






Penreach

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



A Message from Our CEO

Although I have only stepped into the role of CEO full-time at the end of 2025, I have been part of the Penreach family since 2014.

One thing to realise about Penreach is that it is a family. Whether you are a Change Agent, manager, administrator, intern, facilitator, educator, government official, parent, bursary scholar, funder, NGO partner or service provider, you become part of the Penreach family story. Whether we see you once or every day, the connection is made and you remain part of Penreach.

At the heart of Penreach are relationships. Our 2025 Teacher Awards theme, Under the Penreach Tree, captured this beautifully. It reflected how we see our work: people gathering together in spaces that feel natural and protected, learning from one another, supporting one another and growing together.

In 2025, we started a journey that will continue over the next three years to strengthen our Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Learning (MERL) systems. Our goal is to ensure that the impact we make on hearts can be matched by the impact we make on learning outcomes. We remain an organisation of the heart, while building a stronger culture of evidence to sit alongside our culture of care and connectedness.

As part of this work, we reviewed our organisational Theory of Change, redefined logframes across all programmes and began building the digital systems that will support this shift.

We are pleased to share some of the stories in this report from the heart of the beautiful communities we serve.

They are the stories of the Penreach family.

Thank you for being part of it.

Susanna Behrendt

Chief Executive Officer

The Penreach Theory of Change – How we believe things change:

In 2025, Penreach reviewed and refreshed its organisational Theory of Change – a living framework that describes how we believe lasting educational change happens, and why we do what we do in the way that we do it. At the centre of our Theory of Change is a simple truth: systemic barriers in under-resourced communities limit access to quality teaching, leadership, early learning and learner support. These barriers do not affect one child or one school – they affect entire communities, across generations. Our goal is to change that. We work towards improved and equitable learning outcomes for children and youth by strengthening the systems that surround them: the teachers, the leaders, the early learning spaces, and the pathways into adulthood.

We believe change happens through five interconnected levers, each building on the other.

FIVE LEVERS OF CHANGE – FROM EARLY ACTIONS TO LASTING IMPACT

Lever 1
Strengthening early learning foundations

When children have access to quality early learning, they arrive at school ready to engage. Caregivers become partners in learning. Over time, communities actively support child development, and schools sustain the partnerships that keep young learners on track.

Lever 2
Foundational literacy and numeracy

Learners who can read for meaning and work with numbers confidently are better equipped for everything that follows. We work to build this foundation early and sustain it – across literacy, numeracy and STEM – until our learners are meeting or exceeding national expectations.

Lever 3
21st-century skills and holistic development

We live in a changing world, and our learners deserve to be prepared for it. Through STEAM, digital tools and enriched learning opportunities, we work to ensure that every child – regardless of which school they attend or which community they come from – has equitable access to the skills that the future demands.

Lever 4
Sustainable educator and leadership development

Strong teachers and strong school leaders are the single greatest determinant of learner outcomes. We support educators to apply curriculum-aligned practice with confidence, and we develop school leaders who can build cultures of accountability, care and continuous improvement. The goal is not short-term performance – it is lasting professionalism, embedded in the school itself.

Lever 5
Youth employment and post school pathways

Our work does not stop when learners leave school. Through our internship and youth development programmes, young people gain real workplace experience, professional skills and structured pathways into employment, further education or entrepreneurship. Many of our interns go on to become educators, administrators and community leaders – giving back to the same system that invested in them.

Across all five levers, our work is grounded in six ways of working:

How we work:

- equity and access
- digital integration and data
- educator and peer development
- instructional leadership
- caregiver and community engagement
- public engagement and advocacy.

Together, these levers and these ways of working reflect our belief that change in education is not a single event. It is a process – built slowly, sustained deliberately, and felt most powerfully in the lives of children who get a chance they might not otherwise have had.



Reach & Scale

Educational Excellence for One and All is more than a goal. It is a mandate. In 2025, Penreach continued to build a sustainable educational ecosystem that dismantles systemic inequality – one classroom, one child, one community at a time.

By deploying a network of 130 Change Agents across South Africa, we are professionalising the workforce and strengthening the foundations of learning for the next generation.



Strategic Partnerships

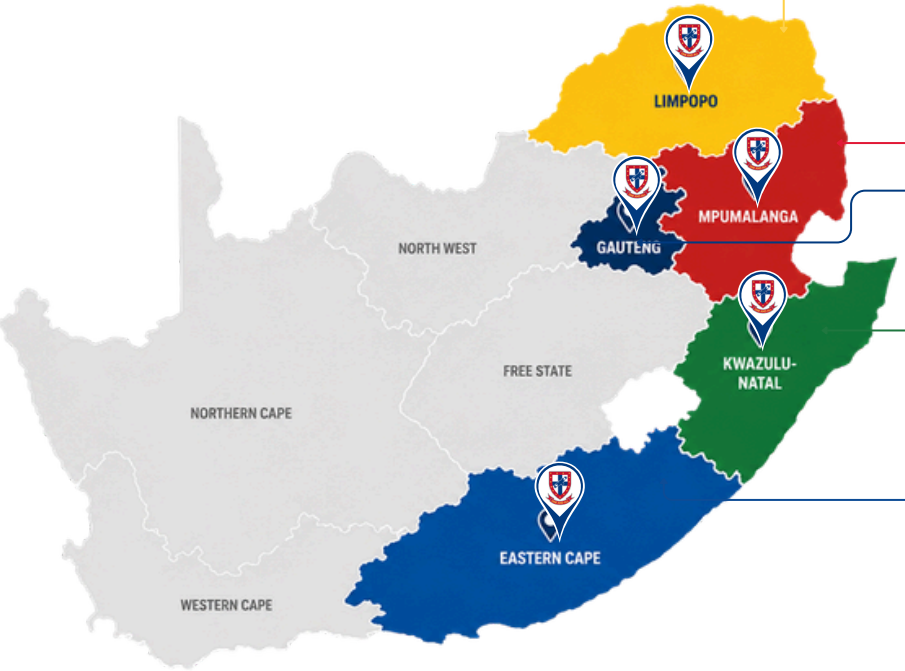
Penreach believes that lasting educational change is achieved through collaboration. Throughout 2025, we continued to strengthen partnerships with government, NGOs, universities and funders to expand access to quality learning opportunities for children and teachers across Mpumalanga.

Through our partnership with SmartStart, we contributed to increasing access to quality early learning programmes for young children. Through Edulution, learners gained access to innovative digital mathematics platforms designed to strengthen numeracy outcomes.

We also worked as part of a consortium with RED INK, Wordworks and Trackosaurus to support the Mpumalanga Department of Education in building Grade R teacher and school capacity at scale. These partnerships demonstrate the value of combining expertise, resources and shared purpose to achieve greater impact than any organisation could achieve alone.

The Penreach Footprint

2025



583 **Limpopo**
Public Primary Schools

964
Mpumalanga
Public Primary Schools

6 **Gauteng**
Primary Schools

185 **KwaZulu-Natal**
Public Primary Schools

Eastern Cape
Active Footprint



184 574
Learners reached

5
Provinces



988
Educators Registered For Teacher Development Workshops (TDW)



126
Interns placed

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ECD Supportive Systems

Impact Statement

Expand and improve access to quality early learning by strengthening ECD ecosystems through Professional Development, Compliance support, community engagement and targeted services.

Early Childhood Development (ECD): Laying the Foundation

Facilitating access to quality ECD for children from disadvantaged communities. Our intervention holistically enables young minds to make the transition from ECD to Primary Phase with ease.

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Core Scale

22 000 +
Children secured in the educational journey

1023
SmartStarters in the programme

122
Toy Libraries Supported

Performance vs. Target

Child Well-being (Nutritional Support)

3685 Children

182% of target

Parental Engagement

2145 Parents

121% of target

Key Action Highlight



21 000
books distributed to foster home-based reading

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ECD SmartStart – Play That Builds

SmartStart is a national early learning programme that brings structured, play-based learning into communities where formal ECD services are limited. Penreach is proud to be an implementing partner of SmartStart, working through (coaches) and community-based organisations (CBOs) to reach children in the spaces where they already live and grow.

What the Support Looks Like

- Coaching and mentoring for practitioners
- Child registration support
- Monitoring visits and programme quality support
- Assistance with implementing play-based early learning activities
- Training support (First Aid, Business Skills and Child Progress)
- Support to improve compliance and increase access to early learning opportunities

11 033

Children Reached



Click here

Success Story

SmartStart Unite Awards

Penreach Asidlaleni Toy Libraries: Learning Through Play

Play is the language of childhood. Through our 100+ Asidlaleni Toy Libraries – both static and mobile – Penreach gives children, practitioners and parents access to educational toys and playbased resources that support creativity, communication, problem-solving and social development.

Children accessing toys and play opportunities reflects growing community trust in the programme and stronger delivery of quality early childhood experiences.

6 720

Children Reached



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Success Story

Dlala. Spielen. Speel. 122nd Toy Library Launched

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TOY
LIBRARY



Early Childhood Development (ECD): Growing Quality from the Inside

ECD Continuous Professional Development

Impact Statement

Increase access to quality Early Childhood Development services for all children

The early years are the most important years. Everything we do in ECD is about making sure that every child – no matter where they are born or what their family can afford – gets the best possible start in life.

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The ECD Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programme is about more than training. It is about walking alongside practitioners and centre managers, helping them grow in confidence and skill so that every child in their care benefits.

Through ongoing coaching, mentoring and classroom support visits, Change Agents work with practitioners to improve teaching practices, create stimulating environments, and build sustainable, well-managed ECD centres.

What the Support Looks Like

115 Practitioners participated in training and support programmes

90 Centres registered via Bana Pele Mass Regsitration

11 110 Children Reached

190 ECD Centres Supported



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NQF Level 4 Graduation!

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ECD

Continuous Professional Development



SCHOOL READINESS INITIATIVE

Impact Statement

All children are ready for Grade 1

School Readiness Initiative (SRI) and MP -R

Maths & Literacy for Grade R Children

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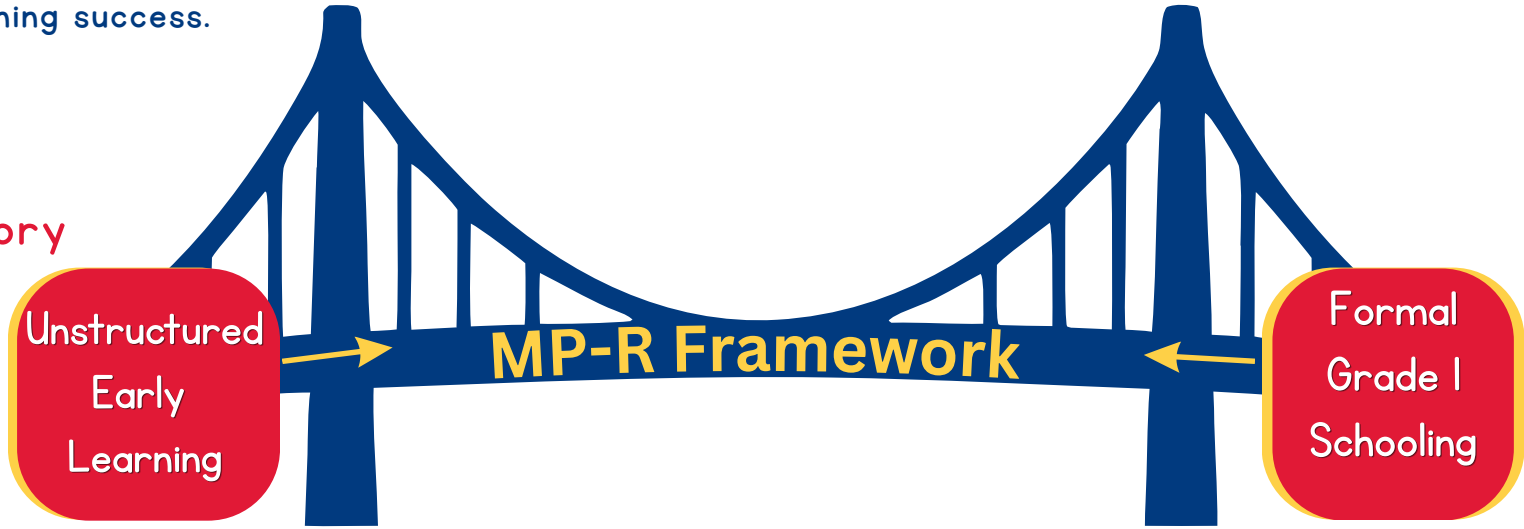
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In 2025, the School Readiness Initiative (SRI) became an important component of the broader Mpumalanga Grade R Teacher Capacity Building Programme (MP-R), a provincial initiative designed to strengthen the quality of Grade R education across Mpumalanga's quintile 1-3 schools. Building on years of implementation and learning through SRI, the programme now contributes to a larger system-wide effort that combines teacher development, curriculum support, classroom resources and assessment. Through MP-R, Penreach works alongside strategic partners, Wordworks, RedInk, Trackosaurus and the Mpumalanga Department of Education to support Grade R teachers, school leaders and district officials, with the goal of improving school readiness and strengthening the foundations for future learning success.

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Success Story

MP-R Launch: A collective dream made a reality



Integration

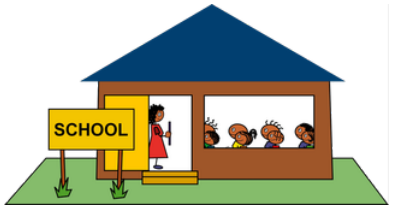
The School Readiness (SRI) is now fully embeddded into the Mpumalanga Grade R (MP-R) framwork

The Goal

Ensuring the 'reception year' is a period of genuine, structured academic preperation rather than just childcare

The Result

Seamless transition and preserved development gains as learners enter the formal Foundation Phase



Schools

MP-R SRI = 961

Limpopo = 503

Kwa - Zulu Natal = 185

Total = 1 649



Teachers

MP-R SRI = 2 027

Limpopo = 825

Kwa - Zulu Natal = 312

Total = 3 164



Natural Playgrounds

MP-R SRI = 757

Limpopo = 382

Kwa - Zulu Natal = 93

Total = 1 232



Penreach has stood alongside the Roger Federer Foundation (RFF) since 2019, driving the School Readiness Initiative (SRI) across South Africa to give children a stronger start in early learning. That partnership grew into Mpumalanga Grade R Teacher Capacity Building Programme (MP-R).

In 2025, that impact became real to see. Roger Federer and Siya Kolisi visited an ECD site to witness firsthand what years of partnership have built on the ground.

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Success Story

Full Circle Moments with the Roger Federer Foundation











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SCHOOL READINESS INITIATIVE

Asifundze

"Let Us Read"

Impact Statement

90% of children perform above 50% in numeracy and literacy by end of Grade 3



Foundational Literacy and Numeracy: The Asifundze Programme

Asifundze focuses on literacy and numeracy as a foundational skill in the Foundation Phase.

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Every child deserves to read. Not just to decode words on a page, but to make meaning from them. That is what Asifundze is about – building the foundational numeracy & literacy skills that every learner needs to succeed in school and in life.

17 154
Learners reached
(15 893 in Mpumalanga)

99
Teacher Interns driving classroom delivery

384
Teachers reached

Strategic Insight:

Early gains in Grade 1-3 decoding must be bridged to prevent the reading-for-meaing gap in Grade 4

Using Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) data, we have reduced foundational backlogs and ensured that 90% of School Management Teams are actively using tracking tools to monitor curriculum coverage.

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Success Story

International Literacy Day

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Asifundze

Literacy & Numeracy

EDULUTION

transforming learning

Impact Statement

All children perform at grade level mathematics by grade 7

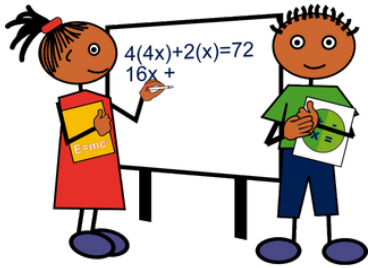


Foundational Numeracy: The Edulution Programme

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8502 Learners targeted for higher-order math transition



13% Increase in average scores for high-intensity learners

19 Core Schools

65 Teachers Reached

49 Change Agents

Mathematics matters. For many South African learners, the transition to higher-order mathematics in the Intermediate Phase is where momentum slows. Edulution targets this critical stage by building the numeracy skills learners need to succeed in Grade 7 and beyond.

In 2025, the Edulution programme reached 8,502 learners. Starting from a baseline of 19.7% of learners performing at or above grade level, the programme achieved a 13% increase in average scores for high-intensity learners. Penreach is working towards increasing learner proficiency to 40% by 2027, in alignment with the Mpumalanga Provincial Learner Improvement Plan (PLIP).

A key milestone in 2025 was the successful completion of the transition from the Kolibri learning platform to the Ei Mindspark platform in December. The programme now uses the teacher-led Ei Mindspark model, which is fully aligned with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and the Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs), strengthening classroom integration and supporting more effective mathematics teaching and learning.

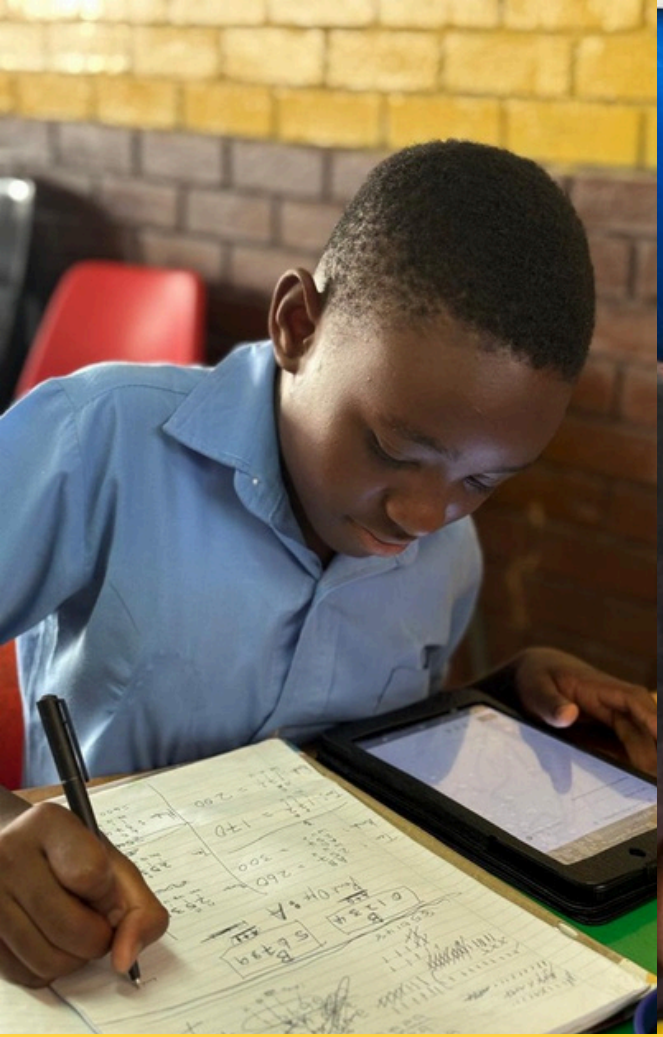
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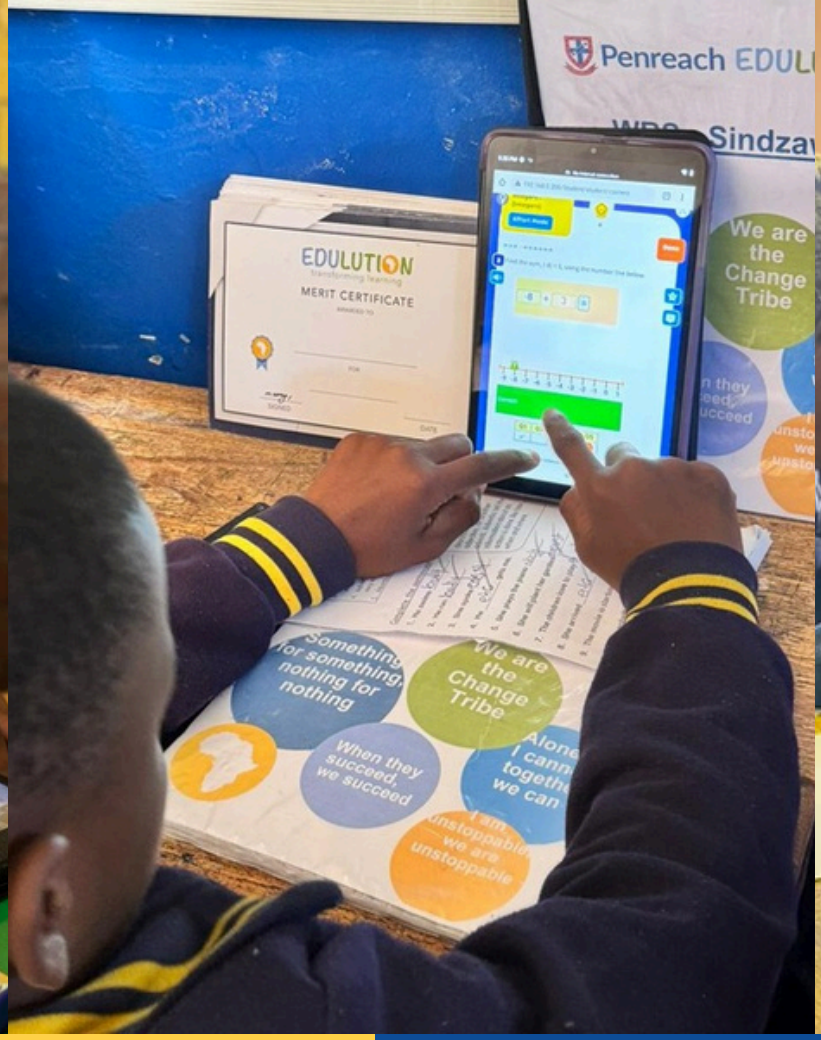
Success Story

More Than Maths

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EDULUTION

transforming learning

STEAM



Impact Statement

All learners can think critically & creatively, can collaborate and communicate to solve real world problems

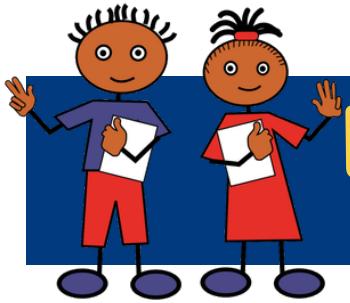
The STEAM Revolution: Preparing Learners for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

Emphasizing problem-solving and collaboration through high-tech exposure and teacher development.

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48 372 Learners Equipped

with the cognitive tools for a digital economy

1366

Teachers in under-resourced schools trained in STEAM and ICT

2152

Learners reached with future-focused coding & robotics curricula

8611+

Learning materials distributed to support

65 STEAM Clubs

Future Tech Exposure

Interactive AI and emerging technology exhibitions broadening student horizons in applied STEM fields

CODING | INNOVATING | BUILDING | EXPLORING

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Success Story

STEAM Festival: All the Action

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STEAM

Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts, and Mathematics



Transformational Leadership: Penreach Courageous Leadership Development Programme (PCLDP)

LEADERSHIP

Impact Statement

Improved learner outcomes in functional schools

Setting the optimal school environment for children to thrive through strong leadership, capacity building and accountability

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Good schools are led by good leaders. When school leadership is strong, children learn better. That is the simple truth behind the Penreach Courageous Leadership Development Programme (PCLDP).

In 2025, 78 Principals and Deputy Principals, and 130 Departmental Heads completed modular training and Portfolio of Evidence verification, focusing on SACE-endorsed professional standards.



PCLDP Impact in 2025

78 Principals / Deputies Completed training andPoE verification

130 Department Heads Completed training



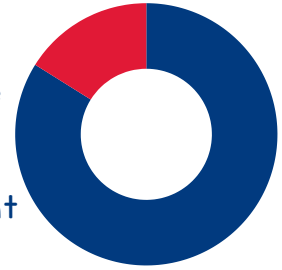
Grade 12 Pass Rate Improvement

2024 **66.7%**



+17.2% Percentage Points Improvement

2025 **83.9%**



Morelig Secondary School

FOCUS: SACE-endorsed professional standards

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Success Story

Morelig's turnaround: Leadership at work

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In 2025, Penreach hosted its inaugural School Leadership Summit in the Paul Harris Exhibition Hall at the Shalumuka STEAM Centre, bringing together Principals and Deputy Principals to rethink what leadership looks like in South African schools today. The Summit tackled the questions shaping education's future: how technology is transforming classrooms, what Society 5.0 means for schools, the growing role of artificial intelligence in education, and what it takes to lead through change. Keynote speakers Mr Isaac Zitha, Mr Franklin Darteh, Ms Nicole dos Santos, and Prof M.A. Mdlhuli brought fresh insight to each of these themes.

For us, this was more than an event. It marked a new chapter in how the organisation equips school leaders to lead boldly into the future.

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Success Story

School Leadership Summit







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LEADERSHIP

Penreach Courageous Leadership Development Programme (PCLDP)



Learning that moves. Learning that matters.

ADOPT A PROGRAMME

Penreach Penryn

Impact Statement

Connecting education with community impact, the programme develops learners who are equipped to lead and create positive change.

The Penryn-Penreach Adopt a Programme empowers learners to apply their knowledge and skills to real world challenges while developing empathy, leadership, and social responsibility. By connecting education with community impact, the programme helps shape young people who are equipped to create positive change.

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In 2025, Penryn South Africa and Penreach brought Project Based Learning to life through Adopt-a-Programme, a hands-on initiative pairing scholars from Grades 3 to 7 with real needs at local partner schools. Rather than learning about community service in the abstract, scholars took on actual projects at partner schools throughout the year – from donating learning materials to spending time with younger learners – so that the impact of their work was immediate and visible. The approach reflects the long-standing relationship between the two organisations: Penryn provides the classroom, Penreach provides the community reach, and initiatives like Adopt-a-Programme let scholars put the two together – learning by doing, caring, and giving back, while developing empathy, teamwork and responsibility along the way. Each grade's project is being shared in turn, showing the full range of what Grades 3 to 7 got up to over the year.

See the Human side of Impact

Click on the play icons



Grade 3

Learning Materials



Grade 4

Literacy Support



Grade 5

Food Garden



Grade 6

Natural Playground



Grade 7

Storybooks

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Impact Statement

Promote school-based art at under resourced schools in disadvantaged communities



Artreach - Music That Builds More Than Musicians

Penreach

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Artreach is a community-focused music education and development programme that uses marimba music as a tool for education, personal growth, leadership development and social impact.

The programme operates through structured music hubs based at partner schools, where teachers and learners receive regular marimba training, ensemble experience and performance opportunities. But the impact goes deeper than music. Artreach creates safe, creative environments where learners build confidence, responsibility and a sense of belonging.

Learners actively engaged **100**

3 Active marimba hubs across Mpumalanga



"What we see is not just participation.
We see confidence building quietly.
We see learners stepping forward,
finding their voice, and owning it."

-Given Mashabane, STEAM Director

Click here

Success Story

The Magic of Marimba Hubs

Penreach

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SPORTREACH

Impact Statement

Promote school-based sport at under resourced schools in disadvantaged communities

Sportreach: Creating opportunities through sport

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581 Learners Participating

11 Schools

3 Sport Codes : Hockey, Rugby & Cricket

40 Teacher - Coaches



Sport has a way of asking questions that classrooms sometimes cannot. Can you push through? Can you lead? Can you get back up? In 2025, SportReach kept creating the conditions for learners to find their own answers.

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Success Story

Born to Rise













Penreach

SPORTREACH

BURSARIES

Impact Statement

More children from disadvantaged backgrounds reach their full potential



Turning potential into real outcomes

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Six bursary learners completed their final year of school in 2025, marking one of the strongest academic outcomes in recent years for the programme.
Together, they achieved 16 distinctions – a result that reflects not only academic effort, but years of consistent support, stability and belief.



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Success Story

Matric Results



Eight years ago, Sinhle Mona joined the Penreach Bursary Programme as a young learner from Pienaar, Mpumalanga. She arrived with talent and a future still taking shape. At Penryn, that future sharpened – academically, and in music.

In 2025, her voice reached far beyond the classroom:

- Strong academic performance throughout her school journey
- Top-level achievement in music at school level
- National recognition in the South African music space
- A professional album collaboration with established artists
- Public recognition for her talent and performance

This is more than a success story. It's proof of what happens when a learner is supported not just to excel, but to grow.

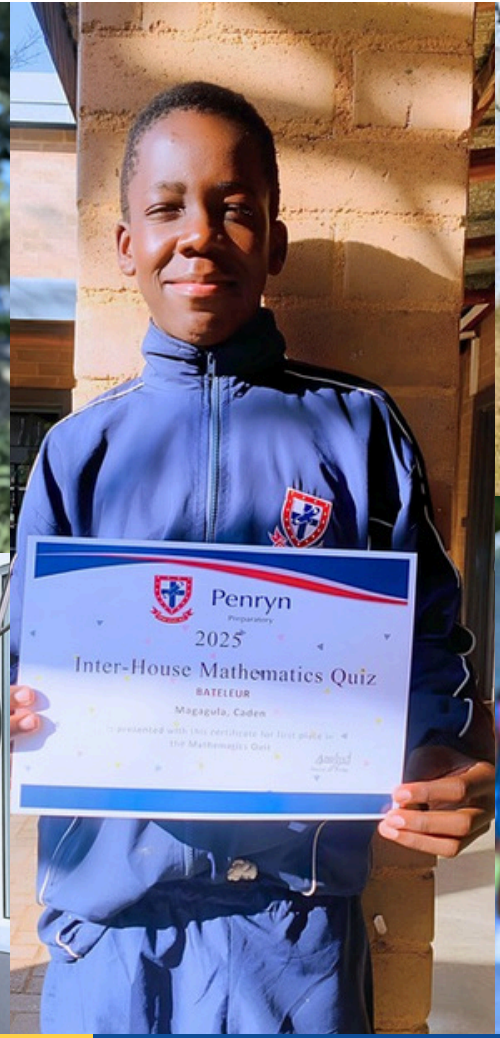
Success Story

A Story That Carries Many Stories: Sinhle Mona













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R

BURSARIES



Youth Development: Building Tomorrow's Workforce

Impact Statement

Build a socially conscious and ethical future workforce

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Penreach believes that investing in young people is investing in the future of education. Youth Development creates practical pathways for young South Africans to gain skills, confidence and meaningful work experience – while directly benefiting the learners and communities they serve.

Impact in 2025

- Improved classroom support through intern placement and mentorship
- Increased learner engagement in literacy and storytelling activities
- Strengthened capacity of interns, practitioners and programme leads through training and ongoing support
- Enhanced learning environments through reading corners and structured classroom activities
- Increased opportunities for youth skills development and workplace readiness

126 Interns placed

50 Young minds graduated from the 2025 MTN South Africa Digital Skills for Digital Jobs Programme, powered by Datacomb.

19 Students successfully completed the D-lab programme

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Success Story

Mpumalanga's best student works at Penreach


KAYISE
Realtime IT Solution
for small businesse
on the GO
Services


DATA
DEVELOPMEN
Explore y
DATACOMB


TOP STUDENT
Award
3rd Place
Buyile Shirley Sithole
d-Lab
TOP STUDENT
Award
1st Place
Zinzi Pearl Thobela
d-Lab
TOP STUDENT
Award
2nd Place
Maggie Alumbenje Manda
d-Lab
Positivity
superpower


MTN


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Youth
Baylab



Teacher Development Workshops (TDW): Empowering educators through professional development.

TEACHER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Impact Statement

Transforming education outcomes through effective educator skills development workshops

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Teachers are the heartbeat of every classroom. When they grow, learners grow. Penreach Teacher Development Workshops (TDW) create a space where educators can be honest about the challenges they face, learn from one another, and walk away with practical tools they can use straight away.

Input ⟷ Output

7 Workshops

988 Total Educators Enrolled

SACE-endorsed across all subjects.

- Practical, immediate solutions for real classroom challenges
- Stronger peer-to-peer sharing and support networks
- Culminating in the TDW Awards 2025 to recognize consistent excellence

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Success Story

Penreach Awards 2025

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Every year, Penreach honours the people who show up and go beyond for their learners and communities. Winners aren't chosen on a whim – advisors track progress throughout the year at our Teacher Development Workshops, looking at real, measurable change. From the School of the Year and Teacher of the Year, to the ECD Centre and ECD Practitioner of the Year, to our Toy Library and STEAM Club Volunteers of the Year – these awards say thank you to the ones doing the quiet, hard work that moves education forward in Mpumalanga: schools that pushed past the mark, teachers who put their training into practice, ECD centres and practitioners who got the basics right every single day, and volunteers who gave their time so children could learn through play and discover science, tech and maths for the first time.

Take a look at the Winners

Click on the play icons























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TEACHER DEVELOPMENT WORKSHOPS

Partners & Funders

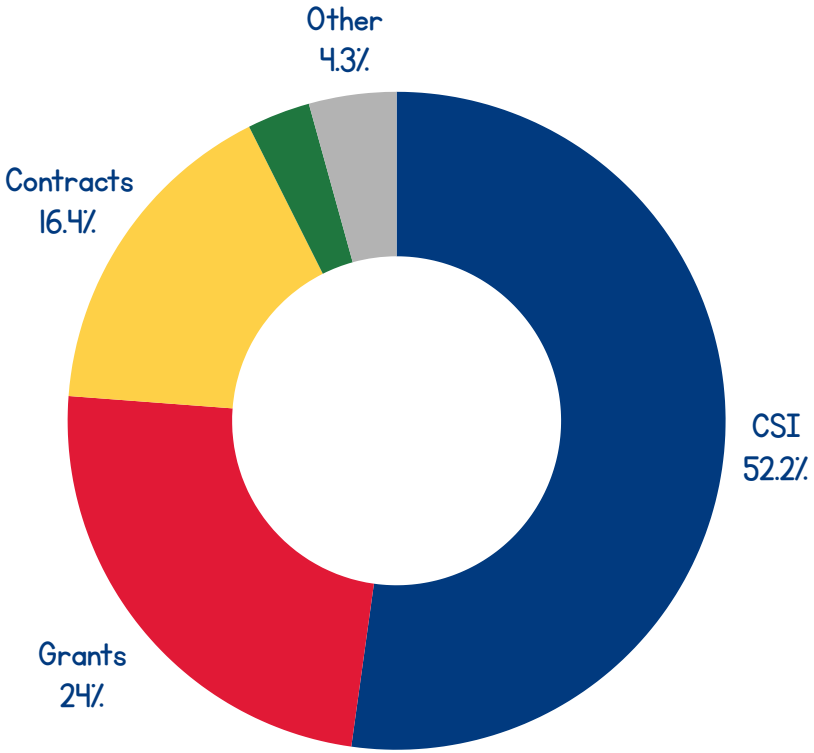


FirstRand Foundation	Get It Done Foundation	Austrian Embassy Pretoria	Dis-Chem Pharmacies	FEM	Adom Technologies – Technology without limit
Assore	Datacomb	Airlink – Freedom of the African Sky	bookdash	d-lab	Edulution – transforming learning
education – Mpumalanga Province, Republic of South Africa	Bayer	Trackosaurus	Wordworks – Changing lives through literacy	University of Mpumalanga	The Herman Ohlthaver Trust
Nedbank	Nkulo Community Partnership Trust	OHIT	RF Foundation	smart start – Giving every child the power to succeed.	TRAC – Trans African Concessions
Raise the Children	NRF – National Research Foundation / SAASTA – South African Agency for Science and Technology Advancement	sappi	sasol	thungela	redink – resources, education & development – early maths & literacy
The Reach Trust	Nalibali – It starts with a story.	vvob – education for development		TFG	Kayise

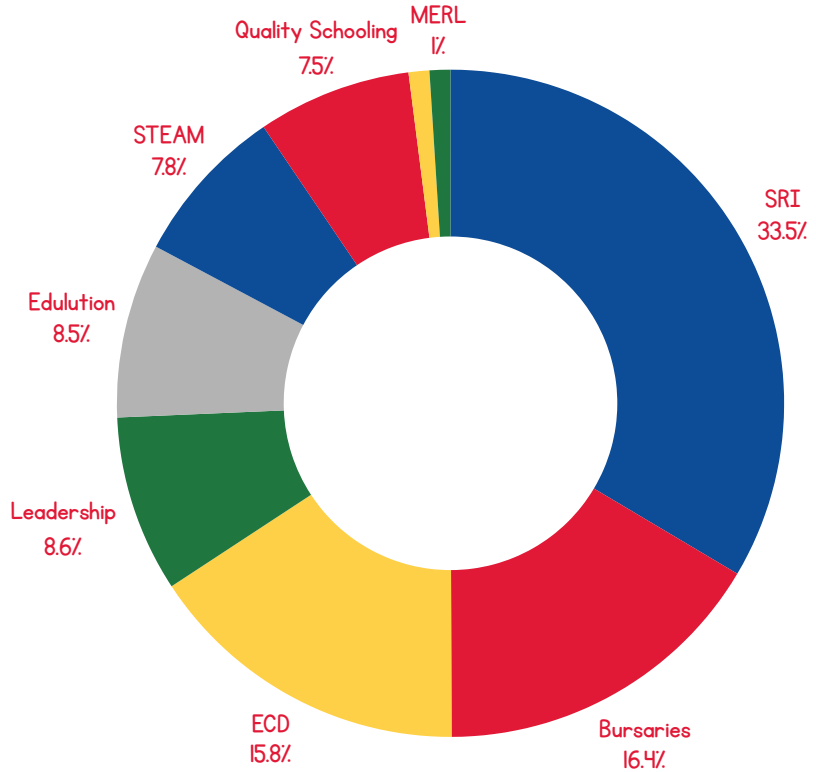
The 2025 Financial Engine

Total Funding: R62,115,948.68

Funding Source



Programme Funding



You have seen the impact.
Now, be a part of the next chapter.

STAY INVOLVED
www.penreach.co.za

Penreach @penreach_ngo @penreach



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