



Gauteng Grade R language and mathematics improvement project

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1. Introduction

The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) established its Education Road Map 2019 – 2024 with 5 Strategic Goals, wherein Strategic Goal #1 is Early Childhood Development. Subsequently a 10 pillar ECD Strategy was developed to deliver on this Strategic Goal 1 and was linked to GET Strategy to create a continuum and seamless transitioning from Grade R to Grade 1 and the entire Foundation phase. Hence the project “Grade R Home Languages and Mathematics Improvement” is firmly located within the ECD Strategy

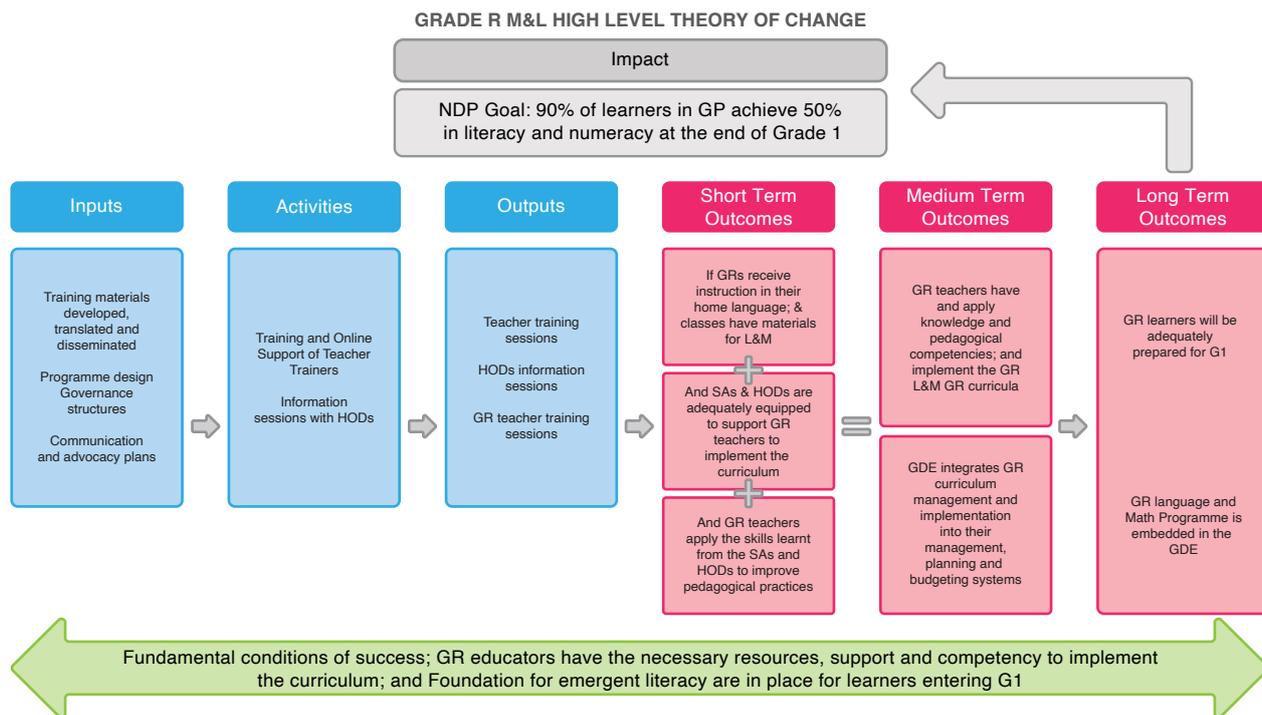
2. Background and context that informed the project

In 2016 the GDE and the Gauteng Education Development Trust (GEDT) were engaged in discussions on possible interventions to improve the content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge of Grade R teachers/practitioners.

A range of studies have indicated the long-term cognitive, social and academic benefits of early education, resulting in increasing emphasis on the good quality of pre-school programmes. To redress the effects of poverty and reverse the stubborn trend of educational under-achievement, the right foundations for learning must be laid in the period before children begin formal schooling. The GDE is building and strengthening its work in ECD and Grade R, in line with national policy developments.

The project is aligned to the GDE’s key goal of improving the quality of teaching and learning of Home Languages and Mathematics in Grade R through play-based learning, improving assessment practices, improving learner readiness for formal schooling and focusing on emergent reading. The sustainability of the change that is envisioned through the project is already an integral part of the GDE’s long-term planning, and the intervention will support the initiation of the work.

3. High level theory of change



4. Focus of the project

The total number of targeted learners enrolled in Gr R is 130 000 in any given academic year, 4500 grade R practitioners/teachers in public schools and 500 grade R practitioners in registered ECD Community based centres.

The project focuses on 1) Development and versioning of the home languages and mathematics training materials into eleven languages; 2) provision of these materials and classroom resources including the Maths kit to all Grade R teachers in all public schools and registered ECD centres that offer Grade R (in 2024); 3) training of 190 Foundation Phase subject advisors as teacher trainers with 10 of them as Master trainers; 4) holding information sessions for 1380 Foundation Phase Departmental Heads; 5) Training of the 4500 Grade R teachers and practitioners, and provisioning of classroom-based resources for both home languages and mathematics in different languages.

The Project is rolled- out in three implementation phases:

- Phase 1 for project set-up with the output being project management and governance structures,
- Phase 2 focused on material development and project design while
- Phase 3 is on project implementation.

Percentage of Funding distribution for Phase 2 and Phase 3.

GDE	20%
Funders Group	80%

The Funders Group, inclusive of the GEDT, Zenex Foundation and USAID will spend R86.7m from 2021 up to 2024. An initial R10m was invested by the GEDT and Zenex Foundation from 2019-2020 to design the programme, plan and start implementation, including to onboard the primary technical partners – Wordworks and the UCT: School Development Unit, through JET Education Services (phase 1 of the programme phase).

The innovation of the Programme is that the primary investment is towards the development and versioning of the classrooms and teacher materials for both language and mathematics in all SA official languages. The GDE and language experts quality assured all the materials and both technical partners signed Creative Commons Licencing agreements with JET (PMO); this will ensure access to other provinces and organisations to a full suite of open source documents for replication.

The GDE has committed R20m towards this programme and has been instrumental to fund the cost of all the trainers (180-190), the data provision and training facilities across the districts.

An annual spend of R20-24m is invested by the Funder Group and the budget and financial management are the responsibility of JET as PMO.

5. Implementation partners and their responsibilities

	Partner	Roles
1	GDE	Custodian, Funder, PSC member
2	GEDT	Funder and custodian
3	USAID	Funder and PSC members
4	Zenex Foundation	
5	JET Education Services	Project management, PSC secretariat,
6	Wordworks	Home Languages service provider contracted by JET for re-versioning of home languages materials into eleven languages and training of its 10 Master trainers and 180 teacher trainers
7	School Development unit (SDU) of the University of Cape Town	Mathematics service provider contracted by JET for re-versioning of Maths materials into 11 languages and training of its 10 Master trainers and the same 180 teacher trainers

The project is funded by GEDT, Zenex Foundation, USAID and managed by JET Education Services as the Project Management Office (PMO) which reports to the Project Steering Committee (PSC). GDE also funds the project but not through the PMO.

The goal of the project is for all Grade R learners in Gauteng Province to be ready for Grade 1, with 90 percent of learners achieving 50 percent in literacy and numeracy at the end of Grade 1 in line with the goals of the NDP.

6. Training Dosage

Provision of materials and classroom resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A set of 5000 training materials and classroom resources produced and Each Gr R teacher and trainer (subject advisor) provided with a set of materials and classroom resources for each term for both Home languages and mathematics in the languages offered at their schools.
Subject advisers as teacher trainers through training of trainers for both components	Once off 5-day face to face block training at the beginning of training for each component followed by face to face Quarterly sessions held for eight hours on a Saturday covering content for the whole term.
Foundation Phase Departmental Heads Information sessions	On-line quarterly information sessions held for two hours to inform the departmental heads about what Gr R teachers will be trained on, for them to be able to offer support and monitor implementation
Grade R teachers and practitioners	Eleven monthly training sessions are held on a Saturday for eight hours and one day during the school holidays.

7. Training logistics

GDE responsibilities	JET responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication of all training logistics with the teacher trainers (Foundation Phase subject advisers) • Secure training venues for training of the trainers across the province 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure travel, accommodation and catering of the training of trainers (TOT) with input from GDE on catering suppliers. • Communication with GDE on logistics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organises all logistics for training of Grade R teachers: securing of laptops, provision of data to trainers and power banks, securing of venues, PPS, catering, attendance registers, • Communication with schools on all relevant training logistics including invitations. 	

8. Materials developed & versioned in eleven official languages

- Home languages: Concept guides, activity guides, workbooks for teachers, facilitators' guides, puppets, sequence cards, big books, game cards
- Mathematics: Concept guide, activity guides, workbooks for teachers, facilitators' guides, poster book and Maths kit.

9. The expected targets:

All the Gr R teachers in Public Ordinary and Special Schools who attended training (a maximum of 4,000 and 500 practitioners in the ECD registered sites)

- Frequently use the developed sets of materials,
- Use innovative play-based teaching methodologies and
- Participate in the community of practices set up by GDE to strengthen sharing of good practices.

10. Principles

The project is guided by key principles, which also guide the work of the GDE. It is systemic and embedded in the GDE for implementation across the GP targeting all public ordinary schools and special schools. It is linked to Foundation Phase (FP) to sustain the impact and sustainability beyond the momentum provided by the project. It is premised on the capacity of the GDE, the provision of good quality training to trainers and Grade R teachers/practitioners and that the FP DH and senior management teams are able to support Grade R and the linkage to Grade 1.

Grade R teachers/practitioners will be incentivized through training endorsed by the South African Council for Educators (SACE). It is designed to contribute to continuous professional development (CPD) points.

11. Internal and external monitoring

The project is monitored internally by GDE monthly, the Project Steering Committee (once a year) and the PMO through onsite visits, monthly project meetings and quarterly reports to ensure continuous oversight, management and quality assurance. It is evaluated externally by an independent evaluator appointed by Zenex Foundation.

12. Project timelines and completion status

2016	GDE and GEDT – discussions in the ECD sector	All completed
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JET was commissioned to conduct an overview of continuous professional development (CPD) and delivery mechanism needs for Gr R • The Funder Group was approached by GDE 	
2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GDE and GEDT initiated the project • Consultation with all stakeholders 	
2020-2021	Additional funding was secured from the Funder Group Design and planning, material development/reversioning in all eleven languages, setting up of governance and management structures, advocacy, prepare for implementation	
2021-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Home language materials and classroom resources to Gr R teachers • Home language training of trainers, dry runs, orientation and training of Grade R teachers • Quarterly online Home languages information sessions for Foundation Phase Departmental heads • Home Languages baseline study: learner testing, classroom observations, stakeholder interviews and teacher testing (pre and post testing) 	
2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Mathematics materials and the Maths kit to trainers and Grade R teachers • Mathematics training of trainers, dry runs, orientation and training of Grade R teachers • Quarterly online Mathematics information sessions for Foundation Phase Departmental heads • Mathematics baseline study: learner testing, classroom observations, and teacher testing (pre and post testing) • Planning, preparations and development of the Special Needs materials 	In Progress
2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of registered ECD sites, special needs schools and catch up sessions for new teachers in POS. • External evaluation activities continue. 	