



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

NORC at the University of Chicago, Implementation and Classroom Observation Studies 2019

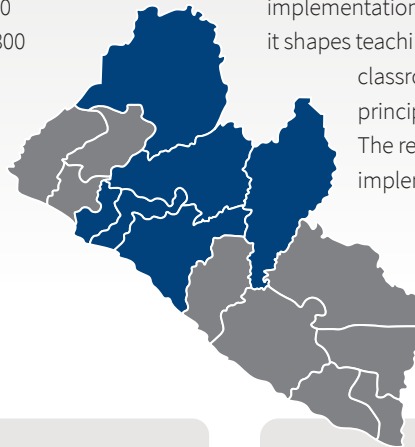
USAID Read Liberia Program

Read Liberia Overview

The goal of the USAID Read Liberia program is to improve early Read Liberia grade reading performance of students in six counties in Liberia – Montserrado, Margibi, Bong, Grand Bassa, Nimba and Lofa. It aims to reach 640 primary schools, 1,280 Grade 1 and Grade 2 teachers, and around 57,800 Grade 1 and Grade 2 students. To this end, the program provides coaching and professional development for teachers and principals, and Read Liberia instructional and supplementary materials such as teacher guides and reading and activity books for students.

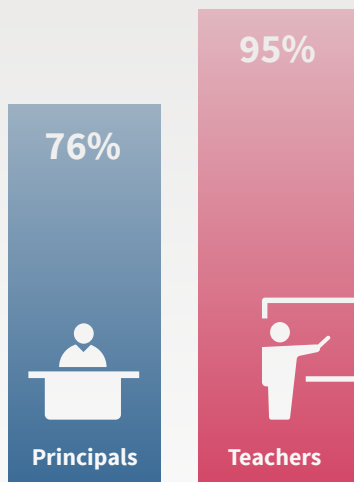
Implementation Study

NORC at the University of Chicago is conducting an external impact evaluation (IE) of the Read Liberia program. As part of the evaluation, NORC conducted a research study in 2019 to assess the implementation of Read Liberia in schools and understand how it shapes teaching practices in classrooms. The study employed classroom observations and interviews with teachers and principals in Read Liberia schools and control schools. The results below present an overview of the program implementation and teaching practices.



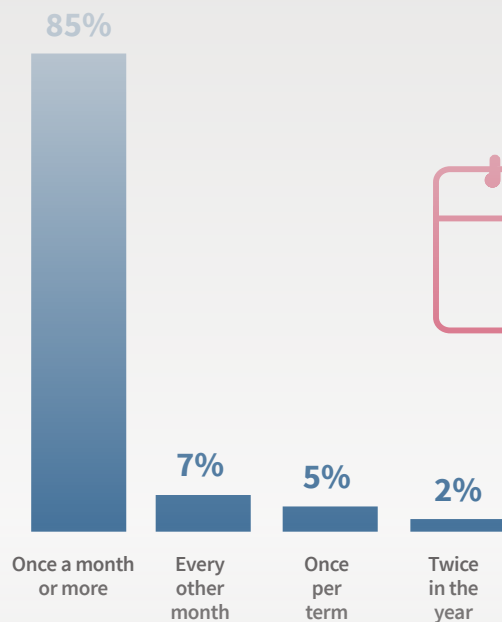
USAID | LIBERIA
Read Liberia Program
● Program Counties

Percent of principals and teachers trained by Read Liberia



Attended any Read Liberia training on how to teach reading in 2018

Frequency of Read Liberia coaches observing literacy classes

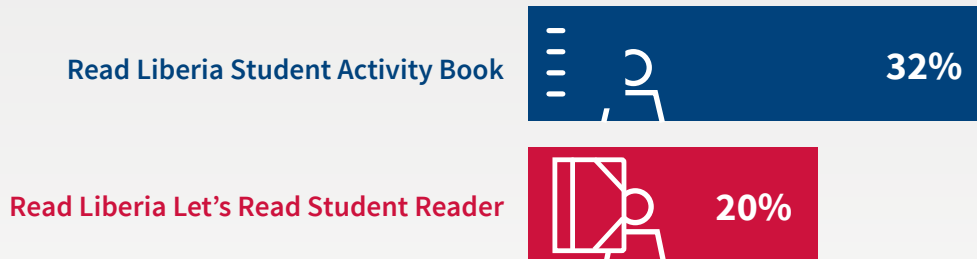


The general opinion about the training is very favorable, with **100% of trained teachers and principals saying that they found it useful.**

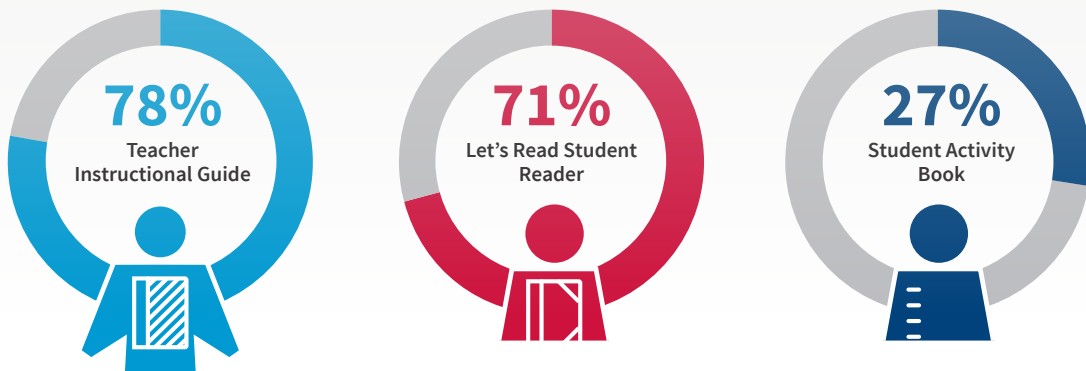
All teachers interviewed in Read Liberia schools received the Read Liberia teacher instructional guide.

All Read Liberia visited schools received the Read Liberia student activity book and most schools received the Read Liberia Let's Read student reader; however, **not all students had copies of these books** when the evaluation team visited the classrooms.

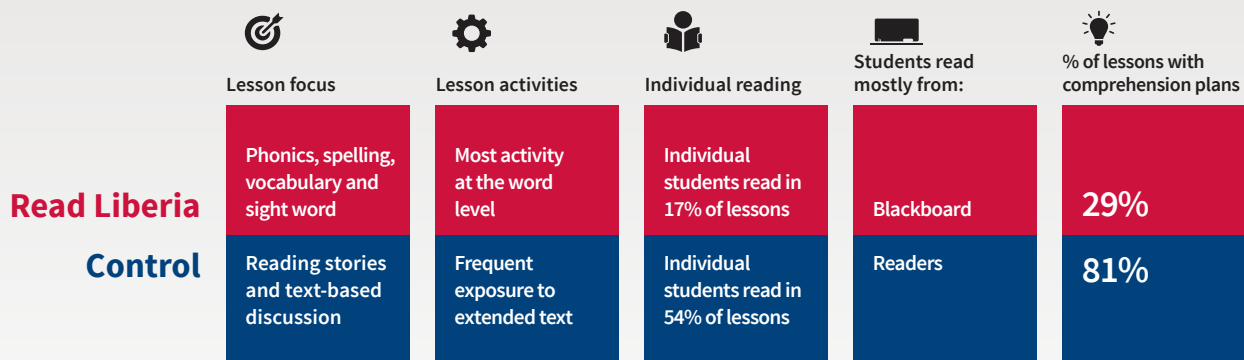
Percentage of Read Liberia Grade 2 classes visited where all students have a copy of:



Use of Read Liberia materials in Read Liberia Schools – Percentage of classrooms



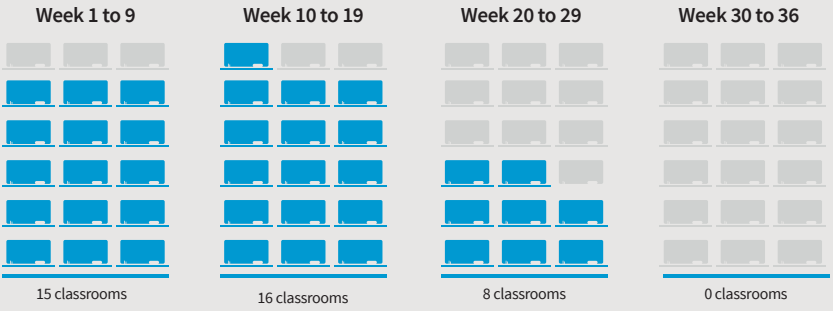
Dominant reading instruction practices – Grade 2



Treatment lessons focus on reading at the letter and word level, the focus of the first four (of eight) steps in the Read Liberia daily lesson plan. **Students in Control classrooms have more opportunities to read extended text, read individually, and engage in more comprehension activities** than students in treatment classrooms.

Teachers were not covering Read Liberia lesson plan at the expected pace. The program has a total of 36 weeks. When classroom observations took place, teachers should have been covering weeks 30 to 36. Instead we found that all teachers were lagging behind.

Teaching week covered during observed lesson –
number of classrooms



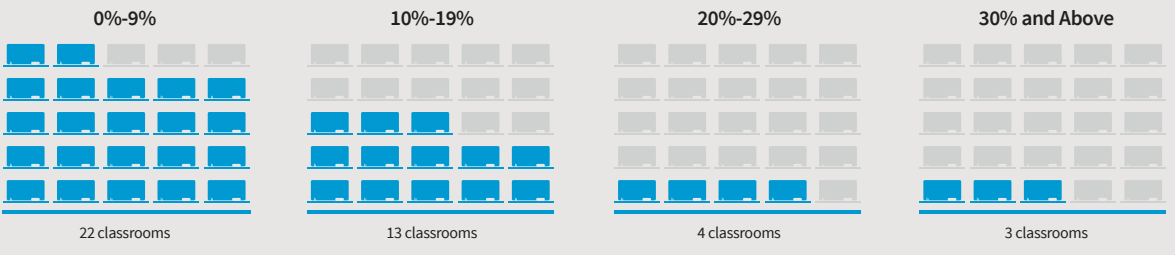
Not following Read Liberia plans
number of classrooms



Classrooms

By the end of the school year, the **Read Liberia students had only completed a portion of the Read Liberia Student Activity Book.** Over one third of the sample had completed less than 10 pages of the 144-page book.

Proportion of Student Activity Book completed – number of classrooms



Classrooms

None of the teachers who were observed covered the eight steps of the daily lesson plan as recommended by the Read Liberia program. Most teachers covered between two and four steps.

Conclusions and Next Steps

The Read Liberia program has reached the schools as planned. Almost all Grade 2 teachers and a large majority of principals received Read Liberia training and have a favorable opinion about it. Read Liberia distributed teaching and learning materials to all program schools and almost all teachers report using these resources. However, we also found poor adherence to weekly progression through the program and daily lesson plans, and the use of student materials.

The evaluation research suggests students in Control classrooms are exposed to more reading opportunities than students in Treatment classrooms. In seeking a balanced approach to reading instruction, the Read Liberia program should seek to increase coverage of reading of extended text and comprehension activities alongside the focus on phonics and activity at the word level (such as spelling).

In 2020, NORC will conduct the endline evaluation of Read Liberia and will assess the impact of the program on reading performance of Grade 2 students.

For more information about the impact evaluation contact NORC at the University of Chicago:
Alicia Menendez | menendez@uchicago.edu