



Building Child Centered Communities in Rural America Project

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Introduction

In October of 2014 Save the Children US Programs (SC USP) was awarded an Innovative Approaches to Literacy (IAL) grant by the Department of Education (DOE) to build and strengthen literacy infrastructures in rural communities across the United States.

SC USP partnered with Reach Out and Read (ROR) to implement the Building Child Centered Communities in Rural America Project. The project design included creating a full-time position through SC USP, titled Community Literacy Manager (CLM). The purpose of the CLM position is to facilitate planning and implementation of community-wide literacy activities in communities identified by SC USP to receive IAL support. Six CLMs were trained in early 2015 and shortly thereafter began to implement literacy activities in 2 to 3 communities each. The goal was to engage the broader community in creating a culture of literacy that is invested in supporting the literacy development of young children across the community.

SC USP works in rural communities in the United States because of the numerous barriers faced by families, such as geographic isolation, high rates of poverty and lack of services, that can negatively impact long term student achievement.^{1,2} This is often coupled with underfunded and under-resourced public schools in communities with a lack of public funding at the local and state level.³ The four states that the IAL activities was implemented in are: Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky and South Carolina. Within these states, 30 school sites across 16 communities were selected to receive IAL activities and support. SC USP selected the specific communities based on where services were already being offered by SC USP and ROR in order to provide holistic support for families, including home visits and school based programs.

Within these communities, the value-add of the IAL funding was financial (provided by the grant) and in kind support (provided by the community) for literacy activities to be facilitated by the CLM. Due in part to the flexible nature of the program structure, and otherwise based on the needs of the community, the specific implementation of IAL activities could largely vary. Each community conducted an asset mapping exercise and proposed a series of activities to promote early literacy practices, including creating StoryWalks, Reading Corners and Little Free Libraries. A StoryWalk is a series of posts with a page from a book, and activities that families can do while they walk in a park. Reading Corners and Little Free Libraries both provide access to books, but Reading Corners are often housed in businesses or waiting areas of service providers, and Little Free Libraries are often outside of buildings and in public spaces that can be accessed beyond traditional business hours.

The programmatic requirements of the IAL grant that were consistent across the implementation sites included two parent child groups annually, completed in conjunction with ROR, and the creation and maintenance of a Community Literacy Collaborative (CLC). The CLC in each community was comprised of local business owners, elected officials, parents, teachers, public agencies, local non-profits, faith-based organizations and other community stakeholders. The CLM facilitates meetings with CLC members to implement literacy activities based on community needs identified in part during asset mapping and input of the local members.

In order to explore the impact that IAL activities had in rural communities, SC USP designed a comprehensive mixed methods program evaluation to understand how activities hosted by CLMs changed community engagement in early literacy programs, activities, and resources. This evaluation aims to answer the following questions:

- 1 Are the steps that SC USP is taking to engage the community leading to social change/action?

 - a. Are families increasingly connected to schools, libraries, and community organizations?
 - b. Has community capacity to support early childhood development and literacy increased?
- 2 What worked in engaging the community (e.g., what are the key ingredients in community engagement? Whom did it work for?)?
- 3 What growth occurred (e.g., resources, access, new partnerships)?
- 4 What are the success stories?
- 5 What did the community invest from their own resources?
- 6 What can SC USP learn from the evaluation that will help them refine and improve their program work?

Methodology

Population

In order to understand the comprehensive implementation of literacy activities executed by SC USP, the evaluation team collected data across multiple sectors of participants. This consisted of creating three main groups: (1) SC USP staffmembers; 2) Community leaders and stakeholders; and (3) Families and other local participants from the communities. Data was collected from 16 communities within 4 states (see Table 1).

The SC USP staff members included Directors of IAL activities (n=2) and CLMs (n=6). IAL Directors provided vision and support before and throughout the program and CLMs, who are full time SC USP staff members, had the primary responsibility of planning and implementing activities in region.

Community stakeholders and leaders were identified as any community members, including SC USP staff such as VISTAs and Program Coordinators, who took an active role in supporting literacy activities in their community. These individuals ranged from local elected officials, business owners, local librarians, and school district employees. Community stakeholders and leaders made contributions ranging from hosting activities in their space, financial or in-kind donations, and participating in planning meetings as part of the local CLC.

Families and other local participants were defined as any person who participated in literacy events but were not actively engaged in planning or supporting literacy events beyond their participation. This group varied slightly by state, but is mostly comprised of female caregivers, self-identified as mothers or grandmothers.

TABLE 1:

States and communities where the IAL program was implemented

State	CLM	Community	Est. Population
South Carolina	1	Barnwell	22,119
		Bethune-Bowman	951
		North	791
	2	Summerton	1,061
		Lee	18,347
		Union	8,148
Kentucky	3	Jackson	13,427
		Owsley	4,654
	4	Whitley	35,766
		Clay	21,364
Arizona	5	Perry	28,010
		Chinle	4,518
		Ganado	1,210
Colorado	6	Alamosa	9,562
		Antonito	777
		Center	2,225

Note. CLM names have been removed and are identified by a number.

SAMPLING

Given the small number of CLMs that participated in the implementation of the literacy activities and idiosyncrasies of each site, each CLM was interviewed as well as both of the IAL Directors. The six CLMs were contacted for individual interviews and surveys, and the two IAL Directors also participated in individual interviews.

In order to determine the sample size for each community, the evaluation team used Community Snapshots provided by SC USP to understand the population and the number of sites served in each IAL region. The team worked with CLMs to select communities that would provide enough unique information about IAL implementation for a holistic evaluation. The team also used information about the number of attendees at programs and meetings (i.e., sign-in sheets). This information was used to determine the number of interviews for community stakeholders and target numbers for survey distribution.

Study participants were recruited differently depending on which of the groups they belonged to. Community leaders and stakeholders (including collaborative members, i.e., CLC) were identified from sign-in sheets. A subsample of community leaders and stakeholders was randomized to participate in 1:1 interviews. Randomization was done by assigning participants with contact information a number and selecting numbers randomly in each community. In this process, at least two stakeholders were randomized to be interviewed from each community. In communities where community leaders and stakeholders participated in focus groups, there was less effort to randomize additional stakeholders and community leaders after the focus groups. This can be seen in Table 2 where in Perry County only one stakeholder was randomized due to high participation in focus groups. These focus groups were not randomized, and participants were invited directly by the CLM.

Families were also identified through sign-in sheets, although due to limited contact information, recruitment to participate in focus groups was largely done by CLMs through collaboration with Early Steps for School Success (ESSS) Coordinators. CLMs provided support in reaching out to individuals to increase the odds of participation. The final sample that accepted to participate in the study and characteristics for survey respondents is reported in Table 2. The number of people the evaluation team attempted to call to participate in the study differs from the number of people who were ultimately interviewed; this is due to the following: people declining to participate (n=1); people who were contacted but never responded to the call (n=20); those who were ineligible based on study criteria (n=3; 2 were under the age of 18, 1 had moved out of the community); those who were not available at the scheduled time of the interview; and people for whom contact information was incorrect or out of date (n=4). In these cases, additional stakeholders and CLC members were randomized using the same strategy as discussed above.

Table 2 below shows the final number of participants by category and state. Table 2a shows demographic information about the stakeholders and CLC members that responded to the survey, which state they are from and the type of organization they work for. Table 2b shows demographic information from participants that responded to the survey. In Table 2b the number and percent is reported based on the responses except for the number of years that they have lived in the community, which is reported as the average and standard deviation.

TABLE 2:

Final evaluation sample: Surveys, Focus Groups and Interviews

State	CLM	Community	Attempted Interviews with CLC and stakeholders	Completed Interviews with CLC and stakeholders	Completed CLC and Stakeholder Surveys	Participants Focus Group (CLC/Stakeholders and families)	Family Surveys responded	Librarian Surveys Completed		
South Carolina	1	Barnwell	3	2	9	5 (3 parents, 2 parents and SU USP staff)	5	1		
		Bethune-Bowman	5	0	1	-	-	N/A		
		North	2	1	1	-	-	0		
	2	Summerton	5	0	3	5 (1 family, 4 CLC)	9	0		
		Lee	2	1	1	-	-	0		
		Union	4	0	2	-	-	1		
Kentucky	3	Clay	3	1	7	-	-	1		
		Perry	1	0	10	9 (8 CLC and stakeholders, 1 family)	-	0		
		Jackson	2	2	2	11 (11 CLC and stakeholders)	-	1		
		Owsley	4	1	6	-	-	0		
		Whitley	4	2	5	-	-	2		
		Arizona	5	Chinle	2	2	1	-	1	N/A
		Ganado		2	2	1	5 (families)	5	N/A	
Colorado	6	Alamosa	3	3	-	-	4	1		
		Antonito	4	0	1	-	-	0		
		Center	2	2	-	-	-	0		
TOTAL			48	19	50	CLC/ Stakeholders=25 Families=10	24	7		

Note. These numbers do not reflect the number of unique participants. N/A in the librarian column indicates that there is no library accessible to the community.

SAMPLING

TABLE 2 cont.

Community Leader and Stakeholder survey respondent characteristics (n=50)

State	N	%
Arizona	2	4.0%
Colorado	1	2.0%
Kentucky	30	60.0%
South Carolina	17	34.0%
Type of organization stakeholder is affiliated		
Non-Profit Organization/Agency	18	36.0%
Public Entity (e.g., Health Department, Law Enforcement, Fire Department etc.)	4	4.0%
Business Community (e.g., business owner, Chamber of Commerce)	1	2.0%
Government (e.g., town, county or state government, etc.)	2	4.0%
Medical Entity (e.g., clinic, doctor's office, hospital, etc.)	0	0.00%
Faith-Based Organization (e.g., church, mosque, synagogue)	2	4.0%
Member-based Organization (e.g., Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks)	0	0.00%
Library	3	6.0%
Education Institution (public schools, college, university, vocational/technical, etc.)	15	30.0%
Early Childhood Center/ Child Care Provider	0	0.00%
Other	3	6.0%
Missing	2	4.0%

TABLE 2 cont.

Demographics for Families and other local participants: survey (N=24)

State	N/M	% / SD
Arizona	6	31.58%
Colorado	4	21.05%
South Carolina	14	58.33%
Relationship to the children		
Mother	20	86.96%
Father	1	4.35%
Grandmother	2	8.70%
Sex: Female	16	88.89%
Race/Ethnicity		
American Indian/Alaska Native	6	25.00%
Asian	0	0.00%
Black or African American	11	45.83%
Latino or Hispanic	4	16.67%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0	0.00%
White (non-Hispanic)	2	8.33%
Other	2	8.33%
US Born	22	91.67%
Employed	14	58.33%
Education: High school or more	22	91.66%
Children receiving Reduced free lunch	16	88.89%
Years in the community	13.29	16.03
Have children under the age of 5	15	62.50%

Note. For all responses except years in the community number and percent were reported. For years in the community, mean and standard deviation were reported.

METHODS

Since the IAL activities were designed to be flexible in each state and community, understanding the nuances of implementation and experiences was critical to creating a holistic evaluation. For this reason, a mixed methods approach, which included surveys, interviews and focus groups, was implemented. Site visits were conducted in seven communities across the four states: Ganado, AZ; Alamosa, CO; Center, CO; Jackson County, KY; Perry County, KY; Summerton, SC and Barnwell, SC. In selecting sites, it was important to see one site per CLM, to understand the physical scope of the place and the differences in implementation.

Measures

Prior to the evaluation, SC USP hired an independent evaluator to design interview scripts for CLMs, community leader and stakeholders. In addition, this consultant developed a focus group script for families and other local participants, and a librarian questionnaire. These measures were reviewed and refined by the evaluation team (Columbia University) and additional surveys measures were created (see quantitative data section below).

The final set of measures included a survey and 1:1 interview or focus group protocol for each of the major groups defined the study population (CLM, community leaders and stakeholders, and families and other local participants). We also developed a librarian survey and an interview for community leaders and stakeholders.

TABLE 3
Measures

Participating Groups	Qualitative data	Quantitative data
CLM	Interview	Survey
SC USP Directors	Interview	-
Community Leader and stakeholders	Interview	Survey
Librarian	-	Survey
Families and community participants	Focus group	Survey

Note. See measures in the Appendix 1

QUANTITATIVE DATA

Using the contact information that CLMs provided in sign-in sheets from CLC meetings and community events, we distributed surveys through Qualtrics, a web based platform, and through text messaging. Because there was a significant amount of missing contact information for families and other local participants, the research team also provided paper surveys to CLMs during site visits, to be distributed at the next community event. Surveys were returned via US mail in pre-addressed envelopes that were opened and entered electronically by the evaluation team.

CLM survey: CLMs filled out a separate survey to provide information about each specific community that they worked with. CLMs rated a set of statements in a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Statements were related to their experience when they first arrived in the community, their experiences with the CLC, asset mapping, and engaging with the community. The survey also included a list of barriers to community engagement that CLMs had to rate on a scale from 0 (not a barrier) to 10 (the largest barrier), and a list of activities and events that they had to rate on how effective they were in engaging community members. (Survey attached in Appendix 1)

Community leader and stakeholder survey:

This survey combined multiple choice questions and open ended questions. This survey was designed to collect data to understand the development and success of new partnerships and their impact in the community. (Survey attached in Appendix 1)

Families and other local participants' survey:

Families rated a set of statements on a Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Statements were related to their participation in community events (related and non-related with IAL) and the impact of IAL. They were also asked specifically about their participation in Literacy corners. (Survey attached in Appendix 1)

Librarian survey: An additional survey was designed for public and school based librarians to understand how IAL programming impacted the utilization of the library and its resources, such as classes and the book catalog that the library was able to provide to the community. (Survey attached in Appendix 1)

Program monitoring tool: An internal SC USP tool developed for CLMs to track activities, attendance and contact information for stakeholders. This tool was used to provide contact information for interview randomization and add individuals to the network analysis.

QUALITATIVE DATA

Interview protocols were designed for CLMs, SC USP leadership, and community leaders and stakeholders. These protocols reiterated information covered in the surveys for validation and triangulation purposes, and also provided the time and space for individuals to share their personal experiences, successes and struggles with the IAL activities. A focus group script in English and Spanish was designed for families and other local participants, which was conducted by members of the evaluation team in region (Appendix 1).

Interviews with CLMs, community leaders and stakeholders, and IAL Directors were conducted in person or by phone. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 2 hours. In some communities it was decided to conduct the community leader and stakeholder interview in a group format.

Focus groups were designed for families that had participated in IAL activities. Focus groups with families and other local participants were attempted in 9 communities, but only five focus groups were conducted due to scheduling constraints and available information (see Table 2). In one community (Ganado) the focus group was conducted only with families that had limited exposure to IAL programming. In four communities, the focus groups combined families and community leaders. In four communities, focus groups were not possible due to lack of contact information to reach out to participants. Focus groups were led by members of the evaluation team (the Project Lead, and the Lead Evaluator or Graduate Research Assistant), lasted about 60 minutes, and were conducted in English. Focus group participants received a children's book as an incentive for participation.

CLM interview:

This interview aimed to understand different aspects of IAL activities from the CLM perspective. There were six main questions: 1) How they first began gathering information to familiarize themselves with their communities, 2) what is their experience with the leadership collaborative, 3) how they engaged with the community and what type of events or activities were more successful, 4) how they used the asset map, 5) what changes they have seen in the community since IAL started, and 6) how effective the training they received was, as well as recommendations for improvement. The overall goal was to understand what worked well to engage the community and what challenges were faced in the different phases of IAL activities. (Script attached in Appendix 1)

Community leader and stakeholder interview:

The interview focused on understanding the community leaders' relationship and engagement with IAL activities, whether or not they perceived that IAL activities had impacted the community, what were the key elements for success, the challenges to participate in IAL activities and engage the community, and their future vision in terms of sustainability of the IAL activities and community needs. (Script attached in Appendix 1)

Families and other local participants' focus group:

Focus groups aimed to understand whether or not families know about and participated in IAL activities, how they liked it, what they have learned, what impact it has had on them, and what challenges they experienced in participating in IAL activities. (Script attached in Appendix 1)

IAL Program Directors' interview:

SC USP Program Directors were interviewed to explore the ultimate visions, objectives and context of IAL activities. The interview focused on planning IAL activities, such as hiring and training CLMs, the implementation of IAL activities, reflecting on how the program met expectations, and the future of activities, about sustainability and expansion. (Script attached in Appendix 1)

Analysis

Two types of data were collected: qualitative data obtained through interviews with community leaders and stakeholders, CLMs and IAL Directors, and focus groups with families and community leaders, as well as quantitative data obtained through surveys.

Qualitative data was coded using NVivo, and was guided by a Grounded Theory approach. Inductive open-coding procedures were used to answer the original study research questions. This means that the coding was guided by reoccurring themes in interviews and focus groups. This coding was a crucial first step in the qualitative analysis.

Members of the evaluation team (the Principal Investigator, Project Lead and Senior Evaluator) coded a community leader or stakeholder interview from each state and a CLM interview, and generated a list of potential codes. The team met to discuss these codes and created an initial codebook. As coding commenced these themes were further informed by

secondary codes that were prominent in interview and focus group transcripts. The codes were then organized within themes. A total of 18 themes were identified (See Table 4). Codes were then entered into NVivo, where intercoder reliability was established with a master coder, the Senior Evaluator, and ranged from 70%-100% agreement, acceptable given the large number of codes. Following reliability, each interview and focus group transcript was coded in an Nvivo database. To ensure that reliability was maintained across each independent coder, the master coder conducted frequent checks across data points.

To better understand the qualitative data collected in interviews and focus groups, the themes described in Table 4 were quantified after coding using Nvivo software. In order to do this, quotes from the transcripts were coded using each theme and code. Then the number of times the code was used across the transcripts was counted at least once. Percentages referred to in the results section under interviews and focus groups are based on these calculations.

TABLE 4:
Themes from interviews and focus groups

Themes	Interview and Focus Group Transcripts coded	Total times used across the transcripts
Activities	27	267
Asset Map	12	86
Challenges	25	219
Changes to improve	16	54
CLM Skills for Success	25	125
CLM-Training	8	17
COL-Investment for Leadership Collaborative	26	204
COL-Sustainability for Leadership Collaborative	19	56
Communication	17	64
Community Assets	12	32
Community engagement	27	76
Grant Timeline	2	2
Impact	29	273
Motivation for work	27	68
Need in the community	19	86
Partnership and Collaborations	27	157
Start up	24	72

ANALYSIS

Quantitative data was collected through Qualtrics, a secure web-based system and paper surveys. All data was entered into Qualtrics, which was exported as a database and data was imported into SPSS, a statistical analysis package. This database included information from the surveys completed by CLMs, stakeholders, families, and information from the program monitoring tool completed by CLMs throughout the grant period. Initial analysis was also conducted when possible through the Qualtrics software, given the small sample of some of the surveys completed. This includes the Librarian Survey (n=7).

Based on information collected throughout the project by CLMs, data collected during the evaluation and an asset map that was completed by CLMs upon the commencement of the IAL activities, a network analysis was completed to better understand how the IAL program has built and strengthened partnerships throughout the community. This analysis was done by identifying key stakeholders that were present or active in IAL activities from March 2015 to December 2016, when data collection was completed. The second step in the analysis was to plot the linkages between the stakeholders as they changed or developed across the grant period. To create a graphic representation of the network, Gephi software was used (See Appendix 2).

Results

The results section is organized by the three main populations involved in the evaluation, and then divided by the type of data, qualitative or quantitative. Community leaders and stakeholders are the first group to be discussed, followed by families to provide a context for how IAL activities were implemented in each community. CLM data is used to inform the process of IAL implementation across the four states. Major themes are highlighted in each subsection that was common across the three study populations. In places where quotes are present in the analysis of surveys, they are from open-ended questions in the survey that were analyzed using the same codes as the interviews and focus groups.

Community Leaders & Stakeholders

Survey (n=50)

A total of 50 Community leaders and stakeholders participated in the survey. Most of the respondents were from Kentucky and South Carolina (see Table 5). Participants work for a wide range of organizations and 9 of them (18%) were SC USP staff working as ESSS coordinators or AmeriCorps VISTAs in local school based programs. Low response rates in the communities listed in the table are due in part to a lack of contact information provided and the various stages at which the CLC exists. For example the CLC in North only has one consistent member, due to turnover and scheduling conflicts, whereas Barnwell has a CLC that has had more consistent member attendance since the creation of the CLC.

Almost all respondents (n=41, 82%) reported their organizations had established new partnerships since the beginning

TABLE 5:
Number of Community Leader and Stakeholder Survey Responses by Community

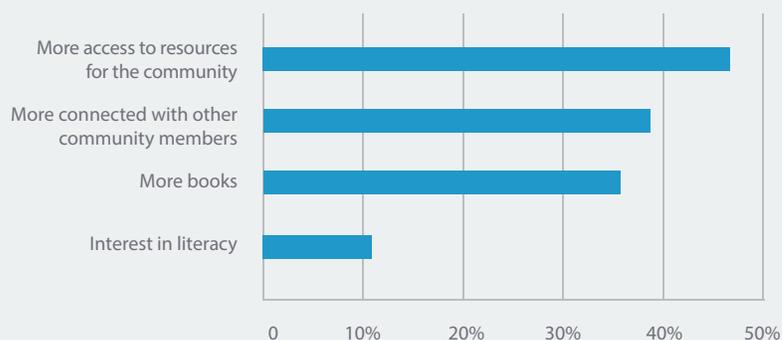
State	CLM	Community	Survey participants
South Carolina	1	Barnwell	9
		Bowman	1
		North	1
		Summerton	3
		Lee	1
Kentucky	2	Union	2
		Jackson	2
		Owsley	6
		Whitley	5
		Clay	7
Arizona	3	Perry	10
		Chinle	1
		Ganado	1
Colorado	4	Alamosa	-
		Antonito	1
		Center	-

COMMUNITY LEADERS & STAKEHOLDERS

of IAL activities and 95% reported these partnerships were good (24%) or excellent (71%). Communication between stakeholders and new partners or CLMs was frequent, as 70% of survey respondents reported communicating at least once a month with their new partners.

In an open-ended question, community leaders and stakeholders were asked how IAL activities impacted their partnerships with other organizations and the changes that they have seen in the community at large. We used codes created for qualitative analysis to identify the impact of IAL in creating new partnerships. As Figure 1 shows, community leaders and stakeholders reported that creating partnerships with SC USP through the IAL activities helped them bring more resources to the community, reach more families, provide more books for families, and be more connected with the larger community as this quote shows:

Figure 1: Contribution of IAL to partnerships (CLC/Stakeholder survey)



“Partnership with Save the Children has been excellent. We have been able to reach more children, families, and other programs. This has had a huge impact on our community. We have collaborated with Save the Children to promote literacy and reach children in need. They have provided opportunities for the children to have books, teach the importance of reading to the families, provide activities to promote literacy, and bring the community together.” (KY)

Working with IAL also allowed organizations to spread the message of the importance of literacy across the community, as this quote shows:

“Now more families are aware of how important early childhood literacy is.” (AZ)

As shown in this quote, working with CLMs on IAL funded activities not only helped bring more resources such as books, but also increased community engagement with existing services. These services include the library or preexisting literacy councils:

“We have been able to give books to families that need them and also, more families are coming into the library.” (KY)

COMMUNITY LEADERS & STAKEHOLDERS

Librarian survey (n=7)

Of the communities selected to participate in IAL funded activities, the majority had at least one librarian that served the community either at the school or a public library. These communities are distributed across three of the four states: Colorado, Kentucky and South Carolina. Neither of the communities in Arizona had libraries that were accessible to community members, so they are not represented in the librarian survey. The breakdown by specific communities can be seen in Table 2 in the sampling section. Figure 2 shows the distribution by state.

Within the data provided, there is some variation across the libraries, such as the size of staff (range: 1-13); both of the libraries reporting only one staff member are located in South Carolina. Almost all of the librarians surveyed reported that their library does employ a children's librarian (83.3%, n=6). Although only one of the librarians who completed the survey works in a library that is part of a public school, at least one additional librarian interviewed works as a school librarian, with extended hours to serve the community at large.

Respondents reported interacting with IAL activities differently, with the majority attending community meetings (71.43%) and back to school nights or open houses (71.43%). Of the librarians that completed the survey, only one reported being a CLC member. Some of the other events that librarians reported attending were StoryWalk Events, Little Free Library ceremonies, and story times (see Figure 3).

Librarians that completed the survey responded that IAL funding and activities has led to more people checking out books (66.6%), an increase in local community members having library cards (57.14%), and a higher percentage of books being checked out from the library every month (57.14%).

FIGURE 2:
Librarian Survey Responses by State (n=7)

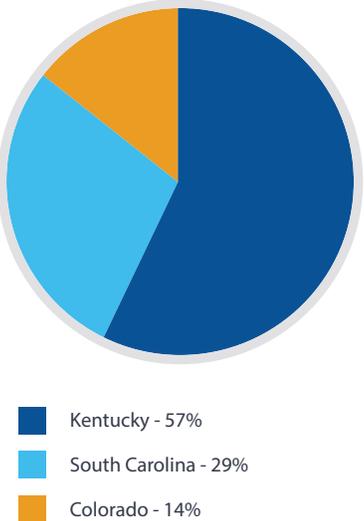
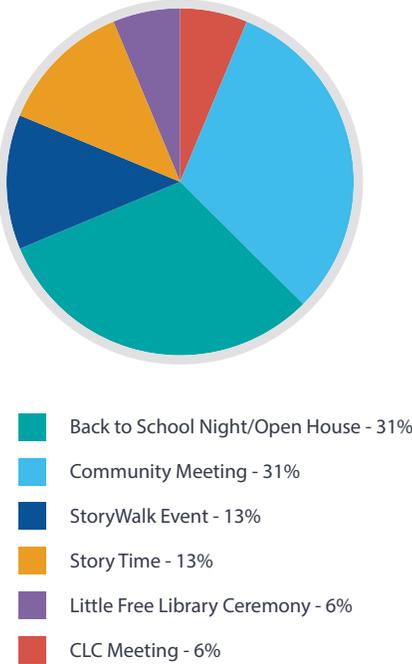


FIGURE 3:
IAL Activities Attended by Librarian Survey Respondents



Librarian survey (n=7)

In an interview, one librarian mentioned how important it was to be able to purchase books that students and young people were interested in reading, a process made possible through IAL funding. Moreover, they talked about how this ability to purchase children's books has changed attitudes around reading and enthusiasm for visiting the library:



“The kids are anxious to read, they want to read, they want to come and check out books. And so, that makes me happy, because I think that I put stuff in here that people want. The kiddos will check out a book in the morning, come back and bring it back and want to check out one this evening. Awesome! Go for it! And they can't wait to get in here and get a book. A lot of third graders can't get here during the school time, so they'll come early in the morning.” (CO)

Librarians were asked to respond to a series of barriers in a Likert type question in response to the challenges the library faces in engaging the community. Based on the results transportation was identified as a barrier for the library in reaching families (57.14% rated either as “Strongly Agree” or “Somewhat Agree”). The other factor that was prevalent in surveys and interviews was economic restrictions and budget cuts (71.43% rated either as “Strongly Agree” or “Somewhat Agree”). In an open-ended question about other challenges and barriers, one librarian wrote:



“The library does not have diverse enough resources to appeal to all members of the community, and the library is unable to purchase more resources or books to replace the out-of-date books in the collection. The library also struggles to keep the public informed about programs and services available to the library.” (SC)



In the survey, respondents were also asked about what barriers stop community members from engaging with the library, and similarities were reported with the above questions. The highest rated barrier was the perception of a lack of interest in literacy among the community members (85.71% rated either as “Strongly Agree” or “Somewhat Agree”). Transportation was also rated as an important factor that prevents the community from utilizing library resources housed on site (71.43% rated either as “Strongly Agree” or “Somewhat Agree”). Low literacy levels among adults in the community were also highly ranked as a barrier by the librarians (57.14% rated either as “Strongly Agree” or “Somewhat Agree”). Providing more information about the challenges facing the community that they serve, one librarian wrote:

“Lack of interest in reading due to apathy from leading a life in poverty and in some cases life of drug addiction.” (KY)

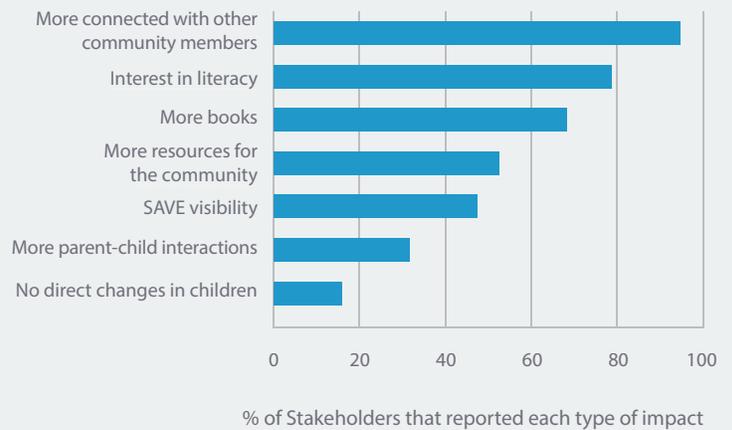
Impact of Innovative Approaches to Literacy Activities

As reported in Figure 4, in interviews with community leaders and stakeholders (n=19) the largest areas of impact reported were community members being more connected with each other through partnership and collaboration (95%), an increased interest in literacy (79%), more books in the community, both for home libraries and public access via Reading Corners and Little Free Libraries (68%), more literacy resources for the community, such as Little Free Libraries, StoryWalks, Reading Corners, and an increase in SC USP visibility in the communities (47%). A few community leaders and stakeholders (15%) reported that it was hard to see direct changes in children, such as improved reading levels. Nonetheless, 32% of community leaders and stakeholders reported having seen more parents engaged in parent-child interactions to support literacy, such as reading together.

“Parents in general are just reading more because of free books. They have more books in the home. I see more in the home than before. Parents are asking for books too now. I think it’s because the books are being given to them. And they see how kids enjoy the story walk. Or they see the book corner at a business and they see how children enjoy it.” (SC)

“It really helped parent education on how they can help their child read and start emerging in reading. Places, like schools and libraries, were already there but I do feel like families are more aware of all the resources those places provide. I mean I didn’t know this until we collaborated with them but the library has these little backpacks that parents can check out with activities centered around a book, so we want to make sure parents are also aware of these resources.” (KY)

Figure 4: Impact reported by CLM and Stakeholders (CLC/Stakeholder interview)



Librarian survey (n=7)

Additionally, in the majority of interviews, community leaders and stakeholders mentioned new partnerships that were formed as a result of IAL activities (n=17, 90%) and that these partnerships were beneficial for the community:

“In some of the medical offices we didn’t have the money to provide literacy rich waiting rooms; through collaborating with IAL we were able to put bookshelves with books. A lot of providers note illiterate parents and we were able to pull in adult education and ESL courses. All of those resources were already there but we brought attention to it, made it accessible, and made it where they were already going.” (SC)

Key components of community engagement

Three main themes were mentioned consistently in interviews with community leaders and stakeholders as key to making the CLC and the IAL activities effective: CLM skills for success, motivation to create a culture of literacy, and communication between community members.

A key factor that reoccurs throughout the interviews with community leaders and stakeholders is how important CLMs are to the success of the IAL activities. Almost 90% of participants in interviews discussed the importance of CLMs in the successful implementation

of IAL activities and bringing the community together. Specific skills that were highlighted to maximize CLM effectiveness were: having strong communication skills/being a “people person” (47%), providing information and/or resources for community members (42%), being organized (42%), and knowing the community well (31%). This is displayed in Figure 5.

Figure 5: CLM Skills for success (CLC/Stakeholder interview)



Key components of community engagement

In many instances, community leaders and stakeholders mentioned more than one skill that increased the potential impact that a CLM could have in the community, especially in creating and maintaining relationships:

“Oh MY God! She is the council. She has worked really hard. She is very nice, approachable, easy to talk to, down to earth, good at making connections.” (SC)

.....

“Her experience and her personality. She brings a lot to the table. You can tell that she’s very well versed in what she does. Her background is strong. Super nice personality, people gravitate to her. She makes everybody feel important. Good listener. I’ve never seen her mad.” (SC)

.....

“He kind of keeps us organized. You always need a leader that can keep everyone focused. People get off track. He’s very good to bring us back to the goal when we need it. He throws out ideas for us to think about. When we have a meeting and put stuff up on a flip chart he gets the information out to us after. It’s important to me – I have so many meetings – he has it ready for us. It makes it easier to make confident decisions on things – you know, where you need to go next.”

(KY)

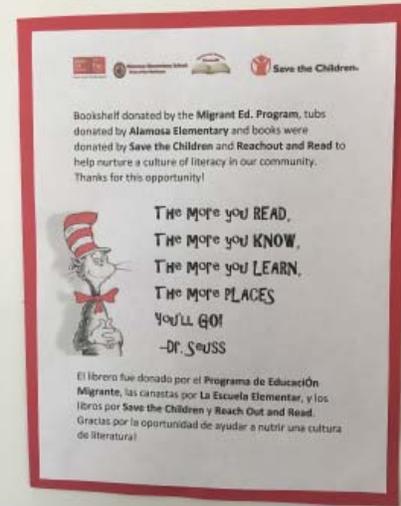
Another theme present in all interviews was the strong motivation of community members and stakeholders to become involved in IAL activities. All of them reported a clear motivation for doing the work and enthusiasm to get involved. Participants involved with the CLC reported wanting to make their communities stronger and more connected; they wanted children to be able to read at the appropriate level, and they wanted families to be passionate about literacy. Community leaders and stakeholders shared these goals as these quotes from different states show:

“I struggled with reading until I was in 8th grade. I had a reading disability and I know how important it is to be able to read. I wanted to join the LC to help other people and make sure children have the opportunities to be good readers.” (CO)



Above: The Alamosa Literacy Council

“Our community doesn’t have anything like that. Doesn’t have a lot of programs to help any youth really. I’ve seen that since I’ve been little—I grew up in this town. It was cool to hear outside sources wanted to help.” (CO)



“I’m working in my own community trying to get books into the hands of children, specifically younger, children (younger than preschool). It seems that the community as a whole, the young children, not all but a lot of children aren’t introduced to books until they start preschool. My background is in early childhood education; I know how important it can be for young children to be introduced to books at an early age. Always looking for new ways to get books into the hands of children and parents.” (KY)

A few of the CLC members interviewed also reported participating in the CLC because the partnerships they formed could be beneficial for their own organization. For example, members remarked that joining the CLC would be a way to obtain more resources for their organization and have more people participate in their own initiatives.

“I wanted to represent the library interests and let people know about library resources since that is my main focus so that we can get more people here.” (CO)

Another key component for sustaining community engagement throughout the grant period was constant communication between people involved in planning and the larger community. The people involved in planning the events include the CLM and members of the CLC. This idea is expressed in the quote below:

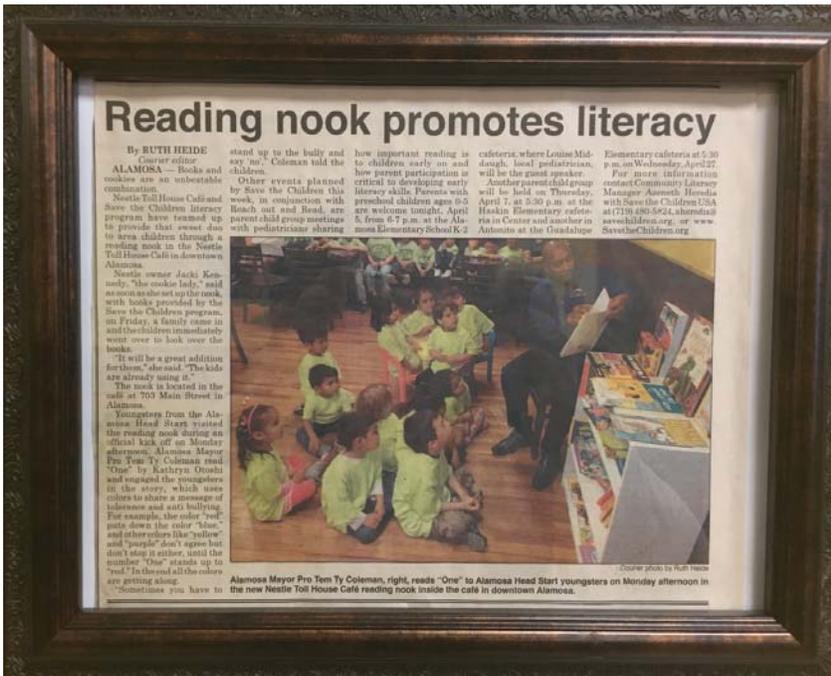
“We thought about how to get information out to the community. How best to do that. And the school was a big part of the advertisement.” (AZ)

The type of communication used varied from Facebook groups, word-of-mouth, flyers distributed at schools, email updates, to media presence or advertising.

“The Literacy council has been great at advertising their events in social media, getting the local newspaper involved and appearing in the front page.” (CO)

“She had done a wonderful job keeping us informed through emails and meeting reminders.

There is always been open communication. She is also connected to donors. And she has made sure that we have media presence. Everything we did was covered by the local press.” (CO)



Most stakeholders reported in-person meetings as the most common way to communicate with other stakeholders (80%, n=15). Throughout the implementation of IAL activities, most CLMs were consistent in reminding CLC members about upcoming meetings and events, and sending out meeting minutes to people who were unable to attend.

New resources for community members

Across all four states the activities implemented through the IAL grant were credited with creating more literacy resources and increasing community access to these resources. Half of the community leaders and stakeholders interviewed reported an increase in literacy resources in their community. In addition, one of the greatest impacts reported was an increase of books in the communities (70% reported). Books were distributed through Reading Corners, Little Free Libraries, home visits via ESSS, back to school events and community fairs.



While there were no formal means of recording the number of people who visited Little Free Libraries or Reading Corners, many business owners reported families using them. Moreover, stakeholders that hosted Reading Corners reported that families frequently used the books in their businesses.

“I just think it’s a good project. I would recommend it to any community. A lot of businesses would’ve never thought they could have books in their business. I think that’s a good thing – especially those book corners.”

In some communities that already had their own version of Reading Corners, the IAL funding allowed them to get more books and make resources accessible to more people:

“The literacy corner is at the community Catholic Church. It existed already but we added a cushion, a carpet, a bookcase with new books and 3 magazine subscriptions. Children and parents have absolutely been enjoying it. Used 3-4 times a week. I have gotten feedback from parents saying that it’s helpful and looks good, and the kids enjoy it. I have said to Save the Children that they are wonderful. There is follow up and that shows they care. I am sure this is part of the grant but I do think they do a really good job about embracing the community because there is follow-up.” (KY)

StoryWalks were another activity that was effective in engaging community members in the communities where they were created. The StoryWalks have become a sustainable resource that can be maintained by community members beyond the funding period of IAL activities. StoryWalks required CLC members to work cohesively, as shown in the quotes below:

.....

“I came up with the idea of a story walk and everybody agreed and worked together to make it possible. In the literacy council meetings everybody shared what they thought the community needed.” (CO)

.....

“The StoryWalk has increased parent engagement. It has opened up more and more doors for families.” (CO)



.....

In communities that created StoryWalks, community members have now taken responsibility for selecting and updating stories, and the maintenance of the physical story posts.

“I am helping with the StoryWalk. We are now considering putting StoryWalk in the elementary school. I am a little more hands on with this project since it is part of our district. We are getting the school and district involved to give money for the StoryWalk.” (CO)

.....

In interviews with community leaders and stakeholders, activities were mentioned 101 times. Some activities, such as Reading Corners, StoryWalks, Little Free Libraries and book donations, were organized by the CLC. Other activities were community events in which CLMs and the CLC participated, usually providing books and information about literacy, but the event was organized or sponsored by other community organizations. The following events occurred in each state, but there were differences in how they were implemented at the community level: book donations, Little Free Libraries, Reading Corners, participation in fairs or community events.

New resources for community members

“I believe it’s beneficial to have the CLM come in and to have books with her and visit communities and parents with books. You can tell the parents are anxious about getting the books. They spend a lot of time at her booth, speaking with her and asking questions.” (AZ)

In interviews with community leaders and stakeholders, more than half (58%) talked about Reading Corners, community fairs, and events. StoryWalks were also frequently mentioned (48%) followed by Little Free Libraries and book donations (32%) (See Figure 6).

We examined the specific impacts of IAL activities that community leaders and stakeholders reported in relation to activities or initiatives organized by the CLC. The activities or initiatives that were reported as being more successful were: book donations, Reading Corners, Little Free Libraries, and StoryWalks. These activities helped bring more books into these communities and were accessible to large groups of community members.

Figure 6: Activities and Initiatives with IAL (CLC/Stakeholder interview)



In addition, they also helped parents to have more opportunities to engage with their children as reported here:

“Parents in general are just reading more because of free books. They have more books in the home. I see more in the home than before. Parents are asking for books too now. I think it’s because the books are being given to them. And they see how kids enjoy the story walk. Or they see the book corner at a business and they see how children enjoy it.” (SC)

Community Investment

All but one of the community leaders and stakeholders interviewed reported having invested time or resources in IAL activities and the CLC. In addition to spending time in monthly CLC meetings, community leaders and stakeholders reported investing their time by participating in activities and events (74%), planning activities (63%), and connecting CLMs with other community members (63%). Many CLC members also provided space for activities, especially those that worked at schools (31%). Less frequently reported were in-kind and financial donations from individuals (See Figure 7).

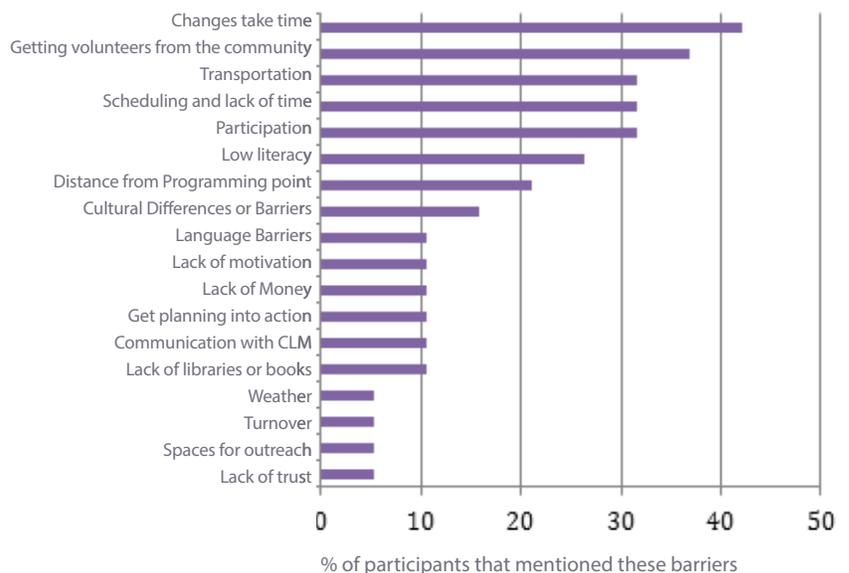
Figure 7: Community investment (CLC/Stakeholder interview)



Challenges

Data from interviews allowed us to identify important challenges experienced in implementing IAL activities and barriers to community engagement that were not captured in the survey. Figure 8 shows the list of all of the barriers identified in interviews with community leaders and stakeholders and the percentage of participants who mentioned these barriers.

Figure 8: Barriers for success (CLC/Stakeholder interview)



Challenges

Almost 45% of community leaders and stakeholders reported that having only 18 months to implement the IAL activities was not enough time to see all of the potential changes. It was reported that it takes time to create partnerships and create a culture of literacy as mentioned by this stakeholder:

“Allow us to continue what we’re doing. I can see that each year we’re getting stronger and stronger. We’re just getting our feet on the ground. At first it all seemed so farfetched. But it happened here.” (SC)

The other barriers that were mentioned frequently were getting volunteers from the community to participate in meetings or help in events and activities (37%), transportation (32%), time commitments (32%, reported as scheduling difficulties and lack of time), participation (32%), and low literacy levels in the community (27%). These quotes show examples of some of these barriers in specific communities:

“It was challenging to find out where we could set up our programs such as the lending libraries. Took some time to find people who wanted to do that.” (KY)

“If I could change anything it would be to do more. People are so busy and have many commitments. It’s hard for people like me to make the commitment. I would like to do more but I don’t know exactly how.” (KY)

“I would say there’s very little initiative. If you feed them they’ll take it. That’s where our biggest challenge is – thinking of ways to get people interested. Like if I go out and deliver books door to door, they would accept them. If I said I’m having story time at a certain time, then that’s a little harder to do. I’m trying to figure out how to get the notion across to parents about how important it is.” (KY)

“It is up to the parent to really get involved, it might be hard on the family, they have to travel far to come to the community, driving conditions, some don’t have transportation, some don’t have power (only lighting during the day) some parents lack reading, they weren’t educated also.” (AZ)

While some barriers were commonly reported by community leaders from different states, others were unique as Table 6 shows. The challenges that were consistent across the states were: that change takes time, low literacy levels in the community, and participation in events and activities. Issues with transportation, scheduling conflicts and lack of time, and getting volunteers from the community, followed these barriers in the frequency with which they were mentioned. Cultural differences were reported as a barrier to engagement in three of the four states: Arizona, Colorado and Kentucky.

TABLE 6:
Barriers by State as reported in interviews with
Community leaders and Stakeholders

	AZ	CO	SC	KY
Changes takes time	2	2	1	3
Low literacy	2	1	1	1
Participation	1	2	1	2
Transportation	2	-	1	2
Scheduling and lack of time	2	2	-	2
Getting volunteers from the community	2	1	-	4
Cultural differences or barriers	1	1	-	1
Distance from programming point	3	-	-	1
Get planning into action	-	1	-	1
Lack of money	-	1	-	1
Weather	1	-	-	1
Language barriers	-	2	-	-
Lack of motivation	-	-	-	2
Lack of libraries or books	-	-	-	2
Communication with the CLM	2	-	-	-
Lack of trust	-	1	-	-
Turnover	1	-	-	-

Note. Numbers in the table indicate how many participants by state reported each barrier. The barriers are listed in the order of how frequently they were mentioned. For example, participants in each state discussed “changes take time” as a barrier, but “turnover” was only discussed by one stakeholder in Arizona.

Challenges

Low community engagement or participation in events and activities was often associated with lack of transportation or distance to the location of events. This is especially true during times of the year when weather made driving conditions less safe. As these two stakeholders from Arizona and Kentucky mentioned:

“It is a very remote community and parents live very far from our school building. That hinders community involvement. The roads aren’t always good, we have dirt roads, so the long distances and the weather can always play a part in getting people involved.” (AZ)

.....

“We try to do lots of events in the summer because it seems easier to access. We have a lot of people who don’t have good transportation so summer and right before school starts are the busiest times.” (KY)

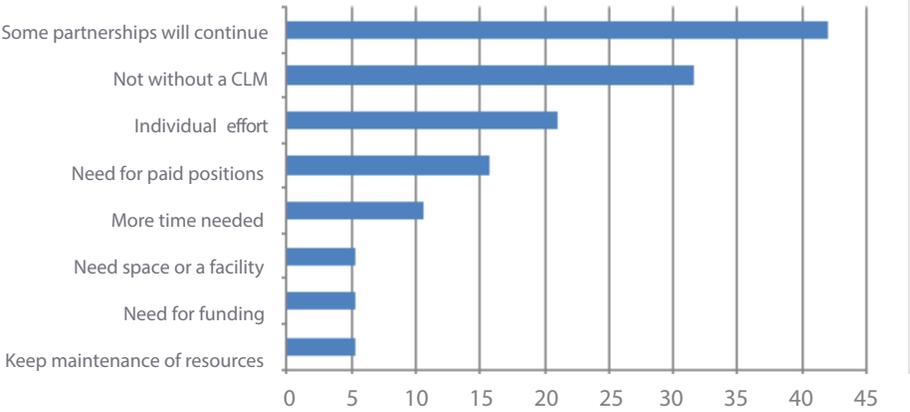
Another relevant challenge common across the four states was the low literacy levels of caregivers, including parents and grandparents. Participants mentioned low literacy levels as a hindrance to their involvement since they don’t feel comfortable reading to their children, as this participant from Kentucky reported:

“ We say read to your children, but when we have the person that’s supposed to be reading to their children that can’t even read, it’s an issue. We’re working with the young ones, our future, and they are looking at our older folks, our parents who can’t read. It would help to get more adult programs here. ... Because I don’t think we have anything like that here yet. And I really think that’s the key to our future, is getting these parents not afraid to read. I think they shy away from those books because they can’t do it and they don’t want to let their kids know that they can’t do it.” (KY)

Sustainability and future directions

Community leaders and stakeholders were asked about the sustainability of the IAL activities and changes that still need to take place to further promote a culture of literacy in their community. Unanimously community leaders want IAL activities to continue, but do not believe that it can without a CLM (32%) or without continued funding and paid positions (15%). This is shown below in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Sustainability of IAL (CLC/Stakeholder interview)



Some of the following quotes show the opinions of community leaders about the sustainability of IAL:

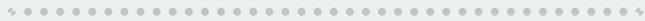
“We have 15% of the community doing 85% of the work; people can get burned out really quick, so having someone outside doing that makes it a lot easier for us.” (KY)



“If Jackson County were a person we would be someone on government assistance. If you take that away people will just be like ok what else can we do. Even though no one is getting paid, people are interested, it gets them out of the office but if there wasn’t someone there (CLM) I don’t think anyone will take on coordinating it without getting paid.” (KY)



“I don’t know. I want to say yes if someone from the school is interested in it. But here at Hubbell we can only continue to do our events, it would be nice for someone to continue to carry it on, but someone like a CLM has to be really dedicated, she did well doing that, I don’t know if it will carry on.” (AZ)



“If you don’t have one person...If you don’t have someone there to set everything up, bring data you need, you won’t be successful. These are all people that have so many roles in the community. We would never get it done. We go and give our two hours, go to the events, but we don’t have time to set them up and do them. We are all employed by public agencies.” (KY)

As these quotes show, community leaders are unsure about the feasibility of continuing the IAL activities without the support of CLMs and funding.

Forty-two percent of community leaders and stakeholders interviewed agreed that change takes time and a 18-month period is not enough to see the potential changes of IAL activities, as reported by these stakeholders:

“But the issue is we just got everything rolling and then on September 30th the grant ended. And sustainability ...all goes with the grant. A one or two year grant is really tough because once you get all the players in place it ends.” (KY)



“By the second year we had so many different services and organizations and the grant wasn’t renewed. I thought years 3, 4 and 5 would’ve made a huge difference with critical indicators.” (SC)



“My only negative is that it didn’t continue. We tend to go in with guns blazing and we don’t stay long enough. We live in a society that wants instant gratification. Some things just take a while.” (SC)

Furthermore, 42% of stakeholders reported that some partnerships will continue and 22% reported that individual efforts to promote literacy would remain. There are also specific examples in communities where activities have spread to neighboring towns where no IAL activities exist, or in a few instances, where there is no SC USP presence. In Kentucky, this can be seen in the creation and proliferation of Little Free Libraries, starting in Perry County through grant funding and CLM support, which has now spread to nearby communities where access to public libraries is severely limited. A CLC member from Perry County has traveled with the CLM to neighboring counties and held workshops for people who want to create Little Free Libraries.

Finally, when community leaders and stakeholders were asked about areas of improvement the main theme that emerged was improving outreach and communication with community members (26% across 3 states: AZ, CO, and KY) as these quotes show:

“If she wants it to work – things to think about are locations of the meeting, time of the meeting, communication of leader who aren’t on committee, getting flyers or something we can send to email contacts so we can spread info.” (AZ)



“We need more education about literacy for the community. We need more people to talk about the importance of literacy. Maybe we could have more teachers that speak Spanish come and talk about the importance of literacy.” (CO)



“We should have even more presence in social media so that more families learn about this initiative and we can expand to other Colorado communities.” (CO)

An interesting issue that was raised by one community leader was how the information provided to parents at events, workshops, and activities could be simplified to make sure that parents and caregivers understood the main message: “read and engage with your children.”

“We tend to work to get all the information and we tend to get impatient and want to give the information as quickly as we can. That goes over the heads of those trying to help. I think we could scale down our worry and even our handouts. Our handouts have great information but I would say 90% became notepads or thrown away.” (CO)

Despite all the work that has happened in these communities there is still much to do as 52% of community leaders across the 4 states reported. Interviewees reported that there is still a need for more books (26%), libraries (26%) child friendly spaces where kids can spend time and be safe (11%), and basic needs like food or grocery stores (11%). These quotes exemplify some of these needs:

“Our community doesn’t have a library, so we had to think outside of the box because a lot of the ideas would have been great if we had more community involvement or we had a library.” (AZ)

.....

“There really isn’t anything here for the youth. All they have is school. There’s nothing outside of school to help them grow.” (AZ)

Community leaders and stakeholders focus group

In total, 25 community leaders and stakeholders participated in focus groups across Kentucky (8 Perry County, 11 Jackson County) and South Carolina (4 Summerton, 2 Barnwell). All community leaders and stakeholders that participated in focus groups share similar visions about what literacy means and understanding of the goal of IAL activities. They want to encourage children and families to read more and build stronger communities, as these quotes show:

“The purpose of the CLC is to create more community involvement. To foster the partnership between schools and communities. Being on the council helps me to think outside the box and being 63 makes me think I know it all, but I don’t. And when you sit down to the table with the group and everyone shares – you have different information coming in, from all different experiences. And everybody is smart.” (KY)

This quote mirrors reports from individual interviews about improving the community and investing in the future of young people. In one focus group, a community stakeholder remarked:

“It’s our future. Our big motto used to be, ‘coal is our future.’ I think our kids are our future. If we don’t invest in them now, we’re done. We’re just absolutely done and I think that’s where we’re sitting at. Where it’s time that we put so much into coal that I think that we forgot about the basis and where we really need to put our knowledge at.” (KY)

“I grew up in Harling County. My father is a coal miner who never learned to read. He’s illiterate. My husband was a coal miner, he is nearly illiterate. So, the idea that making sure our children can read, that we’re working on literacy at a young age so we don’t have adults who are still struggling with literacy with health literacy. A lot of people don’t understand what they’re hearing from their doctors because they haven’t been able to read to understand that.” (KY)



Consistent with interviews, community leaders and stakeholders that participated in focus groups reported similar impacts of IAL activities and similar challenges for engagement. The highest impacts mentioned were more parents and children reading together (40%), more books (36%) and more connections between community members (36%). In addition, more than half of focus group participants (64%)

talked about new partnerships with other organizations or community members established through IAL activities. Resources provided through IAL activities allowed more books to be brought into the community and allowed parents to connect with their children through reading, as the quote below shows:

“Well, I can vouch for the Little Free Libraries. I was the first one to open it. Since then, what are we up to now, seven more? ... And I just think that has really put the books in the kids hands, and it’s actually put them in the adults’ hands too because I actually sit in my restaurant and I watch that little free library, and I’ve watched where we have some books that adults can read. And when I see adults going out there, and pulling them out, I’m thinking, “Yes, one more book!” And I’m averaging about 50 to 75 books a week in that little thing, the little library. Which I think, it’s just at the right place, right time and everything. So people were actually pulling up, right up beside it, letting their kids out, and they look and they grab books and they get back in and they go. I’m happy about it.” (KY)

When participants in focus groups were asked about the barriers to participation that they experienced, there was interesting repetition of barriers discussed in interviews with stakeholders. Similar to interviews, transportation was mentioned as the most frequent barrier to participation in any community event (56%). The second most frequent barrier to community engagement mentioned was low literacy levels in the community (20%).

To learn about existing services in the community, participants in focus groups were asked about community groups or events taking place in the community. In response and throughout the focus groups it was evident that Kentucky and South Carolina had many preexisting community assets. Service providers in these communities were already offering programs and activities aimed to increase literacy, as seen in the quotes below, and as reported by community leaders, these activities were well attended:

“The library does offer a reading program where they have different people come by and do a group activity with the kids and they do that in Barnwell, Blackwell, and Wilster.” (SC)

“We are community oriented; we’re family oriented, faith-based oriented. And this center right here is a resource center it is also the high school that I attended in 1970, but the superintendent made it into a resource center.” (SC)

“This already exists - Bookworm Buddies (at library) –one book each week read to kids and they have activities afterward, library also has bookmobile.” (KY)

“We are a recipient of the “round up” grants. Our outreach coordinator requested money for \$100 credit on electricity bill if they complete career readiness certificate. Reading comprehension, math, and locating information tests. This attracts employers to the area. We made it a 12-hour program with tutoring and the test. We partnered with the extension office to do a graduation.” (KY)

Focus group participants were also asked about what services or resources families needed that were not currently being offered. Two main themes emerged: provide resources to improve adult literacy levels, such as high school equivalency classes, and involve middle school students and teenagers in literacy activities. Below is an example of these needs:

“So, instead it’s “Oh, I’m just tired, go away,” you know. So we just take it in our hands as community people to get these books into the kids hands, and to be more of an emphasis on reading and literacy for them, I think our future now is, now we’ve got this ball rolling, now we’ve gotta get the parents less afraid. I know in my business and that was the eye opener, I knew coming in here we had a lot of illiterate, but when I came in and actually sat down and started teaching people how to read in a restaurant, because our sandwiches were wrong, our orders were wrong, because they couldn’t read the slips. That’s when I knew it’s time. It’s time to look at the kids—the older kids that we have and the adults that we have. It’s heartbreaking.” (KY)

Families from the communities survey (n=24)

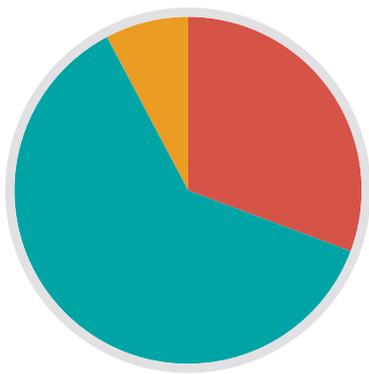
Overall, almost 80% of parents agreed that through SC USP literacy activities they learned about the importance of sharing books with children, how to support children in reading and how to foster language development. IAL activities also helped them learn about other services, activities, and/or literacy events. It is important to note that only 24 parents responded to the surveys (6 from Arizona, 4 from Colorado, and 14 from South Carolina). Due to lack of contact information for families in Kentucky, there were no responses to the family survey. Given the small sample size, these results cannot be generalized.

TABLE 7:
Results from participants survey (n=24)

Survey Questions	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree
Please rate the following statements about the Community Literacy Project on how much you agree or disagree with them.			
I have heard of the Culture of Literacy Project before.	17.39%	0.00%	82.61%
I have participated in Culture of Literacy Programs.	17.39%	4.35%	78.26%
At these programs I learned about how important it is to share books with my children.	12.50%	4.17%	83.34%
At these programs I learned how to support my children in reading and language development.	8.34%	8.33%	83.33%
At these events I learned more about other services, activities, and/or events about literacy.	8.70%	4.35%	86.96%
After going to community literacy events or activities, I was more likely to			
Read with your child	0%	5.26%	94.74%
Tell your child stories	0%	5.88%	94.12%
Play games with your child	0%	5.88%	94.12%
Sing songs with your child	0%	5.88%	94.12%
Take walks with your child	0%	5.26%	94.74%
Talk with your child during meals	0%	6.25%	93.75%
Go to the library	0%	6.25%	93.75%
Limit the amount of TV your child watches	0%	5.00%	95.00%
Limit the amount of video games your child plays	0%	5.56%	94.44%
Limit the amount of time your child uses computers/cell phones/tablets	0%	5.88%	94.12%
Please rate the following statements on how much you agree with them			
The Culture of Literacy Project will change my community for the better	0%	0%	100%
Since the project began, I feel more connected to the local school.	0%	5%	95%
Since the project began, I feel more connected to the local library.	5%	5%	90%
Since the project began, I feel more connected to local community organizations.	5%	0%	95%

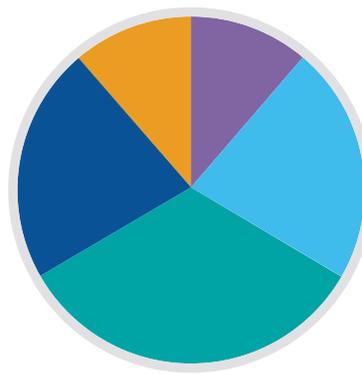
In the survey, families were asked about specific interactions with Reading Corners, such as how often they visited reading corners, where the reading corners were located, and if their children came with them. In their responses, 54.17% (n=13) of families visited reading corners. The frequency of visits and reasons for not visiting are described below in Figures 10 and 11.

FIGURE 10:
Frequency of visits to Reading Corners as reported by families



- Few times a year - 61%
- Once a month or more - 31%
- Once - 8%

FIGURE 11:
Reasons provided by families for not visiting Reading Corners



- Did not have a car or any way to get there - 34%
- I did not know that there was a Literacy Corner in my community - 22%
- Did not need any books - 22%
- Lack of time - 11%
- Too far away from home - 11%

Focus Groups

In focus groups, we interviewed five parents in Ganado (Arizona), three parents who were not also employed by SC USP in Barnwell (South Carolina), one in Summerton (South Carolina), and one in Perry County (Kentucky). In Barnwell and Summerton, stakeholders and CLC members also participated in focus groups with families. In instances where families and CLC members participated in the same focus groups, CLC members also identified as caregivers who utilized literacy resources and activities.

Arizona (Ganado)

In Ganado, the five parents that participated were unfamiliar with IAL activities and the CLC, and did not know about the two Little Free Libraries in the community. All of them had children attending school and 3 of them knew ESSS (two were current participants; one was a past participant). Unanimously, families agreed on the importance of reading with their children and reported reading with their child every day. They talked about the need for child friendly spaces where children can play and places to go hang out or buy books, clothing and other needs. The closest mall to where the participants live is an hour and a half away. The mother that participated in ESSS liked receiving books with activities and reported using them with her child. In response to what they would like to learn more about and what they would like to have in their community, participants said they would like to do more interactive workshops with their children:

“Do it yourself things, ideas to do crafts at home. I think kids learn more when they interact and use their hands instead of you talking to them. Have a family-night, for kids.”

All of these families relied on the school and the teacher to learn about opportunities for their children. They did not report participating in community events other than going to the movies once in a while.

They reported that there should be more advertisement and outreach about events and activities happening in the community. For example, all reported having smartphones and Facebook and said that would be a good way of getting information.

One mom that attended a parent child group, hosted as part of the IAL activities, reported reading more to her baby daughter after learning that it is important to start reading to your baby when you are pregnant.

Most parents, because they did not know about IAL or the events promoted in their community, reported not having seen any changes in their community.

South Carolina (Summerton)

The only father that participated in the focus group of Summerton found out about IAL activities and the CLC through one of the CLC members. After learning about the CLC, he became more involved and helps them set up at events. The father finds out about IAL events through Facebook. He thinks the purpose of IAL activities is to make the community stronger and that it is working to connect organizations. He thinks parents know about the CLC. He feels he is reading more to his daughter after attending the literacy events in his community but also making sure that his daughter understands what they read together.

In Barnwell, the families that participated in the focus group were already attending community events prior to IAL activities. These events included the carnival, football games and church.

Three of the mothers that participated in the focus group are not SC USP employees, and two mothers who worked as ESSS coordinators also participated in the focus group. All of the families learned about IAL events through the ESSS coordinator. The ESSS coordinator present in the focus group reported they communicate with families via word-of-mouth correspondence, using flyers, and posting events on her personal Facebook page. All families had participated in IAL activities. They see the activities as beneficial because their children can interact with other children. They also use these events to meet other families in the community. Given the geographic isolation experienced by many families in these communities, this may be a potentially important support for the community. When parents were asked about literacy events, they answered:

“I love them. They are fun and give the kids the chance to interact with other children. A little rest time to be honest. Just to talk to other parents that might be experiencing something that you are experiencing.”

All of the participants reported that they are reading more with their children and that they have cut back on watching TV after attending literacy events and learning more about the importance of reading. As one participant reported, having more access to free books makes it easier to read to your child.

One participant reported that she has seen an increase in literacy events offered in the community.

All families reported knowing about, using and enjoying the Little Free Libraries and Reading Corners. They specifically mentioned one in an apartment complex and another one in the doctor’s office.

In the focus group, participants were asked to describe reasons that community members would not engage in local literacy programming. The main challenge to participation in literacy events that all participants reported was transportation. In addition, one of the participants mentioned that drug use was a notable issue in the community that would prevent caregivers from engaging in literacy activities.

South Carolina (Barnwell)

“There were a lot more agencies than I thought that actually participated in the program so that was real helpful.”

“Probably the access of getting the books actually because they are free and you don’t have to spend money to buy the books. It helps out a lot.”

Kentucky (Perry County)

One of the participants in the Perry County focus group was a grandmother that had custody of her two grandsons. She knew about IAL activities through ESSS. She did not participate much during the focus group. She said the books she received through IAL activities had made a big difference, as the quote below describes:

“I hate to say, but there were no books in my house until they started bringing them to me. And then I had to go out and buy a bookshelf. And if he likes it, you’ve got to read it to him over and over again.”

She also reported used the Reading Corners and Little Free Libraries more than once.

Community Literacy Managers (CLMs) survey (n=6)

Start-up: strengths and challenges

The six CLMs that facilitated IAL activities completed an online survey to understand more about their experiences over the grant funded period. As shown in Table 8, when asked about their experiences with the start-up process, there was high variability across the sites considering the sample size (n=16) and Likert type (1-7) question. The challenges (“It was difficult to engage community members,” “It was slow to build trust”) had larger standard deviations than the positive experiences (“I felt welcome,” “The community was excited,” and “It was easy to make relationships”), indicating more variability in reported challenges than positive experiences.

To further understand the experiences of CLMs in the start-up phase by unique sites, composite variables of average scores for facilitators of implementation (“I felt welcome,” “The community was excited,” and “It was easy to make relationships”) and challenges to implementation (“It was difficult to engage community members,” “It was slow to build trust”) were created. Figure 12 shows how responses are distributed across each site.

In further statistical analysis, feeling welcomed was significantly correlated to the perception of the community’s excitement about literacy activities (“The community was excited,” $r=0.905$, $p=0.000$), and negatively correlated with difficulty in engaging community members ($r=-0.580$, $p=0.040$). Feeling welcome and community excitement were also negatively correlated to the amount of time needed to build trust (“It was slow to build trust,” $r=-0.755$, $p=0.001$; $r=-0.701$, $p=0.002$). Moreover, difficulty in engaging community members correlated to time perceived as required to build trust ($r=0.782$, $p=0.000$), and has an inverse relationship with the perception of community excitement ($r=-0.551$, $p=0.027$). This negative correlation suggests that the less enthusiastic the community was about engaging in literacy activities, the more challenging it was to engage the community in the literacy activities.

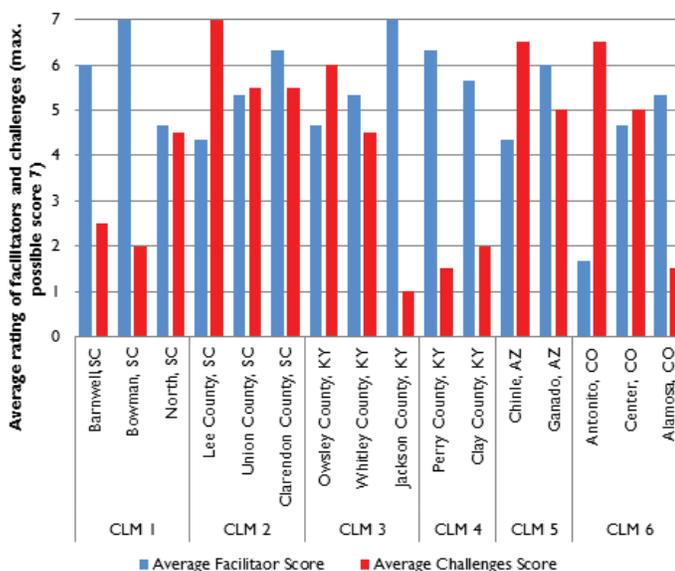
A key difference is whether the individual knew the community in which they were implementing activities. This result is found throughout interviews, focus groups and surveys for all groups. There was a significant difference in CLMs finding it difficult to engage community members based on whether or not the CLM was from the community. Based on CLM survey data, CLMs felt it was more challenging to engage community members in the places that they were not from ($t=3.889$, $p=0.002$), they had more difficulties creating new partnerships ($t=3.77$, $p=0.002$) and engaging with CLC members ($t=2.32$, $p=0.04$).

TABLE 8:
Survey descriptives for questions about Start-up process

	M	SD	Min.	Max.
I felt welcome	5.53	1.69	1	7
The community was excited	5.75	1.18	2	7
It was easy to make relationships	4.59	1.80	2	7
It was difficult to engage community members	4.31	2.12	1	7
It was slow to build trust	4.00	2.25	1	7

Note. Statements are ranged from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree.

Figure 12: Average CLM Rating of Facilitators and Challenges in Start-up Phase



Asset Map

During the startup process, CLMs were instructed to create an asset map for each community in conjunction with their CLC. An asset map is a tool that is created to understand geographically what preexisting resources a community has, and can guide where it is appropriate for service providers to intervene. CLMs ranged in their comfort related to completing the asset map activity, and how it was utilized to inform activities. When surveyed, CLMs responded that they believed that asset maps were useful tools for community engagement (“It was useful,” mean=6.09, SD=0.82, range=1-7).

TABLE 9:
Survey descriptives for questions about asset map

	M	SD	Min.	Max.
I felt confident	5.25	1.24	3	7
It was useful	6.09	0.82	4	7
Challenging to engage community members in asset mapping	4.41	1.80	1	7
Challenging to know what information to report back to community	3.63	2.03	1	6
The community found community dialogues interesting	5.19	0.75	4	6
I found community dialogues interesting	5.47	0.92	4	7

There was high variability between communities as shown in Table 9, especially when CLMs were asked about engaging the CLC in the asset map process (“Challenging to engage community members in asset mapping,” mean=4.41, SD=1.80, range=1-7), and knowing what information to report back to community members (“Challenging to know what information to report back to the community,” mean=3.63, SD=2.03, range=1-6). The challenges in engaging CLC members in creating asset maps were significantly correlated to the challenges of creating a CLC ($r=0.523$, $p=0.038$). In Figures 13 and 14 this can be seen across sites, for example North, SC which was rated as 7 (“Strongly Agree”) for both challenges in creating the CLC and engaging them in the asset mapping process.

Figure 13: Challenges in engaging community to participate in asset mapping

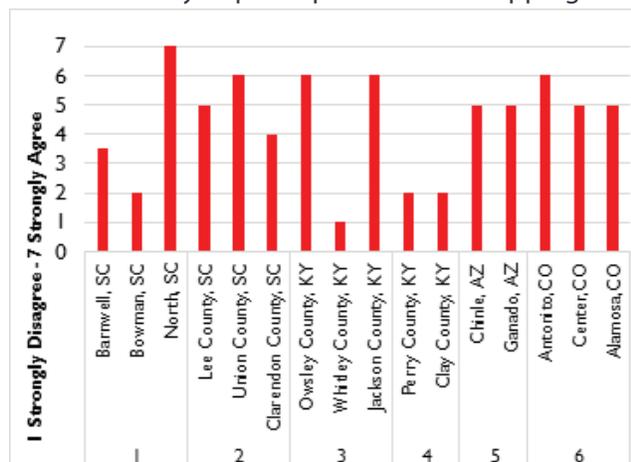
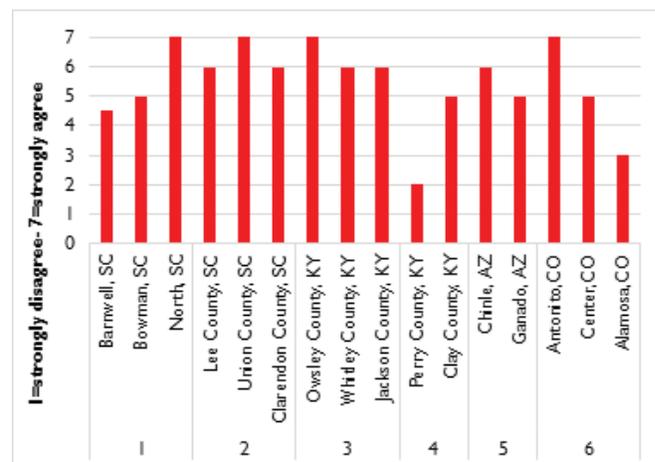


Figure 14: Challenges in creating the CLC



Creating the Community Literacy Collaborative

When surveyed about their experience in creating, working with, and reflecting on the success of the CLC, there was much less variability in responses as shown in Table 10. The questions with the highest range and standard deviation were about the overall success of the CLC (“The CLC was successful,” mean=5.75, SD=1.48, range=2-7) and the initial challenges in creating the CLC (“It was challenging to create it,” mean=5.47, SD=1.43, range=2-7).

TABLE 10:
Survey descriptives for questions about CLC

	M	SD	Min.	Max.
The CLC was successful	5.75	1.48	2	7
I was able to work closely with my CLC	5.75	0.77	4	7
CLC was excited about the work	6.03	0.74	4	7
It was challenging to create it	5.47	1.43	2	7

Note. Statements are ranged from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree.

As Figure 15 shows, in communities where the CLM experienced more challenges to create the CLC, they also reported the CLC was less likely to work closely together ($r=-0.609, p=0.012$). Being able to work closely with their CLC was positively correlated with CLM rating of overall success (“The CLC was successful,” $r=0.638, p=0.008$), and the CLC being excited about doing literacy work in their community (“The CLC was excited about the work,” $r=0.711, p=0.002$). These correlations show that the more likely a CLC was able to work closely together, they were perceived by the CLM as being more successful and enthusiastic about planning literacy activities.

There was a significant difference found in the CLM rating of being able to work closely with their CLC between CLMs who were from the community and those who were not ($t=2.646, p=0.019$). This relationship can be seen in Figure 16.

Figure 15: Experience with CLC: positive experiences and challenges by community

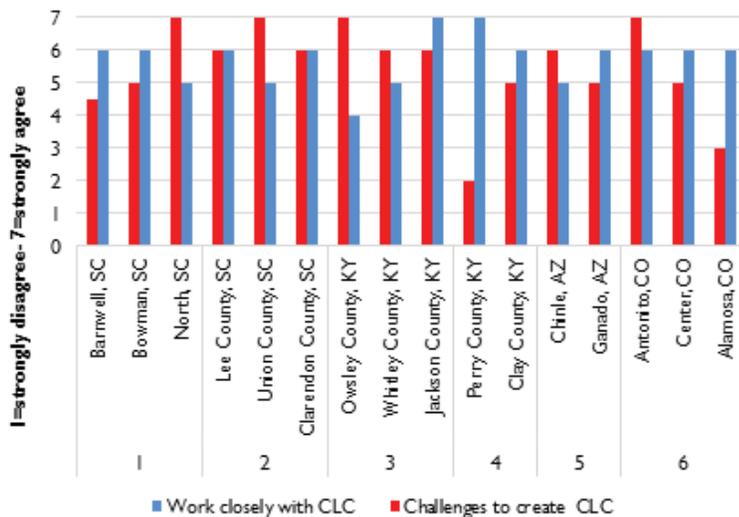
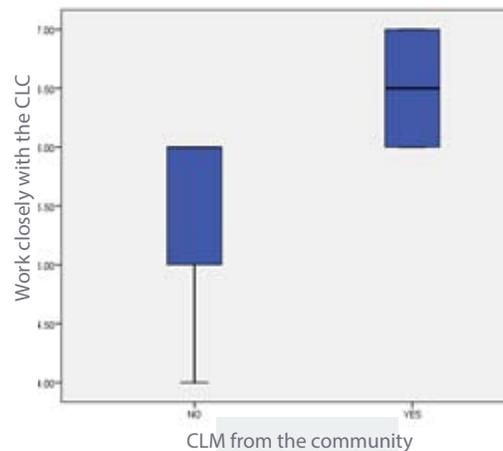


Figure 16: Differences reported in being able to work closely with the CLC based on if the CLM was from the community



Challenges

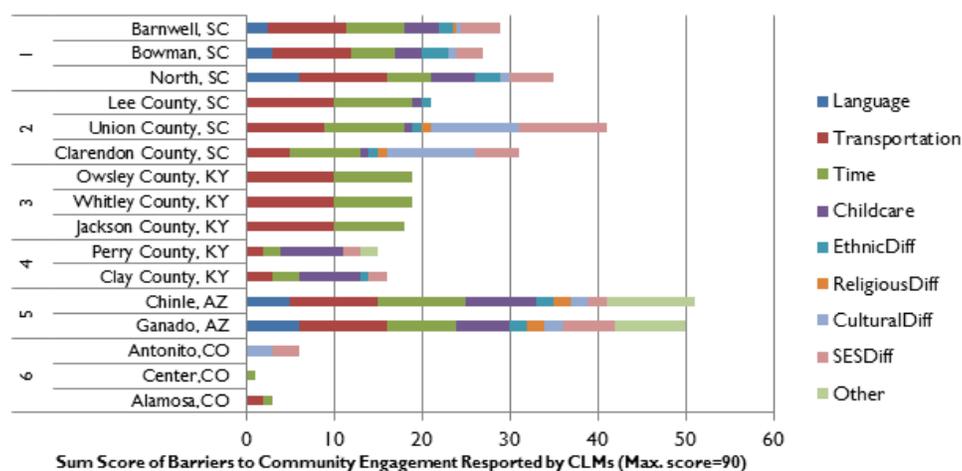
Survey data from CLMs provided evidence about the most substantial barriers and challenges to participation in each community. CLMs rated a set of barriers on a scale from 0 to 10 for each community, 10 being the barrier with the greatest impact on community engagement. Data shows that transportation was the biggest barrier for community engagement (mean across communities=6.81, SD= 4.02, range= 0-10), followed by time commitment constraints (mean=5.84, SD=3.43, range=0-9) (see Table 11). These barriers are similar to community responses. CLMs were also asked about possible barriers encountered working across ethnic, religious, cultural and socioeconomic differences.

TABLE 11:
Descriptive barriers reported in CLM survey

	M	SD	Min.	Max.
Language	1.41	2.32	0	6
Transportation	6.81	4.02	0	10
Time commitment	5.84	3.43	0	9
Child care	2.69	3.00	0	8
Ethnic differences	0.97	1.07	0	3
Religious differences	0.41	0.71	0	2
Cultural differences	1.84	3.32	0	10
Socio economic differences	2.66	2.87	0	10

The barriers to implementation in each community were summed to explore how this would impact implementation of the IAL project. The data shows that total barriers for each community rated by CLM vary greatly, but no community was rated as having the highest possible score of 90 (mean=23.875, SD=15.126, range=1-51). Figure 17 depicts the accumulation of these specific barriers by community. While transportation and time commitment were consistent barriers across all communities except Alamosa and Antonito, all the other barriers listed (language, childcare, ethnic differences, religious differences, cultural differences, and socio economic differences) varied.

Figure 17: CLM Reported Barriers to Community Engagement



Community Literacy Managers (CLMs) survey

There were also significant differences in the total barriers rated by CLMs across states ($F=48.453$, $p=0.000$). Running post-hoc comparisons (Tukey HSD test) showed that the sum of barriers in each state was significantly different from each other. In Figure 18 this can be seen in the different ratings by state, with Arizona having the highest sum of barriers, and South Carolina having the widest range of variability in barriers reported. This shows that although the types of barriers discussed by CLMs were similar, the overall rating was significantly different in each state.

In addition, CLMs reported on the challenges to creating new partnerships in each community. On average they neither agree nor disagree with the statement “It was challenging to create new partnerships” (mean=3.44, $SD=2.19$). In communities where they were from, CLMs were significantly more likely to report it being easier to make new partnerships ($t=3.772$, $p=0.002$). Figure 19 shows the variability of responses in each community.

Figure 18 Sum of barriers reported by CLM by state

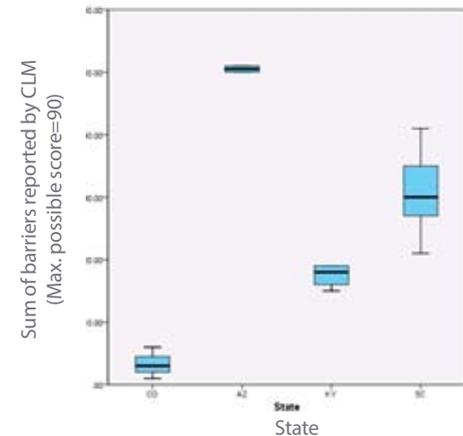
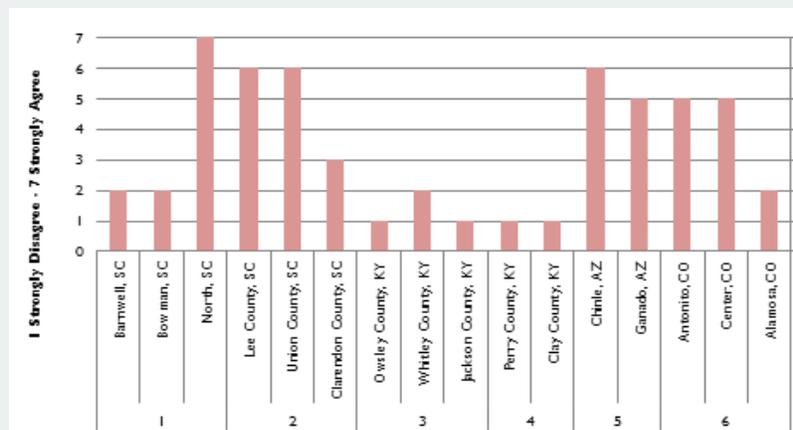


Figure 19: Challenge to create new partnerships



Impact and community investment

In an additional survey the CLMs reported how many activities they did in each community. On average, the three most common activities, excluding summer reading programs, were CLC Meetings (mean=7.6250, $SD=3.775$, range=3-15), Festivals (mean=5.3750, $SD=4.0804$, range=1-17), and Parent Child Groups (mean=4.875, $SD=2.3345$, range=4-13). Summer Reading Programs were excluded due to potential error in reporting in that one CLM listed hosting 46 individual summer reading programs, while others counted overarching summer reading programs that may have included many activities.

In examining the differences in the number and type of activity implemented in each state, there were a few significant findings. While there was no overall difference in the number of activities in each state, there was a significant difference by CLM ($F=3.681$, $p=0.038$). CLMs were significantly more likely to do more activities in communities that they were from ($t=2.837$, $p=0.013$).

When exploring the relationship between the types of activity implemented and the impact reported, there was only one significant correlation. Hosting more Career Fridays was positively associated with CLM reporting increased access to literacy resources for schools, libraries and community organizations (“Schools, libraries and community organizations have increased access to resources to support early literacy development,” $r=0.534$, $p=0.033$). Career Fridays were events that brought local leaders to speak with students about their careers and mentor middle and high school students who may be interested in entering a similar occupational field.

TABLE 12:

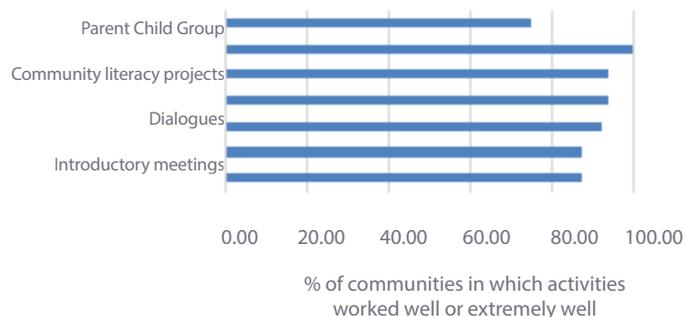
Activities by community (CLM report)

CLM	County	P-C group	CLC meetings	LFL	RC	SW	Festival	Back to School Events	Career Fridays	Summer reading programs	Book donation for other community events
1	North, SC	4	3	0	3	0	4	2	0	1	0
	Bowman, SC	4	5	0	2	0	4	2	0	2	0
2	Clarendon County, SC	4	14	0	5	0	17	3	3	1	0
	Union County, SC	4	7	3	6	0	5	1	2	1	1
	Lee County, SC	4	7	0	2	2	5	3	2	4	0
	Barnwell, SC	13	7	6	8	0	9	5	2	4	4
3	Jackson County, KY	6	5	2	3	0	2	4	14	6	-
	Whitley County, KY	4	6	1	5	0	1	1	7	5	-
	Owsley County, KY	4	6	3	2	1	3	0	5	5	-
4	Clay County, KY	7	4	0	6	1	8	2	4	33	-
	Perry County, KY	4	4	9	9	3	9	2	3	46	-
5	Ganado, AZ	4	14	2	1	0	8	3	0	2	4
	Chinle, AZ	4	9	1	0	0	5	3	0	2	3
6	Alamosa, CO	4	15	1	4	1	2	1	7	1	4
	Center, CO	4	10	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	2
	Antonito, CO	4	6	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	2

Note. LFL: Little Free Libraries; RC: Reading Corners; SW: Story Walk; Festival: community festival or fair; P-C group: Parent-Child group; - represents no response

CLMs reported on a scale of 1 (not well at all) to 5 (extremely well) how well activities worked to engage community members. As seen in Figure 20, there was very little variation in responses, with most CLMs rating most activities as extremely effective in engaging community members. There was no difference in the reported level of engagement by CLM that was found in analysis. The only difference found by state was in participation in the parent-child group; it was reported as less effective in engaging the community ($F=4.219, p=0.03$). This was driven by the difference between CLM reporting in Colorado and Arizona, with Colorado having significantly higher ratings than Arizona in the effectiveness of engaging parents. This may be due to the differences in types of barriers and their impact reported by the CLMs, with both communities in Arizona reporting higher levels of barriers than the communities in Colorado (Figure 17).

Figure 20: How well activities engaged community members



Community Literacy Managers (CLMs) survey

Data from CLM surveys shows that on average CLMs agreed that across communities IAL activities expanded literacy resources, access for parents to new resources, and connections between organizations. In addition, it improved community investment including financial and in-kind donations, as well as time spent volunteering at IAL activities. This is described in Table 13 below. CLMs reported in a Likert-type question that on average communities were very likely to invest financial resources, in-kind donations, and their time to build a culture of literacy (mean=5.41, SD=1.28, range 1-7) (Figure 21). This varies from data reported by community leaders and stakeholders (Figure 7), likely due to the fact that CLMs were responding about community investment in general, and community leaders and stakeholders were reporting their own investments in IAL activities.

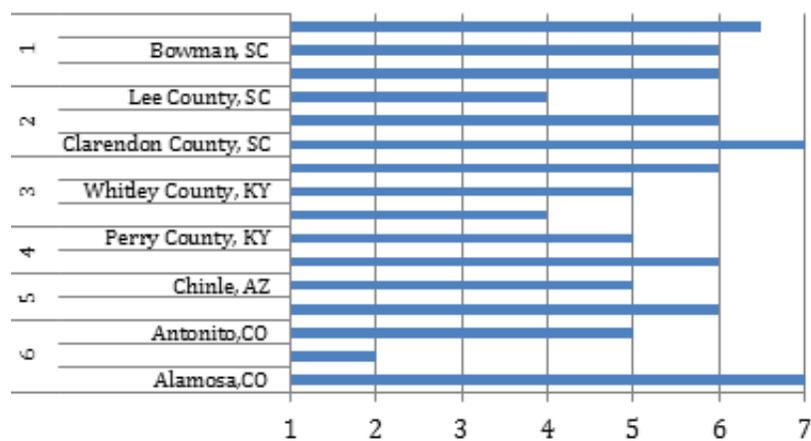
TABLE 13:
Descriptive impact of IAL (CLM survey)

	M	SD	Min.	Max.
Community resources were expanded	6.00	0.97	4	7
Parents have more access to resources	5.16	0.85	3	6
Organizations are more connected	5.75	1.06	4	7
Community Investment (Donations, time)	5.41	1.28	2	7

Note. Statements were rated from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree

CLMs were also asked how much they believed that community literacy resources had been expanded due to IAL funding and activities (“Community resources that focus on literacy were expanded over the course of the IAL work”), and there was significant variation in their responses by CLM, but not by state ($F=5.304, p=0.012$). The distribution of their responses is displayed on the next page in Figure 22. This suggests that the idiosyncrasies in each community, within a given state contribute significantly to the impact of IAL activities in regards to expansion of community resources.

Figure 21: Community Investment (CLM survey)



In analysis of CLM responses about the impact of IAL activities on access to resources for parents, and access to resources for schools, libraries and other community organizations, there were significant differences by state and CLM.

The CLM rating of literacy resources being expanded for families as shown in Figure 23, was significantly different by state, these differences were driven by the differences reported between South Carolina and Arizona (Tukey HSD, $F=4.559, p=0.024$). Arizona was reported as having higher impacts in creating more community resources when compared to the other states, and South Carolina was reported consistently lower in the same metric. This difference is largely being driven by Union and North, two communities where CLMs reported high levels of barriers and challenges in creating and working with the CLC.

The CLM rating of schools, libraries, and other community organizations being more connected to each other was significantly different by state, driven by Kentucky and South Carolina ($F=10.468, p=0.001$), and by CLM. The distribution of their responses is shown in Figure 24. In this analysis, Kentucky was consistently rated higher than other groups and South Carolina lower.

Figure 22: Community literacy resources expanded (CLM survey)

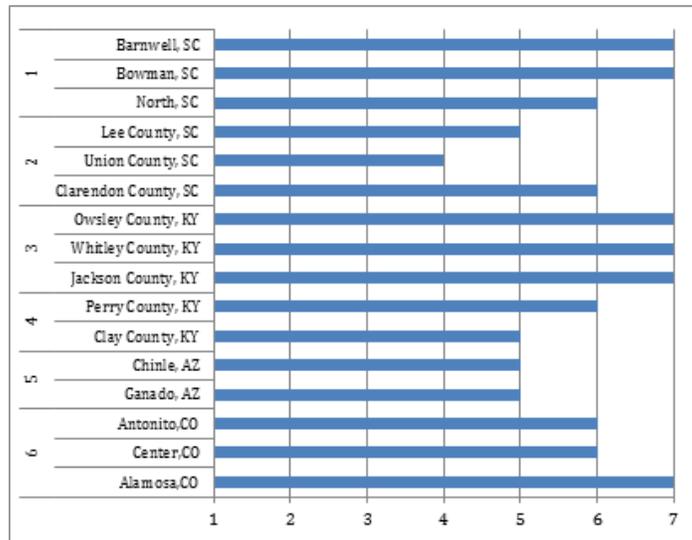


Figure 23: Parents more access to resources (CLM survey)

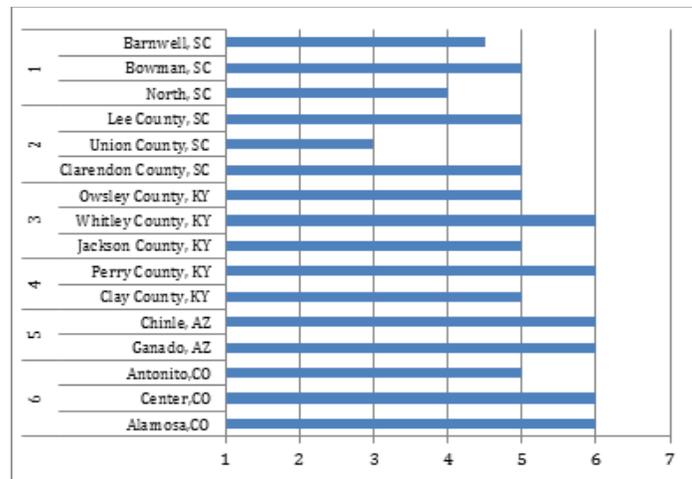
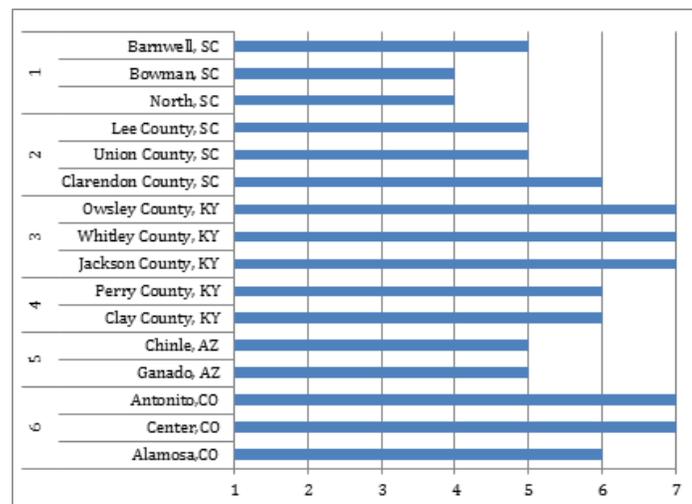


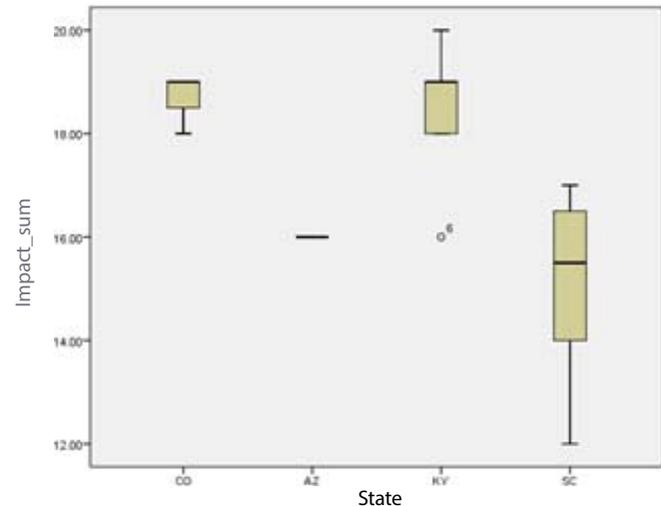
Figure 24: Organizations more connected (CLM survey)



Community Literacy Managers (CLMs) survey

Using the information from CLMs surveys we created a composite score that describes the impact that IAL had on communities (range 3-21). The impact score is the sum of the following statements that CLMs rated from 1=strongly disagree to 7=strongly agree: 1) community resources, such as library catalogs, or space for Reading Corners, that focus on literacy were expanded over the course of the IAL work; 2) parents now have greater access and opportunity to connect with libraries, schools and community organization. 3) Schools, libraries and community organizations have increased access to resources to support early literacy development. Significant differences in the impact of IAL by states ($F=6.21$, $p<.01$) was present. The states with the highest impact as reported by CLM were Colorado and Kentucky (see Figure 25).

Figure 25: Impact of IAL by state (CLM survey)



To understand what challenges and barriers could be associated with differences in the impact of SC USP literacy activities, we examined correlations between early challenges, positive early engagement, barriers to community engagement, and impact reported by CLMs in surveys. Table 14 shows challenges to creating new partnerships and barriers to community engagement were negatively associated with the impact of SC USP literacy activities. When the CLM reported more barriers and challenges to creating new partnerships, they also perceived less of an impact of the activities and resources. Interestingly, impact was not associated with CLM experiences during the startup process. We then examined the association between each individual barrier and overall impact. Results showed that higher levels of barriers due to ethnic differences ($r=-.68$, $p<.01$) and socio economic differences ($r=-.77$, $p<.01$) were associated with less impact. The other individual barriers (transportation, time commitment, language) were not associated with differences in impact due to lack of variability.

TABLE 14:

Correlations between impact of IAL and barriers and challenges (CLM survey)

	1	2	3	4
1. Positive early engagement with the community	-			
2. Impact of IAL	.00	-		
3. Early difficulties to engage with community	-.69**	-.26	-	
4. Challenges to create new partnerships	-.53*	-.61*	.70**	-
5. Barriers to community engagement	.22	-.65**	.30	.43

Note. $p<.05$

Start-up

In independent interviews, all CLMs reported the importance of identifying stakeholders, and creating partnerships and collaborations with community leaders for a successful start-up phase. Five of the six CLMs (83.3%) reported that networking and introductory meetings with community leaders were crucial for engaging community members:

“In Center, I had a community champion who made introductions and supported meetings/network. The community hero that I’m working with in Center is very well connected and helped with introductions... Connecting to well-known people in the community was crucial for the success of the work.” (CLM)

“Everything in rural communities happens in the schools; started at schools and connected to champions in the community. Mentioned champion and people were receptive.” (CLM)

“The Reach Out and Read coordinator made connections with many people, which made it easier.” (CLM)

Similar to the quantitative results, there were some benefits reported for CLMs that were from the community that they were working with. CLMs who were socially rooted in their communities reported that this was helpful in relationship building during the start-up phase:

“People in community already knew me; this made it easier to start working in the community.” (CLM)

“From one of the counties that I worked in (Perry County), people remembered me and knew my family. I had been back to visit my mom frequently even though I moved out of Perry County. There were community champions that were already invested in literacy, including the owner of the local McDonald’s.” (CLM)

The asset map was useful for CLMs (n=5) to learn more about the community that they were working in and understand the resources that already existed, but were reported as being underutilized. This means that few CLMs reported using them to directly inform implementing activities.

Asset Map

Initially, five of the six CLMs interviewed reported that the process of developing the asset map was confusing. One of the CLMs had previous experience creating asset maps, so they did not report being confused by the process of developing an asset map. This is highlighted in the quotes below:

“I felt just as lost as two left shoes and I just might as well be honest, never done this before and felt like a novice...The training was fast paced, but they never broke it down into details for us. Asset Mapping should have been more clear, should have had training from someone.” (CLM)

“It was the most unclear and frustrating part in the beginning. We could have jumped in earlier. More specifics on here is what the end result needs to be. The first thing that confused me was a better explanation of how talking about all of these things in the community had something to do with literacy. I thought about it, but didn’t have a-ha moment until I Googled it. How am I going to pull all of this in and tie it to literacy. It was a bit of a struggle for all of us. How do I explain this to the council? I have to be clear on it before I could explain it to the council.” (CLM)

Overall, the asset map was reported as being useful in CLM interviews (100%), and in specific cases, it was used to inform the location of activities and the creation of new resources (4 CLMs reported using the asset map for this purpose), such as Little Free Libraries and reading corners:

“It shows what is in the community, some of the resources that people are using and some that people are not. In the community that I lived in, I didn’t know that we had these things. Awareness for people there. Helped people to realize what was there, this was a resource and I didn’t even know it was a resource.” (CLM)

“Literacy needs to be focused in three areas (east, west and south), these are the places with the fewest amount of resources and support for families in Alamosa, and also where the schools and Tierra Nueva (migrant housing) is located.” (CLM)

Creating the Community Literacy Collaboratives: Challenges

CLMs were asked in interviews about challenges that they experienced in implementing IAL activities, such as creating CLCs or hosting Parent Child Groups. All of the CLMs (100%) reported challenges related to the initial phase of the grant, this was coded in NVivo under “start-up.” CLMs mentioned how being an outsider was the biggest challenge to initial conversations with stakeholders and community members:

“It was challenging for an outsider, I am from the Zuni Nation, but I am implementing programming in the Navajo Nation. Community was weary to form relationships since in the past people and organizations that made promises to work with the communities left and didn’t stay long.” (CLM)



Other challenges related with the startup process were challenges with participants lacking time and busy schedules (100%), cultural differences (50%), lack of trust (50%), and initial lack of interest from the community (5%):

“I held the first meeting in the summer time, but nobody came to the first meeting. Kept on reaching out to reschedule the meeting.” (CLM)

“People from the community were interested in helping, but often did not commit the time, because in the small town it is the same people working with multiple organizations.” (CLM)

“Some people were very resistant, because okay here is another group in the community that says they are going to help us, so some people were very standoffish. People said to me, “Okay, are you just going to be like everybody else? Just come here and use your grant money and get out?” (CLM)

Impact

In interviews with CLMs the largest areas of impact reported were community members being more connected with each other through partnership and collaboration (83%), more books in the community, both for home libraries and public access via Reading Corners and Little Free Libraries (LFLs) (83%), an increased interest in literacy (50%), and an increase in SC USP visibility in the communities (83%):

“I enjoyed connecting groups of people with each other. Lots of members came to parent child groups, even if they did not have to. The visibility of SCUS in the community went from none to making the front page of the local newspaper 8 times in four months.” (CLM)

In each community there was some variation in the activities that were implemented, but CLMs consistently referred to specific activities that were more successful for engaging members of the community. In qualitative data, the activities that were reported to be more successful were the Little Free Libraries, Reading Corners, Parent Child Groups and StoryWalks:

“Feel like probably more people came to the park for the first time. StoryWalk is around the walking track, and there were probably people who have never been there before. We did a story walk partnering with a church in town doing an Easter Egg Explosion and brought over 1500 people there. Helped with advertising and outreach. People from the community that would not have known about the park came. Also started a county fair there last year. SCUS gave away free books, and literacy basket raffle prize.” (CLM)

“Young lady barbershop owner reached out to put a literacy corner in her business. Local literacy rooms being renovated in schools where parents or children can come to work on job training, GED, come study there, one community made a child friendly space where they can come and do work.” (CLM)

Community Literacy Managers Interviews



Above, from top to bottom: In qualitative data, the activities that were reported to be more successful were the Little Free Libraries, Reading Corners, Parent Child Groups and StoryWalks.

Training

All CLMs reported they felt they needed more training to conduct the asset maps:

“We were excited for training about asset mapping, but we ended up running out of time and not getting to that at all. It was covered in the WebEx, but something I would have recommended being a part of the phone call. There were some good parts, because I was not familiar with SCUS, had some information about Early Steps and the in-school piece. We were so anxious to get to the mapping part but it just didn’t happen. In-person would have been better than the WebEx.” (CLM)

CLMs also expressed a need for more concrete training on tasks they would need to complete for IAL specifically:

“...It was abstract and theoretical. We got a very thick facilitator’s guide. I was more stressed out after the fact and thinking that more tangible training would be helpful, nothing was too concrete- we made it work but colleagues in other states struggled. Tomorrow we have a meeting with sponsorship folks to make a community mobilization plan. Folks who have actually done this work leading the training.” (CLM)

“Focused on all programs offered by SCUS, only one day on IAL, not enough info provided, especially about asset maps, support from Deputy Director should be added in the future, clear expectations and job components for CLMs should be added in the future.” (CLM)

Sustainability and Future Directions

With regard to maintaining the impact of IAL within their communities, some CLMs discussed the need for continued leadership, either in keeping literacy councils together or keeping a CLM in the community:

“Persistence and keeping up with and being diligent to keep councils together and moving forward.” (CLM)

“Person on the ground to lead and guide training is critical to do the work we had a lot of territory to cover.” (CLM)

Network Analysis

Using information across data sources, including sign-in sheets, surveys, and focus groups and interviews a network analysis was completed to visualize how different communities were able to come together to implement IAL activities. Based on the graphics (see Appendix 2), there is high variation across states, which is likely due to the varied nature of resources and service providers that existed before IAL funding. These variations may also be due to other factors that impacted implementation, such as CLM skills and training, and previously discussed barriers and facilitators, such as transportation and the presence of a community champion. Due to the variation in CLM reporting and sign-in sheets, it is likely that this is an incomplete diagram, and does not show changes that have occurred over the past 18 months.

What became clear in this analysis is the importance of local schools in rural communities. In each community there is a high representation of school staff and faculty, represented by the green colored dots. Another difference that was highlighted is how incorporating other SC USP staff and programs facilitated the implementation process. This is especially clear in the Kentucky diagram, the state that was rated by CLMs as having the highest impact and offering the most programs.

Discussion

Over the past two years the work done by SC USP started the shift in rural communities to emphasize early literacy development and create literacy resources in communities supported by IAL. The work appears to be particularly effective in creating community access to books through Little Free Libraries and Reading Corners, and helping families to build home libraries through book donations. These resources were successful in large part, like the majority of activities, due to the collaboration between CLMs, service providers, and other community members. These partnerships, which made literacy activities possible, and now in some places a priority, are likely to be sustained beyond the grant period, and will also be crucial to maintaining resources implemented via IAL funding. This is evident in small business owners and service providers who host Little Free Libraries and Reading Corners, and also community members who are taking the lead on maintaining StoryWalks that were only possible through IAL funding and CLM effort.

Based on the unique attributes of each community and the experiences of CLMs therein, different programs, resources and activities fared very differently across IAL sites, but there are some results that are consistent throughout. The data emphasizes the importance of effective engagement during the start-up process including initial activities and meetings. In a focus group, all CLMs reported the importance of identifying stakeholders, and creating partnerships and collaborations with community leaders for a successful startup. In interviews, five of the six CLMs (83.3%) reported that introductory meetings were crucial for engaging community members. The content of the introductory meeting varied by CLM; overall, they were used to introduce the CLM and IAL activities to the community, but there were some cases where asset mapping was worked on or an overview of all SC USP activities offered in the community was covered.

Across all communities Festivals, Back to School Bashes and ribbon cutting ceremonies for StoryWalks and Reading Corners were more

likely to have higher attendance, as they were open to more members of the community, and could be easily accessed per the scheduling needs of participants. In specific cases, these activities were able to address critical barriers, such as transportation, by relocating books closer to participants, or partnering with local organizations to provide transportation.

Creating partnerships and encouraging collaboration across the community is one of the most unique, and powerful aspects of SC USP's rural literacy activities. Across focus groups and interviews with CLMs, community leaders and stakeholders, and families, "Partnerships and Collaborations," was one of the most frequently mentioned themes (coded in 93% individual transcripts). It was also reported in interviews as the piece of IAL activities that community members and stakeholders believed would be the most sustainable beyond the grant funding (45%).

CLMs with the support of SC USP and community members were able to bring service providers from all different sectors out of isolation and into a conversation of creating a community-based culture of literacy. Throughout interviews, it was common for people to remark that they did not know other people were engaged in similar work or grappling with similar challenges around engagement. Through the CLCs, CLMs were able to pool human capital and additional resources to highlight the importance of literacy on a large scale. This is especially important in the communities where there are multiple service providers, which for whatever reason are not being utilized by the community.

A key takeaway from the evaluation is how motivated community members from many different sectors are in creating positive change for their community.

The community at large invested many of their own resources in IAL activities through time, book donations, and partnerships with the CLM and leadership. There are examples of community members delivering books to families in areas far removed from the

activities center, such as a local judge passing out books in Perry County, across each community. As reported in CLM surveys, on average CLMs agreed that communities at large invested financial resources, for example donating posts for a StoryWalk, volunteered their time and made in-kind donations to build a culture of literacy (mean=5.41, SD=1.28, range 1-7). This was slightly different from how individual community leaders and stakeholders reported their individual investment, and speaks to the CLMs understanding of IAL activities throughout the broader community. This speaks to the potential sustainability of IAL activities beyond the initial funding period.

Sustaining the efforts of CLMs and CLCs will undoubtedly require sustaining and expanding community engagement. A key ingredient for sustaining community engagement throughout the grant period was constant communication between people involved in planning and with the larger community. The type of communication used varied from Facebook groups, email updates, to media presence or advertising, although, most stakeholders reported in-person meetings as the most common way they communicated with each other (93.88%, n=49). Throughout IAL activity implementation, CLMs were consistent in reminding leadership collaborative members about upcoming meetings and events, and sending out meeting minutes to people who were not able to attend. This is reflected in the importance of communication skills, and stakeholders' reports of communicating with new partners and the CLM at least once a month (72%, n=50).

With all of the progress that SC USP's literacy activities in rural America have accomplished, it is important to note that it is just the beginning of the process. Despite the short period of grant funding, many changes have been made, but there is also the potential for more impact if activities continue in these communities. In the future SC USP could strengthen literacy activities further by addressing major barriers identified in this study. For example, in communities where adult literacy levels are low, there could be an emphasis on partnering with adult education services, which some

communities have already started. Similarly, in communities where language barriers are significant, or are growing, there is the potential for partnership with ESL services to support the community and CLMs in providing culturally appropriate resources and activities.

Consistent across the data, transportation and time commitments were the barriers mentioned most often. An additional barrier that was common in the evaluation process was the short time period of the IAL grant. Almost 32% of evaluation participants (families, community leaders and stakeholders, and CLMs) reported that they were excited and surprised about the amount of changes they have seen in their community, but also believed that having only 18 months to implement the IAL initiative was not enough to see all the potential changes. It takes time to create partnerships and create a culture of literacy as a CLM mentioned "you need more than two years to build strong relationships." Considering the short implementation timeline, it is impressive how communities were able to create the foundation for a culture of literacy, such as increasing community interest in literacy (78.9%), and increasing the number of books in the community (68.4%) as reported by both CLMs and community leaders and stakeholders.

The flexible nature of implementation of IAL funded activities is perhaps one of the aspects that allowed the activities to be successful across 16 different communities, but it also presents challenges to monitoring and evaluation. In the future, to facilitate the monitoring process and long-term evaluation, it may be beneficial to create streamlined systems to track the use of resources such as Little Free Libraries and activity participation. In addition, it may be helpful to have satisfaction surveys for participants at the end of events, as contacting them after the event may prove to be challenging. For CLMs, a potential area to improve support is to increase initial support for asset mapping, and ongoing monitoring of where and how CLMs enter information about activities that they have either hosted or participated in.

Limitations

There are important limitations to this study, which may be related to the nature of implementation, given the flexibility across each community. States with larger communities and more SC USP infrastructure, such as Kentucky and South Carolina, are overrepresented in data collected from stakeholders. As with many program evaluations, highly engaged communities and individuals are overrepresented in the sample, despite efforts to engage communities rated as having low engagement. This introduces sampling bias. Increasing participation of families who were not involved in planning literacy activities was also challenging, as there was inconsistent contact information available. To address the lack of contact information, when possible, CLMs were able to work with ESSS coordinators to identify families for focus groups.

Another important limitation to address is the potential for reporting bias from CLMs who were asked to rate their own effectiveness when looking at the impact of IAL activities. To address this issue, families were asked similar impact related questions in surveys and focus groups, and community leaders and stakeholders were asked in interviews. There was also the potential for reporting error in the number of activities, especially the number of summer reading programs reported, accordingly, these were not included in analysis beyond descriptives.

Future Directions

Strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems to capture the breadth of IAL activities will yield to more robust evaluation results in the future. In addition, SC USP may want to examine how to systematically use some of the lessons learned in this evaluation to create a set of tools/ training and essential elements to IAL programming. To examine sustainability of the project, it may be interesting to do research on how activities created through IAL funding fostered changes in the communities. Since Little Free Libraries and reading corners were used across the 16 sites, they could be useful tools in understanding uptake and continued utilization of literacy resources in different settings. Understanding how different people within the community engage with literacy resources is an additional area where more research is needed.

In general, communities where people were aware of the IAL activities tended to have higher engagement and reported impact, which was driven by the CLMs and CLCs ability to communicate about upcoming events. Focus groups also provided insight on access to smartphones and social media, which may have been employed differently by the CLMs. In the future, SC USP may want to explore using different types of communication about early literacy, and the uptake in different communities.

Finally, SC USP may consider examining the impact of IAL in parent and child outcomes in the community. Although the ultimate goal of this initiative was to create a culture of literacy, long-term student outcomes are a crucial testament to how well this approach works in lifting literacy development in rural America.

Conclusion

There are several conclusions about future activities that can be drawn from the analysis above. The flexible nature of the IAL activities is one of the main reasons that it was able to be successful across many different communities, but also made it a challenge to evaluate. Although the barriers for each community were slightly different, the barriers across the four states and 16 sites were strikingly similar. These barriers include transportation and scheduling conflicts. In some cases, CLMs were able to work with community partners to provide transportation to summer reading programs, or find times of the year where community members were more likely to be engaged, such as right before the school year starts. When this happened community events were more likely to have higher attendance, and IAL activities reported to have greater impacts. Future activities should be designed to accommodate the common barriers, such as a lack of transportation and childcare.

Communities where the CLM was from or familiar with were consistently rated higher with regards to impact, and the number of activities implemented, and lower in regards to barriers. Social rooting facilitated the process of identifying champions and creating CLCs, and also decreased the amount of time required to build trust among community members. Local staff members were also more likely to be confident in making and using the asset maps appropriately, an area that in general CLMs reported desiring more support and training. Using local staff to implement literacy activities is an important consideration for future implementation.

Perhaps the greatest impact of these programs was the creation and strengthening of partnerships and focusing communal energy towards early literacy development. These partnerships are a crucial resource in community empowerment, and are also likely to continue beyond the grant period. This was expressed by many of the CLC members in their interviews and surveys.

A potential area for improvement is in the oversight of existing tracking tools and the creation of new ones. Being able to track attendance and utilization, is crucial for understanding how the community engages with literacy activities, and can be used to guide future implementation. Having utilization numbers will strengthen the narratives provided about how much community members use and enjoy Little Free Libraries and Reading Corners.

Overall, IAL activities appear to have made a significant impact in fostering communication amongst community members and bringing literacy closer to the lives of children.

Works Cited

¹ The Rural School and Community Trust (2005). Why Rural Matters 2005.
² Ibid.
³ The Rural School and Community Trust (2011). Why Rural Matters 2011.
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Appendix 1: Measurement Tools

Community Leaders and Stakeholders Interview Script:

1. How did you first learn about the Culture of Literacy Project? [Note to interviewer: the language for the Culture of Literacy Project will need to be community specific throughout the interview]
 - What did you hear and from whom?
2. I would like to learn more about your experience working with _____ committee as part of the Culture of Literacy Project. How did you become a member of the committee? [Note to interviewer: the language for the COL Leadership Collaborative will need to be community specific throughout the interview]
3. Why were you interested in participating with the COL Leadership Collaborative?
4. What do you do as a member of the _____ committee?
5. About how much time have you spent over the past 12 months working with the _____ committee?
 - Approximately how many hours per month?
 - As a committee member, are there times of the year that are busier than others?
6. What do you think that the purpose of the leadership collaborative is?
 - Do you see it as beneficial for your community?
7. What did the committee do for the community?
 - What are the contributions?
8. How would you describe the level of community and family involvement in literacy initiatives and events?
9. What information did the _____ committee use to develop the shared vision for the community and action plan?
 - Who did you get input from when planning?
 - What if any information did you use to guide creating your shared vision?
10. Did the meeting accomplish the goals you established? Why or why not?
11. What were some of the challenges that you experienced as a member of the COL Leadership Collaborative?
12. How did _____ [CLM Name] contribute to the work?
 - What do you think are the key skills needed for someone in the CLM role?
 - Does having a CLM help facilitate or hinder the process for engaging the community and creating literacy partnerships? Why and How?
13. Do you think the community will continue to sustain and build on the literacy efforts over the coming years and months? How?
 - Do you think that the community has the capacity to independently sustain literacy efforts?
 - If no, what resources and support, such as training, do you think you will need?

Now I would like to learn more about your other experiences with the Culture of Literacy Project. What other ways have you been involved in project activities, participated or made contributions? *(These are examples: volunteering, community meetings or presentations, attending events like fairs and festivals, helping CLM network, creating a Literacy Corner, In-Kind donations)*

1. Why did you want to participate in that way?
2. About how much time did you spend working on or attending COL activities?
3. How many hours, if any, did you act as a volunteer for COL activities?
4. What was your experience like at any activities, events or meetings that you attended?
 - Do you think the activities were beneficial to the community?
 - What would you change?
5. Have you made new connections, either personally or professionally by being involved?
6. What opportunities were there to share your ideas, concerns or feedback about Culture of Literacy activities?
7. If they say that they created a Literacy Corner in their business or organization, ask them:
 - What kind of business or organization do you have?
 - Why did you want to have a literacy corner?
 - What types of items do you have in your literacy corner?
 - How much did it cost to create the literacy corner?
 - How did you fund the literacy corner in your business/organization?
 - How have children and families been using the literacy corner?
 - Do you think the literacy corner was beneficial to the children and families who used it? Why or why not?
 - What advice would you give to someone who is interested in creating a literacy corner in their business or organization?
8. I would like to know more about how your community has changed since the Culture of Literacy Project began. When you think about supporting children's literacy development, what changes have you seen in your community?
 - Are there any new services, programs or activities with a focus on literacy that are being offered in the community? If yes, please describe.
 - If your opinion, do parents and families have greater access or increased opportunities to connect with schools, libraries, and community organizations? Why or why not?
 - In your opinion, do schools, libraries and community organizations have greater access to resources, materials, and expertise that they need to support early child development and literacy? Why or why not?
9. Are there any success stories about individuals or organizations that you can share with me?
10. Overall, what do you think about the changes in the community?
 - Are the changes good? If yes, why?
 - How have children and families benefited from these changes?
 - How has the community benefited?
11. Is there anything else that you would like to share with me about the Culture of Literacy Project in your community?

Community Leader and Stakeholder Survey

1. What is your name?
2. Which state and community do you live in?
3. What is the name of the agency or organization you work with?
4. Please check the box that best describes the agency or organization you are affiliated with:
 - Non-Profit Organization/Agency
 - Public Entity (e.g., Health Department, Law Enforcement, Fire Department etc.)
 - Business Community (e.g., business owner, Chamber of Commerce etc.)
 - Government (e.g., town, county or state government, etc.)
 - Medical Entity (e.g., clinic, doctor's office, hospital, etc.)
 - Faith-Based Organization (e.g., church, mosque, synagogue, etc.)
 - Member-based Organization (e.g., Rotary, Kiwanis, Elks, etc.)
 - Library
 - Education Institution (public schools, college, university, vocational/technical, etc.)
 - Early Childhood Center/Child Care Provider
 - Other (please specify):

5. Since the launch Culture of Literacy Project has your organization formed new partnerships to work on early childhood or literacy efforts?
 - Yes
 - No
6. About how many new partnerships has your organization formed to work on early childhood literacy projects?
7. Since forming the new partnerships, how frequently are your organizations in contact with each other?
 - Daily
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Quarterly
 - Annually
8. What type of contact occurs between partners? Please select all that apply:
 - Email
 - Web conferences
 - Phone
 - In-person Meetings
 - Other (please describe):

9. What was the purpose of contact between partners? Please check all that apply:
- Planning and coordination
 - Budget meetings
 - Regular check-ins
 - Marketing and communication strategy
 - Participant recruitment and enrollment
 - Evaluation of partnership
 - Other (please describe):

10. How would you rate the quality of the partnership in terms of making important literacy contributions to the community? Please select one:
- Excellent
 - Good
 - Average
 - Poor
 - Terrible
11. Please explain your ranking.
12. Please describe how the Culture of Literacy project has contributed to the partnership:
Type your answer here.
13. Is there anything else you would like to share about the partnerships, the Culture of Literacy or Save the Children? Type your answer here.

Family Focus Group Script

1. Are you and your family and friends involved in community groups or events? Tell me about an event you went to recently.
 - PROBES:
 - Do you participate in community events, such as cultural events or holiday celebrations? Events at local community program such Head Start or the local library?
 - Do you attend religious activities at church?
2. How do you get to the events?
 - PROBES: Public transportation, car, carpooling, or transportation is a challenge

Let's now talk about the literacy project that has been taking place in your community. [Note to focus group facilitators: when referring to the literacy project, be sure to use the community specific language]

3. How did you first learn about the Culture of Literacy Project?
4. What does the word literacy mean to you?
5. What do you think the purpose of these activities or community events are?
6. Have you participated in any of the activities or community events? If yes, which ones? If no, what are some reasons you were not able to go?
7. What were some of the key messages you remember being important at these events?
 - PROBES:
 - What kinds of things were discussed or presented to you at these events?
 - Was this information new to you or perhaps presented differently than you had heard it before?
 - Some people might feel that they learned about the importance of reading and sharing books with children, or learned about how to use language to help children learn, other participants might have felt they learned something different or that no new information was presented to them. What was your sense?
8. What if any, services, activities, or events that you were interested in receiving or attending, did you find out about at these events?
9. Did participation to these events change your behaviors or habits at home? If yes, how?
 - PROBES:
 - Some behaviors that might have been affected by participating in events are reading with kids, sharing books, telling stories, playing games, singing songs... but it is also possible that some families feel like they didn't change any of these behaviors as a result of coming to community events.
 - How about attendance to the library? Did your habits change?
 - Did the events or information you received affect your perception of habits on the use of television, tablets, computers, video games?

10. What sorts of literacy or learning activities do you do with your child?
 - PROBES: Read a book, sing, tell stories, draw, model reading for my child, have conversations
11. Did you engage in these activities prior to attending the events? What kind of activities do you think prepare children to read and write?
12. Did you visit any businesses or organizations in your community that have a “Literacy Corner”? If yes, which businesses or organizations? Has your child been with you and used the literacy corner while you were there?
13. Did you visit the story walk in your community? If yes, what was your experience with the story walk? If no, why weren’t you able to visit the StoryWalk?
14. Did you visit any of the Little Free Libraries in your community? If yes, what was your experience with the Little Free Libraries? If no, why didn’t you visit the Little Free Libraries?
15. In your opinion, what literacy services do you think the Culture of Literacy should provide? What should the top priorities be?
16. What are your hopes for the Culture of Literacy project?
17. What were some of the challenges you had in attending Culture of Literacy events?
18. Were there aspects of the events that should be changed or improved? What are some of your ideas on how?
19. What do you think the impact of the Culture of Literacy project has been in your community?
 - Alternative phrasing: What differences have you seen in your community since the beginning of the Culture of Literacy project?
20. Has your relationship to the school, library, etc. changed since the project started?
 - If yes: How?
 - If no: Could you describe why your relationships have not changed?
21. Do you have any other suggestions or ideas for the Culture of Literacy project?

Librarian Survey:

1. What is your name?
2. What is your title?
3. What is the name of the library that you work in?
4. In which state is the library?
 - Arizona
 - Colorado
 - Kentucky
 - South Carolina
5. Please select the community you live in from the list of options below.
6. Is the library part of a public school?
 - Yes
 - No
7. Please check all of the following IAL Programs that you attended:
 - COL Leadership Collaborative Meetings
 - Community Meetings
 - Back to School Nights or Open Houses
 - StoryWalk Events
 - Other (please describe) _____
 - N/A
8. How many librarians work in the library?
9. Is there a children's librarian?
 - Yes
 - No

In the next set of questions, we want to know about the changes that have occurred since IAL initiative was launched:

10. Does the library have more books now as a result of Save the Children literacy programming?
 - Yes
 - No

11. Do more community members have library cards?

- Yes
- No

12. Has the percentage of books checked out of the library increased?

- Yes
- No

13. Have new programs or services have been offered?

- Yes
- No

14. If new programs are being offered, what are they?

15. What challenges does the library face?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Economic resources					
Schedule					
Transportation					
Location					
Lack of appropriate books					
Lack of staff					
Language barrier					
Other (please describe)					

16. What prevents the community from engaging with the library?

	Strongly agree	Somewhat agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Low literacy levels					
Lack of transportation					
Lack of interest in reading					

17. Describe other challenges that the community experiences to engage with the library

18. Q1 How can the library give more support to the community?

Family Survey:

1. What is your name?
2. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
3. How you classify your race/ethnicity? (Please check all that apply)
 - American Indian/Alaska Native
 - Asian
 - Black or African American
 - Latino or Hispanic
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
 - White (non-Hispanic)
 - Other: _____
4. What country were you born?
 - USA
 - Other (describe): _____
5. What is your employment status?
 - Employed
 - Unemployed
6. How many years of formal education have you completed?
 - Less than high school
 - High school or GED
 - Some college or associate's degree
 - College completed
7. Do any of your children receive free or reduced meals at school?
 - Yes
 - No
 - N/A
 - Not sure
8. Which state and community you live in?
9. How many years have you lived in this community? _____
10. How many children under the age of 18 do you have?
11. How many children under the age of 5 (four years old or younger) do you have?
12. Please write down the school that your children currently or will attend:

 - My child is home schooled
 - My child doesn't go to school

13. What is your relationship with these children?

- Mother
- Father
- Grandmother
- Grandfather
- Aunt/uncle
- Other (describe): _____

14. Please rate the following statements about community events based on how much you agree or disagree with them (community events include religious/holiday events, community fairs or festivals, etc.):

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I regularly participate in community events.						
I regularly go to religious activities, like church services.						
My friends regularly participate in community events.						
I can easily go to community events if I want to.						
Community events happen far away from where I live.						

15. Please rate the following statements about the Save the Children Community Literacy Project on how much you agree or disagree with them:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
I have heard of the Culture of Literacy Project before.						
I have participated in Culture of Literacy programs.						
At these programs I learned about how important it is to share books with my children.						
At these programs I learned how to support my children in reading and language development.						
At these events I learned more about other services, activities, and/or events about literacy.						

16. Which of the following literacy activities do you currently do with your child (please select all that apply):

- Read with your child
- Tell your child stories
- Play games with your child
- Sing songs with your child
- Take walks with your child
- Talk with your child during meals
- Go to the library

17. Did you participate in any of the community meetings for the Culture of Literacy?

- Yes
- No

18. What type of Culture of Literacy event/s did you go to? (Please describe):

19. Did you visit any businesses or organizations with a Literacy Corner? A literacy corner is a small free library located in a business, such as a barbershop, or community organization, such as a church. (If you answered no, please move on to question 23)

- Yes
- No

20. Please write the name of the business or organization that you visited below:

21. How often do you visit the Literacy Corner?

- Once
- A few times a year
- Once a month
- A few times a month
- Once a week
- A few times a week
- Everyday
- I didn't visit a literacy corner

22. Did your child visit the Literacy Corner with you?

- Yes
- No

23. If you didn't visit a literacy corner, please select the reasons you did not go to a Literacy Corner (check all that apply):

- Too far away from home
- Did not need any books
- Did not have a car or any way to get there
- I speak a different language than the people who work there
- I did not know that there was a Literacy Corner in my community
- Other (please describe below): _____

24. After going to Culture of Literacy community literacy events or activities, were you more likely to (please select all that apply):

- Read with your child
- Tell your child stories
- Play games with your child
- Sing songs with your child
- Take walks with your child
- Talk with your child during meals
- Go to the library
- Limit the amount of TV you child watches
- Limit the amount of video games your child plays
- Limit the amount of time your child uses computers/cell phones/tablets

25. Please rate the following statements on how much you agree with them.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
The Culture of Literacy Project will change my community for the better.						
Since the project began, I feel more connected to the local school.						
Since the project began, I feel more connected to the local library.						
Since the project began, I feel more connected to local community organizations.						

Community Literacy Manager Interview Script

I would like to hear about when you first began gathering information to familiarize yourself with your communities and when you first began to establish relationships in each community.

1. **How did the community react to you when you first started meeting people?**
 - Did community members express interest in the work?
2. **How did initial activities help you do your job? [For interviewer: These activities might have included: gathering community demographics, creating program and leadership lists, developing partner lists, creating the leadership collaborative, and introductory meetings.]**
 - Which activity was the most useful in helping you do your job?
3. **What challenges did you encounter during these initial activities?**
 - How did you resolve these challenges?
4. **How did you build and maintain relationships in general? [NOTE: this can include Save staff like program specialist and program coordinators, as well as community stakeholders-interview will go more in depth in these relationships in following questions]**
 - Who did you build relationships with?
 - What did you do to build trust?
 - What did you do to create buy-in and participation?
5. **What do you think motivated community members to support literacy?**
 - What were the barriers or challenges to community building?
 - What were you hearing that made people come to the table?

Next I would like to hear about your experiences with the Culture of Literacy (COL) Leadership Collaborative.

6. **Overall, how do you feel it went with this group?**
 - Were you able to work closely with this group ? Why or why not?
 - What got in the way of the work?
 - What did you do to keep the work moving forward?
7. **What was the process of creating the shared vision with the Leadership Collaborative?**
 - What was the outcome?
 - Was the shared vision helpful or not in having a productive relationship with the leadership collaborative?
8. **From your perspective, how do you think members of the leadership collaborative felt about having a leadership collaborative?**
 - For example, did they understand the purpose? Did they value the collaborative and see it as a benefit?
 - Why do you think that a more formal governance structure never happened?
 - Do you feel like having a more structured governance committee would have facilitated or hindered working with the leadership collaborative?
9. **What do you think motivated members of the COL Leadership Collaborative to take on this role?**
10. **What are 2 to 3 examples of things that worked well with the leadership collaborative?**
11. **What are 2 to 3 examples of things that did not work well?**

Now I would like to hear your thoughts about community engagement more broadly. In thinking about all the different types of community engagement activities (asset mapping, meetings, events, presentations, leadership collaborative, Reading Corners, community fairs/festivals):

12. Which community engagement activities were effective mechanisms for getting people engaged in the importance of literacy? Why?
 - Do you think some activities were more successful for some communities than others? Why?
 - Do you think some activities were more successful for some members of the community than others? Why?
13. Are there activities that are non-negotiable, meaning they are absolutely critical to community engagement? Why?
14. What is an example of how you capitalized on what was working?
 - How did you use what was going well to keep the momentum of the work moving forward?
15. Was there a local person(s) who was a champion for the work that you tapped into help get other community members on board?
16. What feedback did you receive on any specific activity?
 - What feedback did you receive about Literacy Corners?
 - i. Did families use them?
 - ii. Was this a successful strategy to engage parents in Literacy activities? Why?
17. What did not work well in engaging the community? Why?
18. How did you move the work forward despite the challenges?

Let's spend a few minutes talking about your asset map(s). Thank you for sending me your map(s). I had a chance to review your map(s) but could you walk me through your map(s) and provide me a high-level overview of what the map shows?

19. What does your map show?
20. Next, I would like to ask you some questions about the process of making the asset maps:
21. Who was involved in making the asset maps? (Interviewer Probe: Ask if COL was involved)
 - Regarding the community members who participated in asset mapping events:
 - i. How did they react to the activity?
 - ii. What themes emerged during conversations?
 - iii. What challenges or concerns did they raise?
 - iv. How did it contribute to community engagement work?
22. What did you learn about the communities from the asset map?
23. What were some of the assets that were being under-utilized by the community?
24. Were there any changes in utilization over time? [For example, was there an increase in utilization of assets]

- If yes, what do you think contributed to the increase?
25. What are some of the gaps that were identified in the mapping process that still remain? Why?
26. Now, thinking about your responsibility leading the map creation:
27. Did you have enough training and technical assistance for conducting asset maps?
- What kinds of supports would you recommend that USP provide to their staff for asset mapping?
 - What would you do differently in asset mapping in the future?
28. How did you make sense of the information gathered?
- What process did you go through to review the map(s), notes, conversations with colleagues, to summarize the information?
 - Did you use the information to create a plan for your work?
 - Is mapping a critical activity or non-negotiable? Why or why not?
29. After the asset mapping process, did you report the information back to the community at cross-sector Community Dialogue events?
30. What was your experience when you reported the findings? How did you determine what to report-out at the Community Dialogues?
31. How did participants react to the information that was reported out?
32. What themes emerged during the dialogue?
33. What challenges or concerns did participants raise?
- What did you gain from the dialogue(s)?
 - i. How did you use the information shared by the community at the dialogue to support your work?
34. Would you recommend community dialogues as an effective strategy for reporting?

Now, I would like to learn about what changes or growth you have seen in your communities since IAL and the community engagement work has been underway:

35. What resources (including programs or services) with a focus on literacy were expanded or created and offered to the public? This could include things like storytelling hours, parent-child groups, adult literacy classes etc.
36. What new partnership/linkages/collaborations (formal or informal) formed over the course of the project?
- What work is being focused on in these collaborations?
 - What role do you or USP play in these collaborations?
 - How is the community benefiting from these new collaborations?
 - What are some of the challenges of these new collaborations?
 - What types of partners are most beneficial to the work?
37. What are the gaps that still persist and what resources would be needed to close these gaps?

38. In terms of financial resources, volunteers and in-kind donations:
- How did the community use the financial funds (\$1400 per community for year 1 and \$2200 for year)?
 - In what ways did the community and individuals in the community invest their own time, resources, and in-kind donations?
39. How do you think the IAL programming has impacted families in your communities?
40. Do they have greater access or increased opportunities to connect with schools, libraries, and community organizations? Could you give an example?
41. How do you think the IAL programming has impacted Schools, libraries and community organizations
42. Do they have greater access to resources, materials, and expertise that they need to support early child development and literacy? Could you give an example?
43. What training or support from SCUS is important for community engagement?

Finally, I would like to learn more about the preparation and support you receive as a part of your CLM position.

44. What skill set or previous experiences did you bring to this position?
- Which of these do you think are important for CLMs to have?
 - Do you have any experiences specifically in community organizing?
45. What are your overall thoughts on the CLM training you received in South Carolina?
- What were your favorite parts? Least favorite parts?
 - How has it been helpful in your current position?
 - What do you think should be added in the future to support CLMs?
46. What other support do you receive from Save?
- How often do you have check-ins? Is this enough, or do you need more support

Community Literacy Manager Survey

1. How many communities do you work with?
2. Please write the name of the community below:
3. Thinking about when you first arrived in the community, please rate the following statements (Likert types strongly disagree to strongly agree):
 - I felt welcomed when I first arrived in the community.
 - Community members were excited about the work that I was doing.
 - It was difficult to engage community members.
 - It was easy to build and maintain relationships with community members.
 - Community members were slow to trust me.
4. Thinking about your experience with the COL Leadership Collaborative, please rate the following statements (Likert types strongly disagree to strongly agree):
 - Overall, I think that the COL Leadership collaborative was successful.
 - It was challenging to create the COL Leadership Collaborative.
 - I was able to work closely and productively with the COL Leadership Collaborative.
 - Community members were excited about the COL Leadership Collaborative.
5. Please rate the following activities on how well they engaged community members (Likert type, extremely well to not well at all):
 - Introductory meeting
 - Asset mapping
 - Community dialogues
 - Community events for networking
 - Community events led/sponsored by USP
 - Community event co-hosted/co-sponsored by USP
 - Community event USP participant
 - Community Literacy Project
 - Presentations
 - Parent Child Meetings/Groups
 - Other (please describe)
 - n/a
6. Which of the following events was the most helpful for engaging families?
 - Introductory meeting
 - Asset mapping
 - Community dialogues
 - Community events for networking
 - Community events led/sponsored by USP
 - Community event co-hosted/co-sponsored by USP
 - Community event USP participant
 - Community Literacy Project
 - Presentations
 - Parent Child Meetings/Groups

- Other (please describe)
7. Overall, how effective do you think these strategies, such as community asset maps or community dialogues, were for engaging community members?
 - Very effective
 - Somewhat effective
 - Neither effective nor ineffective
 - Somewhat ineffective
 - Very ineffective
 8. Please score the following barriers according to how they impacted community engagement using the following scale: 0 not a barrier at all to 10 being the largest barrier to community engagement.
 - Language Barriers
 - Transportation
 - Time Commitment/Constraints
 - Lack of Child Care
 - Ethnic Differences
 - Religious Differences
 - Cultural Differences
 - Socioeconomic Differences
 - Other (please describe below)
 9. Thinking about your experience with asset mapping, please rate the following statements (Likert types strongly disagree to strongly agree):
 - I was confident in leading the asset mapping process.
 - Asset mapping was a useful tool for community engagement in this community.
 - It was challenging to engage community members in community mapping.
 - It was challenging for me to know what information I wanted to report back on to the community.
 - Participants in the Community Dialogue events found the event interesting/helpful.
 - I found the Community Dialogue events interesting/helpful.
 10. Thinking about your experience with community engagement more broadly, please rate the following statements (Likert types strongly disagree to strongly agree):
 - Community resources, such as library catalogs, or space for literacy corners, that focus on literacy were expanded over the course of the IAL work.
 - It was challenging to create new partnerships over the course of the project.
 - The community invested its own financial resources, volunteers and in-kind donations to build a community of literacy.
 - Parents now have greater access and opportunity to connect with libraries, schools and community organization.
 - Schools, libraries and community organizations have increased access to resources to support early literacy development.

11. Please rate the following programs according to how much they expanded since community engagement work began (Likert type, a great deal to none at all):

- Storytelling hours
- Parent child groups
- Adult literacy classes
- Other

SC USP Program Director Interview Script

1. What was the general timeline of the grant process? When did you find out you were approved? Hire CLMs? Have people on the ground programming?
2. What were the expectations that you had for the Innovative Approaches to Literacy programming? **OR** What was your vision for the Innovative Approaches to Literacy Programming?
 - Were there specific expectations for the CLMs in regards to community engagement?
3. What was the process of recruiting and selecting Community Literacy Managers?
 - Who was involved?
 - How did you advertise the position?
4. What was the plan for training and supporting the CLMs?
 - How did you implement this plan?
 - As you reflect on this now, what if anything would you do differently?
5. What kind of ongoing support and training do CLMs receive?
6. What, if anything, would you do differently in preparing the CLMs for the work they would be doing?
7. What does sustainability in regards to the IAL programming look like?
 - What do you hope will be true about the programming in the future?
 - i. What is the plan for expansion?
8. Reflecting on the past year and half, how has the reality of the program implementation been in comparison to your expectations?
9. What do you hope will be true about the communities that have received IAL programming in five/ten years from now?

Appendix 2: Figures and Diagrams

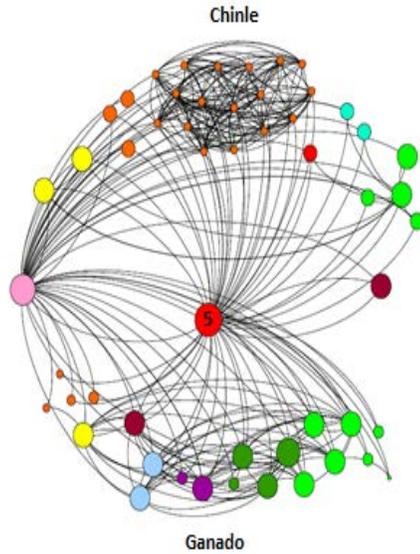
Network Analysis

Legend

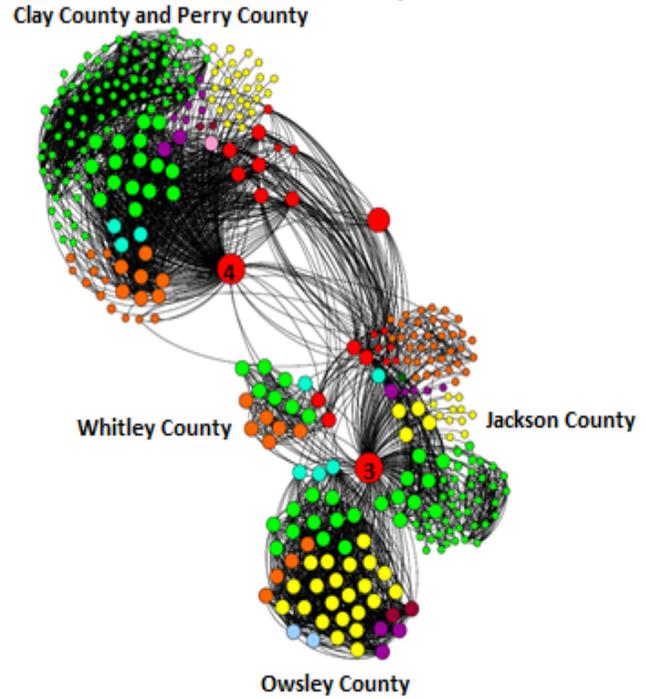
- SC USP Staff
- ROAR Staff
- Education (including school staff and librarians)
- Health and social services (i.e. physicians, DSS, etc.)
- Local businesses
- Caregivers or no information provided
- Elected officials
- Youth from the community
- Clergy and faith based organizations
- National Park Services
- Law enforcement

Note. The number in the circle represents the CLM that worked in and with the communities. A higher density of relationships is shown by more black lines. What does the size of the circle mean?

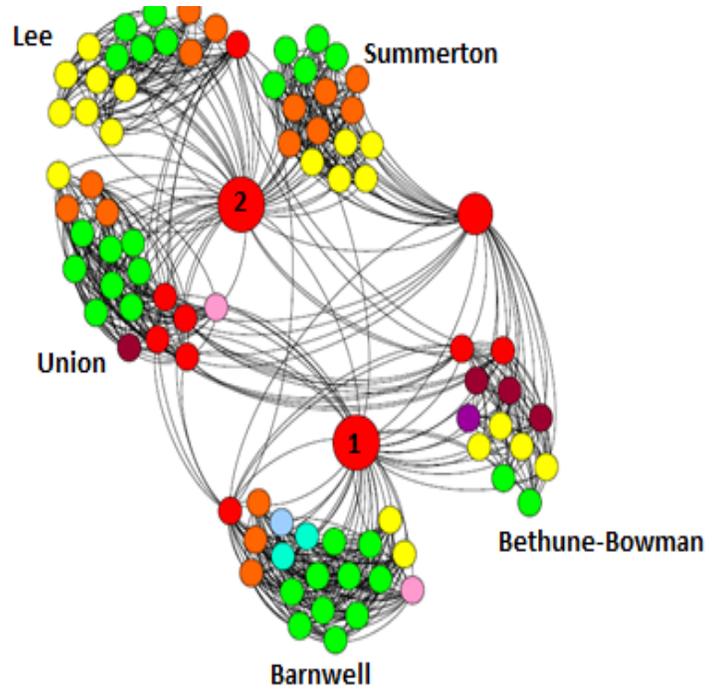
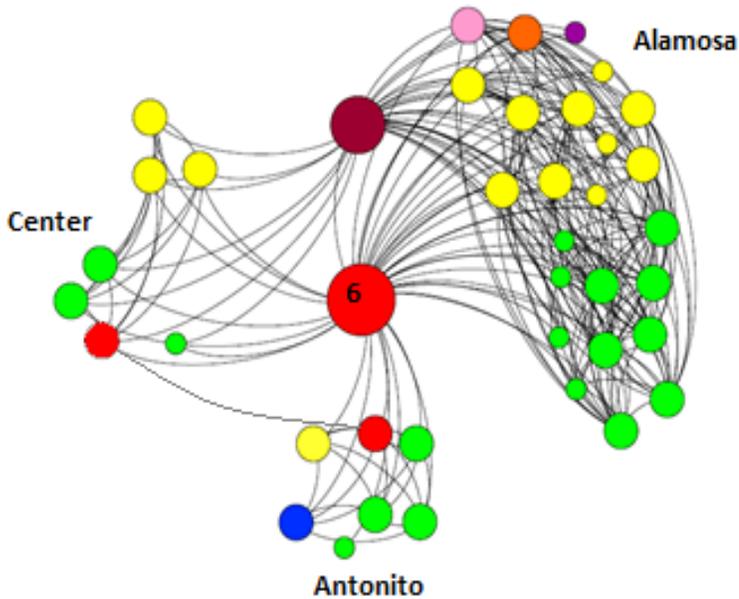
Arizona



Kentucky



Colorado



Appendix 3: Success Stories

Across each region, there are countless examples of success stories that highlight the work of the CLMs and the community to promote a culture of literacy. The following narratives range from events that were particularly successful in engaging community, and seem highly sustainable, or reflect the importance of SC USP in revitalizing programs that bring communities together. There are also examples of community champions and crucial collaborations that made activities more impactful in communities that were new to the CLM, and where SC USP had less visibility outside of schools. Overall, the narratives presented here, represent a small sample of what IAL activities were able to accomplish, and truly reflects the flexibility in implementation.

Alamosa, CO:

Prior to the Innovative Approaches to Literacy grant and the work of Community Literacy Manager, the reach of SC USP was largely limited to the local schools in the San Luis Valley. Over the past year and a half, this has changed significantly. Today, many families in the town of Alamosa need only to go right outside of their apartment in Tierra Nueva to find a reading corner, or downtown to the Nestle Café to enjoy reading together. Perhaps the largest project and success of IAL in the San Luis Valley was the creation of a StoryWalk.

Housed in Cole Park, tucked right behind the Alamosa Public Library, the StoryWalk consists of 28 posts featuring a book selected by the librarian, and activities that can be done by parents and caregivers with children as they walk through the park. While the StoryWalk did use financial support from Save the Children, it was largely supported by donations from local businesses, organizations and individuals, such as local banks, service clubs and government officials. Each post (cost \$200) was sponsored by an organization from the community. The frames and posts were constructed by students at a local community college and prepared by members of the Alamosa Literacy Council. It has been hugely successful as a standalone resource with over sixty people attending the ribbon cutting event. It was also highlighted at other events such as the Summerfest. The StoryWalk has also received much attention in the media, being featured more than once in *The Valley Courier*, the newspaper of the San Luis Valley. The StoryWalk was initiated by the Alamosa Literacy Council, with support from the CLM, but is now largely maintained by the staff of the public library, which is planning on changing the book seasonally. Otherwise, it does not require significant financial investment to maintain.

Ganado and Chinle, AZ

Being an outsider implementing programs in small rural communities, can seem nearly impossible. For this reason creating effective partnerships with local leaders is paramount. One notable example of this comes from Ganado, Arizona, where the Community Literacy Manager was able to forge and maintain a partnership with a former first lady of the Navajo Nation. Coming from nearby Zuni, New Mexico, the CLM was aware of the vibrant culture of the Navajo Nation, as well as the potential barriers to building relationships. The CLM was able to leverage their ties to the community through the Navajo Nation's commitment to providing high quality education to all of their children, to work with people in high level political offices. One person who is well known throughout Navajo land is the former first lady of Navajo Nation who in her tenure championed several causes, including early literacy. The former first lady was also a crucial asset to the team, as the local Reach Out and Read Coordinator. Together they were able to provide vital information, and much needed books to the families in Chinle, Ganado and beyond.

Perry County, KY

When a community is committed to early literacy, and ready to make a difference, sometimes it only takes one person to start the movement. In Perry County, Kentucky, this is exactly what happened when Community Literacy Manager brought all of the right people together and formed the Perry County Literacy Council. Together they agreed that access to books beyond the school and library was what parents and caregivers needed to support early literacy development. With the help of the council, and local business owner, the very first Little Free Library in Eastern Kentucky was opened in Hazard, KY in early March 2016 at the local McDonald's. As of October 2016 seven more Little Free Libraries have opened in Perry County, and beyond. The Little Free Libraries have become such a success in Perry County that they are spreading into neighboring counties that are not a part of the Innovative Approaches to Literacy Activities. To support the counties outside of their purview, the CLM and business owner hosted a workshop for people who were interested in starting Little Free Libraries in their communities.

Jackson County, KY:

One of the strengths of the CLMs throughout the communities that received IAL support was their ability to tap into pre-existing, but underutilized resources in the community. A prime example of this is in Jackson County, Kentucky, where the CLM was able to identify the potential of a partnership with the local Catholic churches. St. Paul's Catholic Church in McGee, KY has existed long before the IAL activities were implemented, but due to small population of people who identify as practicing Catholics in the area, many of their programs were being underutilized, and they frequently had space available. The CLM recruited the director of the church to serve on the CLC, and expand their and resources to the community at large. The CLM was able to leverage their connection with the community and new partnership with St. Paul's to create a well-loved reading corner in the back of the church where families can read books when they are taking advantage of the other resources offered there. The CLM was also able to strengthen their network in neighboring town and counties using their relationship with St. Paul's.

Barnwell, SC:

Perhaps one of the best testaments to the sustainability of a project like the Innovative Approaches to Literacy activities is when a local champion takes on a piece of the project as their own. A prime example of this is in Barnwell, South Carolina. Here a local business owner reached out to the Community Literacy Manager to offer a barbershop to house a literacy corner. This business woman already offers free haircuts for children during the week, and believed the reading corner would be used by families waiting in her shop. The reading corner became so popular among the families and young customers that the owner decided to offer them a deal: For any child that reads five books and writes a book report about them, they will be entered into a raffle for \$50. Only a few weeks into the offer, the business owner has already started to receive write ups about the books that have been picked up in the reading corner.

Summerton, SC:

Across all of the school sites where IAL funding was used, CLMs talked about the importance of back to school bashes and the various roles that they played across each community. The Community Literacy Manager played a crucial role in the revitalization of the back to school bash in Summerton, SC. This event that had previously brought the entire community together in the school, had not taken place for the previous five years before the CLM began working in the community. Using IAL support, local champions, and the leadership collaborative, the CLM was able to support the community as they staged a back to school bash in the 2016-2017 school year. These not only provided the community the opportunity to be

more connected to each other and learn more about the resources that were available, but it helped to build relationships between the CLM and the leadership collaborative. It encouraged future participation from members and helped to increase SC USP visibility in Summerton, SC.