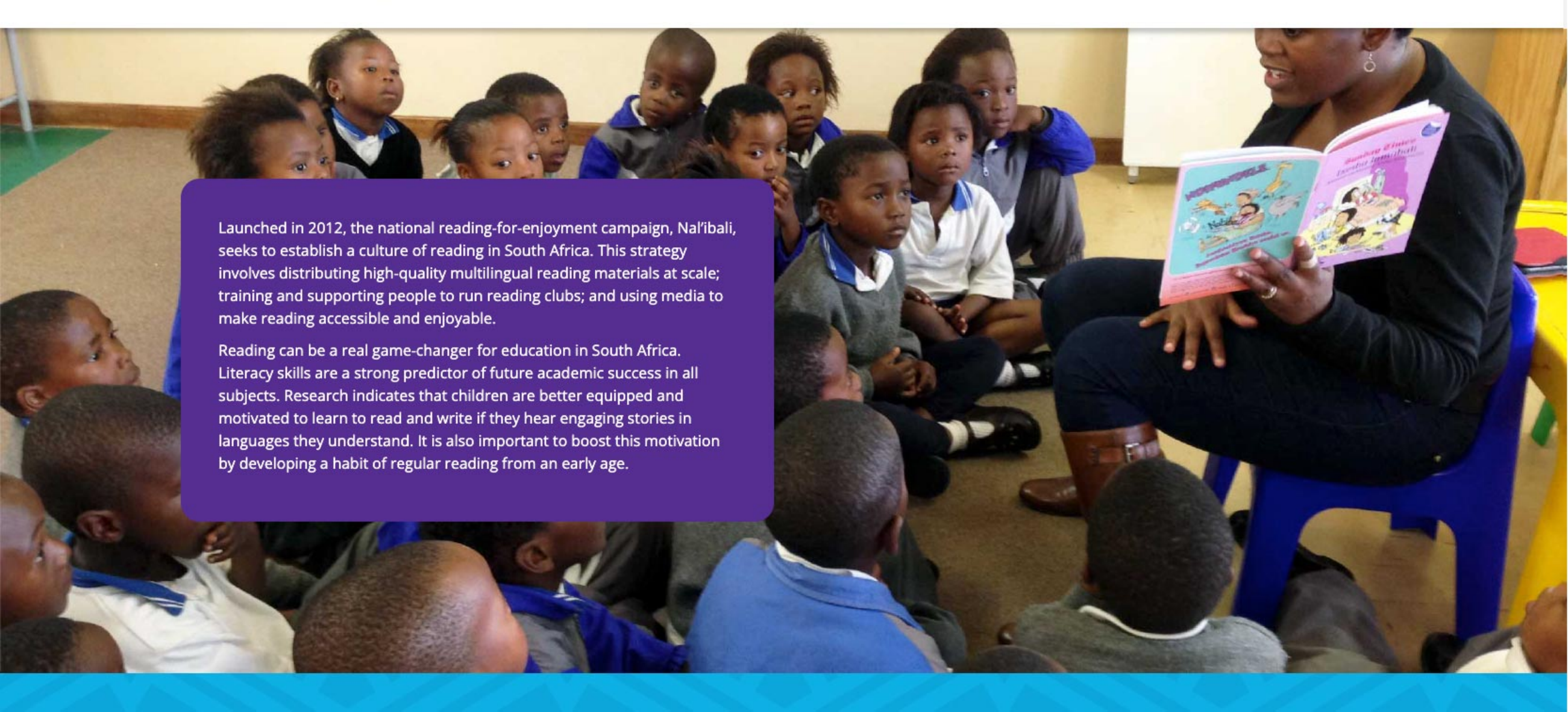
ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Launched in 2012, the national reading-for-enjoyment campaign, Nal'ibali, seeks to establish a culture of reading in South Africa. This strategy involves distributing high-quality multilingual reading materials at scale; training and supporting people to run reading clubs; and using media to make reading accessible and enjoyable.

Reading can be a real game-changer for education in South Africa. Literacy skills are a strong predictor of future academic success in all subjects. Research indicates that children are better equipped and motivated to learn to read and write if they hear engaging stories in languages they understand. It is also important to boost this motivation by developing a habit of regular reading from an early age.

Over the last nine years, Nal'ibali has:

REACHED **7 613 396** PEOPLE

THROUGH **5 043** EVENTS

TRAINED **32 034** PEOPLE

OPENED **11 741** READING CLUBS

FOR **321 208** CHILDREN

DISTRIBUTED **43 246 285** NEWSPAPER SUPPLEMENTS

DISTRIBUTED **4 435** HANGING LIBRARIES

BROADCAST **405** RADIO STORIES

IN **11** LANGUAGES

GAINED **R210 118 635** FREE MEDIA EXPOSURE

CEO'S ADDRESS

Nal'ibali had a difficult year in 2020 due to many reasons. The greatest of these was the significant decrease in annual donations that had dropped to 31% of our 2019 annual budget. Working with this budget proved difficult. This, in turn, led to the need for drastic cost-reduction measures that included the following:

Retrenchment of nearly 50% of staff members	01.	• 33% Reduction
The Johannesburg office was closed	02.	• Saved us R789 998 in rent, office infrastructure and equipment
The call centre based in Johannesburg was replaced with an automated system for key functions	03.	• Reading Club registration and re-registration is now done through an online form with real-time data • Book donation requests are also done through an online request form
Head office was moved to a less expensive office space	04.	• 45% rental reduction
Ending the physical address monthly newspaper supplement drop-offs to partners, reading clubs and schools (All drop-offs are now done through the South African Post Office (SAPO) at no cost)	05.	• Reduced courier costs by R560,480
Introduced story donation instead of commissioning stories (a cost of R5 500 per story before additional editing, translating and illustration costs)	06.	• Saving R330 000 a year to produce 60 stories
Introduced income-generating initiatives such as selling our Read Aloud Collection across CNA stores in South Africa	07.	• Generated just over R2,3 million in revenue during the reporting period of May 2021

With all the cost-cutting measures put in place, we were not able to do as much for our beneficiaries as we could in previous years.

We had to cut the number of stories aired on radio as well as the number of newspaper supplements distributed to communities and partners. For us to service our beneficiaries to the same extent as we had done, we had to raise R63 million to get back to our 2019 budget. This was especially challenging given the economic effects of COVID-19 on business across the globe.

Our strategy has had to change, not only to adapt to the impact of COVID-19 but also to a severely reduced budget. This included a change to how training is conducted in communities and not going directly to schools, ECD centres, community-based organisations and so on. Implementing new models proved to go beyond survival tactics but also demonstrated efficient ways of working during a crisis.

We collaborated with civil society groups that partner with those working directly with children. This enabled us to have greater reach.

We also had to review how we distributed newspaper supplements across the country. This had previously required all beneficiaries to pay for a newspaper for them to access the supplement. We changed the service provider to one that distributed the supplements along with their own local newspapers for free to our target communities. This change resulted in saving a significant amount of money.

These are just a few examples the changes made. This has resulted in a far better position than we were in early 2020 as we have a much smaller, agile, and efficient team. Keeping costs low while having a great impact remains critical.

We remain committed to servicing communities by providing high-quality reading material in all 11 official languages and shifting the culture of reading through community engagements and using mass media as a tool for social change.

Yandiswa Xhakaza
CEO

IT STARTS WITH A STORY.

HOW WE RESPONDED TO THE PANDEMIC

Like other organisations around the world, our ambitious 2020 strategy was not to be realised in the way that we had planned.

Instead of getting reading materials to 95% of reading clubs, our reading clubs suspended operations, and we distributed reading materials via NGOs that were providing food relief during the strict lockdown.

Our goal to roll out a stronger face-to-face mentorship model changed to having our field team filming themselves to conduct short reading club sessions for Facebook Live. They kept in touch with training participants via WhatsApp reading clubs and support groups.

The face-to-face training was redirected to FUNda Sonke, our online training platform.

Instead of holding our usual live events and activities (such as a library membership drive) we launched online activities, including webinars and story challenges during the initial hard lockdown and promoted our digital resources.

Non-core projects that used a face-to-face component were reformatted to focus on family literacy in the home using WhatsApp groups and sharing story videos online. Training support was offered via our free online training modules.

Due to an unprecedented increase in the demand for our story content, the number of digital content partners increased from three to 10 in just two months.

As a result of a drive spearheaded by our main funder DGMT, our digital platforms were zero-rated in July allowing users to access our content at no data cost. This saw an overall increase in web traffic from 17 000 between the months of July and August to over 26 000 in the months of September, October, and November.

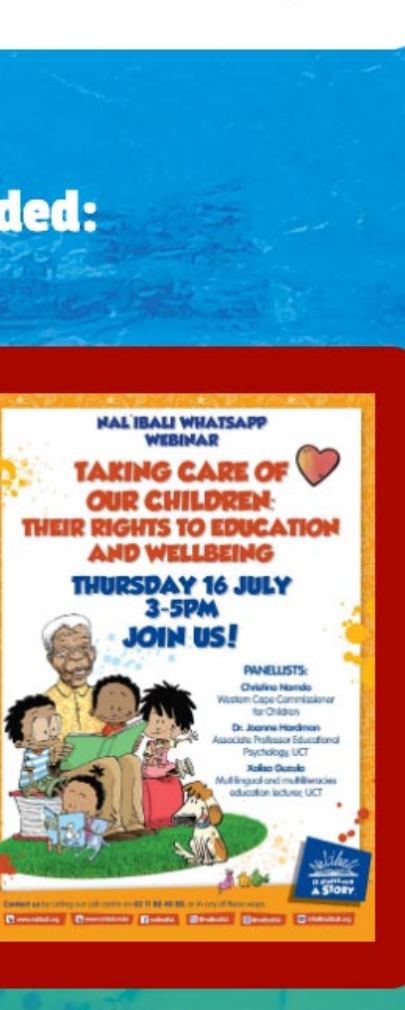
We saw a phenomenal spike in PR coverage through our efforts to grow and formalise our network of community radio partners. Through these partners alone, radio airtime to the value of R4 931 753,79 was secured over the course of the year.

Some of our online activities included:

July

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS WEBINAR

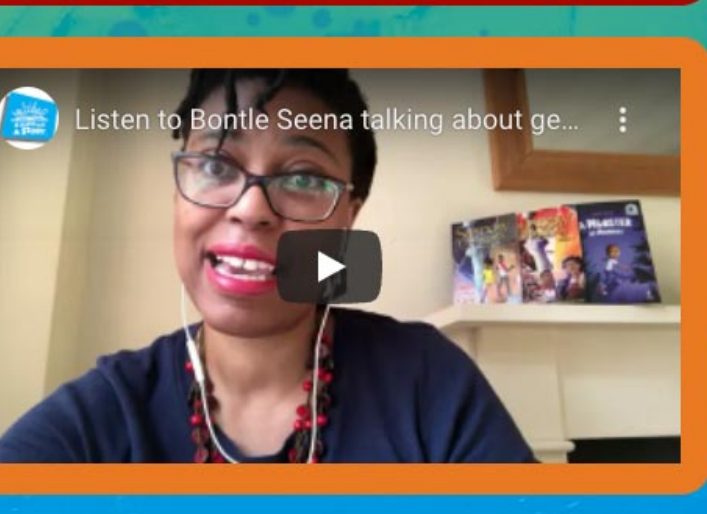
We hosted a free WhatsApp panel with top literacy and children's experts discussing children's right to wellbeing and education during the lockdown. Participants were encouraged to access Nal'ibali's family-literacy resources. We had 256 people attend the webinar (the maximum number of people that can be accommodated in a WhatsApp group).


NAL'IBALI WHATSAPP WEBINAR
TAKING CARE OF OUR CHILDREN: THEIR RIGHTS TO EDUCATION AND WELLBEING
THURSDAY 16 JULY 3-5PM
JOIN US!
PANELLISTS:

Aug

WOMEN'S MONTH

We promoted the importance of debunking gender myths in stories and shared a list of South African children's stories with strong female lead characters.



Sept

STANDARD BANK SOUTH AFRICA LITERACY DAY

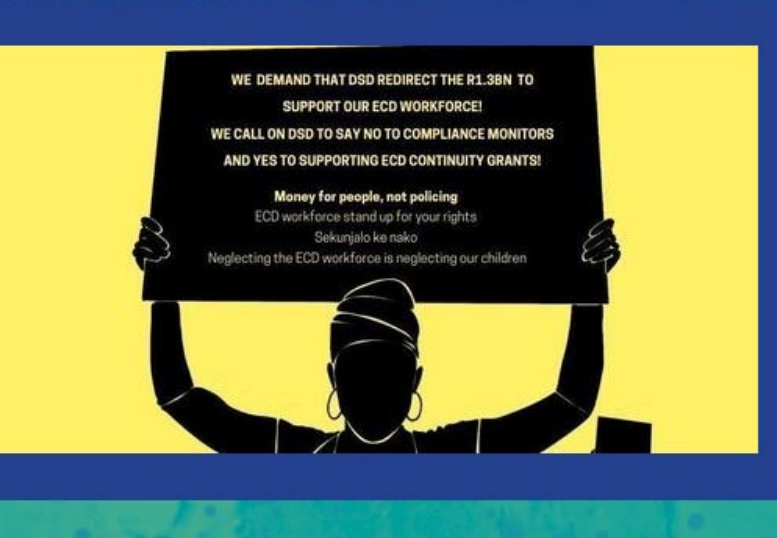
We promoted the art and craft of storytelling with veteran storyteller, Sindiwe Magona. We called on volunteers and members of the public to become FUNda Leaders and start their own storytelling adventures.

Making literacy part of your home
Try our new WhatsApp story line!

Nov

ECD CRISIS

We supported the outcry around the ECD crisis, signing the reform petition and encouraging others to do the same.


WE DEMAND THAT DSD REDIRECT THE R1.3BN TO SUPPORT OUR ECD WORKFORCE!
WE CALL ON DSD TO SAY NO TO COMPLIANCE MONITORS AND YES TO SUPPORTING ECD CONTINUITY GRANTS!
Money for people, not policing
ECD workforce stand up for your rights
Sekunjalo ke nako
Neglecting the ECD workforce is neglecting our children

HIGH LEVEL CAMPAIGN ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2020, we set out to strengthen support to our network (FUNda Stronger), reach new audiences (FUNda Wider), and contribute to the broader society via thought leadership, research, and agenda-setting (FUNda Forward). While our action plans changed dramatically, we continued to chase our comprehensive goals.

Progress towards FUNda Stronger

This strategy sought to strengthen support to our network. At the end of 2019, Nal'ibali had 10 593 adults involved in reading clubs and 23 355 people signed up as literacy activists. Our movement was relevant and growing! Network members were hungry to hear from Nal'ibali more often and access more training and reading material.

External evaluations of our supplement (2018) and reading club network (2019) had shown that reading clubs needed more guidance on good practice; more reading materials; and more frequent, structured check-ins and support.

With this strategy in mind, we wanted to ensure that network members were adequately supported, to keep them motivated and engaged, and support good practice in reading clubs.

01

GOAL: Improve reading club quality and sustainability

RESULT: In mid-March, 1 360 reading clubs had signed up. When the National State of Disaster was declared, Nal'ibali asked its volunteer network to suspend reading clubs. While we do not know how many clubs resumed running after lockdown eased, we have sent book donations to clubs that were running. Our field team provided support to reading club leaders via WhatsApp, many of whom were home schooling their own children for most of 2020.

02

GOAL AREA: Strengthen support to FUNda Leader network

RESULT: Most of our support in 2020 was digital. Nal'ibali staff filmed "virtual reading club" sessions and produced short videos on topics like how to share books with your children. These were shared on social media to support home-schooling parents and entertain children during the hard lockdown. This content proved extremely popular and helped to increase our Facebook engagement by more than 230%. A total of 9 846 people participated in our 21-day story challenge during the initial three-week lockdown. This encouraged parents to read to their children for 15 minutes a day.

03

GOAL AREA: Strengthen, accredit, and expand our training

RESULT: FUNda Sonke. We worked with partner FunDza to develop and run a teen reading club module. We submitted all documentation for training accreditation with the ETDP SETA (Education, Training and Development Practices Skills Education and Training Authority) and await feedback.

Progress towards FUNda Wider

This strategy sought to grow our network; to make it easier and more appealing for people to join the movement; and to raise awareness and change reading behaviour on a larger scale. Encouraging a change in people's behaviour around reading requires more people to be told about the benefits of reading, and where they can find reading materials. One of the most effective ways to reach people is through mass media like radio, television, and billboards.

While our ability to reach new audiences was severely curtailed by circumstances brought about by COVID-19 and reduced funding, we still made progress in this area.

01

GOAL AREA: Increase access to reading materials for the public and improve targeting

TARGET: Distribute 5 250 000 supplements in nine languages from April 2020

RESULT: Reduced funding meant fewer editions so 31 832 19 supplements were distributed in nine languages, achieving 61% of target. We expanded our partnership with Caxton community newspapers which made it easier for people to access the supplement for free as these community newspapers are delivered directly to homes.

02

GOAL AREA: Increase awareness of reading for enjoyment and Nal'ibali via mass media

TARGET: Reach 19% of population (11,14 million people) via mass media

RESULT: Reduced funding meant no budget was available for additional mass media. Yet we still reached 8 307 644 people via radio and newspapers (14% of the population).

03

GOAL AREA: Be where the children are. This was critical given the pandemic restrictions as most children spent more time in the home

TARGET: To reach two million pledges to read to 1,4 million children on World Read Aloud Day

RESULT: An incredible 2 878 288 pledges achieved, achieving 146% of target!

04

GOAL AREA: Make it easier to move from interaction to action

TARGET: Train 5 850 people (including 1 000 online via the FUNda Sonke loyalty programme platform)

RESULT: COVID-19 and lockdown prohibited limited face-to-face training opportunities although 403 people had trained face-to-face prior to lockdown. A total of 1 816 people attended mentored training, 1 157 people completed at least one online training module, and 1 218 people attended webinars.

05

GOAL AREA: Increase accessibility and inclusivity of the campaign

TARGET: Increase the number of volunteers (FUNda Leaders) to 27 570

RESULT: Due to additional prompts via SMS, email and social media, the total number of FUNda Leaders in the network grew to 28 636. This was achieved despite COVID-19-imposed restrictions and the closure of our contact centre in August.

Six new distribution partnerships were formed during lockdown (including Save the Children, Meals on Wheels, and the Red Cross Children's Hospital) to ensure that we could still reach people despite the hard restrictions.

Progress towards FUNda Forward

This strategy sought to strengthen advocacy and collaboration, to drive the literacy agenda and conversation. We set out hoping to repeat and build on our 2019 library membership drive, reduce library sign-up fees, and evaluate our mass media work.

Public focus shifted dramatically from March. We redirected our efforts to support and equip parents to support learning at home, raise awareness around the challenges children and families faced during prolonged school and preschool closures, and to support schools as they reopened.

01

LEARNING AT HOME GUIDE

As part the C-19 People's Coalition, we helped develop a parent support guide for learning at home, with simple activities for each age group. We commissioned a new story about COVID-19, paid for translations, and distributed 27 930 3 abridged copies of the guide via the Nal'ibali supplement.

02

SUPPORT FOR ECD REFORM

We supported the Real Reform for Early Childhood Development campaign, which sought to simplify red tape, increase subsidy access, and improve infrastructure. We elevated the issues via social media, signed the petition, and encouraged others to do the same. Our CEO, Yandiswa Xhakaza, shared our views on a lengthy interview on national TV.

03

NATIONAL READING COALITION

We provided support to the National Reading Coalition, which directed its network of principals, teachers, and NGO practitioners to free online learning resources.

04

READING CHAMPIONS PROJECT

We helped design this arm of the President's Employment Stimulus Package, which sought to place 50 000 young people in schools to improve reading culture and support reading catch-up. We contributed to the training manual and geared up to train more than 7 000 participants in the new year.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

In addition to its national campaign, Nal'ibali runs more intensive, focused projects in specific geographical areas or to achieve specific goals, in partnership with funders.

In 2020, it launched two new projects:

THE STANDARD BANK SOUTH AFRICA (SBSA) PROJECT

The Standard Bank South Africa (SBSA) project set out to place young people at 16 schools in Gauteng and Limpopo, to bring SBSA-supported libraries to life, and create a volunteer programme for SBSA employees. The volunteer programme moved online, and the team turned to parent support and reading material distribution during lockdown. Standard Bank also helped fund radio story development.

THE YIZANI SIFUNDE PROJECT

The Yizani Sifunde project, funded by the Liberty Community Trust, is a collaboration between three like-minded organisations: Nal'ibali, Wordworks, and Book Dash. It seeks to support 80 educare centres in the Eastern Cape and provide the surrounding communities with books. As the implementation was delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions, it had to change focus to the project design and planning.

Five multi-year projects also continued running from previous years:

VOLKSWAGEN SOUTH AFRICA

In Uitenhage, Eastern Cape, our Volkswagen South Africa partnership entered its fifth year of supporting five project schools and catalysing reading-for-enjoyment activities in the broader community. Volkswagen also helped to fund supplement distribution across the country.

TUK-TUK LIBRARIES

Our tuk-tuk libraries, funded by DGMT, were lending books in four provinces prior to lockdown, namely the Eastern Cape, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, and the Western Cape.

LESEDI SOLAR PARK AND LETSATSI SOLAR PARK PROJECTS

Our Lesedi Solar Park Trust project in the Northern Cape and our Letsatsi Solar Park Trust project in the Free State entered their third year of supporting schools and preschools and working with local structures to promote reading.

HCI FOUNDATION PROJECT

In Welkom, Free State, our HCI Foundation project, running since 2016, has supported schools, libraries, educare centres, and parents to keep reading alive in the home throughout lockdown.

2020 Audited financial statements

The Nal'ibali Trust
(Registration number IT547/2016)
Annual Financial Statements
for the year ended 31 December 2020

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