

Ayanda Mtsatse

An unconventional approach to meaningful learning

2019 was a good year for the Eastern Cape Intervention Project – the [Impact Evaluation](#) for the midline assessment were presented and illustrated that the Funda Wandu coaching is effective. Our pilot schools home language (isiXhosa) literacy has improved such that Grade 2 learners paragraph reading proficiency is a term ahead of learners in comparison schools. We thus proudly continued into 2020 with isiXhosa home language and in addition, introduced our mathematics program - Bala Wandu. The team's energy levels were up, the educators ready to teach reading with meaning and Grade 1 learners excited to start calculating with confidence.

It was business as usual until the 15th of March when President Ramaphosa announced a state of disaster with one of the measures being public schools closing earlier than planned – this for us meant less days for making an impact on the learners in our project. The obvious following step was to issue a school closure and coronavirus letter addressed to the parents, which outlined how we could assist them to make sure their child continues to learn. But when the National Coronavirus Command Council enforced a national lockdown, the next step was not as obvious as various factors had to be taken into consideration.

As we were witnessing the rise of various digital platforms for e-learning, we had to deal with our reality that the

Module	Description
Module 1	
1.1 Introduction	*Teaching children to read * What is reading
1.2 Decoding	*Phonological and Phonemic Awareness * Letter-sound knowledge and Phonics * Oral Reading Fluency
1.3 Vocabulary	* Introduction and Key Concepts * Vocabulary development * Teaching vocabulary incidentally * Teaching vocabulary explicitly
1.4 Comprehension	* Teaching Comprehension * Comprehension Strategies * Using questions to build comprehension * Text types * Assessing Comprehension
Module 2	
2.1 The Gradual Release Model of Teaching	* Teaching Gradual Release in CAPS
2.2 Teacher Read Aloud	* What is Teacher Read Aloud and why is it important? * What texts do I use for Read Aloud? * How do I do a Read Aloud lesson? * Teacher Read Aloud Assessment
2.3 Shared Reading	* What is Shared Reading and why is it important? * What texts do I use for Shared Reading? * How do I do a Shared Reading lesson? * Shared Reading Assessment.
2.4 Group Guided Reading	* What is Group Guided Reading and why is it important? * What texts do I use for Group Guided Reading? * How do I do a Group Guided Reading lesson? * How do I assess Group Guided Reading How do I set up for Group Guided Reading
2.5 Paired Reading	* What is Paired Reading and why is it important? * What texts do we use for Paired Reading? * How do we do a Paired Reading lesson?
2.6 Independent Reading	* What is Independent Reading and why is it important? * What texts do we use for Independent Reading? * How do we do Independent Reading? * Independent Reading Assessment.

children in our schools have limited digital access. So how do we make an impact on learners sitting at home, where digital access is in a form of a smartphone shared by siblings and might not have sufficient mobile data? Before getting lost in the socio economics of South Africa, let me shift the focus to the educators and show you what we have done for them. We have developed an online Reading Course for Grade R – 3 Foundation Phase Educators who teach isiXhosa home language. The picture on the left is the course content covered which will take only 40 hours for an educator to professionally develop themselves. The Eastern Cape Department of Education will be rolling out this course during the lockdown as part of their teacher training courses. We also implemented a COVID-19 support programme for the Grade 1 Mathematics Teachers which has been designed for teachers to familiarize themselves with Bala Wandu math activities. The programme is ran through whatsapp – yes,

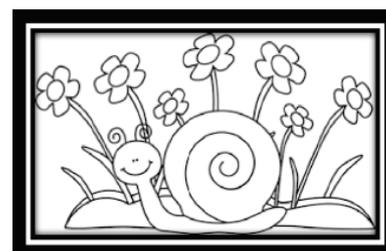
whatsapp – and data is provided on a weekly basis for the teachers.

Now back to the learners, we were pleased when Basic Education Minister Motshekga published that the education sector will open from the 4th May, as we could officially implement our strategy for children to continue learning whilst at home. We have developed graded learner workbooks for isiXhosa and Mathematics tailored to fit the level of the homework that parents would need to support their child – weekly voicenotes giving a brief overview will be provided to the teachers to share with parents. And ongoing support for the teachers will continue.

Given the practical challenges for learning during these uncertain times, we are working continuously to contribute towards meaningful solutions for isiXhosa language and Mathematics learning in schools for foundation phase – not only for the development of teachers but also continued learning for the children during the lockdown.



Ibanga loku-1: Imisebenzi yabafundi yexesho lokumiswa ngxi kweentshukumo



Grade 1 Lockdown workbook