



INTERIM REPORTS

Reading The Game
Progress at 31 October 2007

National
Literacy
Trust





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Background

Kick into Reading (KiR) aims to support literacy work among families and professionals such as teachers, librarians and other community workers by using male role models from football clubs to nurture an interest in reading and storytelling. The main planned outcomes are to deliver 18 KiR projects based at football clubs, bringing high-quality footballer-led storytelling to up to 16,200 children and 1,080 adults. In this way we aim to inspire and motivate children and their families to read, listen to, and tell, more stories. We also intend to promote the use of public libraries and extend the number of storytellers involved with the project.



Overview of project activity

We have planned to run Kick into Reading with 18 clubs between January 2007 and June 2008. The following football clubs have completed or are currently delivering KiR:

Club	Training	Delivery month	Family Day
Brentford FC	11 January 07	January 07	27 January 07
Plymouth Argyle FC	26 January 07	February 07	21 April 07
Blackburn Rovers FC	27-28 February 07	March 07	7 April 07
Reading FC	N/A*	April 07	8 May 07
Stoke City FC	3 September 07	September 07	6 October 07
Queens Park Rangers FC	9 October 07	October 07	3 November 07
Barnet FC†	Jan & Sept 07	Began Nov 07	TBC
Fulham FC	30-31 October	November 07	TBC
Charlton Athletic FC	8 November 07	November 07	12 December 07
Mansfield Town FC	30 November 07	December 07	19 January 08

The following clubs have confirmed that they will deliver KiR:

Club	Training	Delivery month	Family Day
Colchester United FC	17 January 08	January/February 08	TBC
Norwich City FC	23 January 08	January/February 08	TBC
Tottenham Hotspur FC	21 December 07	February 08	TBC
West Bromwich Albion FC	February 08	March 08	TBC

We have confirmed interest from four other clubs: (Doncaster Rovers FC, Arsenal FC, Northampton Town FC and Portsmouth FC. We are currently in the process of

* As Reading FC has run KiR previously, the coaches felt they did not need additional training and delivered the library session with the storyteller very successfully. An academy player attended the Family Day, joining in with the storytelling, the ground tour and answering the children's questions. This helped to make the event even more enjoyable and memorable for those who attended.

† In order to deliver a more effective project for their situation, Barnet FC is not following the standard model for the project. This means their activity is being spread out over a longer timeframe. Details on this are later in this report.

finalising dates. These clubs will complete the 18 projects we have planned to deliver with this funding. We expect all project activity to be completed by the end of the 2007-08 football season.

Beneficiaries and participants to date

Club	No. football club staff trained	No. children at library sessions	No. attending Family Days (children & adults)	No. delivery sessions
Brentford	8	840	38	14
Plymouth	6	780	150	15
Blackburn	12	600	50	15
Reading	Trained previous year	697	40	13
Stoke	12	420	40	14
QPR	10	390	scheduled for 3 Nov	13
Totals	48	3727	318	84

There are currently two professional storytellers delivering the programme, with two more being trained in January 2008 – we will then have four storytellers available to both train club storytellers and deliver the programme.

The numbers attending library sessions usually vary due to the size of the space available for the session. Often the children's section of the library is used. This creates a very effective environment, as the children are able to see the library stock, and staff can suggest books for them to borrow. It also promotes and encourages library membership.

Project case studies

A sample of projects are described below:

Barnet FC

This project is not following the standard delivery model due to the club's situation and the availability of the staff who are taking part. Barnet FC's community work is undergoing a lot of successful development. They have been building up the community team, recruiting a new community officer and other staff. It was decided to run the project as a means to support the football club to integrate a literacy programme into their community scheme.

As with their previous involvement, the club wanted to use its first-team players as the storytellers. The training schedule for the first team players means that they are only available in the afternoons on specific days. This has proved difficult to tie in with the availability of library staff. The project is therefore running on an extended timeframe rather than the usual five consecutive day model, and the sessions are taking place in schools. To keep the message of library use as an aspect of the project, librarians have been attending the sessions, informing students of the facilities of their local libraries and offering opportunities to join.

Training sessions were held early in 2007 for players and some community staff. This was continued with a further training session in September for new players who had joined the club. This has provided a good team of storytellers to begin the delivery sessions, which commenced on 16 October. There are provisional session dates in November and December.

Currently, discussions are taking place around the possibility of a match day event involving tickets to a game. This will happen at a library rather than the football ground because of the limited facilities at the ground. However the library is close to the ground.

Brentford FC

Coaches thoroughly embraced this project and developed the skills they learnt in the training by telling personal stories as well as stories from the fan book *Brentford 'Til I Die* (produced in partnership with Reading The Game). The coaches reported that they really enjoyed the sessions and want to use their new skills in their sports coaching roles.

The whole club is involved with the project, including players. A first-team player, Ryan Peters (now transferred) attended one of the library sessions and read a football book to the group. At the Family Day, several players visited the event before the game, which really added to the excitement of the day.

As Brentford FC has now been involved in KiR for several years, improving and developing each time, the project has really become a part of what Brentford FC has to offer to its local community.

Blackburn Rovers FC

This year, three players from the BRFC Academy were involved in the project, attending some of the delivery sessions. This provided excellent role models for the children involved. A further interesting development for this project was the involvement of students from Liverpool Hope University as part of a Student Enterprise project. As well as increasing the number of trained storytellers for the library sessions, this added further positive role models for the pupils taking part, not only as reading role models but as people engaged in further education. The students were provided with BRFC branded t-shirts to create a team feel to the sessions. An important link between the club, libraries and university was established in order to make this project work so successfully.



Positive comments about the projects

Brentford FC

"Kids + Reading + Fun + Players = Future Supporters = Very Impressed MD"

- Keith Dickens, Chief Executive, Brentford FC 11/02/07

"Just wanted to drop a quick line of thanks for the tickets for myself and my son as part of the children's story session before Saturday's game, and also thanks to your staff for a brilliant and well run initiative.

"My son loved the stories and finding out more about the club and the ground. Your staff were very informative and friendly and really made it a special day... obviously the result helped!"

- Parent 13/02/07

Plymouth Argyle FC

"I have just attended the last session here at Central [library] and it was absolutely brilliant! In fact all the feedback thus far from the branches has been really great."

- Julia Hale, Plymouth libraries 23/02/07

"I had the pleasure of being involved in KiR with Plymouth Argyle. It is a WONDERFUL scheme."

- David Tall, Associate Director for Youth Development, Plymouth Argyle FC 28/08/07

Blackburn Rovers FC

"One dad said he hated football but his daughter loved it so he brought her along because of the storytelling. Several families bought extra tickets to take other siblings or family members, which was great for the club.

"A staff member at the study support centre has said that he's telling one of the stories to all the classes that visit the centre. He produced thank you letters from kids, many saying that the best things about their visits to the study centre was the storytelling.

"The Head of Community has asked about the possibility of me returning, as they want to put their own bid for funding in to run it all again right away or soon as they can."

- Pat Ryan, storyteller.

Stoke City FC

When organising the 2007 project, this message was received:

"We're delighted that KiR is coming to Stoke again this year, the children who take part across the city really appreciate the opportunity to explore books and reading with professional storytellers and players and coaches at Stoke City. We are, as I discussed with you on the phone, very keen to take part again this year."

- Caroline Lovatt, Stoke-on-Trent Libraries



Evaluation

Evaluation questionnaires have been issued for each club's project, and distributed by the coaches or librarians. They have been asked to ensure at least two groups of children complete the questionnaires and all teachers, librarians and football representatives also complete it. The data collected will be fully analysed once activity for the 18 clubs has been completed.

Examples of results from questionnaires to date (7 clubs)

As a result of KiR:

- 59% of children want to read more
- 70% of children want to hear more stories
- 59% of children want to tell more stories

- 80% of teacher's felt that their children wanted to read more
- 90% of teacher's felt that their children wanted to hear more stories
- 90% of teacher's felt that their children wanted to tell more stories

Developments

The main development this year has been the recruitment of a Kick into Reading project manager. The addition of this post, from January 2007, has enabled great improvement to KiR. The amount of time needed to set up each project is substantial and communications can be complex due to the number of people involved. Having a dedicated project manager has enabled tasks to be completed more thoroughly. It has meant that visits to new clubs have been possible, to fully explain the project and the planning process. The project manager has been able to invest time in developing the management processes. Two examples of project development are outlined here:

1. Kick into Reading Resource Pack

Underspend from a previous KiR grant has allowed the development of a Resource Pack, to be used during the 2007-08 funding period. This resource was created by the project manager, who worked closely with the lead storyteller and consulted with club and library representatives. The pack has made an important impact on the way each project is organised. The club and library are provided with a pack when their involvement is confirmed; it contains all of the planning resources needed, from template letters to schools to timetables and hand-outs. These planning materials allow the club and library coordinators to plan the projects more efficiently. Project information has been easier to share, as everyone is using the same formats, and this reduces the chance of logistical errors. A task list for each partner has been created, which ensures everyone involved is clear of their responsibilities. It is hoped that the pack will continue to be used, and will be assessed at the end of the 2007-08 period. This evaluation will then result in plans for improvements to be made.

2. New storyteller recruitment

Due to the growth of KiR, and the availability of the lead storyteller, it was decided that more storytellers who could carry out the training were necessary to ensure sustainability of the project. The training of club coaches is a vital component of KiR as it determines the success and impact of each club's involvement. Two

further storytellers will be joining KiR, who were chosen in consultation with the RTG manager and lead storyteller. A national recruitment process was organised by the project manager, targeting recommended artists. There will be a workshop with the RTG manager and lead storyteller in January. This will be an intensive session to discuss all aspects of the project and ensure their involvement will maintain the extremely positive outcomes KiR is achieving. The focus will be on how to carry out the coaches' training, and the challenges that this can involve. They will begin carrying out full delivery of projects from January 2008.

Issues and concerns to date

There are several issues that continue to be applicable due to the nature of the partner bodies the project works with. These include:

Keeping in contact with clubs and dealing with last-minute schedule changes. While these challenges will continue, we are very aware of them, and able to deal with them as necessary

- Family Day organisation can be a challenge, often due to internal issues at the clubs. However, the Resource Pack includes helpful resources for inviting the pupils and informing the parents, which has improved the system for organising these events
- There have been some instances when the schools invited have not fully met our criteria. While the community and pupils have still benefited from being involved, we are very keen to introduce clearer guidelines for the clubs and libraries when selecting schools. A possibility is to ask the local coordinators to submit details of their proposed schools and for the project manager to carry out a needs analysis into the literacy levels and other appropriate indicators

Planned activity for remainder of project

KiR will:

- establish project dates for the remaining clubs
- complete new storytellers' training and they will begin delivery from January 2008
- monitor the use and impact of the follow-on activity sheets which were developed as part of the Resource Pack for clubs and schools
- investigate funding opportunities for continuation of KiR beyond June 2008



Conclusion

Our evaluation to date has shown that the planned outcomes of KiR are being successfully delivered. KiR is:

- halfway through its planned 18 clubs
- bringing high-quality storytelling to thousands of children and adults
- inspiring and motivating children and their families to read, listen to, and tell, more stories

Our participants are also being encouraged to use their local public libraries, and join them if they are not already members. We have received excellent anecdotal feedback from participants and literacy professionals, and have identified two more professional storytellers who are keen to join this successful project. The addition of the project manager has enabled the central management of the project to be improved. This has ensured successful local delivery, and enabled the creation and consideration of further development ideas. We expect the project to continue improving and look forward to evaluating the programme in full upon its completion.