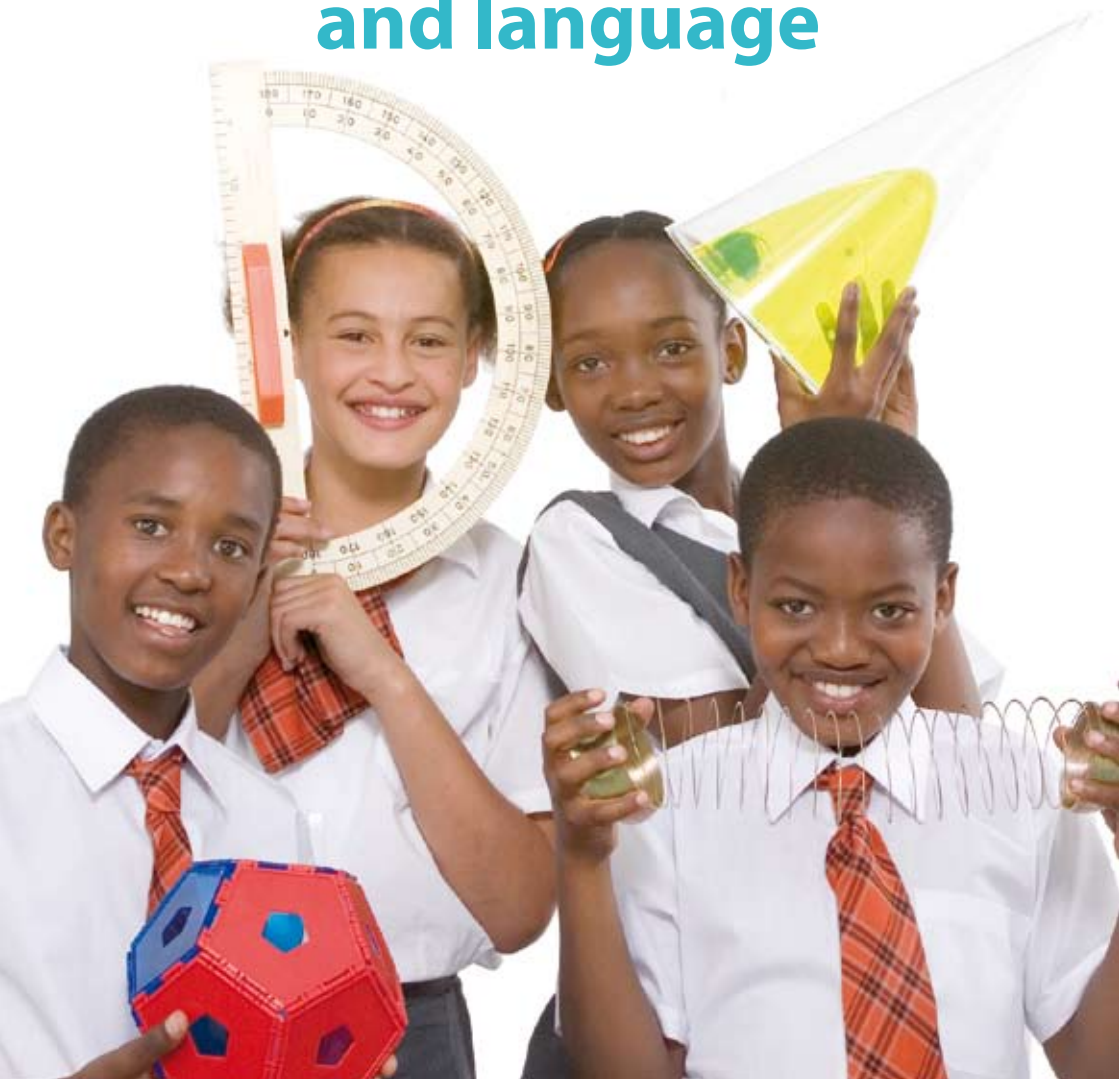


ZENÈX
FOUNDATION

Educating for impact in mathematics, science and language





The Zenex Foundation is a non-profit, independent donor organisation that focuses on mathematics, science and language education in schools.

It values innovation and prizes highly its partnerships with government, donors and service providers in its efforts to respond to the local education and development context.

The Foundation's vision is of skilled and empowered communities with competencies that will contribute towards growth, development and democratisation in South Africa. Its mission is to educate and empower historically deprived learners so they can take advantage of new opportunities.

The Zenex Foundation provides financial resources and proactively engages with funded projects and their stakeholders.

“ The Zenex Foundation invested R237 million in development, primarily education, over the last ten years. ”

Strategy and rationale

A country that nurtures literacy, mathematics and science ensures a society poised for growth and development. The Zenex Foundation has focused its ten-year strategy (2006-2015) around mathematics, science and language education in South Africa. This focus is firmly aligned with the long-term objectives of the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (AsgiSA), launched by government in February 2006.

The Zenex Foundation's ten-year strategy will focus energy and resources on developing long-term programmes to support education in mathematics, science and English. The Foundation supports school-based projects through the coaching and mentoring of teachers, working with learners with potential in mathematics and science, providing school management support, and by providing educational materials.

The Foundation's service providers are encouraged to engage in face-to-face mentorship and hands-on engagement with the realities of the classroom and the school. This model is in keeping with the Zenex Foundation's holistic approach to education and development.

“ The Zenex Foundation provides effective and researched responses to the teaching and learning of mathematics, science and language in South African schools. ”





The Foundation forges partnerships with the Department of Education because only in this way can it make a sustainable impact. It creates models that government can build on. It selects functional schools using the Department's criteria and puts out a call for proposals to which service providers and NGOs in the sector can respond.

The Zenex Foundation's track record

Since its formation in 1995, the Zenex Foundation has supported projects and interventions in three key areas of education: early childhood development, numeracy and literacy in primary schools, and mathematics, science and English in secondary schools.

“ The Zenex Foundation focuses on improving the system and supporting targeted learners to exit the system successfully. ”

Early childhood development

In the first decade of democracy the Zenex Foundation became involved in early childhood development. The Foundation's commitment to early childhood development stems from the knowledge that learning achieved in children's formative years plays a major role in their long-term development. The Foundation has since shifted its focus from community-based ECD to school-based Grade R, as its focus is on school-based education. The government is in the process of making Grade R compulsory. This will enable all children to access early childhood development.

Numeracy and literacy in primary schools

The Zenex Foundation has always had a strong focus on primary school education and development. In the early years it built schools and classrooms, and targeted learners in various grades with education support programmes. Over time, however, it found that learners lacked a proper grounding in numeracy and literacy. The Zenex Foundation then decided to focus on the primary school Foundation Phase where numeracy and literacy is first developed, and used this as a base from which to provide systematic support to the subsequent phases of the primary school system.

Mathematics, science and English in secondary schools

It was only in the late 1990s that the Zenex Foundation began to invest in projects aimed at the support of secondary schools, because relatively few service providers were working in secondary schools. Also, the majority of programmes focused on learners, such as interventions to improve learners' matric results, and not on teacher training.



“ The Zenex Foundation gives disadvantaged learners access to careers that they previously could not pursue. ”



At secondary school level the Foundation has two approaches:

- it works through teacher training, which is seen as a long-term, sustainable approach; and
- it supports learners with potential in the FET phase.

During the Foundation's expansion phase (1998 to 2002) its funding strategy actively sought to encourage and support secondary school projects that included support for teachers, learners and sometimes school management.

Grant-making approach

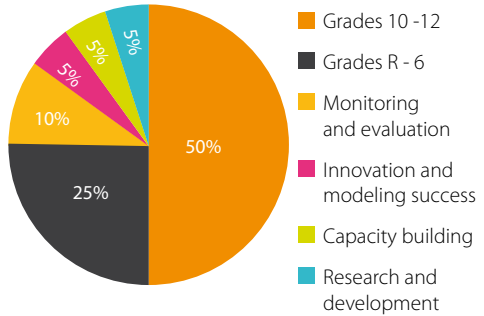
The Zenex Foundation adopts the following approach to its grant-making:



1	2	3	4
The Foundation aims to fund the full costs of the projects it supports, including administrative and evaluation costs, and often forms partnerships to make the funding available to projects.	It is committed to building the capacity of service providers to ensure that they deliver quality programmes.	It provides grants in three-year cycles and supports accredited training so that the impact of the training is focused and sustainable.	It is committed to monitoring and evaluation.

The Foundation does not accept unsolicited proposals because it selects districts, schools and types of programmes in partnership with the Department of Education. It funds specific programmes with very clear objectives and therefore issues calls for proposals.

The Zenex Foundation allocates its budget as follows:



“ The Zenex Foundation builds capacity to ensure quality delivery. ”

Implementing programmes in schools – 2006-2015

At **Foundation Phase** (Grades R to 3), the Zenex Foundation will:

- implement an early childhood development programme in Grade R in order to prepare young learners for school readiness; and
- support programmes in Grades 1 to 3 to strengthen home language learning and provide foundations in numeracy and literacy.

At **Intermediate Phase** (Grades 4 to 6), the Zenex Foundation will introduce English literacy and mathematics programmes through accredited teacher training and continued professional development. The aim is to support 600 teachers in Grades R to 6 to achieve certificated competence in teaching language and numeracy or language and mathematics.

In the **Further Education and Training (FET) Phase** (Grades 10 to 12), the Zenex Foundation will:

- support 1 000 black learners to achieve matriculation passes in mathematics, science and English that will qualify them to enter higher education in these streams;
- support 400 teachers in Grades 10-12 to achieve certificated competence in teaching mathematics, science and/or English;
- support 60 secondary schools to achieve 'centre of excellence' status against agreed criteria in matric-level mathematics, science and English; and
- support 10 school districts to implement models encouraging schools to strive for excellence in mathematics, science and English.



Research, evaluation and modeling success

The Foundation has always been committed to project evaluation and research as a way of strengthening its work and making a contribution to the field. The Zenex Foundation sees itself as a learning organisation. Research and evaluation provides a basis for continuous improvement and modeling success. By understanding weaknesses highlighted by the research, the Zenex Foundation has been able to transform its interventions into more appropriate tools that can make a difference.

Based on its evaluation findings and research results, the Foundation has embarked on new strategies to increase the sustainability of its funding impact and regularly puts out calls for proposals around key areas for research and innovation in mathematics, science and language projects.

ZENEX

F O U N D A T I O N

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