

Annual Report



2022



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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.

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.

Board and team members for 2022



“Literacy is ... the road to human progress and the means through which every man, woman and child can realize his or her full potential.”

Kofi Annan

Director's message: A year of transitions

The year under review was a profound one for me as the first full year of operation at the helm of Wordworks. The transition was carefully managed, donor and stakeholder relations remain strong, and a new energy is driving expansion and innovation, and upholding intentional and cohesive team efforts. I'm thrilled to report on the year with ample milestones, growth opportunities, and hurdles that we faced head-on. Azishe!

Impact of COVID-19 in 2022

We began the year still reeling from the devastating effects of Covid 19. Reconstruction and development efforts to address the learning losses and the closure of ECDs were afoot by the education sector, the Department of Education and other stakeholders. The impact of Covid on the learning of children was significant. Adjustments to traditional learning led to a substantial loss of learning time. Children had to adjust to online education, which brought its own set of challenges including the struggle to find suitable learning environments at home to maintain their academic progress.

Our team quickly adjusted to training online. Challenges included: providing enough resources; upskilling to present online; and understanding partners' needs as they too tried to explore the online space. We provided recorded training sessions and created WhatsApp groups to respond to issues (poor networks, load shedding and limited internet access). We would like to acknowledge one of our donors, The DG Murray Trust, for leading the initiative to keep platforms (like our websites) zero-rated. The intervention was a huge leveler and broke barriers. We hope it continues.

Highlights

- The Reading Panel report cited Wordworks' Grade R Home Language Programme as providing some hopeful signs in addressing the literacy crisis. This project was implemented with GDE (Gauteng Department of Education) in Gauteng. (For more information, see page 63 of the document prepared for the National Reading Panel (<https://www.readingpanel.co.za>) by the GDE and JET (Joint Education Trust). A recent evaluation of this programme confirms that this programme is making a significant impact on teachers and children.
- The 2021 PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study) results reported that the majority (81%) of Grade 4 learners in South Africa cannot read for meaning in any language, including their home languages. It is disheartening that the response to addressing the crisis underplays or downright ignores the significance of the importance of foundational skills and role of early learning. A collective of education leaders, working in the Foundation Phase, responded to the PIRLS report in the Daily Maverick where I reiterated Wordworks' position: "If we are to succeed, we must begin this struggle for children's literacy in homes and communities." (<https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2023-05-21-a-proposal-to-upskill-the-81-of-grade-4-children-in-south-africa-who-cant-read/>)

Wordworks growth points in 2022/2023

During this period, we have welcomed new board members; further developed our programmatic relationships with the GDE and WCED, providing more high quality resources, training and support to our network of programme partners; benefited from project opportunities to develop our pre Grade R classroom programme in different contexts, and forged a collaborative partnership with Think Equal to support Grade R teachers to teach social and emotional learning skills. We have also partnered with the Do More Foundation in Worcester to provide an ECD training programme to capacitate ECD practitioners and facilitate early learning programmes. (Read more about these programmes on page 6 of this report.)

Looking to 2023

Wordworks is blessed to be extending our services and footprint by partnering with our funders:

- Sanlam to provide resource-based training of our Little Stars programme to ECD Practitioners in the West Coast and Gauteng.
- Anglo American South African Education Programme to provide Grade R teachers with Maths and Home Language resource-based training programme in their mining areas of Limpopo, North West and Northern Cape (managed by Jet Education Services).
- As part of the continuation of the GDE Grade R Improvement Programme, a Special Needs research and development programme, to review existing classroom activities; resources in light of different learning contexts; national curricula and international best practices; and make recommendations for implementation.

Expression of gratitude

The Wordworks board's guidance, active participation and support has been palpable in steering the Wordworks ship towards the realisation of our vision and mission.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to our team for exceptional dedication, hard work beyond the call of duty, and upholding our values throughout.

We truly appreciate our longstanding, new and prospective donors who not only provide the needed financial backing in these tough economic times, but also provide much needed in-kind and general support.

Thanks to our government partners, who are holding hands with us in joint initiatives.

Finally I honour our sector partners who are working hard under trying circumstances. Kuzolunga!

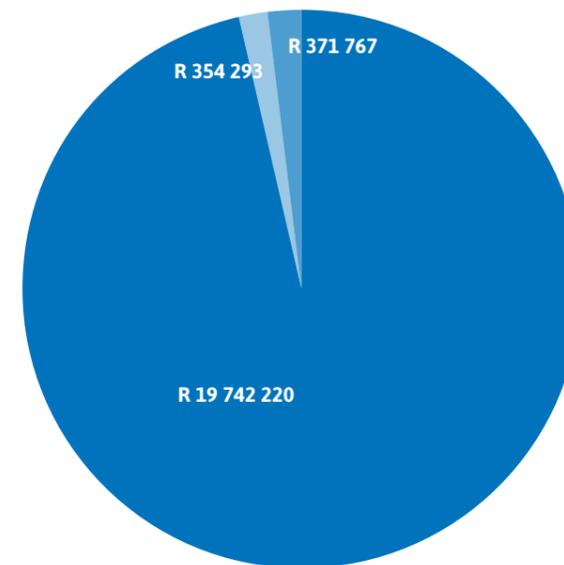
With sincere appreciation,

Mammuso Makhanya



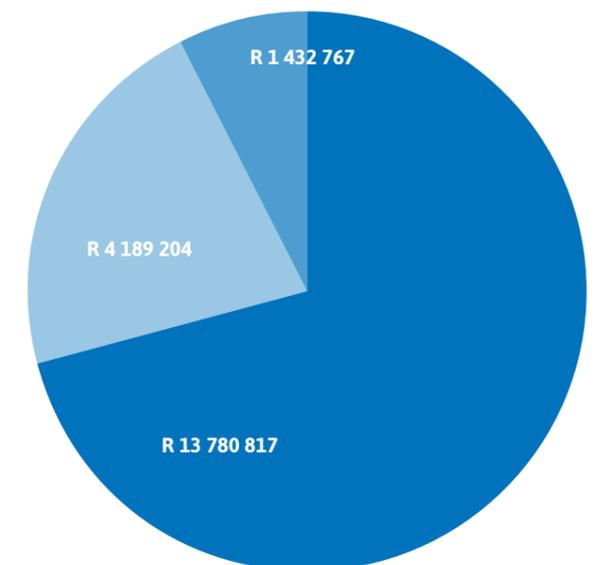

Financial report: With thanks to our donors

Income 2022



Income	2022	2021
Grants and donations	R 19 742 220,00	R 16 602 133,00
Sale of resources and services rendered	R 371 767,45	R 966 959,56
Interest	R 354 293,09	R 310 948,07
	R 20 468 280,54	R 17 880 040,63

Expenditure 2022



Expenditure	2022	2021
Training and capacity building	R 13 780 817,00	R 10 134 650,00
Materials and resources	R 4 189 204,00	R 5 481 323,00
Overheads and office costs	R 1 432 767,00	R 1 537 241,00
	R 19 402 788,00	R 17 153 214,00

Our donors lie at the core of our work. They understand and support our vision, and enable us to accomplish our mission to change lives through literacy. We remain truly indebted to their generosity and unwavering support.



Thank you to the individuals who have donated to our work.



We thank Book Dash for materials donated to our work.

Our programmes: 2022 impact

Wordworks' suite of five literacy programmes continues to fill a vital role in the early years. They provide high quality multimedia, multilingual materials, training opportunities, and carefully structured and scaffolded activities for use by training and development organisations that wish to integrate early literacy offerings; as well as a wide range of adults that work with children at home, in the community and in centres of learning.



Every Word Counts programme



Little Stars programme



TIME Home Learning programme



Stellar Home Language programme



Home-School Partnerships programme

Highlights of 2022

Wordworks teams provided high quality resources and over 700 hours of training and support to its network of active programme partners which grew to 620 in 2022, excluding the new reach to over 2000 Gauteng Department of Education schools. Together with these partners, we are thrilled to report that we reached 7100 practitioners and over 200 000 children. (See our Reach infographic on pages 10 and 11 of this report.)

Training and Support Workshops

In 2022, the Wordworks programme teams provided partners with over 447 hours of certificated training and 286 hours in Community of Practice sessions. (See our Reach infographic on pages 10 and 11 of this report.)



Wordworks offers subsidised materials and training for partners wherever possible, as we believe it is only with an active network of strong, resourced programme partners that early literacy programmes will spread and take root across the country.



Organisations also request focussed programme planning, implementation and Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) support - particularly when moving into a new strategy, region or donor relationship.

Building partnerships

The Train-the-Trainer model has underpinned our partner work within WordNetworks. We work from the assumption that a sector which is capacitated to share and support literacy interventions with practitioners is in a far stronger position to do so than Wordworks working alone.



The provincial roll out of our revised and expanded *Grade R Home Language classroom programme* by the Gauteng Department of Education was a big highlight. In addition, the Western Cape Education Department has committed to equip and support Grade R teachers, first trained in 2016, who are using the Home Language programme.



The Reading Panel background report cited Wordworks Grade R Home Language programme implemented with GDE in Gauteng as providing valuable training, resources and support in addressing the literacy crisis that states 82% of Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning. (<https://www.readingpanel.co.za>)

For more programme information please visit our website (<https://www.wordworks.org.za/our-early-literacy-programmes>).



Together in My Education (TIME) is our newest programme launched in 2021. The multi-lingual packs (with mathematics activities contributed by RED INK) have been widely acclaimed for their high quality, curriculum alignment, age appropriateness, price point, and relevance.

For more programme information please visit our website (<https://www.homeliteracy.org.za/time/>).



An annual highlight is seeing our **Home-school Partnerships programme** unfold successfully; from training Teacher-facilitators to run the programmes at their schools, to mentoring their progress with parents through a series of eight after hours workshops, to finally seeing the parents celebrated with a certification ceremony.



At ECD level, we benefited from a number of project opportunities to develop our **Little Stars pre Grade R classroom programme** in different contexts, exploring training and support modalities, and testing for learner impact. We are heartened by revived sector interest in vital work with families.

Four pilot projects (featured in the picture stories that follow) focused on the training of practitioners to use the Little Stars programme. The projects allowed us to draw in partners to enrich the quality, relevance and sustainability of our interventions, and to provide direct mentoring to their teams in the context of project implementation.



Measuring learner impact, partnering with Khayelitsha ECD Forum, Ikamva Labantu and Inceba Trust, funded by the British Academy.



Looking at potential for system uptake, partnering with Metro South and Cape Winelands, funded by Old Mutual Foundation.

Combining classroom programme intervention with community activation and book saturation in the Yizani Sifunde project, partnering with Book Dash, Nal'ibali, and on the ground with ITEC and Khululeka, funded by Liberty Community Trust.



Developing an online practitioner-training course, partnering with Early Inspirations and Ubunye Foundation, funded by HCI.



Other significant collaborations

Sharing our work at the 2022 Literacy Association of South Africa (LITASA) conference

Wordworks presented some important developments in our programmes in line with the conference theme “Rethinking literacy and pedagogic agency in the 4IR”.

These papers and workshops presented by us were well received:

- *Materials access in the digital age: hybrid offerings rooted in human connection*
- *Activating teachers and parents for home learning: lessons on pedagogic agency*
- *Bringing a Wordworks online self study training course to ECD practitioners: a snapshot of pilot*
- *A practical introduction to the TIME programme: an early grade home learning innovation for scale.*



The Shelley O’Carroll Early Literacy Award with LITASA

Another noteworthy highlight is our partnership with the Literacy Association of SA (LITASA), to set up the Shelley O’Carroll (our founder) Early Literacy Award to honour her pioneering contribution to the field of literacy, tabled annually at the LITASA conference. In 2022, the conference was attended by 234 delegates from academia, corporates and the literacy sector nationally and further afield. A panel of eminent literary experts and sector representatives adjudicated the nomination process, and awarded a befitting ECD early literacy organisation the inaugural prize for their innovation in early literacy in underserved communities. The first annual Shelley O’Carroll Early Literacy Award was awarded to Adele Mooi and the Dr CL Smith Foundation.

<https://web.facebook.com/DrCLSmithFoundation>

Henley Business School: Reputation and Responsibility Immersion Study Programme

Wordworks was invited to collaborate with Henley Business School in London to focus on the management of reputation by building powerful relationships with key stakeholders. They engaged with our Strategic/Implementing partners to understand how we are perceived and what stakeholders need. Their findings were overwhelmingly positive with stakeholders perceiving Wordworks as a trustworthy, transparent, respectful provider of quality services, and with huge potential for growth. Their recommendations continue to be infused into our organisation’s development and growth.



British Academy Research Study on Little Stars programme

Throughout 2022 there has been exciting research underway! Our Little Stars programme was used in a study on the effects of a story-based teacher training programme on the language and early literacy of 4 and 5 year olds. The research explored whether resource-based training for pre-Grade R teachers leads to improvements in: a) teaching practice and b) the language and early literacy skills of 4 and 5 year olds.

The research team was made up of Dr Shelley O’Carroll, Prof Daleen Klop, Monique Visser, Annelien Smith and Anike Swart from the University of Stellenbosch, Prof Jane Oakhill from the University of Sussex and Prof Kate Cain from the University of Lancaster in the United Kingdom and was funded by the British Academy.

The teachers were trained by Wordworks trainers on the Wordworks pre-Grade R language programme, Little Stars. We will be sharing the findings from the study as soon as they are available.



Looking ahead to 2023

Partnership with Think Equal

During late 2022, Wordworks established a partnership with Think Equal to offer their socio-emotional development programme in three Western Cape education districts, to be implemented in 2023. A key driver for the partnership was that both Think Equal and Wordworks take a story-based approach in their programming, which builds literacy. The Think Equal programme additionally teaches children (3–6 years old) how to become compassionate, confident and resilient members of society. The 25 social and emotional learning skills and competencies include self confidence, self esteem, kindness, empathy, resilience, inclusion, and more.

196 Schools, 606 teachers and approximately 18 000 Grade R Learners in the Western Cape are being impacted by our ground-breaking partnership with Think Equal.

Learners benefit from the Think Equal story-based lessons by being exposed to rich story-language which enhances their love for books and stories; while also building their vocabulary, listening, comprehension, early reading and writing skills.

We are learning many valuable lessons through this partnership to enrich our work and strengthen partnerships.



Sanlam Project

After a successful application process, we are delighted to partner with Sanlam Foundation to implement our programmes in their focus provinces over the next three years. This has further bolstered and increased our footprint in new regions, further strengthened our partnerships with new municipalities and the early childhood organisations and fellow implementing partners.

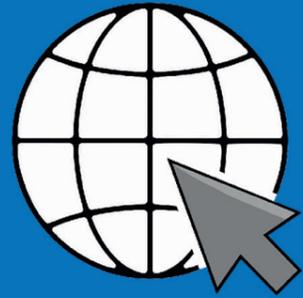


Anglo American South African Education Programme: Grade R Language and Mathematics initiative

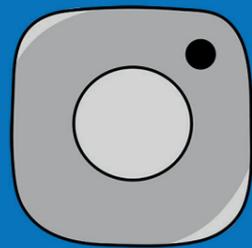
One of the 2022 biggest achievements for Wordworks, in collaboration with REDINK, was to be awarded a four year grant to implement the Anglo American South African Education Programme Grade R Language and Mathematics initiative in the mine’s operating regions. These are De Beers: Venetia (Blouberg and Musina); Kumba Iron Ore: Sishen, Kolomela; and Anglo American Platinum: Amandelbult, Mogalakwena, De Brochen, Polokwane and Rustenburg. This will increase our footprint, and human resource and organisational capacity over the next four years.



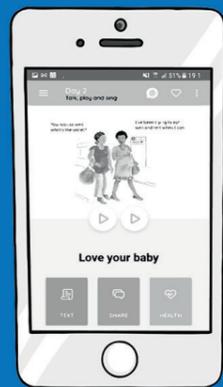
Wordworks Reach 2022



91 748
website users



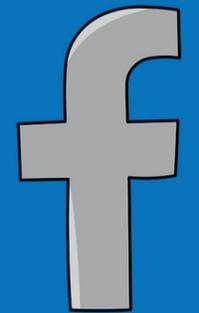
1 349
Instagram page followers



5 584
people used apps with Wordworks content



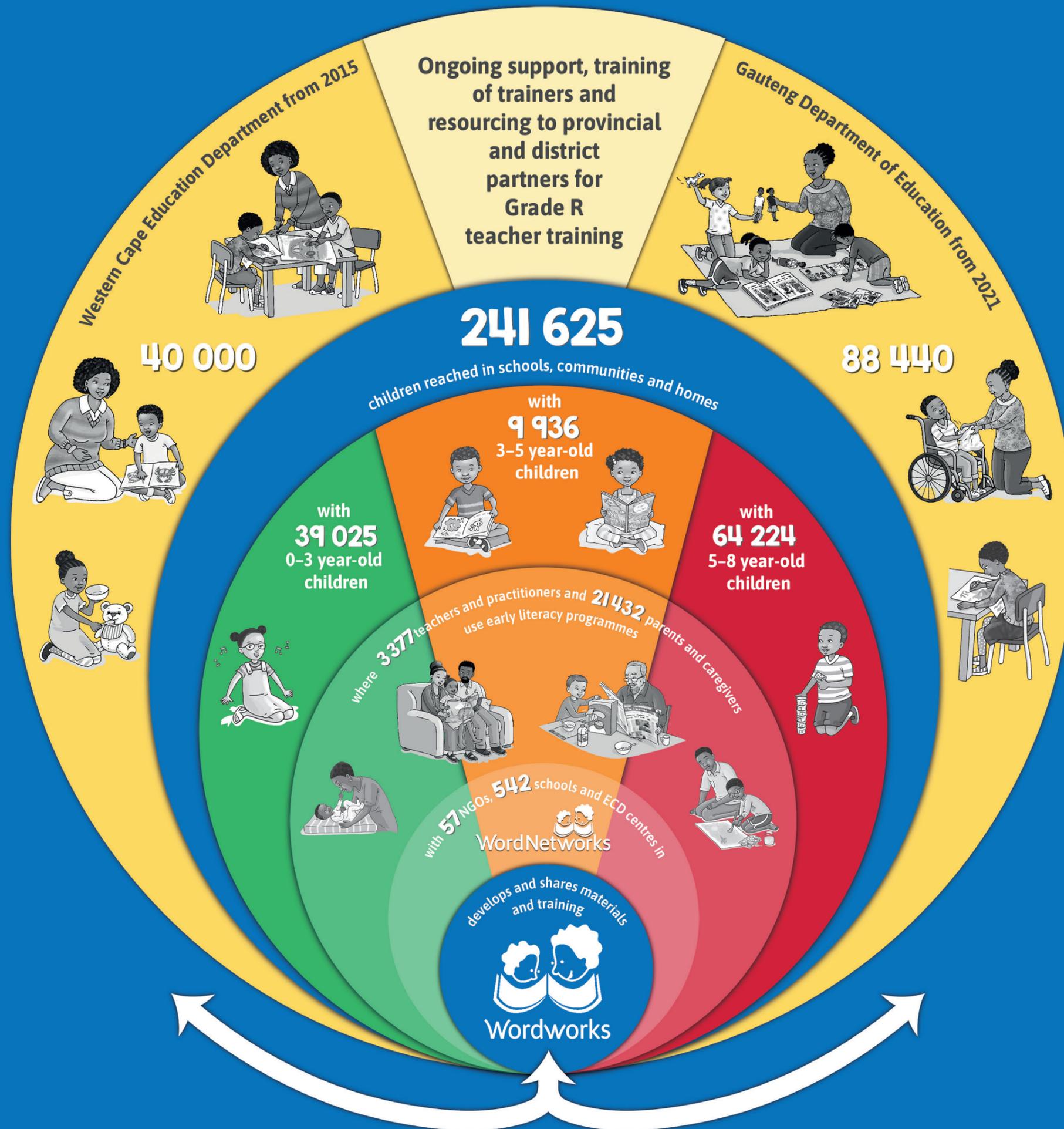
5 180
newsletter subscribers



5 400
Facebook page followers



61 269
user engagements with programme resources on our website



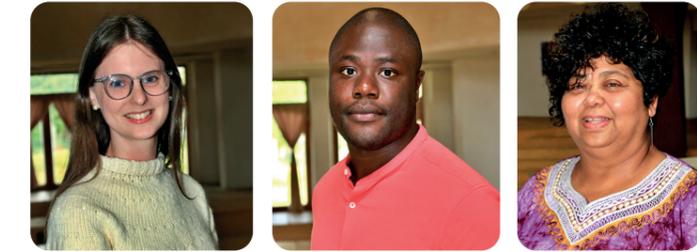
Our partners: 2022 partnerships



Our team: Hellos and goodbyes

Our fast-growing organisation added five new team members in 2022. These remarkable team members are adding so much value in their respective roles.

Kirsten Deane is working in Communications as an Online Content Producer and Writer, and Lydia Makiva and Sudika Martin have joined our Early Childhood Development as Trainers in bringing training language support in isiXhosa and Afrikaans.



Katherine de Wet and Phill Muridzo, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officers, are playing an invaluable role in boosting and growing our MEL Unit. Elaine Josias Programmes officer is efficiently meeting the need for support of our growing programme work.

We were sad to say goodbye to Isabella Hugow and Setungoane Letsatsi in 2022.

Setungoane joined Wordworks in July 2021 as the Programme Manager for the Gauteng Grade R Improvement Project. She left to take up a new professional challenge. S'tu has left her mark on our organisation, touching us and our key stakeholders with her dedication and professionalism.

Isabella Hugow joined Wordworks in 2016, fresh from university. In her work as Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Manager, she played a significant and innovative role in setting up monitoring and evaluation systems, amongst others, for our fast growing organisation.

In 2022, Wordworks welcomed new board members as some board members had reached the end of their tenure. This has broadened the diversity and skills base of the board to take the organisation to new heights.

The following board members have added their special areas of expertise to our board.



Jalal Razavi, Janet Marx and Mavuso Shabalala.



Changing lives through literacy.

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