



2023

ANNUAL REPORT



*scaling
the summit*



WALKING TOGETHER

2023 CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

When I was a five-year-old boy in the 60s, there was an occasion when I was sick and my mother decided that I needed to visit the doctor. But in those days, transport was scarce, and we waited and waited for what seemed like an eternity. At some point, I had obviously had enough because my Mom told me that I abruptly stood up and declared, "Nazi iinyawo, nantsi indlela" (Here are the feet, here is the road).

PROF. KENNETH MLUNGISI NGCOZA



Over the past ten years, GADRA has not only walked the road... it has, on occasion, actually made the road by walking it. Here I am thinking about the amazing array of innovations that GADRA has conceptualised, piloted and institutionalised over this period, such as the 9/10ths mentoring programme, the Bridging Programme, and the Whistle Stop School. Through these interventions, GADRA has pioneered new literacy trajectories and opened new pathways to tertiary study.

GADRA is integral to the education community of Makhanda. We have chosen the path of cooperation and collaboration. Increasingly, every decision that the organisation makes and every programme that it conceptualises is fashioned and forged in collaboration with others. In 2023, three new programmes were designed, namely Grade 4 comprehension assessment, SAC/DSG Maths and Science Academy, and 1st year Rhodes mentoring. All these interventions are fundamentally sustainable in their design in that the implementation onus rests on established partner organisations, namely Rhodes University and St Andrews College/Diocesan School for Girls. This approach - cost-efficient, collaborative, high impact - is the GADRA way.

In February 2023, I accompanied the Treasurer (Margie Keeton) and Manager (Ashley Westaway) to a meeting where we were privileged to present the organisation's 2023

- 2027 Strategic Plan to the Rhodes Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mabizela. The overriding vision of the plan is that Makhanda emerges as the leading academic centre in South Africa by 2027. Professor Mabizela was so inspired and emboldened by this vision that he proposed, at a heartbeat, that we should convene a Makhanda Education Summit. This was the genesis and origin of the summit that so captured the hearts and minds of the education community in the city.

This is a fitting moment to introduce my favourite proverb. It's an African proverb, which goes as follows: "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Throughout its illustrious history of sixty-five years, GADRA has been a community organisation. On a personal note, this year I celebrate 50 years (not out) of being involved with GADRA as a student, a science teacher, a donor, and its Chair.

Since its founding in the 1950s, GADRA has been integral to the community of Makhanda, responding to community needs and walking the road with the community. As a result, it has walked far, it has accomplished great things, and it has transformed thousands of lives. As GADRA gears up to reach the educational summit, we invite you to join our mission to establish Makhanda as the leading educational city in South Africa.

2023 CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

WALKING TOGETHER

FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 DECEMBER 2023

Income and Expenditure Statement

	2023 (ZAR)	2022 (ZAR)
INCOME		
Donations	6 940 007	10 522 875
Interest and Sundry Income	4 045 256	3 832 803
Fees	1 870 781	1 959 901
TOTAL	12 856 044	16 315 579
EXPENDITURE		
Primary Education Programme	2 746 321	4 204 185
Secondary Education Programme	4 877 414	4 506 511
Tertiary Education Programme	449 702	196 946
Research and Publicity	521 256	-
Administration	452 685	738 334
TOTAL	9 047 378	9 645 976
Surplus for the year	3 808 666	6 669 603

Balance Sheet

	2023 (ZAR)	2022 (ZAR)
ASSETS		
Non-current Assets	35 360 858	32 951 050
Current Assets	6 515 488	4 435 204
TOTAL ASSETS	41 876 346	37 386 254
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		
Equity	39 878 564	35 865 763
Liabilities	1 997 782	1 520 491
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	41 876 346	37 386 254

FINANCIAL REPORT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023



SCALING THE SUMMIT



GADRA's new strategic plan kicked in on 1 January 2023. Given our relationship with Rhodes University, we prioritised presenting the plan to Vice-Chancellor Mabizela. We secured this opportunity in February, shortly after Orientation Week. Professor Mabizela's response to GADRA's vision that Makhanda emerges as the country's leading educational city and be recognised as such was beyond expectation. He immediately associated himself with the vision to the extent that he suggested we should convene an education summit to mobilise and galvanise all local stakeholders. Given the standing of Professor Mabizela in the city and his leadership credibility, GADRA immediately appreciated the potential impact of the proposed summit and consequently threw its full weight behind the planning and preparation processes throughout the year.

An initial task was to constitute a Planning Committee (PC) and GADRA was thrilled that Ms Margie Keeton and Professor Ken Ngcoza were entrusted to lead this structure. It was decided that the summit would cover early childhood education and care (ECEC), primary schooling and high schooling. The PC decided that the summit should initially take stock of the accomplishments of the recent period and then plan to reach even greater heights. There were two key aspects to the stock-taking preparation work, namely, situation analysis and SWOT analysis. The former was a desktop study, whereas the latter was a participatory exercise involving all sector Principals. GADRA played leadership roles in relation to both aspects, for the primary and secondary schooling sectors.

For the past decade, GADRA has focused its time, attention and energy on no-fee or fee-exempt public schools. We have done so because our mission is to create educational opportunities for disadvantaged young people. However, the summit is an inclusive forum designed to recognise and maximise the contributions of all stakeholders. This imperative has required GADRA to broaden its networks and strengthen its relations with both fee-paying and independent schools. We are now better positioned to play a meaningful role in fostering a city-wide social movement to establish Makhanda as the leading academic educational city in South Africa.



THE MAKHANDA
EDUCATION SUMMIT IS
SCHEDULED TO TAKE
PLACE AT RHODES
UNIVERSITY CAMPUS

SCALING THE SUMMIT



MAKHANDA READS TO LEARN

The most significant education event of 2023 was the release of the 2021 PIRLS (Progress in International Reading Literacy Study). Distressingly the study revealed that only 19% of South African Grade 4 children can read for meaning in the language in which they were taught during the Foundation Phase. This signals a three-percentage point decline from the 2016 PIRLS, at which time 22% of Grade 4's could read for meaning.

GADRA has long been critical of the lack of reliable learner assessment at primary school level and its Strategic Plan now directs the organisation to set Makhanda on course to become the leading educational city in South Africa.

Thus, shortly after the release of the results, we started discussing how we could conduct PIRLS-equivalent research locally. In the ensuing process, we consulted with both the Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education (PECE) at Rhodes University and Professor Lilli Pretorius.

The outcome illustrates what is possible when competent, committed people get together, determined to plot a constructive way forward.

It was agreed that city-wide research would be carried out by the 4th Year BEd students in September, under the management of PECE and GADRA professionals, using instruments designed by GADRA and vetted by Prof Pretorius. Before proceeding with the research, ethics approvals were obtained from both the Department of Basic Education and Rhodes University. Moreover, written agreements were finalised with all participating schools.

The research process was implemented as planned, yielding a rich, reliable, substantial data set.

Analysis of the data produced the following overall findings:

- 1 40% of Makhanda Grade 4 learners are Able to Read for Meaning in the language in which they were taught in the Foundation Phase. This is more than double the national comprehension rate of 19%.**
- 2 32% of learners attending quintile 1-4 schools are Able to Read for Meaning, while 83% of learners attending quintile 5 and low-fee private schools can comprehend text. This shows the significance of class in local educational outcomes.**
- 3 62% of learners for whom English was the LoLT (Language of Learning and teaching) of their Foundation Phase are able to read for meaning. Comparatively, 24% of learners attending schools where the LoLT of the Foundation Phase is isiXhosa and 19% of those attending Afrikaans LoLT schools are able to read for meaning.**

Encouragingly, the PECE Department has decided that the research will be institutionalised as service learning for 4th year BEd students in future. The 2024 research exercise is scheduled for February.

MAKHANDA READS TO LEARN

ROLLING OUT THE RED CARPET

A quarter of all South African children are taught in English in the Foundation Phase. For many of these children, English is not their primary language; in other words, it is not the language that they speak at home. This generalisation certainly holds true in Makhanda since the vast majority of children at Good Shepherd, St Mary's, amongst other public schools, do not come from homes where English is the primary language. Despite this, these learners performed relatively well in the city-wide Grade 4 comprehension assessments, outperforming those who attended schools where the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) is their primary home language. Importantly, there was considerable variability across the English-medium schools. Some performed considerably better than others. Generally speaking, the under-performing schools do not benefit from external support.

Most of the current efforts to bolster literacy in the country are focusing on African languages. Whilst this is justified and appropriate, it does overlook a huge number of South African children, many of whom are both disadvantaged and not being taught in their primary language.

During the COVID lockdown, GADRA's Whistle Stop School (WSS) teachers developed materials aimed at enabling the learners to make literacy gains despite the lack of in-person teaching. These resources subsequently inspired the idea to roll out the WSS model through a combination of teacher support and material provision. The concept was successfully piloted at St Mary's and Good Shepherd in 2023.

In response to the Grade 4 assessment results and success of the pilot year, GADRA has decided to speed-up the roll-out process. In 2024, it will implement the programme across the Foundation Phase (15 classrooms) at George Dickerson and Ntaba Maria. Moreover, it will undertake rigorous Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) as the basis for motivating a larger roll-out in future years.



ROLLING OUT THE RED CARPET

GETTING BACK ON THE BICYCLE

2023 was the first full year after COVID-19 that education was properly back to normal; Rhodes University was entirely back to in situ teaching and learning, and schools had a full, uninterrupted year. Yet there were marked differences in the abilities, disciplines and inclination for learning of learners and students in 2023 compared with those of 2019.

The literacy baseline of the WSS learners was much lower than in the pre-COVID period. GMS students lacked the discipline and application that we had become accustomed to. The numeracy ability of Grade 12 students in fee-exempt public schools in 2023, as reflected in their mathematical Literacy (MLIT) results, was very poor. In 2023, the COVID-19 chickens came home to roost.

GADRA seeks to understand the challenges that it confronts and to grapple successfully with these. The literacy challenges affecting WSS beneficiaries were effectively confronted by the existing model, to the extent that the school produced outstanding improvements in oral reading fluency in 2023.

The GADRA Matric School experience was more challenging because this pioneering school benefits 18 to 21 year old students. Most of the members of the GMS Class of 2023 were in Grades 10 and 11 during the debilitating years of COVID-19 lockdown.

Because the no-fee public schools were largely inoperative during this period, the students were not required to prepare for tests or examinations in the first two years of the FET phase of their schooling.

Consequently, their basic academic disciplines (summarising, studying, examination writing)

declined. In 2023, the GMS staff struggled to undo the damage wrought by lockdown. The school sets and maintains very high standards, but we were unable to reach lofty heights in 2023.

When reflecting on these challenges at the end of the year, the professional staff opted to institute several changes in 2024 in a bid to push back against the crushing educational consequences of COVID-19. 2024 will see a deliberate, sustained application of the school's Code of Conduct, including its insistence on student attendance and punctuality. In addition, the teachers will implement the Vygotskian strategy of scaffolding; that is, they will break down complex concepts and tasks into smaller, more manageable steps and provide support and feedback as students engage.

For the past decade, GMS has played a central role in the resurgence of Makhanda as a city of educational excellence. Throughout this period, it has been the leading feeder school of Rhodes University, and for the past five years, it has been the university's biggest producer of graduates.



GADRA IS DETERMINED TO CONTINUE BOTH TO DELIVER OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONAL SERVICES TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE CITY AND TO BOOST THE QUALITY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLING IN THE NO-FEE SECTOR.

GETTING BACK ON THE BICYCLE



SCALING THE SUMMIT
requires unity of purpose,
ambition and determination to
be the best, and a commitment
to collaborative effort.

The Makhanda community has adopted the vision to establish the city as South Africa's education leader. We have done the planning and preparation, chosen the best route, and equipped ourselves. Now we embark on our quest, together, to scale the educational summit.



From GADRA to Rhodes



Reading at WSS



Art at WSS



Collaborative leadership



SCALING THE SUMMIT
UNITY



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