

Children's Book Network

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



Books to Children – Children to Books



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Children:

They keep coming. We suspended workshops during the holiday season (children away visiting Eastern Cape family and CBN workers needing a break!) but have already given two workshops in February. During 2019 we held 21 workshops in total, and worked with just over 1 191 children in Stanford, De Kop, Zwelihle (Hermanus) and in Mitchell's Plain and a further 69 children in Stanford in February 2020. (Workshop register and stats for the year can be found under RECORDS on our website as PDF files.)



Little CBN

Are just as keen! At any workshop, we have a high proportion of younger children (who don't fit into CBN because they basically can't read and don't understand English). We accept them gratefully.



CBN in waiting

CBN Facilitators and helpers:

We are lucky enough to still have Wilien van Zyl (and long may that last) and she has just been joined by Lisa Witherden, a qualified teacher who has worked in curricular development in environmental work for an NGO, and who is looking for work – and will accept being paid on an hourly basis as funds are available. This makes an excellent team as the three of us have different skills and priorities.

Division of labour:

- Lesley Beake: Director's duties, PRO, fund-raising and development of materials, website and new ideas. Reports and feedback to board and donors.
- Elsa Gebhard: Financials
- Wilien van Zyl: Board Secretary, Admin of workshops including registers and monitoring and evaluation and general administration of CBN. Book Club from top to bottom. Stock control and preparing and ordering for toolboxes
- Lisa Witheren: Developing materials, social media, some website work, fund-raising and record keeping of funders
- Vuyokasi and Phumlazi Lose: Workshop and choir facilitators, general workshop facilitators, role models, general crowd control and catering duties
- Phumlazi Asande: Workshop activities, songs and clapping games, catering.



Our new team member, Lisa Witherden, with our CBN children

Teen Team (teenaged volunteers)

High School children are keen to help – but very pressurized by work and sport. We have enthusiastic support from children at Hermanus High School who come when they can. Surprisingly, this often includes more boys than girls.

During 2018-2019 the Teen Team was led by Nyasha Makwarimba, who subsequently worked as an intern between finishing Matric and starting college. She injected a great spirit into all activities, and we miss her input.



Serious Debate of, clearly, important issues (Nyasha and friends at Zwelihle workshop)



Some volunteers and helpers with their 'medals'

Workshops:

Venue

We have continued with the regular smaller workshops at our old venue Norfolk Square (previously Butterfly Centre) which we rent for R2 000 per month. This means keeping our existing office and store. There are, however, no tables or chairs in the classroom we can use. We are about to launch a local funding drive to remedy this.

Smaller workshops

There are no plans at the moment for the old-style day-workshops, which are much more expensive, but we may do something in the holidays if we can find local funding to enable this.

It is clear that longer workshops have more impact as the children have more time to absorb ideas and books, but they are expensive. We can see (and they tell us!) that the children would like more workshops more regularly.

A factor to be taken into account is the much-discussed fact that the attention span of children (and adults) is dropping. We have seen this, particularly in the last few years as access to smartphones allows children instant access to, say, Justin Bieber. And if he doesn't arrive quickly enough, they can summon Michael Jackson instead. Our world, and consequently their world, has changed beyond recognition since CBN began.

- *Note: Yes, our children come from impoverished communities, but cellphones can be cheap – and very aspirational. They don't all have one, but many do – and they certainly have access to them.*

During workshops we are also able to trial and test material for the forthcoming toolboxes, as well as improving the Books and Stories toolbox materials.

Workshops for teacher-librarians and reading activists:

We also gave three workshops for teacher-librarians and reading activists. One was in Franschhoek (Groendal Community Library) with 21 very interested people and two in Mitchell's plain with ten community leaders, and representatives of libraries and organizations promoting reading. The second of these was with attending children so the participants could see the real effects of a CBN workshop.



Writing the song in Mitchell's Plain

Monitoring and Evaluation

We at last had the resources and staff to develop a proper M&E system. Our Administrator, Wilien van Zyl, recorded all children attending our workshops and noted demographic details that enable us to make decisions for 2020 on a more factual basis. Each workshop is fully recorded and documented, with pie-charts to make things visually simpler.

Wilien also took on the considerable work of creating a book club. We bought books with donated funds, received books in lieu of a friend's wedding presents ... slowly the collection grows. The collection needs to greatly increase, but a significant beginning has been made. The books are discreetly graded, so that we can record what level each member is reading at and plot their progress without them being too conscious of grades and levels.

(The workshop documentation, graphs and spreadsheets can be found as a PDF under REPORTS on our website – www.childrensbook.co.za)

Toolboxes:

As a direct result of the ZA-FM Public Interest Fund (KPMG) awarding significant funding, we have been able to distribute 20 toolboxes to communities in need of books for reading with comprehension and enjoyment. Our long-term colleague, workshop facilitator and Associate Board Member, Janine van Rooi has facilitated three workshops in Mitchell's Plain with Lesley to inform and train local people working with children to improve their access to books and reading. Eight toolboxes have now been distributed to them so that they can confer and work together to back each other up. We are very proud to have begun this long-held ambition to spread and share our methods with others.

2019 Toolbox Register

		AREA	DONOR
1	Previous (2018)	Khayelitsha	Rotary Newlands
2		Red Hill	Rotary Newlands
3		Red Cross Children's	Crankhandle Club
4		Stanford	Rotary Stanford
5	(2019)	Hoopland School	KPMG
6		Butterfly Centre	KPMG
7		Mitchell's Plain	KPMG
8		Mitchell's Plain	KPMG
9		Mitchell's Plain	KPMG
10		Mitchell's Plain	KPMG
11		Mitchell's Plain	KPMG
12		De Bron School	KPMG
13		Mitchell's Plain	KPMG
14		Mitchell's Plain	KPMG
15		De Kop settlement	KPMG
16		Lusiskisi (E Cape)	KPMG
17		Mitchell's Plain	KPMG
18		Okkie Smuts	KPMG
19		Mitchell's Plain	KPMG
20		Michell's Plain	KPMG
21		Franschhoek	KPMG



Wilien – hard at work, as always

Book Club

We realized early in 2019 that we needed a way of assessing the children's progress. A Book Club was the obvious answer and Wilien sprang into action with a methodical scheme to make this work effectively. The books (kept in our office at the back of the building) are discreetly graded so that we can assess what level each member of the club is choosing. This helps us to measure their progress – as does a Q&A session with Wilien while they are returning their books. It takes time to educate the children into the concept of bringing the books back! But progress is ongoing.



Choosing books

Financial

We have money in the bank, and the annual financials will be completed soon. We hope to finish the financial year (February 2020) around the R50 000 level after end-of-the-year payments.

Fundraising

A big push is about to begin. We have the documentation in place and – more importantly – a new fund-raiser in Lisa Witherden who will work with Lesley on this. We need money urgently to continue with our very successful and exciting programmes, particularly the toolboxes.

Input from Rotweil Fellows (German Rotary)

Thanks to board member Hildegard Witbooi, we have received additional funds from these very good friends and a similar wine promotion has been arranged with Springfontein Wine Estate and the Fellows as happened last year. LB met with some of them during their visit earlier this month (arranged by Hildegard) and was able to make personal contact. This is the third visit and they have expressed continued interest in CBN and our children. We owe them a huge thank you!

Very importantly, social media is about to step forward (under the direction of Lisa) and this important, and so far, neglected means of raising support will fully implemented.

(Financials for 2019 will appear shortly under RECORDS as a PDF on www.childrensbook.co.za)

Projected spending in 2020

Workshops

We have scheduled two small workshops per month in Stanford – which works out to around R50 000 in 2020. We have to work hard to raise that much money.

Additionally, there will be workshops in Mitchell's Plain on an occasional basis and training workshops with the existing toolboxes.

We will also be doing more staff training for our community facilitators.

Toolboxes

We will be monitoring the effectiveness of the 20 toolboxes distributed in 2019. The new toolbox priority is to create the two new toolboxes that have been on the horizon for three years now – Land and Time and Environment. Planning is underway and we will be asking for funding for this part of our work with some urgency. Research and Development has to have a place in our budget.

Priorities

We will clearly be spending more on remuneration for this marvelous team we are fortunate to have. We will not be spending heavily on additional toolboxes until specific funding comes in for this but will be buying books and materials for the prototypes of two new boxes (Time and Landscape and The Environment). Work on these has already begun. Additionally, there will be more supplementary material going into the first toolbox.

Equipment Needed

- Plastic tables and chairs, cushions and rugs. More teddy-bears!
- Signage and a better public image (leaflet, cards etc.)
- We need to update some equipment and allow for some staff training.

We are working on costing for this.



Toolboxes ready to go



Handing out the last four toolboxes for Mitchell's Plain reading community



CBN's home at Norfolk Place – soon to be lived up!

Website

Our website continues to be a massive resource and means of communication. It takes time – and was a bit neglected during some of the busier times of 2019. We are catching up rapidly and the many pictures inspire us retrospectively. We will also be activating our newsletter again – and making good resolutions to keep that up to date too!

www.childrensbook.co.za

Projects in 2020

Franschhoek Young readers 14 & 15 May

We will be participating in this with our Mitchell's Plain colleagues in a round-table discussion called Meeting of Minds. This will be chaired by Janine van Rooi and will have various speakers from groups working with our age group (10,11 to 12) and will focus on real reading intervention.

Project with IZIKO Museums and VOX Cape Town

This has been delayed at IZIKO, which has to make a decision soon, or there will not be time to implement this long dreamed of project to integrate the museum, children and the material in our toolboxes. There are two performances planned, one in May in the Whale Well and one in September in the Planetarium. Children from Mitchell's Plain will be bussed in (by IZIKO) to take part. There is a funding-generating component to this.

Project with Cambridge University Museum's Museum in a Box

This already planned project has taken an upward swing with the news that one of our most loyal volunteers (Emily Hallinan), will be with us in July to create materials for our Time and landscape toolbox as part of a Marie Curie Post Doc which includes reference to this work.

There will be others!

Thank you to each and every one of our board, associate board, funders, friends, teen-team, helpers and well-wishers!

Lesley Beake
17 February 2020
Stanford



What – in the end – it is all about

All photographs from the CBN 2019 collection. All taken by CBN team members and Teen Team.