



## iREAD Vacation Reading School 2013

Facilitating Access to Books During School Vacation



Ghana  
October 2013

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## I. Introduction

### A. Vacation Reading School

Vacation Reading School (VRS) has become an exciting part of the long annual school break (between the end of July and the beginning of September) in Worldreader's Ghana project sites. With students more excited about reading than ever, a simple question emerged: we know that children love to read and that we keep them reading during the break by offering open library reading time, but can we take reading to the next level during the break by incorporating our out-of-classroom activities that fuel the creativity inspired by reading? Can we motivate the students to see, feel, and hear the stories?

The third year of Worldreader's Vacation Reading School in Ghana recently concluded. Students turned out in droves for a chance to read for pleasure on the e-readers. We had an unprecedented turnout of over 175 students each day for the first week of the program. In the results and growth sections of the report, you can see the incredible turnout at both VRS sites and also compare this year's data to our first year of VRS in 2011. We also describe two new additions to VRS this year: our out-of-classroom experiences and the pilot of a new volunteer program that was proven very successful.

Vacation reading school is our solution to students' desire to read during their school break. Since the e-readers cannot be taken home during the month long break, Worldreader staff provide a summer library program to make e-readers available to students who want to read for pleasure. This year, VRS offered three different opportunities to interact:

1. Library time: An opportunity for children to check out the e-readers, sit quietly, and read without disruption.
2. OCE: Out-of-classroom experience (OCE) lessons are designed to engage students in stories and increase their desire to read for pleasure.
3. International volunteer pilot program: Volunteers from other countries came to VRS to interact with the students and share their love of reading.

### B. Program Goals

Our goals for VRS 2013 were threefold: continue to support the children in reading more and reading better, make reading more exciting through OCE, and give the students an opportunity to interact with Worldreader supporters from all over the world.



### C. Schedule of Activities

The program ran for four weeks (20 school days) in Adeiso and Kade schools over the long school break. The program was offered four days a week (Tuesday through Friday) from 9 am to 2 pm. Open library reading was offered in the morning. In the afternoon the volunteers led a group creative learning activity (OCE).

Figure 1: Schedule for Vacation Reading School

Daily Schedule	Activities
9:00-9:30 am	Registration, distribution of e-readers, settling down in classrooms
9:30-10:20 am	Tech training for new e-reader users, Individual Reading Period
10:20-10:40 am	Break
10:40-11:20 am	Individual Reading Period
11:20-12:00 pm	Lunch break
12:00-1:15 pm	Out-of-Classroom Experience
1:15-2:00 pm	Wrap up, device collection, log sheet collection

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#### D. How it Worked

A local teacher at each school facilitated vacation reading school with the assistance of several volunteers. We recruited both local volunteers (some who were in the e-reader program while in school) and international volunteers who traveled to Ghana for the specific purpose of participating in vacation reading school.

The duties included taking attendance, checking out e-readers to students during library time, teaching children how to use the e-readers if needed, and modeling good reading behavior such as sitting quietly.

In the afternoon the volunteers led out-of classroom activities (OCE) such as drawing and coloring, acting out the stories as they are read aloud, taking turns reading aloud, and then answering questions about the book and the characters. This is meant to be highly interactive to bring the stories to life for the students.

The international volunteers had the same roles at VRS but their interaction with the students was an incredible addition to the program. International volunteers were only at VRS for a short time (3-8 days) and came at different times throughout August.



## II. Results

Attendance at Vacation Reading School was unprecedented. Over 175 students showed up each day of the first week. The program ran at two different sites: Kade and Adeiso. Both schools participate in the iREAD program during the school year and contain some classrooms that use e-readers for all of their subjects. Below is a snapshot of the results of VRS at both schools.

OUTCOMES	KADE	ADEISO	VRS Total
Days VRS was offered	19	20	20
AVG # Students attending each day	62	114	176
Days Attended	1,178	2,280	3,520
Majority Grade Level	P4-P6	P4-P6	P4-P6
# of Unique Students who signed in	194	253	447
AVG # days attended by all students	5	4	4.5
% non-iREAD students	71%	71%	71%

Figure 2: Outcomes 2013

### Kade School

- 62 students attended each day on average
- 29% are in the iREAD program
- 194 different students attended at least one day

### Adeiso School

- Students from over 25 different schools attended
- 114 students attended each day on average
- 253 different students attended at least one day

### Overall

- At least 447 students attended at least one day
- Average attendance was 4.5 days
- Each student read over 40 books during VRS, on average
- See Appendix A for the lists of most popular titles

### III. Program Growth

#### A. Attendance

VRS has grown from a small exclusive program to a community wide event as evidenced from the average attendance noted in the chart below. In 2011 the program was designed exclusively to get iREAD students engaged in using their e-readers to read for pleasure. In 2011 we found that non-iREAD students were also very interested in reading on the e-readers and we just couldn't turn them away when they showed up for VRS.

In 2013, we opened the doors wide and invited anyone with an interest in reading to join VRS. With attendance multiplying and over 440 students participating, their actions support that kids are interested in reading more and reading better.

Figure 3: comparison of VRS 2011 and 2013

OUTCOMES	2011	2013
Days VRS was offered	25	20
AVG # Students attending each day	18	176
Days Attended	1,004	3,520
Majority Grade Level	JHS	P4-P6
# of Unique Students who signed in	181	447
AVG # days attended by all students	5.5	4.5
% of non-iREAD students who attended VRS	54%	71%
% of iREAD students who attended VRS	46%	29%

\*2011 data from iREAD VRS report dated October 2011

#### International volunteers

Supporters of Worldreader have occasionally asked to visit the schools to meet with the students and see the e-readers in action. This year we recruited several Worldreader supporters to attend VRS. We arranged for the volunteers to spend time leading the activities and interacting with the students.

Involving international volunteers benefits both the local students and the volunteers who come to work. Lives are changed on both sides as people come together to learn about the others' culture and ideals. The Ghanaian students learn about other countries and get inspiration regarding their education and future hopes and dreams. The volunteers find out what a wonderful, warm, and inviting culture exists in Ghana. They also see first hand what a difference they are making in the lives of these students, their families, and the community.

## IV. Moving Forward

The incredible turnout of students to VRS supports that children enjoy reading for pleasure. We will continue to offer Vacation Reading School during the long break and will be prepared for the program to grow exponentially again next year. The students returned after lunch for the OCE activities so we will continue to develop new interactive learning activities to complement the library reading time.

Piloting a program for international volunteers in our VRS program had challenges but the benefits were definitely worth the extra effort. Challenges included hotel and transportation in and around the villages, sharing limited volunteers between schools, students understanding foreign accents, and VRS being overwhelmed students once the word got out that visitors were in town. We made some minor adjustments to the program and are ready to support many more international donor volunteers in 2014.



## Resources

- Out of Classroom Experience Term Reports [July 2013](#) | [July 2010](#)
  - [Worldreader Vacation School Report 2011](#)
- Blog posts by Vacation Reading School 2013 international volunteers:
  - [The Tale of Two Brothers](#)
  - [Travel for Books Lauren's Volunteer Adventure in Ghana](#)

## Appendix: Popular Titles in VRS 2013

### Top 20 Titles at Adeiso VRS

Title	# students reading
At the Cocoa Farm	213
At the Beach	212
All About Water	211
The Fake Beggar	200
Come and Play	198
Ananse and the Pot of Wisdom	175
Story Time	146
Lion, Dog and Cat	138
The Sultan's Daughter	125
The Golden Forest	117
All About Me	115
Joy and Her Friends	114
Mr. Bempong's House	112
The Canoe's Story	99
The Honest Girl	97
City Life	96
Kofi Has Malaria	95
Ananse's Golden Drum	95
Wake Up	94
Beneath the Rainbow	93

### Top 20 Titles at Kade VRS

Title of Book	# students reading
My Big Dada	54
Kofi Has Malaria	47
Story Time	46
At the Cocoa Farm	34
The Runaway Bicycle	34
Mr Bempong's House	32
My Brother the Footballer	32
At the Beach	26
Come And Play	26
Sports Day	24
The Ghost that Never Was	22
Kwaku Ananse in the Well	21
Long Long Ago	21
The Magic Drum	21
Champion Runner	20
Bee Ninja	19
The Magic Drum	19
Wake Up	19
The Magic Goat	18
Joseph the Dreamer	18