

Cadbury encourages South Africans to share their stories

Cadbury has launched the Homegrown Stories initiative with the aim to grow, co-author and distribute children's stories in all 11 official South African languages.



Source: www.unsplash.com

While the literacy crisis in South Africa continues, many experts agree that learning to read in one's mother tongue can help combat this issue. According to early literacy specialist, author, and translator, Xolisa Guzula, "Research shows that children learn better when they are grounded in their mother tongue."

However, what exacerbates the problem is that most kids only have access to books that are not in their home languages. Only 2% of children's books published commercially in South Africa are in local African languages. In a country where approximately eight out of 10 people speak a home language other than English, creating relatable stories in indigenous languages is critical if we hope to improve childhood literacy.



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Rachana Desai 17 Jun 2022



Last year, Cadbury Dairy Milk asked the public to translate words into their mother tongue. A team of young local authors then weaved these words into exciting new stories. To date over 500 stories have been translated and made available for download from the Cadbury Digital Library with an additional 45,000 books printed and distributed directly to the children who needed them the most.

This year, Cadbury is encouraging South Africans to tap into their innate storytelling abilities and, by using their everyday interests and experiences as inspiration, generously share a homegrown story in their beloved home language.

“With a goal to increase the number of homegrown stories, available in all local African languages, to 1,000 by the end of the year. What better way to advance this mission than by bringing South Africans from all walks of life together to participate in a collective labour of love. Together a small generous act of sharing a story can create lasting impact on a child's life. An authentic story can encourage a child to want to read more, which in turn can open new worlds and introducing opportunities for the next generation. By sharing our own homegrown stories, we are hoping to create a space where our children can see themselves reflected in the books that shape their childhood,” said Lara Sidersky, Mondelez SA category lead for chocolate.

Cadbury Dairy Milk has partnered with several like-minded organisations and distributors to ensure these stories reach all children, both physically and virtually, in languages that they understand.

Alongside community radio stations, which provide an ideal storytelling platform, Cadbury has also partnered with Qualibooks, a leading provider of curriculum-based libraries and other educational resources to schools and communities.

Chris De Beer, a director at Qualibooks, said, "There is clearly a demand for literature in African languages that needs to be provided for. The number of stories being read after school via our KiBooks online platform clearly shows that we are helping children develop a love of for reading in their spare time. If we can help cultivate that by providing them with more titles that speak to their lived experiences, we have no doubt that we can do our bit to improve childhood literacy in this country."

Cadbury Dairy Milk is asking the public to join them and help children fall in love with reading by sharing an authentic Homegrown Story.

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