ELEVATING THE LITERACY LEVELS
OF SOUTH AFRICAN YOUTH

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17 SEPTEMBER 2022
HEAD LIBRARIAN, ST ANDREW’S COLLEGE, SOUTH AFRICA
ILLINOIS SCHOOL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES
& THE MORTENSON CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL LIBRARY PROGRAMS
The South African Context – Librarianship in Schools

Project 21
“WHAT IF I WASN’T SCHOOLED HERE?”
MY PROFESSIONAL LIFE

From Deep rural to the most Prestigious universities

15 years in Academic Libraries – UCT & Rhodes University

Information Literacy gap between Leaving High School and entering University

Carnegie Exchange program to Yale University

Personal Librarian program introduced at Rhodes University to First Year Students modelled to Yale

M.Ed Education study was "Studying Student's Engagement Around Literacy in a Book club setting"

2019 Librarian of the Year in the Eastern Cape

2nd Runner up Librarian of the Year

Project 21 Emerged

Hubert H Humphrey Fellow at Penn State
### RACIAL SNAPSHOT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Black South Africans</th>
<th>White South Africans</th>
<th>Coloured (Mixed) South African</th>
<th>Official Languages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>60 Million</td>
<td>76.4%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
<td>English is dominant</td>
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<td>21.85 Million</td>
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<td>24% of Total</td>
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<td>Population is</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
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<td>11 official</td>
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<td>Languages</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
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</table>
Institutionalized Segregation evident in schools

crowded classrooms for Black children
Mandela was fighting for an Inclusive Society and an inclusive Education in South Africa

“EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON WHICH YOU CAN USE TO CHANGE THE WORLD.”
– DR NELSON MANDELA
2013 - South Africa cited as the country with the worst educational system of all middle-income countries.

Deeper analysis and a look beyond the surface into the Grade 12 results of the country:

Reported that in every 100 pupils that start school, only 50 will make it to Grade 12.
Only 40 will pass, and only 12 will qualify for university.
INEQUALITIES IN EDUCATION

South Africa has nearly **26,000 schools**, 400,000 teachers and close to 13-million learners.

**Less than 2,000 independent schools** in the country cater to just over 400,000 students.

26 Universities - hard to get into universities for Black students because of illiteracy challenges.

Only 11% of black youths and 7% of mixed-race youths in the 18 to 24 year age bracket are in university.
TOO MANY HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS UNABLE TO READ – A NEW SURVEY FINDS

Research by the department of education has shown that many high school pupils are unable to read.

This makes teaching even more difficult, with teachers having to focus on foundation and intermediate phase work in addition to the high school curriculum.

This week, Eastern Cape education MEC Fundile Gade made an urgent plea to institutions of higher learning, various stakeholders and the private and religious sectors to help shape the education system with a focus on read-
HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE EQUITY IN SCHOOLS?

- Public Schools
- Model C Schools
- Private Schools
- Community Partnerships

The only way to solve a literacy challenge.
With the overhaul of government in 1994 all teacher librarian post were abolished.

Private funds - one of the few ways to ensure professional school librarian staffing.
DEVELOPING PROJECT 21
LEARNING FROM MY TRAVELS

There are two things I’m absolutely passionate about:

• Building libraries and

• Researching new ways to enhance the user experience

  • Do we even understand what they want?
  • What about how they learn?
WHAT WE DID AT ST ANDREW’S COLLEGE  
“LIBRARY OF THE FUTURE”

- Smart teams – Teachers committee, Architects, Engineers etc., St Andrew’s College boys teams

- So we Let them (the users) design their own space

- As a result we are experiencing a healthy growth in usage and a healthy appetite for reading
TEMPORARY MOVE
OUR MOTTO – GIVE THE LIBRARY TO ITS USERS

• The Reading Club takes charge in book purchasing – We support local so we take trips to the bookstore – Major benefit here is that children’s appetite for reading is growing rapidly
• Also do exciting initiatives e.g. Extreme Reading competitions, Blind date with a book (new initiative) etc…
• So we ask them – our users what they want and our job is so much easier and more enjoyable
USING THE LIBRARY
Blind date with a book

Escapism
EXTREME READING COMPETITION
• The Reading Club takes charge of book purchasing
• We support local so we take trips to the bookstore, use Bargain Books App to preselect what we need
• Major benefit here is that children's appetite for reading is growing rapidly
• Also do exciting initiatives e.g. Extreme Reading competition, Blind date with a book (new initiative) etc…
• So ask them – your users what they want and your job will be so much easier and more enjoyable
2017 LIBRARY GRAND OPENING TEAM
A STINGING QUESTION WAS ASKED
YOUTH INSPIRED LEADERSHIP

- Why do we exist?
  - Who do we exist for?
  - What now after building this magnificent building and these wonderful collections?
  - Are we just going to enjoy it for ourselves and that’s it?

What about the Community we live in?

“Nothing about them without them” – their motto

We are yet to exist for others
BOOKS EVERYWHERE!
EVEN ON THE FLOOR
Google can bring you 100,000 answers. A librarian can bring you the right one.

Neil Gaiman

I wasn’t able to make reservations at the library. They were completely booked!

Jacob Erasmus

Books are better than TV, if you fall asleep you won’t miss the ending!

Ayomide Israel-Akinbo

“Google can bring you a 100,000 answers. A librarian can bring you the right one.”

Libhongo Mazwana

Just consider me a search engine. I have all the data!
**WHY ENGAGING WITH YOUR COMMUNITY IS IMPORTANT!**

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<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Relation-building</th>
<th>Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breaking the barrier of the socio-economic divide between the different communities in our area.</td>
<td>We are trying to link ourselves and build relationships to bring forward a better standard of life.</td>
<td>Help improve the state of Libraries in our community one at time</td>
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<td>It is also a partnership, it is not purely about giving, it is about developing a relationship, for example Nombulelo kids volunteering at the South African School library conference 2019</td>
<td>Through development we can achieve</td>
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<td>• An enjoyable environment</td>
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<td>• Leadership areas</td>
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<td>• Values</td>
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PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

PROJECT 21 LAUNCHED IN 2019

“AIMS TO PROMOTE LITERACY IN SOUTH AFRICA”

- Setting up Libraries in schools that do not have libraries & Paying it forward – *closing literacy gaps*
- Providing **alternative schooling** with resources to close the poverty gaps – our example ‘Nombulelo Academy’ and ‘Peer Tutoring Project’
- Plant “Libraries of the Future” in marginalized communities to provide access to information
- **Shared Resources** – this speaks to a brighter future of education of our country
4 MAIN LEGS

- **Renovate**
  - Renovating and re-establishing school libraries in marginalized communities – promoting student leadership and ownership

- **Build**
  - Building relevant collections that reflect its community users through the input of its users - school learners

- **Clubs**
  - Setting up book clubs – Use of fiction to start conversations with learners

- **Train**
  - Training School librarians and placing them in the schools to ensure sustainability
PROJECT XXXI

Promoting Literacy in South Africa

Vuyokazi Jamieson 2021-2022 Humphrey Fellow

Our Four Pillars

Renovate
- Renovating and re-establishing school libraries in marginalized communities - promoting student leadership and ownership

Build
- Building relevant collections that reflect its community users through the input of its users - school learners

Clubs
- Setting up and supporting student led book clubs - initiating conversations with learners through fiction

Train
- Addressing deficiencies and gaps by developing training to ensure quality and sustainable school librarianship - training and placing librarians in schools

Project 21 Defined
Building strong reading clubs to elevate literacy levels amongst youth in South African High Schools
Building literacy models that can be exported and adapted across South Africa
Advancing ventures in line with The United Nations Envision2030 Goals: 4 & 17
Based on the model we implemented at The Cawse Library, St Andrew’s College
Inspired by a partnership between St Andrew’s College Interact Club and the Nombulelo High School’s school library renovation project

Keeping in line with The United Nations Envision2030 Goals

Goal 4: Quality Education
Ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.
Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

The South Africa We Want!
Drawing from over 21 years in the library profession, Project 21 aims to help rebuild libraries in the Eastern Cape using a model I have implemented in collaboration with students to build their school library, with the ultimate goal of strengthening libraries across South Africa.

NOTHING ABOUT THEM WITHOUT THEM

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NOTHING ABOUT THEM WITHOUT THEM
KEEPING THE END GOAL IN MIND
WHAT ABOUT THEM?
“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”

— Ralph Waldo Emerson
CONTACT DETAILS

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- Project 21 Website
  Project21.co.za
- Follow me on the Mortenson Center Associates blog
  https://mortensonassociatesprogram.wordpress.com/vuyokazi-jamieson/
BAIE DANKIE

Thank you!!

NKOSI KAKHULU

CONNEL
QUESTIONS?