



ABI FINAL REPORT: 2016-06-02

1. **Project Title:** Stripes the Eco-Cat
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3. **Reporting Period:** July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2015
4. **Project Summary:**

Environmental education (EE) links classroom learning to the real world, contextualising the curriculum and making learning relevant. EE helps to develop proficiency in science, reading skills and other subject areas. Environmentally astute children tend to also influence their parents, which leads to more informed communities who are better able to understand the need to protect biodiversity and lead more sustainable lifestyles. The Stripes Project is designed to introduce environmental conservation concepts to children from an early age. The stories, as told by a naive and uninformed cat, speak to young children. It introduces them to biodiversity and sustainability topics in a fun way and takes them on a journey of exploration with Stripes. His language is simple English. We aim to make Stripes' stories suitable for reading to younger children as well as for older children to read aloud to improve their own reading skills. The charming illustrations should appeal to young and old and make the stories more attractive. The story topics and content will be chosen to follow the CAPS curriculum statement and to provide activity ideas to consolidate learning. The stories will be tested in the target market before final printing. The proposed themes include biodiversity, waste management, water and energy.

5. Summary of Project's Conservation Impacts

Children are exposed to stories about their natural environment in a non-threatening way. They learn new facts through taking a journey with Stripes and are encouraged to explore ideas further on their own or with an adult. *"If children lose contact with nature they won't fight for it"* – George Monbiot.

6. Project objectives

- Acquisition of knowledge about the environment
- Developing a culture of caring
- Connecting children with nature
- Improving English language skills and literacy

7. Changes in Objectives

N/A

8. Objectives achieved

Positive feedback from learners and educators indicate that Stripes is a favourite character and that his stories are eagerly read.

Three 16-page booklets (Stripes Nature Stories 1, 2 and 3) containing 7 stories each have been produced. The content and language of the stories have been tested in the classroom (Grades 1-6) and at Expos and edited accordingly. Each story is illustrated with appropriate activity suggestions at the end of the stories.

Copies of the 3 story booklets are attached.

9. Constraints

It is difficult to assess whether Stripes stories have changed attitudes and behaviour in children. Evaluation of the 'before and after' knowledge of the story topics in the classroom situation was also a challenge. To overcome this challenge observers evaluated children's responses during story readings and teacher comments were elicited.

Access to learners during school hours is (understandably) restricted.

10. Financial Report

No variances

Code	Item	Budget
01	Salaries	R19,500
06	Operating expenses Transport (use of own vehicle)	R500
	Total	R20,000

11. Equipment:

N/A

12. Lessons learned and Recommendations:

No major problems have been encountered in the course of the project.

13. Conclusion

Stripes' stories have generally been very well received. The children find them entertaining, informative and funny. They are enthusiastic about hearing the stories and there was a marked increase in their environmental content knowledge post-reading.

Educators were positive about Stripes' potential to convey environmental education and to improve English language skills. "Learners were very into the plot of the story,"

wrote a Grade 2 teacher. "Responses included laughter and amazement. Understanding, response and fun factors all tops," from a Grade 3 teacher.

The Stripes stories were found to be appropriate for the target group of Grades 1 to 6 where the children have some proficiency in English. From Grade 2 the children also understand Stripes' humour. More illustrations would be welcomed, especially by younger learners.

14. Donor Acknowledgement

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