



## Tuesdays in the Trenches Literacy Presentation Series

### Week 05

#### *Penreach*

Penreach's Asifundze 2.0 ("Let us read" in Siswati) works with 100 Mpumalanga primary schools, 20 Gauteng schools and 10 schools in Limpopo. The three year intervention aims to empower Foundation Phase stakeholders, educators and programme interns to **support and promote strong reading practices and learners' reading development**. This occurs through training workshops, regular school visits and teacher coaching, as well as the provision of reading resources.



One of Penreach's notable successes is its strong partnership with government departments. A core reason for this success is a commitment to consulting with government in planning for and implementing programmes. As Asifundze Programme Manager, Ron Chanetsa, explained, the **"secret recipe" in collaborating with the DBE is not to view interactions as a fight, but rather to work to assist the DBE in identifying and closing gaps**. The result of this positive interaction is evident in that, after attending Asifundze training, the DBE requested Penreach provide training on their behalf and has also incorporated aspects of Asifundze into their own programmes to assist educators in districts across Mpumalanga.

As Asifundze is focused on responding to the needs of their participants and schools, coaches constantly monitor schools' and educators' progress. Asifundze then **structures the frequency and length of their site visits according to each school's needs**. This ongoing monitoring ensures that Asifundze can direct its support and resources in ways that best maximise its impact on children's literacy development.

<https://penreach.co.za>

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#### *SAIDE*

The challenge of children being able to access materials in a familiar language and with content that responds to their interests has been a consistent theme in this series.

SAIDE's African Storybook Project (ASb) was established in 2014 to address the low number of children in Africa interested in reading and/or able to access books, especially books in a familiar



language. ASb created an online [platform](#) and developed the ASb Reader app that provides children open access to picture storybooks in African languages. These books can be read online, downloaded or printed.

ASb's training of over 3 000 writers, translators, proofreaders, artists and reading champions across Africa is a remarkable achievement that has increased possibilities for the production and publishing of books in familiar languages that appeal to children's interests. The project's reception and widespread impact – visible in 6 million website storybook downloads – underscores that it is often not a lack of interest in reading, but a lack of access to appropriate materials that is the major obstacle in increasing the number of children reading. **Its innovative model allows users to translate or alter books' text**, thereby increasing the reach of the books and enabling educators to adjust texts to their learners' levels. The more recent development of the [ASb Maker App](#) presents a unique opportunity for **sparkling aspiring writers and illustrators' creativity**. It creates an avenue for encouraging a love for stories and promoting important literacy practices which are often not prioritised in formal learning contexts.

<https://africanstorybook.org/>

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### *elet (Environment and Language Trust)*

Funda uKufunda works in the Umlazi district in KwaZulu-Natal. The programme was implemented in eight schools in the district and provided 49 educators with training and regular coaching and mentoring. The programme, implemented in English First Additional Language, aims to build on educators' existing knowledge in strengthening classroom reading practices and instruction, and to encourage celebrating reading in schools.



**The strengthening of literacy practices and skills is a complex process** that requires careful thought to ensure programmes meet participants' needs. Funda uKufunda's rounded and multi-pronged approach to supporting educators and schools to strengthen learners' literacy results indicates recognition of this complexity. For this reason, in addition to providing English and isiZulu books, and training and coaching in reading instruction, the programme assists educators in **creating classroom environments conducive to reading**. This includes developing routines, how best to use classroom spaces for reading, advice on visually appealing ways of displaying resources and print, and ideas for how to celebrate and encourage reading.

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### *Final reflections*

**Context matters.** The success of programmes depends on consulting with participants and responding to their needs. While organisations may have insight into the general needs of participants, it is through site visits and direct consultation with participants that programmes can strengthen their impact.

**There is no single solution to strengthening children’s literacy practices or skills.** Each organisation offers a unique contribution to creating possibilities for literacy development and inculcating a love for reading in learners. The impact of these unique contributions is increased when programmes work with government departments, organisations, schools and other stakeholders to broaden possibilities for supporting literacy development in South Africa.

Penreach and Funda uKufunda’s promotion of regular reading events such as readathons and World Read Aloud Day reinforces the importance of creating **environments that regularly celebrate reading and motivate children to read.**

Interactions in the webinar chat again demonstrated the importance of the Tuesday in the Trenches series as a potential source for future collaborations. We would appreciate any feedback from you if this webinar series facilitates further interaction among attendees.

### *Next week: ...*

Join us next week for presentations from ...

- Dr CL Smith Foundation
- LectorSA
- LETCEE
- Lesedi Larona

**Date & Time:** 30 August at 10:00 am

**Online:** [Teams Meeting Link](#)

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

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