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The individual who cannot read is locked in a cultural desert,
Barred from learning, knowledge and experience, he will be
disadvantaged, unable to participate and realise his full po-
tential in society and contribute to its economy. Reading is the
primary method whereby children acquire knowledge and in-
formation and extend their experience. Therefore it is impera-
tive that all children should learn to read.

READ, an independent, non-profit organisation funded by the private sector, has for the past ten years ascribed to an educational philosophy devised to develop each individual to his full potential, improve the quality of education in South Africa and remove racial, socio-economic and sexual barriers from our society.

This basic mission finds expression in READ's aim to help individuals to cope with the modern world, improve their chances of meaningful employment, communicate more effectively, develop management and leadership skills and share in the wealth of wisdom of world literature.

READ believes the ability to communicate to read, write and speak with confidence is the key to the future development of all South African citizens.

Its modus operandi is to provide carefully selected books and other

media material, as well as training in how to use it. READ sees it as the most

cost-effective way to improve language skills, establish

independent study and research skills and extend textbook knowledge.

It also enriches the educational

L] experience of pupils,

teachers and the community, increases the confidence of students on all levels, creates a stimulating learning environment and promotes learner-centred teaching methodology.

In addition, it compensates for inadequate teaching and assists those adults who are studying on their own outside the formal education system.

READ's success has been ensured by the following:

0 The best possible stock of books continually tested against feedback from schools and specialists in the field. At the end of March 1989, READ was working with 885 primary schools, 460 secondary schools, five technical colleges and 28 teachers' training colleges.

0 The compiling of core collections to facilitate appropriate in-service training.

0 Ongoing training of school staff. READ offers training courses to cover the varying needs of school principals, community librarians, teacher/librarians and independent learners. The courses centre on the library and the educational value of reading.

0 Continuous training of READ staff. More than 21 000

principals, teachers, librarians and community leaders have attended READ training courses and workshops. In addition, READ runs story-telling and dramatisation workshops to prepare teachers and pupils for their annual Festival of Books. Other workshops cover public speaking and debating, study skills, motivation and the use of dictionaries. READ employs more or less 70 people nationally.

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Ensuring maximum community participation in READ's structure and programmes.

Involving the private sector in a meaningful way.

The availability of professional library advisers and motivational programmes.

Developing relevant teaching material for the institutions with which they work.

Each READ project is implemented through a five-step process: book-selection and provision, training, provision of materials, monitoring and motivation.

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In the organisation's most recent annual report Cynthia Hugo National Director of READ, discusses its efforts to have the

greatest possible impact on the educational scene.

She met with each regional committee to discuss

the organisation's future direction and

identified four immediate avenues to be followed. One

The first is a teacher enablement programme through a teacher-leader programme, the establishment of prototypes and training standard by standard.

According to Cynthia, READ needs to identify in each region those schools whose principals, teachers and librarians have demonstrated sustained commitment to achieving standards of excellence. She wants to work with those schools and train the entire staff.

READ's aim is to use them as training bases, both as inspiration and an encouragement to surrounding schools. They will become centres of influence.

The staff will be mentors for other teachers in the area and encourage the formation of ongoing support groups among teachers in the locality.

She feels this process will provide the multiplier effect and ensure the transference of skills in a systematic, professional way.

Secondly she identified READ's need to increase its influence among trainee teachers while still at college and to motivate and enable them to use a wide range of book resources in their teaching.

Thirdly READ would like to design a special rural schools project. She noted that two-thirds of South Africa's pupils attend rural schools and that as many as one-third of these children drop out of school before the end of standard one.

We are now seeing in our cities the development of a huge squatter problem created by people who are moving in from rural areas. By and large, these people have very little chance of gainful employment, unable as they are to read and write.

It is essential to ensure that future generations do not face the same plight. Universal primary school education is a must.

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Fourthly she identified the organisation's need to expand its work outside the formal system by increasing its work with community projects.

We have designed and are implementing a special package for industry with live-in labour forces, which complements and supplements literacy programmes. We want to work more with community groups in setting up community libraries and in running reading and study programmes.

Book packages are one of READ's attempts to assist the teacher to build confidence as the confident

teacher is the key

to the process of
acces using books fully
as a learning tool

in the classroom
and by the pupils for study purposes and pleasure.

The teacher should be confident in his or her knowledge of books and their value, confident to improve the language competence of the pupils, confident in his or her own methodology and ability to motivate the pupils to use books.

These book packages are meant to build teacher confidence in order to acquire knowledge of the correct use of books. READ found that the reality is that there is not always a trained full-time librarian on the staff to offer instruction and advice.

The book packages integrate every aspect of learning and teaching with books. These packages which consist of the story pack, the theme pack, the read aloud pack and the story kit, can reach more schools.

The packages are easier to manage and use and less expensive than a small book collection, and they do not rely on the librarian alone. Each package is introduced during a course.

READ's special projects,
such as the Primary
Schools' Festival of
Books, the reading re-

- search project, the
United Kingdom study
tour and the dictionary
project, illustrate the in-

credible spread of
READ's activities. According to Cynthia Hugo, the children who have participated in these programmes are those now coming to the fore in leadership programmes.

The Primary Schools' Festival of Books is a highly successful project sponsored by the Otis Elevator Company. It is designed to promote language competency. The competition aspect consists of four categories, namely the choral

verse and drama categories for pupils and the story-telling and story reading categories for teachers.

Last year 17 000 pupils and 1 100 teachers competed. The regional finals were not held in Johannesburg as before, but instead Otis sponsored the 45 finalists and six teachers of each region to present their winning pieces in Durban.

En route each bus took in an educational three-day tour designed to teach children about the history and geography of their own country.

The reading research project is in its fourth year. Mr David Brindley, a READ consultant who is sponsored by JCL, is testing the reading preferences of tertiary and high school students. The results will be used by READ to conduct reading programmes and as the basis of future library selection.

Mr Brindley has been working with eight schools in Soweto, Alexandra, Tembisa, Thokoza and Katlehong. Books suggested by Mr Brindley are paid for by the individual school's sponsor and are housed in the library.

As far as the UK study tour is concerned, the British Council sponsored 12 school and community librarians for

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The READ family firmly believes that each South African has a right to acquire the skills that will allow individual development to the fullest possible potential and that [first among those skills is the ability to read, write and speak competently and creatively

three months at the Ealing College of Higher Education outside London in 1988.

In 1989 eight librarians left for London. All were trained by READ and were selected nationally for their commitment to their profession.

READ is also involved in the Anglovaal group's literacy project that is being run on the mines. READ offers a library service to industries with live-in labour forces.

A dictionary project was started in Alexandra nearly three years ago and is growing steadily. Standard two pupils receive a dictionary and three workbooks which cover its use in standards two, three and four. Connie Kunene, the project co-ordinator, trains the teachers to use these workbooks. -

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1989 saw the tenth operational year of READ. During this period, READ has already raised a total sum of R19,25 million of which R5,1 million was raised during the past financial year.

As Irene Menell, chairman of READ, commented: "We believe, above all, that each South African has a right to acquire the skills that will allow individual development to the fullest possible potential, and that first among those skills is the ability to read, write and speak competently and creatively.

"All those who make up the READ family share a deep commitment to those beliefs. It is a family that has grown large over the last 10 years. It consists of our many members and their elected staff, our sponsors and the users of our programmes who become, in their turn, the best promoters of the value of our programmes that we could wish to have."

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