

Donated books to the value of R22m will stimulate a new generation of readers

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During National Book Week, from 4-10 September 2017, Adopt-a-School Foundation (AAS) is raising funds to continue the distribution of thousands of books to underprivileged schools throughout South Africa. The books, worth over R22m, were donated by Oxford University Press South Africa.



Reading is the cornerstone of education and only 14% of South Africans read books. Over half of South African households do not have a single book intended for leisure reading.* Research shows that children who read books frequently perform better academically than those who don't.* This, in turn, increases their chances of lucrative employment and playing a valuable role in the growth of the South African economy.

“True literacy comes from reading widely and deeply. Books are a powerful tool for expanding your mind and understanding the world around you,” says Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, founder and chairperson of AAS. “Without access to a wide range of books, learners are less likely to develop a love for reading, which is why we are grateful for this generous donation from our partners at Oxford University Press,” he continued.



AAS and Oxford University Press have a long-standing relationship. In 2015 the organisations partnered on the ‘Every Child Deserves a Dictionary’ campaign to distribute 20,000 dictionaries to schools in the AAS network around the country. AAS

also provided teachers with training on how to use dictionaries effectively.

AAS has already distributed thousands of books to more than 120 schools in all nine provinces. The books cover a wide range of topics, both fiction and non-fiction, and are appropriate for learners and aligned to the national curricula. The books also cater for all 11 national languages.

AAS has partnered with Library Key and Vivlia to ensure that each school receives relevant, language appropriate books that are suitable to the size of the school and the state of the existing library. In many of these schools AAS has built the libraries that will house these books.

"The distribution of these books, as well as the building of libraries, are great practical examples of the Foundation's unique Whole School Development (WSD) model," explains Ramaphosa. "Rather than focus on individual issues, WSD works to improve the school including the academic, infrastructural, social and security environment in which the school operates," he explained.

AAS will be commemorating National Book Week at several of its adopted schools, including Bathabile Primary School, where they will also be delivering spectacles to seven learners following their eyesight testing campaign conducted on Mandela Day.

There are 150,000 books remaining that AAS needs to allocate to schools, and the organisation is currently raising funds to enable this distribution. "We encourage our partners in business and society to help us distribute these books to the children of South Africa," says Ramaphosa. "Together we can give the next generation of readers a chance to fall in love with books," he concluded.

For more information on Adopt-a-School visit the Foundation's website at www.adoptaschool.org.za, email info@adoptaschool.co.za or call 011 592 6430.

References:

* South African Book Development Council, <http://sabookcouncil.co.za/national-book-week/>

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Adopt-a-School Foundation is a non-profit organisation that supports the creation and enhancement of a conducive learning and teaching environment in disadvantaged schools.

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