Strategy 2022–2026

By 2030 all children in South Africa will read for meaning and calculate with confidence by age 10
By 2030 all children in South Africa will read for meaning and calculate with confidence by age 10.
Everything we do is about prioritizing, thinking through and testing interventions that will lead to ALL children learning to read for meaning and calculate with confidence by age 10 by 2030.

Hurdle # 1
78% of grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning
63% of grade 5 learners cannot do basic sums and subtraction

Hurdle # 2
89% of learners will complete Grade 9

Hurdle # 3
37% of learners will complete matric

Hurdle # 4
4% of learners will attend a higher education institution

Finish Line
<3% of learners will get a qualification in the first five years
We are a not-for-profit organisation in South Africa who focuses on early grade reading and mathematics interventions. We experiment with interventions with an eye to scale.

Who We Are

We do this by hiring the best people we can find and work as a team to create high-quality materials, experiment with different teacher training approaches, and independently evaluate everything we do. Our materials and training are created in the languages that children speak and understand and are freely-available for anyone to download and use. Our programmes and materials are all evidence-based, independently-evaluated, policy-aligned and cost-effective.
Our Goals

1. All South African children can read for meaning and calculate with confidence by the end of grade 3 by 2030.

2. All Grade R-3 teachers are well-equipped to teach children how to read and calculate with confidence by 2030.

Our Focus

Training

- Pre-Service
- In-Service
- Rhodes Course
- Reading Academy
- Thinking Maths

Interventions

- Scalable Models
- Materials Development
- Subject Advisors
- Teacher Assistants
- Coaches

Research/Advocacy

- External Evaluations
- Internal Monitoring & Evaluation
- Policy & Public Advocacy

- Randomised Control Trials
- Qualitative & Quantitative Studies
- Pathways to Scale
- The Right to Read & Write
- Literacy & Numeracy Lekgotlas
- The Reading Panel
- The COVID Catch Up Series

High Quality Open Access Materials

- Learner and Teacher Support Materials
- Teacher Guides
- Workbooks
- Training Videos
The first three years of Funda Wanda focused on developing and implementing our package of relatively new interventions and materials, and establishing our organisation in our three provinces – Eastern Cape, Limpopo and the Western Cape. We rapidly innovated, building responsive interventions which were shaped by emerging data and the sobering impacts of COVID-19. We moved and grew fast, understanding that the size of our vision and goals required an immense sense of urgency, clarity and impact.

We are now at the point where we have developed a set of quality learner and teacher materials which include our workbooks, teacher guides and training videos. These are being implemented through three well-established interventions – teacher coaching in the Eastern Cape, teacher assistants in Limpopo and subject advisors in the Western Cape.

In developing our strategy and activities for the next five years, we are preoccupied with the question “Will this get us to our 2030 goal?”. In other words, how might we enable (1) all children to read for meaning and calculate with confidence, and (2) all grade R-3 teachers to be equipped to teach learners how to read and calculate with confidence by 2030? In terms of outputs, this entails ensuring access to quality materials and pre- and in-service teacher training, whilst concurrently ensuring government buy-in and investment in early literacy and numeracy.

The conclusion of the Randomized control trials (RCTs) in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo and all other independent evaluations will be a significant milestone for us, providing much of the evidence base we will rely on in pursuing the relevant scalable options alongside government. For us, this not only concerns how to scale through the system, but also what should be scaled, and how to do so responsibly in the current context of intense uncertainty.

The next five years will therefore be characterised by responsive and relevant interventions which result in the development of a concrete package of solutions for the system, the production of important research and a strong evidence base, and focused and intentional advocacy.
Where are we in our journey?

We imagine the lifespan of our initiatives in four epochs, “can it work?”, “does it work?” “can it scale?” and “does it scale?”. We are currently in our “does it work/ can it scale” phase, which unsurprisingly is characterized by a heavy focus on interventions to help us figure out what works and possible models for scale. As more data becomes available in the next two years, we will transition firmly into the two phases focused on scale.

By 2030 ALL children in SA can read for meaning and calculate with confidence by age 10.
### Program Areas: 2019 to date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>WCED-funded</th>
<th>Funda Wande-funded</th>
<th>Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Western Cape</strong></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>FW(50) &amp; WCED(50)</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>IsiXhosa &amp; Afrikaans</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
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<td><strong>Material Schools</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
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<td><strong>Components</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Maths &amp; Literacy Materials</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Control Schools</strong></td>
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#### The Model

**Maths & Literacy Materials**

**Teacher Training**

**Coaching Schools**

**Material Schools**

**Teacher Training**

**Control Schools**

### Learner and Teacher Materials Development

- **Materials Development**
  - Development of Maths and Literacy resources in multiple languages for the Foundation Phase
  - IsiXhosa, Afrikaans, and Sepedi

- **Languages**
  - 3X

- **Beneficiaries**
  - 120

- **Languages**
  - 948

### Research and Advocacy

- **The 2030 Reading Panel**
  - The Right to Read & Write
  - Leveraging eminent South Africans to ensure reading remains on the national agenda and to provide long-term a-political leadership to ensure that all South African children learn to read for meaning in their home-language, and in English, by age 10 by 2030

- **Report launched on 8 September 2021**

### Sector-Wide Capacity Development

- **NextGen**
  - Empowering talented young South Africans by providing them with access to bursaries, support structures, networks and resources that can strengthen their capacity to develop and achieve their professional goals.
Evolving our focus for the journey.
Our pedagogical levers for change

Our materials were conceptualized as high-quality, attractive and well-illustrated materials for Foundation Phase Learners in their Home Languages. We developed them keeping in mind the need to improve teacher content knowledge and pedagogical skills and to ensure that effective teaching and assessment is possible in our larger, less well-resourced classrooms, without compromising quality. We believe that through the use of the Funda Wande and Bala Wande learner workbooks, guided by teachers who use the project teacher’s guides, learners in no-fee schools should experience high quality teaching that will result in enhanced learning and improved learning outcomes. Our materials, which are based on solid research, ensure learners benefit from increased opportunities to practice reading and doing mathematics with various levels of support. Our reading programme develops decoding, comprehension and response, while the mathematics programme provides a scaffolded, well sequenced presentation of the curriculum. Both programmes support more efficient use of classroom time which should facilitate the development of foundational reading, writing and mathematical skills.

We build on what has already shown promise to create a cost-effective teaching and learning package that is fit for purpose in the South African Foundation Phase maths and literacy classroom.

Our materials are freely available to be used by anyone in part or in full. What we create will be given back to the community for further application and use.

We remain open to critique and committed to collaboration in order to make our package the best it can be.

Our Basic Principles

What we will do to get there

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<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
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| Designing an effective structured pedagogy | • We continue to develop materials that will ensure teachers are “doing more by doing less”. Our materials are targeted to simplify the delivery of the curriculum and reduce the complexity of all the moving parts.  
• Our approach acknowledges the diverse teacher demographic and different levels of content knowledge, and focuses on improving pedagogical instruction through a gradual release model.  
• Teacher-centred support is at the centre of what we do as we believe this is the only way to ensure take-up and utilization. |
| Curriculum, scope and sequence development for literacy and numeracy structured pedagogy | • We develop culturally and contextually representative materials that act as mirrors and windows for our teachers and learners in no-fee schools.  
• We develop resources in the targeted languages rather than take an approach that relies on translations.  
• Our materials development process will continue to be led by the people who speak and are specialists in each of the languages. |
| Leveraging on existing materials | • We balance the need to be led by our own data and to acknowledge and learn from the important work already being done in the sector.  
• We will continue to collaborate with strategic development partners and the broader education ecosystem to draw from inputs that will help us create a quality set of materials for the system. |

Through the use of our materials, learners in no-fee schools should experience high quality teaching that should result in enhanced learning and improved learning outcomes.
Remaining relevant & responsive

In the last three-year implementation period, our core values have included innovation and adaptation. We have taken no issue adapting our approach if it was just not the right fit; moving from lesson plans to workbooks and teacher guides, switching to virtual support and training during hard periods of lockdown, or delaying and extending interventions where the circumstances required this. Our approach has been that whilst we understand that change takes time and is committed to seeing our models through, we are not just looking to pilot interventions that we think should work, rather what is relevant given the sector needs and the sometimes stark and contradictory realities at the intervention sites. This is even more relevant given that our interventions were conceptualized in pre-COVID times, and it would be naïve of us to think the original Funda Wande models remain relevant in their absolute form given current learning losses and intermittent access to schools and beneficiaries. Further, whilst literacy and numeracy remain national priorities, some priorities outside of the sector (e.g. youth unemployment), have grown to be seen as even more urgent, threatening to shift some attention (and at the very worst additional budgetary allocations) from the sector.

Our Basic Principles

- We balance the absolute fidelity of our interventions against what is required on the ground.
- There can be no Funda Wande without catch-up.
- We iterate to respond, but know when to draw the line.
- If it works, we do what we can to make it widely available to the system.

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| Addressing catch-up as part of Funda Wande’s core content | • Development of a structured multi-year in-classroom catch-up programme.  
• Testing the expanded use of teaching assistants for catch-up.  
• Additional support provided to provincial officials to support in-classroom catch-up. |
| Advocating for increased focus and investment in early literacy and numeracy and the institutionalisation of catch-up | • Research and knowledge production focused on the necessary inputs for catch-up, the required “core curriculum” and teaching at the right level (TaRL).  
• Using eminent South Africans as key leverage points to influence policy.  
• Placing numeracy “on the map” in South Africa. |
| Continued focus on strategic, relevant and scalable interventions | • Continued review and necessary revision of existing Funda Wande materials and implementation models.  
• Pursuing strategic partnerships to pilot new interventions in line with national imperatives.  
• Collaboration with the government on phase 2 of the Basic Education Employment Initiative. |

We understand how the system actually operates rather than how it is supposed to operate on paper.
Creating a package of interventions for the system

Initially, we have focused quite heavily on understanding which of our interventions work best and have the best possibility for success. However, moving forward, we are placing greater emphasis on understanding the variety of ways one single intervention may be implemented given the constraints at national and provincial levels to increase opportunities for scale. We will not only produce evidence on what works, but also how to make it work within the varying levels of capacity. Key to this is ensuring increased accessibility to our materials through the completion of various development activities.

We balance the need to get all our materials absolutely perfect, with the need to ensure access to quality materials and training.

We advocate within the current constraints of the system.

Whilst we believe in providing various affordable models for implementation, we will never advocate for an approach we do not believe will be impactful for the sake of scale-up.

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| Ensuring wide-spread access to quality materials | • Development of all materials (including video) for grades 1-3.  
• Versioning of materials in additional home languages. |
| Increase reach to quality in-service training courses for South African teachers. | • Expansion of the advanced certificate in foundation phase literacy teaching to other institutions of higher education.  
• Development of the early grade maths teaching qualification. |
| Develop various implementation modalities for the interventions “that work” | • Development of various implementation frameworks and requirements for each of the models.  
• Focused advocacy at provincial and national level for take-up. |

We know it’s as important not only to find out what works, but how to make it work by government in regular no-fee schools.
Advocating for responsible take-up and scale-up

Even if all our models were to show statistically significant impact, we in no way imagine that we will be in each of the provinces at the same scale in perpetuity, as we continue to believe that our role is to test and innovate, influencing where public money goes rather than trying to replace government. However, maintaining a footprint in each of the provinces is not only strategic given that the access to schools allows for sustained piloting grounds for all future interventions, but speaks to a need for responsible scale-up. As part of our gradual release model, we will slowly begin to taper off the existing interventions, but a continued presence is important as a sustainable support measure to both the schools and the province. The extent of this support will depend on the province and what the data tells, however, given past experience with government taking over interventions, at the very least, a small project management team will be necessary to support implementation.

Our Basic Principles

- We will only advocate for what works.
- Part of scale-up necessarily entails thinking through the removal of systemic blockages, and this itself may need a focused intervention.
- Scale-up must be led by government, interest is not enough, allocation of budget is the gold standard.

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| Pursuing viable pathways to scale | • Engagement with counterparts in government on what makes sense in order for them to scale.  
• A sustained Footprint in each of the current provinces.  
• Beginning to scale down or test alternative implementation modalities in the three intervention sites.  
• Pursuing strategic province-led scale-up e.g. the initial scale up anthologies to all Funda Wande provinces. |
| Focused advocacy on “what works” and “how to make it work” | • Dedicated capacity for advocacy.  
• Mapping out key stakeholders and role-players to develop a stakeholder engagement plan.  
• Institutionalise how we do advocacy and points of influence as part of provincial implementation plans.  
• Establishment of strategic partnerships and collaboration focused on materials development, implementation, knowledge sharing and advocacy. |

Our role is to test and innovate, influencing where public money goes rather than trying to replace government.
Ensuring our data not only keeps us honest but is also useful

It has always been the Funda Wande way that as we continue to iterate and extend some of our interventions, we ensure our evaluations follow alongside to keep us honest with every version of our models. However, we also understand the need to place some finite timelines on our existing evaluations, with a move to focus any further evaluations on new interventions and the sustained impact of the existing ones. More recently, our growth has meant we have developed the need for a centralized and standardized monitoring system that supports improved programme implementation and provides more consistent insights into “what is working well” and “what is not working well”. A comprehensive monitoring system that collects accurate data can go a long way in assisting research into the how and why of programme effectiveness.

Our Basic Principles

- All our decisions are led by data, both formally through external evaluations and internal monitoring, and through anecdotal data from our on-the-ground experiences.
- We adapt, and we continue to measure, but only when the data can tell us something valuable.
- There is a need for defined endlines, this helps to keep us honest, not only about the data, but when it may be time to move on.
- Our data leads our advocacy efforts.

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| All evaluations must come to a logical end | • All existing evaluations will come to an end in 2023  
• From 2024, we will begin to measure the sustained impact of some of our interventions in all Funda Wande provinces. |
| Implementing a robust internal monitoring system | • We will utilise our internal monitoring data to drive responsive decision making.  
• We will link the monitoring system to organisational performance and accountability. |
| Establishing a defined internal research agenda | • We will develop a targeted and responsive research agenda to support our advocacy efforts.  
• Research outputs will become a key focus area. |

We know that research and advocacy are at the heart of scaling up successful interventions.
Developing the next cohort of leaders in the sector

The reality in the education sector is that it may not have sufficient capacity at key influential points to implement the changes required to realise the necessary improvements to the education system. Further, where this capacity exists, it is usually in the form of more mature individuals who will soon leave the system, leaving a gradually increasing skills gap. Additionally, large parts of civil society, who are a key component in holding government accountable and influencing the sector do not widely have the understanding of how government works, and further are simply untransformed, with no meaningful efforts to develop the next generation of young black leaders.

As an organisation, we see the development of this capacity as an increasingly important part of the work we do. Both in terms of how we build our own organisation, and the development of targeted opportunities for young people through initiatives like our NextGen programme. We could create the perfect intervention, but if there aren’t highly skilled individuals who will remain in the sector to take it and other important interventions forward, we will not see the desired impact.

Strategy | What this looks like
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Strengthen the capacity of the sector to deliver in the long-term | • Retain and develop young black talent within Funda Wande. • Operationalise NextGen as a fully funded programme for at least an initial five-year period. • Identification, development and support of new talent as a key organisational outcome.

We understand all individuals in the system are important to its success, however we intentionally invest in those we think have the potential to one day lead key organisations or functions as we believe these are the most influential points for change.

A key constraint for the creation of a new pipeline of academics and leaders is access to reasonable funding – this cannot be understated.

We balance the need to transform existing institutions and ecosystems with the desire to create new, black-led organisations and networks of influence.

We see the development of young people in the sector as an essential part of the work we do.
Responsible Stewardship

As the implementation period of Funda Wande extends beyond 2023, we are actively thinking about the best use of committed funds, and how we responsibly raise additional funds for the continuation of the organisation. As always, our decisions here are driven by evidence, and whether we think we are best-placed to find the solutions to the questions we are asking (and whether these are in fact important questions deserving of answers). What the first three years tells us is that whilst there are multiple organisations currently operating in the sector, some which are much larger and have been around for tens of years, our work continues to add outsized value to the sector and our partners. And for as long as we continue to do so, we believe our work is important to the development of the sector.

Our fundraising focuses on what we believe we “have” to do to achieve our objectives and less on the nice to haves.

Our work will only ever focus on the key questions we believe need to be answered to ensure all learners read for meaning and calculate with confidence by 2030.

As we consider our funders as partners in our journey towards our goals, we will always be honest about our results and be the first to advocate for change where necessary.

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| A focus on key levers of change | • Reviewing implementation models and materials and interventions to develop more affordable alternatives.  
• Pursuing partnerships where possible.  
• Ensuring continued focus of our intervention models on those aspects most essential in ensuring change. |

Our Basic Principles

- Our fundraising focuses on what we believe we “have” to do to achieve our objectives and less on the nice to haves.
- We will never pursue interventions for the sake of another good education NGO, we need to add significant value to the sector.
- Our work will only ever focus on the key questions we believe need to be answered to ensure all learners read for meaning and calculate with confidence by 2030.
- As we consider our funders as partners in our journey towards our goals, we will always be honest about our results and be the first to advocate for change where necessary.
What does this mean for the interventions?
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Whilst the immediate focus and main impact of Funda Wande’s interventions in the three provinces has to date been to improve learning outcomes in the intervention schools, our overall goal and focus for the next five years, is to develop lessons that are applicable to the entire system which will allow national government to meaningfully move the education reform needle for all children.

1. **The Eastern Cape Intervention**
   - Strategic Focus 2022-2026:
     - Embedding coaching, monitoring and support within schools.

2. **The Limpopo Intervention**
   - Strategic Focus 2022-2026:
     - Developing a model for the effective use of teacher assistants in the classroom and acting as a strategic partner for the rollout of the Basic Education Employment Initiative.

3. **The Western Cape Intervention**
   - Strategic Focus 2022-2026:
     - Ensuring buy-in at a district and classroom level and capacitating the WCED for provincial rollout.
Everything we do is about prioritizing, thinking through and testing interventions that will lead to all children learning to read for meaning and calculate with confidence by age 10 by 2030.