OUTLINE

1. Change theory
2. Design
3. Implementation
4. Parent toolkit
5. Reflections
6. Success indicators
Parents mobilised to be more actively involved in children’s education

Improved learner outcomes in reading

EGRS PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

2
FOCUS
READING WITH MEANING HOMEWORK

1
TOOLKIT
STRUCTURE ROUTINE CONSISTENCY

3
PROVIDER
LOCAL READING CHAMPIONS CRCs

4
ENGAGEMENT
SCHOOLS ONGOING EXPERIENTIAL
Design
“YOU WILL NEVER CHANGE YOUR LIFE UNTIL YOU CHANGE SOMETHING YOU DO DAILY. THE SECRET OF YOUR SUCCESS IS FOUND IN YOUR DAILY ROUTINE.”

John C. Maxwell
| **WHO?** | • Grade 1 & 2 parents in randomly selected group of 50 schools  
• Community Reading Coaches (1 per school; chosen by school)  
• Class Act trainers  
• Class Act Quality Assurance Manager |
| --- | --- |
| **WHAT?** | • Development of parental toolkit  
• Training and support for Community Reading Coaches  
• Reading- and homework-focused sessions for parents |
| **WHEN?** | • Quarterly training for Community Reading Coaches  
• Weekly parent sessions at school |
| **WHY?** | • Reinforce the importance of reading and comprehension  
• Coach parents on reading and comprehension support activities  
• Coach parents on homework support activities  
• Mobilise parents to play an active role in children’s education |
| **WHERE?** | • At school (classroom; staffroom; computer centre) |
Implementation
“THE QUICK ONE MAY NOT WIN; THE ENDURING ONE WILL”

Tswana Proverb
COMMUNITY READING COACH TRAINING

DOSAGE: Every six weeks
POIFO YA BATSADI BALELAPA

- Barutabana bone ba dirang ga ke morutabana.
- Ngwanake o matepe, o a ntelela, a re ga ke mo rute jaaka morutabana.
- Ke tla ke lapile fa ke tswa tirong, ga ke na nako.
- Ga ke a tsena sekolo, ga ke itse go bLisa le go kwala.
- Dibhufo tsa gompieno, ga di tshwane le tsa maloba di a mpalela.
- Ngwanake o rata go tshameka thata.
# ATTENDANCE

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PARENT SESSIONS

CHARACTERISTICS:
• Focus on reading
• Active involvement
• Experience activities
• Practice own writing
• Play games
• Follow instructions
• Fun!

DOSAGE:
• Weekly sessions
COMPOSITION OF PARENT GROUPS:

- Predominantly female and young (30 years and younger)
- ‘Older’ women gave parenting advice (TV; childhood illnesses)
- Regular participants:
  - Passionate about group
  - Active and involved
  - Attended all sessions per topic
  - Used session as a forum for discussions
  - Became more active in the schools
  - Developed group rules
DESIGN SHIFTS

• Bulk sms messages to school Principals / HODs
• Bulk sms messages to Community Reading Coaches
• Phone calls and visits to Principals to offer support and encouragement
• Introduction of travel stipend for CRCs
• Competitions to incentivise parental involvement in sessions
“CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN THAT READING IS PLEASURE, NOT JUST SOMETHING THAT TEACHERS MAKE YOU DO IN SCHOOL.”

Beverly Cleary
**MATERIALS PROVIDED**

2015:

- Module 1  Small things can make a difference
- Module 2  Playing with sounds to promote reading
- Module 3  Reading pictures
- Module 4  Letter sounds
- Module 5  Incidental reading
- Module 6  Preparing to read a story (Part 1)
- Module 7  Reading a story numbers 1 & 2
- Module 8  Preparing to read a story (Part 2)
- Reader:  Platinum Series Le Re Tlhabetse Readers MML/ Pearson: Book 1
- Facilitators’ guides for all modules
MATERIALS PROVIDED

2016:
• Module 9  Reading remediation
• Module 10  Reading a story numbers 3 and 4
• Module 11  Reading a story number 5
• Module 12  Reading a story numbers 6, 7 and 8
• Module 13  Reading a story numbers 9, 10 and 11
• Module 14  Reading a story numbers 12, 13 and 14
• Module 15:  Consolidation
• Reader:   Platinum Series Le Re Tlhabetse Readers MML/ Pearson: Book 2
• Facilitators’ guides for all modules
DISCUSSION
PICTURES
READERS
Reflections
“THERE IS A METHOD TO MY MADNESS, AND A MADNESS TO MY METHOD.”

Salvadore Dali
REFLECTING ON COMMUNITY READING COACHES

• More regular contact and training sessions were implemented; and the repetition of key issues and developmental opportunities effectively prepared the CRCs for parent contact sessions
• In general, good relationships existed between CRCs / teachers / schools
• Eight schools (16%) were unable to appoint appropriate CRCs
• Six CRCs (12%) needed to be replaced during the project (permanent jobs; ill health; unsuitable)
• In some instances community relationships interfered with the effectiveness of CRCs where issues of patronage and protection were experienced in terms of appointment and support from parents
REFLECTING ON PARENTS

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

- Low levels of parental involvement (average of 31%) remained a challenge throughout the project.
- Principals and Subject Advisors have authority over teachers, thus teacher commitment and involvement is easier to secure and maintain (as compared to that of parents).
- Many parents still feel that educating their children is solely the responsibility of the school and of the teachers.
- Unplanned scheduling changes interfered with parental involvement.

PARENTS IN A SCHOOL ARE NOT A HOMOGENOUS GROUP

- One particular approach (CRC weekly parent sessions in the EGRS) cannot meet the needs of all parents.
- In the EGRS project, the approach used benefited predominantly young (under 30) female parents.
REFLECTING ON PARENTS

PARENTS LIVES ARE COMPLEX

• Many parents worked and were unable to attend even though they professed an interest
• Transport to and from schools was difficult for parents
• Parents who stayed at the school all day required food
• Parents expressed real fears:
  • I'm not a teacher. Can I really help?
  • My child won't listen to me
  • My child likes to play
  • I'm tired after a long, hard day
  • Today's teaching is so different compared to when I was at school
GENERAL REFLECTIONS

EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IS CRUCIAL

- All three interventions worked best in schools with committed, conscientious and involved leaders
- These leaders were not necessarily the principals, but were always people with authority who meaningfully engaged with the teachers, CRCs and parents
- While this is not a new reflection, it is an important one to acknowledge

CONSISTENT OFFICIAL INVOLVEMENT PROVED DIFFICULT TO MAINTAIN

- The project enjoyed high levels of provincial and district support at the outset
- But this proved difficult to maintain as the project progressed; key officials either resigned from the department or were moved to other portfolios
CONCLUSIONS

SUCCESSFUL

- Concept of community reading champions (CRCs)
- Toolkit as an instrument to enhance parental interactions with children and with schools
- Establishing benchmark for parental involvement
- Low cost sustainable strategy

LESS SUCCESSFUL

- Strategy to involve parents at scale
- Link between intervention and learner achievement tenuous
### SUCCESS INDICATORS

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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Deep understanding and appreciation of community dynamics, relationships and leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Community advocacy for a non-traditional model</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Multi-faceted parental involvement strategies required to meet needs of all parents</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Part of a broader process of school and community development and engagement</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Interrogate conventional parental attitudes and preconceptions about schooling from outset</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Provide consistent and dependable levels of support</td>
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THANK YOU!