



27 February 2026

Project Summary

Project:	UCatchUp Kasese II
Donor:	Hempel Foundation
Reporting Period:	1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025
Submission Date:	28 February 2026

Executive Summary

This report details the 2025 implementation of UCatchUp Kasese II in Kasese District and Kasese Municipal Council. The programme addresses gaps in foundational literacy and numeracy among Primary 3–5 learners through UCatchUp, Uganda's contextualised, school-based, government-led Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) model. The approach focuses on assessing learners, grouping them by learning level rather than age or grade, and delivering structured, level-appropriate targeted instruction supported by ongoing mentoring and data use.

During the reporting period (January–December 2025), the programme transitioned from foundation-building to full district implementation and deeper institutionalisation. UCatchUp successfully expanded from 80 to 264 government-aided primary schools. The programme reached 56,448 learners at baseline and 55,041 learners at midline. Teachers delivered daily one-hour UCatchUp lessons before, during, or after regular school hours. Government capacity at school, district, primary teachers' college (PTC), and national levels was strengthened. 1001 teachers received initial training and 869 received refresher training, 184 school-based mentors were equipped to provide in-school mentoring, and 20 district- and PTC -level Master Trainers trained to strengthen the UCatchUp cascade training model.

Data-driven decision-making remained central to implementation. Baseline and midline assessments were conducted across all 264 government-aided primary schools, with 100 percent of schools submitting their data at midline. District-level stakeholders were trained on the use of the web-based data portal to analyse performance trends, identify underperforming schools, and prioritise targeted mentoring and monitoring support. Review meetings at catchment and district levels strengthened collective interpretation of results and reinforced local ownership of performance improvement strategies.

Midline results demonstrate substantial learning gains, including a 13-percentage point improvement in learners able to read a paragraph in English, a 10-percentage point improvement in learners able to read a paragraph in local language, and a 23-percentage point improvement in learners able to perform 2-digit subtraction. In addition, the proportion of learners unable to read words and recognise two-digit numbers declined substantially.

However, a nationwide teachers' industrial strike in Term 3 disrupted lesson delivery for over one month and prevented the planned endline assessment. Upon school reopening, priority was given to lesson recovery and preparation for national examinations. While this limited full-year measurement of learning gains, the programme demonstrated resilience through adaptive management. Targeted mentoring of low-performing schools has been prioritised for the next cycle, and recovery-focused assessments are underway to measure potential learning regression and inform corrective action. Institutionalisation progressed steadily throughout the year. At district level, leadership increasingly drove assessment dissemination, monitoring, and review processes. At the national level, a UCatchUp Task Team, chaired by the Teacher Education, Training and Development Department, advanced development of a costed strategy for scaling and sustaining the model within existing government systems. Senior Ministry officials expressed support for expansion through established structures, reinforcing prospects for sustainability beyond project funding.

An independent external evaluation, conducted by Laterite and commencing in January 2026, will assess cost-effectiveness, sustainability, and programme refinement needs, including the emerging peer mentoring model. Findings will inform strategic decisions on national adoption and future collaboration.

Overall, 2025 marked a decisive shift from pilot expansion to system-embedded implementation at scale. Despite contextual disruptions, UCatchUp continues to demonstrate measurable learning gains, strengthened government capacity, and increasing institutional ownership, positioning the model as a viable and scalable solution to Uganda's foundational learning challenge.

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List of Acronyms

AA	Associate Assessors
ASER	Annual State of Education Report
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer
CC	Coordinating Centre
CCT	Coordinating Centre Tutors
CfQ	Call for Quotations
CIES	Comparative and International Education Society
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DEO	District Education Officer
DIS	District Inspector of Schools
DLG	District Local Government
DSC	District Support Coordinator
EA	Education Advisor
LC V	Local Council Five
MC	Municipal Council
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
OMR	Optical Mark Recognition
P3	Primary Grade 3
P4	Primary Grade 4
P5	Primary Grade 5
PC	Project Coordinator
cPTC	Core Primary Teacher Colleges
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
SEA	Strategic Education Advisor
TaRL	Teaching at the Right Level
TETD	Teacher Education Training and Development
TLSM	Teaching and Learning Support Materials
TTI	Teacher Training Institute
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board
UNGA	United National General Assembly
UNITE	Uganda National Institute for Teacher Education

1. Introduction

Despite making great strides in primary education enrolment following the introduction of Universal Primary Education, Uganda has not met its goal of ensuring learner competencies in literacy and numeracy. [Recent national assessments](#) showed that only 42.7 percent of Grade 6 learners were grade-level proficient in English literacy, while 58.0 percent were grade-level proficient in numeracy. In Kasese, 2025 baseline data indicated that 56 percent of assessed learners could not read a paragraph in English and 76 per cent could not perform subtraction, underscoring deep learning gaps among Primary 3 to Primary 5 pupils.

To address the low literacy and numeracy rates amongst primary school learners, VVOB has supported the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), and selected local governments in implementing Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) pilot projects in 5 districts: Adjumani (funded by the LEGO Foundation), Isingiro, Madi-Okollo, and Terego (funded by UNICEF), and Kasese (funded by Hempel Foundation). Seeing the success of the pilot projects in raising literacy and numeracy learning outcomes of P3–P5 learners, the MoES validated the strategy for scaling and sustaining the contextualised, school-based, government-led TaRL model in Uganda under the name “**UCatchUp**.”

Under this framework, VVOB, in collaboration with the MoES, the Kasese District Local Government, and the Kasese Municipal Council, is implementing *UCatchUp Kasese II* with support from the Hempel Foundation. The programme aims to improve the foundational literacy and numeracy skills of 100,752 P3–P5 learners in all 264 government-aided primary schools in the district and municipality through the implementation of UCatchUp, while deepening government ownership and system integration.

The UCatchUp model centres on three core principles: regular learner assessments; grouping learners by learning levels rather than age or grade; and delivering structured, level-appropriate, targeted instruction supported by ongoing mentoring. Implementation is embedded within existing government systems to ensure sustainability, ownership and scalability.

Building on the strong groundwork laid during the programme inception phase in 2024, including staff recruitment, situational analysis, material revision, school leader orientation, and strategic engagements, the programme entered 2025 with a clear focus on district-wide expansion and deeper institutional integration. This report outlines progress achieved during the January–December 2025 reporting period, including scale-up to all targeted schools, strengthened government capacity, measurable improvements in learner outcomes, and continued advancement toward sustainable national adoption.

2. Implementation Progress: Key Activities and Achievements

During the reporting period (1 January – 31 December 2025), UCatchUp progressed from expansion to full district-wide implementation, with a strong focus on strengthening delivery quality, mentoring systems, and data use. Key activities included capacity building at district and school levels, structured baseline and midline assessments, ongoing mentoring and monitoring, and reinforcement of data-driven decision-making. A nationwide teachers’ industrial strike in Term 3 disrupted lesson delivery and prevented the planned endline assessment. In response, the programme prioritised instructional recovery and targeted support to underperforming schools. Project staff and district partners worked together to mitigate the impact as much as possible. This will continue into 2026, including additional support for the most vulnerable schools.

The sections below summarise progress across the three result areas, highlighting achievements in scale, learning outcomes, system strengthening, and institutionalisation.

2.1. Result Area 1

2.1.1. Result 1: Capacity building of district-level government structures

1.0 Information session with all school leaders

An information session on UCatchUp was held for 184 head teachers in January 2025 with the aim of introducing the project and highlighting literacy and numeracy challenges among P3-P5 learners. The school leaders welcomed the project's expansion in Kasese, acknowledging the high proportion of P3 learners who are still struggling with initial reading and numeracy. They committed to supporting the selection and training of teachers in January 2025 based on the agreed criteria. Such acceptance contributed to the successful rollout to 100percent of the originally targeted schools.

1.2 Training of Master Trainers in UCatchUp. Master trainers are selected from government staff at district level and tutors from TTIs and are responsible training mentors and teachers

To strengthen the capacity of both the Kasese district and municipality, as well as of VVOB staff to conduct TaRL training, a master training on TaRL was held for 8 days from 28 March to 4 April 2022. The training was followed by 20 hours of practice classes to give participants hands-on experience in classroom delivery of TaRL, to zoom in on key aspects of the TaRL model, and to offer them the opportunity to go through the whole cycle of assessment, grouping, lesson planning, teaching, and evaluating. The training was facilitated by TaRL Africa. 17 Master Trainers (11 males, 6 females), and 2 VVOB staff received this basic training. We continually refresh them on new knowledge and practices in the methodology so that they are able to cascade the new knowledge to the teachers and school-based mentors in the upcoming trainings. The refresher trainings took place in July 2022, April 2023, and January 2024, January 2025, and August 2025 (see 1.5).

1.3 Training of external mentors (Associate Assessors) on UCatchUp and use of the UCatchUp data portal for data-driven decision-making

An orientation meeting was organised with the MoES focal point persons from the departments of Basic Education (BED), Teacher Education and Training Department (TETD), and the Planning Unit. The session was aimed at familiarising them with the portal and requesting the integration of UCatchUp learners' data into the Ministry's Education Management Information System (EMIS). Additionally, an online training session was conducted for the district planner on how to navigate the data portal, generate analytical reports, interpret findings and effectively disseminate the results to inform decision-making. As a result, the district is now able to generate and disseminate the assessment data with minimal support from VVOB, and this is a step towards ownership and sustainability of data-driven decision-making.

1.4 DSC monthly Support (mentoring and monitoring) to district structures on data driven decision-making

Five monitoring and mentoring meetings spearheaded by the District Support coordinator (comprised of CCTs, AAs, and Inspectors) were held during the year with the aim of improving the quality of implementation and addressing gaps in the rollout of UCatchUp. The meetings revealed and addressed issues including identifying struggling schools based on assessment results and organising follow-up support. Teacher morale, especially after the industrial action, was also discussed and school visits were planned to provide psychosocial and technical support.

1.5 Refresher training of Master Trainers/ external mentors

In January 2025, a three-day refresher training was conducted at Canon Apollo PTC for Master Trainers, external mentors, and model teachers including Tutors, Associate Assessors, Coordinating Centre Tutors, Inspectors of Schools, and model teachers. The training aimed to refresh key concepts emerging from implementation learning and strengthen their capacity to train teachers in transitioning from mother tongue to English using the Language Learning from Familiar to Formal (L2F2) approach.

Pre- and post-test results confirmed knowledge gains across assessed areas. TaRL methodology scores increased from 85 percent to 90 percent in session planning and learner progression, and literacy from 54 percent to 70 percent, while improvements in numeracy highlighted the need for continued

technical strengthening. These results indicate strengthened technical capacity among Master Trainers, enhancing their readiness to support scale-up to the additional 184 schools.

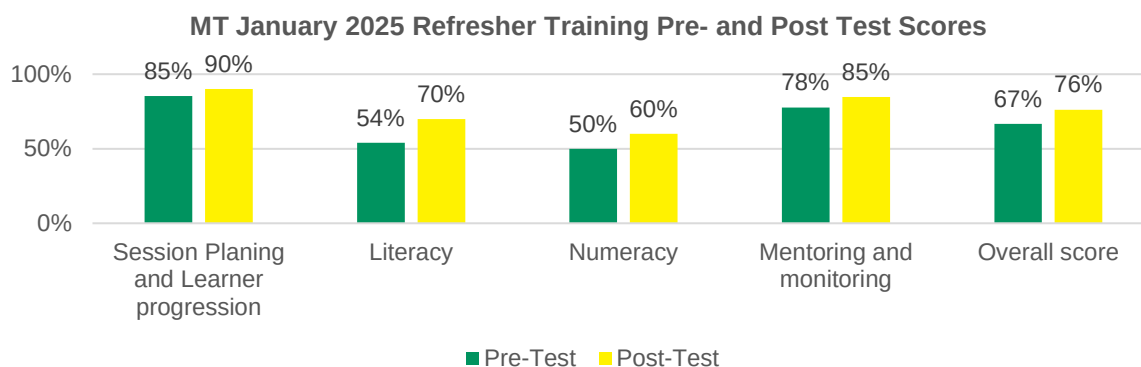


Figure1. Pre-post results for January 2025 master trainer refresher training

2.1.2. Result 2: Training and mentoring of school-level implementers

2.1 Orientation of school leaders on principles of UCatchUp and managerial best practices

187 head teachers (40 female and 147 male), including 184 from scale-up schools, participated in a two-day orientation at Canon Apollo Core PTC. The session successfully strengthened headteachers' understanding of UCatchUp and their role in supporting its implementation. According to evaluation results, 91percent of headteachers felt confident in their ability to support teachers, while 93percent reported that their knowledge of UCatchUp had increased through the orientation, thus laying a solid leadership foundation for the effective rollout of UCatchUp

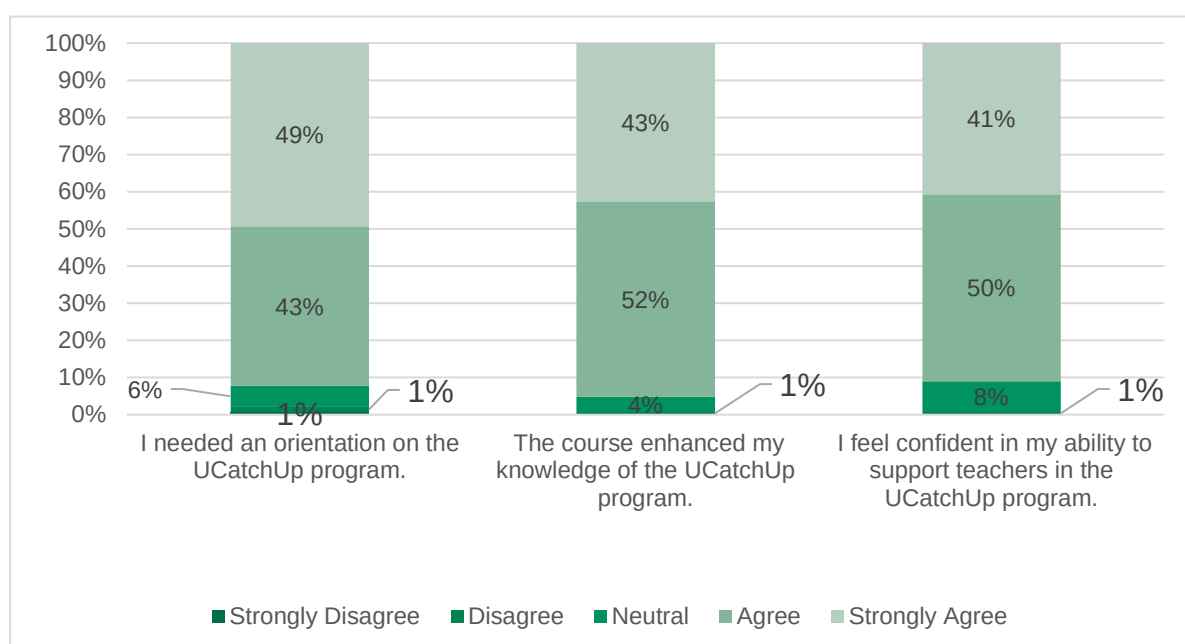


Figure 2. Training Benefit of the headteacher's orientation

2.2 Initial training of school-based mentors on UCatchUp and principles of mentoring

A five-day initial training equipped 188 school-based mentors (49 female, 139 male) from 184 scale-up schools with the knowledge and skills required to provide structured mentoring, conduct lesson observations, support data recording, and guide teachers in implementing TaRL. Four additional mentors had recently transferred from expansion schools and had not previously received training.

Mentors were asked to rate their confidence in the different TaRL (Teaching at the Right Level) domains in which they received training. Overall, confidence levels were high across all three domains. The highest level of confidence was reported in TaRL Domain 2, which focuses on Activities and Teaching Learning Support Materials (TLSM), at 87percent. This was closely followed by TaRL Domain 1, covering assessment, data recording, and grouping, at 86percent. Slightly lower, though still strong, confidence was reported in TaRL Domain 3, related to lesson procedures and class management, at 81percent. Overall, the results suggest that the training was effective in enhancing mentors' knowledge across domains.

Confidence in the different TaRL domains	
Domain	Level of confidence
TaRL Domain 1: Assessment, data recording, and grouping	86%
TaRL Domain 2: Activities and Teaching Learning Support Materials (TLSM).	87%
TaRL Domain 3: Lesson procedure and class management.	81%

Table 1. Confidence levels in the TaRL methodology of school-based mentors' initial training

Further, the pre- and post-test affirmed their confidence level gains, with results for 179 mentors showing substantial gains across. Knowledge of TaRL methodology increased from 52 percent to 79 percent (27 percentage-point improvement). Literacy competencies improved from 45 percent to 65 percent (20 percentage points), while numeracy increased from 47 percent to 70 percent (15 percentage points). These gains reflect strengthened technical capacity to provide effective school-based mentoring and instructional support.

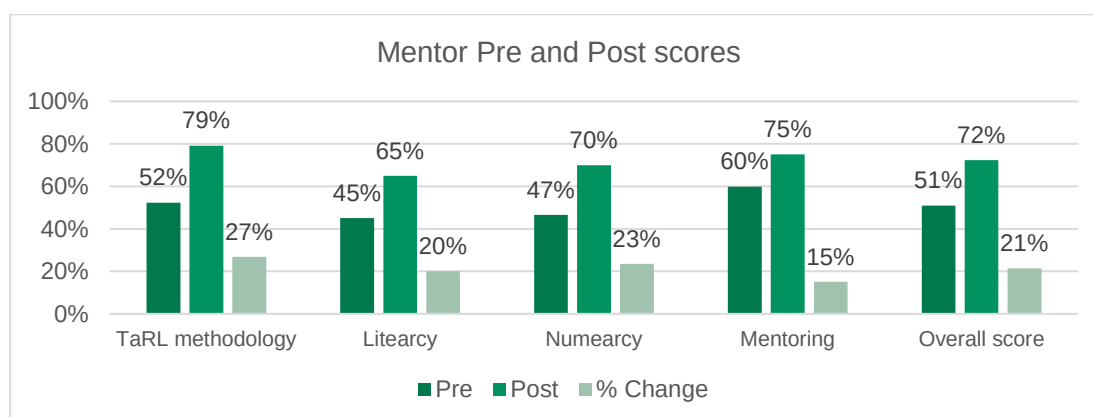


Figure 3. Pre-post results of School-Based Mentors

The magnitude of improvement should be interpreted in light of participants' prior exposure to the methodology. Several school-based mentors had previously completed TaRL training during the pilot and expansion phases and were later transferred to scale-up schools, contributing to higher pre-test scores. In addition, some participants had experience with similar foundational learning approaches implemented by partners such as Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and Save the Children in Kasese.

2.3 Refresher Training of school-based mentors on UCatchUp and principles of mentoring:

In September 2025, a 3-day refresher training was conducted for 184 school-based mentors. The refresher training reinforced and consolidated mentors' competencies in the UCatchUp methodology which enabled them to provide effective support, mentoring and support supervision to teachers during classroom implementation. Mentors were asked to rate their confidence in the different TaRL (Teaching at the Right Level) domains in which they received training. The highest level of confidence was reported in TaRL Domain 1, which focuses on Assessment, data recording, and grouping at 90percent. This was closely followed by TaRL Domain 2 Activities and Teaching Learning Support Materials (TLSM), at 83percent. Slightly lower, though still strong, confidence was reported in TaRL Domain 3, related to

lesson procedures and class management, at 78percent. This improved confidence is further shown by the pre- and post-test, which show an 18-percentage-point improvement among mentors, with the score increasing from 53percent in the pre-test to 70percent in the post-test.

Confidence in the different TaRL domains	
Domain	Level of confidence
TaRL Domain 1: Assessment, data recording, and grouping	90%
TaRL Domain 2: Activities and Teaching Learning Support Materials (TLSM).	83%
TaRL Domain 3: Lesson procedure and class management.	78%

Table 2. Confidence levels in the TaRL methodology of school-based mentors in the refresher training

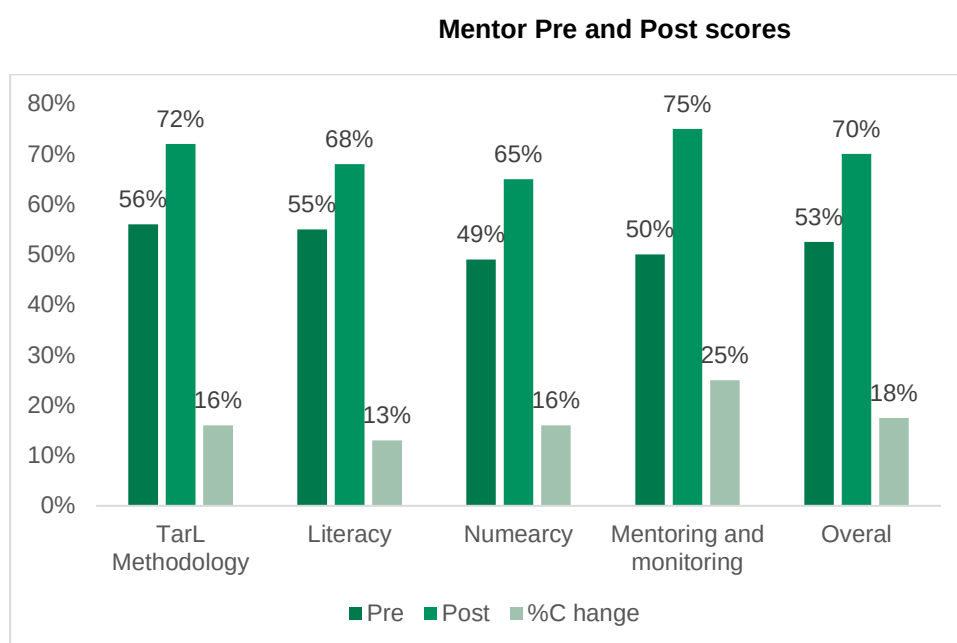


Figure 4. Instructor pre- and post-results on the key elements of the TaRL methodology during the refresher training

2.4_Initial Training of teachers on UCatchUp for teachers from scaling schools

The initial UCatchUp training for teachers from 184 scaling schools was conducted through a 10-day residential program hosted at Canon Apollo Core PTC, which continues to partner with us by providing the training venue and accommodation for teachers on a cost-sharing basis. A total of 950 teachers and instructors attended the training, including 398 females and 552 males. Training evaluation reports indicated that 98percent of participants agreed that the training enhanced their knowledge of the TaRL methodology, and 97percent expressed confidence in their ability to train learners in the TaRL approach.

This increased confidence was reflected in their self-assessment across different TaRL domains. The highest level of confidence was reported in Domain 2—Activities and Teaching Learning Support Materials (TLSM) at 84percent. This was closely followed by Domain 1—Assessment, data recording, and grouping 82percent. Data Recording, and Grouping—at 82%. Slightly lower but still strong confidence was observed in Domain 3—Lesson Procedure and Class Management—at 77percent. The pre- and post-test results confirmed their increased knowledge and confidence, with a 26% improvement—from a pre-test score of 41percent to a post-test score of 66percent. This relatively modest gain was partly due to some teachers being initially trained in pilot and expansion schools before transferring to scale-up schools, which contributed to higher pre-test scores. Additionally, some teachers were prepared in advance by consulting trained colleagues, while others had prior exposure to similar methodologies implemented by partners such as VSO and Save the Children in Kasese.

The initial UCatchUp training for teachers from 184 scaling schools was conducted through a 10-day residential course at Canon Apollo Core PTC, which continues to partner with us by providing the training venue and accommodation for teachers on a cost-sharing basis.

A total of 950 teachers and instructors attended the training, including 398 females and 552 males. Training evaluation reports indicated that 98percent of participants agreed that the training improved their knowledge of the TaRL methodology, and 97percent expressed confidence in their ability to train learners using this approach.

This confidence was reflected in their self-assessed skills across different TaRL domains. The highest confidence levels were in Domain 2, Activities and Teaching Learning Support Materials (TLSM), at 84percent. Close behind was Domain 1, Assessment, data recording, and grouping 82percent., at 82%. Slightly lower but still strong, confidence in Domain 3, Lesson procedures and class management, was reported at 77percent. The pre77%.

Pre- and post-test results confirmed their increased confidence and knowledge, showing a 26-percentage point improvement—from 41% in the pre-test score at 41percent. andto 66% in the post-test score at 66percent.. This relatively modest increase was partly due to some teachers in pilot and expansion schools who had participated in the initial training phases and were later transferred to scale-up schools.

Additionally, some teachers had been prepared in advance by consulting trained colleagues. In contrast, others had prior exposure to similar methodologies implemented by partners such as VSO and Save the Children in Kasese.

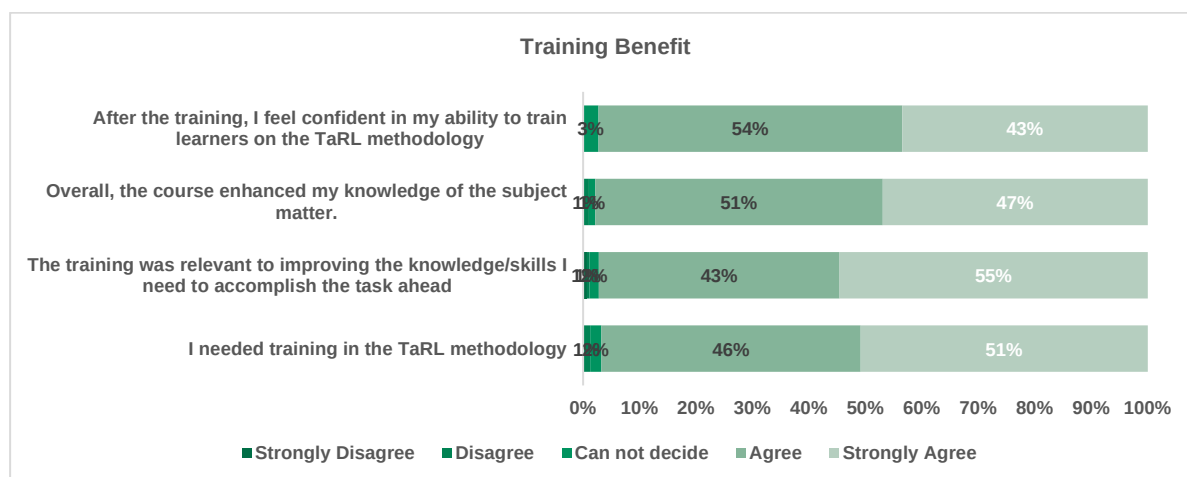


Figure 5. Training benefits for the instructors

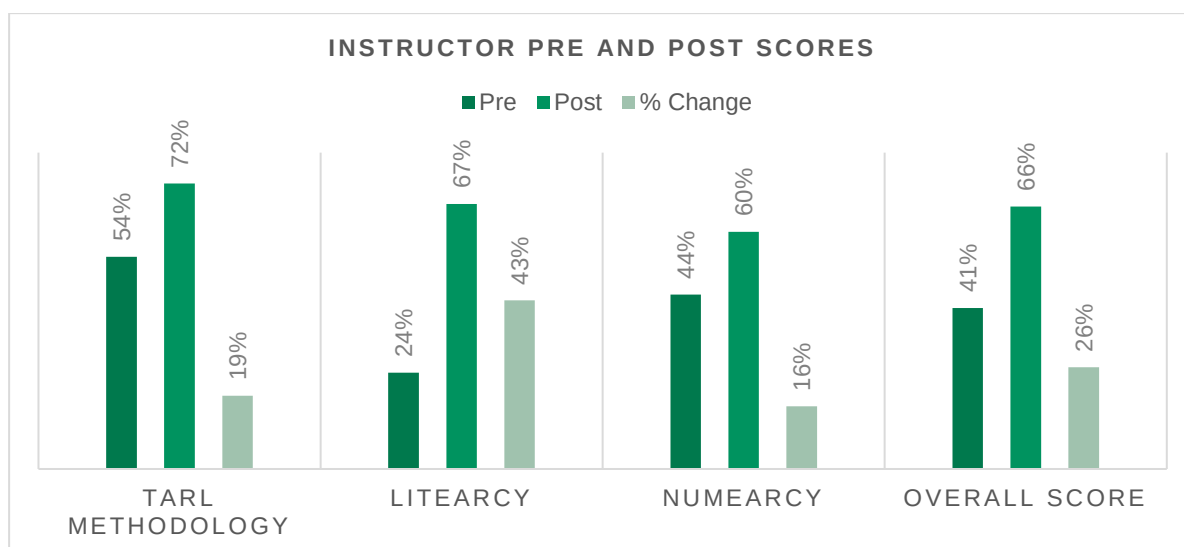


Figure 6. Instructor pre- and post-results on the key elements of the TaRL methodology during the initial training

Confidence in the different TaRL domains	
Domain	Level of confidence
TaRL Domain 1: Assessment, data recording, and grouping	82%
*TaRL Domain 2: Activities and Teaching Learning Support Materials (TLSM).	84%
TaRL Domain 3: Lesson procedure and class management.	77%

Table 3. Instructors' rating of their confidence in the different TaRL domains.

2.5 Initial training of teachers on UCatchUp for teachers from implementing schools

112 teachers, who had never been trained with UCatchUp, were identified with the support of the school-based mentors to fill gaps in some schools, which were created due to transfers and retirements of the trained teachers. Before this refresher, these teachers received peer mentoring to equip them with the basic knowledge and skills in the TaRL methodology. To enhance their practical knowledge, the external and school-based mentors targeted them for mentoring and coaching to improve their performance. These additional teachers trained in the UCatchUp methodology helped improve UCatchUp classroom sizes and thus provided better learning.

2.6 Refresher training of all teachers from scaling schools on UCatchUp

Eighty-six-nine teachers (431 female and 438 male) from the 184 UCatchUp scaling schools participated in a three-day refresher training on the UCatchUp methodology. The training was organised at the zonal coordinating centre level to further reinforce and consolidate teachers' understanding and application of UCatchUp.

After the training, teachers expressed increased confidence levels. Results from the evaluation showed that the highest confidence was reported in TaRL Domain 1, which focuses on assessment, data recording, and grouping, at 96 percent. This was closely followed by TaRL Domain 2, covering activities and teaching learning support materials (TLSM), at 98 percent. Slightly lower but still strong confidence was reported in TaRL Domain 3, which involves lesson procedures and class management, at 81 percent. Furthermore, a pre- and post-test indicated an overall 20-percentage-point improvement among teachers, with scores rising from 44percent. in the pre-test to 63 percent in the post-test.

These results highlight several lessons for future training: the content and delivery methods were largely effective and can be maintained with minor refinements to address remaining gaps. Additional targeted support may be necessary for teachers who did not show measurable improvement. Follow-up coaching and refresher sessions could help consolidate learning and further improve outcomes.

Confidence in the different TaRL domains	
Domain	Level of confidence
TaRL Domain 1: Assessment, data recording, and grouping	96%
TaRL Domain 2: Activities and Teaching Learning Support Materials (TLSM).	98%
TaRL Domain 3: Lesson procedure and class management.	81%

Table 4. Instructor pre- and post-results on the key elements of the TaRL methodology during the refresher training

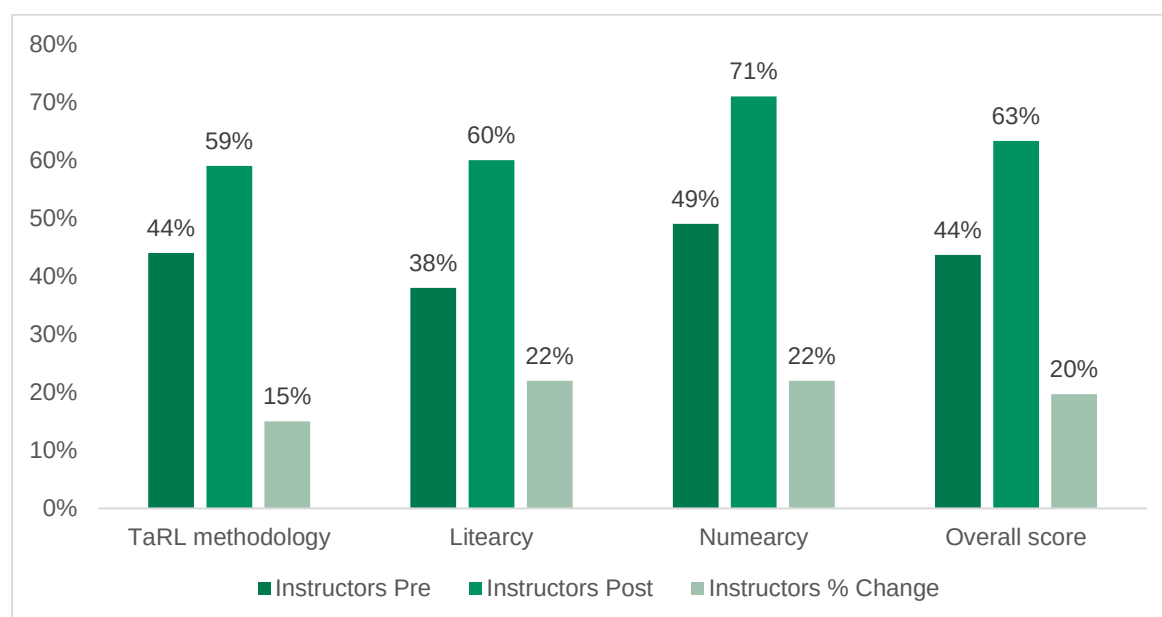


Figure 7. Instructor pre- and post-results on the key elements of the TaRL methodology during the refresher training

2.7 Revision of teaching and learning materials (TLSMs) (facilitator's guides, assessment tools, session plan book, gannybag, binding tape, attendance registers, etc.

UCatchUp teaching and learning support materials were revised to improve usability, quality, and cost-efficiency. The literacy and numeracy teacher guides were streamlined and merged into one comprehensive teacher guide, and the local-language and English story booklets were consolidated to reduce duplication. This streamlining reduced printing costs while maintaining subject-specific materials and improving coherence and ease of use for teachers and learners

At the national level, the MoES and the NCDC, with support from VVOB, UNICEF, Save the Children, and TaRL Africa, conducted UCatchUp materials validation workshops in April and October 2025. The materials were confirmed as appropriate for remedial learning, with recommendations to refine fonts, orthography, translations, inclusivity for learners with special needs and illustrations prior to large-scale printing. The process strengthened technical quality and positioned UCatchUp materials for national approval and scale-up.

2.8 Print and distribute TLSM

TLSMs were printed and distributed to all 184 scaling schools to support teachers and learners during implementation. The materials included teacher guides, mentor guides, assessment tools, calendar charts, picture booklets and other materials. In addition, teachers were also trained on making low-cost TLSM using locally available resources

2.9 Monthly mentoring and monitoring by district structures (External mentors conduct regular lesson observations and provide feedback to teachers)

External mentors observed lessons with an average coverage rate of 80percent. in Term 1 and 90percent. in Term 2, against a target of 10 lesson observations per term. However, coverage declined to 50percent. in the subsequent period, when the target was reduced to four observations. This decline was primarily due to school closures during the teachers' industrial action, which limited opportunities for external mentors to observe UCatchUp sessions. During the mentorship visits, teachers were provided with targeted support based on their identified needs. Gaps in session planning were observed and systematically addressed through specific recommendations, including refresher training and targeted CPDs at the Coordinating Centre level.

2.10 Deputy headteachers (school-based mentors) conduct daily lesson observations and provide feedback to teachers

Deputy Head Teachers played a central role in strengthening classroom practice. through structured lesson observations and targeted feedback across the 264 participating schools. Performance was strongest in Term 2, with 231 out of 264 mentors actively conducting observations and achieving an average of 87percent of the planned target 17 lessons to be observed. In Terms 1, 245 out of the 264 school-based mentors provided mentorship support, achieving 81percent. of the planned target of 15 lesson observations per mentor. However, in Term 3, 248 out of 264 Deputy headteachers participating in mentorship activities, overall performance declined to 30% of the expected target of 4 lessons observed. However, in Term 3, 248 out of 264 Deputy headteachers participating in mentorship activities, overall performance declined to 30percent. of the expected target of 4 lessons observed. This was attributed to the industrial action and the resultant focus by schools on completing the formal syllabus, which limited the implementation of UCatchUp activities.

2.11 Teachers offer peer support on UCatchUp

The process evaluation of the UCatchUp Kasese I programme revealed that, in response to gaps in external mentoring, teachers had established peer support networks to strengthen their implementation of UCatchUp. Recognising the potential of these teacher-led initiatives, VVOB launched the uBoraBora peer mentoring research to better understand how these networks function, assess their effectiveness, and explore how peer mentoring can be systematically integrated into the UCatchUp mentoring framework.

In 2025, the qualitative phase of the study was completed. Findings confirmed that peer mentoring is widely practised, largely teacher-initiated, and driven by intrinsic motivation and a strong belief in the value of UCatchUp. Teachers engaged in various mentoring modalities ranging from one-on-one support to group-based and remote exchanges focused on lesson delivery, assessment practices, and material development. Peer mentoring was associated with increased teacher confidence, collaboration, and perceived improvements in classroom practice.

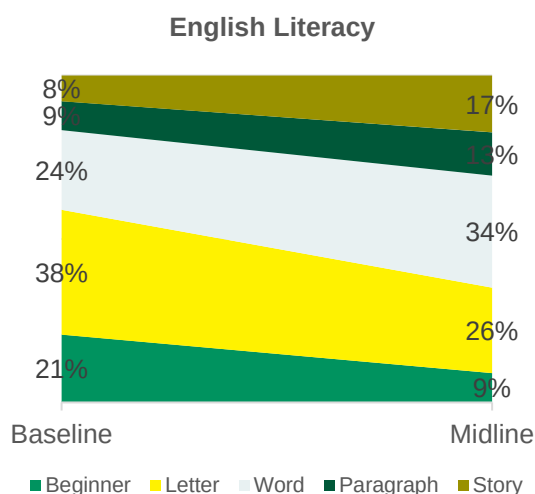
In 2026, the quantitative phase is underway. This phase is testing two different strategies for scaling peer mentoring: (i) digital-only exposure through WhatsApp-based instructional videos and (ii) a combined approach of digital content and in-person training. The study will assess which approach is more effective in increasing participation in peer mentoring and strengthening instructional practice, while maintaining teacher autonomy. Findings from this research will inform how peer mentoring can complement formal mentoring structures and contribute to a more sustainable, system-embedded support model within UCatchUp.

2.1.3. Result 3: Implementing UCatchUp in primary schools

3.1 Assessment data collection by teachers (baseline, midline, and endline)

Baseline and midline assessments were successfully conducted by teachers in all 264 participating schools, covering 56,448 learners for the baseline and 55,041 learners for the midline. The planned endline assessment was not implemented due to the nationwide teachers' industrial action (15 September–16 October 2025). When schools reopened in October, and following guidance from the District Education Officer (DEO) and other key stakeholders, it was agreed that priority would be given to instructional recovery and delivery of UCatchUp lessons rather than administering the endline assessment.

Despite this disruption, comparison of baseline and midline data across literacy (local language and English) and numeracy demonstrates substantial improvements in learner outcomes. The magnitude of gains observed at midline suggests that the programme was on track to strengthen learners' outcomes. Across all three learning outcome areas, significant improvements were observed in learners' foundational literacy and numeracy skills.



English Literacy

In English literacy, the proportion of learners able to read at least a paragraph (paragraph and story levels combined) increased by 13 percentage points, from 17 percent at baseline to 30 percent at midline.

At the lower end of the distribution, the proportion of learners unable to read words (i.e., the beginner and letter level learners) declined sharply from 59 percent at baseline to 35 percent at midline.

Figure 8. Comparison of learning outcomes between baseline and midline English literacy (2025)

Local Language Literacy

In local language literacy, the proportion of learners able to read at least a paragraph (paragraph and story levels combined) increased by 10-percentage points from 11 percent at baseline to 21 percent at midline.

On the lower end of the distribution, there was a 25-percentage point reduction in learners who could not read words from 76 percent at baseline to 51 percent at midline.

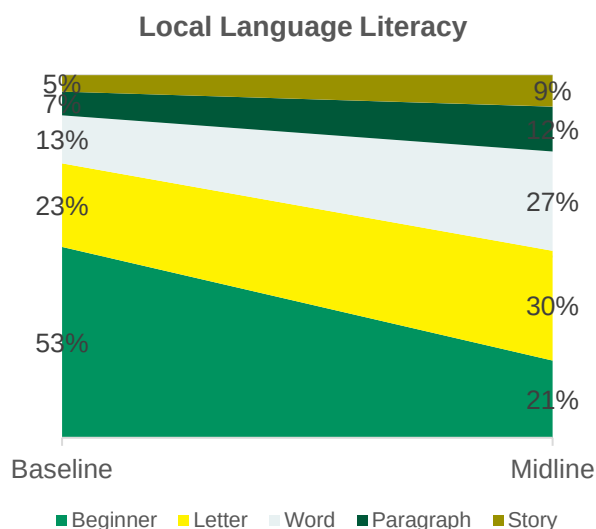
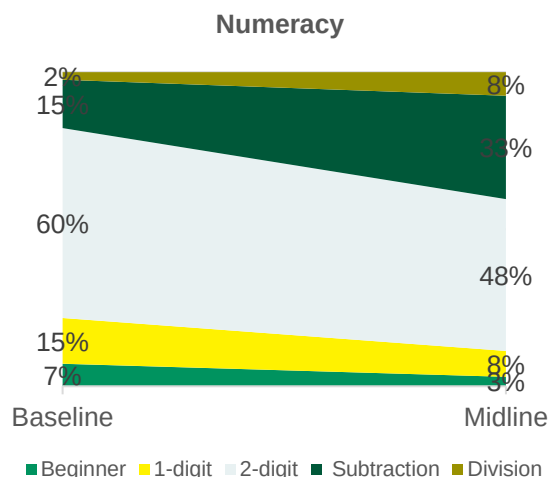


Figure 9. Comparison of learning outcomes between baseline and midline local language (2025)



Numeracy

In numeracy, the proportion of learners able to perform at least subtraction (i.e., learners at the subtraction and division levels) increased by 23 percentage points, from 18 percent at baseline to 41 percent at midline.

At the lower end of the spectrum, the proportion of learners considered non-numerate (i.e., those unable to recognise two-digit numbers, corresponding to the Beginner and One-digit levels) decreased from 22 percent at baseline to 11 percent at midline.

Figure 10. Comparison of learning outcomes between baseline and midline in Numeracy (2025)

In comparison to the progress made between baseline and midline in 2024, there was a 4 percentage-point gain in both English literacy and numeracy, while the improvement gain remained the same for the local language, which shows progress in improving learners' outcomes in English and Numeracy.

3.2_Deputy headteachers aggregate learner-level assessment data on the school summary sheet

Deputy Head Teachers aggregated learner assessment data for the baseline and midline assessments conducted during the reporting period by aggregating data from the teacher's assessment recording sheets onto the school's school summary sheet. All 264 schools submitted data for both assessments demonstrating strong commitment and dedication by Deputy Head Teachers to the UCatchUp programme. The endline assessment was not conducted due to the teachers' industrial action (15 September–16 October 2025).

3.3_External mentors (CCTs and associate assessors) collect aggregated assessment data in their zone and input the data in the data portal

The CCTs and Associate Assessors effectively collected all school summary sheets and ensured the timely upload of baseline and midline data into the portal. The CCTs and Associate Assessors effectively collected all school summary sheets and uploaded the baseline and midline data into the portal within the given timelines of the assessment. Signally their capacity with the data portal and systematic data use.

3.4_Delivery of contextualised UCatchUp model: One hour per day over three terms

Lessons were delivered throughout the year, with a target of 40 lessons per term (20 for Numeracy and 20 for Literacy) in Terms 1 and 2. This is the standard 'dosage' in UCatchUp, set in consultation with the stakeholders. It coincides with a period of 8 weeks per term during which every day 1 hour of UCatchUp is delivered.

However, the target for Term 3 was reduced to 10 lessons (5 for Numeracy and 5 for Literacy). This revised target was set after consultation with the district partner, as it was deemed the highest feasible amount given the circumstances. The reduction was due to the late resumption of schools following teachers' industrial action.

During this period, schools prioritized implementation of the core school syllabus and other key activities, such as the Primary Leaving Examination (PLE) and end-of-term examinations.

The highest performance was recorded in Term 2, with 39percent of schools delivering between 15 and 19 lessons in both Numeracy and Literacy. Additionally, 26–28percent of schools met or exceeded the 20-lesson target, while only 6percent delivered fewer than 10 lessons.

In Term 1, against a target of 20 lessons per learning area, schools delivered an average of 57 percent of the target value of Numeracy lessons and 56 percent of the target value for Literacy lessons.

The lowest performance was observed in Term 3, where the average lessons delivered was 63 percent of the target for Numeracy and 60 percent for Literacy, based on the reduced target of 5 lessons per learning area. Overall, 85 percent % of schools.

3.5_Review meetings at zonal level after baseline, midline and endline

Following the baseline and midline assessments, zonal-level review meetings were convened with Coordinating Centre Tutors (CCTs), Associate Assessors, and Head Teachers to analyse aggregated results and agree on targeted improvement actions. Discussions highlighted persistent gaps in local language literacy, linked to limited teacher capacity, insufficient instructional materials, and strong parental preference for English over mother-tongue instruction.

In response, stakeholders prioritised intensified mentoring, targeted refresher training, teacher-led development of local language materials, and stronger leadership support for mother-tongue instruction in early grades.

3.6_Review meetings at the district level after periodic assessment

District-level review meetings were held after each assessment cycle, with the District Planner taking the lead in presenting and interpreting results, a significant step toward institutional ownership. The District UCatchUp Steering Committee reviewed the baseline findings on 7 April 2025 and emphasised strengthening termly school-level dissemination and data-informed mentoring.

Midline results, presented on 19 August 2025, demonstrated measurable gains across participating schools. The committee endorsed targeted, data-driven actions, including intensified mentorship, refresher training, and literacy-focused co-curricular activities such as debates and poem competitions to reinforce early-grade literacy development.

3.7_Regular steering committee meetings

Three district steering committee meetings were convened with 13 members (4 female, 8 male) to review implementation progress, assess milestone achievement, and agree on next steps. Representatives from VVOB and the Hempel Foundation also participated, reinforcing joint oversight and strategic alignment.

The meetings strengthened coordination and shared accountability across district and partner structures. The committee resolved to intensify monitoring of agreed milestones, adjust timelines where necessary, and conduct periodic reflective reviews to identify lessons learned and areas for improvement. In addition, the committee reviewed and formally approved the scope of the external evaluation of the programme prior to VVOB publishing the Call for Quotations, ensuring alignment on evaluation objectives and learning priorities.

A follow-up meeting is scheduled for 26 March 2026 to track progress against these commitments.

3.8_Field visits by steering committee members

Two strategic field visits were conducted by the Steering Committee to assess the implementation of UCatchUp in schools, identify emerging best practices, and pinpoint critical implementation gaps. During these visits, structured feedback sessions were held with school leadership, particularly through engagement with school-based mentors and staff, to collaboratively develop practical, context-specific solutions for addressing identified challenges.

Following the visits, the monitoring team, composed of external mentors and the VVOB DSC, committed to strengthening school-level implementation by supporting school-based mentors and CCTs in organising targeted Continuous Professional Development (CPD) sessions. This will be guided by a

systematic mapping of capacity gaps within each school. The team will also proactively identify struggling schools, analyse their specific challenges, and provide tailored, hands-on support to accelerate improvement. If implemented, these strategies will enhance the quality and consistency of UCatchUp implementation across schools, strengthen educator capacity, and provide targeted interventions for underperforming schools, ultimately driving better learner outcomes and ensuring sustainable program impact.

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3.10_GSEA field visit to UCatchUp Kasese II project

The GSEA visit initially scheduled for June 2025 did not take place due to competing priorities at the time. Subsequent efforts to organise the visit during the third term were not feasible, as learners were out of school for most of the term. The visit has now been rescheduled for July 2026, strategically aligned with the final phase of UCatchUp implementation. This timing presents a unique and high-value opportunity to consolidate achievements, validate impact, and capture critical lessons as the programme transitions toward closure.

2.2. Result Area 2

2.2.1. Result 4: Integrate UCatchUp in national-level government systems

4.1_Establishing a national UCatchUp steering committee twice every year to develop or update the scaling strategy

Although a National UCatchUp Steering Committee was not formally established, a strong national-level coordination and ownership have been maintained through alternative structures. Two UCatchUp focal persons—representing the Initial Education Department and the Teacher Education, Training and Development (TETD) Department at the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) have continued to actively engage in UCatchUp activities and strategic discussions.

These focal persons have participated in key national workshops aimed at scaling UCatchUp, including the Teaching and Learning Support Materials (TLSM) review and validation workshops. The Ministry has also played a central role in UCatchUp capacity-building initiatives organised by the partner, including hosting participants at the Core Primary Teachers' Colleges (PTCs) and leveraging government structures to mobilise stakeholders at national and sub-national levels. Additionally, UCatchUp was formally presented to the Senior Management Committee at MoES, strengthening high-level visibility and institutional buy-in.

4.2_Quadrimesterly convening of the UCatchUp Steering Committee to discuss progress

The planned convening to share assessment findings did not take place as scheduled. The session was intended to present and compare midline and endline assessment results to provide stakeholders with evidence on learner progress and programme impact. The team is scheduling a new convening in April. This session will focus on analysing available data, including baseline findings, and examining potential learning regression resulting from the prolonged disruption. The discussion will aim to generate actionable recommendations to mitigate learning loss and strengthen programme implementation moving forward. We also desire to see a data-informed recovery plan that addresses potential learning regression, strengthens instructional support, and repositions UCatchUp to accelerate learner progress in the next implementation cycle.

4.3_High-level field visit by strategic govt officials to witness TaRL implementation at the classroom level

The high-level field visit by Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) officials, planned for October 2025 to observe UCatchUp implementation at the classroom level, did not take place. As this is the final year of the programme, such high-level engagement remains critical to strengthening government ownership and reinforcing sustainability. A similar visit has therefore been rescheduled for April and later again in October 2026. The programme team is proactively engaging MoES to ensure strong participation and strategic alignment.

The upcoming visit will prioritise demonstrating classroom-level impact, highlighting integration within existing government structures, and reinforcing the Ministry's leadership role in sustaining and scaling UCatchUp beyond the project lifecycle.

4.4_Orientation of national-level staff in UCatchUp

Progress was made towards integrating UCatchUp into national-level government systems, with a strong emphasis on coordination, capacity building, and strategic planning for scale.

A national UCatchUp Task Team was established to drive the finalisation of a costed strategy for scaling and sustaining UCatchUp in Uganda. The Task Team is chaired by the Teacher Education, Training and Development (TETD) Department and brings together key departments and agencies from the MoES, alongside partners including VVOB, Save the Children, UNICEF, and TaRL Africa. This structure replaced the initially planned steering committee model while maintaining regular coordination and high-level engagement.

Capacity building at national level was strengthened through the training of UCatchUp Master Trainers, held at Bishop Willis Iganga Primary Teachers' College in April. The nine-day workshop brought together 56 teacher trainers from 14 Primary Teachers' Colleges across the country. The training equipped Master Trainers with the skills and tools required to roll out UCatchUp nationally, reinforcing government leadership in implementation and sustainability.



Figure 11. Representatives from the MoES and Partner Organisations during UCatchUp scaling activities at Bishop Willis PTC in April 2025

In addition, a costed strategy for scaling and sustaining UCatchUp was presented to senior management within the Ministry of Education and Sports, supporting informed decision-making on national adoption. During this meeting, the Permanent Secretary was supportive of scaling UCatchUp through existing government systems and requested the Task Team to further strengthen the case by presenting a problem tree analysis on learning loss. At the time of reporting, this analysis has not yet been undertaken, as the Task Team is exploring options for financing this work.

Two ministry officials also observed UCatchUp classroom implementation during the Hempel Group's iWitness Tour in June, providing firsthand exposure to the approach and its application at the school level. In addition, the two MoES UCatchUp focal points from the TETD and Basic Education departments participated in the UCatchUp refresher training in September, further strengthening national-level ownership and technical understanding of the programme.

2.2.2. Result 5: Evidence and learning for Government Investment

5.1 Meeting with key government officials to discuss the outcomes of the Assessments at different stages

Six structured review meetings have been held so far at both the district and zonal levels following each assessment (baseline and midline). These meetings included the district planner, headteachers or deputy headteachers, external mentors, the District Education Officer (DEO), Programme Education Officer (PEO), Education Support Officer (ESO), and a representative from the LCV office. The focus of the meetings was on interpreting learner performance data, identifying schools requiring targeted support, determining priorities for tailored mentoring and refresher training, and formulating action points and tracking follow-up progress. The lessons learnt from these meetings included: effective programme implementation requires consistent learner tracking, strong parental engagement, and timely assessments to ensure accurate performance monitoring. Continuous training and positive mindset change among school leaders enhance the implementation of programme activities

5.2 Strengthen the evidence base for UCatchUp

Teachers mentoring teachers: An exploration into effective peer support models and their impact. Implementation research was conducted to answer key questions: What peer mentoring strategies are teachers already using to support UCatchUp? What makes these strategies effective? And how do they impact teacher outcomes, both in terms of instructional quality and teacher well-being? The goal is to identify and test variations of peer mentoring models that can be integrated into the UCatchUp framework, strengthening the overall mentoring process and improving both teacher support and student outcomes.

The first phase of this research was mainly qualitative. It revealed that peer mentoring is widely adopted by teachers through multiple pathways, driven primarily by intrinsic motivation and a strong belief in UCatchUp's value. Peer mentoring is flexible and dynamic, occurring within and across schools in various formats, from one-on-one to group sessions, including remote mentoring. Most peer mentors take responsibility for organising and leading sessions, although leadership is sometimes shared with deputy headteachers, headteachers, and peers.

Peer mentoring covers key UCatchUp topics such as lesson delivery, assessment, and material development. It is associated with increased teacher confidence, greater collaboration, and improved learner outcomes. In phase two of the study, we will evaluate the effectiveness of different methods for introducing teachers to peer mentoring within UCatchUp. This will be done by comparing outcomes between teachers who receive online-only exposure through WhatsApp and those who receive both online exposure and in-person training via a Coordinating Centre-based professional development session, which is currently underway.

2.3. Result Area 3

2.3.1. Result 6: Hempel Foundation – VVOB Strategic Engagement

The strategic engagement component of the VVOB–Hempel Foundation partnership aims to amplify the impact of the Uganda and Zambia programmes by contributing to global awareness, knowledge sharing, and policy influence on foundational learning, beyond direct project implementation.

In Year 2 of implementation, 2025, the focus was on translating early implementation experience into credible global and regional engagement. Activities emphasised visibility of foundational learning approaches, particularly TaRL and structured pedagogy, while strengthening evidence-informed dialogue with policymakers, funders, and education stakeholders. Uganda and Zambia experiences

were showcased at high-profile global and regional platforms, CIES, including UNGA-related engagements, the SKOLL World Forum, and the ADEA Triennale.

CIES

During the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) 2025 conference, VVOB delivered two presentations on the UCatchUp programme in Kasere. The presentations highlighted early evidence from ongoing peer mentoring research, as well as implementation lessons from using a web-based data portal for assessment data collection to support more data-driven decision-making at the cluster and district levels. The sessions generated strong interest among researchers and implementers and created opportunities for peer exchange on adapting TaRL and structured pedagogy approaches in comparable contexts.



Figure 12. Presentation on UCatchUp at CIES 2025

Skoll World Forum

VVOB participated in the Skoll World Forum 2025 (Marmalade Festival) through a panel session co-hosted by the Hempel Foundation and the Global Schools Forum. The session focused on pathways to scaling education impact in low- and middle-income countries and brought together education implementers, funders, and ecosystem actors. VVOB contributed evidence and implementation experience from the Closing the Learning Gap programme in Zambia, highlighting how structured pedagogy and Catch Up approaches can be institutionalised within government systems to address foundational learning gaps at scale.

The discussion positioned foundational learning as a critical entry point for education systems strengthening and underscored the importance of data-informed implementation, long-term financing, and strong government partnerships. The session featured comparative case studies from Zambia, Uganda, and India, alongside perspectives from global education networks and funders, enabling peer learning on the enablers of sustainable scale. VVOB's participation strengthened engagement with peer organisations and funders and reinforced its role as a credible implementing and learning partner within the global education ecosystem.

UNGA

During UNGA 2025, VVOB contributed to Education House, a global advocacy platform positioning education as a foundational driver of sustainable development beyond SDG 4. VVOB participated in multi-stakeholder sessions bringing together governments, multilaterals, civil society, and private sector actors, alongside the Hempel Foundation. These engagements focused on advancing cross-sector dialogue and partnerships around teacher professional development, school leadership, and education systems change.

VVOB's participation advanced the objectives of its advocacy and engagement plan by amplifying education in high-level policy spaces where it is often underrepresented, reinforcing evidence-based narratives on the critical role of educators in achieving the SDGs, and deepening strategic relationships aligned with Hempel Foundation priorities. The engagements enabled VVOB to showcase evidence-based interventions implemented in Zambia and Uganda, while also facilitating peer learning through exchanges with co-organisers on approaches from other geographies and contexts relevant to VVOB's future programming.

ADEA Triennale

VVOB contributed to the ADEA Triennale on Education by positioning UCatchUp as an evidence-based and scalable approach to improving foundational learning. In partnership with TaRL Africa, EDC, and J-PAL, VVOB supported government representatives from Uganda, Zambia, Mali, and Kenya to participate in a technical panel on evidence and impact at scale. VVOB sponsored the participation of Dr Annet Kajura Mugisha, Commissioner for Teacher Education and Training Development, MoES Uganda, who shared the Ministry of Education and Sports' plans to scale and sustain UCatchUp. The engagement increased UCatchUp's visibility among African policymakers and funders and strengthened VVOB's role in the evidence-informed policy dialogue on foundational learning.



Figure 13.: Kakula Wandi (SEA, VVOB) and Dr. Annet Kajura Mugisha (Commissioner – TETD, MoES) at the 2025 ADEA Triennale

Global Knowledge Products

VVOB contributed a chapter to the [NORRAG Special Issue on Multilingualism and Language Transition](#), drawing on Uganda's multilingual education context and early implementation experience with TaRL's Language Learning from Familiar to Formal (L2F2) methodology. The chapter explains why the language of instruction remains a practical barrier to foundational learning in Uganda and how L2F2 uses learners' existing literacy in local languages to build English reading skills in a structured, assessment-led way. Using UCatchUp Kasese and the Kyaka II refugee settlement bridging programme as case studies, the chapter documented measurable gains in literacy outcomes, highlighted persistent implementation constraints and identified areas where further learning and adaptation are needed.

Policy Recognition and Partner Uptake

Growing support for UCatchUp was also evident among development partners and international stakeholders. During the "Scaling Up UCatchUp in Kasese and Beyond" event in February, Save the Children indicated a shift away from their Catch Up Clubs model to UCatchUp, citing UCatchUp's stronger potential for scale through government systems. In addition, UCatchUp was referenced in the World Bank's [Uganda Human Capital Development and Growth Review](#) as a relevant approach to addressing foundational learning gaps, further reinforcing its credibility within national policy and financing discussions. In parallel, national-level recognition of foundational learning was reflected in a [DEAR Day op-ed](#) by Dr Joyce Moriku Kaducu, State Minister for Primary Education, which highlighted

the importance of foundational literacy and numeracy and acknowledged partnerships with organisations, including VVOB, supporting government efforts in this area.

2.4. Other Results

2.4.1. Result 10: Communications

In our 2025 communications, we focused on documenting the scale-up of the UCatchUp Kasese II programme. We documented the partnership with the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Kasese District Local Government & Municipality and the Hempel Foundation to reach all 264 government-aided primary schools in Kasese. The priority was to highlight the increasing sense of ownership within government structures.

A. Some of our documented moments include

- First biggest [teacher training](#) in Kasese
- Pictures from [the Inception workshop](#)
- ‘Scaling up UCatchUp in Kasese and beyond’ [event](#)
- [Video](#) on successes and impact of TaRL in Kasese.

B. Articles on the website.

- <https://www.vvob.org/stories-news/scaling-up-ucatchup-for-kaseses-schools-district-wide-implementation>
- <https://www.vvob.org/stories-news/scaling-up-ucatchup-in-kasese-and-beyond-event>
- <https://www.vvob.org/stories-news/ucatchup-midline-assessment-shows-progress-amidst-challenges>

C. Some outstanding mentions about our work include

- Uganda Human Capital Development and Growth [Review \(English\)](#)
- [Op-Ed](#) by Minister of State for Primary Education on our contribution to Foundational learning.
- VVOB contributed a chapter in [NORRAG's special Issue 11](#) exploring how the Teaching at the Right Level approach can help bridge foundational learning gaps in multilingual contexts.

2.4.2. Result 11: Evaluation

Following approval from the project Steering Committee, VVOB published a Call for Quotations (CfQ) on 21st August 2025, for a learning-focused external evaluation of the UCatchUp programme. These bidding files are available upon request. Following a competitive evaluation process, a successful bidder, Laterite, was contracted to undertake the assignment. The external evaluation commenced in January 2026 and will support evidence-informed refinement and scaling of UCatchUp in Uganda. The evaluation will focus on (i) cost-effectiveness, including analysis of programme costs in relation to observed learning outcomes; (ii) sustainability and government ownership, with particular attention to system integration and capacity for scale; and (iii) learning for programme refinement, including assessment of the emerging peer mentoring model. Findings will inform programme improvement and strategic decision-making as VVOB and government partners prepare for potential national expansion.

2.4.3. Result 12: Audit

The final external audit of the UCatchUp Kasese II project is scheduled for the end of the project implementation period.

3. Implementation Challenges

Most planned activities for 2025 were implemented as scheduled, with only minor adjustments. However, several key challenges affected timelines and, in some cases, prevented the implementation of specific activities.

1. Nationwide Teachers' Industrial Strike

A nationwide teachers' industrial strike at the onset of Term 3 delayed school reopening and significantly disrupted UCatchUp implementation. Planned sessions were not conducted, and the endline assessment could not be administered because schools prioritised completing the academic term once learning resumed. This in turn, impacted a number of planned activities.

- Incomplete measurement of learner progress due to the absence of endline data.
- Potential learning regression among learners following prolonged disruption.
- Reduced ability to demonstrate full-year impact and compare midline-to-endline outcomes.
- Risk of weakened momentum in programme delivery during a critical phase.

Recommendation:

- Conduct a targeted follow-up assessment early e to generate proxy endline data and measure potential learning loss. To this effect, baseline assessment is ongoing targeting P.3-P.5 learners in all implementing schools.
- Document the impact of disruptions as part of adaptive learning to strengthen resilience planning in future programming.
- Integrate catch-up or recovery-focused support into ongoing implementation to mitigate learning regression.
- Strengthen contingency planning frameworks for future programmes to ensure continuity during systemic disruptions.

2. Non-Implementation in Some Schools

External monitoring visits revealed that 40 schools did not implement UCatchUp in the third Term. Attendance registers that had been issued were found blank, indicating gaps in accountability, supervision, and fidelity of implementation. This implies;

- Uneven program delivery across schools, undermining overall programme effectiveness.
- Reduced reach and potential inequity in learner benefits.
- Risk to programme credibility if implementation gaps are not addressed.
- Limited reliability of monitoring data in affected schools.

Recommendation:

- Conduct targeted follow-up visits to non-compliant schools to identify root causes (capacity gaps, leadership issues, competing priorities). The planned March monitoring by external mentors and project team target schools with such gaps.
- Strengthen school-level accountability mechanisms, including regular supervisory check-ins and verification of attendance records.
- Provide targeted mentoring and capacity-building support to struggling schools.
- Establish clear performance expectations and escalation mechanisms in collaboration with district officials to reinforce ownership and compliance.

3. Sustainability Consideration: While these challenges affected implementation, they also highlight critical lessons for strengthening system resilience, accountability mechanisms, and adaptive management in future programming.

All the above, if not addressed, will impact our desired outcome. Therefore we will focus on improved implementation fidelity, stronger monitoring systems, enhanced resilience to external disruptions, and a

more sustainable, system-embedded model capable of maintaining impact despite contextual challenges.

4. Activity and Budget Monitoring

The overall expenditure rate of the Y2 budget is 92%. Categories contributing to this are HR (some staff costs were charged to UCatchUp Kasese 1, late recruitment of strategic education advisor foundational learning – in February 2026), communication (no event was organized), strategic engagement (most costs were financed by VVOB in Zambia) and evaluation (delay in procurement of external evaluator – but the contract was signed early January 2026), while other cost categories (mainly trainings and materials) are characterized by an overspend (due to the decision, based on an emerging need, to continue targeting the initial 80 schools in addition to the new 184 schools).

Accumulated project spending stands at 73% of the project budget, mainly due to low spending in 2024 (which, in turn, was caused by allocating early project costs to the previous project UCatchUp Kasese 1). In order to avoid structural underspending, new ideas to address emerging needs are being developed. These will be discussed with the Hempel Foundation and district partners during the upcoming Steering Committee in March 2026.

The 2026-2027 annual workplan and financial report will be shared as separate excel files together with this narrative report. The workplan already includes preliminary ideas for new activities (in green instead of blue).

References

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Annex 1: Theory of Change

The goal of the project is to improve foundational literacy and numeracy skills of learners enrolled in grades 3 to 5 of all 264 government and government-aided primary schools across Kasese district and municipality. Based on earlier implementations of TaRL, the project hypothesises as follows:

In less-developed countries, many learners lack foundational skills and lag far behind their respective at-grade content ([e.g. Azevedo et al., 2021](#)).

If these beneficiaries are:

1. regularly and reliably assessed to identify their actual learning levels,
2. and grouped according to their learning levels rather than grade and age,
3. and taught through fun, creative, learner-centred reading and numeracy activities adapted to their level, initially delivered in the local language as a medium of instruction and supported with contextualised teaching and learning materials,

Then they will acquire literacy and numeracy skills in an accelerated manner.

TaRL is implemented through various models, and when models are contextualised, TaRL Africa advises on the minimum number of hours of instruction needed. This advice is based on evidence from other contexts, where TaRL (implemented with fidelity) has achieved significant improvements in literacy and numeracy ([E. Duflo et al., 2016](#)).

To ensure that learners advance as expected, the following assumptions must hold about their teachers.

If teachers are:

- trained in the delivery of the TaRL methodology,
- and regularly mentored and supported,
- and motivated and incentivised,¹
- and provided with contextualised, high-quality teaching and learning materials which use an appropriate language of instruction in which the TaRL instructors are themselves fluent,

Then they will provide high-quality reading and numeracy TaRL instruction to learners (including regular assessment and appropriate grouping of learners).

Moreover, to drive forward the scaling of UCatchUp, the following hypotheses apply.

If key members of the Steering Committees at the district and municipal levels:

- have insight into the growing evidence base for UCatchUp,
- and use monitoring data to adjust the project if/where necessary to meet learners' needs,
- and plan for the institutionalisation of UCatchUp in the education system,
- and continue to secure the necessary funding, then there will be the necessary stakeholder engagement and support for fidelity to what works and the effective implementation and expansion of UCatchUp.

