

# SA schools could win small libraries

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The Avbob Road to Literacy campaign is under way in South Africa, which will strengthen the efforts of teachers and educators in improving literacy for especially young learners at underserved schools. Members of the public can nominate up to 500 schools and educational non-profit organisations (NPOs) for a trolley library. Each trolley library contains hundreds of educational books, providing children with interesting and suitable learning and reading resources – and giving many SA schools a chance at having a library for their learners for the first time.

Language development and reading skills at primary school level across the country will receive a huge boost in the shape of mobile trolley libraries, which will this year be donated to 500 underserved schools in South Africa. Each trolley library contains high quality age-appropriate literacy- and numeracy-building resources and will be donated to schools and education NPOs nominated by the public.

It is part of the Avbob Road to Literacy campaign, which was initiated in 2022 and has been expanding every year.

“This is an exciting opportunity for members of the public to support needy schools in their communities and make a contribution towards tackling the literacy crisis South Africa currently faces,” says Karen Simpson, managing director at Oxford University Press Southern Africa (OUPSA), which is running the campaign in partnership with Avbob.

Nominations started on 12 February 2024 and will close on 30 March 2024 at 11:59pm.

It is estimated that less than 50% of Grade 1 learners have learnt the letters of the alphabet by the end of their academic year. Learners who have not learnt to read in Grades 1 and 2 battle to do so in the next year, when the foundation for literacy (and numeracy) is set in place. This is exacerbated by the change in the language of instruction that happens in Grade 4, where many rural and township schools switch to English or Afrikaans as the primary language of instruction. It is estimated that only 19% of Grade 4 learners have the ability to read with understanding.

Due to vast inequalities between learning institutions in South Africa, many schools do not have libraries and the necessary resources to foster language skills and reading and comprehension abilities.

This year, OUPSA will contribute 250,000 books, almost double the 130,000 books donated in 2023. Each trolley is worth an estimated R65,000 and will be furnished with 500 books tailored to the CAPS curriculum. The total investment value for the 2024 campaign amounts to R32,5m.



The public is encouraged to participate in this initiative by submitting electronic nominations at <https://bit.ly/4bBe38d>. Anyone can put down the name of deserving primary schools or educational NPOs who serve learners in Grade R to 7. When nominating a school or an educational NPO, the desired language for the library must be added so that the winners can receive books in their preferred language.

Oxford University Press Southern Africa (OUPSA) is a leading dictionary and literacy publisher, producing a wide range of quality curriculum-compliant educational material for use in the classroom and at home. Using local experts and authors, OUPSA has published more than 2,700 books in 11 languages, reaching millions of learners, students, teachers and lecturers each year.

The handover of the trolley libraries to the winners will take place on 13 June 2024.

Listen to OUPSA's isiXhosa, isiZulu, and Sesotho book podcasts for a cultural journey through captivating stories and vibrant voices. The books are among the diverse selection available in the trolley library as part of the campaign.

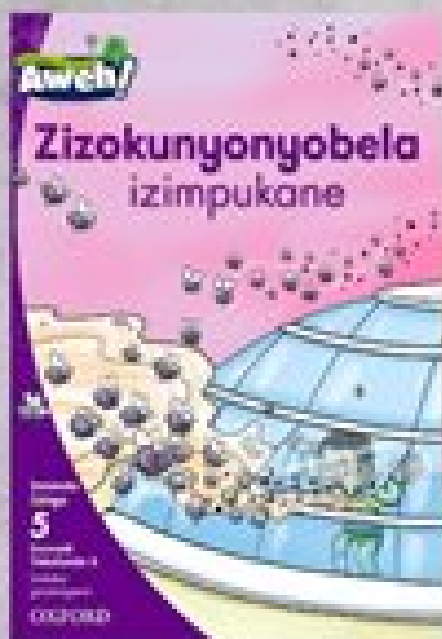
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