Makhalidwe Athu
Creative’s mStories Model
Problems we identified

- Lack of reading materials in local languages
- Lack of reading materials outside school
- Children are not reading at grade level
- Lack of mechanisms to engage communities
Most adults have basic cell phones
SMS reading materials beginning to show promise
Interest in communities to help in education
Oral tradition of storytelling
**Community Awareness and Engagement:**

1. **Crowdsourcing**
   - Stories and folktales submitted:
     - Via SMS
     - Via Interactive Voice Response
     - Via Web

2. **Editing**
   - Submissions edited by literacy experts and project coordinators for:
     - SMS format
     - Age-Appropriate Content
     - Appropriate Reading levels

3. **Publishing**
   - Stories distributed:
     - Stories distributed in a sequence of SMS messages to parents. Early grade students read the stories and answer discussion questions

**OUTCOMES:**

- Increased use of ICT for improved reading
- Improvements in students’ attitudes
- Increased time spent by family members supporting students’ reading
- Increased time reading at home
Old Woman Dances, by Kabwe Tembo. An old woman lived in a hut. She did not have friends. She was sad. One day a band came to the village.

Why was she sad?

One day a band came to the village. The men played drums. The girls sang. The old woman danced. She was happy. Everyone was happy.

Why was everyone happy?
Fosters a culture of reading

- Building on the rich tradition of storytelling
- Sharing and preservation of traditional stories
- Giving children stories that are relevant to their lives
- Leading to a digital repository of mother tongue, early grade reading materials that can be reused and repurposed by schools and other NGOs
Pilot Details

- Funding provided by the All Children Reading Grand Challenge Partners: USAID, Australian Aid, World Vision
- Working in Zambia’s Eastern Province
- Developing stories in Chinyanja
- Working with children who are receiving mother tongue literacy instruction in school and are reached by our Read to Succeed Program
- Partnerships for local ownership
  - Local Radio stations: BreezeFM
  - Local Technology hubs: BongoHive
  - Local Universities: University of Zambia
  - Libraries: Lubuto Library Project
  - Local Children’s authors
Seeking partnerships for scaling

- **Mobile Network Operators**: Those interested in partnering for advertising and making the mStories service available to their subscribers
- **Local Organizations**: Support in crowdsourcing and developing content; ideas for expanding the reach of mStories
- **Foundations**: Support for scaling the model in Zambia or for reaching other countries
- **Private sector**: Exploring opportunities to create shared value
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