



## Tuesdays in the Trenches Literacy Presentation Series

### Week 4: 16 July 2024

Our fourth webinar in the Tuesday in the Trenches series was again a well-attended event where we heard about innovative work from four organisations. There were many insightful questions and comments in the webinar chat that demonstrated the knowledge held by attendees and that provided evidence for an enthusiasm for learning from each other and for potential future collaborations.

#### *Seriti*

Seriti's aRe Bapaleng ("Let's Play") programme works in disadvantaged communities nationwide to equip parents and caregivers with the necessary tools, resources and information required for them to realise their crucial role in children's early childhood development and learning. aRe Bapaleng has adopted a whole society approach that recognises that **sustained impact requires a combined effort of all community members**. aRe Bapaleng trains youth who then work in ECD centres. This creates employment opportunities in communities as well as providing possibilities for children to require additional assistance in preparing them for school readiness.



aRe Bapaleng values that different stakeholders hold unique expertise. As a result, they are committed to collaborative working and have established forums where stakeholders share their respective knowledge and skills. To achieve scale in the nationwide implementation of the programme, aRe Bapaleng partners with local organisations whose **insight and community knowledge ensure that the programme responds to individual community needs**. The programme has a strong focus on literacy development but is structured to provide holistic support that encompasses nutrition, wellbeing and the creation of safe spaces for children.

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#### *Youth@WORK*

youth@WORK is an organisation dedicated to creating employment opportunities for youth, now and in the future. Their programme youthPROFILER is founded in the philosophy that **addressing initial gaps in**

**foundational literacy and numeracy skills supports learners' success as they progress through school**. The result is higher retention rates which increase opportunities for tertiary education and economic growth.



Unemployed youth are trained in administering youthPROFILER's web-based, technology driven assessment tool to measure ECD learners' school readiness and to identify gaps in children's literacy and numeracy skills at foundation phase level. The tool allows for structuring interventions that are specific to individual schools and/or educators, and adaptable to community needs. Parents/caregivers pay R100 per year and this has offered **an innovative way of securing parents/caregivers' buy-in and created a sustainable, social employment project** that provides youth with employment for a minimum of one year.

In addition to administering the tool, the programme will also work with other organisations or ECD centres to train staff to implement the programme. Youth@Work currently operates in Gauteng. It aims to expand to other provinces but this will **require implementing partners** in these provinces.

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### *Social Innovations*

Social Innovations reported on their support for the PEP Academy. This afterschool literacy and numeracy programme has reached 45 000 Grade 4 and 5 learners across Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Free State and the Western Cape. The programme, run in English, addresses the **significant challenge learners face in transitioning from their home language to English as the language of learning and teaching in Grade 4**. The programme promotes creativity in learning, is structured to ensure children have fun while still meeting their gaps in literacy and numeracy.



The programme has achieved an impressive 95% attendance rate, with reasons for this including that the programme provides learners with food and that there is a strong focus on acknowledging parents and their role in ensuring children attend the programme. All learners receive fun activity home packs over the Christmas period and these activities offer another means of maintaining their interest in the programme. These home packs and the colourful, engaging learner books for the literacy component of the programme, developed by Social Innovations' partner Halala! Education are of particular value as there is much **need for more literacy materials at intermediate phase level**.

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### *VVOB*

VVOB is working closely with the DBE and provincial department of education in supporting the implementation of the Early Grade Reading Initiative (EGRI) in KwaZulu-Natal. EGRI is a literacy intervention conducted in isiZulu home language, the majority language of KZN. The approach is underpinned by Brahm Fleisch's [Education Triple Cocktail](#) for system wide instructional reform in South Africa; the programme – currently in pilot phase in six districts in the province – is focused on providing **classroom resources, CAPS-aligned lesson plans and professional development**.



EGRI's development is based in research and analysis of other large reading interventions in South Africa. Central to the programme's development is its emphasis on recognising the **language structure differences between isiZulu and English**. Consequently, the intervention has avoided a "copy and paste" approach from English to isiZulu and developed a programme that equips educators for reading instruction in isiZulu.

VVOB has drawn on the lessons from previous interventions while accounting for the **contextual realities of operating in a resource-constrained context**. The result is professional development through blended learning which provides educators with in-person and online support as well as offering school management teams training in supporting their educators. VVOB encouraged attendees to explore two of the courses [online](#) to gain an idea of programme content.

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### *Final reflections*

Throughout the series, organisations presenting on their work at ECD level have emphasised that successful programmes have to adopt a holistic approach and work with partners to ensure that whole child development takes place and that **children's social, physical and emotional well-being is prioritised** at this fundamental life stage.

Halala's use of materials developed by organisations such as [African Storybook Project](#), [Book Dash](#) and [Nal'ibali](#), in compiling the learner books for Pep Academy's afterschool literacy programme highlights the **crucial role of open education resources** in providing children access to engaging texts.

The success and potential impact of programmes are increased through partnerships where organisations can share resources and knowledge. In particular, **community organisations are crucial in providing programmes with local, practical knowledge** to ensure community needs are met. Ensuring that programmes respond to these needs is essential if programmes are to be taken to scale successfully.

Youth@Work and VVOB both emphasised how attention needs to be paid to **building on and learning from existing programmes, rather than on replicating these programmes**. The ways in which programmes can collaborate with and learn from each other is a core focus of NASCEE and we are working hard to establish how best to support organisations to achieve this.

### *Next week:*

Join us for next week for presentations from:

- Penreach
- SAIDE African Storybook Project
- ELET

**Date & Time:** 23 July at 10:00 am

Online: [TEAMS Meeting Link](#)

Haven't registered to join the session? [Register Here](#)

