



**We see a world where young children are supported to develop early language and literacy so that their lives are enriched and they grow to their full potential.**



# Wordworks

Changing lives through literacy

## Annual Report 2017



Wordworks focuses on early language and literacy development in the first eight years of children's lives. We share knowledge and collaborate with those who care for, work with and advocate for young children so that they recognise the importance of early language and literacy and support its development in homes, schools and community settings.

To find out more about our work, visit our website at [www.wordworks.org.za](http://www.wordworks.org.za) or follow us on 

# A message from the Director

For those working in Education, 2017 will be remembered for the release of international literacy benchmarks which confirmed that we are failing the majority of our youngest children, who, after three years at school, are not able to read for meaning. We see the early signs of this reading crisis in the millions of young children who continue to have very limited access to quality early learning opportunities at home and in ECD centres. We watch another generation of children coming through a system that essentially remains the same, while nevertheless expecting different results.

## Our Growth

Given the scale of the crisis in South Africa, our challenge has been to grow our reach, while remaining committed to quality and sustainability. Our strategy of scaling through partnerships continues to show benefits, with the majority of schools and organisations sustaining programmes well beyond the year of training, and increasingly working with us to grow the reach of this work in their own contexts. We are proud to be working with so many NGOs, schools, ECD centres and community members who have deep local experience. As they integrate our early literacy programmes into their work and find solutions to challenges that are unique to their context, we are learning and building expertise together.

Our 12 years of working in the early literacy space have allowed us to test materials and models of sharing new knowledge in ways that build on the strengths and goals of communities who want so much more for their children. It is clear that there is a keen interest in new knowledge about early learning across a variety of contexts – from classrooms to homes, from rural Eastern Cape and KZN, to farming areas in the Overberg and urban areas in Cape Town.

## Our Impact

We are starting to see how organisations working in the birth to five space are investing in building language and early literacy messaging into their work with parents and practitioners. We have seen a growing demand for our school-based programme for parents and seen how transformative this programme is for schools and teachers who are realising the potential of working together with families in the communities they serve.



*Celebrating families and their role in supporting learning at home.*



*This is where it all starts – building language and supporting learning from birth to five years.*

Through feedback from schools and partners, and increasingly robust monitoring and evaluation systems, we are seeing how we can unlock young children's potential through our work with those that care for and teach young children. Our Grade R programme has demonstrated impact on classroom practice, and our tutoring programme is leading to significant improvements in early literacy outcomes – both in contexts where efforts to improve literacy have resulted in marginal gains over a number of years.

### **Our Content**

In 2017, we continued to invest in the development of resources and training materials that are relevant and accessible to the communities where we work. One look at the shelves in our office and storeroom, and you would be forgiven for mistaking us for a publishing company! We continue to explore possibilities for our programme materials to be adapted for new platforms, and have seen growth in our social media presence and access to resources on our website. In 2017, we extended the content in our app to include messaging for birth to two years across four languages, and we will work to scale the reach of the app in 2018. We remain committed to ensuring that those who participate in our programmes are able to do so in the language they speak at home. As we revised and strengthened the Stellar materials that were part of the provincial Grade R teacher training in 2016, we were challenged to develop new technical terms and to reflect critically on how reading is best taught in different languages. There remains much to learn in this space.

### **Our Organisation**

As an organisation, we are meeting and exceeding our reach targets. Perhaps as importantly, as we grow, we have been developing internal systems that increase our efficiency and use of resources. We have also invested in support functions within the organisation in the areas of data management, publishing and production, communication and stock management. This means our content and training teams can focus on what they do best. We now have the challenge of mobilising funding that can sustain a bigger team year on year. There is no doubt that there are moments when we feel overwhelmed by the challenges we face as an NGO, and the enormity of the challenge we as South Africans face to improve educational outcomes for all of our children. We can't afford to fail in this task and will continue to do everything we can to make sure that a new generation of children has the early learning opportunities it so richly deserves.

**Shelley O'Carroll**



*Volunteer tutors give the gift of reading.*



*The 2017 Wordworks team – changing lives through literacy.*



# Wordworks

# AT A GLANCE 2017

**WE PARTNERED WITH  
ECD CENTRES, SCHOOLS,  
ORGANISATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS**  
that received training, resources and  
ongoing support to use our programmes  
in their communities.

## WE OFFERED TRAINING COURSES TO

Every Word Counts  
**37** Trainers

Ready Steady Read Write  
**198** Tutors

Home-School Partnerships  
**167** Course  
Facilitators

**53** Site  
Co-ordinators

## WE CONNECTED WITH PEOPLE


 **1 330** People received our quarterly newsletter


 **9 894** Unique website visitors (85% new this year)

 **1 705** Facebook page likes

 **6 198** Facebook shares, likes and comments

## WE SHARED EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS

 **2 831** People in WordNetworks received sponsored  
materials to the value of **R483 926**

 **119** People bought materials to the value of **R343 341**

 **12 950** Page views of materials on our website

 **1 224** People downloaded our content on the Careup App

By working together with our partners in

# WordNetworks



**54** organisations and **308** ECD centres and schools ran early language and literacy programmes.

245 Home-School Partnerships Facilitators from 67 sites worked with

**1081** PARENTS  
and CAREGIVERS

11 Stellar Trainers from 7 partner organisations worked with

**299** GRADE R TEACHERS  
at **185** SCHOOLS

76 Every Word Counts Trainers from 35 partner organisations worked with over

**1300** ECD PRACTITIONERS  
and HOME VISITORS

119 Ready Steady Read Write Co-ordinators of 86 sites worked with

**639** RSRW TUTORS



Thanks to the hard work of the network,  
**3865** FAMILIES and  
**24559** YOUNG CHILDREN  
benefitted from Wordworks' programmes.



We are proud to have partnered with **54** organisations and institutions who used Wordworks programmes in 2017 and who, together with our team, supported programmes in **308** ECD centres and schools.





Masiphumelele Library

St Apollinaris Hospital

K2A  
Kenton to Alexandria



In addition to the partners who used our early literacy programmes in their work, in 2017 we also had strong collaborative working relationships with the following organisations and institutions: Shine Literacy, Mikhulu Trust, The Reach Trust, Book Dash, Nal'ibali, Biblioref, Funda Wandu, UCT's Schools Development Unit and Department of Education.

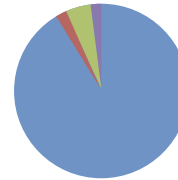
# Financial Report - Year ending December 2017

## INCOME

	2016/2017	2015/2016
Grants & donations	9 846 944,00	8 924 812,00
Sale of resources and services rendered	247 254,00	441 634,00
Bursary fund	180 000,00	240 000,00
Interest	191 773,00	157 663,00
	<b>10 465 971,00</b>	<b>9 764 109,00</b>

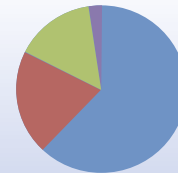
## EXPENDITURE

Training & Capacity Building	6 101 816,00	4 895 862,00
Materials & Resources	1 921 889,00	2 654 486,00
Office costs	1 457 033,00	1 054 920,00
Bursary Fund	151 442,00	242 373,00
	<b>9 632 180,00</b>	<b>8 847 641,00</b>



### Income 2017

- Grants & donations 94%
- Sales of resources & services rendered 2%
- Bursary fund 2%
- Interest 2%



### Expenditure 2017

- Training & Capacity Building 63%
- Materials & Resources 20%
- Office costs 15%
- Bursary Fund 2%

\* R1 173 982 of income received in advance deferred to 2018 expenses

Thank you to the donors who make our work possible.



Thank you to the individuals who contributed to the Wordworks Storybook Fund.