THE STORYMOJA READ ALOUD REPORT
(15TH JUNE, 2015)

Introduction

Start A Library is a Reading Revolution campaign initiated by Storymoja intended to:

• Excite children about reading for pleasure through our Read Aloud events and Reading clubs
• Increase access to books by forming or stocking libraries in primary schools. There are more than 20,000 primary schools in Kenya without libraries!

Vision

To get a book in every hand

Mission

To empower children with books

Achievement to date

• Since 2012, Start A Library has started 64 libraries!
• Start A Library has also run 6 Storymoja Read Aloud events that broke the National and World Record in reading aloud!
The Storymoja Read Aloud

“Reading aloud with children is known to be the single most important activity for building the knowledge and skills they will eventually require for learning to read”. Marilyn Jager Adams

The Storymoja Read Aloud is the largest gathering of Kenyan children reading from the same text at the same time.

Start A Library organizes two major Guinness World Record warm-ups twice a year:

- The Last Friday of every January
- The Day of the African Child – 16th June

Goal

To excite children in reading activities with the target of breaking the World Record in reading aloud. Officially, the current Guinness World Record is 223,363 participants in 909 venues across the United States of America. But the Storymoja Read Aloud in June, 2015 shattered this record by over 5,000 children!

The children read from a 1,000 word extract taken from the KICD approved book “Attack of the Shidas” by Muthoni Muchemi. This book was commissioned by the Kenya Human Rights Commission.

Statistics by the research commissioned by the Kenya Human Rights Commission indicate that 12% of Kenyan children in primary schools have actively been part of a conversation about kicking another community out of their neighborhood. A third of the Kenyan children also feel that their tribe is superior to others.

Synopsis

The book is about invisible aliens who suck water out of the only borehole in town. Tension mounts as the three communities living in that city accuse and argue with each other over the dwindling supply of water. Can three children from the different communities unite in time to stop the alien thieves before their town breaks into war? This stimulating and engaging book entertains children while subtly teaching important lessons in eliminating harmful social and cultural practices affecting children.

Themes in the book

Three themes that come out strongly in this book are:

- United we stand, divided we fall
- Disability is not inability (The heroine in the book is disabled)
- Children are the change agents in the society
The June 2015 Read Aloud World Record

The Storymoja Read Aloud in June, 2015 was a huge success! We finally unofficially broke the World Record for **most people reading aloud from the same text at the same time but from multiple locations**!

After previously carrying out five Read Aloud attempts in the last three years, we can now happily shout out loud – We Did It!

The Storymoja Read Aloud event, which is dubbed the Day of the African Child Edition, was held on June 15, 2015. We managed to rally together **229,043 children** from **1,097 schools** across **44 counties** in the country. This tally excludes the hundreds of teachers, reading ambassadors and other volunteers who joined the children to read aloud an extract from the KICD approved novel ‘Attack of the Shidas’ by Kenyan author Muthoni Muchemi. The current official world record is held by the USA with **223,363 people** in **909 venues**.

Previously, Storymoja has run a series of National record setting attempts with the January 30, 2015 event attracting **160,190 children** from **422 schools** in **12 counties**.

The Storymoja Read Aloud is part of activities held by Storymoja and Start-a-Library to excite children about reading for pleasure.

In the past, the Read Aloud was a preserve of primary school. However, for the June 2015 edition, over 50 Secondary schools participated! We also managed to more than triple the number of counties participating, from 12 to 44!

Indeed, as the Storymoja slogan goes, reading is cool!

Other Start A Library Initiatives

Start a Library also works to increase access to books by forming or stocking libraries in primary and complementary schools around the country. This is in reaction to the fact that countrywide, there are more than 20,000 Kenyan primary schools without libraries. Over the last three years, we have helped put up 64 libraries in needy schools impacting over 40,000 children across the country.

We work with partners to achieve our goal of putting a book in every hand.

Varkey Foundation is our most recent partner. Since May this year, the foundation, which works to improve standards of education through learning projects, joined hands with us to stock a total of 22 libraries in Nairobi, Eldoret and the Coast region. They gave a donation, which enabled to buy 1,000 books for each of the 22 schools. They also provided refurbished containers, complete with shelves and a desk for one librarian for all the schools.

Start a Library also establishes reading clubs in schools to continue nurturing the reading culture. Our volunteer Reading Ambassadors play a big role in encouraging the children to read for pleasure.

Individual and corporate organizations can sign up to donate books and funds to the Start a Library project, donate time to help run reading clubs as well as participate in the Read Aloud events.

Corporate Organisations can sign up by writing in to startalibrary@storymojafrica.co.ke. Individual volunteers can sign up by filling in a form on startalibrary.org/site.
What next?

The next Storymoja Read Aloud will be held on the last week of January 2016. We hope that with your assistance and support, we can rally 1,000,000 participants across the country to read aloud with us! We are also hoping to invite the Guinness World Record team to officially participate and validate the record.

We are targeting to have participation from all the 47 counties.

We also want to increase our reach by recruiting even more reading ambassadors to support this awesome venture.

#ReadAloudKE in Words

“This is a great way to make all of us read books.” Pupil, Westlands Primary School

We are happy that we are slowly succeeding in this front – exciting people to read for pleasure. We are now targeting to have all the children in our primary schools participate in the campaign – Anne Eboso Project Manager, Start a Library

The extract seemed to point out to the tribal crashes going on between the Samburu, Turkana and West Pokot; hence the pupils felt that the story was home and about. We as the volunteers in Lokuto Primary School were encouraged by this event to empower more and more people to read by incorporating exciting ways – Mary Nyaga & James Karimi – G-United Volunteers

Busia County was not left behind as Primary School read out loud under their shady mango trees!

Pupils from Kisian Primary School in Kisumu share an extract as they read.
Read Aloud in Numbers

#ReadAloudKE in Numbers

1 Extract

229,043 children

1,097 schools

15 Minutes

44 counties
The Read Aloud Fever caught up with the Makini School children and they read, loud and excited!

For the students at Kabichbich Primary School in West Pokot, the Read Aloud was so exciting that the environment had to match up!

We sit! We stand! We read! Pupils from Hillcrest School reading out loud.

At Westlands Primary School, the pupils waited anxiously for the clock to hit 9:00am

Gospel Musician and Start a Library Reading Ambassador Holy Dave took time to read out loud with pupils at Kilimani Primary School.

Compueda Academy were not left behind by the read aloud excitement.

Bridge Academies around the country also took part in the event.
In the media Read Aloud on TV

Read Aloud in Print

Storymoja Read Aloud Campaign Shatters World Record! – The Star

Building libraries across Kenya –Kenya Kidz

Children in a bid to create reading aloud record- Sunday Nation

Over 200,000 readers going for Guinness World Record in Nakuru – Nairobian

Kenyan Children seek to break Guinness World Record- The Star

Kenyan School Children Vying for World Reading Record- The Star

Embrace book fairs to build, strengthen reading – People Daily

Storymoja Read Aloud goes to Nakuru – The Standard
Our Partners

The following partners, and many more others, made this milestone possible.