



PROJECT PROFILE

Zambia Let's Read: Using Partnerships to Improve Reading Outcomes for Children



PROJECT NAME

Zambia Let's Read

CLIENT/FUNDING PARTNER

USAID/Zambia

PRIME CONTRACTOR

Education Development Center (EDC)

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Resonance, The Flemish Association for Development Cooperation (VVOB), and Kentalis

COUNTRY

Zambia

TIME PERIOD

Jan. 2019 – Aug. 2023

Challenge

Zambia has made notable strides in early grade reading outcomes, and, in 2013, Zambia's Ministry of General Education (MoGE) launched the national Primary Literacy Program (PLP) for public and community schools. Despite this progress, challenges remain in meeting national literacy benchmarks among primary school learners. The USAID/Zambia Let's Read Project, a five-year initiative led by the Education Development Center (EDC), is working to strengthen the implementation of the PLP through a reading intervention package, teacher professional development, a new performance tracking system, and community engagement strategies. The Let's Read project expects to improve reading outcomes for approximately 1.4 million children attending pre-primary school (kindergarten) through Grade 3 in five provinces in Zambia.

Solution

Public-private partnerships (PPPs) hold the potential to significantly advance Let's Read and the Government of Zambia's early education goals. The private sector – e.g., through co-investment, market-led innovations and service models, and new technology deployment – brings unique insights, expertise, and resources to the table to help overcome educational barriers and attain literacy goals in Zambia. Resonance leads the charge to develop PPPs and engage the private sector for Let's Read: We are mapping the local private sector landscape, analyzing potential partners' ability and motivation to contribute to Let's Read's goals, and facilitating and nurturing partnerships that advance primary literacy in Zambia. Resonance will also strengthen the ability of Let's Read's partners, including MoGE, to engage with the private sector and mobilize company support through shared-value partnerships.

Key Results

In Let's Read's first year, the Resonance team has:

- Completed a Rapid Partnership Appraisal (RPA) that analyzed the interests, business challenges, and corporate social responsibility objectives of select local private sector companies and business associations in Zambia. The RPA explored ways that private sector interests and core capabilities can contribute to addressing the challenges, gaps, and correlated factors for early grade reading success in Zambia.
- Developed a PPP Committee within MoGE to coordinate public-private partnership activities.
- Held seven partnership co-development workshops to design and structure partnerships collaboratively with private sector partners, education stakeholders, and MoGE. Prospective partnerships include opportunities to expand digital connectivity through discounted data packages, use commercial distribution networks to promptly distribute teaching and learning materials to rural schools, disseminate reading content through non-traditional means to more effectively reach learners, expand access to light to extend available reading and study hours, and introduce interactive voice response (IVR) modes of teacher training to mitigate COVID-related in-person training barriers.

As the project enters its second year, the Resonance team looks forward to formalizing and implementing partnerships with the private sector that advance Zambia's literacy goals.