Tuesdays in the Trenches

A NASCEE Literacy Presentation Series
18 June 2024

Our organisation

|	Description	Detail
1.	Aim / Objectives / Goals:	Book Dash is an award-winning social impact publisher of open-licensed, African picture books for very young children. We create, translate, print and distribute affordable, high-quality storybooks, in partnership with creative professionals and community-based organisations, to work towards our vision: that **every child should own a hundred books by the age of five**. Our model is a gamechanger in addressing systemic challenges caused by a lack of appropriate, affordable reading materials in homes. Our books can be incorporated into any programme that works with young children and their families: parenting programmes, early learning programmes, etc.
2	Theory of Change	See next slide
2.	Process overview:	• Content creation: Our innovative, award-winning publishing model drastically reduces the cost to create, print and distribute books. Our books are create in 12-hour sprints by teams of creative volunteers. They are translated into 11 South African languages, and published on our website. • Distribution: Our distribution partners in literacy, early learning and healthcare get books into children's hands and support their effective use.
3.	Target audience / Beneficiaries: (Learners / teachers / school managers / district and provincial officials)	• Physical books: Across South Africa, children aged 0-5 and their families receive free books in the language they are most comfortable with. • Digital books: our open-licensed, free-to-use materials have been used by hundreds of organisations in dozens of countries around the world.
4.	Dosage:	• Created 200 original African storybooks, and translated them into a library of 800+ versions across 11 South African languages. • By end July, we would have printed and distributed 4.2 million book; strategic aim is to print and distribute 1 million books per year for the next three years. • Donated books to more than 200 organisations across South Africa.

Theory of Change

Outcome

Preschool children own more engaging storybooks necessary for improved family literacy practices

Key input activities

Book Dash focuses on the key activities needed to reach our vision, "Every child should own a hundred books by the age of five"

PUBLISH

DISTRIBUTE

CREATE

TRANSLATE

Molweni! Hello!

Dumelang! Sanibonani!

PRINT

PARTNER

ECD
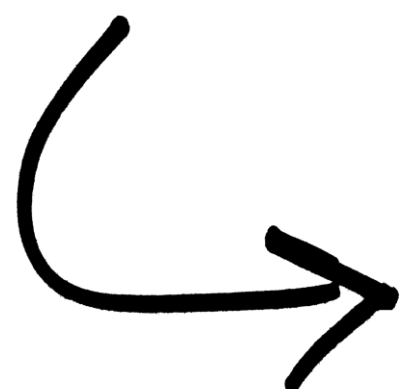
1. We create, translate and publish new African storybooks.
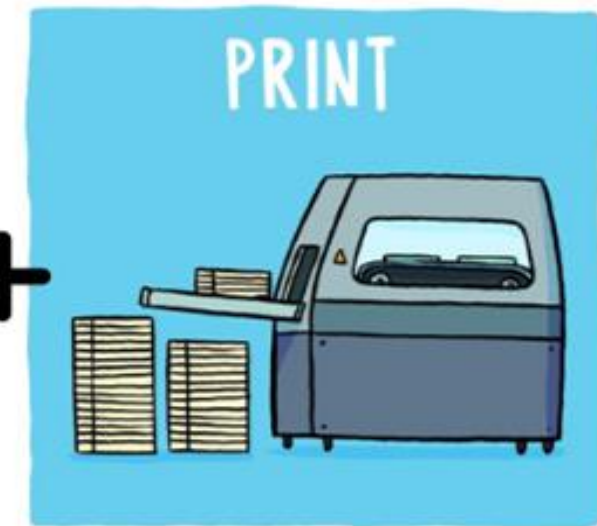
2. We print and partner to distribute physical copies of these books to children to own.

# Why we do what we do: the impact of owning books

Reputable studies prove that children who own books and share these with their loved ones are more likely to:

1. develop socio-emotional skills like empathy and resilience
2. do better at school and make more progress across the curriculum
3. be healthier and happier children with better mental wellbeing and self-esteem
4. be more creative, overcome disadvantages and have better economic prospects.

BookTrust UK, 2023

Roughly 70% of children under ten years old in South Africa don't own a single book before they enter school. Studies show that learning inequality is cemented in the first five years of a child's life.

Low literacy levels carry a huge cost to the economy. Increasing the number of books in preschool children's hands and homes is a low-cost, high impact way of addressing the problem and investing in our human capital.
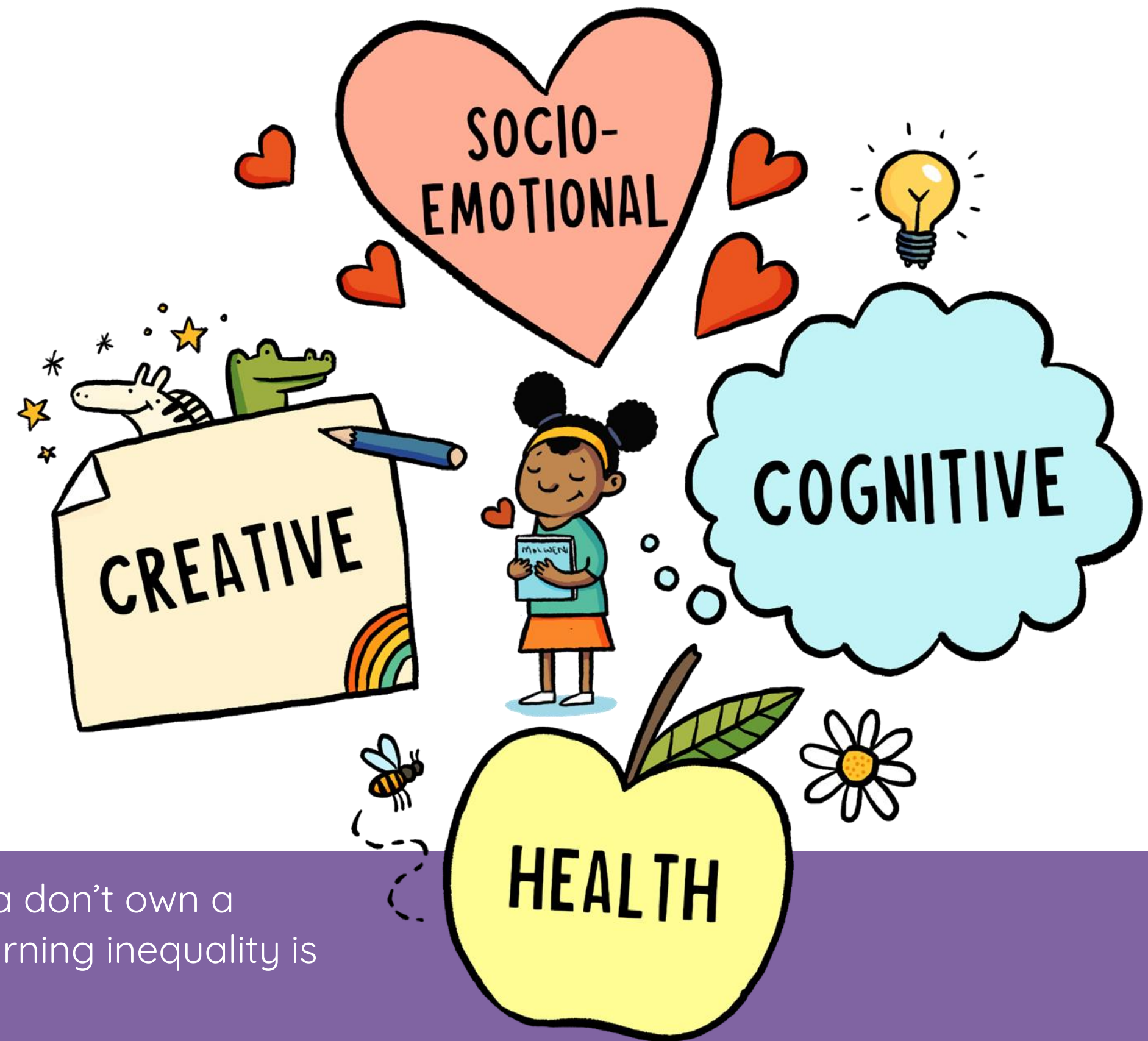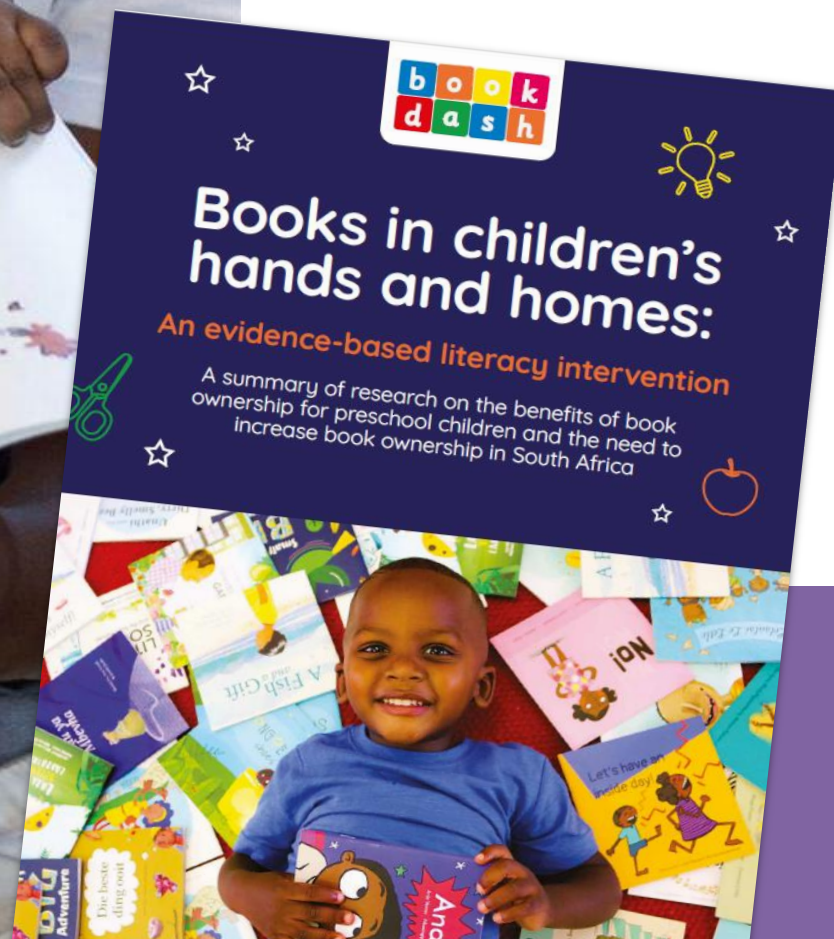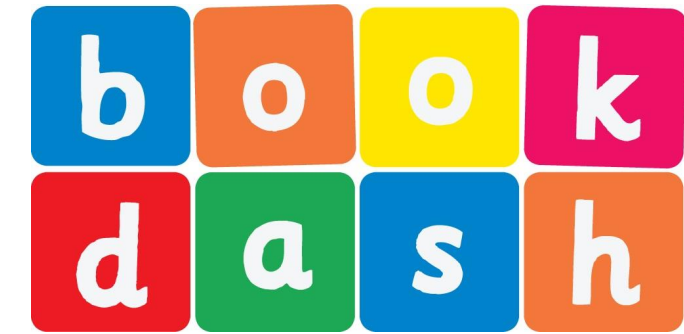
The research that underpins our work

Summary of research that underpins our work: **Books in children's hands and homes: an evidence-based literacy intervention**

Topics include:
- The advantages of reading with young children
- We we should start early
- The advantages of book ownership
- Why children should own physical copies of books
- Why South African children should have more books at home.

Photo: Zero2Five, Rogan Ward

Our partnerships

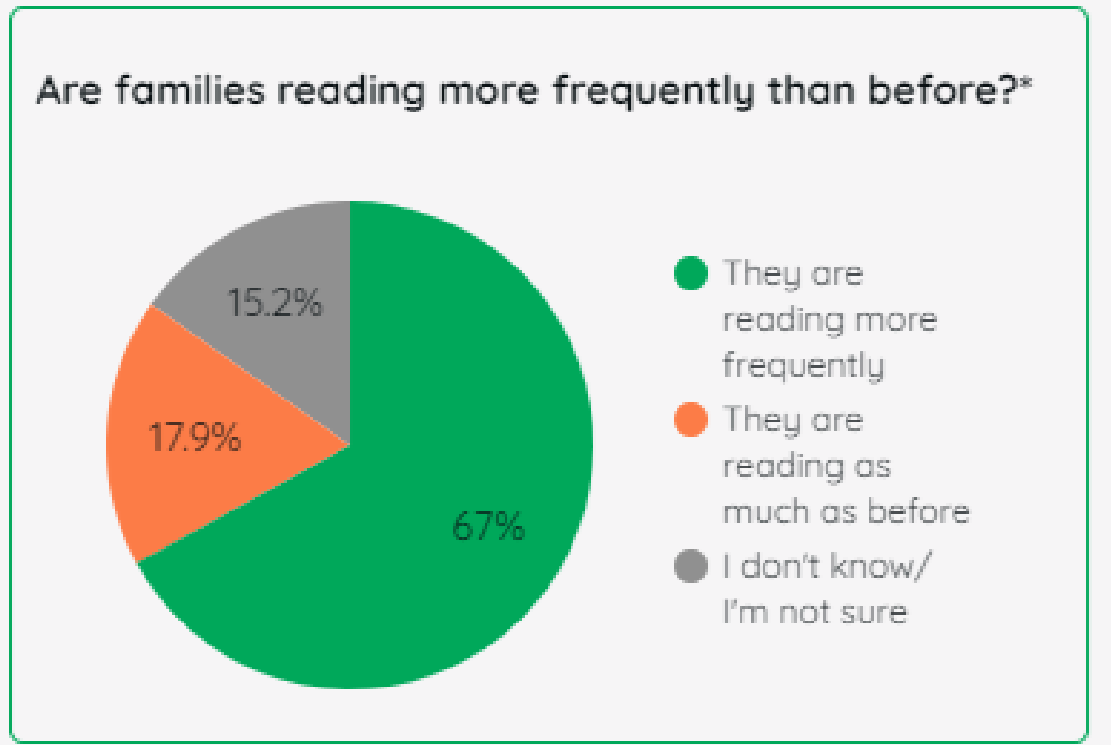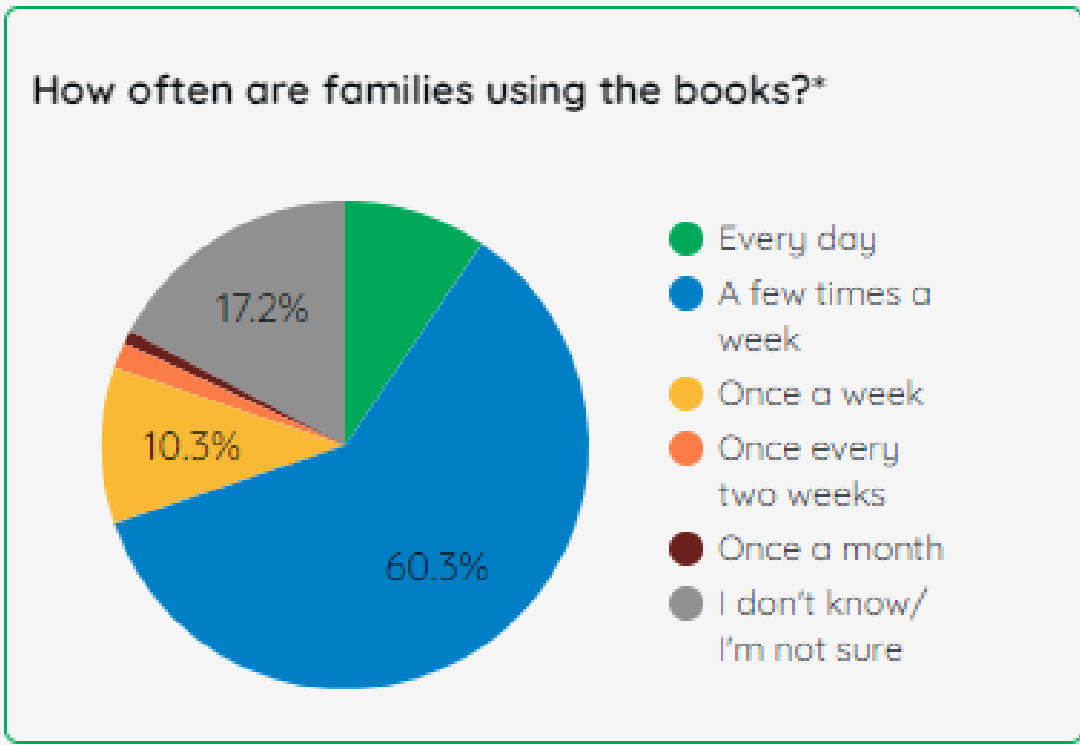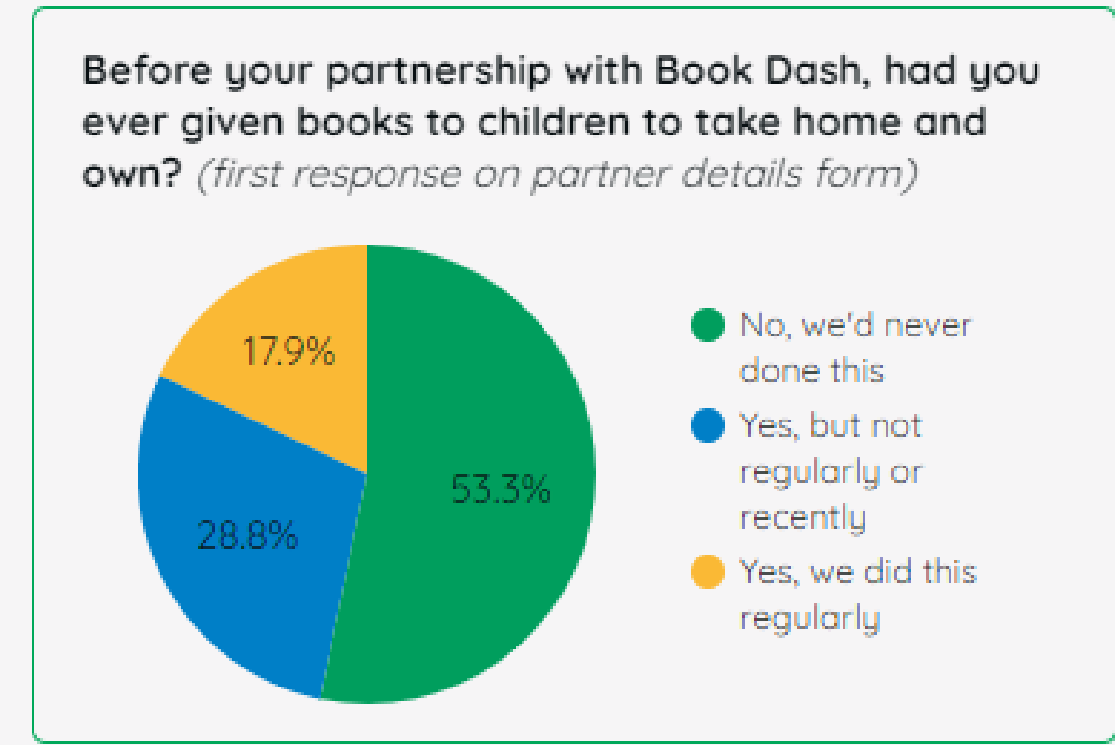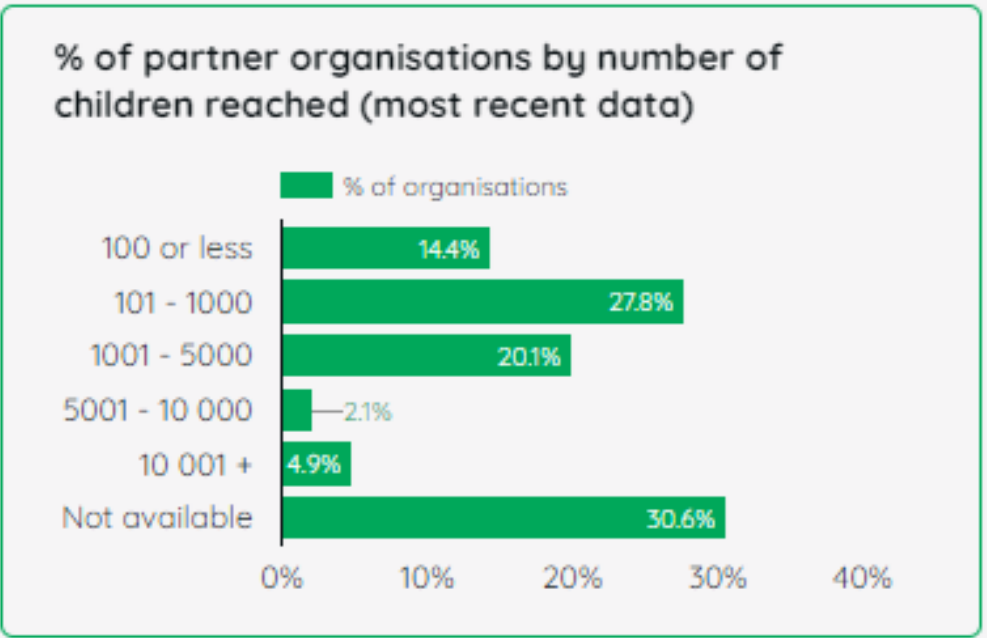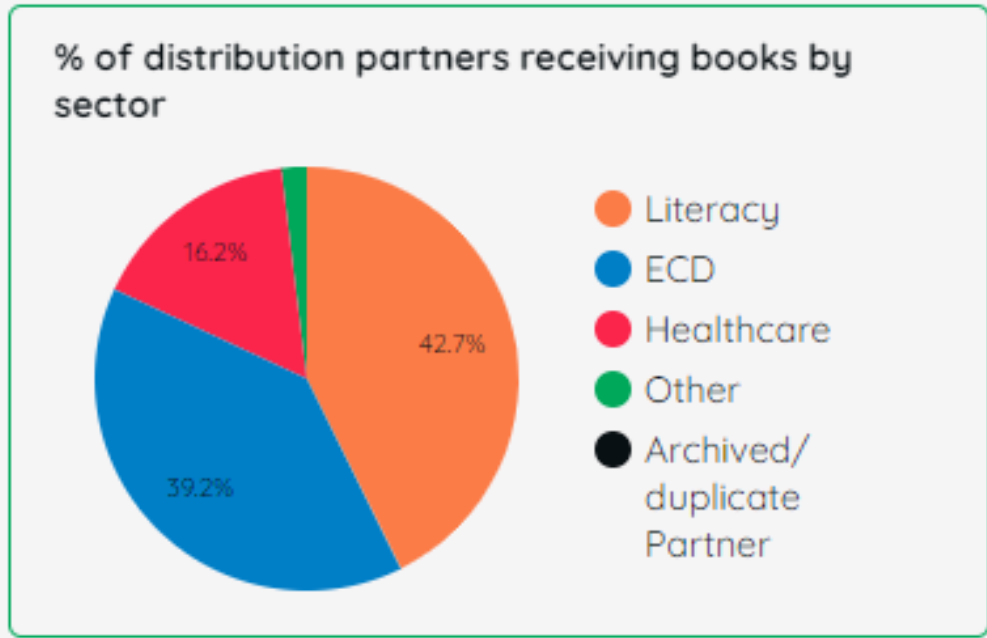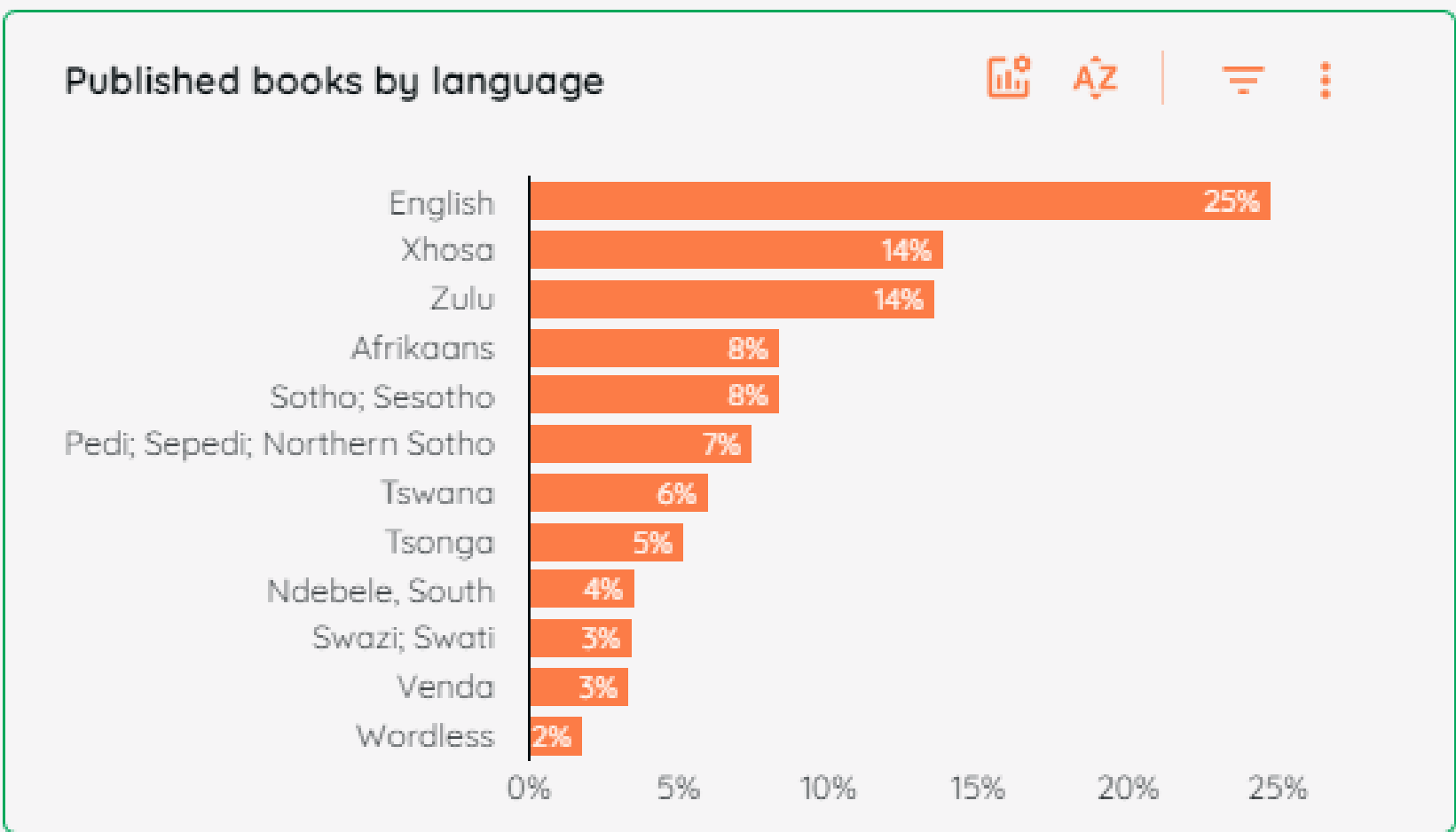| Organisation (& footprint)	Role
Creative volunteers	The lifeblood of Book Dash, our creative volunteers give their time and talent to create new African picture books, and then share them with the world. More than 400, many of them repeat participants.
Funding partners and networks	Organisations who have access to resources and networks to realise our vision. They fund the creation, translation and distribution of Book Dash books to children to own. They include individuals, SA and International Trusts, local and international corporates
Distribution Partners: physical books	We have donated books to more than 200 organisations across South Africa that work with young children and their families. These are mostly civil society organisations like ECD NGOs, literacy promotion organisations, and provincial hospitals. We select them carefully, and they are responsible for the onwards distribution of the books to families - and to work with parents and caregivers about the benefits of reading.
Content partners: digital versions and local printing	We have over 100 content partners across the globe who use the Book Dash content on their platforms or in their programmes at no cost, hugely increasing the reach of our books. They sometimes also print the books locally, thereby boosting book ownership in their own context.
Networks	We participate in networks across several different sectors: ● ECD: We are members of NECDA and NASCEE ● Publishing: we are members of IBBY ● Literacy: We are members of Litasa, and the Global Network for Early Years Book-gifting

Indicators that we monitor

We use data dashboards to monitor our main indicators; e.g. the LTD dashboard for 'Books in the World' below:

# Book Dash books in the world	Target	% of target achieved
3,738,623	3,495,000	106.97%

Programme aspect (linked to our ToC)	Monitoring indicators
Publishing Activities	# of book creation events **# new books and their source files published** # new translations published
Maintaining and Growing a Community of Diverse Creative Volunteers	# of creatives participating in Book Dash Event # creatives participating in 2 or more events (alumni)
Book Dash Books in the World	**% of books donated and sold** **% of books distributed per language** Book distribution per customer category (ECD, healthcare, Literacy)
Growing and Maintaining a Network of Reliable Distribution Partners	**# distribution partners** % of distribution partners receiving books by sector **% of partner organisations by number of children reached (most recent data)** **Geographic spread of partners / Partners per province** # partner sharing sessions
Open Content Partners (OCPs)	# OCPs Geographic spread of OCPs # OCPs who digitally re-share Book Dash Books **# OCPs who print and distribute books**

More examples from data dashboards to monitor main indicators

Published books by language

Language	%
English	25%
Xhosa	14%
Zulu	14%
Afrikaans	8%
Sotho; Sesotho	8%
Pedi; Sepedi; Northern Sotho	7%
Tswana	6%
Tsonga	5%
Ndebele, South	4%
Swazi; Swati	3%
Venda	3%
Wordless	2%

% of distribution partners receiving books by sector

- Literacy — 42.7%
- ECD — 39.2%
- Healthcare — 16.2%
- Other
- Archived/ duplicate Partner

% of partner organisations by number of children reached (most recent data)

% of organisations

Number of children reached	%
100 or less	14.4%
101 - 1000	27.8%
1001 - 5000	20.1%
5001 - 10 000	2.1%
10 001 +	4.9%
Not available	30.6%

Before your partnership with Book Dash, had you ever given books to children to take home and own? *(first response on partner details form)*

- No, we'd never done this — 53.3%
- Yes, but not regularly or recently — 28.8%
- Yes, we did this regularly — 17.9%

How often are families using the books?*

- Every day
- A few times a week — 60.3%
- Once a week — 10.3%
- Once every two weeks
- Once a month
- I don't know/ I'm not sure — 17.2%

Are families reading more frequently than before?*

- They are reading more frequently — 67%
- They are reading as much as before — 17.9%
- I don't know/ I'm not sure — 15.2%

Testimonials from Distribution Partners
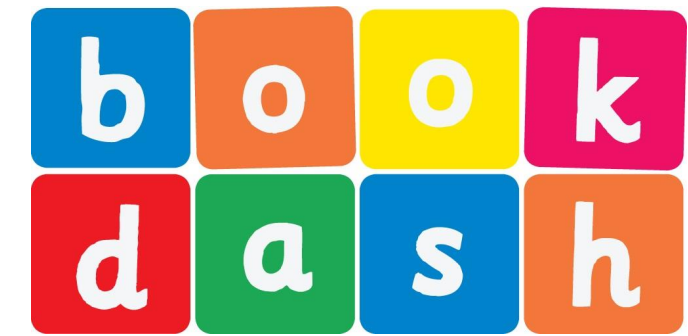
"The excitement and enthusiasm has been unbelievable. The children are so happy that they get to own their very own copies of these beautiful books. They have been reading them to their older and younger siblings. They have been doing make-believe with them being a teacher and teaching their pets or teddies. They have been engaging with their parents about the stories they were taught at school. Even though they can't read the text they remember the story told to them in school and retell it at home."
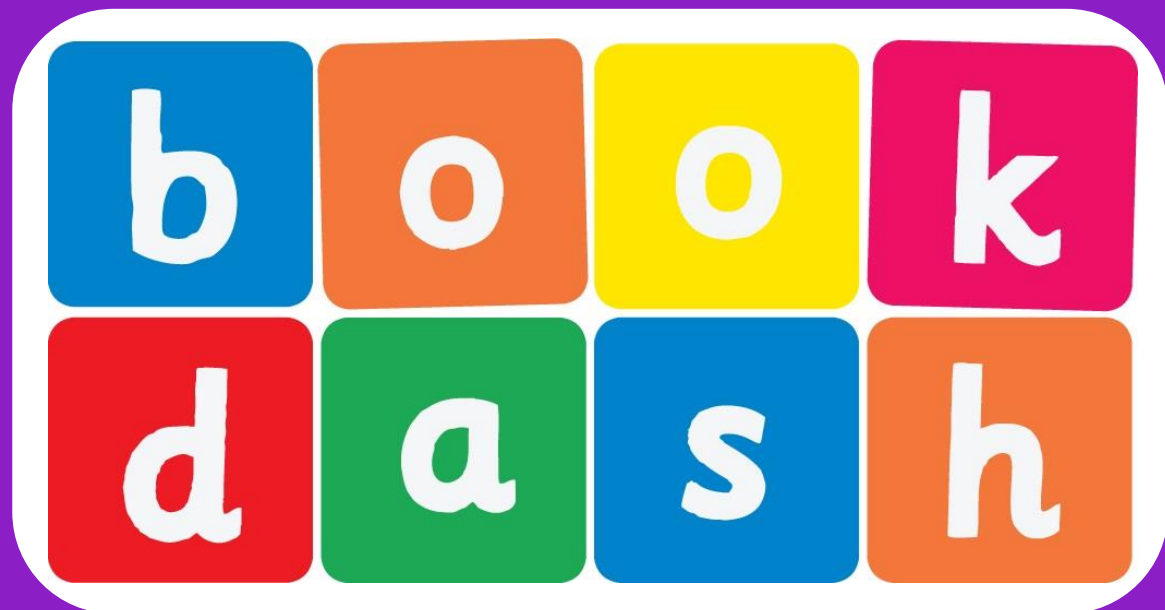
Clemengold Foundation, Limpopo

Thank you!

For more information
- *contact* us at team@bookdash.org
- *visit* us at bookdash.org
- *follow* us at @bookdash

NASCEE

For more info, visit nascee.org.za.