

Annual Report 2025



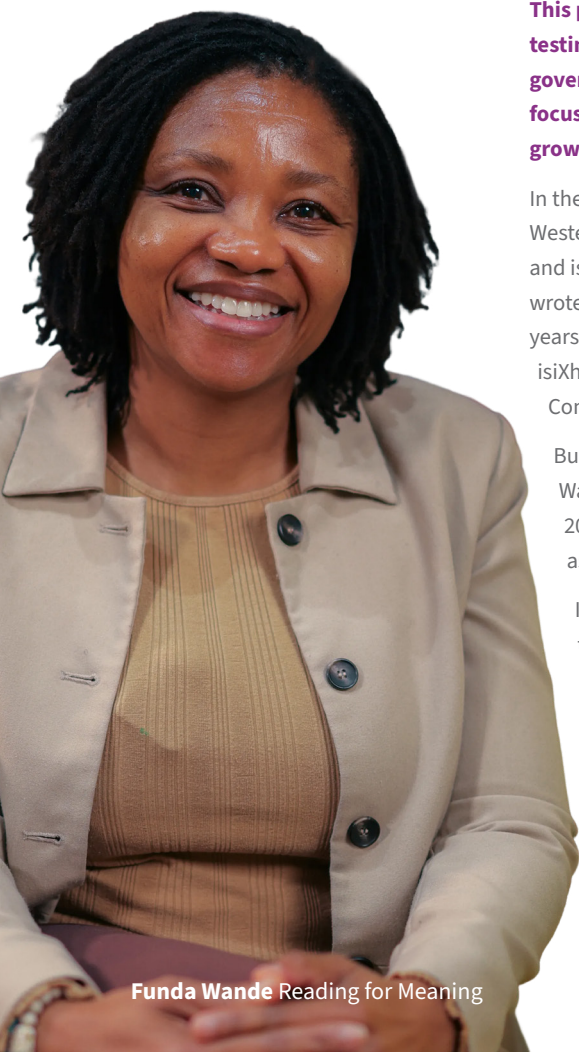
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Message from the CEO

2025 marked a year of meaningful progress.



While the impact numbers tell an important story, I am especially proud of the quality of what Funda Wandé is building.

This phase of our journey is about building on our first five years of learning: testing what works, what can be scaled, and how we can support the government to implement structured pedagogy programmes at scale. Our focus remains on deepening implementation, maintaining quality as scope grows, and strengthening the partnerships that make this work sustainable.

In the Western Cape, the Funda Wandé literacy programme was adopted by the Western Cape Education Department in 2023 and rolled out across all Afrikaans and isiXhosa schools, reaching Grades 1 to 3 by 2025. The Grade 3 learners who wrote the 2025 systemic exams had been exposed to the programme for three years, and their results showed significant improvement in both Afrikaans and isiXhosa — the strongest Grade 3 performance since systemic testing began.

Congratulations to the WCED on this achievement!

Building on this progress, the WCED is preparing to roll out Funda Wandé's Bala Wandé numeracy programme in all foundation phase classrooms from 2027 to 2029, with a pilot in 70 schools beginning in 2026. Funda Wandé will continue as implementing partner while the department leads implementation.

In the Eastern Cape, we continued training hundreds of foundation phase teachers in partnership with the Eastern Cape Department of Education, while exploring how behavioural science can strengthen teachers' use of materials and assessment practices. In Limpopo, we supported teacher interns to enter the profession with classroom experience and practical capabilities in our intervention schools, while continuing to test strategies for teaching mathematics effectively in multilingual contexts.

We also continued building capacity in the education system through our partnership with Rhodes University. Education officials from Limpopo and the Free State participated in the Advanced Certificate in Foundation Phase Literacy Teaching, and more delegates joined the Rhodes

University Coaching Short Course. Excitingly, we began supporting pre-service teacher education by creating materials for foundation phase BEd lecturers, with more than 50 public university representatives attending an initial convening.

The evidence continues to affirm what we have always believed: when teachers are supported with structured materials, training and ongoing support, learning outcomes can improve. Achieving this consistently at scale is complex, requiring patience, strong relationships and a commitment to quality.

What gives me confidence is the depth of our partnerships. In 2025, Funda Wandé was selected as one of the implementing partners in FLOAT, a collaborative initiative focused on improving literacy and numeracy in South Africa. This has opened new partnerships within the sector and expanded our work within the Free State, Eastern Cape, and Gauteng Departments of Education, reflecting the trust placed in our model.

Funda Wandé ended the financial year in a strong position, with healthy cash reserves that allow us to sustain current initiatives and pursue new opportunities with confidence.

“ The 2030 goal of ensuring that every child in South Africa can read for meaning and calculate with confidence by age 10 is ambitious. But we are better placed than ever to keep accelerating towards it.

With deep gratitude to the Funda Wandé team, our school partners, and our partners in the public and private sectors, the achievements of 2025 are yours to celebrate.

I hope you enjoy reading about our activities this past year.

Phumi

Our Vision To be a trusted partner in foundational education.

Our Mission To ensure that by 2030, all children in South Africa will read for meaning and calculate with confidence by age 10. We do this by developing and scaling evidence-based solutions through collaborative partnerships with government and educational institutions.

Where we work From scale in the Western Cape to growing impact in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo, our reach continues to expand, one school, one teacher, one learner at a time.

About Funda Wande

What we do

Everything we do is grounded in evidence, made possible through partnerships, and measured by what happens in the classroom.

Funda Wande's work spans several integrated areas that include:



Developing high-quality Learning and Teaching Support Materials

We create and provide learner workbooks, teacher guides, big books, and other resources in multiple African languages, for literacy and numeracy interventions aligned to the national curriculum.



Training and supporting teachers

We have designed and created a range of pre-service and in-service teacher training programmes, from on-site coaching and mentoring to formal university-accredited courses. This includes our SACE-accredited Reading and Numeracy Academies, online learning platforms which provide ongoing professional development.



Testing and refining intervention models

We pilot different models of teacher support – including instructional coaching models and teacher-led approaches – to determine effective and cost-efficient ways to improve learning. These pilots are rigorously evaluated and inform decision-making.



Research and advocacy

We conduct and commission research to generate evidence on early-grade reading and mathematics and use the findings to advocate for policies and practices that prioritise foundation phase literacy and numeracy.



Collaborating with government for scale

We work closely with provincial education departments to support the implementation of structured pedagogy at scale. This involves embedding structured programmes into provincial education strategies, training government officials and lead teachers, and ensuring local ownership to build sustainability.



About Funda Wande

Funda Wande's journey has been marked by two clear strategic cycles:

Early grade literacy

Education systems change

Phase 1

2017 - 2023

Testing what works and what can be scaled for system-level impact.

Phase 2

2024 - 2028

Partnering with government to prioritise and implement evidence-based structured pedagogy programmes at scale.

Literacy intervention programmes

Evidence-based education

Eight years in, Funda Wande has built a solid foundation. We continue to deepen our understanding of what works, while focusing on supporting implementation at scale, and holding the bar high on quality – using what we know to drive real, system change in public education.

Leveraging our capacity for innovation, demonstration, and partnerships will enable us to catalyse systemic change in public education.

“ This work is grounded in collaboration, learning, knowledge-sharing, and a commitment to measurable impact.

Every Child Reading.

Every Child Calculating.

By 2030.

Programme Review

Funda Wande's programmes are delivered with fidelity, adapted using evidence, and increasingly owned by the provinces they serve.

In 2025, work in the Eastern Cape, Limpopo, and Western Cape strengthened the core components of Funda Wande's structured pedagogy approach:

- High-quality Learner and Teacher Support Material (LTSM)
- Targeted educator training, and
- Sustained classroom support.

This model is becoming increasingly embedded in provincial systems. The aim now is to keep improving delivery strategies, maintain quality at scale, and adapt to contextual challenges as they arise. All of this is guided by implementation research and learning.

In 2025, Funda Wande reached:



Learners

250,740



Teachers

6,702



Schools

973

Limpopo 30, Eastern Cape 79, Western Cape 864



Western Cape

Schools

864

Learners Reached

234,845

Teachers Reached

6,263

The Western Cape represents Funda Wande's largest provincial footprint. In 2023, the programme was adopted by the WCED and has become a blueprint for achieving sustainable scale with government buy-in and accountability. Across Afrikaans and isiXhosa schools, the partnership worked to improve its teacher support interventions, material distribution systems, and ability to support learning in the classroom. The partnership expanded when a decision was made to pilot the Bala Wande numeracy programme from 2026.

Learning and Teaching Support Materials

Literacy Learner Workbooks and Teacher Guides were distributed to all Afrikaans and isiXhosa teachers and learners.

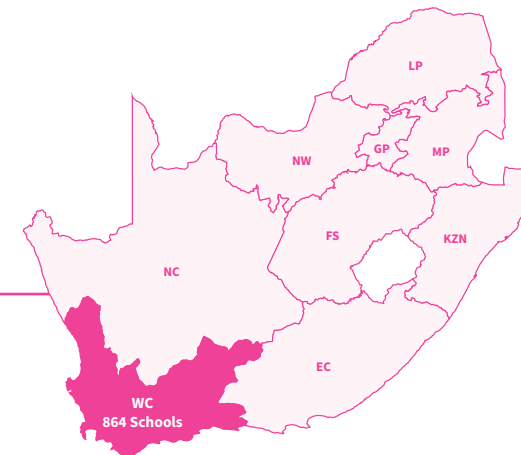
In 2025, Funda Wande worked with the WCED to redesign their literacy workbooks for scale. The learner books would not require termly replenishment (except in Grade 1) and would be more cost-effective and aligned to government budgets. The piloting of these scalable materials involved gathering in-class observations and data in seven schools, which informed improvements to the materials' content and durability.

Orientation tools and lesson-planning templates were provided to support their integration into daily classroom use. Funda Wande built feedback mechanisms into the distribution process to gather real-time usability insights, which informed the design of the final product. The revised materials were printed for all Grade 1-3 Afrikaans and isiXhosa classrooms in time for the start of the 2026 school year.

Piloting Professional Learning Communities

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are spaces for teachers to regularly connect and reflect on their teaching experiences – to share what is working and find solutions to shared challenges. They are designed as central support mechanisms for teachers, supplementing ongoing teacher training and in-classroom coaching provided by subject advisors.

PLCs led by lead teachers were piloted in two districts, reinforcing practices of peer learning, self-reflection, and growth. The PLCs also reinforced Funda



Wande's Hub and Spoke Model, which positions lead teachers as the key facilitators of peer learning within cluster schools. Early evidence showed that these lead teacher-led forums could become integral structures for reinforcing teacher development through focused and practical peer-to-peer learning.

PLC's contributed to:

- Strengthened implementation and reflection on Group Guided Reading and shared reading practices.
- Increased teacher collaboration, peer learning and reflective professional practice.
- Greater focus on refining instructional routines, literacy pedagogy and classroom-based problem solving.



Lead teachers continue to receive structured support through WhatsApp groups, school-based visits, and termly reflection sessions. Real-time, contextual feedback informs both workbook content and the design and structure of teacher support.



Programme Review / [Report Back](#)

Eastern Cape

Schools

79

Learners Reached

12,193

Teachers Reached

336

Since 2024, Funda Wande has been working in the Chris Hani West, OR Tambo Inland and Amathole East rural districts in the Eastern Cape, with work maintaining momentum in 2025. Learnings from a Behavioural Science for Pedagogical Change (BSPC) study were applied more broadly in intervention schools. The study showed that Funda Wande's efforts in the Eastern Cape were gaining traction, with evidence that behavioural science techniques were strengthening teachers' adoption and consistent, effective use of the provided teaching and learning materials.

[Read more](#)

Learning and Teaching Support Materials

336 Teacher Guides and 12,193 Learner Activity Books distributed

Working in the Eastern Cape's more rural areas presents distribution challenges for several schools. With each new distribution cycle, Funda Wande continues to improve logistical oversight and strengthen distribution strategies.

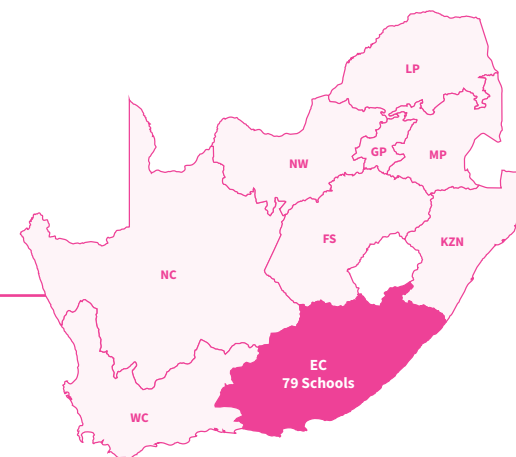
Training, Support, and Coaching

In addition to training teachers in its own interventions, Funda Wande coaches also trained approximately 800 foundation phase teachers across the province, in partnership with the Eastern Cape Department of Education. The Eastern Cape training interventions focused on phonics, assessment strategies, the New Learning Engage Model Practice Apply (NEMPA) routine, curriculum pacing, and classroom management.

PLCs facilitated by our instructional coaches increasingly became important spaces for learning and connection, with many Intermediate Phase departmental heads and Grade R teachers voluntarily attending these sessions - suggesting that this work is resonating beyond the programme's immediate reach.

Through the influence of PLCs, we saw:

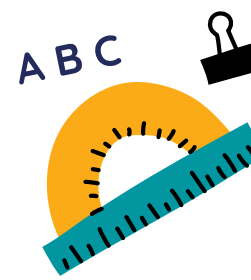
- Teachers with increased confidence in facilitating Group Guided Reading
- More effective use of the Teacher Guides
- Notable improvements in reading fluency and comprehension
- More consistent use of mathematics manipulatives



Multi-grade classrooms often introduce complexities for teachers. In response, Funda Wande introduced adaptive support models to strengthen differentiated teaching instruction. Targeted teacher training, structured lesson guidance, and ongoing coaching support enabled teachers to manage varying learner levels within a single classroom effectively. This approach aims to ensure that all learners, regardless of grade or ability, receive appropriate and responsive instruction.

Funda Wande partners with FLOAT, leading the intervention in the Eastern Cape's OR Tambo Coastal district.

Funda Wande was selected to lead the implementation of the FLOAT initiative in the OR Tambo Coastal district in 2026, overseeing comprehensive training for teachers, subject advisors, and department heads. This will include termly teacher training, and supporting the rollout of the province's package of teaching and learning materials. Through this role, Funda Wande will contribute to strengthening district-level systems, improving instructional practice, and ensuring greater coherence in the delivery of foundational literacy interventions at scale.



Limpopo

Schools

30

Foundation Phase Teachers

118

Thandulwazi teacher interns

44

Learners

4,079

Support for our 30 intervention schools was delivered through a combination of structured teacher training, in-classroom teacher support, and the provision of standardised pedagogical resources. The team also supported a Teacher Professional Development study aimed at moving children up the maths ladder through improving teaching strategies in a multilingual context. ([See Research section.](#))

Training, Support, and Coaching

In 2025, teacher training focused on shared reading strategies, sentence construction, core numeracy concepts, foundational pedagogy, practical modelling and feedback techniques.

162 teachers and teacher interns received training, with Funda Wandé facilitators and specialists observing classroom delivery and providing real-time feedback.

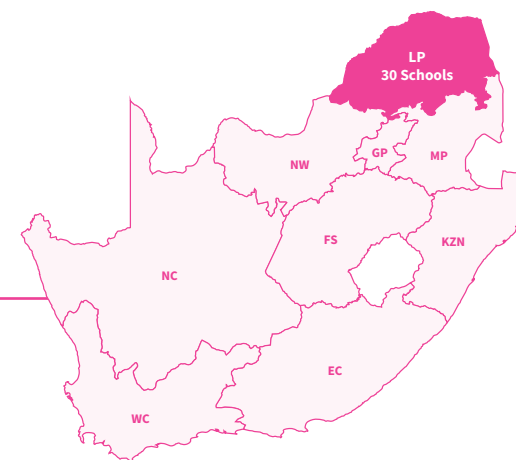
As a result of the teacher professional development study, we are seeing:

- **Measurable improvements in teacher pacing and learner engagement**
- **Stronger uptake of structured teaching approaches in schools receiving regular support**
- **Consistent application of phonics and structured numeracy practices**

Teacher Interns:

Building in-classroom capacity and strengthening the national teacher pipeline

A core feature of the Limpopo intervention has been the integration of Thandulwazi teacher interns into the support model. Interns received specific training and were enrolled in our e-learning platforms, the Reading and Numeracy Academies. Their involvement strengthens classroom capacity and also bolsters the pipeline of pre-service teachers through practical, classroom-based experience.



Subject Advisors

The Limpopo team works closely with district and provincial education officials. In 2025, 30 subject advisors participated directly in the programme, helping to connect classroom practice with district oversight. Their involvement helped build a shared understanding of effective teaching practices and supported schools in responding to challenges as they arose.

Case Study:

Abigail Madubanya became a Funda Wandé Teaching Assistant in 2022, and used her stipend to pay her outstanding tuition fees and continue her Bachelor of Education degree. She consistently participated in Funda Wandé's training workshops, building her teaching capabilities in literacy and mathematics. After becoming a Thandulwazi teacher intern, she gained valuable classroom experience through the partnership with Funda Wandé.

Abigail has since graduated with a Bachelor of Education degree, majoring in Mathematics and Social Sciences. She is entering the teaching profession with a specific focus on building strong mathematical foundations in the early grades.

“My journey from Teacher Assistant to graduate has been one of resilience, growth and purpose. When financial challenges placed my studies at risk, Funda Wandé gave me the opportunity to continue, not only by helping me pay my outstanding fees, but by equipping me with the skills, confidence and classroom experience I needed to grow as an educator.”

Today, I am proud to have completed my degree. My journey is not just about my success — it is about giving back. I want to help learners build strong foundations in Mathematics, gain confidence in their abilities, and no longer fear the subject, but embrace it with understanding.” says Abigail Madubanya, Funda Wandé Teacher Assistant and BEd Graduate.



**By 2028, Funda Wande
will have completed
full language coverage**

Content & Training Review

Bala Wandé Numeracy Programme

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Bala Wandé

Calculating with Confidence

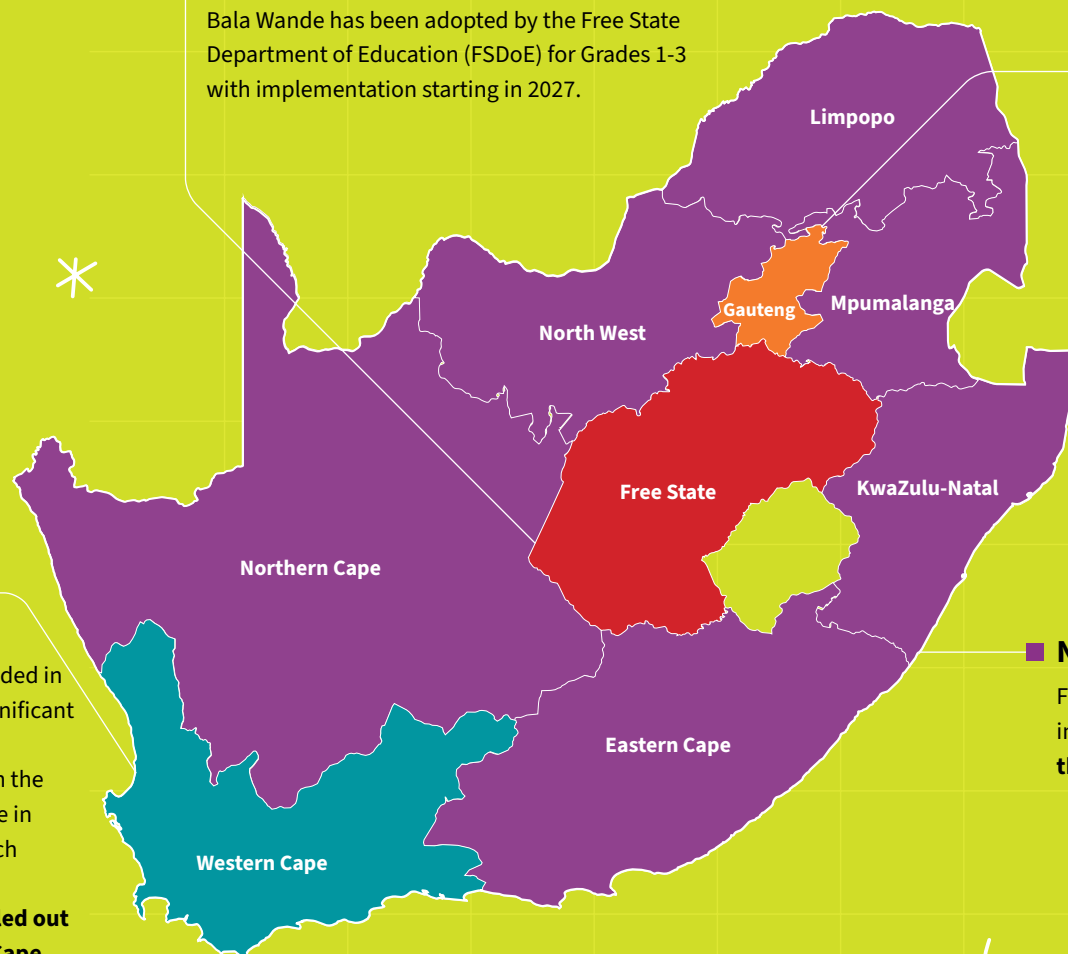


Free State

Bala Wandé has been adopted by the Free State Department of Education (FSDoE) for Grades 1-3 with implementation starting in 2027.

Gauteng

Bala Wandé numeracy materials have been versioned into seven additional languages and **will be used for Grade 3 materials in the FLOAT initiative's 2027 Maths Improvement Plan.** The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) hopes to also implement the programme in Grade 1 and 2 once adequate funding is secured.



Western Cape

As the literacy programme has become embedded in the Western Cape, the province has taken a significant step by introducing the Bala Wandé numeracy programme. Funda Wandé worked closely with the WCED to co-design the Bala Wandé programme in preparation for a 2026 pilot in 70 schools, which included large-scale training for **225 Grade 1 teachers. From 2027, Bala Wandé will be rolled out to all 1,100 primary schools in the Western Cape, with implementation starting in Grade 1.**

National

Funda Wandé developed Grade 1-7 Maths dictionaries in all languages for the DBE, **soon to be available through its national catalogue.**



Content & Training Review

Versioning of Funda Wandé Literacy Materials

By 2028, Funda Wandé will have completed full language coverage.

The scalable format of our literacy LTSM developed for Afrikaans and isiXhosa schools in the Western Cape is being extended to other languages. Sepedi, Sesotho, and isiZulu materials are being reviewed to follow the same approach, making them easier to adopt – and fund – for large-scale implementation.

The impact is already attracting buy-in from other provinces, with Funda Wandé's Sesotho materials adopted by the FLOAT project in the Free State for its provincial rollout. This versioning process has been prioritised, and Funda Wandé will complete all remaining language versions by 2028.

Digital Hybrid Learning

Funda Wandé's e-learning platforms continue to grow in reach, language, and global interest.

Reading and Numeracy Academies

A partnership with **Teach For All** has opened the Reading Academy to teachers across Africa, and cohorts from multiple countries are already participating in the platform. To keep up with expansion into Africa without compromising quality, Funda Wandé has shifted to a hybrid delivery model with pre-recorded lessons supported by a single live Q&A session.

A research study is underway to assess uptake and impact across Teach For All cohorts.

To expand our home language offering, instructional videos have been developed in Sesotho and Setswana, to add to the isiXhosa and Sepedi videos already used in the Reading Academy. While the primary purpose of developing videos in these new languages is pre-service teacher training, they will also be used to expand in-service teacher training through the Reading Academy.



Reading Champions WhatsApp Chatbot

The DBE's Reading Champions Programme trains Education Assistants (EAs) who are deployed to schools across the country to foster a love of reading in schools and communities, equipping them to support learners from Grade R to Grade 6 in under-resourced schools.

Funda Wandé designed a WhatsApp Chatbot to support the growth of the Reading Champions initiative. The tool tracks progress and provides ongoing training and support, and reached over 56,000 users across all nine provinces in 2025.

The programme expanded to include Intermediate Phase literacy and numeracy, growing beyond its Foundation Phase roots. The monitoring tool and Champion support booklet were updated to reflect this expansion.

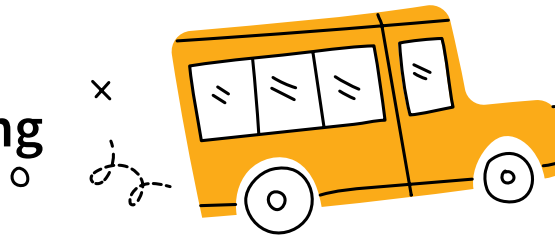
Exploratory work in artificial intelligence is also underway, through collaborations with local and international partners, laying the groundwork for responsible technology integration.

We look forward to seeing this partnership with the DBE strengthen as the Reading Champions initiative grows in both reach and impact.



Content & Training Review

Higher Education and Training



Shaping the Next Generation of Foundation Phase Teachers

A large part of Funda Wande's work over the past few years has been the rollout of university programmes. This work has largely been focused on in-service teacher training, but in 2025, we added pre-service teacher training to the mix. Funda Wande has built strong linkages with a community of lecturers from traditional public universities involved in Foundation Phase teacher education, who have been introduced to our literacy resources.

The intention is to capacitate BEd lecturers and students with resources and methodologies to improve pre-service teacher education, meeting the need for quality foundational literacy training in higher education. There is strong demand for multilingual, practice-focused video resources, signalling a clear opportunity to integrate these materials at the system level.

Funda Wande's Ongoing Work in Universities

Four top-performing Funda Wande coaching graduates now serve as lecturer assistants at Rhodes University, strengthening internal training capacity and supporting their own professional growth.

Students enrolled in the Rhodes University Advanced Certificate in 2025

58

New participants enrolled in the Rhodes University Instructional Coaching Course in 2025

74

The impact of Funda Wande's partnership with Rhodes University is already visible at the national level. At the 2025 DBE Annual Teaching Plan workshop, three of the four working groups included Funda Wande alumni (graduates of the Advanced Certificate and Coaching Courses) who contributed to national tools, including a newly launched Teacher's Practical Guide for Reading.

This is Funda Wande's theory of change in practice: **equip people inside the system with deep pedagogical knowledge, and the impact multiplies from within.**



Research and Development

Evidence shapes everything we do

Funda Wande's Research and Development work has entered a new phase of consolidation, with internal research capacity being built to support the focus on implementation research. The R&D function continued to evolve from project-based inquiry to system-informed research, driving decisions grounded in timely and actionable evidence. The team focused on deepening research partnerships, embedding monitoring and evaluation systems within provincial operations, and supporting the delivery of scalable, data-driven education solutions into 2026.

Meaningful progress was made in evaluation design, implementation research, and regional partnerships. Some important research initiatives included:

01

A dedicated framework for monitoring and assessing the effectiveness of PLC training for lead teachers in the Western Cape. This evaluation will provide insights into the effectiveness of peer-led professional development.

04

In collaboration with the Teach For All project, a survey was designed and launched to examine the impact of Funda Wande Academies on teaching cohorts across the network.

02

A Rapid Research Study across 15 schools in three Western Cape districts to assess programme effectiveness. Insights from 53 teachers and 13 district and provincial-level education officials have already influenced programme adjustments.

05

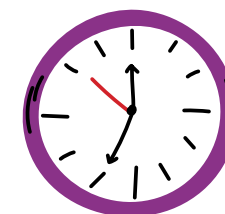
A comprehensive literature review on foundational literacy benchmarks was completed and shared with the WCED to inform provincial targets.

03

A targeted study into scalable workbooks to better understand their uptake and effectiveness.

We continued to commission external evaluations to track the impact of our interventions on teaching practice and learning outcomes. A midline evaluation of the Limpopo intervention conducted by JET Education Services, as part of the longitudinal study tracking learning outcomes study across 30 programme schools, produced several important findings after approximately one year of programme implementation. The evaluation assessed learner progress in foundational literacy and numeracy and generated important insights into instructional quality, conceptual learning and the role of ongoing teacher support and implementation fidelity in shaping programme outcomes.

Research and Development



The evaluation findings are actively informing ongoing teacher professional development, instructional support models and priorities, and the refinement of programme implementation strategies across Limpopo intervention schools.

The midline evaluation of the Limpopo intervention produced some important key findings:

- There were significant improvements in foundational literacy skills, particularly in letter-sound knowledge and decoding ability.
- Grade 2 learners demonstrated particularly strong progress, with more than half reaching the DBE benchmark for letter-sound knowledge.
- Passage-reading fluency improved substantially, indicating that learners were increasingly developing the foundational reading skills required.
- The evaluation identified reading comprehension as a persistent instructional bottleneck, with many learners still struggling to transition from fluent decoding to reading for meaning.
- Mathematics results showed meaningful gains in number recognition, number discrimination, missing number tasks, and foundational arithmetic operations.
- The MARKO-D developmental mathematics assessment revealed encouraging progression in learners' conceptual understanding of number relationships and arithmetic reasoning.
- The findings also highlighted hidden foundational gaps in counting and relational mathematical reasoning, suggesting the continued need for conceptually grounded numeracy instruction alongside procedural fluency.
- Significant variation in learner growth trajectories between schools was identified, reinforcing the importance of instructional quality, coaching intensity, implementation fidelity, and school-level support structures in shaping programme outcomes.

Western Cape Process evaluation using a purposive sampling procedure

Funda Wade worked closely with the WCED to co-design the Bala Wade implementation model in preparation for the 2026 Grade 1 pilot across 70 schools. The process included large-scale training of 225 Grade 1 teachers, alongside the development and refinement of structured mathematics materials, teacher guides, classroom routines, and implementation support systems aligned to the realities of public school classrooms.

The 2026 pilot phase will be accompanied by a dedicated qualitative process evaluation designed to generate actionable implementation evidence before large-scale system rollout. The evaluation will focus on understanding how the programme is enacted within classrooms and school systems, rather than measuring learning outcomes at this stage. A purposive sample of 16 schools has been identified for deep qualitative engagement, comprising eight rural schools and eight urban schools across Afrikaans, isiXhosa, and English language contexts.

The process evaluation is centred around three interrelated dimensions:

- **Implementation fidelity:** the extent to which teachers are using the programme materials, routines, and structured lesson components as intended;
- **Instructional fidelity:** how classroom practice aligns with the intended pedagogical approach underpinning Bala Wade;
- **Monitoring and support systems:** how coaching, leadership structures, and system-level support mechanisms enable or constrain programme implementation.

Endline evaluations are planned for the Eastern Cape and Limpopo interventions in 2026.

Collaboration and Advocacy

Extending Our Footprint

Through the FLOAT initiative, Funda Wandé has begun collaborating with other NPO partners to strengthen early-grade teaching across new provinces and districts in the Eastern Cape, Free State and Gauteng.

Partnerships like these enable Funda Wandé to support system-level change, scale evidence-based interventions and help improve foundational literacy and numeracy outcomes across multiple provinces. FLOAT provides a model for how philanthropic funding can catalyse government implementation at scale, with NPOs providing technical and implementation support as needed. Learn more about [FLOAT here](#).

From Classrooms to Policy: Funda Wandé's Advocacy Work in 2025

Funda Wandé's advocacy work in 2025 was a direct extension of its programmes and research. The focus remains to:

- Strengthen government adoption and ownership of structured foundational literacy and numeracy approaches
- Widely share learnings from the field for system-level change

Throughout the year, Funda Wandé prioritised alignment with its provincial partners – through technical committees, provincial governance structures, and district-level collaboration.

In all partner provinces, Funda Wandé actively participated in the G20 Reading Indabas, contributing to the conversation to improve Foundational Literacy and Numeracy strategies and plans for the future.

Provincial Dialogue Sessions

Events were held in partnership with provincial education departments in the Western Cape, Eastern Cape, and Limpopo, and brought together education

officials, district leadership, school representatives, researchers, funders, and implementing partners. These were gatherings where stakeholders shared lessons and working solutions, and could align activities for the future. At each of the events, Funda Wandé shared programme evidence and evaluation findings, as well as reflections from teachers, coaches, and subject advisors.

In the Eastern Cape, the “From Insight to Action” event highlighted how behavioural science can drive instructional improvement, while in Limpopo, the “From Research to Scale” event engaged on the baseline evaluation report and deepened dialogue on provincial ownership and evidence-based practice. The Western Cape “Teachers at the Centre” event celebrated teacher agency and the potential of PLCs to strengthen teacher practice. Collectively, these events reinforced Funda Wandé's position as a teaching partner to the government.



Our partnership with Funda Wandé reflects what is possible when strong collaboration meets a shared commitment to improving learning outcomes. Together, we are translating vision into action, scaling impactful literacy and numeracy interventions across the province. This work brings us closer to a collective national goal, that by 2030, every child in South Africa can read for meaning and calculate with confidence by the age of 10.

David Maynier - Western Cape Minister of Education

Collaboration and Advocacy

Cross-Country Learning and Regional Positioning

As part of a growing regional learning agenda, Funda Wande exchanged learnings with Tarl Africa in Nigeria and Zizi Afrique (now Mizizi Elimu Afrika) in Kenya. The exchanges focused on instructional coaching models, teacher professional development, and the design of learning and teaching support materials within government systems, and they became a valuable opportunity to learn from peers doing similar work in different contexts.



Global Thought Leadership and Knowledge Exchange

Funda Wande shared its work with an international audience at the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) conference, presenting insights from the South African context on a global stage.

Funda Wande also engaged with the Oxford-based What Works Hub for Global Education and the Teach For All global learning network - spaces for honest, practitioner-focused dialogue. These platforms offered an opportunity to share what is working while learning from government-partnered programmes elsewhere.

Other national and global engagements included participation in the:

- Literacy Association of South Africa conference
- 80th Session of the UN General Assembly
- Education and Development Forum in the UK

All of these engagements reinforced the importance of collaboration, evidence-based advocacy, and positioning education as central to development.

With the appointment of our CEO, Phumi Nhlapo to the NASCEE board, we hope to champion more collaboration and coalition building in the sector in years to come.



“

Evidence, teacher agency and provincial ownership are helping turn insight into action, strengthening classroom practice and reinforcing Funda Wandu's role as a trusted government partner”

Our People

Funda Wandé **continues to invest in its people** and in measures to improve organisational culture and talent wellbeing. Each year, we conduct a Q12 talent engagement survey **to understand factors that impact organisational culture, and listen carefully to the insights shared.**

In 2025, our ability to keep talent fully engaged, develop our leaders, attract new talent and ensure opportunities for growth and development were high on our priority list. Performance management and learning and development remained on track, as we continued to provide learning opportunities through our Leadership Academy and Bursary programmes. We also continued to use the MyGrow Emotional Intelligence Programme organisation-wide, and saw this being adopted by the Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropies group, of which we are a member.

Behind every intervention is a team that cares deeply about Funda Wandé's mission. Recognising this, nurturing it, and keeping it alive are fundamental to the organisation's future. We take every moment to celebrate our team for the amazing work they do.



Our People

“As a Literacy Specialist at Funda Wandé, I am passionate about empowering Foundation Phase teachers through training and ongoing support to deliver quality literacy instruction. I find fulfilment in helping teachers create meaningful learning experiences that enable learners to read with comprehension. Contributing to improved reading outcomes and building strong foundations for children inspires me to make a positive impact every day. Every teacher supported and every learner empowered is a step towards a brighter future we yearn for, for the children of South Africa.”

Phuti Masenya - Literacy Specialist

“As a Graduate Intern, I have found the most excitement in learning as I develop in my career as a communications practitioner. Every day presents a learning opportunity for me and I remain excited about what’s to come and how our organisation will make an impact in years to come.”

Lona Matuntutha - Communications and Advocacy Intern



“Being part of Funda Wandé presents a profound opportunity to fully immerse myself in my passion for childhood development. As a Communications and Advocacy Officer, I have the privilege of leveraging my skills to raise awareness about literacy challenges in South Africa and advocate for it as the critical public priority. I began my journey as an eLearning Graduate Intern and found my passion and purpose in the StratComms career as a social sciences and literacy advocate, this career path made so much sense to me.”

Ambeswa Mgandela – Communications & Advocacy Officer



“As we get closer to our 2030 goal, our greatest asset remains our people. By investing in the growth and development of our team, we are not only enhancing our capabilities but also ensuring that every individual is equipped to drive our mission forward.”

Tshego Letswalo - HR Business Partner

“My education and career growth reminds me that I work for an organisation that cares about my future.”

Thami Mali - Project Coordinator, Eastern Cape Intervention

Financial Sustainability 2025 Funding Update:

A key learning coming out of 2025 has been that sustainable improvement in foundational literacy and numeracy requires:



Our experience has reinforced the importance of embedding structured approaches within existing provincial systems, while remaining responsive to contextual realities such as multi-grade classes and varying levels of teacher readiness.

Meaningful change is driven by coordinated interventions - where curriculum, training, coaching and assessment work together to support teachers in the classroom.

These insights continue to shape our approach as we strengthen implementation quality, deepen our partnerships and work towards greater impact at scale by 2030.

Moving into 2026, our strategic objectives include:

- Partnering with government at scale
- Developing a sector capacitation strategy
- Developing a strong MERL agenda for organisational and sector development
- Increasing stakeholder engagement
- Improving employee engagement

Conclusion

Learnings and Insights:



Here's how funds were spent across key areas:



R40,1 million
Funds spent on our people

R19,2 million
Funds spent on materials

R6,2 million
Funds spent on research

R5,74 million
Funds spent on advocacy

R2,47million
Funds spent on teacher development



Scan the QR code to access Funda Wande's Audited Financial Statements.

Funda Wande's growing footprint and impact was a result of strategic collaboration with a range of funding partners, such as FEM Education Foundation, FirstRand Foundation, Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropies, Maitri Trust, the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation, the Gates Foundation, Prevail Fund, Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, and Windfall Foundation, among others.

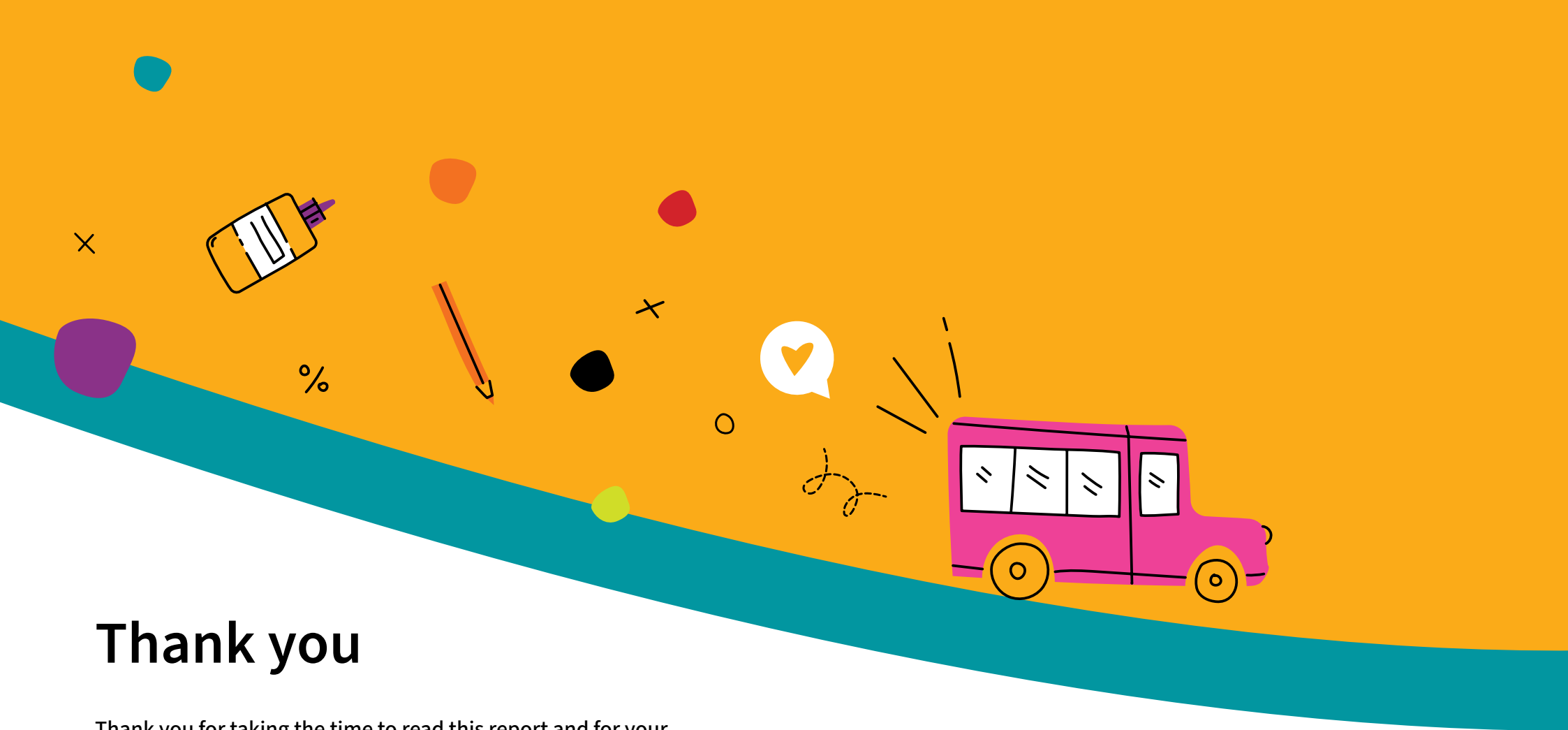
In 2025 Funda Wande raised over R120 million, a substantial increase from the support received in 2024. This growth reflects the model's momentum and the confidence of those who believe in it.



Outside of our people, the organisation's largest expenditure was on LTSM, and this investment continues to grow as we improve content development and expand both our in-school and pre-service training programmes. High-quality, curriculum-aligned resources in home languages are at the heart of this work. We remain committed to ensuring the right materials reach the right classrooms and that our LTSM strategies are scalable.

Our Advocacy spending also increased as we intensified our efforts to influence and shape the national conversation on foundational literacy and numeracy. Our investment in research and evaluation mirrors our commitment to deepening our contextual understanding, with multi-year studies informing both our programming and the broader national dialogue.

Funda Wande ended the 2025 financial year in a strong financial position. Healthy cash reserves and committed funder support across all three provinces gave us the platform to sustain current programmes and scale with confidence.



Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read this report and for your continued interest in Funda Wande's work.

Together with our partners, we remain committed to ensuring that all children in South Africa can read for meaning and calculate with confidence by age 10.

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