



help2read

improving Lives through Literacy

2024 ANNUAL REVIEW

IMPROVING LIVES THROUGH LITERACY





"We like to wash her,"
said the twins.
"We like to dry her, too."

"Look at Lola.
She is so clean!"
said Mom.
"And she smells so good,"
said Dad.



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ABOUT US

help2read is a South African non-profit company registered under Section 21 of the Companies Act (2005/044040/08). Help2read (RF) NPC, formerly known as the Moss Educational Foundation, was established in December 2005 by Alexander and Mai Moss. Inspired by volunteering experiences at a UK-based charity, they saw the opportunity to provide English reading assistance to learners in South African communities. Initially operating as a volunteer driven Organisation, help2read has since evolved its model to focus on employing, predominantly young women (ages 19 – 28), as literacy tutors to provide reading support for struggling learners.

help2read's vision is nation building through reading development and youth employment. help2read implements high-quality reading support programmes that lead to literacy development for children, community cohesion, and employment opportunities for unemployed young people. This is achieved through:

- one-on-one reading support
- reading clubs and holiday clubs
- youth development training and employment
- parent workshops
- Early Learning Center support and
- after-school programmes.

help2read UK is entirely independent from the South African company and is registered as a Charity (UK Charity Reg no. 1109567) with the sole remit of fundraising to support the operations of help2read in South Africa.



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REACH

In 2024, help2read operated in 2 provinces viz. the Western Cape and Gauteng. Within these 2 provinces help2read Programmes ran in thirteen (13) schools in the Cape Winelands, Khayelitsha, Mitchell's Plain and Diepsloot. In addition to the thirteen schools on the help2read Programme, children attending 2 libraries and twenty seven (27) Early Learning Centres benefitted from the access to one-on-one reading support and emergent literacy development. In total help2read reached two thousand nine hundred and two (2 902) children under the age of eleven (11), six hundred and nineteen (619) parents and one hundred and eighty-three (183) Literacy Tutors and Reading Champions.

Since inception our reach is:



42 902

Children



858

Young People
Empowered and Employed



7000

Volunteers



433

Schools



27

ECD Centers



CEO'S OVERVIEW

The year under review has been another year of full activity for help2read. As we consider and navigate our 20th year in existence, we realise that our journey of improving lives through literacy is far from over. There have been many challenges but, as always, the Board of Directors and the Team have faced the challenges and have found solutions. One of the biggest challenges with which help2read and many other similar non-profits are grappling, is sustainability and relevance.

The creation of sustainable, meaningful employment for young people is a route help2read embarked on in 2013 with the switch from a volunteer driven programme to affording young people the first opportunity to practice working with children on a daily basis, in schools, while earning a stipend. help2read is extremely proud to have entered the 11th Jobs Fund Challenge, funded by the National Treasury, competed with far bigger players, progressing to the final round but ultimately not succeeding to unlock funding for the creation of employment due to the higher cost of our programme. help2read welcomed significant new funders, the Rupert Education Trust and Alex Forbes during the year and is grateful to all our existing funders who have contributed to us being able to continue our work.

Collaboration with the Thembaletu Foundation on the Social Employment Fund (SEF) in the Western Cape has enabled help2read to increase the number of employment opportunities for young people albeit at a cost to actual time spent working with the children who are ultimately the focussed beneficiaries of all help2read programmes. With donor funding and participation on SEF, help2read has recruited, trained and employed one hundred and thirty-three (133) literacy tutors. These young people, predominantly women, have sustained help2read activities throughout the year and have given almost three thousand children the opportunity to grow and thrive. However, the sustainability question, for which we are all still actively looking for answers, inevitably arises: “What are the pathways to formal employment for our literacy tutors after 10 months of immersion in school communities while actively supporting the English literacy development of children under the age of eleven?”



The number of children reached is two thousand nine hundred and two (2 902) across the thirteen (13) schools in Gauteng and the Western Cape. While this is lower than in previous years, we recognise that the quality of our intervention should always be weighed up against the numbers game. help2read is very proud of the 2024 results of the children on the one-on-one programme. The evidence from the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) shows that 83% of learners improved in their recognition of letter sounds, 96% of learners approved in sight word recognition, 93% of learners approved in passage reading and 63% of learners improved in comprehension. These results are the highest since 2019 when help2read introduced the EGRA as an instrument to measure learner gains on the programme. These outstanding results are due to the unwavering commitment of the help2read Coordinators, literacy tutors and to the children themselves. The very best outcome and solution to the sustainability of the help2read programme is to see the learners reading with confidence and falling in love with books.

Participation on the SEF initiative in the Western Cape and community outreach in Gauteng has enabled help2read to lay the foundations of emergent literacy in twenty-seven (27) Early Learning Centres. The fifty (50) Reading Champions, working under extremely disadvantaged circumstances in the informal settlement of Langrug in the Western Cape, play a meaningful role in supporting early learning practitioners in giving children under the age of 6 an opportunity to engage meaningfully in games and stories which enhance their emergent literacy abilities. help2read firmly believes that this early start, in the mother-tongue of each child, can only benefit them in the long run and sustain their progress when they go to schools assisted by help2read.

All of the above would not have been possible without the support of my help2read Team as well as the Board of Directors Each individual has contributed extensively towards the sustainability of help2read through their skills and dedication to improving lives through literacy. I am proud to wear the T-shirt and lead the help2read team of dedicated women for whom there is always a solution to every challenge.

Lynn Cumpsty Steyn

CEO



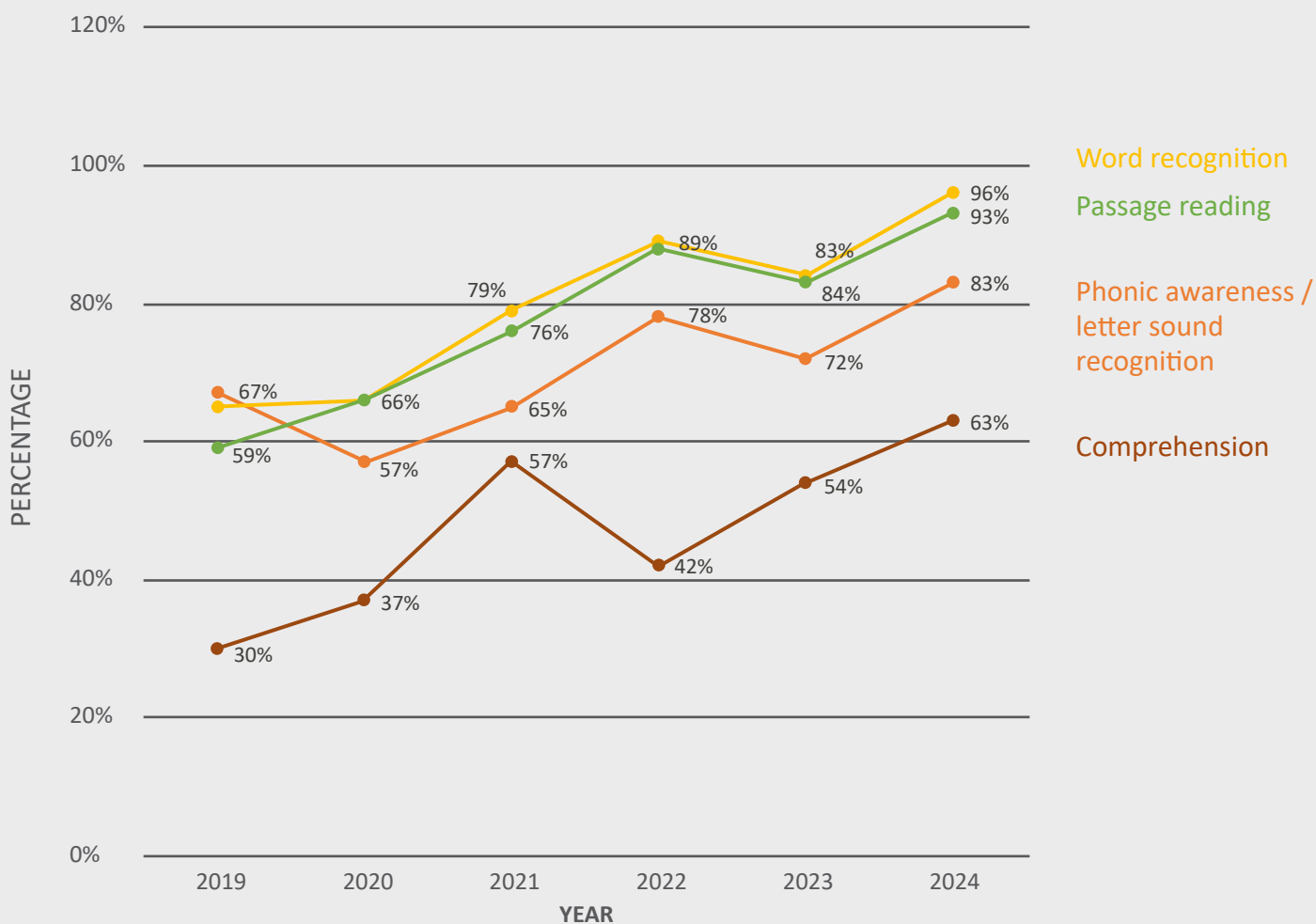


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HELP2READ'S SOLUTION TO THE LITERACY CRISIS

Average improvement in reading outcomes for help2read learners, 2019 - 2024



In light of the PIRLS study, the focus in 2024 has been on reading with Comprehension. help2read is delighted to record a 9% increase in the 2024 Comprehension component.

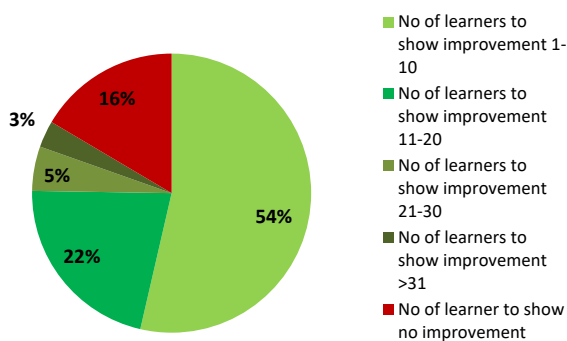
MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING

1. The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)

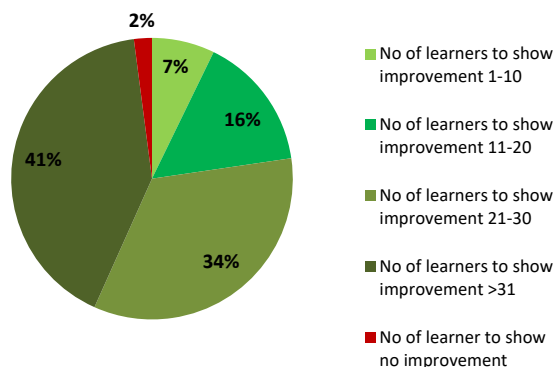
help2read seeks to use the best and most accurate way to show that one-on-one time spent with learners makes a difference in their ability to read, comprehend what they are reading, enjoy what they are reading and also to use their reading skills as tools for learning. The EGRA was chosen as the instrument to measure the change in learner scores before and after the help2read intervention. The EGRA is a diagnostic reading assessment that focuses on four key reading components viz. phonics and phonetic awareness, word recognition, passage reading and oral comprehension. Unlike many other standardised literacy assessments, the EGRA does not need the assessor to be a registered Psychometrist or Educational Psychologist. The literacy tutors are trained to administer the EGRA.

The graphs below highlight the learner improvement at Diepsloot Primary 4, one of the help2read schools where the full programme is implemented.

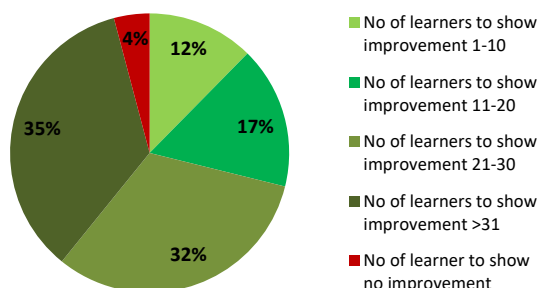
Phonics and Phonetic Awareness



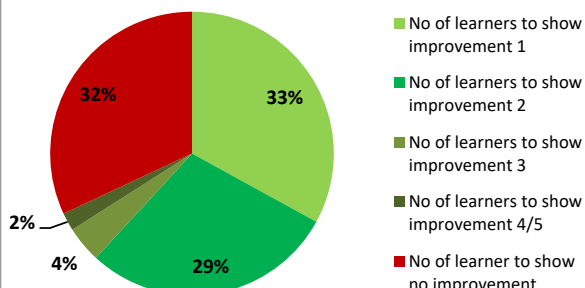
Word Recognition



Passage Reading



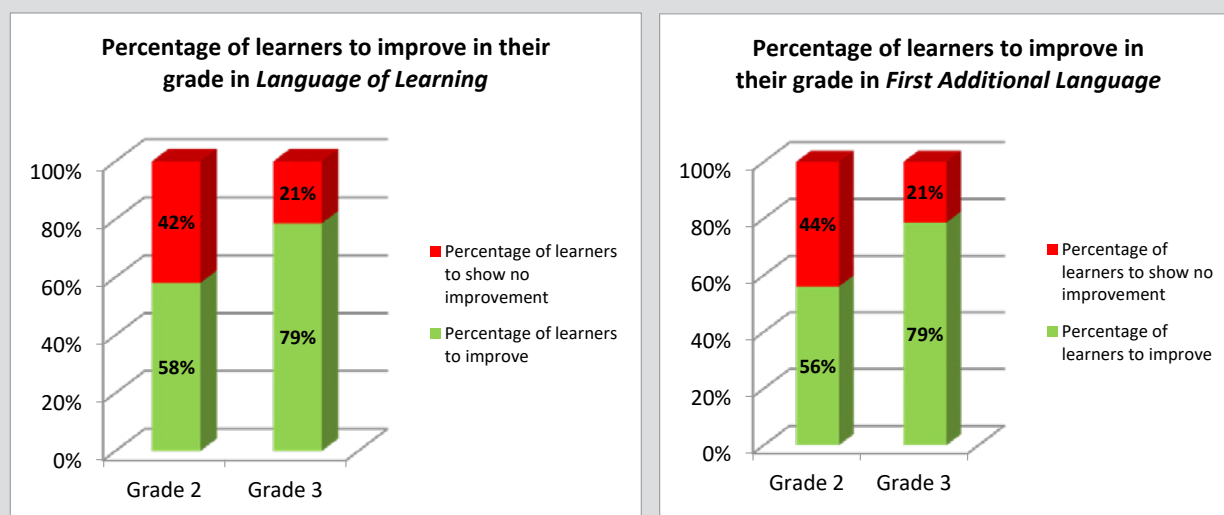
Oral Comprehension



2. School results

In addition to the administration of the EGRA, help2read obtains the learners' results for Language of Learning and Teaching and First Additional Language (English) from their school reports. This is done in order to assess whether the help2read learners are making progress in class.

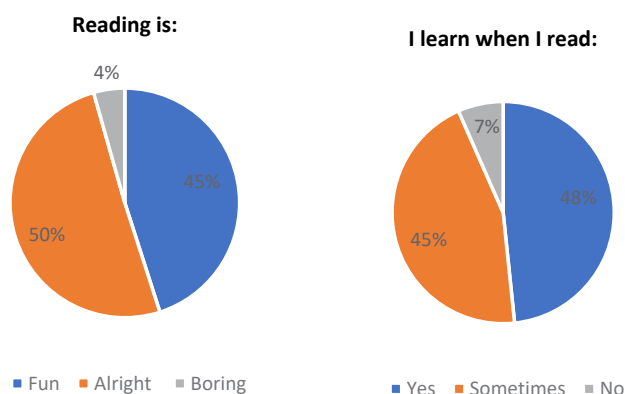
The below graphs show the percentage of learners at Diepsloot Primary 4 who were able to improve in their school results from term 1 to term 4.



3. Attitude to Reading Assessment

The third instrument used in the research was the Attitude to Reading questionnaire which the learners and the literacy tutors completed at the beginning and the end of the help2read intervention. The following graphs show the Diepsloot Primary 4 learners' attitude to reading at the final assessment.

A very small percentage of learners showed a negative attitude towards reading at the final assessment.





ACTIVITIES

Youth Employment and Empowerment

Contractual Employment

help2read offers a 10 month fixed-term contract of employment to young people. The young people work as literacy tutors, five hours every day from Monday to Friday in low-fee or no-fee paying Government Primary Schools. The literacy tutors are paid at a rate just above the National Minimum Wage and sign a formal contract which complies with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act.

Training

The induction to being a help2read literacy tutor and core help2read modules are delivered at the training camp. The literacy tutors learn the core skills of how to implement one-on-one reading sessions with children, organise and run reading and holiday clubs as well as planning and leading parent workshops. In addition, the literacy tutors are trained to use a standardised assessment tool (Early Grade Reading Assessment) which is used to measure change in children's English literacy ability. At the end of the 10 month period, the literacy tutors receive a Certificate of Attendance for all training undergone.

Professional and Personal Development

The help2read professional and personal development component includes work readiness and professional skills development to prepare young people for the workforce or to start their own community ventures. In addition, help2read offers ongoing weekly personal life skills training which covers essential skills such as teamwork, effective communication, time management, financial literacy, and responsible decision-making. The training also includes guidance with work applications as well as interview skills. The weekly, ongoing life skills training is offered by the help2read Programme Coordinators.

Mentoring and Preparation for Future Employment

To further support the young people, help2read provides ongoing mentoring and facilitates access to networking opportunities, online platforms and future employment prospects. help2read firmly believes in the potential of South Africa's young people as crucial catalysts for community development and upliftment.



One-on-One Reading Support

The one-on-one reading support, provided by help2read is a unique approach which sets help2read apart from other implementing organisations. help2read is committed to supporting in-school children up to the age of eleven, by implementing play-based learning methodologies. This innovative approach ensures that learning becomes an enjoyable experience while fostering significant improvement in learners' outcomes and overall confidence in English reading.

Selection of Learners

Recognising the challenges posed by large class sizes and limited literacy resources, help2read provides access to one-on-one literacy support, for 2, **thirty-minute sessions per week for selected learners**. Learners are selected by their teachers and need to achieve a 3, 4 or 5 on the Department of Basic Education, 7-point assessment scale for Language of Teaching and Learning and English First Additional Language before being assigned to a literacy tutor. The literacy tutors arrange a suitable time with the class teachers to collect the individual learners from their classrooms, during the school day.

Structure of the One-on-One Sessions

Each session is structured around 4 essential building blocks that comprehensively address various aspects of reading development. These building blocks include: developing listening skills, phonics and phonetic awareness, sight words and punctuation marks and comprehension. In addition, these building blocks are instrumental in customising individualised learning plans tailored to meet each learner's unique needs, thereby significantly improving comprehension and retention of new information.



During the sessions, the literacy tutors read a variety of books with the learners, encouraging them to explore different genres and themes, and participate in fun, interactive activities designed to reinforce the material covered.



Reading Clubs

Reading clubs involve groups of children or entire classes of learners. The children are not selected to attend the sessions thus creating a principle of inclusion. The focus remains on English Literacy development but accommodates the strengthening of the languages spoken by the children at home and in the school. Reading clubs are a beacon of consistent support for children who need it the most, operating during school hours to ensure no child is left behind. These clubs are meticulously structured to cater to a diverse range of reading levels and ages, ensuring that each child receives the attention and resources suited to their specific learning journey. The benefits of reading clubs extend far beyond individual reading proficiency. By uniting children in a supportive and collaborative environment, the clubs strive to forge a community of readers. This communal aspect is instrumental in nurturing social skills, fostering empathy, and cultivating a strong sense of belonging among the participants. Through this holistic approach, help2read's reading clubs not only elevate reading skills but also contribute significantly to the personal and social development of the children involved.

Each session usually begins with a warm welcome, ensuring that the children feel comfortable and excited about the activities ahead. The reading material typically includes a mix of picture books and simple stories that are appropriate for their age, capturing both their attention and imagination. These selections are carefully chosen to introduce new vocabulary, themes, and ideas. During reading clubs, storytelling is a key component. The literacy tutors read aloud to the children, using expressive voices and animated gestures to bring the stories to life. This not only makes the experience enjoyable but also helps children understand the rhythm and intonation of language.

The primary goal of the reading clubs is to nurture an enthusiasm for reading and learning. By creating a positive and fun atmosphere, learners develop a deep-seated interest in books, setting the stage for lifelong literacy and later academic success.





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Holiday Clubs



help2read's holiday clubs ingeniously combine literacy with fun by structuring programmes to integrate educational activities seamlessly with engaging entertainment. These clubs offer reading sessions and interactive literacy games designed to enhance reading and comprehension skills, ensuring that learning is effective and enjoyable for the children involved. Furthermore, by actively engaging community members in these programs, help2read's holiday clubs not only enrich the experience with a variety of perspectives and skills but also fortify community connections and raise awareness about the critical role of literacy. This approach to learning cultivates a supportive environment where education and community development go hand in hand, making a lasting impact on the participants and their wider community.

Holiday clubs operate for two to three days with a different skill focus for each day. A typical holiday club is filled with fun child-centered activities such as Spelling Bee competitions, book reading and story-telling, music and dance, drama activities and puppet shows. In addition, help2read invites guest speakers from various departments such as the South African Police Service, Health Department, Traffic Department, and Fire Department to come and play games with the children but mostly to educate them about the role the specific Department plays within the community. Food and nutrition play an important role at holiday clubs. Children are treated to snacks during the day as well as a nutritious lunch before they go home.

At all times, help2read prioritises the safety and well-being of the learners. help2read hands out parental consent forms and registration forms which include the signing in and out of the learners. Holiday clubs take place in an open environment where other people from the community can see the activities.





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After-School Reading Support



There are many versions of after-school/aftercare programmes in operation in South Africa. The formal help2read after-school reading support project was delivered primarily at Diepsloot Primary 4 and is unique as it has been designed to enhance literacy among children who face challenges in English reading and lack support at home. This initiative not only focuses on improving English reading and comprehension skills but also addresses nutritional needs by including a crucial, nutritious snack component. Understanding that hunger can significantly impede a child's ability to learn, this aspect of the project ensures children have the necessary energy and focus for reading activities after their regular school day. Proper nutrition is foundational to anti-hunger efforts and crucial for children in food-insecure households, who are at a disadvantage academically.

The after-school project is available to learners under the age of 11, every day, Monday to Thursday for one hour after the end of the official school day. Activities at the after-school project include one-on-one reading, reading clubs and homework support. By providing a stable, supportive after-school environment, Help2read addresses food insecurity while simultaneously bolstering literacy.



Parent Reading Support Workshops

help2read actively equips parents, caregivers and the broader community with essential tools to support their children's reading development right at home. Beyond mere access, help2read provides training opportunities tailored for parents, enhancing their understanding of the reading learning process. This empowers them to more effectively support their children's literacy journey. By implementing reading activities across various platforms such as reading clubs, community holiday clubs, and outreach activities at Early Learning Centres, help2read champions the cause of reading for enjoyment and foundational literacy development. The Organisation's efforts in storytelling and facilitating a culture of reading within communities not only bolsters literacy rates but also fosters an environment where reading is celebrated and cherished.

Over the past years, help2read has built a very strong relationship with the Principals and School Governing Body (SGB) of the Primary Schools where we operate. help2read works alongside the SGB to organise and facilitate parent workshops.

A typical programme for the workshops includes ice-breakers, reading activities using recycled materials, games and interactive presentations by the Programme Coordinator and literacy tutor team on how to read to children. Excess donated books, when available, are handed out to parents to take home.

help2read further has the opportunity to share a basic understanding of the four elements of reading (implemented in on-on-one reading sessions) with the parents of children who receive one-on-one reading support. This is done in small groups.





Community Outreach in Early Learning Centres

help2read has found a unique niche in the communities surrounding the schools. We have been able to extend our services to community Early Learning Centers. Literacy tutors do community outreach at Early Learning Centers to provide early literacy support for the young children aged 5 and under who possibly would be attending the schools in the coming years.

During the school holidays when literacy tutors are unable to assist children at school, they spend time in the Early Learning Centers. The literacy tutors use the same methodology as they do in reading clubs but the child centered activities do not only focus on English literacy but incorporate and consolidate the mother-tongue languages spoken by the children. In addition to the songs, games, storytelling and reading, the literacy tutors provide practical assistance to the Early Childhood Development practitioners in the centers. The assistance is determined by the practitioners' daily routine and may include serving the children breakfast and lunch, assistance with toilet training and routines as well as supervising the children during indoor and outdoor play.

The children benefit through the outreach to community Early Learning Centers. Among others:

- Children are encouraged and motivated to use and develop their language competencies in a fun filled way;
- Reading and storytelling becomes an exciting activity and children are eager to participate;
- Listening skills, necessary for the acquisition of language are practiced on an on-going basis.

The literacy tutors benefit from learning how children develop emergent literacy skills and are introduced to a possible career path in Early Childhood Development. Literacy tutors are motivated to continue with community work after they leave help2read and also gain an understanding of how children build their language skills before they get to school.





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Reading Parents / Reading Champions Project



In collaboration with the Social Employment Fund, help2read trains and equips unemployed parents in the Franschhoek area to assist children in Early Learning Centers. The Reading Parents/Champions are trained to use the same methodology as the literacy tutors do in reading clubs. The child centered activities do not only focus on English literacy but incorporate and consolidate the mother-tongue languages spoken by the children. In addition to the songs, games, storytelling and reading, the Reading Parents/Champions provide practical assistance to the Early Childhood Development practitioners in the centers. The assistance is determined by the practitioners' daily routine and may include serving the children breakfast and lunch, assistance with toilet training and routines as well as supervising the children during indoor and outdoor play.





News from help2read UK

The trustees of help2read are incredibly grateful to all those who supported our Big Give Christmas Challenge! This annual appeal is one of our major fundraising opportunities and each year it is key to supporting our programmes in South Africa. In 2024 you helped us raise just under £22,000.

Thank you so much for this and it will be used to make a real and immediate difference to the children we work with. We are so grateful to Killik & Co who represent the Promotion of English Trust who were our pledgers – the whole transaction was swift and efficient. We would also like to thank The Step Up Fund who were our Champions!

Our trustees meet regularly and are currently busy planning the 20th anniversary gala which will take place in May. Our founder, Alex Moss and his wife Mai, will be guests on the night in the splendid surroundings of Inner Temple Hall. We hope you will be able to join us and meet the trustees and guests and help us raise funds through our exciting auction. There are wonderful items for auction such as rare and iconic South African wine that is no longer available even from the vineyards; a long weekend in the Cotswolds in a classic, luxurious, English cottage recently featured in The English Home; and fine homeware from South African brand Ardmore – and lots more! Come and join us!

In 2024 our Chair, Emma Franklin, ran the London Marathon and this year, trustee Alexandra Pardoe will also do so. She is currently well advanced in her training and is looking forward to taking part in this major event in the London's sporting year especially as it is the last time that help2read will have a place allocated. If you would like to follow Alexandra's progress please click on the link here: <https://2025tcslondonmarathon.enthuse.com/pf/alexandra-pardoe>

We hope you love reading about the programme delivery in South Africa – after all, that is what we are here to support. Everything we do is designed to help the team in South Africa deliver literacy programmes via our specially trained Literacy Tutors. The children can then go on to enjoy a full education and the Literacy Tutors will be able to forge a better career, thus improving the life chances for both. Everything we do is designed to support this. Everything you do makes it possible. Thank you.

If you would like any further information on anything to do with help2read in the UK please contact Sheila at sheila@help2read.org or telephone 07477 948377.



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SINCERE THANKS

To all our funders, sponsors, partners and supporters for helping us
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Alexander Forbes Financial Services

Grid Metals

R&H Rail

Anonymous donations received via
the UK Online Giving Foundation
and Given Gain

help2read UK

Rupert Education Foundation

High Street Capital

Stekhoven Family Investments

Barry Smith

HR Footprints

Superior Packaging

Centaur Asset Management

Khumo Capital

Terre des hommes

David Graaff Foundation

Lynn Douglass

Roy Family

Grandslots

Mac Farlane Family Foundation

All the dedicated individuals who contribute to the work
of help2read on a regular basis.

MEET THE BOARD



Andrew Davis: Vice Chair

Andy is a Chartered Accountant and has extensive experience in the Corporate Sector and Universities. Andy has been on the Board of help2read since 2009 and has been instrumental in guiding help2read through many unpredictable financial scenarios throughout his tenure. Andy was recruited to the help2read Board by the Founder, Alex Moss.



Elise Malherbe: Chair

After leaving a leadership role in the Corporate sector, which involved exposure to all aspects of senior management (strategy, managing teams, negotiating, HR, Launching new products and services), Elise was drawn to two of her other passions, which are the development people and education. Elise was involved as a partner to a Principal through Partners for Possibility before joining the Board of help2read. Elise states: 'Being involved with Help2read with its long established track record, incredible leadership team and the exceptional work that is done, has been an absolute privilege'.



John Young

John worked as a History and English teacher before embarking on a career as a freelance journalist, researcher and writer. His books include A Town in the Suburbs (a history of Observatory), the history of Grey High School and a book on the building of a wind farm on Mfengu land in the Tsitsikamma. For 12 years he was the director of Cwesi, a night school for adults in Cape Town. John's command of the English language and his editing ability have taken Help2read documentation to a new level.



Jonathan Muthige

Jonathan is an experienced Group Human Resources Director with a demonstrated history of working in multiple industries, covering Oil, FMCG, Retail, and Banking. He is experienced in working across cultures having had human resources accountabilities for Europe, USA, Asia and Africa. Jonathan's skills include Human Resources and Talent Management, Performance Management, Leadership Development, and Organisational Development. Jonathan brings all his business acumen to the help2read Board and is appreciated for his considered approach to finding solutions within the context of a Non-profit Company.



Nichola Roy

Nicky has worked in many fields, all of which are grounded in her technical knowledge and passion for the English language and communication. This lead her to practicing law, working as an English teacher and consulting as a content writer. Nicky consistently applies her basket of skills to furthering the Vision and Mission of Help2read at every opportunity and is instrumental in connecting help2read with others who are enthused by her passion for the Organisation.



Zinhle Matentji

Zinhle's philosophy on talent acquisition is rooted in finding great leaders who have a burning desire to set their career agenda; and match these individuals with organisations. She receives enormous satisfaction when she knows she has created a winning partnership between both the client and leadership talent. Zinhle brings the same energy and passion to the help2read Board where she sees the development of young people (literacy tutors) as a priority.



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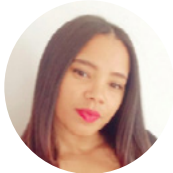
MEET THE TEAM



Elizabeth Pretorius,
Finance and M & E Manager



Melody Volmink (until 25 November),
Reading Programmes Manager



Hilre Papier,
Senior Programme Coordinator
Winelands



Naazli Khan (deceased 14 September)
Finance and Fundraising Assistant



Jevine Goliath Baartman,
Programme Coordinator Reading Parents



Nondumiso Mzamo,
Programme Coordinator Khayelitsha
and Mitchell's Plain



Lehlabile Shokoane (until 25 August),
Programme Lead Gauteng



Palesa Phumo,
Programme Lead Gauteng



Lerato Monedi (until 25 July),
Business Development Manager



Patricia Masemulu,
Programme Coordinator Gauteng



Lynn Cumpsty Steyn,
CEO





CONTACT HELP2READ

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DONATE

Help2read Bank Account

Bank: ABSA | Account Name: Help2read (RF) NPC

Account No: 4071214490 | Branch Code: 632005

Have a question?

We'd love to hear from you!

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E: info@help2read.org



VIEW WEBSITE

www.help2read.org