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FINAL REPORT

USAID SOMA UMENYE

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Cover photo: At Rugaragara Primary School, students practice reading in their Kinyarwanda textbooks. (Credit: Alain Patrick Mwizerwa / USAID Soma Umenye)

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The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States government.

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ACRONYMS

CA-LEGRA	Comprehensive Assessment – Local Early Grade Reading Assessment
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CTLRD	Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning Resources Department (REB)
CWPM	Correct Words Per Minute
DDE	District Director of Education
DEO	District Education Officer
DOS	Dean of Studies
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EP	Ecole Primaire
ESAD	Examinations, Selection, and Assessment Department (REB)
ESSP	Education Sector Strategic Plan
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
GOR	Government of Rwanda
GS	Groupe Scolaire
GSM	Grams per Square Meter
ICT	information and communication technologies
IR	Intermediate Result
KRC	Kinyarwanda Reading Camp
LARS	Learning Achievement in Rwandan Schools
LEGRA	Local Early Grade Reading Assessment
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
NCPD	National Council of Persons with Disabilities
NESA	National Examination and School Inspection Authority
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
NRTT-SL	National Reading Training Team (School Leader Training)
NRTT-TT	National Reading Training Team (Teacher Training)
NUDOR	National Union of Disability Organizations in Rwanda

ORF	Oral Reading Fluency
PI	Primary 1 (or Grade 1)
P2	Primary 2 (or Grade 2)
P3	Primary 3 (or Grade 3)
REB	Rwanda Basic Education Board
RNUD	Rwanda National Union of the Deaf
RSL	Rwanda Sign Language
RUB	Rwanda Union of the Blind
SD	Standard Deviation
SEI	Sector Education Inspector
SGAC	School General Assembly Committee
TDM	Teacher Development and Management and Career Guidance and Counseling Department (REB)
TLM	Teaching and Learning Materials
TTC	Teacher Training College
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
URCE	University of Rwanda College of Education

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2016, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) launched the \$72 million Soma Umenye (“read and understand”) activity to increase early grade reading outcomes by distributing teaching and learning materials (TLM), improving classroom instruction and supervision, increasing use of assessment and remediation, and strengthening systemic capacity to deliver early grade reading instruction. The activity aligned with Rwanda’s Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP). In addition, USAID Soma Umenye was part of USAID’s larger “Literacy Enhanced Across Rwanda Now” (LEARN) project, which included a community engagement activity (Mureke Dusome) and a pre-primary activity (Itegere Gusoma).

Over the life of the activity, USAID Soma Umenye worked closely with the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC), its implementing agency, the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB), District Directors of Education (DDEs), District Education Officers (DEOs), and sector education inspectors (SEIs) to improve classroom instruction and systemic capacity. The focus of these efforts was — by activity end — 3,189 public and government-supported schools, 4,201 education administrators and officials, 18,062 Grade 1-3 teachers, 16 teacher training colleges (TTCs) and more than 2.2 million Grade 1-3 students across Rwanda’s 30 districts.

KEY ELEMENTS OF SOMA UMENYE IMPLEMENTATION

Over more than five years of implementation, USAID Soma Umenye helped:

- create and distribute an essential core of Grade 1-3 teaching and learning materials,
- provide professional development to Grade 1-3 teachers in evidence-based early grade reading instruction,
- build the skills of school leaders to better lead and manage for early grade reading achievement,
- support the Government of Rwanda (GOR) to develop a comprehensive assessment system,
- create a greater understanding of how to improve early grade reading outcomes, and
- promote improved gender-responsiveness, inclusive education, and ICT-enabled solutions.

Teaching and learning materials (TLM). USAID Soma Umenye collaborated with MINEDUC to define a set of materials core to early grade reading instruction — a textbook, teacher’s guide, read-aloud book, and classroom library of leveled readers (including decodable readers in Grade 1) — and distributed them to all public and government-supported schools across the country. As part of this work, Soma Umenye collaborated with MINEDUC to develop leveling guidelines (to structure the leveling of the supplementary readers), which it discussed with publishers to build their capacity to apply the guidelines to their existing catalogs.

Teacher instructional skills. USAID Soma Umenye combined several professional development modalities to expose Grade 1-3 (Primary 1 to Primary 3 or P1-P3) teachers to new

approaches and give them opportunities to apply these new strategies in the classroom. With GOR trainers, Soma Umenye provided face-to-face training to all P1-P3 teachers and complemented this training with school-based professional development: teacher coaching and communities of practice for P1-P3 Kinyarwanda teachers. As part of this work, Soma Umenye collaborated with the GOR to create teacher standards for early grade Kinyarwanda teachers and used those standards to structure the school-based support. To ensure that teachers entered the profession with a stronger understanding of how to support children to learn to read, Soma Umenye also worked with Rwanda's TTCs to revise the curriculum, create TLM for use in pre-service, and build the capacity of TTC tutors to strengthen the skills of teacher candidates through modeling and practice (including micro-teaching).

School leadership. To equip school leaders to support their P1-P3 Kinyarwanda teachers and strengthen early grade reading instruction, USAID Soma Umenye worked with the GOR to train head teachers and Deans of Studies or DOSs (who work in schools with both primary and secondary education) as well as education managers, such as DDEs, DEOs, and SEIs. In addition, Soma Umenye built the capacity of head teachers and DOSs to coach P1-P3 Kinyarwanda teachers in the classroom and to lead them in communities of practice to reflect on and address instructional challenges they faced in the classroom.

Comprehensive assessment. USAID Soma Umenye supported MINEDUC to create its first comprehensive assessment system. First, Soma Umenye helped create grade-level learner performance standards in reading (specifically, oral reading fluency and reading comprehension). Secondly, Soma Umenye helped MINEDUC create a local early grade reading assessment (LEGRA) system in which teachers assess learners at the end of each term using a standardized test to see if they are achieving termly benchmarks (calibrated with the grade-level performance standards). The LEGRA process involved multiple steps that gave teachers, head teachers, and caregivers the opportunity to reflect on learner achievement to date, either celebrating progress or identifying challenges and planning how to overcome them in the next term.

To provide schools with remediation resources and approaches to address any challenges identified in the LEGRA, Soma Umenye helped develop and pilot the Kinyarwanda Reading Camp (KRC). Integrating a systematic phonics approach with strategies to keep students engaged and reinforce learning, the pilot showed strong results. While the COVID-19 pandemic prevented this approach from being scaled during the life of Soma Umenye, learning from the KRC pilot informed the development of REB's remediation guides.

As the last element of the comprehensive assessment system, Soma Umenye helped the GOR integrate oral reading fluency and reading comprehensive sub-tests into its existing national assessment, the Learning Achievement in Rwandan Schools (LARS).

Policy and practice. USAID Soma Umenye used multiple strategies to help build awareness of how children learn to read and how schools and communities can help them succeed as readers.

- *Andika Rwanda.* For two years, Soma Umenye ran the Andika Rwanda (Rwanda Writes) storywriting competition, in which students (primary students, secondary students, or TTC teacher candidates) submit original stories. Once submitted, 24-30 winning stories were selected from across the country and edited, illustrated, and published. Soma

Umenye then printed and distributed the stories as part of the classroom libraries it provided to all P1-P3 classrooms. Over the course of two years, the competition received close to 200,000 entries and built awareness of the power of reading and writing, thereby helping strengthen a culture of reading in Rwanda.

- *Instructional time study.* To better understand how time was being spent in Kinyarwanda classrooms, Soma Umenye conducted a study of the use of time in P2 classrooms. The study found that nearly 30% of allocated instructional time is lost to teacher and student absence or tardiness (42% in rural schools versus 20% in urban schools), while an additional 20% is lost to activities other than direct reading instruction. The result is that only about 50% of scheduled Kinyarwanda class time is actually spent on learning to read.
- *Learning labs.* To support MINEDUC to reflect on key topics informed by data, Soma Umenye helped create a series of learning labs (for example, one was focused on the instructional time study). In each lab, participants reviewed the data underlying the selected topic and reflected on its implications for policy and practice.
- *National Reading Campaign.* To spread the word about the importance of spending time on learning to read in the early grades, to help school personnel and communities understand how time can be lost through absence and tardiness, and to promote the use of the books from the Soma Umenye-supported classroom libraries for reading practice, Soma Umenye organized the National Reading Campaign. It included a series of outreach strategies, including radio spots, radio shows, a changemaker campaign, and media awards. It spread the word in both schools and communities to “make time for reading.”

Gender, inclusion, and ICT. USAID Soma Umenye integrated strategies to promote gender-responsive and inclusive instruction in its professional development modules for teachers and head teachers. In addition, it supported MINEDUC to implement its Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy. This support included helping create a standardized braille code and Rwanda Sign Language (RSL), both of which enable the creation of learning materials that will be understandable by learners who know braille and RSL (in special schools and perhaps in mainstream schools in the future). In addition, Soma Umenye helped MINEDUC create a Rwandan approach to the use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in instruction. Soma Umenye helped pilot this approach (though the pilot was unfortunately interrupted by the pandemic). These approaches were integrated into Soma Umenye’s professional development materials and informed development of REB’s remediation guides in 2020.

Impact. USAID Soma Umenye had planned an endline EGRA, but was unable to conduct one due to the pandemic. However, MINEDUC conducted a LARS assessment using P3 oral reading fluency and reading comprehension sub-tests (created with activity support). Soma Umenye conducted an equating exercise to be able to compare the P3 findings from the two assessments. As discussed in more detail in Section 5, comparing Soma Umenye’s P3 baseline to the 2021 P3 LARS assessment indicates that Soma Umenye was able to support an increase of 25 percentage points in P3 students achieving the oral reading fluency benchmarks (from 4% in 2018 to 29% in 2021) and a decrease of 24 percentage points in P3 students who scored zero on the assessment (from 28% non-readers in 2018 to 4% non-readers in 2021).

Areas for future focus. While Soma Umenye helped MINEDUC strengthen the use of instructional time, TLM, improved teaching techniques, and formative assessment in Rwandan classrooms, Rwanda's schools still face challenges to ensure every early grade learner learns to read in order to be able to read to learn in upper primary. In particular, ensuring teachers and learners make effective use of classroom time (in class on time focused on learning) and that teachers draw on evidence-based practice is an ongoing issue. Key to this goal is ensuring that teachers have access to the professional development resources that can help them use effective instructional strategies that help all children learn, and MINEDUC and REB are working towards this goal. Ensuring continuing access to TLM (at one textbook per learner) is also an ongoing challenge that has unfortunately been exacerbated by the pandemic, which saw many books go home with children but not come back. Finally, Rwanda's new comprehensive assessment system is a powerful tool for educational change, but it is new and it is important that it be strengthened while maintaining its nature as a formative assessment tool (rather than an evaluative tool) that school personnel can use to identify learners, teachers, or schools that need additional support and provide it.

PROGRAMMATIC SHIFTS

Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic introduced a major programmatic shift for USAID Soma Umenye's interventions. Rwanda closed its schools in March 2020, and most P1-P3 students did not return to a classroom until February 2021.

During this time, Rwanda provided remote learning to students, and Soma Umenye moved quickly to help REB develop radio lessons. Over the course of the program, Soma Umenye helped REB develop 237 radio lessons that covered the full range of the P1-P3 curriculum and are available for future use, should schools again face the need to close. In addition, Soma Umenye helped develop 54 digital readers (distributed online and over WhatsApp) to provide learners with additional reading materials as they learned at home.

As a result of COVID, Soma Umenye was unable to proceed with plans to scale up KRC delivery in 2020. Planned KRC delivery was also cancelled in 2021 due to (1) COVID 19 restrictions that prevented the teacher training required to prepare for remediation and (2) the need to use the limited training window to train the more than 7,000 newly appointed teachers. In addition, plans to scale up LEGRA in 2020 were delayed though LEGRA was delivered in full in 2021.

Exhibit I (next page) highlights Soma Umenye's interventions and achievements.

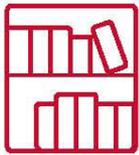
Exhibit I. Soma Umenye's Life-of-Project Achievements

SOMA UMENYE ACHIEVEMENTS

2.2M 
Early Grade learners reached

25 PERCENT POINT INCREASE
IN P3 LEARNERS ACHIEVING GRADE-LEVEL BENCHMARKS

24 PERCENT POINT DECREASE
IN P3 ZERO SCORERS



6.4M TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS DISTRIBUTED

1:1 CREATING A LEARNER TO TEXTBOOK RATIO

 **18,000**
P1-P3 TEACHERS

 **3,700**
SCHOOL LEADERS

 **16**
TTC'S STAFF

COMPLETED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES TO BUILD INSTRUCTIONAL AND/OR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP SKILLS

9 PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS
SET FOR P1-P3 LEARNERS

3 ROUNDS
OF LEGRA ADMINISTERED PUBLISHED/DISTRIBUTED

4,201 EDUCATION LEADERS
TRAINED TO USE LEGRA AS FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

 **100,000+**
ANDIKA RWANDA STORY WRITERS

54 
ANDIKA RWANDA BOOKS PUBLISHED/DISTRIBUTED

54 
ANDIKA RWANDA BOOKS IN BRAILLE AND RSL

 **237**
P1-P3 RADIO LESSONS DEVELOPED

 **54**
PDF ANDIKA RWANDA BOOKS SHARED

 **54**
VIDEO READ ALOUD ANDIKA RWANDA BOOKS SHARED

SECTION I

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

At the beginning of Soma Umenye, Rwanda had made significant progress in achieving near universal enrollment. However, it faced high lower primary dropout rates (some estimates approached 30%) and low learning levels in lower primary, particular in reading. Below, we discuss the status of the 5 Ts in Rwanda at the beginning of the activity.

- *Tongue.* Rwanda had the advantage of having the vast majority of its students speak Kinyarwanda (the language of instruction for lower primary). While there are small communities of second-language speakers, in general Rwanda's language of instruction aligned with its students' mother tongues.
- *Text.* USAID/Rwanda's Literacy, Language, and Learning Initiative had provided teaching and learning materials (TLM) to early grade classrooms. However, some last minute curricular revisions at the end of the initiative had required the reprinting of TLM, and the revised versions had been provided to P1 and P2, but not P3 classrooms.
- *Time.* No data existed regarding how time was used in Rwandan classrooms. However, some observers suspected that time might be a problem to be addressed.
- *Teaching technique.* While some lower primary Kinyarwanda teachers had been trained in early grade reading instruction by the Literacy, Language, and Learning Initiative, there had been turnover among the lower primary teacher cohort by the start of Soma Umenye, and only about a third of teachers reporting having been trained.
- *Test.* Rwanda lacked a consistent framework that would enable education stakeholders to know what REB expected learners to achieve in each grade, and it did not have metrics that allowed alignment among the different assessment tools used to measure student achievement.

1.1. USAID'S SOMA UMENYE OVERVIEW AND RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The objective of USAID Soma Umenye was to improve reading outcomes in Kinyarwanda for at least 1 million children in public and government-aided schools in Rwanda. Specifically, Soma Umenye targeted all children in grades P1-P3 attending public and government-aided schools nationwide to ensure that at least 70 percent of these students were able to read grade-level text with fluency and comprehension. Below, in Exhibit 2, are the outcomes that are intended to collectively achieve Soma Umenye's program purpose.

Intermediate Result 1 (IR 1) focuses on the classroom and school-level interventions necessary to improve evidence-based reading instruction, including provision of materials, training and coaching, supportive leadership, and analysis and use of student assessment results.

Intermediate Result 2 (IR 2) focuses on strengthening the capacity of the education system in Rwanda to implement and support high-quality, evidence-based reading instruction throughout the country during and beyond the life of Soma Umenye.

Exhibit 2. USAID Soma Umenye Results Framework

Development Objective: Increased opportunities for Rwandan children and youth to succeed in schooling and the modern workplace	
Program Purpose: Improved literacy outcomes for children in early grades	
IR 1: Classroom instruction in early-grade reading improved	IR 2: Systemic capacity for early-grade reading instruction improved
Sub-IR 1.1: Evidence-based, gender-sensitive early-grade reading materials available and used	Sub-IR 2.1: National advocacy mechanisms for early-grade reading interventions strengthened
Sub-IR 1.2: Teachers' use of evidence-based, gender-sensitive instructional practices in early-grade reading increased	Sub-IR 2.2: Student and teacher performance standards and benchmarks for early-grade reading applied
Sub-IR 1.3: Capacity of head and mentor teachers to coach and supervise early-grade reading instruction strengthened	Sub-IR 2.3: Research-based policies and curricula in support of early-grade reading instruction implemented
Sub-IR 1.4: Schools' and teachers' use of student assessment results improved	Sub-IR 2.4: Early-grade reading assessment systems strengthened
	Sub-IR 2.5: Capacity of TTCs to prepare effective early-grade reading teachers improved
Cross-Cutting: gender and inclusion of students with special needs, ICT	

USAID Soma Umenye sought to improve the reading skills of all students in lower primary school so as to increase the opportunity for all Rwandan children to succeed in school. Soma Umenye activities facilitated the reading achievement of all students in the target grade levels, including girls and boys, and students with disabilities. In addition, Soma Umenye was designed so that female teachers, tutors, lecturers, researchers, and officials have equitable opportunities for professional development and advancement.

Soma Umenye also aimed to strengthen the capacity of people and systems in Rwanda to adopt and sustain improvements in reading outcomes. Specifically, USAID Soma Umenye sought to strengthen the institutional capacity of relevant departments of MINEDUC, REB, the University of Rwanda College of Education (URCE), and local government offices (such as district and sector education officers) to support schools, teachers and students. In alignment with USAID's commitment to strengthening local capacity and encouraging local solutions by investing in local organizations, Soma Umenye also worked with multiple local partners.



PHOTO: Alexis Nshimiyimana for USAID Soma Umenye.

At Kivugiza Primary School, a P1 student undertakes a spelling exercise.

1.2. THEORY OF CHANGE

The GOR and USAID have worked together to improve early grade reading in Rwanda since 2011 by strengthening the five Ts (time, text, tongue, test, and teaching technique) as well as by promoting leadership in early grade literacy at national, district, school, and community levels.

Soma Umenye as a whole supported the topline goal of USAID and the GOR of having increased opportunities for Rwandan children and youth to succeed in school and the modern workplace. To achieve this goal, Soma Umenye’s theory is that:

- **if**
 - enough **time** is spent teaching and learning reading skills for children to develop those skills,
 - if children have access to and use plentiful numbers of books (**text**) in a language they understand (**tongue**) and at the right level,
 - if teachers are equipped with instructional **techniques** to build the seven key subskills of reading (oral language comprehension, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, fluency, reading comprehension, and writing) and to teach them explicitly,
 - if teachers know how to track student progress (through **tests**) towards grade-appropriate standards and find support for students who fall behind,
 - if Rwandan leaders at the national, district, sector, school, and community level have access to actionable data that allows them to monitor and support progress towards clear goals,
- **then**
 - students will have a better opportunity to learn and both teachers and students will be better able and more motivated to teach/learn,

- and children’s literacy skills will improve and they will be able to transfer key literacy skills to a second language.

Coupling these interventions with a theory of action which specifies who needs to do what, Soma Umenye interventions supported national and district education actors to deliver improved early grade reading outcomes.

I.3. CONSORTIUM

The implementation of USAID Soma Umenye was led by Chemonics International. Local and international consortium partners included Room to Read, Cambridge Education, Evans and Associates, Human Network International, EdIntersect, Daniel Harris and Associates, Inclusive Development Partners, the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Inspire-Educate-Empower, Never Again, Rwanda, the National Union of Disability Organizations of Rwanda (NUDOR), the Rwanda National Union of the Deaf (RNUD), and eKitabu.

I.4. PROJECT PHASING

As part of the design of Soma Umenye, USAID planned an impact evaluation. To ensure control schools were available to be part of the evaluation, Soma Umenye’s rollout was initially planned in three phases.

- *Phase 1 (2017 school year)*. Soma Umenye was to implement in the P1 classrooms of all public and government-aided primary schools in 30 percent of sectors in each district.
- *Phase 2 (2018 school year)*. Soma Umenye was to implement in P1 and P2 classrooms of all public and government-aided primary schools in 60 percent of sectors in each district.
- *Phase 3 (2019 school year)*. Soma Umenye was to implement in P1-P3 classrooms of all public and government-aided primary schools in all sectors (approximately 2,500 schools).

However, at the end of Year 1, in collaboration with USAID and the GOR, Soma Umenye shifted this phasing plan to the following.

- *Phase 1 (2018 school year)*. Soma Umenye would support all P1 classrooms in public and government-aided schools.
- *Phase 2 (2019 school year)*. Soma Umenye would support all P1-P2 classrooms in public and government-aided schools.
- *Phase 3 (2020 school year)*. Soma Umenye would support all P1-P3 classrooms in public and government-aided schools.

In 2018, REB requested that Soma Umenye bring forward support to P3 classrooms from 2020 to 2019. Soma Umenye, in consultation with USAID, agreed to this request. This change required that Soma Umenye revise and print the P2 and P3 teaching and learning materials in tandem in order to distribute in 2019. If Soma Umenye had not made this change, P3 textbooks might not have reached classrooms and P3 teachers might not have been trained until 2021 due to the disruptions of the pandemic.

With these changes, Soma Umenye’s actual phasing was the following:

- *2017 school year.* Soma Umenye implemented in the P1 classrooms of all public and government-aided primary schools in 30 percent of sectors in each district.
- *2018 school year.* Soma Umenye supported all P1 classrooms in public and government-aided schools.
- *2019 school year (and forward).* Soma Umenye supported all P1-P3 classrooms in public and government-aided schools.

SECTION 2

ACHIEVEMENTS AND DISCUSSION OF MAJOR ACTIVITIES

This section describes USAID Soma Umenye’s major activities and achievements from 2016 to 2021.

2.1 AUGMENTING TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS

SUMMARY OF CORE ACTIVITIES

USAID Soma Umenye worked with REB to define a core set of materials essential to early grade reading instruction, revised and created reading materials for that essential core, and printed and delivered these books (and bookshelves) to classrooms to ensure each child had a textbook and classrooms had supplementary reading materials. (Soma Umenye’s work on TLM for children with disabilities is described in Section 2.6).

Key Achievements

- Distributed 6,493,281 educational materials to Rwandan schools: 26,446 teacher guides, 1,576,558 student textbooks, 18,984 teacher read alouds, 3,266,849 decodable readers, and 1,594,020 leveled readers
- Supported development of leveling criteria for leveled readers
- Distributed more than 14,000 bookshelves to create classroom libraries and secure storage for readers
- Built REB’s capacity to manage the book supply chain and increased the capacity of selected printers to respond more effectively to REB’s specifications and quality standards
- Supported teachers to improve use of books during lessons (achieving a high of 73% of classrooms where at least 75% of students were using their own books)

Rwanda’s Essential Core of TLM

Soma Umenye’s baseline EGRA found that classrooms lacked sufficient teaching and learning materials. In P1 classrooms, the textbook to pupil ratio was 1:7, in P2, it was 1:9, and in P3, it was 1:16. These ratios limit pupils’ ability to learn. To ensure that all children had access to sufficient evidence-based materials to help them learn to read in Kinyarwanda, USAID Soma Umenye worked with MINEDUC to create an “essential core” of P1-P3 TLM, aligned to REB’s competency-based curriculum (in Rwanda, Grade 1 is referred to as Primary 1 or P1, Grade 2 as P2, etc.). At the start of the program, early grade classrooms used either the books developed by USAID/Rwanda’s Literacy, Language, and Learning Initiative (a teacher’s guide, student textbook, and teacher read aloud book) or a textbook created by a local publisher. To determine how to constitute the essential core, Soma Umenye initially worked with REB to evaluate the existing books.

With REB, USAID Soma Umenye created an evaluation team composed of technical experts from various REB departments, teachers, and technical experts from various organizations, including Soma Umenye, URCE, and Save the Children. As no tool existed within Rwanda to assess TLM, Soma Umenye helped localize a tool developed by the University of Oregon (tailoring it to the characteristics of the Kinyarwanda language). The evaluation team was trained to use it to analyze how well the currently available TLM reflect the five foundational skills underlying early grade reading competency: phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. These five skills are essential underpinnings of a competence-based curriculum in literacy. Participants also evaluated other features of the TLM, including illustrations, design, layout, gender equality, and the incorporation of the general competencies set forth in Rwanda’s current curriculum. The team found that the existing TLM had strengths and weaknesses. While the book from the local publisher would require significant revision, the USAID-support books needed more limited revisions and hence were chosen to be the base TLMs for revision and inclusion in the essential core.

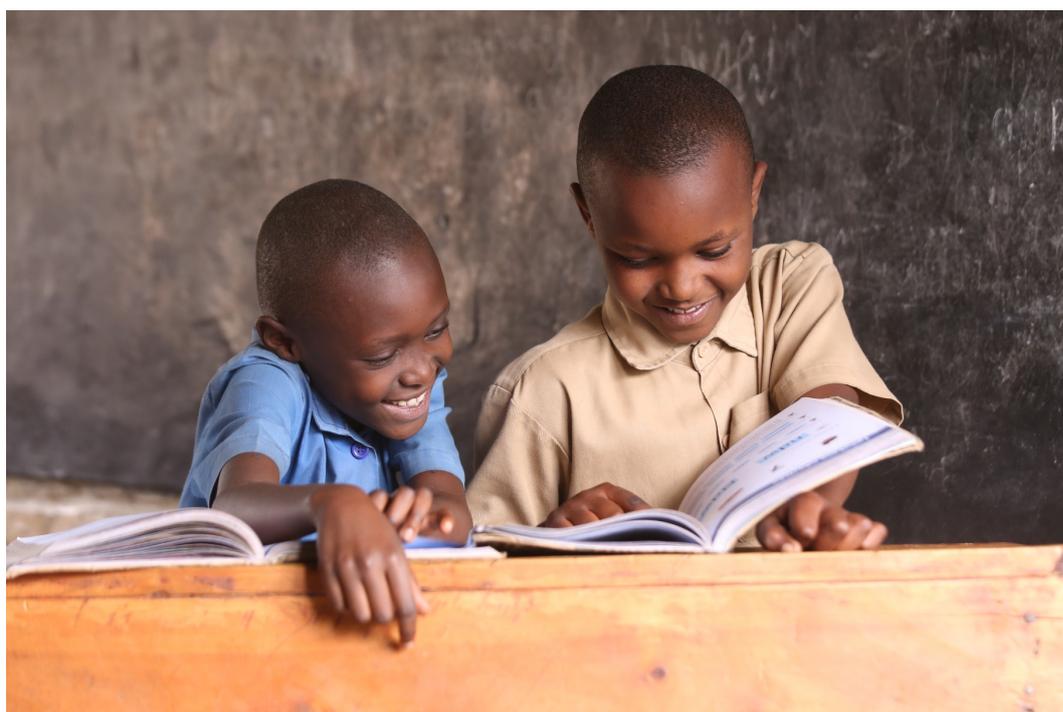


PHOTO: Alain Patrick Mwizerwa for USAID Soma Umenye.

PI students in Muhanga District practice reading using new Kinyarwanda textbooks.

In Years 2 and 3, Soma Umenye collaborated with REB’s Curriculum, Teaching, and Learning Resources Department (CTLRD) to revise the PI-P3 materials, including the teacher’s guide, student textbook, and teacher read aloud for PI-P3. Revisions included providing more opportunity in PI for the review of phonics skills, increasing the number of reading passages for practicing fluency in PI-P3, and additional exercises to help children learn to segment and blend in P2 (among other things). They also included adjustments to ensure the new books conformed to the revised Kinyarwanda orthography, which made some changes in letter-sound correspondence. In addition, Soma Umenye ensured that gender and inclusion were positively reflected throughout all of the books. This included showing boys and girls each involved in tasks stereotypically associated with the other gender and showing people with disabilities as active, empowered members of the community.



An image from the Kinyarwanda learner textbook shows children with and without disabilities playing together.

In addition to the evaluated TLM (teacher’s guides, student textbooks, and teacher read alouds), USAID Soma Umenye and REB also decided to include decodable readers and leveled readers in the essential core (the full essential core is shown in Exhibit 3). Soma Umenye initially considered including alphabet charts and flash cards in the essential core, but in the end, they were not included.

Exhibit 3. Essential Core Materials for Early Grade Reading

		P1	P2	P3
	Teacher’s guide	1 guide per teacher	1 guide per teacher	1 guide per teacher
	Student textbook	1 book per student	1 book per student	1 book per student
	Teacher read aloud	1 book per teacher	1 book per teacher	1 book per teacher
	Decodable readers	24 decodable titles per classroom	N/A	N/A
	Leveled readers	76 leveled readers per classroom	100 leveled readers per classroom	100 leveled readers per classroom

At USAID Soma Umenye’s start, Rwanda had few if any decodable readers in classrooms. Soma Umenye worked with REB to create 24 decodable readers keyed to the Grade 1 curriculum to support young readers to begin reading as they learned the alphabet.

While publishers in Rwanda had created many storybooks, these storybooks were not leveled in a way that made them accessible to early readers. To address this issue, Soma Umenye worked with REB to develop levelling criteria for readers that established six levels.

- *Level 1: beginning readers.* At this level, children are just beginning to learn how print works and that there are relationships between letters and sounds. They are learning to (1) look (aided by their finger or the teacher's finger) right to left across words and one line of print (2) use information from pictures to help them understand print, and to read simple language structures (3) differentiate print from pictures and notice the distinctive features of letters, attaching names to them (4) read one-line phrases or sentences with simple words on familiar topics (5) match one spoken word with one word in print.
- *Level 2: emergent readers.* These children are beginning to encounter simple stories and familiar topics in texts that have two to four lines of print on each page. They move smoothly from left to right across words and lines of print, sweeping back to the left margin for each new line and reading print on both left and right pages. Reading is becoming smooth, allowing for some phrasing and readers are moving away from needing to point to each word as they read. Readers are developing a larger repertoire of high frequency syllables that they recognize quickly and easily.
- *Level 3: emerging fluent readers.* These children are beginning to encounter stories and familiar topics in texts that have three to six lines of print on each page. They are flexible enough to process texts with varied placement of print on the page and punctuation.
- *Level 4: fluent readers.* These children are processing texts that vary from short to medium to long. They are beginning to read short informational texts as well as longer, illustrated narratives that have short chapters.
- *Level 5-6: advanced fluent readers.* These children are processing chapter books that vary from short to medium to long, with more sophisticated, elaborate plots, multiple characters and few illustrations, as well as shorter informational and fiction books. They adjust their reading to a range of genres (realistic fiction, simple fantasy, informational texts, traditional literacy and biography). They understand that chapters have multiple episodes relating to a single plot.

With REB, USAID Soma Umenye organized workshops with publishers to help them understand how to edit their existing stories (or how to create new stories) to match the finalized leveling criteria. Next, Soma Umenye supported MINEDUC to review these titles for approval for use in Rwandan classrooms. At the beginning of Soma Umenye, only some 40 readers were approved for use in schools and Soma Umenye helped increase this number to close to 500 (for Grades 1, 2, and 3).

Overall, as shown in Exhibit 4, Soma Umenye distributed 6,493,281 essential core TLM to P1-P3 classrooms across Rwanda. With these books in classrooms, Rwanda achieved a 1:1 ratio of textbooks to learners.

Exhibit 4. TLM Distributed by USAID Soma Umenye

	P1	P2	P3
 Teacher's guides	14,876	5,940	5,630
 Student textbooks	657,741	464,569	454,248
 Teacher read alouds	7,514	5,900	5,570

		PI	P2	P3
	Decodable readers	3,266,849	N/A	N/A
	Leveled readers	497,747	577,131	519,142
	Alphabet charts	5,209	N/A	N/A
	Flash cards	5,215	N/A	N/A

USAID Soma Umenye distributed leveled readers from two different sources. The first set were storybooks created by local publishers that were suitable for early grades. Because Rwanda already had a large number of these storybooks, Soma Umenye worked with publishers to revise those books according to the leveling guidelines mentioned above and distribute them to schools. These books remain under copyright held by one of the Rwandan book publishers. The second set were generated through the Andika Rwanda competition (see Section 2.5 for a description of Andika Rwanda), which were written by Rwandan children. All books (with the exception of the leveled readers created by local publishers) are published under a Creative Commons license. In addition, all books published under a Creative Commons license are available on REB’s e-learning platform so they are accessible for download and use in Rwanda’s private schools.

Classroom Libraries

About 50% of schools had school libraries in 2017, though these libraries varied from well equipped to small. With the provision of supplementary readers to each PI-P3 classroom in public and government-aided schools, each of Rwanda’s approximately 14,000 PI-P3 classrooms now have a classroom library. To provide a place to store these materials, Soma Umenye provided classroom bookshelves where the textbooks and readers could be stored between classes. In addition, Soma Umenye provided separate storage units for the decodable readers (as they are only used during a portion of Grade 1 and needed a place for secure storage when teachers moved on to teach more advanced fluency skills).

In addition, Soma Umenye worked with REB to develop School Library Management Guidelines. The guidelines were developed in collaboration with library experts from URCE, REB, and development partners including Peace Corps Volunteers, USAID Mureke Dusome, the Building Learning Foundations project (funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office or FCDO), VVOB, and the Wellspring Foundation. The guidelines are intended to help teachers to develop, manage, and use school and classroom libraries effectively and to actively encourage book borrowing by students. Following an in-depth analysis of the different types of libraries currently in schools, the final guidelines covered the following three types of libraries:

- *Standard school library.* A standard library is a library that meets the requirements of the manifesto of the International Federations of Library Associations and Institutions. The guidelines serve as a framework for school leaders and partners to improve their school library in a systematic way.
- *Minimum school library.* A minimum school library is a developing library that does not yet meet all the requirements referred to above. It is typically a small room with a collection of textbooks, a few storybooks, and possibly other materials that are related to the

curriculum. A minimum school library should be managed by a teacher/librarian with the support of the School Library Committee.

- *Classroom library.* A classroom library is a safe, comfortable place for learners to read and enjoy books that are age and grade appropriate. It is composed of a collection of textbooks and learning materials aligned with the curriculum that are kept in the classroom bookshelves. The classroom teacher is expected to manage the books and facilitate children’s reading activities.

To ensure that school leaders had a clear understanding of the value of TLMs, how to use them, and how to preserve them, USAID Soma Umenye worked with REB staff to revise their existing Learning and Teaching Materials Guide to integrate the school library guidelines. This guide was then integrated into the training materials for school leaders and disseminated through the training. School leaders were encouraged to share the information with teachers, students, and parents. USAID Soma Umenye created additional resources to support the use of classroom libraries including videos (see Section 2.2 and Exhibit 12) and classroom posters. Three classroom posters covered book care rules, library rules, and the book checkout process.



Andikisha igitabo utiye cyo kujyana mu rugo.

A portion of a library management poster highlights how teachers can check out books to children to read at home.

Book Supply Chain Toolkit

During implementation, Soma Umenye identified a need for support to (1) REB regarding how to manage the various aspects of its book supply chain and (2) local printers to meet printing specifications. For example, during Soma Umenye’s procurement of TLM, it became clear that local printers lacked understanding of what was required to meet REB’s standards. Soma Umenye ensured that REB specifications were clearly presented in the process of contracting vendors and supported vendors to both understand and meet REB specifications. In addition, Soma Umenye also supported REB to develop clearer specifications for digitized readers through the process of reviewing the development of the 54 Andika Rwanda digitized readers with RSL content.

During textbook printing, activity staff identified that REB’s required specifications for books were not in alignment with common regional practice, which was driving up books costs for Rwanda by requiring the procurement of special inputs. For example, REB specifications required 80 gsm paper for textbooks whereas the industry norm is now 70 gsm. Printers would not normally stock 80 gsm and as there is no paper pulp capacity in Rwanda, printers would have to order paper specifically for REB contracts adding to the time required for printing. To address this need, Soma Umenye developed a toolkit covering a range of key issues (as summarized below):

- *Planning.* Planning and forecasting the need for TLM.
- *Book development.* Key issues of quality in textbook development (including issues of gender equality and diversity as well as illustrations); Working with local publishing

houses to develop textbooks; Designing digital versions of textbooks (and planning for equitable access).

- *Print specifications.* Determining the specifications that will deliver target longevity at the best cost.
- *Procurement.* Procuring textbooks, including the bidding process and assessing capacity and past performance of offerors.
- *Print quality assurance.* Conducting pre-production, production, and post-production quality assurance.
- *Distribution.* Modalities, tools, and key issues in distribution.

In addition, Soma Umenye recognized that REB's existing set of instruments to review quality of printed materials could be improved and as only one set of instruments was available, we procured several instruments — a paper cutter, printer's loupe, weighing scale, and densitometer — to support REB in the process of conducting printing quality assurance during the procurement of books and to enhance the potential of REB to assess the quality of several samples simultaneously.

The toolkit contains multiple case studies (real-life examples from Soma Umenye's experience) that bring these issues to life and provide the opportunity to vicariously experience real-world challenges. Soma Umenye's work with both REB and the printing industry have raised the quality of both (1) printers to meet REB specifications and (2) REB to deliver more effective quality assurance and to manage development partner quality assurance where development partners are procuring TLM for REB. The toolkit and print quality instruments provide it with the tools its needs to do so more effectively in the future.

Achievement

Soma Umenye clearly improved access to TLM — achieving a 1:1 ratio of pupils to textbooks in P1-P3 classrooms prior to the pandemic — which is a crucial first step. In addition, Soma Umenye appears to have increased pupil use of TLM, which is what improves learning. In 2019 (following TLM distribution), Soma Umenye monitoring found that in 73% of classrooms, teachers were ensuring that at least 75% of students used their own textbook during the lesson. This is up from 50% in 2018. However, this figure fell to 55% by project end. We expect that the reason is simple availability of books, as Soma Umenye found that many books did not come back to school following 2020 school closures (see Exhibit 6 below). It will be important that education officials and development partners focus on promoting availability and use of TLM in the future.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND REMEDIATION ACTIONS

Productive scope and sequence. During the revision of the Grade 1 textbook, USAID Soma Umenye raised the issue of the sequence of letter introduction. The textbook under revision did not have the most productive sequence: it introduced all vowels first, and — given the pace of letter introduction — consonants were not introduced until lesson 66 (in Term 2). Soma Umenye explored with REB the revision of the sequence of letter introduction and an increase in the pace of letter introduction. However, REB's curricular experts at the time of this discussion decided not to make any changes. In response, Soma Umenye took steps to increase REB involvement in the early grade reading learning agenda in order to improve their understanding of evidence-based approaches to instruction.

Quality assurance during printing. During the printing of P1 teacher’s guides and student textbooks, USAID Soma Umenye discovered a issue with the original binding of these books. As a result, Soma Umenye recalled these books, improved the binding, and re-distributed them. In addition, Soma Umenye institutionalized a more intensive process to quality assure the production process of all additional books to ensure that this sort of problem did not arise again. For example, Soma Umenye staff visited book printers daily in the crucial first stages of production, when printers are getting the machines properly set up to ensure quality color and bindings. During this stage, Soma Umenye staff worked closely with printers to ensure they would deliver a product that met Soma Umenye’s and REB’s quality specifications, inspecting the quality of the product at each step in the production process, and where necessary, halting production. For example, when printing the P2 student textbook, Soma Umenye’s quality assurance team stopped production several times due the lack of consistency with regards to the folding process. The printer had to switch to sheet feed printing to resolve the issue. Another examples relates to REB’s specifications for the “hinge” of the book. Soma Umenye specialists had to coach printers to ensure they understood the specific requirements and could deliver it during mass production. Soma Umenye also ensured that REB signed off on production quality samples, not just the pre-production dummies, to ensure that there was confirmation that the standard for binding had been met. While this quality assurance was intensive, it was cost effective as it reduced the levels of rejects post print at the pre-distribution quality assurance stage.

Made in Rwanda policy. In 2018, REB informed USAID Soma Umenye staff of a new government policy (Made in Rwanda) requiring that all educational materials be produced in Rwanda using local printers. Due to the limited capacity of printers and the lack of sufficient high-volume equipment for textbook production, in 2018, the project sought a waiver for the printing of P2 and P3 textbooks. The waiver was granted in the first quarter of the 2019 fiscal year. However, the new policy had the impact of slowing down Soma Umenye’s procurement of books. It did so by:

- Delaying the procurement of P2 and P3 textbooks
- Generating increased scrutiny of any books printed outside of the country (necessitating multiple rounds of approvals)
- Overloading local printers, as they were printing all books planned for the next school year (all grades and all subjects). This slowed down the procurement process (as printers sometimes did not respond to solicitations given that they were overloaded with production tasks) and slowed down the production process.

Soma Umenye staff worked to move things forward as quickly as possible (working to build the capacity of local printers and to build the capacity of REB to understand the implications of different decisions).

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Print additional P1-P3 books in 2022/2023. Students learn best when they have their own learning materials. While some annual loss of books is inevitable, 2020 — which saw children learning remotely for some nine months — was a particularly difficult year for book survival. It is important to recover the 1:1 student to textbook ratio created by Soma Umenye in 2019. This will require printing textbooks in the 2022-2023 school year to

ensure students have their own books. As shown in Exhibit 6 below, there is particular need to print P1 books, but all lower primary grades are below the target 1:1 ratio.

Promote improved longevity of books in schools. Soma Umenye noted a higher textbook loss rate than expected. After the distribution of P1 TLM in 2019, Soma Umenye conducted a textbook audit in 150 schools (five from each of the 30 districts) at the end of the school year to determine the textbook survival rate in schools. The findings are shown in Exhibit 5.

Exhibit 5. Survival Rate of Distributed Textbooks (2019)

	Textbooks received	Textbooks available	Textbooks lost or unusable	Survival rate
P1	33,142	27,007	6,135	81%
P2	29,736	26,584	3,152	89%
P3	27,245	24,878	2,367	91%

This is a high rate of loss for one year of use (in particular the P1 loss rate). Following these findings, Soma Umenye increased efforts to build the capacity of school-level personnel to promote appropriate caretaking of TLM (see discussion of LTM guide above and the National Reading Campaign below). Soma Umenye repeated the audit in 2021 (following a period when books had been taken home for nine months during the pandemic), and found very high loss rates (see Exhibit 6). However, the 2021 findings are not typical because the 2020 school year was not typical.

Exhibit 6. Survival Rate of Distributed Textbooks (2021)

	Textbooks received	Textbooks available	Textbooks lost or unusable	Survival rate
P1	100,272	46,616	53,656	46%
P2	69,445	41,988	27,475	60%
P3	65,580	41,075	24,505	63%

We recommend that MINEDUC and development partners continue efforts to promote caretaking of books alongside other strategies to ensure books last as long as possible.

Consider revising the P1 scope and sequence. The current sequence of letter introduction in P1 does not allow for students to begin to read words until Term 2 (Lesson 66). Using a more productive sequence to introduce letters in P1 (and increasing the pace of letter introduction) would enable children to advance to blending letters and reading words more quickly. REB should consider revising the order in which letters are introduced in order to allow children to read words in Term 1.

2.2 BUILDING TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS

SUMMARY OF CORE ACTIVITIES

USAID Soma Umenye took a multi-pronged approach to supporting REB to build teacher capacity to teach early grade reading effectively. Project staff worked with REB to develop face-to-face training that introduced teachers to evidence-based instructional practices as

well as school-based capacity building mechanisms and self-study resources that could support and reinforce what they learned in training. Parallel to this process, Soma Umenye also worked with REB to design teacher standards to highlight expectations for early grade reading teachers. In 2021, given the unprecedented number of new lower primary teachers (due to new school construction among other factors), Soma Umenye worked with REB to design school-based orientation for new teachers.

Key Achievements

- Developed 10-day professional development course for P1-P3 teachers
- Supported face-to-face training for more than 18,000 P1-P3 teachers
- Developed teacher standards for early grade reading teachers
- Strengthened school-based mechanisms (coaching and communities of practice) for continuing professional development
- Supported the creation of self-study resources for ongoing teaching capacity building
- Developed school-based orientation procedures for new teachers
- Supported revision of the pre-service curriculum and creation of TLM for TTCs
- Enabled teachers to improve their practice, with 78% of teachers demonstrating the use of evidence-based instruction (up from 20% in 2019)

Teacher Training

Working with REB, USAID Soma Umenye helped develop several modules of teacher training per grade (P1-P3) that helped focus teachers on instructional methods to help students build the foundational sub-skills of reading, including phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing. In addition, training content included strategies to promote gender-responsive instruction and inclusive instruction. Exhibit 7 illustrates the approach Soma Umenye and REB took to teacher capacity building. A core strategy that teachers were trained to use was the “I do, we do, you do” approach, in which teachers model reading skills, practice them with learners, and then provide learners with independent practice.

Exhibit 7. Focus of P1-P3 Teacher Training

Grade	Modules	Focus
P1	3	Phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, scaffolding (“I do, we do, you do”), use of textbook and decodable readers, practice teaching, gender-responsive and inclusive instruction
P2	2	Phonics, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, writing, scaffolding, use of textbook and leveled readers, practice teaching, gender-responsive and inclusive instruction
P3	2	How to apply reading and writing skills to learning, fluency, vocabulary, comprehension, scaffolding, use of textbook and leveled readers, practice teaching, gender-responsive and inclusive instruction

To lead teachers in building their familiarity with this content, USAID Soma Umenye supported the development of a National Reading Training Team for teacher training to serve as trainers. The members of this team were drawn from REB staff, URCE staff, TTC

tutors, DEOs, SEIs, and master teachers (identified by REB and local education officers). Soma Umenye’s training-of-trainer activities built the capacity of these key actors in the education system to understand and promote evidence-based approaches to early grade reading instruction. Soma Umenye worked with the National Reading Training Team to provide 3-10 days of training to teachers each year.



PHOTO: Alexis Nshimiyimana for USAID Soma Umenye.

A teacher sharing insights during teacher training at Rwinkwavu Primary School.

Teacher Performance Standards

In 2019, REB had recently adopted general teacher competencies for all teachers, and USAID Soma Umenye and REB took the opportunity to describe how these competencies should be fulfilled specifically for early grade teachers of reading. USAID Soma Umenye and REB organized a workshop to develop a user-friendly document that teachers could use to self-assess their instructional and assessment practices for reading to see how they aligned with the overall competencies. In the workshop, participants began from REB’s existing competencies (which is represented in the domains as well as the first two columns of Exhibit 8), and elaborated how these competencies would be expressed specifically in early grade reading instruction (the third column of Exhibit 8). Participants also discussed reading performance descriptors for four performance categories: basic, good, very good, and outstanding. Exhibit 8 shows the competencies that participants felt teacher must demonstrate while Annex B includes the performance descriptors for the performance categories. These standards shaped the design of the community of practice materials. With competencies highlighting the skills that teachers need to help learners achieve REB’s student performance standards, REB has an evidence-based framework that can guide continuing professional development efforts.

Exhibit 8. Reading competencies developed based on the CPD framework

Standard	Competency	Reading competency
Domain 1: Professional knowledge		
	1.1 Know how children learn	1.1.1 Know how young children learn to read

Standard	Competency	Reading competency
1. Know your learners and the learning process	1.2 Know your learners	1.2.1 Know your learners' reading profiles (<i>languages or dialects spoken at home, the kind of reading support and reading materials available at home and in the community, attendance at pre-primary, visual or hearing impairments, etc.</i>) and gaps that need to be bridged to help them build strong reading skills
2. Know the subject and curriculum content and appropriate ways to teach it	2.1 Know the subject matter and the national curriculum	2.1.1 Know the important components of reading skills, the sequence in which these skills develop and the importance of each in helping young children learn to read;
		2.1.2 Know the expectations of the national curriculum, the end-of-term and end-of-year benchmarks and targets for important reading skills and simple tasks for measuring students' progress with respect to those benchmarks/expectations
	2.2 Know the principles and strategies for teaching and learning	2.2.1 Know the effective instructional strategies or activities for developing each important reading skills and for instilling in students a culture of reading
		2.2.2 Know the different types of reading instructional materials needed to develop young children's reading skills, the purpose of each and how to use each effectively in the classroom
	2.3 Know the principles and strategies for inclusive education	2.3.1 Know the strategies for ensuring that all students learn to read, regardless of their reading profile (students who speak a different dialect/language, students with visual or hearing impairments, struggling versus strong readers, etc.)
2.4 Know the language teaching principles and strategies	2.4.1 Know how to use other subject content areas (math, social studies, science, etc.) to reinforce students' reading skills	
Domain 2: Professional practice		
3. Teach in a way that ensures that all learners participate and achieve expected benchmarks	3.1 Establish learning outcomes and objectives for all lessons and activities	3.1.1 Develop a clear learning objective, tied to specific reading component skills and to lessons and activities that fosters the development of a culture of reading among children
	3.2 Use language teaching and learning strategies	3.2.1 Deliver instruction that based on the sequence of reading skill development in the curriculum and paces learning appropriately
		3.2.2 Use scaffolding techniques like "I do, we do, you do" when introducing a new reading skill or competency
		3.2.3 Implement reading instructional strategies or activities accurately, as intended, to develop key reading skills
	3.3 Facilitate activities where learners apply and extend learning	3.3.1 Maximize the amount of time students spend reading new texts independently in Kinyarwanda lessons (<i>i.e., the amount of class time students spend with "eyes on the text in their hands", trying to decode a text they are seeing for the first time</i>); Use that time purposefully and effectively
		3.3.2 Maximize the amount of time students read at 1) school, but outside of Kinyarwanda lessons and 2) outside of school time
	3.4 Use questions for teaching and learning	3.4.1 Asks questions that require students to explain their reading strategies (how figured out how to read a word or the meaning of a word) or to develop students' literal and inferential comprehension of what they have heard (listening comprehension) or read

Standard	Competency	Reading competency
	3.5 Use a range of appropriate teaching/learning resources (TLRs)	3.5.1 Use appropriate reading instructional materials regularly and accurately, as intended, to create a rich, literate classroom environment
		3.5.2 Ensure that during school time and at home, students read texts that are at their appropriate levels of difficulty.
4. Plan and assess to improve learning and teaching	4.1 Plan for teaching and learning	4.1.1 Regularly plan reading lessons and related materials
	4.2 Assess student learning and give regular and practice feedback	4.2.1 Use daily, weekly and end of unit formative assessment activities to determine whether students are developing targeted reading skills and implement appropriate remediation activities to address learning gaps
		4.2.2 Use formal formative assessment activities and end of unit standardized assessments to measure individual students' progress with respect to end-of-term and end-of-year benchmarks; Record, interpret and share results with different stakeholders
	4.3 Use assessment information to improve teaching and learning	4.3.1 Based on results of the aforementioned assessments, implement classroom-based remediation activities for readers at risk (non-readers, those who do not meet expectations, those who partially meets expectations) and extension/consolidation activities for strong readers
		4.3.2 Based on results of above assessments, implement outside-of-school remediation activities for readers at risk (non-readers, those who do not meet expectations, those who partially meets expectations) and extension/consolidation activities for strong readers
	5. Create and sustain an inclusive, child-friendly learning environment	5.1 Ensure that all learners are safe, protected and able to learn in an inclusive environment
5.2 Manage learner behaviours to facilitate learning for all		5.2.1 Use active, engaging learning activities that keep students on task and arrange seating to allow all students to access reading learning resources easily and equitably (materials on board, on walls, on shelves, etc.).
Domain 3: Professional ethics, attitudes, and behaviors		
6. Engage in professional development	6.1 Be familiar and comply with professional requirements and ethics	6.1.1 Adopt new REB/MINEDUC reading instruction and assessment guidelines and policies in you teaching and assessment practices
	6.2 Reflect on teaching and engage in CPD	6.1.2 Participate in early grade reading professional development activities, including communities of practice; Self-assess reading instructional practices based on Reading CPD framework to identify areas of strength and areas in need of development
7. Support student learning at school and in the community	7.1 Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to improve student learning	7.1.1 Involve parents and other stakeholders in supporting students' reading development at school, at home and in communities
	7.2 Contribute to school learning environment	7.2.1 Contribute to school-wide and community activities to improve reading



PHOTO: Alexis Nshimiyimana for USAID Soma Umenye.

Children and their teacher in a classroom at GS Kabusunzu, a public school in Nyarugenge District in Kigali City.

School-Based Capacity Building

To help teachers to apply what they learned in training and address the specific challenges faced by their students, USAID Soma Umenye worked with REB to design a cycle of school-based support tied to the LEGRA assessment (see Section 2.4), which helped teachers develop and apply the competencies included in the teacher standards for early grade reading teachers. These competencies (as described in Exhibit 8) include understanding effective instructional strategies, teaching in a way that allows all learners to learn, and planning for assessment and remediation. With these competencies, Soma Umenye supported REB to develop school-based capacity-building activities that were focused on a common set of integrated strategies that teachers could use to ensure all children were learning. These activities included coaching, communities of practice, and self-study resources.

Coaching. Soma Umenye supported the head teacher (or dean of studies in schools with secondary students) as the coach of early grade teachers. Coaching activities are further described in Section 2.3.

Communities of practice. To develop the community of practice model, USAID Soma Umenye reviewed the available research on communities of practice, which is summarized in Exhibit 9.

Exhibit 9. Best Practices for Communities of Practice

Communities of practice work best if they:

- Are seen by teachers as responding to their specific, practical needs
- Allow teachers to share their experiences and challenges in a safe environment
- Allow teachers access to new information
- Keep the focus simple

USAID Soma Umenye envisioned monthly communities of practice as part of a cycle of support that would help PI-P3 Kinyarwanda teachers effectively use provided teaching and learning materials (including the teacher’s guide), prepare for and administer classroom assessments and the LEGRA assessment, and use assessment results to inform their instruction to help learners progress towards grade-level benchmarks. The creation of school-level communities of practice was aligned with REB’s Teacher Development and Management Policy, which calls for the implementation of school-, sector-, and district-based CPD programs. It also aligned with REB’s draft School-Based Mentorship Framework, which calls for teachers to use two hours a school time a week for professional development. To realize this vision, USAID Soma Umenye worked with REB to design materials to support early grade communities of practice. These included:

- training materials for head teachers and deans of study, who would lead the communities of practice (discussed in Section 2.3),
- facilitator guides for head teachers, deans of studies, SEIs, and DEOs describing how to establish, manage, and sustain a community of practice (distributed to head teachers and SEIs); these guides included session agendas, content, and delivery methodology as well as the teacher performance standards described above,
- videos covering relevant topics to be used at community of practice meetings to support discussion and learning (see Exhibit 12 below), and
- materials for documenting communities of practice held and the topics discussed.

In addition, USAID Soma Umenye developed resources to support sector-level communities of practice as well as district-level communities of practice.

Exhibit 10 lays out the integrated cycle of coaching, communities of practice, and LEGRA. With DEO and SEI support, the designated coach (head teacher or dean of studies) lead the implementation of the school-based CPD cycle. During Term 1, monthly communities of practice and coaching visits focused on discussing (1) how to use Soma Umenye-supported TLM as described in the teacher’s guide and using techniques (like “I do, we do, you do”) that teachers had learned in training, (2) the results of formative classroom assessment, and (3) common challenges that had arisen during coaching or were raised by teachers during the community of practice and how to address them. Community of practice leaders had available a set of videos to address a range of topics that might arise during the communities of practice (see Exhibit 12 below).

Support to Try New Practices

PI teacher Theoneste Rugamba (at GS Kanazi in Bugesera District) described the benefits of regular communities of practice as a way to share his experiences and challenges with his peers. He specifically remarked that the Kinyarwanda communities of practice have helped teachers in his school have more of an open mind when it comes to trying new things in the classroom or doing things differently.

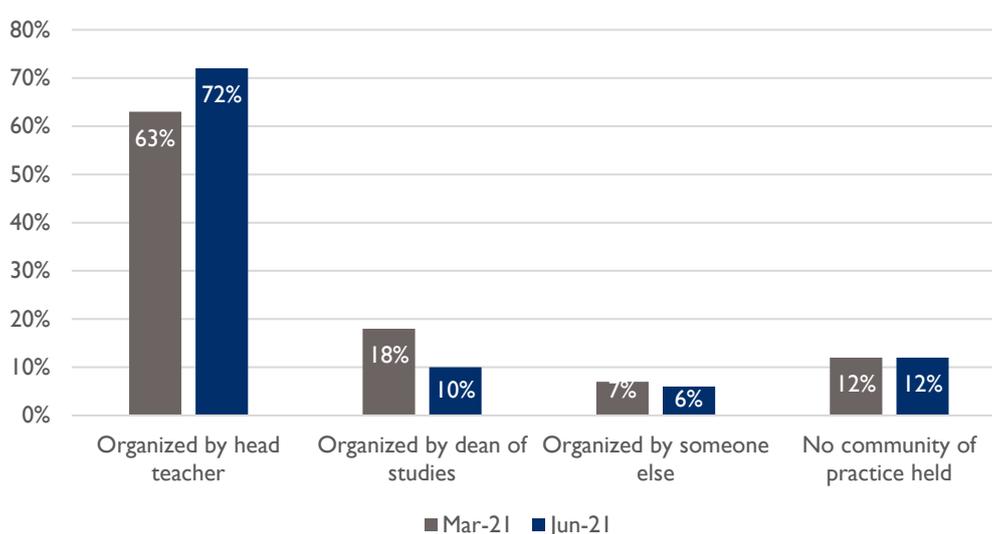
Exhibit 10. Termly schedule for communities of practice and coaching (tied to LEGRA cycle)

Activity	Term 1	Terms 2 and 3
Communities of practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach holds monthly communities of practice focused on fidelity to teacher’s guide, formative assessment, and teachers’ challenges. • Coach supports reflection on common challenges found through coaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach supports teachers to reflect on LEGRA results (alongside fidelity and teacher questions) and create remediation plans to address any identified problems. • Coach supports reflection on common challenges found through coaching.
Coaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head teacher or dean of studies coaches teachers by observing lessons, providing feedback on how to improve student engagement or fidelity to teacher’s guide, and answering questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach focuses on challenges identified through the LEGRA during lesson observations, providing feedback and answering questions.

Towards the end of each term, DEOs, SEIs, and head teachers prepared for the LEGRA process (described in Section 2.4), which included meetings to reflect on the term’s learning before and after the assessment. In addition, DEOs and SEIs were charged with ensuring the CPD cycle was taking place as planned (including coaching of teachers), which they could review through school reporting (done using Soma Umenye-provided tablets, as discussed in Section 2.6). As needed, Soma Umenye’s district advisors checked in with DEOs and SEIs to see how the cycle of professional development support was unfolding at the schools in their jurisdiction.

In the last year of the project (see Exhibit 11), according to USAID Soma Umenye’s monitoring data, the majority of head teachers reported that their school held a community of practice (63% organized by the head teacher in March and 72% organized by the head teacher in June). When head teachers said that they did not hold communities of practice, the most common reason given was lack of time (about a third of head teachers and deans of studies said they did not have time to hold one, and about a fifth of P1-P3 teachers said they did not have time to attend one). During COVID, when the GOR had in place restrictions on the number of people who could gather, Soma Umenye used the community of practice structure to share key materials and information (see below).

Exhibit 11. Percent of Schools Reporting Communities of Practice



Self-study resources. USAID Soma Umenye developed a range of resources that head teachers could use during communities of practice or that teachers could use on their own to review evidence-based teaching practices. As described in Exhibit 12, these videos covered instructional strategies, assessment practices, use of TLM during class, use of classroom libraries to check out books for children to use at home, approaches to coaching, and approaches to leading and participating in communities of practice (they also covered the LEGRA and KRC processes, see Section 2.4 for more detail about these activities). These videos were uploaded to the tablets given to head teachers (see Section 2.6) and also shared with head teachers through established WhatsApp groups.

Exhibit 12. Videos to support self-study and communities of practice

Video	Content	Primary Audience
Videos focused on instruction, assessment, and TLM		
Effective instructional strategies	Six videos that model effective instructional strategies for phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing.	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Engaging instructional strategies	Effective, low-resource strategies that teachers can use in lessons to engage more students. These strategies are drawn from the KRC and UDL pilots and include strategies such as wait time, precise praise, and small group work.	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Full model lesson	How to conduct a full lesson in 40 minutes using the teacher's guide	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Formative assessment	The purpose and importance of formative assessment; the difference between formal and informal formative assessment; steps for conducting formative assessment; how to interpret formative assessment data	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Decodable readers	The purpose and importance of decodable readers; how and when PI teachers should use the readers; differences and similarities between decodable readers and levelled readers in the classroom library; the role of parents and the community in the use of decodable readers	School-based coach and PI teachers

Video	Content	Primary Audience
Videos focused on use of classroom libraries		
Introduction to libraries	Guidance on how to set up a classroom library and the difference between a school and classroom library	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Managing a classroom library	Overview of classroom library rules (including book care rules) and how to leverage student volunteers to support the classroom library	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Classroom library registers	Guidance on how to set up and manage the book checkout process	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Reading activities	Modeling effective use of readers in the classroom library through paired, shared, and independent reading activities	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Role of school leaders in classroom libraries	Guidance on how to monitor classroom libraries	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Involving parents and the community	Roles that parents and the community can play with the classroom library	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Videos focused on coaching process		
The coaching process	Role of the coach; how to conduct key steps in the coaching process (from lesson observation to the coaching debrief meeting and record keeping)	School-based coach
Videos focused on communities of practice		
Delivering school-level CoPs	Introduction to the community of practice and coaching roadmap; tips for facilitating successful communities of practice; overview of Soma Umenye-provided materials to support the delivery of communities of practice	School-based coach
Delivering sector-level CoPs		SEI
Delivering district-level CoPs		DEO
Videos focused on LEGRA		
The LEGRA process	Overview of LEGRA, its importance, and how it fits into REB's cycle of comprehensive Assessment	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Administering LEGRA	Guidance for teachers on how to administer each of the LEGRA sub-tasks	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Running school, sector, and district inamas	Three videos provide an overview of the purpose of each inama ("meeting"), how the inamas fit into the LEGRA cycle, and guidance on how to facilitate each inama	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Pre-assessment LEGRA meeting	Overview of the purpose of pre-assessment meetings and guidance for head teachers on how to facilitate this meeting	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Post-assessment LEGRA meeting	Overview of the purpose of post-assessment meetings and guidance for head teachers on how to facilitate this meeting	School-based coach and PI-P3 teachers
Videos focused on Kinyarwanda Reading Camp		

Video	Content	Primary Audience
The KRC process	Guidance on the KRC methodology and implementation	Head teacher and PI-P3 teachers

By June 2021, Soma Umenye found that approximately 56% of teachers had viewed one or more of the training videos described above, which is a significant increase over the 32% who had done so in March 2021 and the 12% who had done so in March 2020. Based on monitoring data, we understand that many of these teachers had watched as the result of preparation for and delivery of the school-based orientation in February 2021 and April 2021 as well as preparation for LEGRA in March 2021 and June 2021. These are both community of practice activities delivered nationwide with communication from REB and NESAs (with Soma Umenye’s district advisors encouraging participation).

School-Based Orientation for New Teachers

In 2020 (during school closures), MINEDUC and REB recruited almost 18,000 new teachers to (1) address the nationwide teacher shortages and (2) fill the more than 22,000 new classrooms built during the pandemic. USAID Soma Umenye estimated that there were approximately 7,000 new teachers for lower primary. Approximately 30% of these teachers did not have the benefit of pre-service (or other) training, so it was critical to orient them to both early grade instruction and Soma Umenye’s instructional approaches.

In February 2021, less than a month after lower primary students returned to school, Soma Umenye staff conducted a rapid survey of 12 schools (in six districts across all five provinces) to understand how head teachers and teachers were supporting new teachers’ professional development. All schools reported that they had undertaken professional development activities, and 11 of 12 said that they had scheduled time during the school week and had engaged the head teacher or experienced teachers to conduct the professional development session.

To build on this good practice, REB and USAID Soma Umenye designed a five-week school-based orientation program for new PI-P3 Kinyarwanda teachers. The program, which ran from February to March, was designed to help build teacher skills in the face of restrictions on the number of people who could meet face to face. Each new teacher was paired with an experienced teacher in their school. As shown in Exhibit 13, during the first week, new teachers met with more experienced (or “lead”) teachers for an orientation on evidence-based strategies to teach reading. The lead teachers were selected by head teachers and SEIs (in partnership with Soma Umenye district advisors). In the next four weeks, the new and lead teachers observed each other’s lessons, lead teachers gave feedback to new teachers, and lead teachers provided the opportunity for the new teacher to reflect on what s/he was seeing and experiencing.

Exhibit 13. Overview of School-Based Teacher Orientation

Phase I / Week 1: Orientation	
 Goal and Overview	<p>To provide an opportunity for new teachers to focus on five key skills that they need to master (particularly focused on ensuring successful delivery of Term I content):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5 core components of literacy (phonics, phonological awareness, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension) plus writing

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Gradual release of responsibility: “I do, we do, you do” 3. Core instructional materials (textbook and teacher’s guide) 4. Supplementary instructional materials (decodable and supplementary readers) 5. Weekly lesson structure for PI-P3 in the teacher’s guide
 Suggested Time	Five meetings or “ structured coaching sessions ” (1 hour each; each session will cover one of the topics above)
 Resources	Overview document that guides lead teachers and new teachers through the five sessions, signposting to specific pages in existing materials (e.g.: teacher’s guide, previous training guides) and supported by training videos . Materials disseminated through field team.
Phase 2 / Weeks 2-5: Practice, Observation, Reflection	
 Goal and Overview	To provide an opportunity for new teachers to observe an experienced teacher in the classroom and learn from that teacher. Additionally, to provide an opportunity for new teachers to receive ongoing feedback and support from lead teachers as they navigate Term 1 lessons and put into practice the content from Week 1 of the program.
 Suggested Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New teachers will observe lead teachers (two Kinyarwanda lessons per week) • Lead teachers will observe new teachers (at least one Kinyarwanda lesson per week) • Lead teachers will organize discussion and reflection sessions with new teachers to debrief on observations and support each other (one session per week; one hour)
 Resources	Classroom observation form (for both new teachers and lead teachers) and prompts for reflection sessions .

To reinforce the proposed school-based orientation activities, Soma Umenye developed a set of messages (distributed via WhatsApp and email) to remind participants (DEOs, SEIs, head teachers, lead teachers, and new teachers) of their role in the orientation. Participants reported that the reminders were helpful.

Based on a monitoring sample of 150 randomly selected schools across all 30 districts (five per district), Soma Umenye found that most schools (92%) had held CPD sessions for any new PI-P3 teachers at their school during the weekday during breaks or other free time. While at the beginning of the program, head teachers reported that lack of trained teachers was the biggest implementation challenge they faced, this challenge was largely overcome by SEIs who identified experienced teachers from nearby schools to support schools without experienced teachers. By the end of the program, 71% of head teachers saw lack of sufficient time as the biggest challenge facing implementation.

Of respondents (DEOs, SEIs, head teachers, lead teachers, and new teachers), 92% reported that they felt the model had been successful. Among SEIs, this percentage rose to 95%, with many saying they considered the school-based orientation to be the most successful CPD approach they had seen. Lead teachers reported that they appreciated the flexibility built into the program (as well as the opportunity to reflect on their own practice and strengthen their skills), and 71% of new teacher respondents said that — as a result of the program —

they felt confident in supporting students in their role as teachers (13% reported that they felt “very confident”).

USAID Soma Umenye reflected on the program’s outcomes with REB (who found the role of the lead teacher to be a promising CPD approach) and as a result conducted the program again in the second term to continue to build the capacity of new Kinyarwanda teachers (including an additional 900 teachers hired for Term 2).



PHOTO: Elisabeth Turner for USAID Soma Umenye.

New teachers participate in a community of practice during school-based orientation.

Support to Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs)

To ensure that new teachers studying for their certification learn evidence-based approaches to teaching reading, USAID Soma Umenye strengthened TTC education through revised curriculum, new TLM, and a short-course for teacher candidates.

Over five years, Soma Umenye supported REB’s gradual revision of the TTC curriculum for lower primary (Early Childhood and Lower Primary Education), which was rolled out in phases. As part of this work, Soma Umenye also worked with REB to develop a tutor’s guide and textbook for TTC students. The TTC TLMs were aligned with the revised PI-P3 Kinyarwanda instructional materials (teacher’s guide, read aloud storybooks, and student textbooks). In addition, the TLMs were designed to incorporate the early grade reading benchmarks, classroom library management guide, and other early grade reading best practices in order to ensure that the student teachers were effectively prepared to teach Kinyarwanda in early grades once they graduate.

In addition, Soma Umenye helped develop a six-day TTC tutor training module based on the recently developed TTC tutor guide and student book, as well as existing in-service training materials. The training was designed to prepare tutors to effectively teach the content of the new curriculum using the new TLM. Exhibit I4 outlines its content.

Exhibit I4. Outline of the TTC Tutor Training Guide

Day I

- Understanding the Kinyarwanda lower primary curriculum

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinyarwanda instructional materials in lower primary • Management of classroom libraries • Crosscutting issues in Kinyarwanda teaching and learning materials
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use and structure of TTC tutor guide and student textbook (Kinyarwanda teaching methodology and practices) • Principles and theories of teaching and learning Kinyarwanda as the mother tongue • Introduction to evidence-based reading instruction (five core components of reading instruction) • Introduction to reading and writing instruction • How to conduct a micro-teaching session • Developing a detailed Kinyarwanda lesson plan • Phonological awareness
Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonological awareness: Microteaching • Phonics (including teaching reading, writing vowels, teaching and writing consonants, and teaching consonant blends) • Writing: Microteaching
Day 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocabulary: Microteaching • Reading fluency: Microteaching • Reading comprehension: Microteaching
Day 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching specific elements of the PI-P3 curriculum, including dictation, grammar, funny stories, poems, tongue twisters, riddles, proverbs, songs, drama, and debate
Day 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation (from Day 5) of teaching specific elements of the PI-P3 curriculum, including: different types of text, text summary, and text composition (story writing) • Lesson observation and teaching Kinyarwanda role play • Teaching Kinyarwanda in practice schools • Student teacher internship in primary schools

Achievement

USAID Soma Umenye improved the ability of Rwanda’s lower primary teachers to build the sub-skills of reading. While the activity collaborated with REB to develop a number of enduring resources — from the training manual to the self study resources to the pre-service TLM to the experienced education sector trainers — it also helped teachers improve their practice. According to Soma Umenye’s monitoring data, approximately 20% of teachers were using evidence-based instruction (following the approved teacher’s guide and using strategies like “I do, we do, you do”). By the last year of the activity, this percentage was up to 78% of teacher who were demonstrating these essential skills.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND REMEDIATION ACTIONS

Many schools lacked teachers qualified to be lead teachers in the school-based orientation. In multiple instances for the school-based orientation, USAID Soma Umenye received feedback that schools did not have teachers that were seen to be qualified to serve as lead teachers. To address this concern, Soma Umenye encouraged head teachers and SEIs to look to neighboring schools to identify an experienced teacher able to take on the role. As a result,

many SEIs were able to mobilize support from nearby schools, and some schools also partnered with nearby TTCs to engage the TTC as the lead teacher.

Negative impact on classroom time of school-based orientation. In some instances, Soma Umenye received reports that teachers had left their classrooms in order to participate in school-based orientation. This challenge arises because there is not currently scheduled time in the school day for CPD (despite REB's direction to use time for CPD). Upon hearing this, Soma Umenye staff communicated that classes should continue, but teachers could use weekend communities of practice with micro-teaching activities or weekend remediation lessons to conduct school-based orientation activities. Soma Umenye also engaged SEIs, who worked with schools to find alternative times for professional development (that did not interrupt class time).

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Use TTC expertise in in-service training. The most cost-effective means of developing a new cohort of early grade reading teachers is strong TTC preparation (using the resources provided by USAID Soma Umenye) paired with expert support at the beginning of a teacher's career. TTCs are an untapped resource for in-service training and coaching support of newly qualified and redeployed teachers as they build their skills as early grade reading teachers. REB and development partners should explore ways to use TTCs for short-term holiday in-service training for newly qualified or redeployed teachers.

Build on Soma Umenye's school-based orientation model as a CPD model. USAID Soma Umenye found that more than 90% of schools implemented the school-based orientation model to help build new teachers' skills. The model has the advantage of supporting teachers in their own classrooms as they practice new skills. Soma Umenye recommends that REB and development partners continued to use this model if REB can ensure that new teachers have access to experienced lead teachers and that schools are able to prioritize CPD time (alongside planned learning time). This model can also be used to effectively mentor newly qualified teachers after they graduate from TTCs and are placed in schools or to mentor redeployed teachers.

Ensure school calendar dedicates time for CPD. As noted above, the most common reason given for not holding or attending communities of practice was time. While REB has suggested that schools provide time for CPD in the school calendar (and has recently released guidance to that effect), they have not made it mandatory or indicated where it should fall in the school calendar. Without REB making clear when and how time should be spent (for example, how should CPD for different subjects be allocated), this time will be made only when school leaders sees the benefit. We recommend that REB work with development partners to consider strategies to measure the use of CPD time to ensure that school leaders and teachers are taking advantage of opportunities to improve their practice.

Ensure teachers remain teaching specific grades and subjects long enough to develop expertise. Teaching in the early grades requires specific skills and instructional expertise. However, USAID Soma Umenye's experience was that each year a portion of early grade Kinyarwanda teachers who were trained to implement REB's early grade reading approach were transferred out of early grades (or out of teaching Kinyarwanda) and a new set of teachers was transferred in to replace them. In 2021 (in part due to circumstances generated by the pandemic), more than 50% of early grade Kinyarwanda teachers were either newly

appointed or redeployed from other grades. This turnover represents a significant loss of early grade Kinyarwanda expertise built through participation in training, coaching, and communities of practice. Rebuilding this expertise (particularly when the numbers are large) is challenging for Rwanda’s CPD system, and likely will take several years, to the detriment of students. To maximize the investments made in teacher capacity, REB should work with development partners to examine teacher deployment approaches that would allow it to promote the retention of teaching expertise among early grade Kinyarwanda teachers.

2.3 PROMOTING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

SUMMARY OF CORE ACTIVITIES

School leadership is critical to improved delivery of early grade reading instruction in the classroom. At the start of USAID Soma Umenye, the government of Rwanda had existing school leader standards, covering the leading of learning and the leading of instructional activities. As a result, the activity implemented interventions in alignment with these standards. Soma Umenye trained school leaders — including head teachers, their deans of studies (in schools with secondary students), SEIs, and DEOs — in how to apply Rwanda’s standards to improve early grade reading instruction.

Key Achievements

- Developed capacity building resources in support of school leadership, coaching, leading communities of practice, and school-based assessment aligned with Rwanda’s school leadership standards
- Trained more than 4,000 education leaders (including head teachers, deans of studies, DEOs, and SEIs)
- Supported a 35 percentage point increase in the number of head teachers undertaking activities in support of early grade reading

Face-to-face training. To help school leaders focus on key practices to improve early grade reading, Soma Umenye worked with REB to develop three modules of training. Exhibit 15 describes their content. They included summarized content from the teacher training along with coach capacity building materials to help school leaders develop coaching skills. They also covered leading communities of practice (see Section 2.3), administering the LEGRA assessment (see Section 2.4), and supporting remediation to address learning gaps identified through formative assessment.

Exhibit 15. School Leader Training

Module 1

- General principles of school leadership
- Evidence-based approach to early grade reading
- How to coach early grade teachers of reading

Module 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General principles of school leadership • Setting up communities of practice at the school and sector levels, • The five professional standards for effective school leadership in Rwanda • School improvement planning for early grade reading and writing instruction • Working with the school community for improved reading and writing instruction • How to lead communities of practice for early grade reading teachers • Coaching in practice
Module 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General principles of school leadership • Local early grade reading assessment (what is it, how it is administered, what role do school leaders play in it) as part of comprehensive assessment • How to oversee student assessment and use assessment data

To help head teachers in building their familiarity with this content, Soma Umenye supported the developed of a National Reading Training Team for school leaders to serve as trainers. The members of this team were drawn from REB staff, DDEs, DEOs, SEIs, and MINEDUC inspectors of Kinyarwanda. Soma Umenye’s training-of-trainer activities built the capacity of these key actors of the education system to understand and promote evidence-based approaches to early grade reading instruction. Soma Umenye worked with the National Reading Training Team for school leaders to provide 10 days of training to school leaders.

Putting School Leadership into Practice

Head Teacher Theogene Ndayisaba (GS Ruhuha, Bugesera District) said that the school leadership training supported him to develop a school improvement plan (with literacy as a key focus), manage and facilitate communities of practice for teachers in lower primary (focused on Kinyarwanda instruction), and provide effective coaching. In describing a coaching session with one of his teachers, he noted that he met with the teacher, conducted a lesson observation, and then held a post-observation meeting to provide feedback. During that post-observation meeting, he thanked the teacher for what she had done well and together they brainstormed areas for improvement. During a subsequent visit to this teacher’s classroom, he noted that the teacher was putting into practice her areas for growth and was making good improvement.

Coaching. With REB, USAID Soma Umenye decided to work with the head teacher (or dean of studies in schools with secondary students) as the coach of early grade teachers. To guide the school-based coach, Soma Umenye collaborated with REB to develop a coaching protocol and tools.

- *Protocol.* The coaching protocol indicated that the designated coach (head teacher or dean of studies) should observe the classroom of each P1-P3 teacher once a month and provide feedback. The coach should only provide feedback on one instructional strategy at a time and should be sure to provide both positive and constructive feedback. (In the design of the protocol, Soma Umenye collaborated with FCDO’s Building Learning Foundations project, which was working with coaches in other subjects to ensure a unified model for Rwanda.)

- **Tools.** Working with REB, Soma Umenye also helped develop tools that designated coaches would use to document each visit. Using the tools, the coaches record six things: (1) the fluency rate of three to five randomly selected students, (2) key strengths of the class observed, (3) key areas in which the teacher could do better (a maximum of three), (4) three specific suggestions for the teacher to improve before the next visit, (5) the date of visit, and (6) the signature of the coach. The form was then be countersigned by the teacher to demonstrate that s/he understood the feedback and will try to act accordingly. Initially, these forms were paper based, but were later available in digital forms for use on tablets.

“During constructive feedback meetings, I first give room to the teacher to share how the lesson went and what he/she would do differently, if given a chance to re-teach the lesson. Then I go on to share what I have seen the teacher doing well followed by one or two areas for improvement. I always end with something that went well. This is contrary to what I was doing in the past as I only focused on all that went wrong in the lesson and blamed the teacher.”

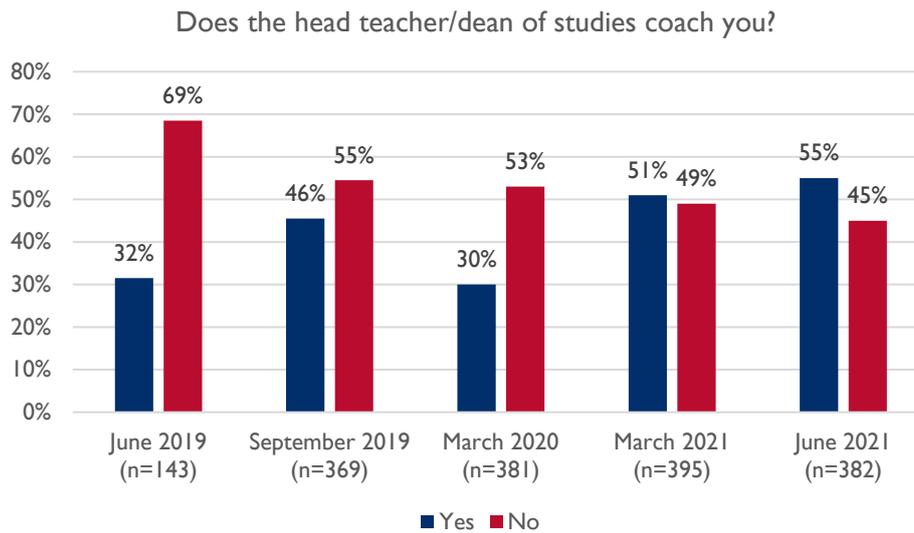
— DEOGRATIAS TUYISINGIZE,
HEAD TEACHER OF GS NKANGA

USAID Soma Umenye initially piloted these tools, revised them based on the feedback received, and rolled them out to supported schools. Head teachers and deans of studies were trained to use the protocol and tools as part of the school leader training (see Exhibit 14 above). To provide support to the school-based coach, Soma Umenye trained SEIs to act as supercoaches to support school-based coaches to take on the coaching role.

To make it easier to record and preserve coaching records (and also to make them visible to SEIs and DEOs, among other functions), Soma Umenye distributed tablets to each head teacher that they could use to share resources (like videos) with communities of practice and to record the findings from their coaching visits. See Section 2.6 for additional information.

Over the course of the project, USAID Soma Umenye saw a steady increase in the frequency of school-based coaching, according to teachers (shown in Exhibit 16) interviewed in project monitoring. While coaching was less infrequent in 2019 (only a third to a half of school-based coaches were coaching teachers), it broke 50% in 2021, which saw the majority of teachers reporting that their school-based coaches were coaching them. There are likely multiple explanations for this change. By 2021, Soma Umenye had interacted with head teachers for several years, building their understanding of how REB’s school leadership standards applied to supporting early grade reading. In addition, 2020 brought additional focus on students learning due to (1) the 2020 school closures, which interrupted learning and (2) the LEGRA, which gave head teachers an understanding of how their lower primary students were performing, and (3) the introduction of structured school-based orientation in February 2021 (repeated in April 2021) that required coaching as part of its design. In this context, Soma Umenye’s coaching and community of practice resources may have caught more head teachers’ attention.

Exhibit 16. Participation in school-based coaching according to teachers



In 2021, the teachers who were coached reported 95-96% satisfaction with the coaching experience and 94-98% reported that the coach provided the teacher with feedback after observing their lesson.

Achievement

While the GOR recognizes head teachers as the instructional leaders of the schools (in their school leader standards), head teachers carry many responsibilities that can make it difficult for them to fully engage as instructional leaders. Through repeated engagement (including face to face training in early grade reading, school leadership, coaching, and LEGRA), Soma Umenye built head teachers' ability to carry out key functions (including the capacity of other education leaders such as deans of studies, SEIs, and DEOs). In 2019, Soma Umenye found only 4% of head teachers were carrying out key activities supporting early grade reading, such as developing a school improvement plan, leading teacher professional development (including coaching and communities of practice), tracking student progress towards grade-level standards, and sharing reading assessment results with the community. By 2021, this figure had increased 35 percentage points to 39%. While there is still room for improvement, USAID Soma Umenye helped school leaders better understand how they can support all children to learn to read.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Allow head teachers to focus on instructional leadership. As is common, head teachers in Rwanda have a wide range of responsibilities beyond instructional leadership, and these duties frequently prevent them from spending sufficient time leading the teaching and learning process within their schools. (2021 was an extreme example of this, with head teachers overseeing COVID restrictions while also overseeing new classroom construction, among other issues.) REB and the Ministry of Local Government should consider the benefits that could be gained by ensuring that head teachers spend more of their time supporting teachers to improve classroom instruction and ensuring that everyone in school is focused on ensuring the best possible learning outcomes.

Engage lead teachers to provide coaching when schedule allows. USAID Soma Umenye’s engagement of lead teachers to orient and coach new teachers in the school-based orientation suggests lead teachers may be an effective resource to support school-based coaching. REB and development partners should consider (1) encouraging head teachers to build lead teacher capacity to coach and (2) re-arranging their schedules so they are able to observe the classrooms of their peers to provide coaching and feedback.

2.4 STRENGTHENING COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

SUMMARY OF CORE ACTIVITIES

USAID Soma Umenye collaborated with REB to create a unified assessment and accountability framework in Rwanda. To establish the assessment framework, Soma Umenye supported REB to develop student performance standards, specifically performance categories for early grade reading keyed to specific performance benchmarks. To begin an accountability framework, Soma Umenye helped REB create tools to gather regular data on student performance: the local early grade reading assessment, or LEGRA, and a revised national assessment (the Learning Achievement in Rwanda Schools or LARS). Soma Umenye also helped REB design a remediation program to address any achievement gaps uncovered by its assessment tools.

Key Achievements

- Developed student performance standards for reading for each grade level using the modified Angoff method
- Built teacher capacity to use assessment guide to monitor student progress
- Supported REB to institute the LEGRA administered at the end of each term
- Supported a 32 percentage point increase in the proportion of school leaders sharing assessment results with communities.
- Piloted the Kinyarwanda Reading Camp (KRC) to provide remediation to students who needed it
- Collaborated with REB to conduct the early grade reading assessment (EGRA) baseline
- Integrated elements of the EGRA into Rwanda’s LARS assessment
- Equated the EGRA, LARS, and LEGRA instruments

Student Performance Standards

Prior to USAID Soma Umenye, MINEDUC had P1-P3 grade-level student performance standards (for oral reading fluency and reading comprehension), but they were not approved by REB and had not been widely shared with education stakeholders. The standards were also a bit lower than is typical for East African languages: P1 students were expected to read at least one correct word per minute, P2 students were expected to read at least 20 correct words per minute, and P3 students were expected to read at least 33 correct words per minute. Because these standards were not widely shared among education stakeholders, education officials, head teachers, teachers, and communities did not have a common understanding of what students could achieve as readers in the lower primary grades.

To address this issue, in 2018, USAID Soma Umenye deployed a modified Angoff approach to revise existing student performance standards. The process had three phases. In the first phase, MINEDUC learning assessment specialists came together to discuss how many performance categories Rwanda should have. The conclusions was five: (1) below categorization (2) does not meet expectations, (3) partially meets expectations, (4) meets grade-level expectations, and (5) exceeds grade-level expectations.

In the second phase, reading curriculum specialists defined what performance looked like for each performance phase category from the first to third grade. In this phase, they elaborated performance descriptors for each of the four categories for each grade level (see Exhibit 17).

Exhibit 17. General Performance Descriptors for Reading in Early Primary

Does not meet expectations	Partially meets expectations	Meets grade-level expectations	Exceeds grade-level expectations
<p>Pupils are unable to identify most sounds in words or to consistently connect sounds to letters. As a result, they make many errors reading the simplest grade-level texts, so many that they do not understand most of what they are reading and can only rarely figure out the meaning of new words. They do not like to read.</p>	<p>Pupils read grade-level texts very slowly – usually syllable by syllable – hesitantly, and with limited confidence, particularly when faced with longer texts. They make some errors when reading familiar words or simple texts, often skipping over words entirely. They rarely go back to self-correct. As a result, they are able to answer some basic literal comprehension questions or figure out the meaning of some new words.</p>	<p>Pupils read most grade-level texts accurately. They usually self-correct when they make a mistake and are able to figure out the meaning of most new words by using simple clues in the text or illustrations. They are able to answer most literal comprehension questions and demonstrate confidence in their reading abilities.</p>	<p>Pupils read grade-level texts easily and fluently, respecting tones and syllable duration. They are able to figure out the meaning of all new grade-level words and answer all literal and simple inferential comprehension questions, including making accurate and logical predictions and making personal connections between the text and their own lives. They like to read and have confidence in their reading abilities.</p>

In the final phase, master teachers and curriculum specialists established benchmarks for oral reading fluency by relying on their understanding of student performance as well as data they collected from students. To set the benchmarks, teachers learned how to collect oral reading fluency data and spent a half day collecting this data from students in a nearby school. Next, they met to discuss how borderline pupils would perform; that is, how would a student that met expectations but was right at the border with partially meeting expectations perform (what would they be able to do). After setting initial cut scores (separating the performance categories), teachers went back to their classrooms to collect additional data to test their initial decisions. Then USAID Soma Umenye brought teachers back to revisit their initial cut scores and revise them if needed.

Throughout this process, teachers identified the scores that differentiated each of the five performance categories described above. As a result of this exercise, the grade-level expectation in oral reading fluency for P3 was moved from 33 correct words per minute to 41 correct words per minute, which raises the bar for both Rwandan students and teachers and also aligns Rwanda with regional benchmarks. The new benchmarks were later validated by REB and MINEDUC.

The benchmarks and cut scores developed permit teachers or MINEDUC/REB staff to place pupils in one of the five performance categories (see Exhibit 17 above), or below them, to identify whether they will need help to meet grade-level expectations. Exhibit 18 contains approved national fluency benchmarks, P1 to P3, measured in correct words read per minute (CWPM).

Exhibit 18. Approved Oral Reading Fluency Benchmarks, P1 to P3 (End of Year)

	Below Categorization	Does not meet expectations	Partially meets expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds expectations	Benchmarks
P1	0 CWPM	1 to 6 CWPM	7 to 9 CWPM	10 to 20 CWPM	21+ CWPM	10 CWPM
P2	0 CWPM	1 to 9 CWPM	10 to 24 CWPM	25 to 35 CWPM	36+ CWPM	25 CWPM
P3	0 CWPM	1 to 17 CWPM	18 to 39 CWPM	40 to 50 CWPM	51+ CWPM	40 CWPM

Exhibit 19 contains approved national reading comprehension benchmarks for P1, P2 and P3, measured in percent of questions correctly answered.

Exhibit 19. Approved Reading Comprehension Benchmarks, P1 to P3 (End of Year)

	Below categorization	Does not meet expectations	Partially meets expectations	Meets expectations	Exceed expectations	Benchmarks
P1	0 questions answered correctly	1 question answered correctly	2 questions answered correctly	3 questions correctly answered	4 or 5 questions correctly answered	60%
P2	0 questions answered correctly	1 question answered correctly	2 questions answered correctly	3 questions correctly answered	4 or 5 questions correctly answered	60%
P3	0 questions answered correctly	1 or 2 questions answered correctly	3 questions answered correctly	4 questions correctly answered	5 questions correctly answered	80%

Soma Umenye supported REB to communicate these student performance benchmarks to education stakeholders (education officials, head teachers, teachers, and parents) in multiple ways (as described below).

Classroom Assessment

To accompany the grade-level TLM (see Section 2.1), Soma Umenye worked with REB to design an assessment guide for teachers. The guide laid out the formative assessment cycle (Exhibit 20) and laid out a series of steps for teacher to follow (from planning to administering the assessment to creating and implementing an action plan based on the results). The guide described the competencies for each grade (P1-P3) of the Kinyarwanda syllabus so teachers could compare their students progress against the grade-level curricular standards. It also included simple templates that teachers could use to review and analyze assessment results as they put together their action plan to address any performance gaps.

Exhibit 20. Formative Assessment Cycle

Formative Assessment	Possible Follow-up Actions
Daily assessment: Small-group activity at end of class with teacher circulating and listening to identify struggling readers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole-class remedial activities (e.g., re-teach lesson) • Move struggling readers to front of class

Formative Assessment	Possible Follow-up Actions
End-of-week assessment: Whole-group task that measures key skills while teacher circulates to identify struggling readers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seat strong readers next to struggling readers and have them read together each day • Focus on struggling readers in routine formative assessment to monitor progress
End-of-unit assessment: Whole-group task that measures key skills while teacher circulates to identify struggling readers	

After working with REB to draft the assessment guide, Soma Umenye piloted it, considered the feedback with REB, and revised the guide. The guide was printed and distributed as part of the teacher’s guides and use of the guide was integrated into teacher training (discussed under Section 2.2 above).

Local Early Grade Reading Assessment (LEGRA)

In 2019, the GOR adopted a cabinet resolution to establish a system of comprehensive assessment in primary, secondary, teacher training colleges, and technical and vocational schools. The goal of comprehensive assessment is to provide a harmonized accountability framework for schools, sectors, and districts to produce a picture of student learning achievement as compared to the grade-level performance standards. Comprehensive assessment also aims to enable and inform prompt school-based and policy decisions to improve learning outcomes. In support of this resolution, Soma Umenye worked with the National Examination and School Inspection Authority (NESA) to develop the LEGRA as the comprehensive assessment of Kinyarwanda reading in the early grades. (See Annex E for the additional information.)

LEGRA is a quick and relatively easy assessment to administer that enables teachers and school leaders to collect data on every student’s reading performance at the end of each term. The LEGRA is designed to feed into school, sector, and district improvement processes focused on improving student outcomes. As a process, the LEGRA consists of a pre-assessment meeting, the assessment itself, a post-assessment meeting reflecting on the assessment and planning for improvement, and a school-community *inama* (or “meeting”).

Exhibit 21. Key Events in the LEGRA Process

Local Early Grade Reading Assessment	Pre -Assessment	Administer & Mark	Post -Assessment	Community meetings
 End of Terms 1 and 2  Every P1 -P3 student  4 sub-tests; decoding, dictation, fluency, and reading comprehension	Teachers and head teachers meet to reflect on benchmarks and predict the reading performance of students.	Teachers administer LEGRA for every student and record results on a tablet the day of the assessment.	Within two days of the test, teachers and head teachers meet to reflect on results and develop plans to use the data to improve teaching and student performance.	At the school, sector, and district level, each school re-introduces the benchmarks, shares LEGRA results with the community, and presents remedial plans.

As an assessment, the LEGRA measures the extent to which students are progressing towards and meeting the grade-level student benchmarks approved by REB (see Section

2.6). For use in the LEGRA, USAID Soma Umenye worked with REB to create term-level benchmarks that align with the year-end benchmarks detailed in Exhibits 18 and 19 above and are used to categorize students. The LEGRA assessment includes four sub-tests (see Exhibit 22), which are largely conducted using pen and paper (to enable a teacher to assess multiple students at once). However, the teacher assesses oral reading fluency and reading comprehension with one student at a time. Student scores on the four sub-tasks are aggregated to create a single composite score, which falls into one of REB’s four performance categories for early grade readers: non-reader (below categorization), does not meet expectations, partially meets expectations, or meet expectations (see above for a description of the standards).

Exhibit 22. Sub-Tasks in LEGRA Assessment Each Term

	1	2	3	4
Sub-tasks	Decoding	Dictation	Oral Reading Fluency*	Reading Comprehension*

*Note the PI students do not take the oral reading fluency and reading comprehension subtests in Term 1.

The LEGRA takes place three times a year.

- *Term 1.* The end-of-Term 1 assessment data is used to
 - build teacher and community understanding of what students can achieve through effective instruction (i.e., the term benchmarks),
 - identify successful learners whose efforts can be celebrated,
 - identify children who need remedial support either through in-class or out-of-class remediation, and
 - inform the school improvement plan, which will deploy tools like school-based coaching and communities of practice.
- *Term 2.* The end-of-Term 2 assessment data is used to
 - identify children who need remedial support,
 - inform in-class remedial actions during Term 3, and
 - provide focus for Term 3 coaching sessions.
- *Term 3.* The end-of-Term 3 assessment data is used to reflect on the success of the remedial activities taken to improve the percentage of learners who are meeting the benchmark or consider taking additional actions if needed.

Government-Driven Reform

From the beginning of LEGRA development, USAID Soma Umenye worked closely with NESAs to design the assessment process, which directly met NESAs’ need for comprehensive assessment tools. NESAs were actively involved throughout the process of administering LEGRA in communicating with schools about what it expected regarding their participation. Soma Umenye had originally only planned support for LEGRA at Terms 1 and 2, but NESAs determined that it also wanted a Term 3 LEGRA to ensure schools could understand year-end achievement. As a result, NESAs took the initiative to design Term 3 tools (building on what it had learned in its work with Soma Umenye) and organize their administration in schools. Because LEGRA directly met government needs, its development and roll out was largely government driven, culminating in NESAs taking ownership for Term 3 administration in the first year of national roll out.

Pilot. In Years 3 and 4, Soma Umenye conducted a pre-pilot of the LEGRA instruments in 10 schools and then piloted the LEGRA process in five districts with 175,000 students and

2,000 teachers. Working with REB, Soma Umenye developed training for teachers, head teachers, and SEIs in how to conduct each step of the LEGRA process, including administering the assessment and uploading results using a tablet. Both the pre-pilot and pilot led to adjustments in the LEGRA process, in particular to simplify the process for students and provide job aids for teachers to manage the assessment effectively.



PHOTO: Alain Patrick Mwirerwa for USAID Soma Umenye.

A teacher administers a one-on-one test as part of the LEGRA pilot in September 2019.

National roll-out. In 2021, USAID Soma Umenye worked with REB to roll out LEGRA nationwide (the planned roll-out in 2020 was canceled due to the public health context). The 2021 school year, following nine months of school closures, brought a number of challenges, including a large number of new teachers and a limit on the number of people who could meet at one time. This limit required a lengthened cascade training in which DEOs trained SEIs who trained head teachers, who in turn trained teachers. To support the quality of the training cascade, Soma Umenye created videos to be used in training (see Exhibit 12 above). In addition, Kigali schools remained closed until February 2021 (a month into the school year) due to a high incidence of COVID cases. As a result, P2-P3 students from these schools took the LEGRA a month later than their peers. To facilitate the upload of the assessment data, Soma Umenye distributed tablets to head teachers and provided training in how to upload the LEGRA data into the forms on the tablet (see Section 2.6).

Exhibits 23-28 show the progress of LEGRA scores across the 2021 school year. In each exhibit, we present the percentage of students falling into each performance category (per the term-specific benchmarks) for each grade for first oral reading fluency and then reading comprehension. While Term 1 and Term 2 data are relatively complete, Term 3 data represents only a portion of LEGRA data (as uploads were ongoing at the time of report writing). P1 students are not tested for oral reading fluency and reading comprehension until Term 2.

Exhibit 23. PI ORF LEGRA Score Across 2021 School Year¹

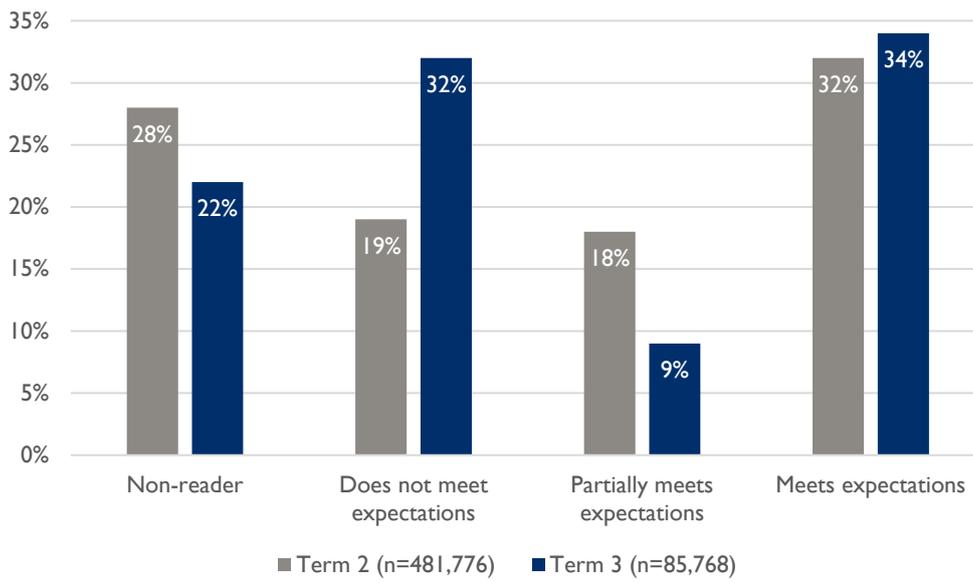
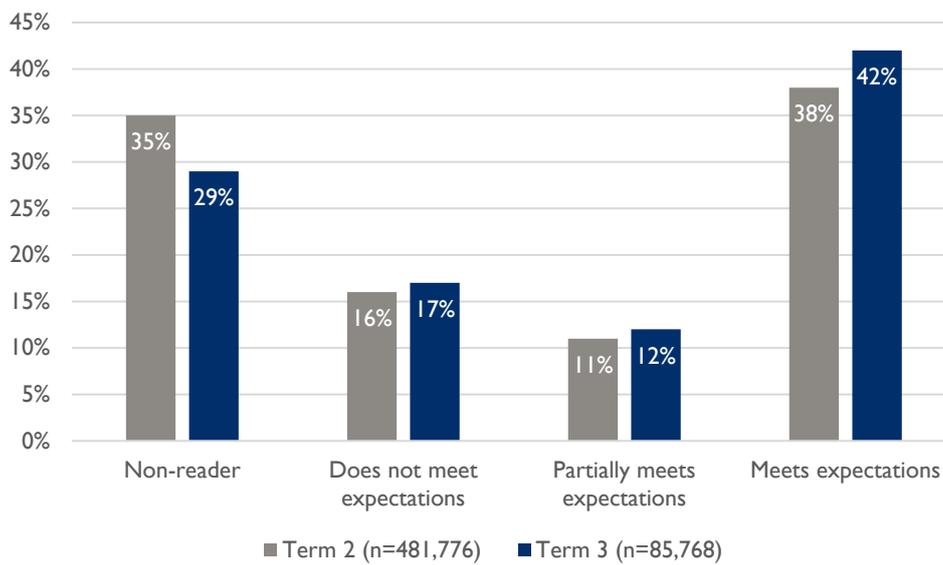


Exhibit 24. PI Reading Comprehension LEGRA Score Across 2021 School Year



¹ Note that these results are presented on the LEGRA scale (not the EGRA-equated scale) and are most useful for understanding trends across the school year. See below for a discussion of equating.

Exhibit 25. P2 ORF LEGRA Score Across 2021 School Year

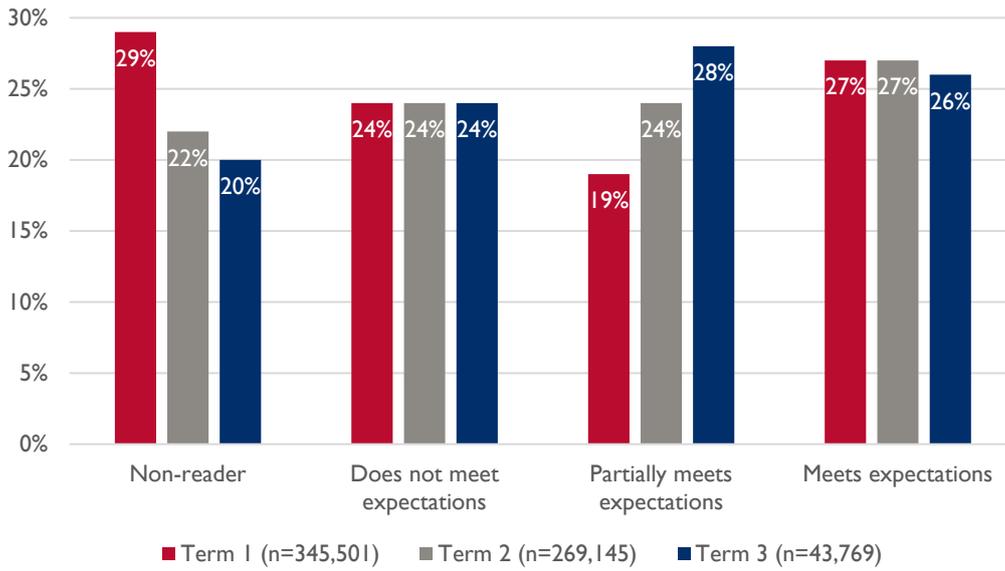


Exhibit 26. P2 Reading Comprehension LEGRA Score Across 2021 School Year

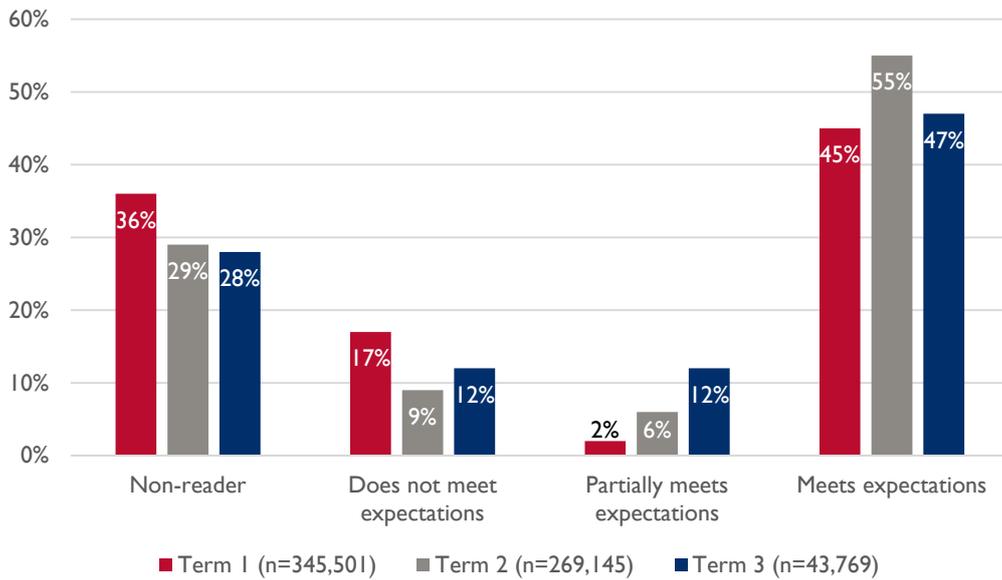


Exhibit 27. P3 ORF LEGRA Score Across 2021 School Year

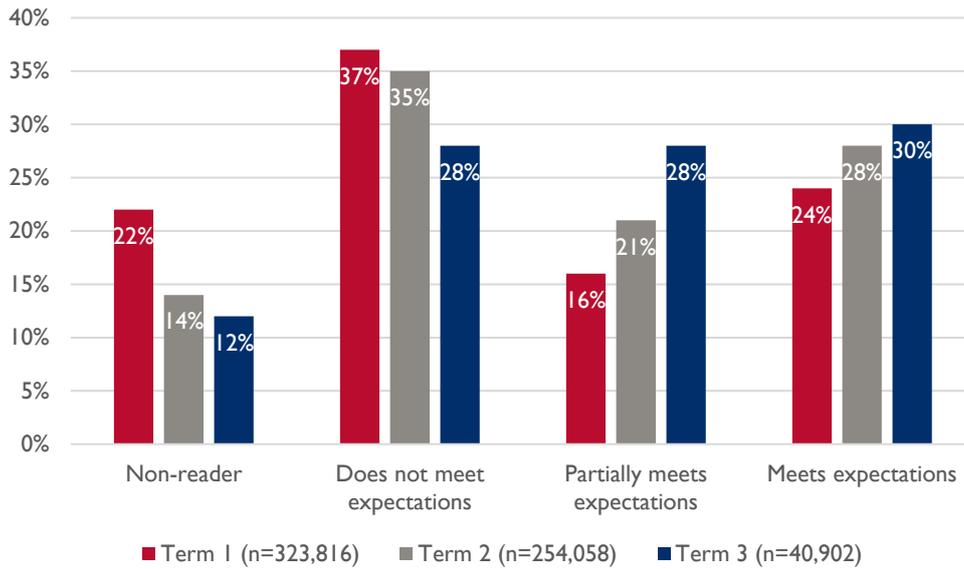
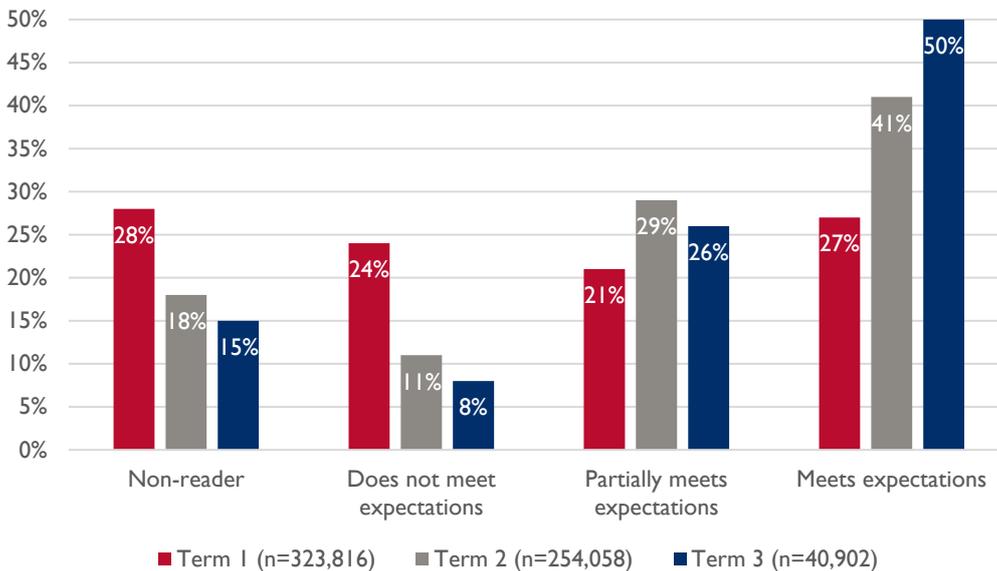


Exhibit 28. P3 Reading Comprehension LEGRA Score Across 2021 School Year

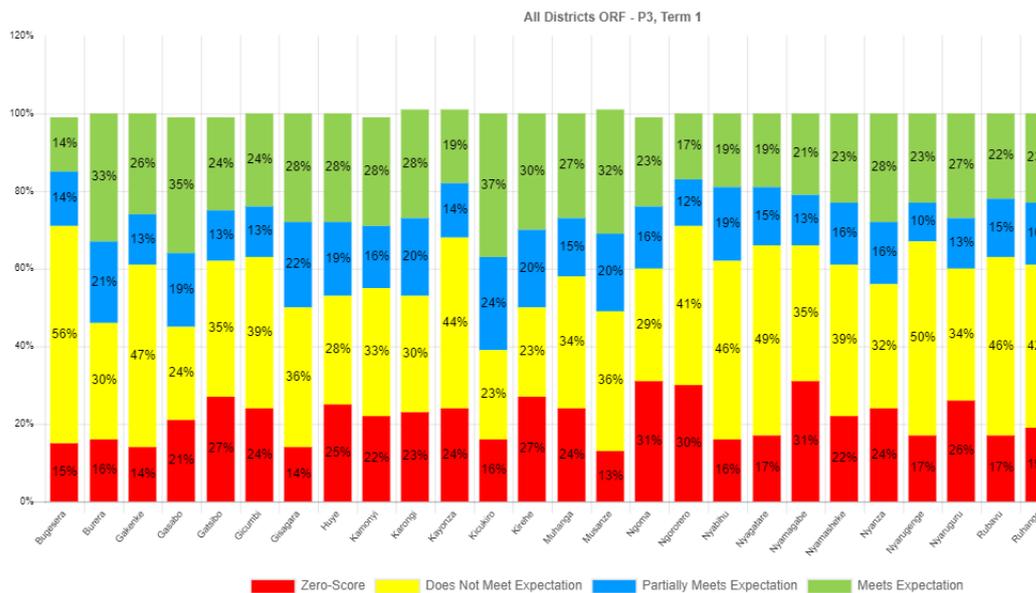


LEGRA dashboard. REB is currently planning a comprehensive assessment management information system and dashboard that will integrate LEGRA, but it is not yet ready. To make LEGRA data easily accessible to users at the school, sector, district, and national level, USAID Soma Umenye has developed an interim dashboard that holds LEGRA data and enables the user to visualize it in different ways. Based on their type of access (national, district, sector, or school), users can see data at their level and below it. For example, district access allows users to see aggregated district data as well as data focused on a specific sector or specific school within that district.

School level reports include identifying letters (PI Term I only), identifying syllables (PI Term I only) reading accuracy of letters/syllables/words (PI Term I only), dictation, decoding comprehension, oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. In addition, following guidance from NESAs, the dashboard presents a composite score combining results for each of the four assessments for each grade. Soma Umenye has trained NESAs staff to work with the dashboard from data upload to data visualization.

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The LEGRA dashboard available to users at the school, sector, district, and national level.

Kinyarwanda Reading Camp

The LEGRA clearly identified students who were falling behind expectations and created the opportunity to support these learners to catch up with their peers. For example, the 2019 LEGRA pilot revealed that about three-fourths of P3 learners were not meeting expectations. In Rwanda, teachers often have up to 50 (or more) students in a classroom for each of the two shifts of the day. As a result, it can be difficult for teachers to support students through in-class remediation. To address this challenge, Soma Umenye worked with REB to design a remediation program during the school holidays — the Kinyarwanda Reading Camp (KRC) — that would support struggling readers to build their skills and be successful in school. The intervention was piloted in 20 schools in Kicukiro and Burera districts (the first urban and the second rural) that had also participated in the LEGRA pilot. It was implemented over 12 days in December during the Term 3 break in 2019. Prior to this time, Soma Umenye worked with REB to deliver three days of teacher training to orient teachers to the KRC approach.

Student participants. KRC is designed to support students who scored zero on the LEGRA assessment. While KRC did not target students who met grade-level reading benchmarks, there were a few cases of students attending KRC who did meet or exceed the benchmarks at the baseline LEGRA. Some of these students accompanied their siblings who joined KRC, while others lived near pilot schools and joined KRC.

Instructional approach. The first and last of KRC’s 12 days was for registration, the pre-KRC LEGRA (which also served as a placement test), and a post-KRC LEGRA. As a result, students received 10 days of core remedial instruction for three hours each day. In total, the amount of KRC instruction that each student received is equivalent to approximately 45 regular class periods. The core support strategy that teachers were trained to use was a systematic phonics approach to instruction that provides equal support for decoding and encoding skills directly at a learner’s instructional level with multiple opportunities for reinforcement and practice with hands-on activities. As described in Exhibit 29, KRC also uses techniques of positive camp culture with engagement techniques for participation and time on task.

Exhibit 29. Core instructional methodologies used in the KRC pilot

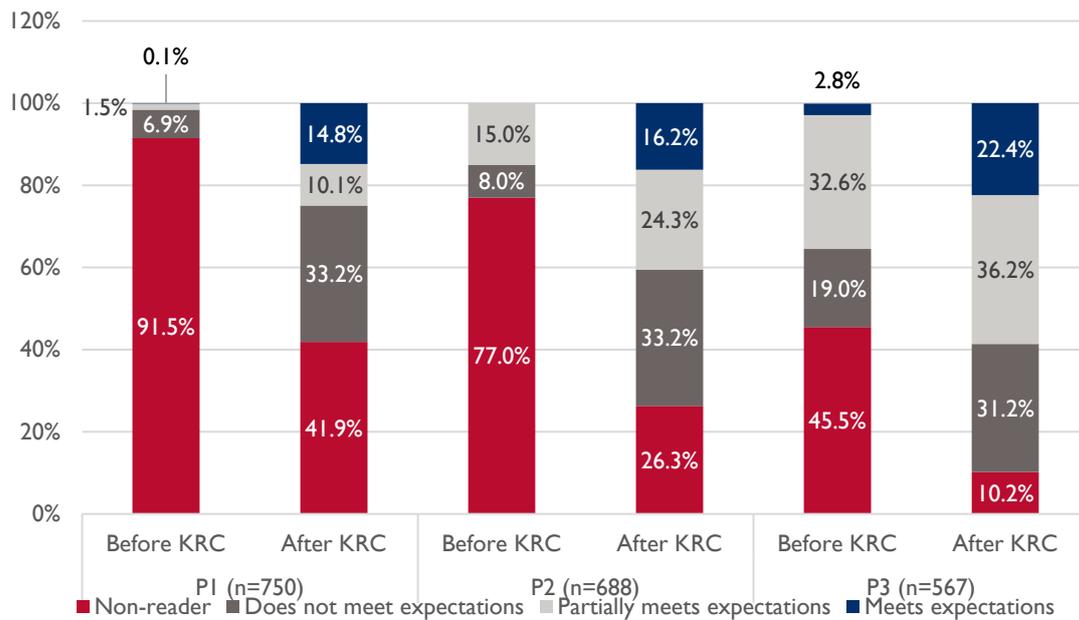
Key component of KRC	Description
<p>Hands-on phonics activities</p>	<p>The phonics instruction lessons use different hands-on games and sound songs to support KRC students to practice decoding and encoding sounds and letters. For example, using picture cards and letter cards, the teacher leads students in singing the sound in a song, along with actions to help the students remember the target sound.</p> <p>The games and activities included in the KRC materials are referenced in the weekly phonics lessons, such as Sound Out and Zapu! (a phonics game specifically focused on practicing blending) and, for small group work, Letter-Sound Roads (cards to help children recognize specific sound in a picture name), Upper-Lower Case Matching, and Word Building with Bottle Caps (letters are painted on top of each cap and children try to make words by putting those different caps together).</p>
<p>Classroom engagement techniques</p>	<p>These techniques encourage more students to regularly participate through thinking, active listening, giving answers to questions in words and in written form, and finding ways to show what they have learned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SLANT: This technique teaches students the specific behaviors that show active listening. The teacher gives students positive cues or directions that refer to these behaviors to increase time on task. SLANT stands for Sit up, Lean forward, Ask questions, Nod your head, Track the speaker. • Precise praise: This technique uses positive reinforcement to emphasize what good students do. Saying “good boy” or “good girl” doesn’t help a student understand why they are earning praise or acknowledgment, or give other students clues about what to do so that they can also earn that kind of praise. For example, the teacher could say “Ange, thank you for raising your hand and not shouting out” or “Table three is sitting up and nodding their heads, I can see they are really listening to Alphonse.” • Wait time: This technique encourages teachers to give at least five to ten seconds of wait time before calling on a student to answer a question. When more wait time is given, then more students have enough time to think about the answer and raise a hand to participate.

Key component of KRC	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone can answer and give the right answer: This technique encourages teachers to never accept no answer or a wrong answer and move on. If they do, it sends the message that it is acceptable for students to give a wrong answer and confuses the other students who have the right answer but were not called on. Teachers can use four formats to help a student answer a question. For the first, the teacher gives the correct answer and the student repeats. For the second, the teacher gives clues to help the student find the answer and the student gives answer. For the third, the teacher calls on another student to give the correct answer and the first student repeats. For the final format, the teacher calls on another student to give a strategy to get the correct answer and the first student repeats.
Positive camp culture techniques	<p>These techniques create positive camp culture by providing teachers and students with time to describe and set their intentions about the choices and behaviors that will help them meet goals for learning to read. These meetings provide structured time to address the social and emotional learning that happens in an academic environment, and helps teachers and learners to be more self-aware, cooperative, confident, and kind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning meeting: Teachers are guided to begin each KRC day with a whole camp gathering for 15 minutes and includes activities that contain a message and provide movement. The message should relate to a specific guiding principle or value that is being reinforced through a positive behavior system. The movement should be a quick game or exercise that engages the body and gets learners ready to look, listen, and follow directions. • Community meeting: At the end of each KRC day, the teachers and learners in each classroom gather for 15 minutes in a circle to have some reflection and discussion about the day. This meeting provides an opportunity to “check in” and think about how behaviors and actions have led to successes or opportunities to try again on academic or behavior goals.

The KRC instructional materials — teacher’s guides and big book readers — were developed based on an interactive play-based learner-centered methodology. The play-based approach helps the students to be more engaged in the teaching and learning process.

Results. Student attendance at the KRC varied. On the first day, only 34% of enrolled students attended, but by Day 6, participation had increased to 72%. Overall, 1,984 student from 20 schools (63%) attended on the last day and therefore took the post-KRC LEGRA. Of these, their average attendance was nine days. Exhibit 30 compares the pre- and post-KRC LEGRA scores in oral reading fluency (ORF). It shows a dramatic decrease in zero scores across grades (an average of 45 percentage points), and a notable increase in the percent of students meeting standards (an average of 17 percentage points). (See above for a description of the performance standards.)

Exhibit 30. P1-P3 ORF Scores Before and After the Kinyarwanda Reading Camp



As shown in Exhibit 31, students in urban Kicukiro district outperformed students in rural Burera district. In addition, as shown in Exhibit 32, girls lagged slightly behind their male peers in P1. However, by P3, girls were outperforming boys in terms of the number of students meeting expectations.

Exhibit 31. ORF Performance by Urban/Rural at the End of KRC

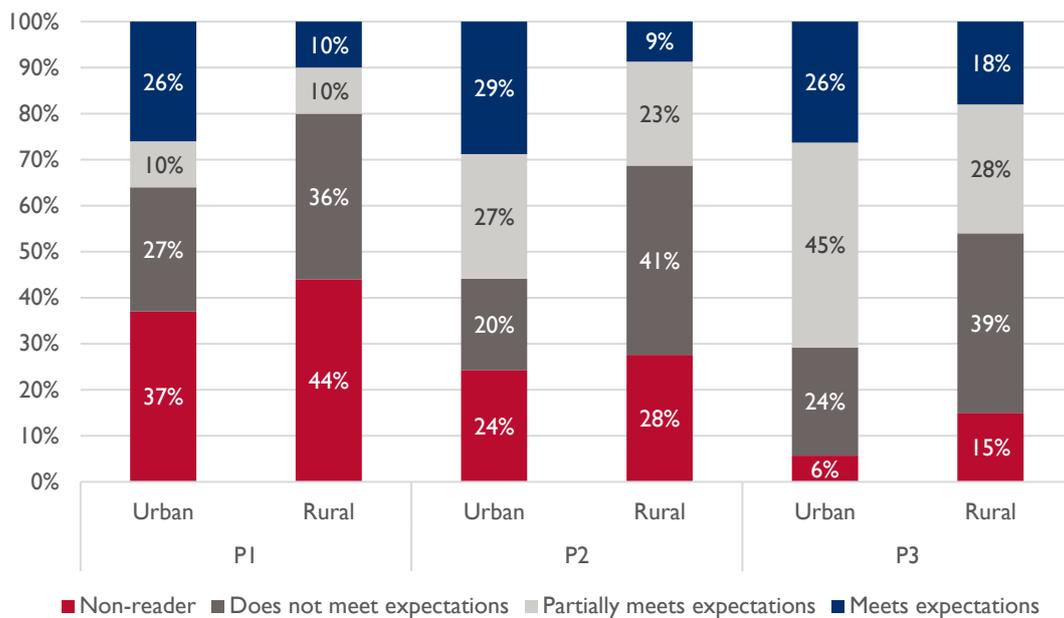


Exhibit 32. ORF Performance by Gender and Grade

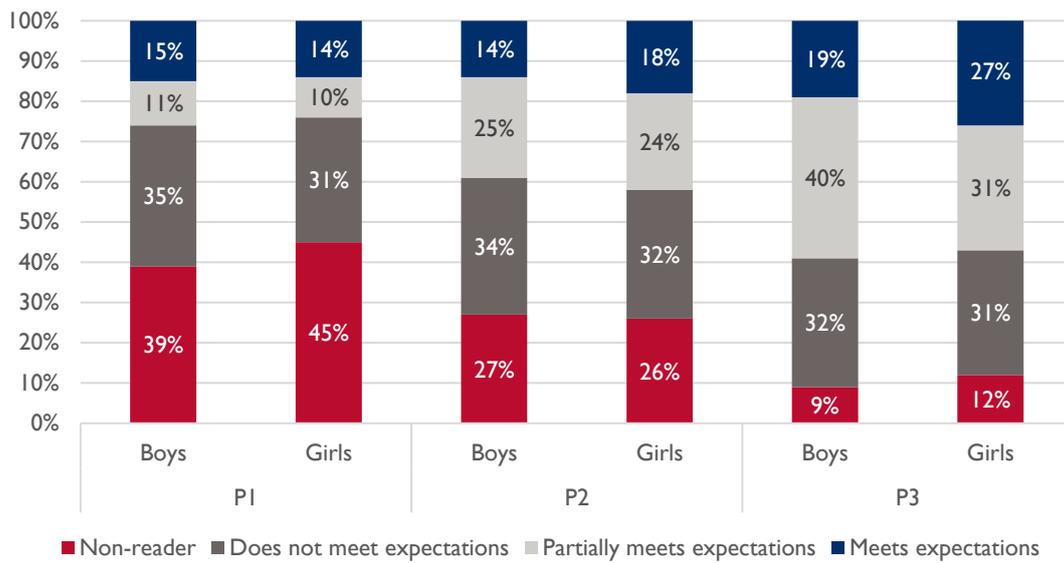
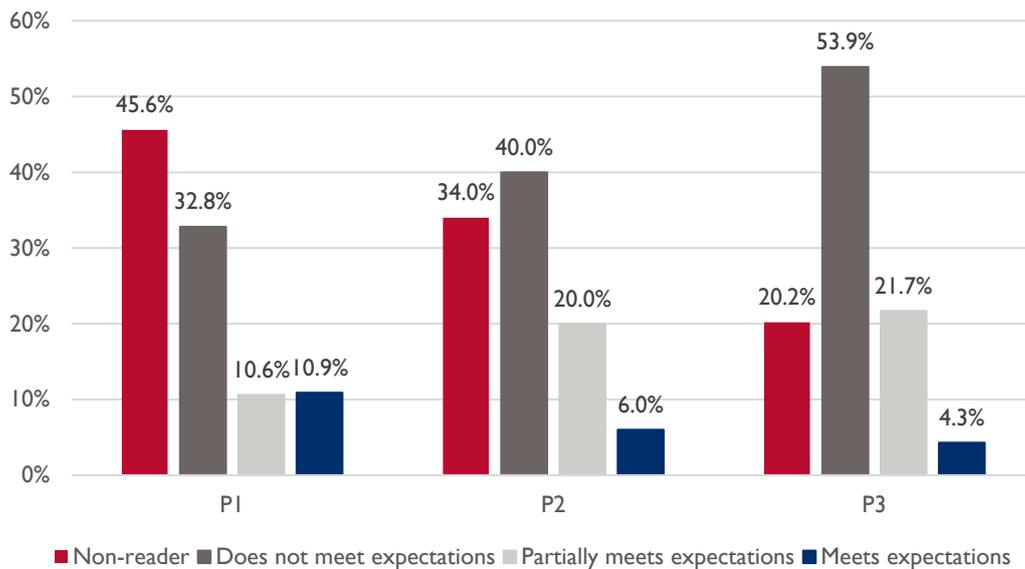


Exhibit 33 shows the final distribution across performance categories of the P1, P2, and P3 students who were zero scorers at the start of KRC. It shows that while a significant percent of these students remained zero scorers at the end of KRC, large numbers also started the journey towards becoming readers. Most moved to the next category (does not meet expectations), but a notable group progressed two performance categories (to “partially meets expectations”) and 4-10% were able to meet expectations.

Exhibit 33. P1-P3 Zero-Scorers’ ORF at the End of the KRC



USAID Soma Umenye had planned to roll out KRC nationwide in 2020 (alongside the national roll-out of the LEGRA). While the LEGRA was in fact rolled out in 2021, the dates planned for KRC training in 2021 coincided with an uptick in COVID cases and were, unfortunately and as a result, canceled. Soma Umenye supported REB to integrate KRC strategies into the remediation guide it created before primary schools re-opened in January 2021.

Baseline EGRA



PHOTO: Alexis Nshimiyimana for USAID Soma Umenye.

REB staff practice a baseline data collection simulation during training at the EGRA beta-testing workshop.

Following changes to USAID Soma Umenye’s phasing plan (see Section I), Soma Umenye collaborated with REB to conduct the baseline EGRA in 2018, using a cross-sectional design. It sought to answer the following research questions:

- What reading-related skills are pupils acquiring in P1, P2, and P3?
- Are pupils achieving key end-of-grade reading benchmarks in P1-P3?
- What school-, classroom- and home-related contextual factors are associated with pupilearly grade reading skills in Rwanda?⁹

Soma Umenye worked closely with REB staff during the design of the EGRA instruments, which gave them the opportunity to learn more about the reading fluency and reading comprehension subtests, which were not (at that point) included in REB’s LARS assessment tool (the LARS used an adult literacy approach to assess literacy). This change is discussed further below. As part of this work, Soma Umenye collaborated with REB to create clear metrics to be used to level assessment text to ensure text of comparable difficulty was used (see Annex C).

Sample. The EGRA was administered to a nationally representative sample of 155 schools and 4,650 students (P1-P3) in public and government-supported schools in Rwanda’s five provinces. A multi-stage stratified random sampling design was used. All sectors in the country were first stratified by geographic zone (urban or rural) and linguistic status. A random sample of sectors was then selected and then one school in each sector randomly selected for data collection. In addition, a total of 434 P1 to P3 teachers and 140 head teachers participated in the data collection. At the request of REB/USAID sectors where other languages or where dialectal varieties of Kinyarwanda are used were purposefully sampled.

Findings. Figures 34-35 illustrate the number of learners meeting the abovementioned student performance standards at baseline in oral reading fluency and reading comprehension.

Figure 34. Percent of pupils meeting reading fluency benchmarks (P1-P3)

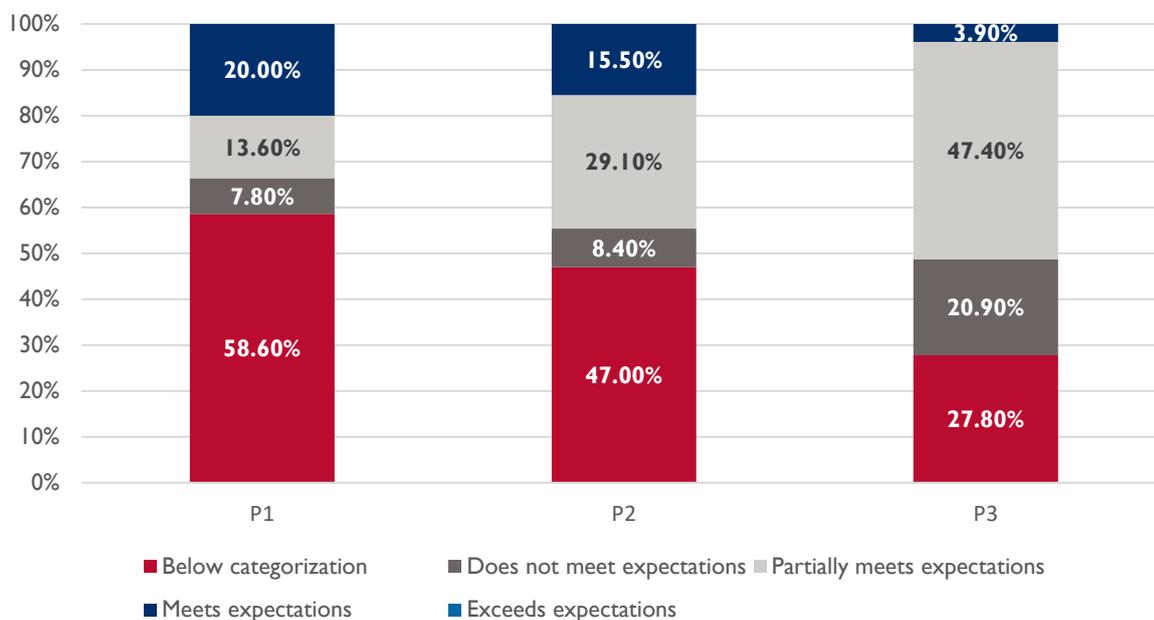
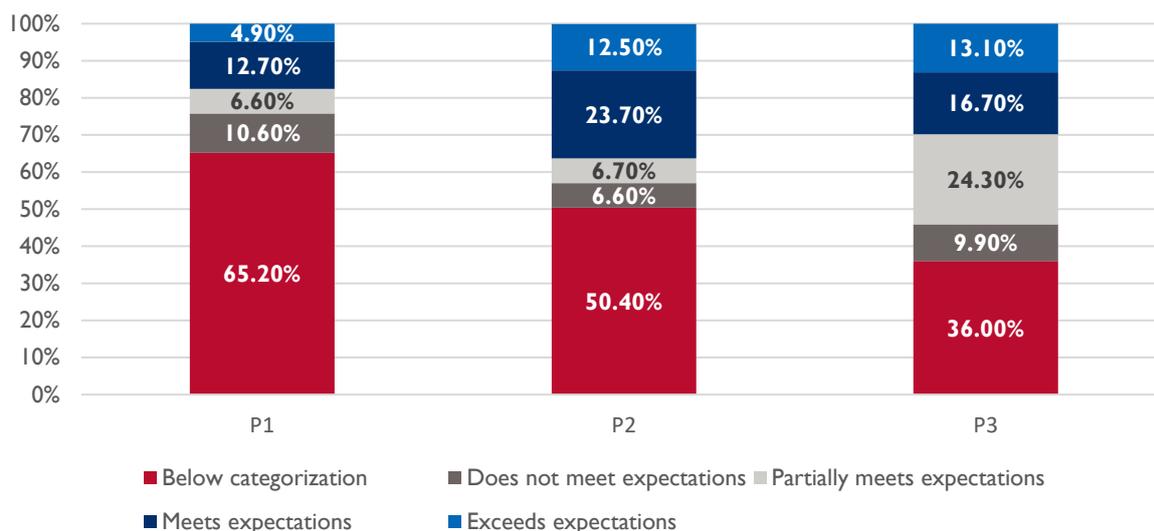


Figure 35. Percent of pupils meeting reading comprehension benchmarks (P1-P3)²



- *What reading-related skills are pupils acquiring in P1, P2, and P3?* The results made clear that a significant number of students were zero scorers at the end of the school year, though the proportion of zero scorers did decrease somewhat as the student progressed through school years. In addition, the data showed that the high percentage of

² This chart represents REB's benchmark of 60% of questions answered correctly in P1 and P2. USAID's benchmark during Soma Umenye was 80% of questions answered correctly (as is REB's P3 benchmark).

nonreaders came largely from children in P1 rural classrooms, particularly boys. While many children developed reading skills as they progressed, pupils who speak a dialect of Kinyarwanda at home or at schools were more likely to remain non-readers than pupils that speak standard Kinyarwanda. While P2 and P3 pupils were beginning to gain some proficiency in reading syllables and blending syllables, they still read very slowly. P1 students read an average of 5 words a minute, while P2 students read 11 words per minute, and P3 students 16 words per minute. Even though they may be reading slowly, those pupils that can read, can understand some of the ideas presented in the text. By P3, there is little difference between boys and girls in terms of literacy skills.

- *Are pupils achieving key end-of-grade reading benchmarks in P1-P3?* Exhibits 34-35 above show that a small proportion of students are meeting benchmarks, and this proportion decreases as the pupil advances grades. Pupils living in rural areas are more likely to be nonreaders (as are boys in P1 and P2)
- *What school-, classroom- and home-related contextual factors are associated with pupil early grade reading skills in Rwanda?*⁹
 - *Tongue.* Children who spoke Kinyarwanda at home (93% of the sample) read 2-13 more cwpm than students who did not.
 - *Text.* In classrooms where textbooks were used regularly, on average, pupils read 2.3 more cwpm than those in classrooms where that was not the case. Prior to Soma Umenye, access to a textbook in class varied significantly by grade. In P1, the textbook to pupil ratio was 1:7, in P2, it was 1:9, and in P3, it was 1:16. In addition, when students were able to take books home, they were generally able to read 1.3 cwpm more than students who were not able to take books home. In about 60% of P1-P3 classrooms (58-64%), students were able to bring books home to read.
 - *Time.* P1 and P2 students who were absent at least one day in the week prior to data collection, generally read 1.9-2.5 fewer cwpm. About half of P1-P3 fell into this category. In addition, 67% of head teachers interviewed reported teacher absence and tardiness as a significant problem.
 - *Teaching technique.* When a teacher had been trained to teach reading, his/her students read more than the students of teachers who were not trained. Slightly more than one third reported being trained.
 - *Test.* Teachers rarely reported conducting end of term assessments or sharing results with parents. The most impactful practice found was when teachers checked student homework (associated with an increase of 3.4-8.9 cwpm in P1-P3).

These findings informed many of Soma Umenye’s interventions. Soma Umenye had planned to conduct an endline EGRA in 2020 (and then in 2021), but in the end, it was not possible due to COVID-19 restrictions. See Section 5 for a discussion interpreting Soma Umenye’s endline results.

Integration of LARS and EGRA

Because USAID Soma Umenye had worked closely with REB staff in the design of the EGRA instruments, NESAS³ requested assistance in developing the tools for the LARS IV assessment (initially scheduled for 2020, but actually administered in 2021, see Section 5).

³ Soma Umenye worked with the examinations division with REB to design the EGRA, but the request for LARS support came from NESAS (an agency external to REB formed from REB’s examinations division).

The fluency and comprehension subtests from the EGRA have the benefit of enabling REB to produce data acceptable for reporting on the World Bank's Human Capital Index as well as Sustainable Development Goal 4.1.1.

Soma Umenye supported REB to develop assessment forms with fluency and comprehension items, pilot them to identify which was better suited to LARS administration, and finalize them for use in the LARS. See Section 5 for a discussion of LARS findings.

Equating Exercise

To enable comparison between the EGRA, LARS, and LEGRA instruments, USAID Soma Umenye supported an equating exercise in September 2021. The goal of this exercise was to enable REB to begin to equate the LEGRA and the LARS and to enable Soma Umenye to compare the EGRA with the LARS.

Sample. Given the restrictions caused by COVID-19, it was not possible to collect data from a representative sample of all provinces of Rwanda. Schools were closed in many districts when data was scheduled to be collected. For this reason, data were collected only in Kigali City. The students for this equating study came from 39 randomly selected schools. In each school, Soma Umenye data collectors collected data from 12 Grade 3 students (6 boys/6 girls), administering both the 2018 EGRA and 2021 LARS fluency and comprehension items. Several weeks later, teachers administered the year-end LEGRA in their classrooms, and the results for the students who participated in the EGRA/LARS administration were collected from their schools. A total of 461 students participated in the EGRA/LARS assessment while data for LEGRA was collected for 448 students.

Analysis. Analysis of the data was conducted using a two-step approach. In the first step, a descriptive analysis of the performance of the students on each instrument was conducted. This first analysis served to explore the data and see differences in distribution of the scores between the three different instruments. Correlations between oral fluency scores on the different passages and performance on reading comprehension questions were also computed as well as cumulative distribution functions for fluency and reading comprehension scores.

Next, equating for the fluency scores and reading comprehension scores was conducted using the single group kernel approach (van Davier, *et al.*, 2004). This equating method is an observed-score test equating based on the percentile distribution of the fluency scores on each instrument and includes a pre-smoothing approach to correct for inconsistencies in score distribution on the different oral reading fluency or reading comprehension scores. Once satisfied by the equating method, tables were produced to transform scores on one instrument to the scale of value of the other. It was only possible to run equating with two instruments at a time, so equating was conducted pairwise (EGRA to LARS, EGRA to LEGRA, and LARS to LEGRA).

Findings. The study found a high degree of association between the EGRA and LARS, both in terms of zero scores and fluency scores. The association between EGRA and LEGRA was somewhat less strong, with a strong association for zero scores, but a lower association for fluency scores. The same was true for the association between LARS and LEGRA (strong association for zero scores, but a lower association for fluency scores). For reading

comprehension, all three instruments had similar good associations with each other. Of course, the LEGRA had a different mode of administration (teacher-administered) than the LARS and EGRA, which could contribute to some differences.

The study found that students’ average score on the EGRA items was lower than their average score on the LARS items, which in turn was lower than their average score on the LEGRA items. Exhibit 36 lays out the scores that align the three instruments (noting that these are approximations for reading comprehension).

Exhibit 36. Equation Between Rwandan Assessments

	Oral reading fluency			Reading comprehension ⁴		
	2018 EGRA	2021 LARS	LEGRA	2018 EGRA	2021 LARS	LEGRA
Exceeds expectations	51+ cwpm			100%		
Meets expectations	40-50 cwpm	51+ cwpm	71+ cwpm	80%	100%	100%
Partially meets expectations	18-39 cwpm	23-50 cwpm	30-70 cwpm	60%	70%	70%
Does not meet expectations	1-17 cwpm	1-22 cwpm	1-29 cwpm	40%	60%	62%
Below categorization	0 cwpm	0 cwpm	0 cwpm	0%	0%	0%

In describing Soma Umenye’s achievement in this report, Soma Umenye used the MINEDUC-administered LARS results rather than the LEGRA results. This choice was made for several reasons. First, the LARS and EGRA share similar administration procedures (administered by personnel external to the school), while the LEGRA is administered by teachers (who were trained but not as extensively as those who administered the LARS and EGRA). Second, the LEGRA was not designed as a representative sample of Rwanda’s population and the Term 3 data comes from an ad hoc selection of schools and is not representative. Third, the Term 3 data we have is from a much smaller number of students than the data available for Terms 1 and 2 (though the Term 1 and 2 LEGRA assessment items were not part of the equating study and we do not know how they align with the EGRA or LARS).

Achievement

Soma Umenye’s collaboration with REB to develop a unified assessment and accountability framework for Rwanda is a significant achievement that provides REB with both (1) the tools to measure the effectiveness of its early grade reading delivery system in the LARS and (2) resources to help identify teachers and learners who need additional support in the LEGRA and tools to help them improve in the KRC (and the professional development resources discussed in Sections 2.2 and 2.3). Importantly, developing this framework helped strengthen the partnership between schools and communities with the goal of keeping all children learning. Soma Umenye saw a 32 percentage point increase (from 26% in 2019 to 58% in 2021) in head teachers who shared assessment results with community members in the LEGRA inama, where participants developed strategies to help learners who need additional support.

⁴ The numbers for reading comprehension for LARS and LEGRA are approximations because the more limited options makes it difficult to identify exact matches on the EGRA scale.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND REMEDIATION ACTIONS

Challenges of LEGRA data upload. To facilitate the analysis and use of LEGRA data, USAID Soma Umenye distributed tablets to head teachers to be used to enter and upload LEGRA data for each P1-P3 student to the national database. Head teachers were oriented on how to use the tablet-based forms during LEGRA training. However, during the Term I LEGRA, Soma Umenye staff monitoring the process noted that some head teachers encountered challenges with the new process and data upload was time consuming. Soma Umenye staff provided remote support to head teachers to help them troubleshoot issues. In addition, the training content for data upload exists in digital form on head teacher tablets to serve as an ongoing resource. It is expected that as school leaders become more comfortable with the tablets, the LEGRA data upload process will be smoother in the future. However, there may be a need for further NESA encouragement to upload data in a timely manner to make it available to inform improvement plans, which SEIs should monitor to ensure their implementation.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Integrate local expertise and relevance to build ownership. The modified Angoff method provided a structured way to engage Rwandan expertise (master teachers and REB experts) in setting the performance benchmarks. Because this exercise was driven by Rwandan knowledge, we saw high levels of ownership of the process within REB.

The standards became relevant to communities and education officials across the system (from teachers to head teachers to SEIs and DEOs) because they served to categorize learners following the LEGRA assessment. As a result, the LEGRA provided an opportunity to educate the range of education stakeholders regarding the learner performance benchmarks and give them a common sense of what expected performance is.

Continue comprehensive assessment and focus on its formative application. Soma Umenye staff saw many school personnel embrace the potential of the LEGRA: an opportunity for teachers, head teachers, and caregivers to focus on student progress and identify and provide any support needed to keep students on target to meet grade-level performance standards. In reviewing the results, teachers and head teachers came up with multiple ideas for ways to improve instruction and provide students with support. It is important that REB work with development partners to build on this momentum and continue to strengthen LEGRA (its administration and the rapidity with which data is uploaded to the dashboard and used by schools to inform instruction). All parties should work to build the capacity of schools, sectors, and districts to use LEGRA to drive a cycle of reflection and action to improve student learning outcomes.

Promote remediation solutions. Unfortunately, KRC was not rolled out nationwide as planned in 2020 (or 2021) due to the public health context. The LEGRA shows clearly that some students need additional support, and the KRC pilot showed that significant progress can be made with these students through a focused course of remedial support. The gradual elimination of the second shift (planned by the GOR) will create time for teachers to provide remediation. In advance of this change, we recommend that REB work with development partners to (1) review the school timetable to identify the best time in the

school day for remediation and (2) integrate teaching-at-the-right level approaches (which informed KRC) in remediation sessions to help teachers make faster progress.

Continue to align the LARS and LEGRA systems. As Rwanda continues to develop its comprehensive assessment system, REB and development partners should consider developing an item bank of equated items for each assessment, which would allow it to rely on the LEGRA to help it understand whether students are progressing towards its grade-level benchmarks as measured on the LARS. As part of this work, they should consider regular recalibration of the assessment items (and LEGRA termly benchmarks) to ensure that the benchmarks represent appropriate progress towards the end-of-year benchmarks (aligned with the LARS).

2.5 SUPPORTING POLICY AND PRACTICE

Throughout implementation, Soma Umenye worked closely with REB to better understand the constraints on early grade reading achievement (through research and program monitoring) and to develop strategies — to change policy or practice — that could address those constraints and support the prioritization of early grade reading within primary education. These strategies included supporting the Andika Rwanda competition, undertaking a study on how instructional time is issued in lower primary Kinyarwanda classrooms, and conducting the National Reading Campaign. Soma Umenye also conducted several learning laboratories to support MINEDUC and REB to learn from Soma Umenye data and review changes to policy supported by the data.

Key Achievements

- Conducted two nationwide writing competitions that received 182,634 story submissions, built awareness of the value of reading and writing, and generated 54 new storybooks for use in Rwandan classrooms.
- Conducted study of instructional time in early grade reading classrooms
- Promoted the use of books to practice reading inside and outside of class through the National Reading Campaign.
- Developed early grade reading toolkit to orient Rwandan government officials to the evidence base (local and international) underlying early grade reading program design
- Supported learning and engagement visits to help counterparts learn from their peers and share their accomplishments
- Facilitated technical laboratories to enable REB to review its own data and develop policy recommendations for wider dissemination.

Andika Rwanda! (Rwanda Writes!)



PHOTO: Alain Patrick Mwizerwa for USAID Soma Umenye.

The national winners of Andika Rwanda 2019 gather during the three-day authors workshop.

Andika Rwanda is a story-writing contest begun by USAID’s predecessor project Literacy, Language, and Learning with the goal of helping build a culture of reading by engaging students to write their own stories. Soma Umenye supported the competition in 2018 and 2019. Students eligible to participate in Andika Rwanda included primary school students, secondary school students, and student teachers in TTCs.

The stages of Andika Rwanda are illustrated in Exhibit 37.

Exhibit 37. Stages of Andika Rwanda



- *Develop guidelines and publicize the contest.* First, the Andika Rwanda Steering Committee (which includes Soma Umenye and REB staff) developed the submission guidelines. Next, Soma Umenye staff worked with DEOs and SEIs to publicize the upcoming writing contest and the competition guidelines. Soma Umenye organized orientation sessions in all 30 districts with DEOs, SEIs, head teachers, TTC principals, and TTC tutors, and the competitions was advertised through posters, banners, and pamphlets. Information was also shared at community events like *umuganda* or parents’ meetings (like *akagoroba k’ababyeyi*).
- *Receive entries and conduct juries.* Once submissions were received at the school level, they were evaluated at three levels through Andika Rwanda juries. Jury members were selected at the local level following the competition guidelines, and were trained in how to assess stories to ensure jury members followed a common approach. Jury members included Kinyarwanda teachers, head teachers, SEIs, and DEOs. First, the sector-level

jury identified the best submissions from the sector, using criteria in the competition guidelines, and passed them on to the next level. Next the district-level jury did the same. Finally, the national-level jury identified the winners. In 2018, there were 24 national winners, while in 2019 there were 30 national winners, one from each district.

- *Hold authors workshop.* Once the winners were identified, Soma Umenye and REB invited them to an authors workshop to prepare their book for publication. At the authors workshop, the young authors worked with professional editors and illustrators to level their book appropriately for the target grade (P1 in 2018 and P2 and P3 in 2019), edit it, and integrate illustrations. The books were leveled using REB’s leveling guidelines (see Section 2.1)
- *Hold awards ceremony.* With the books in their final form, Soma Umenye organized an awards ceremony (in conjunction with International Literacy Day) to honor the winners and award them their prize (such as a tablet with the Andika Rwanda winning books uploaded on it, school materials, the first draft of their own winning book, and a bookbag).
- *Print and distribute books.* Finally, once REB approved the Andika Rwanda winners’ books for use in classrooms, Soma Umenye engaged a printer to print and distribute the Andika Rwanda books to all public and government-supported schools in the country.

In 2018, some 80,000 students submitted entries. Two of the winning entries from among this pool were submitted in braille. In 2019, some 102,000 students submitted entries.

Giraso Ella Parfaite, a fourth grade student from Rulindo District, was among the national winners. She said, “I am so happy that my poem 'Stop Abusing a Child' was selected as the winner at the national level. Andika Rwanda really inspired me to write in Kinyarwanda and I tried to write about something important.”

Soma Umenye distributed copies of the 54 winning titles as part of the classroom libraries to all P1-P3 classrooms across the country (see Section 2.1).

Instructional Time Study

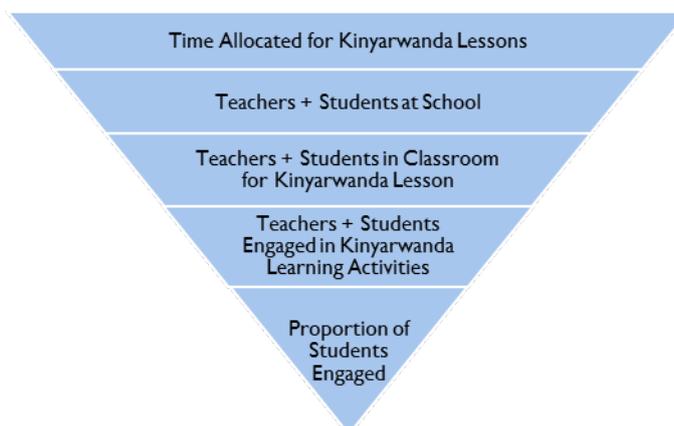
In 2018, USAID Soma Umenye collaborated with REB to design and conduct a study to understand the amount and nature of instructional time in early grade classrooms in Rwanda. The study looked at “time” as a multi-dimensional construct, collecting data at multiple levels including: allocated time, in-classroom time, and learning time.



Alverie Nyirabatware — shown here preparing to read her braille Andika Rwanda entry at the International Literacy Day celebrations in 2018 — was a student at the School for the Blind in Nyaruguru District. Her poem is entitled “I thank the teacher.”

PHOTO: Alexis Nshimiyimana for: USAID Soma Umenye.

- Allocated time = the scheduled time in the curriculum for Kinyarwanda reading lessons.
- In-classroom time = the amount of time teachers and students are in the classroom together.
- Learning time = the amount of time students are engaged in reading instruction or reading activities that build the fundamental skills children need to learn to read.



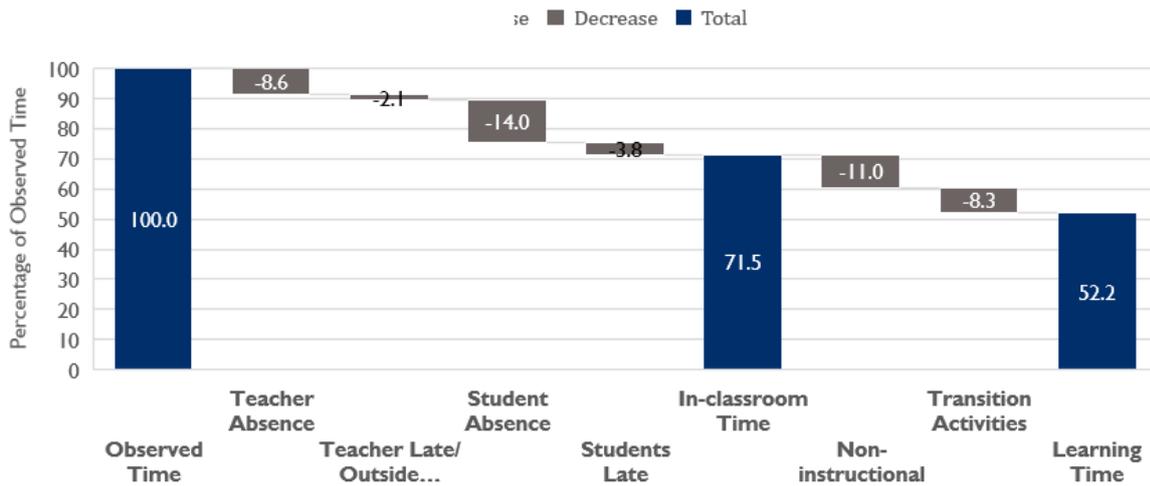
The research questions addressed by the study included:

- What is the allocated time for P2 Kinyarwanda lessons per week and how is that time structured?
- What is the in-classroom time for P2 Kinyarwanda lessons per week and what is the nature and quality of that time?
- What is the association between amount and type of in-classroom and learning time and reading skills for P2 students?

The study gathered data from 100 public or government-aided schools (85 randomly selected, 15 purposively selected) using four survey instruments: (i) classroom observation for the P2 class section of interest, (ii) teacher survey for the Kinyarwanda teacher of the sampled P2 class section; (iii) student profile and reading assessments for P2 students from the class section of interest; and (iv) school profile for the head teacher or any relevant school authority.

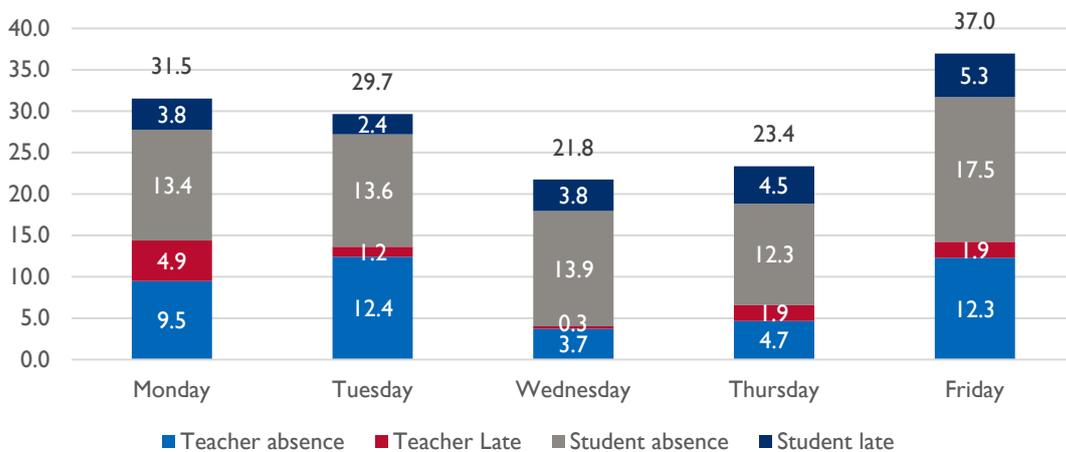
The study found that 28.5% of planned instructional time is lost due to teacher and student absence and tardiness (see Exhibit 38), resulting in teachers and students being together in the classroom only 71.5% of the allocated time. Beyond this loss due to absences and tardiness, 19.3% of in-classroom time was utilized for activities other than direct reading instruction (non-instructional and transition activities), resulting in a total of 52.2% of the intended/allocated Kinyarwanda reading instruction time being dedicated to learning time.

Exhibit 38. Total Time Composition/Lost Time



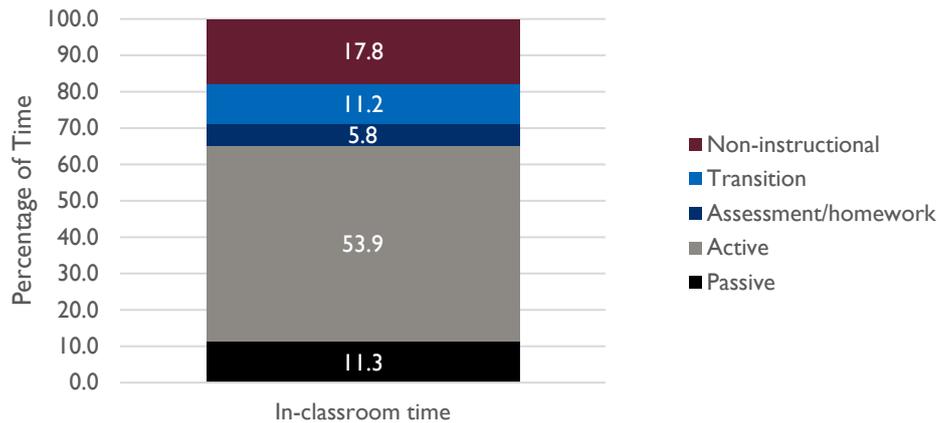
Teacher and student absence differed significantly according to time of day and day of the week. The first hour of the morning shift and the first hour of the afternoon shift experience the highest amount of lost time due to tardiness. The effect of this is compounded for Kinyarwanda instruction by a high percentage of P2 Kinyarwanda classes being scheduled in these high tardiness slots. As shown in Exhibit 39, student absence and tardiness rates are similar across days of the week, with some increase in Fridays. However, the percentage of time lost due to teacher absence on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays is striking, with a high of 12.4% on Tuesdays and a low of 3.7% on Wednesdays. The data show that teacher absence is predominantly a rural phenomenon. This may be driven by factors such as market days or long travel distance on the weekends to visit family or home community.

Exhibit 39. Percentage of Time Lost to Teacher and Student Absence or Lateness by Day



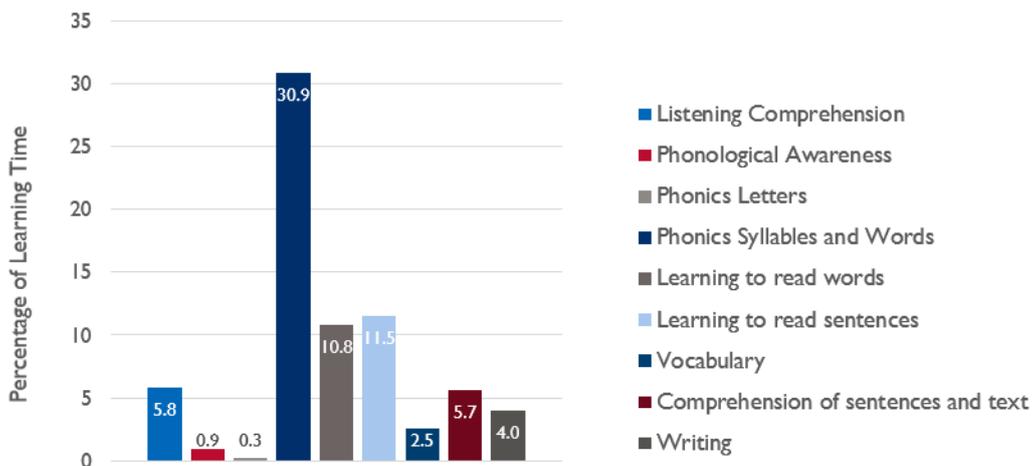
When teachers and students are in the classroom together (71.5% of the allocated time) and focused on learning activities (52.2% of the allocated time), we see that the majority (65.2%) of in-classroom time is spent on direct reading instruction (using both active and passive instructional strategies).

Exhibit 40. Composition of In-Classroom Time



As Exhibit 41 illustrates, phonics instruction (syllables and words) dominated learning time with learning to read words and sentences the second and third most frequent reading skills focus in the classroom.

Exhibit 41. Percentage of Learning Time by Reading Skills



A key objective of the study was to identify whether there was a relationship between time and reading outcomes. The study assessed this relationship by looking at absence rates and several different levels of time (in-classroom time, learning time and active/passive learning time) as compared to student reading skills. It did not find that time lost due to teacher and student absence and tardiness was associated with lower oral reading fluency scores. Study authors hypothesize that they did not find a relationship between in-classroom time and oral reading fluency scores because the composition of in-classroom time includes a variety of types of time — including non-instructional, transition and learning time — and some of this in-classroom time advances learning (learning time) and some of it does not support learning (non-instructional time).

The study authors then investigated the relationship between the *composition* of in-classroom time and oral reading fluency scores by including the type of instructional activities teachers directed during in-classroom time (transition, assessment/homework, active and passive reading activities) in the model. More specifically, it assessed the first

three categories of in-classroom time against passive reading activities (the reference category). Study authors found a statistically significant relationship between active instruction and oral reading fluency scores and reading comprehension scores. The effect size is quite small, with a 10% increase in active instructional time resulting in an increase of 0.936 in oral reading fluency (cwpm) and an increase of 0.117 in reading comprehension, both equivalent to a 0.06 standard deviation increase. In oral reading fluency this means getting one extra word correct per minute.

This 1 cwpm increase in oral reading fluency (equivalent to .06 SD) associated with a 10% increase in active reading instruction time does not seem meaningful in the context of policy objectives, standards for reading outcomes, and effectiveness of early grade reading interventions in general. However, with a 30% increase in active instruction, then improvements in reading scores become meaningful, with an increase in nearly 3 cwpm in reading fluency and an increase of .35 in comprehension scores and an effect size of .19 SD. Given that 28.5% of allocated instructional time is lost due to teacher/student absence and tardiness, it becomes clear that if this lost time were converted into active learning time, there could be a substantial improvement in reading outcomes with no additional cost to the system.

Based on the study findings, the study steering committee (which included both REB and Soma Umenye staff) developed recommendations, several of which are included in Exhibit 42. REB leaders considered these recommendations as part of a learning lab (discussed below).

Exhibit 42. Recommendations From the Instructional Time Study

Increase overall time teachers and students are in the classroom together
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise scheduling of lower primary Kinyarwanda and all foundational skills classes, so a higher percentage of classes are conducted on days with lower absence and tardiness rates. • Develop remediation strategies with local governments and integrate realistic, progressive targets for reducing absenteeism and tardiness into performance contracts Develop information systems that provide timely and reliable data about teacher and student absence/ tardiness, complemented by joint reviews at the national and local levels Incentivize and motivate teachers to reduce absences and tardiness and develop strategies for communities and parents to reduce student absenteeism and tardiness.
Increase the amount of “active” time for reading instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher preparation institutions and in-service teacher professional development programs should train and equip teachers to deliver more “active” instruction. • Teacher coaching strategies should include a focus on the use of active instructional strategies and engaging distracted or unengaged students.
Address the disparity in reading outcomes across schools and students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop strategies targeting non-readers as a priority to address those who are “internally excluded” from learning. This will reduce repetition and drop-out rates and offer the most efficient way to increase the proportion of students meeting reading benchmarks. • Develop practical and timely strategies for classroom-based assessments to identify struggling readers and to close the gap between teachers’ estimation of student reading skills and actual student reading skills.

Remote Learning Study

USAID Soma Umenye planned to conduct a study on teacher behavior change as a result of coaching support. However, the project shifted its plans due to COVID-19 and school

closures. Instead, at the request of the director general of REB, USAID Soma Umenye designed an in-depth study to look at the reach of REB’s remote learning program to supplement regular monitoring data. This study is described in Section 3.

Learning Laboratories

To support REB and MINEDUC to review the findings of Soma Umenye-supported research, project staff organized learning laboratories focused on a range of key topics. Exhibit 43 lays out the learning laboratory topics and accompanying key discussion points. The laboratories provided Rwandan education officials the opportunity to review research data, discuss implications of the findings, and identify actions that could address the issues identified by the studies. For example, following the learning laboratory on the instructional time study, the director general of REB directed staff to review the head teacher *imihigo* (or performance contract) to integrate a focus on the use of classroom time.

Exhibit 43. Learning Laboratory Topics

Topic	Key Discussion Points
EGRA Baseline (see Section 2.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on EGRA findings • Validate the results • Using the EGRA results to inform key messages for the National Reading Campaign
Instructional Time Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on findings from the study on instructional time • Revise head teacher <i>imihigos</i> to incorporate lessons learned and recommendations from the study
LEGRA Pilot (see Section 2.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an overview of the five-district pilot and reflect on results • Introduce how results will feed into a cycle of reflection, at the national, district, sector, and school level
Remote Learning Study (see Section 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present highlights from routine remote learning monitoring • Share results from the in-depth remote learning study on access and participation in remote learning • Present assessment of early grade reading skills during school closures (small sample from Burera district)
Comprehensive Assessment (see Section 2.4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review how LEGRA data is being used • Identify any challenges in administering LEGRA or using assessment data

National Reading Campaign



Soma Rwanda's logo and tagline: **Make Time for Reading.**

USAID Soma Umenye collaborated with MINEDUC and the Soma Rwanda (“Rwanda Reads”) platform to develop a national reading campaign whose goal was to increase the time that parents, students, and community members spent reading with young people to help them build literacy skills. The central theme of the campaign was Make Time for Reading, which was intended as a call to action by students, their parents and communities, and Rwandan policy makers. As part of this call to action, the campaign urged caregivers to spend at least 15 minutes a day reading with their children. The campaign launched in February 2020. As a result of the public health context over the next year, it took place largely over radio, social media and other media outlets.

Activities. To communicate the campaign’s call to action, Soma Rwanda’s members (which included several organizations focused on early grade reading) undertook a range of activities, including those described below supported specifically by USAID Soma Umenye.

- *Radio spots.* Soma Umenye created a campaign jingle and song that covered key themes. The jingle and song were broadcast with the weekly radio lessons during school closures (when parents and children were likely to be listening) and also on several radio stations as schools were re-opening to keep caregivers thinking about the importance of reading with their children.
- *Radio shows.* Soma Umenye created two types of radio shows. The first was intended to encourage caregivers to make time to read with their children. Soma Umenye created a radio show that described the importance of this activity to helping children build literacy skills. It also covered how to care for the books that children would bring home from school when they were not using them to practice reading. The radio program was broadcast on their community radio stations on three Saturdays after the start of Term 2. The second was a radio talk show, which focused on the role of parents and communities in supporting children to learn to read. The show featured a discussion between the program director of the Rwanda National Union of the Deaf, local government officials, and local parents regarding ways to help children (with and without disabilities) to practice reading at least 15 minutes each day.

- *Change Maker campaign.* To highlight role models for whom reading is an important part of their lives, Soma Umenye developed the change makers campaign. Change makers are people in communities and schools, people working in government, or public figures who recognize reading as an important force in their lives. Soma Umenye identified 17 change makers and interviewed them to understand the role reading plays in their lives. Their stories were shared on social media.

Exhibit 44. Change Makers Describe the Role of Reading in Their Lives



Two of the 17 changemakers featured in the national reading campaign.

- *Media awards.* To encourage the media to disseminate campaign messages, Soma Umenye organized a media orientation workshop for 70 journalists, media personalities, and social media influencers. At the orientation, attendees learned about the importance of learning to read in the early grades and how they could help spread this message through their print and digital stories. At the end of the campaign, project staff evaluated stories covering the campaign and early grade reading issues to identify those that would earn media awards. Twelve media presentations (stories, videos, etc.) were selected for award.

The campaign also disseminated messages through established WhatsApp groups, Soma Umenye’s YouTube channel, REB’s YouTube channel, and REB’s e-learning platform.

Campaign impact. Given the public health context, evaluation of the campaign’s impact could not include face-to-face elements. As a result, Soma Umenye conducted a public survey using Google surveys (promoted through WhatsApp groups and Twitter targeting parents

and community leaders). About 200 people responded to the survey. The findings show that nearly all respondents (97%) were at least somewhat familiar with the campaign. In addition, more than 90 percent of respondents strongly agreed that literacy was important to them. Nearly half of all respondents (44%) were able to identify the campaign's aim to raise awareness about literacy and to promote a culture of reading among Rwandans. Nearly three quarters of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the campaign had a positive impact on Rwanda's culture of reading.

Exposure and learning visits

Soma Umenye supported various visits in which counterparts could either gather information to help them further their thinking on a key issue (e.g., a study tour) or share information with the international education community regarding what they had achieved in Rwanda.

Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) conference. In 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021 Soma Umenye supported REB officials to present on their achievements in Rwanda to the international audience of education officials and specialists that attend the CIES conference. Participants presented on a range of topics, including assessment in Kinyarwanda, inclusive education, instructional time (see Section 2.7), system strengthening and sustainability, scalable approaches to integrating UDL in instruction, remote learning in Rwanda, and the LEGRA (see Section 2.4).

Study tour to Kenya focused on inclusive education. In 2018, Soma Umenye supported a study tour to Kenya for representatives of REB as well as two organizations of people with disabilities, RNUD and NUDOR, to learn more about Kenya's experience using ICT to promote inclusive education. Study tour participants spoke with members of the Government of Kenya, with providers of inclusive digital content, and with end users of this content (students and teachers). As the result of this trip, Soma Umenye further developed its plans to develop digital texts that incorporated UDL principles and provided inclusive access to all children (see Section 2.6).

Nkombo Island visit. In 2018, Soma Umenye supported REB staff to visit Nkombo Island in Rusizi District. Nkombo Island is one of the few places in Rwanda in which students' first language is not Kinyarwanda. Its residents speak "amashi," which is a mixture of Kinyarwanda and a Congolese language. The visit served to reflect on the foundations of early literacy learning, including the role of Soma Umenye's classroom libraries in building reading skills, and on the need to provide additional support to children whose first language is not Kinyarwanda.

Early Grade Reading Toolkit

Given that key counterparts (at REB and other institutions) will change from time to time, Soma Umenye developed an early grade reading toolkit with essential information that can be used to orient new government officials to the evidence base underlying effective early grade reading instruction. The toolkit covers both national and international evidence that informs early grade reading program design. Core to the toolkit is evidence from Rwanda in locally-administered EGRAs, LEGRAs, the KRC, and other studies from Soma Umenye as well as other development partners.

Exhibit 45. Content of Early Grade Reading Toolkit

Module 1: Student Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building the framework • Early literacy skills (oral language, listening comprehension, print awareness) • Phonological awareness, phonics • Vocabulary • Fluency • Reading comprehension • Writing and spelling • Putting it all together
Module 2: Early Grade Learning Pedagogy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to pedagogy and instruction in early grades • Early literacy skills and strategies (covering the five foundational skills and writing/spelling) • Assessment • Language • Putting it all together
Module 3: Using Data to Plan for Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building the framework • Examining data across a program cycle • Putting it all together

Achievement

USAID Soma Umenye worked closely with REB to increase their access to and use of data to inform lower primary Kinyarwanda policies. The instructional time study was surprising and alarming to many GOR education officials and the National Reading Campaign highlighted the importance of time to literacy education for the wider public. With each new set of data (the EGRA, the LEGRA, etc.), Soma Umenye engaged REB to consider the implications and review what could be learned about the successes and areas for improvement shown in the data.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Increase the time that teachers and students are in the classroom together. The findings of the instructional time study make clear that a significant portion of instructional time is lost in Kinyarwanda classrooms (particularly in rural schools). REB should work with development partners to identify the best strategies to stem this loss. These might include (1) ensuring all foundational skills classes are scheduled when the largest percentage of teachers and students are present, (2) developing information systems that provide timely and reliable data about teacher and student absence/tardiness and using them to work towards improved targets for time on task, (3) motivation and reward schemes for to encourage teachers to reduce absenteeism and tardiness. In addition, REB should continue to communicate to head teachers, teachers, and communities the importance to learning of being in class on time. Districts should consider integrating a measure of teacher and student absence or tardiness into district education plans, with provisions for monitoring progress towards goals.

Increase active instructional time. To ensure that teachers make the best use of the instructional time they have, teacher professional development modalities (pre-service preparation as well as in-service training, coaching, and communities of practice) should equip teachers to deliver more active instructional strategies and deploy core strategies to engage distracted or unengaged students.

2.6 STRENGTHENING GENDER, INCLUSION, AND ICT

SUMMARY OF CORE ACTIVITIES

USAID Soma Umenye integrated a focus on gender and inclusion throughout its capacity building activities. However, the activity also developed resources specifically designed to support children with disabilities to learn to read, including resources in braille and Rwanda Sign Language (RSL). In addition, Soma Umenye provided ICT devices for head teachers, SEIs, and DEOs to bring digital capacity building resources directly to the school, available whenever teachers or coaches wanted them.

Key Achievements

- Developed materials that meet the needs of children with disabilities
- Facilitated completion of a Rwanda Sign Language dictionary, ensuring an agreed upon common set of signs to strengthen education in RSL
- Supported the standardization of the Grade I braille code
- Integrated gender-responsive and inclusive strategies into classroom instruction
- Designed Universal Design for Learning (UDL) pilot
- Provided ICT devices for head teachers (and education managers like DEOs and SEIs) with digitized resources to support school-based capacity building and LEGRA reporting

TLM for Children with Disabilities

In 2019, the GOR created a new Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy, and USAID Soma Umenye worked with the government to help realize its vision of an inclusive education system. Shortly after the adoption of the new policy, Soma Umenye facilitated a high-level consultative workshop with MINEDUC, REB, DPOs, and partners to examine the policy's goals and develop a sector-wide short-term and scaffolded plan. Soma Umenye's approach was then to derive project-specific activities from that plan. The activities presented below represent key activities that lay the groundwork for fulfillment of specific goals of the policy. These include piloting the integration of UDL into instruction (discussed in the next section), finalizing the RSL dictionary, supporting the standardization of the Kinyarwanda braille code, creating readers for children who are deaf and blind, and piloting the use of Orbit Readers for blind children.

Finalize the RSL dictionary. Learning sign language is a critical component of learning to read for deaf children because oral language skills are a necessary prerequisite to literacy skills. In Rwanda, at the start of Soma Umenye, RSL was not recognized as an official language,

preventing consistent and quality support for students who are deaf. While some work had been done to create an official RSL dictionary (specifically the collection of data for the signs), there was disagreement among stakeholders about how to complete the process, which prevented the dictionary from being finalized and going to Cabinet for approval. To address these issues, Soma Umenye helped form a RSL Dictionary Steering Committee to direct the work. Soma Umenye collaborated with the National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) and RNUD to propose a plan and methodology to finalize the RSL dictionary, which will enable the government to validate RSL as an official language. Doing so will facilitate consistent use of RSL in teacher training (pre-service and in-service) and also in TLM. In total, the RSL dictionary now has approximately 2,000 signs as well as a section on the basics of RSL grammar and how to use the dictionary. These have all now been approved by NCPD. Exhibit 46 illustrates two sample entries from the dictionary.

Exhibit 46. Two Entries from the RSL Dictionary

 <p>0403</p>	<p>Gusoma</p> <hr/> <p>Uhagarika ikiganza cy'imoso imbere yawe kikwerekeye, ukandika "V" n'ikiganza cy'indyo cyubitse, hanyuma mukubitarukoko na musumbazose ukazinyuza muri cya kiganza cy'indyo umanuka ndetse n'amaso areba uko izo ntoki zigenda.</p>	<p>To read</p> <hr/> <p>Hold flat left hand in front of body, palm towards body. With right V handshape, palm down, move fingers up and down near the left palm, from fingertips to wrist, while at the same time moving eyes direction of fingers.</p>
 <p>1075</p>	<p>Urukingo</p> <hr/> <p>Ukora "K" igikumwegitunze kuruhande, hanyuma ikiganza kikambukiranya igituza kikagera imbere y'urutugu, maze ugakoza umugongo wa mukubitarukoko na musumbasozze ku rutugu igikumwe kiri hagati yazo.</p>	<p>Vaccine</p> <hr/> <p>With "K" hand, start with thumb out and move to touch back of fingers to opposite shoulder while closing thumb to touch middle finger.</p>

The next steps, which will be largely driven by NCPD and RNUD, are to secure Cabinet approval for the final RSL dictionary and print and disseminate the dictionary to all stakeholders.

Create digital supplementary readers. In Year 4, Soma Umenye collaborated with REB to develop accessible readers for children who are deaf using the 2018 and 2019 Andika Rwanda books (see Section 2.5). During the design phase, Soma Umenye leveraged lessons learned from REB's ongoing accessible digital textbook project, including the importance of digitizing only elements that had a specific pedagogical benefit instead of purely for the sake of digitization. Since REB's vision and strategy for producing accessible digital books is still nascent, Soma Umenye supported REB to develop draft standards for digital supplementary readers. These standards were derived from best practice but contextualized to focus on features that would be appropriate for early grade students in Rwanda. The digital readers included an image of the pdf page of the reader as well as a video of someone signing the content while a narrator reads the page content. However, both of these features (sign language video and audio narration) are optional, meaning that students can select to turn them on based on their learning preferences and needs. Each digital reader also included several interactive reading comprehension questions.



Screenshots of an accessible digital Andika Rwanda book. Audio narration is accompanied by Rwanda Sign Language video.

Standardize the Kinyarwanda braille code. Rwanda has not had a standardized form of Kinyarwanda braille, which means that students are taught slightly different versions (sometimes borrowed from different language braille code, such as French or English). This impacts the code used at two stages of learning braille: the Grade 1 braille code (which spells out words letter by letter) and the Grade 2 braille code (which contracts words and is intended for more experienced braille users). This lack of uniformity makes it difficult for the GOR to use braille to develop a standardized test or for publishers to be assured of their market when they print in braille. To address this problem, Soma Umenye organized a consultative workshop with REB and multiple stakeholders (including the Rwanda Union of the Blind) where participants drafted a unified Kinyarwanda braille code, which includes an agreed-upon Grade 1 braille code.

Participants recognized the need for a unified Grade 2 code, which is generally used with upper primary and secondary school students, and this is one of the next steps in supporting learners who read in braille. Doing so will require inputs from upper primary/secondary braille teachers (and URCE braille experts). Once this code is standardized, it (and the Grade 1 code) can be used to adapt additional TLMs in braille.

Transcribe supplementary readers into braille. USAID Soma Umenye worked closely with subcontractor NUDOR to transcribe and print 54 Grade 1, 2, and 3 Andika Rwanda readers in braille. These books were reviewed against the uniform Grade 1 braille code discussed above, and printed (10 sets of the Grade 1 books and 18 sets of the Grade 2 books) and distributed to eight schools (a selection of mainstream schools, model inclusive schools, and schools for the blind).

Pilot Orbit Readers. Blind students in Rwanda face challenges accessing braille materials for a variety of reasons. One possible tool to overcome these challenges is an assistive device like the Orbit Reader. Orbit Readers are refreshable braille devices that display a row of braille cells made of plastic or metal pins that raise and lower (forming the braille code) as the user moves through a text. Orbit Readers access texts either from an SD card or by syncing to a computer. In Year 5, Soma Umenye piloted the use of Orbit Readers in five schools with

blind students. The Orbit Readers were loaded with P1-P3 Kinyarwanda textbooks, 54 Andika Rwanda leveled reader titles, and 24 decodable readers. The pilot was designed to answer the following research questions:

- Are Orbit Readers suitable for early grade students who are still learning braille or are they better for students who already have a solid foundation in braille? Note that, previously, Orbit Readers had not been used with early grade students in Rwanda.
- For both teachers and students, is the device easy to use and manipulate? Is it easy to access materials loaded on the device?
- Can Orbit Readers play a role in supporting the literacy development of students who are blind?

Soma Umenye and REB staff oriented school staff (the head teacher and one teacher proficient in braille) and students to the use of the Orbit Reader and explained the purpose of the pilot. A month later, Soma Umenye and REB staff returned to the school to conduct focus groups with the teachers and students to learn about their experience using the readers. We review the findings with regard to the research questions described above.

- *Suitable for early grade students.* Teachers in the pilot schools found that the Orbit Reader was more useful to P2 and P3 students who had better foundational knowledge of braille. P1 students spend much of the school year building their basic knowledge of braille. Teachers felt that learning a new technology on top of the braille code was too much for them.
- *Ease of use.* To become proficient in the use of the Orbit Reader, students need the assistance of a teacher who has a good understanding of braille and a basic knowledge of English. Young students may not have experienced technology similar to the Orbit Reader before and required several days of practice to develop the skills to operate the device. They needed a teacher that knows braille to help them understand how to use it, and because the device settings are in English (Kinyarwanda is not currently among the available alternatives), the teacher needs to know basic English to help the student learn to navigate the reader. Teachers might need additional training to ensure they are familiar with both braille and the operation of the Orbit Reader.
- *Role in literacy development.* The Orbit Reader provides students who are blind with access to significantly more reading texts than previously. This is important because when learning to read, students need access to many different types of grade-appropriate text to help them practice their new literacy skills. Orbit Readers could also be a cost-effective investment in that their cost (\$500-\$650 per device) is less than the cost for a school to acquire a braille embosser (often up to \$5,000) and produce books for the small number of students who are blind (in inclusive schools; schools for the blind would obviously have a larger number of blind students).

While it appears that the Orbit Reader may be more cost effective, Soma Umenye recommends that REB consider the need to build teacher skills to help students learn to use the readers, the need to build the braille teaching skills of teachers, as well as the importance of a solid P1 braille education to ensure that the investment in the Orbit Readers bears the best results.

Gender and Inclusion in Classroom Instruction

As part of teacher training and communities of practice (see Section 2.2), Soma Umenye provided materials to support teachers to think through how to ensure gender-responsive instruction that engages both boys and girls to participate in class. This included supporting discussion among teachers about how to avoid gender stereotypes, how to engage both boys and girls, and how to give positive feedback to both boys and girls to keep them engaged. In addition, Soma Umenye provided guidance to support teachers to engage children inclusively, ensuring that children who have low vision or low hearing are seated close to the front. Following the universal design for learning (UDL) pilot described in the next section, Soma Umenye integrated many of these methodologies into teacher professional development resources.

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Pilot

UDL pilot. During implementation, Soma Umenye’s monitoring data indicated that a large portion of early grade students were not mastering basic reading skills (rather, they were scoring zero on reading assessments). While the causes of this underperformance were likely varied, some children might be struggling with disabilities or learning difficulties. To address the needs of these students (as well as their peers), Soma Umenye designed a pilot in which UDL strategies were integrated into instruction to see if these strategies could help boost student performance. These strategies were piloted in 25 PI classrooms in Gicumbi district starting January 2020.

In the pilot, Soma Umenye used existing REB-validated materials, and created a UDL Companion Toolkit for pilot teachers. The toolkit was designed to be used in conjunction with the existing PI teacher’s guide and focused on practical, accessible, and low-resource applications of UDL to existing lessons. It covered different styles of student learning, specific examples of inclusive teaching strategies for each of the five components of literacy, and ways to use local materials to support UDL-informed instruction. It also described several types of student learning difficulties that teachers might face in Rwandan classrooms and described specific strategies that teachers can use to engage all students, regardless of any learning difficulty that they might face. Finally, it included several sample lesson plans to show teachers examples of what a UDL-informed lesson plan might look like.

Soma Umenye trained teachers to build their understanding of (1) inclusive education; (2) UDL principles; (3) how to apply UDL to reading instruction, looking specifically at the five components of literacy (phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and fluency) and writing; (4) how to use local materials to support the application of UDL in the classroom; and (5) inclusive classroom management strategies. In addition, Soma Umenye made adjustments to the coaching tools that designated coaches in pilot schools used to ensure a focus on inclusive instructional approaches.

In March 2020, Soma Umenye conducted a lesson observation and discussed progress to date with teachers. Exhibit 47 describes a range of the instructional strategies that teachers were using at the end of the first term of the pilot.

Exhibit 47. Examples of observed UDL strategies in Term I 2020

UDL principle	Instructional strategies observed
Multiple means of engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual schedules: At the beginning of the class, teachers were observed introducing the activities of the class on a schedule with pictures. Some teachers also invited children to come and point to the components of the lesson including the new letter demonstrated on the schedule. • Songs and movement: Some teachers were observed using the alphabet song creatively by asking students to clap when they reach a letter that they have learned or having students follow along in their textbook and pointing to the letters as they sign them • Concrete objects and images: Teachers were observed bringing objects into the classroom (e.g., an object that contained the target letter) and passing it around to students so they could touch and feel it. Some teachers also drew illustrations from a read aloud story on large grain sacks (large enough for all students to see) and asked students to point to certain elements in the picture or describe what they thought was happening.
Multiple means of representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manipulatives: When teaching new letters and blends, some teachers created flashcards with letters and words on them and used the “I do, we do, you do” method to work with students in whole group and small groups. • Small group practice: Some teachers utilized small group exercises like “turn and talk” and “think pair share” to engage a greater number of students.
Multiple means of action and expression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment in pairs: Teachers were observed putting students into pairs and having one student read the syllables or words to the other student while the other student follows along in his/her book. Then, the roles are reversed. While students are reading, the teacher circulated the room to check for understanding. • Individual assessment: When learning a new letter, teachers were observed asking a student to walk to the walls of the room, find, and then point to the target letter in print-rich materials. • Whole/small group assessment: When practicing reading and reviewing syllables, teachers were observed asking students to first go through a passage and count how many times the target syllable appeared. Students were then asked to share their answer with their group or the whole class.

Unfortunately, as a result of the pandemic, the pilot was canceled in 2020. Soma Umenye tried to implement it in 2021, but the public health context also made that impossible. Encouragingly though, REB has embraced UDL as a framework for inclusive teaching and Soma Umenye supported REB to integrate UDL strategies into its national remediation guide.

ICT-Enabled Early Grade Reading Activities

In Year 5, Soma Umenye distributed tablets and laptops to education sector actors (as described in Exhibit 48). The devices aimed to support improved school

management, promote school-based continuous professional development for teachers and head teachers, and provide a direct channel to improve teaching and learning for students through collection and analysis of assessment results. In addition, Soma Umenye provided phones to be used by teachers for professional development.

Exhibit 48. Distribution of ICT Devices

School		
	2,573 tablets to head teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture LEGRA data and generate school reports • Conduct coaching and complete/submit reports • Facilitate communities of practice and share digital resources
	600 phones to head teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable effective communications with school community, sector and district • Engage with CPD resources including videos and training guides • Enable planning of LEGRA and structured CoP with district and sector
Sector		
	182 tablets to SEIs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct head teacher coaching and complete/submit reports • Share digital resources for communities of practice • Review school LEGRA data and develop sector reports
District		
	30 laptops to DEOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review summary data about school coaching performance • Review sector LEGRA data and develop district reports

Soma Umenye and REB uploaded a number of resources to the tablets before distribution in order to ensure effective coordination of assessment, coaching, and communities of practice. These resources included student books, teachers’ guides, decodables, training modules and videos (as described in Exhibit 49).

Exhibit 49. Materials Available on Tablets

Essential core materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1-P3 student textbooks • P1-P3 teacher guides • P1 decodable readers • Andika Rwanda readers • P1-P3 read aloud books
P1-P3 teacher training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1-P3 teacher training modules (modules 1-3) • Newly qualified/re-deployed teacher training manual

School leader training materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leader training (modules 1-3) and refresher training
LEGRA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-assessment video • Post-assessment video • School inama video • LEGRA guide
Classroom library materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six classroom library videos • Classroom library guide
Community of practice materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community of practice facilitator guides for initial meetings • Facilitating a school-level community of practice video • Decodables video • Formative assessment videos (set of 3) • Kinyarwanda coaching video • Six self-learning videos on evidence-based instruction per reading sub-skill (phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing)

The devices were used in a range of Soma Umenye interventions as described below.

School-based training of new teachers. Following REB’s recruitment of new teachers for the 2021 school year, COVID-19 guidelines initially prevented face-to-face training to orient these new teachers to evidence-based early grade reading methodology. Soma Umenye supported REB to provide schools with guidelines for a school-based orientation program for new teachers (see Section 2.2). These guidelines encouraged head teachers to lend their tablet to lead teachers for use in communities of practice and coaching activities for new teachers as they learned how to use Soma Umenye-support instructional approaches and resources. In addition to holding soft copies of core instruction materials (teacher’s guides, student textbooks, and read aloud story books), the tablets also contained videos orienting teachers on the five components of literacy instruction and effective management of classroom libraries.

Coaching. As part of the coaching process, designated school-based coaches (the head teacher or dean of studies) are supposed to fill out a coaching plan (detailing when s/he plans to coach the P1-P3 teachers in their school). The form for these plans is available on the tablet, which enables head teachers to submit them electronically for SEI review. Coaches are also able to access reporting forms for their notes about each coaching session. Soma Umenye’s monitoring data suggests that head teachers are just beginning to establish comfort with performing these coaching duties using the tablet-based forms, but they have the benefit of enabling SEI review (and coaching of the school-based coach).

Communities of practice. The school-based coach is also expected to lead the school’s monthly community of practice for Kinyarwanda teachers. The tablets include multiple

resources (see Exhibit 49 above) for use during the community of practice. They also have reporting forms for coaches to detail their community of practice plans as well as to report on the topics discussed at each meeting. Soma Umenye’s monitoring data also suggests that this practice is just beginning, but to date reported topics for communities of practice are time on task, parent engagement, use of decodables, and remedial activities for students (among others).

LEGRA administration. During the nationwide roll-out of LEGRA training in Year 5, school leaders were asked to bring tablets to the training (and refresher training) so they could practice using them to enter and submit LEGRA data and to prepare to conduct the community meeting (inama) about LEGRA results. Training focused on data management and tablet use, particularly on data entry. The tablets also included videos about the LEGRA process (see Exhibit 12), including the pre-assessment meeting, the post-assessment meeting, and the community inama. Entering data through the tablets allows for DEOs and SEIs to have quick access to results and for quicker aggregation of full results.



PHOTO: Emma-Claudine Ntirenganya for USAID Soma Umenye.

School leaders in Muhanga District use their tablets (provided by Soma Umenye) to participate in the school leader refresher training.

Achievement

USAID Soma Umenye leveraged the release of the REB’s new special needs policy to help advance issues critical to literacy acquisition for children who are deaf and blind in the standardization of RSL and the Grade braille code. Soma Umenye also helped REB localize its approach to UDL for Rwandan classrooms. While the pilot was unfortunately interrupted, the commitment to this approach remains within REB and among teachers who were exposed to these strategies through communities of practice and school-based orientation. Soma Umenye also helped integrate technology as an educational tool for children who are deaf and head teachers, who now have access to an array of resources on tablets to support their professional development activities and help them communicate and understand LEGRA results.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND REMEDIATION ACTIONS

Delays in the production and approval of accessible digital readers. In Quarters 2 and 3, Soma Umenye experienced challenges in receiving REB approval of the accessible digital Andika Rwanda prototypes. After working closely with REB for several months, it became clear to Soma Umenye that the biggest challenge in approving the books was that REB did not have accessible digital standards against which to evaluate the project's prototypes. REB has some draft guidelines for accessible digital textbooks; however, there are differences between digitizing a textbook and digitizing a supplementary reader. To address this issue, Soma Umenye supported REB to develop standards and guidelines for accessible digital supplementary readers. Co-developing these standards with REB, and – in parallel – reviewing and revising the accessible digital Andika Rwanda readers led to a more efficient review process. Having the standards will also support REB with developing other accessible digital supplementary readers in the future.

Delays in tablet procurement. Soma Umenye originally planned to procure tablets just prior to the pandemic, but once the pandemic hit the activity reprioritized its activities (focusing on supporting remote learning). Once staff again looked to procure tablets, there were some challenges related to disrupted supply chains to securing devices at the desired price. In the end, Soma Umenye did not deliver tablets to schools until February 2021. However, because lower primary classrooms were closed between March 2020 and January 2021, beneficiaries received the tablets in advance of key activities (including training) and therefore were able to use them to mentor and coach teachers and analyze assessment data as expected.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Continue investing in inclusive education. Inclusive education is good education for all. While children with specific disabilities benefit from targeted support in special schools (given the lack of resources/skills in mainstream schools), mainstream schools should focus on using inclusive teaching practices in all lessons. For example, an approved Rwanda Sign Language opens the door to improved deaf education; however, sign language education must start before students attend school (with families and communities). Additional investment is recommended to support families and children who are deaf to learn to communicate in sign language from an early age.

Teachers in mainstream classrooms need continued support on inclusive teaching practices/methodologies to engage more students in their classroom (these methodologies do not necessarily need to be tailored to individual disabilities as teachers often do not know who has a disability; rather, they need to represent good teaching practices and focus on things such as small group work and student-centered practice)

Continue to support teachers to integrate UDL strategies into instruction. REB has embraced the use of UDL in classroom instruction, and we encourage them to continue to support teachers to integrate UDL strategies into their classrooms. A key strategy may be integrating a focus on UDL in pre-service education to ensure that new teachers have exposure to and experience with these approaches and can begin using them from the start of their teaching careers. In addition, REB may want to integrate these strategies into the

teacher's guide (working from the Soma Umenye-support UDL pilot teacher's guide) to support classroom teachers to use them.

SNAPSHOT

New teachers supported through school-based coaching

School-based training is a timely and sustainable response to Covid limitations.



PHOTO: USAID Soma Umenye

A lead teacher orients new lower primary teachers on early grade reading teaching methodology. (Kigali, March 2021)

USAID Soma Umenye supports the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) to ensure early grade teachers are equipped with effective strategies to teach reading and writing in Kinyarwanda. Improved teaching will facilitate achievement of the goal that all children are able to read fluently in Kinyarwanda by the end of Primary grade 3.

Following extensive school construction by the Ministry of Education to ensure a safe return to school, REB recruited approximately 7,000 new teachers for lower primary. Soma Umenye is committed to provide all new early grade teachers with training on evidence-based instructional techniques for reading in Kinyarwanda. However, due to health guidelines, traditional face-to-face mass training was not possible.

In response, USAID Soma Umenye supported REB to design and implement a school-based orientation for new teachers. The five-week program focused on delivering core skills that early grade teachers required to teach Term I content and utilized a lead teacher in each school to provide direct support to new teachers through coaching and lesson observations. A lead teacher was one who had previously received USAID Soma Umenye's early grade Kinyarwanda reading training.

Project monitoring found that most schools were able to at least partially implement the program, with a focus on reviewing the five components of literacy and familiarizing new teachers with core instructional materials. New teachers also had the chance to observe lead teachers in the classroom and then be observed themselves. During debriefs and Communities of Practice, new teachers received additional guidance to continuously improve.

Mr. Noel Nahimana, a new teacher in Ngororero district did not graduate from a Teacher Training College (TTC). He said, "I am not a TTC graduate, but I can now teach confidently. I thank the school for giving me the opportunity to learn new skills and I wish that we will be given another such training."

Though headteachers still request for more in-depth face-to-face training, they believed the program was successful in meeting an urgent need. One lead teacher from Kigali City told REB that she believes the school-based approach to training should be applied to other subjects as well. She went on to say, "Supporting new teachers through this program also gave me an opportunity to review what I have previously received training on, which is useful as we begin the new school year."

The Director of Teacher Training at REB, Mr. Gerard Murasira, appreciated Soma Umenye's support of this "home-grown solution". He agreed that it is a method which can be applied to other subjects as it allows schools to take ownership to meet the needs identified among their teachers.

SNAPSHOT

Strengthening National Early Grade Reading Assessment

Oral reading fluency and comprehension tests made part of national assessment.



PHOTO: USAID Soma Umenye

An enumerator conducts an individual student assessment during LARS IV. (Nyabihu, March 2021)

Since 2018, USAID Soma Umenye has worked closely with the Rwanda Education Board (REB) to review and revise an early grade reading Kinyarwanda assessment framework in order to promote foundational skills of individual learners based on a strong assessment system. In March 2021, this collaboration reached a milestone success with the Ministry of Education's Learning Achievement in Rwandan Schools (LARS IV) assessment including individual timed oral reading fluency and comprehension tests for the first time.

From 2018, the early grade reading Kinyarwanda assessment framework was revised to better align with the curriculum, performance descriptors and assessment metrics. Soma Umenye supported REB to develop an assessment item bank and deliver a national sample-based Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) using the new framework.

Based on the successful work, REB and Soma Umenye embarked on a process to develop annual oral reading fluency and comprehension benchmarks for P1 to P3 Kinyarwanda. The benchmarks are regionally and internationally comparable and, when applied, will allow Rwanda to report on both the Sustainable Development Goal indicator for Quality Education (SDG 4) and the Human Capital Index.

Following the validation of the benchmarks, REB requested Soma Umenye's support to plan the fourth iteration of their LARS assessment with the specific aim to add individual timed oral reading fluency and comprehension tests for early grade Kinyarwanda. Soma Umenye supported question item bank development and enumerator training. LARS IV was delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 but was successfully administered between 15 February and 1 March 2021 in 295 schools in all 30 districts of Rwanda.

The addition of individual timed oral reading fluency and comprehension tests mean that LARS IV will produce internationally comparable early grade reading data, thus contributing to more informed decision-making in order to achieve national reading targets and address barriers to Rwanda's human capital development.

Dr. Alphonse Sebanwa, Head of Assessment at the National Examination and School Inspection Authority, has appreciated the advantage that the updated LARS assessment will provide the sector. "Reading is a foundation to all learning. Individual assessment of learners' reading fluency and comprehension will enable us to get a better picture of specific areas where learners are struggling so that necessary action can be taken at the right levels."

SECTION 3

PROGRAMMING PIVOTS DURING COVID-19

In early 2020, COVID-19 changed schooling for children around the world. Rwanda reported the country's first case on March 14, 2020. The government reacted quickly, closing schools on March 16 and moving into a national lockdown on March 21.

3.1 BUILDING EDUCATION RESILIENCE DURING COVID-19

The pandemic clearly restructured Soma Umenye's delivery of support past March 2020. Schools for lower primary children were closed between March 2020 and January or February 2021 (depending on where the school was located). To support maintenance of learning, Soma Umenye helped develop radio lessons and digital books. Once schools reopened but social distancing requirements remained in place, Soma Umenye developed methods for distance CPD to prepare education personnel for the new school year.

DISTANCE LEARNING



PHOTO: Alain Patrick Mwirerwa for USAID Soma Umenye.

A lower primary student practices Kinyarwanda reading with support from a radio broadcast in Nyarugenge District.

Soma Umenye worked with REB to create audio lessons, which were first broadcast for PI-P3 students over radio 10 days into school closures. The lessons ran 20 minutes, were broadcast twice a week per grade, were aligned with the government curriculum, and covered the five foundational skills of reading (as appropriate to the grade). Approximately, every fourth lesson was a review lesson that went back over the content learned in the

previous three lessons. In total, Soma Umenye helped REB create 237 radio lessons (79 per grade), which covered the full P1-P3 curriculum. The lessons were validated by REB and most were broadcast by REB on national radio. While these lessons were developed as a response to COVID-19 school closures, they will also serve as a key resource for REB in the event of future school disruptions and, as needed, can support/supplement future teacher training and remediation activities.

Digital Books

To provide additional learning resources (in addition to the textbooks that many children took home), Soma Umenye developed and distributed digital Andika Rwanda readers both in compressed PDF and read aloud video format (54 titles in total). In the videos, Soma Umenye included reading comprehension questions and guidance for parents on how to use these videos to read with their children. Project staff worked with REB to ensure that all online materials were uploaded to REB's eLearning platform, posted on Soma Umenye's YouTube channel and circulated through WhatsApp and Twitter. In addition, Soma Umenye's district advisors had created WhatsApp groups with more than 3,000 parents to share remote learning materials.



PHOTO: Emma-Claudine Ndiranganya for USAID Soma Umenye.

Niyifasha Sonia, a child who is deaf, practices sign language vocabulary as she interacts with an accessible digital Andika Rwanda storybook.

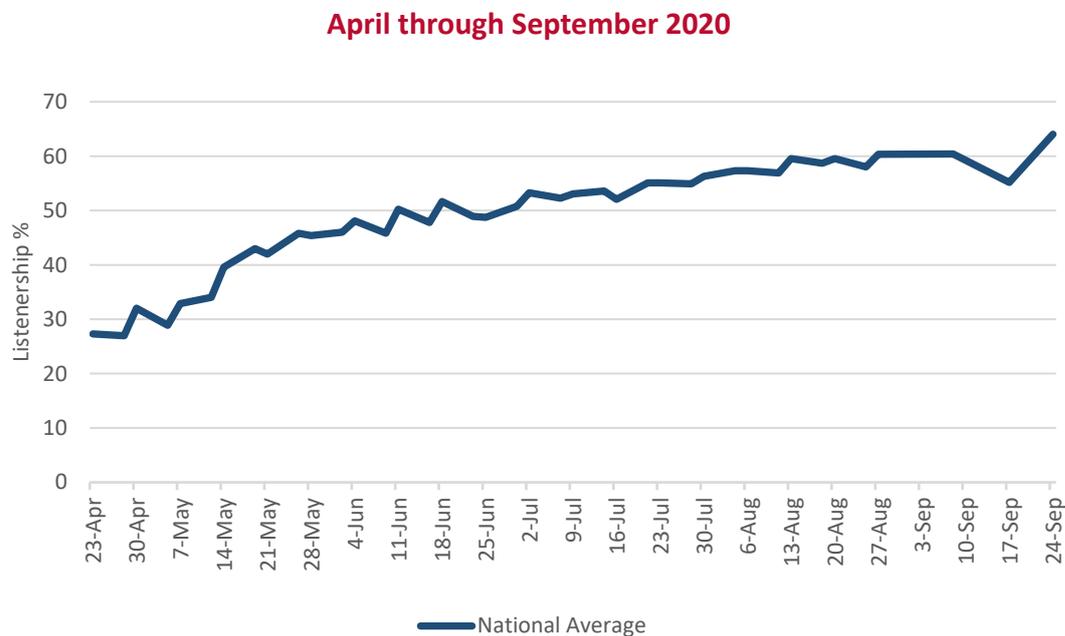
3.2 MONITORING ENGAGEMENT

Monitoring efforts

USAID Soma Umenye worked closely with REB to track student participation in remote learning, serving as the co-chair with REB of the Remote Learning MEL Task Force. Initially, few students (only about 30 percent) were listening to radio lessons. To engage more children in the radio lessons, Soma Umenye engaged DEOs, SEIs, and local officials to share

with parents the broadcast times of the radio lessons and how they could help their children participate and continue to learn. By September (six months into the pandemic), Soma Umenye found that 64% of parents/guardians interviewed said that their child followed the Kinyarwanda radio lessons. However, only 10% of parents reported that child accessed and engaged with the digital Andika Rwanda books. Exhibit 50 shows how the national average of radio listenership has changed since the beginning of remote monitoring efforts.

Exhibit 50. National average of students listening to P1-P3 Kinyarwanda lessons



Remote Learning Study

During the pandemic, Soma Umenye collected monitoring data on more than 49,000 households across Rwanda. These data identified a wide range of participation in radio lessons and remote learning across districts, with some participation rates as high as 88% or as low as 34% (of those surveyed). REB wanted to understand the reasons for the variation; therefore, in 2020, Soma Umenye designed a study with four research objectives:

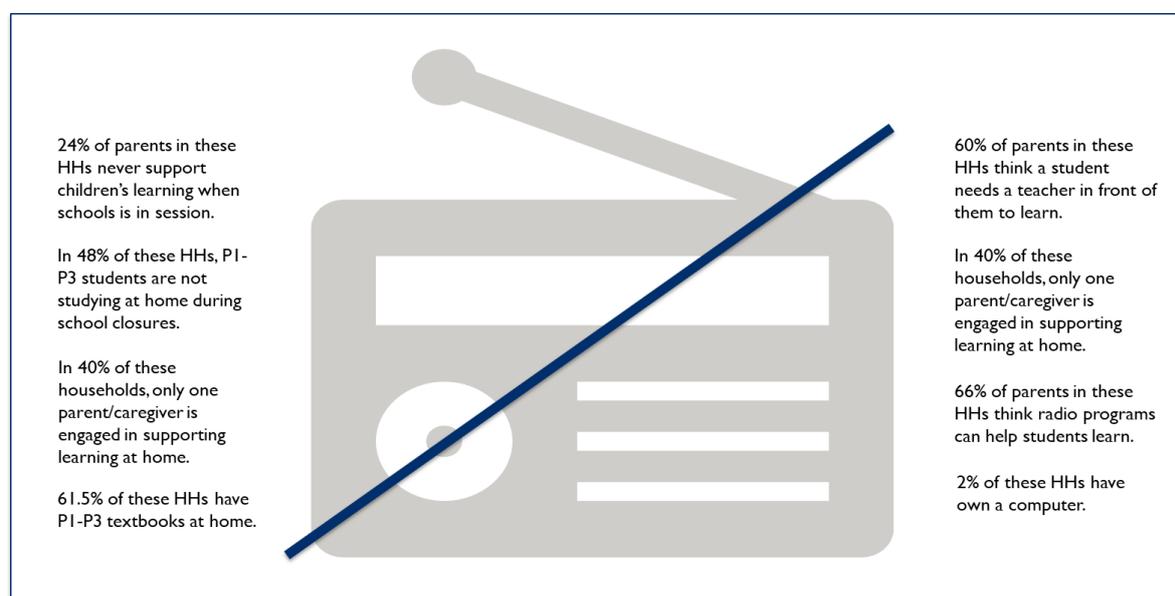
- To understand why some households are participating in radio lessons and why some are not participating.
- To learn more about households’ practices and attitudes with respect to children learning at home.
- To identify the resources that households have to support learning.
- To support REB in their planning for continued radio lessons after schools open.

In late 2020, Soma Umenye collected data from 250 randomly selected households across nine districts (the sample was selected purposively from rural households in low resource areas participating in the radio lessons, rural households in high resources areas not participating in the radio lessons, and urban households that were not participating in the radio lessons). Soma Umenye’s district advisors collected data over the phone using a tablet-based survey with a total of 231 parents/caregivers and 91 students participating.

Exhibit 51. Summary View of Households Participating in Radio Lessons



Exhibit 52. Summary View of Households Not Participating in Radio Lessons



The study found that the following factors influence student participation in Kinyarwanda radio lessons:

- Not surprisingly, general awareness of the Kinyarwanda radio lessons is the most important factor associated with child participation in the radio lessons. When caregivers are aware of the radio lessons, children are 54 percentage points more likely to participate in the radio lessons compared with children whose parent/caregiver is not aware.⁵
- Children whose caregiver knows the days when Kinyarwanda lessons are broadcasted are 25 percentage points more likely to participate in the radio lessons, indicating that more detailed knowledge about program specifics is associated with participation.⁶ This

⁵ Statistically significant at 1% significance level.

⁶ Statistically significant at 1% significance level.

may also be confounded with general caregiver interest and engagement in children's education.

- Having a stand-alone radio in the household is associated with children being 25 percentage points more likely to participate, an important factor when we consider future investments to support remote radio-based learning.⁷
- Children from households in which the caregiver listens to the radio on a phone are 13 percentage points more likely to participate in the lessons than if caregiver reports not listening the radio on a phone. This might indicate that having more ways to listen to the radio (stand-alone radio and phone) increases participation.⁸
- Importantly, children whose caregiver believe that students are capable of learning even if they are not in a classroom with a teacher are also 25 percentage points more likely to participate. This is an important signal that communication and advocacy at the community and family level is critical.⁹
- Counterintuitively, having someone else who supports children in the household besides the caregiver is negatively associated with participation (only at the 10% significance level). This finding may reflect households that have multiple children where caregivers are not able to fully support students' learning.

3.3. PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND REMEDIATION ACTIONS

The pandemic brought the very obvious challenge that schools were closed and learning had to shift to a remote format. However, it brought some less obvious challenges, which are detailed below.

New classrooms/schools. In 2020, MINEDUC began construction of more than 22,000 new classrooms (nursery, primary, and secondary), in part, to ease the challenge of overcrowded classrooms. In addition to new classrooms in existing schools, there were 562 newly constructed primary schools. Because Soma Umenye had already distributed TLM prior to this time, these schools began operations without project-supported TLM. However, Soma Umenye was able to navigate several lockdowns (which prohibited travel) to deliver TLM to these new schools. Even with this rapid distribution, not every new school/classroom has enough materials to support Soma Umenye's goal of a 1:1 ratio of textbook to learner.

New P1-P3 teachers. Prior to schools re-opening in 2021, REB hired nearly 7,000 new teachers to teach Kinyarwanda in P1-P3 (due to the needs of the pandemic, the new schools, and a shift from subject to classroom teachers). The majority of these were new teachers (as REB had conducted a large-scale teacher recruitment in Year 4 and at the beginning of Year 5); however, some were teachers who had been reassigned to the early grades (and previously trained Grade 1-3 teachers had been shifted to other grades). This number of new teachers was far larger than the normal 1,500 teachers or so who move grades each year. None of these teachers had been trained in Soma Umenye-supported approaches, but perhaps more challenging was that approximately 30% of them had no teaching qualifications. With the inability to conduct face-to-face training prior to the start of Term 1 (due to COVID-19 guidelines), these new teachers, and the students that they were assigned to teach, faced challenges in taking up their new responsibilities.

⁷ Statistically significant at 1% significance level.

⁸ Statistically significant at 5% significance level.

⁹ Statistically significant at 1% significance level.

Despite this challenge, Soma Umenye acted quickly to support REB implement the School-Based Orientation Program (described above) which provided some “just in time” support at the school-level. This did not completely replace face-to-face training and, when COVID-19 restrictions eased, Soma Umenye conducted a four-day training on the foundations of early grade reading for new P1-P3 teachers. The early grades are critical for building foundational skills and this challenge reinforced the importance of ongoing advocacy for P1-P3 teachers (particularly those who receive training) to remain in their assigned grade for a minimum number of years.

Double P1 cohort. The GOR made the decision to have students whose 2020 school year had been interrupted by the pandemic repeat the grade they were in in 2020. As a result, the 2021 entering P1 students joined the 2020 cohort to create a double P1 cohort. Not only did this result in challenges with TLMs for the double cohort but it also created challenges for schools and teachers. Teachers (some of whom were new to the profession) were faced with the challenge of managing a mixed group of students (some of whom had been in school in 2020 and some of whom had never been in school). In response, Soma Umenye strengthened support for P1 students, particularly through the distribution of decodable readers, the production of a decodable reader radio program, messaging through the National Reading Campaign, and P1 support strategies in the School-Based Orientation program.

3.4. LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Expand plans for future school closures. Rwanda’s 2020 plan for the continuation of learning in the face of school closures came together quickly and efficiently, but it was, of course, less complete than a plan made in advance. While many teachers and head teachers took on roles during the pandemic to support ongoing learning, their roles were not defined. We recommend that REB consider defining their roles in areas like tracking student participation and supporting children without sufficient access to remote learning. Doing so would help fill some of the gaps that necessarily occurred during the 2020 remote learning activities.

Develop strategies to measure student learning during remote learning. During school closures, REB focused on promoting student participation in remote learning, which is a critical first step. As a next step, REB should consider developing strategies (which may need to include teachers visiting students periodically) to measure the degree to which students are learning during remote learning. Doing so would also enable them to test the effectiveness of different remote learning methodologies (radio lessons, SMS lessons, online learning, etc.) that could be repurposed to meet remediation needs.

SNAPSHOT

Parent and Community Engagement in Learning

Vulnerable students are supported by their community to learn and read from home



PHOTO: Alain-Patrick Mwirerwa/ USAID Soma Umenye

Jean Pierre Komezusenge sits with five children as they listen to a Kinyarwanda radio lesson and do an assignment in Huye District.

In early 2020, Rwanda launched a national reading campaign in order to persuade parents and communities that children must learn to read in early grades if they are to succeed in school. When COVID-19 arrived and the government closed schools, the campaign found a new scope in persuading parents and communities across the country to take on the role of teachers themselves.

When schools closed, USAID Soma Umenye re-focused its support for the Rwanda Education Board on the production of early grade Kinyarwanda radio lessons. These lessons, which teach foundational literacy skills, including phonological awareness and listening comprehension, are broadcast on national radio twice a week. However, early monitoring of the radio audience revealed that many students were not listening to the radio lessons, some due to a lack of radios.

To increase student listeners, the government of Rwanda began an awareness campaign that drew on reading campaign messaging to promote the role of parents and communities in supporting children to learn and practice reading at home. Public service announcements played on radio and local authorities included reminders during their daily health announcements. The messages had an impact.

In Huye district, Jean Pierre Komezusenge supports his own children as well as his neighbor's children, who do not own a radio, to follow the lessons each day. After the lessons, he helps the children continue to practice reading and uses his smartphone to share digital books, which are sent weekly by USAID Soma Umenye over WhatsApp.

Jeanne D'Arc Kayitesi, a teacher trainer in one of Rwanda's Teacher Training Colleges, also supports children. "I support six Primary I students to continue learning remotely. Besides the remote learning lessons, I spend three hours each Sunday evening, helping them to review the Kinyarwanda lessons. I have been supporting all of them since shortly after the program started and I will continue until schools resume their activities," she promised.

USAID Soma Umenye supports REB's efforts to improve reading outcomes in Kinyarwanda.

SECTION 4

TRANSITION TO GOVERNMENT

4.1. ENABLING TRANSITION TO GOVERNMENT

SUMMARY OF CORE ACTIVITIES

USAID Soma Umenye’s approach to supporting the transition of activities to government was to design them as much as possible in partnership with GOR officials and implement them the same way. In this way, walking step-by-step with GOR officials, activity staff ensured that the intervention responded to and was meeting the needs of government.

Embedded support. In the first half of Soma Umenye, the activity embedded two staff within REB.¹⁰ The first staff person was a development partner coordinator that provided direct assistance to the director general of REB regarding how to keep development partner assistance harmonized with REB initiatives and also among various partners. This role was extremely helpful in promoting donor coordination, expanding REB capacity to do so, and was clearly appreciated by REB. The second staff person was a Kinyarwanda specialist embedded in REB’s curriculum department to support the revision of the Soma Umenye-supported Kinyarwanda TLM. This position was also appreciated by REB and expanded their capacity to focus on Kinyarwanda TLM.

Performance standards. REB had performance standards for several years when Soma Umenye started but they were not in use and education-sector actors were not familiar with them. Soma Umenye worked closely with REB specialists to develop the revised performance standards using a modified Angoff method (see Section 2.4). This approach relies on the expertise of master Kinyarwanda teachers, which was an expertise that REB was familiar with and trusted. As the result of using this highly participatory method (with a skilled facilitator), REB helped drive the standards revision process and approved the resulting standards for distribution across schools.

Comprehensive assessment. From the beginning, Soma Umenye’s support of comprehensive assessment was a partnership with REB. It included both LEGRA and the LARS-EGRA integration (see Section 2.4).

- *LEGRA.* In designing the LEGRA, Soma Umenye worked with REB to develop a tool that it (and school-level personnel) could use to understand the progress students were making towards grade-level standards. In implementing the LEGRA, Soma Umenye worked closely with DEOs and SEIs, some of whom were part of the team that developed LEGRA or were part of the National Reading

¹⁰ Soma Umenye had originally intended to embed a larger number of staff, but REB decided that it didn’t want a large number of embedded staff.

Training Team, which trained school leaders on the implementation of LEGRA. This reality helped schools to understand that this was a government-driven effort. Soma Umenye also worked closely with NESAs to create a LEGRA dashboard (in advance of NESAs comprehensive assessment dashboard) that can be used to review and visualize LEGRA data. NESAs have been trained in the use of this dashboard and is prepared to take it forward. In advance of the development of the dashboard, schools, sectors and districts have been working with LEGRA reports throughout 2021 so they are familiar with the delivery of the assessment and the reporting of results. In 2022, as NESAs determine the next step with the comprehensive assessment management information system, they will need to decide whether the LEGRA dashboard remains a stand-alone site or becomes integrated into the comprehensive assessment dashboard they are developing.

There is significant potential to support not just school remediation following reflection on LEGRA results, but also sector, district, and national turnaround strategies, focusing on schools that have performed significantly lower than district or sector averages. In addition, there is room for more in-depth diagnostics of LEGRA data to identify potential common areas of weakness which may require a revision to how a section of the curriculum is taught.

- *LARS.* Soma Umenye included multiple REB specialists in the design and piloting of the 2018 EGRA instruments. As part of this process, REB specialists participated in discussions about key assessment design choices related to the characteristics of Kinyarwanda as a language as well as the process of piloting the instruments in schools (which gave them first-hand experience of student achievement). This collaboration set up the later partnership on LARS, when REB requested support to integrate Soma Umenyes items measuring oral reading fluency and reading comprehension into the LARS assessment. Soma Umenye worked with REB to create a roadmap of activities with multiple partners to ensure that REB got the support it needed to implement its national assessment.

School-based professional development resources. Soma Umenye has provided REB (on its e-Learning platform) and all head teachers (on their tablets) with digital copies of all Soma Umenyes professional development materials (training modules as well as model videos) covering classroom instruction, assessment, the use of classroom libraries, coaching, communities of practice, and LEGRA and KRC.

Supply chain toolkit. Soma Umenye worked closely with REB on print quality assurance of Soma Umenye-supported textbooks (engaging consultants to help build capacity during that process). The supply chain toolkit grew out of that work and provides a ready resource for REB as it continues to build its capacity to manage its TLM supply chain.

Early grade reading toolkit. Given the benefits members of REB gained when they attended an early grade reading course as part of CIES, Soma Umenye developed an early grade reading toolkit that new members of REB could use to orient themselves to the key issues in early grade reading and review the international and Rwandan evidence base for them.

Special needs and inclusive education. After Rwanda’s Special Needs and Inclusive Education Policy was updated in 2019, Soma Umenye worked with REB to establish an implementation framework for the policy (involving all other relevant development partners). Next, Soma Umenye partnered with REB and local partners to create some of the tools needed to implement the policy. These tools included a standardized Grade 1 braille code, a validated Rwanda Sign Language dictionary, and an approach to UDL for early grade literacy that could be implemented across the country. Working to help establish these working structures and tools, Soma Umenye helped strengthen REB’s ability to support special needs and inclusive education across disciplines. Soma Umenye also helped strengthen the local partners (like NCPD, NUDOR, and RNUD), who are better equipped to take forward issues related to RSL and braille. Significant future investment will be required to apply both the RSL dictionary to the every day lives of deaf people and their families and to apply the improvements in braille code to enhance accessibility to braille products to all blind people, including the potential expansion of technology such as the Orbit readers.

Crisis and recovery planning. Soma Umenye worked with REB to develop and then transferred 237 radio lessons covering the full P1-P3 curriculum. These resources can be used during any future disruptions to schooling. Throughout the COVID-19 crisis, Soma Umenye worked with REB in contingency planning for school re-opening. As part of this process, Soma Umenye helped them scenario plan to identify plausible options and appropriate courses of action in each scenario. Given the fluidity of the public health situation, Soma Umenye worked through several cycles of planning with REB over the course of 2020. As part of this work, Soma Umenye discussed with REB the need to build in a cycle of assessment and remediation once schools were back in session to give school personnel the tools they would need to identify students who had fallen behind and help them catch up. Unfortunately, REB was not able to carry these remediation plans forward in 2021 due to COVID restrictions and the large number of new teachers.

COVID 19 not only closed schools, it also closed REB offices and mobilized key staff to focus on back-to-school planning, teacher recruitment, and other COVID responses. This impacted Soma Umenye’s plans to deliver LEGRA in 2020 and the planned reflection on LEGRA data, which would have drawn from the draft early grade reading toolkit and provided contextualization with local data. While LEGRA was delivered in 2021, there was little opportunity to engage REB or NESAs with data and to start to reflect on potential areas for improved learner outcomes, though this discussion did start to take place at a higher level following Soma Umenye’s closing event, where recommendations were presented and at a combined MINEDUC World Bank event, where recommendations were explored in more depth. As a result, Soma Umenye has adapted the early grade reading toolkit and added contextualization to be part of NESAs and REB future reflection on learner outcomes and potential for further improvement.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND REMEDIATION ACTIONS

Turnover among government counterparts. Over the course of the activity, Soma Umenye frequently had to orient new GOR counterparts to work in progress (or

complete) and gradually build their trust in that work. During Soma Umenye, REB was led by several different people, and there was turnover among key department heads (for example, no director general served longer than about two years). Of course, new people bring new perspectives which can also be fruitful. Soma Umenye's school based orientation initiative was presented, agreed and delivered under the leadership of the acting director general in January/February 2021.

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Build on government counterparts' priorities. While Soma Umenye focused on school-based assessment throughout the life of the activity, in 2019 the cabinet resolution to establish a comprehensive assessment system meant that Soma Umenye's efforts achieved significantly more traction. Following this event, Soma Umenye was able to develop an extremely productive relationship with REB authorities in charge of comprehensive assessment.

Co-create with counterparts. After encountering challenges with the development of the P1 textbook in 2017, Soma Umenye began a co-development collaboration process, which included the P1-P3 essential core, the 2018 EGRA baseline instruments, EGRA administration, and LEGRA design and roll-out. This approach to cultivating ownership had significant impact. Because Soma Umenye had established strong working relationships with REB, we were able to secure a Made in Rwanda waiver, enable integration of EGRA items into LARS, and support development of learner benchmarks, LEGRA, and KRC.

When Soma Umenye and USAID had to negotiate a temporary waiver from the Made in Rwanda directive to enable earlier printing of the P2 and P3 textbook, the strength of relationship with REB was a significant factor enabling agreement. Similarly, the collaboration with EGRA, and building a core team which remained working with Soma Umenye, allowed REB ESAD to co-develop the revised Kinyarwanda learner benchmarks, LEGRA, KRC and the adoption of ORF and RC within LARS IV. This approach to co-design and co-delivery is a key differentiator for Soma Umenye and the progress made has contributed not just to project success but also to systemic change and sustainability. For example, in December 2021, NESA will deliver Term I LEGRA without Soma Umenye.

Collaborate with other development partners to develop an approach that covers multiple areas of education officials' focus. Soma Umenye occasionally faced challenges because it focused on reading in Kinyarwanda while REB was sometimes more concerned about driving change in English or math education. To address this challenge, Soma Umenye framed its work in developing an assessment and accountability system as building a model that REB could use for other subjects. In fact, REB did go on to apply what staff learned with Soma Umenye about setting performance benchmarks to other subjects. Similarly, Soma Umenye framed its contributions to comprehensive assessment as a model that could be leveraged for other subjects, which appealed to REB's need for assessment across the range of lower primary subjects.

Provide government counterparts with direct experience. Soma Umenye found that progress on key topics was much easier when GOR counterparts received support

to directly experience a challenge or the time to consider a specific problem. For example, during the design of the EGRA tools, some counterparts spent time assessing children's reading ability in schools in order to test the tools. In another example, a counterpart attending an early grade reading course at CIES. In both instances, after having the time and support to grapple directly with the challenges children face in learning to read, counterparts had the opportunity and time to consider different solutions and renewed energy to implement them.

SNAPSHOT

Local Early Grade Reading Assessment Extended to Term 3

Government leaders decided to continue use of the local early grade reading assessment as the official national assessment for P1-P3



PHOTO Emma-Claudine Ntiringanya / USAID Soma Umenye

Teachers conduct individual assessments of reading fluency and comprehension skills as part of the local early grade reading assessment (Gicumbi District, June 2021)

Rwanda's national Comprehensive Assessment framework calls for schools to administer standardized assessments at the end of the third term. Following positive feedback from schools and local education officials on the local early grade reading assessment (LEGRA) supported by Soma Umenye in Term 1 and Term 2, the National Examination and School Inspection Authority (NESA) decided to use LEGRA as the official Term 3 Kinyarwanda assessment for all P1-P3 students.

USAID Soma Umenye supported NESA to rollout LEGRA in all public and government-aided schools at the end of Term 1 and Term 2 of the 2021 academic year. This assessment provided the first comprehensive student-level data on grade level reading performance for teachers and schools to utilize in planning class and school remediation activities.

During a focus group conducted in September 2021, an early grade Kinyarwanda teacher said, "LEGRA has given us more understanding of learners' performance in different skills. The results allow us to identify areas for remediation and facilitate conversations with parents on how they can support their children while at home." Teachers also reported that they were able to use LEGRA to adjust their teaching in subsequent terms and hope a similar type of assessment could be used for other subjects.

With the decision to utilize LEGRA at the end of Term 3, NESA conveyed confidence in the value LEGRA provides to teachers and learners. NESA also demonstrated ownership of the assessment by developing the Term 3 tools and implementing LEGRA with minimal external support. Soma Umenye's support for the Term 3 LEGRA included a quality assurance of the Term 3 tools to ensure they were appropriate and accurate and the creation of a link for schools to upload Term 3 results for consolidation at national level.

The head of Rwanda Basic Education Board's Teacher Development and Management Department, Mr. Leon Mugenzi, said, "LEGRA helps celebrate where children succeed and informs where and how to give support. When children learn to read very well, they have fewer challenges in other subjects, so we are glad to have support in this area of our education system, which can also help us to strengthen assessment overall."

SECTION 5

LIFE-OF-PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS

To understand Soma Umenye’s progress against MEL plan targets, we will look at indicators as they align with Soma Umenye’s theory of change (see Section 1). (The full list of Soma Umenye indicators and progress against targets is included in Annex A.) A significant limitation in this discussion is Soma Umenye’s inability to conduct an endline EGRA due to the public health context. To try to fill this gap, we will look at other available assessments. However, they were not administered to measure all parts of Soma Umenye’s theory of change and therefore cannot provide complete answers.

5.1. PROGRESS MADE AGAINST OUTPUT AND OUTCOME TARGETS

Soma Umenye’s theory of change focused on four of the five Ts (time, text, teaching technique, and test).

Time. At project start, Soma Umenye hypothesized that loss of learning time was one factor depressing learning in Rwandan early grade Kinyarwanda classrooms. The study of instructional time (see Section 2.5) confirmed this hypothesis, demonstrating that only about half of allocated instructional time was being spent on active reading instruction. Through the study, the learning lab focused on it, and the National Reading Campaign, Soma Umenye raised awareness among Rwandan education officials, head teachers, teachers, and caregivers about the importance of ensuring children spend time (in the classroom and outside it) on reading. However, we did not have an indicator focused on time. We had planned to re-examine time on task as part of a 2020 study focused on teacher instructional practice and in the endline EGRA, but neither of those studies took place. It seems likely that ensuring all students and teachers are in class on time every day and that teachers are using active, effective instructional techniques remains an ongoing challenge in some schools, and we encourage MINEDUC and development partners to develop ways to measure and track the use of time in classrooms and to gain a greater understanding of why rural teachers in particular have high absenteeism and to what extent this can be reduced. Within the class, now that LEGRA data is and will be available, we would recommend that NESAs and REBs combine to focus on significantly reducing zero scores through active remediation as well as finding more time for reading within the timetable.

Text. Soma Umenye’s baseline found that in Kinyarwanda classrooms, children generally did not have their own textbook. In only 73% of classrooms were pupils observed using any books at all, and the textbook to student ratio varied from 1:7 in P1 classrooms to 1:9 in P2 classrooms to 1:16 in P3 classrooms. This finding was two years after USAID had distributed P1 and P2 Kinyarwanda textbooks to all public schools. While Soma Umenye addressed this deficit — establishing a 1:1 textbook to student ratio in P1-P3 classrooms (see Indicator 8 in Exhibit 53 below for the

number of books Soma Umenye distributed, exceeding its target) — the activity did face some delays in getting all books into classrooms due to the Made in Rwanda policy. Made in Rwanda required all books used in government-funded schools be printed in country. While Soma Umenye was able to print P2 and P3 textbooks elsewhere (due to a waiver), local printers were overwhelmed with printing the remaining Soma Umenye books plus books for other subjects and grades, which generated delays.

Most books entered schools the year before the pandemic hit. As a result, schools had books to send home with students for use during remote learning. However, unfortunately, all of these books did not come back from the nine months of remote learning so Rwanda likely again faces a shortage of textbooks.

The shortage of books (see Exhibit 6 above) likely explains some portion of Soma Umenye’s shortfall in Indicator 9, which measured whether at least 75% of children had their own textbook in early grade Kinyarwanda classrooms (Exhibit 53 shows the Year 5 value). However, this value was less than 100% for much of Soma Umenye. It was at its highest immediately after book distribution (73% in 2019), when REB was emphasizing to schools that they should use (not lock away) the new books. But in early 2020, it fell to 51% (though monitoring was limited at the beginning of the school year). Some schools do not yet seem committed to ensuring each child has their own textbook during each Kinyarwanda class.

Exhibit 53. Indicators Related to “Text”

Indicator	Target	Actual
8. Number of primary or secondary textbooks and other teaching and learning materials (TLMs) that are inclusively representative provided with USG assistance (output, F indicator ES 1-49)	4,914,911	6,493,281
9. Percent of observed classrooms in which children are using project-provided books (outcome, custom)	90%	55%

Teaching technique. Soma Umenye met its targets with respect to training teachers and school leaders (see Indicators 5A and 6B in Exhibit 54). The activity’s baseline found that only one in three teachers (36%) had been trained to teach reading, and Soma Umenye dramatically increased this percentage to 98% of teachers trained. Soma Umenye had begun its interventions to strengthen school-based capacity building through coaching and communities of practice when the pandemic hit, interrupting the process of building consistency in these practices.

Soma Umenye also built the understanding of school leaders (head teachers and deans of studies, as well as DEOs and SEIs) of how to improve early grade reading outcomes. Soma Umenye trained 92% of head teachers, and saw a 35 percentage point increase (from 4% in 2019 to 39% in 2021) in head teachers conducting activities (coaching, holding communities of practice, sharing assessment results with communities, etc.) that support early grade reading. However, this fell short of our target of 50% for Indicator 12. Head teachers have multiple priorities, and Soma

Umenye had only begun to help focus their attention on early grade reading achievement.

Through school monitoring, Soma Umenye found that (by June 2021) 88% of head teachers reported that their schools held communities of practice for teacher professional development (72% held by the head teacher, 10% organized by the dean of studies, and 6% organized by someone else in the school). For the same period, Soma Umenye found 55% of teachers reporting that a school-based coach was coaching them. Of these, 95-96% (across grades) reported that they were satisfied with the coaching experience and 94-98% (across grades) reported that the coach provided them with feedback after observing the lesson. The outcome of this support brought Soma Umenye very close to meeting the target for teachers demonstrating essential skills in the teaching of reading, coming at 78% just below the target of 80%.

Finding time for CPD activities during the school calendar has been an ongoing challenge during Soma Umenye, as time is often filled with classes. School-based coaches seem to have faced challenges finding time for both communities of practice and coaching duties. While REB has established the expectation that teachers will spend time on CPD in its teacher competencies, this expectation may need to be shared more clearly with head teachers and teachers.

Exhibit 54. Indicators Related to “Teaching Technique”

Indicator	Target	Actual
5A. Percent of head teachers successfully trained (output, custom)	90%	92%
6B. Percent of early grade reading teachers successfully trained (output, RFTOP)	90%	98%
10. Percent of teachers demonstrating essential skills in the teaching of reading (outcome, custom)	80%	78%
11. Percent of P1-P3 Kinyarwanda teachers who report receiving adequate coaching for the implementation of an evidence-based early grade reading approach	50%	52%
12. Percent of head teachers demonstrating essential leadership skills in the support of early grade Kinyarwanda literacy in their school	50%	39%

Test. Prior to Soma Umenye, there was limited to no consistency in the assessments that teachers used, and they had no common grade-level performance standards towards which they knew they should be helping students work to achieve. As a result, head teacher, teachers, and caregivers had different ideas about what learners were capable of and what was acceptable performance. Soma Umenye helped REB establish grade-level student performance standards; communicate them to head teachers, teachers, and communities; and establish a comprehensive assessment system that provided schools with standard tests for use at the end of each term. With the LEGRA system, schools could track learner achievement at the end of each

term, identify when students were falling behind, and develop and use remediation strategies to help students catch up.

As evidence that this strategy has improved school-community engagement with student learning progress, Soma Umenye exceeded its Indicator 13 target for schools that share assessment result with parents (the LEGRA included a community meeting as part of its process).

Exhibit 55. Indicators Related to “Test”

Indicator	Target	Actual
13. Percent of schools (1) sharing assessment results with SGACs and (2) helping SGACs use assessment results to inform parents (outcome, custom)	50%	58%
16. Number of early grades reading performance standards approved by MINEDUC (output, custom)	3	3

5.2. PROGRESS MADE AGAINST HIGH-LEVEL TARGETS

Soma Umenye’s original target was to enable 70% of P1-P3 Rwandan children to meet grade-level performance standards by the end of the activity. Several factors prevented the activity from achieving this goal:

- *Delay in textbook distribution.* Soma Umenye’s textbook distribution was delayed as the result of the Made in Rwanda policy (see Section 2.1 above), which increased attention to any books printed outside of the country (Soma Umenye’s textbooks) and overloaded the local market, leading to delays in book production.
- *Change in performance benchmarks.* As discussed in Section 2.4, the benchmarks children must reach in order to be counted as meeting Soma Umenye’s indicator increased (most significantly for P1 students, but across all three grades).
- *COVID-19 pandemic.* COVID significantly changed education service delivery around the world. In Rwanda, lower primary classrooms were closed between March 2020 and January 2021, with all learning moving to remote modalities. We did not measure the learning achievement during school closures, but we suspect (as has been documented elsewhere in the world) that children lost learning. In addition, Soma Umenye did not have the opportunity to roll out interventions (like the LEGRA and KRC) that we anticipated would drive strong improvement. Soma Umenye also saw the loss of a portion of the books that it had delivered to schools in 2019.

Soma Umenye had planned to administer an endline EGRA in September 2020 to measure how the school closures as well as the changes in the four Ts (discussed in the previous section) impacted the percent of P1-P3 students meeting fluency and comprehension standards. With the onset of the pandemic, these plans shifted to September 2021. In the end, Soma Umenye and USAID agreed not to conduct an EGRA due to the public health context.

However, MINEDUC did conduct its LARS assessment in March 2021 (supported by the World Bank). As noted in Section 2.4, the 2021 administration of the LARS included items from Soma Umenye’s P3 EGRA item bank that tested oral reading fluency and reading comprehension. While the LARS is usually administered to P3 students, given the disruptions of the pandemic and the fact that this LARS was administered in March 2021 (in the first part of the school year), the government decided to administer the P3 items to P4 students (who had been out of school for nine months in 2020). This particular group of students had finished its last complete in-person school year in 2019 (when they graduated as P3 students). They started the 2020 school year as P4 students and switched to remote learning starting in March 2020. They next returned to school in December 2020 as P4 students (as the government had students repeat the 2020 school year given the disruptions of the pandemic).

Exhibit 56 below compares the samples of the 2018 EGRA and 2021 LARS assessments. Both samples were nationally representative drawing schools from each of Rwanda’s districts. The 2018 EGRA used a four-stage stratified random sampling design: first randomly selecting sectors (and stratifying them according to rural or urban status), next randomly selecting schools within each sector, next randomly selecting classrooms within each school, and finally randomly selecting 30 students per grade (half girls and half boys). The 2021 LARS used a two-stage cluster survey approach. It first sampled 296 schools (P3 students were identified in 101 of these schools), and next it sampled 18 students from each school.

Exhibit 56. Comparison of 2018 EGRA and 2021 LARS Sample and Assessment¹¹

	EGRA	LARS
Target population	P1-P3 pupils attending public or government-supported schools	P3, P6, and S3 students attending public or government-supported schools
Number of schools	155	101
Number of students tested per school	30 (10 P1 students, 10 P2 students, and 10 P3 students)	18
Number of P3 students	1,553	715
Target subjects	Literacy in Kinyarwanda	P3 (English, numeracy, Kinyarwanda), P6 (literacy, numeracy), S3 (English, numeracy, science)

The equating exercise Soma Umenye supported (see Section 2.4) enables the equating of the P3 assessment items used in the 2018 EGRA and the P3 items used in the 2021 LARS. Exhibit 57 illustrates how Rwanda’s performance categories align with benchmarks in each assessment.

¹¹ Information about the LARS sample and findings come from “Learning Achievement in Rwanda Schools (LARS IV): Assessment Report,” June 2021. Though P4 students were tested, the report refers to them as P3 students, indicating (as discussed above) that the assessment aimed to evaluate P3 competencies by testing early in the P4 school year.

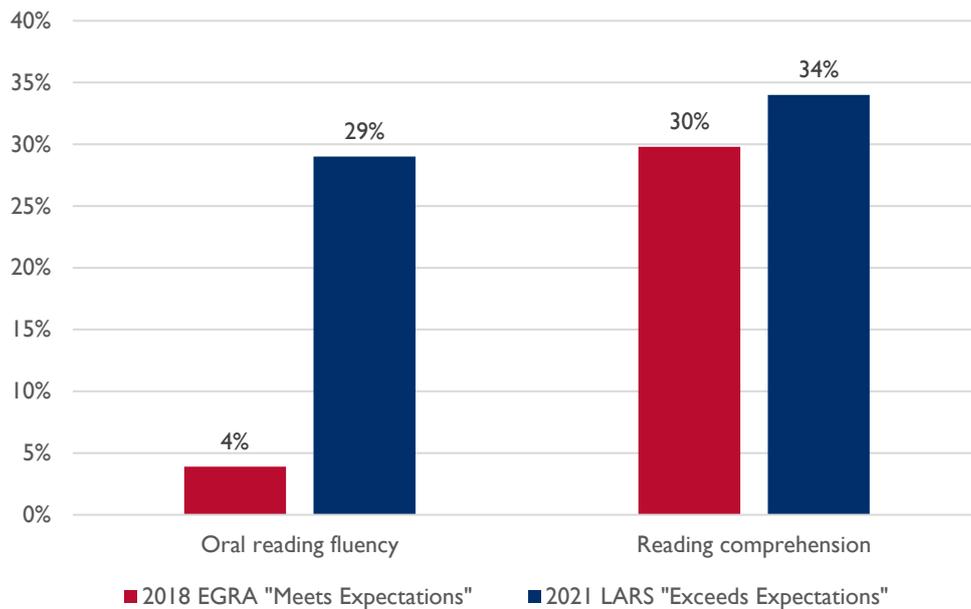
Exhibit 57. Equating Table for the 2018 EGRA and 2021 LARS P3 items

	Oral reading fluency		Reading comprehension	
	2018 EGRA	2021 LARS	2018 EGRA	2021 LARS
Exceeds expectations	51+ cwpm		100%	
Meets expectations	40-50 cwpm	51+ cwpm	80%	100%
Partially meets expectations	18-39 cwpm	23-50 cwpm	60%	70%
Does not meet expectations	1-17 cwpm	0-22 cwpm	40%	60%
Below categorization	0 cwpm	0 cwpm	0%	0%

Fortuitously, the equated score for “meets expectations” on the LARS (51 cwpm) matches the category “exceeds expectations” of the Rwandan performance categories. Therefore, we can compare the percentage of students who met expectations with the baseline EGRA with the percentage of students who exceeded expectations on the 2021 LARS to measure change in the percentage of students meeting standards from 2018 to 2021. Exhibit 58 (next page) shows this comparison. We see a 25 percentage point increase in the percent of students meeting oral reading fluency standards and a 4 percentage point increase in the students meeting reading comprehension standards. This is a significant increase in oral reading fluency skills, which suggests that Soma Umenye’s interventions supported teachers to more effectively build literacy sub-skills.

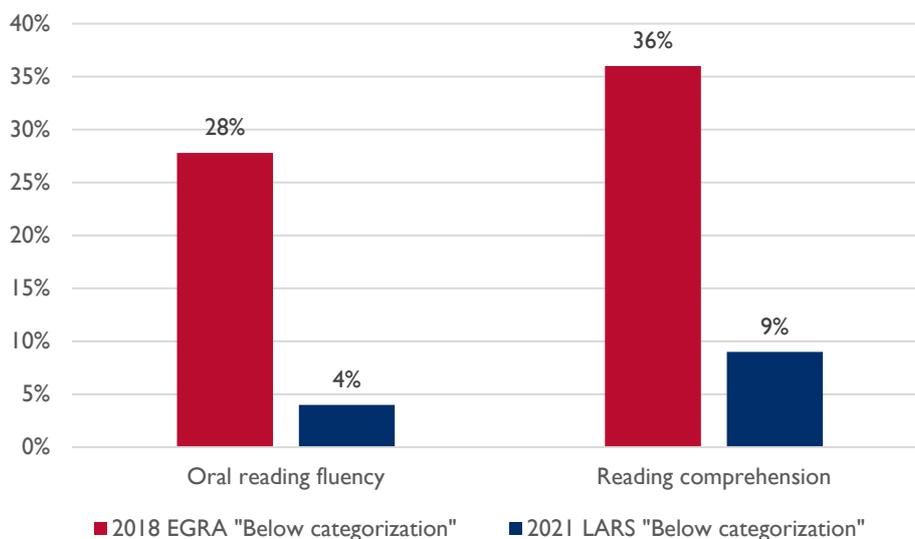
The difference in the change between oral reading fluency and reading comprehension may be explained by the different modes of administration of these two assessments. As is customary, Soma Umenye EGRA (and LARS) enumerators took the measure of oral reading fluency after one minute of reading. For the reading comprehension measure, children were allowed to continue reading for an additional two minutes (with no interruption during the full three minutes). After three minutes, the EGRA (and LARS) enumerators stopped the child and began asking the reading comprehension questions.

Exhibit 58. Comparison of P3 students who meet expectations in 2018 EGRA and 2021 LARS¹²



The only other category that matches between the EGRA and LARS is the “below categorization” category (see Exhibit 18). Exhibit 59 below illustrates the decrease in zero scorers between the 2018 EGRA and 2021 LARS. This exhibit demonstrates a significant decrease in zero-scorers suggesting that Soma Umenye’s interventions were able to help the lowest performers become readers at project end from being nonreaders at project start.

Exhibit 59. Comparison of P3 non-readers in 2018 EGRA and 2021 LARS



¹² Note that the “meets expectations” category for the 2018 EGRA includes both students that met expectations and that exceeded expectations.

SECTION 6

CONCLUSION: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMING

Over more than five years of implementation, Soma Umenye successfully met its goals of improving the reading skills of early grade reading students by increasing learner access to teaching and learning materials, improving classroom instruction and supervision, increasing the use of assessment (and remediation to a lesser extent), and strengthening systemic capacity to deliver early grade instruction. The 2021 LARS assessment indicates significant growth in P3 reading ability. Given that P3 abilities rest on skills developed in earlier grades, we assume improvement in those grades as well.

While Soma Umenye made significant contributions under each of its implementation areas, there remains more progress to make. Below, we have consolidated the recommendations offered through the report.

6.1 CONSOLIDATED RECOMMENDATIONS

AUGMENTING TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS

- *Print additional P1-P3 books in 2022/2023.* Students learn best when they have their own learning materials. While some annual loss of books is inevitable, 2020 — which saw children learning remotely for some nine months — was a particularly difficult year for book survival. It is important to recover the 1:1 student to textbook ratio created by Soma Umenye in 2019. This will require printing textbooks in the 2022-2023 school year to ensure students have their own books.
- *Promote improved longevity of books in schools.* Soma Umenye noted a higher textbook loss rate than expected in 2019 (and certainly during school closures). The instructional time study also found that — just two years after USAID had distributed P2 books in 2016 — only a third of classrooms still had them in use. We recommend that development partners and the GOR continue efforts to promote caretaking of books alongside other strategies to ensure books last as long as possible (building on the messages of the National Reading Campaign and resources like Soma Umenye’s library posters).
- *Consider revising the P1 scope and sequence.* The current sequence of letter introduction in P1 does not allow for students to begin to read words until Term 2 (Lesson 66). Using a more productive sequence to introduce letters in P1 (and increasing the pace of letter introduction) would enable children to advance to blending letters and reading words more quickly. REB should consider revising the order in which letters are introduced in order to allow children to read words in Term 1.

BUILDING TEACHER INSTRUCTIONAL SKILLS

- *Use TTC expertise in in-service training.* The most cost-effective means of developing a new cohort of early grade reading teachers is strong TTC preparation (using the resources provided by USAID Soma Umenye) paired with expert support at the beginning of a teacher’s career. TTCs are an untapped resource for in-service training and coaching support of newly qualified and redeployed teachers as they build their skills as early grade reading teachers. REB and development partners should explore ways to use TTCs for short-term holiday in-service training for newly qualified or redeployed teachers.
- *Build on Soma Umenye’s school-based orientation as a CPD model.* USAID Soma Umenye found that more than 90% of schools implemented the school-based orientation model to help build new teachers’ skills. The model has the advantage of supporting teachers in their own classrooms as they practice new skills. Soma Umenye recommends that REB and development partners continued to use this model if REB can ensure that new teachers have access to experienced lead teachers and that schools are able to prioritize CPD time (alongside planned learning time). This model can also be used to effectively mentor newly qualified teachers after they graduate from TTCs and are placed in schools or to mentor redeployed teachers.
- *Ensure school calendar dedicates time for CPD.* Soma Umenye’s monitoring data indicates that the most common reason given for not holding or attending communities of practice was time. While REB has suggested that schools provide time for CPD in the school calendar (and has recently released guidance to that effect), they have not made it mandatory or indicated where it should fall in the school calendar. Without REB making clear when and how time should be spent (for example, how should CPD for different subjects be allocated), this time will be made only when school leaders sees the benefit. We recommend that REB work with development partners to consider strategies to measure the use of CPD time to ensure that school leaders and teachers are taking advantage of opportunities to improve their practice.
- *Ensure teachers remain teaching specific grades and subjects long enough to develop expertise.* Teaching in the early grades requires specific skills and instructional expertise. However, USAID Soma Umenye’s experience was that each year a portion of early grade Kinyarwanda teachers who were trained to implement REB’s early grade reading approach were transferred out of early grades (or out of teaching Kinyarwanda) and a new set of teachers was transferred in to replace them. In 2021 (in part due to circumstances generated by the pandemic), more than 50% of early grade Kinyarwanda teachers were either newly appointed or redeployed from other grades. This turnover represents a significant loss of early grade Kinyarwanda expertise built through participation in training, coaching, and communities of practice. Rebuilding this expertise (particularly when the numbers are large) is challenging for Rwanda’s CPD system, and likely will take several years, to the detriment of students. To maximize the investments made in teacher capacity, REB should work with development partners to examine teacher deployment approaches that would allow it to promote the retention of teaching expertise among early grade Kinyarwanda teachers.

PROMOTING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

- *Allow head teachers to focus on instructional leadership.* As is common, head teachers in Rwanda have a wide range of responsibilities beyond instructional leadership, and these duties frequently prevent them from spending sufficient time leading the teaching and learning process within their schools. (2021 was an extreme example of this, with head teachers overseeing COVID restrictions while also overseeing new classroom construction, among other issues.) REB and the Ministry of Local Government should consider the benefits that could be gained by ensuring that head teachers spend more of their time supporting teachers to improve classroom instruction and ensuring that everyone in school is focused on ensuring the best possible learning outcomes.
- *Engage lead teachers to provide coaching when schedule allows.* USAID Soma Umenye's engagement of lead teachers to orient and coach new teachers in the school-based orientation suggests lead teachers may be an effective resource to support school-based coaching. REB and development partners should consider (1) encouraging head teachers to build lead teacher capacity to coach and (2) re-arranging their schedules so they are able to observe the classrooms of their peers to provide coaching and feedback.

STRENGTHENING COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

- *Continue comprehensive assessment and focus on its formative application.* Soma Umenye staff saw many school personnel embrace the potential of the LEGRA: an opportunity for teachers, head teachers, and caregivers to focus on student progress and identify and provide any support needed to keep students on target to meet grade-level performance standards. In reviewing the results, teachers and head teachers came up with multiple ideas for ways to improve instruction and provide students with support. It is important that REB work with development partners to build on this momentum and continue to strengthen LEGRA (its administration and the rapidity with which data is uploaded to the dashboard and used by schools to inform instruction). All parties should work to build the capacity of schools, sectors, and districts to use LEGRA to drive a cycle of reflection and action to improve student learning outcomes.
- *Promote remediation solutions.* Unfortunately, KRC was not rolled out nationwide as planned in 2020 (or 2021) due to the public health context. The LEGRA shows clearly that some students need additional support, and the KRC pilot showed that significant progress can be made with these students through a focused course of remedial support. The gradual elimination of the second shift (planned by the GOR) will create time for teachers to provide remediation. In advance of this change, we recommend that REB work with development partners to (1) review the school timetable to identify the best time in the school day for remediation and (2) integrate teaching-at-the-right level approaches (which informed KRC) in remediation sessions to help teachers make faster progress.
- *Continue to align the LARS and LEGRA systems.* As Rwanda continues to develop its comprehensive assessment system, REB and development partners should consider developing an item bank of equated items for each assessment, which

would allow it to rely on the LEGRA to help it understand whether students are progressing towards its grade-level benchmarks as measured on the LARS.



A teacher a GS Miyove in Gicumbi District administering the LEGRA oral reading fluency sub-test to a P3 student.

SUPPORTING POLICY AND PRACTICE

- *Increase overall time teachers and students are in the classroom together.* The findings of the instructional time study make clear that a significant portion of instructional time is lost in Kinyarwanda classrooms (particularly in rural schools). REB should work with development partners to identify the best strategies to stem this loss. These might include (1) ensuring all foundational skills classes are scheduled when the largest percentage of teachers and students are present, (2) developing information systems that provide timely and reliable data about teacher and student absence/tardiness and using them to work towards improved targets for time on task, (3) motivation and reward schemes for to encourage teachers to reduce absenteeism and tardiness. In addition, REB should continue to communicate to head teachers, teachers, and communities the importance to learning of being in class on time. Districts should consider integrating a measure of teacher and student absence or tardiness into district education plans, with provisions for monitoring progress towards goals.
- *Increase the amount of “active” time for reading instruction.* To ensure that teachers make the best use of the instructional time they have, teacher professional development modalities (pre-service preparation as well as in-service training, coaching, and communities of practice) should equip teachers to deliver more active instructional strategies and deploy core strategies to engage distracted or unengaged students.

STRENGTHENING GENDER, INCLUSION, AND ICT

- *Continue investing in inclusive education.* Inclusive education is good education for all. While children with specific disabilities benefit from targeted support in

special schools (given the lack of resources/skills in mainstream schools), mainstream schools should focus on using inclusive teaching practices in all lessons. For example, an approved Rwanda Sign Language opens the door to improved deaf education; however, sign language education must start before students attend school (with families and communities). Additional investment is recommended to support families and children who are deaf learn to communicate in sign language from an early age. Teachers in mainstream classrooms need continued support on inclusive teaching practices/methodologies to engage more students in their classroom (these methodologies do not necessarily need to be tailored to individual disabilities as teachers often do not know who has a disability; rather, they need to represent good teaching practices and focus on things such as small group work and student-centered practice).

- *Continue to support teachers to integrate UDL strategies into instruction.* REB has embraced the use of UDL in classroom instruction, and we encourage them to continue to work with development partners to support teachers to integrate UDL strategies in their classrooms. A key strategy may be integrating a focus on UDL in pre-service education to ensure that new teachers have exposure to and experience with these approaches and can begin using them from the start of their teaching careers. In addition, REB may want to integrate these strategies into the teacher's guide (working from the Soma Umenye-support UDL pilot teacher's guide) to support classroom teachers to use them.

BUILDING EDUCATION RESILIENCE DURING COVID-19

- *Expand plans for future school closures.* Rwanda's 2020 plan for the continuation of learning in the face of school closures came together quickly and efficiently, but it was, of course, less complete than a plan made in advance. While many teachers and head teachers took on roles during the pandemic to support ongoing learning, their roles were not defined. We recommend that REB consider defining their roles in areas like tracking student participation and supporting children without sufficient access to remote learning. Doing so would help fill some of the gaps that necessarily occurred during the 2020 remote learning activities.
- *Develop strategies to measure student learning during remote learning.* During school closures, REB focused on promoting student participation in remote learning, which is a critical first step. As a next step, REB should consider developing strategies (which may need to include teachers visiting students periodically) to measure the degree to which students are learning during remote learning. Doing so would also enable them to test the effectiveness of different remote learning methodologies (radio lessons, SMS lessons, online learning, etc.) that could be repurposed to meet remediation needs.

ENABLING TRANSITION TO GOVERNMENT

- *Build on government counterparts' priorities.* While Soma Umenye focused on school-based assessment throughout the life of the activity, in 2019 the cabinet resolution to establish a comprehensive assessment system meant that Soma Umenye's efforts achieved significantly more traction. Following this event, Soma

Umenye was able to develop an extremely productive relationship with REB authorities in charge of comprehensive assessment.

- *Co-create with counterparts.* After encountering challenges with the development of the P1 textbook in 2017, Soma Umenye began a co-development collaboration process, which included the P1-P3 essential core, the 2018 EGRA baseline instruments, EGRA administration, and LEGRA design and roll-out. This approach to cultivating ownership had significant impact. Because Soma Umenye had established strong working relationships with REB, we were able to secure a Made in Rwanda waiver, enable integration of EGRA items into LARS, and support development of learner benchmarks, LEGRA, and KRC. This approach to co-design and co-delivery is a key differentiator for Soma Umenye and the progress made has contributed not just to project success but also to systemic change and sustainability. For example, in December 2021, NESA will deliver Term I LEGRA without Soma Umenye.
- *Collaborate with other development partners to develop an approach that covers multiple areas of education officials' focus.* Soma Umenye occasionally faced challenges because it focused on reading in Kinyarwanda while REB was sometimes more concerned about driving change in English or math education. To address this challenge, Soma Umenye framed its work in developing an assessment and accountability system as building a model that REB could use for other subjects. In fact, REB did go on to apply what staff learned with Soma Umenye about setting performance benchmarks to other subjects. Similarly, Soma Umenye framed its contributions to comprehensive assessment as a model that could be leveraged for other subjects, which appealed to REB's need for assessment across the range of lower primary subjects.
- *Provide government counterparts with direct experience.* Soma Umenye found that progress on key topics was much easier when GOR counterparts received support to directly experience a challenge or the time to consider a specific problem. For example, during the design of the EGRA tools, some counterparts spent time assessing children's reading ability in schools in order to test the tools. In another example, a counterpart attending an early grade reading course at CIES. In both instances, after having the time and support to grapple directly with the challenges children face in learning to read, counterparts had the opportunity and time to consider different solutions and renewed energy to implement them.

ANNEX A. REPORTING AGAINST INDICATORS

#	Name	Source/Disaggregation	FY 2017		FY2018		FY2019		FY2020		FY2021		LOP	
			Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Objective: Improved literacy outcomes for children in early grades														
I	Percent of P1-P3 students able to read grade-level text with fluency and comprehension (outcome, RFTOP: Deliverables 5.7 and 5.8)	Source: EGRA/official government records Disaggregation: sex, province, rural/urban, disabled/non-disabled, grade	0%	N/A	35%	Baseline set	50%	N/A	N/A	Not measured	22% ¹³	Not measured	70%	29% of P3 students ¹⁴
IA	Percent of learners with a disability targeted for USG assistance who attain a minimum grade-level proficiency in reading at the end of Grade 2 (outcome, ES. I-47) ¹⁵	Source: official government records, EGRA Disaggregation: sex, district, grade							N/A	Not measured	5%	Not measured	N/A	Not measured ¹⁶

¹³ This target was decreased in 2021 due to uncertainties regarding how school closures would impact student learning. In addition, the language of instruction had been changed for lower primary (not for Kinyarwanda classes), which was anticipated to be disruptive for teachers.

¹⁴ While Soma Umenye was not able to conduct an endline EGRA, MINEDUC did conduct a LARS (only for P3 students), which is the source of this figure. See Section 5 for additional details.

¹⁵ This indicator was added after the baseline EGRA was administered.

¹⁶ Soma Umenye was unable to administer its endline EGRA due to the public health context in Rwanda (first planned for September 2020 and next for September 2021).

#	Name	Source/Disaggregation	FY 2017		FY2018		FY2019		FY2020		FY2021		LOP	
			Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
2	Number of children whose reading outcomes in Kinyarwanda are improved (outcome, RFTOP: Deliverable 5.6)	Source: EGRA Disaggregation: sex, province, rural/urban, disabled/non-disabled, grade	60,447	N/A	203,368	Baseline set	689,180	N/A	N/A	Not measured	400,127	Not measured	1,033,364	Not measured
2A	Percent of learners targeted for USG assistance with an increase of at least one proficiency level in reading at the end of grade 2 (Outcome, ES.1-48)	Source: EGRA Disaggregation: sex; disabled/non-disabled, proficiency benchmark							N/A	Not measured	10%	Not measured	N/A	Not measured ¹⁷
2B	Percent of individuals with improved reading skills following participation in USG-assisted programs ¹⁸	Source: EGRA Disaggregation: sex; disabled/non-disabled, proficiency benchmark									20%	Not measured	N/A	Not measured
3	Number of learners in	Source: MINEDUC EMIS, district statistics	172,707	158,468	581,051	498,778	1,378,359	1,323,719	1,288,995	1,288,995 ¹⁹	1,812,456	1,742,039	2,245,191	2,234,363

¹⁷ Because Soma Umenye was unable to conduct an endline EGRA, we are unable to measure this precisely.

¹⁸ This indicator was added in FY2021.

¹⁹ This number of students were reached in the first three months of 2020. Schools were closed in Rwanda for the rest of the 2020 school year.

#	Name	Source/Disaggregation	FY 2017		FY2018		FY2019		FY2020		FY2021		LOP	
			Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
	primary schools or equivalent non-school based settings reached with USG education assistance (output, F indicator ES 1-3)	Disaggregation: grade, sex, district, disabled/non-disabled, age (5-9, 10-14 and 15-19)												
S1	Percent of learners regularly participating in distance learning programming funded with USG education assistance	Source: phone calls to parents and students Disaggregation: grade, sex, district, disabled/non-disabled, age, type of remote learning (radio lesson, pdf book, read aloud video, USSD assessment items)							N/A	57%	60%	71%	N/A	71%
S2	Percent of P1-P3 students listening to radio lessons receiving support during USG supported remote learning (context indicator)	Source: phone calls to parents and students Disaggregation: grade, sex, district, disabled/non-disabled, age, type of remote learning (radio lesson, pdf book, read aloud video, USSD assessment items)							N/A	96%	99%	91%	N/A	91%
4	Number of public and private schools receiving USG assistance	Source: project records Disaggregation: district							2,563	2,591	2,573	3,189	2,573	3,189

#	Name	Source/Disaggregation	FY 2017		FY2018		FY2019		FY2020		FY2021		LOP	
			Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
	(Output, ES.1-50)													
5	Number of education administrators and officials who complete professional development activities with USG assistance (output, F indicator ES 1-12)	Source: project records Disaggregation: sex, district, disability, occupation, focus of training	700	1,499	3,810	3,071	3,810	3,635	3,748	3,748	3,810	4,201	3,810	4,201
5A	Percent of head teachers successfully trained (output, custom)	Source: project records Disaggregation: sex, district	90%	0%	90%	89%	90%	91%	90%	91%	90%	96%	90%	92%
IR I: Classroom instruction in early- grade reading improved														
6	Number of educators who complete professional development activities with USG assistance (output, F indicator, indicator ES.1-6)	Source: project records Disaggregation: sex, district, grade taught, in-service/pre-service	3,263	1,572	4,140	4,569	6,633	11,357	7,370	10,159	6,465	6,705	12,420	18,062
6A	Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes	Source: project records Disaggregation: sex, district, grade taught, in-service/pre-service	3,263	1,572	4,140	4,569	6,633	7,631	7,370	10,159	6,465	6,705	12,420	18,062

#	Name	Source/Disaggregation	FY 2017		FY2018		FY2019		FY2020		FY2021		LOP	
			Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
	consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations (output, F indicator, indicator GNDR 8)													
6B	Percent of early grade reading teachers successfully trained (output, RFTOP)	Source: project records Disaggregation: sex, grade taught, district	90%	93%	90%	99%	90%	96%	90%	97%	90%	104%	90%	98%
7	Number of USG-assisted organizations and/or service delivery systems that serve vulnerable persons strengthened (output, F indicator ES.4-3)	Source: project records Disaggregation: N/A												²⁰
Sub-IR 1.1: Evidence-based, gender-sensitive early-grade reading materials available and used														

²⁰ The referenced organization is the government of Rwanda.

#	Name	Source/Disaggregation	FY 2017		FY2018		FY2019		FY2020		FY2021		LOP	
			Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
8	Number of primary or secondary textbooks and other teaching and learning materials (TLMs) that are inclusively representative provided with USG assistance (output, F indicator ES 1-49)	Source: project records Disaggregation: district, grade, TLM type	896,610	89,492	9,515,936	9,028	10,384,057	1,330,252	1,684,129	2,304,835	1,972,984	2,664,762	4,914,911	6,493,281
9	Percent of observed classrooms in which children are using project-provided books (outcome, custom)	Source: Classroom observations Disaggregation: district, grade	N/A	N/A	50%	N/A	65%	73%	70%	51%	55%	55%	90%	55% ²¹
Sub-IR 1.2: Teachers' use of evidence-based, gender-sensitive instructional practices in early-grade reading increased														
	Number of primary or secondary school educators who complete professional		See Indicator 6 above											

²¹ This indicator measured the percentage of classrooms with at least 75% of all children using their own textbook. However, following the nine-month school closures (during which time many books were sent home with children to support remote learning), all books did not come back to schools (see Exhibit 6 for details). As a result, teachers did not have access to all the books that Soma Umenye had distributed.

#	Name	Source/Disaggregation	FY 2017		FY2018		FY2019		FY2020		FY2021		LOP	
			Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
	development activities ...													
10	Percent of teachers demonstrating essential skills in the teaching of reading (outcome, custom)	Source: EGRA Disaggregation: sex, grade, district	N/A	N/A	45%	N/A	55%	21%	70%	76%	75%	78%	80%	78% ²²
Sub-IR 1.3: Capacity of head and mentor teachers to coach and supervise early-grade reading instruction strengthened														
	Number of education administrators and officials who complete professional development activities ...		See Indicator 5 above											
11	Percent of P1-P3 Kinyarwanda teachers who report receiving adequate coaching for the implementation of an evidence-based early grade reading approach	Source: Teacher questionnaire Disaggregation: sex, district, grade taught			40%	N/A	42%	21%	43%	41%	41%	52%	50%	52%

²² The actual achievement is quite close to the target (only 2% under). Given the public health context, we see the figure of 78% as a solid achievement.

#	Name	Source/Disaggregation	FY 2017		FY2018		FY2019		FY2020		FY2021		LOP	
			Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
12	Percent of head teachers demonstrating essential leadership skills in the support of early grade Kinyarwanda literacy in their school (outcome, custom)	Source: School visits Disaggregation: sex, district	N/A	N/A	40%	N/A	42%	4%	43%	41%	41%	39%	50%	39% ²³
Sub-IR 1.4: Schools' and teachers' use of student assessment results improved														
13	Percent of schools (1) sharing assessment results with SGACs and (2) helping SGACs use assessment results to inform parents (outcome, custom)	Source: Member of SGAC Disaggregation: grade of results, district, school action (sharing results vs. helping SGACs use results)	N/A	N/A	40%	N/A	42%	26%	43%	45%	45%	58%	50%	58%
IR 2: Systemic capacity for early-grade reading instruction improved														
14	Number of laws, policies, regulations, or	Source: MINEDUC records	0	1	1	1	4	5	4	2	2	2	15	11 ²⁴

²³ While this final figure is a significant improvement from earlier figures, it is below what we had hoped to achieve. Working with head teachers was particularly challenging given their multiple responsibilities (occasionally outside the education sphere) and the demands on their time from local officials. This was particularly true for some head teachers during the pandemic while they supervised new construction. These challenges made it difficult to help head teachers establish a routine of activities focused on early grade reading improvement (on-time attendance, coaching, etc.)

²⁴ The pandemic diverted REB's attention from matters unrelated to remote learning and the safe return to schools, which made it difficult to achieve our original target for this indicator.

#	Name	Source/Disaggregation	FY 2017		FY2018		FY2019		FY2020		FY2021		LOP	
			Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
	guidelines developed or modified to improve primary grade reading programs (outcome, custom)	Disaggregation: type of document, policy area, and process/step												
Sub-IR 2.1: National advocacy mechanisms for early-grade reading interventions strengthened														
15	Percent of annual activities in the transition plan, approved by MINEDUC and/or REB that are completed (outcome, custom)	Source: REB records, project records Disaggregation: N/A			50%	0%	50%	50%	50%	0%	50%	0%	50%	50%
Sub-IR 2.2: Student and teacher performance standards and benchmarks for early-grade reading applied														
16	Number of early grades reading performance standards approved by MINEDUC (output, custom)	Source: MINEDUC records Disaggregation: N/A	0	0	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	3	3
17	Number of early grades reading teacher	Source: MINEDUC records Disaggregation: N/A	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0 ²⁵

²⁵ While we did work with REB to create early grade reading teacher performance standards aligned with REB's overarching teacher competencies, we were not able to get them formally approved by REB (as required by the indicator). They were not approved prior to March 2020 and afterwards, it was difficult to prioritize this topic for REB. However, we were able to include the performance standards as part of training materials for teachers so they were communicated to teachers.

#	Name	Source/Disaggregation	FY 2017		FY2018		FY2019		FY2020		FY2021		LOP	
			Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
	performance standards approved by MINEDUC (outcome, custom)													
Sub-IR 2.3: Research-based policies and curricula in support of early-grade reading instruction implemented														
18	Number of scientific studies published, or conference presentations given as a result of USG assistance for research programs (outcome, custom)	Source: project records Disaggregation: type of document (study/presentation)	1	0	2	0	3	2	2	3	2	4	10	9 ²⁶
Sub-IR 2.4: Early-grade reading assessment systems strengthened														
19	Number of times Soma Umenye-supported assessment data is cited by policymakers in official documents, presentations,	Source: MINEDUC and media records Disaggregation: medium of communication	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	0	3	0	17	0 ²⁷

²⁶ We came very close to our original target for this indicator, but were not able to reach it due to the disruptions of the pandemic.

²⁷ Without the pandemic, we may have had a better chance of coming closer to this target. But given the interruption of schooling (and normal assessment activities), REB was focused more on access to schooling rather than performance. REB generally does not discuss assessment results publicly and, when it does, it usually happens several years after the assessment was administered.

#	Name	Source/Disaggregation	FY 2017		FY2018		FY2019		FY2020		FY2021		LOP	
			Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
	or media interviews. (Outcome, custom)													
S3	Number of times Soma Umenye-supported remote learning monitoring data is cited by government officials at national and decentralized levels in official documents, presentations, or media interviews	Source: MINEDUC and media records Disaggregation: medium of communication							N/A	N/A	3	1	3	1 ²⁸
Sub-IR 2.5: Capacity of TTCs to prepare effective early-grade reading teachers improved														
20	Number of host country tertiary education institutions receiving capacity development support with USG assistance (output, F	Source: project records Disaggregation: N/A	1	1	1	1	16	16	16	16	0	0	17	17

²⁸ It was difficult to predict what this target might be given the uncertainties of the public health context. While we only noted one REB citation of remote learning data, we know that REB was focused on understanding the degree of student participation in remote learning and looking for ways to ensure the greatest number of students were engaged.

#	Name	Source/Disaggregation	FY 2017		FY2018		FY2019		FY2020		FY2021		LOP	
			Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
	indicator ES.2-1)													

ANNEX B. PERFORMANCE DESCRIPTORS FOR TEACHER COMPETENCIES

Reading competency	Basic	Good	Very good	Outstanding
1.1 Know how young children learn to read	<i>Rarely adapt the techniques of teaching reading to young children</i>	<i>Sometimes adapt the techniques of teaching reading to young children</i>	<i>Regularly/often adapt the techniques of teaching reading to young children</i>	<i>Almost always adapt the techniques of teaching reading to young children</i>
1.2 Know your learners' reading profiles ²⁹ and gaps that need to be bridged to help them build strong reading skills	<i>He/she is rarely aware of learners' reading profile or does not know the gap that needed to be bridged to help them to build strong reading skills</i>	<i>He/she is sometimes aware of learners' reading profile or sometimes know the gap that needed to be bridged to help them to build strong reading skills</i>	<i>He/she is regularly/often aware of learners' reading profile or know the gap that needed to be bridged to help them to build strong reading skills</i>	<i>He/she is always aware of learners' reading profile or know the gap that needed to be bridged to help them to build strong reading skills</i>
2.2.1 Know the important component reading skills ³⁰ , the sequence in which these skills develop and the importance of each in helping young children learn to read	<i>Cannot identify most of the important reading skills, the sequence in which they develop and cannot explain their importance in helping young children to read</i>	<i>Can identify some important reading skills. Has a very basic understanding of how they contribute to helping young children to read</i>	<i>Can identify most important reading skills and their importance in helping young children to read; Can describe a basic sequence of skill development</i>	<i>Can identify all important reading skills and fully their importance in helping young children to read; Can the sequence of skill development</i>
2.1.2 Know the expectations of the national curriculum, the end-of-term and end-of-year benchmarks ³¹ and targets for important reading skills and simple tasks for measuring students' progress with respect to those benchmarks or expectations	<i>Is either unaware of term or end of year benchmarks or does not know the correct benchmarks. Either cannot describe simple tasks for measuring progress against benchmarks or tasks described do not match benchmark in question.</i>	<i>Can name some term or end of year benchmarks and some simple tasks for measuring progress against benchmarks.</i>	<i>Can name most term or end of year benchmarks and most simple tasks for measuring progress against benchmarks.</i>	<i>Can name all term or end of year benchmarks and simple tasks for measuring progress against all benchmarks.</i>
2.2.1 Know effective instructional strategies or activities for developing each important reading skill and for developing in students a culture of reading	<i>Cannot fully explain or give many accurate, grade-specific examples of instructional strategies for developing each reading skill, or for developing in students a culture of reading or an enjoyment of reading.</i>	<i>Can explain or give some grade-specific examples of instructional strategies for developing each reading skill, or for developing in students a culture of reading or an enjoyment of reading. However, explanations are usually incomplete, as are the number of different strategies identified. Strategies are not always</i>	<i>Can explain accurately and give many examples of instructional strategies for developing each reading skill, or for developing in students a culture of reading or an enjoyment of reading. Explanations not necessarily extensive. Can give two or more instructional strategies for each skill. Instructional</i>	<i>Can explain fully and accurately and give numerous grade-specific examples of instructional strategies for developing each reading skill, or for developing in students a culture of reading or an enjoyment of reading. Instructional strategies are always</i>

²⁹ A reading profile includes languages or dialects spoken at home, reading supports at home or in community, pre-primary attendance, visual or hearing impairments, etc.

³⁰ Important reading component skills include: phonological awareness, alphabetic principle (linking letters to sounds), fluency, reading comprehension, listening comprehension and vocabulary

³¹ Benchmarks include being able to read 10 or more correct words per minute by the end of P1, 25 or more correct words per minute by the end of P2 and 40 or more correct words per minute by the end of P3.

		<i>appropriate for the grade-level cited.</i>	<i>strategies are generally grade-level appropriate, although not always creative and engaging.</i>	<i>grade-level appropriate, creative and engaging.</i>
2.2.2 Know the different types of reading instructional materials ³² needed to develop young children’s reading skills, the purpose of each and how to use each effectively in the classroom	<i>Can only name one or two types of reading instructional materials. Cannot fully explain the purpose of the materials or how they are used in the classroom.</i>	<i>Can name some reading instructional materials and describe their purpose or how they are used in the classroom, although descriptions are often limited and not always accurate.</i>	<i>Can name most reading instructional materials and describe their purpose or how they are used in the classroom. Descriptions are accurate although not always detailed.</i>	<i>Can name all reading instructional materials and describe their purpose or how they are used in the classroom. Descriptions are clear, accurate and detailed.</i>
2.3.1 Know strategies for ensuring that all students learn to read, regardless of their reading profile (students who speak a different dialect/language, students with visual or hearing impairments, struggling versus strong readers, etc.)	<i>Rarely set clear strategies for ensuring that all students learn to read, regardless of their reading profile.</i>	<i>Sometimes set clear strategies for ensuring that all students learn to read, regardless of their reading profile.</i>	<i>Regularly/often set clear strategies for ensuring that all students learn to read, regardless of their reading profile</i>	<i>Always set clear strategies for ensuring that all students learn to read, regardless of their reading profile</i>
2.4.1 Know how to use other subject content areas (math, social studies, science, etc.) to reinforce students’ reading skills	<i>Rarely use other subject content areas adequately to reinforce students’ reading skills.</i>	<i>Sometimes use other subject content areas adequately to reinforce students’ reading skills.</i>	<i>Regularly/often use other subject content areas adequately to reinforce students’ reading skills.</i>	<i>Always use other subject content areas adequately to reinforce students’ reading skills.</i>
3.1.1 Have a clear reading learning objective, tied to specific reading component skills or to the development of a culture of reading, for all reading lessons and activities	<i>Rarely have a clear reading learning objective, tied to specific reading component skills or to the development of a culture of reading, for reading lessons and activities.</i>	<i>Sometimes have a clear reading learning objective, tied to specific reading component skills or to the development of a culture of reading, for reading lessons and activities.</i>	<i>Regularly/ often have a clear reading learning objective, tied to specific reading component skills or to the development of a culture of reading, for all reading lessons and activities.</i>	<i>Always have a clear reading learning objective, tied to specific reading component skills or to the development of a culture of reading, for all reading lessons and activities.</i>
3.2.1 Deliver instruction that respects the sequence of reading skill development in the curriculum and paces learning appropriately	<i>Rarely deliver instruction that respects the sequence of reading skill development in the curriculum and paces learning appropriately</i>	<i>Sometimes deliver instruction that respects the sequence of reading skill development in the curriculum and paces learning appropriately.</i>	<i>Regularly/often deliver instruction that respects the sequence of reading skill development in the curriculum and paces learning appropriately.</i>	<i>Always deliver instruction that respects the sequence of reading skill development in the curriculum and paces learning appropriately.</i>

³² Important reading materials include: teacher’s guide, student textbook, teacher read aloud stories, decodable texts, levelled texts, supplementary reading materials, big books, alphabet charts, classroom libraries, teacher-made learning aides, etc.

<p>3.2.2 Use scaffolding techniques like “I do, we do, you do” when introducing a new reading skill or competency</p>	<p>Rarely scaffolds students’ learning. Rather, explains a skill and expects students to immediately apply it. If scaffolding strategies like “I do, we do, you do” are used, they are generally used incorrectly or inappropriately.</p>	<p>Sometimes uses scaffolding techniques like “I do, we do, you do” but does not use them consistently or not always appropriately or as intended.</p>	<p>Regularly uses scaffolding techniques like “I do, we do, you do” when introducing a new reading skill or competency. Uses the techniques accurately, as intended.</p>	<p>Always uses scaffolding techniques like “I do, we do, you do” when introducing a new reading skill or competency and uses the techniques accurately and as intended.</p>
<p>3.2.3 Implement reading instructional strategies or activities accurately, as intended, to develop key reading skills</p>	<p>Rare uses reading instructional activities to develop a range or reading instructional skills within a single lesson. Reading instructional strategies used are often not used or implemented correctly.</p>	<p>Uses reading instructional activities to develop a few reading instructional skills within a single lesson. Reading instructional strategies used are not always used or implemented correctly.</p>	<p>Regularly uses reading instructional activities to develop a range reading instructional skills within a single lesson. Reading instructional strategies used are almost always used or implemented correctly.</p>	<p>Always uses reading instructional activities to develop a wide range reading instructional skills within a single lesson. Reading instructional strategies used are always used or implemented correctly.</p>
<p>3.3.1 Maximize the amount of time students spend reading new texts³³ independently in Kinyarwanda lessons³⁴; Use that time purposefully and effectively</p>	<p>Students rarely read new text in Kinyarwanda lessons. Most of class time is spent listening to the teacher or watching individual students complete reading activities on the board.</p>	<p>Students sometimes, but not always, have time to read new text in Kinyarwanda lessons. The amount of lesson time allocated to having students read texts in their textbooks or supplementary readers is limited, however. Most of class time is spent listening to or watching teachers model reading.</p>	<p>Students regularly have time during Kinyarwanda lessons to read new text.</p>	<p>Students always have time during Kinyarwanda lessons to read new text. A significant amount of time each lesson is devoted to actually reading new text. Teachers use a variety of activities (pair reading, choral reading, individual reading) to maximize the amount of time students spend reading.</p>
<p>3.3.2 Maximize the amount of time students read at 1) school, but outside of Kinyarwanda lessons and 2) outside of school time</p>	<p>Rarely encourages students to take books (textbooks, supplementary readers, library books, etc.) home each night to read or assigns reading homework; has no formal home-school reading program. Register to record books students are taking home is either non-existent or not used.</p>	<p>Sometimes encourages students to take books (textbooks, supplementary readers, library books, etc.) home to read or assigns reading homework; Formal home-school reading program is not highly functional and/or register to record books students are taking home is not up to date or used consistently. Does not institute reading competitions or other activities to increase the amount students are reading outside of school.</p>	<p>Regularly encourages students to take books (textbooks, supplementary readers, library books, etc.) home to read or assigns reading homework; Has a formal home-school reading program and/or register to record books students is generally up to date and used consistently. Institutes some reading competitions or other activities to increase the amount of time students are reading outside of school. Encourages students to read to others outside of class.</p>	<p>Always encourages students to take books (textbooks, supplementary readers, library books, etc.) home to read or assigns reading homework; Has a highly functioning, active formal home-school reading program and/or register to record books students updated daily. Has ongoing activities, including regular reading competitions, to increase the amount of time students are reading outside of class and rewards students who read a lot.</p>

³³ Texts can be syllables, words, sentences or passages, depending upon the level.

³⁴ That is, the amount of class time students spend with “eyes on the text in their hands”, trying to decode a text they are seeing for the first time)

3.5.1 Use important reading instructional materials regularly and accurately, as intended, to create a rich, literate classroom environment	<i>Uses few teaching/learning materials in a lesson. Textbook and supplementary readers are rarely used. Most of class time is devoted to chalk board activities.</i>	<i>Sometimes uses textbook and/or supplementary reading materials during lessons, but the bulk of class time is still devoted to chalk board activities. Materials are not always used effectively and as intended.</i>	<i>Regularly uses textbook and/or supplementary reading materials during lessons. Devotes over half of class time to using textbooks or supplementary reading materials. Materials are generally used effectively and as intended.</i>	<i>Always uses textbook and/or supplementary reading materials during lessons. Creates own reading instructional materials. The majority of the lesson students are reading in their textbooks or using supplementary reading materials. Materials are always used effectively and as intended.</i>
3.5.2 Ensure that during school time and at home students are reading texts that are at an appropriate level of difficulty for them	<i>Rarely uses the color-coded system to ensure that students are reading texts that are at an appropriate level of difficulty for them. All students either read the same text or they are not guided as to the level of text they should be reading.</i>	<i>Sometimes uses the color-coded system to ensure that students are reading texts that are at an appropriate level of difficulty for them but does not do so consistently. Students often end up with a book that is too difficult or easy for them.</i>	<i>Regularly, but not necessarily always, uses the color-coded system to ensure that students are reading texts that are at an appropriate level of difficulty for them. Students sometimes have books that are not at the right reading level for them.</i>	<i>Always uses the color-coded system to ensure that students are reading texts that are at an appropriate level of difficulty for them. As a result, students always have books that are at the right reading level for them.</i>
4.1 .1 Regularly plan reading lessons and related materials	<i>Rarely plan reading lessons and related materials</i>	<i>Sometimes plan reading lessons and related materials</i>	<i>Regularly plan reading lessons and related materials</i>	<i>Always plan reading lessons and related materials</i>
4.2.1 Use daily, weekly and end of unit formative assessment to determine whether students are developing targeted reading skills and implement appropriate remediation activities to address learning gaps.	<i>Rarely conducts daily, weekly and end of unity formative assessment activities and rarely measures whether students are developing reading skills.</i>	<i>Sometimes conducts daily, weekly and end of unity formative assessment activities. But has limited capacity to determine whether students are developing targeted reading skills</i>	<i>Regularly conducts daily, weekly and end of unity formative assessment activities and determines whether students are developing targeted reading skills and sometimes implements appropriate remediation activities to address learning gap.</i>	<i>Always conducts daily, weekly and end of unity formative assessment activities, and determines whether students are developing targeted reading skills and always implement appropriate remediation activities to address learning gaps</i>
4.2.2 Use formal formative assessment activities and end of unit standardized assessments to measure individual students' progress with respect to end-of-term and end-of-year benchmarks; Record, interpret and share results with different stakeholders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Rarely uses formal formative assessment activities and end of unit standardized assessments to measure individual student progress.</i> <i>Rarely keeps records of formal formative assessment activities and end unit standardized assessment to measure individual student progress.</i> <i>Rarely interprets the results from formal formative assessment activities and end of unit assessment for</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Sometimes uses formal formative assessment activities and end of unit standardized assessments to measure individual student progress.</i> <i>Sometimes keeps records of formal formative assessment activities and end unit standardized assessment to measure individual student progress.</i> <i>Sometimes interprets the results from formal formative assessment activities and end of unit assessment for</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Regularly uses formal formative assessment activities and end of unit standardized assessments to measure individual student progress.</i> <i>Regularly keeps records of formal formative assessment activities and end unit standardized assessment to measure individual student progress.</i> <i>Regularly interprets the results from formal formative assessment activities and end of unit assessment for individual student progress.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Always uses formal formative assessment activities and end of unit standardized assessments to measure individual student progress.</i> <i>Always keeps records of formal formative assessment activities and end unit standardized assessment to measure individual student progress.</i> <i>Always interprets the results from</i>

	<p><i>individual student progress.</i></p> <p>4. <i>Rarely shares results from formal formative assessment and end unit assessment with education stakeholders</i></p>	<p><i>individual student progress.</i></p> <p>4. <i>Sometimes shares results from formal formative assessment and end unit assessment with education stakeholders</i></p>	<p>4. <i>Regularly shares results from formal formative assessment and end unit assessment with education stakeholders</i></p>	<p><i>formal formative assessment activities and end of unit assessment for individual student progress.</i></p> <p>4. <i>Always shares results from formal formative assessment and end unit assessment with education stakeholders</i></p>
<p>4.3.1 Based on results of above assessments, implement classroom-based remediation activities for readers at risk and extension and consolidation activities for strong readers.</p>	<p><i>Rarely implements classroom-based remediation activities for readers at risk (non-readers, does not meet expectations, partially meets expectations) and rarely provides extension/consolidation activities for strong readers.</i></p>	<p><i>Sometimes implements classroom-based remediation activities for readers at risk (non-readers, does not meet expectations, partially meets expectations) and sometimes provides extension/consolidation activities for strong readers.</i></p>	<p><i>Regularly implements classroom-based remediation activities for readers at risk (non-readers, does not meet expectations, partially meets expectations) and regularly provides extension/consolidation activities for strong readers.</i></p>	<p><i>Always implements classroom-based remediation activities for readers at risk (non-readers, does not meet expectations, partially meets expectations) and always provides extension/consolidation activities for strong readers.</i></p>
<p>4.3.2 Based on results of above assessments, implement outside-of-school remediation activities for readers at risk and extension or consolidation activities for strong readers.</p>	<p><i>Rarely organizes and provides remediation to readers at risk outside of school time.</i></p>	<p><i>Sometimes organizes and provides remediation to readers at risk outside of school time.</i></p>	<p><i>Organizes and provides remediation to readers at risk outside of school time on regular bases, after class time, during weekends and holidays.</i></p>	<p><i>Always organizes and provides remediation to readers at risk outside of school time, after class time, during weekends and holidays.</i></p> <p><i>Advises and support other teachers to organize to carry out remediation activities to readers at risk outside of school time.</i></p>
<p>5.1.1 Help students feel safe and encourage risk taking in Kinyarwanda classes by correct student errors in ways that help students learn from their mistakes, using learning activities that encourage students to encourage, support and help each other to read (peer reading, small group reading)</p>	<p><i>1. Rarely correct student errors in ways that help them learn from their mistakes,</i></p> <p><i>2. Rarely use learning activities that encourage students to support and help each other to read (peer reading, small group reading)</i></p>	<p><i>1. Sometimes correct student errors in ways that help them learn from their mistakes,</i></p> <p><i>2. Sometimes use learning activities that encourage students to support and help each other to read (peer reading, small group reading)</i></p>	<p><i>1. Regularly/ often correct student errors in ways that help them learn from their mistakes,</i></p> <p><i>2. Regularly/ often use learning activities that encourage students to support and help each other to read (peer reading, small group reading)</i></p>	<p><i>1. Always correct student errors in ways that help them learn from their mistakes,</i></p> <p><i>2. Always use learning activities that encourage students to support and help each other to read (peer reading, small group reading)</i></p>

5.2.1 Use active, engaging learning activities that keep students on task and arrange seating to allow all students to access reading learning resources easily and equitably (materials on board, on shelves, etc.).	<i>Rarely use active, engaging learning activities that keep students on task and arrange seating to allow all students to access reading learning resources easily and equitably.</i>	<i>Sometimes uses active, engaging learning activities that keep students on task and arrange seating to allow all students to access reading learning resources easily and equitably.</i>	<i>Regularly/ often use active, engaging learning activities that keep students on task and arrange seating to allow all students to access reading learning resources easily and equitably.</i>	<i>Always use active, engaging learning activities that keep students on task and arrange seating to allow all students to access reading learning resources easily and equitably.</i>
6.1.1 Adopt new REB/MINEDUC reading instructional and assessment guidelines and policies	<i>Rarely adopts new reading instructional and assessment guidelines and policies recommended by REB/MINEDUC.</i>	<i>Sometimes adopts new reading instructional and assessment guidelines and policies recommended by REB/MINEDUC.</i>	<i>Willingly adopts new reading instructional and assessment guidelines and policies recommended by REB/MINEDUC.</i>	<i>Always adopts new reading instructional and assessment guidelines and policies recommended by REB/MINEDUC.</i>
6.1.2 Participate in early grade reading professional development activities, including communities of practice; Self-assess reading instructional practices based on Reading CPD framework and identify areas of strength and areas in need of development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Rarely participates in early grade reading professional development activities.</i> 2. <i>Rarely conducts self-assessment on reading basing on CPD frameworks.</i> 3. <i>Rarely implements lessons learnt and best practices shared through CPDs.</i> 4. <i>Rarely recognizes areas of strengths and areas of improvement during self- assessment.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Sometimes participates in early grade reading professional development activities.</i> 2. <i>Sometimes conducts self-assessment on reading basing on CPD frameworks.</i> 3. <i>Sometimes implements lessons learnt and best practices shared through CPDs.</i> 4. <i>Sometimes recognizes areas of strengths and areas of improvement during self- assessment.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Often participates in early grade reading professional development activities.</i> 2. <i>Often conducts self-assessment on reading basing on CPD frameworks.</i> 3. <i>Often implements lessons learnt and best practices shared through CPDs.</i> 4. <i>Often recognizes areas of strengths and areas of improvement during self- assessment.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Always participates in early grade reading professional development activities.</i> 2. <i>Always conducts self-assessment on reading basing on CPD frameworks.</i> 3. <i>Always implements lessons learnt and best practices shared through CPDs.</i> 4. <i>Always recognizes areas of strengths and areas of improvement during self- assessment.</i>
7.1.1 Involve parents and other stakeholders in supporting students' reading development	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Rarely informs parents of what they can do at home each evening.</i> 2. <i>Rarely institutes formal home-school programs.</i> 3. <i>Rarely monitors parents' involvement.</i> 4. <i>Rarely shares student assessment data with parents.</i> 5. <i>Rarely identifies what parents and students can do to improve reading results.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Sometimes informs parents of what they can do at home each evening.</i> 2. <i>Sometimes institutes formal home-school programs.</i> 3. <i>Sometimes monitors parents' involvement.</i> 4. <i>Sometimes shares student assessment data with parents.</i> 5. <i>Sometimes identifies what parents and students can do to improve reading results.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Regularly informs parents of what they can do at home each evening.</i> 2. <i>Regularly institutes formal home-school programs.</i> 3. <i>Regularly monitors parents' involvement.</i> 4. <i>Regularly shares student assessment data with parents.</i> 5. <i>Regularly identifies what parents and students can do to improve reading results.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Always informs parents of what they can do at home each evening.</i> 2. <i>Always institutes formal home-school programs.</i> 3. <i>Always monitors parents' involvement.</i> 4. <i>Always shares student assessment data with parents.</i> 5. <i>Always identifies what parents and students can do to improve reading results.</i>
7.2.1 Contribute to school-wide and community activities to improve reading.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Rarely encourages students to participate in Andika Rwanda competition.</i> 2. <i>Rarely develops different strategies that promote reading initiatives.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Sometimes encourages students to participate in Andika Rwanda competition.</i> 2. <i>Sometimes develops different strategies that promote reading initiatives.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Often encourages students to participate in Andika Rwanda competition.</i> 2. <i>Often develops different strategies that promote reading initiatives.</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Always encourages students to participate in Andika Rwanda competition.</i> 2. <i>Always develops different strategies that promote reading initiatives.</i>

ANNEX C. METRICS FOR ASSESSMENT TEXT

Exhibit 60. Measuring P1-P3 pupils' foundational reading skills: reading letters, syllables and familiar words

Skill and criteria	P1	P2	P3
Letters			
Number of letters in task	100	Same as P1	No letter reading assessment in P3 as this skill must be mastered in P1
Frequency of each letter in grid	Frequency reflects the frequency at which letter appears in Kinyarwanda texts, with the exception that two incidences of the letter “a” are replaced with other letters	Same as P1	No letter reading assessment in P3 as this skill must be mastered in P1
Weighting of capital versus small letters	20% of letters should be capitals, the remaining 80% are small letters	Same as P1	No letter reading assessment in P3 as this skill must be mastered in P1
Position of capital letters	No more than 2 capital letters per row	Same as P1	No letter reading assessment in P3 as this skill must be mastered in P1
Arrangement of letters in grid	Easiest, most frequent letters should appear in rows 1 and 2 No letter should be next to an identical letter (i.e., cannot have two “a”s side by side, or one above the other). The latter will avoid pupils losing their place on the page. Avoid putting small i next to a small j.	Same as P1	No letter reading assessment in P3 as this skill must be mastered in P1

	Put least frequent letters, for example l (small and capital), in last rows.		
Font	Same as font used in textbook	Same as P1	No letter reading assessment in P3 as this skill must be mastered in P1
Font size	Minimum font size should be same as font used in textbook when introducing a letter for the first time	Same as P1	No letter reading assessment in P3 as this skill must be mastered in P1
Syllables			
Total number of syllables in grid	100 syllables in a 10 x 5 grid (10 syllables per line, 5 lines per grid)	100 syllables in a 10 x 5 grid (10 syllables per line, 5 lines per grid)	100 syllables in a 10 x 5 grid (10 syllables per line, 5 lines per grid)
Nature of syllables	Consonant + vowel only, no blends	Consonant + vowel syllables, plus syllable blends introduced in term 3 of P1, as well as terms 1 and 2 of P2	Any syllables with consonant blends introduced in P1 to P3
Arrangement of syllables in grid	Most frequent, easiest P1 syllables in rows 1 and 2; Arrange syllables in other rows according to frequency of appearance in Kinyarwanda words No repeat syllables	Most frequent, easiest P1 and terms 1 and 2, P2 syllables in rows 1 and 2; Hardest or least frequent syllables should be in rows 3 to 5, arranged in order of frequency No repeat syllables	Most frequent, easiest term 3 P2 syllables in rows 1 and 2. Hardest or least frequent P3 syllables in rows 3 to 5 No repeat syllables
Capitalization	20% of syllables should be capitalized. Syllables selected for capitalization should be those that can appear as first syllables in a word (proper noun or word that can appear as first word in a sentence). No more than 2 syllables with capitals per line.	Same as P1	Same as P1
Font	Same as font used in textbook	Same as font used in textbook	Same as font used in textbook

Font size	Minimum font size should be same as font used in textbook	Minimum font size should be same as font used in textbook	Minimum font size should be same as font used in textbook
Familiar Words			
Total number of words in grid	50 words (10 rows, 5 words per row)	50 words (10 rows, 5 words per row)	50 words (10 rows, 5 words per row)
Nature of words	Most familiar words in P1 textbook, based on frequency analysis	Most familiar words in P2 textbook, based on frequency analysis	Most familiar words in P3 textbook, based on frequency analysis
Length of words	Short (2 to 3 syllable words). No one letter words as they are also letters. No two or three letter words that are also syllables.	Shorter (3 to 4 syllable words)	Longer (3 to 5/6 syllable words)
Arrangement of words in grid	Shorter, most frequent words in lines 1 and 2 Words in remaining rows according to length and frequency (words get progressively longer as lines progress)	Familiar P1 words without blends in rows 1 to 6, generally 3 to 4 syllables. Longer words, with blends, in rows 7 to 10.	Familiar P3 words without blends in rows 1 and 2. Words with blends in rows 3 to 10. Progressively longer, more difficult blends as rows progress.
Capitalization/Proper nouns	10% high frequency, familiar proper nouns. No more than 1 per row.	Same as P1	Same as P1
Font	Same as font used in textbook	Same as font used in textbook	Same as font used in textbook
Font size	Minimum font size should be same as font used in textbook	Minimum font size should be same as font used in textbook	Minimum font size should be same as font used in textbook

Exhibit 61. Measuring P1-P3 Reading Comprehension and Fluency Skills

Criteria	P1 2018	P2 2018	P3 2018
Content			
Type of text (narrative, informative, etc.)	Narrative	Narrative	Narrative

Criteria	P1 2018	P2 2018	P3 2018
Topic or theme	Theme familiar to P1 pupils (P1 real life experiences, domestic animals...). Happy story	Everyday life themes (or animal stories) familiar to P2 pupils Happy story	Everyday life themes (or animal stories) familiar to P2 pupils Happy story
Number of different ideas in text	One big idea	One big idea	One main idea
Complexity of ideas in text	Simple idea	Simple ideas, but more complex than P1	Simple ideas, but more complex than P2
Verb tense	Past tense (for narrative)	Past tense (for narrative)	Past tense (for narrative)
Words/Vocabulary/Expressions			
Type of words and expressions	Simple, short, familiar words only	Familiar, simple words introduced in P1 and P2. Not necessarily short.	Familiar words introduced in P1 to P3 but longer and less frequent words than P1 and P2
Presence of blends (yes, no, which ones...)	No blends	P1 blends + terms 1 & 2 P2 blends. Approximately 20 blends in total.	Mostly P1 and P2 blends. 1 or 2 rare P3 blends
Average no. syllables per word (<i>total number of syllables / total number of words</i>)	3 syllables per word	3.5 syllables per word	4 syllables per word
% of familiar words (<i>number of familiar words / total number of words x 100</i>)	100%	100%	100%
% unique words (versus repeated) (<i>number of unique words / total number of words x 100</i>)	80% unique words. No word repeated more than 3 times.	85% unique words. No word repeated more than 3 times.	90% unique words. No word repeated more than twice.
Length of Text			
Total number of words	25 to 28 total words	38 to 41 total words	60 words
Total number of sentences	5 sentences; 1 st sentence is easiest	7 sentences; 1 st sentence is easiest	9 sentences. 1 st sentence is easiest
Nature of Sentences			
Types of sentences (structure, complexity)	Simple sentences (with 1 verb)	Simple sentences, but longer or a mix of short and long sentences.	Mix of short and longer sentences. Maximum of 2 compound sentences
Average no. words per sentence (<i>total number of words / total number of sentences</i>)	5 to 5.6 words per sentence	5.5 to 5.9 words per sentence	6.5 to 6.7 words per sentence

Criteria	P1 2018	P2 2018	P3 2018
Nature of Reading Comprehension Questions			
Number and spacing of questions	5 questions, 1 per sentence	5 questions, 4 for the first 5 sentences. 5 th question can cover sentences 6 and 7.	5 questions, 4 evenly spaced over the first 7 sentences. 5 th question can cover sentences 8 and 9.
Types of questions	All literal comprehension questions. Answers can be found directly in the text.	First 4 questions are literal comprehension questions. Answers can be found directly in the text. Fifth question is a simple but inferential comprehension question.	First 4 questions are literal comprehension questions. Answers can be found directly in the text. Fifth question is a simple but inferential comprehension question.
Overall			
Approximate Flesch-Kincaid readability level (as calculated by formula in Microsoft word)	21 ³⁵	21.5 to 23 ³⁶	23.5-25

³⁵ Metric for Flesch-Kincaid readability level was established by averaging the readability level of Term 3 texts in the new P1 textbook.

³⁶ Metric was established by incrementally increasing the readability level from the P1 metric. This metric should be revised once the 2018 P2 textbook is available, by averaging the readability levels of the Term 3 texts.

ANNEX D. SUMMARY OF YEAR 6 ACTIVITIES

This section provides an update on specific activities that happened between October 2021 and December 10, 2021, which were not covered in Soma Umenye's Year 5 annual report covering October 2020 – September 2021. Overall recommendations and considerations for next steps are presented in the main narrative of the final report; they are not reported in this section.

A. OPERATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Operations. From October to December, Soma Umenye completed operational closeout tasks (detailed in the approved demobilization plan). Specific tasks included (but were not limited to) the closing of several international and local subcontracts, closing the project's leases (office, warehouse, and residential), payment of final invoices, and ensuring the smooth transition of all project staff among. Additionally, the project disposed of final assets to REB, NESAs, and other beneficiaries and shipped hard copy project files to the Chemonics headquarters in Washington, DC.

B. TECHNICAL ACTIVITIES

B1. COVID-19 CONSIDERATIONS

B1a. Support REB to deliver a remote learning program

Deliver P1-P3 radio lessons. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Support REB's digital materials platform. This activity was completed in Year 5.

B2. MATERIALS

B2a. Ensure student access to learning materials

Finalize distribution of remaining project materials. In October and November, Soma Umenye finalized distribution of remaining TLMs, specifically the remaining bookshelves.

Audit student textbooks in schools (losses, condition of books). This activity was completed in Year 5.

Provide a short-term solution to support the double P1 cohort. In October and November, the project reconciled all remaining PODs from previous distributions.

B2b. Build REB capacity to procure teaching and learning materials to better manage its book supply chain

Deliver supply chain training to REB. Due to COVID restrictions, Soma Umenye could not deliver supply chain training to REB as planned. Plans to hold interactive training during the

procurement and printing of additional P1 student textbooks in 2021 were cancelled when the procurement could not be completed due to paper supply challenges. However, the project has developed revised book supply chain guidelines in an accessible form to support REB's future delivery.

Present recommendations to REB on its print specifications and print quality assurance. Soma Umenye procured the following print quality assurance instruments for REB: cutter, magnifying glass, weighing scale, and densitometer to improve the potential of REB to assess the quality of printed material and has discussed the potential of USAID School and System enabling training of REB specialists to utilize the instruments.

Develop and disseminate book supply chain guidelines. Soma Umenye continued developing the book supply chain guidelines, which take into account global supply chain best practice as well as regional and local book supply chain contexts.

B2c. Digitize the P1-P3 teacher's guide

Digitize the P1-P3 teacher's guide. In November and December, Soma Umenye worked with a local partner to create draft digital version of the P1-P3 teacher's guide. The digitized guides contain embedded links to all previously approved project instructional materials (including guides, videos, and P1 decodable readers). Soma Umenye coordinated with REB ICT to create a private course within REB's eLearning system in order to build out the digitized guides. However, starting in late November and continuing through December, REB experienced technical difficulties with their eLearning platform and Soma Umenye was unable to sign into the platform. At the time of this report's submission, REB was aware of the problem and was working to fix it. Soma Umenye will hand over all of the backup files (HTML, image, and CSS files that were used to build the digitized teacher guides on the platform) to REB and USAID Schools and Systems.

B3. SUSTAINABLE CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, QUALITY INSTRUCTION, AND SCHOOL-BASED SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS AND SCHOOL LEADERS

B3a. Deliver an integrated cycle of communities of practice, coaching, and reflection for P1-P3 Kinyarwanda teachers, school-based coaches, SEIs, and DEOs

Deliver training to newly appointed school leaders. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Deliver refresher training to all school leaders. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Develop community of practice materials. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Distribute community of practice materials. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Support the reporting cycle for community of practice and coaching. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Deliver virtual coaching pilot. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Assess virtual coaching pilot. This activity was completed in Year 5.

B3b. Train newly qualified and re-deployed PI-P3 Kinyarwanda teachers in best practices in early grade reading instruction

Train NQTs and re-deployed teachers in Soma Umenye foundational training. This activity was completed in Year 5.

B3c. Support REB to leverage TTCs for a sustainable approach to CPD and coaching

Support REB to finalize the tutor's guide and design of the tutor training program. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Support implementation of the TDM policy related to the TTCs' role in in-service training. This activity was completed in Year 5.

B4. COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT

B4a. Support PI-P3 Kinyarwanda teachers to conduct formative assessment

Support teachers to conduct formative assessment. This activity was completed in Year 5.

B4b. Support REB to implement end of term assessments in PI-P3 Kinyarwanda

Conduct adapted LEGRA in selected districts. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Finalize the development of a bank of equated test items for Term 1 and Term 2 LEGRA assessments. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Deliver Term 1 and Term 2 LEGRA training. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Support head teachers, SEIs, and DEOs to manage LEGRA data collection. Soma Umenye continued to work closely with NESAs to support schools with uploading Term 3 LEGRA results. At the time of this report's submission, schools were still uploading Term 3 LEGRA data. See Activity B8 details on how, as part of closeout and transition events, Soma Umenye supported NESAs, REB, and selected school leaders and teachers to reflect on 2021 LEGRA data.

Make LEGRA data available on the comprehensive assessment dashboard. See Activity B4d.

B4c. Collaborate with REB to implement school-level remediation for PI-P3 students

This activity was completed in Year 5.

B4d. Develop a comprehensive assessment dashboard and transition it to REB

Finalize the comprehensive assessment dashboard architecture. Soma Umenye finalized the LEGRA dashboard architecture and ensured that all available Term 1, Term 2, and Term 3 LEGRA data were uploaded.

Transition the comprehensive assessment dashboard to REB. Given the delays with the rollout of CA-MIS, Soma Umenye agreed with NESAs to develop an interim dashboard for LEGRA data; however, Soma Umenye continued to ensure that NESAs were aware of the development of the LEGRA dashboard and built it so that it could be seamlessly integrated into the larger CA-MIS system once that system becomes fully functional. In December, Soma Umenye facilitated two handover events related to LEGRA data at the dashboard. The first one was a general handover meeting with NESAs, USAID/Rwanda, and USAID Schools and Systems that provided an overview of the dashboard and some next steps. The second was a more in-depth handover with NESAs and USAID School and Systems to walk through each aspect of the dashboard (from data upload to data visualization).

B4e. Support NESAs to deliver a NESAs-EGRA

In November, Soma Umenye analyzed the data from the EGRA/LARS/LEGRA equating exercise (conducted at the end of Year 5) and produced a report. The main findings from the equating study and presented in Section 2.4 of this final report. The equating exercise produced transformation tables which will enable NESAs and partners to conduct future comparisons of the performance of students who were assessed with the different instruments (EGRA, LARS, and LEGRA) without having to administer all these instruments to the same students.

B5. INCLUSION

See Activity B8 for details on Soma Umenye's transition and handover of all inclusion-related activities to USAID/Rwanda and USAID Schools and Systems.

B5a. Implement a Universal Design for Learning (UDL) pilot in selected PI classes

This activity was completed in Year 5.

B5b. Support the National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) to finalize Rwandan Sign Language

Collaborate with the Rwanda National Union of the Deaf (RNUD) to finalize the remaining signs. In October and November, Soma Umenye supported RNUD to produce the remaining sections of the dictionary. This included the development of 900 word-sign entries as well as a grammar section that highlights the distinctive linguistic features of RSL.

Support NCPD to validate the RSL dictionary. In December, Soma Umenye and RNUD received approval from NCPD on all sections of the dictionary. In the final RSL Dictionary Steering Committee meeting, RNUD noted their willingness to compile all approved sections and NCPD reiterated their commitment to printing the dictionary as well as steering its approval process through the Government of Rwanda.

B5c. Support REB and stakeholders to standardize and validate a Kinyarwanda braille code

Hold workshop with REB and stakeholders to standardize and validate a Kinyarwanda braille code. This activity was completed in Year 5.

B5d. Adapt the 2018 and 2019 Andika Rwanda books for students who are blind

Validate the draft braille books. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Print and distribute the braille books. In November, Soma Umenye distributed the braille Andika Rwanda books to the following schools: HVP Gatagara, GS Rwisirabo, GS Rukungu, GS Burema, GS Ruhango Catholique, PS Gitega, PS Muramba A, and Kibeho School for the Blind. Each school received one set of the Andika Rwanda 2018 books (24 titles) and two sets of the Andika Rwanda 2019 books (30 titles). Additionally, Soma Umenye handed over two sets of the Andika Rwanda 2018 and 2019 books to REB's Special Needs and Inclusive Education Unit.

B5e. Pilot the Orbit Reader for students who are blind

Deliver pilot. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Assess pilot and disseminate findings. Soma Umenye shared the Orbit Reader Pilot report with REB's Special Needs and Inclusive Education Unit

B5f. Produce and distribute accessible digital supplementary readers

Secure validation from REB. Following REB's approval of the five prototypes, Soma Umenye supported local partner eKitabu (who, in turn, worked with RNUD) to finalize the production of the remaining 49 accessible digital Andika Rwanda readers. The production of these remaining readers adhered to the draft standards for accessible digital content that Soma Umenye and other partners supported REB to develop.

Train end users. Given the delays in securing REB approval for the prototypes, Soma Umenye was unable to conduct training for end users on the final books.

Distribute accessible digital readers to selected schools. Soma Umenye developed the books on REB's eLearning platform to allow students and teachers to easily access them. However, in November and December, REB began experiencing technical difficulties with their eLearning platform and, at the time of this report's submission, the platform was not fully functional. Currently, the books are hosted on eKitabu's server. When the platform is functional again

(following the closure of Soma Umenye), eKitabu will work with REB to ensure they are available on the platform.

B6. COMMUNICATIONS

B6a. Deliver the National Reading Campaign

Deliver Phase 2 of the National Reading Campaign. This activity was completed in Year 5.

B6b. Raise visibility of Soma Umenye activities

Document project activities for sharing. The Communications team archived all project photos, videos, and other relevant project materials.

Disseminate project information through social media. In October and November, Soma Umenye promoted final events, including learning events and closeout celebrations (see Activity B8), through its social media channels.



A selection of Tweets showcasing Soma Umenye’s final events.

Develop communications materials. The Communications team developed a project documentary showcasing Soma Umenye’s work over the past five and a half years. Soma Umenye showed the documentary at the final event (see Section B8) and also shared it on the project’s YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BSO3NnB-is>).

Engage Rwandan media. Soma Umenye engaged local media to promote and cover the project’s final events.

B6c. Support regular required reporting

Support required reporting and develop success stories. Soma Umenye completed all final reporting activities.

B6d. Ensure appropriate branding and marking

Ensure appropriate branding and marking. The Communications team ensured that all project materials had appropriate branding and marking.

B6e. Leverage communications to support Soma Umenye's expected results

Support Soma Rwanda. Soma Umenye handed over final credentials for the Soma Rwanda website to the Secretariat. Soma Umenye also briefed USAID/Rwanda on Soma Rwanda platform updates and engaged in discussions around opportunities for the platform moving forward.

B7. MEL

B7a. Conduct ongoing performance monitoring

Review data collection tools. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Collect and analyze data on Soma Umenye performance with respect to required indicators. Soma Umenye compiled and analyzed all final/life of project data.

Coordinate school monitoring and lesson observation activities to monitor fidelity of Soma Umenye's implementation. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Coordinate remote monitoring of uptake of radio lessons and other remote learning tools. This activity was completed in Year 5.

Produce summary reports of collected data on the internal dashboard. This activity was completed in Year 5.

B7b. Implement data quality assurance procedures

Carry out data quality assessments to verify data submitted for Soma Umenye indicators. Soma Umenye conducted final data quality assessments to verify life-of-project data.

B7c. Report Soma Umenye data as required

Submit performance data through Development Information Solutions portal. In October, Soma Umenye submitted performance data through the Development Information Solutions portal.

B7d. Conduct evaluation activities

See Activity B4e.

B7e. Conduct collaborating, learning, and adapting activities

External collaboration. Soma Umenye continued to engage collaboratively with a number of stakeholders to complete final activities and ensure a smooth transition. Examples of this include collaboration with RNUD and NCPD on the RSL dictionary, NESAs and REB with the LEGRA technical laboratory, and several partners to share achievements and recommendations during the project's final event.

Support collaborative learning with counterparts. Soma Umenye supported collaborative learning with counterparts, primarily through the series of closing events and the LEGRA technical laboratory (further described in Activity B8).

Enable internal learning across project teams, and adaptation as needed. This activity was completed in Year 5.

B8. TRANSITION

Develop and deliver a Rwanda Early Grade Reading Toolkit for REB and MINEDUC. In December, Soma Umenye shared the Rwanda Early Grade Reading Toolkit with USAID/Rwanda and USAID Schools and Systems.

In addition to the activities described earlier in this section, Soma Umenye also supported several transition-specific activities with NESAs, REB, and USAID Schools and Systems. These activities are outlined below.

Materials: Soma Umenye handed over soft copies and InDesign files of all TLMs to USAID Schools and Systems.

Comprehensive Assessment and National Assessment: Soma Umenye facilitated two main transition activities during this period: (1) a LEGRA technical laboratory and (2) a transition workshop with NESAs and USAID Schools and Systems on the LEGRA dashboard.

In October, Soma Umenye facilitated a LEGRA technical laboratory with NESAs, REB, USAID Schools and Systems, and selected representatives from the school-, sector-, and district-level. There were four primary goals of the technical laboratory, including (1) reflecting on the national scale up of LEGRA as part of Comprehensive Assessment in 2021; identifying adaptations to be instituted and best practices to be supported in the next academic year, both for early grade Kinyarwanda and assessment more broadly; (2) understanding LEGRA results through identification of core questions and deep dive into data to explore implications of LEGRA results for improving early grade literacy and education broadly; (3) developing a greater understanding of LEGRA, benchmarks, and the value of school, sector and district level reflection on assessment results; and (4) celebrating the significant achievement of a nation-wide, evidence-based early grade reading assessment in Rwanda conducted by teachers.

During the technical laboratory, it was clear that stakeholders had interest in applying the LEGRA model, specifically the development of benchmarks, to strengthen Comprehensive Assessment in other subjects. Additionally, discussions revealed several areas in which continued focus will be needed to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of LEGRA as part of NESA's Comprehensive Assessment system, including:

- Refresher trainings for all involved in assessment administration;
- Additional training on data collection, results analysis, and guidance on using results to inform class and school remediation activities;
- Institutionalization of an assessment results system to quickly collect, analyze, and share results back to users at every level;
- Continued guidance to support education meetings at every level that share results, reflect on trends, and determine strategies to improve learner achievement;
- Continued engagement of parents and the community through inamas and regular sharing of learner performance and strategies to support struggling students.

A report from the technical laboratory can be found in Annex E.

The second transition activity was a handover workshop for the LEGRA dashboard with NESA and USAID Schools and Systems. Soma Umenye provided participants with a hands-on demonstration and walk-through of the LEGRA dashboard. Additionally, the workshop discussed dashboard maintenance as well as its integration with the forthcoming CAMIS platform.

With the finalization and handover of the LEGRA dashboard to NESA, as well as NESA's participation in the planned technical laboratory, Soma Umenye is confident that NESA is well-positioned to manage LEGRA moving forward.

Inclusion: In December, Soma Umenye facilitated a handover meeting with USAID/Rwanda and USAID Schools and Systems. The meeting presented progress made with a number of inclusion activities (including the RSL dictionary, Orbit Reader pilot, UDL pilot, accessible digital Andika Rwanda books, and the development of braille Andika Rwanda books), suggested next steps, and overall recommendations.

Closing/Learning Events: In October and November, Soma Umenye facilitated three events with stakeholders to mark the end of the project and reflect on progress made. The first event was a visit to EP Tumba in Huye District and provided an opportunity for USAID/Rwanda leadership to observe a P3 lesson and then engage in a school meeting where the head teacher presented the school's 2021 LEGRA data. The head teacher and teacher also discussed how the actions that they had taken based on their school's LEGRA results, which included the facilitation of weekend remedial classes to support struggling students.

The second event was a visit to GS Nyamata Catholique where REB and USAID/Rwanda were able to observe a P3 lesson and then take part in a district-level community of practice. At the community of practice, the DEO and the SEIs reflected on the district's LEGRA data and discussed practical ways to support school leaders and teachers. The Acting Mayor of Bugesera

District was also in attendance and joined participants in reflecting on the achievements the district has made with early grade reading. The event at GS Nyamata Catholique, as well as the event at EP Tumba, both demonstrated school, sector, and district ownership of the LEGRA process (including both the assessment and, more importantly, the steps after the assessment to support struggling students).

Finally, Soma Umenye facilitated an official closing event in November with MINEDUC, REB, NESAS, USAID, several development partners, local organizations, and DPOs. The event showcased Soma Umenye's support to REB and NESAS since 2016, presented the project's impact (see Section 5), and reflected on recommendations. The recommendations are described in the main narrative of the final report.



At Soma Umenye's closing event in November, participants watch a documentary showcasing the project's achievements.



Minister of State for Primary and Secondary Education, Gaspard Twagirayezu, presides over Soma Umenye's closing event.

B9. CLOSEOUT ACTIVITIES

Soma Umenye completed closeout tasks described in the project's demobilization plan and highlighted in Activity A.

ANNEX E. COMPREHENSIVE ASSESSMENT - LOCAL EARLY GRADE READING ASSESSMENT TECHNICAL BRIEF

USAID SOMA UMENYE, OCTOBER 2021

CA-LEGRA BACKGROUND

Comprehensive Assessment - Local Early Grade Reading Assessment (CA-LEGRA) is part of the National Examination and School Inspection Authority's (NESA) learner assessment system.

LEGRA uses four subtests to assess a learner's key reading fluency and reading comprehension skills in Kinyarwanda, along with lower-order foundational skills such as alphabet knowledge, decoding words and vocabulary. In addition to four distinct data points for each student, LEGRA are given real power by being consolidated into a single reading metric for each learner and by being set against the national reading benchmarks. These standards are the levels which students in that grade are expected to have attained in relation to the various reading skills. So, for instance, by the end of P3 students are expected to be able to read 40 words correctly in a minute. These benchmarks were officially signed off by Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) in June 2019.

CA-LEGRA was piloted in five districts in 2019 and rolled out nationally at the end of Term I in March 2021. March 2021 marked the successful implementation of CA-LEGRA in every early grade Kinyarwanda class, for all P1 to P3 students nationwide. This successful scale-up was supported by USAID Soma Umenye and included a series of teacher training sessions at district, sector, and school levels. However, due to the impact of Covid-19, the teachers could only be trained to a limited extent through cascade and virtual training. In addition, a structured process of school Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment meetings before and after the two days of the Assessment were instituted. Finally, at every level stakeholder meetings, or *inama*, are held where the local community, decision makers and other education stakeholders engage with the reading results and strategize about how to respond and improve the results.

Exhibit 62. Overview of the CA-LEGRA Process

CA-LEGRA was again fully implemented at the end of Term 2 in June 2021, with less direct support, and at the end of Term 3 in September 2021 by NESA itself. Rwanda may well be the first country anywhere, but certainly in Africa, to administer EGRA-style tests to every early grade learner three times in a year, and to have the teachers do the testing using national reading standards to benchmark every learner’s performance.

This series of three national-level data sets illustrates the role and value of integrated, formative early grade reading assessment and in improving early grade literacy skills for Rwanda’s growth and development. In particular, it shows the value of using learner assessment data to inform systematic and structured diagnostic analysis of learner and school performance, to help identify learners who are struggling to read, and to inform remediation for these learners and guide the teacher in what to include in the remediation process.

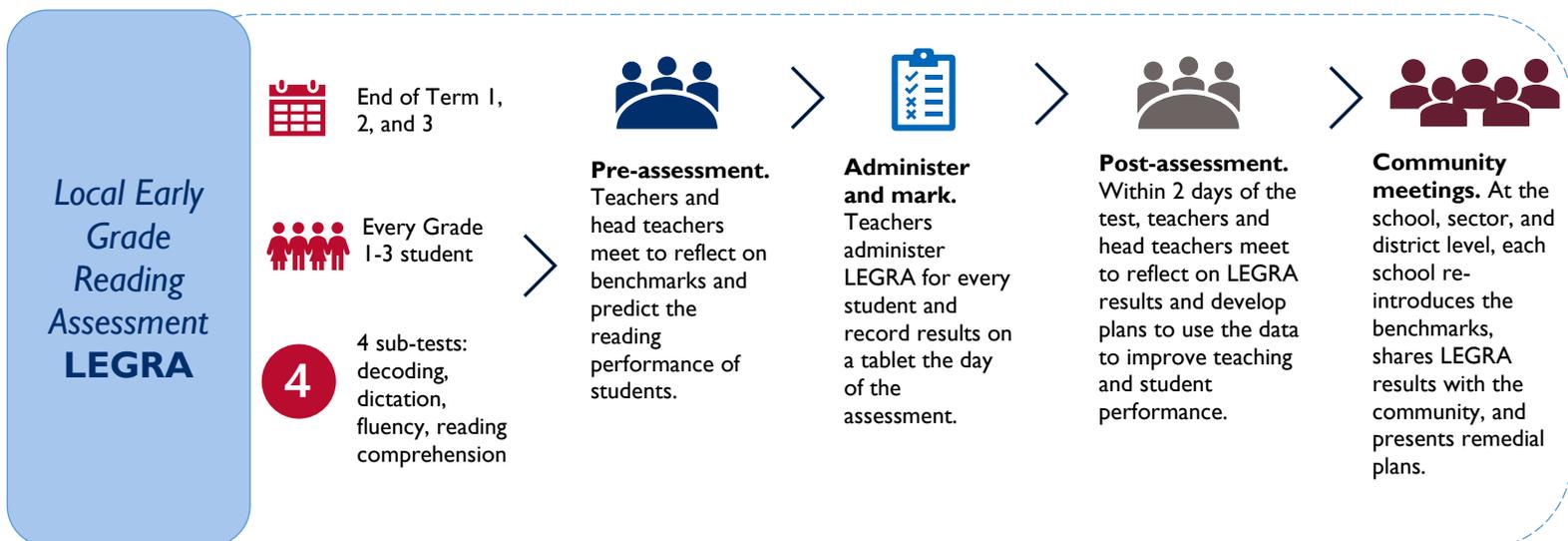
Additional CA-LEGRA Background Documentation:

- [CA-LEGRA overview video](#)
- [CA-LEGRA pilot report](#)
- [CA-LEGRA Term I \(March 2021\) report](#)
- [CA-LEGRA administration guide](#)
- [CA-LEGRA training module](#)

WHAT ARE THE 2020-2021 LEGRA DATA TELLING US?

In the 2021 academic year, approximately 1.2 million early grade learners sat each term’s CA-LEGRA assessments. After three rounds of collecting census-level early grade reading data we can make some general statements about the findings at national level:

- Across P1, P2 and P3, over the course of the 2020 – 2021 academic year, we saw improvement in the proportion of students meeting expected levels of reading performance



for their grade. This should be understood within context: each term’s LEGRA test increases in complexity as it tests students on new skills they have learned throughout that term. Students are assessed against Term 1 and 2 benchmarks and then, with the Term 3 test, they are assessed against annual benchmarks.

- There was a decrease in the number of non-readers across Rwanda in every grade between Term 1 and Term 3. But for students in P1, the proportion of non-readers and those below expectation remained high. Given the Covid-related stop/start beginning to their schooling career, this may not be too surprising.
- In P2 and P3, the number of learners who got a zero score in Oral Reading Fluency (ORF) and Reading Comprehension decreased across almost all but one district. At the same time in most districts the proportion of learners who reached the benchmark in oral reading fluency and reading comprehension increased significantly over the course of the year.

WHAT DO TEACHERS AND EDUCATION OFFICIALS SAY ABOUT CA-LEGRA?

It is important in introducing new methodology, which impacts so directly on foundation phase teachers, school head teachers, sector, district and national education officials, to hear the voices of these practitioners and officials.

The teachers who administered CA-LEGRA during 2021 are generally positive about the experience. Soma Umenye conducted focus groups with teachers and head teachers throughout the year in order to better understand how they were implementing and embracing CA-LEGRA. A selection of direct quotes can be found in the remainder of this section.

“We are thankful of the way LEGRA was different from the usual way of setting tests in the previous years.”

“LEGRA assessment was helpful to me in teaching, testing and the way of setting questions to identify the level of children’s success in oral reading fluency, writing and comprehension. In LEGRA, a teacher’s role allows participation in testing, like giving examples before tests. When you start explaining to children how they approach the test, it awakens and excites many learners which supports them to attain grade level benchmarks.”

“Having seen how good the LEGRA model is, we would like the same to be applied to other subjects, starting with setting common benchmarks that student performance is measured against by all teachers.”

“The marks helped us to identify and categorize children in grades, to know where to put much emphasis: is it reading, writing? Which helped me to put in more effort ... at school we kept the marks which would help us to support children of different categories. As a school we were able to put mechanisms in place for remediation.”

It was clear that many teachers had grasped the potential of CA-LEGRA to deepen stakeholder – and particularly parental – engagement with learner performance:

“In cases where weakness is identified among students, it’s the responsibility of teachers to discuss with the school administration through COPs (communities of practice) and involve parents so that they also support their children as they get home hence to improve learners’ performance. Teachers have been sharing information with parents, in short LEGRA created chances for teachers to meet with parents and parents get sensitized to support their own children in learning.”

Teachers also grasped the importance of the CA-LEGRA assessment and meeting cycle, as one teacher stated:

“Pre-and post-assessment meetings were held following guidelines, be it before and after LEGRA. The introductory meeting was meant to explain how LEGRA tests will be conducted, like giving example during tests, brainstorming on guidelines, precautions during preparations. The last meeting was held to discuss about the results and the challenges that were encountered and to find mechanisms to support zero scores.”

Many schools had quickly seen value in integrating the CA-LEGRA process into existing planning processes:

“The information from LEGRA helped us to engage better with all stakeholders to plan remediation (because they have seen the results). For example, the local priest is now more flexible with organizing remediation activities on Saturday.”

“LEGRA results are now helping to inform our school improvement plan.”

Education officials also show commitment to CA-LEGRA and see the value of it at a system level, as seen in the following statements.

As a Sector Education Officer (SEO) said: *“We have been engaged with LARS and EGRA and we never see the results, but with LEGRA we get the results and it means that we can use them to work with schools based on the data.”*

As a national official stated: *“Three months ago, I went to some schools and they asked if we are setting the CA (Comprehensive Assessment) in the model of LEGRA. We want to continue it. Teachers want this. We have embraced this form of learning assessment. It has helped pupils extend their reading.”*

A NESO official said: *“LEGRA is important for policy makers and stakeholders at all levels as when we set policy we have expectations that the policy must be well implemented by all involved. LEGRA is well-implemented even parents know about it – parents can see how their children are progressing. Once Covid allows we will hold inama at different levels.”*

“LEGRA is a good concept that should be applied in other subjects (English, Math, etc).”

“(We need to) start assessments like LEGRA in PI in order to avoid (student) repetition at the end of P6.”

Perhaps most significant for the institutionalizing of CA-LEGRA were signs of schools and local authorities taking the initiative to ensure that the CA-LEGRA was a success.

A head teacher commented,

“Ownership of school leaders facilitates the good implementation of LEGRA.”

“In some cases, students thought that assessment has ended after the first day. In such cases, we worked with the head of the Mudugudu (village) to call them back for second day, and they all came back.”

The comments of teachers and their head teachers also highlighted areas where more planning is needed, particularly in relation to adapting CA-LEGRA to make it suitable for learners with aural, psycho-motor and mental challenges.

“(We need) to plan how we can include the students with disability in LEGRA process, this was a challenge in implementing LEGRA.”

“The 2 days’ training wasn’t enough. Even though the training was successful, there is a need for teachers especially newly employed teachers to meet and share experience, challenges encountered and in collaboration with head teachers we can support new teachers.”

Appendix A1 provides additional comments from participants of the technical laboratory focused on the following questions:

1. What adaptations may be needed for LEGRA to be effectively sustained as part of Comprehensive Assessment going forward?
2. What support do stakeholders need to implement Comprehensive Assessment?
(Responses from selected teachers, head teachers, SEIs, DEOs, as well as NESAs and REB officials)
3. Why is it of critical importance that the LEGRA tests are combined with the pre- and post-assessment meetings at school level, and the inama at sector, district, and national levels?
4. How can the LEGRA model guide remediation and assessment in other subjects?

2021 CA-LEGRA DATA HIGHLIGHTS

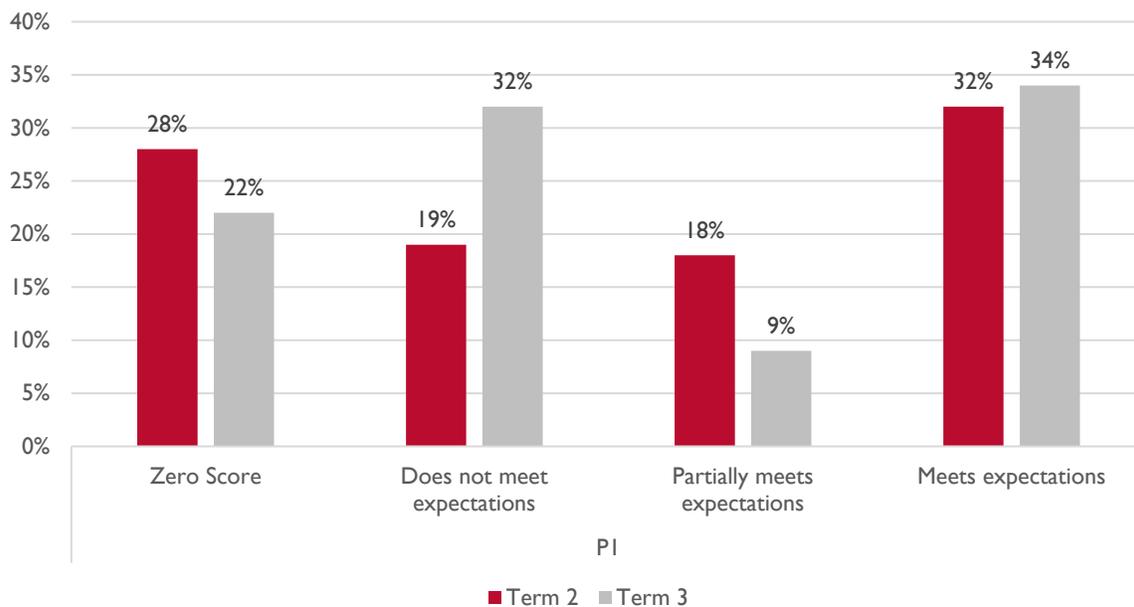
The exhibits below present national-level data that was shared at the technical laboratory (it has been revised slightly at the time of writing this report to reflect updated data). Additionally, note that at the time of writing this report, only a small portion of Term 3 LEGRA data had been uploaded to the system.

Exhibit 63. Number of Student LEGRA Data Records

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
PI	585,664	481,776	85,769
P2	345,501	269,145	43,469
P3	323,816	254,058	40,902

ORAL READING FLUENCY – NATIONAL-LEVEL DATA

Exhibit 64. PI ORF LEGRA Scores Across the 2021 School Year³⁷



³⁷ Note that in Term 1, PI students are not tested on ORF.

Exhibit 65. P2 ORF LEGRA Scores Across the 2021 School Year

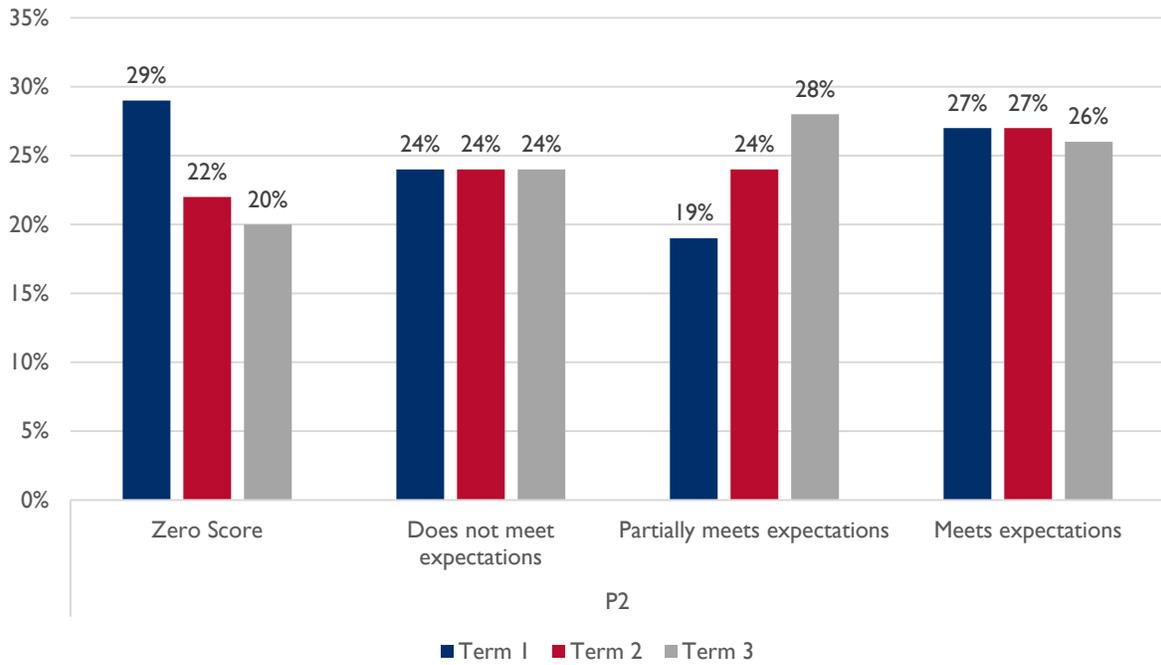
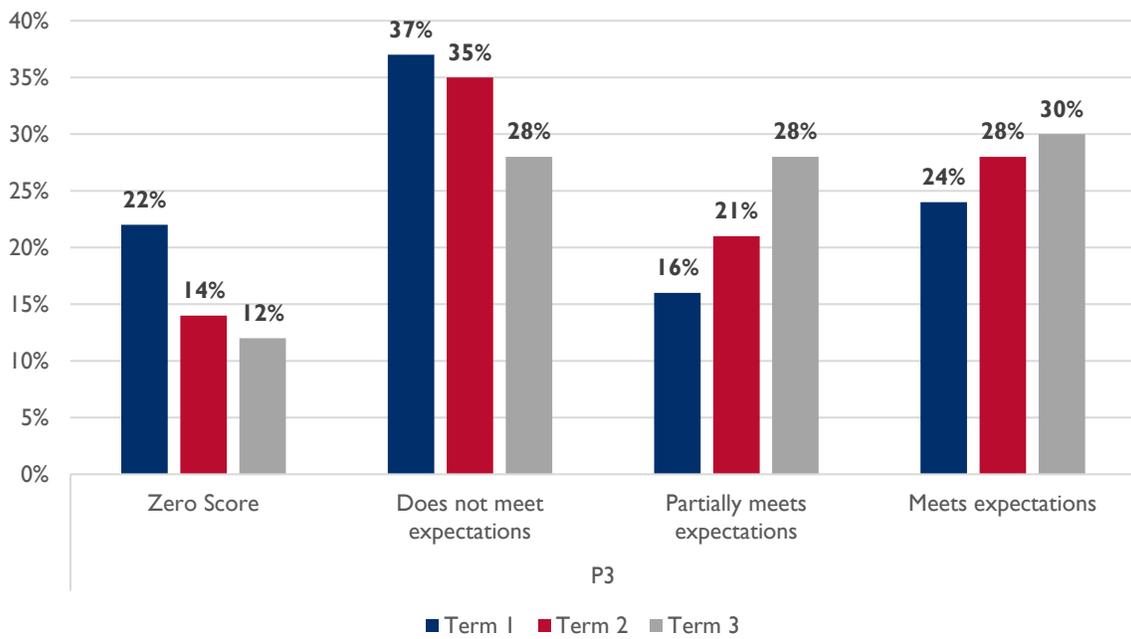


Exhibit 66. P3 ORF Scores Across the 2021 School Year



READING COMPREHENSION – NATIONAL-LEVEL DATA

Exhibit 67. P1 Reading Comprehension LEGRA Scores Across the 2021 School Year³⁸

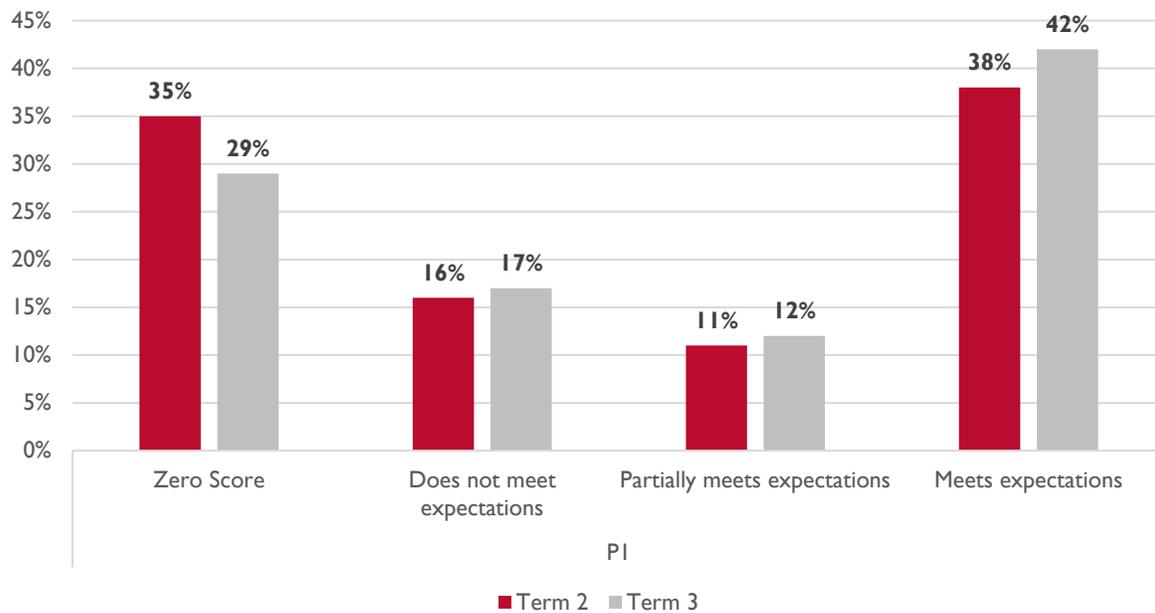
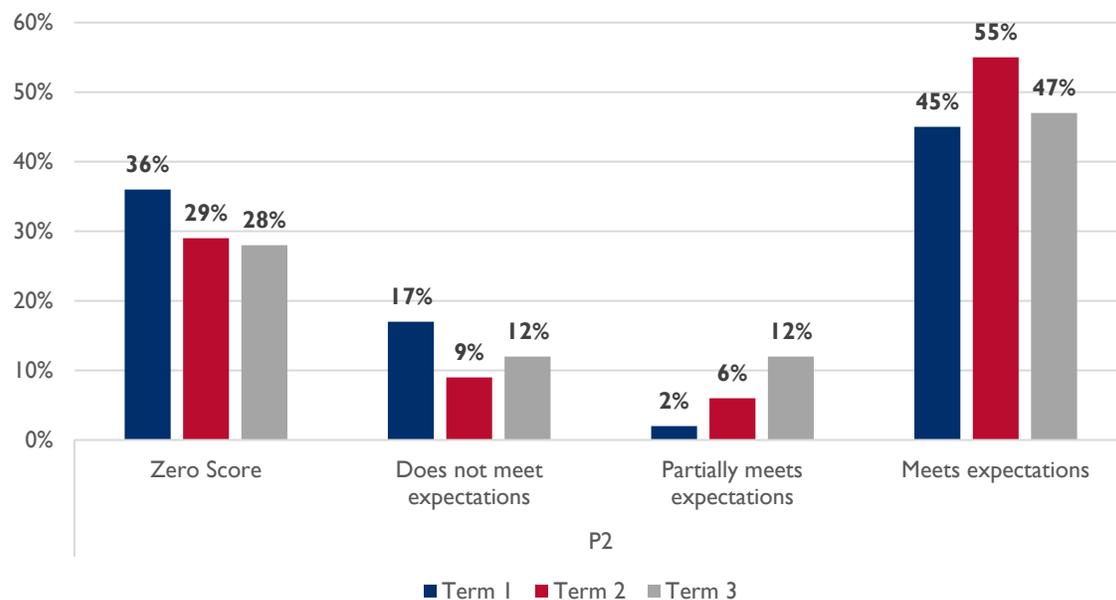
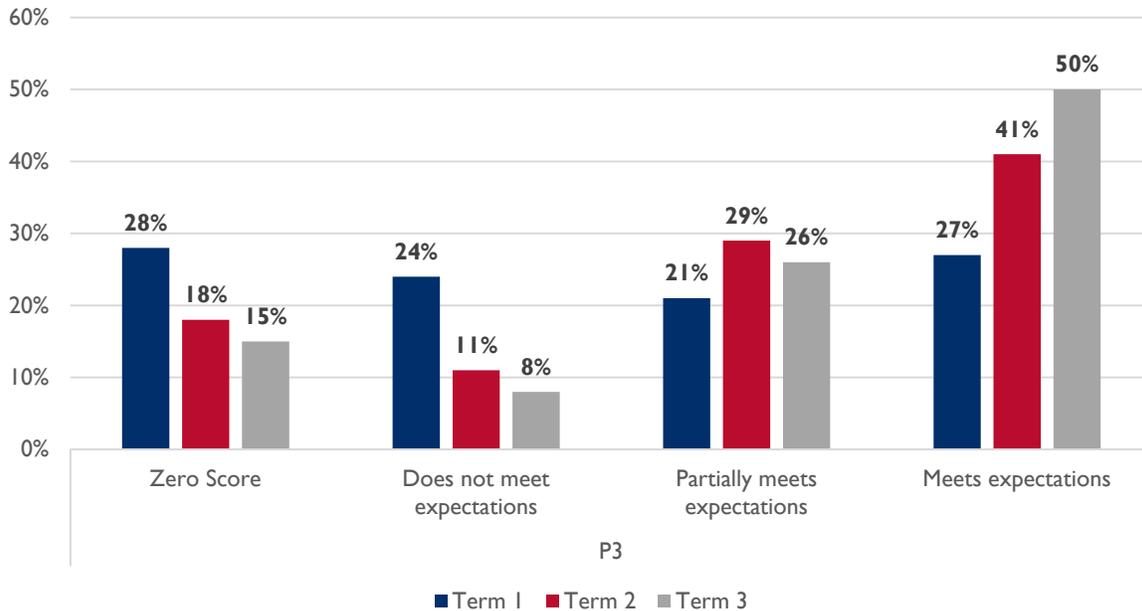


Exhibit 68. P2 Reading Comprehension LEGRA Scores Across the 2021 School Year



³⁸ Note that in Term 1, P1 students are not tested on reading comprehension.

Exhibit 69. P3 Reading Comprehension LEGRA Scores Across the 2021 School Year



HOW DO DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS USE CA-LEGRA?

The CA-LEGRA technical laboratory was also an opportunity to convene a number of different stakeholders, who each have a vested interest in using and reflecting on CA-LEGRA data. Exhibit 70 presents a summary of CA-LEGRA focus areas for each stakeholder, which was discussed at the technical laboratory.

Exhibit 70. CA-LEGRA Focus Areas for Different Stakeholders

Stakeholder	CA-LEGRA Provides:
P1-P3 teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The teacher gets 4 data points for each of her students, which show: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Phonemic Awareness and Phonics – identifying words accurately Reading fluency – what level of automaticity the student has achieved (number of words read per minute set against national reading benchmarks) set against the national reading benchmarks Vocabulary level – being able to associate words read with their meaning (which requires knowing what words read mean – having a wide and varied vocabulary) Comprehension skills – constructing meaning once words are identified
School leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It foregrounds the importance for school principals of early grade reading and gives it a scientific edge by basing it on benchmarks It provides a process by which school leaders can work with early grade teachers to improve learner reading performance

Stakeholder	CA-LEGRA Provides:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It provides data from which to understand the reading performance of learners in his/her school and to monitor performance over time • It provides the principal with a path to identify learners with serious reading challenges and institutionalize learner remediation in a structured way
Sector officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reading performance of each class, grade and school in the sector • From this the SEO will have a good idea of the strengths and weaknesses of each school and teacher in reading • This data can inform targeted workshops and school based support specific to the needs of the teachers and school • Over the termly assessments the SEO can measure progress of individual classes and schools and even a specific student
District officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The reading performance of each grade and class in each school • The comparative reading performance for sectors, which could be used, with other data, to measure the SEI's performance • This data can inform targeted communities of practice and workshops specific to the needs of specific groups of schools • Over the termly assessments the DEO/DDE and district leadership can measure progress of individual schools and sectors, and even deep dive to a specific class or student
National officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A detailed picture – with 4 data points and a composite score – of reading performance across the country in the early grades for national and international use • The reading performance of each district, which can be used comparatively • Over the termly assessments NESA, REB and MINEDUC can measure progress of individual districts, sectors and even schools, and even deep dive to a specific class or student • A national Term 3 assessment which helps to validate Term 1 and 2 data and assessment processes

THE WAY FORWARD

CA-LEGRA is a Government of Rwanda product administered as part of the Comprehensive Assessment protocol by NESA and REB. Ownership has already been established and, as such, CA-LEGRA has been institutionalized. Judging by some of the quotes above, teachers and education officials see the potential for CA-LEGRA to act as a model for other subjects, particularly in early grades. This would involve NESA developing a similar cycle of planning and review meetings, around the assessment of other subjects – particularly mathematics and English – and using the learner performance data to inform structured remediation for learners who are failing in the assessments. During the technical laboratory held 21-22 October 2021 with NESA and REB, it was clear that there is interest in applying the LEGRA model, specifically the development of benchmarks, to strengthen Comprehensive Assessment in other subjects.

The technical laboratory also revealed areas in which continued focus will be needed to ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of LEGRA as a part of NESA’s Comprehensive Assessment system, including,

- Refresher trainings for all involved in assessment administration
- Additional training on data collection, results analysis, and guidance on using results to inform class and school remediation activities
- Institutionalization of an assessment results system to quickly collect, analyze, and share results back to users at every level
- Guidance to support education meetings at every level that share results, reflect on trends, and determine strategies to improve learner achievement
- Address the gap whereby LEGRA fails to cover all content of the P1-P3 Kinyarwanda curriculum
- Engage parents and the community through inama and regular sharing of learner performance and strategies to support struggling students.

Following the technical laboratory, Soma Umenye supported two site visits with stakeholders to understand how, in practice, districts, sectors, and schools were using LEGRA data (further described below).

Spotlight on EP Tumba (Huye District) and GS Nyamata Catholique (Bugesera District): Using LEGRA Data

In November, Soma Umenye and REB visited two schools (EP Tumba in Huye District and GS Nyamata Catholique in Bugesera District) to meet with school, sector, and district officials and observe how they engage with LEGRA data. Following lesson observations in each school, the team sat in on school-level and district-level meetings where local stakeholders were reviewing their Term 1, 2, and 3 LEGRA 2021 reports. From both site visits, it was clear that school, sector, and district officials have strong ownership of LEGRA and are committed to engaging in the full LEGRA process (which, perhaps most importantly, requires locally designed remedial plans for schools, sectors, and districts). For example, at EP Tumba, the head teacher reported that, following the school’s internal reflection on Term 1 and 2 LEGRA data, the school began implementing Saturday remedial lessons – targeted to students who were struggling in Kinyarwanda. This is a positive example of a data-informed activity that has been designed because the school had timely access to assessment data through LEGRA.

Similarly, in Bugesera District, the DEO and SEIs demonstrated in-depth reflection of the 2021 LEGRA results. Through a district-level community of practice, the Bugesera District team discussed how the district was doing overall and then drilled down into sector-specific results, allowing them to discuss more targeted support for certain sectors. The Acting Mayor for Bugesera District also expressed his commitment to the LEGRA process (including data collection, reflection on results, and informed/targeted remediation) by attending the district-level community of practice and engaging with the DEO and SEIs on actions and next steps.

Appendix G2 provides a copy of the Term 1-3 LEGRA reports used by officials at GS Nyamata Catholique. It also provides a copy of the Ruhuha Sector report as well as the Bugesera District report.

Finally, in December 2021, NESA announced plans to deliver a Term I LEGRA for the 2021-2022 school year, indicating not only strong commitment from the national level but also sustainability of this process.

Appendix E1. Recommendations from Participants at the CA-LEGRA Technical Laboratory

On the final day of the CA-LEGRA technical laboratory, participants completed a brief reflection questionnaire to provide feedback on LEGRA implementation, results, and the way forward. The following provides all responses received.

Question 1

What adaptations may be needed for LEGRA to be effectively sustained as part of Comprehensive Assessment going forward?

- Data collection systems will need to be in place (e.g. Kobo)
- NESA to establish a mechanism whereby schools may respect in terms of data submission
- To improve the use of Kobo in sending results of LEGRA to national level
- Quick analysis of data and sharing data back to different stakeholders (automation)
- Set rules and regulations for data collection
- Submit marks on time
- Equip early grade teachers with IT skills so that they will be able to use tools to upload data
- To organize trainings at sector/school level as refresher courses on the use of Kobo
- Needs more training
- Make analysis report at school level
- NESA ownership
- Analyze data
- Training of teachers, headteachers (refresher)
- NESA ownership
- Dashboard to all concerned education officials (national → school level)
- Headteacher ownership making sure remediation is done for those who need it
- More trainings
- Aligning LEGRA with other Comprehensive Assessment to respond to complaints that LEGRA does not assess the whole content covered in the curriculum
- Dashboard at all levels
- Use it as a model also on other subjects
- Collaboration with all stakeholders (parents, teachers, HT, DPs, REB. NESA, district, sector...)
- Ensure LEGRA covers all units in the curriculum.

Question 2

What support do stakeholders need to implement Comprehensive Assessment?

Teachers...

- CPD based on experience and lessons learnt

- Guidance on strategies to use for different categories of students who don't meet grade-level benchmarks (remediation)
- More trainings (coaching, enhanced CoPs)
- Trainings on the system
- Teachers need to follow up on the improvement of students scores
- Refresher trainings (particularly newly hired teachers)
- CPD activities
- Increased accountability
- Individually follow up on data and increase the quality
- More trainings (coaching, CoPs)

Headteachers...

- CPD opportunities to continuously support the implementation of LEGRA and remediation
- CoPs
- They need assistance from SEIs, district, NESAs & REB for better implementation
- Training on objectives of formative assessment
- Strengthen CoPs at school level
- Increase visit to classrooms as part of supervision to teachers
- Take full ownership
- Increase accountability and ownership and detailed analysis on data as well as data submission
- Increased accounting on data generated
- Sustainable trainings on for all headteachers (refresher or new)
- Be fully involved in preparation, pre-assessment, administration, post reflection, sharing data and remediation plans.
- Ownership
- Increased accountability, ownership by headteachers
- CoPs to update their knowledge
- Close collaboration to identify daily challenges in teaching
- Provide training on data entry

SEIs...

- Quick access to data and analysis
- Ownership
- Collaboration with headteachers to better understand the situation and act accordingly
- Organization of meetings with head teachers to discuss results
- Guidance to organize LEGRA discussions and follow up (remediation)
- Monitoring and evaluation at school level
- Increase engagement of SEIs and participation in inamas
- Being trained on how to support schools
- Train new SEIs
- Follow up assessment administration in schools and make plan for post-assessment meetings at sector level to discuss results
- Engagement and ownership

- Increased engagement for education interventions
- SEIs to have regular communication with school leaders and teachers on Comprehensive Assessment
- Increased engagement in educational activities
- Advocacy to mobilize parents to attend meetings at school level

Districts...

- Quick access to data
- Compile all reports from sectors/schools and discuss the cases where there is need for improvement
- Collaboration with SEIs and headteachers in order to be well informed which helps in implementation
- Ownership
- Routine monitoring and ownership of comprehensive assessment
- Use of data in planning
- Coordinate with SEIs to ensure assessment activities are carried out efficiently and effectively
- Guidance on reflection of data
- Need greater orientation on LEGRA and expected outcomes
- Regular trainings and refresher for district education officials
- Monitoring and evaluation at sector level
- Communication with NESAs and schools; good collaboration
- Take ownership
- Help in trainings after analyzing results

NESA...

- Strengthen data management systems (dashboard)
- Organize trainings for teachers in different subjects on formative assessment
- Quick analysis of data and share data (graphs) to stakeholders for decision making, including remediation
- Get informed from districts on the real situation in order to know where much support is needed
- Provide guidelines on assessment
- Facilitate and work with partners and all stakeholders
- Information about the school and conduct regular monitoring of comprehensive assessment
- Prepare LEGRA tests that comply with the covered content
- Monitoring implementation and help respond to some challenges that may occur
- Set rules and regulations for data and analyze data from schools
- Collect question items from teachers in different subjects to be used while designing question papers for Comprehensive Assessment
- Support in developing standards and benchmarks for other subjects
- Take ownership
- Provide tools for remediation and catchup programs
- Apply LEGRA model to other subjects
- Make results accessible to all schools so that they can look at it every time

- Set appropriate benchmarks for other subjects

REB...

- Avail LTM to schools at different levels
- Provide trainings
- Training all education officials
- Regular collaboration with NESAs, districts, schools to fill the gaps existing in the Comprehensive Assessment results
- Collaboration with NESAs to know what support is needed and where
- Trainings for school leaders and teachers
- Be trained on data management & use, so that they benefit from the records and dashboard for policy strengthening and using data in decision making
- Keep providing trainings to teachers, especially NQTs
- Trainings of teachers, school leaders
- Training headteachers/SEIs/teachers

Question 3

Why is it of critical importance that the LEGRA tests are combined with the pre- and post-assessment meetings at school level, and the inama at sector, district, and national levels?

- During the pre-assessment meetings, teachers, school leaders discuss on their expectations. The quality of students that are going to be assessed and approximately the number of zero scores they expect to have at the end of LEGRA. Therefore, then the results are available, post-assessment meetings will provide reflection time on how LEGRA was conducted and suggest areas of improvement.
- Preparation, briefing, community ownership
- Meetings are very important at all levels to have common understanding of tests and instructions on how to administer them, how to interpret results and inform on actions to be taken by policy makers.
- Gives a reminder for teachers/prepares teachers
- The pre-assessment meeting mainly based on preparation of LEGRA assessment to be conducted well and establishing expectations on learner's performance. Post-meetings take place to look at the achievement of their expectations, particularly the way forward for supporting slow learners to improve their performance. They help to remind teachers, headteachers, sector, district officials on their role in helping teachers through the support needed (trainings, ...)
- It is because there is need for LEGRA plan, discussion about results, and the way forward.
- This helps in good preparation and helps the entire group to take measures to handle problems that may arise.
- To share information about LEGRA tests and about results so that they all fill the gaps existing in the results
- Strategic planning
- Positive pressure on teachers; making plans
- To have a good preparation and decision-making based on data available
- Creates community ownership of education

- Pre-assessment helps in preparation of the assessment to make sure everything is in better place. Post-assessment helps to inform the stakeholders on the way forward.

Question 4

How can the LEGRA model guide remediation and assessment in other subjects?

- LEGRA results categorize students, and show who needs more attention (e.g. KRC).
- Put in place the benchmarks for other subjects
- The LEGRA model will guide all concerned in assessment for other subjects by setting benchmarks for other subjects basing on specificity for each subject.
- Stakeholders should support assessment financially.
- Key stakeholders should discuss what best practices to learn from LEGRA and the adaptations needed
- Create additional benchmarks
- LEGRA identifies learners with learning difficulties. If it is applied in other subjects, it will help other teachers in their respective subjects identify those learners and plan for remediation.
- It can be used in testing learners in other subjects so that learners weaknesses are addressed.
- Adopting the same model
- By using data from LEGRA assessment, sustainability
- Maintain the model
- Basing on LEGRA experience (including benchmarks, one-on-one assessment, ...) other subjects can be assessed in the same way

Appendix E2. Sample LEGRA Reports

This appendix contains the following reports:

- Bugesera District report
- Ruhuha Sector report
- GS Nyamata Catholique report (note that GS Nyamata Catholique is in Ruhuha Sector)

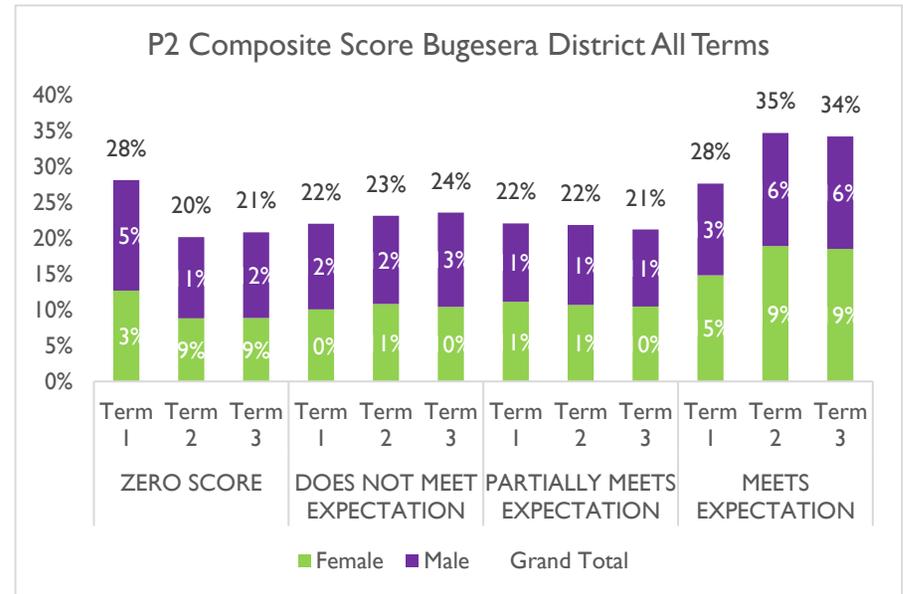
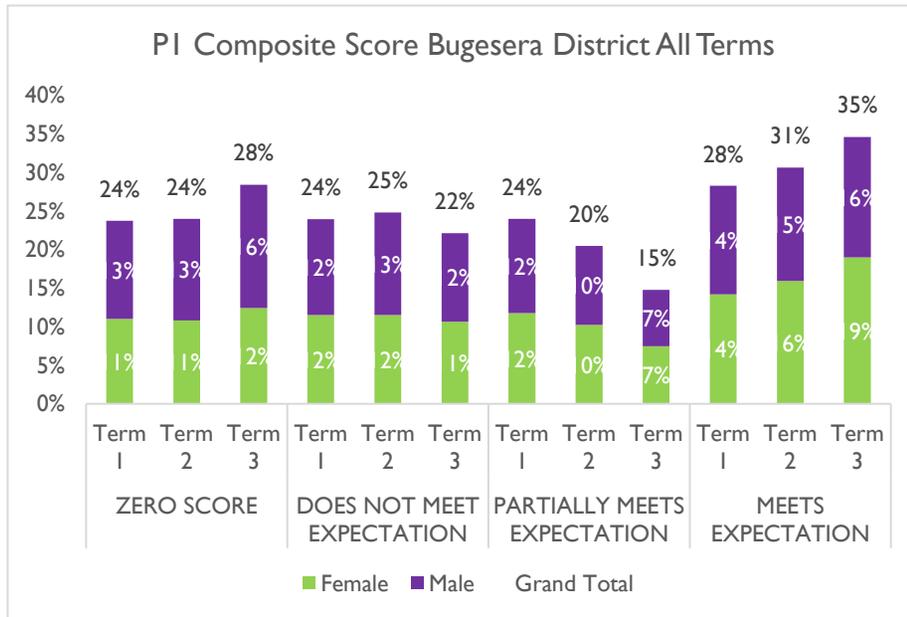
DISTRICT: Bugesera District
LOCATION: Southern Province

Number of Student Records

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
P1	29,149	24,577	9,316
P2	14,995	12,680	4,001
P3	12,688	10,087	3,709

Note: Data upload for Term 3 is lagging, therefore term 3 percentages should be considered as draft.

Bugesera District Composite Score Summary (Term 1-Term 3)



From Term 1 and Term 3 in Bugesera District...

- The number of PI non-readers increased by 4%
- The number of PI students meeting expectations increased by 7%

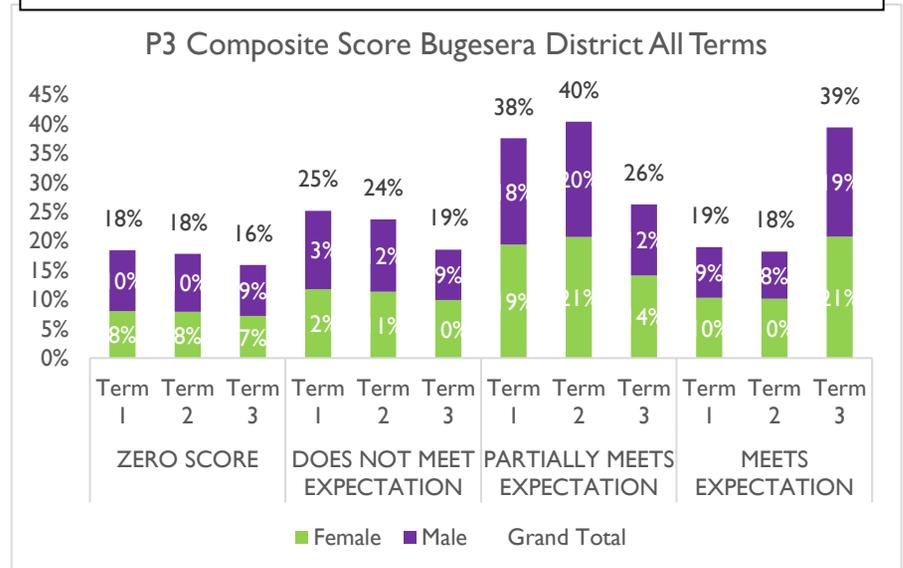
Note in PI Term 1, students are tested on different skills as they have not advanced enough to be tested on ORF and RC

From Term 1 and Term 3 in Bugesera District...

- The number of P2 non-readers decreased by 7%
- The number of P2 students meeting expectations increased by 6%

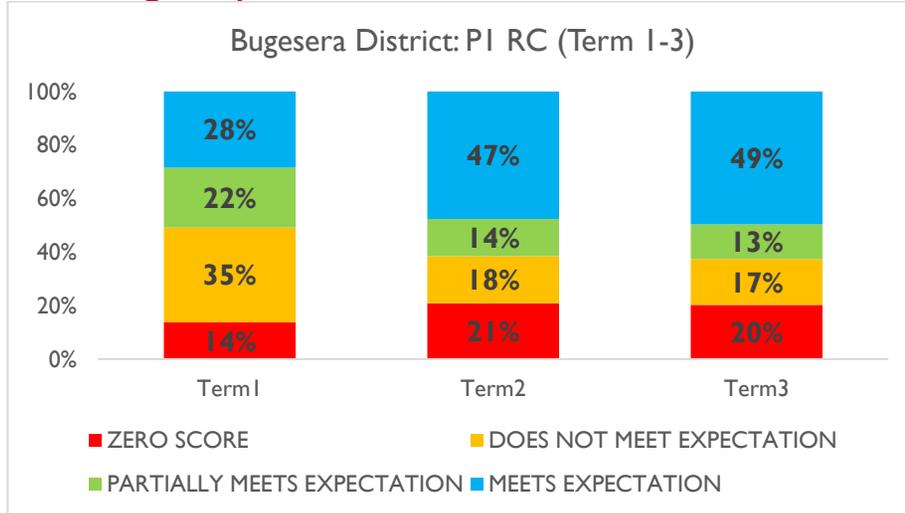
From Term 1 and Term 3 in Bugesera...

- The number of P3 non-readers decreased by 2%
- The number of P3 students meeting expectations increased by 20%



Bugesera District: ORF and RC Score Summary (Term I- Term 3)

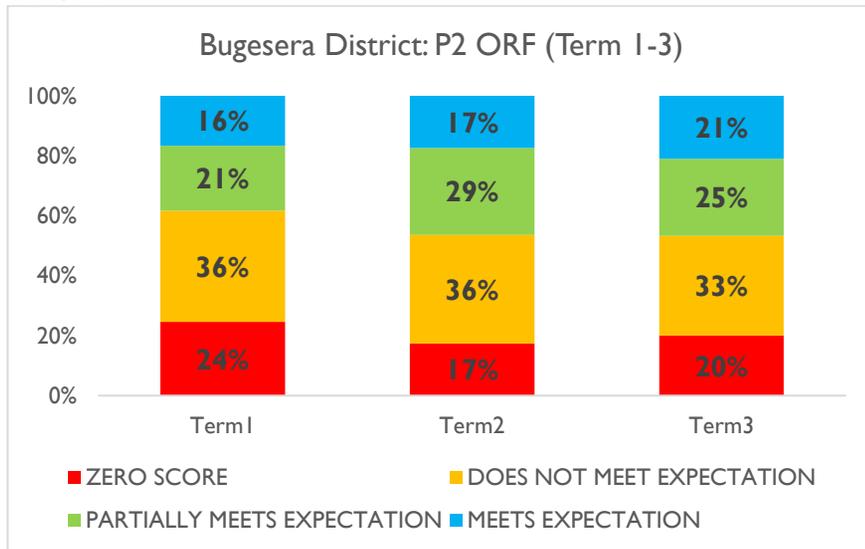
PI Reading Comprehension



For **Reading Comprehension**, between Term I and Term 3....

- Zero scores increased by 6%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 21%

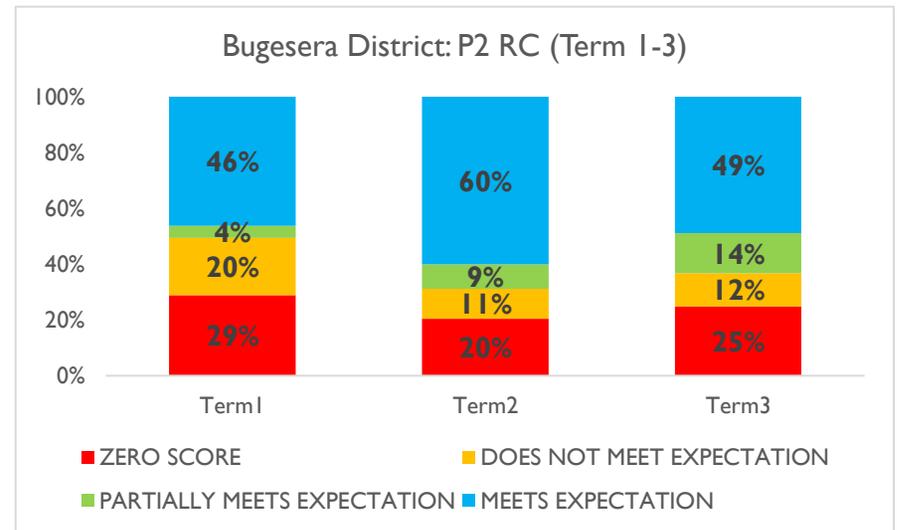
P2 ORF



For **ORF**, between Term I and Term 3....

- Zero scores decreased by 4%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 5%

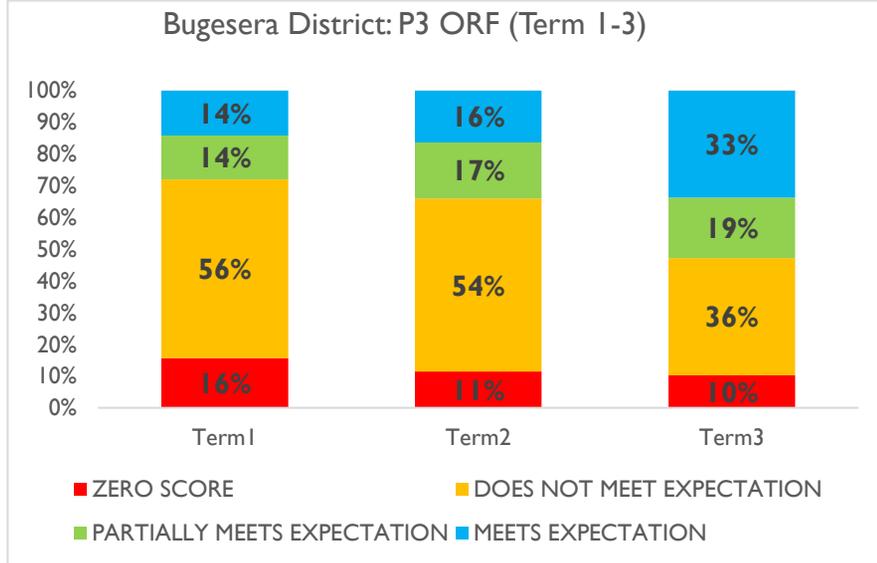
P2 Reading Comprehension



For **Reading Comprehension**, between Term I and Term 3....

- Zero scores decreased by 4%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 3%

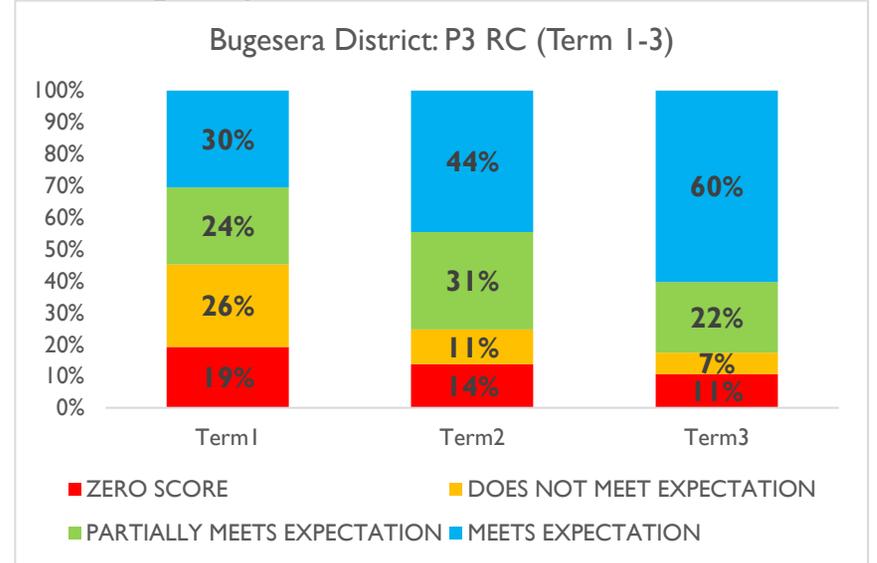
P3 ORF



For **ORF**, between Term 1 and Term 3....

- Zero scores decreased by 6%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 19%

P3 Reading Comprehension

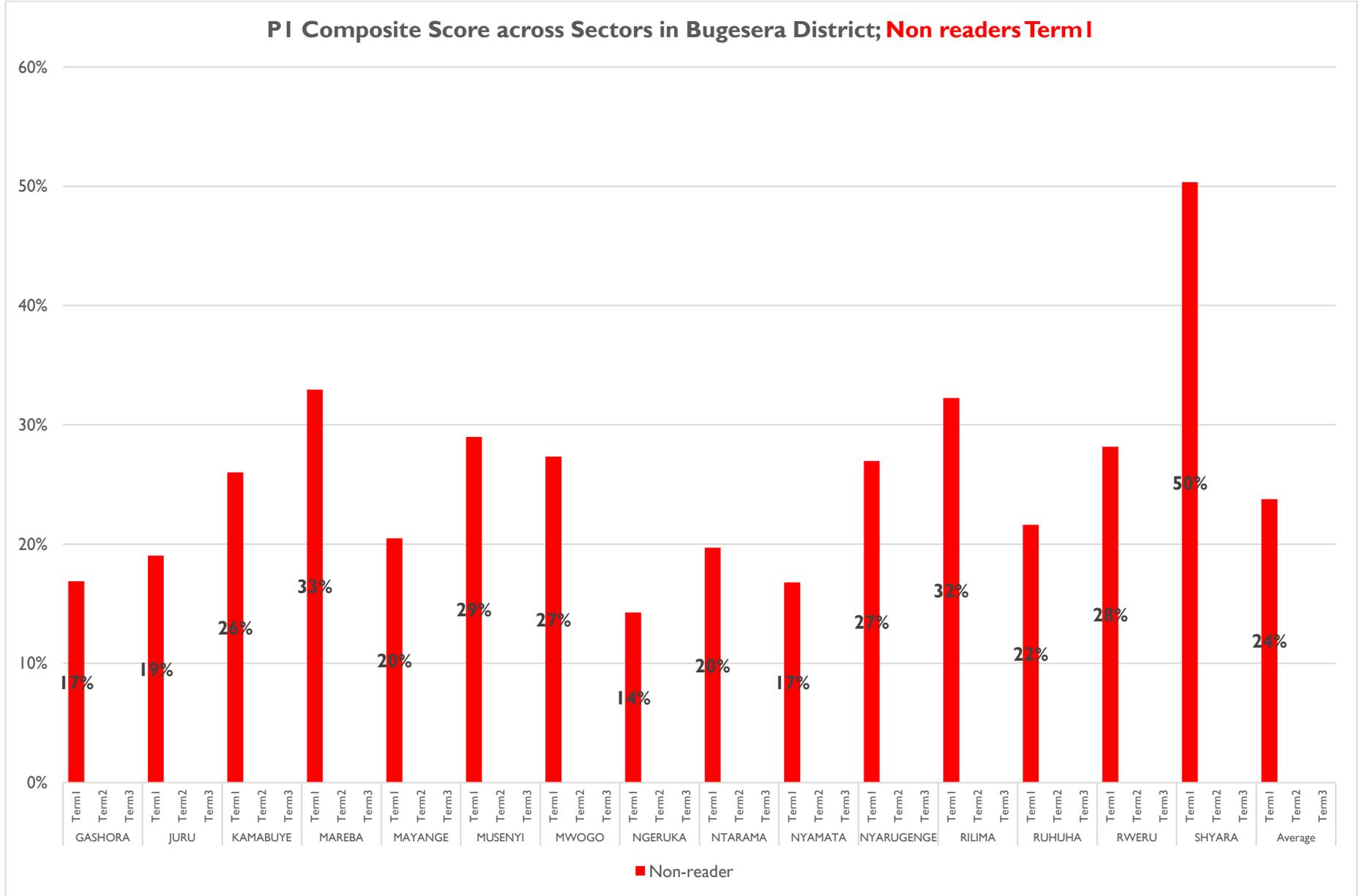


For **Reading Comprehension**, between Term 1 and Term 3....

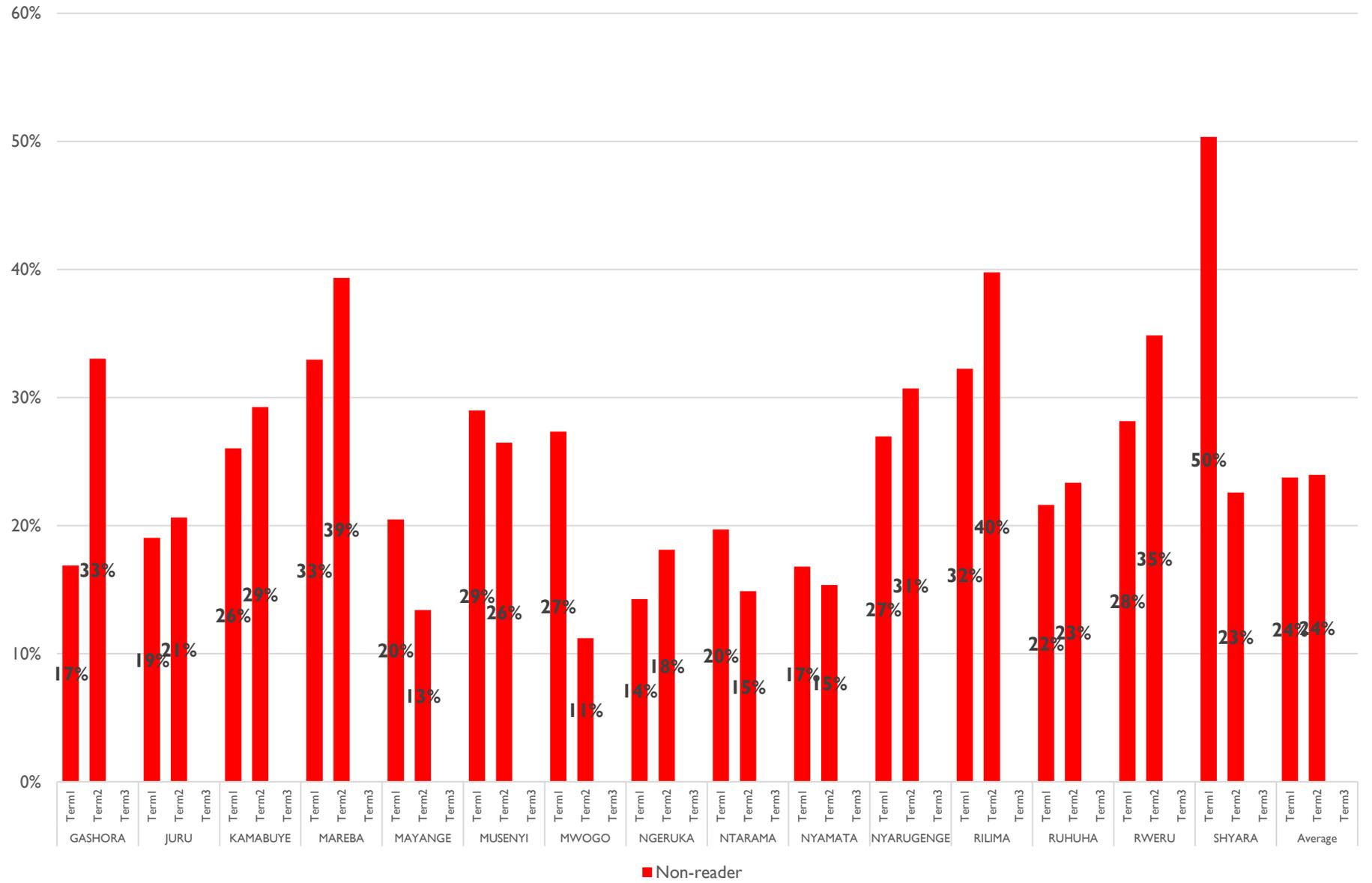
- Zero scores decreased by 8%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 30%

Bugesera District: Composite Score Comparison (Term 1- Term 3) Across Sectors

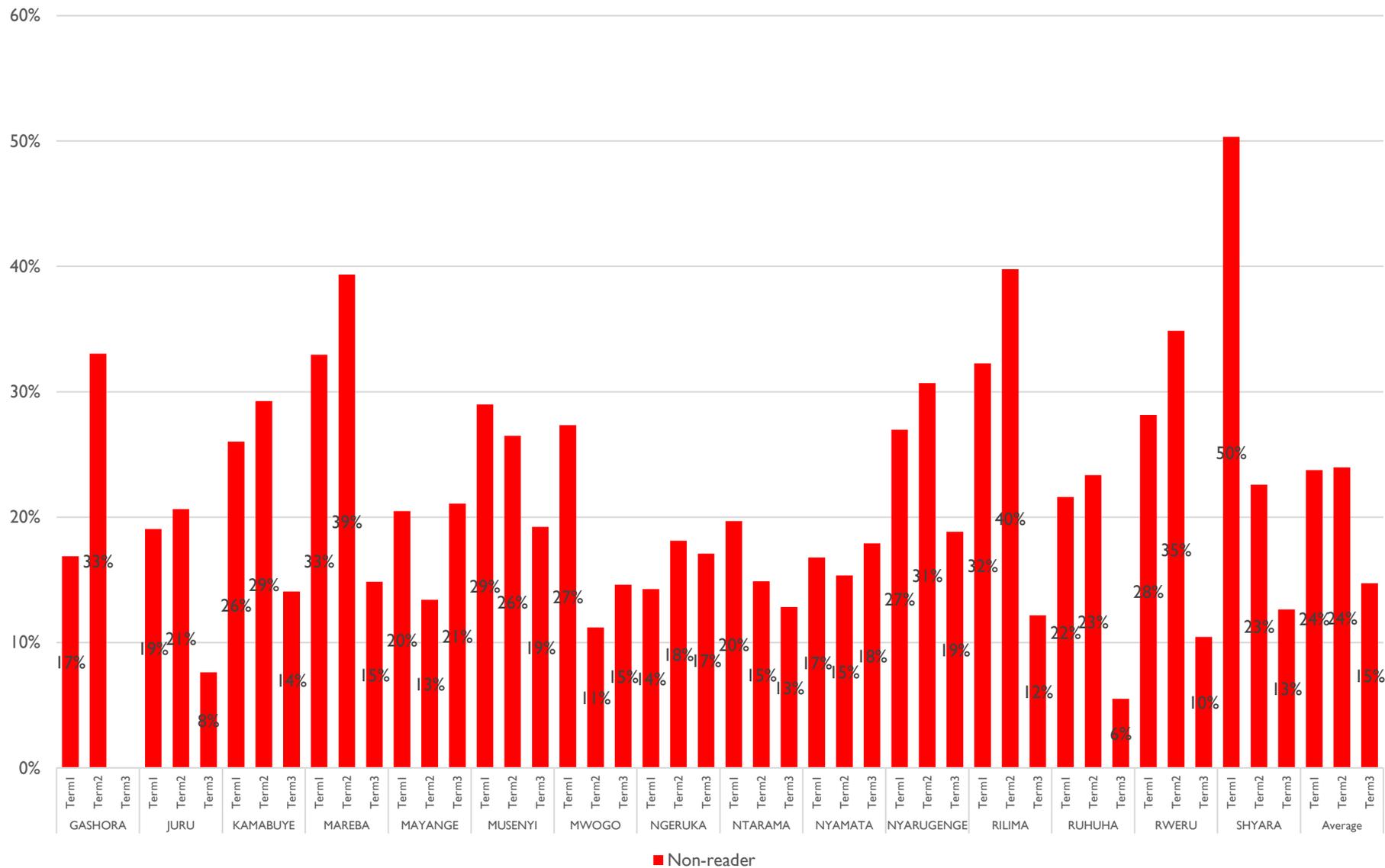
PI



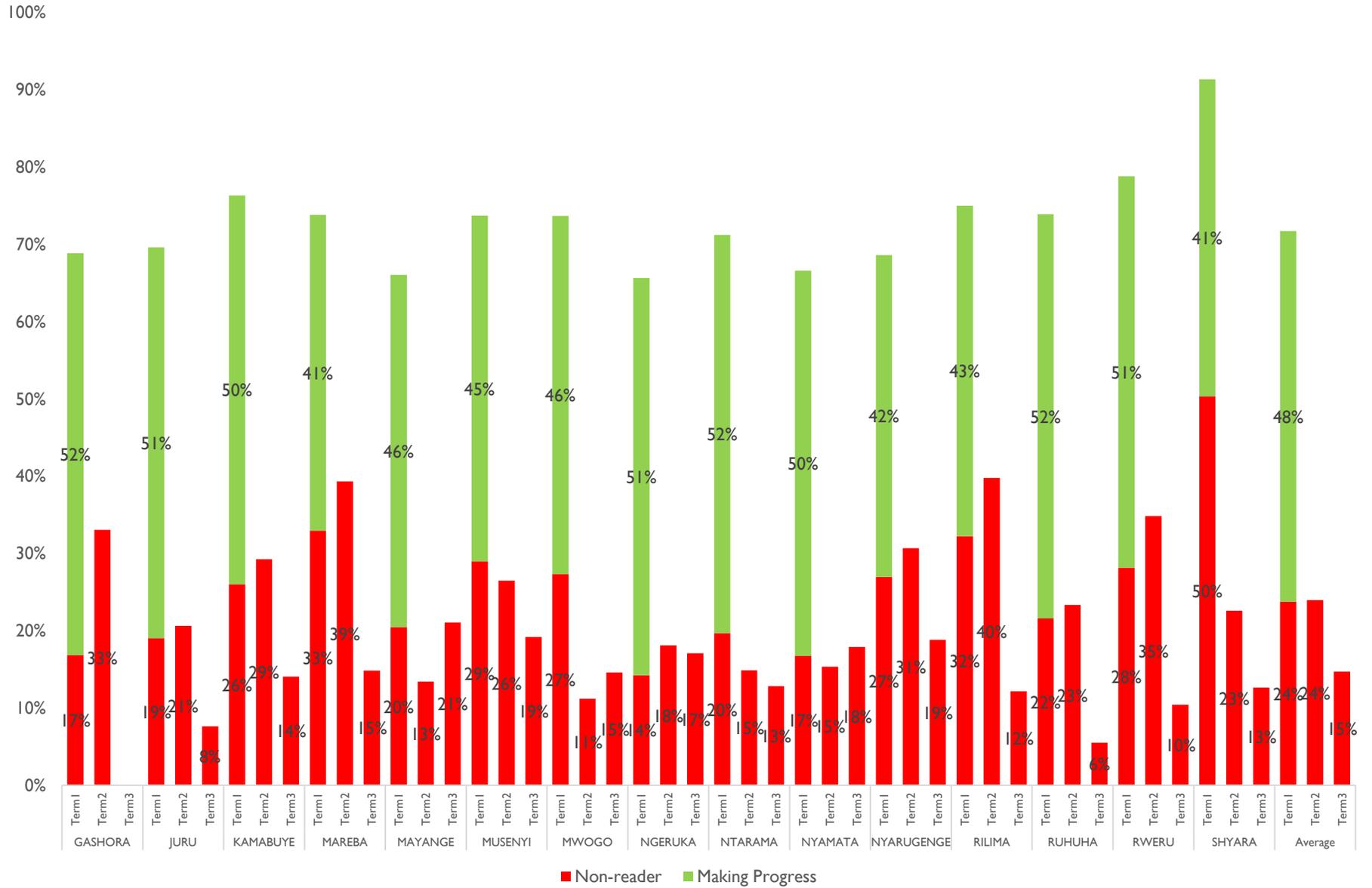
PI Composite Scores across Sectors in Bugesera District; **Non readers Term I & 2**



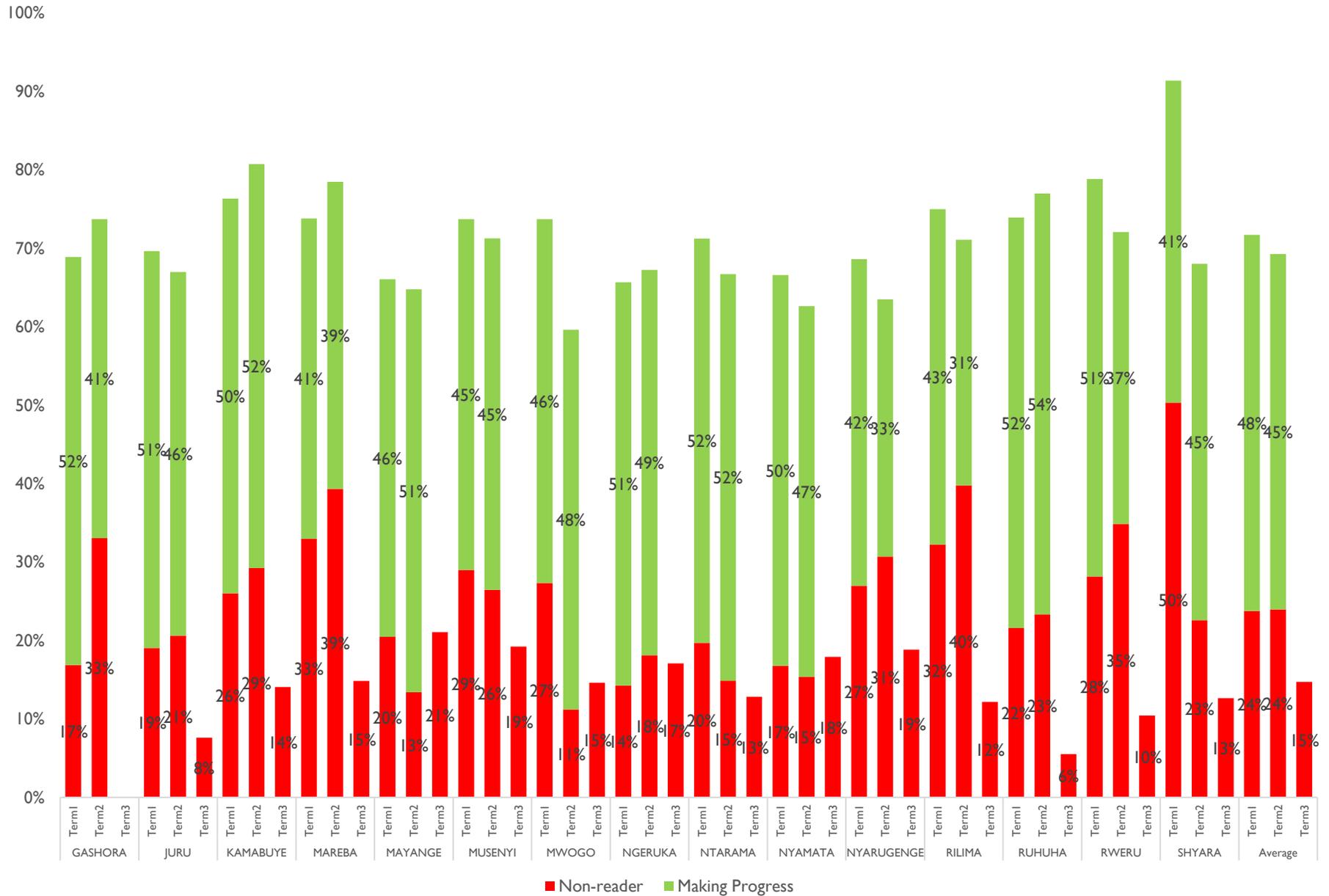
PI Composite Score across Sectors in Bugesera District; **Non readers Term I-3**



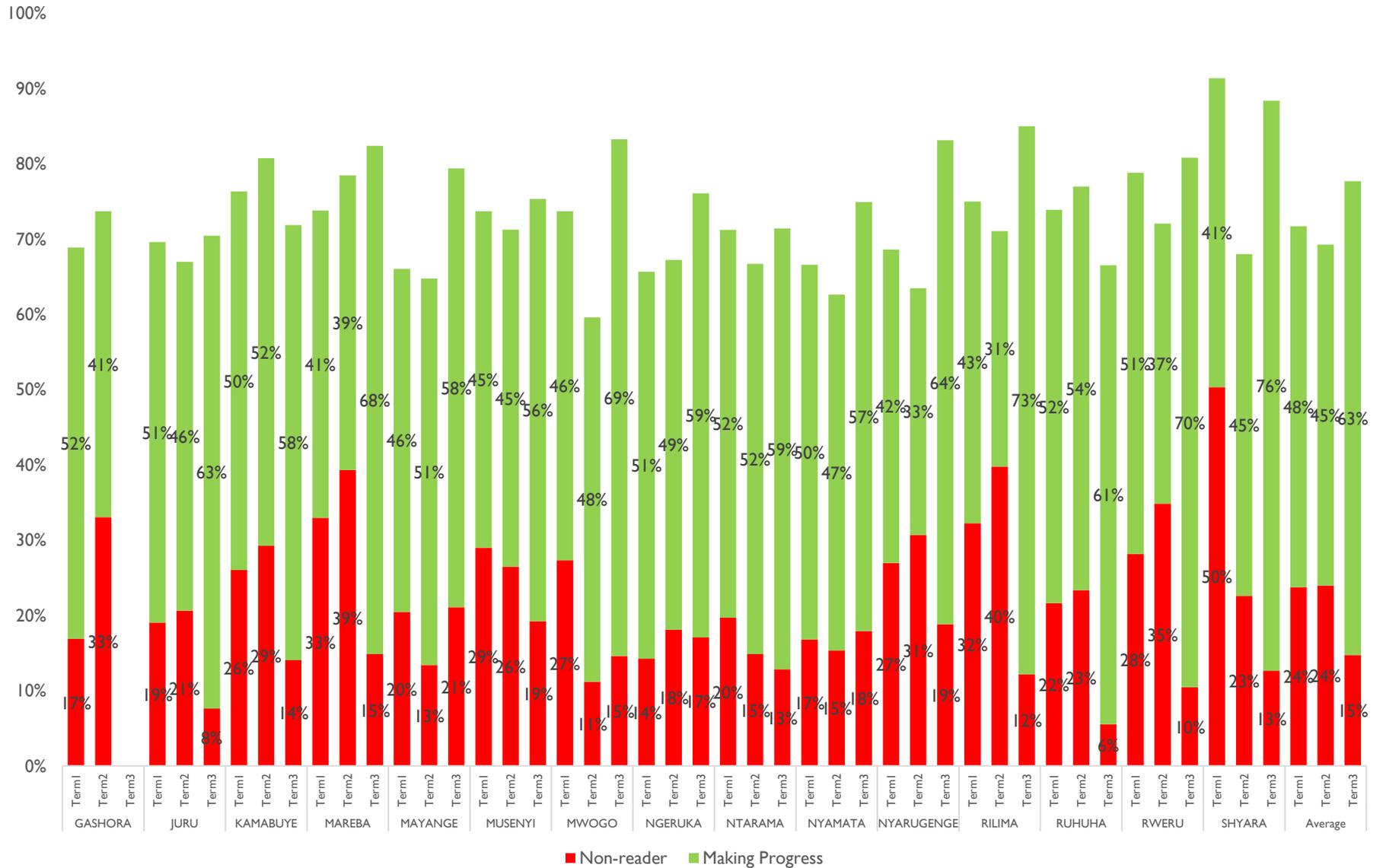
PI Composite Score across Sectors in Bugesera District; Making Progress Term I



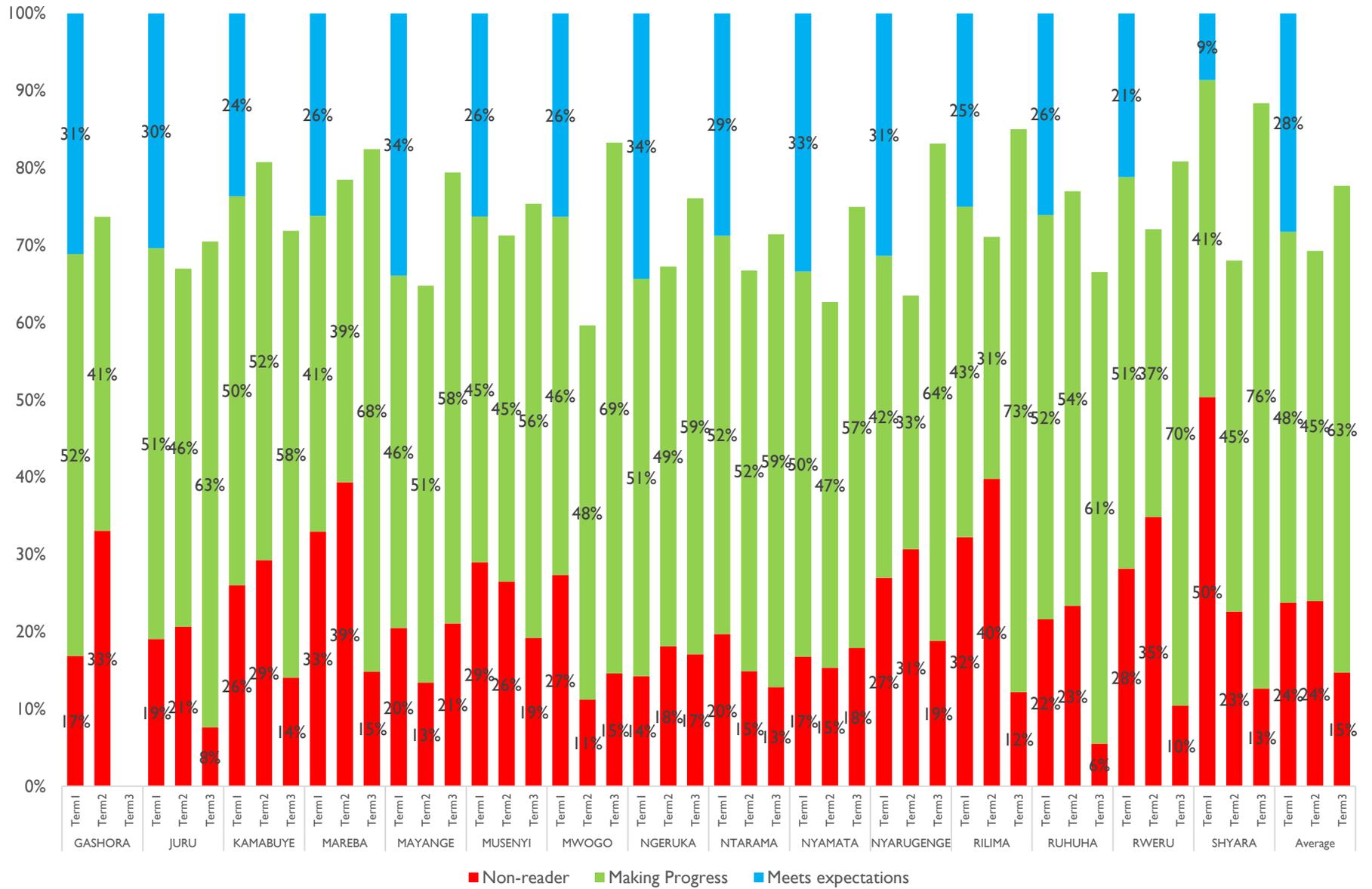
PI Composite Scores across Sectors in Bugesera District; Making Progress Term 1 & 2



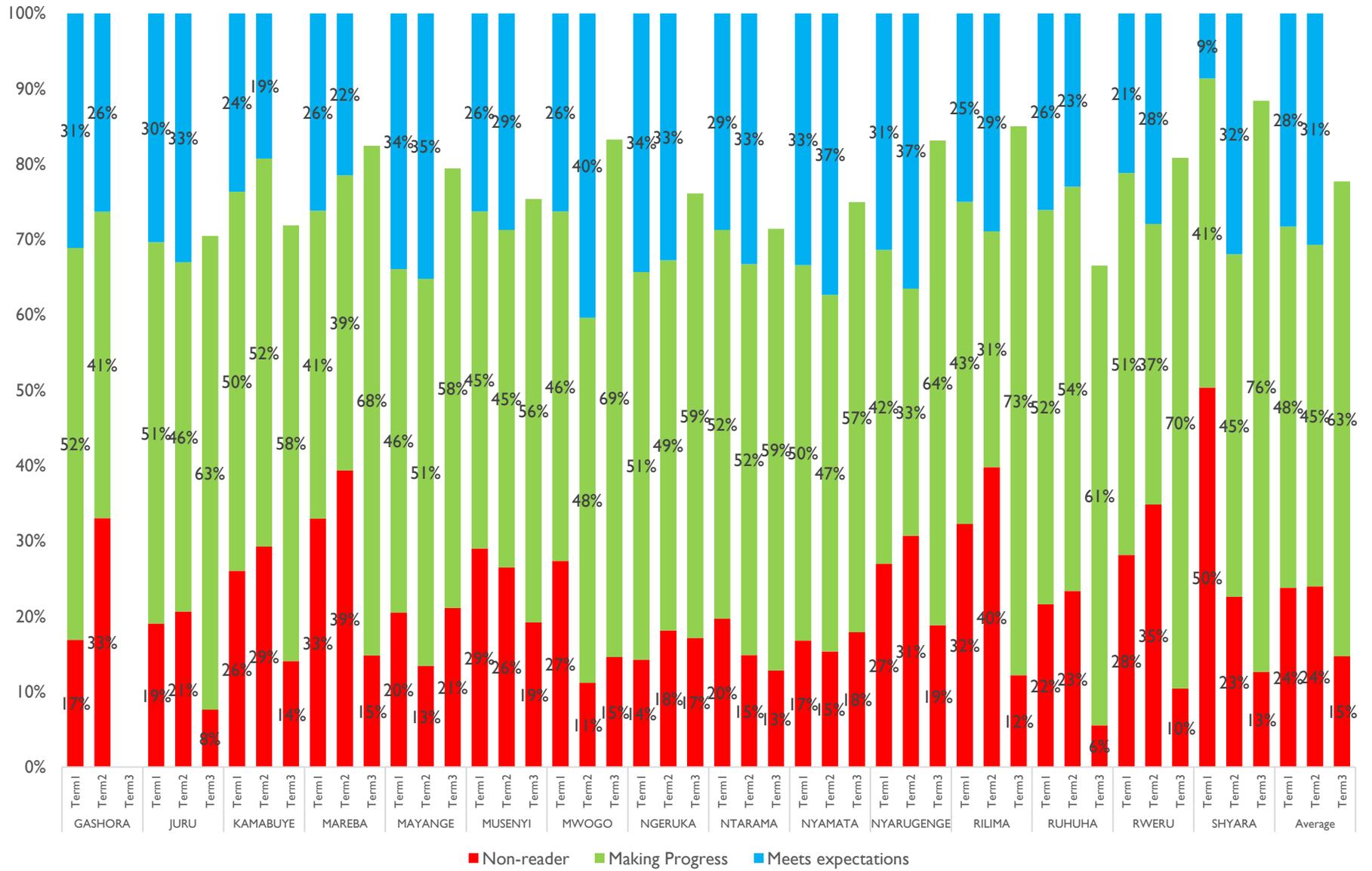
PI Composite Score across Sectors in Bugesera District; Making Progress Term 1-3



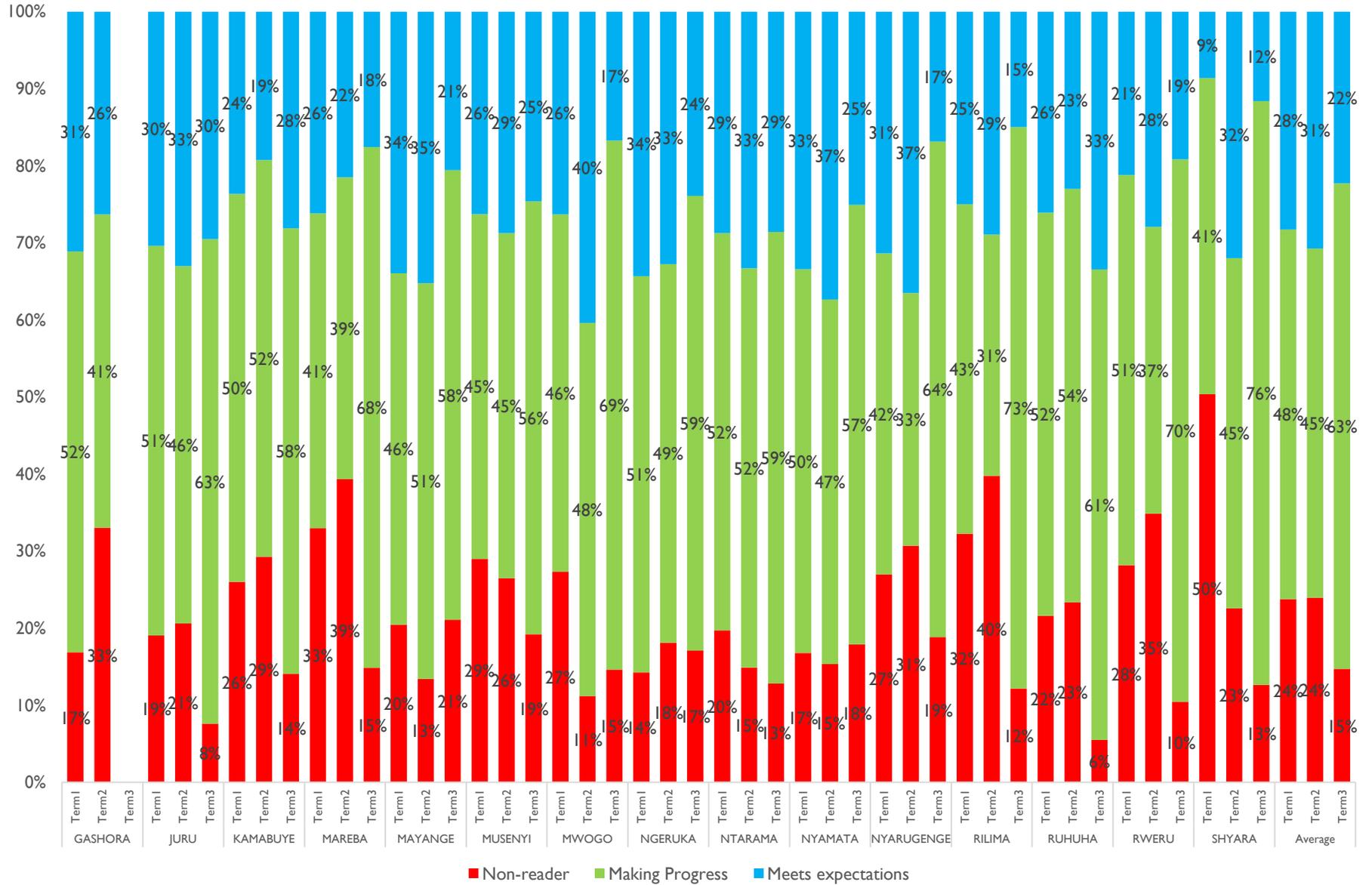
PI Composite Score across Sectors in Bugesera District; Meets Expectation Term I



PI Composite Score across Sectors in Bugesera District; Meet expectation Term I & 2

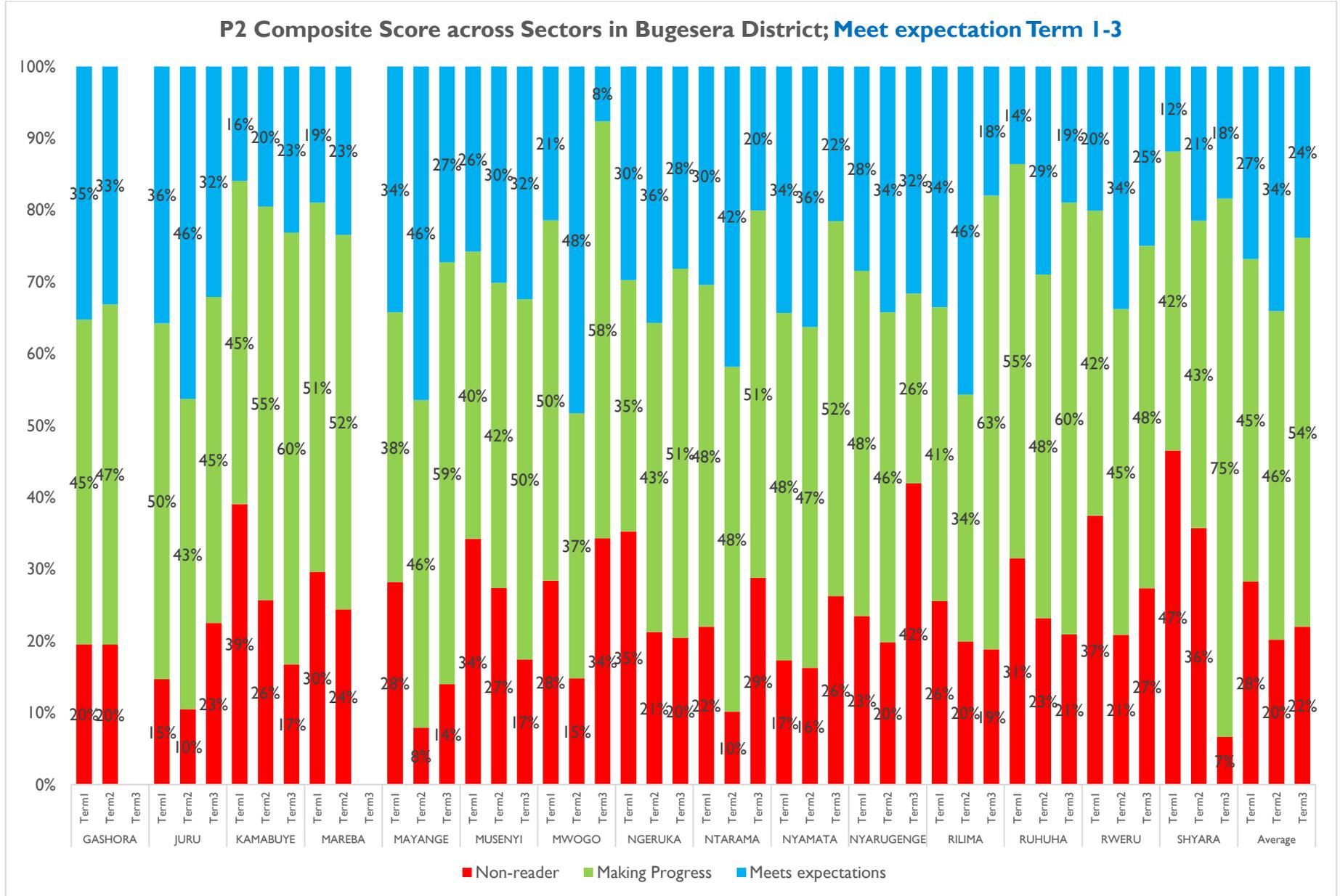


PI Composite Score across Sectors in Bugesera District; Meet expectation Term 1-3



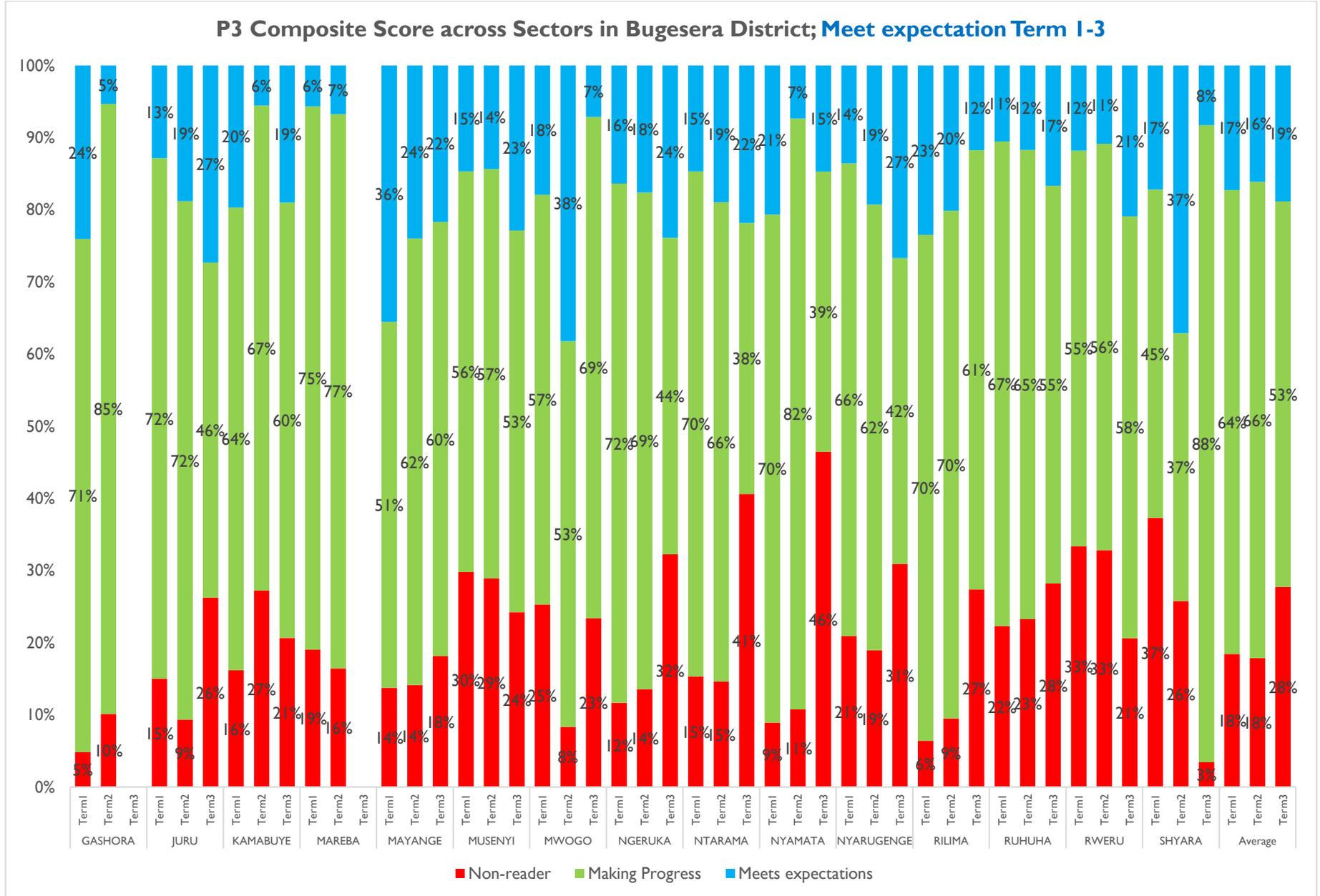
Bugesera District: Composite Score Comparison (Term 1- Term 3) Across Sectors

P2



Bugesera District: Composite Score Comparison (Term 1- Term 3) Across Sectors

P3



SECTOR: Ruhuha Sector
LOCATION: Bugesera District

Number of Student Records

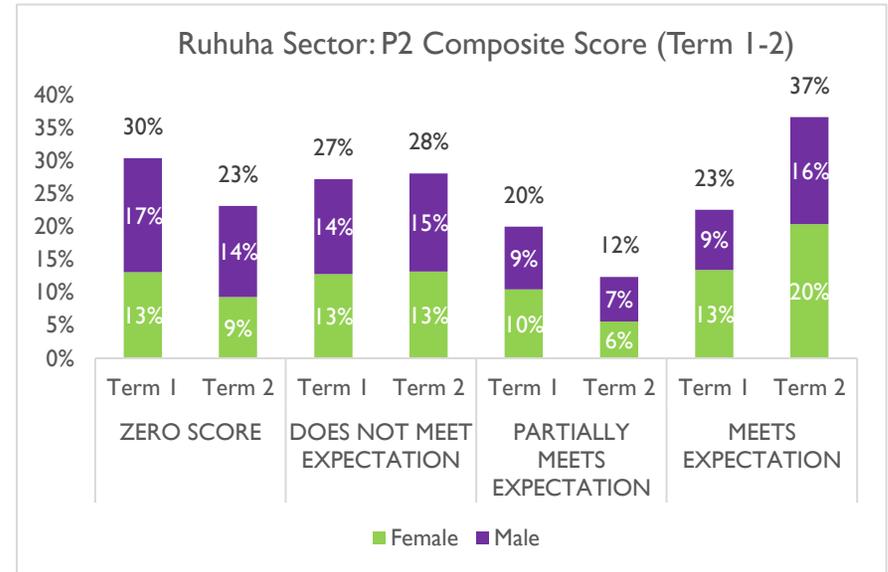
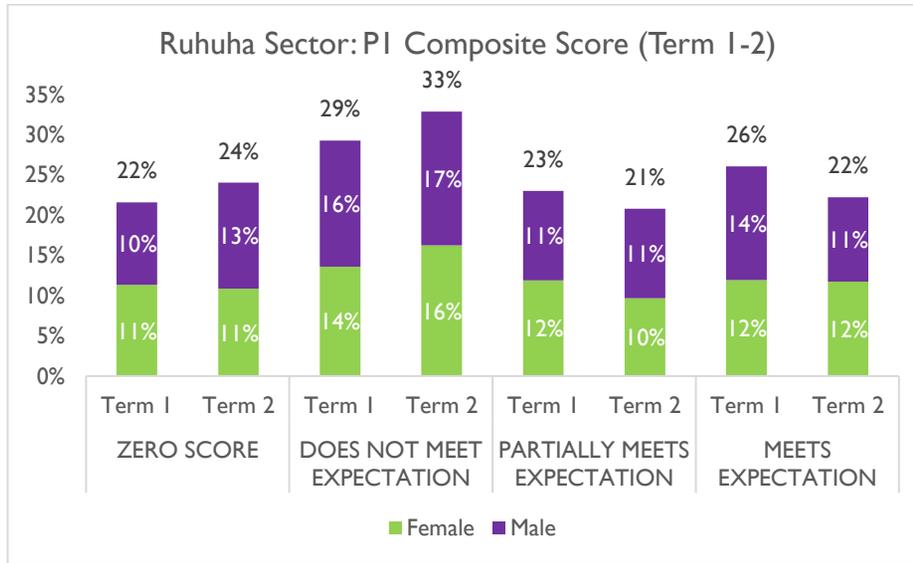
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
P1	2,101	2,000	254
P2	1,127	949	153
P3	963	790	78

Note: In Ruhuha Sector, out of 7 schools, only two have submitted Term 3 data for P1 and P2; and only one school has submitted Term 3 data for P3.

Therefore, the following report focuses on Term 1 & 2 data only.

Ruhuha Sector: Composite score Results Comparison (Term 1 - 2)								
	Zero Scorers (% of students)				Meets Expectations (% of students)			
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Direction of Change	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Direction of Change
National Average P1	29%	29%	32%		26%	29%	34%	
National Average P2	30%	21%	23%		31%	38%	35%	
National Average P3	20%	22%	20%		51%	24%	37%	
Bugesera District Average P1	24%	24%	28%		28%	31%	35%	
Bugesera District Average P2	28%	20%	21%		28%	35%	34%	
Bugesera District Average P3	18%	18%	16%		19%	18%	39%	
Ruhuha Sector Average P1	22%	24%	-		26%	22%	-	
Ruhuha Sector Average P2	30%	23%	-		23%	37%	-	
Ruhuha Sector Average P3	22%	22%	-		30%	29%	-	

Ruhuha Sector Composite Score Summary (Term 1 vs. Term 2)



From Term 1 and Term 2 in Ruhuha Sector....

- The number of P1 non-readers **increased** by 2%
- The number of P1 students meeting expectations **decreased** by 4%

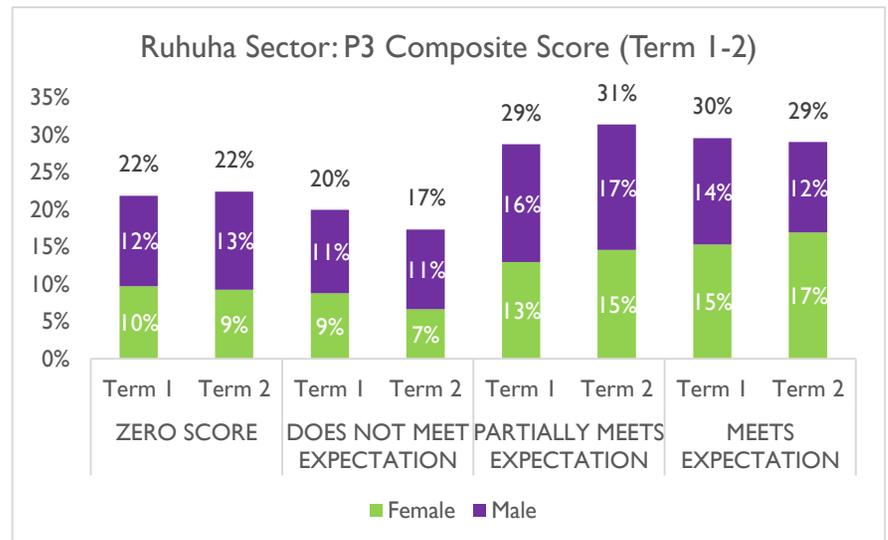
Note in P1 Term 1, students are tested on different skills as they have not advanced enough to be tested on ORF and RC

From Term 1 and Term 2 in Ruhuha Sector....

- The number of P2 non-readers **decreased** by 7%
- The number of P2 students meeting expectations **increased** by 14%

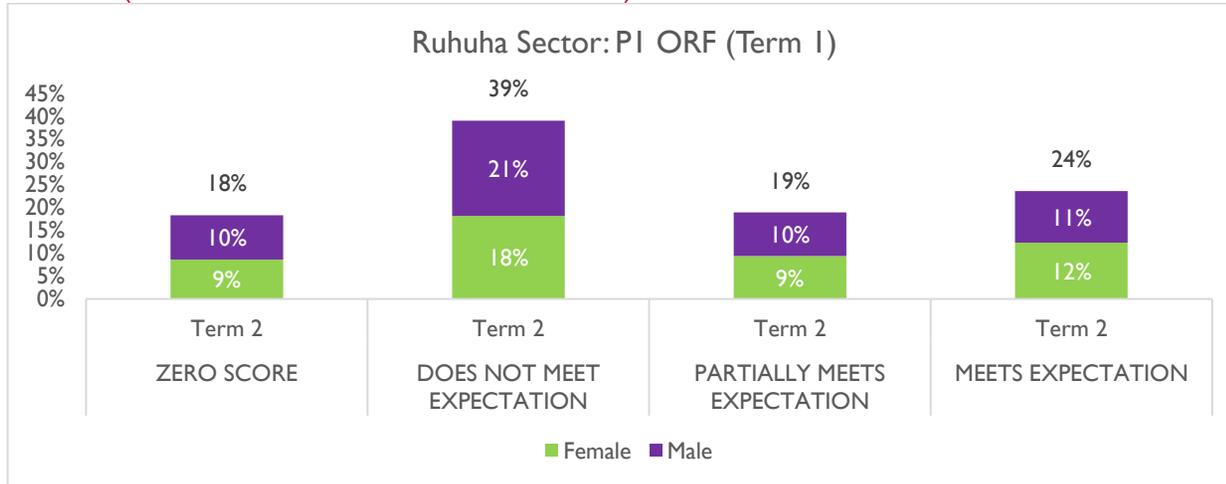
From Term 1 and Term 2 in Ruhuha Sector....

- The number of P3 non-readers **remained unchanged**
- The number of P3 students meeting expectations **decreased** by 1%

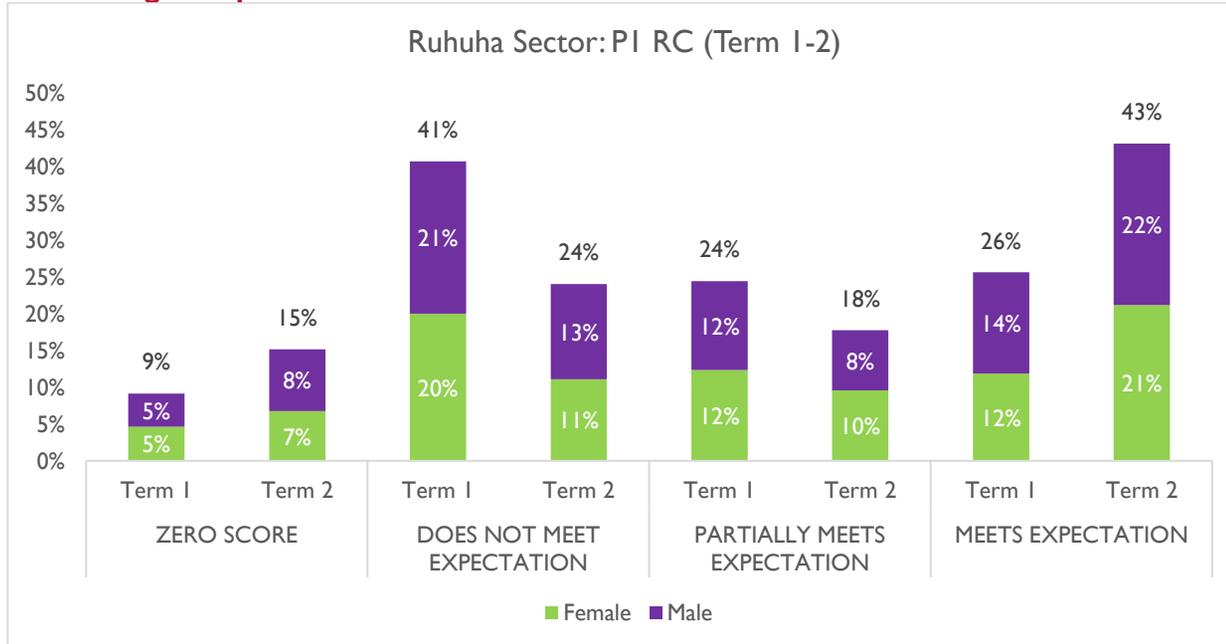


Grade Results: Sub-Task Summary (Term 1 vs. Term 2)

PI ORF (Note there is no ORF test for PI Term 1)



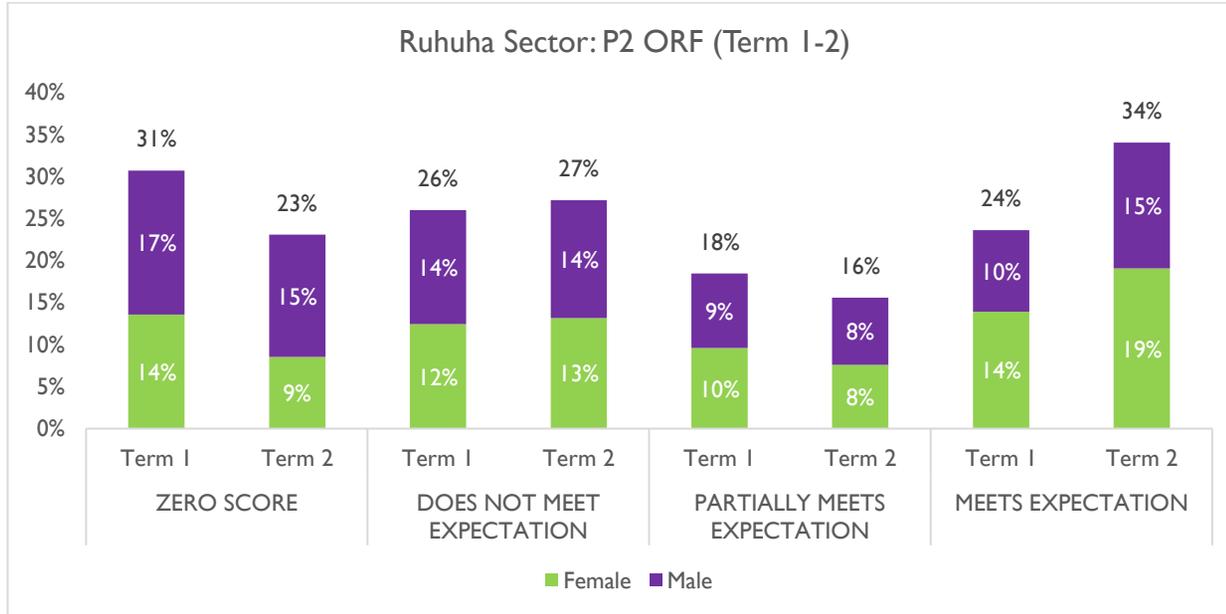
PI Reading Comprehension



For **Reading Comprehension**, between Term 1 and Term 2....

- Zero scores **increased** by **6%**
- Those meeting the benchmark **increased** by **17%**

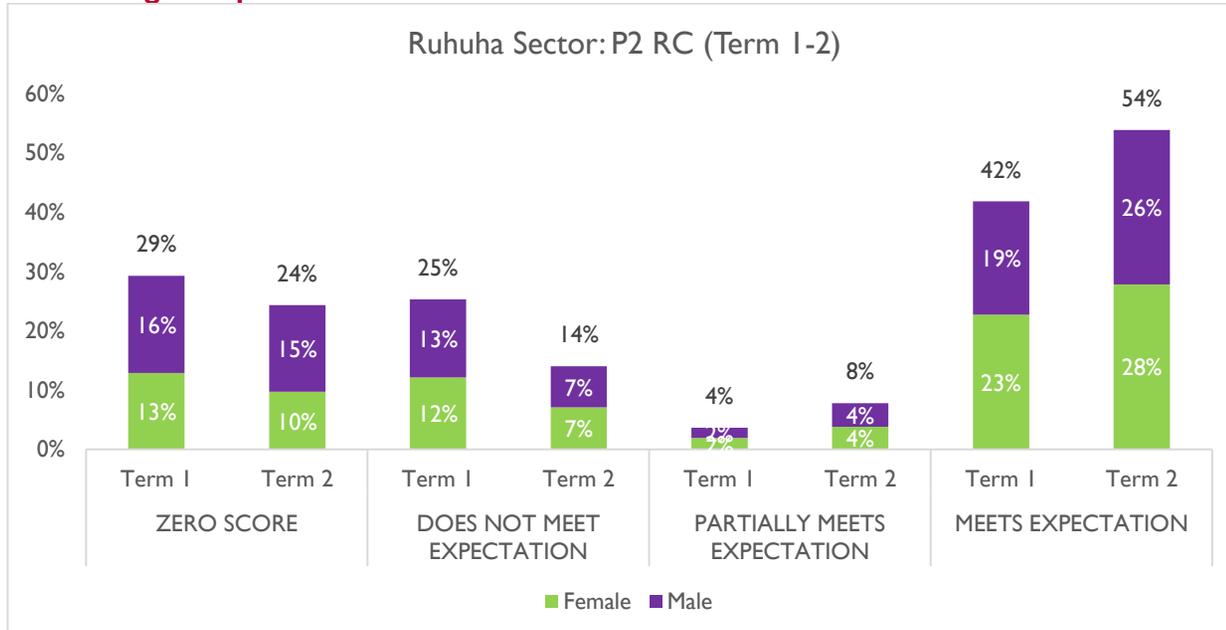
P2 ORF



For **ORF**, between Term 1 and Term 2....

- Zero scores decreased by 8%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 10%

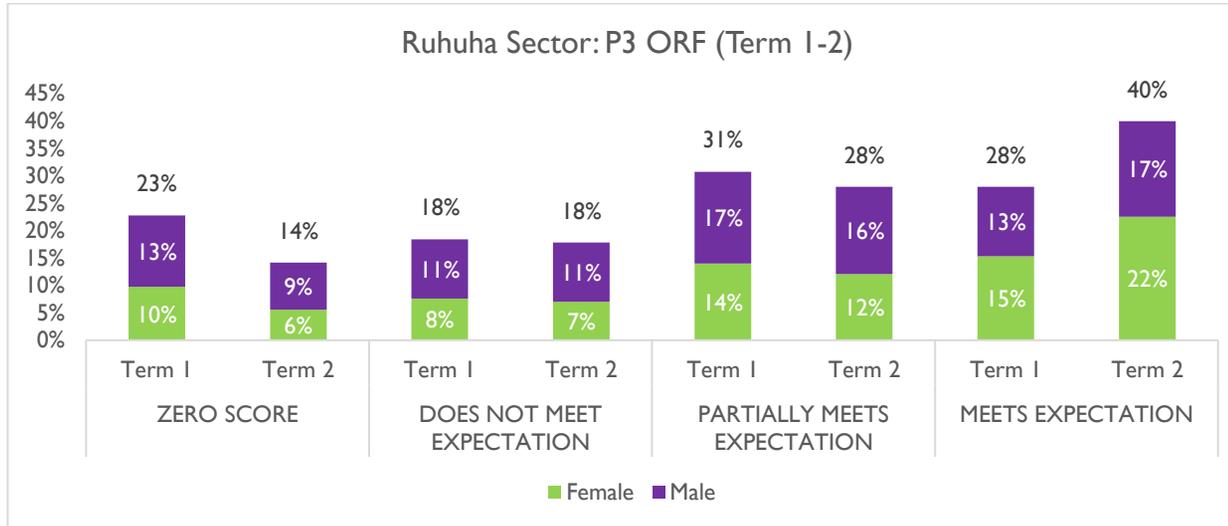
P2 Reading Comprehension



For **Reading Comprehension**, between Term 1 and Term 2....

- Zero scores decreased by 5%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 12%

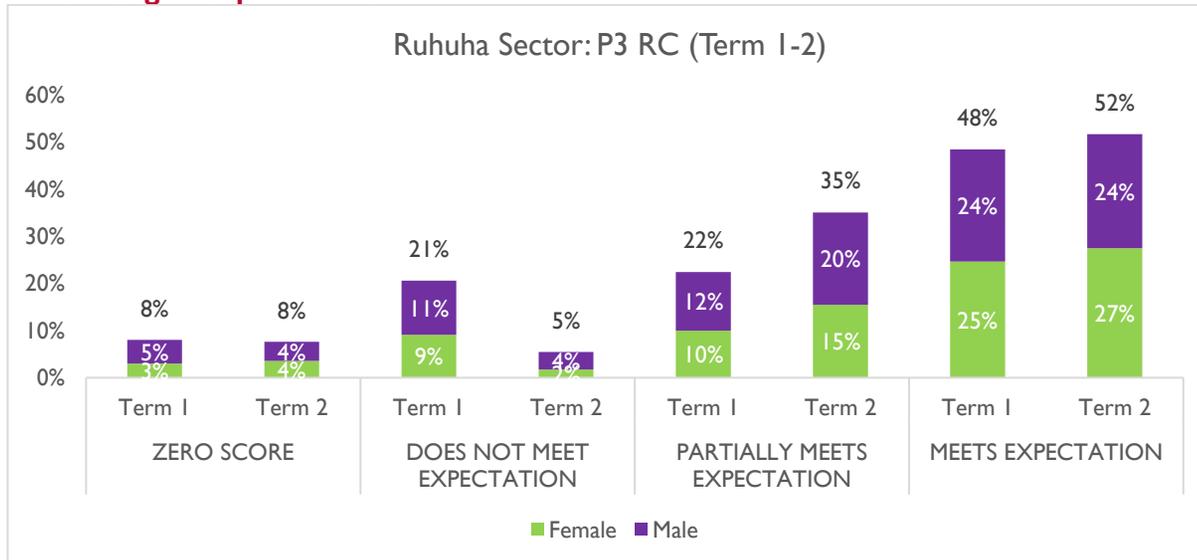
P3 ORF



For **ORF**, between Term 1 and Term 2....

- Zero scores decreased by 9%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 12%

P3 Reading Comprehension



For **Reading Comprehension**, between Term 1 and Term 2....

- Zero scores remained unchanged
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 4%

SCHOOL: G.S. Nyamata Catholique
LOCATION: Nyamata Sector, Bugesera District

Number of Student Records for LEGRA 2021

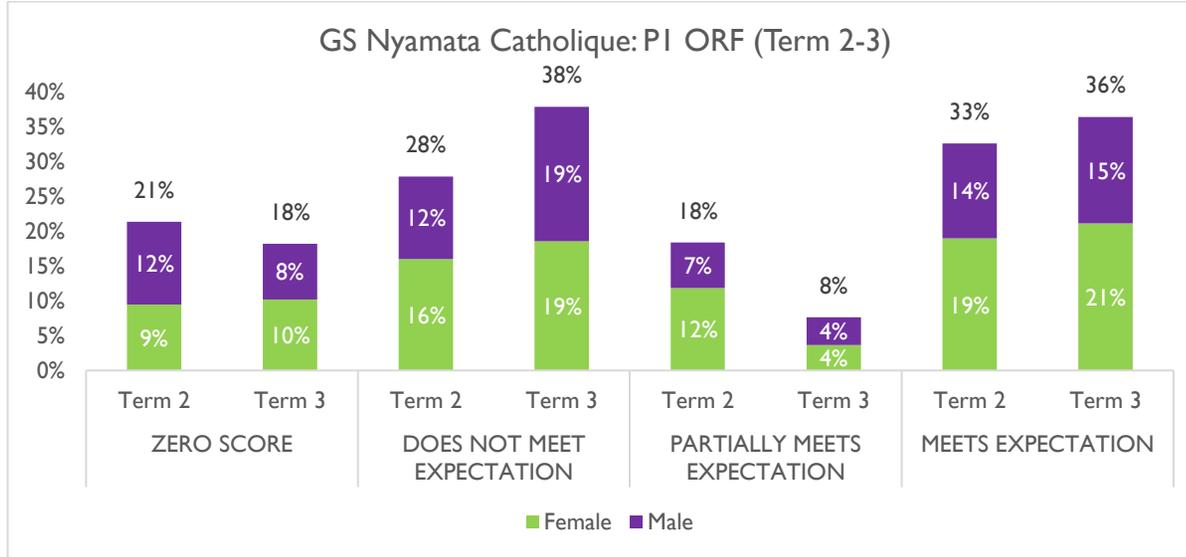
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3
P1	236	169	275
P2	149	150	141
P3	142	138	135

Composite Score Comparison

GS Nyamata Catholique: Composite score Results Over Time (Term 1 - 3)								
	Zero Scorers (% of students)				Meets Expectations (% of students)			
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Direction of Change	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Direction of Change
National Average P1	29%	29%	32%		26%	29%	34%	
National Average P2	30%	21%	23%		31%	38%	35%	
National Average P3	20%	22%	20%		51%	24%	37%	
Bugesera District Average P1	24%	24%	28%		28%	31%	35%	
Bugesera District Average P2	28%	20%	21%		28%	35%	34%	
Bugesera District Average P3	18%	18%	16%		19%	18%	39%	
Nyamata Sector Average P1	17%	15%	19%		33%	37%	38%	
Nyamata Sector Average P2	17%	16%	15%		36%	38%	42%	
Nyamata Sector Average P3	9%	11%	8%		26%	17%	51%	
G.S. Nyamata Catholique Averages								
P1	21%	30%	14%		35%	38%	46%	
P2	34%	27%	25%		42%	49%	54%	
P3	19%	17%	15%		59%	63%	65%	

PI Results: Sub-Task Summary (Term 1 vs. Term 3)

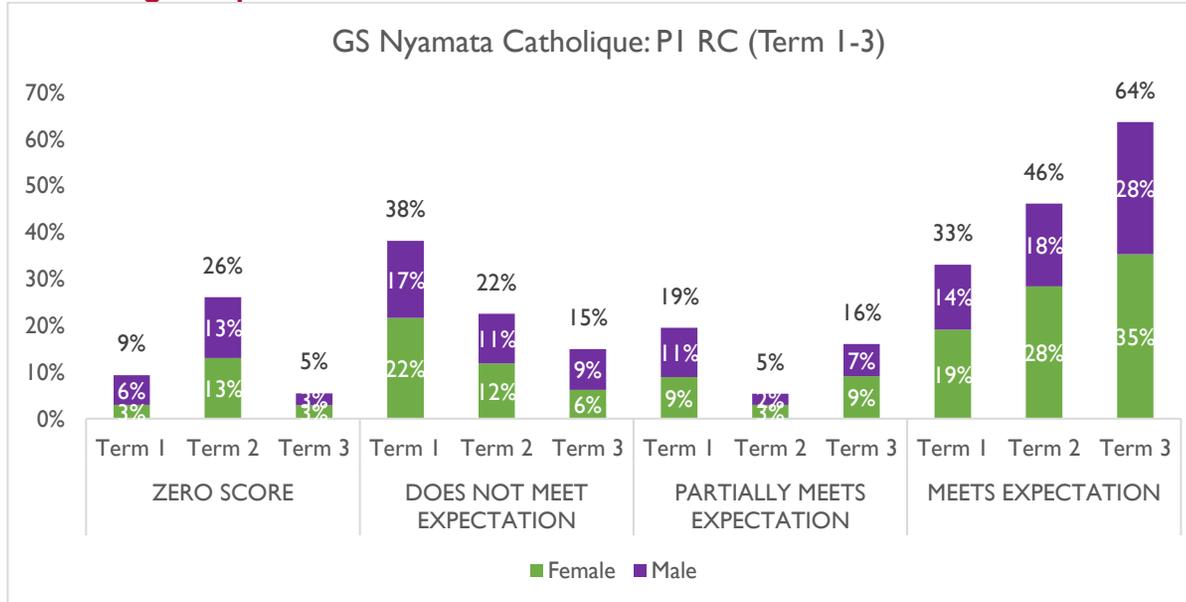
PI ORF



For **ORF**, between Term 2 and Term 3....

- Zero scores decreased by 3%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 3%

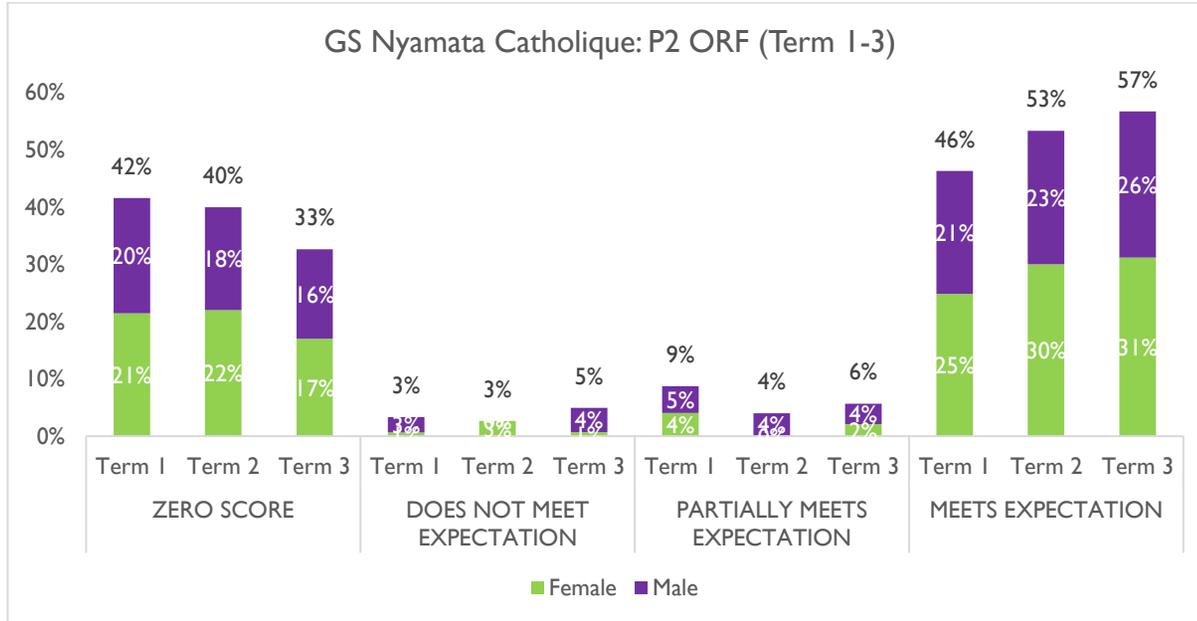
PI Reading Comprehension



For **Reading Comprehension**, between Term 1 and Term 3....

- Zero scores decreased by 4%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 31%

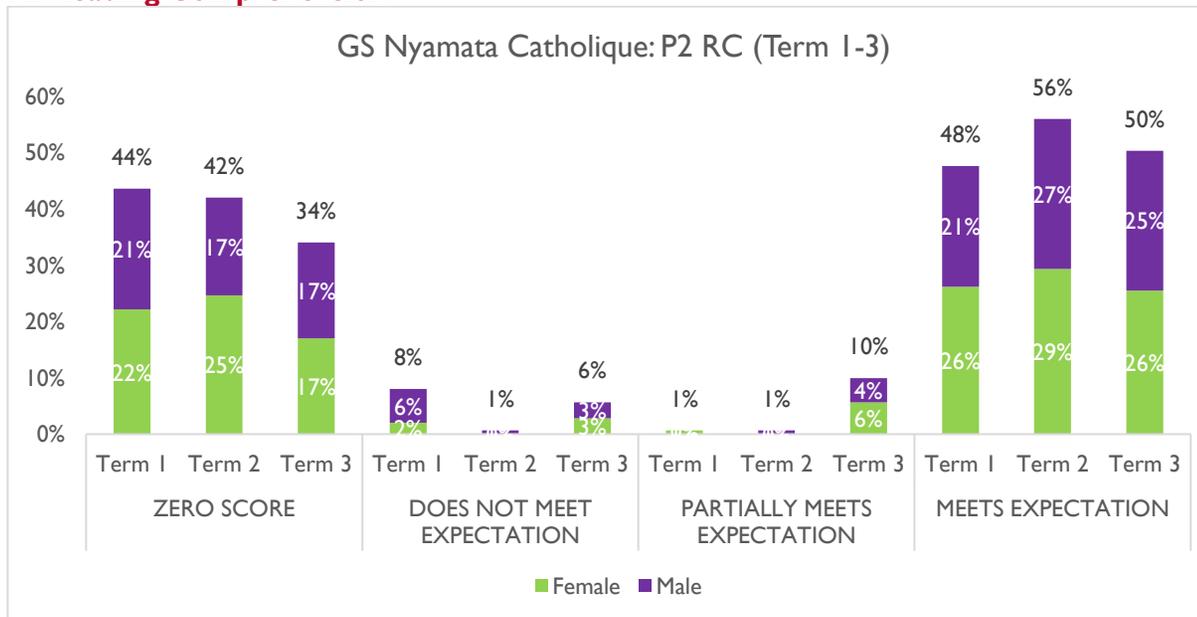
P2 ORF



For **ORF**, between Term 1 and Term 3....

- Zero scores decreased by 9%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 11%

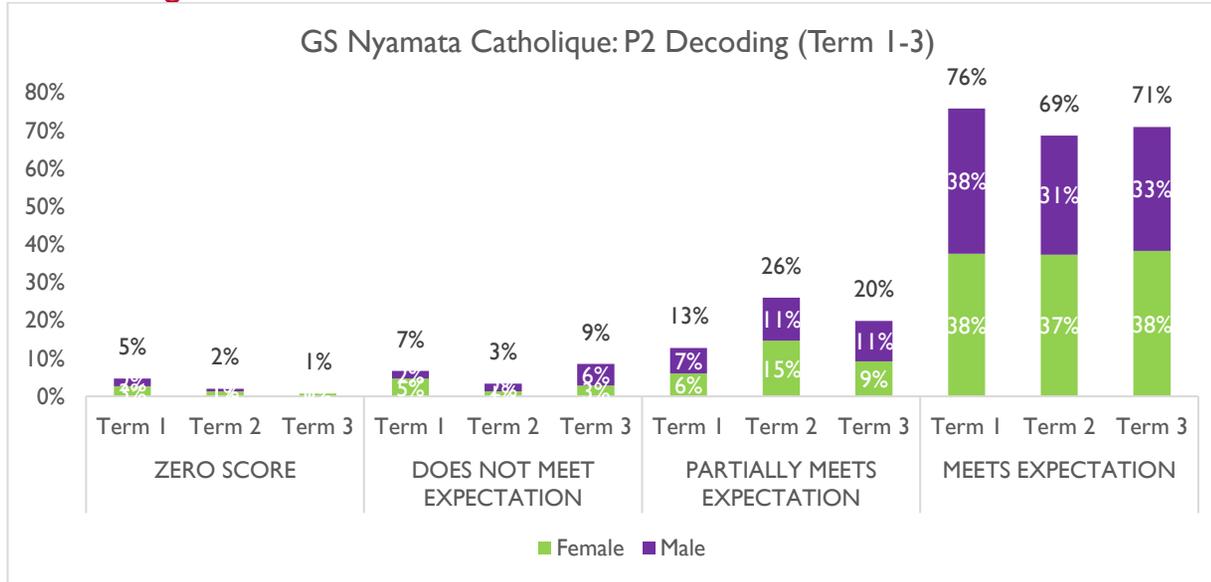
P2 Reading Comprehension



For **Reading Comprehension**, between Term 1 and Term 3....

- Zero scores decreased by 10%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 2%

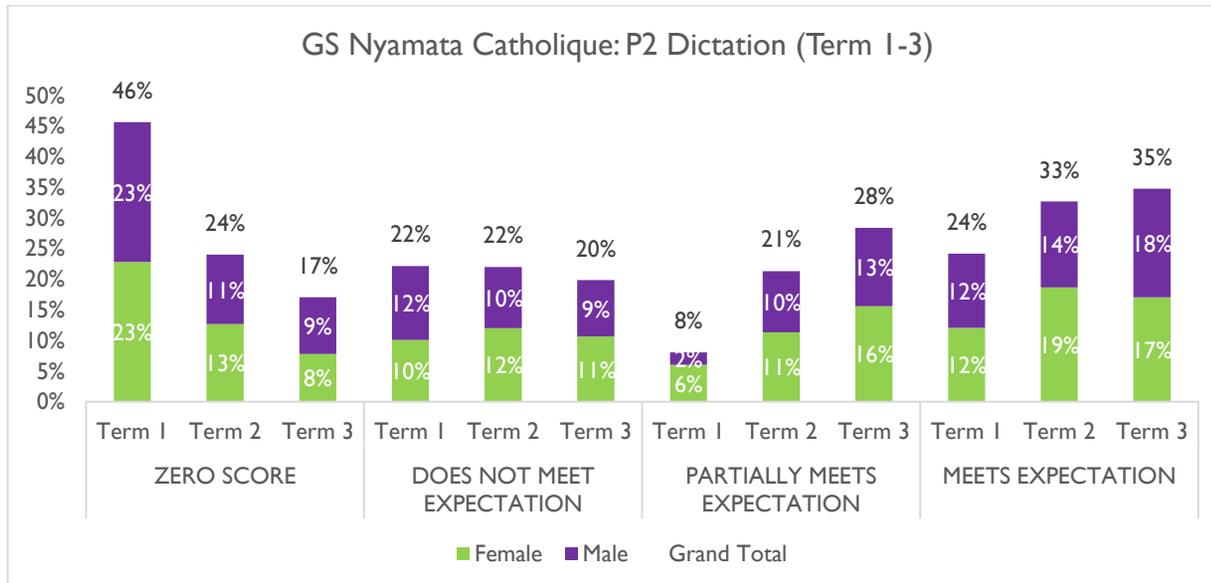
P2 Decoding



For **Decoding**, between Term 1 and Term 3....

- Zero scores decreased by 4%
- Those meeting the benchmark decreased by 5%

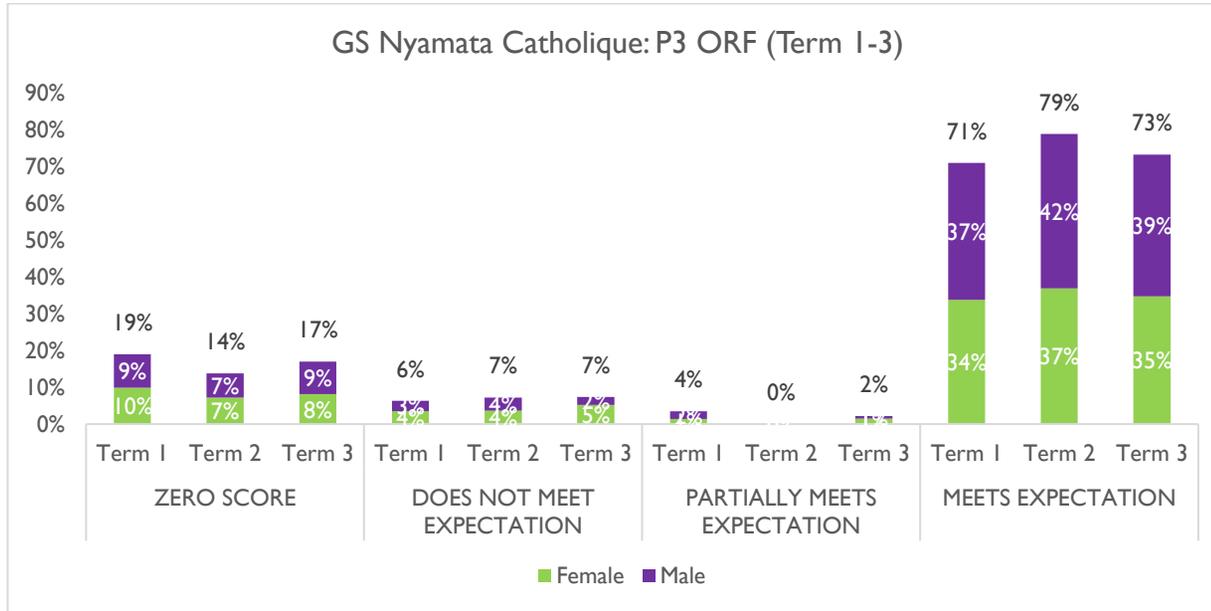
P2 Dictation



For **Dictation**, between Term 1 and Term 3....

- Zero scores decreased by 29%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 11%

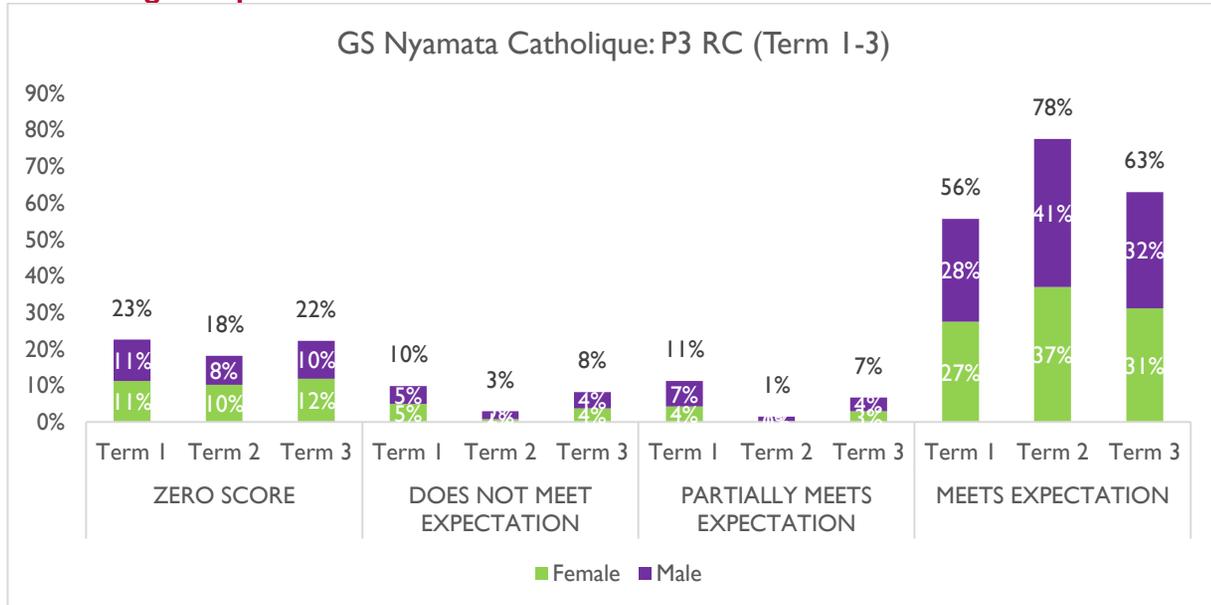
P3 ORF



For **ORF**, between Term 1 and Term 3....

- Zero scores decreased by 2%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 2%

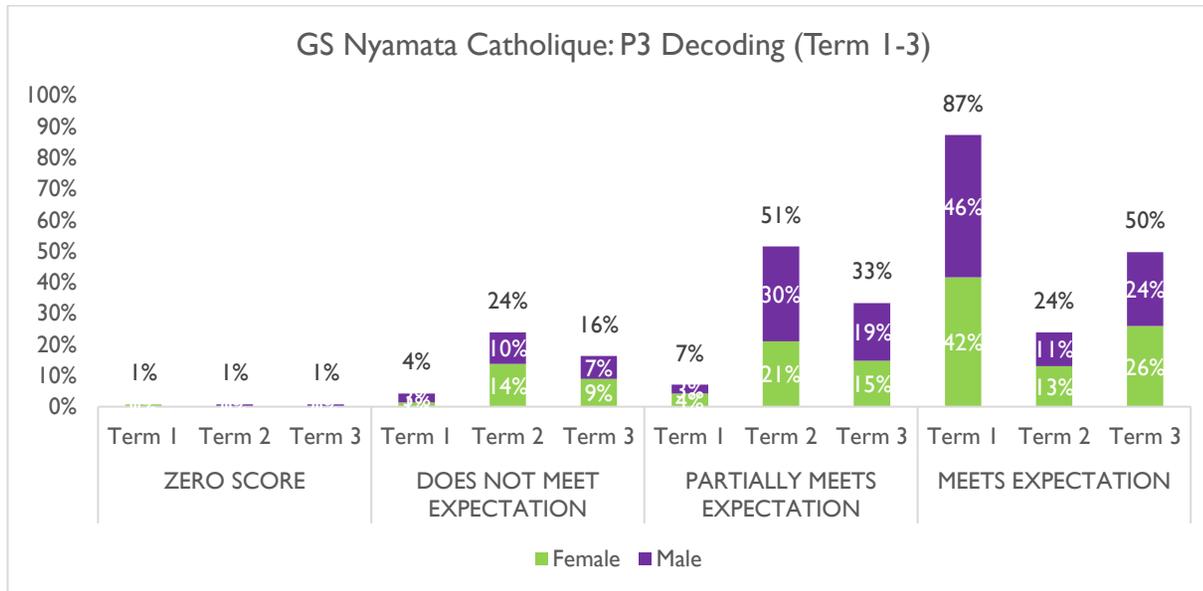
P3 Reading Comprehension



For **Reading Comprehension**, between Term 1 and Term 3....

- Zero scores decreased by 1%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 7%

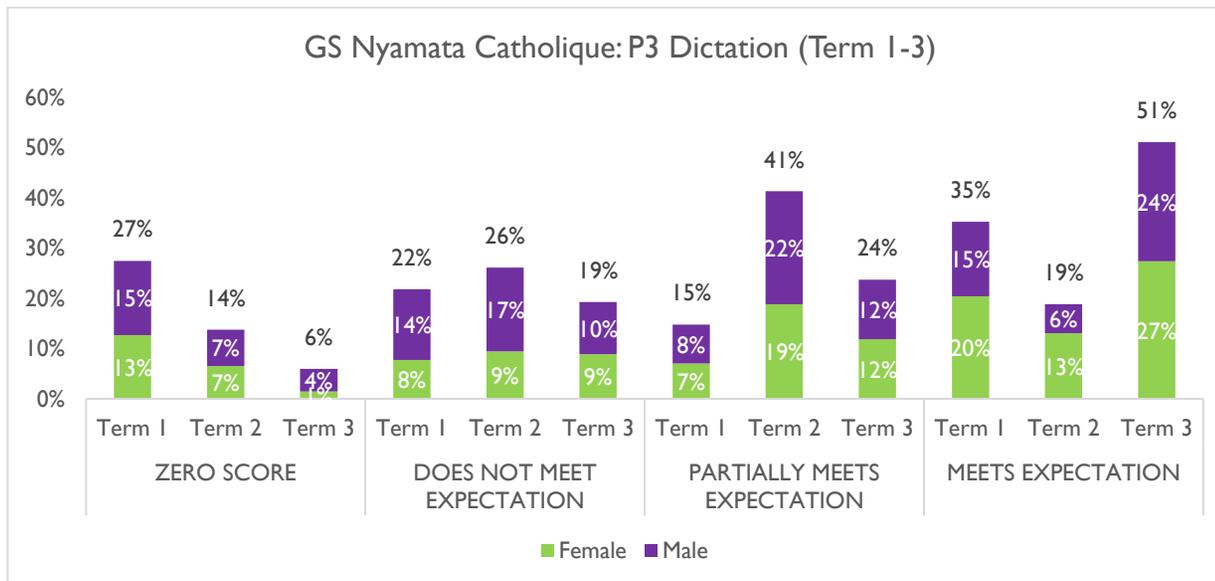
P3 Decoding



For **Decoding**, between Term 1 and Term 3....

- Zero scores remained unchanged
- Those meeting the benchmark decreased by 37%

P3 Dictation



For **Dictation**, between Term 1 and Term 3....

- Zero scores decreased by 21%
- Those meeting the benchmark increased by 16%

ANNEX F. SOMA UMENYE MATERIALS

Report Title	Publication Date	DEC ID Number	Hyperlink
Core Teaching and Learning Materials (TLMs)			
P1 Materials			
PI Textbook	2018	PA-00T-B2S	Link
PI Read Aloud Book	2018	PA-00T-B7B	Link
PI Teacher's Guide	2018	PA-00T-B79	Link
Decodable Reader #01 (R-K)	2018	PA-00X-8ZF	Link
Decodable Reader #02 (B-N)	2018	PA-00X-92K	Link
Decodable Reader #03 (M-G)	2018	PA-00X-92N	Link
Decodable Reader #04 (Y-T)	2018	PA-00X-92Q	Link
Decodable Reader #05 (Z-H)	2018	PA-00X-92R	Link
Decodable Reader #06 (S-V)	2018	PA-00X-92T	Link
Decodable Reader #07 (W-C)	2018	PA-00X-92W	Link
Decodable Reader #08 (D-F)	2018	PA-00X-92Z	Link
Decodable Reader #09 (J-P)	2018	PA-00X-93I	Link
Decodable Reader #10 (L-ND)	2018	PA-00X-92G	Link
Decodable Reader #11 (Ng-Ny)	2018	PA-00X-92H	Link
Decodable Reader #12 (Sh-Kw-Mb)	2018	PA-00X-96Z	Link
P2 Materials			
P2 Textbook	2018	PA-00X-8XW	Link
P2 Read Aloud	2018	PA-00X-8XR	Link
P2 Teacher's Guide	2018	PA-00X-8Z2	Link
P3 Materials			

Report Title	Publication Date	DEC ID Number	Hyperlink
P3 Textbook	2018	PA-00X-8ZB	Link
P3 Read Aloud	2018	PA-00X-8Z6	Link
P3 Teacher's Guide	2018	PA-00X-8ZD	Link
Andika Rwanda Readers (P1-P3)			
Agasaro ka gasaro	2018	PA-00X-933	Link
Agakapu ka ganza	2019	PA-00X-932	Link
Akanyoni kange	2018	PA-00X-936	Link
Akarabo	2018	PA-00X-937	Link
Akayuki k'agakozi	2018	PA-00X-938	Link
Akazuba keza	2018	PA-00X-939	Link
Bakame n'Akanyamasyo	2019	PA-00X-93C	Link
Bana dukunde kwiga	2019	PA-00X-93F	Link
Duharanire kurengera ubuzima	2018	PA-00X-93G	Link
Duturane mu mahoro	2018	PA-00X-93J	Link
Farida akura iwabo mu bukene	2018	PA-00X-93K	Link
Ganza yaratabawe	2019	PA-00X-93N	Link
Gikeri na Bakame	2019	PA-00X-93Q	Link
Girinka iwacu	2019	PA-00X-93T	Link
Havumbutse amashyuzza	2019	PA-00X-93V	Link
Ibiyobyabwenge biragatabwa	2019	PA-00X-93W	Link
Igishwi cyahasize inkuru	2019	PA-00X-93X	Link
Imvura n'izuba	2019	PA-00X-948	Link
Inama nziza	2019	PA-00X-93Z	Link
Inkwavu za mucyo	2019	PA-00X-94I	Link
Inyamanza n'abana bayo	2018	PA-00X-943	Link
Isazi n'ikimonyo	2019	PA-00X-945	Link

Report Title	Publication Date	DEC ID Number	Hyperlink
Ishuri ryange	2018	PA-00X-947	Link
Kanani n'utunyange	2019	PA-00X-949	Link
Maguge na nyina	2018	PA-00X-94B	Link
Muhirwa yirinze Malariya	2019	PA-00X-94C	Link
Mureke atete	2018	PA-00X-94D	Link
Muswa na Kimonyo	2018	PA-00X-94F	Link
Nawe Birakureba	2019	PA-00X-94G	Link
Ndashimira abambyaye	2018	PA-00X-94H	Link
Ndatabaza	2019	PA-00X-94J	Link
Ndate ikiyaga cyacu	2019	PA-00X-94K	Link
Ndate umubyeyi nkunda	2018	PA-00X-95N	Link
Ndate umurezi	2018	PA-00X-94M	Link
Nimugarure Mutesi yacu	2018	PA-00X-94P	Link
Nkunda inama	2019	PA-00X-94Q	Link
Nkunda ishuri	2019	PA-00X-94R	Link
Nkurate mawe	2019	PA-00X-94S	Link
Nzakugirira akamaro Rwanda	2019	PA-00X-94T	Link
Rugero ntakiryamira	2018	PA-00X-94V	Link
Teta	2019	PA-00X-952	Link
Teta na Simoni	2018	PA-00X-94W	Link
Tubungabunge ibidukikije	2018	PA-00X-954	Link
Tugire umuco wo gufashanya	2018	PA-00X-956	Link
Tugire urukundo	2018	PA-00X-958	Link
Tumenye gusoma	2018	PA-00X-95B	Link
Twabaye inshuti	2018	PA-00X-95C	Link
Ubutwari bwa mahoro	2019	PA-00X-95D	Link

Report Title	Publication Date	DEC ID Number	Hyperlink
Umugambi w'isazi	2019	PA-00X-95F	Link
Umupira wa Sano	2019	PA-00X-95G	Link
Umusambi n'inuma	2019	PA-00X-95H	Link
Ururimi rwacu	2018	PA-00X-95J	Link
Wihotera umwana	2019	PA-00X-95K	Link
Yakijije akanyoni	2019	PA-00X-95M	Link
Core Training Materials			
School Leader Training Modules			
Module 1 (Core focus: management and coaching)	2019	PA-00X-8RT	Link
Module 2 (Core focus: EGR management and CoPs)	2019	PA-00X-8RV	Link
Module 3 (Core focus: comprehensive assessment)	2020	PA-00X-8RQ	Link
All SL Refresher (Core focus: return to school, CoPs, coaching, tablets for EGR management)	2021	PA-00X-8RR	Link
P1 Teacher Training Modules			
Phase 1 and 2 modules (Core focus: early grade reading methodology and materials)	2019	PA-00X-8RZ	Link
Refresher training #1 module (Core focus: early grade reading methodology and materials)	2019	PA-00X-8RW	Link
Refresher training #2 module (Core focus: early grade reading methodology and materials)	2020	PA-00X-8RX	Link
P2 Teacher Training Materials			
Phase 1 module (Core focus: early grade reading methodology and materials)	2019	PA-00X-8SC	Link
Phase 2 module (Core focus: early grade reading methodology and materials)	2020	PA-00X-8SD	Link

Report Title	Publication Date	DEC ID Number	Hyperlink
Refresher training module (Core focus: early grade reading methodology and materials)	2020	PA-00X-8SB	Link
P3 Teacher Training Materials			
Phase 1 module (Core focus: early grade reading methodology and materials)	2019	PA-00X-8SG	Link
Phase 2 module (Core focus: early grade reading methodology and materials)	2019	PA-00X-8SQ	Link
Refresher training module (Core focus: early grade reading methodology and materials)	2020	PA-00X-8SF	Link
Newly Qualified Teachers			
Module for NQTs for the 2021 academic year	2021	PA-00X-8SR	Link
Other Materials (Pilots, etc)			
Kinyarwanda Reading Camp (KRC) – remediation			
PI-P3 KRC TG	2020	PA-00X-8SS	Link
Training module	2020	PA-00X-8ST	Link
Universal Design for Learning (UDL)			
UDL Toolkit for PI	2020	PA-00X-8WJ	Link
Classroom Libraries			
Classroom library posters	2020	PA-00X-8WK	Link
School library guidelines - English	2020	PA-00X-8WN	Link
School library guidelines - Kinyarwanda	2020	PA-00X-8WT	Link
Video 1: Introduction to classroom libraries	2021	1_szlp6j83	Link
Video 2: Management of the classroom library	2021	1_j2qu7lgd	Link
Video 3: Use of library registers	2021	1_khesb0p8	Link
Video 4: Reading activities	2021	1_tnercote	Link
Video 5: Parents and the community	2021	1_uwkv7w4p	Link

Report Title	Publication Date	DEC ID Number	Hyperlink
Video 6: School leadership	2021	1_xo3bokkm	Link
Self-Learning Videos on Key Literacy Skills			
Video 1: Phonics	2018	1_w5ntxyr1	Link
Video 2: Phonemic Awareness	2018	1_nlwlsx22	Link
Video 3: Vocabulary	2018	1_w5ntxyr1	Link
Video 4: Reading comprehension	2018	1_h0u0d7ba	Link
Video 5: Fluency	2018	1_0l6gqsbu	Link
Video 6: Writing	2018	1_b9p33yta	Link
Local Early Grade Reading Assessment (LEGRA)			
Guide for administering LEGRA	2020	PA-00X-8XB	Link
Training module	2020	PA-00X-8XH	Link

ANNEX G. SOMA UMENYE PROGRESS REPORTS

Report Title	Publication Date	DEC ID Number	Hyperlink
Annual and Quarterly Reports			
FY 2016 4th Quarterly Performance Report	October 30, 2016	PA-00M-M27	Link
FY 2017 1st Quarterly Performance Report	April 30, 2017	PA-00M-WJF	Link
FY 2017 2nd Quarterly Performance Report	April 30, 2017	PA-00M-V3G	Link
FY 2017 3rd Quarterly Performance Report	July 31, 2017	PA-00N-1Z6	Link
FY 2017 4th Quarterly Performance Report	October 31, 2017	PA-00N-899	Link
Y1 (FY 2017) Annual Performance Report	October 31, 2017	PA-00S-WD8	Link
FY 2018 1st Quarterly Performance Report	January 19, 2018	PA-00S-X2J	Link
FY 2018 2nd Quarterly Performance Report	April 30, 2018	PA-00T-6KK	Link
FY 2018 3rd Quarterly Performance Report	June 30, 2018	PA-00T-HDV	Link
FY 2018 4th Quarterly Performance Report	October 30, 2018	PA-00T-PWR	Link
Y2 (FY 2018) Annual Performance Report	October 31, 2018	PA-00T-P8X	Link
FY 2019 1st Quarterly Performance Report	January 30, 2019	PA-00T-SKJ	Link
FY 2019 2nd Quarterly Performance Report	April 30, 2019	PA-00T-SJH	Link
FY 2019 3rd Quarterly Performance Report	July 30, 2019	PA-00W-GMV	Link
Y3 (FY 2019) Annual Performance Report	October 30, 2019	PA-00X-78T	Link
FY 2020 1st Quarterly Performance Report	January 30, 2020	PA-00X-74M	Link
FY 2020 2nd Quarterly Performance Report	April 30, 2020	PA-00X-74N	Link
FY 2020 3rd Quarterly Performance Report	July 30, 2020	PA-00X-74Q	Link
Y4 (FY 2020) Annual Performance Report	October 30, 2020	PA-00X-74K	Link
FY 2021 1st Quarterly Performance Report	January 30, 2021	PA-00X-86R	Link
FY 2021 2nd Quarterly Performance Report	April 30, 2021	PA-00X-G9P	Link

Report Title	Publication Date	DEC ID Number	Hyperlink
FY 2021 3rd Quarterly Performance Report	July 30, 2021	PA-00X-R5Q	Link
Y5 (FY 2021) Annual Performance Report	October 30, 2021	2e2300b9-8aef-417a-8ca5-a46a839732b9	Link
Other Key Project Reports (Deliverables, Studies, and Assessments)			
Gender Assessment	October 17, 2016	PA-00M-N69	Link
Disability and Inclusion Assessment	October 17, 2016	PA-00M-N68	Link
Capacity Building Plan and Capacity Assessment Tools	November 16, 2016	PA-00T-C8X	Link
2018 Early Grade Reading Baseline Assessment	November 1, 2019	PA-OOX-3BG	Link
Rwanda Early Grade reading Assessment: Draft baseline Report 2018	January 15, 2020	PA-OOX-3C5	Link
Local Early Grade Reading Assessment (LEGRA) Pilot Report	March 1, 2020	PA-00X-74F	Link
A Study on Kinyarwanda Instructional Time in Lower Primary	July 8, 2020	PA-OOW-Q7N	Link
A Study on Kinyarwanda Instructional Time in Lower Primary: Annexes	July 8, 2020	PA-00W-Q7P	Link
A Study on Remote Radio Lessons to Support Early Grade Kinyarwanda Learning in Rwanda	October 28, 2020	PA-00X-4G5	Link
Lower Primary Term I Local Early Grade Reading (LEGRA) Report	July 30, 2021	PA-00X-S8Q	Link
USAID Soma Umenye: Equating Study: LARS IV, EGRA 2018, LEGRA 2021	December, 2021	PA-00Z-2QZ	Link
External Evaluation Reports			
Impact Evaluation YI Baseline	April 26, 2018	PA-00T-I3Z	Link
Impact Evaluation YI Baseline: Executive Summary	April 26, 2018	PA-00T-I4I	Link
Impact Evaluation YI Baseline: Debriefing Presentation	April, 2018	PA-00T-I46	Link
Midterm Performance Evaluation	February, 2020	PA-00W-NZX	Link

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