

Cultivating a thriving literacy landscape, 30 years of democracy and beyond

Reflection on past National reading Summits

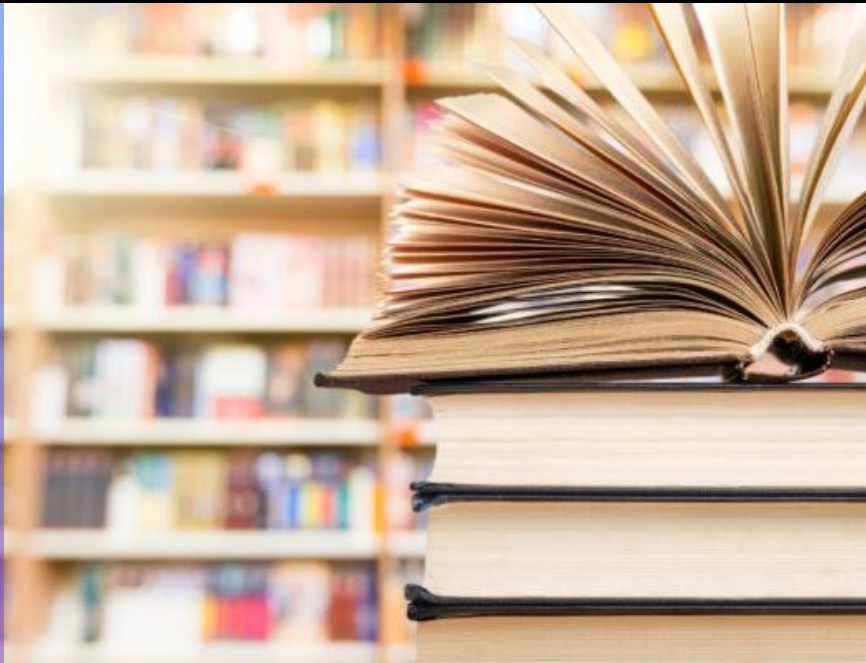
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Importance of the national reading summit

To bring together stakeholders such as librarians, NGOs, policy makers, authors, researchers, students and community leaders to collaborate in promoting, supporting and strengthening a reading culture and literacy development across all levels of society.

These reading summits are imperative for the growth of literacy development as the foundation for personal empowerment, lifelong learning and active participation in a democratic society.



Focus of the national reading summits

- The reading summits respond to the national reading initiatives as well as the Reading Survey that was commissioned by the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture through the South African Book Development Council (SABDC) published in 2017.
- The survey revealed that only 14% of the South African population were active book readers, and a mere 5% of parents read to their children.
- The results highlighted the importance of fostering a culture of reading to improve literacy rates and educational outcomes in South Africa.
- It emphasized that efforts are required to advance reading in addressing literacy challenges by promoting reading as a valuable and enjoyable activity.



Focus of the different national reading summits



Strengthen the
reading ecosystem

Nurturing reading
cultures and
literacies in post-
pandemic
ecosystems

Cultivating a thriving
literacy landscape,
30 years of
democracy and
beyond

Focus of the first national reading summit - 2021

- To explore issues and insights on reading practices in South Africa, on the African continent and globally.
- To provide a platform for exchange of experiences and dialogue on Book clubs as a means of promoting reading in our communities.
- To identify and analyse opportunities and challenges of reading initiatives.
- To showcase effective reading programmes of specific age groups.
- To draw lessons from best practice models in driving reading programmes.
- To strengthen reading programmes and initiatives in collaboration with Government and the various stakeholders including educators NGOs, publishers and institutions of higher education.





Topics of the first national reading summit - 2021

- Reading and literacy in 4IR
- Reading post COVID19 pandemic
- Book clubs and mobile libraries on culture of reading
- Impact of reading initiatives: what has been their reach and effect in advancing a culture of reading
- Storytelling and promotion of reading culture
- Reading interests and readers
- Barriers to reading and reading culture
- Best practices in driving reading programmes. What models exist in the continent and globally that can be emulated to give momentum to the programmes.
- The impact of International and National Reading Campaigns in promoting the culture reading in South Africa (e.g. World Book Day, S.A Library Week, and International Literacy Day)
- Sustainability of reading programmes
- Reading for people with disabilities





Outcomes of the first national reading summit - 2021

- Policy Development and Implementation
- Reading resources Community of Practice
- Strengthening the Reading Ecosystem.
- Form a programme committee for the next summit, which will determine the themes for the next summit.
- Continuous Development for the Teaching of Reading and Building a Reading Culture
- Policy development and Implementation
- The NLSA has identified lack of research skills and clear agenda as main attributes the communities of practices losing members, declining participation and stagnation in terms of achieving the intended goals.

Focus of the second national reading summit - 2023

The Reading Summit aimed to assess the role of literacy in the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030 and focuses on contributing to the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the Agenda 2063 of the African Union, to improve literacy in Africa.



Focus of the second national reading summit - 2023

Objective included:

- To explore issues and insights on reading practices in South Africa, on the African continent and globally.
- To provide a platform for exchange of experiences and dialogue on Book Clubs as a means of promoting reading in our communities.
- To identify and analyse opportunities and challenges of reading initiatives.
- To showcase effective reading programmes of specific age groups.
- To draw lessons from best practice models in driving reading programmes.
- To strengthen reading programmes and initiatives in collaboration with Government and various stakeholders including educators, NGOs, publishers and institutions of higher education.



Topics of the second national reading summit – 2023

- Reading cultures for sustainable development
- Reading and Technology
- Promotion of reading and literacies
- Reading cultures and literacy theoretical constructs
- Multilingualism and Multiculturalism
- Reading and literacy skills development
- Case studies of successes





Specific focus of topics related to the second national reading summit - 2023

- Reading interests and readers
 - Barriers to reading and reading cultures
 - Decolonising reading practices
 - Reading for differently-abled individuals
 - Early childhood literacies
 - Reading support for different user groups
 - Reading and literacy in 4IR
 - Technology use towards strengthening reading practices
 - Influence of social media on reading
 - Book clubs and mobile libraries
 - Storytelling and promotion of reading cultures
 - Best practices in driving reading programmes
 - Best practice examples of success stories
 - Reinforcing information literacies by reimagining reading cultures in post-pandemic communities of practice
- Theoretical framework development towards the advancement of reading cultures
 - Conceptual constructs to advance reading programme expansion
 - Promotion of multilingualism in reading
 - Development of indigenous language systems
 - Preserving indigenous knowledge
 - Building skills to enhance reading cultures
 - Funding towards reading and literacy skills development
 - Collaborations towards reading and literacy skills development
 - Inclusive and accessible reading culture development



Outcomes of the second national reading summit - 2024

- Focus on parents being key role players in reviving the culture of reading
- Decolonising reading practices through the use of indigenous languages
- National reading barometer to leverage change in the literacy eco-system
- Using technology and technological devices to strengthen reading skills
- Utilising tools such as book clubs, public library engagement projects, reading rooms and publishing to promote reading and literacies
- Expanding the role of libraries to promote a reading culture to meet the sustainable development goals

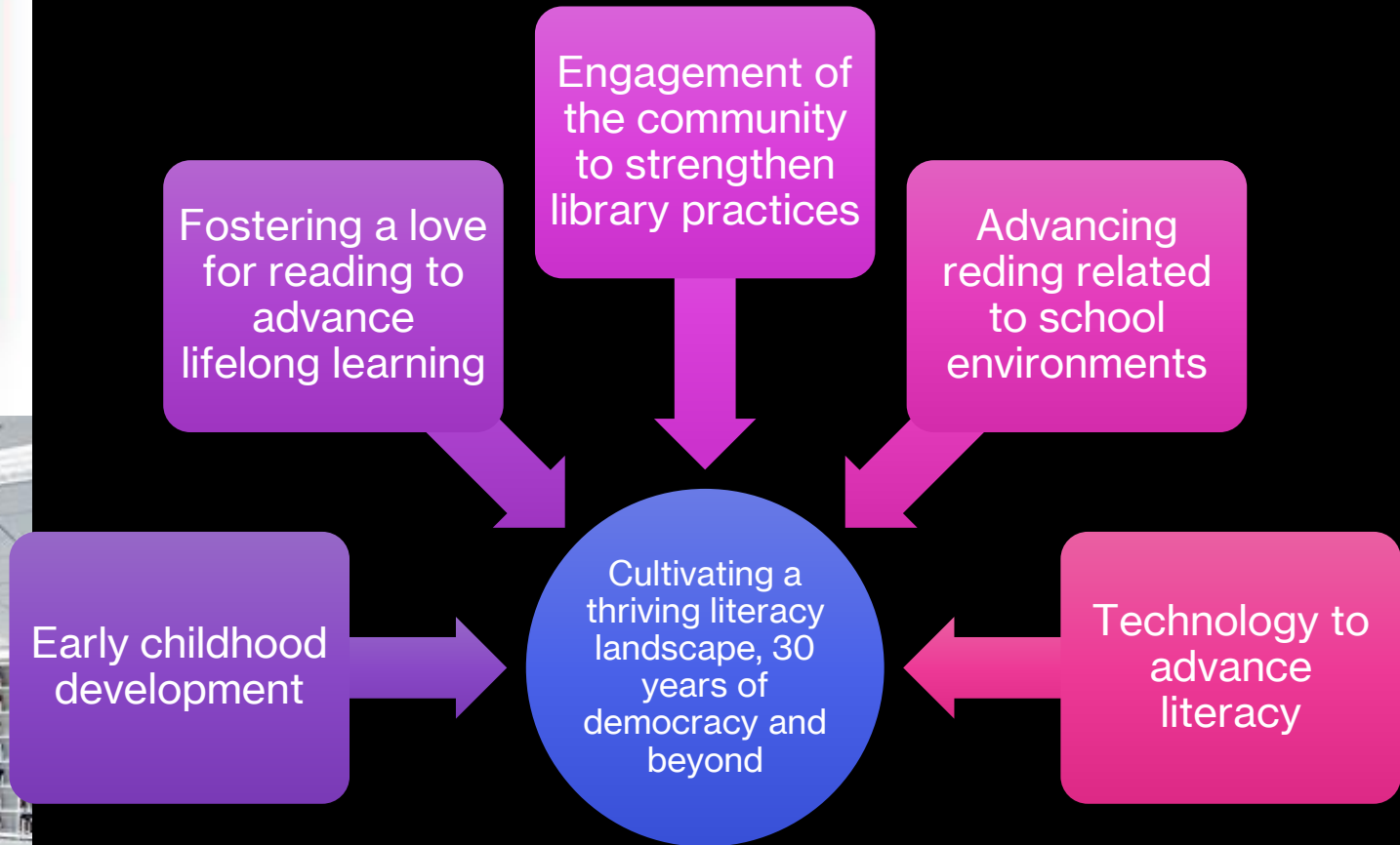


Publication opportunities

- 18 possible articles received
- First line of reviews were done and sent back to colleagues to ask for major improvements
- Second line of reviews were done to comply with the requirements of the Mousaion (x2 blind peer reviews)
- Few articles were found to comply and not sufficient enough for a special edition
- Those that are publishable will be incorporated into the normal publications of the journal



Moving forward



Conclusion

- Reading summit conferences are pivotal platforms that bring together educators, policymakers, literacy advocates, and community leaders to address challenges and opportunities related to literacy development.
- Reading summits are crucial for creating momentum, accountability, and sustainable impact in advancing reading and literacy across all levels of society.
- National Library Readings summits must continue to ensure the promotion of literacy awareness, policy and strategy development, knowledge sharing, mobilising stakeholders, empowering communities and monitoring progress of the impact of literacy campaigns on literacy advancement.





Literacy is not just about reading and writing — it is the foundation for freedom, dignity, and sustainable development. In Africa, empowering people through literacy is the key to unlocking innovation, reducing poverty, and building a more just and prosperous future.