



Tuesdays in the Trenches Literacy Presentation Series

Week 3: 9 July 2024

In our third webinar of the Tuesdays in the Trenches series, we heard from representatives from four organisations. The presentations all offered opportunities for attendees to learn more about exciting projects that are being implemented across the country. Presenters reflected on project implementation and spoke candidly of the importance of constantly evaluating and learning from their progress. All four organisations expressed openness to sharing their knowledge and resources with attendees. We are hopeful that the presentations and the engagements in the webinar chat will result in opportunities for attendees to support each other in working to strengthening literacy levels and practices across South Africa.

Project Literacy

Project Literacy presented on their ECD project, Run Home to Read (RHTR) and its implementation in the Northern Cape. RHTR is a family literacy project, established in 2003. It focuses on literacy development



and developing school readiness in children from birth to seven years of age. The project targets families in rural communities who are unable to send their children to ECD programmes. It trains unemployed youth to work in their communities, ECD centres and schools as reading champions. Reading champions visit homes and provide parents/caregivers with training and literacy skills that empower them to prepare their children for entry to primary school. In addition to home visits, RHTR's reading champions work in ECD centres and schools where they identify and support children who require additional literacy intervention. While strengthening children's mother tongue literacy development is the primary objective of the project, RHTR's focus on creating nurturing home environments and the employment opportunities that the project has created offer a strong example of how well-structured projects can **benefit communities in multiple ways**.

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Performance Solutions South Africa (PSA)

PSA's focus is on enabling school improvement through building school management and governance structures. CEO, Geoff Schreiner, stated that traditionally PSA has focused its efforts in literacy improvement on capacitating school management teams to support reading practices in the classrooms. Their work provides an example of how **strengthening literacy in schools requires multiple competencies** to ensure



educators and learners receive the necessary support to succeed in teaching, learning and literacy. PSA reported on a recent collaboration with [edufundi](#) that has allowed schools to benefit from PSA's expertise in strengthening leadership, and from edufundi's experience in providing educators with practical support and coaching. PSA spoke in detail of their development and use of an assessment rubric to measure intervention at classroom level in their collaboration with edufundi, and offered to share this useful tool with other organisations. By working with edufundi, PSA is expanding its knowledge on effective ways of supporting schools and educators. Collaborations such as PSA and edufundi are an example of how **working together strengthens both organisations** thereby enabling greater impact than they could achieve independently.

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Biblionef

Biblionef distributes and supports the effective use of new children's books in 11 languages to promote reading for enjoyment in South Africa. Established in 1998, Biblionef initially focused only on providing books to organisations and schools. However, with experience and through evaluation, they realised that they needed to restructure their focus to ensure that once they distributed books, these books were used effectively. The success they have achieved since widening their programme focus to include training educators and establishing school libraries is a strong example of the value of ongoing monitoring and evaluation and **the importance of a willingness to learn** from achievements and challenges, and refine programme implementation as needed.



A significant aspect of ensuring children benefit from book donations has been training Foundation Phase educators in incorporating reading into the CAPS. This was informed by educators not being aware of CAPS stipulating that stories should be central to a balanced reading programme. Biblionef's early identification of the need to support educators to incorporate stories into their reading programmes is a valuable reminder of ensuring that **interventions are well thought out and respond to identified needs**. Guidance, an [activities' booklet](#) and demo teacher training [videos](#) are available on their website as resources that can assist other organisations and individuals in ensuring books are effectively used and enjoyed.

<https://www.biblionefsa.org.za/>

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Funda Wandé

Funda Wandé's CEO, Phumi Nhlapo, provided an overview of the organisation's work in Limpopo, Eastern Cape and Western Cape. She discussed the three different models they have adopted in working towards a vision of all children being able to read for meaning and calculate with confidence by the age of 10. Phumi focused on the organisation's commitment to ensuring that all programme **activities are based in evidence and consistently evaluated** to determine progress and areas for improvement. This commitment is evident in that Funda Wandé has conducted extensive research on education, literacy, numeracy and language and has subjected its programmes to in-



depth [evaluation](#) that informs all future decisions. By piloting various models for teacher and learner support, Funda Wandé is able to identify what improves learner outcomes and the practical and cost realities of implementing different models. This is fundamental to identifying potential programme scalability and ways in which Funda Wandé can extend its impact. Funda Wandé training resources are available in isiXhosa, Sepedi and Afrikaans and can be accessed [online](#).

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Final reflections

- All four organisations referred to the crucial role of **strong partnerships with education officials and the DBE** in successful programme implementation. This links closely to Dr Mbude's (Deputy Director General for Transformation Programmes, DBE) request in her presentation in [Week 2](#) for NGOs to work with government in ways that enable maximum possible impact.
- Across presentations, the need for strong monitoring and evaluation systems was evident. The **benefit of constantly learning and adapting** was clear in how organisations have identified areas for growth and worked to achieve such growth. As Biblionef's General Manager, Sunitha Amod, stated, it is "by learning along the way" that organisations can improve their offerings and, ultimately, increase their positive impact.
- The willingness of organisations to share their resources, including their training guidelines and assessment tools, presents a significant contribution to the NGO sector in providing other organisations with **opportunities to benefit from existing knowledge and resources**. Discussions in the webinar chat show that there is, however, need for greater awareness of the resources that are available.

The strong attendance in the webinar series thus far shows that significant interest exists in learning about the contributions that our members are making to education in South Africa. We are excited about the conversations in the chat and the connections being made. NASCEE exists to empower NGOs in education to magnify their impact and influence. Your input is crucial in our efforts to achieve this. The Tuesday in the Trenches series is a new initiative for us. If you have any feedback or suggestions based on your participation in this series, please email patience@nascee.org.za

Looking ahead

Join us next week for presentations from ...

- Seriti Institute
- youth@WORK
- Social Innovations
- VVOB - education for development

Date & Time: Tuesday, 16 July 2024 at 10:00 am

Online: [Teams Meeting Link](#)

Haven't registered to join the session? [Register here](#)

