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HANDS-ON

Experience Learning

October - December 2018

The legacy of Douglas and Eleanor Murray

Invest in South Africa's Potential

On the cover:

The Hands-on Learning publication shares what civil society organisations are learning through implementation. **Nthabi Mofokeng** is a Network Activator for **SmartStart**, a social franchise that aims to expand universal access to quality early learning in South Africa (www.smartstart.org.za). Here she is facilitating a session at a SmartStart centre in Duncan Village, East London, in May this year. Watch this space in 2019 to see what SmartStart and other organisations have been learning about social franchising.

Photo by **Bart Love** from **Anotherlove Productions**.

“We are drowning in information, while starving for wisdom” reads a quote by E.O. Wilson, who wrote the book, ‘Consilience: The unity of knowledge’. Through the newly revived and rebranded edition of our Hands-on Learning publication, we hope to play a helpful role in synthesising information from innovators and implementers in civil society, supporting them to share what they have learned so that others are able to draw from and build on their experiences.

IN THIS ISSUE WE FEATURE THREE BRIEFS:

Embrace is a national movement to help create connected, supported and celebrated motherhood journeys for all women in South Africa. Connecting people in a diverse and unequal society such as South Africa’s is by no means easy. Embrace shares three lessons that changed and shaped its strategy, and which might serve as inspiration for other organisations facing similar challenges.

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Book donation organisation, Biblionef, shares what they learned from a 21-month pilot project with Foundation Phase teachers to determine the impact book donations can have on teachers and children if coupled with training.

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Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are embracing mobile technology to connect with their target audiences. We interviewed a number of organisations with experience developing mobile platforms to drive social change. We asked them what they learned and their best advice to those interested in going down this path.

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OPPORTUNITY

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Build simple, loving connections for every child

DECEMBER 2018

Connecting South Africans around motherhood: Three strategic insights that have shaped the mission of Embrace

Embrace is a national movement to help create connected, supported and celebrated motherhood journeys for all women in South Africa. In this learning brief, we explore key lessons that helped Embrace evolve from a programmatic, city-wide initiative into a national movement for motherhood.

The transition into parenthood is a vulnerable time for women. Between 9 and 21% of new mothers will experience depression during pregnancy, or within a year after the birth of their baby¹. The ‘First 1 000 Days’ describes the time from conception to a child’s second birthday when a baby’s brain develops faster than at any other time in a person’s life. What happens during this time plays a vital role in helping children grow up to be happy, healthy and well-adjusted², and a mother’s mental health can negatively affect the development of her baby.

Support from others can help to lower feelings of depression and anxiety in a new mother by boosting her sense of self-esteem and competence as a parent³, and by making her feel less isolated. Such support has also been shown to reduce preterm births⁴, and to increase the length of time women breastfeed, as well as the length of time they breastfeed without introducing any other types of liquids or foods⁵. Given that in South Africa, 27% of children under five years of age are nutritionally stunted⁶, a condition that prevents

children from reaching their full growth potential, supporting new mothers is an important strategy to strengthen human capital development in the country.

To reduce the vulnerability of small children, more than services and programmes are required, a societal response is needed. Once mothers and babies leave post-natal clinics at six weeks of age, they only visit health services for vaccinations or when they are sick. We need to create networks of care and support for new mothers and young children in communities - such connections, including connections to modest opportunities- build lifelong resilience in children.

Embrace is growing a nationwide support network for new mothers, but it is more than a network. It is a movement that aims to represent the voice of mothers in South Africa. Driven by the idea that an ‘Embraced Mother’ raises a thriving child, Embrace has made it its mission to tackle some of the structural and social dynamics that shape the experience of early motherhood.



“Motherhood is something that should matter to all of us, not just individual mothers. Embrace holds society to account for the lack of real social structures of support and services offered to mothers.”

Rumbi Goredema Görgens, Embrace Operations Manager

1 McLeish, J. & Redshaw, M. 2017. Mothers’ accounts of the impact on emotional wellbeing of organised peer support in pregnancy and early parenthood: a qualitative study. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*, 17:28. Access at: <https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-017-1220-0>

2 Ilifa Lanbantwana. 2017. The First 1000 Days of Life Factsheet. Access at: <http://ilifalabantwana.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/THE-FIRST-1000-DAYS-OF-LIFE.pdf>

3 McLeish & Redshaw. 2017.

4 Ickovics, J. R., Kershaw, T.S., Westdahl, C., Magriples, U. Massey, Z., Reynolds, H. & Rising, S. S. 2007. Group Prenatal Care and Perinatal Outcomes: A randomized trial. *Obstet Gynecol*, 110(2 PT 1): 333-339. Access at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2276878/>

5 Renfrew, M. J., McCormick, F.M., Wade, A., Quinn, B., & Dowswell, T. 2012. Support for Breastfeeding mothers. Access at: <http://summaries.cochrane.org/CD001141/support-for-breastfeeding-mothers#>

6 Said-Mohamed R., Micklesfield L., Pettifor J., & Norris S. 2015. Has the prevalence of stunting in South African children changed in 40 years? A systematic review. *BMC Public Health* 15(1):1-10.

Embrace is growing a nationwide support network for new mothers – a movement that hopes to represent the voice of mothers in South Africa. Driven by the idea that an ‘Embraced Mother’ raises a thriving child, Embrace has made it its mission to tackle some of the structural and social dynamics that shape the experience of early motherhood.

Structured around Embrace’s three mission areas – to inspire, mobilise and connect – this learning brief shares three strategic approaches that have evolved from pivotal moments in Embrace’s journey. This journey has seen the initiative shift its focus and strategy from one that aimed to programmatically connect and support mothers for the sake of their baby’s development, to a movement that champions the powerful experience and contribution of motherhood first and foremost. Embrace firmly believes that by supporting mothers we empower them to ‘mother’ better, and in so doing, we strengthen the social fabric of South Africa.

shared experiences, the mothers were able to let their guard down, and the session went on seamlessly from there. It was a strategic breakthrough for Embrace.

Julie realised that if mothers do not recognise the shared motherhood identity in each other, and in their facilitators from the onset, there can be no true community of mothers. There will only be teachers and learners, or mentors and mentees. The golden thread of a shared motherhood identity allows for honesty, which creates a safe space for women for deep listening, empathy and sharing.

Growing from this moment of inspiration, Embrace has since shifted the way in which it views engagements with mothers: the shared identity of motherhood comes first before anything else. While the original model for Embrace⁷ had support for mothers at its heart, a focus on babies eclipsed a focus on motherhood.



As a result, some members in the network focused their energies on helping babies, rather than partnering with moms on equal terms. So while the intention of making connections between mothers was to build relationships that can ultimately reshape society around the wellbeing and development of children, the approach fell into a common trap in South Africa – entrenching the power differentials, rather than challenging them.

INSPIRE

Can we elevate the social status of motherhood to one we can all connect to?



In 2016, Julie Mentor, Project Leader for Embrace, returned from maternity leave feeling overjoyed, but also overwhelmed by the prospect of being a mother for the second time. She dived straight into work by facilitating a session giving mothers from Khayelitsha the opportunity to reflect on their motherhood experiences.

She wanted to run a well-facilitated session, but having been off work for a while, she felt out of place and a little nervous. “In the moment I let my guard down,” shares Julie, “and I asked the women, ‘is anyone else feeling really, really tired today? I was up all night with my baby’...” There were giggles, there were nods, and Julie recalls one woman reaching over and rubbing her back, reassuringly.

“I realised that when I came into this group there were huge differences between us – in a way, everything was separating us – but there was one thing connecting us: the social identity of motherhood,” says Julie. She adds: “But it was not only motherhood, but honest motherhood. We acknowledged the dark parts of being a mother, parts that often lead to postnatal depression, while savouring the good parts, like yearning for our children because they were not there with us, or enjoying the simple act of sipping our tea in a moment of reprieve from the burdensome tasks of motherhood.” Bonding around these

MOBILISE

Can we galvanise around the social identity of motherhood?



Later in 2016, another simple idea turned out to be a key strategic development for Embrace as a movement.

The idea was for people to spend one hour visiting, spoiling and celebrating moms and nursing staff in maternity wards in public hospitals on Mother’s Day. After a couple of weeks of planning, Embrace mobilised 100 women to visit 490 new moms at 12 Western Cape hospitals. They called the initiative ‘Mother’s Day Connect’. The event not only delighted both the visiting mothers and the moms and nurses in maternity wards, it also captured the public imagination, and led to a number of lasting interpersonal connections between mothers.

⁷ Embrace was established in 2013. Then known as Cape Town Embrace, it was positioned as a city-wide initiative aimed to protect and develop the potential of all 75 000 babies born in Cape Town every year. The hope was to connect each child in the city who might otherwise be excluded, to a network of support that links their parents to another caring adult – most likely associated with a faith- or community-based organisation.

'Mother's Day Connect' illustrated to Embrace the potential of creating opportunities for connections to happen spontaneously, leapfrogging some of the awkwardness of engineering one-on-one connections. Up until this stage, the Embrace network worked by connecting vulnerable moms, who were generally identified via non-profit organisations or public clinics with supporters⁸, who were mostly identified via faith-based organisations.

There are many initiatives that use specific days, like Mandela Day, for example, to drive charitable giving, but 'Mother's Day Connect' was never about charity. It was symbolic. It showed that South African women were willing to reflect on the motherhood journeys of other mothers – on a day normally dedicated to celebrating their own motherhood experience. It also showed that they were keen to honour and show support for new mothers.

Both the number of facilities and the number of mothers visited during 'Mother's Day Connect' nearly doubled from 2017 to 2018. In 2017, 400 women visited 27 facilities and 1 520 moms in the Western Cape. In 2018, 774 volunteers visited 49 facilities and 3 000 new moms in eight provinces and 12 new cities.

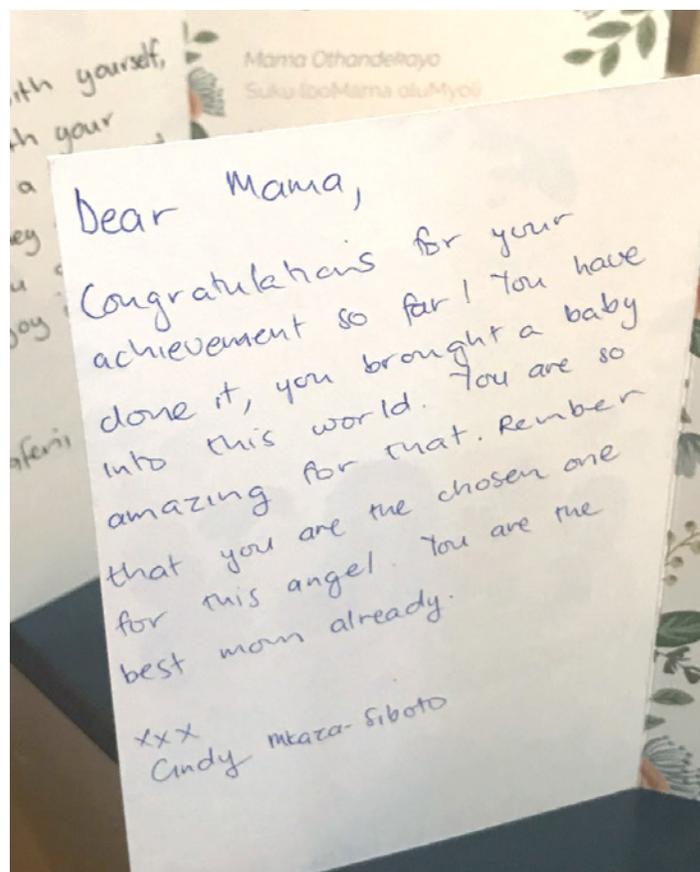


Says Rumbi Goredema Görgens, Operations Manager for Embrace: "To me the 'Mother's Day Connect' call to action felt different from the often commercialised pats on the back that mothers traditionally get on Mother's Day. It felt like another layer of meaning was being added, acknowledging some of the hard realities of motherhood in South Africa, where many new mothers leave the public hospital a day after giving birth, without anyone to support them or to celebrate the birth of their baby".

The continued success of 'Mother's Day Connect' further convinced the Embrace team that the common experiences of motherhood are a societal equaliser, and therefore a relatable mechanism for mobilising a movement.

Next, the team experimented by drawing together diverse groups of mothers around issues affecting the experiences of all South African mothers equally. For example, they rallied support for a public 'nurse-in' at a branch of Edgars to protest against the unfair discrimination against a mother from Mitchell's Plain who nursed her baby in public. More than 300 people signed up to join Embrace through the initiative.

In 2018, Embrace wanted to celebrate the courage of participants in a new social franchise for pre-and post-natal classes⁹, and mobilised its network of mothers to write 93 personalised letters of encouragement to these new mothers within 48 hours – an excellent response rate as most programme implementers will know.



⁸ Supporters were called 'connectors' at the time.

⁹ Flourish pre-and post-natal classes are an initiative of the Grow Great Campaign, which aims to drive a national commitment to a stunting-free generation by 2030. Read more about Grow Great and Flourish here: www.growgreat.co.za

CONNECT

Can we sustain what connects us to build meaningful relationships?



The original Cape Town Embrace was based on a vision that drew substantially on the concept of social capital¹⁰, and the potential of increasing the resilience of children and families by connecting Capetonians, across divides, to create new networks through which social capital could be shared.

“We were very optimistic back then,” says Julie. “We knew people would buy into the idea of investing in a child’s life, but that it would be tricky to bring individuals from different socioeconomic statuses together. As we implemented, we saw that there was a sense of inequality in connecting individuals which they found very difficult to bridge in their relationships. It took us a long time to understand how we might attempt to change that dynamic.”

Adds Rumbi: “There is a sense that some social capital is worth more than others. For example, you might think that someone who is a nurse has more expertise to share, or that someone who is rich has more resources to aid babies and mothers. And often people whose perceived value to others is great, or comparatively great, get treated differently.” This awareness and experience of trying to connect people across divides surfaced another key strategy that has shaped Embrace as it is today and guides the Embrace team to continually ask:

How can the Embrace movement redefine thinking about social capital? And how can the movement promote dignity and respect for all members?

One of the most important tools in redefining how social capital is viewed, valued and managed in the movement, is Embrace’s Motherhood Manifesto¹¹, a collection of statements about motherhood that underlie how members of the Embrace network relate to one another. The manifesto acknowledges a mother as the expert of her context and her child, and in doing so, gives her the space to share her lessons with confidence and to learn from other mothers.

There are also ways to channel the sharing of monetary or physical forms of social capital to downplay the charitable aspect of giving or sharing. With ‘Mother’s Day Connect’, for example, goods sourced and donated by mothers in higher socioeconomic groups often get handed out by visitor groups who did not necessarily source them. This serves to acknowledge that having access to certain forms of social capital, for instance, being able to source donations from local businesses, does not overshadow other forms of social capital, such as being able to communicate to hospital staff in their mother tongue.

Looking at redefining social capital is part of the spirit in which connection takes place in the network, but Embrace also employs interesting strategies to create opportunities for connection.

For example, Embrace is now in the process of learning how to create network action groups around motherhood. While doing this, it started seeking out stories of motherhood for the purpose of sharing and building a sense of belonging in the network, but the storytelling process has become a much more important strategy in itself.

Embrace found that some of the stories shared in those groups were so private and ‘sacred’ that they could not easily be re-shared in order to build solidarity. However, through the storytelling process, women who have known each other for years were discovering details about each other that they never knew, friendships deepened and actions and attitudes spilled over to other mothers in the community. “When you bring these good and bad moments of motherhood into the light, you can figure out how to solve them for a community bigger than yourself,” says Julie.

In 2017 Embrace facilitated an online book club on WhatsApp around Lindy Bruce’s book ‘Motherhood and Me’. The mothers who connected through the book club are still supporting each other through the WhatsApp group more than a year and a half later. And through Tuesday Check-in’s, mothers in the network get an encouraging email and a WhatsApp message to pass on to another mother in her personal network that she chooses to support. The idea is to encourage women to be intentional in encouraging other mothers in their lives. Embrace recently discovered that Tuesday Check-in’s also inspire support for groups of new mothers via WhatsApp chat groups.

EMBRACE MOTHERHOOD MANIFESTO

We, as mothers and mother supporters believe...

- We are diverse but united by our common experiences of motherhood
- Every mother can gain from and contribute to the movement
- Every mother is the expert on HER child
- Every mother is worthy of care and support
- We listen first and then speak
- We encourage and support rather than judge and criticise
- How we do things is as important as what we do
- Our voices and stories are powerful
- What divides us needs to be diminished
- Friendship and community are critical for our mental health and wellbeing
- There are many good practices of motherhood, but no single way to mother our children.
- We acknowledge and value the role of culture and beliefs in the way they shape our motherhood journey.
- We have the right to celebrate our children and honour our role as mothers of the next generation.

¹⁰ Social capital includes everything that people share through networks to add advantage to others, such as information, mobility, time, money and useful items, expertise, experience, skills, acceptance, support, etc.

¹¹ Embrace’s Motherhood Manifesto has been translated into all South African languages, access it here: <https://www.embrace.org.za/manifesto/>

Finding and bringing to light the things that connect people in a country with such diversity and inequality as South Africa is not easy, and few organisations attempt it. Those who do, continue to learn from the experience, with many well-intentioned attempts written-off as naïve or ill-conceived. Social capital is an interesting sociological concept and a powerful mechanism in society to strengthen groups of people, but the prerequisites for the sharing of social capital is trust and goodwill. Finding goodwill between diverse groups of people is perhaps not that hard, but building trust is.

Since its establishment, Embrace has taken every lesson to heart; as a result, the team has repeatedly reorganised their thinking and adjusted its strategy. The Embrace team's approaches and willingness to experiment in a respectful way can be of value to other organisations grappling with similar issues.

Connecting around the development and potential of children is a powerful idea, but inequality in South Africa is so great that it does not draw people together on an equal footing. The experience of motherhood is by no means equal either, but there are parts of motherhood that challenge as well as delight people in the same ways across groups and generations. These are the points of connection that have the power to bind mothers together and inspire them with a sense of solidarity, whilst recognising their own unique experiences of being a mother.

"Women speak to us because they trust us," says Julie. "They share their wisdom and insights with us because they know that we respect them and we are not going to judge. We want South Africa to become renowned as a country that really understands the complexities of motherhood and truly sees the value of mothers in society – and not in a tokenistic manner. Mothers are part of the foundational work of the next generation, worthy of being valued and respected. When that happens, we will happily walk away."

*Learning brief by **Thulile Seleka** and the **Embrace** team.*



Julie (third from the right) and Rumbi (in pink in front) with a group of mothers who shared their motherhood stories as part of Embrace's #IamMother campaign.



**This is the learning experience of:
Embrace**

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OPPORTUNITY

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Make sure every child is ready to read by the time they go to school

The power of engaging around stories: Evidence from the Biblioneef and Western Cape Education Department Book Project.

South Africa's foundation phase reading is in crisis. As evidenced by studies such as the 2016 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), 78% of Grade 4 students cannot read for meaning in any language. Several South African NGOs are trying to address this fracture in our education system.

*In 2016, book donation organisation Biblioneef - with the support of the DG Murray Trust (DGMT), the South African Library and Information Trust (SALI) and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) - initiated a 21-month pilot project with foundation phase teachers at 10 primary schools in the Beaufort West district in the Western Cape.¹ The main aim of the project was to determine the impact book donations would have on teachers and children, **when coupled with training**. This learning brief shares what was learnt through the mixed impact study conducted as part of the project.*

OCTOBER 2018

Childhood literacy specialist, Marlene Rousseau, was appointed to lead the project and conduct a mixed impact study (MIS) on her findings. She conducted six workshops and supported teachers in classrooms. Six days were spent at each of the 10 schools in the project. The MIS model, which allows different types of data to be collected and analysed, was used to provide specific and some in-depth knowledge. The baseline was established in April 2016 and, in August 2017, a second and final round of data was collected and analysed.

According to Rousseau, the effects of poverty and associated socio-economic factors, such as malnutrition and foetal alcohol syndrome, is acute in the school communities included in the study. She also points out that teachers in rural areas receive very little ongoing teacher development. Within this context the baseline study showed that for children participating in the study, reading was not about thinking, talking and interpreting texts. Imaginations were rarely engaged, children's ideas were not sought out or extended and texts were seldom linked to the readers' ideas and life experiences. There was also little attention given to cultivating complex and creative cognitive thinking.

In addition, the study revealed that many foundation phase teachers assume that young children who can read a sentence correctly, understand the text. Yet intermediate phase teachers regularly report that whilst many children **cannot** read, those who **can** tend not to understand what they have read. As Rousseau argues, unless addressed, this flawed belief and associated methods and practices of teaching will have grave political and economic consequences.

Initial visits to the schools revealed:

- › A worrying lack of reading material in most classrooms, such as complete sets of readers, picture books, reference books and bookshelves.
- › Teachers had little understanding of how to teach children to engage with text so that they can learn to read with understanding.
- › Consequently, children spent most of their instructional time learning low-order thinking skills, such as letter-sound relationships and word recognition.
- › Girls outperform boys in classroom and external high-stake tests.
- › Boys tend to be reluctant readers.

1

Beaufort West was selected as rural areas tend to receive minimal teacher training.

Thus, the project's four main objectives were:

- › To promote rich classroom dialogue, writing and reading.
- › To promote reading to learn.
- › To increase boys' motivation for reading and writing.
- › To make connections between the lives and socio-cultural practices of the children and those of the books' characters, storyline and values.²

After the study, Rousseau noted the most significant changes in the classrooms to be:

- › A deepening of teachers' pedagogic practices, specifically in learning to use new techniques and approaches related to storytelling, writing and reading.
- › Teachers using stories as a centre point in lesson planning.
- › Children's voices are heard more in classrooms.
- › High order cognition is foregrounded when children and teachers talk and write about books.
- › Teachers focus on what children do before and after reading, so as to deepen and extend children's comprehension.
- › Children have become artists and writers.
- › The project resulted in a significant broadening of teachers' and children's communicative interests and practices.



“Talking well about books is a high-level activity in itself. But talking well about books is also the best rehearsal there is to talking about other things. So, in helping children to talk about their reading, we help them to articulate about the rest of their lives.”

Aidan Chambers, *Tell Me: Children, Reading and Talk*,
Thimble Press, 1993: 9

PROJECT DETAILS: A ONE-OF-A-KIND PROJECT

This project was unique in that no beneficiary of Biblionef had previously received as many books or professional guidance on how to work with the books. The distribution of the books was staggered - every time that training occurred, a new pack was delivered.

Each teacher received:

- › A pack of *Star Story* readers (simple books featuring short sentences, big type and picture clues to help children read on their own);
- › 40 high-quality picture books;
- › A story anthology; and
- › A *Big Book* (an oversized book ideal for group reading).

The majority of the 10 schools that took part in the project were under-resourced, with between 40-48 children in a class. There were three distinct levels of focus and participation:

LEVEL 1: All 10 schools received children's picture books and all Grade 1-3 teachers participated in the quarterly workshops.

LEVEL 2: Rousseau visited 8 of the 10 schools each school term, and each for a day, to support the implementation of workshop content (pedagogic concepts and practices) in classrooms.³

LEVEL 3: A further selection of schools was made, allowing for a more detailed tracking of how teachers and children were using Biblionef books. They were known as the focus schools.

Three focus schools were selected for the study:

- › **SCHOOL A:** a remote rural school where Afrikaans was the children's home language as well as the language of learning and teaching (LOLT).
- › **SCHOOL B:** a large town school with predominantly isiXhosa-speaking children and a small percentage of children (up to 7%) speaking Afrikaans as a home language. The LOLT was isiXhosa.
- › **SCHOOL C:** a large town school that integrates children with disabilities e.g. wheelchair-bound children and those with Down's Syndrome. While Afrikaans is the dominant home language of the children (and also the LOLT), up to 5% speak isiXhosa at home.

At each focus school, a teachers' focus group and one or two children's focus groups were formed.

² Dyson, A. (2003). Welcome to the Jam, Harvard Education Review: ISBN: 0178055 Luke, A.& Freebody, P. (1999), Further Notes on the Four Resources Model, <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/a916/0ce3d5e75744de3d0ddacaf6861fe928b9e>

³ Excluded were two ex-model C schools, whose systemic reading test results were well above the no-fee paying schools.

Classroom observations:

The children did not think or speak about the texts they read. When Rousseau asked them to think aloud about why we read books, and why writers write stories for children, the standard response was: "To teach us". She says most children did not think they were entitled to say a story was boring. Doing this was regarded as being 'naughty'.

Children asking questions, as well as making comparisons, inferences, generalisations and probing values implicit in stories was not evident, nor did they think about the social uses of different text types (e.g. adverts, poems, songs, maps, invitations, stories, etc.).

The above findings laid bare an urgent need to expand the reading instructional practices in most schools, so as to meet the project's key goals of reading for pleasure and reading to learn.

Learning Communities

The project followed a social approach to learning, where children collaborate through thinking aloud, reading and generating text.

Interview questions to prompt discussion:

Each child was asked to bring a favourite book to the session.

- › What book did you bring to show me today? Show me a page you like. What's happening here? Who's that? What is s/he doing?
- › Talk to me about this story (pause). Can you tell me what you enjoyed?
- › Does this book make you think of another book you have read? Perhaps a character in this book reminds you of another character, or someone you know?
- › Do you sometimes take a book home to read?
- › Show me the picture you drew. Tell me about your drawing. What did you write about your picture?

Post-reading:

Post-reading activities were at the core of the project.

They included:

- › Exploring children's responses to books.
- › Developing a range of children's higher order cognitive skills.
- › Encouraging children to think and express ideas through:
 - › Focused talk;
 - › Drawing;
 - › Emergent, shared and independent writing;
 - › And shared reading, reading in social groups and independent reading.

This new family of approaches was used consistently in workshops and in class visits. Ten of the 12 focus group teachers began using some or many of them. The evidence was on classroom walls, on chalkboards, in children's exercise books and teachers' weekly plans.



Grade 1 children doing post-story activities linked to the stories they've engaged with in the classroom.

Results

As in 2016, 36 focus group children each brought a favourite picture book to the 2017 session, and were invited to talk, draw and write about their books. Questions used to prompt children’s discussion are noted above. There was a marked improvement in children’s capacity to talk about books, across all three grades, in comparison with the silences and halting talk of 2016.

These findings provided evidence that these children had some experience of thinking about and discussing the content of books. There was also a marked improvement in their writing, specifically in writing extended texts.

Biblionef’s mission is to make books available for children (ages three to 18) in all official languages, for reading for pleasure and for education. In this way, it aims to lay the foundation for children to make good decisions through critical thinking, and live balanced and productive lives.

Over a 19-year period, Biblionef has donated 1 654 000 books to children.

How access to books brought a new dimension to classroom life:

SCHOOLS IN APRIL 2016



SCHOOLS IN APRIL 2017

STORYTELLING

- › No teacher was aware of CAPS’ endorsement of the role of stories in early childhood literacy, namely: “*Stories are at the heart of a balanced reading programme.*”
- › Only one of the 12 teachers in the two focus group schools regularly told or read stories in class.
- › CAPS requirements were flagged in all workshops, school visits and lessons taught.
- › Whilst CAPS set the minimum teaching and learning requisites, teachers worked with raised expectations, e.g. story complexity and associated talk and writing tasks.
- › Eleven of the 12 teachers in the two focus group schools started reading or telling the stories used in workshops, in class.

READING RESOURCES IN CLASSROOMS

- › No picture storybooks.
- › No non-fiction picture books e.g. dictionaries, first word books, nursery rhymes or information books, etc.
- › Each classroom received a pack of *Star Story* readers, 40 picture books, an anthology and a *Big Book*.

BOYS’ INTERESTS AND READING PREFERENCES

- › No awareness or consideration of boys’ preferred reading interests, e.g. action and non-fiction.
- › Increased attention to boys’ interests and preferences, e.g. book choice and choice of writing tasks.

NON-FICTION (NF)

- › South African reading series seldom introduce non-fiction to children. This absence was evident in the sets of class readers in the focus schools: *Boet en Saartie* and *Doen en Leer* contain no non-fiction. *Storieboom* (Oxford Reading Tree) includes a rare non-fiction text.
- › An entire workshop was dedicated to NF.
- › Here we created NF texts linked to stories. Teachers unanimously rated this workshop the highest of all workshops with regard to teacher learning and the provision of texts that children could read.
- › Teachers received a range of children’s NF texts, which they worked with in the workshop, and then used in classrooms.
- › NF texts introduced: graphs, mindmaps, street maps, story maps, information texts, biographies, recipes, instructions and descriptive texts were visible on walls, on chalk-boards and in children’s written work.

Lessons Learnt

Distilling New Learning



“Too often we underestimate children. My first challenge to teachers is to encourage them to aim high and expect a lot more from the children they teach. We discuss which instructional practices and techniques capture children’s enthusiasm and fire-up their interest and motivation and focus on pedagogies where children and teachers are positioned as capable learners and professionals.”

Marlene Rousseau

Rousseau, who has been a literacy specialist for 16 years, says the key to the success of the project was that it was based on the pedagogies of belonging and possibility, which embrace the following theoretical concepts:

- › The notion of belonging: within physical classroom spaces, as well as in how children and teachers relate to one another - both in and outside of classrooms.
- › An open classroom discourse: diverse ideas, subjectivities and experiences are welcomed.
- › What Comber (2015) calls the recognition factor: teachers who are interested in what children can do and do, and where children see that this counts (They are quick to do so!).⁴
- › Explicit interest in learning, “where there is a sense of well-being and a readiness to participate in the classroom as a collective learning community.” (Comber 2015: 42)
- › An assets model where the cultural and linguistic resources of children, their families and those of teachers are important resources for learning and teaching. Principles of social justice underpin this work, challenging South Africa’s historical and ongoing production of inequality in education.



A responsive curriculum evolved.

When the Grade 3s brought toys to school, the planned reading lesson changed. The class chose four toys, named them, created a rough plan (using a mindmap) and then composed a five-paragraph adventure story about the four characters.

⁴ Comber, B. (2014). Critical Literacy and Social Justice. *Journal of adolescent & adult literacy*, (48) 5: 358-363.

Pedagogic practices to support reading:

- › Tell and read children fabulous stories.
- › Recognise and support emergent literacies.
- › Foreground the key role of talk when learning.
- › Advocate writing into reading: use the ‘mighty twins’, shared writing and shared reading. Cultivate high order cognition in reading lessons, including critical literacy.
- › Integrate thinking, reading, writing and word study so that learning to read and write becomes one flowing, harmonious movement.
- › From Grade 1, consistently focus on higher order cognition.
- › Critically and creatively explore stories children read and listen to e.g. children and teachers can discuss:
 - › **Gender roles:** *Nozibele and the Three Hairs*.
 - › **Race and power:** *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.
 - › **Family dynamics:** *Damien* (seeing issues through a child’s eyes).
 - › **Agency and power:** *Nyangara the Python*, a story where children are positioned as active agents.
 - › **Complex societal concepts:** *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* (for example, cultural and language practices, power, discrimination, outcasts (monsters), aggression, abuse, anger, justice and injustice).

Rousseau stresses that books of high quality that capture children’s imaginations and offer beginner readers rousing narratives and illustrations - whether these be about everyday life, e.g. *The Best Meal Ever* or wonderfully humorous stories e.g. *My Sussie is ‘n Alien* - are crucial if teachers, parents and after-school organisations are to engage with books in similar ways to those outlined in the MIS. Often children’s creativity surprises us. And, as we see in the box on the right, teachers’ creativity is also set free.

This learning brief is a condensed version of the MIS written by **Marlene Rousseau**. The brief was edited by **Daniella Horwitz**.

SCAFFOLD LEARNING

From Grade 1, children learn to use paragraphs when writing, and from Grade 2, they learn to plan their writing. Post-reading activities may include creating non-fiction texts, e.g.

Story:
The Girl and the Crocodile

Shared Writing:
A non-fiction text

PLAN for WRITING

Use a draft title:
A crocodile

Paragraph 1:
Describe a croc’s head.

Paragraph 2:
Describe the croc’s body, its skin, texture, colour, etc.

Paragraph 3:
Where do crocs live? What do crocs eat? Anything else you know?

Stay Away from Crocodiles

Today we want to describe a crocodile. Crocs have large eyes on top of their heads so that when they are in the water they see well. Crocs have long, big mouths with very sharp teeth.

Crocs have thick scaly skin covering all their body. They have four short legs and long, strong tails. Crocodiles can grow as long as 5 metres!

Crocs live in rivers during the day and walk on land at night. Crocs eat anything that comes close to their mouths. They enjoy eating meat; they are carnivores.

Written by Grade 2 and 3 teachers in a workshop



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OPPORTUNITY

1

Drive public innovation by reigniting civil society

How not to trip up on the digital highway: Lessons from social innovators developing e-platforms.

Almost every household in South Africa has access to a mobile phone¹. This has transformed the face of social development, with many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) embracing mobile technology to connect with their target audiences. In this learning brief, we explore the diverse opportunities – but also challenges – that come with using mobile platforms to drive social change.

Mapping out the mobile space in SA: Mobi sites, mobile apps and bypassing the high cost of data.

While both mobile sites and apps are accessed via mobile handsets, there are key differences between them. Mobi sites are websites that have been specially designed for use and viewing on a mobile phone, and like websites, they can display text, data, images, and video². Apps are applications that are downloaded and installed onto a mobile device, rather than being rendered in a browser like a mobi site; they can pull content and data from the Internet, like a website, but they can also download content so that it can be accessed without an Internet connection³. (See appendix for a detailed breakdown of the apps and mobi sites discussed in this brief.)

Mobi sites are not necessarily better than apps, and vice versa – it depends on various factors, such as the purpose of the platform, the nature of content, and the depth and frequency of use i.e. how much and how often the platform is to be used.

Andrew Rudge, CEO of The Reach Trust, a developer of innovative and cost-effective mobile solutions, shares: “Our data has shown that in South Africa, offering an app that runs offline gets much more sustained use than a mobi site. It’s not

just about the cost; half the time you don’t have good signal, so it can be a very frustrating experience to try and access a service that needs to be online the whole time. If you go into rural areas, connectivity is even more problematic.”

In South Africa, where data remains expensive, NGOs have long strived to make their platforms cheaply accessible by finding ways to circumvent the high cost of data. For instance, Andy du Plessis, managing director of FoodForward SA, an NGO that secures quality surplus food for those in need, says: “We were acutely aware of high data costs when we developed our [FoodShare] solution that uses virtual technology to connect retail stores and food outlets with public benefit organisations that redistribute surplus food. Firstly, we ensured that the platform costs the user nothing; secondly, that the costs were reverse billed to us; and thirdly, that we got preferential rates from the USSD⁴ provider.”

Andrew Tlou, director of business development at Jobstarter, a digital work-readiness learning and information platform for entry-level jobseekers and opportunity providers, points

1 According to GSMA’s ‘The Mobile Economy 2017 report for Sub-Saharan Africa’, South Africa has a unique mobile penetration rate of 68%, with 37.5 million unique mobile subscribers in the country. [My Broadband. ‘How many unique mobile subscribers South Africa has’. 11 July 2017. Available at: <https://mybroadband.co.za/news/cellular219270-how-many-unique-mobile-subscribers-south-africa-has.html>

2 Human Service Solutions. ‘Mobile Website vs. Mobile App: Which is Best for Your Organization’. Available at: <https://www.hswsolutions.com/services/mobile-web-development/mobile-website-vs-apps/>

3 Ibid.

4 USSD, or Unstructured Supplementary Service Data, is a communication technology that allows a message exchange between a mobile device and the network’s operating computer.

out that a significant number of their users employ the Opera Mini Browser to help them access the site at a low cost (Opera Mini compresses the amount of data used). A number of learning mobile interventions, such as dig-it and MathsUp, often use airtime and data rewards to incentivise users to complete challenges, quizzes, etc. on their platforms.

The reality is that most people already consume data – they are just selective about what they use their data for. If a product doesn't resonate with them, they are not going to 'spend' data on it. So, how can users be encouraged to spend their precious data on a social development platform? Here we share 10 lessons from South African NGOs that are harnessing the power of mobile technology, with a few bumps along way...

Top 10 tips for mobile platform development

1. Develop your platform in conjunction with users
2. Test, evaluate, sustain
3. Balance content and technology
4. Repurpose technology
5. Find the right partner
6. Be mindful of tech illiteracy
7. Get the word out
8. Explore free models
9. Make it a habit
10. Ask yourself, "Who is holding the phone?"

FEATURE- VERSUS SMARTPHONES

While feature phones used to dominate the market in South Africa – and continue to do so in sub-Saharan Africa with 62.2% of the region's overall mobile market share – the increasing affordability of low-end smartphones has seen this type of handset browser, in South Africa an estimated "51% own a smartphone that can access the internet and apps, making it the most common device" in the country.*

So what's the difference between feature and smartphones? Feature phones are the lowest entry phones available in South Africa and provide basic services; they can make and receive calls, send text messages and provide some of the advanced features found on a smartphone, such as Internet access. However, feature phones don't usually support add-on applications (apps), may have less storage capacity and lack advanced multi-media and Internet connectivity options.

"All users would like a smartphone. Barriers are the cost of the device and of the data required to operate a smartphone," observes Lauren Kotze, strategic lead for maternal health and Early Childhood Development (ECD) at Praekelt.org, an NGO working on mobile solutions to social problems.

* Silver, L & Johnson, C. 2018. 'Majorities in subSaharan Africa own mobile phones, but smartphone adoption is modest'. Pew Research Centre. October 9, 2018. Available at: <http://www.pewglobal.org/2018/10/09/majorities-in-sub-saharan-africa-own-mobile-phones-but-smartphone-adoption-is-modest/>

1. Develop your platform together with users

To effect change, it is essential that you put yourself in the shoes of your users and purposefully create a feedback loop that draws information from initial users to streamline the platform. Du Plessis says that while it took nearly a year to scope the specification for FoodShare, several adjustments had to be made to the first beta version because they had not thought through all the implications, connections and needs of the various users. He explains: "When we initially developed FoodShare, we had six steps with long explanations before the user completed all the information that we needed to receive for the inventory. After speaking with users, we realised that it could be made simpler. We now have just three steps to follow."

Marcha Bekker, business development lead at Praekelt.org, adds: "Whenever you design or build any new piece of technology, start with the end user in mind. Get out of the office, speak to them and understand what kind of access to technology they have, how they use it, and what their barriers are to accessing information. Then take that into a co-design session; once the prototype is developed go back to the users to test it. See what they like and don't like, where they struggle and how they actually engage with the platform. Then build a basic product with just enough features to satisfy early users and to provide feedback for future development."

When designing platforms to support programme implementation, for example, to collect data on programme participation or service utilisation, the project should be designed so that those who collect the data – most likely be the project implementers – are first in line to receive reports from the system. Too often programme implementers are the last to get feedback that they could use to improve the quality of programmes.



“We are a mobile technology organisation so we love to be innovative and work on the latest tech. But you need to be very aware of the target audience and make sure that you are using the channel that the user has in their hand right now.”

Lauren Kotze, strategic lead for maternal health & ECD, Praekelt.org



This is Somdake Vuyiswa. She lived in a remote area of the Eastern Cape called Amajingqi. As a Nal’ibali Story Sparker (literacy mentor) she runs reading clubs for children who would otherwise have very little opportunity to be exposed to books and be supported to love reading. Via her cell phone, she and everyone else in Amajingqi, can access nalibali.mobi, a mobile platform developed by the Nal’ibali reading-for-enjoyment campaign to make available a library of children’s stories in various South African languages, as well as other resources for adults who are committed to cultivating literacy skills in children – skills that are critical for building a foundation for learning.

2. Test, evaluate, sustain

It’s common to test a prototype before launch, but organisations often don’t use effective methods to do so. Mufaro Magidi, operations manager for Mosaic, an NGO focused on preventing women and child abuse in disadvantaged communities, notes: “We didn’t test our apps (see appendix) enough and we didn’t test it with the right people. We thought we had the buy-in of the community because we looked at audiences and community members familiar with Mosaic. When we tried to sell the apps to a new audience, it fell through. The test has to be done on a raw audience and we had to learn the hard way.”

Erika Wiese, head of portfolio management at Innovation Edge, an innovation catalyst and impact-first investor that has several investments focused on using mobile interventions to bring about change, says evaluation is crucial when piloting an app. However, she thinks that traditional evaluation methods are not necessarily appropriate and need to be adapted to cater for the iterative design⁵ cycles used to develop these products. She believes it is also important to develop a strategy for sustainability and scale right from the start: “Many apps get developed without a clear pathway to scale and consideration of who ultimately will cover the maintenance, hosting and enhancement costs to sustain and/or grow the app.”

3. Balance content and tech

When the focus is primarily on technology, the integrity of content often suffers – both are equally important when it comes to developing an effective platform. Mignon Hardie, executive director of FunDza Literacy Trust, an organisation that delivers reading content to young people via their mobile phones as one of their strategies to promote a culture of reading in South Africa⁶, says: “If you don’t have the right content to put into that technology, it is never going to work. There were other apps using public domain content, such as old Shakespeare texts. But they didn’t have that same appeal, because it wasn’t necessarily what was going to hook people into reading. For us, the technology and content creation process works hand-in-hand.”

⁵ Iterative design is a continuous and cyclical process of prototyping, testing, analysing, and refining a product. Based on the results of testing the most recent iteration, or version, of a design (usually through user research), modifications are made. A new prototype is then made and the process begins all over again until the best possible design is found.

⁶ There are three different ways that you can access content from FunDza.mobi: via FunDza’s responsive website, via its Android app or via the FunDza app on FreeBasics.com (available free of data charges to Cell C in South Africa and other mobile partners in the rest of the world).

4. Repurpose technology

The biggest cost in technology development is time (specifically, the time spent on design and software engineering). With this in mind, The Reach Trust builds apps in a modular way so they can repurpose certain elements. For example, the first version of their CareUp app was made available in three languages (English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa) and to change between them took about five steps. When MathsUp was developed, language translation was enabled with just one touch. Rudge explains: “It sounds simple, but there’s a lot of complexity that goes on in the background to enable a simple switch between languages. Once we built it for MathsUp, we could then apply the same feature to CareUp. Now every app we produce that is available in multiple languages utilises the same underlying technology.”

This concept evolved into the ECD Launchpad, a platform underpinned by the idea that rather than inventing the wheel every time a new app is needed, different apps can be produced at a fraction of the cost (and time) using modular architecture already developed. The apps, though connected by a shared infrastructure, can be customised to set them apart and make them independent, and by forming part of one ecosystem, organisations can enjoy several benefits such as the ability to share ideas quickly and track users over time.⁷

5. Find the right partner

Many NGOs don’t have the internal engineering capacity to build a platform and struggle to find the right partner. FunDza’s Hardie explains: “It’s difficult to figure out who to work with and how to ensure you get the solutions you need – and at the right price – particularly when you’re working in a specialist field and your own understanding of the work/technology required is limited.”

Surf therapy organisation Waves For Change’s (W4C’s) CoachAssist app faced similar challenges. Founder Tim Conibear recalls: “Finding Cape Town developers was really hard and took a long time. We weren’t sure of the best code to use, which code scales most effectively, and also became aware we needed the development of an app as well as a back-end management system – two different skill sets. We searched for about six months and fortunately found two good development teams who saw the potential of our app, but also had experience developing apps with similar goals, so the concept of social impact was familiar to them.”

FoodForward SA told their service provider they were a non-profit and were granted a preferential rate. “We also made sure that we own the source code⁸, so we are not beholden to only one developer,” states du Plessis. Mosaic sent out calls to at least five contractors for each of their apps, which allowed them to negotiate better pricing. Kotze says dig-it was built externally and acknowledges that this was sometimes a painful process. As a result, the bulk of their engineering is now done in-house. “This allows us to do everything from initial research, to service design and engineering all within one small hyper team, working very closely and collaboratively together, and with our users, and this certainly delivers better results.”

How can NGOs ensure their IP (intellectual property) is not subsequently used for profit? Rudge of The Reach Trust advises: “Be specific about the transfer of IP to the funder/NGO and ensure that code is committed to GitHub⁹ so other organisations can benefit and build upon it.”

Hardie believes custom solutions to specific problems may have limited application in commercial environments, so the risk of a for-profit IT company re-using the entire platform for commercial gain is probably low. However, they may be able to re-use certain parts. She offers a possible solution: “Non-profits should seek equity investment in for-profit IT concerns so that their investments for social solutions can be offset against future profits by the IT concern.”

6. Be mindful of tech illiteracy

Many users don’t know how to download an app or are afraid of ‘hidden’ costs associated with doing so. Innovation Edge has found that for their target market, continuous upgrades negatively affect user retention. “Rather try and create content that can be downloaded once-off, within a free wifi zone, for example,” advises Wiese. According to The Reach Trust, Internet cafes in small towns and townships in the Western and Eastern Cape charge R10 to download and set-up WhatsApp for a client. This means people who want WhatsApp, but don’t have the technical ability, pay to get what is essentially a free service.

Failure to recognise icons can also be an issue. During a pilot of the dig-it mobi maths site, it was revealed that learners didn’t know what the ‘burger menu’ (the three horizontal lines used to signify the menu bar) meant because they were not web-literate enough. “Assumptions are dangerous and you must test these things; we ended up taking away lots of symbols and icons, and just using words,” explains Praekelt’s Kotze.

⁷ Innovation Edge funded and co-developed the ECD Launchpad and the apps built on it: MathsUp, CareUp and The Wordworks App.

⁸ The form in which a computer program is originally written before it is changed into computer language. Access to source code allows modification of a programme.

⁹ GitHub is a web-based version-control and collaboration platform for software developers. It is used to store the source code for a project and show the history of changes to the code.

7. Get the word out

In South Africa, there is still a low demand for services via digital platforms. You can have the best app in the world, but if people don't know how and why they should be using it, take-up is going to be minimal. This presents a demand problem that needs to be solved through awareness and marketing. All participants in this learning brief said they would have like to have invested more in marketing "to get the word out". However, marketing is expensive and NGOs tend to have limited budgets. To ensure some awareness was generated around their apps during the activation phase, most of the organisations included in this brief held workshops to publicise their apps, some taking modems with them so their target audience could download the app for free.

8. Explore free models

A free-to-end-user model for data could prompt more people in under-resourced communities to sign up to mobile interventions. Zero-rating is one solution. A site is zero-rated if networks do not charge a consumer for using data to access it. Examples are Facebook's Free Basics and Google's Free Zone. Rudge from The Reach Trust explains that zero-rating an Android app is complex, however, because you need to download Free Zone from the Google Play Store (which is not zero-rated). An effective method is to get the app onto the user's phone in the cheapest way possible (at a free wifi spot or using a free file transfer app, such as SHAREit) and then fetch content from a zero-rated mobi site.

9. Make it a habit

The main advantage of mobile interventions is the vast reach they can provide. But to make a major impact, you don't just have to grab attention, you have to keep it. That can be tough, in 2017 the average mobile app retention rate across all industries was only 20% after three months¹⁰.

There needs to be a reason for users to keep coming back, "especially in social impact type projects because it is not often that the user has gone out looking for it to begin with. It is targeted at them," warns Praekelt's Kotze. A simple, hassle-free and fun user experience encourages return visits; incentives have also proved to be effective (for example, on the dig-it mobi site, learners were given three maths questions each day from Monday to Friday; if they got 60% right, they were given an airtime reward the following week).

A useful way of thinking of users is the 'skimmer, dipper and diver' model¹¹, which Rudge says The Reach Trust has used in its own thinking around audience engagement:

- › **The 'skimmer':** downloads the app or opens the website, has a quick look and then moves on; this type constitutes 90% of users.
- › **The 'dipper':** sits on the surface of the water and sticks his/her head down now and again. This user typically spends two to five minutes on the app/site; this type constitutes 9% of users.
- › **The 'diver':** goes down deep into the platform and has a good exploratory look at the app/site; this type constitutes just 1% of users.

The conclusion is that if you want your intervention to have traction, you need to produce an app or mobi site that has depth, but is easy and intuitive enough for a skimmer to use. The Reach Trust believes most people are skimmers rather than divers, and thus the ideal delivery methodology to hook and keep users is through regular but bite-sized interactions.

¹⁰ Perro, J. 2018. Mobile Apps: What's A Good Retention Rate? Localytics: Access at: <http://info.localytics.com/blog/mobile-apps-whats-a-good-retention-rate>

¹¹ Hassler-Forest, D. 2016. 'Skimmers, dippers, and divers: Campfire's Steve Coulson on transmedia marketing and audience participation'. Participations: Journal of Audience & Reception Studies. Vol 13, Issue 1. Available at: <http://www.participations.org/Volume%2013/Issue%201/S3/11.pdf>

10. Ask yourself, “Who is holding the phone?”

If people are struggling just to survive in impoverished circumstances, will they have an interest in using apps or mobi sites, even those that are for social good? Magidi of Mosaic says: “We would develop the apps again, but for a different audience, for example the South African Police Service or the Department of Health that have access to many people. Our app is used for data capturing and tracking, and our experience is that communities are not ready or capacitated enough for this yet.”

Sometimes, however, there is no requirement for the beneficiary of a mobi site or app to have a mobile phone of their own. With W4C’s CoachAssist app, for example, the coach has a smartphone so that she/he can take a photo at the beginning and end of the session to log attendance. MathsUp only expects teachers to have access to a mobile phone so they can download Maths learning materials.

Other platforms use a combination of feature phones and computers. FoodForward SA says beneficiary organisations typically use a mobile phone when making collections at a store. Du Plessis expands: “We use USSD tech so there are no costs to the user, and no smartphones are required. When they log into FoodShare to record tonnage or review/update information, using a computer is better, because of the size of the screen. Donors typically use their computers for ease of use.”

In conclusion: Opportunities and challenges

Mobile interventions save organisations and users time and money, but they can also generate income. FoodShare allows for another income stream because food donors pay to use the system. Similarly, CoachAssist is licensed and this allows W4C to generate a small revenue. W4C’s Conibear adds that one of the most surprising outcomes of CoachAssist is that “it has challenged the way we look at NGOs because it means that many of the functions performed by management are slowly starting to be automated. It does challenge our thinking around how we structure our organisation.”

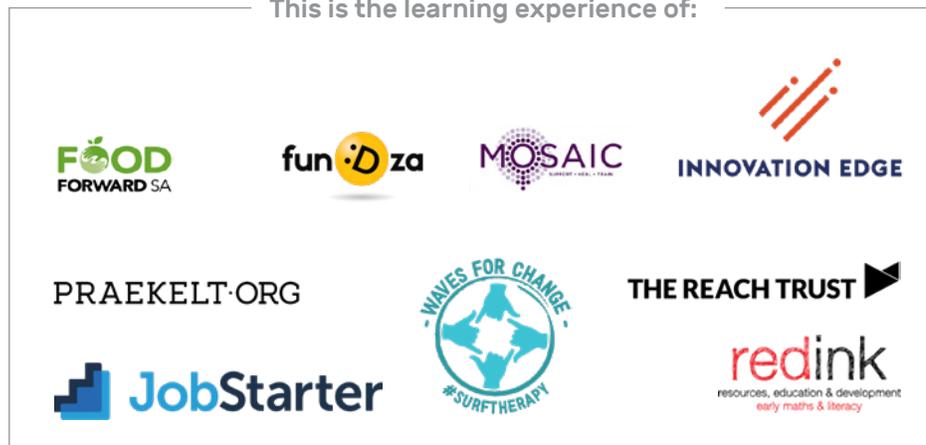
It’s a challenge keeping up with the breakneck speed of technology and subsequent fragmentation of the market. As current trends already show, more users will adopt smartphones as they become cheaper, but if your platform is designed only for feature phones, it will look clunky on a new (albeit low-end) smartphone.

The Reach Trust advocates that social innovators move with the market, but also try to change people’s perception of what they can use their phones for. Rudge elaborates: “The more people realise that phones are very powerful in terms of accessing educational content and all sorts of other things, the more prepared they are to invest in newer phones. It doesn’t have to be a very high-end phone, but should stay with the market.”

This applies also to the look and feel of the platform. Just because NGO platforms are often built on a limited budget, doesn’t mean they should look or read as low-budget; they should be aspirational and fun to use. We are firmly set on the digital trajectory and perhaps the greatest advantage of mobile technology is that it challenges the status quo by giving more opportunities to those who have so few.

Learning brief by Daniella Horwitz.

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Appendix of digital platforms

Name of digital platform:	MathsUp
Type of platform:	Android app
Developed by:	The Reach Trust and Redink with Innovation Edge
Target audience:	Grade R teachers
What does it do?	A mobile application that provides Grade R teachers with a high-quality curriculum to support the effective teaching of mathematics in low resource settings. The content is available in English and isiXhosa.
How long has it been active?	12 months
How long did it take to develop?	Six months initially but there is ongoing iteration and refinement.
How much did it cost to develop?	± R1 million to date
Basic utilisation stats:	The project is being piloted with 250 teachers in the Eastern Cape.

Name of digital platform:	FoodShare
Type of platform:	Mobi site with USSD functionality
Developed by:	Leaping Rhino with FoodForward SA
Target audience:	Beneficiary organisations (BOs) and food donors
What does it do?	Virtually connects BOs to retail stores and restaurants for the regular collection of edible surplus food.
How long has it been active?	Two years
How long did it take to develop?	12-18 months
How much did it cost to develop?	The initial cost was R580 000.
Basic utilisation stats:	This mobi site is being used by 135 BOs collecting food from 151 stores nationally.

Name of digital platform:	SEJA and Access2Justice
Type of platform:	Android app
Developed by:	Boland Internet services with Mosaic
Target audience:	SEJA: children and adult community members; Access2Justice: general public
What does it do?	Shares information with users on their nearest child protection service provider. Allows for functioning as a panic button for persons in need of emergency protection and care. Captures data for Mosaic.
How long has it been active?	SEJA: six months; Access2Justice: two years
How long did it take to develop?	SEJA: eight months; Access2Justice: five months
How much did it cost to develop?	SEJA: R110 000; Access2Justice: R90 000
Basic utilisation stats:	Average SEJA: 25 regular visitors on average per month. Average Access2Justice: 15 regular visitors on average per month.

Name of digital platform:	dig-it
Type of platform:	Mobi site
Developed by:	Retro Rabbit with Praekelt
Target audience:	South African learners from low or no-fee schools, in Grades 10 to 12.
What does it do?	It provides a way for learners to practice Maths on a daily basis, providing them with access to CAPS-aligned content so they can improve their skills over time to ultimately improve their Maths results at the end of the year.
How long has it been active?	Since July 2014
How long did it take to develop?	The first version took three months to develop, but the platform is constantly being iterated and improved upon.
How much did it cost to develop?	R2 million
Basic utilisation stats:	Approximately 9 000 users per month

Name of digital platform:	FunDza.mobi and FunDzapp
Type of platform:	Mobi site and Android app
Developed by:	The Lateral Alternative with the FunDza Literacy Trust
Target audience:	Teens and young adults, aged 13 to 25 years. The actual readership is broader than this with approximately 20% of readers being older than 25 years.
What does it do?	Provides access to local reading material with new content featured daily. Readers can also send in their own work for publication. FunDza's in-house team edits readers' work and provides writers with feedback. This content is uploaded to FunDza.mobi as 'Fanz' content. Readers can also access a variety of open online courses to develop their language and comprehension skills.
How long has it been active?	Since 2011
How long did it take to develop?	Continuously being developed
How much did it cost to develop?	A total of ± R1 800 000 in tech spend between 2011 and 2018. This excludes the cost of content and internal staff managing the platform.
Basic utilisation stats:	An average of ± 250 000 unique users each month.

Name of digital platform:	CoachAssist
Type of platform:	Android app
Developed by:	Cobi Mobile and Baseline Software with Waves for Change
Target audience:	CoachAssist targets individuals delivering services in their community. At present, these are sports coaches leading various types of sport and physical activity programmes for vulnerable populations living in high-risk communities in South Africa, Liberia and USA.
What does it do?	CoachAssist helps users track their activity and log the number of individuals they are reaching and engaging through their service. The app works on and offline and is designed for use in high-risk zones far off the grid.
How long has it been active?	Six months
How long did it take to develop?	12 months
How much did it cost to develop?	± R300 000
Basic utilisation stats:	Currently being piloted with 30 users (coaches/ community volunteers) delivering services to 1 600 individuals.

Name of digital platform:	jobstarter.co.za
Type of platform:	Mobi site
Developed by:	Thumbtribe and Cognician with the DG Murray Trust
Target audience:	Unemployed youth (between 16 and 35 years old) who are not in education, employment or in any other form of training opportunity.
What does it do?	Provides users with easy-to-navigate, straightforward information on topics ranging from how to find a job to bursaries, apprenticeships and other education and training opportunities. It also offers mobile learning courses to help users build their workplace competencies while functioning as a mechanism to connect opportunity providers with opportunity seekers registered on the platform.
How long has it been active?	Three years
How long did it take to develop?	Two years. The plan is to keep adding new pieces of work each year, and hiring an in-house e-learning manager.
How much did it cost to develop?	To create the basic platform with core components: ± R3 000 000. Development of new components continues.
Basic utilisation stats:	23 463 registered users (meaning they've registered for e-learning); and an average of ± 17 000 active users on the platform and 20 000 visits each month.



DGMT is a South African foundation built on endowments from Douglas George Murray and his wife, Eleanor. DGMT is committed to developing South Africa's potential through public innovation and strategic investment. Our goal for South Africa is a flourishing people, economy and society. Towards this end DGMT currently distributes about R160-million per year and leverages and manages a similar amount of funding through joint ventures with other investors.

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The logo consists of the letters 'DG' stacked above 'MT' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, set against a solid blue square background.

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