



Tuesdays in the Trenches Literacy Presentation Series:

Week One: 18 June 2024

Thank you to Wordworks, Book Dash and Na'ibali for being the brave presenters at our first webinar of the Tuesday in the Trenches Literacy Presentation series. It was exciting to hear about the meaningful work that all three organisations are undertaking and the positive impact of this work. Each organisation presented on their own programmes and then presented together on Yizani Sifunde, an early literacy development collaboration undertaken by Wordworks, Book Dash and Na'ibali.

Wordworks

[Wordworks](#) presented on two long-standing and successful programmes.

[Every Word Counts](#) equips caregivers and communities to support language and learning development in children from birth to five years

old. [Little Stars](#) is a classroom-based literacy and language programme for pre-Grade R learners. An evaluation of Little Stars showed that participants achieved **additional learning gains of three to five months** within six months of programme exposure, with children from deprived contexts especially benefiting from the programme.

Both programmes use a **training of trainers model** where partner organisations receive training and various reading and play resources required for programme implementation. These partner organisations then train other practitioners, facilitators, and/or caregivers. By using this model, Wordworks has been able to expand its reach far beyond what it could achieve individually. This has provided communities nationwide with much-needed opportunities to strengthen their children's language and literacy development.

<https://www.wordworks.org.za/> email: info@wordworks.org.za



Na'ibali

[Na'ibali](#) presented on **Siyafunda, a multi-partner programme**, in KwaZulu-Natal that will support 800 parents/caregivers and their children under the age of six, and 350 ECD practitioners to increase the number of children on track to develop skills that contribute to **school readiness**. Siyafunda's approach will include parent/caregiver and practitioner training and follow-up support, home visits, material provision and the development of edutainment resources in isiZulu.



This multi-faceted approach, and Nal'ibali's commitment to engaging closely with all community stakeholders from initial planning stages, highlights the organisation's recognition of and insight into the benefits of an ecosystem approach and the input and role of all community members.

<https://nalibali.org/>

email: info@nalibali.org

Book Dash

[Book Dash](https://bookdash.org/) is driven by its vision that in South Africa, **every child should own a hundred books by the age of five**. It has been internationally awarded for its innovative publishing model that condenses the traditional publishing



process into 12-hour sprints and has reduced traditional publishing costs by 80%. Books Dash has published

200 original storybooks, translated into 11 South African languages. Digital books are freely available online. Printed books are distributed nationwide through over 200 community partners. The success of this

network highlights the value of working with other organisations who are positioned to complement and strengthen an organisation's impact. Book Dash can focus on publishing and printing books confident that, through its partners, children receive engaging books in the language most familiar to them. By the end of July 2024, Book Dash will have printed an incredible **4.2 million books**.

<https://bookdash.org/>

email: team@bookdash.org

Yizani Sifunde

[Yizani Sifunde](#) is a multilayered, **early literacy support project in the Eastern Cape** currently in its fifth and final year of implementation. The project resulted from Book



Dash, Nal'ibali and Wordworks individually responding to a request for proposals from Liberty Community Trust. The Trust identified that the three organisations' mandates could complement each other in structuring a multifaceted, holistic early literacy intervention that serves children aged four to five and their teachers, parents and surrounding communities. Yizani Sifunde adopted a three-pronged approach:

- Providing **reading resources** to ECDs, community members and participating children, with each child receiving a minimum of 25 Book Dash storybooks.
- Working with local implementing partners to **train** ECD practitioners on Wordworks' Little Stars programme and train volunteers to facilitate Nal'ibali reading clubs.
- **Providing support and modelling**. Implementing partners visit and support ECD centres and practitioners. Nal'ibali conducts weekly storytelling sessions at each ECD and their community reading clubs promote literacy practices in homes and communities.

Eight months of Yizani Sifunde input has translated into an average of between **3.8 and six months of additional learning** for children and as much as a year of additional learning for the most vulnerable learners. Despite the complexities and challenges that come with implementing a large intervention with multiple collaborating partners, the programme has achieved great success. This success highlights the



value of organisations **combining their respective expertise** to support literacy development in a holistic way that creates more positive impact than would have been achieved by organisations working individually.

Final reflections

- **Well-thought out strategies and innovative approaches** are crucial in working in a complex, resource-constrained environment. Book Dash’s successful publishing model shows how rethinking traditional approaches can drastically improve a programme’s achievements and impact.
- **Monitoring and evaluation are essential.** Unless we identify and analyse progress and impact, we cannot build on successes or learn from failures. The benefit of using and adapting existing tools to individual organisation needs was highlighted in Nal’ibali, Wordworks and Yizani Sifunde’s use of DataDrive 2030’s Early Learning Measurement (ELOM) tools. These indicators are potentially useful to other ECD organisations. Further information is available on DataDrive 2030’s [website](#).
- Nal’ibali, Wordworks and Book Dash each have clear areas of expertise within ECD. Their **willingness to collaborate** with other organisations, individuals and communities has allowed them to maximise the impact of their expertise. Nal’ibali’s engagement with ward councillors, municipal libraries and tribal leaders demonstrates an awareness of needing to consult and include community members in programme planning and implementation.
- The success of Yizani Sifunde underscores the importance of NASCEE’s mission of creating a platform where NGOs can **network and identify potential collaboration partners** to enable the sharing of skills, knowledge and resources to maximise the impact of education interventions.

Presentations:

- [Wordworks](#)
- [Book Dash](#)
- [Nal’ibali](#)
- [Yizani Sifunde](#)

