

Annual Report 2014

723 parents completed the eight-week Home-School Partnership Programme course at 53 schools, and 88 new teacher-facilitators were trained to run courses.

128 Grade R teachers completed the STELLAR Programme course over eight months, teaching 3929 learners at 59 schools.

373 volunteers gave their time as Early Literacy Programme tutors so that 1992 children at 60 schools and one library could benefit from additional early language and literacy support.

18 partner organisations and six schools received training and materials to implement Wordworks programmes independently, reaching hundreds more volunteers, teachers, parents and children.



"It's important to take a moment with your child to learn to understand his mind."

Wordworks supports early language and literacy learning among children from historically disadvantaged communities in South Africa. By sharing our materials, know-how and enthusiasm with teachers, parents, volunteer tutors and home visitors in a respectful and inclusive way, we seek to ensure that all our children can learn to read and write successfully. To find out more about our work, visit our website at www.wordworks.org.za or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/wordworksSA.

Early Literacy Programme

The Early Literacy Programme was developed as a way of sharing practical ideas for supporting young children as they learn to read and write. We provide training and resources so that volunteers are equipped to work with pairs of children who need extra help with literacy.

The programme can be used in Grade R to build a solid language and literacy foundation or in Grade One as part of an early language and literacy intervention. The resources are also useful as part of a teaching programme for children who are literate in their home language, but learning to read in English as a second language. The individual attention that children receive allows for learning to take place in a fun and relaxed way. The relationships that develop during the lessons are key to the success of the programme and benefit both the child and the volunteer tutors.



"I'm here for the children. I'm here for the other parents who can't sit at night and see to the books. I'm here to see that that child can also learn how to read and write." Volunteer at Square Hill Primary school

Home-School Partnership Programme

Through the Home School Partnership Programme (HSPP), we train facilitators to run a series of workshops over eight weeks to empower and inspire parents and carers with the understanding and skills to support informal learning at home. The target group is parents of children from five to seven years of age.



The HSPP is about acknowledging and supporting parents in their role as their children's first teachers. Because teachers facilitate the parent workshops, the programme builds trust between families and schools, moving away from 'them' and 'us'. The programme aims to ensure that children are supported at home so that they can be the best they can be.

"Thank you that you were reaching out to us to be better parents, I'm different now with my children. That shouting is not there anymore." Parent

STELLAR Programme

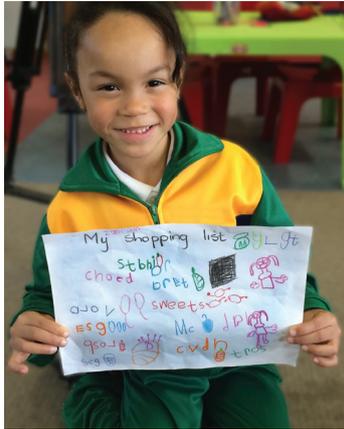
The STELLAR Emergent Literacy Programme supports Grade R teachers to take their learners on the exciting journey from spoken language in an affirming learning environment.

Together with teacher workshops run over a full teaching year, we provide carefully trialled and high quality materials to strengthen oral language and emergent literacy in Grade R.

The materials have been developed in isiXhosa, English and Afrikaans and are being used successfully in Grade R classrooms in schools as well as at early childhood development centres.

The STELLAR classroom resources consist of story-based modules, complimented by graded play-based activities to build children's oral language, emergent reading and writing skills and their knowledge of sounds and letters. Teachers work with each story for a fortnight, immersing their learners in a rich language experience, and guiding them through fun emergent literacy activities for the whole class and for small groups.

"My learners have become strong emergent writers and their vocabulary has increased tremendously. They have also become very confident in telling stories and role playing. This has been an exciting and rewarding journey for me as well as for the learners."
Grade R teacher



Every Word Counts Programme

Since 2005, Wordworks programmes have focused on supporting the language and early literacy development of children aged 5 to 8 years. However, we know that language is vital for literacy, and this means that literacy development actually begins at birth, when children begin to learn language through loving and responsive relationships with caregivers.

Over the past two years we have researched and developed easily accessible resources and a training guide that can be used to share ideas about how to support early language, literacy and maths. Our aim is that partner organisations that work with parents of young children will integrate these resources into their work in order to introduce parents to new ideas, link the ideas to their own experience and explore ways of putting them into practice with their children. The resources can be used in homes or in group parenting sessions with parents and caregivers of children between birth and five years of age.



A message from Shelley O'Carroll, Director of Wordworks

2014 was marked by two important new steps for us - taking our work into the birth to five space, and beginning a partnership with provincial government.

From 2005 to 2014, our work had focused primarily on supporting and resourcing those that care for and teach children aged 5 to 8 years. However, we knew that we needed to also find ways of sharing new knowledge, and inspiring parents to believe that they can and must play a bigger role in their children's early language and literacy learning. We are excited about the potential for partner organisations to use our new Every Word Counts resources and training materials to strengthen their work with carers of children under five years of age.

2014 will also stand out as the beginning of a partnership with the government in the Western Cape and an opportunity to contribute to

strengthening language and literacy teaching in Grade R throughout the province. Over the past few years, we have seen what an impact the STELLAR programme and resources have had on Grade R teachers' confidence, their teaching practice and their belief in the importance of language and literacy development before Grade One. We are learning about and being challenged by what it takes to bring about change at a system level, as we move from direct training of teachers to training and supporting Curriculum Advisors and Lead Teachers to train and share the programme.

While we took on new programmes and new partnerships in 2014, our more established programmes continued to grow, as parents and volunteers gained new knowledge and were able to play a more significant role in the education of their own children, and other children in their communities. Our work through volunteers is a

testimony to the spirit of generosity that exists amongst so many women in South Africa.

As an organisation, we now celebrate ten years of working in the early literacy arena. We can look back and see that much has changed, but that there remains so much work to be done to give young children the chance they deserve to learn to read and write successfully. We remain committed to sharing knowledge and resources, and building relationships that will equip and inspire people to be early literacy champions in their schools, organisations and communities.

Very best wishes,




Thank you to all our donors for their generous support which makes our work possible.

