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INTRODUCTION

Concerned librarians observed with trepidation, the nonchalant attitude of the Nigerian government towards the lack of public or school libraries in the Ilesha region. Consequently, poor reading culture has been observed among the children in many of the schools in an underserved suburban community in Ilesha, Nigeria. If properly annexed, reading promotion and campaigns by librarians could foster the love of reading in children (Abimbola,2022). Cognisant of the importance of reading to the realization of SDG-4, the Soaring Crew Reading Club(SCRC) was established in August 7,2022 as a reading promotion and motivation initiative by librarians to fill the gap created by the lack of public and school libraries to foster the development of good reading skills and positive reading attitude in children.

This initiative focused on intrinsic motivation to inspire children of all ages and backgrounds to come together to form an inclusive community of children with a love for reading such that no child is left behind..

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- Report on the activities of the Soaring crew readers club, Ilesha, Nigeria
- Assess the impact/ outcome of the reading motivation and promotion initiative

METHOD

The project is a case study survey of the Soaring Crew reading club, Ilesha. Qualitative data was generated using focus group discussion. Questions were derived from the Motivation for Reading Questionnaire (MRQ) developed by The Wigfield, Guthrie & McGough (1996).



Fig. 1.0 Participants

The participants are made up of children from the host community with ages ranging from 5 to 10 years, volunteer librarians and parents as observers. At inception,there were nine children(6 boys and 3 girls).The club meetings have been regular and weekly for 2 hours a week for eleven months now. Presently, we have eighteen (18) children (11 girls and 7boys).

PARTICIPANTS IN SOARING CREW READING CLUB

| Participants | Male | Female |
|--------------|------|--------|
| Children | 7 | 11 |
| Librarians | - | 2 |



ACTIVITIES

| Activity | Participants | Facilitator |
|---|--------------|---------------------|
| 1. Read aloud | Children | Librarians/children |
| 2. Story telling retelling of stories from the books read and sharing lessons learned | Children | children/Librarians |
| 3. Spelling bee | Children | Librarian |
| 4. Vocabulary building (learning of new words) | Children | Librarian |
| 5. Book sharing/exchange | Children | Librarians |
| 6. World book day celebrations | Children | Librarians |
| 7. Motivational talks | Children | Librarians |

RESOURCES UTILISED



| | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | Assorted books by Nigerian authors | Librarians/authors |
| 2. | Snacks | Librarians/parents |
| 3. | White board | Librarians |
| 4. | Coloured markers | Librarians |
| 5. | Space for meetings | Volunteer in the community |
| 6. | Exercise books, pencils and erasers | Parents |

EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT/OUTCOME OF THE READING MOTIVATION AND PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

Items selected from the Motivation for reading questionnaire (Wigfield, Guthrie & McGough, 1996.) based on constructs measuring intrinsic motivation were applied to a group of 9 children (6 boys , 3 girls) within 20 - 25 minutes in a read aloud manner in a focus group discussion. The children were encouraged to be as honest as possible and that there were no wrong answers. Children who have been participating regularly in the reading promotion and motivation activities from the inception of the club were purposely selected for the focus group discussion.

Findings

Of all the nine children, non had ben to a library before. All the children enjoyed reading , loved participating in the club activities and looked forward to the weekly meetings with excitement. The children's greatest motivation for reading is because, " I love to read and it is very important to me to be a good reader". "In comparison to other activities I do, the reason it is very important to me to be a good reader is so that I can become great in future".

Reading Curiosity

All the children agreed that, sometimes they lose track of time when reading something interesting. A girl said she would hurriedly do her chores so that she would have time to read. All of them agreed that, "I read to learn new information about interesting topics". Half of the children said that, " if the teacher discusses something interesting, I may read more about it".

Reading Challenge

Majority of the children affirmed that, "if a book is interesting, I can read difficult materials." The younger children however disagreed.If a book is difficult, they would rather exchange it for another one while others will take a difficult book home to parents to read to them. This showed the confidence, support and level of parental involvement in the reading motivation activities. The children however disagreed that if a book is interesting, they don't care how hard it is to read. This was the case especially with the younger and slows readers in the club. It was majorly agreed that, 'I like it when questions in books makes me think'.

Social Reasons for Reading

None of the children had ever visited a library with their family. They all agreed that "I sometimes read to my parents." A 5 year old girl reported that, "I read to my baby brother." They all read to their younger siblings, exchanged books to read and talk to friends about what they are reading.



CONCLUSION

As at July, 2023, we have a membership of 18 children actively involved in club activities. We started out with a group of nine (9) enthusiastic children with varying levels of reading competence. Slow readers were given individual attention, shy children were coaxed out of their shells during read aloud and story-telling time. Reading competencies improved over time, as the children interacted with one another, social barriers came tumbling down as librarians engaged them in spelling bees, quiz and motivational talks. Through the reading promotion and motivation activities to this community, social inclusion has been enhanced and the gap of library services to the underserved has been bridged ,thereby ensuring inclusivity in education and the attainment of SDG4.

Lessons learned

- Librarians can make great impacts in their communities by volunteering their time and skills to book clubs in underserved communities
- Parents and teachers can be trained to run similar clubs in other underserved communities.

REFERENCES

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