



*Shine*  
LITERACY

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2022**



## DIRECTOR'S REPORT MAURITA WEISSENBERG



**THE PHOTOGRAPH OPPOSITE WAS TAKEN AT OUR VERY FIRST SHINE CENTRE,** at Observatory Junior School, in 2000. When I reflect on our first programmes, one boy's story springs to mind. He was already in Grade 3 when he joined Shine. He struggled so much to read and write, but always turned up to each session motivated to learn. He was such a brave soul. It took him two full years until one day he came skipping into the Shine Centre saying "I can read what's on the board!" The first novel he read alone was *James and the Giant Peach*. Watching him come out of his shell and gain confidence in reading is the reason why I have always insisted on an early whole-school intervention, making sure no child is overlooked, giving them a safe place to come to and working at a pace that they can cope with, both emotionally and academically. I focused on sowing seeds of confidence by always ending a session with noticing and praising something specific that they have improved. Work at scale is needed, but for me, more than ever, it also needs to be personal, face to face, engaging and trauma sensitive.

Over the years I have witnessed the power of those face-to-face interventions in every Shine Centre that delivers our flagship Shine Literacy Hour programme to thousands of children. Our Shine Chapters are embedded in the communities they serve and their work provides a sustainable and positive presence that will continue to improve the literacy levels of young South Africans.

In 2022, we continued our innovative projects to meet the literacy needs of young South Africans. In particular, we are proud to have achieved the following:

1. We partnered with 11 organisations to operate Shine Chapters in 19 schools, where 995 Grade 2 and 3 learners received twice-weekly individualised literacy support.
2. We partnered with Youth Employment Services, Action Volunteers Africa and the Western Cape Education Department to run our Youth 4 Literacy programme, which placed 101 young people as Reading Partners at 21 schools. Last year, these young people provided 108,403 individual paired reading sessions to 4,710 children. We also trained 295 Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI) Teaching Assistants in paired and shared reading to provide further support to our partner schools.
3. We distributed more than 60,000 @home reading packs to support our Creating a Culture of Reading at Home initiative, an effort that started during the Covid-19 pandemic.
4. We continued developing and adding resources to our mobi-site, another Covid-era innovation, which saw more than 39,000 users benefit from the tools since its launch.



**What have we learnt?** As we closed 2022, we knew that the individual and one-on-one assistance that Shine has historically provided to a subset of learners in the classroom no longer meets the increasing literacy needs brought on by school closures during lockdown. Our context has changed. In the COVID recovery environment, more children than ever, indeed most children in the classroom, need catch-up support. In many ways, our COVID-era innovations have run their course and need to shift to make space for interventions focused on reading recovery. We see provincial departments of education taking up reading recovery programmes, increasing investment in the foundation phase, which is finally getting the attention it so desperately needs, and large-scale interventions making an impact in the literacy sector. We also see our Chapters and partners as rooted in their communities and well positioned to innovate in ways that serve the needs of their diverse and geographically spread communities. With this knowledge, after three challenging years of change and disruptions, we've gone into 2023 prepared to make changes to best support our mission.

I will serve one more year with Shine as we enter into a year of new beginnings for our partner organisations and the literacy sector by open-sourcing our resources. I am proud to take steps this year with the same intention I took into my first years at Shine – to create a nation of readers by investing directly into the lives of young South Africans.

Thank you to our 11 Chapter organisations, our youth partners, volunteer learning partners, and funders for your long-standing confidence and trust in our mission and vision. Creating a culture of reading truly takes a village and your support is deeply appreciated.

And lastly, I would like to thank the Board for its commitment to and support in ensuring that Shine Literacy fulfils its vision, especially over the last year as we embarked on leadership transition and deep reflection of our model and work, which has brought us to a very big decision, one that I am in full agreement with, will journey with and which will be spoken to in our Board Letter at the end of this report.

Sincerely,

**Maurita Weissenberg**

FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SHINE LITERACY

OPPOSITE clockwise from top left: Shine Literacy smiles; Maurita in 2023 with other Shine Literacy members; Thanks to Mullers for glasses; 'Words Change Worlds' at the Shine Literacy centre in Masinyusane.





# SHINE LITERACY HIGHLIGHTS 2022



We have expanded our offering to include parents, caregivers and the greater community in an effort to **Create a Culture of Reading (CCR)** in the spaces where children live, play and learn.

## Creating a Culture of Reading (CCR)

### CCR at Home

#### Shine @Home Packs

15,172 children in 46 schools received four packs each, creating countless reading opportunities at home.

#### Storytime - Data-free Mobisite

Since inception the site has had 39,124 new users and 601 780 page views. In 2022 - 1000 monthly users listened to at least 2 books per session.

#### Shine Training

76 staff and volunteers from 5 non-profit organisations trained on reading methodology and positive discipline.

### CCR at School

#### Youth4Literacy (Y4L)

101 youth placed as Reading Partners, who provided 108,403 individual paired reading sessions to 4,710 learners at 21 schools.

#### Shine Literacy Hour (SHL)

995 Learners supported across 19 Chapters. In 2023 we will work with 22 Chapters across 4 provinces.

#### Community of Practice (CoPs)

196 Teachers from 24 Y4L schools participated in our CoPs to share experiences, gain encouragement, and receive support.

### Partnering with Government

#### Western Cape Education Department (WCED) - YearBeyond Programme

45 YearBeyond Mentors trained.

#### President Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI) - Teaching Assistants

295 Teacher Assistants trained in 19 schools.



# SHINE LITERACY PROGRAMMES REPORT 2022

## SHINE LITERACY HOUR

SHINE LITERACY HOUR (SLH) CONTINUES TO BE OUR MOST IMPACTFUL APPROACH AND UNDERPINS ALL OF OUR PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS.

The SLH programme is designed to take Grade 2 and Grade 3 children from struggling readers to confident readers in as little as six months. We do this by providing two hours of one-on-one or one-on-two reading support to children each week, using four key methodologies: paired reading, shared reading, have-a-go writing, and literacy games that progressively develop skills. For many years, sessions were led by dedicated, committed volunteers, though more recently we have also trained youth to deliver the programme. Shine Literacy Hour provides a **practical, relevant, and easy-to-use** model that our partners and Shine Chapters can implement quickly and effectively for maximum impact from day one.

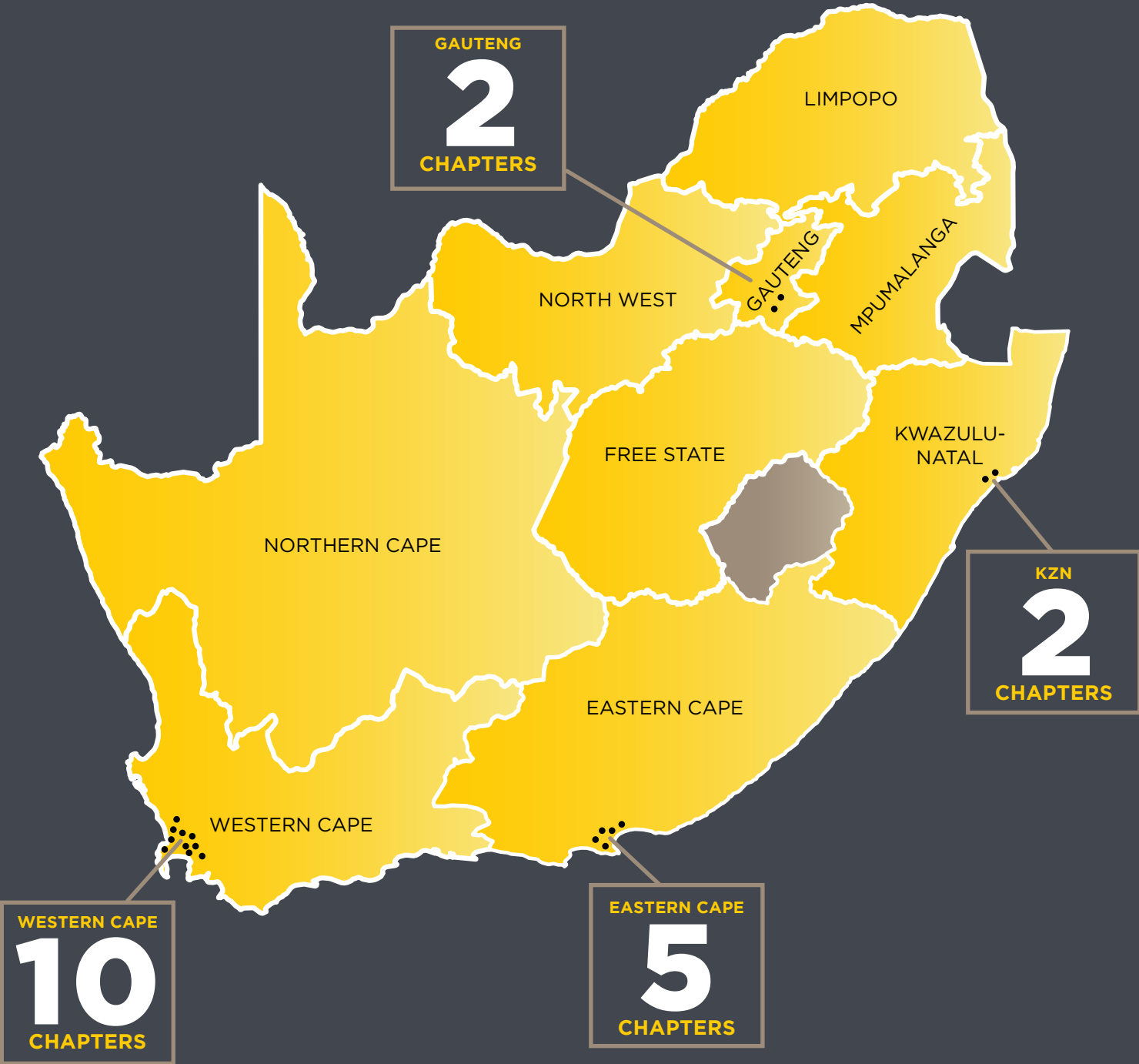
Since the lockdowns in 2020, we have experienced challenges that forced us to adapt, including more limited access to schools; a reduced volunteer base; greater need for literacy support, often requiring more than a subset of learners to receive intervention; and assessment variability, where not all schools and chapters have been able to run assessments in the normal time frame.

We have responded to these challenges by focusing on **partnerships** and **training** to reach as many struggling readers as possible. We continue to see our role as an enabler and supporter for community-based organisations who want to implement a reading support programme quickly and effectively.





# SHINE CHAPTERS 2022



## SHINE CHAPTERS

OUR CHAPTER MODEL STARTED IN 2009 with the goal of expanding our reach through trusted and vetted partners. We implement a social franchise model: we share our resources, training, and best practice with our Chapters, who implement Shine Literacy Hour in their schools, community centres, and faith-based environments. Our Chapters are best suited to meet the unique needs of their communities, and these partnerships allow us to reach even more readers than we could on our own.

In 2022, Shine partnered with 11 organisations and one school to operate Shine Chapters in 19 schools. These chapters equipped 270 volunteers to provide reading opportunities to 995 Grade 2 and 3 learners. In 2023 three of our partner organisations will expand their reach by establishing 6 more Chapters.

### OUR CHAPTER PARTNERS ARE:

#### WESTERN CAPE

- The LifeMatters Foundation
- Won Life
- Enlighten Trust
- Heart 2 Heart
- Good Hope

#### KWAZULU-NATAL

- Anchor of Hope
- Liv Village

#### EASTERN CAPE

- Masinyusane
- Walmer Angels

#### GAUTENG

- Shine
- Dare 2 Care

In addition to this we have Shine inspired programmes in the Western Cape. Namely **St John’s Primary**, **St Pauls Primary**, **Claremont Primary**, and **Kleinberg Primary**.





# CREATING A CULTURE OF READING AT SCHOOL



## YOUTH4LITERACY

**THE YOUTH4LITERACY PROGRAM (Y4L)** was supported by Youth Employment Service (YES), a government-sponsored employment initiative, and Year Beyond. The programme trained unemployed youth and placed them as Reading Partners in schools. In 2022, we placed 101 youth as Reading Partners, who provided 108,403 individual paired reading sessions to 4,710 learners at 21 schools. We also trained 295 Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI) Teaching Assistants (TAs) in paired and shared reading to provide further support to our partner schools.

In addition to training on literacy teaching skills, we also saw our Reading Partners as secondary beneficiaries of our work. We invested in their growth through a financial literacy workshop, a walking tour of the city of Cape Town, a trauma-informed workshop, and individual mentorship and support.

While we have expanded our impact with this approach, we have also experienced challenges, including poor retention of Reading Partners, variable implementation across our schools, limited oversight of recruiting and management due to limited capacity, and lacklustre support from teachers in some affiliated schools.

In 2023, we continue this work as a training partner to the Western Cape Education Department, Year Beyond Programme and the PYEI, offering TAs training in paired and shared reading.

**KEY LEARNINGS:** Through this programme, we have identified some key learnings that can benefit other organisations that are delivering their programmes by working with Teacher Assistants (or would like to). These include:

- **Design with realistic expectations:** If TAs are deployed in resource-constrained contexts with minimal training, the focus should be on mastering one methodology for literacy support (rather than being expected to integrate a range of methodologies). In Shine's experience, paired reading (being a reading partner) is the methodology most suited to the classroom context and the skill level of TAs recruited through government employment programmes. The young people we trained took most easily to paired reading, which is less performative than shared reading to a group, and can be done effectively using easy, practical techniques that do not require detailed technical knowledge.
- **Focus on quality of interactions:** Much of Shine's ethos supports the creation of a safe environment for learning. The value of this is backed up by research from the neuro-science and mental health fields. This is the kind of environment that teachers (and TAs) need to be supported to create.
- **Improve supervision and management:** Supervision is often an undervalued aspect of large-scale implementation models relying on para-professionals, despite evidence that highlights its importance. We encourage increased focus on supervision as a tool for sound management and delivery.
- **Explore creative ways to improve retention:** Retention of TAs has often been a problem, which has a negative impact on programme outcomes. Creative solutions, such as paying retention bonuses, need to be explored.

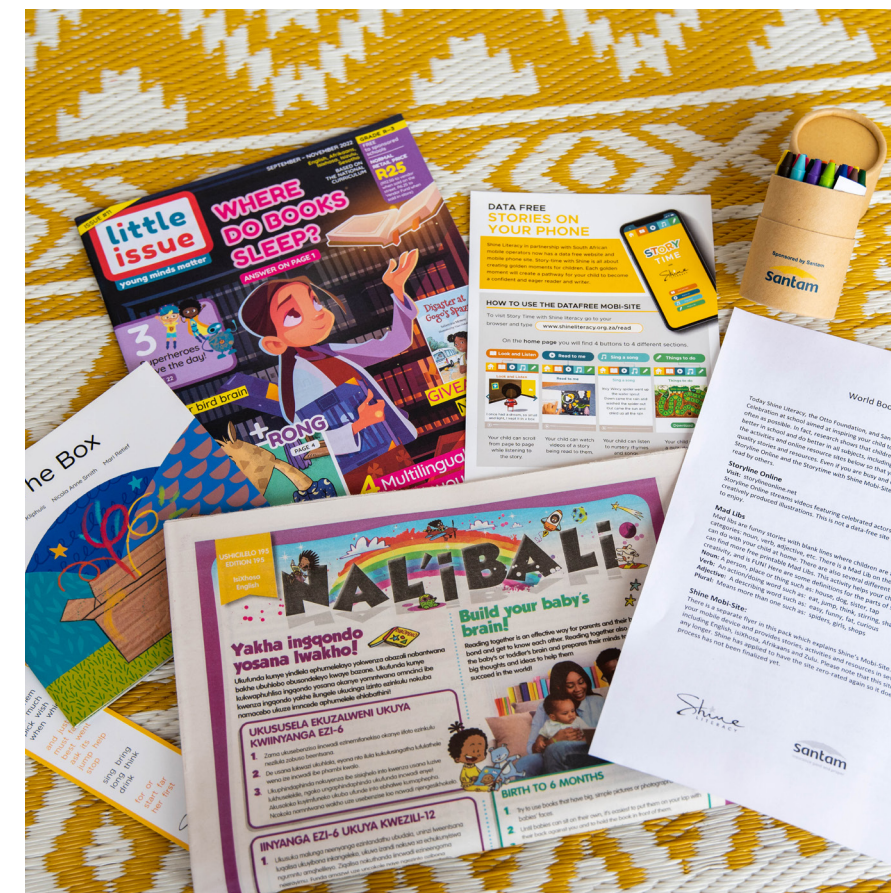




## CREATING A CULTURE OF READING AT HOME

**STARTED IN 2020 TO CONTINUE READING OPPORTUNITIES** for learners in lockdown, we continued distributing take-home packs with resources to encourage reading in the home.

In 2022, 15,172 children across 46 schools received four take-home reading packs each, for a total of 60,688 packs distributed. These packs not only provide reading opportunities to the learners who receive them, but also engage caregivers, siblings, and other family members – resulting in even more reading.



## THE TAKE HOME PACKS INCLUDED:

1. a children's magazine called *The Little Issue* which is filled with Department of Basic Education endorsed games, stories and activities
2. a Shine Literacy game with dice and counters
3. a storybook
4. a parent pack to help parents support their children's learning
5. Wordworks TIME pack
6. links to the *Talking Stories* App where 30 readers can be downloaded
7. stationery pack of crayons, pencils and a drawing book
8. a deck of cards





# STORY TIME

with



Look and Listen



Read to me



Sing a Song



Things to do



## STORY TIME WITH SHINE (MOBI-SITE)

Our mobi-site was birthed during lockdown with a goal of reaching children in their homes and increasing access to reading opportunities.

Since inception, the Shine Mobi-site has achieved:

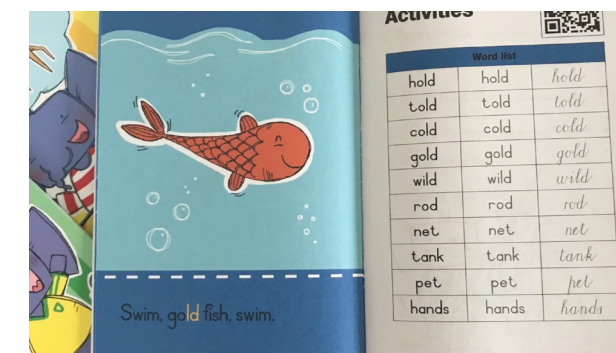
- 39,124 new users
- 601,780 page views
- In 2022, 1000 monthly users listened to at least 2 books per session



70% of all-time users have been female and under the age of 44, which we assume are female caregivers using the app.

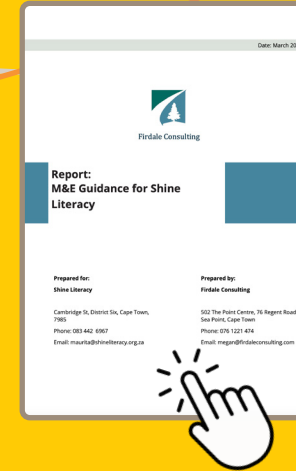
We lost our data-free status in 2022 after the state of emergency ended. In 2023 we will explore reverse billing options and ways to reduce the data size of content. We also plan to add books in all 11 official languages.

We would like to thank Book Dash for their beautiful books which are free of copyright. Without their collaboration this project would not have flown as it has. In July 2022, we partnered with Curious Learning using their Curious Reader software to create karaoke-style readers that incorporated some of our paired reading methodology into our technology. This increased our readership and we are grateful to them for this collaboration.



Activities		
Word list		
hold	hold	hold
told	told	told
cold	cold	cold
gold	gold	gold
wild	wild	wild
rod	rod	rod
net	net	net
tank	tank	tank
pet	pet	pet
hands	hands	hands





## MONITORING AND EVALUATION GUIDANCE REPORT

We embarked on a review of our current programmes, data collection, and evaluation approaches through a collaboration with Firdale Consulting. The report reviewed several of Shine's programmes, including Shine's approach to monitoring and evaluation of these programmes. It also placed the Youth4Literacy (Y4L) programme within the broader context of the Shine organisation and other national reading programmes and determined what information is available to measure the impact of Y4L.

### KEY FINDINGS FROM THIS REPORT INCLUDE:

- This review reinforces Shine's belief in its flagship model, Shine Literacy Hour (SLH) and finds that the approach is backed up by global best practices and evidence.
- Covid has changed the way Shine works – and it has changed the way schools work. The individual and one-on-one assistance that Shine has historically provided to a subset of learners in the classroom no longer meets the demands of the moment in our post-lockdown environment, most children in the classroom need catch-up support. Additionally, volunteers are less forthcoming than they have been previously, and access to schools is more challenging, requiring new approaches to sourcing and training reading partners.
- Shine has responded to the changed context by adapting its SLH model and introducing new and different programmes. This is in line with a core principle underpinning our approach – to provide programmes that are practical, relevant and easy-to-use. These programmes are new and have variable implementation at present, so will require some enhancements to be more easily evaluated.
- Shine has also entered into new partnerships to deliver on these programmes, particularly with the WCED and Presidential Youth Employment Initiative (PYEI). While these partnerships enable scale and reach, they also make it difficult to standardise delivery and collect consistent data about programme delivery and impact. Further research into the outcomes of these models would be beneficial, once they have stabilised.

We would like to thank the Allan & Gill Gray Philanthropies for their support to review our work.

The full report can be found [here](#)



# SHINE'S SUNSET

## A LETTER FROM OUR BOARD

### THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS IRREVERSIBLY ALTERED THE EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

in South Africa and created a greater need than ever for reading catch-up programmes. As we transitioned into the COVID recovery period in 2022, we also embarked on a recruitment process to appoint a new Director as our founding Director, Maurita, prepared to retire. We reviewed our strategies to respond to the COVID-era needs in our programmes and found them to be incomplete in a COVID recovery context.

Following this realisation and two director recruitment drives, we found ourselves at a turning point, which catalysed some deep reflection. We began to imagine Shine into the future, and asked ourselves: "What is the essence of Shine? What do we have to offer that we believe remains absolutely critical for the children of South Africa?"

The answer is easy: Shine can turn a struggling reader into a confident reader in as little as six months. We can train anyone to do it. We package our models in a simple, 'paint-by-numbers' way that is easy to replicate.



Over the years, Shine has experimented with different ways to help children learn to read for meaning. This has included Shine Centres, which harnessed the time, skills and love of committed volunteers; a social franchise model with Shine Chapters; training youth to work in classrooms; pairing older children and young children as 'book buddies'; take home packs and digital resources; and training parents to embed a culture of reading at home. Through each of these models, we have remained focused on our North Star: helping children read with meaning and confidence. We have done this with a focus on the 'magic' that makes Shine effective: the quality of relationships, a safe learning space, solid partnerships, high-quality learning resources, and practical training.

Since we launched our first Shine Centre at Observatory Primary in 2000, a lot has changed. At the time, we were one of only a few non-profit organisations (NPOs) focused on reading. Since then, many more organisations have been established to improve reading, and some provincial governments are investing heavily in foundation phase literacy. There are more models available, and more research about what works in what context. Government is scaling up youth employment programmes. This creates challenges and opportunities.

**In this context, we believe that the 'magic' of Shine is needed more than ever.**





**But is sustaining Shine in its current form – as an NPO – the only way to achieve this? And is it the best way? After deep reflection, forecasting and planning, we have come to realise that the answer is: ‘No’.**

And so Shine is taking a bold step: we are launching a ‘sunsetting’ strategy. This entails the managed transition of our activities from our hands to our chapter partners’ hands, whilst at the same time open-licensing and sharing our curricula so it is available to partners, literacy programmes, funders and government into the future.

This is an unconventional path. While many nonprofits have shut down due to insufficient funds, it often happens ‘on the back foot’ – an unwanted response to difficult circumstances.

We are not making this decision under financial pressure. Shine has loyal funders, a strong individual donation base, and healthy reserves. Nor is this decision our only option: we explored a merger with a like-minded literacy organisation, and we could continue to seek a new Director. Choosing proactively to sunset is a response to a changing environment, and a clear-eyed assessment of how our experience and resources can best serve the children of South Africa into the future.

We see this as not as a defensive move, but as the opposite: a joyful celebration of what Shine has contributed over the years, and a thoughtful, considered approach to ensuring its intellectual property, experience, and learning becomes a public good, in service of all who are committed to improving literacy.

And we see it as a courageous, innovative path – one we hope may inspire others. Nonprofits are facing rising operational costs, scarce funding and a context of volatility. Under these conditions, organisations may find themselves pushed to prioritise survival over delivering on their purpose. When we let go of the imperative to sustain Shine as an organisation indefinitely into the future, we were amazed at the innovative thinking it catalysed and the opportunities that appeared – and we are excited and energised to explore them over the months ahead.

**At the end of the sunsetting process, in March 2024, we plan to have achieved the following:**

1. Strengthened our Chapters to continue, deepen, and grow their work in the schools and communities they support.
2. Open-sourced our materials for wider use so that they can continue impacting readers indefinitely.
3. Built awareness, skills, and knowledge about key reading support skills in volunteers, paraprofessionals, and the people who support them.
4. Fulfilled all of our existing programme, funder, and partner commitments alongside the sunset process.
5. Sunset with integrity to our values and ethos with accountability to our team, partners, and funders and to all financial and government requirements.
6. Shared our learnings from this process with the sector, with honesty, integrity and courage, to share best practice and inspire others.

As embodied in our Trust Deed, at the end of the Sunset we will be donating our remaining funds to our Shine Chapters and to other like-minded literacy NPOs, as approved by our Board, so that our influence and legacy will live on through others. And even after Shine has formally closed its doors, our learnings, training and resources will continue to support struggling readers through these partners.

Along this journey, we plan to document and share what we learn – including where we misstep and change course. We hope to offer a good-practice blueprint to organisations who, like Shine, come to realise that sustaining an organisation may not be the only way, or the best way, to achieve their ultimate goal.

Our vision, as Shine, is ‘a nation of readers’ – because we know that ‘words can change worlds’. We hope to leave a legacy that feeds into that goal for many years to come. And we invite you to join us on that journey.

Sincerely,

***Kehiloe Ntsekhe***

BOARD CHAIR ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF SHINE LITERACY







## **SHINE LITERACY**

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