

Call for proposals for Foundation Phase Curriculum Recovery Project

1. Introduction

This is a call for services of organisations, academic institutions, and implementers to implement a curriculum recovery project for Numeracy and Literacy in the Foundation Phase (Grade 1-3). The project will be implemented from January 2022 – December 2023.

The key intervention principles are:

1. **Curriculum catch-up and coverage.** The closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic have implications for how the schools are managed, how curriculum is delivered and how teaching and learning takes place. Schools require external support to mitigate challenges brought forward by the pandemic.
2. **Protecting psychological needs of target groups.** The full impact of the pandemic on teachers, learners and school managers is a major concern and the DBE is looking at endeavours that will assist schools to deal with issues of anxiety, fear, and other psychological issues. A survey conducted by EI Africa on how unions respond to COVID-19 indicated that 62% of the teachers were not offered any psychosocial support to deal with their own anxieties and those of learners. The little support offered was document-based with no evidence of effectiveness¹.
3. **Understanding the context.** Each province, district, circuit, and schooling community will have a unique set of challenges and opportunities. As such, partners need to develop support mechanisms that are contextually relevant for each target area.

2. Problem statement

Schools in South Africa have been constantly closing since March 2020 and have lost more than 50% of teaching time since then. The return to schools has always been staggered and all the learners (except for Grade 12 learners) have been rotating since the first reopening of schools in August 2020.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic broadened the challenges that are faced by learners in each grade, especially those in the Foundation Phase, as they spent most of the time at home. Schools lost over 50% teaching time and learners stayed at home with no opportunities for home-study. The International Journal of Education (2021) already indicates that the short-term losses in school time is up to one year and could accumulate to 2,8 years of long-term lost learning². In 2021, Foundation Phase learners are only expected to be fully in school in August after long closure due to the Delta variant.

¹ <https://www.ei-ie.org/en/item/23501:unions-and-governments-meet-to-address-teacher-professional-issues>

² <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S073805932100050X?dgcid=author>

On coming back, School Management Teams (SMTs) must ensure that the revised curriculum is covered efficiently, and the learning backlogs built from the time learners were not at school are bridged. This must be done with minimal resources, shortage of staff and in some instances while coaching/ training teaching assistants. Most schools are still using rotation to ensure that the number of learners in school are contained to comply with safety regulations.

Teachers are faced with the challenge of managing rotational classrooms, learners with academic foundational gaps and allocating work for home study, while covering the curriculum as per DBE requirements.

South Africa enjoys high access to basic education with nearly 99% of children aged 7 to 15 attending an education institution. Most of these learners continue to perform below grade level expectations in literacy and numeracy in post-apartheid South Africa. Spaul and Kotze (2015) show that by Grade 4, most learners are already two grades behind curriculum expectations. This research further revealed that only 16% of South African Grade 3 children are performing at an appropriate Grade 3 level.

Over the last 10 years, both local and international research has found that 29% of Grade 4 learners are illiterate, while 58% cannot read for meaning. Similar results have been found in Mathematics as well. Research indicates that learners are routinely promoted from one grade to the next without having mastered the content and foundational competencies of preceding grades.

Learners in the Foundation Phase do not have the capacity to study independently at home and need parent support. Parents/guardians in lower quintile schools either lack the skills to support learners at home, are aged or work long hours. This makes it almost impossible for them to assist learners at home.

The Foundation Phase is a priority area in the education sector, with President Ramaphosa stating that every child should be able to learn to read with meaning by the age of 10 and the Minister of Basic Education prioritised the improvement of foundational skills of literacy and numeracy, especially “**reading with meaning**”, straddling the Early Childhood Development (ECD) to end of the Intermediate Phase at Grade 6.³

3. Scope of the project

The project aims to:

- Support **SMTs** in curriculum management, timetabling and learner tracking;
- Support **Foundation Phase teachers** in curriculum delivery and classroom management;
- Provide the **school community** with psychosocial support, and
- Develop a **parent guide** to enable out of school learning.

Project Framework

Target Group	Content /Delivery
SMTs Principals and HoDs	Efficient management of curriculum Efficient timetabling to reach all learners Face-to-face coaching

³ Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga, Budget vote speech 16 July 2019

	Hotline for problem solving Professional Learning Community (PLC)
Numeracy and Literacy	Classroom Management Delivery of revised curriculum Management of resources for home and in-school learning Training/Coaching Resources
Parents	Foundation Phase learners are provided with Lesson Plans by the DBE for work at home. The project will develop a simple guide to assist parents to help learners with home study. The guide will give examples and further develop examples and solutions to assist learners to practice at home.

The project will be implemented in 60-80 schools across three provinces, Gauteng (Johannesburg Central), KwaZulu-Natal (iLembe) and the Eastern Cape (Buffalo City). The Zenex Foundation already implements the Senior Phase Curriculum Recovery Project in the above districts and is looking at implementing in feeder schools to the High Schools in the Senior Phase Recovery Project.

Project Characteristics

RELEVANCE	All activities and content need to be relevant to the revised curriculum for each grade.
COMPLEMENTARY	All activities need to complement DBE support: ADD IN – NOT ADD ON.
ASSISTANCE	All activities will aim to assist teachers and SMTs in their curriculum implementation and management.
COLLABORATIVE	Support and sharing with peers will be implemented through PLCs.

4. Task interpretation

- Kindly submit NOT more than a five pages proposal outlining how you understand the task and how you will undertake the task.
- Affirmative action principles will be used to assess applications.

Only shortlisted organisations will be notified. Organisations can submit joint submissions or share the call with others.

5. Proposal submission process

Activity	Date
Submission of proposals closing date	13 August 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief outline of how you understand the task. • An outline of the project implementation, indicating target group, mode of delivery, use and explanation of technology. • A detailed plan and budget. • Experience and expertise of the organisation and team that will deliver the project. • List of team members including race and gender. • Details of the Board/Trustees of the organisation. 	
Applicants to participate in interview process by	20 August 2021

6. Contact Person for Queries and Submission

Queries and proposals must be emailed to: Ms Fundiswa Sayo at fundiswa@zenexfoundation.org.za

CLOSING DATE: 13 AUGUST 2021