



# Children's Book Network

Report for 2013



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## Introduction

Children’s Book Network (CBN) is about exactly what it says – children, books and networking. Persuading children and books to be friends is a challenge worldwide. Motivation to read is decreasing in the face of competition from a dozen different media types. But a child – or a person – has to be able to *read* before any screen, however interactive, is useful. Reading, in this information age, has become a critical skill. More important even than that, books are a place of imagination and freedom, where anything can happen and anything is possible. Reading is amazing! But only by enjoying reading will our children learn to read well – and enjoy reading more.

Founded late in 2011 by writers Gcina Mhlophe, Lesley Beake and Sindiwe Magona, CBN continues to work most passionately to bring the excitement of books and reading to children, to make reading cool.



## **How we work – Workshops, Website and Passion**

When CBN conducts a workshop, we take dynamic, exciting and challenging ideas with us. We work with communities in the rural Cederberg Mountains and in the informal settlement at Red Hill, above Simon's Town. We work with children who do not have a happy experience of books and reading. We aim to change that.

A typical workshop might include drummers, a performance poet, motivational speakers, writers and illustrators and young mentors. Activities range from photojournalism to map-making, writing poetry, observing, debating – and just sitting quietly, listening. Our participants listen with their whole being. The pictures of them on our website are echoed by our memories of their eyes – bright and interested, focused and often moved or amused. This approach can change the way children think about books and stories, about reading.

Books are at the core of every workshop – books, and texts taken from books that may be too long or too difficult in their entirety. We want our children to hear beautiful words, beautiful ideas. We want to switch them on to reading and the pleasure and fun of it as well as the usefulness.



The process has to be given time – we like to hold workshops over two full days with a story event somewhere in between. It needs follow-up. We need to go back - frequently. In Clanwilliam, for example, where we have an extended programme for 2014, we will alternate the workshops between children in Grades 5, 6, and 7 (our target age group of ten to twelve year-olds) and have Saturday Sessions where anyone in that age group can come and take part in related activities. In addition there is a story celebration associated with each workshop, which may be attended by a much larger number of children.

Our website is also critical – and will become more useful as time passes and more work by children is published there. For information of any kind, but most particularly details of the three main points – Children, Books and Network, please go to the following links.

- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/children>
- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/books>
- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/network>





## Overview of 2013

2013 was an astonishing year. Children's Book Network outgrew capacities by quite a long stretch. But we managed to keep up, just. Looking back at the galleries of pictures in the CBN archive is like flicking through a scrapbook of a much longer space in time. All the photographs are of children; children reading, writing, smiling, listening; children having fun. We wound up the year with a sense that we were indeed going in the right direction. CBN is working.

### Need for role models

We have been struck by how deeply impoverished some children are, sometimes literally, but very often culturally as well. Their sole conduit to another world is television. Croc E Moses, one of our most enthusiastic workshop facilitators, asked a group to draw a diagram of what was important to them in the context of home. It instantly became clear that these children were *desperately* in need of role models.



## Workshops – Cederberg Stories

Our challenging programme has got off to a good start with nine workshops planned in the Cederberg and one already accomplished there. For Heritage Month in September 2013 we held a two-day workshop on *Landscape, Story and ME!* that was attended by 25 registered children – and about 25 more secret infiltrators! Turning children away is impossible – especially when they are this keen. We tried to limit the numbers for the working sessions, which were held in three venues at the Clanwilliam Living Landscape Project, but allowed the story-hungry to join us for all the books and story sessions (and the lunches and snacks).

For more information, please go to:

- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/news/2013/10/25/cederberg-stories-one-september-2013>











The results were stunning. The children rotated between the three groups, coming together for book and story sessions at the beginning and end of each and enjoying substantial breakfast and lunch. These children don't need to be told to 'come hungry'. We always make sure our participants have plenty to eat – breakfast, cooked lunch, juice and fruit. (And a huge cake at the end!)

We also provide entertainment – in this case riel-dancers from Elizabethfontein Primary School. (Riel is the traditional local folk dancing with roots extending back to the Khoi people who once lived in these mountains). Have a look at:

- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/news/2013/10/31/stories-and-reels>

Eight more workshops are planned, beginning late February 2014 when the heat in the area might (maybe) abate slightly.

- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/news/2013/06/01/cederberg-stories-proposal>
- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/news/2013/06/21/cederberg-stories-activities-plan>
- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/news/2013/09/09/cederberg-stories-children>

*This project is being run with the help and participation of Cederberg Municipality and their Senior Librarian Natalie Leens and with the Clanwilliam Living Landscape Project.*





## **Workshop – Red Hill Madiba Tribute December 10<sup>th</sup> 2013**

When Madiba died, the effect on the whole world was shattering. South Africa went into a period of deep and almost universal mourning. We had planned a children's story celebration on the day that turned out to be the day of the state funeral. It was unthinkable to cancel – but difficult to continue.

We brought seventy children by bus from Red Hill informal settlement to Simon's Town library and about ten more arrived with librarians and colleagues. We didn't want the children to be sad – just to make them think, and remember. We allocated five minutes for a tribute that would begin the event. Croc E Moses and Lesley Beake read some words written by children about Madiba five years before. Anele Mhlahlo played his violin softly. The children were silent, watching; listening. It was an incredibly moving experience for all who participated. We followed the tribute with storytelling, singing, drumming, more violin, dancers and drummers from Chris Hani High School in Khayelitsha and music from members of the UCT Choir.

To read about it, please go to:

- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/news/2013/12/11/dance-madiba>
- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/news/2014/01/13/legacy>











## Small workshops

We also had the opportunity to work with children at a rural farm school – Elizabethfontein Primary School, affectionately known as Betjiesfontein.

- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/news/2013/11/08/class-visit-elizabethfontein-school>

In addition CBN made several visits to rural libraries and schools in the Cederberg area in company with Natalie Leens, senior librarian, including a birthday celebration of Citrusdal Libraries.

A new small-workshop project, Saturday Stories, has been initiated as a result of extreme pressure from would-be readers! One of the most rewarding and emotional responses comes from the children who come back – bringing their friends, their mothers – and asking: ‘Is there reading today?’

- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/news/2013/11/11/stories-saturdays>





## School Visits

CBN always accepts invitations! We visited Timour Hall Primary in Cape Town as well as participating in the schools programme of the Franschhoek Literary Festival's children's programme (four school visits).



## Website

We launched the website mid-year after funding support from Rotary Skellefteå, Hugh Clarke and Mary Cadogan and the Jowell Family Charitable Trust made it possible to complete the technical design and initial content. There is enormous potential to develop this website into a more vibrant source of information and – most importantly – a place where children's own writing can be published. We have begun! There is still much to do. For some examples of children's writing go to:

- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/news/2013/11/08/how-we-feel>
- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/news/2013/10/24/listen-me>



## Contact with other organizations

There have been two meetings of the informal group of reading organizations first proposed by CBN in March last year when we met with six other groups working with different aspects of children and reading. The unanimous decision was to have a further meeting in November, which we duly did at the Centre for the Book. Because we all work with different age groups, there is huge potential to work together in the future. We also attended functions organised by Nal’i bali, Centre for the Book and ASSITEJ. Another meeting is planned for March 2014. For a list of organizations with which we are connected, please look at:

- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/network/friends>



## **Rotary**

Rotary Cape of good Hope has remained a stalwart and supportive partner to CBN, backing us up in every possible way and, in particular, handling our financial matters. It is immensely reassuring for funders to know that donations are administered by such an impeccable partner. We thank them for advice, support, mentoring – and listening.

## **Rotary Dictionary Donation**

We were very happy to be part of a dictionary donation project with Rotary and have been enjoyably handing out copies to schools and libraries in the Cederberg region and to children at Red Hill.

- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/news/2013/08/26/rotary-cape-good-hope-dictionary-donation-clanwilliam>





## **Rotary Skellefteå**

Discussions continue about the very exciting iPad project, which will be funded by this Rotary group. This will be made more immediate when one of the Rotary committee (Philip Cohen) brings a teacher and four 18 year-old students from Skellefteå at the beginning of March 2104. We will be visiting Red Hill, working with young people there and showing them how CBN operates. There will also be an evening of stories and music and sharing before they move on to look at other Rotary projects in Cape of Good Hope.

## **The iPad Project**

Digicape (suppliers of Mac products in Cape Town) are lending us five iPads for 4 months and providing free training so that we can trial this project at Red Hill with young people there. For two days, during a visit from Rotary Skellefteå, we will work in teams to produce interviews, personal writing, and poetry, short films and pictures so that we can show what we can do. If the project is successful, we hope that Rotary Skellefteå will follow through on the idea of buying iPads for CBN.





### Swedish CBN

In March of 2013, Sindiwe Magona and Lesley Beake were invited on a ten-day reciprocal visit to Sweden (we entertained five visitors from there in 2012). In a packed programme, we visited dozens of venues, talking to children and adults in libraries and participating in the Ummëa Book Festival. Of particular interest were workshops with refugee communities, who share language and cultural difficulties with some parts of South Africa. We learned an enormous amount about practical management of reading promotion, especially about how much we share problems in reading across cultures.

- <http://www.childrensbook.co.za/news/2013/03/25/cbn-heads-sweden>





When CBN went to Sweden, we took a donation (the other direction, for a change). We wanted to show that we do indeed produce and publish good books for Africa *in* Africa. We also felt that some of these titles were appropriate for children from Africa who find themselves in Sweden and for Swedish children who are interested in Africa. Staff at the *County Library of Västerbotten* had an exhibition mounted within a day and it subsequently toured the county libraries. Our book editor, Jay Heale, orchestrated the whole thing, publishers gave generously (and promptly) and the KLM clerk who advised us how to get round the system at the airport made sure that the whole exercise cost nothing. It was such a pleasure to be able to give back just a little to a country that has given so much.



### **Franschhoek Literary Festival**

CBN took part in school visits during the festival for children that precedes the main festival, visiting four schools on different socio-economic levels. We also hosted a symposium with other organizations working in reading.





## Translation Project

This is not forgotten! We simply lack the person-power to initiate this as well as the website, workshops, funding proposals and administration. For the time being, we have taken the tab off the website – it will be back!

## Future plans

CBN has already begun ambitious plans for workshops at Red Hill and in the Cederberg. (See Appendix \*) and we have plans to be involved both with the Red Hill Library and the community. We are currently in negotiation with the Community Forum about how this will take place.



## **Staff and running expenses**

Our most urgent need is additional staff to manage aspects of CBN. Gcina Mhlophe and Sindiwe Magona are patrons and keep a benevolent eye on proceedings. Richard Parsons is a very active board member, responsible for governance issues and Lesley Beake is Director. This is not enough person-power for an organisation of this scope.

We have hopes that we will be able to appoint Anele Mhlahlo as Workshop Manager soon and are interviewing candidates for the position of Website Manager. Otherwise we work (with some difficulty) only with volunteers and occasional part-time help on an hourly basis.

## **Workshop manager**

Will manage the process of workshops from start to finish – and ‘finish’ includes the follow-up after each workshop and seeing the completion of each project.

Anele Mhlahlo is already working for us on a semi-volunteer basis at the moment as workshop manager. He is a professional violinist, twenty-one years old and from Imezamu Yethu in Hout Bay. His passion and commitment to working with CBN are beyond question. He is the right person for the job – we just have to raise the funding to make it happen – (40 hours per month at R300 per hour = R12 000 per month).



### **Website technical manager**

We have had various people in this position, also partly as volunteers. We need to identify somebody who can take this on as a fixed hour-per-month job. The job will involve uploading material onto the website and liaison with the workshop manger on additional communication with children, parents, communities and the public. We are currently looking at the social media aspect of this. We have a Facebook and Twitter facility, but it needs to be driven. Children mention that they like What's App as their medium of choice. (40 hours per month at a rate of between R150 and R300 per hour).

### **Website editor and children's publisher**

Will work with the children's writing, getting it – and it's illustrations to the technical website manager. This is immensely time consuming and needs a lot more attention than we have been able to give it. (50 hours per month at R350 per hour)

### **Director**

We also need to find a fee for the job of meeting, connecting, administering and following up for a limited number of hours (10 hours a month at R400 per hour).





## Amended Operating expenses

	2014		
	Hours/ month	Rate/ hour	Monthly total
<b>Staff costs</b>			
Director	10	R 400,00	R 4 000,00
Editor / Publisher	50	R 350,00	R 17 500,00
Workshop Manager	40	R 300,00	R 12 000,00
Website management	15	R 300,00	R 4 500,00
<b>Monthly total: Staff</b>			<b>R 38 000,00</b>
<b>Annual total - Staff</b>			<b>R 456 000,00</b>
<b>General running expenses</b>			
Office expenses, stationery, etc.			R 300,00
Telephone			R 1 000,00
Petrol and travelling expenses			R 1 000,00
Printing			R 1 000,00
Website domain registration			R 100,00
Website maintenance			R 450,00
Data for 3G and cellphones			R 500,00
Subscriptions			R 200,00
Insurance (incl public liability)			R 400,00
<b>Monthly total: running exp.</b>			<b>R 4 950,00</b>
<b>Annual total: running exp</b>			<b>R 59 400,00</b>
<b>Total operating exp/month</b>			<b>R 42 950,00</b>
<b>Total operating exp/annum</b>			<b>R 515 400,00</b>



## **Funding**

Our funding proposal for 2014 is attached (Appendix 1), as well as our financials for 2013 and 2012. We have been managing on a shoestring budget, getting by with a lot of help from our friends. But this is not viable for the future. If CBN is to make the difficult transition between charity and NPO, we need to be properly funded. Funders so far include:

- **The Swedish Arts Council (R65 000)**

Swedish supporters of CBN applied for, and received, funding from The Swedish Arts Council and SIDA. This funding was used for joint workshops both in South Africa (2012) when four librarians and a storyteller came to share their expertise and in 2013 in Sweden when Sindiwe Magona and Lesley Beake went to Sweden for an intensive programme of training and sharing.

The Swedish Arts Council and Sida have four times launched a call for applications for cooperation between cultural operators in Sweden and partners in Botswana, China, India, Indonesia, Namibia and South Africa.

The overall objective is to strengthen cooperation within the field of culture between Sweden and Botswana, China, Indonesia, Namibia and South Africa, with the aim to contribute to poverty reduction and equitable and sustainable global development. Each project which receives support shall contribute to creating sustainable relations between Sweden and the cooperation country. Shared ownership along with mutual interest and division of responsibility are of central importance in enabling the relationship to become self-supporting in the long term.

**Contact person** - *Gunilla Brinck / Bibliotekskonsulent/Library adviser / Länsbiblioteket i Västerbotten/County Library of Västerbotten / E-post/e-mail: [gunilla.brinck@regionvasterbotten.se](mailto:gunilla.brinck@regionvasterbotten.se)*



- **The Cecil Jowell Charitable Trust (R33 000)**

The Cecil Jowell Charitable Trust kindly donated funding to help with the start-up costs of the website. Without their help, we would not be online today. A sincere thank you to their board for their support and belief in the project.

- **Rotary Skellefteå (Under negotiation, approximately R75 000)**

We have been in contact with this Rotary Club for some time – and Sindiwe and Lesley visited them during their trip to Sweden. They have raised funding for two projects:

- To bring technology to the workshops in the form of tablets and e-readers that can be preloaded with texts and workshop materials around the theme of the workshop.
- To assist with translation of texts into different indigenous languages. We are experimenting with the kind of texts and the technology we need to be able to do this. Twelve translations have already been completed from English into isiXhosa.

- **Hugh Clarke and his wife Mary Cadogan (R50 000)**

Hugh and Mary provided funding that, among other things, enabled the website to go forward through technical editing and content creation.

- **The Smith Family (R3 000)**

The Smith family donated funds and their time to the library refurbishment at Red Hill community centre and have been supportive of the workshops there.

- **University of Cape Town and Government of W. Cape (R10 000)**

This amount is specifically to increase the input of both teaching staff and students in the Cederberg Stories Project in Clanwilliam.





- **Parsons Family (R50 000)**

The Parsons family have consistently, and generously, helped with workshop funding.

- **Rotary Cape of Good Hope**

The Rotary Cape of Good Hope have given invaluable help by offering to handle all donations and finances for us until we have our own Not for Profit Organization (NPO) status. This has given us a secure and credible means of handling funding.

- **Donations in kind**

We would also like to express gratitude for donations in kind, discounts offered and endless willingness on the part of the public to help.



## **Conclusion**

We are enormously excited by the future. We might never be a national, or even a regional organization, but we hope to reach many hundreds of children and significant numbers of librarians and teachers. With steady growth, we can expand this number until we can feel that we really are making a difference.

### **What we learned in 2013**

We need more people and (naturally) more money to keep on growing at the rate we have been.

We need to find ways of extending the number of children we reach. We are planning Saturday morning sessions to increase this number – and also bigger story events for a wider group of children in each of our venues. We have to, for logistical reasons, stick to around 25 children in a workshop situation, but we can expand that in other ways to give more children exposure.

We cannot successfully continue without a dedicated website editor and publisher of children's work. This is time consuming and needs a sensitive eye.

We need a stronger support infrastructure for financial planning and record keeping, and administration.

We need to ensure that, if one person is taken out of the equation, we can continue. CBN was slowed down by the serious illness of two of its main protagonists during 2013.

















## **Sincere thanks to:**

### **Red Hill**

Liz Danks (Red Hill Community)  
Patricia Manzana (Red Hill Community)  
Nonzukiso Manzana (Red Hill Community)  
Headman Breakfast (Red Hill Community)  
Phumla Bakajana (Red Hill Community)  
Anele Mhlahlo (Violinist and volunteer)  
Croc E Moses (Performance poet and musician)  
Marlene Winberg (Storyteller and photographs)  
Members of the choir of University of Cape Town  
Basse, Kabbo and Suleiman, drummers from Senegal and friends of CBN  
Drummers, singers and dancers from Chris Hani High School (in  
Khayelitsha)

### **Clanwilliam**

Cederberg Municipal Libraries  
Di and Dave Mohr (photographs and spreadsheet advice)  
Natalie Leens (Senior Librarian)  
Lizel Koopman (Children's Librarian)  
Clanwilliam Living Landscape Project  
Professor John Parkington  
Sarah Chaimowitz (Logistical support and admin)  
Principal and staff of Elizabethfontein Primary School  
Principal and staff of Sederberg Primary School  
Peter Slingsby (Author and Cartographer, workshop facilitator)





## **General and Funding**

Rotary Cape of Good Hope

Richard Parsons (SA) and Parsons Family

Hugh Clarke and Mary Cadogan (Ireland)

Cecil Jowell Charitable Family Trust (SA)

Rotary Skellefteå (Sweden)

SIDA (Swedish aid agency)

Swedish Arts and Culture

Philip Cohen

Members of the Swedish CBN support group

Mr Dudley Smith (UK) for funding support for Red Hill

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University of Cape Town and W Cape Provincial Government

DG Murray Trust (for dictionaries with Rotary)

Jay Heale (Book Editor)

Chelsea O'Regan (technical support)

Lyndall Thwaites (technical support)

Rosemary Bangham (Design)

Emily Hallinan (Support)



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Lesley Beake  
Cape Town, January 2014

