HELLO FRIENDS,

Last Month, we commemorated and celebrated International Literacy day on the 8th of September. And of course, this speaks to why we exist as an organisation and the Big Audacious Hairy Goal (BHAG) of getting all children in South Africa reading for meaning by the age 10 by 2030.

In this month's newsletter, I share with you some of the highlights of this month and the engagements that the Funda Wande team has taken part in.

FROM THE CEO’S DESK

ALLAN GRAY MAKERS (AGM) FEST

Well, many may not be aware that Funda Wande was incubated by the Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropies (AGGP) South Africa (previously known as the Allan Gray Endowment). Since our spin-off and final private entity registration we continue to be part of the AGGP family together with Jakes Gerwel Fellowship and Allan Gray Foundation.

I had the honour of joining a panel discussion at the AGM Fest. I spoke in a session titled Women in Leadership & Women in Trades. My presentation focused on encouraging the young and vibrant women in artisan, a field which is dominated by males. In summary, there are 4 points I left them with: 1) Even when something may seem to be daunting, be bold and take risks 2) Backing yourself when it matters the most works 3) Mistakes are part of the journey to success and 4) This world is nothing without women – even science proves this!

INTERNATIONAL LITERACY DAY

One of the 5 things we had set for ourselves in 2022, was strategic partnerships and collaboration, as we are not the silver bullet to the reading crisis in the country. In that spirit, we hosted a roundtable discussion with leaders from six education organisations: Lunga Nqadolo (The Bookery), Sibongile Khumalo (The Learning Trust), Nqabakazi Mathe-Gina (NaliBali), Sibonelo Nongcula (Numeric), Mammuso Makhanya (Wordworks) and myself (Funda Wande). This year UNESCO International Literacy theme was “Transforming Literacy Learning Spaces” and what this means in the South African context. You can watch the full discussion on Funda Wande’s YouTube channel. It was clear that we all share a common vision in ensuring children are reading for meaning, and we are excited at the possibilities of collaboration this conversation has started – So watch the space!

I also took part in the International Literacy Day panel discussion that was hosted on 3FM by Cathy Mohlahlana - have a listen.

FUND A WANDE INTERVENTIONS

WESTERN CAPE

One of our guiding principles is “Our data and research findings keep us honest”. We do this not only through our Random Control Trials (RCT) but also by conducting quarterly deep dives to understand our program bottlenecks and fidelity. The Western Cape Team, represented by Janine Jantjie, with our Head of Content Permie Isaac and Head of Limpopo, Nwabisa Makhaluza went to Abedare Primary School, one of the flagship schools in the WC intervention. The visit included some classroom observations followed by focus group discussions with the foundation phase team to unpack teacher beliefs and motivation to implement the program.

LIMPOPO

In Limpopo, Phuti Masenya, our Literacy Specialist was invited to attend a special event at Moraro Primary School. It was a celebration of International Literacy Day as well as Heritage Month. To make this celebration even more special, Funda Wande partnered with Breadline Africa to donate a small library to the school. The learners were encouraged to practice reading aloud and they ended the day off with traditional dancing and singing.

International Literacy Day Panel moderated by Sihle Nontshokweni

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If you were to ask me what my learnings from the TA intervention have been, it must be that there is something special when you deploy a young energetic youth who has been trained very well and provided support to thrive in the classroom! Our TAs facilitated a reading competition at one of our intervention schools in the EC, Little Flower R.C. Primary School between two Grade 1 classes. The internal competition was meant to create excitement about reading and build on the current enthusiasm the learners have from being part of the program. The learners read in English and isiXhosa and were judged on confidence, fluency and punctuation.

### EASTERN CAPE

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### TEAM BUILDING ACTIVITIES

All our offices from Western Cape to Limpopo came together to connect around the lunch table and do team-building activities. I was honoured to join the regional team-building session and I have learnt about my colleagues throughout this time. When I was appointed, one of the things I presented in the final interview stage was “creating a workplace of choice” – Funda Wande is nothing without its people! Each team left me with some reflections based on the activity we did. Limpopo – we are all inspired by a woman who has touched our lives deeply, in most cases, it was our Mothers! Western Cape – life is like painting pottery; it is never perfect, but beauty is defined and crafted as we go along. Eastern Cape – The successful warrior is the average man, with laser-like focus (Bruce Lee).

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Yours in Education,

Nangamso Mtsatse, CEO Funda Wande