



# Community-Led Learning (CLL), qualitative research findings

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**SESIL**  
STRENGTHENING EDUCATION SYSTEMS  
FOR IMPROVED LEARNING



# Purpose and approach of qualitative study

Research to support the (quantitative) learning assessment and add depth to the evidence base – to understand *how* CLL was, or was not, implemented

Data was collected by a team of external researchers in May – June 2022, through interviews and focus group discussion in 4 districts with:

- ✓ 7 SESIL staff members
- ✓ 8 Mentor Teachers
- ✓ 12 CLL Implementation Committees
- ✓ 13 Centre Management Committees
- ✓ 16 Community Learning Facilitators
- ✓ 16 learners and parents
- ✓ 19 district officials

# CLFs found it easier to teach numeracy than literacy

- Literacy was seen as more complicated for the learners to comprehend and not as practical as numeracy to teach
- Some CLFs lacked the adequate skills to deliver the literacy lessons and were not conversant with the language of instruction, particularly Kupsapiiny.

*“ Most progress was in numeracy because it is a more practical subject. For example we were using stones, mangoes, and other common objects to explain the concepts.”*

CLF, Kapchorwa district

# There were unintended benefits of CLL

*“ My child comes back from the centre and tutors the younger siblings how to read and count which has impressed me as a parent and therefore I say that this programme should continue.”*

Parent, Kapsep village,  
Kapchorwa district

- Parents, CLFs, CMCs, and CICs reported improvements in children's interest in learning and general confidence to learn and to express themselves because of attending CLL lessons.
- The literacy and numeracy skills of other children not enrolled in the programme also improved due to tutoring from their siblings enrolled in CLL.

# The children who needed CLL the most were selected

- Enrolling the most marginalised children was prioritised, including girls, particularly from poor family backgrounds, who had already fallen behind before the school closures.
- The target of 50% girls enrolled was not always possible due to considerations of the placement tests, age, and classes.
- Limiting the number of learners enrolled at each centre enabled the CLF to attend to all learners, responding to those that needed attention and assess whether the set competences had been achieved.

*“ The children selected for the programme were the right ones. The committee concentrated on the guidelines of SESIL. During registration and administration of the pre-test, only children from government schools were registered much as those from private schools also wanted.”*

Parish Chief, Bukiis, Sironko District

## Learner attendance was high because of community ownership of CLL and the timing of CLL lessons

*“The centre was very near home, and we could even hear the lessons from our homes, so it was hard for the child to miss the lessons.”*

Parent, Itia village,  
Obongi district.

- Respondents attributed the high attendance of both learners and CLFs to good mobilisation by the community structures, location of the centres at local central places which did not require children to travel far to attend, and the parents' commitment to CLL.
- Learners and parents agreed that the timing of the lessons was good because they were being conducted after school and over the weekends.

# Local school leaders actively championed CLL

- CIC members from all districts reported that head teachers continuously encouraged the children to continue with their CLL lessons
- They also helped supervise CLL centres and provided scholastic materials to supplement those provided by SESIL.
- District and sub-county officials saw partnerships with neighbouring schools as key in CLL implementation

# There was strong compliance with the safeguarding procedures to protect children

- CLFs, CMCs, CDOs and SESIL staff knew and played their roles in ensuring children's safety and the reporting pathways.
- However, SESIL staff felt community members were not reporting safeguarding incidents because they perceived them to be minor cases, or they feared causing tension within the community

*"In the CLL centre where our children study, there is always a parent, and that parent would make sure that there is order at the centre. The parent also made sure that children were all in one place as they waited for the teacher to come."*

CMC member, Sironko district

*"She does not cane us, teaches well, can understand when you tell her something. She does not shout at us, she keeps time, she has made me understand what I did not know before."*

Learner, Kapchorwa district



# There was high demand, ownership and leadership of the CLL initiatives from communities and LGs

- Examples include: provision of venues for learning, identification of the right volunteers, provision of books and pens/pencils, provision of masks, soap and water for handwashing, regular monitoring of lessons to ensure that children were learning and safe.
- Being community-led and cost free helped improve attitudes of stakeholders towards the programme: they felt that their involvement was key in making it a success and their opinions were respected.
- Local Government officials incorporated CLL activities into their routine monitoring and supervision
- In some CLL communities unenrolled children still showed up for lessons, leading to crowded rooms and, in some cases, interruption of learning.

*“Everyone felt that it was a good initiative because it involved the parents and community right from the start. The parents identified the management committee members and the CLL centre locations, identified and supervised the CLF and offered them small appreciations. This made them feel very important in the programme.”*

Mentor teacher, Sironko district

# Additional challenges to implementation (1 of 2)

## Hungry learners at the CLL centres

*“Parents sometimes delay cooking lunch which in turn delayed or made the children to miss the CLL lessons. This was the major reason as to why we started providing porridge so that the children didn’t have to go home but rather come straight to the learning centre because eating was assured.”*

CMC member, Sironko district

## Resistance and doubt from some of the parents at the start of implementation

- Some parents did not believe that community learning was possible with unqualified teachers teaching outside of normal classroom settings.
- Others demanded that lessons should be conducted in English rather than the local languages and some were concerned that their children no longer supported them with house chores.
- Perceptions positively changed once they observed the improvements in their children’s literacy and numeracy skills

# Additional challenges to implementation (2 of 2)

Unfavourable learning environments due to the absence of proper structures, particularly during the rainy season

*“ We managed to borrow a blackboard from a nearby school... We also borrowed and used tents to protect children from direct sun and rain.”*

CIC member, Sironko district

Delayed payment of monthly stipends to volunteers and limited payment of allowances of LG officials

*“The work of monitoring was also not done in time due to lack of funding. Since these lessons were conducted from 3-5pm and you had to walk to these centres, you’d sometimes reach there when they had already been completed,”*

Sub-county chief, Sironko district