Community-Based Approaches to Enhancing Literacy Development in the Mother Tongue for Marginalised Populations in Thailand
To begin, a question for the audience...

2010 EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO

‘Children in the early grades are not mastering the reading skills necessary for further learning .... Reading skills can be improved relatively easily. Education ministries and teachers need to renew their efforts regarding these basic skills.’

Why might we question this statement?
Presentation Outline

➔ Why Community based?
➔ Examples of Community-based strategies
➔ Evidence of impact of community based strategies
➔ Conclusions
An integrated approach

Many reading or MTB-MLE projects take a narrow school-focused approach.

Through our Literacy Boost and First Read Programs, SCI works on three pillars: teacher training, community action, and assessment.

We always face an explicit or implicit choice of where to invest, by narrowly focusing on school we may miss the point...
Why Community Based

1. Students spend a small proportion of **time** in school and on task

   ![Potential Learning in a Day: School-Only and Life-Wide Learning Approaches](chart.png)

   - **School Only Approach**
     - School (annual avg.: 2 hrs per day)
     - Learning potential ignored or not supported
   - **Life-wide Learning Approach**
     - School (annual avg.: 2 hrs per day)
     - Life-wide learning (annual avg.: 12 hrs per day)

   Percentage of a Child’s Time Awake in a Year

2. Poor **quality** education and **language** policies
3. Severe **inequalities** in home support and print environments
4. A strong predictor of reading success is **enjoyment** of reading
Research identifies 3 community-related factors as important for learning to read:

- Home learning/reading activities
- Materials, and
- Book sharing or reading out loud…
Examples of community-based strategies

Material Creation
- Book banks
- Other reading materials

Parent Behavior change
- Workshops
- Home Visits
- Playgroups
- Radio

Community reading & language development activities:
- Reading clubs
- Playgroups
- Reading buddies
- Story time
- Reading festivals
Community Reading Activities

- Reading clubs
- Reading buddies
- Story time
- Reading Festivals
• Weekly activities done with children outside of school
• Led by youth or community volunteers
• Objective is to strengthen children’s reading skills while having FUN
Reading Club: Typical flow

Free Play/ Assembly
Song Time
Story Time
Activity Time
Make & Take
Writing in journal
Reading Buddy system

How it is done:
Older pupils (4th-5th) support the development of reading skills in young learners (1st-2nd)
Teacher identified to oversee program

Benefits:
Brings books close to home.
Older buddy acts as a mentor/role model, position of responsibility
Younger buddy develops familiarity with print text
Buddies develop a reading culture
Builds community relationships.
Parent Behaviour Change: First Read, Deep South of Thailand
Supporting children’s social and emotional well being

Learning how to talk with your child in a supportive and nurturing manner
Language Development and Everyday Activities

→ Understand that parents are a key factor in literacy development

→ Know how to take everyday activities and turn them into learning opportunities for parents and their children
Using story telling with children

Support children’s literacy development by helping children think and talk about stories.
Creating Reading Materials

- Develop materials to support their children’s reading
- Support children’s learning through play.

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Some evidence on Impact
Testimony: Thin Ma Khing’ Story

“Before I become a parent volunteer in the community, people from my community did not accept me, because I was abandoned by my husband and had no academic qualification, the community had assumed that I was not suitable to play that role (parent volunteer) but, because of the knowledge that I learned from the workshop, I felt confident and brave enough to try.”

She said, “Now I know how to deal with stress and am confident to support my children’s learning, such as reading and writing. I can even share a bedtime story, which I had never done before, and also know how to spend time with children at play. My confidence to communicate with the community, with leaders and friends has increased. I can see that my children have developed trust in me. Lastly, I know how to encourage my children to pursue their education.”
Evidence of Impact: RCT in Rwanda

**How was the trial conducted?**

Led by researchers at Stanford University, Literacy Boost in Rwanda’s randomized control trial randomly assigned all sectors within one Rwanda district to one of two treatment groups or a control to answer two questions.

**Three groups**

- **TT**: Teacher Training only
- **LB**: Teacher Training combined with Community Action activities
- **C**: Control group

**Two high-level questions**

1. Does Teacher Training alone have a positive impact on students’ learning?
2. Do community literacy activities positively impact student’s learning, over and above Teacher Training?
• TT alone had limited impact compared to the full program with the community component.

• Students in the LB group experienced improved Literacy Ecologies at home, especially on Reading Habits and Interactions, Reading Materials, and Child Interest/Engagement.

• The most consistent predictor of student’s literacy outcomes was student interest and engagement in literacy activities.
**Challenge: Sustainability: First Read Thailand**

- **First Read** will aim to explore sustainable government and community delivery platforms in the Deep South of Thailand.

- A scientific evaluation is planned with Ratchapat University for 2016-2017.

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CONCLUSIONS

- School-only focused programs will often have limited impact on children’s reading and language development, if inequalities in the home and community are not addressed; so practitioners and governments should **always plan for a strong community component**.

- Effective community programs should be **multi-component** and explore ways to empower parents who may not have understood the influence they have on their children’s development.

- **Differentiated strategies for different genders and cultures** may be required.

- It is key to consider and plan for **sustainable delivery platform** for CBAs.