

Appendix 3: RTG achievements 2005-2007 – summary report

The National Literacy Trust (NLT) is a charity dedicated to creating literacy partnerships that change lives. We aim to promote social inclusion through raised literacy standards. The Football Foundation has generously committed £175,000 to Reading The Game for the three year period from 2005 to 2007, and we are now pleased to provide an overview report on how this money has enabled us to make a difference to the lives of thousands of disadvantaged children. A full report will be submitted to the Foundation at the completion of the current tranche of funding (end of 2007).

About Reading The Game

Reading The Game (RTG) is the NLT's on-the-ground initiative which works with professional football clubs and players to promote a love of reading and learning. Through the motivational power of football we are able to target people difficult to reach through more conventional channels, particularly young men and boys. Boys continue to underachieve in test results – for example 79% of boys at key stage 2 achieved the standard expected for their age in reading compared with 87% of girls.

With the help of partners such as the Football Foundation, the PFA, the Premier League, the Football League, Football in the Community, Playing for Success and the FA, RTG has continued to grow over the last three years and make a significant contribution to addressing these issues. RTG now encompasses several discrete projects and a summary of these, together with our key achievements, is included below.

Grant from the Football Foundation

Between 2005 and 2007 the Football Foundation will have generously donated £175,000 to Reading The Game.

This grant has been the major contribution to the key delivery costs of Reading The Game and has provided essential support for all of our resources and initiatives: Premier League Reading Stars, Kick into Reading, Playing With Words, Reading Is Fundamental and BBC RaW Football Stories.

We are delighted to be able to reach around 9,500 children and parents in 2007 with Reading The Game projects. This has risen from 7,700 in 2005, and has only been possible with the help of supporters such as the Foundation.

Key achievements of RTG



Reading Champions is a national scheme run by the National Literacy Trust which aims to find and celebrate those who have acted as positive male role models for reading. The extraordinarily high status of footballers in today's society means they hold a unique position from which to successfully encourage and inspire young people. RTG now has over 132 Reading Champions from 49 clubs, and we also have representatives from the worlds of rugby, cricket, athletics, rowing, motorcycling and tennis.

Resources

In addition to running successful projects, Reading The Game also creates valuable resources for schools and libraries to use more widely. These help to reinforce the messages of the projects, and also reach a wider audience with the vital message that reading is important for everyone.

Since 2005, the FF donation has contributed towards the production and distribution of 56,000 Reading Champions posters. These show positive images of England footballers reading, and are displayed in schools, libraries and other community locations across the country.



Reading Champions posters: Rio Ferdinand and Alan Smith

In addition, RTG has produced a DVD of footballers talking about reading positively in a fun Match of the Day style format. This has been distributed free of charge to every primary and secondary school in the country: over 22,000 schools. Thousands of public libraries and other community settings such as prisons and army learning centres have also received the film.



Reading Is Fundamental, UK (RIF) is a children's literacy initiative through which disadvantaged children are able to choose and keep three books of their own at motivational events which highlight the fun of reading.

Since 2005:

- 31 projects in football club settings have been established.
- Over 8,000 children identified as being in socio-economic need have benefited from RTG RIF projects.
- Nearly 24,000 books have been given for free to children to choose and keep.



Premier League Reading Stars is run in partnership with the Premier League and the Football Foundation. Reading Champions from each of the 20 Premier League clubs recommend a box of books for families to read and talk about in local libraries.

- The programme has reached over 3,000 people.
- PLRS is currently developing a new strand, working with HM Prisons and Youth Offender Institutions.



Kick into Reading involves professional storyteller Dr Pat Ryan training FITC coaches and academy students (and sometimes first-team players) to tell stories to children in local libraries.

- 14 clubs (West Bromwich Albion FC, Liverpool FC, Barnet FC, Blackburn Rovers FC, Brentford FC, Plymouth Argyle FC, Reading FC, Mansfield Town FC, Charlton Athletic FC, Manchester United FC, Queen's Park Rangers FC, Fulham FC, Stoke City FC and Nottingham Forest FC) have successfully delivered the programme to over 11,000 children since 2005.
- A KiR DVD has been produced to promote the scheme to libraries, football clubs, schools and funders.



RaW (Read and Write) Football Stories is an adult literacy initiative in partnership with the BBC, launched in 2005 with a successful pilot at Brentford FC (culminating with the Football League community award finalist publication *Brentford 'til I Die*), and completed in May 2007. The project encourages fans to make the most of their reading and writing skills by bringing together their football stories in a published book.

- This project has run through 16 clubs: Hull FC, Nottingham Forest FC, Huddersfield Town FC, Everton FC, Huddersfield Town FC, Hartlepool United FC, Liverpool FC, Manchester City FC, Norwich City FC, Scunthorpe United FC, Manchester United FC, Bistol City FC, Reading FC, Barrow AFC, Northampton Town FC, Brighton & Hove Albion FC and Port Vale FC.
- Around 500 people have taken part, writing and sharing their own football stories.



Playing With Words is designed to enable the motivation of football to be used more widely in schools. RTG provides a box of reads to each participating school along with stickers and reading journals. Local football clubs offer incentives such as free tickets to matches that the children receive for achieving reading goals.

- The scheme was piloted successfully in 2006 with Preston North End FC and Northampton Town FC.
- It is now running in 12 clubs (Brentford FC, Bristol City FC, Colchester FC, Hull City FC, Leicester City FC, Northampton Town FC, Norwich City FC, Oldham Athletic FC, Preston North End FC, Scunthorpe United FC, Stoke FC and Sunderland AFC), with 36 schools.
- PWW will have reached over 2,800 children by the end of 2007.

Total numbers of beneficiaries reached

	RIF	PLRS	KiR	PWW	RaW	Total
2005	3,488	878	3,419	-	-	7,785
2006	2,875	1,120	5,057	191	333	9,576
2007	2,284	1,140	3,233	2,640	167	9,464
Total	8,647	3,138	11,709	2,831	500	26,825

Player appearances

Thanks to the links we have developed through our partner organisations with numerous football clubs across the country, RTG and the participants in RTG projects have had the opportunity to benefit from the direct input of players, which is incredibly inspiring. Depending on the type of project, players attend events to talk about their own favourite reads, tell stories to the children, give out free books or simply talk to the children about reading and its importance. This direct contact with players increases the impact of the projects as it is both exciting and motivating for children to meet their role models first-hand. This reinforces the essential message of the projects that reading is both important and fun.



David James reading with children at an event

Impact of RTG

A full evaluation of Reading The Game is undertaken on an annual basis at the end of each year. We obtain detailed feedback from children and coordinators involved in all projects. Our most recent evaluation, in December 2006, showed that:

- 94% of Premier League Reading Stars participants stated that they would go to the library more
- 68% of children stated they wanted to read more as a result of Playing With Words
- 94% of children taking part in Playing With Words stated that player involvement had encouraged them to read more
- 60% of children reported wanting to read more as a result of Kick into Reading
- 96% of RTG RIF project coordinators said that the project had improved the children's attitudes to reading

Below are some comments we received from project coordinators, the children and their parents:

"I really enjoyed the scheme and have told all my friends about it and I would recommend the scheme to everybody as I now think reading is important as well as fun." – Lewis, age 8

"I can't believe how much the children have got out of this scheme – it's fantastic!" – Librarian

"I was never an enthusiastic reader, but now I've started reading on the train on my way to work." – Cliff, Dad and RTG participant

"The first thing she'd ask when she got up or when she got home from school would be 'are we going to the library today?'" – David, Parent

"The pupils do enjoy selecting their favourite books, and a lot find it hard to narrow their choice down to only three! Having their books presented by the players is a highlight for the majority." – RIF project class teacher

The future

Reading The Game is continuing making a real difference to children and their families across the UK by bringing them together with their favourite football clubs and players and inspiring them to discover the joy of stories and reading. We are extremely grateful for the encouragement, partnership and financial support of the Football Foundation, which has helped us to develop projects that reach and motivate so many young people.