



Press Release - 2008 

International NGO Calls for Use of Jolly Phonics Fast Track Reading Scheme in Government Primary School – Offers Assistance

A recent pilot study into the effectiveness of the fast-track reading scheme, Jolly Phonics, has shown that the scheme has massive potential to help the deplorable levels of literacy can be witnessed in Government primary schools throughout Nigeria. The study, which was carried out by a team of academics from the University of Uyo with support from the UK registered charity, Stepping Stones Nigeria, highlighted that children who had been taught using this method were able to read on average 7 months beyond their chronological reading age. Some children were able to read to a level 2 years and five months above their age after only having been taught with the method for 12 months. The study highlighted the unfortunate fact that out of 162 children who had not been taught using the scheme, not one could read a single word at the end of Primary one.

Said Prof Comfort Ekpo, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University of Uyo, “Jolly Phonics really does have tremendous potential to improve literacy levels of children in Nigeria, which in turn would have a long-term effect on the economy, human rights, democracy and the future of Nigeria as a whole”.

We asked one of the teachers who participated in the study, Mrs Grace Ikot from the Holy Cross Primary School in Esit Eket LGA, Akwa Ibom State exactly how she found using the Jolly Phonics method. She felt that the scheme “ is a very interesting one and one that the children love very much. More than anything it makes learning to read fun for the children. This has meant that I have seen a quite dramatic improvement in the abilities of the children since we began using Jolly Phonics. They are really coming up. I myself really enjoy teaching with this method and feel much happier in the workplace thanks to using this method”.

Jolly Phonics is a thorough foundation for reading and writing. It teaches the letter sounds in an enjoyable, multisensory way, and enables children to use them to read and write words. Governments around the world are increasingly turning to Jolly Phonics to help improve literacy levels amongst their populations, with the UK government being the latest to adapt its curriculum to include the teaching of this “synthetic phonic method”.

Gary Foxcroft, the Programme Director of Stepping Stones Nigeria had this to say, “It is clear that the most successful and stable Nigerian States of tomorrow will be those who recognise the importance of improved literacy today. The Jolly Phonics method could really help to transform the educational landscape of some states. At the moment Stepping Stones Nigeria is looking to work with the Akwa Ibom State government to train and resource government schools in this method. However, we would also like to hear from other State Ministries of Education, academics and teachers in Nigeria who may be interesting in receiving free training and resources to carry out pilot studies”.

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