

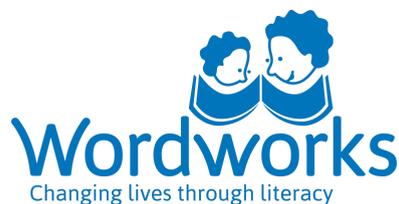
REPORT ON THE
2021 EXPLORATORY FIELD STUDY OF THE
TIME HOME LEARNING PROGRAMME



Together In My Education

Home learning programme for Grade R and Grade 1

January 2022





Executive Summary

This report presents the main findings that emerged from a comprehensive study of the TIME (Together In My Education) home learning programme, which took place between May and November 2021. [TIME](#) is an intervention proposed by Wordworks, in collaboration with a wide network of NGOs, to support the families of Grade R and Grade 1 learners through the distribution of printed activity packs as well as digital messages.

From May to November 2021, a series of data collection exercises was undertaken to gain a deeper understanding of how the programme was being embedded in the Western Cape education landscape, how the various categories of users were feeling about the offering, how well it was being taken up in the homes, and what benefits it might already be bringing to the various categories of users. This report [describes briefly the evaluation methods](#) and discusses 15 key findings as follows.

User satisfaction with the TIME programme offering

[Key finding 1:](#) District officials, teachers and parents were equally and overwhelmingly positive about the quality of the printed packs, which they found academically sound, visually attractive and user-friendly.

[Key finding 2:](#) There is solid evidence that the teachers who were familiar with the TIME multimedia messages found them valuable for their own needs. The usefulness for parents was more difficult to establish.

Early evidence of the impact of TIME

[Key finding 3:](#) Multiple sources of feedback from teachers and caregivers indicated that, when implemented well, the TIME programme was highly beneficial for participating children.

[Key finding 4:](#) Both teachers and caregivers found that TIME had contributed to improving the children's soft skills and attitudes, as well as their literacy and mathematical skills.

[Key finding 5:](#) Caregivers report that the TIME programme has changed their attitude to their child's schooling and their role in it, as well as their relationship with the teachers. The improvement in parental involvement was confirmed by a number of teachers in interviews.

[Key finding 6:](#) Caregivers report that the TIME programme has improved their relationship with their children.

Evidence from the WCED districts and partnering NGOs

[Key finding 7:](#) In most Cape Metro districts and the Cape Winelands, the district offices were very complimentary about Wordworks and TIME – and were actively promoting the programme. In outlying districts, where Wordworks' networks are largely made up of NGO, rather than



District, partners, and a lower number of schools were receiving the materials, the understanding of the programme was still superficial.

Key finding 8: The programme's growth is affected by a sense of overwhelm at district-level caused by multiple programmes being implemented in the Foundation Phase and at teacher-level by the difficulty of teaching under Covid-19 regulations.

Key finding 9: The network of NGOs helps broaden the reach of TIME across the province, however different NGOs had very unequal capacity, levels of familiarity with, and practical responses to, the implementation challenges experienced.

Findings about uptake of TIME in homes

Key finding 10: Overall, teachers' feedback indicated good uptake of TIME in their classes, with slightly higher uptake in Grade R classes compared to Grade 1 classes.

Key finding 11: The caregivers' feedback indicates that most engage with TIME two or three times per week, with a sizable minority doing it daily. The off-school days were the preferred time choice for caregivers to do TIME activities with their children. There were large variations in the length of a TIME session.

Findings about enablers and hurdles

Key finding 12: The teacher has a key role to play to catalyse the uptake in homes. The quality of the teacher-parent relationship also influenced the uptake.

Key finding 13: Across multiple socio-economic contexts and family configurations, the presence of an engaged caregiver (generally, the mother) was key to ensuring good engagement with TIME.

Key finding 14: Good use of the packs requires the caregivers to be fluent at speaking and reading the language of the packs.

Effectiveness of the delivery model for TIME multimedia messages via Moya

Key finding 15: The model chosen for the delivery of parent messages was found to be problematic. The chain of delivery was too long and the administrative and advocacy requirement of teachers was too onerous to allow quick and widespread access by parents.

Actions and adjustments inspired by these findings

The report discusses how the findings above have inspired the project team to take action, adjust the model and its delivery mechanisms – the most significant adjustment being the decision to try a radically new way to deliver messages to the caregivers, abandoning the Moya App and instead including QR codes on the printed materials.



Concluding thoughts

The 2021 MERL study on TIME has confirmed the potential value of the home-learning programme for children and adults involved and has provided ample food for thought in terms of better understanding the factors at all levels of the ecosystem that enable impact on children. The study has informed ongoing improvements to the materials, model and systems and has guided the planning for 2022 and beyond.



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Acronyms and abbreviations

CWED	Cape Winelands Education District
ECK	Eden and Central Karoo Education District
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FP	Foundation Phase
HOD	Head of Department
HSP	Home-School Partnerships (Wordworks early literacy programme)
LOLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LST	Learning Support Teacher
MCED	Metro Central Education District
MEED	Metro East Education District
MERL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning
MNED	Metro North Education District
MSED	Metro South Education District
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OED	Overberg Education District
QR ¹	Quick Response [Codes]
RSRW	Ready Steady Read Write (Wordworks early literacy programme)
RWWM	Read and Write with me (Wordworks lockdown early literacy programme)
TIME	Together In My Education (Wordworks home learning programme)
TOC	Theory of Change
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
WK	West Coast (Weskus) Education District

¹ See <https://www.kaspersky.co.za/resource-center/definitions/what-is-a-qr-code-how-to-scan>



1. The TIME home learning programme

TIME is a home learning programme for Grade R and Grade 1 children and their families based on termly activity packs, distributed at no cost to families, around which the intended learning takes place. Developed with early literacy content from Wordworks, early mathematics content from RED INK², and stories from Nal'ibali³, African Storybook⁴ and Book Dash⁵, the TIME learning materials were designed for distribution at scale, costing R12.50 per colour-printed pack in 2021, and were also made available for free download from Wordworks' website⁶.

Building on more than a decade of experience in supporting families through the Home-School Partnerships (HSP) parent programme, and supporting children learning to read and write through the Ready Steady Read Write (RSRW) community tutoring programme, TIME incorporates elements of both programmes to provide opportunities for interactive learning routines to be established between parents and children at home.

At the core of the TIME programme are its printed learning materials which are currently available in the three dominant languages of the Western Cape (Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa). While online offerings of educational activities have increased in number over the past year, the TIME programme works from the belief that Grade R and Grade 1 children, who are still learning to read and write, cannot utilise online learning resources effectively without adult guidance. In addition, TIME resources, though all paper based, are designed to offer a range of concrete apparatus appropriate for the learning requirements of young children.

A second but key aspect of the TIME programme resources are the multimedia motivational and support messages which were developed to serve as supplementary programme mediation tools. These messages comprise tips and demonstrations that take the form of written and audio messages, videos and images that were shared weekly with teachers so that they could be shared with parents (see [Figure 1](#)).

[Figure 2](#) illustrates in simplified terms the flow of learning and engagement that takes place through the TIME programme. The programme is designed such that five activities are completed in homes each week and provides a paper-based activity record to allow children to become aware of their own progress, and to allow parents to share this with their school teacher. Teachers are encouraged to support parents' interaction with their children and to elicit feedback and questions from parents.

The TIME home learning programme theory of change is available in [Appendix 4](#).

The proposal to create an open source home learning programme that covered the key Language and Mathematics skills in Grade R and Grade 1 CAPS, was supported by the Western Cape

² See <https://www.redink.org.za/>

³ See <https://nalibali.org/>

⁴ See <https://www.africanstorybook.org/>

⁵ See <https://bookdash.org/>

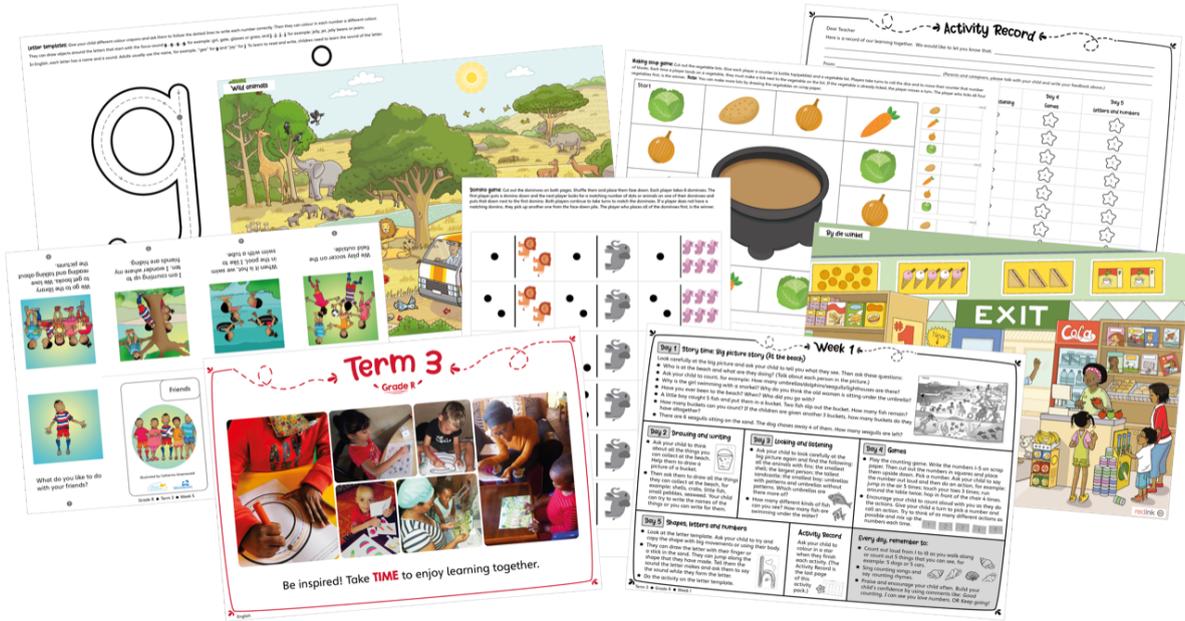
⁶ See <https://wwhomeliteracy.org.za/time/>



Education Department’s Curriculum Directorate and its @ Home Forum. The WCED has given the programme its full endorsement.⁷

Along with the WCED’s endorsement, and an effective partnership strategy, the TIME programme was taken up in several provinces in 2021 and the materials were shared for distribution to over **50 000** homes through more than **6** District Offices, **300** schools and **24** NGOs (see [Appendix 1](#)).

Figure 1: a) TIME printed packs (above); b) Example of TIME message (below)



Time Grade R Message 15

Learning to draw and write letters and numbers takes lots of practice. It is important that children are taught how to form letters and numbers correctly.



Click below to listen to text



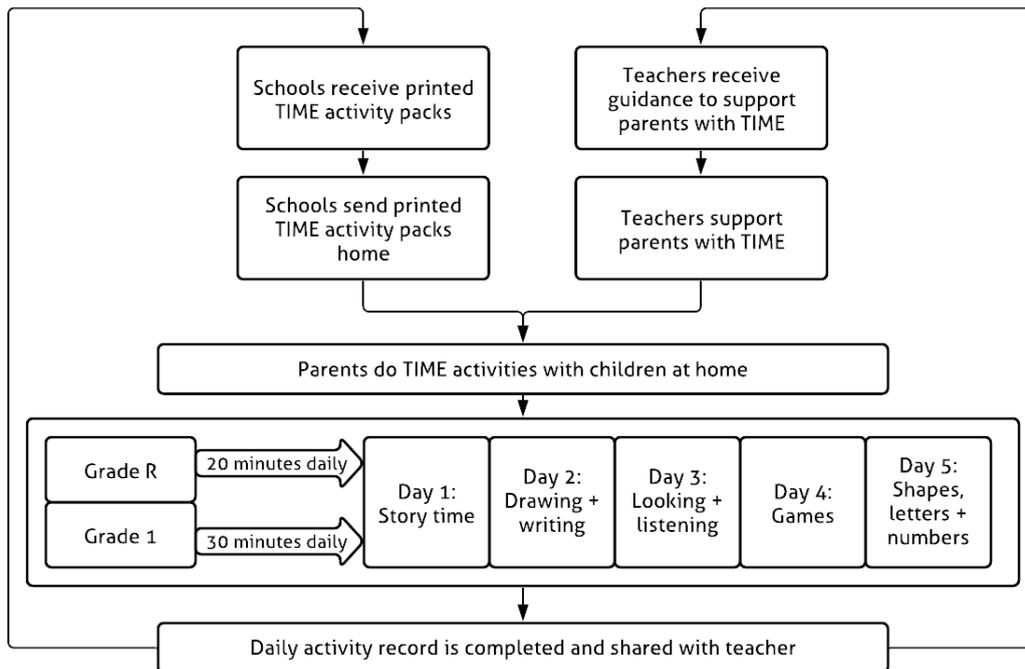
Find out how your child is learning to write each letter and number in class so you can do the same at home. Look at the letter and number templates in your activity packs for guidance. Start at the dot on the template.

Follow the direction of the arrow with one movement without lifting your crayon. If there are two movements to form the letter or number then place your crayon again on the dot at number two and follow the arrow in one movement once again. Your child can practise again and again by using a different colour crayon each time. In this way your child is making a rainbow letter.

⁷ See the WCED’s public endorsement of TIME at <https://youtu.be/K5IKSR5obwg?t=377>



Figure 2: TIME implementation flow



As this report focuses on a home learning programme, we acknowledge the various configurations of people with whom young children engage on a daily basis at home. This report uses the terms *parents* and *caregivers* interchangeably, but always in reference to the significant adults engaging with the child at home on the TIME programme.

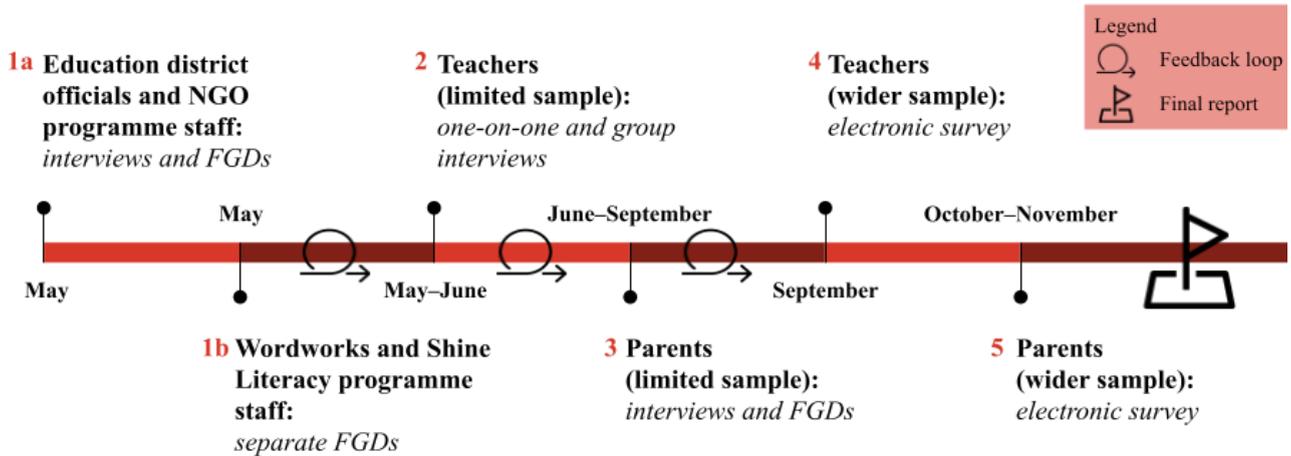
2. The field study

This report summarises the findings of the MERL (Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning) activities that took place over the course of 2021, the first year of implementation of the TIME programme. These activities included five data collection exercises, which are represented in [Figure 3](#). Between these data collection moments, debrief sessions were arranged to discuss learnings and salient insights.

The research that took place in 2021 was motivated by the desire to learn and improve the intervention: the Wordworks TIME programme team was primarily interested in finding out how the programme was being taken up by schools and in homes, so that challenges could be identified early on, allowing for an agile response in implementing improvements or modifications to the program strategy and activities if necessary. The three main areas of enquiry were:

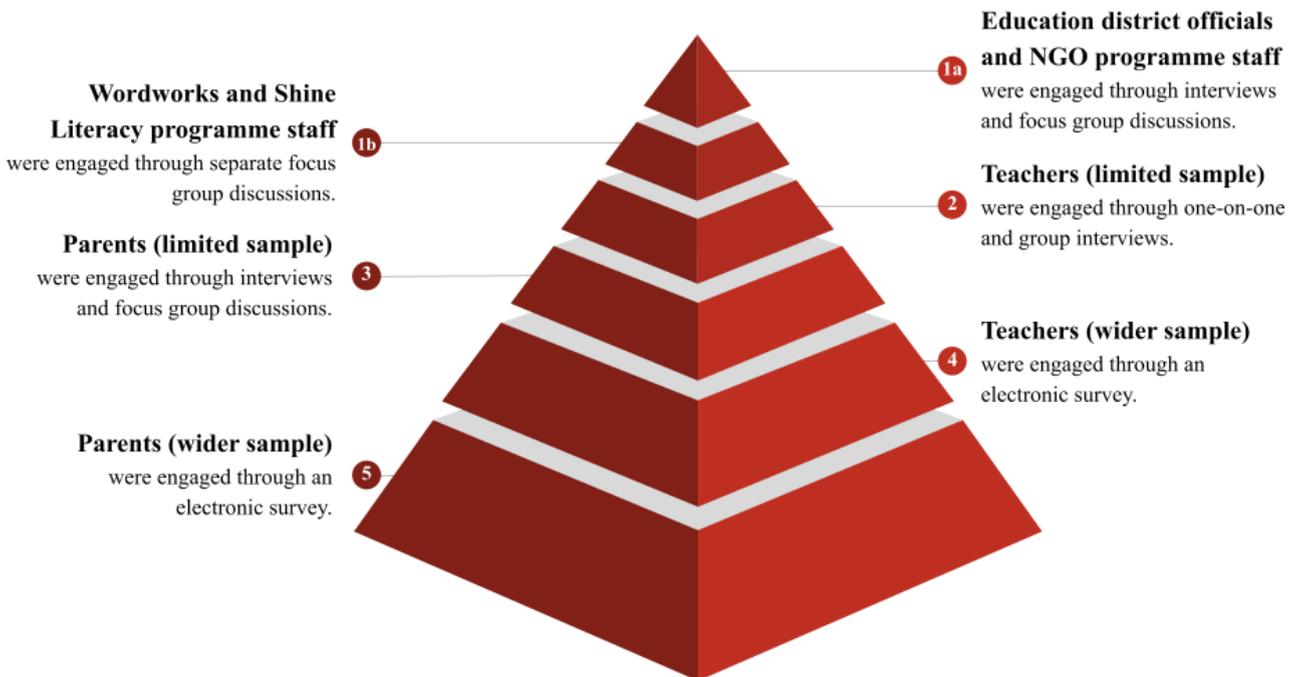
1. To what extent is the programme reaching homes? How are families experiencing it?
2. How well are stakeholders collaborating with each other at different levels of the programme?
3. What outcomes are emerging from the early stages of programme implementation?

Figure 3: Study timeline with staged data collection, feedback loops and a final report



The approach used combined qualitative and quantitative data collection: a qualitative method was used for exploratory purposes in order to inform the quantitative method used subsequently with a larger sample, as represented by Figure 4.

Figure 4: Sequential procedure for mixed methods data collection in five stages





Scope of the study

With the exception of engagements with districts and partner NGOs, a decision was made to focus the field study on the subgroup of the **146** schools which are established members of WordNetworks⁸, and the **27 645** homes that they are reaching. Compared to a total of over 300 schools and 50 000 homes, this means that the study was narrowed to approximately half of the programme audience. A breakdown of this subgroup by district is available in [Appendix 3, Table 3.2](#).

This subset of the TIME participants has the following characteristics in common:

- a. WordNetworks schools all have to some degree a history of engaging parents or community members through their implementation of Wordworks' HSP, RSRW or RWWM programmes.
- b. WordNetworks schools received sponsored TIME materials for all of their Grade R and Grade 1 learners, as well as materials for all Grade R and Grade 1 class teachers, FP HODs and LSTs (if relevant).
- c. Each WordNetworks school was allocated a Wordworks programme staff member (mentor) responsible for supporting their TIME implementation.
- d. This mentor established and maintained WhatsApp group chats to provide ongoing virtual support to each school's participating teachers.

These inputs were not necessarily included in the programme delivery of other participating NGOs and education districts.

Data collection for **stages 1, 2 and 3** was conducted primarily by Wordworks staff, led by an external expert advisor. Overall, **16** WCED district officials, **36** NGO programme staff, **39** teachers and **47** caregivers participated in the interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) (see [Appendix 2](#)). In the sampling of teachers and caregivers, to counter the self-selection bias and gain insights into possible hurdles to implementation, a deliberate effort was made, wherever possible, to seek engagements with individuals who were assumed to have had moderate or low levels of engagement with TIME.

The surveys (**stages 4 and 5**) were disseminated as Google Forms which were shared through links on mobile messaging apps – the links were shared with teachers, with a request for them to forward the parent survey to the parents. The parent questionnaire was available in three languages (English, isiXhosa and Afrikaans). Due to the fact that Wordworks did not have direct contact with parents, we cannot confirm the extent to which the whole population of parents involved received the survey via the intended cascade through teachers.

Overall, **294** teachers (**139** Grade R teachers, **144** Grade 1 teachers) and **428** parents (**190** Grade R parents and **238** Grade 1 parents) submitted responses to the respective surveys.

⁸ WordNetworks schools are schools with a history of implementing Wordworks' early literacy programmes prior to the development of TIME.



Table 1 below estimates the portion of the target population that was sampled at different levels.

Table 1: Respondents to data collection, in relation to estimated target population group size

Respondent type	Estimated population size (WordNetworks)	Stages 1–3 Interviews/FGDs		Stages 4–5 Surveys	
		Number participating	Est. % sampled	Number participating	Est. % sampled
Education district officials	120	16	13.3%		
NGO programme staff	80	36	45.0%		
Teachers	800	39	4.9%	294	37%
Parents	27 000	47	0.2%	428	2%

Interpretation: We estimate that the TIME programme is reaching 800 teachers within the Wordworks network. From these 800, 39 (4.9%) have participated in interviews or FGDs and 294 or 37% have responded to the survey.

37% of the WordNetworks teachers involved in TIME responded to the teacher survey, representing 77% of participating schools. The parent survey elicited responses from 43% of schools but from just under 2% of potential parents, with an average of 6 parent responses per responding school. For a more detailed breakdown by district, see [Table 3.1](#) in Appendix 3.

Given the methodology, self-selection bias is likely to have affected all the teacher and parent data collected, with an increasing degree as the study progressed to its later stages, i.e. the bias is assumed to be lowest in stage 2 (where teachers from less engaged schools were targeted for interview) and highest in stage 5 (because the parent survey potentially suffered from a double self-selection bias: firstly more engaged teachers are likely to have been more proactive in sharing the survey with their parents, and secondly, within each class, the parents who responded are likely to be the most engaged ones). This means that the survey data is best able to inform us about how the programme is being utilised, whereas interview and FGD data might provide more insights into possible hurdles to uptake quantitative data should not be utilised for the purpose of measuring uptake. Every attempt was made to triangulate findings – for example the data collected through the surveys was analysed in light of the insights garnered from the interview and FGDs phases.

[Appendices 2 and 3](#) (Tables 2.1–3.5) provide more detail on the data collection activities and the profile of respondents, including a breakdown by district, school and language.

3. Stakeholder assessment of the TIME resource offering

The implementation of the TIME programme required the TIME materials to be formally approved by the Department. In addition to this, informal approval of the materials was essential across the



educational ecosystem if the materials were ever to reach children. The materials needed to be disseminated by Districts, taken on by school management, mediated by teachers to parents. Parents had to find time and energy to commit to regular learning time with their children. NGOs had to find ways to incorporate TIME materials into existing programmes of work. At every layer of the system, the TIME roll out required extra effort at a time of stress for everyone. It was our assumption that none of this would have happened if the TIME materials were not positively regarded. In this section, we look at feedback from users about the quality, accessibility and relevance of the TIME programme packs and messages.

Feedback on the TIME offering as a whole was overwhelmingly positive. The feedback on the multimedia messages, however, was affected by poor awareness of those messages within the targeted audience. This resulted from practical challenges in the dissemination chain, which will be discussed later. Table 2 below summarises user feedback on the two key aspects of the TIME offering.

Table 2: Visual representation of user feedback through five-star rating scale

	Districts	Teachers	Caregivers
Printed packs	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★
TIME multimedia messages	Poor awareness	★★★★	Poor awareness

3.1 Printed packs

Key finding 1: District officials, teachers and parents were equally and overwhelmingly positive about the quality of the printed packs, which they found academically sound, visually attractive and user-friendly.

As shown above, feedback on the printed packs of TIME materials was extremely positive. Throughout each engagement with WCED officials it was apparent that the TIME materials are viewed very highly. In particular officials commended it for being attractive (printed in colour); easy to use; available in equal quality in the province’s three main languages. The fact that it includes mathematics was also welcome. Ideas for improvement tended to be with respect to details and were always fed back to the development team.

Similarly, all engagements with teachers indicated that the TIME materials are regarded as high quality resources, which are both attractive to children and educationally effective. Some of the overarching feedback included statements like:

“Nothing is lacking.”

“Packs are relevant to the grades and to their themes.”

“I love that maths and language are included.”



Of the teachers who participated in the survey, close to 80% chose to describe their level of engagement with the TIME materials as “I have reviewed the programme carefully and I think it is a strong home learning programme” (see [Figure 5](#)).

Parents also gave largely positive feedback on the materials with particular reference to the enjoyment factor of the programme. When surveyed, 97% of parents said that they would recommend the programme to other parents (see [Figure 6](#)) and when given the opportunity to provide suggestions for improvements of the materials, the vast majority of parents responded with statements like:

“It is just perfect.”

“It's already brilliant.”

“No. Because it's perfect the way it is. I enjoy it with my child.”

“Baie goeie leermiddel. Hou so aan!”

Figure 5: Surveyed teachers' responses on the extent of their engagement with TIME materials

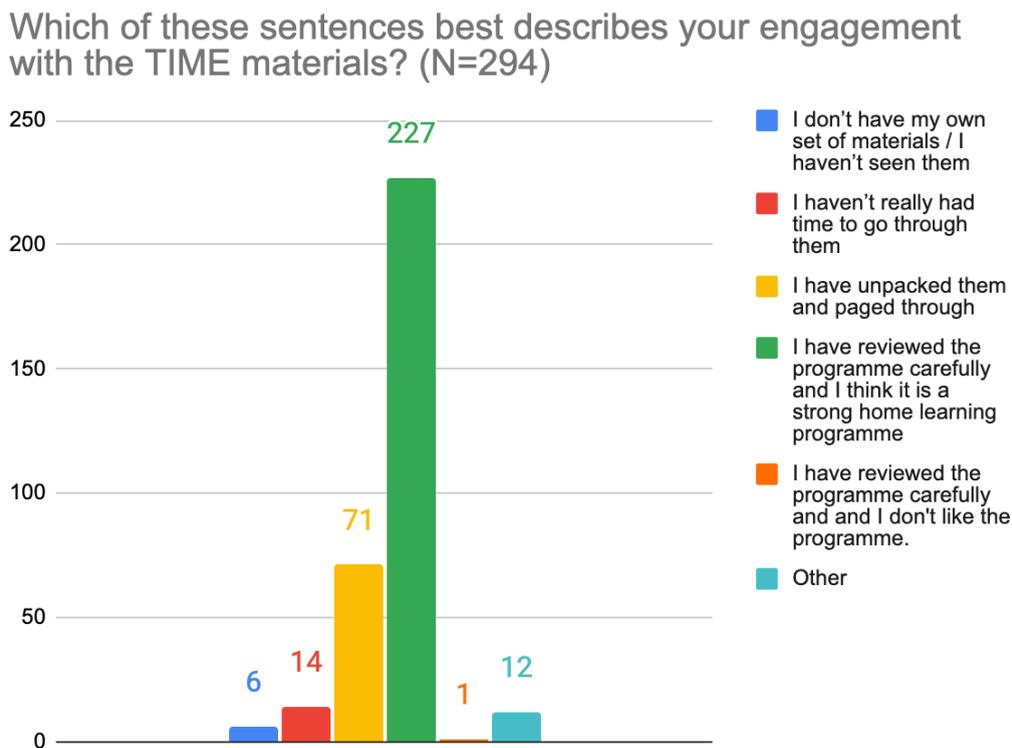
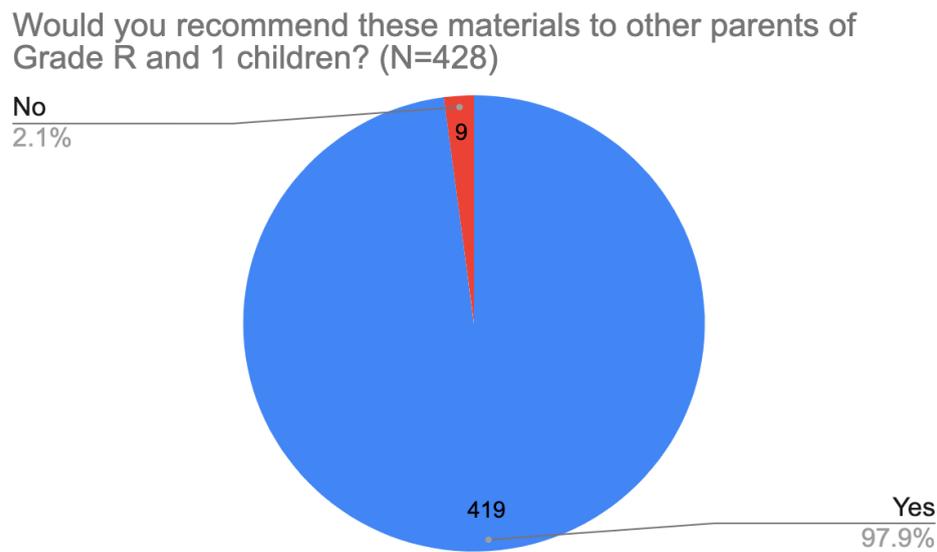




Figure 6: Surveyed parents on whether they would recommended the TIME materials to other parents



3.2 TIME multimedia support messages

Key finding 2: There is solid evidence that the teachers who were familiar with the TIME multimedia messages found them valuable for their own needs. The usefulness for parents was more difficult to establish.

Over the various stages of the study, the data collected on satisfaction with the messages has been difficult to interpret: contradictions hint at the possibility that some respondents (especially parents) expressed satisfaction without being fully familiar with the messages. Nevertheless, there was very little negative feedback shared, and the qualitative comments, despite being mostly unspecific, suggest that users were satisfied.

The most specific feedback was received from teachers who expressed the value of these messages for them.

"Even for me as a teacher, the messages give me ideas to do with my learners. Last week, they spoke about drawing. Sometimes I get so caught up in teaching that I need to give them time to draw about the story and show what they think and feel. Especially if they are not ready to write sentences." (Learning Support Teacher, English school, Metro South)

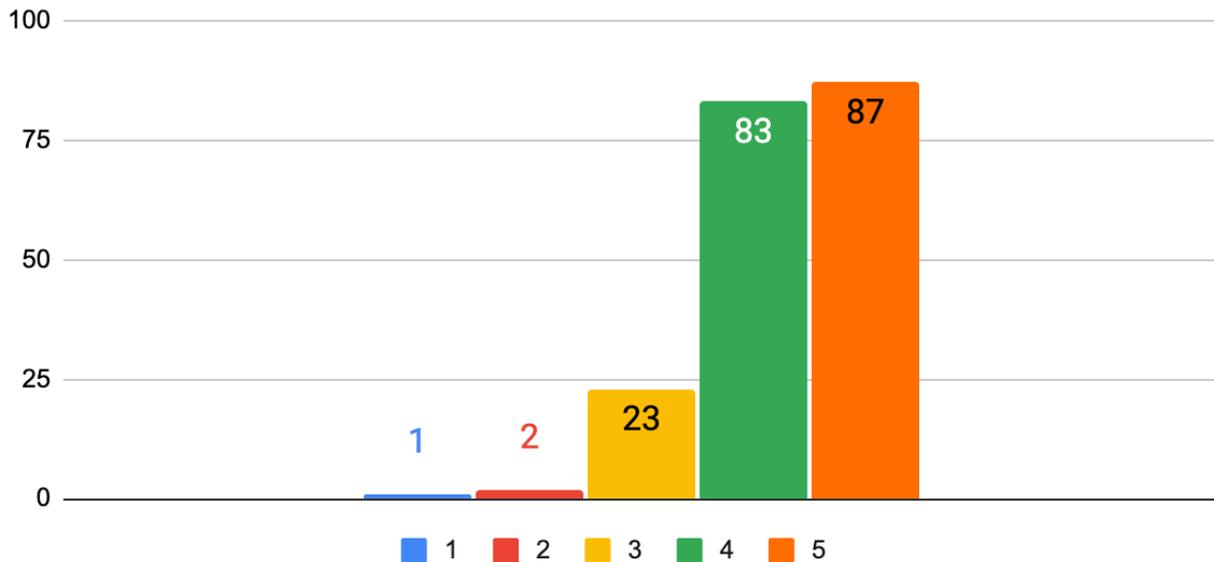
Teacher survey data confirmed that the overwhelming majority of teachers rated the messages as helpful or very helpful (see Figure 7).



Figure 7: Surveyed teachers' feedback about helpfulness of the TIME support messages

Teacher survey: If you were able to access the free TIME support messages, rate how helpful you found them (N=196)

1 = Not at all helpful; 5 = Very helpful



The usefulness of messages for parents has been more difficult to establish, partly because of [dissemination challenges](#) resulting in low levels of awareness of those messages at parent-level.

Observing teacher behaviour, it is interesting to note that, although 73% of respondents to the teacher survey received the TIME messages, only 35.7% shared these messages systematically with the parents (see [Figure 7](#)), while over 20% report sharing these messages “if they feel they are good resources for parents/caregivers”. The data collected was not sufficient to be conclusive about the kind of resources which teachers found useful, vs. less useful to parents.

Regarding the accessibility and understandability of messages, most teachers in interviews indicated that the messages are clear and pitched well for the level of parents. Some reservations were expressed, mostly by Afrikaans teachers.

“The messages are of good quality, but some parents can't understand due to the language barrier, so parents need to get someone to interpret the messages. Sometimes we as teachers also explain to parents on WhatsApp what the message is about.” (Afrikaans Grade R and Grade 1 teacher, Quintile 4 school, Metro North)

“I found some of the messages too difficult for the parents to understand because the parents themselves do not speak pure Afrikaans. I sometimes do a voice over and explain the message to them in very simple language.” (Afrikaans Grade R teacher, Quintile 4 school, Metro North)



More research is needed to fully understand how the messages can better accommodate the kind of language commonly used in homes.

4. Early evidence of the impact of TIME

4.1 Child level impact reported by teachers and caregivers

Key finding 3: Multiple sources of feedback from teachers and caregivers indicated that, when implemented well, the TIME programme was highly beneficial for participating children.

Despite the interviews taking place early in the year, in Term 2, we were surprised that most teachers and caregivers already reported observing benefits in the children as a result of TIME. Only 4 of the 29 teachers interviewed concluded that there was no significant impact to report or that it was too soon to tell – mostly, these were teachers who had experienced implementation challenges or admitted not having devoted much attention to the programme yet.

Some teachers referred to some individual learners in particular, while others indicated that the improvement was across the board. Two teachers from low-quintile schools expressed that having TIME in 2021 had made a very strong difference to the children’s learning, when compared to 2020.

“Children this year are far better than last year’s ones when it comes to reading because now parents have something to offer to their children” (Grade R teacher, isiXhosa Quintile 2 school, Metro South)

“2021 Grade R learners are much better than 2020 in understanding sounds, numbers, and stories.” (Grade R teacher, isiXhosa Quintile 2 school, Metro East)

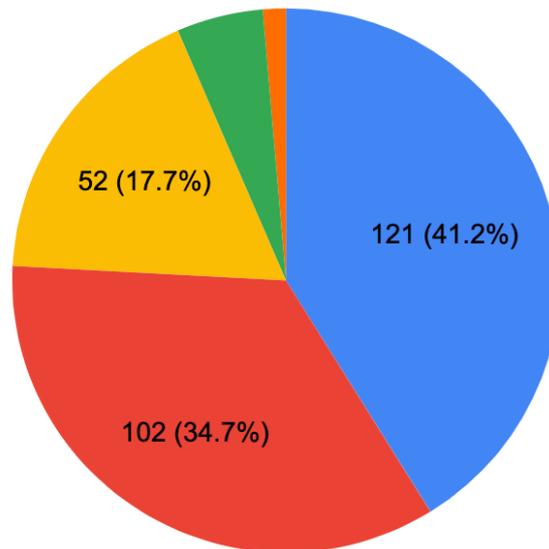
When surveyed in Term 3, teachers were even more confident in asserting the positive impact of TIME on the children. Survey responses (see Figure 8) showed that over 75% of teachers felt that they could link improvements in their learners’ skills with their engagement with TIME.



Figure 8: Surveyed teachers' responses about the improvement of children's skills and link with TIME

Please choose the statement that best reflects your opinion
(N=294)

- I have noticed improvements in some children and believe I can link this to their engagement with TIME
- I feel strongly that TIME is making a real improvement in the children's skills and learning
- Some children have progressed but I cannot say if this is related to the TIME programme
- With Covid, the year is so disrupted that I cannot really notice their progress
- Other



Key finding 4: Both teachers and caregivers found that TIME had contributed to improving the children's soft skills and attitudes, as well as their literacy and mathematical skills.

Feedback from parents and caregivers gives a very strong indication that children who do the TIME activities regularly grow into more confident, talkative and eager children.

"My daughter always used to be the shy one, but now she is more confident and even helps her brother in Grade 1. This would not have happened without the Term 1 and Term 2 packs."

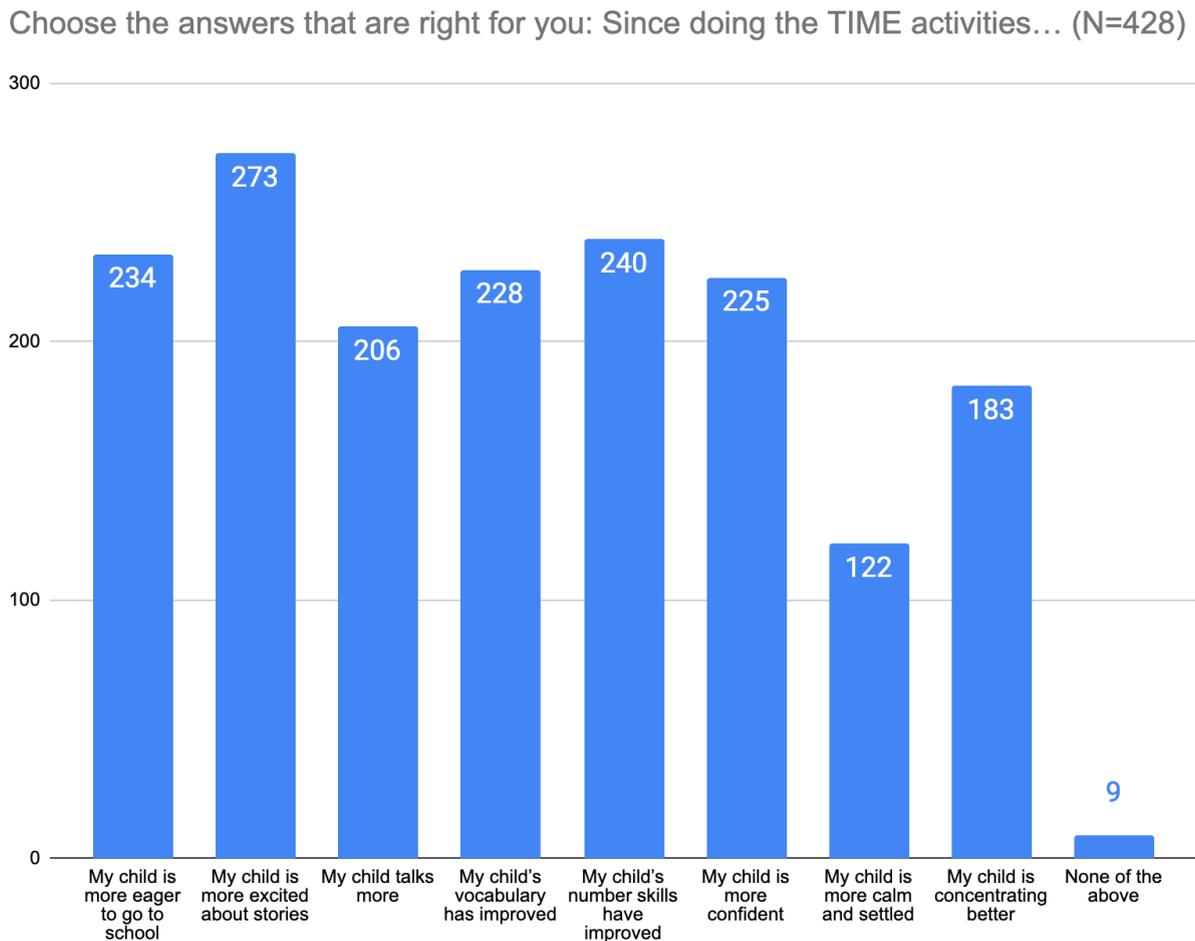
"My daughter has very low self-esteem. Since we've started working together, it boosts her confidence. I know that my child is ready for any challenge." (both quotes above from Grade R parents in Quintile 4 English school, Metro South)

*"Musa is more diligent to go to school. Homework is the first thing he welcomes me with when I come from work. Musa likes to tell stories in a relaxed way. Musa can also follow the instructions very well now. He is now **more talkative, playful and free.**"* (Grade R parent in Quintile 1 isiXhosa school in the Winelands)

The parent survey (Figure 9) confirmed this and also revealed that parents have become aware of the improvement in their children's academic competence.



Figure 9: Surveyed parents' feedback on their children's improvement since their engagement with TIME



The teachers who were interviewed also reported positive learning outcomes for children:

“Teachers can see the phonics improving, the reading is improving.” (Afrikaans Quintile 4 school, Metro North)

“There is a huge improvement in the children’s vocabulary, when they speak you can hear improvement.” (Grade R teacher, English Quintile 4 school, Metro South)

“I have seen an improvement with reading especially during shared reading.” (Grade R teacher, English Quintile 5 school, Metro North)

“The children love the dice a lot and are showing improvement in numbers.” (English Quintile 2 school, Metro North)

“I have a set of twins in my Grade R class. At the beginning of the year, they were very weak. I called the parent in and showed her the TIME resources; I explained what the parent



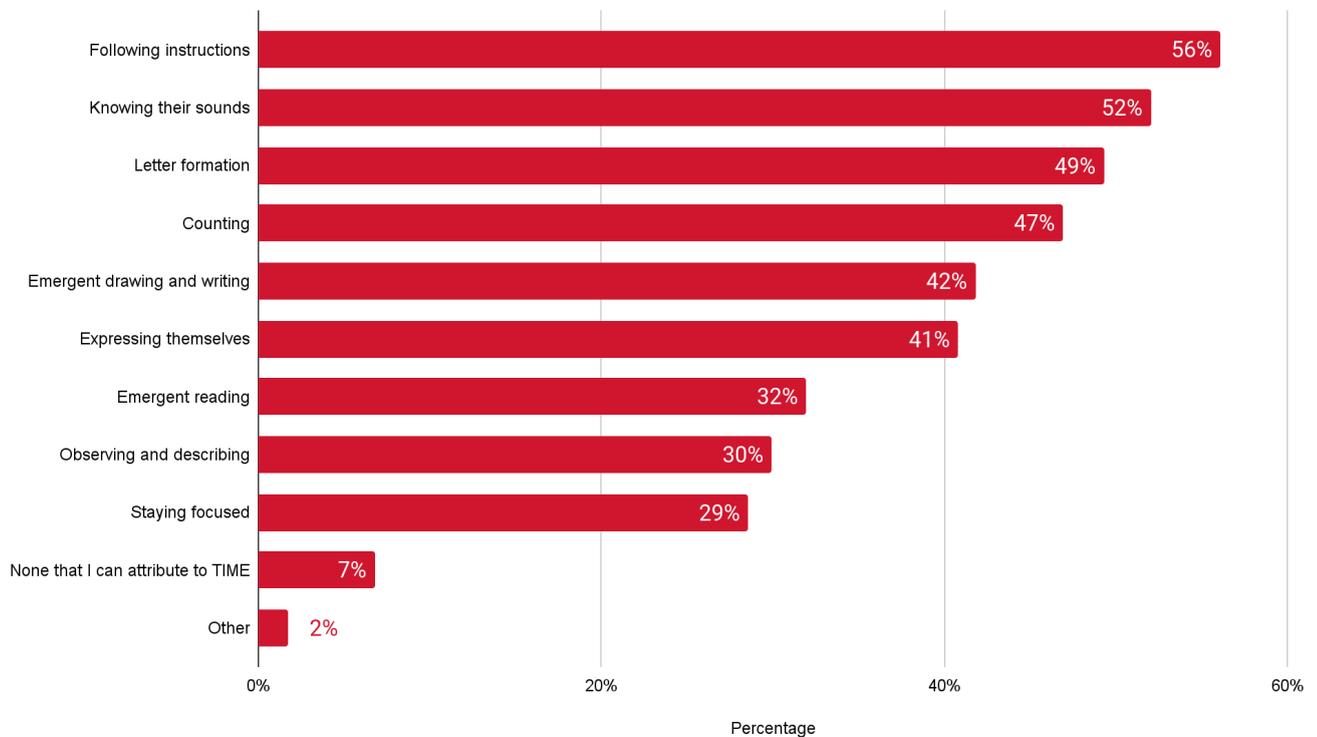
should do. I have seen very positive results. It is evident that the parent is doing her utmost at home” (Grade R teacher, English Quintile 4 school, Metro North)

“The drawing skills of learners has improved and their counting has also improved. The learners’ performance generally has improved.” (Grade R teacher, isiXhosa Quintile 3 school, Metro Central)

The teacher survey also elicited reports of a range of positive outcomes for their learners as illustrated in the figure below. It is encouraging to note that only 7% of responding teachers were unable to attribute any improvements in learner outcomes to their engagement in the TIME programme.

Figure 10: Surveyed teacher’s feedback about children’s growth in confidence

The children in my class who do TIME at home have become better/more confident with... (N=294)



4.2 Early outcomes related to caregivers and their relationships with children

Key finding 5: Caregivers report that the TIME programme has changed their attitude to their child’s schooling and their role in it, as well as their relationship with the teachers. The improvement in parental involvement was confirmed by a number of teachers in interviews.

Many of the interviewed caregivers confirmed that they feel much more present and involved in their children’s education as a result of implementing the TIME programme regularly.



The selection of quotes below are taken from interviews with caregivers.

“When my other grandchild was doing Grade R, I was not involved but now, with this granddaughter, I am highly involved because the teacher sends work everyday. I sit and help her with the homework everyday.”

(Grandmother of Grade R child in a Quintile 5 English school, Metro North)

“To me, TIME is very interesting. I am now more interested in my child's education. For example, I never knew that a child can learn through games.”

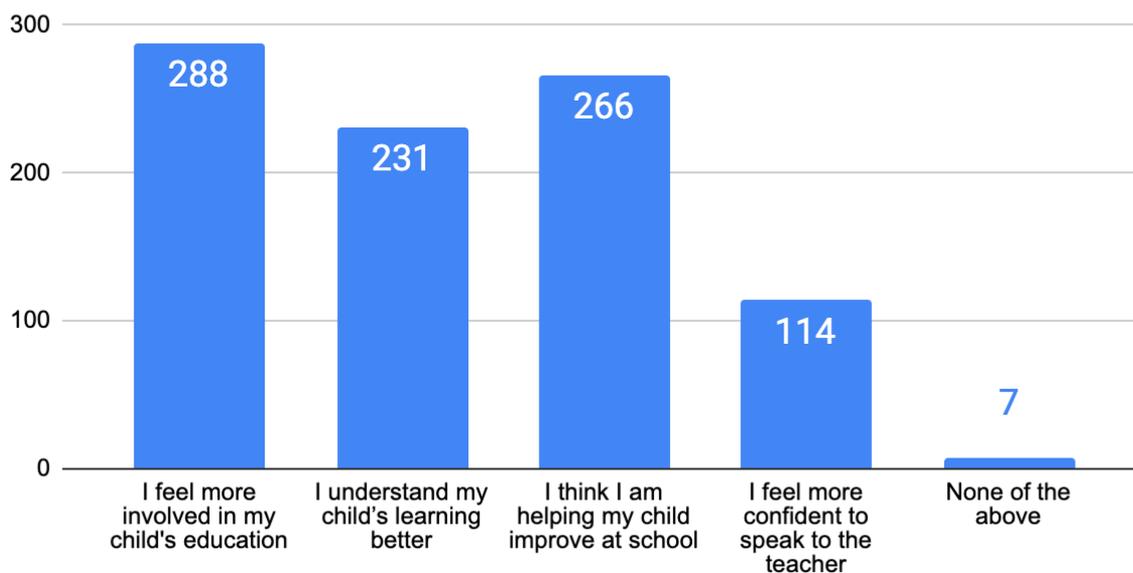
(Mother of a Grade R child, isiXhosa Quintile 1 school, Cape Winelands district)

“TIME has changed my experience because now I feel more involved in my grandchild's education. This helps me, when the teacher gives me the progress report I am now able to compare it with what I've noticed doing TIME at home.” (Grandmother of a Grade R child, isiXhosa Quintile 3 school, Metro Central district)

“The packs are helping us with guidelines and activities of what to do with the child at home.” (Mother of a Grade R child, isiXhosa Quintile 3 school, Metro Central district)

Figure 11: Surveyed parents' altered approach to their child's learning as a result of their TIME experience

Choose the answers that are right for you: Since doing the TIME activities... (N=428)



Teacher interviews also elicited substantial statements from teachers revealing that TIME contributed to improve parental involvement at their schools.

“The broader community is really supportive and with the TIME programme they are even more supportive.” (Teacher at an English Quintile 5 school, Metro South)



“Few parents were involved before TIME. Now, they cooperate with the school very well.”
(Teacher at an English Quintile 5 school, Metro North)

“Before TIME not all parents responded to an invitation to a school. But during TIME, parents co-operate a lot.” (Teacher at an isiXhosa Quintile 3 school, Metro Central)

This improvement often went hand in hand with a strengthening of the relationship between the teacher and the caregivers. In the interviews, one caregiver, who is the aunt of a Grade 1 learner, reported having a strained relationship with the teacher due to her hard approach which used to upset the child. After the TIME packs were distributed, the teacher encouraged parents to be part of the children’s learning and acknowledged and affirmed those caregivers who were diligent in doing the activities. This has contributed a lot to improving the relationship between the teacher and the child’s aunt.

Many parents indicated that TIME created opportunities for regular communication with the teacher, and that this helped them to feel more comfortable contacting the class teacher to ask questions.

“Me and the teacher, we can now communicate about the activities of TIME.” (Parent at an Afrikaans Quintile 4 school, Metro South)

“The messages sent by the teacher help a lot. She sends messages on how to motivate our child, that was very helpful to us as parents” (Parent at an English Quintile 5 school, Metro North)

Some parents however indicated that they still need more support from the teacher and do not find it easy to ask questions about activities they don’t understand.

Key finding 6: Caregivers report that the TIME programme has improved their relationship with their children.

A very significant and reliable outcome which came out strongly from the interview process is how the regular practice of spending time doing fun activities with children has strengthened the bond between caregivers and their children. In the interviews, with the exception of a few families who had been unable to implement the programme at home, nearly all parents provided strong evidence for this.

The relationship improvement was related to the increase in the amount of time spent together, the fun factor as well as the opportunities created to have more and deeper conversations.

“I didn’t know how to handle [my son]. Now, as a result of TIME, I can get to know my own child better.” (Grade R parent in English Quintile 4 school, Metro South)



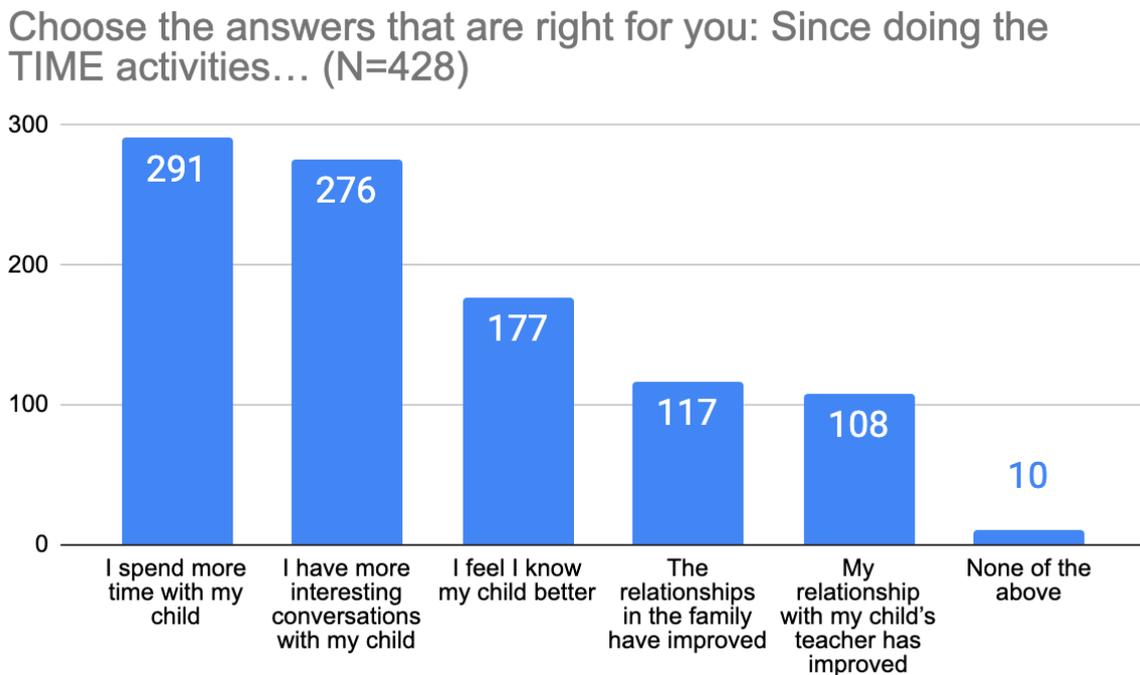
“I have seen the impact it has made on us. Now I spend quality time with my children and even the other family members seem to get along much better with them.” (Mother of Grade R twins in Afrikaans Quintile 4 school, Metro North)

“Now we talk about things that we were not talking about before because we spend more time together. My relationship with my grandchild is great now.” (Grade R grandmother, isiXhosa Quintile 3 school, Metro Central).

A few parents have highlighted how the strengthening of the relationship has extended beyond the caregiver-child bond, to include other members of the family too, as illustrated e.g. by the following quote.

“I have been part of the HSP programme at the school before, so it has made it easier for me to use the TIME material. It has also made me more aware of my role as a parent. It has improved my relationship with all my children, and the relationship between the children has improved too, because all members of my family became involved in the games.” (Grade R mother, English Quintile 5 school, Metro Central)

Figure 12: Surveyed parents’ feedback on improved relationships as a result of their experiences with TIME





4.3 Concluding words on early impact

Although it is early in the life of the programme to draw reliable conclusions regarding positive academic and social changes in participating children, there are strong indications that engaged teachers and parents are noticing a range of **child-level outcomes**, including improvements in language, numeracy, concentration and attitudes to learning.

In addition, the study has elicited strong evidence of **adult-level outcomes**, such as shifts in attitude at the level of caregivers (who feel motivated to play a greater role in their child's education) and teachers (who have had a positive experience of mobilising parents). While such attitudinal shifts remain fragile, their significance should not be discounted as transformed understandings of roles amongst stakeholders is an essential requirement for successful system change.

The above-mentioned positive outcomes were achieved in a context of successful implementation of TIME, i.e. many of the teachers' reflections suggested that the impact on children depended on effective practices in the homes, which in turn were affected by the role played by the teacher. At the same time, there are some broader ecosystem elements⁹ at play, which influence the outcomes.

In an effort to shed light on these success factors at the level of teachers and caregivers as well as within the broader educational ecosystem, the following section exposes the insights that have emerged from the field study about the factors and practices that support the effective roll-out and implementation of the TIME programme. We start with a review of the role played by the WCED districts and partnering NGOs, before presenting and discussing in greater detail the practical processes observed at school- and home-level in the implementation of TIME.

5. Factors that support or hinder the effective delivery of TIME

5.1 Review of evidence from the WCED districts and partnering NGOs

Districts play a key role in the delivery of the programme to schools: logistically, they are involved in the distribution of materials to the schools. Programmatically, their endorsement, advocacy and encouragement through their systems is an important part of driving the uptake. The interviews and focus group discussions with district officials held in May 2021 yielded many insights. From these, the most salient are the following three:

Key finding 7: In most **Cape Metro districts and the Cape Winelands**, the district offices were very complimentary about Wordworks and TIME – and were actively promoting the programme. In outlying districts, where Wordworks' networks are smaller, and largely comprised of NGO rather than District partners, and a lower number of schools were receiving the materials, the understanding of the programme was still superficial.

⁹ It is worth noting here that the field study took place within schools that displayed favourable characteristics both in their history and the support they had access to (see [scope discussion](#))



We observed very warm and heartfelt attitudes from foundation phase subject advisors and learning support advisors from Metro North, South and Central, as well as from the Cape Winelands. Most of these had a well-established relationship with Wordworks, which appeared to inform their attitudes towards the TIME programme.

Most of the advisors we engaged with from those districts had engaged extensively with the printed packs, which they viewed as academically solid and visually attractive. They also understood the practical value of what the programme was seeking to achieve in the homes, and were very aware that such ambition required a concerted effort from multiple stakeholders. To a large extent, we found that the officials in those districts were willing to go out of their way to raise awareness about the programme, both within the district and in the communities they serve.

“One of our aims is to ensure parent involvement. This programme involves parents in an easy to follow way. We’ve seen videos of parents in rural areas playing the games on a bed. The beauty of it is the parent involvement.” (Cape Winelands district)

“I advocate for the programme during my department head meetings. I encourage my team to advocate for the programme when meeting with principals. [One curriculum advisor] has advocated to put it on the local radio in Atlantis. We also thought about getting it into the community newspapers.” (Cape Metro North District)

In the West Coast, Overberg and ECK districts, at the time we had the conversations (May 2021), it was apparent that most of the officials we talked to had not engaged with the programme at the same level as the Metro and Cape Winelands districts. They were however positive about it and saw potential for it.

“This is my second conversation on this programme, so I’m not as clued-up yet. But me and [my colleague] will come together and discuss this programme, it will be good to get all the LSTs involved.” (Learning Support, Overberg District)

“It’s too soon to report on successes, but at least our teachers are positive about TIME.” (Overberg District)

“It is important to get the teachers and parents on board. It will work well when the parents are working well with the school.” (West Coast District)

“Because it is a project run by NGOs, I must admit that I am not fully aware of what is done at the schools or the sites in our circuit. This is the first time that I am asked to join a session, but it is good to hear the benefits of this project.” (ECK District)



Key finding 8: The programme’s growth is affected by a **sense of overwhelm** – at district-level because of multiple programmes being implemented in the Foundation Phase; and at teacher-level by the difficulty of teaching under Covid-19 regulations.

District officials reminded us repeatedly of the impact that the Covid-19 crisis had had on teachers over the past year and a half. In addition to the universal personal stress, foundation phase teachers were confronted with the challenge of helping young, previously unschooled children settle into a school routine despite rotational attendance and, in 2021, the pressures of having to catch up on the previous year’s learning losses. This may explain why some teachers were struggling to engage deeply with a project which they may regard as being only marginally relevant to their classroom.

An additional element causing overwhelm for Advisors was the large number of programmes for which they are responsible:

“The TIME programme is one of 10 or 12 projects that are running, apart from our own work with schools. And we have to juggle all the balls. So it is asking two extra miles to ensure that all the programmes are running.” (Cape Winelands district)

Key finding 9: The network of NGOs helps broaden the reach of TIME across the province, however different NGOs had very unequal capacity, levels of familiarity with, and practical responses to, the implementation challenges experienced.

Nationally, just over half of packs were distributed via the Wordworks school network, with partner NGOs helping to broaden the reach by penetrating geographical areas or population segments that may not otherwise be covered. In general, NGOs would order and fund printed packs from Wordworks and then take over the implementation of the programme within their own networks and in terms of their own capacity, programme methodology and commitments.

While some NGOs adopted the same model as Wordworks (working with class teachers to mediate TIME packs to parents in the homes), others used the TIME materials in community settings, e.g. relying on community volunteers in after-school centres, or as tutors during class time, i.e. implementing TIME outside of the home environment.

Among the staff of NGOs involved in the interviews, there was a wide spectrum of familiarity and comfort with the programme. Some NGOs, such as Principal’s Academy Trust, were pro-active in implementing TIME within their schools and problem-solving as they went along; others were more in the early stages of understanding the layers of the programme and were grappling with some practical challenges. As the interviews with NGOs took place relatively early in the year, these might well have been ‘teething pains’.



Examples of successes:

“We love the programme, especially with the pandemic and children coming on alternate days. It has worked well in my schools once we’ve got the teachers involved and they drive buy in from the parents. The teachers are laminating games to make sure that they last long, they check up and make sure that the parents are doing the activities. They encourage the children to make them excited about the programme.” (Principal’s Academy Trust)

“At our Educare, the parents are so excited and they are almost a bit competitive, they want to show on the WhatsApp group that they are doing it well.” (Hout Bay Project)

Examples of implementation challenges:

“It was initially welcomed here, but the challenge is that the children have to decide to come regularly. Of the 8 children, only 2 are coming regularly. Those two are flourishing. The obstacle is that if the parents aren’t buying into this, then the children are not getting the regular support that it requires. The issue for me is that there is not really buy-in from the school. They have been invited to come and have a look, but they haven’t come.” (The Breede Centre, McGregor)

“Our challenges are that we have got at least 5 WCED Grade R schools, those teachers are overburdened with their own curriculum, they report that they haven’t handed out the materials yet.” (Knysna Education Trust)

“The challenge we are facing is that the material is easily damaged if the children move it between our centres and their homes.” (Beautiful Gate SA)

5.2 Evidence on the uptake of TIME in homes

Obtaining a sense of the extent to which TIME was or wasn’t being used in the homes was an important objective of the 2021 study, yet raised the question of how to find out. Doing direct observations in the homes would have restricted us to a small sample of homes and would have been unlikely to yield representative results. Instead, we asked both teachers and caregivers for their estimation. While caregivers were best placed to respond from their own experience, adding the perspective of the teachers would provide some degree of correction of the inevitable self-selection bias among caregivers. Teachers’ insights into the frequency of use in the homes came mostly from hearing the children talk (and brag) about what they’ve done at home. All these results are therefore subject to some limitations.

Key finding 10: Overall, teachers’ feedback indicated **good uptake** of TIME in their classes, with slightly higher uptake in Grade R classes compared to Grade 1 classes.

The teachers participating in interviews were mostly positive about how well parents had responded to the TIME offering, with some notable exceptions. 4 out of the 28 interviewed teachers (18%)

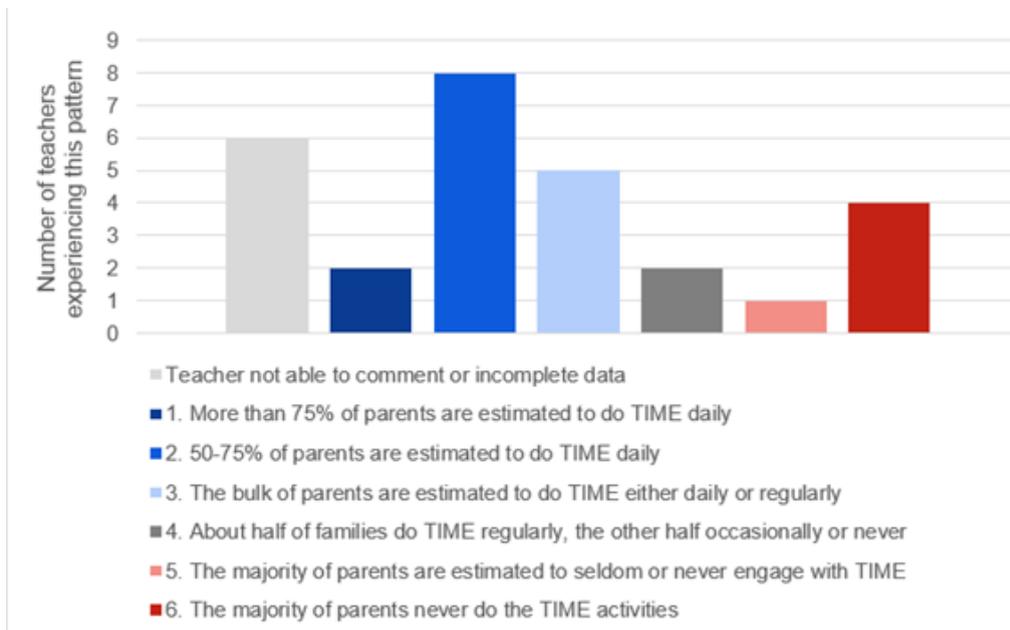


believed that the majority of the parents in their class were never doing TIME activities – in the teacher survey the rate of teachers believing that none or very few of the parents were engaging with TIME was slightly lower at 13.6% (see [Figure 13](#)).

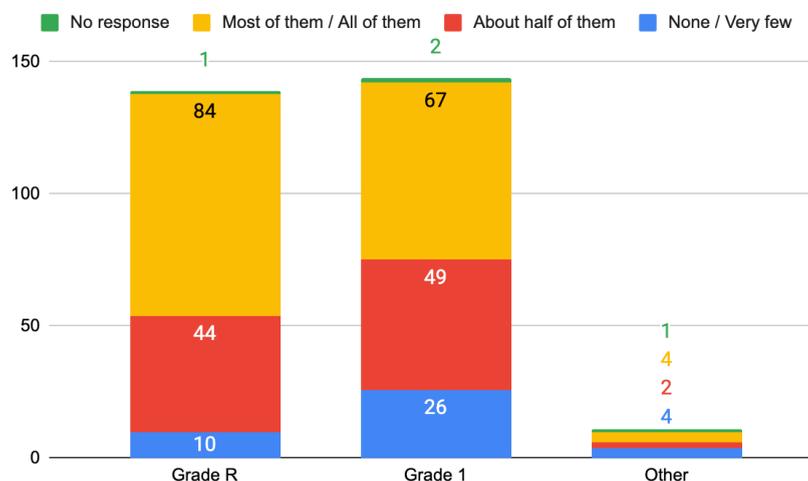
The survey data above indicates higher doubts of Grade 1 teachers about the engagement of the parents in their class with TIME. This was consistent with the findings from the interviews (see [Figure 14](#)). A possible explanation that surfaced in the interviews is that, in Grade 1, the TIME programme is seen as an addition to the teacher’s homework, while in Grade R there is no homework given by the teacher.

Figure 13: Teachers’ estimation of the uptake of TIME in homes

Teacher interviews: How well was TIME taken up in homes? (N=28)



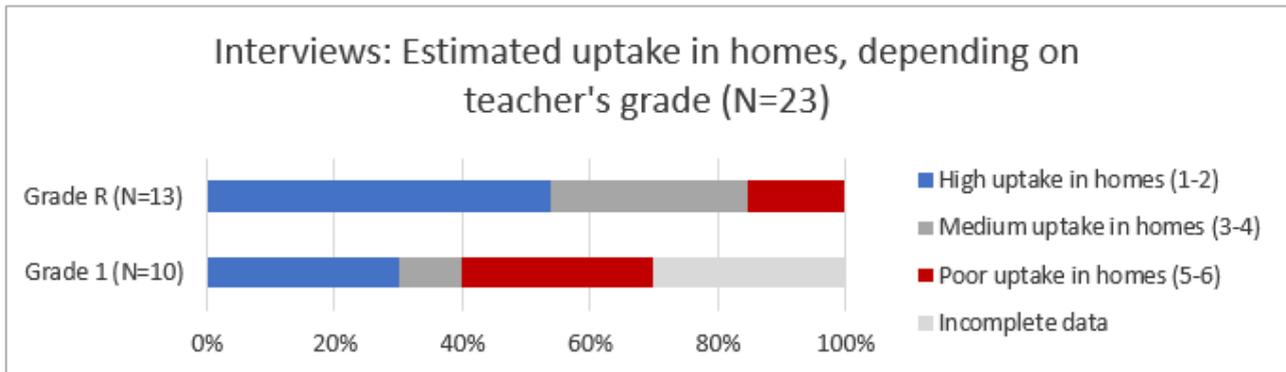
Teacher survey: If you HAVE sent the TIME packs home, how many children do you think have engaged with the programme activities? (N=294)



Note: ‘engaging with the activities’ does not distinguish between frequent or occasional engagement.



Figure 14: Interviewed teachers' estimation of the uptake of TIME in Grade R and Grade 1 homes

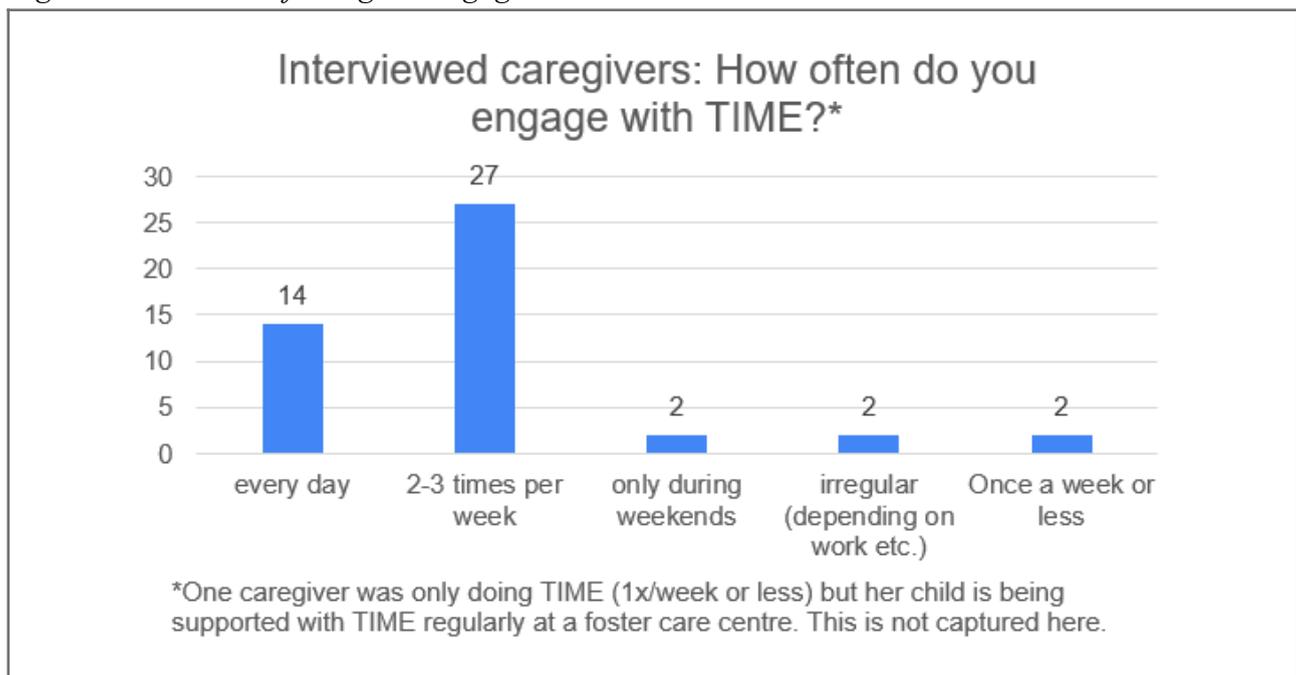


Key finding 11: The caregivers' feedback indicates that most engage with TIME **two or three times per week**, with a sizable minority doing it daily. The off-school days were the preferred time choice for caregivers to do TIME activities with their children. There were large variations in the length of a TIME session.

The TIME programme is designed for daily use, however it is understood that the actual use in the homes will depend on the families' circumstances. Indeed, the study revealed that families doing the TIME activities religiously every day represented a (sizeable) minority of the caregivers responding – while the majority of caregivers indicated that they engaged with TIME two to three times per week, often on the days that the children are out of school.

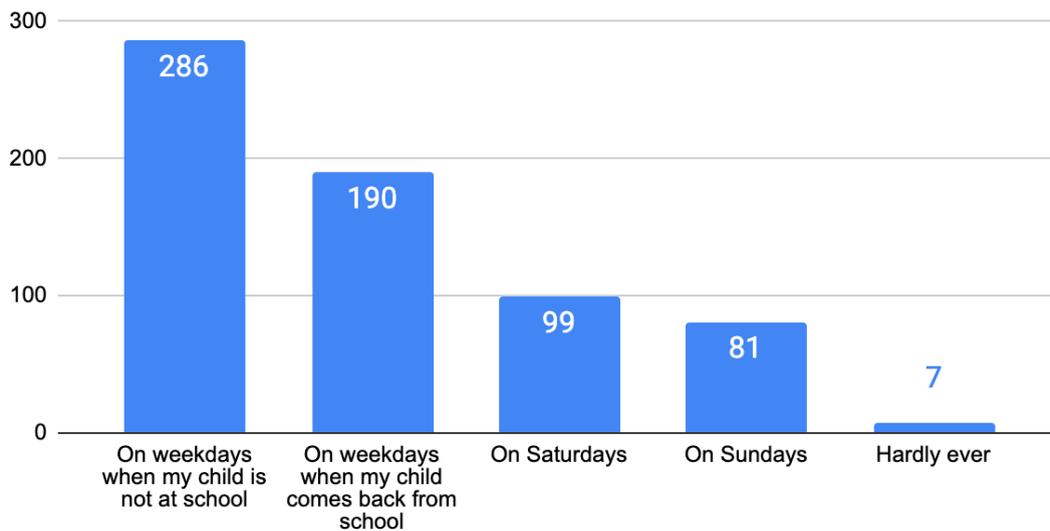
Figure 15 represents the patterns of caregiver engagement with TIME in the interviews (top graph) and in the survey (bottom graph).

Figure 15: Patterns of caregiver engagement with TIME





Parent survey: In general, when does your child do TIME activities? (N=428)

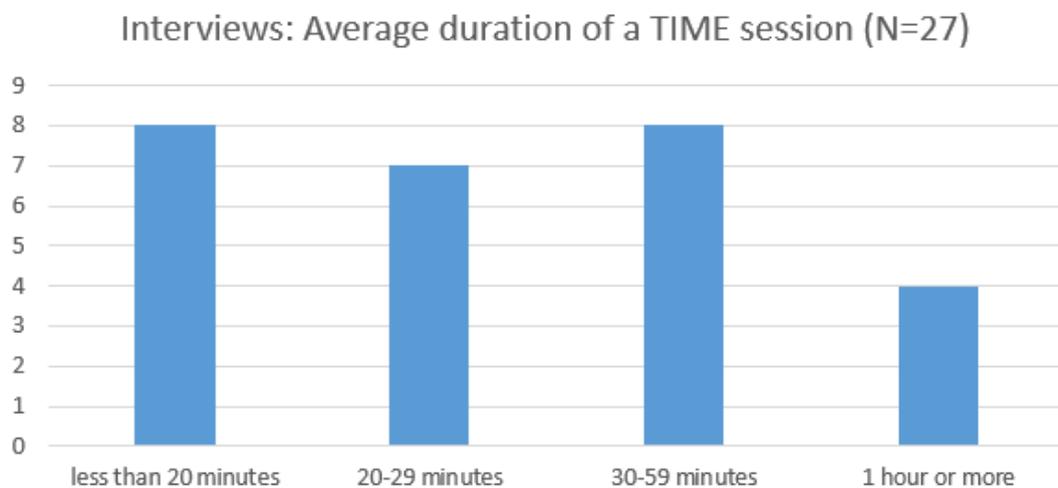


Note: In the survey caregivers were allowed to tick more than one response, hence the chart cannot be read as indicating how many times per week a caregiver engages with TIME.

With regard to the length of the TIME sessions, the responses received revealed some wide variations on both sides of the recommended 20–30 minutes (from 10 minutes to 2 hours). Since many families tend to do TIME less frequently than daily, they were accordingly likely to spend slightly longer periods of time going through the activities. The interviews yielded relatively frequent indications that the TIME activity was done quickly (10–15 minutes) which, in the survey, seemed to be more exceptional.

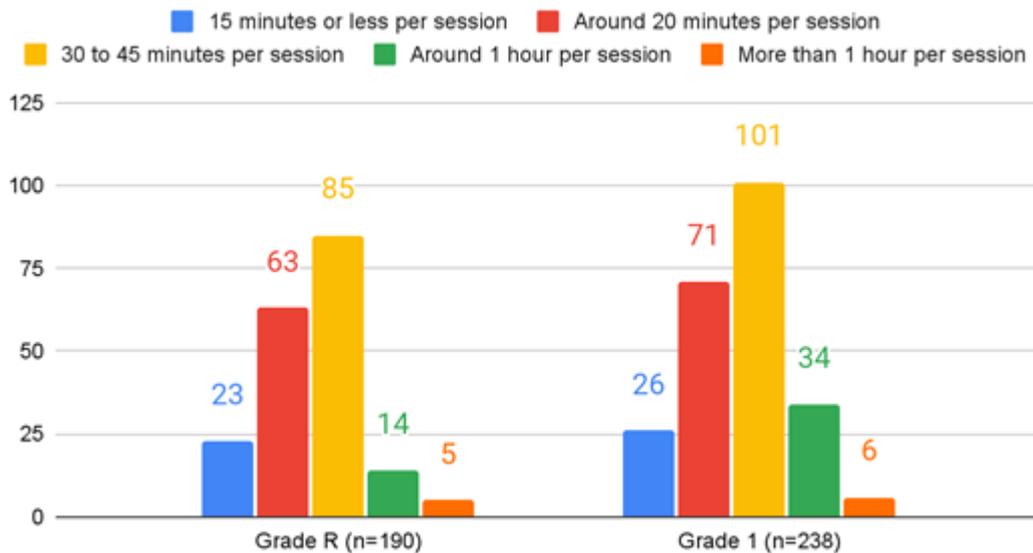
The time spent by Grade 1 families was slightly higher than Grade R, which is consistent with the programme design (which foresees 20 minutes daily for Grade R and 30 minutes for Grade 1).

Figure 16: Caregiver's feedback on the average duration of a TIME session





Caregiver survey: On average, how long does a TIME session take in your home? (N=428)



Note: in the survey caregivers were allowed to tick more than one response, hence the chart cannot be read as indicating how many times per week a caregiver engages with TIME.

5.3 Uptake enablers or hurdles at school level and in homes

Key finding 12: The teacher has a key role to play to catalyse the uptake in homes. The quality of the teacher-parent relationship also influenced the uptake.

In the field study, a key uptake enabler appeared to be the role played by teachers in facilitating and mediating the implementation of the programme with parents – which in turn appeared to be influenced by the school’s culture regarding engagement with parents, and the extent to which schools.

The interviews suggested the types of teacher behaviour or attitudes that were most frequently associated with high uptake by families were:

- Teachers having deliberate communication strategies in engaging with parents (engaging face-to-face, arranging specific parent meetings, or communicating via Moya)
- Teachers choosing to disseminate the TIME printed materials weekly rather than once a term
- Teachers having extensive engagements with their foundation phase team on TIME, i.e. problem-solving collectively within the phase.

A few quotes illustrate good practices that have emerged from teachers’ problem-solving:

“Last year and in term 1 it was distributed as a pack but there was a lot of mess. (...) Now the TIME work is distributed on a weekly basis pasted on their books as homework. The weekly distribution works very well compared to the whole pack.” (English Quintile 5 school, Metro North)



“All grade R teachers meet and check the material, then choose the ones that consolidate their teaching then communicate with parents.” (isiXhosa Quintile 2 school, Metro South)

“At our school we take decisions together. Together we have worked out a plan as to how we want to work with the children.” (Afrikaans Quintile 4 school, Metro North)

The relationships of teachers with the school community also emerged as a powerful success factor. In interviews, we asked teachers for their perception of their community’s involvement; the responses received may be at least as reflective of the teachers’ attitude, as it is an indication of an intrinsic characteristic of the community itself. Some teachers who reported poor engagement of parents added blanket statements which might be indicative of some degree of stereotyping or of a lack of skills of teachers in driving parental engagement.

“I am dealing with children of teenagers who don't care.” (isiXhosa Quintile 2 school, Metro East)

“They sit and listen and leave without engaging.” (English independent school, Metro South)

Conversely, there was some indication that schools who have previously participated in other Wordworks programmes such as HSP¹⁰, may have been better equipped to mobilise parents for TIME. It is reasonable to expect that those schools / teachers displayed a higher ability to reach out to parents and activate them.

“The HSP Wordworks programme was running at our school, where the parents were trained. I wasn't part of that. I was also part of the Wordworks Stellar programme – I was a lead teacher with that. Our parents were keen to get involved in the HSP and so we targeted those parents and they came to the party (...)” (English Quintile 5 school, Metro South)

Note that the teacher-parent relationship surfaced as both a possible predictor of TIME uptake, and an [outcome of the programme](#).

Key finding 13: Across multiple socio-economic contexts and family configurations, the presence of **an engaged caregiver (generally, the mother)** was key to ensuring good engagement with TIME.

Many teachers indicated that certain family configurations make it more difficult for adults to commit to a regular time with the child, especially when children are not raised by their own parents, or when they grow up in overcrowded homes. A teacher illustrated this scenario:

¹⁰ HSP: the Home-School Partnership programme, whereby foundation phase teachers are trained to run workshops to support/promote the parents’ involvement in their children’s education.



“The weak learners, those in a small overcrowded house – 10 people with only one bedroom. some children have to sleep in the kitchen – those parents often do not work with their children at home.” (Afrikaans Quintile 4 school, Metro North district)

The survey data did not directly ask for the household’s socio-economic status and did not detect any significant correlation between the caregiver’s employment status and the uptake of TIME at home. What was apparent is that the mother was most frequently the primary caregiver as well as the primary roleplayer in her child’s education – 89% of the parents surveyed reported that the mother regularly gets involved in TIME activities.

Interviews shed light on scenarios where the mother’s ability to engage with TIME is severely constrained by her circumstances: in two cases, another family member then takes charge of the child’s schooling including TIME (a grandmother or an aunt). We encountered another case where the mother was battling to engage with TIME for multiple reasons including her physical and mental health. Having no other family member to support her, she however was relying on the staff of a daycare centre to go through the TIME activities with her child.

The key role of the mother remains true irrespective of the mother’s employment status: mothers working outside of the home accounted for almost half of the parent survey respondents, as evidenced in Figure 17. 26% of the parents surveyed reported that fathers regularly engaged with TIME activities compared with 13% for grandparents.

Figure 17: Surveyed parents’ report on who does TIME activities with children

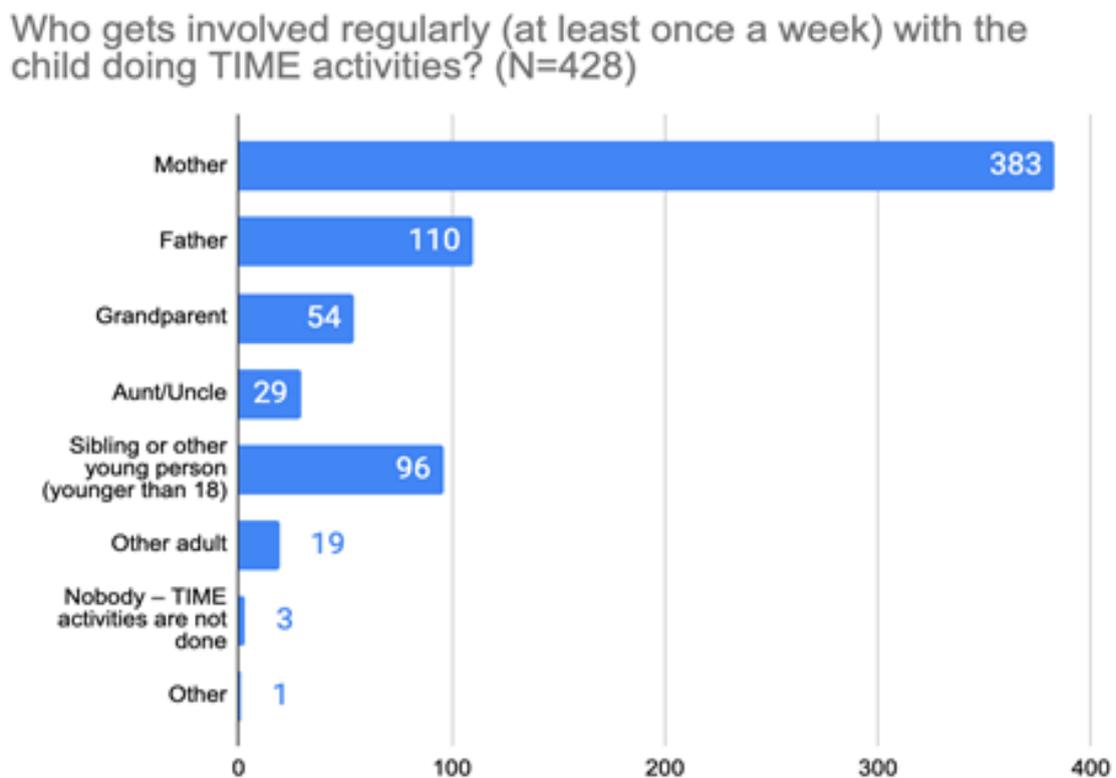
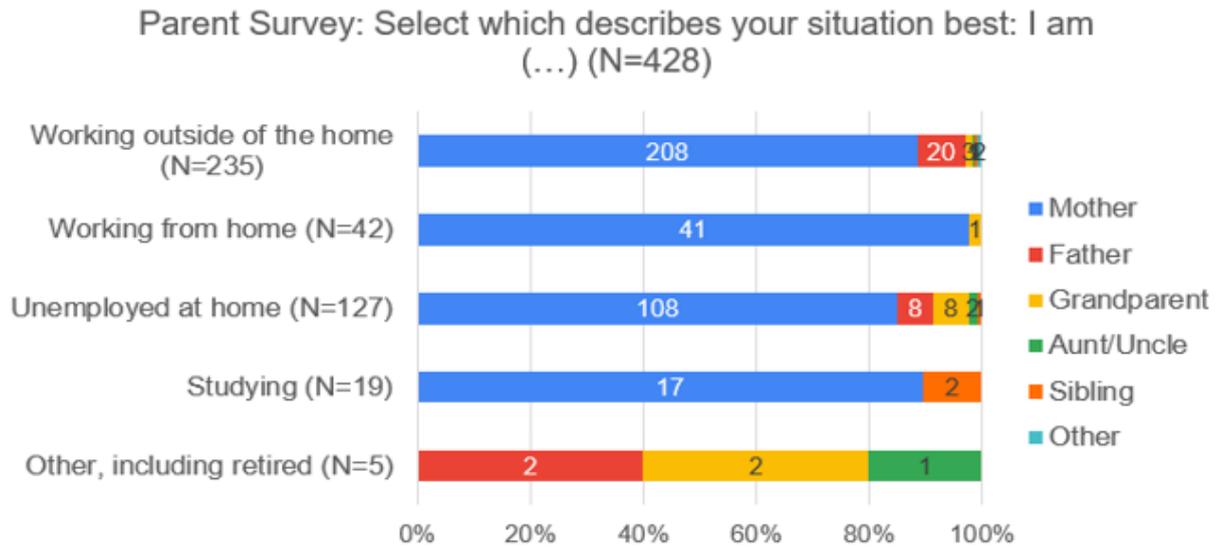




Figure 18: Surveyed parents' reports of caregivers' employment status



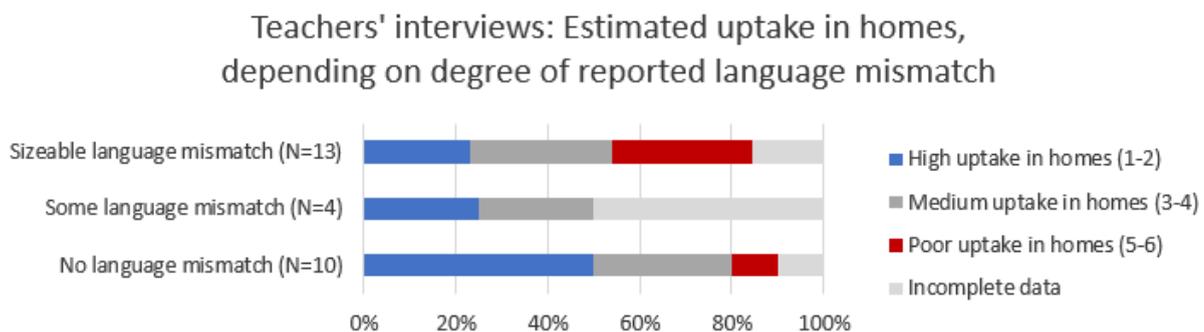
Key finding 14: Good use of the packs requires the caregivers to be fluent at speaking and reading the **language of the packs**.

The TIME materials are distributed to homes in the Language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) of the school.

Field study engagements pointed to the fact that uptake may be compromised in cases where the home language is different to that of the LOLT. In 13 of the 29 schools covered in the teacher interviews, teachers reported a sizable language mismatch, i.e. the language of the class frequently did not coincide with the language of the family. This included English-language schools serving families from other linguistic backgrounds, as well as isiXhosa schools serving families that were either Afrikaans-speaking, or of migrant background and therefore not fluent in isiXhosa.

It is easy to imagine how these scenarios can create hurdles for the families especially if they are not literate in the language of the class. The data collected tends to confirm that scenarios of language mismatch can significantly affect the uptake of TIME materials in the home.

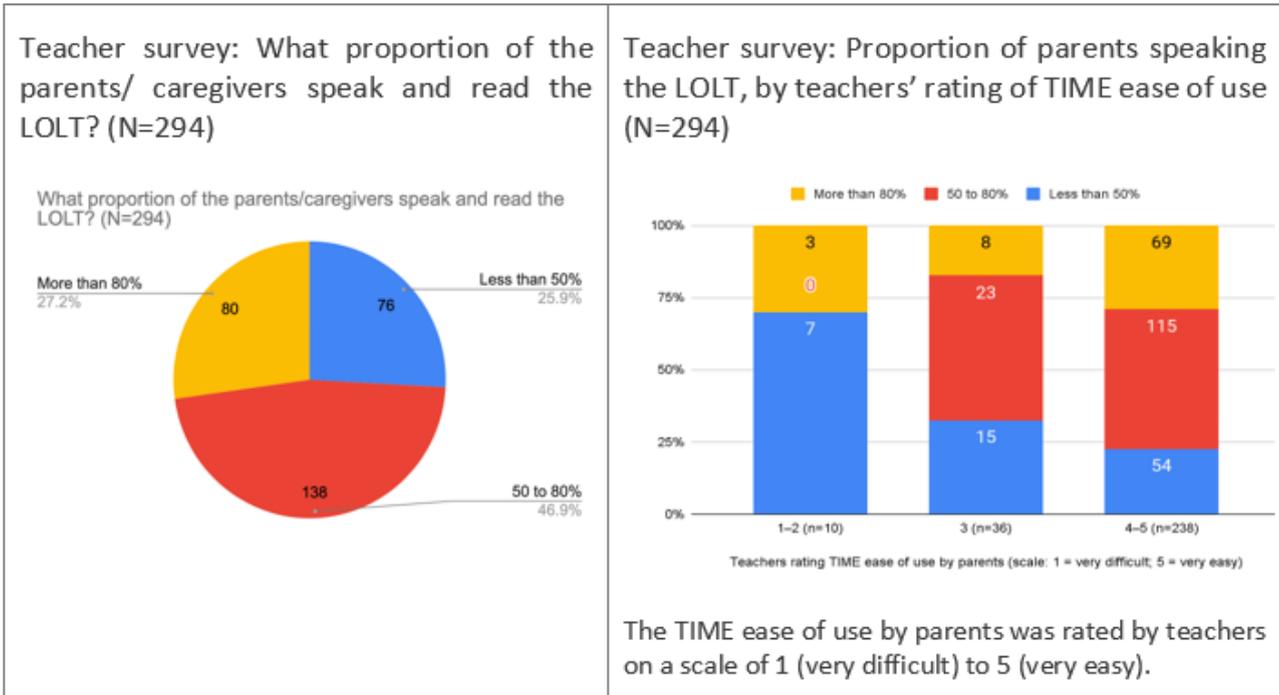
Figure 19: Influence of language on the uptake of TIME in homes





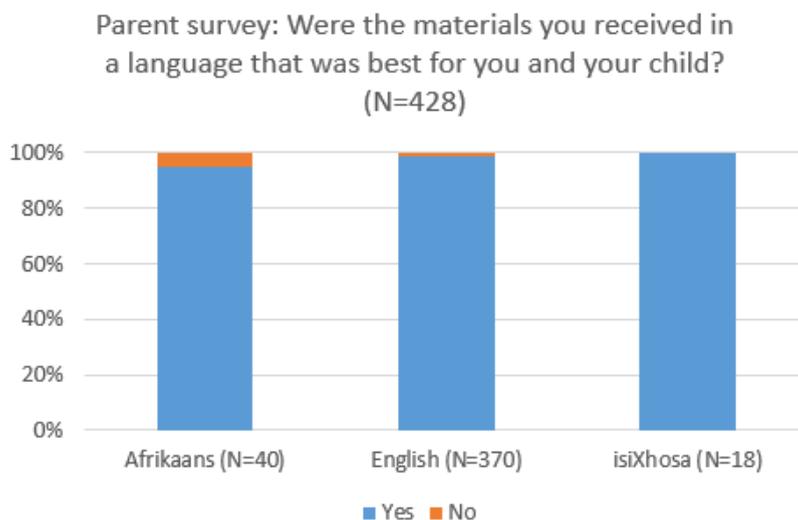
The survey data corroborates the insights from the interviews. Of the teachers surveyed, 26 percent reported that less than half of parents speak and read the school’s LOLT. Those teachers who indicated that the TIME materials were very easy to use also reported higher proportions of parents who were competent readers and speakers of the school’s LOLT (see Figure 20).

Figure 20: Teacher survey insights on the role of parent fluency in the LOLT



Despite these reservations from the teachers, the parent survey did not pick up significant concerns around the language of the packs: more than 98% of respondents to the survey reported that the language of the materials suited them. This may be because of the self-selection bias in the parent survey, whereby parents who were challenged by the language would have refrained from responding to the survey.

Figure 21: Parent satisfaction with the language of the TIME materials received



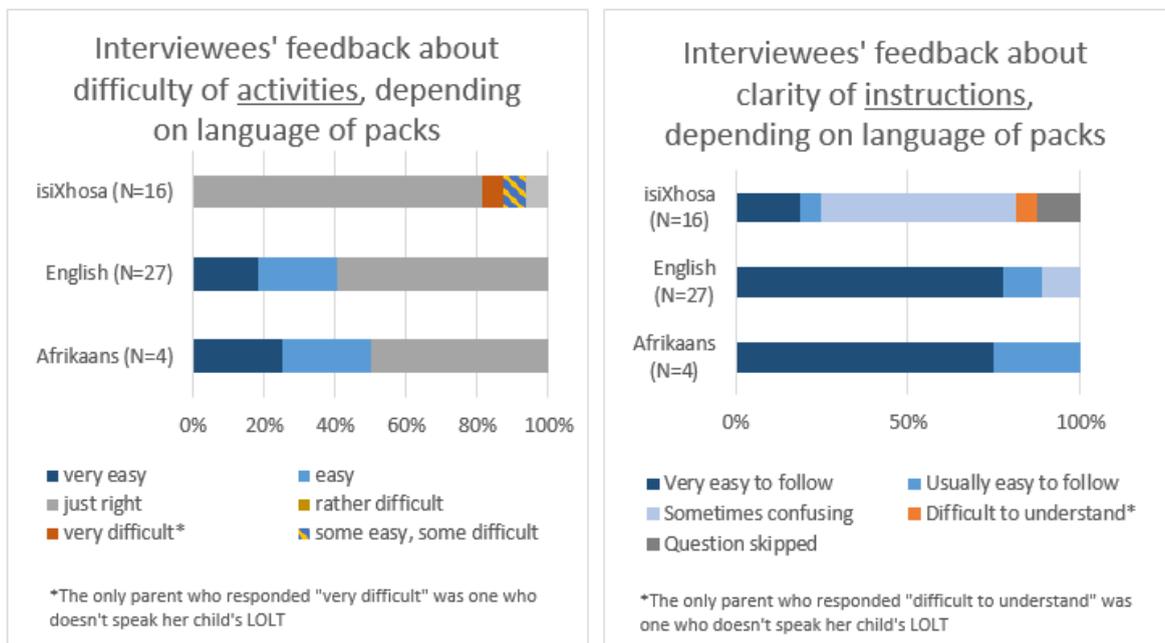


Note on language of packs and ease of use of the materials

Interviews suggested a possible link between the language of the packs and the ability of caregivers to use them easily. This link is presented tentatively here but further research will be necessary in order to understand fully what the data is revealing.

In the interviews, most caregivers found the TIME activities either easy or ‘just right’, and did not report serious challenges with regard to understanding the instructions. However, it appeared that, for children taught in isiXhosa, caregivers in the interviews may have had a lower level of comfort – none of them reported finding the activities ‘easy’ or ‘very easy’, and a higher proportion found that the instructions were “sometimes confusing” (see Figure 22).

Figure 22: Interviewed caregivers’ feedback about difficulty of activities and clarity of instructions



This tentative finding could not be verified in the survey, due to the low response rates within the isiXhosa-speaking parents and can only be recorded as an indication of the study’s ‘blind spot’, requiring deeper enquiry in homes that are under-represented in the survey’s sample.

When asked in the survey to rate the accessibility of the materials’ instructions and the level at which the activities are pitched for children, over 80% of responding parents reported that they found the TIME activity instructions easy or very easy to understand, while 35% of parents reported that their children found the TIME activities easy or very easy and 26% reported that the activities were ‘just right’ for their children (see Figures 23 and 24).



Figure 23: Surveyed parents' rating of the accessibility of the materials' instructions

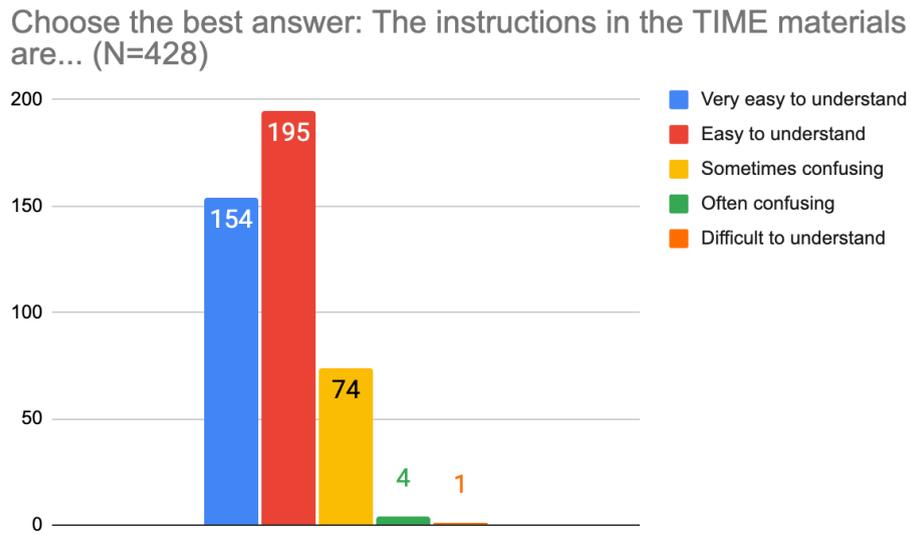
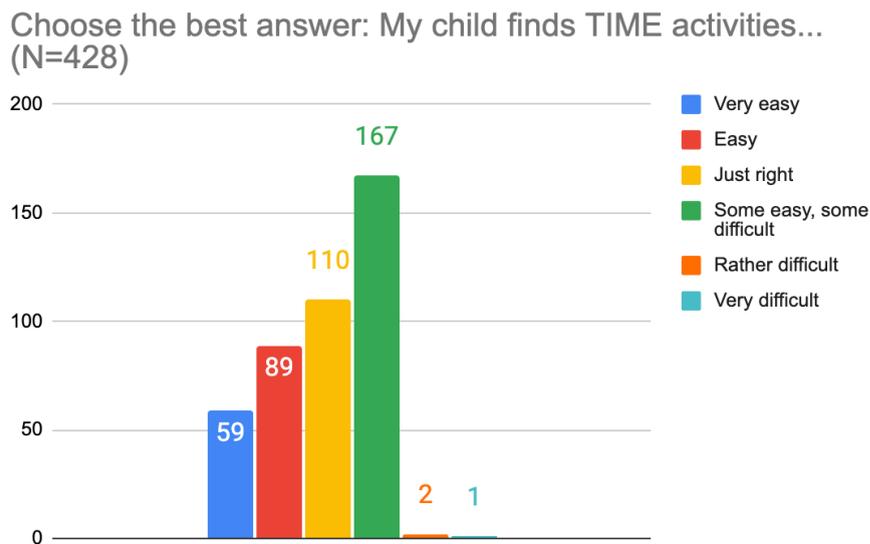


Figure 24: Surveyed parents' rating of the level at which the activities are pitched for children





5.4 Effectiveness of the delivery model for TIME multimedia messages via Moya

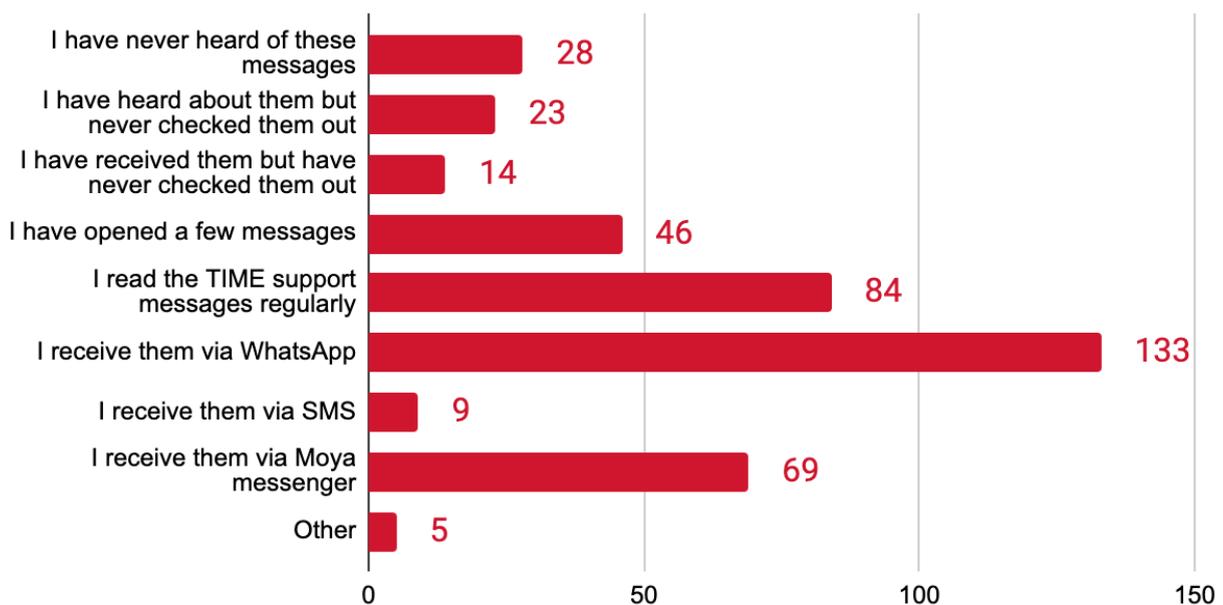
Key finding 15: The model chosen for the delivery of parent messages was found to be problematic. The chain of delivery was too long and the administrative and advocacy requirement of teachers was too onerous to allow quick and widespread access by parents.

In addition to the printed packs, the TIME offering included multimedia motivational and support messages for those parents who have access to a smartphone. The chosen mechanism to disseminate these parent messages in 2021 was to upload the multimedia contents to Wordworks' data-free website and send out short notifications to teachers, containing links to the specific website content via the Moya data-free messaging app, with the intention of building teacher understanding of the programme in the first place, and in the second place, with the hope that teachers would forward the messages to the parents in their classes, or share the ideas in other ways.

The objective of reaching teachers with the messages was relatively well achieved. 73% of respondents to the teachers' survey reported that they received the messages, although they were more likely to receive them via WhatsApp than via Wordworks' preferred delivery channel on Moya (see Figure 25). As indicated [before](#), teachers also found the messages helpful.

Figure 25: Surveyed teachers' reports of receiving TIME support messages

Are you aware of / do you receive the TIME support messages? (N=294)





The interviews however raised concerns about the effectiveness of that delivery model when it comes to reaching homes: from 29 teachers asked, 20 (69%) reported receiving the messages, but voiced various challenges with regard to disseminating them to parents (see Table 3). It transpired that several teachers had not spoken to the parents in their classes about Moya. Indeed, among the 48 parents interviewed, only 12 (25%) stated confidently that they received the messages¹¹, and only 4 of them received them through the preferred channel of the Moya app. District officials and NGO staff also shared similar challenges with regard to access to the messages on Moya.

Table 3: Reservations voiced by interviewed teachers about Moya

Teachers who don't have Moya	Teachers who have Moya, yet have been unsuccessful in onboarding parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moya not compatible with iPhone (1 teacher) ● Challenges in obtaining the parents' contact numbers (1 teacher) ● Belief that parents are not on Moya (8 teachers) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Belief that parents on Moya are only a minority ● Parents not having phones, or using <i>tilili</i> devices which do not support the Moya app ● Concern that parents are suspicious of links received on their cell phones, and therefore unlikely to click and access the actual resource on the website ● Alleged experience of parents being charged data for accessing the data-free site

The survey responses provided a slightly more positive picture than the interviews, with 73% of teachers saying they received the messages (see [Figure 25](#)), 57% of teachers reporting that they shared at least some of the messages with parents (see [Figure 8](#)), and over 46% of parents stating that they received messages ([Table 4](#)). Cases of parents being unaware of the messages, or unsure whether they had seen them, were not caused by lack of access to a device (see [Figure 27](#)); inevitably, the parents who responded to the online survey were those who were equipped and comfortable with digital media. Overall the research made it clear that it was difficult for teachers, especially in the Covid context, to do advocacy with parents and set up the systems needed in order to share the messages successfully.

In light of this feedback, a decision was taken to radically rethink the delivery mechanism for multi-media messages by using QR codes printed on the packs (see discussion in [Section 4](#)).

¹¹ In a number of interviews, there appeared to be some confusion for parents about what the TIME messages are, vs other WhatsApp communication which the teacher might be sharing with the parents.



Figure 26: Surveyed teachers' reports of sharing TIME support messages

Have you been able to share the TIME support messages?
(N=294)

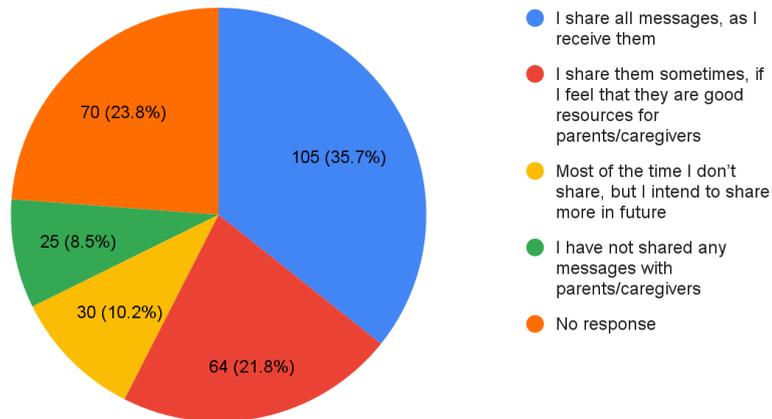


Figure 27: Surveyed parents' reported access to a smartphone

Parent survey: Do you own, or have access to, a smartphone?
(N=428)

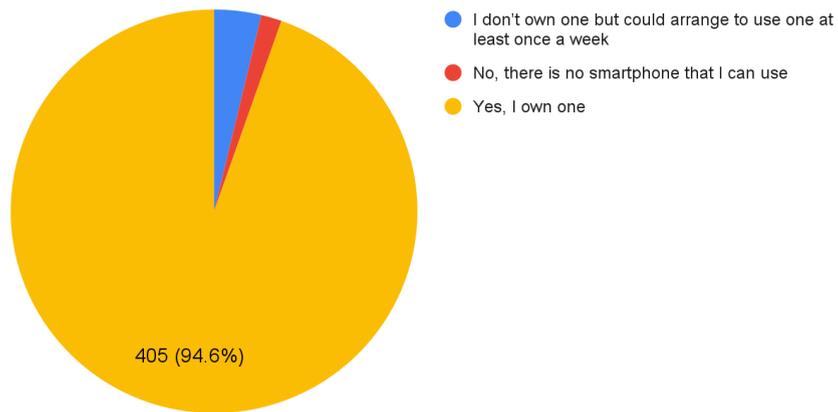


Table 4: Surveyed parents reporting on their awareness of TIME support messages, by how they receive the messages

Are you aware of the data-free TIME support messages?	Do you currently receive the messages?					Total
	Yes, on Moya	Yes, on WhatsApp	I know how to find them on the data-free website	I receive some messages but I am not sure if they are for TIME	No, I don't receive them	
Yes	35	98	18	5	34	190
No	1	40	4	8	113	166
Not sure	0	26	0	7	39	72
Total	36	164	22	20	186	428



6. How findings have informed ongoing adjustments to the TIME model

Throughout the phases of the field study, debrief and feedback sessions were organised with the Wordworks leadership and programme leadership. As findings were unpacked, discussions took place about possible remedial action, in some cases leading to adjustments to the model. Mostly the adjustments were minor, however one of them was significant. Through these actions, a few examples of which are listed below, the Wordworks team demonstrated an openness to data-informed learning.

After the engagements with district officials and NGOs

- A decision was taken to pursue liaison and advocacy efforts with the districts, including more remote districts. One person at programme leadership level is tasked with this.
- It was also decided to create a virtual space for peer learning and peer support among the NGOs who have similar implementation models. NGOs were invited to join smaller WhatsApp groups and to engage among themselves, sharing experiences. Sadly, this opportunity of peer learning did not result in active participation by forum members.

After the interviews and focus group discussions with teachers

- Considering the key role of the class teacher in driving parental uptake, Wordworks decided to undertake a deliberate effort to equip teachers to support parents to use the programme. For this, Wordworks offered weekly online sessions to the teachers in their network with the following topics:
 - Online sessions to guide teachers on how to use Moya and how to on-board their parents to the app
 - Online sessions to guide teachers on how to run TIME meetings with parents
- To reduce the challenge of parents who are not fluent in their child's LOLT, Wordworks has decided to include English text together with the Afrikaans or isiXhosa on the page that provides activity guidelines. (The option of offering the entire pack as a bilingual resource was rejected due to cost implications).
- In light of the feedback received about some translated messages being difficult to understand particularly in Afrikaans, the team decided to add a step in the process whereby messages would be reviewed post versioning to check for clarity and simplicity of language.

After the interviews and focus group discussions with caregivers

- The most significant decision, in response to [evidence](#) of multiple hurdles in the delivery chain for multimedia messages, was that teachers will no longer be asked to send messages to parents via Moya. Instead, QR codes will be printed on the packs, each code leading to the relevant message on the data free website. Besides providing direct access to messages for the caregivers this solution offers the added advantage of enabling the linkage of messages to specific activities allowing for more targeted, just-in-time support.



- A decision has also been made to redesign the online user experience to enable toggling between languages. This would allow multilingual caregivers, and those whose home language differs from the LOLT, to read, listen to or view their message in their chosen languages.
- Lastly, the data collected during parent interviews informed the targeting and development of messages in the last term of 2021. Apart from specific themes such as prompting teachers and parents to use and share Activity Records, a concerted effort was made by the message development team to respond to practical issues that had emerged as most challenging for parents – one example includes a discussion of when is the best time to do TIME with your child.

7. Concluding thoughts

As this report has attempted to show, the MERL study undertaken in 2021 has inspired much reflection on the value of offering the TIME programme to young children and their families, and on the success factors that enable the best possible implementation at various levels of programme delivery. TIME can be seen as an ecosystemic intervention, which works best in a context of collaboration of stakeholders at provincial, district and school level, with involvement of parents and communities and where available the support of NGOs.

Very encouragingly, the evidence collected suggests that TIME has the potential to catalyse a virtuous circle of mutually reinforcing supportive relationships where teachers and caregivers find ways to support children's learning journey together. As such, the conclusions of this study are aligned with findings from a recent [UNESCO publication](#) which saw TIME as an innovative model worthy of inspiring other countries on how the Covid pandemic might open up opportunities for 'building back better'.

The findings of the 2021 study and ongoing MERL activities will continue to inform the team's journey in leading the TIME programme on the intended trajectory that motivated its design as an open source resource, namely:

- In the short term (2021–2022): enabling access *within our networks* to a quality home learning programme, to meet the urgent skills needs of Grade R and Grade 1 learners in the Covid context.
- In the medium term (2022–2023): enabling access *beyond the Western Cape and our national NGO networks* through (i) a deliberate advocacy and communications strategy to the public, the NGO and donor sectors and to government (ii) the versioning of the materials into all South African languages, (iii) (drawing on ongoing MERL effort closely linked to delivery) improving our online and organisational systems to enable more efficient [implementation flow](#) at scale.
- In the long term (from 2024 onwards): influencing and supporting the mainstreaming of interventions to support and resource home-based learning as a necessary complement to



classroom-based learning, particularly of foundational language and maths skills for young children.

This report is being concluded as we start 2022, with both short and medium term goals guiding our planning for the year. At this stage there are positive indications that we are strongly positioned to make good progress towards these goals.

- **The development of materials** for three terms in three languages was completed in 2021. The introduction of QR codes to the materials to enable direct access to online multimedia multilingual support messages is in process. The fourth activity pack will be developed in house. Versioning in all South African languages is scheduled for 2022 as part of the GDE Grade R Improvement Project project.
- The model for the **funding of materials** combines bulk collective printing by NGOs and schools, coordinated by Wordworks, and, for procurement reasons, separate departmental printing using our PDFs. In 2022, in the absence of Covid emergency funds, we have secured a reduced but still significant commitment for bulk printing of materials for 170 schools. In addition, the WCED has allocated funds for materials for the 100 Schools Project and is awaiting confirmation of funds for up to 50 schools involved in their @home Yeboneers project in the West Coast and Cape Winelands.
- **The data free TIME website** will be revised to improve user experience for individuals and organisations, and will be the go-to platform to sign up for and renew registration for the programme, access learning briefs, training information, online resources, downloadable PDFs, to place an order for hard copy materials, enquire about or provide feedback on the programme.
- **Advocacy, communication and capacity building** about the programme will be ongoing in order to share the programme goals, model, materials and learning across forums. Partner recruitment, liaison and support and online information and training sessions will be managed by Wordworks throughout the year and will be open nationally to all participating districts, schools and other implementing partners.



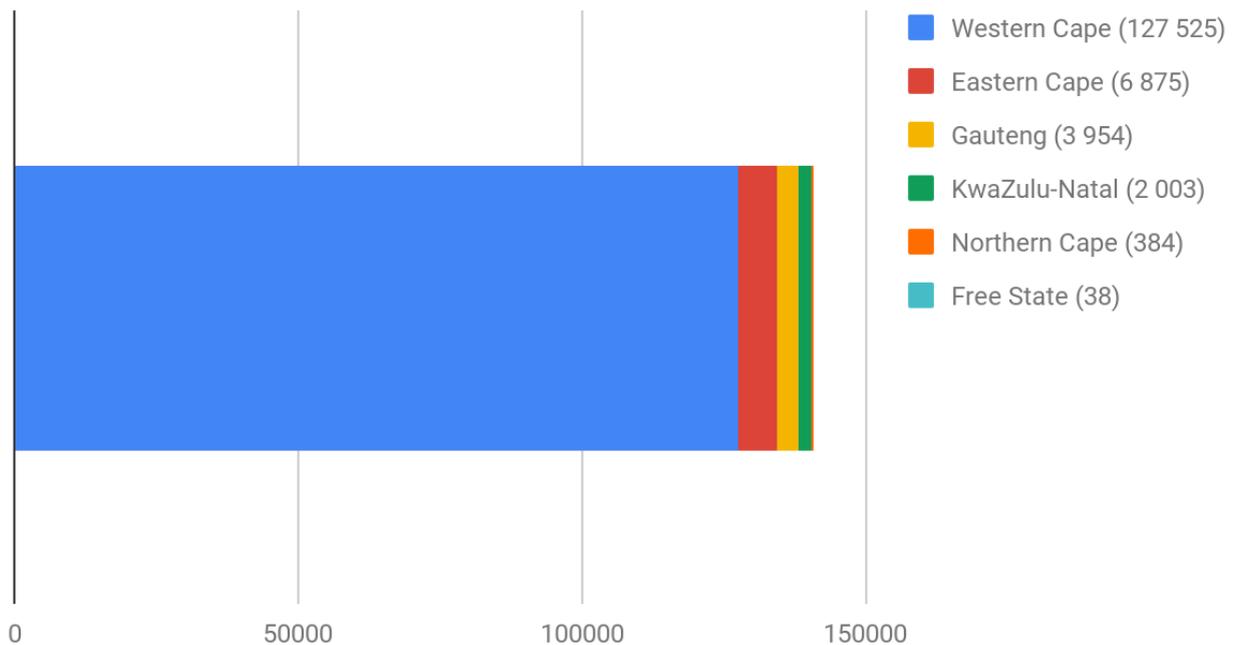
Appendix 1: Reach of the TIME programme

Appendix 1.1: Distribution of school & NGO partners, and TIME packs distributed by province

Province	Schools & NGO partners		TIME packs distributed	
	N	%	N	%
Western Cape	266	89.86%	127525	90.59%
Eastern Cape	22	7.43%	6875	4.88%
Gauteng	2	0.68%	3954	2.81%
KwaZulu-Natal	4	1.35%	2003	1.42%
Northern Cape	1	0.34%	384	0.27%
Free State	1	0.34%	38	0.03%
Total	296	100%	140779	100%

Appendix 1.2: Distribution of TIME packs by province

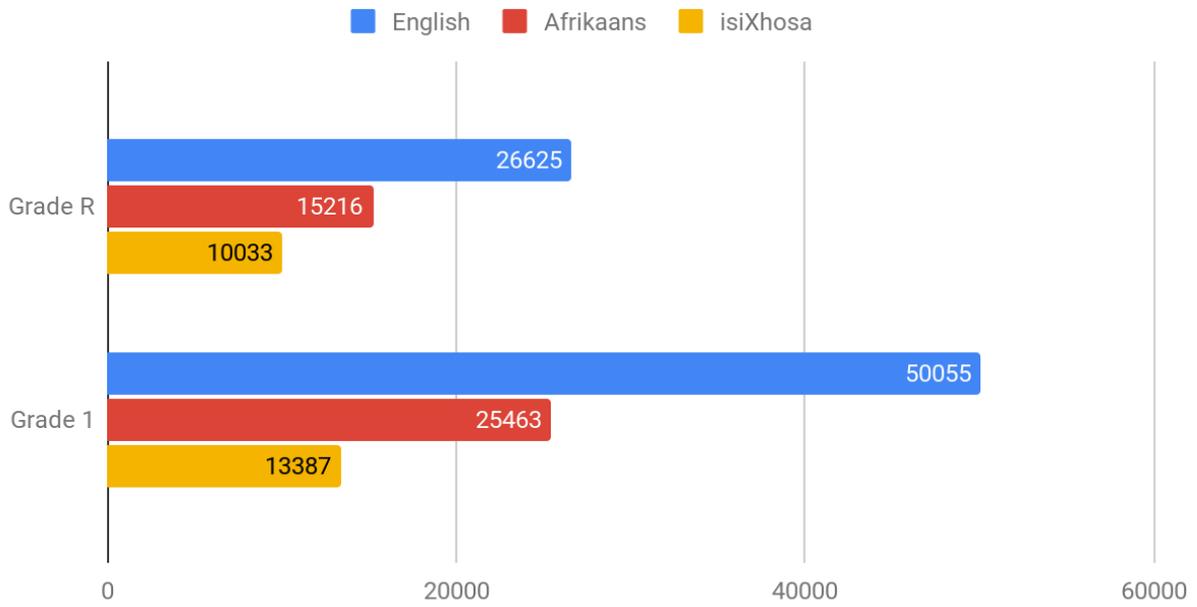
Total TIME packs distributed by province





Appendix 1.3: Distribution of TIME packs by language

TIME packs distributed per language





Appendix 2: Summary of participation in field study data collection activities

Table 2.1 Education district and NGO stakeholder participation in stage 1a of exploratory field study

Interviews (6)				
Respondent group	District/organisation	Role	Date	N
WCED district officials	Cape Winelands district	FP Coordinators	13 May 2021	1
	Metro East district		17 May 2021	1
	Metro North district		10 May 2021	1
	West Coast district	FP Subject Advisors	14 May 2021	2
NGO staff	Bitou 10 Foundation	Programme representatives	11 May 2021	1
	Principal's Academy Trust		11 May 2021	1
Subtotal respondents				7
Focus group discussions (2)				
Respondent group	District/organisation	Role	Date	N
WCED district officials	Cape Winelands district	FP Subject Advisor	17 May 2021	1
	Cape Winelands district	FP Coordinator		1
	Eden & Central Karoo district	FP Subject Advisor		1
	Metro Central district	Learning Support Coordinator		1
	Metro North district	Learning Support Advisor		1
	Metro North district	FP Subject Advisor		1
	Metro South district	ECD Advisor		1
	Metro South district	Learning Support Advisor		1
	Overberg district	FP Coordinator		1
	Overberg district	Learning Support Coordinator (acting)		1
	WCED Head Office	Foundation Phase Head		1
NGO staff	Beautiful Gate South Africa	Programme staff	14 May 2021	1
	Capespan			1
	Foundation for Community Work			3
	Hout Bay Project			2



	Knysna Education Trust			3
	Principal's Academy Trust			2
	Shine Literacy			1
	The Breede Centre			1
Subtotal respondents				25
Total respondents				32

Table 2.2 NGO stakeholder participation in stage 1b of exploratory field study

Focus group discussions (2)				
Respondent group	Organisation	Role	Date	N
NGO staff	Shine Literacy	Programme staff and centre managers	19 May 2021	7
	Wordworks	Programme staff and school mentor team	12 May 2021	13
Total respondents				20

Table 2.3 Teacher participation in stage 2 of exploratory field study

Education district	School	Teacher's role	Language of packs	Date	N
CW	Siyafuneka Primary School	Grade 1	isiXhosa	2 June 2021	1
	Van Cutsem Combined School	Grade R	isiXhosa	1 June 2021	1
MCED	Chapel Street Primary School	Grade 1	English	9 June 2021	2
		Grade R	English		2
		FP HOD	English		1
	Heideveld Primary School	Grade R	English	3 June 2021	2
	Holy Cross RC Primary	Grade R	English	4 June 2021	1
	Mokone Primary School	Grade R	isiXhosa	4 June 2021	1
MEED	Chumisa Primary School	Grade R	isiXhosa	4 June 2021	1
	Sobambisana Primary School	Grade R	isiXhosa	2 June 2021	2
	Sosebenza Primary School	Grade R	isiXhosa	3 June 2021	1
	Ummangaliso Primary School	Grade 1	isiXhosa	1 June 2021	1
MNED	Cravenby Combined School	Grade R	English	3 June 2021	1
	Eldene Primary School	Grade R	Afrikaans	2 June 2021	1
	Kerria Primary School	Grade R	Afrikaans	7 June 2021	1
		Grade 1, HOD	Afrikaans		1



Education district	School	Teacher's role	Language of packs	Date	N
	Ubunye Educare Centre	Administrator	isiXhosa	2 June 2021	1
	Valhalla Primary School	Grade 1	Afrikaans	7 June 2021	1
MSED	Bhongolethu Foundation	Grade R	English	2 June 2021	1
		Grade 1	English		1
	Entshona Primary School	Grade R	isiXhosa	7 June 2021	1
	Heinz Park Primary School	Grade R	English	10 June 2021	1
		Grade 1	English		1
	iThemba Primary School	Grade 1	English	1 June 2021	1
	Kleinberg Primary School	Grade 1, HOD	English	1 June 2021	1
	Parkwood Primary School	Grade 1	Afrikaans	1 June 2021	1
	Sid G Rule Primary School	Grade 1	English	20 May 2021	1
	Simon van der Stel Primêre Skool	Grade 1	Afrikaans	2 June 2021	1
	Simon's Town School	Grade R	English	10 June 2021	1
		Grade 1	English		2
	St Mary's RC Primary School	Grade R	English	20 May 2021	1
Wespoort and Jamaica Way Primary Schools	Learning Support Teacher	English	9 June 2021	1	
WK	Ebenhaeser Primêre Skool	Grade 1	Afrikaans	9 June 2021	1
	Nuwerus Hoërskool	Grade 1	Afrikaans	7 June 2021	1
Total respondents					39

Table 2.4 Parent participation in stage 3 of exploratory field study

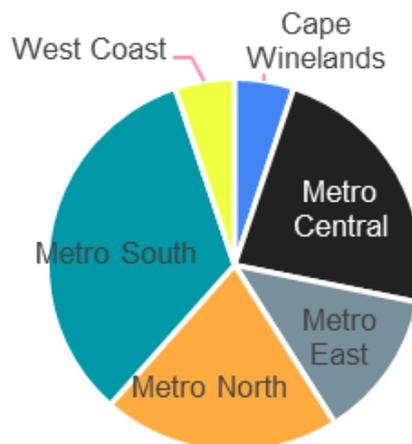
Individual Interviews (24)			
Education district	School	Language of packs	N
CW	Siyafuneka Primary School	isiXhosa	1
	Van Cutsem Combined School	isiXhosa	4
MCED	Heideveld Primary School	English	1
	Holy Cross RC Primary School	English	1
	Mokone Primary School	isiXhosa	3
MEED	Sosebenza Primary School	isiXhosa	2
	Ummangaliso Primary School	isiXhosa	3



Individual Interviews (24)			
Education district	School	Language of packs	N
MNED	Cravenby Combined School	English	2
	Eldene Primary School	Afrikaans	2
MSED	iThemba Primary School	English	1
	Kleinberg Primary School	English	1
	Parkwood Primary School	Afrikaans	1
	Valhalla Primary School	Afrikaans	1
	West End Primary School	English	1
Subtotal respondents			24

Focus group discussions (5)			
Education district	School	Language of packs	N
MEED	Sobambisana Primary School	isiXhosa	3
MSED	Alpine Primary School	English	8
	Bhongolethu Foundation	English	3
	Heinz Park Primary School	English	2
	St Mary's RC Primary School	English	7
Subtotal respondents			23
Total respondents			47

Teachers interviewed by district

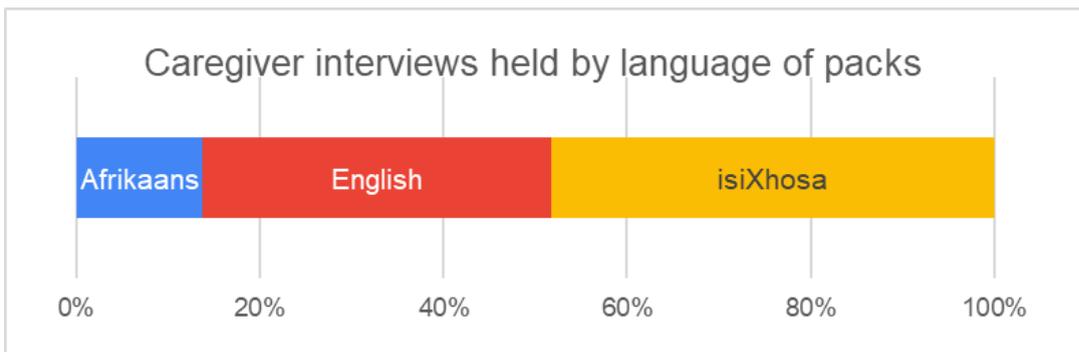
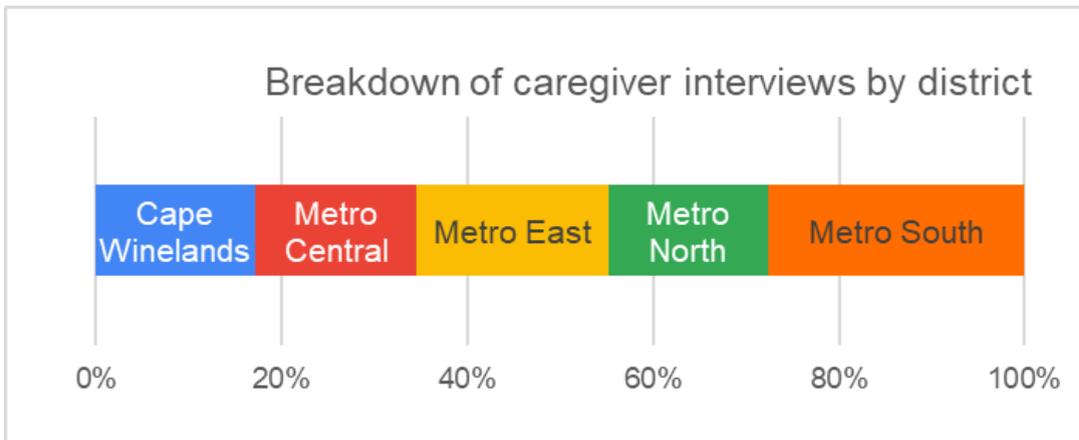
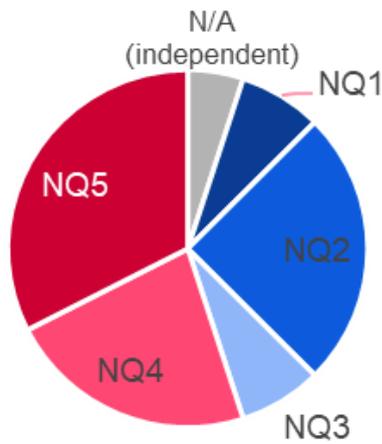


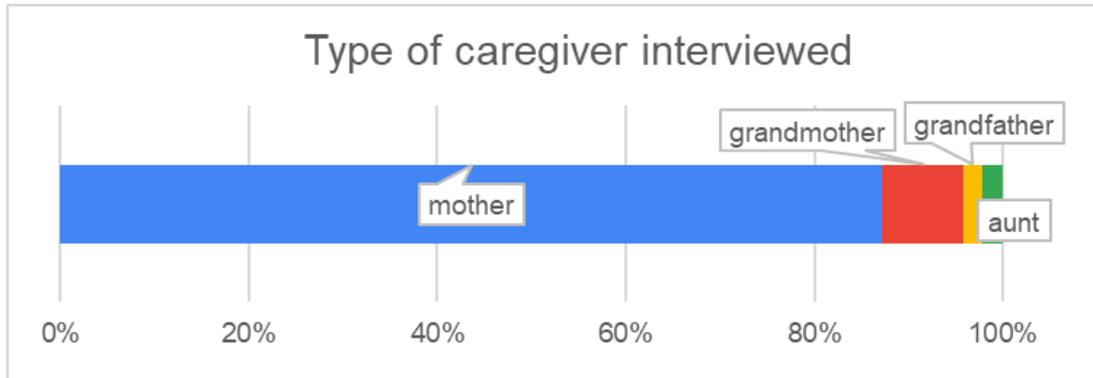
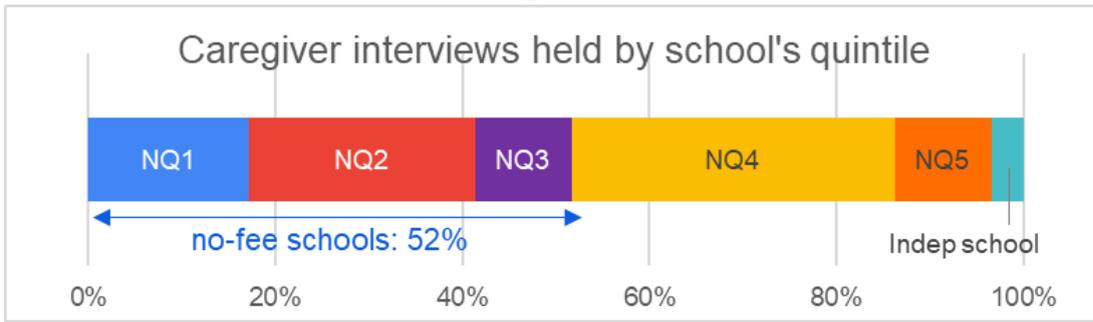


Teachers interviewed by grade or role



Teachers interviewed by school quintile







Appendix 3: Summary of participation in teacher and parent surveys

Table 3.1 Number and percentage of schools responding to teacher and parent surveys, of total number of WordNetworks schools receiving TIME materials

Western Cape education district	N WordNetworks schools receiving materials	Teacher survey responses		Parent survey responses	
		N schools	% schools	N schools	% schools
Cape Winelands	11	8	73%	2	18%
Metro Central	30	21	70%	15	50%
Metro East	10	7	70%	5	50%
Metro North	22	16	73%	10	45%
Metro South	54	43	80%	26	48%
Overberg	4	4	100%	3	75%
West Coast	15	14	93%	2	13%
Total	146	113	77%	63	43%

Table 3.2: Subgroup of schools implementing TIME that are supported by Wordworks, by homes reached

Western Cape education district ¹²	Schools		Homes	
	N	%	N	%
Cape Winelands	11	8%	2497	9%
Metro Central	30	21%	4267	15%
Metro East	10	7%	2303	8%
Metro North	22	15%	5570	20%
Metro South	54	37%	10456	38%
Overberg	4	3%	405	1%
West Coast	15	10%	2147	8%
Grand Total	146	100%	27645	100%

¹² While there are eight education districts in total in the Western Cape, only seven appear as Wordworks does not directly support any schools in the eighth district, Eden & Central Karoo. There were however 36 schools in this district who implemented the TIME programme in 2021, but they were supported by local NGO partners or advisors at the district.



Table 3.3: Teacher participation in stage 4 of data collection – number of respondents, by district and by learners' grade

Western Cape education district	Grade R	Grade 1	Other	N teachers responding
Cape Winelands	16	20	0	36
Metro Central	26	19	5	50
Metro East	7	9	1	17
Metro North	28	27	1	56
Metro South	49	49	4	102
Overberg	4	4	0	8
West Coast	9	16	0	25
Total	139	144	11	294

Table 3.4: Parent participation in stage 5 of data collection – number of respondents, by district and by child's grade

Western Cape education district	Grade R	Grade 1	Total
Cape Winelands	2	0	2
Metro Central	47	39	86
Metro East	4	22	26
Metro North	27	30	57
Metro South	98	140	238
Overberg	8	4	12
West Coast	4	3	7
Grand Total	190	238	428

Table 3.5: Responses to parent survey, by chosen survey language

Survey language	N	%
English	385	90%
Afrikaans	31	7%
isiXhosa	12	3%
Total	428	100%



TIME Home Learning Programme Theory of Change

Notes
 1. While the diagram refers to parents, this may include other caregivers, family and community members depending on the child's context.
 2. This strategy was not included in the initial programme design, but was incorporated based on findings emerging from the field study.

so that, ultimately...

Young children from poor and vulnerable communities acquire strong academic foundations, and the resilience and support required to engage fully and sustainably in their continued education

Effective implementation of whole-of-society approaches help reduce the gap between the education structures serving poor and vulnerable communities and their better resourced counterparts

Impact

so that...

Learning cultures and routines are established and sustained in homes
 Children are supported by a rich network of relationships
 Children's learning-readiness and resilience are fostered
 Children's language and mathematics scores improve

Parent and community contributions to learning are built into school culture and policy
 Schools are effectively involving parents in children's learning
 Education districts are effectively supporting schools to involve parents in children's learning

Long term outcomes

so that...

Children develop their foundational language and mathematics skills
 Children are more motivated to engage in learning activities at home and at school
 Child-parent relationships improve
 Parents support children to develop consistent and self-directed learning habits
 Parents recognise the importance of their role and feel confident to support young children's learning

Teachers understand that investing in parent engagement will enhance children's learning
 Relationships and communication between schools and homes are strengthened
 Schools have positive experiences of engaging with their parent community

Medium term outcomes

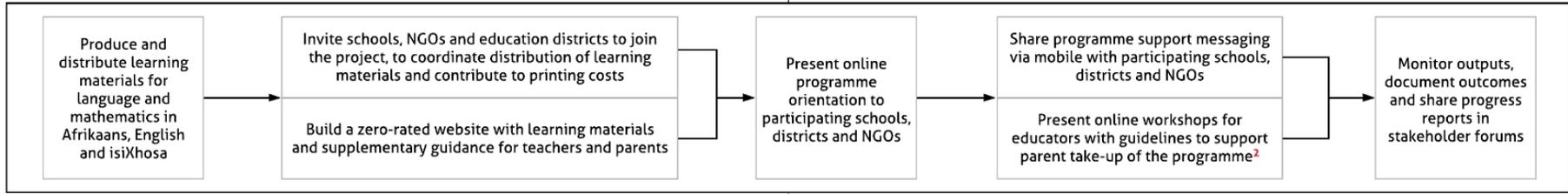
so that...

Children remain engaged in learning routines despite rotational school timetables
 Children enjoy learning activities
 Parents spend time doing TIME activities with children

Teachers mediate the use of the programme at home
 Schools put plans and systems in place to distribute and support the uptake of TIME activities in homes

Short term outcomes

whereby, we...



Strategies

In light of this, we have developed...

The TIME home learning programme, which guides families in structured and fun learning activities for Grade R and Grade 1 children

and acknowledge that in the COVID-19 context...

Evidence indicates that learning losses for young children are heavy across the board, but most severe in poor and vulnerable communities
 Addressing early learning gaps is essential to reducing school failure and drop out rates
 Supporting parents to ensure children are learning is essential to avoid children becoming disengaged from school during the pandemic

Assumptions

We believe that...

Most parents, given the tools and necessary guidance, will work to support their children's learning at home
 In the early years, quality interaction and parental support for learning at home can contribute to improved learning outcomes and close early learning gaps
 Parents¹ are critical roleplayers in a child's education journey

Schools are willing to invest effort in working with parents of Grade R and Grade 1 children
 If guided and supported, schools can effectively activate participation from the parent body
 In the Wordworks network of schools, there is a growing consensus around the benefits of parental involvement in children's education
 Parents are best engaged through effective home-school partnerships

Printed learning materials for use in homes should be suitably low-cost so that such home learning programmes can be taken to scale
 Printed (paper-based) learning materials provide the most accessible format to stimulate child interaction, while multimedia resources can serve as effective supplementary programme mediation tools
 There is a need for low-cost resources and support in parents' home language so that they can play a role in their child's education journey