



2021

NEWSLETTER ROUNDUP



2000 notebooks given to pupils
300 Reading Made Easy printed and distributed
500 phonic readers added to the libraries
500 bookbags given to pupils
600 storybooks added to the libraries

READING MADE EASY WORKSHOPS LAUNCH AND RESEARCH TRIAL BEGINS

January 2021 marked the beginning of second term for primary schools in Nigeria and we began to see the schools in Ona-Ara, Oyo State, settle after a tentative start to the academic year after Covid closures. We kicked off by recovering the books that we had left in the community back in March 2020. We collected community feedback about the books and we learnt that even the simplest storybooks in English were too difficult for a large number of pupils and they needed books for absolute beginner readers, particularly in English.

In 2nd term we launched Book Box Library Club in 5 new schools, taking the total of schools serviced by our mobile library to 10, with a reach of over 2000 children. Annual refresher training on how to care for books was conducted in all 10 schools in June. Repetition of this message is important in a community that has little exposure to books and how they need to be treated. This is all part of 'changing the culture' around reading and books.

We were getting extremely good feedback regarding the early literacy phonics readers we had printed and added to the library collection. We scoured the bookstores for more high quality phonics books for beginner readers and struggled to find relevant material. As a result we partnered with Telling Our Tales, a children's book publishing initiative, to produce the books the children need. By June Telling Our Tales had developed the first book in a series of levelled readers, ready for trial in schools.

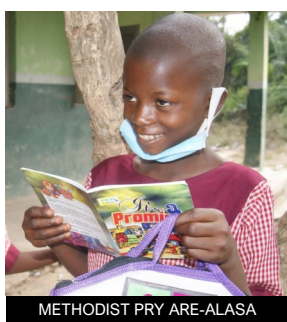
We conducted 3 workshops with the new materials and phonics instruction. Feedback from these workshops would help us shape the new books, ensuring they were the right books at the right level for the children they were aimed at servicing. The outcome of this very short trial was encouraging. By the end of the 6-weeks the children could read simple 3-letter words by decoding and had learnt many sight words. We decided to start a formal 2-year pilot of the materials and workshops starting in the new academic year.

With our official Reading Made Easy pilot due to launch in October we embarked on benchmark testing so we could track achieved by the pilot project. With the help of volunteers from the UK, an academically sound research trial was developed. The literacy assessment were conducted using an adapted version of the USAID Early Grade Reading Assessment that was developed for a joint project with the Sokoto Education Board and USAID in 2013.

The first awards for the incentive scheme were awarded in December, just ahead of the Christmas holidays. Teachers were awarded based on a points scheme where points were awarded to teachers for:

- 1) Support in increasing awareness of the benefits of reading.
- 2) Support in increasing access to books.
- 3) Support in encouraging positive behaviours around reading.
- 4) Support in increasing motivation to read.
- 5) Support in increasing confidence to read.
- 6) Help to increase literacy skills.
- 7) Encouraging parents and community involvement in reading.

Seven teachers received ₦5000 and a certificate acknowledging their efforts supporting children with their reading.



METHODIST PRY ARE-ALASA



IDC SCHOOL OLODE



ISLAMIC MISSION AKANRAN



ST JOSEPH'S GBEDUN



ST JAMES OLORUNDA