

‘The Plan, the Money ... and the WILL’

We didn't say that. Nic Spaul said it, and he was talking about reading in South Africa. It's what we most urgently need.*

(Reading organizations) ‘... are operating at a fraction of the necessary scale.’ The website of the Douglas G Murray Trust (DGMT) states that very clearly. The reference is to Nali'bali. It applies to all of us who are working to address the enormous crisis that is reading and education in South Africa.*

WHAT CHILDREN'S BOOK NETWORK (CBN) CAN OFFER

Input at the seriously neglected – and critical – level of upper primary school. Ten years-worth of tested reading materials, about half already print-ready, with more nearing completion soon. The whole three-year programme is designed to spark imagination and thinking, to introduce new and exciting ideas, to include scientific concepts in addition to literary and artistic stimulation.

These specially written stories, texts, poems, activities, and recommended books cater for the 10-12 age group, who are most at risk of losing reading as a life opportunity. (Grades 4-7 with the possibility of extending into high school.)

WHAT WE NEED

- More energy in the form of sustained and focused input including funding.
- We need to be connected to a structure that can take our work further.
- We need to find ways to publish non-commercially and distribute widely.
- We need to involve more writers, communities, and networks.
- We need action – NOW.

For links on our website, please go to:

Home www.childrensbook.co.za

- Policy Document can be found as a pdf under RECORDS.
- Workshops can be found under NEW.
- Reading Toolboxes all under TOOLBOXES
- Toolbags at: <https://www.childrensbook.co.za/2022/08/22/what-is-a-bookbag/>
- Reports Toolbox reports are at <https://www.childrensbook.co.za/category/toolbox-reports/>

We will also soon be adding:

- Reading Aloud Allowed – recordings of CBN stories being read aloud by skilled readers.
- Picture this – children's illustrations of CBN stories.

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*Interview on Fine Business News

*web page www.dgmt.co.za

FUNDING NEEDS

There are four main areas where we need funding in order to continue and grow.

1

Workshops for the children locally and as far as we can reach from Stanford in the Western Cape. (Estimate R102 000 annually.)

2

Funding to complete the Reading Toolbox project for ten-year old reader and upwards. This is already at an advanced stage of development largely due to volunteer work from the two-person team that has created it. There is a huge reservoir of material available that has been specially written for Children's Book Network. (About 600 stories, poems, non-fiction texts, activities, and ideas.) The first reading toolbox (the red box) is complete, but we need funding for the final push when external editing, design and some illustration will be added). (Estimate R100 000 to complete and print red toolboxes ready for distribution.)

TOTAL R100 00

3

Developing the Green and Blue Reading Toolboxes. These materials are already partially assembled. We need development costs – including payment to the creative team. To complete the whole series with reading for 11- and 12-year-old readers, and upwards. (Estimate R150 000 Additional polishing the material to finish and printing: R100 000 These estimates include running expenses such as rent, communications, travel – and all the normal small business expenses. TOTAL R250 000

4

Our training programme needs more input. We currently have two facilitators working in Stanford South and one in Zwelihle (Hermanus). We would like to extend this programme and create jobs for more people interested in working in their own communities to promote reading. This includes small payments to volunteers. (Estimate R75 000 annually)

Investment in reading in South Africa is one of the most effective ways of changing children's future – and our own. Any help will be vastly appreciated. Any help, however modest, can change the lives of children in South Africa, can give them the gift of reading.

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STRUCTURE

Currently we have two part-time workers (Director Lesley Beake and General Manager Wilien van Zyl) with a volunteer bookkeeper looking after the financials.

We work from a spare bedroom, a garden hut, and a dining room table. The garden hut has just been flooded, and our entire book-stock lost.

NEEDS

Clearly, if we are to expand, we must look at:

- Renting an office and store with space to assemble toolboxes.
- Increasing remuneration for key people.
- Having funds available to pay local facilitators and increase the number of these working in new communities.
- Furnishing the office with desks chairs and bookshelves.
- Adequate internet connection and communications

CONCLUSION

Children's Book Network has come very far in developing our materials, setting up systems and identifying solutions. We have reached the point where we need to grow if we are to achieve our aim of giving more children a love of reading. Bringing, in other words, books to children and children to books.
