

IMPROVING LITERACY OF CHILDREN THROUGH SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY NETWORKS

CONSOLIDATED REPORT OF THE ULLN PROJECT RESULTS

NICARAGUA 2021-2022

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SIGLAS

CNA	National Literacy Crusade
CAS	Complex Adaptative Systems
DGF	Focus Group Discussion
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EIC	Key Informant Interview
EPA	Popular Literacy Army
FOSDEH	Foro Social de la Deuda Externa y Desarrollo de Honduras
CDF	Comprehensive Development Facilitators
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
IDRC	International Development Research Center
KIX	Knowledge and Innovation Exchange
MECA	Measuring Evidence of Quality Achieved
MINED	Ministry of Education
OISE	Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
PNUD	United Nations Development Program
SITEAL	International Institute of Education
UL	Unlock Literacy
ULLN	Unlock Literacy Learning Network
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WV	World Vision
VM	World Vision



INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, more than 387 million elementary school girls and boys (6 to 11 years old) are not reaching minimum proficiency levels in reading (Statistics Institute UNESCO, 2017).

UNICEF (2020) estimates that 53% of children in low- and middle-income countries cannot read with confidence at age 10 (p.2). This implies that children who do not read well in the initial grades fall further and further behind, as they advance in their school years, they have difficulty keeping up with the content taught, or they drop out of school. This is especially true for girls, who are often responsible for most of the chores in the home. Girls and boys who do not learn to read with confidence are on a trajectory of limited educational and economic opportunities which can become a lifelong reality.

To respond to this problem, during the past decade, World Vision has implemented the Unlock Literacy (UL) project, which complements and supports the efforts of the Ministries of Education of the countries where it is implemented, to improve the learning processes in reading and writing of all children, including the most vulnerable (FOSDEH; OISE; UG, 2021). UL goes beyond the classroom and school to also strengthen children's literacy skills at home, as well as in other community settings where Reading Clubs represent one of its most commendable efforts, increasing children's access to printed materials and educational stimulation sessions.

The Unlock Literacy Learning Network (ULLN), is a research project funded by the International Development Research Center and Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Project (IDRC/KIX), and is part of one of twelve global grants which aim to strengthen education systems with proven innovations in development contexts. The purpose of these grants is to generate knowledge and evidence to support the adaptation of proven innovations to address fundamental education priorities in the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) partner countries and to mobilize research and knowledge to support the scaling up of proven innovations.



The research itself seeks to study the literacy work with children carried out by World Vision through the UL program in three countries belonging to the GPE: Ghana, Honduras, and Nicaragua. Its main objective is to explore how community stakeholders (including teachers, directors and officials from the Ministry of Education, parents, caretakers, community leaders, and local organizations) work in partnership to implement the community-based literacy activities of the UL project to allow children to participate and benefit from these activities within the different contexts of Ghana, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

This report on the first and second phases of the community component of the "Improving Literacy Children Through the Support of Community Networks" (ULLN) project focuses on sharing the findings of the research study based on the perceptions of key stakeholders, considering how they responded to the research questions around the adaptation of the UL model and how networks support children's literacy, the qualitative evidence, and the changes and perceptions found in the sample of 10 communities where the project Unlocking Literacy (UL) is being implemented in Nicaragua, which are a part of a sample. And at the same time, the report covers how the stakeholders responded to the research questions about the adaptation of the UL model at the community level and how networks support children's literacy. Similarly, it deals with how to carry out the scaling up of the UL activities for improved literacy of children from first to third grades in rural and urban territories of the program target areas, from a comprehensive perspective through community involvement with the implementation of community reading clubs. Quotations from key informants regarding the challenges faced due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and the effects of hurricanes Eta and Iota, among other vulnerable contexts, are also shared in this report as evidence.

To document the description of the ten Nicaraguan cases as a representative sample, the information collected and codified from the community component survey was used, carrying out two information surveys: 1) The first phase was carried out from August 9 to September 3, 2021; resulting in a total of 102 instruments collected, including 63 key informant interviews (KIIs), 30 focus group discussions (FGDs) and 9 observations of Reading Clubs. 2). The second phase was carried out from June 6 to June 20, 2022, and a total of 63 instruments were collected; of which 33 were KIIs, 20 FGDs and 10 observations of Reading Clubs in the 10 communities (8 rural and 2 urban). Both surveys were conducted in the territories of Condega, La Trinidad, Larreynaga, and Tipitapa.

Below, we present the results of the research study, starting with an overview of each of the ten sampled communities. The document elaborates on the multiple factors involved in facilitating or limiting the functioning of the Reading Clubs, extracted from the common elements identified in the 10 case studies. Section six presents some reflections on the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) dimension, pointing out the role that women and girls play in the UL model, as well as the impact it has on the most vulnerable groups of children. Next, the main changes perceived by the participants as a result of the implementation of the UL model and the Reading Clubs are described. Finally, the report ends with some conclusions that attempt to take into account the results and the reflections raised throughout the document.

In its research component, the research is led by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE-UofT), which has partnered with FOSDEH (Social Forum on Foreign Debt and Development of Honduras) for Honduras and Nicaragua and with SEL-UofG (School of Education and Leadership) for Ghana. Guided by the main research question; *“How can community stakeholders and networks in Ghana, Honduras and Nicaragua, each with their own particular contexts, be enabled and strengthened to develop and use their own adaptive systems when implementing at scale World Vision's UL program to improve children's literacy outcomes, including the most vulnerable?”*

I. BACKGROUND



Country Socio-Educational Context

Nicaragua is located in the geographic center of the Central American isthmus, bordering Honduras and Costa Rica, with a surface area of 130,373 km². It is divided into 15 departments (states), 153 municipalities, and 2 autonomous regions, with a total population of approximately 6.7 million people. It is estimated that 50.7% are women and 49.3% are men (World Bank, 2021). In Nicaragua, overall poverty has been significantly reduced from 48.3% in 2005 to 24.9% in 2016, 6.9% in the same period, due to all the socio-productive programs that have been implemented, accompanying security, peace, macroeconomic stability, and national and foreign investment (National Plan to Fight Poverty and for Human Development 2022-2026).

In Nicaragua, basic education is managed and regulated by the Ministry of Education. Elementary education is free and compulsory in public schools. The Basic and Elementary School Sub-systems are made up of the following levels:

1. Early Education: which offers formal and non-formal modalities. The age group from 0 to 3 years operates under the non-formal mode, with greater community participation, while the age group from 3 to 5 years, operates under both modes, non-formal and formal, the group from 5 to 6 years operates under a Formal Education mode.

2. Elementary Education: this includes Regular Elementary, Multi-grade, Accelerated Elementary Education, and Adult Education, Special Elementary Education and Elementary Night School, with two Cycles: First Cycle (1st to 4th grades), Second Cycle (5th and 6th grades) operating under innovative modalities to cover the educational demand (Basic National Curriculum, pages 12 and 13).

As per the Law, Education is offered under several modes: regular, multi-grade, accelerated, special, and night. The General Directorate of Elementary Education (MINED) also indicates the over-age and distance modalities which operate in remote areas. In the over-age elementary school mode, children and adolescents between 9 and 16 years old from urban areas, who for some reason did not complete their schooling at the appropriate age for their grade, have the opportunity to complete elementary school in three academic years.



Distance elementary school is for boys, girls and adolescents between 9 and 16 years old from rural areas who for some reason did not study at the appropriate age, so weekly meetings are held on Saturdays and tutorial sessions are provided. In the multi-grade modality, the curricular contents are adapted to the characteristics of the socioeconomic, productive, and cultural environment of the communities. Pedagogical strategies are developed for the simultaneous participation of boys and girls of different ages and educational levels (SITEAL-UNESCO, 2019).



Since 2007, the Government has maintained the budget allocation to education as an important part of the social investment policy of the Budget of the Republic:



In this regard, according to records of the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (MHCP), the budget allocation for Investment in education went from C\$4,409.8 million in 2006 to C\$21,191.9 million in 2020 (+381%); and the specific allocation to the Ministry of Education, went from C\$2,908.2 million in 2006 to C\$16,206.4 million in 2020 (+457%); with 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020 being the years with the highest allocations.



Between 2016 and 2020 in Nicaragua, an annual average of 3,069 teachers were enrolled in initial training courses in teaching faculties and 4,058 undergraduate teachers in professionalization courses. A total of 4,486 schools have been declared free of empiricism out of a total of 9,105 public schools, a 49% improvement (National Plan to Fight Poverty and for Human Development 2022-2026).

Nicaragua has improved access to elementary education. According to the Ministry of Education; 9 out of 10 girls and boys attend school. Great strides have been made in improving access and quality of education at all levels. According to the country's educational authorities, the school enrollment of children, youth, adolescents, and adults in education in the different modalities has gone from 1,672,000 students in 2006 to 1,800,293 in 2020 (+7.7%), even with the decrease in the country's birth rate. In 2020, the grade approval rate in elementary and secondary education was 90.9% (an increase of 79.4% when compared to 2006).

As per the goals of the educational system, MINED expects an increase in enrollment in elementary school, due to the reduction of grade repetition and school attrition, which is already showing results. In 2021, a slight reduction was projected, which would be the effect of the reductions over a longer term with regards to grade repetition and school attrition, once the groups of students who remain in the system and move on to the next grade, begin to move on to secondary school. Secondary school enrollment is projected to grow by 30% over the period. The government has expressed its commitment to restore the right to education, which means that the transcendent goal is qualitative: no child, adolescent, or young person should be left without the opportunity to access quality education at a timely age, while making progress in reducing the overage and lag in adult education. A goal is also planned for 2017 to 2021 and is in execution for the investment in physical classrooms for replacement, repair, and expansion, as follows: preschool 390, elementary: 1,299, secondary: 879, for a total of 2,568 classrooms (MINED, 2021).

For 2021, the statistics indicate that there are **1 million 702 thousand** students in all modalities of basic and secondary education; "which is also an achievement because of school permanence and the quality of education provided in Nicaragua. The 2022 enrollment, as of November 5, reached 1 million 776 thousand 51 students", and finally, the Presidential Advisor on education, said that the intention of the Government of Nicaragua is to continue improving the quality of education in the country.¹



[1] Interview with Salvador Vanegas, presidential advisor on Education issues in Nicaragua, News Channel / TN8

Research Study Design

Purpose of the research study

Through the first and second phases, the research study provides evidence on how to enhance collaborative networks of stakeholders to promote quality, sustainable, and effective literacy that is gender sensitive and inclusive for early grade school age children, by implementing UL methodologies that address low levels of literacy in vulnerable populations. The study uses this evidence to establish a general working theory about how community networks in the education system collaborate to implement the main components of the UL model – Reading Assessments, Teacher Training, Community Action, and Teaching and Learning Materials – with quality and fidelity at the local, regional or national levels. However, we will not deep-dive in this area, as it was addressed in *ULLN: results of the first phase (FOSDEH; OISE; UG., 2021)* and in the *Unlocking Literacy Learning Network (ULLN) Research Design (FOSDEH; OISE; UG., 2021)*

Summary of Theoretical Frameworks

The general conceptual framework for this study is Complex Adaptive Systems (CAS) theory, which is rooted in systems thinking. Using a CAS lens for this research allows researchers and implementers not only to work collaboratively to understand and describe the complex partnerships that allow community members to tailor UL activities to better fit their contexts and needs, but also to generate and promote collaborative learning networks where formal and informal stakeholders and peers work together towards a specific shared goal within a structure of interdependence (2005 Edition). The research also feeds into the Educational Marginalization Framework, which places Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) as a fundamental crosscutting perspective. From such a perspective, marginalization in education is conceived both as a process and as a result, characterizing the way in which universal, contextual, systemic, community and family conditions combine with each other, facilitating or hindering the educational opportunities for children (United Kingdom's Department of International Development, 2018; FOSDEH; OISE; UG, 2021).

Data collection process for the first and second phases at the community level

Once the different partners of the project jointly completed the design stage of the research plan and the data collection instruments (the stage prior to gathering information), together with World Vision, the various field visits were scheduled as required to carry out reading club observations, key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGD) with the local stakeholders who are part of the communities where the UL project is implemented, as well as Reading Club observations.

The FOSDEH research team began the data collection process for the first phase at the community level in Nicaragua on August 9 and completed the process on September 3, 2021. The second phase of data collection was carried out from June 06 through 20, 2022. In coordination with World Vision, the volunteers responsible for the invitations and those in charge of the implementation of the UL project, and FOSDEH's team carried out the application of the research instruments in 10 communities (8 rural and 2 urban communities), in the departments (states) of Estelí, León, and Managua.

During the first and second phases, the research team conducted a total of 50 FGD, 96 KII, and 19 Reading Club observations with the number of stakeholders listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Data collected by type of tool and type of participant

Type of tool	Type of participant	Sample	Number performed	Sample	Number performed	Sample	Number performed
		First phase		Second phase		Total	
Focus Group Discussion	Reading Club Facilitators	10	10	10	10	20	20
	Children participating in the Reading Clubs	20	15	10	10	30	25
	Community Members	10	5	0	0	10	5
	Subtotal						50
Key Informant Interviews	Members of the municipality	6	2	0	0	6	2
	Fathers, mothers, caregivers sending their children to RCs	40	37	10	10	50	47
	World Vision International	1	0	1	1	2	1
	World Vision National	1	1	1	1	2	2
	World Vision working in different regions of each country	6	3	4	4	10	7
	World Vision Community Development Specialists (CDFs) - Local	10	4	10	8	20	12
	Faith Leaders	20	16	10	9	30	25
	Subtotal						96
Reading Club Observation	Reading Club Observation	10	9	10	10	20	19
	Total	134	102	65	63	199	165

Communities studied as a part of the research

In Nicaragua, the project was able to apply 165 research instruments in 3 departments and 4 municipalities, which are distributed in the sample of 10 communities; 8 rural and 2 urban, where World Vision currently has a presence with the UL program (see illustration 1). In the first phase, 102 instruments were applied in the 10 selected communities, while in the second phase, 63 instruments were applied in the same 10 communities, representative of the different territories and zones where the UL Program is implemented. These communities have particular characteristics that condition the way in which the Reading Clubs should be carried out in order to adapt to their respective contexts, being representative of the universe of communities.

Illustration 1. Regional divisions in Nicaragua of the information survey



50

50 Focus Group Discussions

96

96 Interviews with Key Informants

19

19 Reading Club observations with various stakeholders

10 communities (8 rural and 2 urban) in the departments of Estelí, León, and Managua



Of the 10 communities analyzed, 5 belong to the department of Estelí, 3 to the department of León, and 2 to Managua. The 8 communities in the departments of Estelí and León are rural, and the 2 communities belonging to the department of Managua are urban. It should be noted that 5 out of 10 rural communities in the department of Estelí and the 2 urban communities of Managua were significantly affected by floods caused by hurricanes Eta and Iota in 2020; thus, at the time of data collection, they reported the effects caused by these hurricanes, such as the loss of crops, the problem of food shortages for family consumption, the impact on the infrastructure of schools, and the deterioration of their homes in the most affected areas.







Description of the Unlock Literacy Model and the Reading Clubs

Unlock Literacy (UL) Model

The UL project is an evidence-based initiative of World Vision aimed at supporting the efforts of schools, parents and communities to improve children's literacy processes. The UL project focuses on four particular areas: 1) reading assessment; 2) teacher training; 3) community action; and, 4) teaching and learning materials. While the first two components focus on schools, the third one focuses on parents and communities. The teaching and learning materials can be used to improve literacy processes inside and outside of the classroom. Each of the areas are built with the goal of promoting five reading skills: 1) knowledge of the alphabet; 2) phonetic awareness; 3) fluency; 4) vocabulary; and 5) reading comprehension (Save the Children; World Vision, 2019). As a part of the community action component of the UL project, World Vision promotes the development of reading clubs, which consist of a space outside of the classroom in which trained community leaders support children from the first through the third grades to improve their literacy skills through a series of playful activities that promote the five key reading skills.

What are the Reading Clubs?

It is an out-of-school activity that promotes fun reading for children in the first three grades.

Who develops the Reading Clubs?

Volunteers or caregivers help boost children's reading skills through play and in an environment rich in reading material.

What is the purpose of conducting Reading Clubs?

To strengthen children's literacy skills, such as letter knowledge, phonological awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

How does a Reading Club take place?

The reading clubs are designed to be implemented in 21 sessions; each with a format that follows seven steps: 1) agenda; 2) free play time; 3) song time; 4) story time; 5) activity time; 6) make and take, and 7) diary. Through these activities, basic reading skills are strengthened. They focus on stimulating phonological awareness, vocabulary learning and letter knowledge; (Save the Children; World Vision, 2019).

Similarly, the Reading Clubs allow children to develop socially and emotionally by interacting on a regular basis (weekly) with boys and girls, and this generates soft skills in boys and girls.





Summary overview of the UL project in Nicaragua

In 2019, World Vision began the implementation of the project: Learning Networks for reading and writing, which seeks to strengthen the capacities of community stakeholders to adapt sustainable literacy practices through the Unlock Literacy project model, which is implemented in 3 departments of Nicaragua where World Vision accompanies families through area programs. According to World Vision Nicaragua, since Unlock Literacy began its implementation, 232 Reading Clubs, as they are known in Nicaragua, have been opened in 4 territories of the country, which serve an average total of approximately 15 participating children. For the second phase of the ULLN data collection, a total of 161 participating children were observed, of which 85 (52.7%) were girls and 76 (47.2%) were boys. Of the Reading Clubs visited during the survey, 23 Volunteer Facilitators (women) were in charge of the ten communities.

Among the findings of the study based on the community component, we can conclude that, although at the time of the data collection the Reading Clubs were being implemented in the 10 communities visited, an **adapted method** was observed as part of the particularities of the communities in the implementation.

In some cases, due to the limitations highlighted by the volunteers, they do not have a written strategy at the community level that allows them to follow the systematized steps in directing the teaching of the Reading Club in the long term, so that exhaustion is already observed, and a constant visit is needed to emphasize the **sustainability** of the Clubs.

The volunteers do not have formal teacher training, with pedagogical tools, and were only trained by World Vision to be Club facilitators, and therefore, constant training is required by the facilitators in the data collection of both phases of research. In spite of this, their unquestionable willingness to manage the Reading Clubs stands out.

Likewise, it is considered necessary to provide more materials for the stability of the clubs' activities and to improve the conditions in which they are carried out, for example, adequate places to develop the methodology of the Reading Club with the accompaniment of dynamic activities, dances, songs, drawings, and ensuring the safety of the children, as well as the learning process. However, the current endowment complies with the actions, likewise, the portable sound system has been an **innovation** on the part of the implementation that facilitates not only the singing, but also the dynamic activities and games.

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected the implementation of the activities of the Reading Clubs, reducing the attendance of children, and in some cases the club is not implemented to avoid spreading the infection to volunteers and mothers. When Covid-19 cases increased, the volunteers did not implement the Clubs or group activities. The volunteers implemented other alternatives in the communities with the support of World Vision, which provides support materials for the children to continue reading activities in their homes. The crowding of children and parents to attend the club represents a permanent risk in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, in addition to the difficulties that children have because they have to walk long distances to reach the reading club locations.

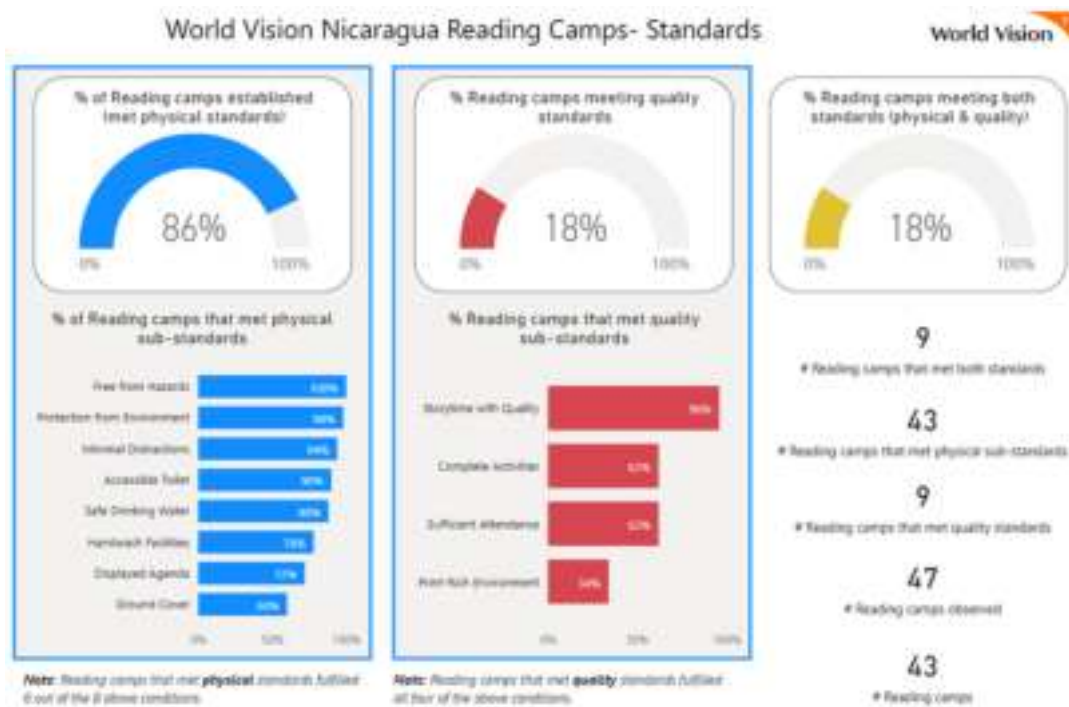
It will be necessary to continue identifying new prospects at the local level to find volunteer facilitators for the Reading Clubs, to ensure **sustainability** in the communities, taking into account that many of them, once they find work, tend to leave or migrate with their families to another country during harvest season.



Measuring Evidence of Quality Achieved (MEQA)

The MEQA component is the digital monitoring and training system for World Vision's educational programs, whose purpose is to monitor and improve the quality of the programs, including the UL project. Through this tool, information is collected through the observation of reading club sessions and interviews with the facilitators, and progress in the physical and quality standards of the project can be measured in real time. (World Vision, 2020).

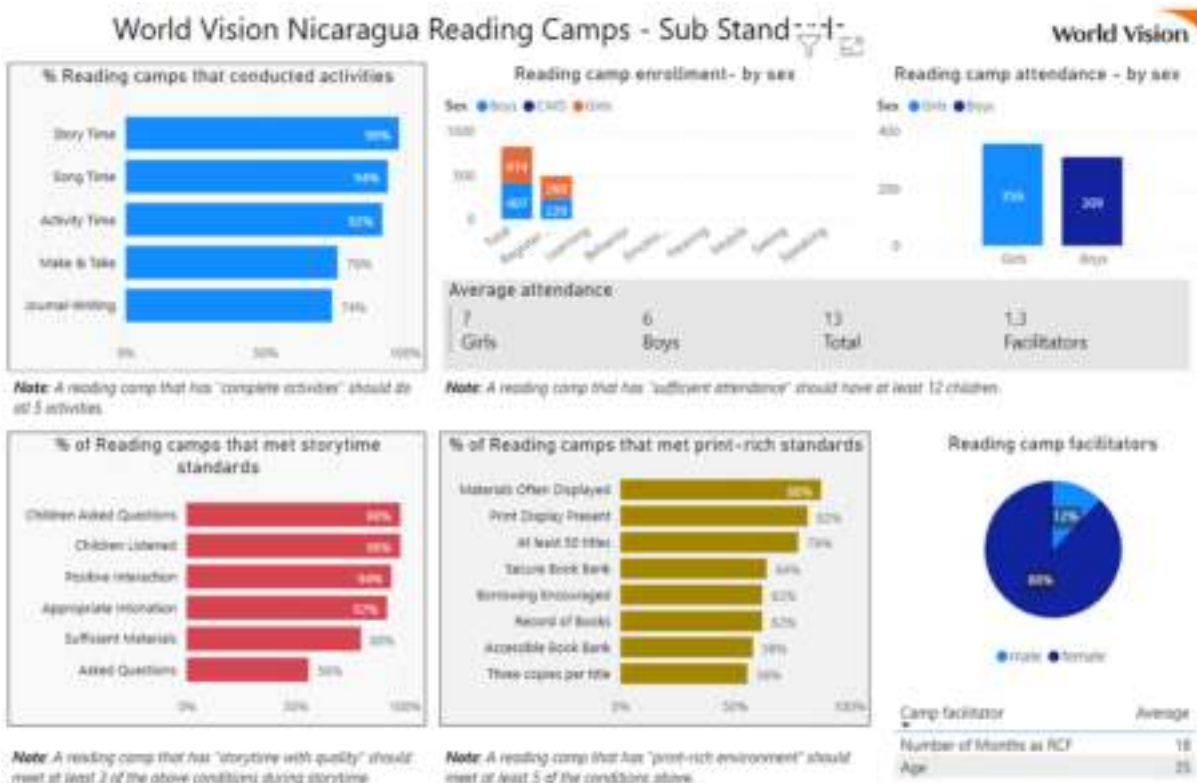
Illustration 2. MEQA data for the communities of Condega, Larreynaga, and Tipitapa



Source: Taken from World Vision MEQA, October 30, 2022

In 2022, World Vision began collecting the first MEQA data in two of the territories where the UL project is currently being implemented: Condega and Tipitapa. As can be seen in Illustration 2, the results of this process indicate that 86% of the reading clubs meet the physical standards of the project (environmental protection, minimal distractions, hazard-free, drinking water, accessible facilities, among others). However, only 18% of reading clubs in these communities are meeting quality standards (quality story time, sufficient attendance, print-rich environment, etc.). In total, only 18% of the reading clubs meet both physical and quality standards.

Illustration 3. MEQA data for the communities of Condega, Larreynaga, and Tipitapa



Source: Taken from World Vision MEQA, October 30, 2022

The Reading Clubs in the territories of Condega, Larreynaga, and Tipitapa comply with the activities of the agenda to be developed: storytelling, singing, activity time (games), among others. Similarly, a point to highlight is the average attendance of girls and boys as per gender equality and access; 7 girls and 6 boys.



Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Test

The results of the EGRA (Early Grade Reading Assessment) study reflect children's reading fluency, which consists of the ability to read words and texts, without making mistakes in an expressive manner, at an adequate pace. As children learn to read, they become progressively more familiar with written words until they reach the optimal level of reading comprehension. Thus, during 2021, the World Vision Nicaragua team conducted a study to identify the impact of the Reading Clubs project on the participating children, and of support in the other UL projects/components. The children who participated in the exercise were able to read an average of 68.37 words in 60 seconds. Comparative findings with the report of another measurement conducted in 2019 (baseline) indicate that there was a decrease of 1.66 percentage points, as this reflected an average of 70.03 (World Vision Nicaragua; Early Grade Reading Assessment Study, 2021).

The results of this fluency and comprehension indicator show that only 38.5% achieve an adequate level, which is much lower than that achieved in the 2019 study, which was 43.4%. In the data disaggregated by gender, it is observed that, in the 2019 study, the percentage of fluency and comprehension among boys was 38%, while in the present study boys show an average of 32.8%, a decrease of 5.2 percentage points. For girls, a 4% decrease is observed, as their average rating fell from 48.8% to 44.8% in fluency and comprehension.

For 2022, according to the Historical Comparative Reading and Comprehension Baseline – PT FY22 (World Vision Nicaragua, 2022), an increase in children who read adequately and their reading comprehension is observed: Tipitapa, with 53.5% (2021; 36%), Larreynaga, with 44.8% (2021; 41%), La Trinidad, with 34.8% (2021; 30.9%), and Condega, with 49.4% (2021; 42.9%), as the results in these territories of the Reading Clubs observed by ULLN.

Previous work by other organizations and World Vision

Currently, World Vision is developing a technical program in Nicaragua that was found in most of the communities where the data was collected: spirituality, protection, education and sponsorship. This technical program works in strategic partnerships with churches and state-owned institutions, among others, so that girls, boys, adolescents and young people feel loved by God, while they learn to become socio-emotionally resilient while living within protective environments (World Vision Nicaragua, 2022). In addition to these, the key informants mentioned other programs such as the traveling backpack and youth ready.

From the interviews held with the World Vision team, we were able to see that the institution is characterized by its long history and experience working in favor of the communities studied, where it has carried out these and other development projects over a period of time which, depending on the community, extends up to 30 continuous years, promoting sustainable development projects in the areas of child protection, food security, water and sanitation, education, and life skills. This strong presence of World Vision in the territories where it is currently operating has earned it very significant recognition by all, including the community leaders, as well as the government authorities with whom it has worked and consolidated relationships during this time. That aspect is considered an important asset for the implementation and development of projects such as UL, which is positioned and supported by World Vision's experience and credibility within the different territories in which UL is implemented.

In the first phase of the study, it was noted that, in some of UL's target communities, Compassion International also worked in the area of education with elementary school children to strengthen reading skills, providing a package of illustrated stories to the children they sponsor, complementing the community work with the Reading Clubs implemented by World Vision. For the survey of the second phase, no other international organization with intervention in the territories where the research was carried out was found.

II. Community Reading Clubs in action. How are the dynamics of a Nicaraguan Reading Club carried out?



At the appointed time (the day and time of the Clubs varies by community), little by little the girls and boys approach the space, either churches or the facilitators' houses (the two most common areas). The younger ones are accompanied by their mothers, others by their grandparents and some by their older siblings; the older ones come on their own and the *noise is heard* from inside. The Facilitator awaits their arrival, her youngest daughter, who is also part of the group, says: "so-and-so is missing, I'm sure she didn't get her orange shirt ready early to come because she is one of the first ones".

The room is decorated with colorful figures, *today* the animal sheet will be used and a couple of large sheets of paper await with the tasks of the first day and the other blank sheet where the story exercise will be done with graphs of their own ideas about what they understand from the narrative. A couple of wooden benches, *some chairs and/or worktables* are waiting for the children to settle down. On the tables, small sheets of paper, colored pencils, crayons, and other materials to be used for the activities, such as rubber erasers, acrylic glue, and a pair of round-tipped scissors. The concrete floor was already *swept* and water was sprinkled beforehand to freshen up the environment. Everything is ready to begin.



As they enter the space, the facilitators greet them, welcome them, and they settle in, looking for their places, or rather the places closest to their friends, "Do you always leave at the same time? Asks one of the parents, "Yes, only when they see that the sky darkens, they come to pick them up earlier. Well, I'm going to stay anyway, I've already done the housework and I have time left to enjoy these kids!" She asks who wants to say the prayer of the day, "Me, teacher!", "Very well, say it, honey".

The activities begin in the order that the Facilitator has written her agenda for the day and posted on the wall. Now we go to the story: "The Rooster and the Precious Stone". On a sheet of paper, the Facilitator has written the story: "Let's see, who wants to read first? Very well, read this paragraph, up to here" - she indicates with her finger on the paper - and then, "who wants to continue, that's fine, you will go in that order until you complete the story". When he finishes the narration he tells them, "Let's see, what do you think about what happened to the Rooster, do you know anyone just like the Rooster, has it happened to you?" The children raise their hands to speak, but not all of them; "Wait, wait, wait, let her finish", "Oh, I'm losing the idea!". "All right, now let's draw what each of you understands the story is about". From the table they pick up paper, pencils, crayons. A couple of older girls help the younger ones. Then each one takes her sheet of paper to the front where the flipchart is and explains her drawing, they place them with glue and go back to their place.

Now, following the agenda - explains the Facilitator - we will do the following dynamic activity; we are going to "represent" what happened in the story. Who wants to participate? Perfect, that's fine, 4 is enough. He takes the children aside and asks them how they want to perform, giving them some ideas that he writes down on small colored cards that he gives to each one of them to practice their act. "You're going to see Carlitos, he is to play the Rooster and he can't even sing," they laugh among themselves. With the help of a small music player, the facilitator asks them to come closer, the song starts, and the 4 little ones also start to act; there are nerves and laughter, words that they forget, confuse, or escape from the script, but they don't stop - the mothers who stayed behind have their faces light up - look at your kid, he came out as an actor! They approach, trying to remain unnoticed, so as not to miss anything. The Facilitator invites the rest of the children to dance to the background song. Now the party is on!

After the celebration is over, the facilitator asks them to take their places again. Supported by the two older girls, she forms several groups, asks them to remember the story and also tells them that it is posted on the flipchart in case they forget something. She approaches each group, addresses each question, and gives them advice. With that, try to find the words that are new to you and write them down on these slips of paper. *Now, are you finished? Let's see,* she goes over the slips of paper that the older girls gave her. She gives them back to each child and explains: we are going to investigate those words that are new or that you didn't know, so each one of you will take that paper home to work with your parents and family to see what you discover, then in the next meeting we will share what you found, *do you agree? Excellent.*

Well, we have 15 minutes of time left, what shall we play; run-run, hide and seek, freeze? Two groups are formed because not everyone agreed and they rush out to play. Careful not to hit the little ones. The mothers make sure they don't hit each other.

Facilitators respectfully correct when they have to do so. They continue with the *Make and Take activity*, in which children create or build some artifact, figure, or drawing that should also be linked to the teachings that were taught that day. Finally, participants write in a personal diary about what they enjoyed during the session, and in the case of those who have not yet learned to write, they are accompanied by one of the facilitators to write their name or an idea. After writing, the children take this diary home, and this activity closes the session. Afterwards, a closing prayer is said, after which the facilitators inform the children and caregivers that they are free to leave.

At last, the 15 minutes were short, but they have to come closer to end today's meeting. They form a circle holding hands and give thanks for this day, they give thanks for their parents, grandparents, for the "teacher" and for their friends. They already want it to be that next day. But before leaving, one last thing; remember to write down in your notebook what you liked most about this meeting, what you learned and what you did. They look at each mother and caregiver who have come to pick up their children and the Facilitator reminds them that this is important.

They all they goodbye, and now, let's clean this place, let's put away the materials and organize the work of the children. Tired but satisfied, the facilitator recites: See you next time.

Some differences in the development of Reading Clubs

1

Unlike the two urban communities visited, which also showed greater participation and involvement of mothers in the Club's activities to support children's literacy: It was observed by the **mothers in four rural communities** that in addition to being in charge of the home, preparing meals, and being in charge of the children so that they can attend the club, **they are the ones who have to take them and pick them up** at the club and support the Facilitators in activities that require their participation or attend sessions to learn how to help them with their reading homework when they return to their homes.

2

Unlike the two urban communities that conducted the club in protestant churches, we observed that in 5 out of 10 rural communities, the Reading Clubs visited when implementing the research instruments were being held in the homes of the community facilitators. Before starting the Reading Club session, **they had arranged and set up the homes** to turn them into classrooms to receive the children who attend the Reading Club, and in this space they developed the content, the children feeling that they were in a relaxed space that allowed them to reinforce their learning in the case of those who attend school and were motivated to attend the Reading Club.

3

In 6 out of 10 communities, it was noted that the **children who attended the Reading Clubs were of different ages**: between 5 and 11 years old; and in **four communities, there were also older children: between 11 and 14 years old**, who had been assigned to carry out some tasks or act as assistants for the Facilitators. Many of them were in charge of doing the dynamic activities, dances, and songs with the children, who often reproduced them from their cell phones or on phones provided by the World Vision specialist.

These children are a potential for the future of the community can provide continuity to the club, through their support as potential volunteer facilitators in their community, and this leads us towards scaling up to become future volunteer Reading Club Facilitators.

III. DESCRIPTION OF CASES



The following is a synthesis of the 10 cases of the communities in which the first and second *community information surveys* were carried out in the project *Improving Literacy for Children through the Support of Community Networks in Nicaragua*, described according to the guidelines of the UL model.

CONDEGA

Community 1 Rural

Community context

Condega is located in the north of the country, at a distance of 205 kilometers from Managua, in the center of the community, with permanent access provided by a secondary road. The main economic activity of its inhabitants is agricultural production. It has modern infrastructure (pedestrian walkways, classrooms, perimeter fence, recreational space, sanitary services in good condition, potable water service and stable electric power) to serve the preschool education levels (1st community level with 2nd and 3rd regular level), complete elementary school and basic secondary education cycle with a classroom or space for each cycle or grade. Education activities are carried out in two shifts; Morning for preschool (1st, 2nd and 3rd grade), regular elementary school (1st to 3rd grade) and basic secondary education (7th to 9th grade); afternoon for regular elementary school (4th grade) and complete with 5th and 6th grade in multi-grade mode.

The villagers describe the community as "very quiet, safe," with a community center, health center, Catholic and protestant churches, and community leaders who promote activities and community organization. In the context of Covid-19, community development was complicated.



Well, the pandemic was one of the challenges, because there were many days in which there were no meetings because of that problem, there was a very strong outbreak here in the community, we all decided for the children to stay in, and there were no meetings. So that was something that changed for them because when they were able to get together it was difficult for them to concentrate within the group, she had to make a group one day, another group the next, because of the number of children she has. She decided to have one group one day, another group the next day. Practically she even sacrificed her time to be able to have them there with her (Faith Leader, Community 1, 2022).

UL Overview

The project began in approximately 2019 and at the time of the first phase of information collection, the community component had already been operating for more than two years. World Vision was implementing the Child Protection, Sponsorship and Education programs, to which the organization's Community Development Facilitator devotes 80% of his/her time and 20% to the UL program.

The Volunteer Facilitators (women) of the Reading Clubs are committed to their community and feel useful as members performing unpaid work, some of them thought they could not teach in the clubs because they were not teachers, but now they have even become counselors.




The book clubs are made up of church members and the promoters. Because the Catholic church has its club, the protestant church has its club, and the other two clubs belong to the community (Faith Leader, Community 1, 2022).



Regarding the Covid-19 pandemic in this community, she commented that the facilitators looked for alternatives to work with the children (Faith Leader, Community 1, 2022).

Training and socialization process

In this community they have received support from World Vision in the process of socialization and training of the community stakeholders involved in the Reading Clubs.




We received 6-7 initial training sessions as facilitator training. They covered topics such as strategies, dynamics, ways of working, theater, singing, phonetics. They learned to develop creativity, imagination, take the initiative and adapt materials to the conditions (such as the quarantine, self-initiative). We work with an agenda, a topic, and everything is done based on that (Club Facilitators, Community 1, 2022).


An education specialist has been assigned to cover this community and has imparted training for volunteers on the methodology for running the Reading Clubs.

Summary of the Reading Club session

The observation made showed that the facilitator worked in the following order: She began by welcoming the children into her house, thanking them for their attention, after preparing the materials, she accommodated the children in the area of her garage. Then she began the club with a prayer, made the presentation with a game of cabbage, they have to perform a dynamic activity, sing songs, read, imitate, etc.. She performs the story with several children, that is, they read it several times. The facilitator asks questions for reading comprehension, followed by a group strategy for reading and writing. They end with a dynamic presentation. The set of activities was carried out in a period of approximately 1 hour.



The facilitators, some of them have a very nice strategy, for example, the children who are older, about 11 years old, they do not take them out, they help the younger ones, the way they learn here is with strategies (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 1, 2022).



...what the facilitators (do) is ask them (the children), "who was the story about", "who were the characters in the reading". So, by doing this, the children comprehend more and participate more (World Vision local official, Community 1, 2022).

Participants involved

The involvement of mothers and caregivers in activities to support children's literacy is evident in the support and motivation of their children at home, developing a "love" for reading and writing. There is greater participation and involvement on the part of mothers, because men go to work in the fields and mothers have always been more involved in caring for their children.



Coming to the Reading Club supports us to reinforce knowledge, especially because they play, because they have fun, and that is an additional motivation. They draw, play, do dynamics, read, interact, and share (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 1, 2022).

In addition, the religious leaders (catechists, delegates of the word, and Sunday school teachers) are involved as volunteers and the Protestant and Catholic churches provide the physical premises to develop the Reading Clubs.



When the Facilitator does an activity or has a small meeting with parents, I go as a leader of the church and as a parent because I have a child in one of the clubs. So, when they need support, at least in the one where my daughter attends, there are quite a few children, so, even if she has one or two supporting her, she always needs help, so she asks for someone to help her, someone to be present, so that we know what they are really doing in the clubs (Faith Leader, Community 1, 2022).

The support of community leaders for the implementation of the Club was identified as a strength in itself to the extent that it is possible to express the needs of the community. In the case of this community, the community leader and the municipal leader also support them in the activities requested by the community volunteers. In addition to the involvement of World Vision in the training process for the volunteer facilitators of the Reading Club, in the support of didactic materials, one-page stories, biosecurity materials in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, among others. Likewise, other entities are involved, which, from the coordination with the promoters, support the Reading Clubs or vice versa.



...the Ministry of Health, they ask about the children, at least if there are vaccination days, she goes to Marina and says: "There are x amount of children here of x ages, I am going to vaccinate them one day" (Faith Leader, Community 1, 2022).

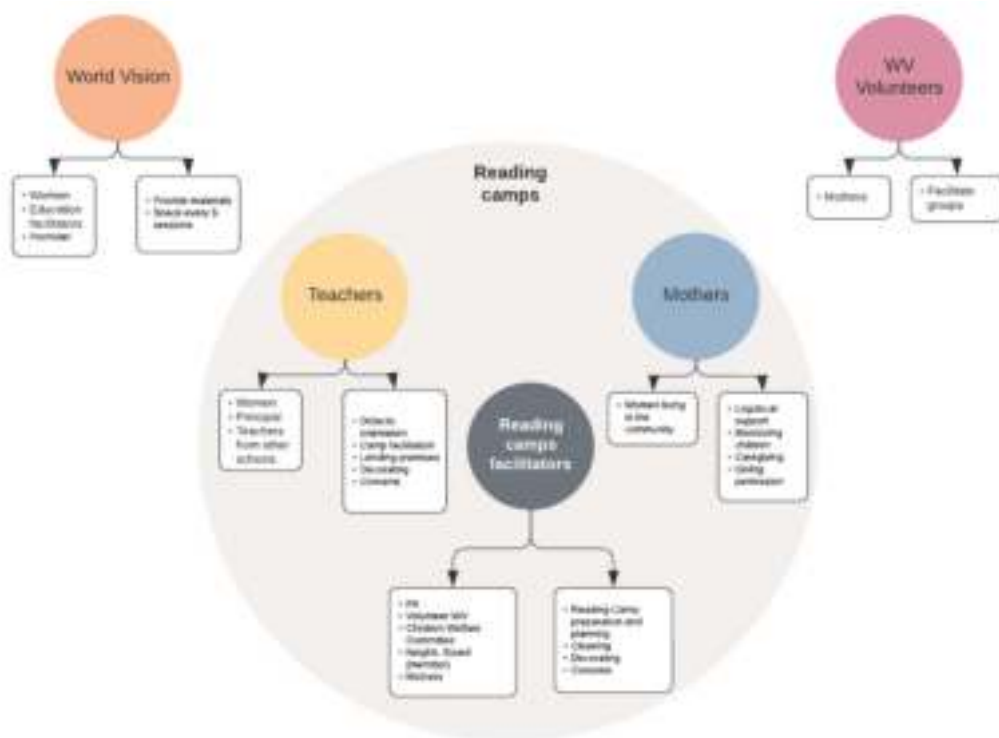


Let's say, if the facilitators have in mind to do such and such a thing, but they don't have the imagination, or know how to do it, then they go to the teachers and ask them how they can do it. Then, the teachers are also involved in a certain way, or maybe, on this occasion too, that they have an interview, then they let them use the class times (Faith Leader, Community 1, 2022).

In the first phase, the four volunteers exchange experiences and socialize with each other, the key to the didactic process among the volunteers is exploration, creation, reflection, understanding, and participation. There were no male volunteers in this community.

Stakeholder Mapping Community 1

FOSDEH | October 30, 2022



Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Regarding the gender equality and social inclusion dimension, there is greater participation and involvement on the part of mothers; likewise, the participation and involvement of facilitators and girls is greater both at the club and in school.

Another finding is that the Reading Club volunteers do not differentiate between girls and boys in terms of treatment or accompaniment; they work with the more shy children and detect the more active ones so that they can work in mixed groups.



Regarding age; as I was saying at the beginning, she (the facilitator) organizes them in groups, the younger children and the older ones are separated, so each one does his or her own activity (Faith Leader, Community 1, 2022).



Some of them are almost teenagers and it seems that this has affected them a little bit (...) But, they talk about it at church, that it is good that they attend the Clubs, mainly those who are at that age because they already have a different mentality, maybe with other ideas that are not relevant for them, and then the parents who follow this advice continue with their children there (Faith Leader, Community 1, 2022).

Community 2 Rural

Community context

The community is located in the northern region of the country, 202 kilometers from the capital, which is accessed from a main secondary road. It has access to electric energy service through a regional power line, internet service through a repeater, and has potable water service through a community network. This community is eminently agricultural, the production of basic grains and livestock is the source of its economy and climate change is its main challenge;



...it has been affected by shortages at times, because of the times we have been living in, the droughts, there has been a lot of difficulty with food. So there have been no harvests; and another thing, now the supplies to cultivate, the supplies are too expensive, we can hardly work (Faith Leader, Community 2, 2022).



This community faces an important challenge; "we have a context of migration" (World Vision regional official, Community 2, 2022).



Sometimes also when the mothers travel somewhere else and take them (the children) with them. Migration, they stay there, they don't come back (Faith Leader, Community 2, 2022).

UL Overview

The community work that has been carried out by World Vision, as mentioned by the facilitator, has been going on for a long time, therefore, there was a long process that needs to be taken into account; the education specialists "believe" in the model, which they have adapted in the country.



World Vision had already been working since 2010, strategies and this has been the base, it is not true that it has only been for three years (World Vision local official, Community 2, 2022).

The community has also achieved implementation based on previous work with the Ministry of Education and with community promoters, so there are installed capacities.

In this community, the program began in 2018, however, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, World Vision Nicaragua has been working for quite some time. The teaching and community component was implemented in 2018, and in 2019 they started to adapt it. One of World Vision's CDFs mentioned that there are other organizations that are working in the community, and that this work is complemented by the UL project.

Training and socialization process

In this sense, there were training and socialization sessions in which some members of the community were invited to participate in the Reading Clubs. The facilitators received three training sessions, first they learned about the methodology to be used, then they received training on how a child should read, and finally, how to decorate a study space, or what they should draw. There has also been support from World Vision personnel, who have been in charge of providing the training to the community.



Yes, we had training sessions every week, not now, but to start, yes. 2020 and 2021, on Fridays (Club Facilitators, Community 2, 2022).

Yes, uh, well, at the beginning, right, when they told us that we wanted to be part of informing them. Yes, they took us to Trinidad for training and still, every year they always call us and take us, at least this year we went because it is a different methodology, right. Yes, they have not given us any material, but they told us that they would. That there will be, there will be material, for books, to work with the children in a more developed way. But to date, we continue working with what we can, with what we find in our homes or what the children bring, because sometimes it is difficult financially, or maybe asking the children to bring things, but with what we have... we try to do the activity, with what we can (Club Facilitators, Community 2, 2022).



Summary of the Reading Club Session

In the afternoon, children came accompanied by mothers and caregivers, followed by a middle-aged mother who works as a facilitator; teachers and more caregivers arrived. The facilitators greet us.

The activity takes place - this time - in the school to allow children from different parts of the community to come together. The classroom is clean, prepared, tidy, the children stand in front of the blackboard, and the facilitator explains the day's activities, which develop smoothly. As a starting point, they pray, then they read a story on a flipchart (no title-space to fill), each child reads a section and comments on what it means to him or her. The facilitator distributes materials as the reading progresses (blank sheets of paper, colored pencils, crayons). Once the story is read, she asks the children to draw on the paper what they imagine or understand happens in the story, and they place on the blackboard next to the reading each group drawing what they identify with images, and with those elements they ask questions, as usual: *What is the name of the story?* The children identify and place the name on a colored ribbon, previously prepared. They are asked to propose a dynamic activity that they perform (story with animation).



Participants involved

Community members have an important role and involvement, as they are key actors in making the project sustainable. There are retired teachers in the community, which is of great wealth and potential for the implementation of the Reading Clubs. The community also has many volunteers willing to teach children to read and write. World Vision contributes with materials and different types of help.



The ones who are giving the most effort and participating the most are the community volunteers (women) (World Vision local official, Community 2, 2022).

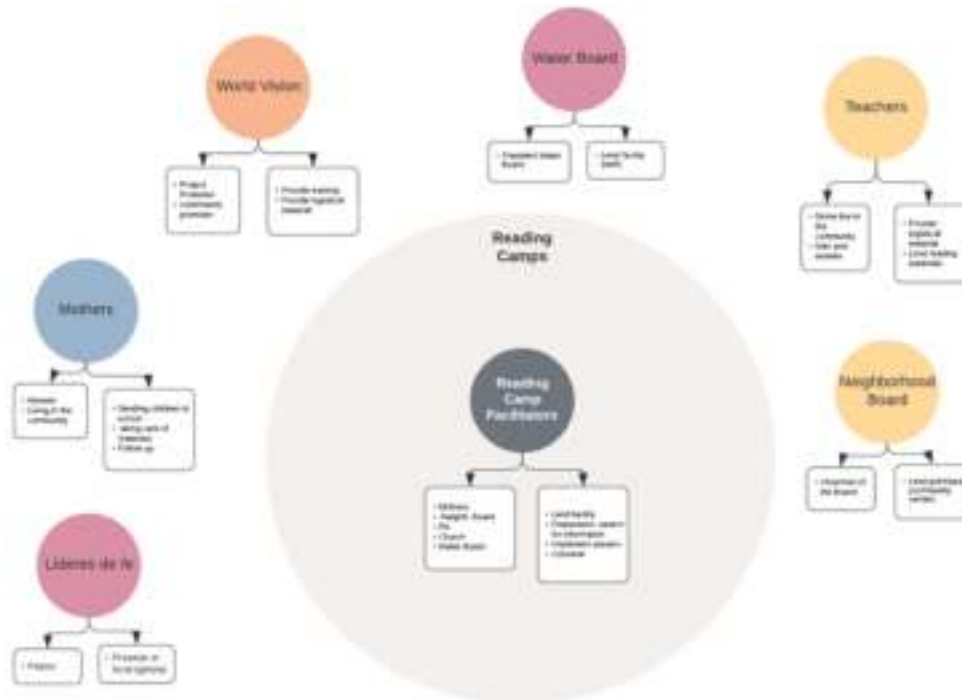
The key stakeholders for each of the clubs include, first of all, the facilitators (women) of the clubs, since they are the ones in charge of carrying out the activities, as well as the support provided by World Vision, and the parents, allowing their children to attend the Reading Clubs. One of the Facilitators, in charge of the Reading Club, is a person involved in various community activities. She became part of the facilitators, as the clubs were growing and needed more people to collaborate, so she was also trained.



Well, here in the community I am a World Vision volunteer, I am a member of the health brigade, and I have frequently participated as president of the school board, parents' board, and I am vice-coordinator of a small community, which is a study that takes place every Wednesday, every week. This group has a Christian doctrine, where different topics are taught, with biblical quotes, history; it is from the Catholic Church (Club Facilitators, Community 2, 2022).

Stakeholder Mapping Community 2

FOSDEH | October 30, 2022



Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

The adults interviewed were women. In the children's focus group there was participation from both girls and boys. There is an interesting observation about the participation of men and women in the Reading Clubs, since there is greater participation of mothers who have children in the Reading Club, and less participation of fathers because they are working during the day. On the other hand, it is observed that in this community all the volunteers involved with the clubs are women.

Regarding the roles:



...the rural area is not used to calling child labor that which actually is child labor, and first priority is given to the child having to go to drop off food for the parents during lunchtime, they work in vegetable production, and children have to do chores, such as fetching water and firewood (World Vision local official, Community 2, 2022).

Another relevant aspect is that there are challenges in working with children with disabilities, since prior training is needed for those who work with children so that they can better guide them in their learning. This is the municipality with the most children with disabilities and the schools do not have adequate conditions to attend to them.

Community 3 Rural

Community context

Community 3 is located in rural northern Nicaragua, 200 km from the city of Managua, and is accessed by a main secondary road that borders rural community 2 of this study. This road basically communicates with the municipal capital and is crossed by a river with a significant flow. The population has access to basic services (electricity and internet through secondary services; there is a water supply network through a local mini aqueduct). There is a school located at the end of this road at the western end of the community. The main economic activities are agriculture and livestock farming with hillside crops (few extensions of land can be worked with machinery), cattle herding, and forestry-pastoral production.

Overview of the UL

The facilitator has been a collaborator in World Vision's programs for five years. She has been involved with the Reading Club since 2021, collaborating with her daughter and nephew as the facilitators of the Reading Club in the community. In 2022 she was left without the support of her nephew because he migrated to the USA:



Angel (he was a facilitator who is no longer with us), got that in his head, and left for "the States"; he said: "I'm going, I'm going and I'm going". He has been there for about 6 months now. We suffered because of this, because the children also asked questions, because sometimes he would do dramas, or a dance, disguised like that, so, all that. I felt it more (the absence) because he was from here, from home, their cousin, they looked at each other as siblings here, but it affected me a lot (Club Facilitator, Community 3, 2022).

To promote the work with the Clubs, they have received support from World Vision for learning materials and handicrafts, as well as biosafety materials. Recently, it is reported that this support has decreased:



What I think is also missing, the difficulty here, I say, "chairs", even if they are small, "chairs for them", they don't have a place to sit, like a blackboard too. Materials, a place to sit, that is missing, and help for volunteers... that is missing (Club Facilitators, Community 3, 2022).

The coordinator of the Facilitators is the one who provides her home for the club, she plays a key role, not only at the World Vision level, but also for the whole community, as she has been a teacher, member of the brigade, political leader, etc. This gives an important value to her role, when she convenes people for this project.

Training and socialization process

World Vision has carried out the socialization and training process with the stakeholders involved in the Club. This process has entailed reinforcing with materials, strengthening how to work with children, and having written material for the development of the Reading Club. All training sessions were held from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and were developed by different members of the team.



We were receiving training almost every month, for 22 days, but then because of the pandemic it stopped, but I would like for it to continue because everything they taught us has already been taught, so sometimes we repeat it (Club Facilitators, Community 3, 2022).

oma té en la taza.
da baila zumba.
o del vestido es azul.
oato es lila.
o ve el zopilote.



Escuela
Luz

Summary of the Reading Club Session

The club session begins with a welcome to the guests. The Facilitator arranges the position of the chairs, reviews the agenda with them for the session and develops it easily with instruments used that correspond to each point of the agenda, which is developed as follows: Prayer of gratitude made by a girl, the reading is done with a dynamic activity prepared by the girls and boys (sociodrama, plus reading) and guides the realization of creative drawings to capture ideas from the reading and these are then placed on the wall. The girls and boys perform a motivational song, then develop dynamics related to the agenda: sociodrama of girls and boys (song-dance), animation dynamics plus competition aimed at a skills development. Dynamics of dance-stretching. Work with the children on the activities and makes an evaluation of the day. The girls and boys say a prayer of thanksgiving. Finally, they say goodbye to the club. The children were very emotional and did not want to leave. Tidying up of the premises: collection of materials and cleaning. The session lasted approximately 2 hours.

Participants involved

The coordinator, a community leader and facilitator of the Reading Club, has been working for 15 years as a member of the health brigade and promoter for other cooperation and governmental organizations.



Well, I'm with the World Vision Children's Reading Club, and I'm also a promoter for MEFCA. I'm also a promoter for INTA. I am also a promoter for CATIE (Club Facilitators, Community 3, 2022).

In this community, children, mothers, facilitators (members of the same family), community members, a faith leader and a community member leader participate in the Reading Club. The faith leader plays an active role in convening the children and youth of the community.



I think we have been involved for a while now, and the way I am involved as a member of the church is that I see that it is something that helps the children a lot, because in my house there are two children, and I see the progress they have made, the way they are developing their intellects and how there is that relationship among classmates, with those who participate in this club, I see that they work hard with them, and that stimulates the child, and one feels happy because there is someone working for the children in our community (Faith Leader, Community 3, 2022).

As of 2022, three Club Facilitators (mother and 2 daughters) are responsible for the Reading Clubs. After the retirement of a young local volunteer facilitator, the vacancy has not been filled, so they have distributed the girls and boys in groups and with different schedules to develop the Reading Club in the house of the community leader;



...now there are only 3 of us and before we were 4 (facilitators). You see, when I have an emergency, then the girl stays with the group, she already masters it. She is always helping me. There are 30 children, there are new children now, there are about 10 (Club Facilitators, Community 3, 2022).

One of the facilitators stated that his experience with the club has significantly changed his communication skills, generating an attitude of greater openness and new expectations for the future of his own life.

Involvement of mothers, fathers, and caregivers in activities to support children's literacy: Mothers and fathers consider that the Reading Club is a space to improve their children's learning. They affirm that the children have improved in reading and in school.

We let them to get ahead in reading, to wake up more (1).

They have a better development, since they can relate with the other children (2).

For her to learn because sometimes it is difficult for her to pronounce words, so it is very important for her to adapt to the club (3).

I like it because she learns more after she comes from class, because it is nice for them to learn more. The club is after school (4).

Well, I also like that she comes because she comes at 3 o'clock, because she learns to draw with the whole family, and they do reading, too. -They play, they sing. -They dance. -They learn a lot, they do everything. They celebrate some special days too (5) (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 3, 2022).



There is involvement by religious leaders in activities to support children's literacy. When the children attend church, the catechists advise the children to attend the Reading Club and many of them take part in the club and in catechesis.



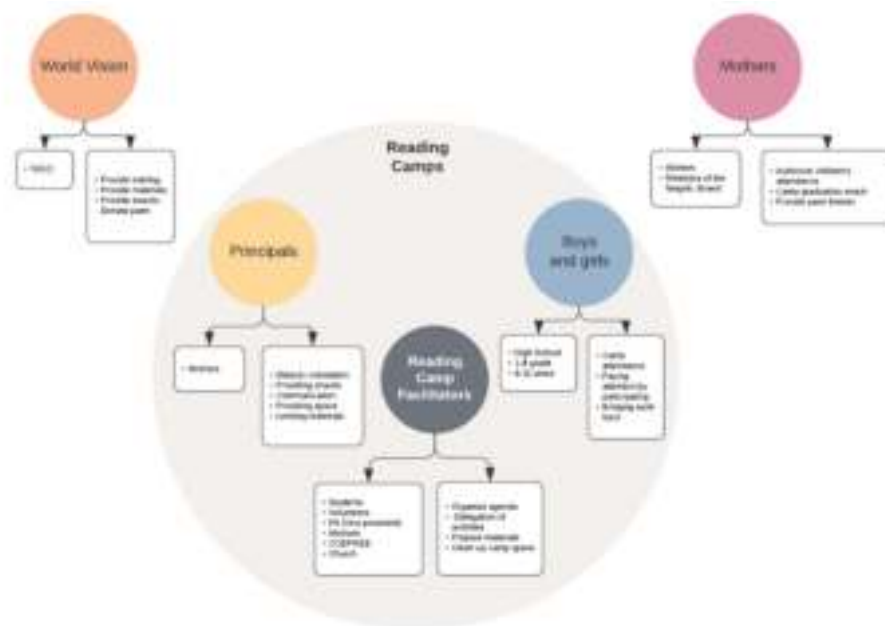
I think it helps them a lot because you know very well that the child, in the way they are taught, the child develops more capacity, because in the classroom they give them the basics, like MINED, that is what they offer; but here, it is a reinforcement, which means progress for the children (Faith Leader, Community 3, 2022).



Most of the children are girls and they are the most active in the Reading Club. In the morning they are put to work, to pull water, to sweep and go to class, some of them, some not, but now most of them... and the boys are sent by their mothers to herd cows, and to their class. Do you think it is an obstacle for them to come to the clubs? No, because we do it in the afternoon, so there is no problem (Club Facilitators, Community 3, 2022).

Stakeholder Mapping Community 3

FOSDEH | October 30, 2022



Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Regarding the dimension of gender equality and social inclusion, it was observed that the parents of the children in the Reading Club are less involved than the mothers due to their work responsibilities in the field. The mothers of the children are more involved in caring for them (food, school, Reading Club, among other activities). In the case of mothers who are the ones who support their children to attend the club, it happens this way because the fathers are working outside the home all day in agricultural activities. Participation in the club tends to be mostly by women, especially among mothers and faith leaders.

Don't the girls and boys who attend have difficulties because they have to work in the fields or because the girls have things to do at home? Don't they have that difficulty? -No. They take that time off. Compared to the boys and girls, do you see that the boys and girls take advantage of the Reading Club in the same way, or are some of them more rebellious, or do they both take advantage of it in the same way? - They take advantage of it equally. They are like equals, girls and boys attend (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 3, 2022).



There are no differences in the treatment of girls and boys in the Reading Club by the facilitators (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 3, 2022).



LA TRINIDAD

Community 4 Rural

Community context

La Trinidad is located in the north-central region of the country, 121 kilometers from the capital, Managua. It is accessed from a secondary road that crosses the community and the school is reached by an alternate dirt road in good condition. The school is located in the center of the village, it has two spaces or infrastructures; the first one, where the regular elementary school operates under multi-grade mode (2 groups of 3 grades each in separate classrooms) in the morning shift and the second space corresponds to the old school built by the community which has 3 spaces or classrooms, one of which is dedicated to preschool (this infrastructure requires some repairs; classrooms, roofs, windows and floors are in poor condition). In this rural school, four of the members of the parents' board of directors are also World Vision promoters and a community facilitator.

The community's main source of income comes from farming, followed by temporary jobs (services, mainly for women and on the outskirts of the village).

UL Overview

During the first survey visit, it was noted that World Vision is present with important programs for the community such as "Sponsorship", in addition to recognizing the important work done by the Club facilitators, highlighting their commitment. The development of the two clubs that were implemented at the time of the survey was carried out in the homes of the two volunteers of the Club.

In the second phase of the visit, we were told:



It is a doubt that we also have because World Vision will no longer operate here in La Trinidad in September, 2023. So, this... as far as I know, I think this could continue partially, as long as the promoters keep a positive attitude, and maintain an open attitude with the children to work on this part,... take care of the material we have now, such as books, and with that, we can ensure that the project is maintained and that the children remember the work that was done and what the organization wants to remain in the community (Facilitators of the club, Community 4, 2022).



I think the best thing the community could do is to create a community library, to work on the basis of a community library and promote reading among the children, but the whole community should be integrated, that is, not only the promoters, but also the church and the community leaders. I think that would be key (Club facilitators, Community 4, 2022).

During the year 2022, one of the founding facilitators retired from the community and her position was taken over by the preschool teacher. For the second phase of the survey, the club facilitator shared the following:



As far as I know... the number of children remains the same, there are other children who want to join because this is a large community; there is another group that we wanted to create at the time, but we have not found another facilitator who wants to work with that group, two clubs (they have in the community), but we need one more to attend to the number of children, because there are many of them. So, the number of children is maintained, I have seen that the children like it, they love to participate, and I have seen in them the interest to be there, to learn, to read, to do their homework. The times I have gone to the Reading Club Facilitator, sometimes they come to drop off their work, their homework assignments, "here I come", they tell her (the children tell the facilitator), "here I come to drop off my work folder, I come to drop this off..." (Faith Leader, Community 4, 2022).

So, it's nice to see that, it's nice to see how they are committed to their work, to what they are doing. They like to get together, they like to share with each other, they like to spend time with each other, and the Club facilitator has found a way to work, because they are at that age, they are young children; the ages of the children she works with range between 6 and 11 years old, as far as I understand. Both groups are in that age range. So, they have found a way to avoid distractions and concentrate more on what they are doing, reading, working on their books, studying. So, it has been very nice, I like the progress they have made (Club Facilitator, Community 4, 2022).



The Reading Club facilitator comments that the things that have gone well in the Reading Clubs include the fluency in reading and the improvement in the children's school performance.

I have observed it when I go to school and see how they behave; I have observed it when they pick up a book and read, and I have also seen it because I have asked some mothers and they have told me that the children are doing well in class. So, there is nothing more to say, in other words, it has been fruitful (Club Facilitator, Community 4, 2022).



Among the challenges faced at the club, we were told about the need for working materials:

I think the challenges have been especially around the lack of work materials, we need more work materials, I think. Maybe more books, more... more... materials, as well as furniture and like tables and chairs, she works with both groups; each group has... and she would hand that out. But we need support material, there isn't much. And why do you think there are not enough materials? -Each child does their work, each facilitator is in charge of providing them material, each promoter is in charge of giving them material to work with and that's why they run out (Club Facilitator, Community 4, 2022).



Another challenge they shared with us during the second phase visit was the distance they travel to get to the Reading Club:



Those who live farther away, I think those are the ones who have more difficulty, but they all have a normal participation; those who live farther away, what their parents or their mother often have to do is to accompany them, they are always accompanied, because of the distance (Club Facilitator, Community 4, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic has also been a challenge they have had to face:



Yes, the COVID thing, now that there is another virus like that, cough, and fever, all of that has some parents a little stagnant because they have a cough, fever, and that is what has affected them a little, otherwise everything is normal (Faith Leader, Community 4, 2022).

Regarding community buy-in of the Reading Clubs, we were told:



Well, I have seen quite a lot of acceptance, since the project has been in place for quite some time. There has been a lot of acceptance, there has been involvement of the parents; the same with other children, as I said, there are many children who want to join, but there is no way to accept them because the promoter can't handle that many kids. So, I think it has had a great impact, it has been something very good and the parents, in one way or another, there are some who have limited involvement, there are others who don't engage, there are others who try to come every time there is a session; but those who cannot, at least they try to get involved with the child at home. As far as I know, that's how it has been (Club Facilitator, Community 4, 2022).

Training and socialization

The training process conducted by World Vision for the Reading Club facilitators took place at the beginning of the project. World Vision's Reading Club officers distribute their time throughout the sponsorship and education programs.

Reading Club Session Summary

The classroom is clean, prepared, tidy, the children stand in front of the blackboard, and the facilitator explains the day's activities, which develop smoothly. First, they pray, then they read a story on a flipchart, each child reads a section and comments on what it means to them.

The Facilitator distributes materials as the reading progresses (blank sheets of paper, colored pencils, crayons), once the story has been read, she asks the children to draw on the paper what they imagine or understand happens in the story, they label and place it on the blackboard next to the reading. She socializes each drawing in the group, asking what they identify with the images, with these elements she *asks what is the name of the story*, the children identify and place the name on a colored ribbon previously prepared, and asks them to propose a dynamic activity that they perform (story with animation), everyone is together at this time for these activities. The Facilitator explains that there is another activity with 6 girls and boys who would be chosen by themselves and that is why they will conclude. There will be no homework or handing out of materials because there are representatives of the three Reading Clubs of the community. They say goodbye with another prayer of gratitude and leave after they have organized the classroom. The session lasted approximately 2 hours.

Participants involved

Mothers are considered key stakeholder in assuring children's attendance and the realization of the Reading Clubs.

Yes, something happens here, I think this is a context that is found in all communities; as a facilitator, well, between you and me, every time I see a father in a meeting, I say to them: "Blessed God, good to see a father, what a good thing. I thought children were born alone...". Because for the most part, it's just the mothers, only the mothers. So, in general you are always going to find something like that; fathers do not engage, there is very little participation of men, it is always the women, it is always the mothers who are involved, because men have this tendency to let the mothers be in charge of that, "ah because those are women's tasks, those are..." (Club Facilitator, Community 4, 2022).



Among the changes they have noticed in the children who participate in the Reading Club, they tell us:

Reading comprehension; they improve academic performance. I see in the emotional part, the mental part of the children, that they are more united among themselves, that they support each other. And I see a greater mental development. That is what I have observed the most. The support of the children's families. I have seen that this remains the same as the... (Club Facilitator, Community 4, 2022).

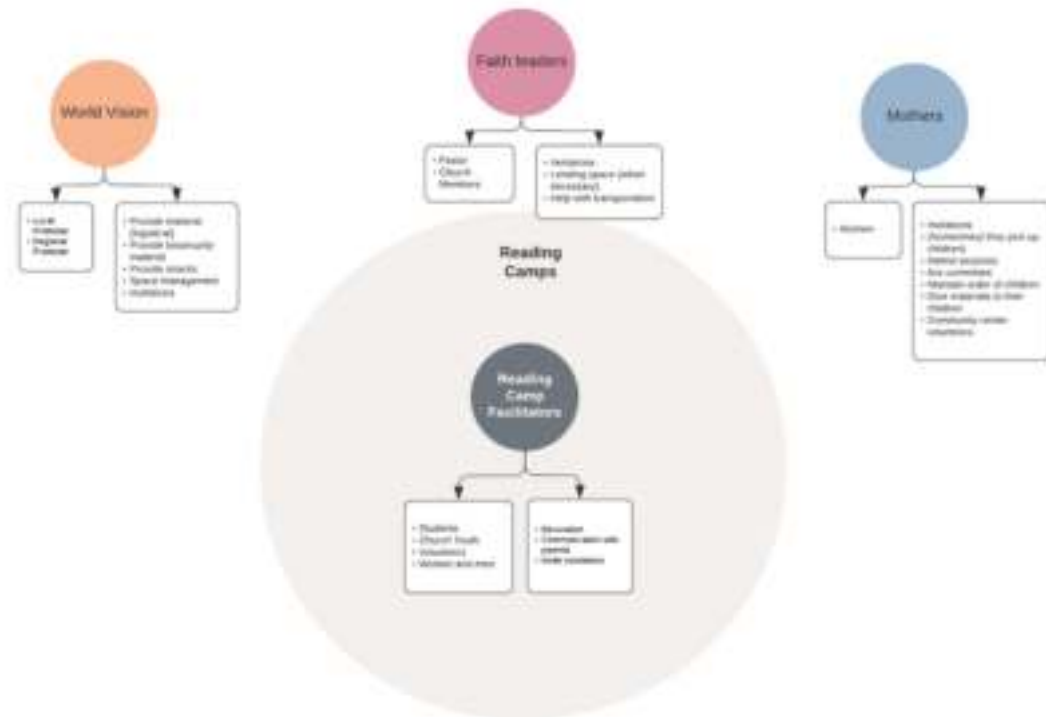


In the case of the faith leaders, a man participated in the first phase, he was the delegate of the Word, and a female catechist, who was also a volunteer in one of the Reading Clubs, but who was no longer volunteering in the second phase of the interview because she had moved to a different house. They commented that they collaborated in the Reading Club by motivating the children of the community to participate in the sessions.



Stakeholder Mapping Community 4

FOSDEH | October 30, 2022



Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

In the community, Reading Clubs are facilitated by two women.



There is very little male participation, it is always the women, it is always the mothers who are in charge of that, because men have this tendency to let the mothers be in charge of that, ah because those are women's tasks, those are... (Club Facilitator, Community 4, 2022).

At the community level, the children's attendance is stable in the two phases of the survey.

Los peques dicen
no no

Los peques dicen
Cuando tienen hambre cuando
tienen frío la galleta cuando
el mamá entrego los la
Comida y los peques dicen
dame se dice dice
devenen los peques
Que de cuando
dices mamame
Cuando dicen la mamá

Los peques dicen
Cuando tienen hambre cuando
tienen frío la galleta cuando
mamá y el papá de la mamá
y los peques dicen
no no no



Community 5 Rural

Community context

The community is located in the north-central region of the country, 132 kilometers from Managua, which is accessed from the Pan-American International Highway, about 100 meters from the road, which facilitates communication but at the same time, it is a risk factor because children have to travel along or cross that road.

The community is served by a World Vision Development Facilitator, who commented that his roles have changed, as he is currently in charge of the Education component and collaborates with the UL Project Specialist.

UL Overview

World Vision develops three major projects: education, protection and the community development project. The Community Development Specialist has his own responsibilities to which he devotes 80% of his time.

Regarding the Reading Club, for the second phase, the Facilitator shares what has been happening in the club:

Last year we met almost all year round, in some months, sometimes, because of different situations, sometimes the children were sick. You know that last year many of them still got sick, they had a lot of coughs, a lot of flu. Not the COVID, but then to avoid that, we met once a month. Now this year it has been a little calmer, right. However, the children have also been affected by the rain, there is a lot of flu, a lot of coughing, but thank God there have been no other problems, no absentees... all children have been attending, no problems there. Yes, the children who completed sixth grade last year, those children are no longer at the club, but we had to look for other children to complete the groups because the other club also has 12, 11 and 12 children, so we are looking for other children to have the number we have (Club Facilitators, community 5, 2022).



The facilitator shares what went well in the club:



Yes, it is good, because you also know that they are taught to sing, maybe otherwise you won't be able to develop that skill. The children even know Christian songs, we practice, we pray; they are also used to praying, so I ask the children if they pray at home. Then, they have also learned to pray before eating, to pray in the morning, to pray at night, to thank God, all of that, right. So, all that helps and it's nice (Club facilitators, community 5, 2022).

Regarding changes, the club facilitator shares that she has had positive changes:



Yes, because sometimes that has helped me to grow more in different areas, I am no longer ashamed to speak, to present before others, to give an opinion, to express myself; it has helped me a lot. Had you been in any other project where you were a tutor or teacher, like here? - In the children's Sunday church, I was a teacher. Now I have a regional position in the church, I am the regional children's director, at regional level, so I have to keep track of the children in each church. So, it has helped me, because that is a gift, a talent that God has given me (Club facilitators, community 5, 2022).

Among the changes that have been observed in the second phase in community members who have children participating in the Club, the facilitator shares the following:



Yes, what I have seen is that people like to get organized, they are always ready and awaiting to be invited. In other words, they were not like that in the past, and now they are, they are ready to meet, to help, there is willingness, and to help the children; the mothers and fathers of the children who are in the clubs (Club Facilitators, community 5, 2022).



Regarding the challenges, he stated the following:

At least, maybe the place, because sometimes the rain, when it is winter, in the summer, no, because you can go out to play in the yard with the children, because you know that you have to play with the children, sometimes you take them for a walk outdoors within the premises, but not during winter time, because where I live, the area is like a hill that runs steep down and there is a creek there too. So, we have been taught that we have to avoid danger for the children, so during winter season we try to do something like that, but in the space I have, which is small, sometimes even for them it is uncomfortable (Club facilitators, community 5, 2022).



Training and socialization

Regarding capacity building and sensitization of project stakeholders, World Vision has conducted a capacity building process for those involved in the community component, with the participation of World Vision's Education specialists, volunteers, and community members.

Reading Club Session Summary

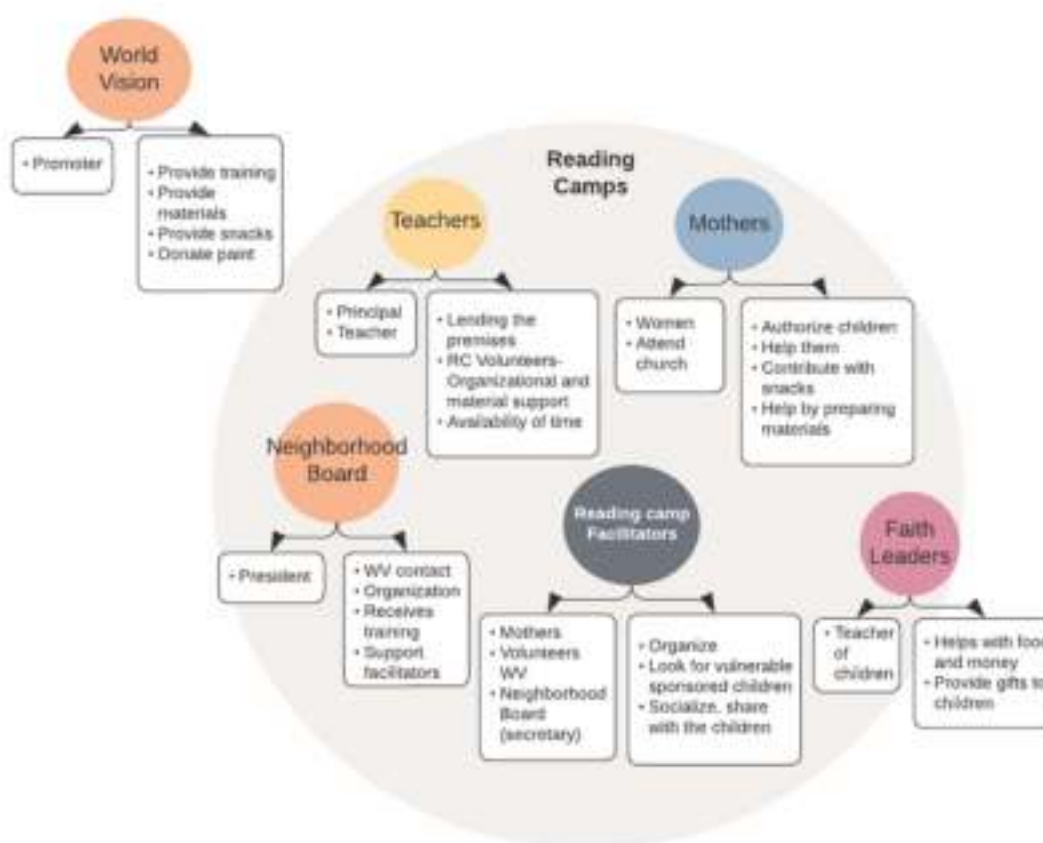
It takes place at the facilitator's house. The Reading Club was carried out with two activities: a story, developed as a way of reading, and the presentation of reading comprehension questions. The children of the two clubs were invited. They played games as per the dynamics of the club. The session lasted approximately 1 hour.

Participants involved

In this community, children with an age between 7 and 12 years old participate in two Reading Clubs, with the involvement of mothers, faith leaders, members of the municipality, and the Reading Club facilitators. We also identified the participation of a Parents' Committee, consisting of mothers of the children who attend the club, who are more involved in the activities, offering logistical support to the volunteer facilitators.

Stakeholder Mapping Community 5

FOSDEH | October 30, 2022



Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Regarding the gender equality and social inclusion dimension, there are no differences in the way girls and boys are treated at the Reading Club by the facilitators; however, participation is more active among girls and the number of girls attending is higher than boys.



There are no differences, not in my case, because I work more with girls than boys, Yes, more girls, but well, they get along well (Club facilitators, community 5, 2022).

Fathers do not participate because they are working outside the home (all day in agricultural activities), and it is the mothers who mainly support and accompany their children to attend the Reading Club. In the case of the faith leaders, there is support from the pastor of the Christian church for both Reading Clubs, from where they help invite the girls and boys to attend the club's activities.

Mothers acknowledge the support they receive from the club:



It has supported us, both the parents and the children, because we have learned from them too, because they come to our homes telling us what they have learned, and we learn from them. We the mothers have had several meetings with them, and I have learned a lot, they have taught us how to build a house with paper, with caps, how to cover the roof of a house with caps, we have learned at the Reading Club (Facilitators of the Reading Club, community 5, 2022).



LARREYNAGA

Community 6 Rural

Community context

The community of Larreynaga is located in the rural area of the northwestern part of the country, within a mining enclave, 125 kilometers from the capital; it has paved road access along the peripheral route to the northwestern border and paved roads to the community including internal streets of the town. It has a school, a Catholic church, and road access to the community. There are transnational mining companies in the community that generate jobs for the male population. Because of this situation, the community benefits from electrical energy service, which is subsidized by the mining company. The Reading Clubs began with the support of the local church, which has played an important role in their implementation, since the children participate by attending a church group that the children's guardians call "*Missionary Childhood*".

UL Overview

In the first visit of the survey phase of the research, the findings showed that church leaders were key players. For example, the priest of the Catholic Church supported the Reading Club by facilitating the church space and together with his assistant, who was also a club volunteer, motivated the girls and boys to attend both the sessions and the catechesis. For the facilitation of the Reading Clubs, two young university students and a woman who is the catechist of the church participated in the first phase. However, for the second phase, one of the young men who facilitated the Reading Club was no longer taking part in the Club because he had emigrated, looking for better job opportunities, while the priest was transferred to another area of the country, and so the club was facilitated by the catechist on Sundays, with the support of another sister of the church.

The stakeholders focus their efforts on ensuring that the children are invited by arranging spaces and schedules that facilitate their attendance and that of their caregivers, which subsequently leads them to give their regular consent for their children to attend. If the mothers and fathers are not able to attend in-person, the promoters make the time to visit their homes and take the children to the Reading Club.



We have the club on Sundays, so one Sunday, two sisters, two members of the Church, one attends to the club, for the ones who can already read, and the other one works with the children who still can't read, with preschoolers, because practically, they come and we can't dismiss them, right. But they don't like the activities we do in the Reading Club either, because they are small, so we do other activities with them (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).

Regarding Covid-19 and the activities of the Reading Clubs, particularly because they are an interactive and group activity, it has been impossible to ensure adequate distancing, having also an additional barrier, that is, not always having adequate infrastructures that have the basic services to carry out the corresponding biosafety and sanitation measures, except for the use of gel and masks.



Parents, sometimes they don't like children to interact with others, because our children may not have washed their hands or may not be wearing a mask. I tell them that this should not limit us, there are safety measures, which we can put into practice and continue (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).

Training and socialization

Regarding training, once the training and the period of implementation of the UL model have been received, local leadership is strengthened, supported by the recognition and legitimacy given to them by the community. Solidarity is also strengthened, generating satisfaction and identity in the personal development of the volunteer promoters in charge of facilitating their clubs.

World Vision is an important stakeholder, helping with the materials in order to carry out the clubs and the volunteers express that, although this help is approximately 30% to 40%, especially for the materials, the community contributes with mobilization and by making other arrangements required. The space allows them to become acknowledged leaders to mobilize, articulate, and manage resources/opportunities for the benefit of the community.

Each Community Action Committee has a different level of empowerment, some are more self-managed, they approach the institutions themselves and are not afraid to do that. They submit requests to the mayor or during Mass, they do whatever they have to do. But there are others who don't, they are asleep, and that is the work that we have to do, to give them that encouragement, to tell them that as groups they have to be strengthened, they have to be united, have good communication, but it is also a struggle, with the creation of the committees, because we have been working with them for about three years and it has been a struggle because it has been hard to keep the same group (World Vision local official, Community 6, 2022).



For me the most significant thing is the fact that we have a person in the community who has the desire to do something different because, of course, I believe that the discipline of the reading promoter is important, they must think like, hey, I am going to comply with my club, I am going to do it on the day I am supposed to, I believe that this contributes a lot because without them this would not be possible. In other words, the reading promoters, they are like the pillar, because if we don't have promoters, and no one else, it can't be done, and the nice thing is that they are also willing to learn new things, the institutions come and enrich their knowledge, well... (World Vision local official, Community 6, 2022).



Participants involved

Parents collaborate with the activities of the Reading Clubs with the resources required to carry out activities in the clubs. In the second phase of the survey, there are three promoters involved, including someone from the church, a teacher, and a volunteer mother in charge of facilitating the sessions; two Reading Clubs have been organized, one from the church and the other from the community with the support of the teacher.

I feel very good, because I have learned with them too, because I have learned to give them and with time I will overcome," I tell them. I have felt very grateful, first of all, to God, because He brought me here, and to you also, because you have me as a promoter for the children, to teach them.



Interviewee 2: Well. I am more than proud because I just tell the children "We'll have the Reading Club " and they are all here, or they are calling me to see what time, to see if there will be one. I feel very happy and joyful for being here (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).

Yes, I am a mother, I am always ready to help the kids with school. Sometimes we come to church, we support them there.

Interviewee 2: I am a professional, but I don't work.

Interviewee 3: I am a housewife, right, I am a high school graduate, besides coming to church, I do sewing, that is my hobby.

Interviewee 3: I am a mother, wife, housewife, elementary school teacher, right. And I have a high school degree, but I have worked more with elementary school and I am also a teacher of the children here at the church (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



There is an effective involvement of religious leaders in activities to support children's literacy: the improvement and expansion of physical conditions/spaces, which motivated more children to join the Reading Club. The promoters synchronize Sunday classes with the club's session as a strategy to attract more members to the club, thus spreading and extending the attendance of more members in the community.

Now that Sister Carmen runs the church, now it is bigger, she is in charge of the children's Church, which also has a little school for the children that is divided, one for each child. So, that has motivated more mothers to come here, they have brought their children more often, so the children have come more, when their mothers don't come, they come or I go to pick them up, I go by to pick up each child so that the child and the mother don't become discouraged, so that they can join the Reading Club and so that, as always in the churches, we always teach the children on Sundays, Sunday class, so I motivate them to bring them, I go with them (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



The pastor is always following up, because they are not the ones who develop the club, but maybe it is one of the Sunday school teachers or the catechists, and he is close by.

Interviewer: Because he also provides a space?



Yes, they facilitate a space, if you want to see how to work with organizations as well, sometimes they are invited and they are the ones who are asked, so they also have to know what is being done (World Vision local official, Community 6, 2022).

Members of the Church have arranged the days to facilitate and guarantee the convocation.



I do it on Wednesdays when we have worship sessions and on Thursdays, so that the moms don't have difficulties, and on Wednesdays and Thursdays (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



You can no longer do things in the afternoon, you know, children come back from class at noon and they are exhausted, some come to sleep, sometimes they come back and say things like: I didn't go to the club because I fell asleep, so I talked to the parents and told them, we are going to have it on a weekend, a Saturday morning at 10 a.m., so the children can leave at 10 a.m., it may rain, but at 10 a.m., okay, the parents said, okay, they said, because it's better; they said (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).

There is a preponderance of female participation; volunteers, housewives, religious leaders, Sunday school teachers, and delegates of the Word.

The testimonies indicate greater participation and better performance and interest on the part of the girls compared to the boys in the reading and fine motor activities (drawing, crafts). At the club led by the church, there are more boys than girls, which prompts the boys to feel more confident and to be more involved in the activities than the girls. It is important to consider the variable of age in the different grades children belong to and the preference for certain activities. Other testimonies attribute gender-based personality characteristics.



In general terms, girls tend to be more skillful, when creating the material, when drawing, boys find it a little more difficult, they tend to be shyer, you know, there are differences. Of course, they are skillful (in reference to boys), the only thing is that girls are faster (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).

Other relevant aspects:

There are slight implications regarding the safety factor during the journey that children travel to attend the club, where vulnerabilities are linked to environmental-climatic conditions. There are also socioeconomic gaps that force guardians to delegate children to fieldwork and home.



Now with the rain, we can no longer plan things for the afternoon, so I talked to the parents and told them, we are going to have it on a weekend, Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m., so the children can leave at 10:00 a.m., unless it rains, but let's agree on 10:00 a.m., that's fine, the parents said (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).

It is important to remember that the general context of the community is also embedded in the dynamics of the Reading Club, affected by forced migration, child labor, family disintegration, lack of access to resources and opportunities, and welfare conditions. These conditions limit the desired involvement by the tutors as per the demands of implementation. On the other hand, due to the long distances they have to travel, communication through digital media that require internet services may represent a challenge.



People are dedicated to agriculture, to planting corn and beans, and unfortunately, it was lost. Sometimes it affects the work, so it began to fade away (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).





Community 7 Rural

Community context

This community belongs to the rural area of western Nicaragua, it has easy access to the paved road and has a health center, a Catholic church chapel and a school, and a river that also bears the same name as the school. It is the flagship school in the area for complete secondary education, and it operates on Saturdays.

The Volunteer Facilitator stated that at the beginning she had the impression that World Vision only collaborated with Protestant churches, however, when she became involved with the Reading Club project, she felt strong support and no difference in the treatment and interaction with the organization.

UL Overview

It was noted that World Vision created at least three Reading Clubs in the community, one that collaborates with the Catholic church, one with the Protestant church, and one which is community-based with children who do not necessarily attend church.

The community leader interviewed shared that her goal is also to create a Reading Club with teenagers to work on and prevent substance abuse in the community.

A volunteer catechist from the Catholic Church has assisted them in running the club, along with a *Delegate of the Word*. However, in the second phase of the survey they only had two Reading Clubs, since the male Facilitator who was the Delegate of the Word left and migrated in search of a better job.

As a part of their support, World Vision has provided materials to implement the methodology in the club, and carpets for the children to sit on and promote cohesion. The volunteer has learned to teach the children using materials from the community and she has received training. In addition, support for the clubs is strengthened with the help of the community leader and community Reading Club Facilitator who has been working in the community for more than thirty years and is a municipal facilitator and political leader. This means that the leader looks at the problems of children, adolescents, and families, and also empowers the organizations that come to help the community and seek further development.

Training and Socialization

World Vision has been in charge of capacity building and sensitization of the stakeholders involved in the Project, contributing with everything that is required by the Reading Club Volunteers.

Reading Club Synthesis

A space in the Facilitator's home has been set up for the Reading Club.

The reading club session is convened, the environment is clean, orderly and the work materials are available, as well as posters and the work of the children from previous sessions. The facilitator uses the reading to carry out other activities, reads and comments in different creative ways.

She plays a game with questions through a dynamic activity with dice and the learning tree and the song. The facilitator integrates time management and manages the group mood in a dynamic manner. What do you do in the journal (girls and boys)? *"We write what we did and what we liked most about this day"*. Some older children come from another club. The club has been running for three years. The session lasts 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Participants involved

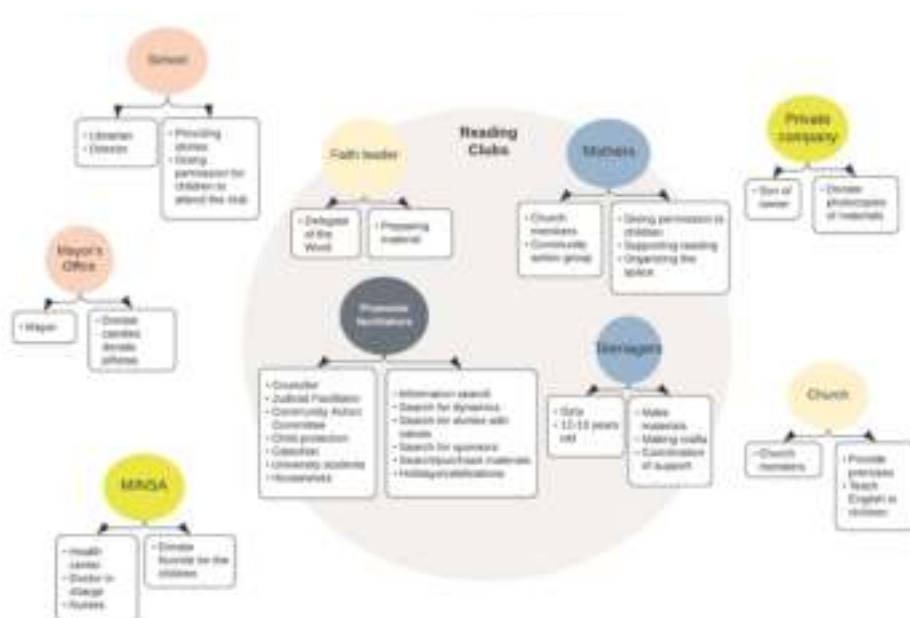
There are two Reading Clubs in this community, they have one session per week. One is implemented in the space of the Catholic chapel and is facilitated by two religious volunteers (delegate of the Word and the young catechist who lives in the community). The chapel where the club is held has a courtyard where the children can carry out the club's activities. The priest's residence also provides security for the children. The other club is held in the house of the community leader. The Facilitators emphasize the support of mothers in the children's learning, and they have a committee of mothers.

The Facilitator who runs the Reading Club is well known for the work she carries out in the community. The children even look for her at work, just to be with her. It was identified that the facilitators have a strong connection with the children, which has helped to have greater rates of attendance.

The participants of the Reading Club activities in this community include children, mothers, Reading Club Facilitators, faith leaders, community leaders and the parents' committee (consisting of the mothers of the beneficiary children). The Reading Club Volunteer Facilitators are part of the Catholic Church structure, including the catechist and the delegate of the Word, the Sunday school teacher, and the community leader.

Stakeholder Mapping, Community 7

FOSDEH | October 30, 2022



Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

When analyzing the levels of participation between men and women in the club, we see that women tend to participate more, especially the mothers. Regarding children, both girls and boys participate actively in the Reading Club. There are no differences in the way boys and girls are treated by the Facilitators; however, participation is more active among girls; additionally, the number of girls who attend club sessions is greater than the number of boys.

In the case of mothers, who are the ones who support their children so they can attend the club sessions, this is because the fathers are dedicated to work out in the fields in agricultural activities all day. In the first phase, the presence of a male Facilitator generated equality in the distribution of club activities, which was not common in the clubs observed; however, that Facilitator was no longer there for the second phase.

The community has a female leader who has participated in several programs, gives moral support, and serves as a project leader. The faith leaders are two members of the Catholic Church: the communion minister and the catechist who work with the priest who visits them and works in several communities.

Community 8 Rural

Community context

Community 8 belongs to the rural zone of western Nicaragua, located 118 kilometers from the capital city in the northwest of the country. It has paved road access along the peripheral route to the border and a paved road that crosses the community. However, this type of vehicle access does not result in ease of access to the school, since the students live throughout different areas or sectors that do not have vehicular access roads. In this rural school, the members of the parents' board are also World Vision promoters. The school principals have university degrees and experience in secondary education.

UL Overview

World Vision implements the clubs in places where participation is guaranteed, and that is why the projects are implemented as stated in the methodology. The Reading Club Facilitators are key, because they are committed to carrying out the club's activities, expressing satisfaction during the process. Likewise, the participation of parents is important, as well as the help provided by World Vision so that the clubs can be implemented in the community.

It is worth mentioning that one of the teachers is also a Reading Club facilitator. At the beginning of the Reading Clubs, the mothers were told about the Reading Club program so that they could send their children to participate; they also mentioned that this is the first experience that their children have had with literacy programs like this one in the community. Of the Reading Club Facilitators interviewed, one is a homemaker and the other one is a nursing student, both collaborate to run the club, both facilitators were trained.

Training and socialization

Training and socialization of the model was carried out in the community, and leadership has been strengthened with the support of other members who work on issues related to social projection activities.

Reading Club Synthesis

In short, the Reading Club is conducted in the following manner: the Facilitator verifies attendance of the girls and boys. They begin with a prayer to give thanks for the day, which is said by a girl from the club. The Facilitator presents the reading of the session on the little house, the children take turns to read paragraphs of pictures (put on flipchart paper), the Facilitator leads the group to find key words, and together determine the meaning and message of the lesson. Based on this, she instructs children to draw pictures that reflect the idea of the reading. The children place their drawings on the wall and are accompanied throughout the exercise by the facilitator. Then, the children choose a song to share; the facilitator uses a tape recorder so that everyone sings along. With key words, they put words together and unscramble them with exercises to make a spider of words. Work is done with a team of 2-3 girls and boys. The session lasted 50 minutes.

Participants involved

The following are involved in the session: three church promoters, a teacher, and a mother/volunteer who leads the facilitation of the sessions; two Reading Clubs have been organized, one from within the church and the other one from the community with the support of the teacher.

Stakeholder Mapping, Community 8

FOSDEH | October 30, 2022



Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Regarding gender equality and social inclusion in the participation of girls and boys, the facilitators comment that there is equal participation of both girls and boys, and that they encourage the participation of those who are more timid. The club volunteers are two young women from the community who are motivated and committed to the children. Since this Reading Club is next to a community that has a parish, the priest provides them with religious services.

In the community context, unequal participation is often attributed to traditional gender-based beliefs and attitudes. The Facilitators state that some attitudinal differences do exist in the interaction and development of the Reading Club. There is an absence of male participation in the facilitation of the clubs; this results in a total predominance of female participation; the volunteers are housewives, religious leaders, Sunday school teachers and delegates of the Word. The assignment of traditional roles tends to lead to greater female participation in educational processes, while if there is male participation, it tends to be in activities complementary to the process and not in the education and care of children.



In the case of Community 8, all of them are women, because the husbands work and that is also taken into account and the Community also elects them. It is not us, it is the community that chose them through an assembly that was held. If they are going to make any changes, the committee is the one in charge of doing that (World Vision local official, Community 9, 2022).



TIPITAPA

Community 9 Urban

Community context

This community belongs to the urban area of the Pacific coast of Nicaragua, located 32 kilometers northeast of the capital city of Managua, in the urban periphery of the city of Tipitapa, it has paved road access by the Pan-American Highway to the north and the main streets of the neighborhood which are paved. Because it is an urban area, it is not known as a "community", it is called a "neighborhood", and it is located in a municipality where the people are dedicated to businesses and selling in the markets, bus stops, and intersections that lead to the capital city. Some people are highly vulnerable and have no sources of employment, they are dedicated to the collection and recycling of garbage on the outskirts of the municipality, and it is common to see entire families participate in that activity.

UL Overview

With the UL model, World Vision has been implementing the community component for 2 years in this area. Some of the Reading Club children benefit from World Vision's sponsorship program. In the case of the community component, it is necessary to be a little closer to the communities, so the work also involves on-site visits and training of the Reading Club Volunteers in the UL methodology to lead the sessions, since the volunteers do not necessarily have a professional background nor are they teachers. Compassion International also works in this community, collaborating with the churches in the field of education throughout the primary and secondary school with school reinforcement.

In a complex context of violence and insecurity in this community/neighborhood, the legitimacy of the Protestant church to carry out the Reading Club activities is seen as a strength. The church becomes a positive player within the community for the promotion of values, which places it in a good position to provide different types of support which meet children's needs.

Training and socialization

In capacity building and sensitization of the stakeholders involved in the UL model, World Vision has started this process with volunteers and then with the community members involved in the Reading Club.

Two of the clubs visited for the survey hold their sessions at the premises of the Protestant Church and the Church of Christ. The Reading Club sessions are held once a week, after school hours to allow everyone to participate, both children who attend school and those who do not. The facilitators mentioned that, in a fragile context, participating in the Reading Clubs gives them satisfaction because they are part of a positive change in the children.

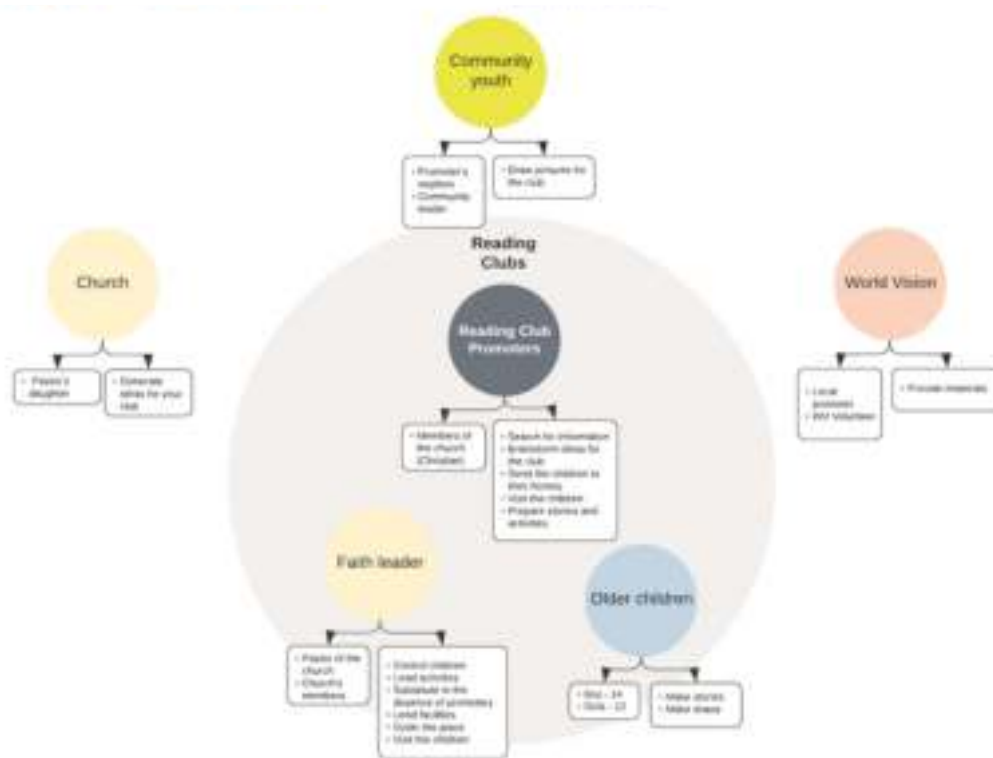
Reading Club Synthesis

The Facilitator has a support person (adult) as an assistant. The group is large; 24 children in the session, but up to 28 come on a regular basis. There is a notable effort to lead the group, especially by the Facilitator, who takes the lead in the activity. This group is particularly restless, and they master the tasks quite well, but the distribution of tasks/responsibilities is not equal among the two people who lead the sessions; at the end, one of them is more tired than the other one. The group exercise is carried out successfully, however, more coordination is required to assure a greater frequency of the sessions.

Participants involved

In this community, children participate in the Reading Club and mothers, faith leaders, community leaders and the Reading Club Facilitators are involved, most of them belong to the Protestant Church and some are Sunday school teachers. Most of these participants are involved with the Reading Club as part of their work within the church, for example, the sessions are held at the church. It was observed that there is minimal involvement on the part of the mothers with the club, since almost the entire responsibility is attributed to the members of the church. This was identified in the fact that mothers only drop their children off on the premises and are not well aware of the activities that take place in the Reading Club.





Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Regarding the gender equality and social inclusion dimension, when comparing participation between men and women in the club, we see that women tend to participate more. Regarding the participation of girls and boys, both have an active involvement in the Reading Club. In this community there are no differences in the way the Reading Club Facilitators treat girls and boys. In the case of mothers, they are the ones who support their children to attend the club because the fathers are out working, not at home.



Community 10 Urban

Community context

This community belongs to the urban area of the Pacific coast of Nicaragua, 32 kilometers northeast of the capital city of Managua, in the urban periphery of the city of Tipitapa; it has paved road access via the Pan-American Highway to the north and the main streets of the neighborhood are paved. The Reading Clubs began with the invitation to the parents to send their children, as well as to collaborate with this program.

UL Overview

Through the Sponsorship programs, World Vision has been present in the community. Some members of the community have been part of World Vision as volunteers for several years. The period of implementation of the UL model has generated satisfaction and identity in the personal development of the volunteer promoters in charge of the facilitation of their clubs.



It is nice because you feel good, because we know we are helping both parents and children, and they help us also because we are learning. I will confess that when I was in school I was very self-conscious, I did not have friends among the other children, I left early and locked myself in when I arrived home, and I did not have many interactions with the people; and now with this, as I was saying, this helped me because I have made friends, I have been getting to know more, I am learning more, things that I did not know, I am learning and it is very nice. The training that World Vision has imparted is very important, you learn a lot (Club Facilitators, Community 10, 2022).

Regarding COVID-19: with the implementation of the Reading Clubs, particularly because it is a group and interactive activity, it has not been possible to guarantee the necessary physical distancing, and there is a barrier related to the lack of adequate infrastructure that has the basic services to implement biosafety and sanitation measures, except for the use of gel and masks.



Reading Club Synthesis

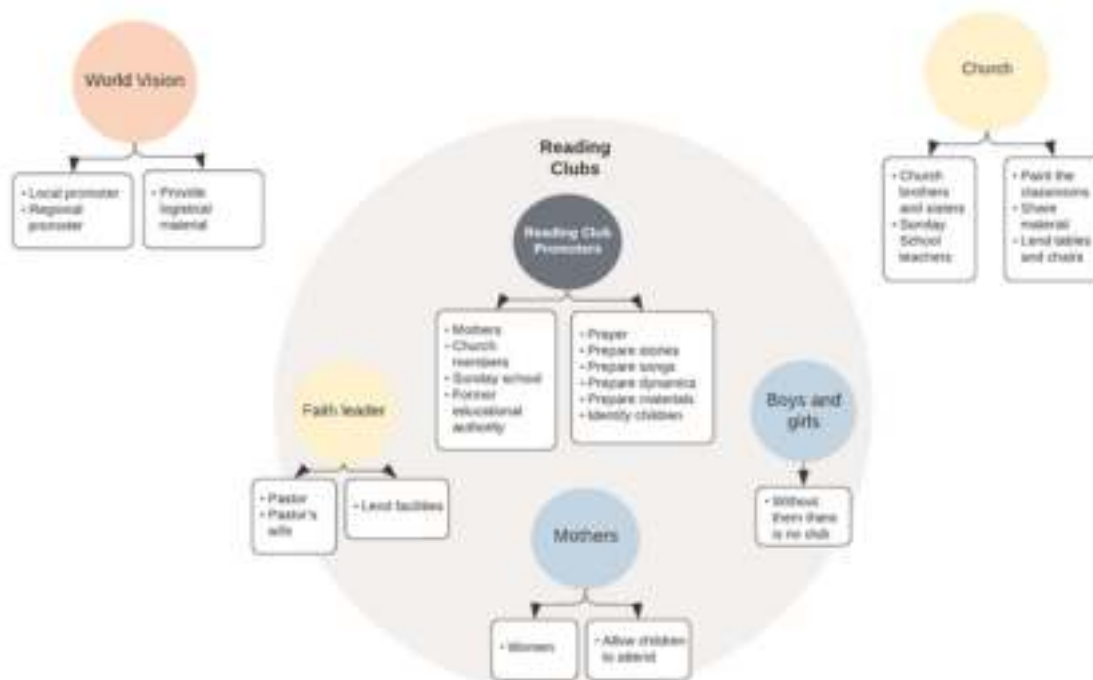
The Facilitators (main ones and auxiliary facilitators) had prepared the classroom the day before to receive the group. The venue is a classroom chosen for this purpose by the church, and it is well equipped. Both facilitators distribute the tasks of the session: each one supports equally in each point. The atmosphere is lively, the group of girls and boys is large and very eager to participate, the agenda is clear and the activities are overlapping, so they explain and develop with the group; mastery of the subject and support dynamics is observed in both facilitators. The use of dynamic activities is more evident in this club, including work in pairs, groups, teams of classmates and socialization, which they do with mastery. All the activities on the agenda are completed sooner than planned, *but when they leave, they are happy.*

Participants involved

In this community, children participate in the Reading Club, and mothers, faith leaders, and the Reading Club Facilitators are involved, most of them belong to the Protestant Church and some are Sunday school teachers. Most of these participants are involved with the Reading Club as part of their work within the church, since the sessions are held at the church.

Other members of the church have also been involved in the Reading Clubs. They have played an important role, as there are members of the congregation who are involved in some of the activities. Parents are also important players involved in the Reading Clubs.

Club facilitators have a high level of commitment, which is evident from the way they express themselves about the activities. The clubs are implemented with two volunteer Facilitators, under two schedules, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. This way, children can attend as per the schedule that does not interfere with their classes at school.



Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

There is greater participation and better performance and interest by girls than there is by boys in reading and fine motor activities (drawing, crafts). It is important to consider the age variable in the different grades to which they belong and the preference for certain activities. Other testimonies attribute gender-based personality characteristics and learning deficits.



Somehow girls are more sensitive to this type of activity. Girls are even more open to this type of activity. If I ask a boy and a girl to make a drawing, the girl does the drawing but the boy waits. Girls are brighter, they are more spontaneous, although there are boys who do everything quickly, without being told. There was a question asked of the children, "What do you like to do most with your little friends?", The girls said we do homework together, the boys said we play soccer, we love to go cycling, to the parks, while the girls are always thinking about their classes (Club Facilitators, Community 10, 2022).



Some of them have learning deficiencies, I have noticed that frequently. In a visit I made in the afternoon, I noticed that there are some children with learning deficiencies and others with attention deficit. Since attention is not neglected, children with hyperactivity or who pay attention but only for a short time, because they move on to something else quickly. These are the main issues that I can mention that I have noticed, that I have observed, that I see that it is quite difficult, where the child cannot pay attention and learn 100% (World Vision regional official, Community 10, 2022).



Other relevant aspects

In this community, no children with disabilities have been identified. Although from the testimony of the Facilitators there are some children with these disabilities who were identified. What should be noted is the emphasis on how activities should be adapted for these children. The facilitators mentioned the need to incorporate an inclusive education. There are cases of some children who are affected by certain situations at home, and they could be considered cases of bullying.

- * Bienvenida
- * Canto
- * Tiempo de historia
- * Comentar
- * Dibujar, escribir el cuento (Dramatizarlo).
- * Juego relacionado con el cuento.
- * Elaborar material relacionado al cuento. (manualidad).
- * Redacción del cuento
- * Conclusión, material para la siguiente sesión.

IV. CONDITIONING FACTORS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE READING CLUBS



A. Enabling factors in the community

Factor 1: The club represents a space for learning and interaction outside of school for girls and boys

The Reading Club represents a space for interaction for children and youth as members of the community, to socialize, get to know each other, and strengthen their relationships. According to the results of the information survey, the Reading Clubs have motivated improved school attendance, which is reflected in school retention. The children have developed an interest in attending the Reading Clubs, which is a learning space supported by the families.

Of the 10 communities that hold Reading Clubs: 4 are held in Catholic and Protestant church spaces, 2 in community centers and 4 in spaces set up by the Volunteer Facilitators of the Reading Clubs.



The biggest change we could say is the relationship between the children themselves and the volunteers who teach there, because when they come here they have the confidence that they are going to come and do something and that they are looked at with affection, what they need, everything is provided to them, so they feel that they come with joy to this place (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 5, 2021).



Yes, the girls and boys are improving a lot, when we started reading, they did not read very well, and now they are doing better, they are enjoying it equally. Some tell me that their parents help them at home, we ask the parents, and they say that they do help them, it is only the parents who help them and especially the mothers (Club Facilitators, Community 3, 2021).



Sometimes we are very creative, at least in the case of the children in my club. Last time I gave them the task of writing a legend, about the community, the map of the community, the history of the community, for them to investigate with their moms, uncles, grandmothers... So, now I asked them if they had completed the task and they answered yes, well, that's how it is (Club Facilitators, Community 5, 2022).



It's a way like... a recreation, fun, but educational (Mother/father/caregivers, Community 1, 2022).

Factor 2: Involvement of committed volunteers in the implementation of the clubs

Volunteers are committed, organized, motivated, and showing a desire for continuity of the clubs; even when some professionals or students from their communities do some sort of work. In 6 communities, they thought that only teachers could teach at the club, but now they have even become advisors to the UL project. Volunteers from 6 communities mentioned that being part of the Reading Clubs gives them the satisfaction of being part of the positive changes in the children. In all 10 communities, the participation of the children in the Reading Club is valued positively.

The work done by the volunteers (women) is completely free-of-charge and they need more support from World Vision to expand coverage and from community members to accompany their children.



As a Reading Club facilitator, at first, I felt a little nervous, because I didn't know anything about it, but now that I have more experience, I am more confident and more motivated, it can be when you are reading the story, the reading part, the dynamic activity as well. The most difficult thing is that the children get restless, and they all get... you don't know what to do, how to control them, sometimes they get out of control, the most difficult part is to control the children. All the children we have here live with their parents (Club Facilitator, Community 5, 2021).



Yes, she helps us to draw, read, write, the teacher shows us letters for us to read, so we can draw and improve handwriting. It helps us to be more obedient, they teach us to respect our elders, we do several things (Girls and boys, Community 5, 2021).

A volunteer expressed the following:



Some children don't read correctly, we read them a story, they get excited, they look at the characters who are in the story and that catches their attention, and they make an effort to discover what it means (Club Facilitator, Community 5, 2021).

Volunteers in the 10 communities:



We could say that, yes, because you learn from children also. I said, it has been a very nice experience to work with the children, although you must be patient with the children, but I have liked it and you learn little by little (Club Facilitator, Community 4, 2022).

In 6 communities they thought that only teachers could teach in the club, but now they have even become advisors to the UL project.



There are two facilitators here with me who handle the methodology very well, Aryeris from Laguna de Santa Rosa and Enrique. As the work is at a national level, I had to look for facilitators to ensure the quality of the workshop, so with these communities they supported me in the reinforcement because they are also people who know the methodology perfectly well (World Vision regional official, Community 5, 2022).

Volunteers from the communities mentioned that being part of the Reading Clubs gives them the satisfaction of being part of positive change for the children.



Well, I have become empowered and mastering this, although I already had a feeling of being a reader, but I didn't want it to be just for me, but also for others, and it has enriched me, I have strengthened my knowledge, I have realized that I can help children in another space (Club Facilitators, Community 7, 2022).

In the 10 communities, the participation of children in the Reading Club is positively valued. Both in the focus groups and in the interviews with key informants, they agreed on the following:



For a Reading Club to work, we have to have, first of all, the participation of the volunteers, and their willingness to work, then the second thing we need ... well first the children, if there are no children in a community we cannot have a Reading Club, then we need the volunteer who must play the role of monitor, teacher, educator, whatever we want to call it, then you need the parents, who are the ones who are responsible for dropping off or picking up the children at the club (World Vision regional official, 2022).

Factor 3: Engage religious leaders effectively in activities to support children's literacy.

Religious leaders, both from the Catholic and Protestant churches, support the Reading Clubs. From their point of view, the program is very positive because of the moral values it instills in the children. This situation is evident in 6 out of the 10 communities with the participation of volunteer catechists, and in 5 communities with Sunday school teachers. Some members of the Protestant church work as Reading Club volunteers and in the case of the Catholic church, the catechists participate as volunteers.



For example, these children are prepared with their catechesis, there, we have catechists who work and also mothers who authorize their children's attendance, and that involves all of us. This is related to the faith, as well as the improvement in their classes, because it is part of it. I see it as a reinforcement of the classes they receive at school, because they help them here... being with other children helps them to have that community environment to develop their love, availability, the activities that the children do (Faith Leader, community 5, 2021).



The faith leaders express that there is satisfaction among the children that attend the club:



...We did that activity, we did this, we did that, we had a piñata, and they are happy that they did something when they came here (Faith Leader, community 5, 2021).

Religious leaders from both the Catholic and Protestant churches support the Reading Clubs.



Well, the role of the Church, many of them provide us with the facilities and the staff, because they run the clubs as well. It is staff because they already have a certain level of training, they are very good at reading, because those who read the Bible are very good at reading and understanding (World Vision National Officer, 2022).

From their point of view, the program is very positive because of the moral values they instill in the children, which are extended to the community.



So, the parents who have these children in the catechesis are also part of the club, they are well involved (Faith Leader, Community 1, 2022).

This situation occurs in 6 out of the 10 communities with the participation of volunteer catechists, and in 5 communities with Sunday school teachers. Some members of the Protestant church work as Reading Club volunteers and in the case of the Catholic church, the catechists participate as volunteers.



Within the volunteers, there are also some volunteers who are members of the church, who have a position in the church, and they are also teaching in these Reading Clubs (Faith Leader, Community 1, 2022).

In the second phase, the improvement and expansion of conditions and physical spaces was observed, which motivated more girls/boys to join the Reading Club. The promoters synchronize the Sunday School classes with the club's session on Sundays, thus spreading the Word and extending the attendance of more members in the community.



Now that Sister Carmen runs the church, now it is bigger, she has the children's church, they also have a little school for the children that are divided, one for each child. So, what has motivated more moms to come? They are bringing their children more frequently, so the children are coming more often, when their moms don't come, they come on their own or I go to pick them up, I go by and pick up each child so that neither the child nor the mom become discouraged, so that they can join the Reading Club and so that, as we always do in the churches, we teach the children on Sundays, Sunday School class, so I motivate them to bring them, I pick them up (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



The Pastor is always following up on this because they are not the ones who develop the club, but maybe they work at the Sunday School or are catechists, and he is close to them. Why does he also provide a space? Yes, they facilitate a space, well, if you want to see how to work with organizations as well, sometimes they are invited and they are the ones who are asked, so they also have to know what is being done (World Vision local official, Community 6, 2022).

As facilitator of the club, the catechist supports the learning of the girls and boys who attend the club located in the Catholic chapel where she also teaches catechesis.



Of course, as before, the children would come and receive catechesis only, but now there is something else for them to learn, something else for them to deepen their knowledge and their learning attitudes. So, this has made them more active, I can say, more active, and the parents more interested in their children's learning. They have learned to work together both in the program with the church and as parents. Because of the activities, because of the dynamic girls who are young, right, and you know that the youth, they have their, their active energies (Club Facilitator, Community 7, 2022).

The facilitator explains who helps her prepare the club:



They help me in the way that I tell her to help me with this or that, she helps me to set up the tables, to explain how they are arranged, to be able to control the children, they help me with the materials, Sister Nanci helps me, to know how to do things by myself, I have to find a way to do things with my children, the children help me too, there is a pastor that I asked for help too, they meet on Wednesdays, we didn't meet yesterday because we were waiting for them (Club Facilitator, Community 9, 2022).

So far World Vision has supported us with materials, since the club started, they have supported us with materials, they have always supported us with materials. I say that without World Vision, we could continue on. There are many people with ideas, there are many ideas to go on working with these children, even if they don't support us, we know that if they cannot help us, that is what we are for, that is what the parents are for, they have never refused, I ask the pastor, the sisters, at least with the church, what do the church brothers/sisters say, the ones that don't have children, how am I going to support them, to tell the parents, then we have to contribute from our own pocket, for the love of the children, I know that the reward comes from above, then the Sunday school supports me, but I have not said anything to the people at church. Sunday school does help, but not for the club, that is separate, as I say, there are almost no children from the church, but the project can continue, while there is life there is hope (Club Facilitators, Community 9, 2022).



Factor 4: Increasing mother's participation and involvement in children's literacy activities.

The mothers felt that the Reading Club is a space to improve their children's education, since the children have improved in reading and in school, in addition to having more confidence, improved communication with other children, better behavior, and they consider that the Reading Club is a reinforcement and review of school topics.

Together, their children have fun and learn appropriate behavior in a holistic way. The children have changed their behavior with greater respect and obedience and have made new friends among the children who attend the Reading Club. The volunteers also highlight the positive support of the mothers in the children's learning, since they are usually burdened with responsibilities at home.

Throughout the 10 communities, there is greater participation and involvement in club activities by mothers when compared to fathers, since the latter are the ones who go to work out in the fields.

It is important to encourage parents with what is being done, to let them know that their child is not here to waste time. There are parents who ask what the children will do at the club, but no, we have to clarify, for example, I have the opportunity to meet with all of them and I tell them that it is something good, I have seen it and I can tell them that what is being done is for the good of the children (Club Facilitator, Community 5, 2021).





Faced with the challenge of including children with special needs in the Reading Club, one of the mothers, based on her own experience of being a mother of a special child, suggests integrating sign language instruction (Club Facilitator, Community 6, 2021).



Well, only with my mom, she has been really involved, helping her copy, helping her because my mom can't draw. At least if I'm busy she helps him do things, even if it's not club stuff, for example, school stuff (World Vision local official, Community 2, 2021).

The mothers felt that the Reading Club is a space to improve their children's education, since the girls and boys have improved in reading and in school:



The most important thing is that they are getting ahead in reading. Now they read correctly, they learn to read without stopping and sometimes children's reading is "choppy", as if they go letter by letter. So, I say that they learn to read faster (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 1, 2022).

The involvement of mothers adds to the value of children's confidence, communication with others and better behavior:



It is a reason for the mother and father to meet with the child and accompany him to the Reading Club, maybe to strengthen communication, so that the child has the ability to express himself more or better with his parents and tell them things, because at the Reading Clubs they also talk about these issues, right, the issue of trust, respect, and the issue of protection, so they are more confident and can talk better with their parents about different topics, so that way it has helped with family cohesion (World Vision local official, Community 5, 2022).

They see the Reading Club as school reinforcement and review:



Yes, quite a lot of progress for the community, yes, because as I told you last time, before I used to pay for my child to receive reinforcement. Now, I am no longer paying (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 7, 2022).

Their children have fun and learn together, having an appropriate and interactive behavior:



What I see is that when they come here, they have good communication, they learn to be sociable among themselves, they interact among themselves, they play. It's nice for them to walk together, well, and that they relate well, they take care of each other, because they are learning to draw, to tell stories, to learn how to communicate with each other, they become more friendly (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 7, 2022).

The volunteers also emphasize the positive support of the mothers in the children's learning process, since they are usually burdened with responsibilities at home.



Look, in some homes parents say that they have had a change because at least some mothers used to say, "I used to tell my child to do his homework and that was it", if the child did it well, OK, if he did a poor job, the teacher would check it at school. And now they say, well, that they have seen changes because the child arrives, I give them two sheets, take them away, let them read them, those who can read, read them, and I am going to ask them what the sheets said, so some children come back and say things like: "mom, read this reading to me", "wait, maybe later I will read it to you", "no, right now I was going to learn what it says for when I have to go to the club... I already know what I am going to say". So, the parents are getting involved with the children because they get involved with them with the sheets they take home (Club Facilitators, Community 8, 2022).

In the 10 communities, there is greater participation and involvement in club activities on the part of mothers when compared to the fathers, since they are the ones who go out to work in the fields.



The greatest responsibility in the issue of children's education and the issue of reading is delegated to the mothers, because they might have a little more time to spend on that issue (World Vision local official, Community 5, 2022).

Factor 5: There are other community leaders involved in activities to support literacy.

The support of community leaders for the implementation of the club was identified as a strength in itself. One need raised by a community leader is to be able to have a community place where adolescent boys and girls can also be integrated into another Reading Club for children ages 12 and older, taking into account that boys and girls are exposed to dangers and require support and other activities that allow them to have guidance, help and activities around educational issues, so that they do not get involved in harmful habits.



The leader provides her house, her space, so that 15 or 20 children can come to a club, so they are perceiving the space as something relevant for the children, even though in a club that I know of, a lady is providing her house even when she has no children in the club, she shares the space (World Vision local official, Community 2, 2022).

Factor 6: Adaptation of the methodology by the Facilitators in the clubs increases the attendance of children.

The implementation of Reading Clubs began in the 10 communities more than two years ago, and currently, there are at least two Reading Clubs running. On the other hand, in 2 out of the 10 communities there are 4 Reading Clubs. The children participate on a weekly basis, and in the case of the Reading Clubs that use the churches as a space for the sessions, they carry out the activities on Sundays, either around catechism classes or Sunday School.



Another relevant aspect is the methodology they are implementing in the Reading Clubs and the training provided by the World Vision education specialist to the volunteers, which has allowed them to learn the methodology, create and facilitate the club with stories, songs, dynamic activities, more fun for the children, and that allows the child to feel more joy, more excitement. This program should be implemented not only in this community but also in the rest of the communities (World Vision local official, Community 3, 2021).

In the second phase, the club, led by the Protestant church, has achieved a greater coverage of children participating in the sessions imparted by the promoters, motivated by the improvement of the physical conditions of the church, now they have two clubs and a greater number of children.



I understand that in "La Hermosa" church, there was only one club last year, they had 15 children. They have grown to have two clubs now with a total of 30 children.

(Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



My girl can't wait for the day to come because she starts to tell me things early in the morning, "Mom, it's time, it's time!", she loves it, she's excited about the club. And it's nice that they hang out with each other too, even if it's not an hour of class, but it's a moment here, and you see that they talk, my little girl comes back telling me that she likes everything about it

(Mother/father/caregivers, Community 6, 2022).

Adapting the UL model to the particularities of each reality demonstrates a mastery of its dynamics and innovation to achieve the desired results. Due to the implementation period and some difficulties not overcome in relation to the delivery of study materials (books, stories, illustrations), most of the staff in charge of the clubs have adapted children's readings, dynamic activities, songs, and other playful activities to carry out the Reading Club sessions.



We don't want to lose sight of the fact that the methodology is community-based and at a time when the organization is not there, they can look for strategies; that is another way we teach them, how to use materials available to them

(World Vision regional officer, 2022).



In order to motivate the children to continue participating, they implement dynamic activities, different dynamics, songs or games than the ones they already have, they try to innovate in that part, really, so that the children feel more entertained

(World Vision local official, 2022).



They are inventing stories, even with contests, trying to share locally what is produced. "The beautiful part of this and what excites me the most is that these are stories created by the communities, by the families with whom we work, by the reading promoters

(World Vision national officer, 2022).

A particular element to highlight is the use of the internet; in that case platforms that give volunteer staff other tools to implement in the clubs, which they have adapted to their context.



What can I say, we might print some things, some material that may be available on the Internet and ask for it to be printed, because it will not have the quality of a book that is illustrated, maybe in 3D, some figures, etc., but it is useful for reading, the purpose is to read, the purpose is not so much aesthetics, but to have reading material (World Vision regional official, 2022).



In the training process we had to redesign how to train volunteers so as not to lose track of things, because if you lose track of what has been learned, children forget things. So, what did we redesign? Well, for example, the way of training them and what we did was to teach them how to work online so that we could meet with them. So, starting there, training volunteers, we started to do that online, and believe it or not, things kept going, they were always willing (World Vision regional officer, 2022).

Another noteworthy fact is the growing relationship of the teachers with the communities and from the point of view of the resources; more information is shared on the progress of children's learning and its limitations, teachers provide reading material from their own schools and exchange group work dynamic activities.



For example, the "traveling backpack" strategy, which we implemented at the club level, but we also implemented it at the school level, was another one that helped us a lot, because the teachers put all the guides for the week in the traveling backpack (which parents brought to school). They would take the guidebook with them, it would go in their traveling backpack, it was their study backpack at the end. So, we took advantage of that space and it was something important because we made a great investment in time as a response to the COVID-19 issue and the affectation and the low school attendance, which at times was zero (World Vision regional official, 2022).

Creativity in the use of materials is an element to highlight; it is reused, adapted, or transformed, not discarded. For example, using play dough to make figures when we lack paper or so that when it rains the paper does not get damaged. The use of ropes - rustic ropes with discarded cardboard to make a "*Spider of Letters*".



When they work, they practice with materials available to them, they bring cardboard, fabric, buttons, bottles, whatever (World Vision national official, 2022).



...they have learned to make objects with disposable bottles, with caps, with paper, they have learned to make all sorts of things (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 5)

Factor 7: Effective training and sensitization of key stakeholders

On the part of World Vision, training and sensitization sessions were held in 10 communities, to which some members of the community were invited to participate, such as volunteers, religious leaders, and later, parents or guardians who send their children to the Reading Clubs.



World Vision provides us with everything, from training to materials, everything we are going to use when facilitating the club. If we have to go to a training session, World Vision provides us with everything, we have always been there, they have always responded to our needs (Faith leader, community 6, 2021).



At the beginning, they practically started during the pandemic. So, it was back when people would not be overcrowded in meetings, until one day when Mrs. Berta came and explained to us, she gave us a... I don't know if you can call it training or not, but we gathered here, many of the mothers, and the clubs had begun (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 1, 2022).



6-7 initial training sessions as training of facilitators. Strategies, dynamics, ways of working, theater, singing, phonetics. Learning to develop creativity, imagination, taking initiative and adapting materials to the conditions (this regarding quarantine, self initiative). We work with an agenda, a theme, from there everything is done according to that (Club Facilitators, Community 2, 2022).



Yes. We had trainings every 8 days, now no longer, but at the beginning we did, during 2020 and 2021, on Fridays (Club Facilitators, Community 2, 2022).

They called us to a meeting one day and told us that they would only be operating in this area in three communities, because it was bigger and then they said: La Labranza 2, Peñasco, Potrerío, and Linda Vista. That was two years ago, when the Reading Club started; then they asked us if we wanted to start, that they were going to help us with everything, with materials... We received training almost every month, for 22 days, but then it stopped because of the pandemic (Club Facilitators, Community 3, 2022).



Well, at the beginning, right, they told us that if we wanted to be a part of this, we should let them know. They took us to La Trinidad for training and still, every year they always call us and take us, at least this year we went because it is a different methodology, right (Club Facilitators, Community 4, 2022).



We cover the protected area, with presentations, training for children and parents...training for teachers and, if the opportunity arises, for children as well (World Vision local official, Community 4, 2022).



In the second phase, the facilitator was asked if they had received training and she expressed:

Yes, yes, first we received the first training with Cristian, but Cristian was assigned to another area, then we continued the Reading Club with another specialist from World Vision and we had a very nice experience (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



Factor 8: Building community networks on established relationships

The grassroots work that World Vision has been doing for years in the territories and at the national level with the different support programs for children and work with the church is recognized, which facilitates the working relationship with the communities where the Reading Clubs are implemented. Likewise, there is a good coordination relationship between World Vision and the local authorities that allows for the implementation of the UL program.



Well, what I have seen is that World Vision and other organizations are contributing to this Reading Club project, and I think it is good because we are preparing, we are teaching children to be intelligent, to be children, to work on their shyness (Community member, Community 9, 2021).



In this connection with the MINED in the community in "the field". It is understood more than at the institutional level, more at the level of neighbors, the teacher or the community, the teacher lives in the community and interacts more with the parents and with the Reading Club Facilitators (World Vision Regional Officer, 2022).



Whoever gives you a space, a house, a hallway, a church, some... few, few, few schools, but mostly community gardens; we are seeing support in the participation...it is very important to have a space to carry out the activity, and also the human contribution that each girl, young woman or adult who is participating is sharing voluntarily, she is doing it in good faith and wants the children of her community to improve (World Vision local official, 2022).

Factor 9: Reading Club as a mechanism for child protection

It is recognized that the Reading Clubs are part of the spaces in the territories and at the national level, not only as a program to support children in reading and writing, but also as a way to strengthen the construction of mechanisms in the communities to protect Nicaraguan children. The community networks visualize that the Reading Club is part of the environment where mothers, fathers, volunteers, leaders, and above all, children can interact.

Mother 1: I have been living here for about three years and I even think I had almost a year with them (mothers who attend the club), not much back then, and now I know them better, I talk with them and I feel like I went back to high school with my friends, right. It feels nice because you are with one and with the other one and it's the same, the children interact and get together, they learn to get along with each other, mothers and fathers also.

Mother 2: Because of the friendship, because of the children's friendship, so that kind of unites us as parents, for example, is my daughter has to do some homework assignment like handicrafts, then we learn to interact with other mothers and we become friends (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 8, 2022).



B. Hindering factors in the community

Factor 1: Volunteers and other community members need constant and specific training.

Although the volunteers received a process of socialization and training from World Vision to teach at the Reading Clubs, they commented that they do not have pedagogical material to guide them when carrying out the activities that respond to the UL model.

The problem is that we learn a little bit in the training and so that the children also learn from what we learn, so I imagine that this is the purpose of the training, to obtain the information, a little bit of information that they give us for the children (Club Facilitators, Community 4, 2022).



Some mothers ask me: and why in my club where my girl attends, why don't they do this and they do it differently here? Then I say, maybe they don't have the same methods, I don't know (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 1, 2022).



What I have more difficulty with is, sometimes, knowing, sometimes I forget, it's not that I don't know things, but that I forget things, I can't keep them in order, the activities of the agenda, I don't forget what I have to do, but I forget the order in which I am going to do them (Club Facilitators, Community 3, 2022).





It is suggested to expand the coverage of didactic materials to be used and cover the demand of all children. Well, right now they have not given us any material, we have received training. And I think one is missing, but they have not given us material for the children, but more or less... I have written in a notebook the methodology and everything, but I did not bring it, nor the notebook. But they explained to us that there will be new material for the children to have (Club Facilitators, Community 5, 2022).

As a result of the observation carried out in a Reading Club, it became evident that the facilitators have a limited command of the knowledge imparted through the activities in the Reading Club.



Now they haven't done any (training), I went to one about two months ago". And did they give you a manual or a guide? - No, they just told us how it is done, first the prayer, the welcome, the development, everything like that. But not a manual, nor an attendance book, but I keep it in a notebook, on my own, to have control, the date, the attendance; because we meet every 15 days (Club Facilitators, Community 5, 2022).

Within the trainings, it is suggested to take into account the tools to work with children with disabilities, and to have printed material with sign language, and teaching the club facilitators minimum communication expressions in sign language.



You have to invest resources, you have to invest in training, you have to invest in implementation, there is a significant investment. But it is important to take the time to be able to do it, to pilot it, to implement it and really see the results, I think that part is a great satisfaction (World Vision national official, 2022).

Generally speaking, mothers are aware of the scope and purpose of the program, but more awareness is still needed to help their children move along the literacy process, and to help the Reading Club Volunteers.



Yes, for the children, because meetings like those, with the parents, very few, as well as to explain to us, "we are going to do this", no, no (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 3, 2022).

One of the Reading Club facilitators commented the following:



Yes, we have received all the trainings, they were done from 8:00 am to 12:00 noon, about a year or so ago, when it started, first it was when the previous World Vision specialist was here, but now we have another World Vision specialist who is in charge of the community. First, we covered the steps of how to work with the children, how to welcome them, the prayer before starting the club, reading the stories from a single page, the whole methodology and practicing, that was effective, I learned how to interact with the children, how to carry out each activity with them, and I learned a lot because we did the practice and then we came to apply it here with the children and I learned many things (Club Facilitators, Community 5, 2021).

It is also suggested to expand the coverage of didactic materials to be used and cover the demand of all children.



Well, right now they have not given us any material, we have received training. And I think we are still missing one more training, but they have not given us material for the children, but more or less... I wrote the methodology in a notebook and everything, but I did not bring it, nor the notebook. But they explained to us that there will be new material for the children to have (Club Facilitators, Community 5, 2022).

Factor 2: Extensive need of materials for Reading Club activities.

Volunteers comment that the Reading Club does not have books to read, as well as more updated stories and materials to carry out the reading activity that focuses on story drawings. It is necessary to be able to reinforce with written materials for the development of the club, as well as to have more adaptations to reinforce the work with the children.



The limitations we have right now are with the materials, they have run out, they always read with the materials we have, and with the other materials, like crayons and pencils, we have limitations, they need them, I have 13 children (Faith Leader, Community 4, 2021).



We are almost out of materials. So, we are already using the materials that are left over at home, that is, because they give us some material, to do the... preparation of the work, but they give them material also, separately, but when they run out of materials, we have to help them. They have not given us new material this year, they have not said anything about that (Club Facilitators, Community 1, 2022).



I think the challenges we have are especially related to the lack of work materials, we need more work materials, I think. Maybe more books, this... I have... more... more... well, material, as well as furniture and tables and chairs, the two groups already have them; each group has them and they are in charge of delivering them. But we need support material, there isn't much (Club Facilitators, Community 4, 2022).



One of the comments they made last time was that they had the same stories since they started, so they already know them, they already know them by heart, they feel bored, and that is what they need, to have new stories or bibliographies to motivate them... the clubs and the children feel motivated when they have new resources, right, in this case books, new stories, that motivate them more to continue participating... Yes, sometimes we neglect that part, when there is nothing new, so it demotivates us a little (Club Facilitators, Community 5, 2022).

On the other hand, parents expressed that with these limitations of materials, difficulties also arise in the management of the little that is available, since it lends itself to misinterpretations regarding the behavior of the person in charge of the Reading Club:



There is a problem with the materials she is sent, she may give them to the chosen ones, the best material she gives to the chosen ones, the ones she thinks get along with her. Last time, they sent her some folders with drawings, she gave them to those closest to her, and the other normal folders she gave them to the other children, blank paper to the children (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 5, 2022).

Well, we have challenges, like the fact that we don't have materials. When the church has materials, they share that with us. Like I was saying about the story and the little stick, we have to adapt as best we can. We have to accept this, we also need material after summer, it helps, because the child, besides the fact that the child is going to read, he is going to carry out a strategy and he needs this material. He/she needs to create. We need composers, yes, we have challenges (Club Facilitators, Community 8, 2022).



Yes, one of the challenges is the lack of material, like the markers; also the rain, because when it is raining, their parents don't let them come here. We have to cross a street over there that they call "El charcón" [big puddle], but when it rains the level of the water is so high that children say: "Ah teacher, it's raining, now we are going to cross the Major River", so that's what they call the street. They take off their shoes to be able to cross, but I have told them, since there are things in the air, illnesses like cough, fever, flu, then, "if it is raining children, we are not going to go", because we don't want them to get sick. And the parents tell us "look sister Flor, if it is raining the children will not be able to come", so that is the setback we have; otherwise, I re-schedule for the next day so we can always meet with them, but I will let them know in advance. We were going to come yesterday, but since they asked us to meet today so we could meet with you, then they asked: "Teacher, so we are not going to come?", no, we are going to meet tomorrow (Club Facilitator, Community 10, 2022).



Factor 3: Challenges around schedules and convocations based on member's availability

It is important to be mindful of the Volunteer Facilitators' schedules, as they have personal responsibilities beyond the Reading Club. Volunteers in a community's Reading Club suggest that activities be carried out in a timely manner, respecting their schedules and responsibilities outside of the project. Organizing time for the Reading Club is a constant task that is part of the work dynamics and it is sometimes difficult to do.



One of the challenges that we consider a little heavy, is related to being able to coordinate the children's time because most of them go to school, and we have found that some attend school in the morning, others in the afternoon and what we do is try, try here and there, and that is why there is a group in the morning, to give the children who attend school in the morning a chance, and another group in the afternoon, which is the largest (Faith Leader, Community 9, 2021).



Well you know that I have to spend some time planning this, and I am a housewife, I have to work, there are things to do, so sometimes my sisters-in-law help me in the kitchen so that I can work and focus on what I am going to do (Club Facilitators, Community 5, 2022).

Key informants suggest that World Vision should have effective communications with Volunteer Facilitators and be mindful of schedules as they affect them in Reading Club related activities. In one of the churches, club Volunteers reported having to continually adapt to World Vision's constant training. In this regard, one of the volunteers expressed her dissatisfaction with the way World Vision organizes and plans its meetings.



We request better communications when convening to meetings, because this affects us for future events with World Vision (Club Facilitators, Community 8, 2021).

Factor 4: New Volunteers for Club Development

New volunteers should be sought so they can become Volunteer Facilitators and to ensure the continuity of the Reading Clubs in the long term:



Because many young people, once they get a job, they leave this activity and also migrate to other places in search of better opportunities (Club Facilitators, Community 8, 2021).

In the second phase, four reading promoters have had to leave the club because of opportunities to improve their financial status or social mobility, which has led other members to participate and take on the facilitation of sessions. Others, on the other hand, have decided to pause the weekly programming of the Club, resuming it as per a consensus, convenience, and the availability of each member.



But the biggest problem they face is replacing someone to participate in them as before, another facilitator.... Well, if they say they don't want to continue because they are bored, I would say, then it would be necessary to find another person who is interested and who will continue with the group's course, because if they are bored, then nothing can be done, if it is because of health problems, the same is true, or because of economic problems, sometimes the economy delays us a lot in reaching the goal we want to reach, or we have families, maybe we have to work outside the community to be able to support ourselves and that delays us a lot with learning or teaching, because maybe I won't be able to spend much time with the children or I have to leave for good (Club Facilitators, Community 1, 2022).



Volunteers also have their own lives, they also have their families, they have things to do, all their work, so there are very personal events that make them leave the club, and it is understood...there are many volunteers who would like to collaborate, but they have to work hard to support their families (World Vision regional officer, 2022).

Factor 5: Ongoing monitoring and support for sustainability

World Vision's organization is a key to maintaining Reading Clubs:



There should be more frequent follow-up by World Vision to ensure quality in the implementation of the Reading Club. The program does not have an exclusive facilitator assigned to the communities (Club Facilitators, Community 8, 2021).

With regard to the evolution of World Vision's follow-up, the following observations were made during phase two of the information gathering process:



Well, right now, this year they have not come by, they have not had the support with materials like the ones they brought in previous years, this year there has not been any, but they have supported them, in visits, with the parents in training as well (Faith Leader, Community 1, 2022).



About six months ago they gave us 260 Córdoba, and now they have come again to deliver that again. If they knew, I said, I took it like... "And what are you coming to do?", -to drop off some help- "What help?" "So you can eat" - It's not their fault, the technical people are not to be blamed, I can't get angry with them, I can get angry with the directors, directors know what is going on; the Volunteers, tell them, they are restless... and do you feel that the Volunteers of other communities are feeling the same? -Yes, all of them, because the same ones that are going to receive health workshops are there, and we comment about it there (Club Facilitators, Community 1, 2022).



We meet at least three times a year with them, in extensive workshops, from 8am to 5pm. Number one, always reminding them of the strategies, number two, so that they do not forget about the main indicators of the Reading Club; and three, so that they do not lose the thread, he is a volunteer, I have had cases where volunteers "think they are even teachers", so I tell them no, you are volunteers who reinforce the children's knowledge in a playful way. So, yes, yes, yes, yes always, because it is a way to motivate them as well, that is, you are working with people who are not being paid; so, we always meet (World Vision regional officer, 2022).

Factor 6: Some inadequate spaces for the development of the Reading Club

The leaders of two communities suggest that, given that the Volunteers' houses do not meet the necessary conditions to carry out the activities, it is proposed to set up community spaces where the Reading Clubs can continue to take place.



The leaders of two communities suggest that, given that the Volunteers' houses do not meet the necessary conditions to carry out the activities, it is proposed to set up community spaces where the Reading Clubs can continue to take place.



We need someone to support us because the community is poor, so we do what we can, but sometimes we can't do it all, so support is always good (Faith Leader, Community 3, 2022).



Space would be a constraint. There are several here, there are quite a few children here (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 5, 2022).



There are clubs where more children want to attend, but the houses do not have the capacity, or the facilitator also does not have the capacity (World Vision local official, Community 5, 2022).

It is important that adequate toilets/latrines are provided for children to use. In some cases, there is no exclusive space to implement the club. In cases where the Reading Clubs are held inside a church, it is not possible to have a "reading corner" and paste the materials on the walls, in addition to the fact that there is no blackboard.



They say that there is a space in the community that is not being taken advantage of (the old community school), it has three classrooms. Currently, the preschool classroom is in use, the other two are not being used, it is deteriorated; roof, windows. But it can be very useful to install the Reading Clubs because its location is more central, it is accessible and safe. In addition, it has more space to develop the activities (in their homes the space is more limited). It has an abandoned school. This would be a task that requires external support, but above all, community interest to reach out to the mayor and the Ministry of Education (Club Facilitators, Community 1, 2021).



For example, I implement my club in my house, I hold the sessions in the corridor, in the little patio I have... It would be ideal if we had a space, like this one, a space where we can do many things (Club Facilitators, Community 4, 2022).

Factor 7: Distances between girls/boys homes and Reading Clubs

In some communities, children have to walk long distances to reach the club venue, sometimes due to the poor condition of the roads.



Only through the river, yes, because of the distance, as I said, I come to drop them off and bring them back, it is not a problem because you know how far away we live, so there is no option, I am the one who has to find a way to bring them, I go with them every morning, taking them to school at 7 am, they go to my mom's and I return at 1 to leave with them around 5 (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 5, 2021).



... there are children who live far away, they live in a community called "Cuajiniquil", which is very far away and the mothers don't allow them to come here. I have already gone to the school to try to get... other new children; and the other children live in El Portillo, which is quite far away, so the mothers are afraid. All the children who are in the club, at least the girl who was upstairs, she has those children that live nearby; Suley has children that live close to her. And the ones I work with, they can access the venue easily, close by yes, because the mothers have told me that they are afraid of the road (Club Facilitators, Community 4, 2022).



Almost all 4 sectors have to cross the river, Laureles, El Valle, Guayabal and Potrero Grande; in all 4 sectors they have to cross the river, and when it rains the water rises, they cannot cross...When it's raining they don't meet (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 3, 2022).

Factor 8: Low participation of fathers (male) in Reading Club activities

Due to their economic work, whether in agriculture, commerce, industry, and/or mining, the fathers do not get involved in the Reading Club activities, but they accept that their children attend; in general they do not attend the club and related meetings, so the work falls on the mothers who are the ones who support their children to attend the club and play a role of greater involvement in the care of the children (food, school, Reading Club).



To be honest, basically.... the one who brings her is my daughter, an older one, she is the one who brings her (to the Reading Club), here the girl I almost don't... no well, I don't get involved in this, but my girl does, really... she loves to draw, she says that she comes here to draw, and she tells me, "Daddy, I like to draw" and she starts to draw a little dog, everything that she imagines and I say, "it's good, my daughter" -I tell her- she should learn more so (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 6, 2022).



For me the most important thing is that they learn to read, it feels good to know that the child who started out unable to read now goes home and knows how to read, which is important... It is also a support for the parents because maybe the parents want to teach the child to read, but they don't have books, so we have all the materials here, so the children learn more, so it is a support for them and for the parents (Club Facilitator, Community 9, 2021).



In general, you will always find something like this; fathers do not get involved, there is very little male participation, it is always the women participating, it is always the mothers who are involved, because men have this tendency to let the mothers be in charge of this, "Ah, because these are women's tasks," that is the way men think in the communities, or even here in the municipality, "Ah, education is definitely a woman's task, and not a man's." What would be the man's task? What would be the man's task? -To work, to bring food to the table (World Vision local official, community 3, 2022).



In most of the communities here in the municipality that accompanies World Vision, the men are dedicated to working, whether they work in agriculture or in factories, as laborers, as security guards. Like in the case of Havana, there are quite a few security guards, they work in factories, and they work all day (World Vision local official, Community 5, 2022).



If someone has to leave home to work for food, the one who leaves is the man and even if he does not leave the country, he moves around, he may leave for Estelí, if he is from Condega, he may leave for Managua to work or to another area of the country, so they also migrate seasonally to have some opportunities, they go around, as they say, they go around looking for work, to see how they can keep a job or assure livelihoods in a given period of time (World Vision national official, 2022).

Factor 9: In some communities there is a context of violence and insecurity

In the two urban communities and one rural community, the context of violence and insecurity represents a great challenge for the Reading Club. In addition, there are conditions of great socioeconomic vulnerability among the population, and local needs may exceed the objectives of the Reading Club (learning, memory, access, coverage, among others).

According to community leaders, in some communities there are problems of alcoholism and drug use among the youth, and these activities sometimes take place around the house where the Reading Club is held.



Sometimes we have cases where the father, since he is not involved at all, he does not care if the child goes to school or not and sometimes he says, don't go to school, better come to work with me, he doesn't think it's important at all, so World Vision is struggling with that, at least the father should let the child go to school and not take him out (World Vision regional official, Community 2,2022).



When you say delinquents, yes, there is a lot of delinquency here, this neighborhood is very, how should I put it? Drugs are being used frequently here, there are many places that sell drugs. Yes, there are a lot of children who are involved in drugs, I tell you because they are 12 years old, 13 years old, they are still children. So, there is a lot of delinquency and through that, they steal, they injure themselves... Yes, there is a lot of delinquency, I could say (Faith Leader, Community 9, 2022).



Thank God violence has improved a lot, thefts are sporadic, nothing frequent, I think that it has improved in this neighborhood, in terms of domestic violence there are few cases, more than anything they are cases that may arise in families, very little can be seen, it is something very internal, thank God we have not had cases of abuse of children, these cases are internal in families (Faith Leader, Community 10, 2022).



Factor 10: Effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and Hurricanes Eta and Iota

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected the implementation of the activities of the Reading Clubs, reducing the attendance of children and at times when the cases of Covid-19 have increased, the club is not held to avoid the spread to volunteers and mothers, and especially to children. The crowding of children and parents who attend the club represents a permanent risk in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite the above, it is important to mention that most of the Reading Clubs have a hand washing and gel application "kit" provided by World Vision. However, in a couple of cases this was placed in a location that did not allow for ease of use or access, as it was not located at the entrance of the venue where participants could disinfect themselves before engaging in Reading Club activities. In relation to the pandemic, the negligence of some adults regarding biosecurity measures was noted in two communities.



Well, this week the community is affected, for example, some of the children I work with have been sick, so they did not attend, because sometimes they are ill, that is, the children may be affected (Club Facilitators, Community 1, 2021).



We have water available until 10:00 am. Well, in my case, I manage the water and the children with their masks, well, as she was saying, the problem was mostly with the attendance because when the parents are sick they can't come here, two of them have not been attending right now, it is coming back (Club Facilitators, Community 1, 2021).



Well, at the moment they comply with bringing the children and they are wearing their masks, they bring alcohol, they are punctual. Yes, they motivate the children because, for example, if the parents tell them no, no, you are not going, the child does not attend (Club Facilitators, Community 9, 2021).



With COVID, the club was suspended a little bit and the traveling backpack was used, to keep a connection with the club, right, this modality was created for that very reason and a limitation is also the lack of furniture (World Vision local official, Community 6, 2022).

Well, the pandemic is one of the challenges, because there were many days when there were no meetings because of that problem. There was a very strong outbreak here in the community, so they decided that the children should not leave their homes, and there were no meetings. So that was something that changed because when they were able to get together, it was hard for them to concentrate in the group, and another issue was that they would be in one group one day, another group the next, because of the number of children she works with, she chose to have one group one day and another group the next. She practically sacrificed her time to be able to have the children there with her (Faith Leader, Community 1, 2022).



Not right now, there were people here with Covid (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 3, 2022).



The truth is that many, when there are outbreaks, mothers and children, they are afraid to go out, because of the issue, the fear of becoming infected, some children don't like to participate or parents don't send them because of that reason, because of the contagion (World Vision local official, Community 5, 2022).



When hurricanes Eta and Iota (November, 2021) hit the communities where the survey was conducted, the children were only affected in terms of their attendance, since with heavy rains they cannot leave their homes to prevent accidents. In one of the communities, they have to cross a river to get to the house where the Reading Club is held. However, the families were affected mainly in the production of crops due to the excessive rains.

Yes, when it rains they don't attend, water levels rise...it seems that just that, of course, if she is sick, I don't allow her to attend. Look, when she wants to do something at home she does, otherwise, no, I don't hold her back, no, when it rains it is better for her not to attend, there was a lot of rain recently, in those days with heavy rains children could not attend, no, it is dangerous for the rest of the children to go out when it is raining, there are many creeks here and it is dangerous for any child to attend (Club Facilitators, Community 5, 2021).



Factor 11: Effects of poverty and migration

Poverty and migration are factors that are generally intertwined one way or another. Given the characteristics of the communities which are the subject of the research study; in the case of rural communities dependent on monoculture crops such as tobacco, for example, for their survival, most of them depend on the production of basic grains; rice, corn, beans and extensive cattle raising, that is, with technological limitations given that most of the populations consist of small and medium size agricultural producers and a good part of them are day laborers who perform daily tasks.



...it has affected us, with shortages at times, because of the times we have experienced, because of the droughts, there have been many difficulties with food. So there have been no harvests; and another thing, now the supplies required to grow the crops are too expensive, we can hardly work anymore (Faith Leader, Community 3, 2022).



In the case of Community 5, most of the families are not dedicated to agriculture, they are dedicated to working in tobacco factories, in other jobs also... (World Vision local official, Community 5, 2022).

Others, such as in the case of producers around some of the mining areas (3 communities located in the northwestern part of the country), their productive limitations result from the incursion of mining activities, which reduces the agricultural and livestock work areas available and gradually forces them to leave their land to join the mining industry. This implies employment, yes, with the risks and dangers associated with this type of work. It also entails a drastic and profound change in their culture.

The communities, in this case barrios (2) located in the region near Managua, are characterized by high population density, and a workforce which is dedicated to tertiary economic activities (services, commerce), many of the inhabitants of the research sample area work in the surrounding factories (export processing zones) earning minimum or insufficient wages to cover all of their basic needs.



We have many mothers here, at least single moms, and moms who work in Free Trade Zones, they leave at 6 in the morning and return home at 7 at night, and in some cases, like my own, those who are in charge of these children are their grandparents, so as grandparents, we play the role of grandmother and we play the role of mother (Faith Leader, Community 9, 2022).

Migration occurs at different levels: regional and national and is mainly due to people wanting to go out and look for better income.



Another issue is that children may be affected because their mothers or fathers have migrated to other countries (World Vision local official, Community 5, 2022).



We have a context of migration... (World Vision regional officer, Community 1, 2022).

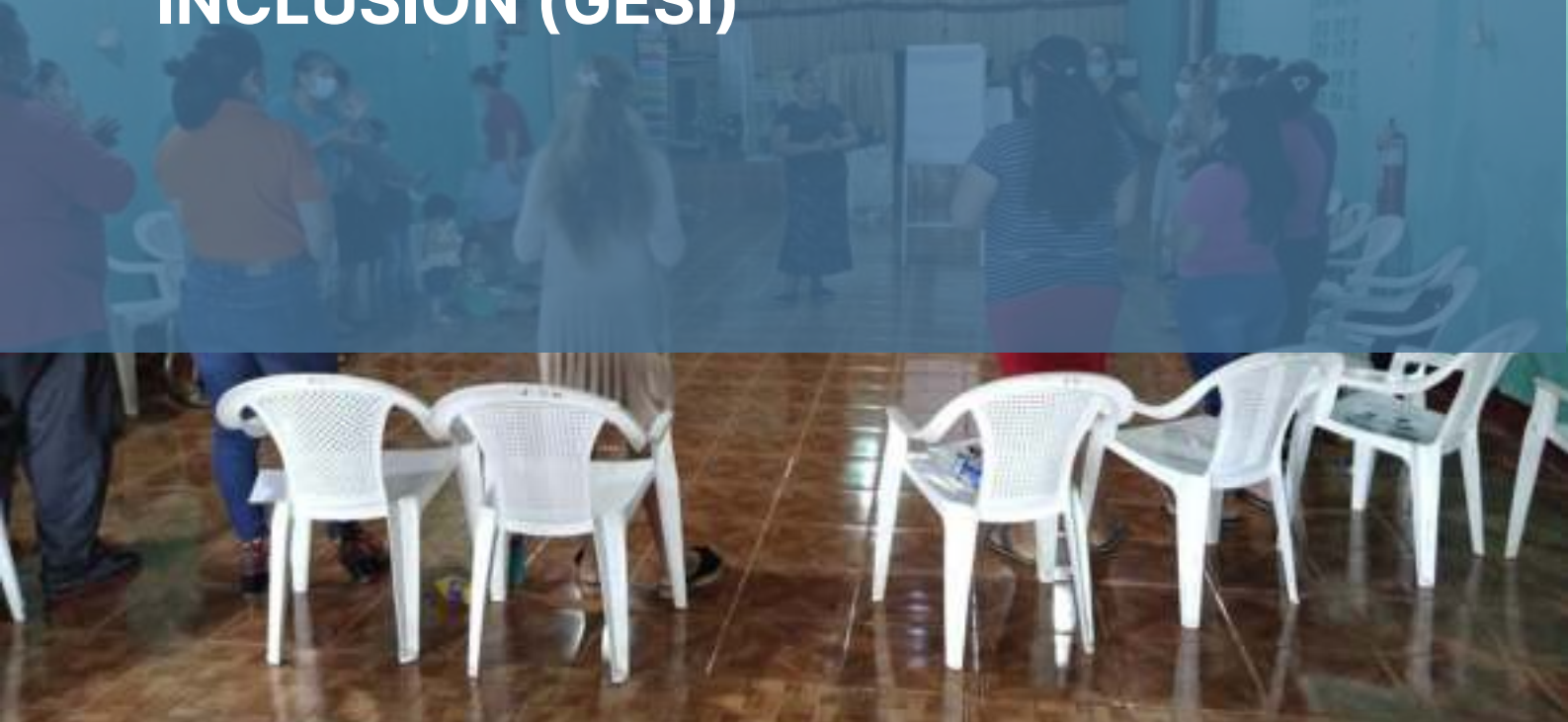


Sometimes when the mothers travel somewhere else they take them with them. Because of migration.. they stay there, they don't come back (Faith Leader, Community 3, 2022).



The issue of migration has been more noticeable since last year, from January to date there are many parents who have migrated, in the context that we live here... children are affected by migration, family ruptures are quite common in that sense (Faith Leader, Community 10, 2022).

V. GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI)



Gender equality and social inclusion are fundamental cross-cutting elements for this research study. These GESI elements are defined as follows:

- **Gender equality:** is the state or condition that allows women and girls, men and boys, equal enjoyment of human rights, socially valued assets, opportunities, and resources. It includes expanding people's freedoms and voice, improving power dynamics and relations, transforming gender roles, and improving the overall quality of life for men and women to reach their full potential.
- **Social inclusion:** seeks to address inequality and/or exclusion of vulnerable populations by improving the terms of participation in society and improving opportunities, access to resources, amplifying voices and respect for human rights. It seeks to promote empowerment and achieve peaceful and inclusive societies and institutions (World Vision, 2020, p. 4).

According to the *Global Gender Gap Report of the World Economic Forum*, of the 136 countries evaluated in terms of good distribution of resources and equal opportunities between men and women, Nicaragua ranked fifth in 2018, standing out in terms of formal political representation of women and education, among other aspects. According to this measurement, the country was one of the ten countries in the world that reduced the gender gap by more than 80%. At the same time, it ranked 105th out of 189 countries in the United Nations Gender Inequality Index, which tracked labor force participation, health by gender and other factors (World Economic Forum, 2013).

In analyzing the gender dimensions of the Reading Clubs, it is valuable to identify the degree and extent of participation that adults, girls and boys are having in the development of the sessions. Table 2 provides gender disaggregated data regarding the number of Reading Club Facilitators in each community observed in this research study in Phase 2 (final) while Table 3 does the same for children participating in the Reading Clubs observed through the research study (applying the observation instruments).

Table 2. Number de Reading Club facilitators, by sex and community

Community	Final Phase (2)		
	Women	Men	Total
1	1	0	1
2	1	0	1
3	1	0	1
4	1	0	1
5	1	0	1
6	1	0	1
7	1	0	1
8	2	0	2
9	2	0	2
10	2	0	2



When analyzing the gender dimensions with respect to the Reading Club Facilitators in the 10 communities, at the end of the second survey it was noted that 100% of the Reading Club Facilitators are women, due to the fact that the 4 young male Facilitators who participated in the first phase (15%) dropped out of the Reading Clubs, since they emigrated in search of employment opportunities, some of them abroad and others internally, some of them are present in the community and still supporting it.

This indicates that women, in contrast to men, are likely to continue to collaborate as volunteers for the sustainability of the Clubs in order to facilitate their cultural, work, and socio-economic context. As has been pointed out in each of the cases described, this significant difference in the participation of women with respect to men, is framed, according to the testimonies of the participants themselves, by the context of a culture with gender roles strongly rooted in the beliefs and practices of the communities visited, where it is common that, while men are dedicated to working outside of the home (generally in agricultural work and extractive mines) and providing the resources to meet the material needs of the family, women work in family care, which includes supporting their children in school, mainly in elementary education and sometimes in secondary education. Another major situation is the decrease in the number of female facilitators with respect to the first phase.

Table 3. Number of girls/boys participating in Reading Clubs observed per community

Community	Final Phase (2)		
	Girls	Boys	Total
1	10	7	17
2	8	8	16
3	13	5	18
4	11	7	18
5	6	8	14
6	3	6	9
7	5	8	13
8	6	10	16
9	12	12	24
10	11	5	16

When analyzing the gender dimensions in the first phase in the 10 communities that participated with respect to who attends the Reading Clubs that were observed, 57% were girls and 43% were boys. For the second phase of the survey; 53% were girls and the remainder were boys.

While this seems to indicate that the gap in participation is narrowing, with girls attending more than boys, only two Reading Clubs had the same number of girls and boys for the first phase. One club had significantly more boys than girls in the first phase, however, in the second phase they maintained the same number of girls as boys in two communities, while three clubs had significantly more girls than boys. In general terms, as previously noted in the findings of the first phase, one of the reasons for the higher participation of girls compared to boys is that boys are usually involved in chores related to agriculture, such as coffee harvesting and crop planting in rural areas, and sales in urban areas.

Regarding the participation of fathers and mothers of all the communities in this research study, there is a greater participation of women than men. According to one of the testimonies of the World Vision team, this situation demonstrates the commitment of mothers who, despite having a high level of responsibility in their homes, decide to take the time to bring and accompany their children to the Reading Club activities. Through the data collected in the 10 communities, it was possible to verify that leadership in addressing issues related to children's education in general, and of the Reading Clubs in particular, is assumed by women community leaders.



Yes, the girls and boys are improving a lot, when we started reading they didn't read very well, and now they are enjoying it equally. Some tell me that their mothers help them at home, we ask the parents and they say that they do help them, it is mostly the parents who help them and especially the mothers (Club Facilitator, Community 3, 2021).



The only issue is the river, yes, because of the distance, as I said, I come to drop them off and bring them back, it is not a problem because you know how far away we live, so I am the one who has to find a way to take them, I come every day to take them to school in the morning, at 7 am, they go to my mother's house and I head back out there at 1 pm, and leave with them around 5 (Mother/father/caregivers, Community 5, 2021).



The most significant change for us is to have installed the club in the county. Because, as I say, the children have had an excellent learning experience. In my opinion, this change, the learning by our children, the Reading Club even helps them to improve in school (Mother/father/caregivers, Community 6, 2022).

Regarding the GESI issues, no situations were detected that modify the results of Phase I, i.e., there are still more women involved in the clubs than men (parents/caregivers), but expressions were detected that the latter are closer to providing support from home and that they are more involved in the activities, although it is claimed that this is not enough.

Both World Vision and the communities recognize that a constant effort is being made to raise awareness among the population and especially among men for a more significant change in this regard. At the same time though, this is a process that generates resistance to change, as it responds to deeply rooted cultural, social, religious and economic values. However, when they refer to how effective and positive the program is for the children and the community, they express reactions of greater commitment on the part of the men to maintain and sustain the program because of the positive effect it has had on their children, a source of pride and satisfaction, and the fact that programs such as this one should be supported.

An interesting fact in this section related to local leadership (community and religious expressions) is that, although it is true that in most cases in the religious field the leadership and representation falls on men, they are supported by an extensive base of women leaders who, in one way or another, make themselves felt. In fact, they are the ones who, from their commitment as catechists or being in charge of Sunday Schools, take on the responsibilities of running the Reading Clubs;



...we work with church personnel and the same happens in the churches, they get more involved, there is a leadership, I will say intermediate, not necessarily the one who is more in charge, or leads, a male, but the intermediate structure depends on the work of many women (World Vision national officer, 2022).

The issue of inclusion of children with cognitive limitations, addressed both in Focus Groups and Interviews, indicates that there are very few cases of this vulnerable group, as well as children outside the formal education system. When they have occurred, their admission to the clubs is not limited, despite the fact that the Facilitators state that they have not received any special didactic preparation to work with them, in those cases they try to document themselves and try to have an equitable behavior towards everyone.

A shared concern among mothers/parents/caregivers and facilitators is the permanent accompaniment they provide to the children in their activities to avoid and/or limit acts that violate the children's integrity.

VI. PERCEPTIONS OF CHANGES BY THE READING CLUBS



A. Promoting factors in the community

Taking into consideration the time they have been implementing the community component in the places where the information was collected, the research findings show participants' perceptions of the immediate benefits and positive changes in the learning of the children who attend the clubs, which contribute to the impact that the project aspires to as a result of its implementation, as well as social cohesion.

Among the changes that stand out in the children, the Volunteers refer to the learning in reading and writing, commenting that now the children have a greater ability to read and have also learned to express themselves better, linked to imagining and creating, thus also to socializing more, to be more sensitive, helpful and sharing what they know with other children. An example of the progress in the children's learning is that they now stand out in painting and reading competitions in the communities, obtaining the first places, representing a source of pride for their parents, the Volunteers and the community leaders.

Below, key informants highlight the changes that have occurred in their children, especially with reading, as well as in behavioral attitudes as a result of the findings of the first and second surveys conducted in Nicaragua:



Well, with reading, because that has been her biggest problem, it was a serious problem, and now she has overcome that (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 4, 2021).



I feel that the biggest change is that she is learning to read (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 5, 2022).

Community members also expressed their opinions on the changes that have occurred in the children:



The girls and boys who attend the club are motivated and have competed in inter-school competitions with other communities and have won first places in reading, painting and drawing, representing a source of pride for their parents and community leaders (Community member, Community 3, 2021).



Well, it has been evident that they have learned, because they come and immediately wash their hands, sit on their chairs, take out their pencils and start drawing, so the children have learned (Community member, Community 4, 2021).

Likewise, World Vision's community facilitators and volunteers commented on the changes that have occurred in the children:



Their children have improved so much, all of the children, mothers, fathers (family members) and volunteer facilitators, even extending to other school subjects such as Spanish, mathematics, science and with better overall behavior. (World Vision local official, Community 3, 2021).



They learned the letters, so children are motivated. There are children who have made progress because they were very shy, now they are even more cheerful, they have lost that fear, and it has even helped them in school, they come here to read and they are making more progress in writing and letters (Club Facilitators, Community 3, 2021).

For her part, one of the catechists comments:



There have been changes in the children because, in addition to reading, they have learned to express themselves, to imagine and create, and in the same community with the children, to socialize more and be more sensitive, helpful and share what they know with other children. For her, a great achievement is that "many children now no longer spend too much time with their cell phones in their hands, because they are harmful to their health, and at this time in the club they forget about this device and the songs they were able to see on their cell phones are shared with other children" (Club Facilitators, Community 3, 2021).

The space in the club has stimulated and reinforced the literacy skills of children who were already vulnerable as children without access to formal schooling.



There are children who said that they had not had the opportunity to go to school, but now they attend, they are learning to read, they read with me, and they read quickly, I have seen all of the children improve and I have taken good care of them, you know that it is better to take good care of the children so that they can adapt to the teacher and I have seen great improvement with them (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



Yes, there is a change in the child, because the child was insolent before joining the club and then, since he spends his time around his classmates, he would come back home to draw, he did not... he did not misbehave anymore. He learned a lot. He feels more motivated, and his behavior has improved so much. He has also made a lot of progress in reading, he is smart at school. -They are learning, and she motivates them to keep going, to do things, both at home and at school (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 2, 2022).



I see that he is more motivated, at the beginning he did not like drawing very much, nor going to school; and now he draws a lot, he is trying to read by himself, he does his homework, so he is well developed. He is in first grade and does not need me to hold his little hand, he draws well and is learning to read well. This has been helping them to develop. -Now he has more classmates, and he is interacting more (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 2, 2022).



Now they read better, they respect periods, commas, question marks; all that has to be part of learning to read, I tell them. Now I have them come up front, to read, and they are no longer afraid; they used to be embarrassed, and now they are not (Club Facilitators, Community 10, 2022).

In the second phase, there are substantial testimonies that have attested to the impact of the sessions as an opportunity to reinforce the children's learning, even in parallel to the requirements of the grade they are in. On the other hand, it has been possible to get other members of the club to read.



I have had an improvement with the children who have learned and even with children who have not been able to read, who have not read, they now read, they write, they go to school, they are learning more (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



When I tell them, -you took so long now-, -x amount of minutes you took-, then what the child does is read faster, the time, so they also measure the time with me (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



When I first started to work with the children, some of them could not read, you know that the first graders are already reading (referring to the children who were already in the Club), so when I started to work with them, they could not read and I said - What am I going to do, Lord! The one who can't read and the one who can read, what am I going to do? -So, the one who could not read, I said, I am going to have him work with the one who can't read, and the one who could read faster I gave him more materials to read to me, I was listening to him and I was teaching another child at the same time... and I have felt improvement because now the children can read and they can read faster. As I say again, they are learning more (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



Greater reading fluency, this is also part of the follow-up, asking the promoter, what changes do you see with this club, do you feel that we are reaching the children? Suddenly I have these conversations with the promoters, "Yes, he/she is reading better now, and before he/she was embarrassed" (World Vision local official, Community 6, 2022).



The teacher would tell me, the child, it is hard for him to read and he says that he started to join the club, the child has improved, because now the teacher says that she has him do more work at home. Teacher, the truth is that the child is attending a club. When I did not have the club available, the child is not attending, he is attending a club now, I tell you, it is a reading club and several children are there and several mothers say that their children, have developed reading at the club (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



The children have learned to read, because that is something very nice because we like the children to... the reading, they take it with enthusiasm, and you know that it makes you angry to see a child who does not read well, who reads all choppy, all "mmm"... because we know that there are parents who take a page and read worse than a first grader. So I say now, the children who are in third grade, second grade, who are starting to read, the children are reading very well, very nicely, so it looks nice, so that has been a great change. Seeing that the children have had that love for reading and also the change that the children can now interact with each other (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



Well, the main change that I have perceived is that the child who participates in the Reading Club is more open when it comes to participating in the opportunities that we as World Vision provide. On many occasions I have had the experience of taking photos and videos and the child who is participating in the club has a much better participation. So we are making stories of change, by chance yesterday in one of the communities there was a Reading Club, and the girl who participated, we were able to work with her easily, she was motivated, she decided to represent the group of the Reading Club, so that seems to me a significant change, that the child specifically was able to participate openly, without fear (World Vision local official, Community 2, 2022).



There are children whose mothers do not know how to read, so they need help, I tell them that I am going to help them, they tell me that the mothers do not know, I do not like it when they say that some can't and some can, I tell them that we are all equal, I like when they learn, to learn more every day through reading (Club Facilitators, Community 9, 2022).

B. Other skills acquired by the children

The impact of the Reading Clubs in the lives of the children is not limited to reading and writing skills only, but also includes the development of other skills equally valuable for their academic and personal development, such as drawing, handicrafts and the willingness to collaborate in group activities, as well as emotional skills.



We have seen the changes because there was a time when many older children did not have the ability to draw, and there are children in preschool also, I have a girl in one of my groups that if you tell her to sign, she can sign, so there is progress because children are improving (World Vision local official, Community 4, 2022).



I think that the way... drawing, I think it helps them in the way they want to draw, then the brain starts to acquire skills, also when they sing they develop skills, yes, the club has helped. Yes, because children have help from others at home... so, I wouldn't know if they have help from someone else or not. Yes, they have experienced changes because it helps me too, because they have acquired knowledge, it helps me too (Faith Leader, Community 4, 2022).



These are the biggest changes the girl has had, not just the Reading Club, and me helping her, supporting her, telling her to come here (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 4, 2022).



Yes, she always comes back and says that they make handicrafts, drawings, so they come in saying that they play a lot and that they read them stories (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 5, 2022).

During the second phase, the Facilitators have found it useful to apply with greater emphasis the play-related activities which awaken communication skills (dynamic activities, songs, games) and motor skills (crafts, drawings) as a previous step to strengthen reading and writing skills.



We are guided under five steps but since I have first graders, I have third graders, fifth graders, then I do a reading from a flipchart and from that reading I generate many activities, because I can start from a picture, it can be a picture of a turtle, the reading can be "the turtle", but the first grader, he/she works with the "T", then I go with the first grader with that letter, then I go with the third grader who can identify words with "T", then I work it that way, and the sixth grader may already be able to write (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



For me it has been his development. Because he has improved and has been motivated to do his drawings, his readings; and because now, he comes back and says things like, they gave me a task, I have to read... and it wasn't like that, before he didn't like to do it. So he has been improving a little bit. In the beginning he didn't like it, and when he saw that the other children were working, he started to interact better (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 2, 2021).



Well, mine is related to education, my child has changed a lot, he didn't like school. He has learned to read a lot (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 2, 2022).

Children enjoy the Reading Clubs; this is one of the positive components of what is happening in the Reading Club.



We do dynamic activities, we dance with the children, we sing, we read, we have girls and boys from 5 to 12 years old, in the morning they go to school and they come here in the afternoon. Yes, it helps the children a lot because at school they do a job and they do something similar here, they come to have fun and learn to read a little more, they know more about the letters that we make for them, they don't get bored, they have fun at the club (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 5, 2021).



The biggest change is, how could I put it, the children, the parents and the children who want to be different, the parents who want the children to be different, to be intelligent, to be different from the way they have been taught, the education that they want the children, for their children, to be different (Community member, Community 10, 2021).



One of the changes would be the participation, the motivation of the children, but internally it is very difficult for us to know it, but the children seem very happy and motivated, and they must have something left for them in their learning. They have improved in reading. I have heard that they tell each other the story, you know that in the groups of children, there are some who have greater abilities than others, some retain and some do not, some understand and retain the story (Faith Leader, Community 7, 2021).



Happy, joyful, because we are here to paint and to draw, we plan and we sing. I feel better because we are making progress in reading, drawing, and reading, I don't like going to school, but I like going to the club because I don't have to move (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 5, 2021).



The child feels happy, because she only talks about what she did in the Reading Club (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 2, 2021).



We paint, we play, we sing songs, we made a piñata, we read many stories, we color, we play, we do dynamic activities, we read, we play tag (Girls and boys, community 5, 2021).



I feel very good, because I am learning many words. We feel happy, because we are motivated to learn more and more, we don't stop much when we read. I feel very good because we are learning and we feel happy (Girls/boys, Community 6, 2022).

The most significant change is respect:



That they learn a lot, that they learn to respect, how they are inspired when they go to express themselves, because Doña Fidelina sometimes has them present in front of others. - Tamara: For me the most valuable thing is the motivation, they are motivated to do more and more, they change. -Fidelina: Well, for me it is that my child learns what he/she does not know, that is what motivates me the most. -For me it is that, learning (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 4, 2022).

Children attend punctually and the Club Facilitator expresses her pride:



Yes, for me, as you say, attendance is important, because if the children don't come, how am I going to implement the club? So it is also the attendance because the more attendance there is, the more I benefit from the club. Well, I am more than proud because I just tell the child we'll have the Reading Club and they are all here, or they are calling me, they are calling me to see what time, to see if there will be one, and if not, we don't have it, because if it is raining parents don't like the children to get wet, but I feel very happy and joyful to be here (Club Facilitators, Community 8, 2022).



C. The Reading Club as an alternative learning space to school and reinforcement

During the second survey, it was observed that **the model and its playful character** spread quickly in the communities, becoming an innovative and satisfactory experience that the children share with each other. The "alternative" perception of the programming and its transcendence of the school space is especially favorable when the space is managed within the church or home of a member of the community, acquiring a character of community openness, and, secondly, an environment that privileges the expression and participation of the child, encouraging the possible involvement of other children who learn of the existence of the club.



The children are compelled by the activities, and that boy of mine says to me, "Mom, did know that there is a book club?", he says to me, "make one for me", and then I made one for him with a small table with his notebook and his little book, he likes what I share with him there, being with all the children and he joins the children, he pays attention when I teach him the classes, then he gathers his little cousins, and they start off well. And I am interested because he is also interested in what he likes (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



Yes, these children are more strengthened, because it is not the same to do homework alone at home than with the help of their parents, who are socializing with the rest of the children, they see it as something exciting, as something more motivating. It gets their attention and you know it's 1:40 and time for the club, but they clap, they sing, they run, they play. You have their serious time, you know, reading analysis and all that so, it's something that they like quite a lot (World Vision local official, Community 6, 2022).



It awakens the interaction that there should be, why, you come from meeting with some parents, right, you met with some children, so there you are interacting, the community is more active (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



Since she has been involved with the club, she has shown her enthusiasm to come here, to learn and doing all those things there, and it has changed her a lot, also her personality and it helped me a lot because she relates with the children and they learn (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 6, 2022).



At least the singing, the children like to do the activity of the movements as the song says, the reading, I read them the story and I ask them three questions and they are active to answer and even want to ask more questions, regarding the material, they are happy to draw, grab those colored pencils to color, with the newspaper, so for the moment they have not said "Oh, we do not like this part of the club" (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).

The meeting not only allows them to socialize or establish relationships and friendships, but also to test themselves in front of the other members, receiving positive feedback on their skills from both the children and the promoters. This factor is linked to being able to guarantee regular meetings.



You know that regarding attendance, if there is no attendance, we are not OK. Attendance and the participation of the child's parents, as you say, attendance, because if the children don't come, how am I going to implement the club? Then it is the attendance, also because the more attendance, the more I take advantage of the club (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



As he participates in the club, he is working on colors, learning to draw, doing things, he is making a lot of progress, and he tells me; now I am going to go to the reading club because I like it, because we draw (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 6, 2022).



My little girl can't wait for club day because early in the morning she's telling me, "Mom, it's time, it's time!", she loves it, she's excited about the club. And it's nice that they spend time with each other too, even if it's not an hour of class, but it's a moment here, and you see that they talk, when my little girl comes back she sings all the songs she likes (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 6, 2022).

Some of the children of the Club expressed the following:

I think I like the club because sometimes we draw, I like to draw, I don't have notebooks at home, only homework. I keep the notebooks that I use and some blank pages, to color them.



For example, when we come back home from school, we come with the desire to draw and all that and when they have us draw, we color, I don't know... we feel more motivated (Girls and boys, Community 6, 2022).

The stakeholders interviewed emphasize that the club is like a space for fun entertainment through the dynamic activities they teach the little ones that allow them to interact. This is also an achievement because there are children who are shy, and their participation in the Reading Club fosters their communication skills.

One mother says that her child is shy and one of her daughter's greatest achievements is that she is able to express herself:



...at times, I feel like she's a whole different little person (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 3, 2021).

The drawings and the reading are good, but they do not do it as if they were more serious classes, it is like a game so that they have fun, there are short stories for the girls and boys. The child says that at home she is bored, so this is the moment when she lets her go out to attend the club, happy because she plays, has fun, they paint, run here, run there, so it is very important and she also learns so that no one is demanding that she learn as in school and she attends of her own free will. As a mother, it has allowed her to accompany her by knowing her daughter's spelling, she can dictate a text, so the child asks her mom, "Is there a comma here?" and she helps her (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 3, 2021).



In the second phase, the testimonies are reiterated in which they consider that the space represents a contribution to the school system as a reinforcement, the playful methodology has improved their performance in school, stimulating creative awareness and oral expression.



Skills and abilities, these Reading Clubs, (I as a teacher and I put myself in the place of the facilitator here), are of great importance, they rescue the child, the desire to excel, the desire to learn. These clubs help the child who attends class to have more skills (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



The most significant change for us is to have installed the club in the county. Because, as I tell you, the children have had excellent learning (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 6, 2022).



For me this change, the learning for our children, the Reading Club even helps them to improve in school (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 6, 2022).

D. Children's academic performance is improving as a result of the Club

Some of the important changes that have been seen at the children's level is the improvement in their academic performance.



It is when they read more, that change may be the most important one, there has been a change since they joined, because now they are more active, some teachers comment that they are better than before, that they have improved a lot (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 5, 2021).



Yes, her teacher called me right now and told me that the girl was doing very well academically, it's just that she talks a lot, but she is doing well, thank God (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 2, 2021).



Well, so far I know that the academic performance of the children who attend the club has improved quite a lot; in terms of diction, reading, fluency, I could say that it has improved by 70 to 80 percent depending on the child, because you know that there are children who are brighter and others who are more passive. So, yes, there has been a big change. I have not heard of any child repeating a grade or who is not doing well in class, no... not at all, they are children who are doing well, well, relatively well (World Vision local official, Community 1, 2021).



The improvement in academic performance. Look, I have seen something in the children... World Vision when I... I did not attend before, the community, I received it in 2017, almost at the end of 2017, at this time a project was carried out, maybe the girls will tell you about the organization of a tablet, the tablets are full of books of all kinds of literature, stories, myths, legends, all these things are on the tablets. At that time when the project was underway, I went to the school because the tablets are in the school and the children were not reading well, they were reading like... they were choppy... I encouraged them - come on, come on, keep going, you can do it, you can do it - I told them, but they always got stuck. Now I see them reading fluently, normally (World Vision local official, Community 1, 2021).



Now they have reading fluency, and improvement in the children's school performance. I have observed it when I go to school and see how they behave; I have observed it when they pick up a book and read, and I have also seen it because I have asked some mothers and they have told me that the children are doing well in class. So, there is nothing more to say, in other words, it has been fruitful (World Vision local official, Community 5, 2022).

In the second phase of the survey, the children express what they have learned:



To read, we have learned to read more. We have learned to draw more. To do dynamic activities, to build little boxes out of paper. -They teach me how to make a closet, to draw, reading, writing, dynamic activities, to dedicate poems, to make paper boxes, to sing songs and to guess riddles. Wilver: Reading without interruption (Girls and boys, Community 3, 2022).

E. Club facilitators are acquiring new skills and community recognition

The change is in relation to their perspectives and their new ways of looking at and collaborating with the Reading Club.



That they feel useful; as professionals, and they thought only teachers could do it, but now they have even become counselors (Club Facilitators, community 3, 2021).



Well, that the knowledge we have acquired is good and we have really taken them to practice and it is evident. Of course, there are weaknesses, not everything is easy, but it is a matter of doing things... I am not an expert with children, but you can see that the child is having fun, that the nice thing is that the child has fun and does not feel like it's all a straight line (Club Facilitators, community 4, 2021).



We are contributing to improve education because there has been a deficit in education and this type of methodology helps encourage the child's interest in reading, because that is an area that is not present, so we promote the importance of reading from an early age (Club Facilitators, community 6, 2021).



Well, it has been a good significant change, first of all, before I was very shy, I was very timid, and when I worked with the children, I became more communicative, and more sociable with people, for me it is... I will always continue with the children because I like the work I do. When I was studying, they told me to study to be a teacher, but I didn't like it, and now I have more communication with the children's parents (Club Facilitators, community 5, 2021).

In the second phase, it was observed that the facilitators/promoters have found it convenient to use with greater emphasis the play-related activities that awaken communication skills (dynamic activities, songs, games) and motor skills (crafts, drawing) as a previous step to the reinforcement of reading and writing skills.



We are guided under five steps but since I have first graders, I have third graders, fifth graders, then I do a reading from a flipchart and from that reading I generate many activities, because I can start from a picture, it can be a picture of a turtle, the reading can be "the turtle", but the first grader, he/she works with the "T", then I go with the first grader with that letter, then I go with the third grader who can identify words with "T", then I work it that way, and the sixth grader may already be able to write (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).

The great contributions that World Vision has made to the community through such changes were highlighted. Here are some examples:



The World Vision organization, because they are the ones who are supporting, they give training to the Volunteers and then the Volunteers, they are developing their position here teaching the children and they obtain great changes in the children. This has greatly strengthened family bonds, and being here together makes us stronger, besides they are learning to read, they go with a more awakened mind, and they learn to see what is bad and what is good (World Vision local official, Community 3, 2021).



Yes, I have been trained, the first training sessions, there were 3 training sessions, first what was the methodology that one had to follow, then there were training sessions on how a child should read, how to decorate a study space, how to draw details that were taught there, for something that is visible and the child can look at it, we were trained in all that, all those things that I had no idea about. We received training in puppetry, in all the training sessions we made summaries of all of the activities, the main thing was that the facilitator could adapt the methodology, singing time, story time and activity time and one had to know how to manage those activities. Not all of the volunteers have the level of schooling to help the child, and those are some of the difficulties, as I said, I know how to read, but can I sing? For example, I have experience in different activities, for example, like an expert in making puppets (Club Facilitators, Community 4, 2021).

I was in charge of training the promoters, at first an external consultant was requested, but I did not want that, because I had been trained firsthand and I wanted to see the experience as such, and they began to select these people with prior knowledge in education issues, with 5 continuous training sessions, then to train them and we went to do a census of children. They did a session with the children, then they indicated the gaps and so we improved them, teaching them to prepare a lesson plan, the modeling of reading and different strategies, the whole session of the club, we practiced, they went with the children and then we returned to the next training and we looked at what we should strengthen, so we spent 6 continuous months making the agenda with them, going to the field, coming to compile the experience and returning, It was an interactive training, not only theoretical, I went club to club to see how they were doing, I looked at the gaps in silence, like when I saw children with disabilities, and I thought how to teach the volunteer to manage this, this was the second stage, it was no longer about the 5 skills, but strategies to manage groups and strengthen reading strategies (World Vision regional officer, 2021).



More accompaniment/guidance from World Vision for the facilitating promoters was needed.

Another change we have had is, now I feel the reading promoters are more empowered, they need to be supported and their schedules respected. Yes, I know when the day is, I have to be there, and I do it. Well, basically the promoters plan their club on weekends. So, during the week there are few clubs that are carried out because that is independent from other time of the promoter's time, so we cannot demand much from him. And we are also working to have at least two reading promoters in each club because we see that sometimes it is very difficult to manage the group, so at least two. And maybe one goes for training and the other one doesn't because he/she can't go. And you can see that they are older. You can see that type of club atmosphere in the communities. They had almost no materials to do it (World Vision local official, community 8, 2022).



Another change in the clubs is the number of girls and boys the promotor works with:



Yes, the number of children I used to serve was higher. What we have now is fewer, before, they had more than 15 children and that was healthy for the reading promotor, and this year the standard is 15, the maximum can be 18, but they cannot go beyond that. The reading promoters already have a different agenda than last year. Last year the promoters felt that they were like teachers, the way they were taught at the workshops was more like you had to plan like a teacher and that is what they told us. Now it is a looser agenda, more fun, more friendly, where they have the prayer, the singing, the time to do the dynamic activities, the time to read and that is more friendly, so they feel it is easier, so to speak, because last year they felt they were like teachers. So, that has also helped the reading promoters to feel encouraged and not feel like a burden (World Vision local official, Community 8, 2022).

F. Accompaniment/guidance of parents/caregivers to their children at the core of the community network.

In many of the communities, it was identified that some parents support the Reading Club, which is essential for the proper functioning of the sessions.



Sometimes when we have to do handicrafts some come and support us and we finish faster with their help, when we ask them for example to bring boxes and the children's parents bring them, also, they support us because they guide the children to come to class, they tell them to attend the Reading Club, the school teacher supports us and she is from the community (Club Facilitators, Community 5, 2021).

The change is in relation to their perspectives and their new ways of looking at and collaborating with the Reading Club.



That they feel useful; as professionals, and they thought only teachers could do it, but now they have even become counselors (World Vision local official, Community 3, 2021).



Well, that the knowledge we have acquired is good and we have really taken them to practice, and it is evident. Of course, there are weaknesses, not everything is easy, but it is a matter of doing things... I am not an expert with children, but you can see that the child is having fun, that the nice thing is that the child has fun and does not feel like it's all a straight line (Club Facilitators, community 4, 2021).



We are contributing to improving education because there has been a deficit in education and this type of methodology helps the child's interest in reading, because that is an area that is not present, so we promote the importance of reading from an early age (Club Facilitators, community 6, 2021).



Well, it has been a good significant change, first of all, before I was very shy, I was very timid, and when I worked with the children, I became more communicative, and more sociable with people, for me it is... I will always continue with the children because I like the work I do. When I was studying, they told me to study to be a teacher, but I didn't like it, and now I have more communication with the children's parents (Club Facilitators, community 5, 2021).

Mothers are fully willing to help their children. The mothers also take into consideration the purpose for which the clubs exist and therefore the importance of the clubs in the community, especially for the children.



Yes, it has been evident, parents accompany their children more, because as a facilitator of the club I advise parents to assist their children here as well, they tell us teachers that it is a very good job that we are doing, then parents tell the teachers (Club Facilitators, Community 3, 2021).

In the second phase, as in the first phase, the mothers continue to accompany and support the children in the Reading Clubs and express the following:



Reading comprehension; they improve academic performance. I see in the emotional part, the mental part of the children, that they are more united among themselves, that they support each other. And I see a greater mental development. That is what I have observed the most (World Vision local official, Community 5, 2022).

In relation to the children's relatives.



I have seen that this is maintained, I think that last year I told him that what I saw the most was that fathers, or rather mothers, were very involved, that they participated, that they came to observe what their children were doing, and that they also supported them with their homework and with the work assigned at the clubs (World Vision local official, Community 5, 2022).

The parents of the children attending the club provide support to the children in their homes:



Look, in some homes parents say that they have had a change because at least some mothers used to say, "I used to tell my child to do his homework and that was it", if the child did it well, OK, if he did a poor job, the teacher would check it at school. And now they say, well, that they have seen changes because the child arrives, I give them two sheets, take them away, let them read them, those who can read, read them, and I am going to ask them what the sheets said, so some children come back and say things like: "mom, read this reading to me", "wait, maybe later I will read it to you", "no, right now I was going to learn what it says for when I have to go to the club... I already know what I am going to say". So, the parents are getting involved with the children because they get involved with them with the sheets they take home (Club Facilitators, Community 8, 2022).



G. Enabling community members to work together to help the community

Some adult leaders who are concerned about the development of the communities and the younger generations are highlighted, and their role is to support the Reading Clubs.



There are leaders in this community who organize everything, so they have seen a change even more than I have, I have seen my point of view, so I think I have also seen that change, the help they are giving to the children with intelligence also by sharing the readings, sharing the teaching and even the one who teaches them (World Vision local official, Community 2, 2021).

Regarding the discussions in focus groups, among the strengths that stand out is that the community is committed, organized and motivated.



...we all learn and win," said the community and municipal leader. He also adds that the community takes pride in the fact that all of the social work personnel are from the community (teachers, nurses, members of the health brigade and volunteers) (World Vision local official, Community 3, 2021).

No interviews are detailed in the second phase of the survey. We did not interview members of the municipality, since in the first phase we only interviewed a community leader from the community, one who also worked with the municipality.



H. Sensitization and accompaniment in the education of children in community networks

Facilitator members, promoters, volunteers, and caregivers have become more sensitized to strengthening early education and literacy. Particularly (in some cases) caregivers are broadening their vision and extending a greater commitment beyond the instruction to send them to school, or asking them to do the assignments without accompanying them at home. One mother said:



I used to tell my child to do his homework and that was it, if the child did it well, OK, if he did a poor job, the teacher would check it at school. And now they say, well, that they have seen changes because the child arrives, I give them two sheets, take them away, let them read them, those who can read, read them, and I am going to ask them what the sheets said, so some children come back and say things like: mom, read this reading to me, "wait, maybe later I will read it to you, no, right now I was going to learn what it says for when I have to go to the club... I already know what I am going to say. So, the parents are getting involved with the children because they get involved with them with the sheets they take home (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



One of the changes is joy, right, the joy because it creates this feeling, as in the case of my daughter says now during the month in which we celebrate mother's day, every day she brought a little drawing for me, "I love you mom", and then imagine how I feel and it is clear that it motivates us, and besides, the feeling right, the love grows more and more for our children, and yes, both the change and one's daily life. I am a mom, a housewife. The children change also, they are filled with joy also, right (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 6, 2022).



The motivation is in the sense that it is like going back to school, as she says, because now with the help of an adult, life is busy, there are things that one leaves behind, you no longer read like you used to. So now when they get home, with their high intellect, they ask you questions and you feel cornered, what do you do? You do research again, search so that you have an answer, because you cannot leave that child with doubts, so, as she also said, as a parent, you are motivated to go back to study again (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 6, 2022).



I do see, there are some (mothers) who come to see how the club is going, how they are doing, they support the children, but this is an area that can still be improved (World Vision local official, Community 6, 2022).

As a result of their participation in the Reading Clubs, they identified the strengthening of community networks to support children's literacy learning.



Yes, the Facilitators, the parents, we as a community and the World Vision organization, the change has been great, because we have seen it, from the moment the Facilitator leaves his house he is already contributing because he is eager to teach, there is a great interest in helping the children, besides they are people that one at least has a degree, the other lady has been a catechist for years (Community member, Community 4, 2021).



Well, yes, it has contributed something because they were restless, they did not understand or care for the readings, but with the club they became more enthusiastic, the day of the club they attend and the day of the Bible readings as well, before they did not attend for days, and now they have been motivated with that, with the stories, being dynamic and the readings, they became more enthusiastic, in their behavior, yes, they have been great. Yes, with the parents' meetings they respond to the invitations (Faith Leader, Community 4, 2021).



Unity among people, because it used to be difficult for people to work in groups, also with respect to the care of children, there has been more awareness, which is something very important, the organization has been developing that area through training, it has been the most important aspect, because most of these children are the ones who attend catechesis (Faith Leader, Community 6, 2021).



The biggest change we could say is the relationship between the children themselves and the volunteers who teach, because when they come here they have the confidence that they are going to come and do something and that they are looked at with affection, they have what they need, everything is supplied to them, so they feel joy when they come to this place (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 5, 2021).



Well, yes, there have been many changes, really, because people have learned to organize themselves, when we do some activity, we all get together, and we do the activities we have to do, like the little jobs that are done in the community, then everyone joins in, the parents, the kids, and us too, the church workers. - Health is important also, because people don't want to do anything when they are sick (Faith Leader, Community 2, 2022).

I. Children attending Reading Clubs build confidence in themselves and the community

For many of the participants interviewed, one of the most valuable effects of participating in the Reading Clubs is the trust generated among both adults and children as a result of their involvement in the different project activities.



The most important change for me is the confidence in her, because the most important thing is to believe in oneself to move forward and love more than just studies (Mother/father/caregiver, Community 6, 2021).



Animation is a good thing and if it helps to come and see that what is being done for the children is something beneficial, that they develop their skills more because a child who can read and write can make a handcraft and learn quickly, so it is a benefit for the child, it will help him later on (Club Facilitator, Community 3, 2021).



Parents need to be sensitized to send their children to this type of space. Because in the end, the child learns to read in one way or another, they have to do it, but parents should have the confidence to send their children to the Reading Club and feel that they are giving results. I think it is very significant and it is also something sustainable, over time (World Vision local official, Community 6, 2021).

In the children, I have seen changes, some children were embarrassed to go to the blackboard, they said 'I am embarrassed, they are going to laugh at me', they are now able to have better interactions with the children of the club, then there is a change, they have learned, they ask what is that, some children have had trouble reading, the mothers tell me that they have made good progress, they tell me with our help they have learned, a child in one of my groups tells me: Sister, what are we going to do, how do we make that flower, how are we going to sing? Since they don't know, I write on the blackboard so they can see, those who don't sing only listen, but there has been a big change. I tell them that they come here to learn, I have learned to make crafts, sometimes you have an idea, but I have learned to have more love, more patience with the children, I was a Sunday School teacher, it has never been difficult for me to talk to the children, I like them to participate, so I have to help them, I have them work and help each other, the one who knows with the one who does not know, so they can see and in this way they learn (Club Facilitators, Community 9, 2022).



J. Children attending the club participate in the original creation of stories and tales, organized contests and different school activities

I think that, for her, it has strengthened her knowledge, let's say that sometimes she is given a book here and as the girl reads it, then she comes home, and says, 'mom come here, I'm going to read you a story'. She can't read very well. But if she can identify the image, she starts to say more or less what they read to her, that there was a little goat, anyway. Ah, how nice this story I tell her, yes, mom tells me that I can read, and then she says, just as I told it to you, so it says here, so the knowledge she has, it grows, she has learned to develop knowledge (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 8, 2022).



One of the changes in the girls and boys in the second phase is that they improved their participation in the activities they carry out in the club, as well as in declamation and cultural activities.

Well, the children I have seen in school, well, they are the most participative and some parents told me that they didn't like those "kids" who go out reciting poems and now, the teacher who is currently there, because the children I have are preschoolers and only second graders, sorry, third graders, most of them are third graders and preschoolers. So the teacher tells me, because as the teacher, she is my godmother too, so sometimes there is a group where I am also involved. In this one, in a teacher's group. And then the teacher said to me, some of these children, there are children who didn't like to participate in declamation and folkloric dance and all that, now she says, she even surprises me, she says, because there was a child, she says that she couldn't get him to participate, in the dances. And now, he is the first one, he asks and wants to be included in everything and so I feel that we have been able to reach that point. And there are many children who are like this, who want to discover more. So, it is true that they have been awakening every day (Club Facilitators, Community 7, 2022).



They are learning to express themselves, they are losing fear, they are learning to share, to coexist, which is the most important thing among them. You can see that there is no exclusion, that is, they all work equally, they are taken into account equally and it is nice. I am happy to know that my daughter has learned to share, to live the moment with her little classmates and she is learning, and it is helping her a lot (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 6, 2022).



Well, for me personally, right, I love the opportunity that this Mission gives us, this project, because our children are growing, they come here to learn and there is a great reason, because as the sisters say, right, they are so eager to come when it's their turn to come here, at least my daughter tells me, daddy, I will go soon, when the mother comes I tell her to go, I say, at one o'clock I think it is your turn, now she wanted to come with me, no, now it's for adults, the meeting has not ended, your meeting is not until one o'clock, then you go, OK. It is something important, right, because they relate with the children too, they become friends, they grow in affection, right, and learn to interact with those who teach them also. All of this is something important for them and for us as parents also (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 8, 2022).



The children have changed their behavior with more respect, obedience and have made new friends among the girls and boys who attend the Reading Club. There are activities here for them, I really like how they start to express themselves since they come here, and I have seen that they have developed and... Companionship, unity, because if they don't go out in a group they don't go out, or we were holding hands with such and such a classmate and we were taking care of each other... These are some of the issues that they also share (Mothers/parents/caregivers, Community 10, 2022).



K. Participation of children of different ages in activities at the Club

In the second phase it was also possible to observe, the selection of activities based on children's ages and skills, so that they would not be distracted during the development of the agenda and in this way each member could feel sufficiently stimulated and included in the activities, being able to progressively carry out the instructions of the reading promoters.

There are children who read fast to me, they read fast! I also have younger children and what I do with the younger ones who don't understand the Reading Club yet, what do I do with them? I do dynamic activities, I even have another promoter help me, as you know I can't handle so many children because it's not that it's difficult for me, it's just that there are times when the children read, the younger children are more hyperactive, so we do a kind of dynamic activity for them, we have drawings, that's what attracts their attention, we draw pictures, we color with them, and with the older ones who can already read, some had difficulties reading, I measured the time for them to adapt. When they were reading, they looked slow, but when they kept practicing, they went faster, as if they grasped the questions quickly (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



At the beginning when we started the club, we had almost 50 children, because they were from 6 years old and up, from 6 to 12; we had two groups, but this year, at the beginning of this year, most of them went to class, among the youngest we had, from 6 to 7; they went to class and then our attendance dropped. There were three groups, look, we had one on Wednesday from 9 to 10 in the morning, which were the ones that did not go to classes and a small group of those who went in the afternoon; but then at the beginning of this year, it became complicated because they went to class, and we were left with only two who were the ones who went in the afternoon. Then, they told us that with two we could not continue with that club, that was on Wednesday morning, so we left it and we only work in the afternoon, on Thursday afternoon; we have two clubs (Club Facilitators, Community 10, 2022).



L. Attendance of children at the Club, generates opportunities to open new community clubs

In the second phase of the survey, there was an increase in attendance for the clubs, and new clubs had to be opened and new promoters had to be found. The club led by the church has achieved a greater coverage of girls/boys participating in the sessions given by the promoters, motivated by the improvement of the physical conditions of the church.



I understand that in the church "La Hermosa" last year there was only one club, they only had 15 children there. Yes. Today they have grown to two clubs. Two. They have 30 children
Yes, 30 children (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



Since now it is Sister Carmen who runs the church, now it is bigger, she has the children's church, they also have a little school for the children that is divided, one for each child. So, what has motivated us, more mothers have come, they have brought more children, so the children have come more frequently, when their mothers don't come, they come on their own or I go to pick them up, I go by to pick up each child so that the child and the mother don't get discouraged, so that they can join the Reading Club (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



I would like that, in addition to us, who have three Reading Clubs here, other communities can also have them. So that this would allow us to have a relationship, both with the community and the parents, and this would help the school on a daily basis. Because the truth is that, it is little, it is little what is given to the child and we should like her, I really like her idea, she says; twice a week (Club Facilitators, Community 8, 2022).

M. Credibility and legitimacy in the network of promoters who lead Reading Clubs at the community level

In both the first and second phases, a remarkable legitimacy and trust that the children give to the reading promoters in the facilitation of the sessions is further strengthened, which extends to the caregivers and other members of the community. This condition is due to the close bond they have been able to consolidate with the children.

Regarding the integration of fathers and mothers, they expressed the following:



In my opinion, excellent, because if I tell the children -we have a Reading Club on Saturday- and they are ready, at 2:30 in the afternoon the children are here, from there they (mothers) are participating, others come to see them, to take care of them, so the support is good (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



When I tell them "Let's go to the Reading Club", then the children are already waiting for me, the older ones and the younger ones get their moms ready and bring them to the churches (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



They have congratulated us, because one of them is my niece, a little girl, and she says to me "Aunt, Samantha can read, but she doesn't want to, ask her to read at home". So I ask her to read, then she says, -You can read, that's good! (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).



Just as it happens to her, so it happens to me with a little girl, a little niece of ours, she reads fast and the other one doesn't and she tells me to teach her more so that they can both learn (Club Facilitators, Community 6, 2022).

CONCLUSIONS

The community-level survey process carried out in the first and second phases satisfactorily fulfilled the planned sample of the research instruments. The key informants interviewed during the two surveys were the children who attend the Reading Clubs, mothers/parents/caregivers, Reading Club Volunteer Facilitators, religious leaders, community members, municipal leaders, and in addition, interviews were conducted with World Vision Community Facilitators, as well as with education specialists at the territorial and national levels.

World Vision's support in coordinating with the territories to guarantee the field schedule for the survey should be highlighted, as it was important to coincide with the time available for the stakeholders involved in the survey process. For the collection of information, a team of researchers were involved in the construction of the instruments, which allowed a better appropriation of these instruments to facilitate them with greater mastery during the processes of the interviews and focus groups, also facilitating the transcription of the data collected. Having carried out the team reflection in each community as the survey work progressed was helpful to the research team in order to improve the work in the following communities and to organize the relevant results of each community into memos.

Taking into account the findings of the study, it is recognized that the UL project in Nicaragua, at the time of the community survey, presented significant evidence of the appropriation of the UL model by the stakeholders involved.

The time that they implemented the community component in the places where the information was collected for most of them was two years, the findings of the research show the perceptions of the participants about the immediate benefits and positive changes in the learning of the children who attend the Reading Clubs, which contribute to the impact that the project aspires to as a result of its implementation.

Among the changes that stand out in the children who attend the club are the improvement in reading and writing skills, improvement in communication and oral expression, improvement in imagination, creativity and socialization, to be more sensitive, helpful and share what they know with other children. An example of the children's progress in learning is that they now excel in painting and reading competitions in the communities, winning first places in contests in which they participate, representing a source of pride for their parents, volunteers, and community leaders. The volunteer Facilitators of the clubs value that the girls and boys have learned to read more fluently through their participation in the Reading Club. There are some older children (10 to 12 years old) whose parents do not send them to school because they are assigned chores at home, but they participate in the Reading Club, and it has allowed them to advance in their reading levels.

In the second phase of the survey, there are substantial testimonies that have attested to the impact of the sessions as an opportunity to reinforce the children's learning, even in parallel to the requirements of the grade they are in. On the other hand, it has been possible to get other members of the club to read. Positive validation is collected from the children who attend the Reading Clubs, where emotions linked to joy, motivation, and satisfaction for attending the meetings are observed, benefiting from the interaction, and openly developing their communication and socialization skills with the rest of the members. The playfulness factor of the sessions is again a key condition; there is positive validation of the content and interactive nature of the activities and games.

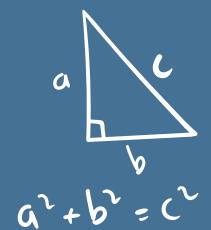
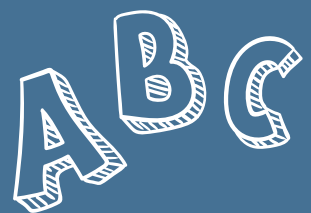
At the same time that the children are advancing in literacy, the Volunteer Facilitators of the club are acquiring new skills and aspirations with the Reading Club experience, the change is in relation to their perspectives and their new ways of looking at and collaborating with the Reading Clubs and their commitment to serve their communities and their love for the children. The volunteer facilitators of the Reading Club in the 10 communities positively value the support provided by World Vision with training and materials.

It also highlights the willingness of women leaders in three communities to participate in various programs in their communities and to support the clubs as volunteers, providing space in their own homes to implement the activities. The importance of a Parents' Committee identified in three communities, made up of mothers of the children in the clubs, is highlighted, from which they become more involved in the activities, offering logistical support to the volunteers of the Reading Clubs.

The sensitization and accompaniment/guidance of volunteers and caregivers has allowed a greater awareness of the importance of education and early literacy. Particularly in some cases, caregivers broaden their vision and extend a greater commitment that transcends the duty to merely send children to school or ask them to do their homework without being involved with them at home.

The involvement of women who are mothers in the 10 communities is relevant, as they support their children to attend the clubs and also play the role of caring for the children in feeding them and encouraging them to attend school and the Reading Clubs. They consider that the Reading Club is a space to reinforce school content, and where their children have fun, resulting in greater confidence and improved communication skills, as well as better academic results at school.

The role of the church in the Reading Clubs in 8 out of the 10 communities observed is a key and essential factor for the organization, infrastructure, and functioning of the Reading Clubs. Religious leaders have provided facilities within the churches and are involved in the Reading Clubs from their work as volunteers. This occurs among members of both Protestant and Catholic churches. Also in the second phase, it was observed that the improvement and expansion of physical conditions/spaces motivated more girls and boys to join the Reading Clubs. Many of the promoters synchronize Sunday School classes with the club sessions as a strategy to attract more members to the clubs, thus spreading and extending the attendance of more members in the community.



When analyzing the gender dimensions, it is identified that in all 10 communities, the Reading Clubs are led mostly by young women volunteers, housewives, religious leaders, Sunday School teachers and delegates of the Word; while in three communities these are coordinated by young men, students, university students and delegates of the Word, who are very committed to their communities, to the children and to the church. The Reading Club Volunteers in the 10 communities commented that there are no differences between the participation of girls and boys, the treatment is respectful, cordial, and cheerful in all key informants (girls, boys, volunteers, mothers, faith leaders). Girls and boys are given their space, and time to be who they are (girls and boys).

The complex context of violence and insecurity in three communities was seen as both a challenge and an opportunity because of the legitimacy of the church to carry out the Reading Club activities. The church thus becomes a positive reference within the community for the promotion of values, which places it in a position to provide support of various kinds to the needs of the children. Some club volunteers mentioned that being part of the club gives them the satisfaction that, in a fragile context, they are part of the positive change for children and young people.

During phase I of data collection, Reading Clubs and Facilitators were found to be working in a stable manner, i.e., with regularity both in the clubs and the personnel in charge, even in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic. In phase II, there was a more irregular panorama with substitution of the personnel in charge of the clubs, as well as the cancellation and/or temporary suspension of some clubs (not attributable to the Covid-19 phenomenon). The main reasoning behind the rotation of Facilitators is due to the economic pressure that forces them to migrate both within and outside of the country in search of employment opportunities.

Key informants in three communities agree that the program should foresee and think of a follow-up for children who are leaving the age range served by the clubs and becoming pre-adolescents, thus becoming potential leaders and valuable human resources in their communities. Something that was also highlighted as key in the Reading Clubs is that the girls and boys can keep up, be consistent, as well as the need to increase the quantity and quality of work materials.



Responding to the research question on: *How are community members in Nicaragua adapting the UL model in terms of their actions and interactions in implementing the UL project's community-based activities to support literacy in children, especially the most vulnerable?* The following findings were established:

It is considered that Nicaragua at this time is stable, which allows for community interaction according to the relevant stakeholders around the Reading Clubs. A metaphor for scaling up, since the Reading Club innovation was introduced more than three years ago and has been expanded and disseminated with at least two clubs in 6 out of the 10 communities and in two communities there are up to four clubs each, and growing, increasing the participation and attendance of children steadily and with motivation.

Girls and boys participate on a weekly basis, and in the case of the Reading Clubs that use churches as a space for the sessions, they carry out the activities on Sundays (or other days, such as Saturdays), either as part of catechism classes or Sunday School.

The findings of this study will enable key stakeholders to learn about what enables and what hinders Reading Club implementation so that innovation can more effectively "take root" and achieve greater scale.

Regarding the sustainability of the Clubs, in general and with a greater or lesser degree of conviction, the idea that it is possible to give continuity to the program with the participation of the community is expressed, including fathers, mothers, caregivers, churches and local leadership, by managing external support (especially from Protestant churches) and, to a lesser extent, by knocking on the door of the Ministry of Education.

In this sense, what is essential is the commitment of the volunteer staff followed by the conviction of the parents about the benefits of the program, which makes the effort to sustain it valid. It is suggested to leave the communities sufficiently supplied by World Vision and thereafter to create the conditions to obtain the necessary work materials on their own.

Regarding adaptation, most of the staff in charge of the clubs have adapted children's readings, dynamics, songs and other playful activities to carry out the meetings. They are producing their own stories, even at the level of contests, trying to share locally what is produced.

Creativity in the use of materials is an element to highlight; it is reused, adapted or transformed, not discarded (examples; Community 2, using play dough to make figures in the absence of paper or so that in the event of rain the paper is not damaged. Community 1: the use of ropes - rustic strings with discarded cardboard to make a "Spider of Letters").

On the one hand, from the point of community demand, the positive effect created by the Reading Clubs has generated the opening of new clubs. The behavior in this sense has been differentiated; while some communities internally manage the redistribution or search for materials and human resources, either because a Club exceeded the capacity of attention (number of children) and is divided, or because more requests arrive so another Club is created. On the other hand, other communities with greater limitations (organization, poverty, management capacity) present their demands directly to World Vision, waiting for an effective collaborative response. What is certain in either case is that a good project attracts and generates expectations of growth.

With the contests in clubs and communities (reading, drawing, dramatizations, games), in addition to stimulating healthy and recreational competition, it points outward to the local community becoming an element of dissemination. By relating these activities to the success of the clubs, it will be understood to a large extent the fact of demanding the program's coverage capacity both within and outside of the community.

To complement the results of the findings, we have the EGRA study conducted by World Vision in the territories where the research was conducted: the results of the study show that the indicators linked to literacy have deteriorated, compared to the results of the measurement conducted in July 2019, which confirms that the issue of education and especially literacy as a key element in the development of skills continues to be a priority and a challenge. According to the risk levels established by the DIBELS scale, when comparing the results of reading fluency, a gap was determined, since in 2019 it reported 48.1% at the Good level, that is, the children achieved more than 70%, while the current measurement reports a decrease to 44.8%, increasing the risk level from 42.4% to 43.2% which may have a tendency to decrease depending on the factors that are affecting the children's learning.

Reading comprehension in relation to a text read by the children reports that, out of four questions related to the text, they managed to respond assertively an average of 2.6%, by 63.9% of students, which reports a decrease compared to the 2019 results. For oral comprehension, in which children manage to understand what the other person expresses or reads, the level of attainment was a 3.96% average achieved out of five questions. When reviewing each of the questions answered correctly by each child, only 43.9% managed to get correct answers to all 5 questions. For the year 2022, according to the Historical Comparative Reading and Comprehension Baseline - PT AF22 (World Vision Nicaragua), there is an increase in children who read adequately and have good reading comprehension; Tipitapa 53.5% (2021; 36%), Larreynaga 44.8% (2021; 41%) La Trinidad 34.8% (2021; 30.9%) and Condega 49.4% (2021; 42.9%), territories of the Reading Clubs observed by ULLN.

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