

Telkom Foundation rallies the hearts and minds of primary school learners in the Northern Cape



The Rally to Read project was launched in 1998 by Human Science and Resources Council with the intention of reaching out to remote rural schools which lack educational resources. This is achieved through public-private partnerships which sponsor mobile libraries, teacher training and a contribution towards feeding the learners. On the 15th of October 2016 different Telkom partners namely Bidvest Insurance, Anglo American, Pedra Diamond mine, Kolomela mine, SHELL One Logix, Mercedes, SchoolNet and Telkom Foundation participated in the Northern Cape Rally to Read programme. The various partners travelled from across the country to meet at Broadwaters River Estate and SchoolNet SA was represented by Ms Mathapelo Sehume.

There were approximately 200 people gathered for the rally and they were split into teams of 16 people and each team was tasked to visit two schools. Mathapelo was part of the Orange team which had to visit Aalwyn Primary School, in Campbell (approximately 35 kilometres away from Douglas) and Anderson Primary School in Griekwastad which was situated a further 45 kilometres away from Campbell.

The drive to Aalwyn Primary School was a long, dusty and rocky journey with dry land alongside the gravel roads and yet the team stayed focussed on the mission which was to ensure that reading

resources and materials were delivered to the learners in an effort to reinforce the importance of literacy.

As we neared the school, learners made way for the cars to enter the school and the group was greeted by overwhelming excitement and enthusiasm and learners were on hand to unpack the cars.



Aalwyn's principal, Mr Hendrik Jacobs was humbled and honoured to receive the guests and teachers organised the learners for assembly. This is where the Orange team was treated to a variety of learner activities which showcased an incredible amount of talent and potential that our young citizens of South Africa have.

A grade 4 learner was the MC of a program kicked off the show with a Grade R song and followed by a display of reading and reciting of stories by the Grade 1-3 learners. A band using recycled materials as instruments ended the learners programme with beautiful renditions of songs. The Orange team leader reminded learners that they are worth every investment and that all they had to do was learn and have fun whilst at it.

A classroom tour was next on the program and teachers had the opportunity to demonstrate how reading had improved since the inception of the Rally to Read programme.

It was reiterated during classroom visits that there are some multigrade classes, and that teachers had to work extra hard to make sure that learners received a good quality of education with relevant grade specific curriculum content.

The Orange Team then moved on from Aalwyn Primary School to Anderson Primary School which was another dusty ride filled with heart-warming stories from team members on their experiences with the learners.

A sweet and pleasant welcome awaited the team members at Anderson Primary School with the school yard being spotless and the principal Mrs Martins with smiles, friendly and welcoming.



Once again learners were gathered at assembly point for a programme that included a play by Grade 3 learners demonstrating the power of teamwork. The school choir along with Mrs Martins rendered a music item and learners from Grades 1 to 3 took turns demonstrating their reading skills and role playing the stories that they had been reading. Some learners displayed gumboot dancing. Watch the action here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BsOnGWIORYc>

Mr Monese Puso, Telkom Foundation Project Manager addressed learners and he reminded them that they were loved and cared for and that they should always listen to their teachers and do their best in class.



During the classroom demonstration each team member had the opportunity to pick a learner for a reading session with grade 1 learners and a drawing and painting session with grade R's and the learners attempted this opportunity with great enthusiasm.

It was unfortunate to discover that Mrs Martins is leaving the school however it was encouraging to see the great work she had done and her passion and love for the learners will remain a constant guide to the teachers she leaves behind.

In the three years that Rally to Read has been a part of both schools, learners have had access to educational toys, games, puzzles, creative play tools, fantasy toys, loads of story books, dictionaries and literacy resources.

Some of these learners may not have much, however through Telkom SA and the different stakeholders they have managed to walk into the lives of these learners and plant seeds of hope.

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October 2016