



Tiyo Soga Community Reading Room & Museum

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REPORT ON THE READING ROOM – 2017-8

The Reading Room has been operating within the community since its renovation. Several developments have taken place during the year. The Reading Room has attracted youth as well as the older generation within the community. The response could be better though, but due to financial constraints we are unable to arrange some of the events that could promote more readers within the community.

Exhibition

The museum is drawing interest from the community as well as visitors who come to Mgwali and to our Church. We will continue to keep this momentum so that we can keep our audience interested and attract new visitors to the museum. We are currently doing more research, although it is currently desktop based. This will help us to curate a new exhibition that could be launched towards the in 2019.

Next Step: Continue with the research.

Books

Received a donation of 2 bags of books from Ms Mlisa. The books were mainly fiction and non-fiction.

Presently, our books are being used by the surrounding schools, especially learners from Cumming Memorial Primary School. We are currently in bilateral talks with the staff of Cumming Memorial Primary School as we intend to use the school as a pilot for our schools programmes. This will act as a model to roll-out the schools programmes to other schools. Our idea is to incorporate the use of the books from the Reading Room in a more structured manner and as part of the curriculum.

We have started to encourage learners, especially the young children, to read in the Reading Room since they are struggling to return the books. Although this will limit them, this arrangement will also ensure that we keep our books safe.

We are still experiencing a challenge of getting study guides for Grade 12 learners.

Next step:

1. We plan to work with government to get some study packs for Grade 12 learners.
2. We are planning to set up book clubs for children & youth as well as a rewards system to encourage them to be the keepers of their treasures (books)
3. Encouraged learners to read.
4. Need activities to draw them to the reading room... e.g. Computer and TV to play CD's and Video
5. Need to get some movies to draw their attention then we can have activities like Movie Saturday for group discussions, debates etc...

NEIGHBOURING SCHOOL DAMAGE

In June 2017, the school next to the Reading Room was affected by strong winds and the roof of one of the classrooms was severely damaged. The school requested the Church to assist with accommodation as temporary measure. They were granted permission to use the museum side of the reading room. Since the museum was just been renovated, it was agreed that the school will leave the museum room in its original form, i.e. re-paint the walls and replace broken windows.

The arrangement has taken longer than anticipated because the government has delayed in providing the prefab building for the school.

The main advantage of this arrangement is that the children can gain access to some of the books from the Reading Room. Their teacher reads books for them during storytelling time.

The disadvantage is that it has delayed some of the programmes we had planned to implement in 2017. This will be remedied as soon as the space is available. We will be able to implement some of the programmes as planned.

ELECTRICITY

We identified electricity as key to make the Reading Room fully functional. With the assistance of our Councilor & Ward Committee member, we have applied for electricity and we are waiting for installation by ESKOM.

FUTURE PLANS & NEEDS

Our basic principle remains unchanged, i.e. the reading room as a place that caters for the needs of our community, including learners, youth, farmers, small businesses etc.

We are still committed to encourage a generation that reads and interested in expanding their knowledge through research, e.g. the best ways of growing good vegetables; starting or growing a business; school assignments, career guidance, scholarships, bursaries, applying for jobs, learning institutions and colleges, etc.

*We can never have enough of books as a need of new books remains, prioritizing:

- Curriculum based books to assist/motivate the matriculants
- Teen fiction including comic books.
- Historical books & Biography
- Christian books
- Fiction and literature.
- Sport

We need 65-35 balance of Xhosa - English books respectively. There will be overlaps in these categories but this is just to give an indication of what is needed.

- **Museum Exhibition:** We plan to extend the scope of our exhibition so that we could have focused or thematic exhibitions from time to time.
- **Equipment:** The reading room requires equipment to function optimally, e.g. computers at least two, (preferably laptops with docking stations, for security reasons, because they are portable and can be moved after hours to a safer place), a TV, printer/scanner/copier, a camera, projector & screen.
- **Fundraising** to assist in implementing activities such as careers exhibitions, poetry session, storytelling sessions for children etc.

Income generation/sustainability Factor

- **Curio shop:** Our curio shop plans have been delayed, because our museum is accommodating the school. As soon as things go back to normal, this project will start.
- Our plans are to sell items like post cards, t-shirts, key holders, mugs etc., but also provide space for the community to sell their materials like traditional attire, curios, household items etc. at a small fee.

Conclusion

We hope that we will receive support to realize these plans for the development of our young people and the rest of our community.

Compiled By: Bulelwa Mbangi: Reading Room Coordinator