

SCALA Solutions

<u>Team Member Name</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Major</u>
Alyssa De La Cerda	Junior	International Business, Sustainability Management
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Stella DiCicco	Senior	Global Studies

Advisor(s): Astrid Schmidt-King, Keith Saylor, Donald Manekin, Mark Hornbeck

Topic Title: Fluent and Fearless: Minding the Literacy Gap within Urban Communities

Audience: Amazon

Sustainable Development Goal (2 max)

SDG #4: Ensure Inclusive and Equitable Quality Education and Promote Lifelong Learning Opportunities For All

Executive Summary

Amazon publicly states it is “building long-term, innovative programs that have a lasting, positive impact” and pledges to “work with community partners to strengthen education and increase access.” Yet the company has faced growing ethical backlash for falling short of these commitments. Past initiatives like AWS Education Equity and Amazon Future Engineers have been criticized as short-term, top-down efforts that align more with Amazon’s strategic interests than with lasting community benefit. A lack of coordination with public institutions and a reliance on proprietary platforms have raised concerns about corporate overreach and shallow engagement.

The Amazon-First Book Bundles initiative presents a chance to shift that narrative. Designed to address the literacy crisis, the program provides pre-kindergarten children in underserved communities with curated, age-appropriate books and digital learning resources. Kits will be sold at subsidized prices or donated, ensuring access for low-income families. By partnering with First Book, Amazon can use its logistics network and platform reach to deliver meaningful support where it’s needed most.

This initiative strengthens early learning during the critical transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn,” while offering a scalable, community-driven model that aligns Amazon’s business capabilities with measurable social impact. It’s a step toward rebuilding trust and demonstrating how corporate resources can support long-term educational equity.