

TOP 10 FINALIST

Marjorie Brown

SOUTH AFRICA

Marjorie is a former human rights activist, teaching history to girls in South Africa and encouraging critical thinking and global citizenship. Her students have gone onto represent South Africa at youth forums, the Paris Climate Talks, and various Ivy League universities. She started and still leads the Kids Lit in SA programme, devoted to improving children's literacy in what is still a very unequal society.

She popularised the Kids' Lit Quiz in South Africa. This international competition was founded 26 years ago; South Africa has won three times over the past 13 years, despite its being the poorest country to participate. Marjorie has hosted the world finals twice, raising funds through publishers, book dealers, and newspaper corporations. She works with 100 schools in South Africa on the quiz and the result has been palpable in terms of booked stock in libraries increasing and reading expanding.

As part of her efforts in the field of literacy, Marjorie introduced the Phendulani literacy quiz in poorly resourced schools in South Africa. The pupils in these schools do not have functioning school libraries, so the books Marjorie sends out for the quiz are often all there is to read. Scores of teams from schools who have been participating for over five years have risen steadily, some from 40% to 80%, with the teachers taking on the role of coaches and reading champions. Students receive books as personal prizes and their school libraries get to keep the books used in the quiz.

The South African Department of Education is using the Phendulani quiz as a pilot project in 45 new reading clubs from 2018. Pan Macmillan publishers want to start a Phendulani Quiz in a poor area near Johannesburg.

SUBJECT:
History



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