



fun  za

**ANNUAL
READER
SURVEY
2020/1**

INTRODUCTION

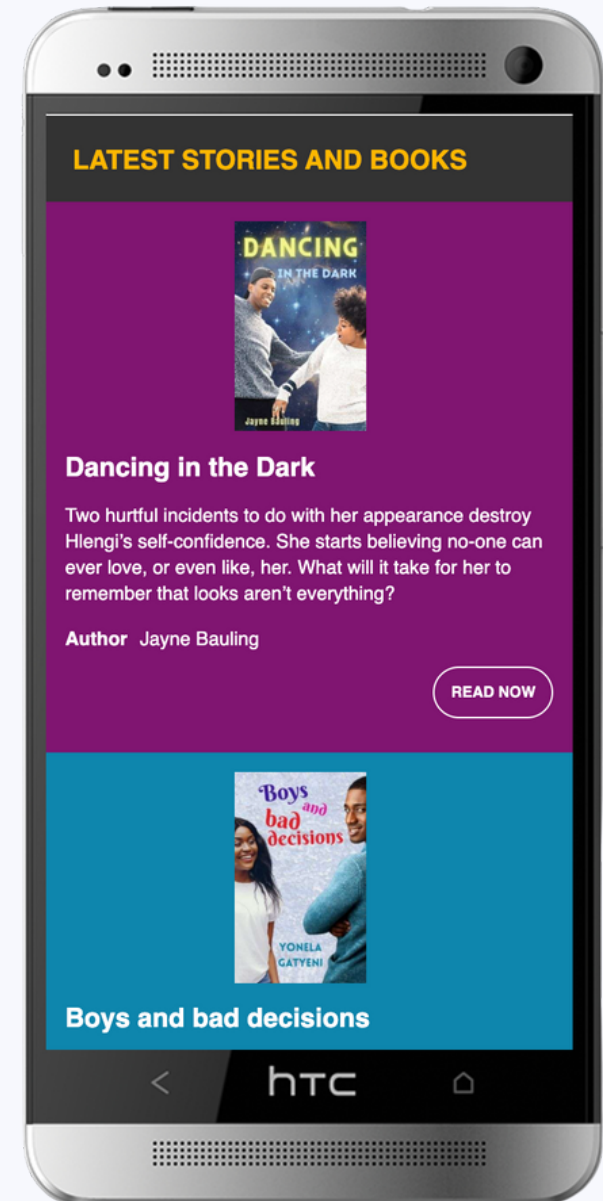
In September 2011, FunDza launched its fundza.mobi site - a space for young people to read exciting and relatable content for free on their mobile phones.

One of our key focus areas is to produce the content that will get readers hooked on reading and coming back for more, and on using technology in innovative ways to ensure a pleasurable reading experience. Fundza.mobi has new content daily. Each week there's a new short story and each day there is either a new blog, feature article, children's story or similar for readers to enjoy. Readers can send in their own writing for publication too and more than 1.500 have over the past year.

From a tech perspective the platform has transformed over the years and we've tried to make continuous improvements for speed and access. Partnering with messaging services (such as Mxit in the early years and Moya Messenger in later ones) has helped to keep fundza.mobi easily accessible. The additions of features such as open online courses has also made the platform more valuable to readers, and the zero-rating of the platform across all mobile networks in South Africa means that the cost of data is no longer an inhibiting factor.

In the last year, FunDza reached more than 3-million total readers and over 720,000 active and returning readers. These active users clock up an average reading time of 15 minutes or more. The platform as a whole derived 60-million reading hours.

For the past five years, we have run an annual reader survey to find out more about our users. This last year almost 4.500 respondents shared information about their lives, and how FunDza was impacting them. The results, as always, were interesting and rewarding.



In the last year...



**720,000
returning
users**

**17 mins
av session
length**



**175,000
comments**

**60-million+
reading
hours**



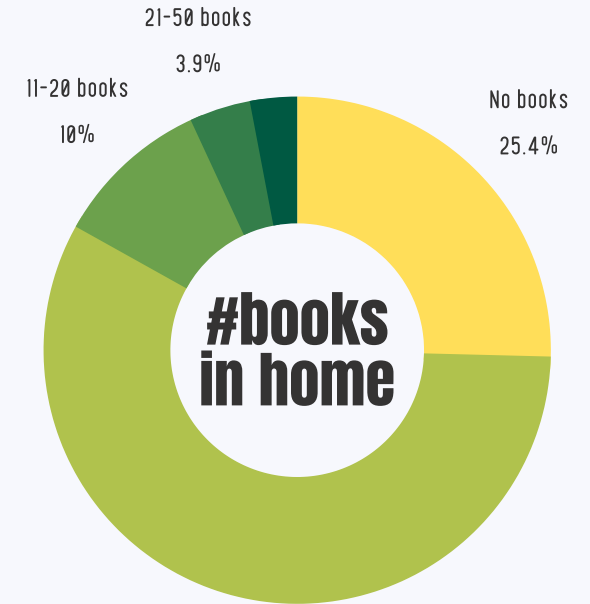
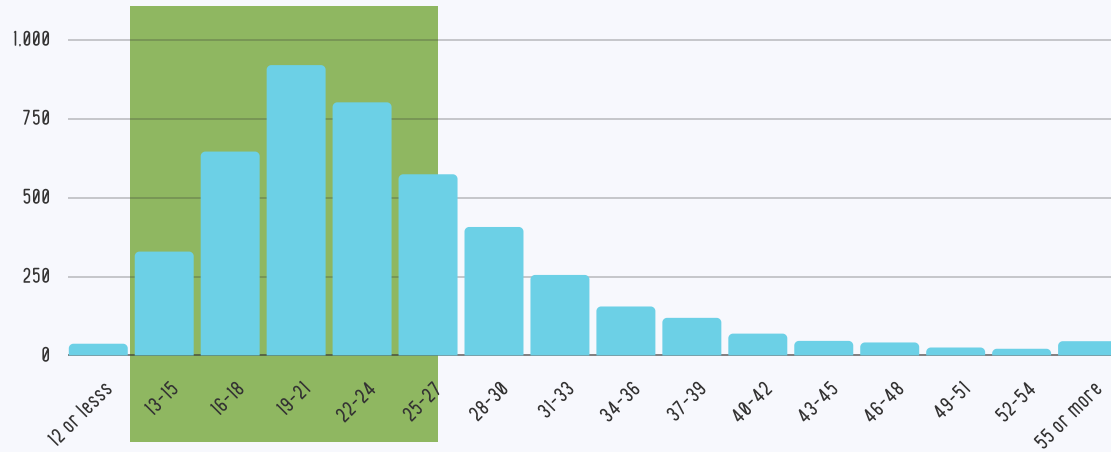
**14,500 course
completers**

**1,500 Fanz
writers**

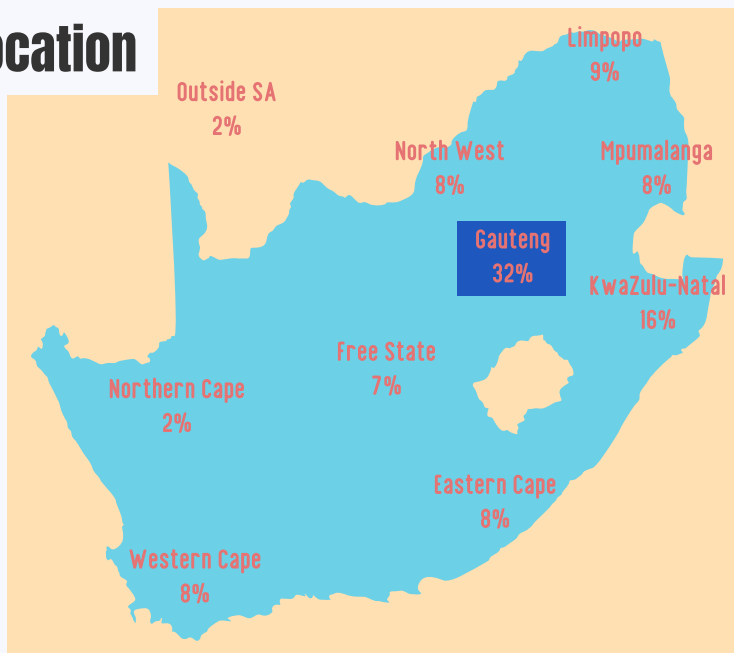


Who we reach

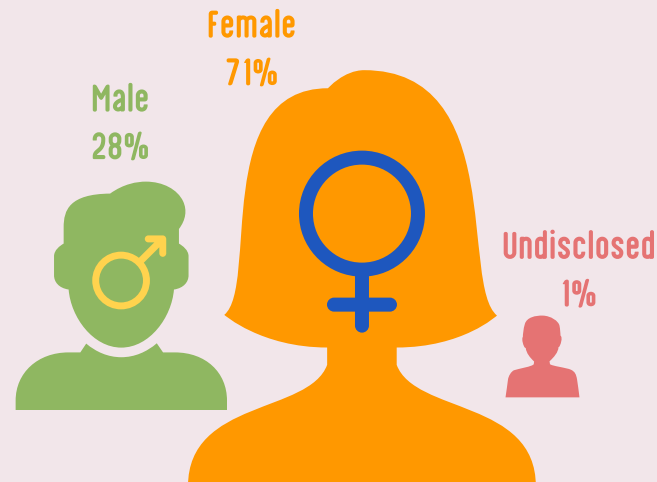
Age



Location



Gender



1-10 books
57.7%

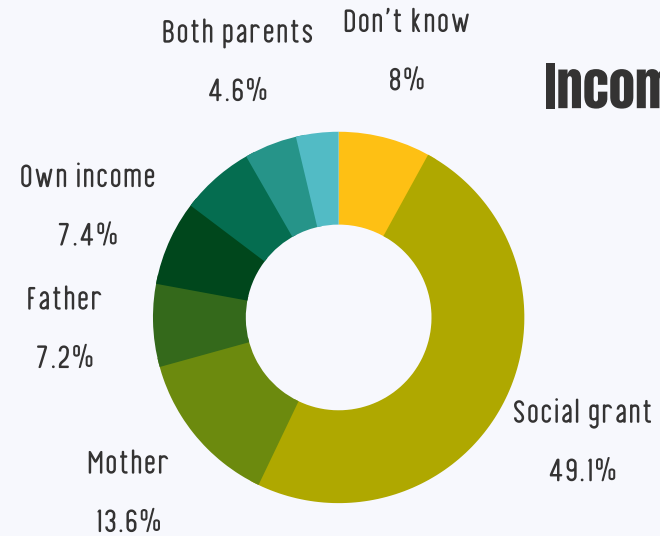


Who we reach

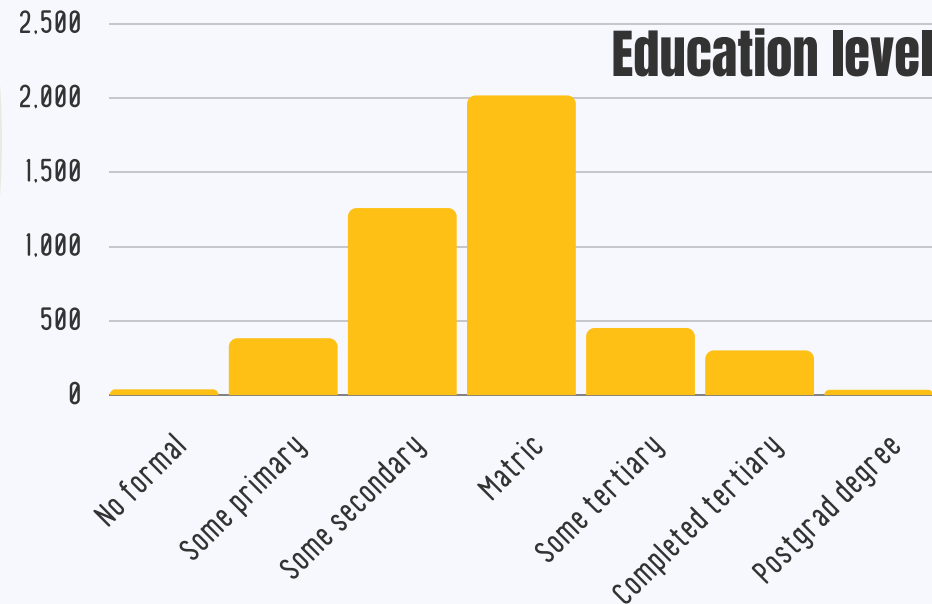
Occupation



Income source



Education level



Who we reach

Type of home

52%

Formal house
or flat

26%

RDP house

22%

Informal dwelling
(shack)

22% live in rural areas
78% in urban areas



Major issue facing the youth

30.5%
Lack of work
opportunities



21.6%
drugs & alcohol
abuse

11.5%
Poverty or lack of
financial support



10.7%
Lack of hope for
the future



8%
Lack of quality
education



6%
Exposure to
gangsterism or crime



I come from a community where young people are hopeless and don't believe in themselves. Of course they do dream, but mentally they are not okay. There have been so many cases of depression, anxiety and mental illnesses due to the mental health area being rejected and unspoken of.

well my life ain't that interesting as i not having an ethic relationship with most of my family members

We stay in an impoverished section of our township where unemployment and teenage pregnancy are rife. We're poor at my house too, but we never go hungry.

Well my home is a peaceful place there's lots of love there yha we may have some money problems but my mom n dad are trying to be the best parents...n my community i guess its fine

We living each day as it comes , unexpectedly , uncomfortably , hopefully & willingly to do anything to get something brighter out of this. Growing and building each other stronger is my home life and community. We don't have much , but we have enough. Life throws obstacles & tribulations at us daily , but us as a family we face it head on.

Our impact

Reading improvement

66%

Reading has improved 'a lot' and 24% say it's improved 'quite a lot'

Reading frequency

61%

Frequency of reading has increased 'a lot' and 30% say they are reading 'a little more'

Reading enjoyment

36%

Say they didn't like reading but do like it now. 49% say they liked it before but like it more now.

I gained more knowledge about certain things that I did not know about. I get to Exercise my mind I now read without any stop.

I have learned new words that didn't know. my vocabulary has increased too. and am flowing with words when reading than before

Reading FunDza stories, poems and drama. improved my life because they are really educative. Nowadays when I come across a difficult situations. I know how to deal with it because I look at it with a different perspective than before

Impact on reading

I spend most of my time reading on fundza, there are lot of words i didn't know exist but now i know them. Improve my writing skills my english is improved, in terms of pronunciation and online courses helped me alot.

Reading this everyday makes me want to do more

I gained more knowledge about certain things that I did not know about. I get to Exercise my mind I now read without any stop.

Just reading has generally improved my reading especially big words. When reading it feels as if I join a world.

I have learned new words that didn't know, my vocabulary has increased too, and am flowing with words when reading than before

I have managed to write stories and get feedback on where to improve and also completed online courses. Fundza has improved my language and reading skills because there are feedbacks provided after submitting short stories.

Reading on fundza, mobi has improved reading skills and language a lot because whenever I login I find many interesting short stories, human-dramas, poems and blogs so since I'm not choosy I do read many of them. I enjoy that I could even cross night holding my cellphone in my hands reading the writings.

Reading FunDza stories, poems and drama, improved my life because they are really educative. Nowadays when I come across a difficult situations, I know how to deal with it because I look at it with a different perspective than before

Impact on reading

The exposure to challenges and various definitely added to me loving reading and enjoying it and not just mentioning enjoying as a human being it added value and changed my perspectives on how life is and all that. I have improved in confidence and i can stand next to a crowd share my thoughts in words without even thinking twice.

It has kept my mind active and I had to read with understanding so I could understand the whole text.

I am now able to read for meaning and understanding. At first i would read to get done with a certain text without really minding if i understand or not. Every since I've started reading more often on FunDza, i find that i learnt how to read and understand what i am reading, mostly because some of the stories need you to understand them in order to enjoy them. I've broadened my vocabulary with words that i thought didn't exist.

Well since going to high school English has been very difficult but starting to read on fundza.mobi English has rather been an easy subject.

I completed all the courses that were offered from September and I have achieved certificate of completion and excellence for the 2 short stories. I have begun to read isiXhosa stories. I think I am addicted to FUNDZA stories.

Fundza is life changing. You cannot have a profile with fundza and still be the same. My writing skills have upgraded and also my language skills.

To be honest it has not improved my reading and writing as they were not in need of improvement. However i fell inlove with the stories and the content being offered. These are everyday South Africans stories written by south Africans for Africans. Previously, I've been subjected American authors in my school library. Not really relating to them. Fundza has awarded me the opportunity to read content that i can relate to. It's also a platform for young budding future african authors to receive exposure and critique for their work in order to improve.

Our impact

Writing improvement

53%

The writing of 53% of readers improved 'very' much, and of 27% of readers 'quite a lot'

It has made me to be open minded and I saw many opportunities. I have archived certificates and still willing to achieve more. I now understand people's feelings and their heart breaking experience.

Reading keeps me busy since well there was nothing i can do beside chilling at Indians shop. watching my peers smoking drugs. Ever since i discover fundza my life improved very much. Am always indoors reading i don't see any reason to go out and do nothing. instead i read and i find the best way to use my free time by reading here on fundza

Other benefits

45%

45% of readers noticed other benefits to reading, like personal development or growth

i am now woke as they say alert and aware of things that are happening around me. I am able to interpret and interact with others in various topics i am no longer the silent one with no opinion or view on certain subjects.

When life gets tough. I search for the story that relates to what I am going through and it always soothe my heart

Lessons learned

1

Local relatable content 'works'

Many readers mention that they love FunDza because they relate easily to the content - because it reflects their lives

2

Incentivise (sometimes)

Competitions do help with engagement... but one cannot rely on these solely - we want to grow intrinsically motivated readers

3

Build for low digital literacy

Many of the comments and suggestions show that digital literacy is low... make navigation as easy as possible

4

Readers want more interaction

Feedback shows that readers want to be active participants on the platform. Find ways to include them and build communities

5

Readers are aspirational

Readers want to improve their lives. They are aspirational and hungry for content, opportunities to learn and to shine

The Phendula Park course series of stories has really shaped me to see the factors that affect us as the youth such as how unemployment can lead to wrong doing or gangsterism. Taught me how it's important to take care of our parks make sure that they are clean and safe for the community to live in. In short it has impacted my life to grow more on my leadership skills in my community and to inspire others!

I suggest that certificate should be rewarded immediately after one has completed the course.

[please!] Create groups whereby people would be able to read books and discuss.

I mean I have learnt a lot from the stories that I've read so far. It gave me some sense of bravery and to always stand for what is right. It made me feel really amazing. And fundza app is best app on my phone right now

Find FunDza at...
live.fundza.mobi

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