

Annual Report 2024



Introduction

In 2024, Siyawela implemented various programmes in the Eastern and Northern Cape provinces, with a focus on improving literacy, numeracy and teacher wellbeing, and on school development.

Central to our efforts, was the *Learning Schools Initiative (LSI)* which provided school communities with training and resources to improve teaching and learning. *LSI* programmes were run in partnership with:

- Cookhouse Wind Farm Community Trust (CWFCT); and
- Renewable Energy Investment South Africa (REISA).

The *Staff Wellbeing* programme, offered in partnership with The Stucken Group, aimed to improve teachers' personal wellbeing and work-life balance.

In addition to providing classroom support, we helped to develop a concept document for a new primary school in the Humansdorp area. This was completed in partnership with the Kouga Wind Farm Community Development Trust (KWFCDT) and Eastcape Training Centre (ETC).

We trust that you will enjoy reading more about our work in 2024 on the following pages.



LSI in the Eastern Cape:

Literacy and Numeracy Support for Foundation Phase

Siyawela first partnered with the **Cookhouse Wind Farm Community Trust (CWFCT)** in 2015 to facilitate the *LSI* in 15 schools in Adelaide, Bedford, Cookhouse and Somerset East. A variety of *LSI*-programmes have since been implemented successfully in the participating schools. In 2024, we were contracted to implement two programmes as part of the *LSI*:

- *Education Assistant Programme*
- *Professional Development Programme*

1 Education Assistant Programme

Education assistants (EAs) play an important role in providing support to Foundation Phase teachers. They can help to create an effective learning environment, by helping with daily classroom activities, facilitating small-group activities and working with learners who need additional assistance.

15

Community members
trained and
equipped to be EAs

Programme Activities in 2024

- 15 EAs were recruited and trained, and allocated to classrooms in participating schools.
- EAs received ongoing mentorship, which focussed on literacy and numeracy support.
- EAs facilitated small-group activities, including guided reading and practical numeracy exercises.
- EAs encouraged active learner participation, improving learners' behaviour and focus.
- EAs assisted with organisation of learning materials, reducing teachers' administrative workload.
- EAs provided daily classroom assistance, helping teachers to manage large classes more effectively.
- EAs administered benchmark assessments with selected learners.



LSI in the Eastern Cape:

Literacy and Numeracy Support for Foundation Phase

Education Assistant Programme – Benchmark Assessments

To evaluate the effectiveness of the *Education Assistant Programme*, Siyawela conducted two rounds of benchmark assessments – one in February and another in October 2024. These assessments provided important information on learner progress, which in turn helped us to adapt the programme's content to ensure its effectiveness.

Details of Benchmark Assessments

- 300 Grade 3 learners were assessed (20 learners x 15 schools), ensuring a representative sample for analysis.
- Standardised literacy and numeracy assessments were conducted in the first and fourth terms, allowing for data-driven comparisons.
- The key assessment areas were:
 - literacy (word recognition, sentence reading and comprehension); and
 - numeracy (number recognition, counting, basic arithmetic, problem-solving and maths reasoning).

"I enjoy working with children, so enjoyed every moment at school – helping the kids and teaching them new things."

Education Assistant

Key Findings and Achievements

- There was an overall improvement in learner performance average – a 7% increase from February to October.
- In eight of the participating schools, 70% of learners improved their results.
- The data showed that learners still need support in:
 - mental maths activities (counting skills);
 - addition and subtraction; and
 - word sums (stronger literacy and analytical skills).

600

Benchmark
assessments
administered.



LSI in the Eastern Cape:

Literacy and Numeracy Support for Foundation Phase

2 Professional Development Programme

Siyawela implemented a *Professional Development Programme* for Foundation Phase teachers across the 15 participating schools. The purpose of this programme was to equip teachers with skills and resources to enhance their teaching of maths and reading.

Programme Activities in 2024

- Eight training workshops were conducted in each town, focussing on practical techniques for teaching literacy and numeracy.
- Teachers appreciated the support, and workshops regularly had above-90% attendance.
- Training sessions were highly interactive, covering topics such as:
 - early reading techniques (phonics, instruction, sight words and reading comprehension strategies);
 - mathematical foundations (counting, data handling and problem-solving techniques);
 - classroom behaviour management; and
 - teachers' professional and personal wellbeing.
- Teachers received resources to use in their lessons, including:
 - measuring cups (for maths activities);
 - colourful dictionaries (for vocabulary development); and
 - data handling booklet (worksheets for foundation phase learners).

32

PDP
workshops
conducted.

"We were introduced to fun and interesting ways to keep learners focussed while we teach them how to read."

**Professional Development
Participant**



LSI in the Northern Cape

Siyawela has worked in partnership with **Renewable Energy Investments South Africa (REISA)** in the Northern Cape since 2018. In 2024, we implemented our *LSI* in three primary schools to:

- facilitate five levels of *NeuroNet Learning*;
- run an *Education Assistant Programme*;
- offer a *Professional Development Programme* for teachers; and
- provide work opportunities (and increase the employability skills) of selected community members.

1 **NeuroNet Learning**

NeuroNet Learning is a neuro-science based intervention that develops fluency in reading, numeracy (mathematics) and handwriting through structured, movement-based learning.

Programme Activities in 2024

- Six community members were recruited and trained as *NeuroNet* assistants, and an additional community member was appointed as an admin assistant.
- 612 Grade R and Grade 1 learners from 17 classes participated in the programme.
- 170 learners (10 from each class) completed benchmark assessments in February and October, providing data on programme impact and learning progressions.
 - 80% of these learners achieved a 20% improvement in literacy and numeracy results.
- Teachers observed increased learner confidence, improved classroom engagement and better cognitive processing skills.

612

Learners
benefitted from
NeuroNet.

*"Learners work faster, they
know the phonics sounds, and
they can count better."*

Foundation Phase Teacher

*"There is a change; learners are
disciplined, they know their shapes and
colours, and they can cross their midline."*

Foundation Phase Teacher



LSI in the Northern Cape

2 Education Assistant Programme

The REISA *Education Assistant Programme* was designed to provide targeted support for Grade 2 and Grade 3 learners, and empower selected community members through structured training and mentorship. In addition, the trained education assistants (EAs) were able to support teachers with managing routine classroom activities.

Programme Activities in 2024

- 14 EAs were recruited, trained and placed in Foundation Phases classes in participating schools.
- EAs were trained to facilitate the *Six-Bricks Programme* – an educational tool developed by the Lego® Foundation to help learners develop a wide range of skills through structured play activities, using six brightly coloured Duplo® bricks.

"Teachers were happy when they saw us reading the Three Billy Goats Gruff story. They loved how we explained it to the children."

Education Assistant

- Through the *Six-Bricks* sessions, EAs helped learners to:
 - develop their cognitive skills;
 - improve their ability to follow (and give) instructions;
 - develop their fine motor- and perceptual skills; and
 - improve their emotional regulation.
- 31 classes each completed 25 *Six-Bricks* sessions.
- Teachers supported and appreciated the regular *Six-Bricks* sessions, as it helped to improve learners' behaviour and academic achievement.
- EAs helped teachers in the classroom by (e.g.) reading with small groups while teachers work with the remainder of learners.

1082

Learners participated
in *Six-Bricks*
sessions.

775

Six-Bricks sessions
facilitated across
three participating
schools.



LSI in the Northern Cape

3 Professional Development Programme

The REISA *Professional Development Programme* was structured to equip Foundation Phase teachers with the confidence, practical knowledge and resources to help improve learners' literacy and numeracy achievements in the early grades.

The programme aimed to:

- improve Foundation Phase teachers' professional skills;
- provide curriculum-aligned strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy;
- improve classroom management and learner engagement; and
- enable teachers to earn CPTD points (as Siyawela is a SACE-accredited training provider).

Programme Activities in 2024

- Topics addressed in workshops included the following.
 - Literacy and numeracy strategies
 - Supporting learner development
 - Peer mediation and promoting positive behaviour
 - Improving teachers' personal wellbeing

"We now feel more equipped to handle conflict effectively, and are eager to implement the strategies we've learnt, in our classrooms."

Professional Development Participant

17

Workshops held for participating teachers.

- Teachers received workbooks, data handling booklets, templates and other resources to use in their classes.
- Teachers created PowerPoint presentations – incorporating video clips – which reflected and showcased their professional growth.



Staff Wellbeing Programme

In partnership with **The Stucken Group**, Siyawela implemented the *Staff Wellbeing Programme* for the staff at Walmer Primary School. The programme focussed on putting wellbeing at the heart of education, and on equipping teachers with strategies to help them be the best educators they can be.

The programme aimed to:

- boost morale and motivation among staff;
- build capacity and resilience in teachers;
- establish a shared understanding of the importance of wellbeing; and
- create positive connections and promote a positive school environment.

"The workshops helped us a lot, because we now know each other's character strengths, and we also know how to speak to others. And how to control our emotions."

Participating Teacher

Programme Activities in 2024

- 36 teachers attended the programme's three workshops which focussed on stress management, emotional intelligence, character strengths and self-care strategies.
- During workshops, teachers participated in practical exercises to build their skills in areas such as the practising gratitude, and praise and encouragement.
- A school visit and engagement session with Walmer Primary's school management team and teachers gave an insight into the conditions under which teachers work.

"I learnt that every child deserves a champion – someone that will speak words of encouragement and love."

Participating Teacher

The programme encouraged positive changes in teachers' mindsets – it promoted empathy, collaboration and a collective commitment to a healthier work environment.



Concept Document

for

A New Primary School in Humansdorp
(Kouga Coastal Unit)

Prepared for



Concept Document for New School

In partnership with the **Kouga Wind Farm Community Development Trust (KWFCDT)** and **Eastcape Training Centre (ETC)**, Siyawela played a key role in developing a concept document for a new primary school in the Humansdorp area.

This concept document serves as a blueprint for the establishing a new primary school – providing details on essential elements such as legal matters, operations of the school, school governance, curriculum programmes and required spaces (as per Department of Basic Education [DBE] requirements).

The purpose of establishing this primary school is to reduce overcrowding in existing schools, improve access to quality education and ensure long-term sustainability of the school's operations.

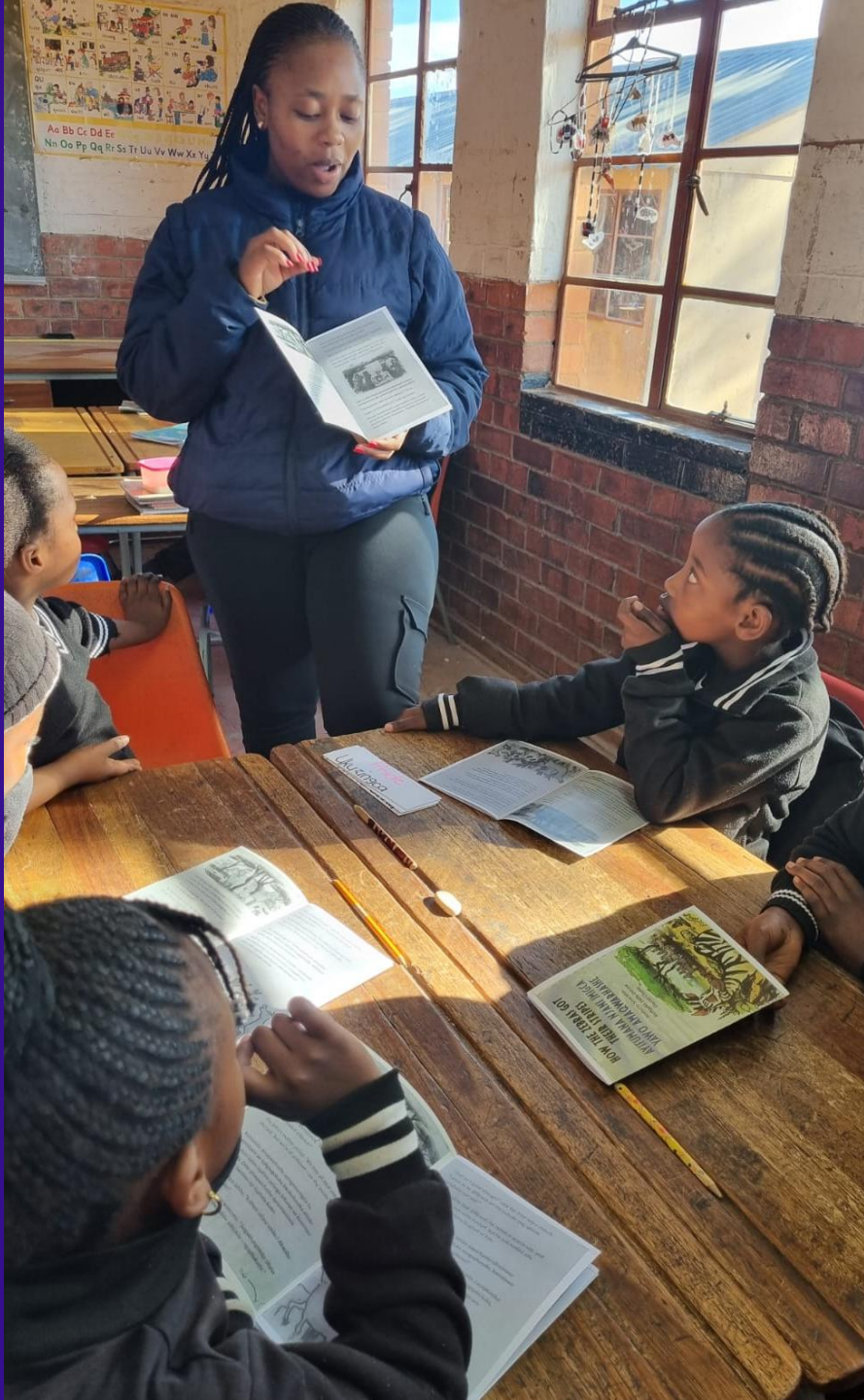
Programme Activities in 2024

- Concept Document for the New School
 - In-depth research was conducted, including demographic analysis and an assessment of infrastructure requirements.
 - Meetings were held with role players from Kouga Local Municipality and the DBE's Sarah Baartman District Office, ensuring alignment with local and provincial policies.
 - Recommendations were made on governance structures, fee models, school management and infrastructure development.
- Additional Activities Supporting New School Development
 - Meetings were held with school communities and School Governing Body associations to get community input into planning.
 - Schools that follow a model similar to that of the envisaged new school were visited to identify strategies that could be used in the establishment (and governance) of the new school.
 - Funding and partnership opportunities to support long-term sustainability were explored.



Concept logo for new school





Our Partners in 2024





Contact Us

Should you be interested in any of our programmes, please visit our website and contact us for further information.

Website: www.siyawela-rts.co.za

Email: admin@siyawela-rts.co.za





Siyawela is an independent, non-profit training agency that implements and manages education programmes aligned to the needs of the South African communities.

Established in 2000, we have an extensive portfolio of effective education programmes that can be offered in a variety of contexts.

Our Vision

Educators, government officials, youth and adults who are skilled to realise their potential and bring about vibrant communities and work environments.