

STEM Volunteer Readers



OBJECTIVE

Awaken children's interest in math and science and improve their language and reading skills by reading aloud to them



PROJECT PARTNER

Stiftung Lesen



DURATION

2015 – 2020

What happens during a volcanic eruption and why do children get stomachaches? Often, these kinds of scientific or technical phenomena can be readily explained through fun stories. Research shows that children who learn about science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) develop better language and reading skills, especially at elementary-school age, while better language skills conversely improve STEM literacy. This reciprocal relationship is being targeted by Deutsche Telekom Stiftung and Stiftung Lesen (German Reading Foundation). The partners aim to develop an accessible program in which adults spark children's interest in STEM subjects by reading aloud to them.

The partnership's main focus is to integrate STEM content with reading and language development. Studies show that these programs are particularly beneficial for children from disadvantaged backgrounds or immigrant families since, like all children of day-care and elementary-school age, they are curious and enjoy researching and experimenting. Researching fuels a deep interest in language and communication since the children want to name and describe phenomena, formulate hypotheses, take another person's perspective and draw conclusions.

In this joint project, the two foundations are particularly keen to capitalize on the opportunities and possibilities of digital media. After all, people need sufficient language and reading skills to understand complex scientific, technological and engineering concepts and absorb and process the growing, increasingly diverse flood of digital information – and thus successfully participate in our digital world.



Many exciting children's stories are about scientific and technical phenomena.

READERS SPARK CHILDREN'S INTEREST IN STEM SUBJECTS.

To move the project forward, Stiftung Lesen found reading materials (digital and hard copy) on STEM subjects that are suitable for children aged three to ten. The books are read by volunteer readers recruited by Deutsche Telekom Stiftung and Stiftung Lesen. The program has grown beyond Germany to include other countries as well. The foundations use the following recruiting channels:

- Stiftung Lesen's German and international network

- Deutsche Telekom's corporate volunteering program in Germany and around 50 local subsidiaries around the globe
- Other partners such as international reading initiatives and national federations

Readers regularly receive free online and classroom training in the form of webinars, educational videos and other sources, along with reading and media tips in multiple languages. They then approach day-care centers, elementary schools, libraries or similar institutions – either on their own or with support from the two foundations – in order to work with the children there.

More information:

www.telekom-stiftung.de/volunteer-readers

Project partners

Stiftung Lesen promotes literacy, reading enjoyment and access to reading in all media for all ages and population groups. As an operational foundation, it conducts research and model projects as well as large-scale programs in close cooperation with partners such as federal and state ministries, academic institutions, foundations, associations and business enterprises. Its key initiatives include the annual "Nationwide Read Aloud Day", "World Book Day" and "Start Reading – Three Reading Milestones", a nationwide early childhood literacy program financed by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. Many celebrities support the foundation as reading ambassadors. Stiftung Lesen was established in 1988 and is sponsored by the German Federal President.

Stiftung Lesen

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DEUTSCHE TELEKOM STIFTUNG

Deutsche Telekom Stiftung was established in 2003 to strengthen Germany's position as an education, research and technology leader. It is one of the country's main corporate foundations with an endowment of EUR 150 million. Deutsche Telekom Stiftung's mission is to improve education in the digital world concentrating on the so called STEM subjects science, technology, engineering and mathematics. It focuses on four core areas: Education Drivers, Education Opportunities, Education Innovations and Education Dialog.

In Education Drivers, the foundation supports people who inspire others to study STEM subjects. Education Opportunities involves projects to prepare children and teenagers to succeed in STEM fields and participate fully in our connected world. In Education Innovations, the foundation invests in researchers and teachers who specialize in STEM subjects. Finally, Education Dialog comprises all the projects in which the foundation works with policymakers and civil society to improve education in a digitized world.