



ANNUAL REPORT 2019



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2019 **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

FORGED BY FIRE



These are trying times. The country as a whole is grappling with massive socio-economic challenges, the national fiscus is in very bad shape (burdened by numerous failing state-owned enterprises such as Eskom), the Eastern Cape Province is suffering from a protracted drought, and the woes of Makana Municipality deepen day-by-day. In a context of government failure, it is a relief that organisations such as GADRA Education provide outstanding service to communities and individuals who cannot afford to engage the private sector.

GADRA's presence in public primary school classrooms in Grahamstown increased significantly in 2019. It successfully piloted an internship programme that provided human resources (HR) support to ten selected Foundation Phase classrooms and it took its Whistle Stop intervention at Tanti Primary School up to full capacity. The main purpose of this work is to support the development of literacy skills for the city's disadvantaged young children. It measures the effectiveness of this work through checking the beneficiaries' gains in oral reading fluency. Based on considerable data, we can conclusively assert that GADRA made a massive contribution to the literacy advancement of over 500 children in 2019.

2019 was not a good year for matric results in Grahamstown. But they would have been a whole lot worse without the 9/10ths Mentoring Programme and the GADRA Matric School (GMS). The former helped to deliver the second highest ever cumulative number of Bachelor passes from Ntsika, Nombulelo and Mary Waters. Not too long ago, the most Bachelor passes produced by all six no-fee schools was 62; it is therefore impressive that the three participating schools were responsible for 79 Bachelors in 2019. GMS 'shot the lights out' last year, with the two highlights of its performance

being a record 160 Bachelor passes and a 97% success rate in its expanded 'bridging' programme.

Having been a beneficiary of GADRA's bursary programme approximately 40 years ago, in my youth, it gives me particular pleasure to report that it had a stellar year in 2019, achieving a staggering 94% success rate. Many of these beneficiaries together with growing numbers of GMS alumni and other local students will be graduating from Rhodes in April. We celebrate with all these youngsters. It is entirely fitting that there is an increasing number of local disadvantaged students featuring during Rhodes graduation ceremonies because this symbolises the growing and deepening partnership between GADRA and the university.

Despite GADRA's unprecedented programme success, the funding environment is becoming increasingly challenging. It is thus particularly relevant for me to close this report by thanking all the organisation's supporters - donors, community members, educationists - for having contributed so generously and effectively in 2019. I urge you all to remain loyal to GADRA as we chart our course into an unknown future.

FINANCIAL REPORT

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT

	2019 (ZAR)	2018 (ZAR)
INCOME		
Donations	11 239 633	9 205 356
Interest and Sundry Income	2 075 543	2 084 445
Fees	1 181 980	843 380
TOTAL	14 497 156	12 133 181
EXPENDITURE		
GADRA Matric School	4 159 332	3 703 303
Primary Education Programme	3 848 414	3 578 399
Bursaries	349 016	636 672
Advocacy	893 309	531 549
Administration	252 500	257 052
Fixed Asset Expense	62 360	58 722
TOTAL	9 564 931	8 765 697
Surplus for the year	4 932 225	3 367 484

BALANCE SHEET

	2019 (ZAR)	2018 (ZAR)
ASSETS		
Non-current Assets	17 760 455	13 620 740
Current Assets	4 082 516	3 053 334
TOTAL ASSETS	21 842 971	16 674 074
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Equity	20 073 559	14 674 088
Liabilities	1 769 412	1 999 986
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	21 842 971	16 674 074



NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

GADRA sustained a physical presence in nine public school foundation phase classrooms in 2019. Instead of continuing to offer literacy support in the form of a professional (as had been the case in 2018), the organisation opted for an internship model last year. Nine alumni of the GADRA Matric School were recommended by senior teaching staff for the programme. These students were orientated, trained and each assigned to a specific class for the duration of the year. They were required to be in class for 10 hours per week to offer small group literacy enhancement interventions. The impact of the work was assessed through measuring changes in the oral reading fluency of the learner beneficiaries.

One of the realities of Quintile 1 – 3 classrooms is large class sizes with significant variation in learners' respective abilities. Government requires that teachers cover the prescribed curriculum according to stipulated timeframes. This imperative means that the vocational calling to teach children is generally quashed. Specifically, teachers generally have no time to attend to the educational needs and challenges of individual learners. Invariably this means that the weaker children gain precious little in class and so the gap between the stronger and weaker learners grows larger over the course of the Foundation Phase.

A big advantage of providing intern support to teachers in a regular and predictable manner is that it enables group work. One of the most pleasing measures of success is that the programme enabled high percentages of all learners to improve their oral reading fluency by at least one grade level. Specifically, in five of the nine classrooms at least 75% of all learners improved by this quantum. A key measure of the health of an education system is its retention rate. The South African education system is characterised by a notoriously high drop-out rate. Functional illiteracy lies at the heart of the drop-out crisis. There is a need to explore and mainstream interventions such as the internship model that enables all children to benefit from and develop at school.



AS EFFECTIVE IN ISIXHOSA AS IN ENGLISH

GADRA completed its third full year of the Whistle Stop School pilot programme in 2019. Over the preceding two years, the school had built up an impressive data set for the St Mary's site, which indicates that the literacy intervention doubles the rate of normal development in English. Normal development of oral reading fluency in English at the Foundation Phase is 25 additional words per minute. In other words, by the end of Grade 3 a child whose language of learning and teaching (LoLT) is English should be reading 75 words per minute. Data collected from the St Mary's site in 2017 and 2018 indicated that the Whistle Stop intervention doubles this advancement from 25 to 50 additional words per minute. (This assertion was confirmed by the data collected at St Mary's last year.)



Having successfully undertaken this pilot work in an English medium context, GADRA decided to test the effectiveness of the Whistle Stop intervention in an isiXhosa medium context in 2019. It selected Tantyi Primary School as the test site; for more in this regard, be sure to view the report poster. For the duration of the year, GADRA employed a full contingent of three teachers at the site. The basic strategy was to support the development of isiXhosa literacy in the Foundation Phase and to facilitate the switch to English (as the new LoLT) in Grade 4.

The isiXhosa language has an agglutinative structure. That is, the language tends to express concepts in complex words comprising several elements. For this reason, normal oral reading fluency development in isiXhosa is approximately half the number of words that one would expect in English.

GADRA is thrilled to report that the outcomes achieved in the first year of Whistle Stop at Tantyi were phenomenal, highlighted by the following:

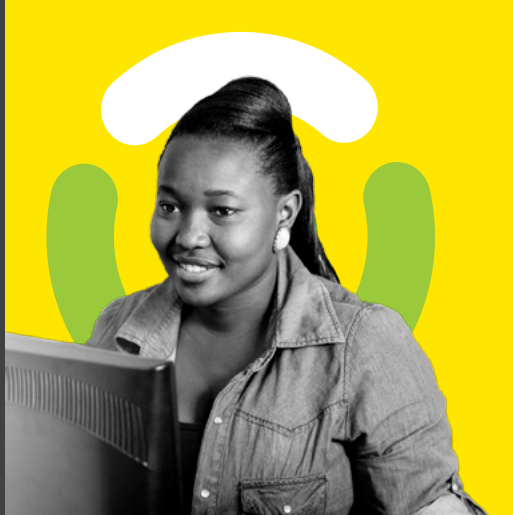
1. On average the Grade 1 learners were reading 18 words per minute (wpm) at year-end.
2. On average the Grade 2's Oral Reading Fluency improved from 3 wpm in January all the way up to 36 wpm in November. This 33 wpm increase over the year is considerably more than what would normally be anticipated and enabled the class on average to jump two grade levels, from Grade 1 to Grade 3 level in the course of one year.

In 2020 GADRA hopes to use the impressive data from both the St Marys and Tantyi sites to influence policy and advocate for the take-up of more effective literacy teaching practices.



9/10ths MENTORING

A RUBRIC FOR STIMULATING TOP-END MATIC SUCCESS



2019 was a bad year for public school matric results in Grahamstown. The number of successful candidates declined from 2018, the overall city-wide pass rate dropped and there were considerably fewer matriculants who secured a cherished Bachelor pass. Across the board, in fee-paying and no-fee schools alike, the local results declined. The declines were most severe and dramatic at the top-end of the performance spectrum, namely at Bachelor level. Whereas 238 public school matriculants secured Bachelor passes in 2018, only 187 members of the class of 2019 reached this level. This is a massive drop of 51 (22%).

Within this challenging context it is reassuring to report that the 9/10ths Mentoring Programme (a joint initiative of Gadra Education and Rhodes University) delivered the impressive quantum of 79 Bachelor passes in 2019. This is the second highest number of Bachelor passes produced cumulatively by the three target schools (Ntsika, Nombulelo and Mary Waters), after the record-smashing feat of 2018. The 2019 performance should be viewed as a consolidation of the incredible gains made the previous year. What it demonstrates is that the structured mentoring programme that GADRA has tried, tested and improved over the past five years is a rubric for stimulating top-end matric success.

It recognises that education and learning are cumulative; one's learning today builds on one's prior learning. Performance in Grade 12 depends on the skills, competencies and characteristics that one has developed over the full duration of one's life and schooling experience. Mentoring support has the greatest impact when it gains traction with prior experience and existing traits. Thus it should be targeted at matriculants who want to succeed and have an inclination to study. This is the group that is best placed to develop meaningful personal plans, adopt and implement effective study skills and seize incentives offered for academic achievement (such as preferential access to tertiary study opportunities). This, more than anything, is the over-riding lesson to be drawn from the outcomes achieved by the 9/10ths Mentoring Programme over the past four years in general and last year in particular. Even when the going got very tough in 2019, the programme still managed to support the tough to get going!

	2019	2018	2017
Mary Waters	23	19	16
Nombulelo	28	34	14
Ntsika	28	36	22
TOTAL	79	89	52

REBORN AS A TOP-END BRIDGING SCHOOL

In 2014 GADRA decided that the best way to sustain its Matric School (GMS) would be to transform it from an all-purpose finishing school into a top-end bridging school. This mission has not yet been accomplished in its entirety, but 2019 will go down as the year in which the school made tremendous strides in this regard. **There are now three distinct categories of student at the school, as follows:**

1. Select Bachelor students placed in one of several bridging programmes, offered in partnership with Rhodes University.
2. Students who have already secured Bachelor passes but who require additional university admission points.
3. Students who do not have Bachelor level passes.

GMS'S PERFORMANCE ACROSS ALL THREE OF THE STUDENT CATEGORIES WAS OUTSTANDING, AS SUMMARISED BELOW.

BRIDGING STUDENTS

GMS placed 31 Bachelor students in bridging programmes in 2019. 30 of these students (97%) passed their respective Rhodes University courses and have therefore registered as full-time students in early 2020.

LOW POINTS BACHELORS

GADRA registered 41 students in this situation in 2019. The key for them was to increase their points to put them in a position to submit competitive university applications in future.

RU POINTS	INCOMING	OUTGOING
40 - 44,9	-	1
35 - 39,9	3	25
30 - 34,9	12	10
25 - 29,9	17	5
20 - 24,9	9	-

The two most important observations about the tabulated data are as follows:

1. All but five of the students pushed their respective points' tallies to 30 or above.
2. 26 of the students (63% of the total) pushed up to 35 points or above.

STUDENTS WITHOUT BACHELORS

Of the 130 students who came into the school without a Bachelor pass, 87 (67%) reached this level by the end of the year, as tabulated below. This is the highest-ever number of new Bachelors produced by GMS in a single year. 45 of the new Bachelor-level passes amassed 33+ Rhodes points. These candidates are thus now in a position to apply to Rhodes.

	INCOMING	OUTGOING
Bachelor	-	87
Diploma	98	39
Higher Certificate	14	2
Fail	18	2

GADRA'S SUCCESS WITH ALL THREE OF THESE CATEGORIES MEANS THAT THE THROUGHPUT OF STUDENTS TO RHODES CONTINUES TO GROW FROM YEAR-TO-YEAR.

In 2020 approximately 70 GMS alumni have registered as 1st year students at the province's leading university.

Tantyi

HOPE RISES

Photo: Tim Hacksley

Tantyi location was formalised a long time ago, but today it is home to one of the poorest communities in Grahamstown/Makhanda. Tantyi Primary School was one of the first schools established in the locality, but it suffered an awful first decade of this century. Very weak leadership and inadequate management undermined teaching and learning at the school. Consequently parents pulled their children out of the school and standards dropped alarmingly.

The installation of Mr Nuntsu as School Principal circa 2010 was a key moment in stabilising and restoring the school. In addition, it was blessed with committed teachers such as Ms Peter, Mrs Phillip and Mrs Vabaza. In this context, GADRA decided in 2018 to open a second branch of the Whistle Stop School at Tantyi. The results have been immediate and there is a noticeable transformation underway at the school. Despair has been overcome by hope and joy has replaced sadness.



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MORE INFORMATION

Dr Ashley Westaway GADRA Education Manager
Tel: 046 622 4837 **Email:** ashley@gadraed.co.za

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