

Children's Book Network



Annual Report 2018

Putting children and books on the same page

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OVERALL SUMMARY FOURTH QUARTER 2019 AND FOR THE YEAR

Funding enabled Children's Book Network to grow and thrive during 2019. In fact, this has been a spectacular year of progress, improving on the efforts of six previous years of slow, steady growth. Additional funding from other sources covered operational costs.

Workshops:

We worked with a total of 1191 children in 24 workshops during the year. These took place in De Kop informal settlement, Stanford South, Zwelihle in Hermanus and in Mitchell's Plain, where we are growing a strong relationship with several reading organizations that will be taken forward into 2020.

Workshops for teacher-librarians and reading activists:

We also gave three workshops for teacher-librarians and reading activists. One was in Franschoek (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.

Our reading toolboxes have taken years of research and development. This was the year that we managed to deliver the results of that to ten recipients, with ten completed kits waiting in our office to be delivered in 2020. (The end of the

year is not a good time to deliver such resources when recipients are tired out and ready for a break.)

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 graded, so that we can record what level each member is reading at and plot their progress.

Coping with additional (younger) children

It's a nice problem to have but was difficult to deal with. Younger children are desperate to come to CBN, so we have created a Little CBN (their choice of name) to cope with these additional numbers. We have devised structures that enable us to satisfy the needs of the small ones, deal with the extra children in the correct age group who come without the required permissions forms (the pop-ins as we call them) and create a disciplined atmosphere for the workshops.

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.

CBN Choir and clapping games

The CBN choir was begun in order to create a feeling of CBN community. We always begin each session with traditional clapping games and other icebreakers. Two of our facilitators, Vuyokasi and Phumlani Lose, have truly wonderful voices and choir skills, and they lead this initiative. The choir has been requested to perform three times at functions in Stanford and are much appreciated. They wrote their own CBN song and sing this with pride whenever we have interested visitors or potential funders.

PROGRESS AGAINST IMPLEMENTATION

We delivered.

We were scheduled to give 8 workshops and actually delivered 24.

We committed to 20 toolboxes, and that has been done – with ten awaiting delivery, but complete.

We were scheduled to give three teacher-librarian workshops and did so.

PLAN FOR THE COMING YEAR

Workshops

We are now compelled, by the demand from the children, to deliver regular workshops. Twice a month would be best. We have some funding to start off the year, but fund-raising is a priority.

Toolboxes

Our Director (Lesley Beake) is already working on research and development for the next toolbox, which will be themed around Time and Landscape. There are also exciting developments around working with other organizations on this – Universities of Cambridge University (UK), being one, and Kalahari Peoples' Fund (USA), being another. This could be an important new stage in the development of Children's Book Network.

CBN Reading Game

We have had a chance to redevelop the game, making it cheaper to produce and more interesting. Played like a normal board game, it generates huge excitement. The trick is that the players have to *read*. They throw a dice to move around the board and then have to reference a set of books (included as quiet reading books in the toolbox) before they can throw again and move on. It's fun!

Training of facilitators

In two important workshops early in December, we made contact with reading and community activists in Mitchell's Plain, who were excited by the possibilities of both the

workshops and the toolboxes. We will be meeting again late in January. There will also be local training exercises with volunteers and paid assistants.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Our greatest risk is shortage of personnel and reliance on volunteers. This has been seriously compromised by banking struggles (FNB Trust account). This is no small issue and has involved very stretched helpers in endless frustrations and days of wasted time.

Planning and holding the workshops and making the toolboxes is what we do – and we do it well. The administration needs more attention – and we need to fundraise further to cover these costs. Funding for Operational Costs is notoriously difficult, but we will persevere.

Our second vulnerability is in lack of an ongoing base for our office and workshop venue. We have been fortunate to share premises with a school for children with special needs (The Butterfly Centre in Stanford) but this building is now being sold. We are taking both of these issues very seriously.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

1

Coping with the numbers of children – a good problem. We have created a structure that enables larger groups of children to be accommodated.

2

Setting up adequate monitoring and evaluation – we have that in hand. During 2018, we worked with Impact Consulting on methods of assessing how successful (or not) our methods are. During this first quarter, we have begun this process. Our existing permissions slips (signed by parents) have been modified to collect more data. Our Workshop administrator has created a system where we can access that data and see it represented visually.

Thank you.

Stanford, December 2019
Lesley Beake (Director)

PHOTOGRAPHS













