

**CLOSE OUT REPORT – SEF 2 (August 2023 – June 2024)**

**THIS REPORT IS MADE UP OF 5 SECTIONS. IT MUST BE COMPLETED IN FULL. PLEASE DO NOT EDIT OR CHANGE ANY OF THE SECTIONS. THE FINAL COMPLETED REPORT SHOULD NOT EXCEED 10 PAGES. KEEP RESPONSES BRIEF AND FACTUAL. UTILISE VERIFIABLE FACTS AND FIGURES.**

SIP Name	The Nal'ibaliTrust
Province/s	Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KZN, Limpopo, Northern Cape, Western Cape
No. of Sites	91
Total number of partners within SIP consortium	1

**SECTION ONE: NARRATIVE**

**1. Executive Summary and Theory of Change**

*(Provide a summary of the project's initial theory of change and the extent to which this has been met, milestones achieved, outputs/outcomes, challenges encountered and any other relevant information. Please also comment on movement of impact against the baseline established at the beginning of the programme)*

The Social Employment Fund (SEF) Family Literacy Programme commenced in 2022 and is a partnership between The Nal'ibali Trust and the Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa (IDC). The main aims of the project were to increase literacy activities and resources in under-resourced communities, spread awareness about benefits of reading and sharing stories and tackle unemployment via job creation and skills development in targeted communities. The second phase of the project commenced in August 2023, with community-level activities concluding at end May 2024. The project was implemented in 91 sites across seven provinces, namely Eastern Cape (EC), Free State (FS), Gauteng, KwaZulu Natal (KZN), Limpopo, Northern Cape (NC) and the Western Cape (WC).

The project's Theory of Change (ToC) was premised on the following logic:

IF we train and mentor unemployed community members to provide caregivers, ECD practitioners and community partners with skills, knowledge and reading resources,

THEN adults will develop new attitudes, beliefs and mindsets about the importance of reading and stories and implement regular reading practices in homes and community settings,

AND THEN, through increased exposure to enjoyable reading opportunities, children will develop an interest in books and stories and develop early language and literacy skills that will prepare them to succeed in school and in life.

To achieve these outcomes, the following activities were implemented, organised in six thematic areas, the outputs of which are outlined below:

- 1) *Community outreach:* Through the home-literacy component of the project, a total of **46,984** home visits were conducted (74% of the targeted 63,232), by pairs of Literacy Facilitators, reaching up to **5,815** children per month. During these sessions the Literacy Facilitators demonstrated to caregivers how to make reading and storytelling fun and enjoyable. Literacy Facilitators assisted families to develop their own libraries at home and assisted families and children to sign up for library membership, and a total of **32,187** library membership cards were issued (624% of the targeted 4,446). It was anticipated that regular storytelling or reading at home would strengthen relationships between caregivers and children. This intervention mostly benefitted the children who are not yet at ECD centres, helping them not to lag far behind in terms of the words they know at their age. Children who were already attending ECD also had a support system at home to help them improve their vocabulary and comprehension. *Refer to section 2, thematic area 1.*
- 2) *ECD Story Sessions:* The project intended to make reading or sharing stories a regular habit by conducting story sessions in ECD centres, grade R classes in identified schools, and in community reading clubs,

targeting children aged 3-6 years. This was aimed at stimulating interest amongst children so that they develop early language and literacy skills, i.e. listening, imagination, memory, vocabulary (oral and receptive language), emotional intelligence, and confidence. During this phase, **50,349** story sessions (170% of the targeted 29,640) were conducted across the **623** participating ECD centres reaching **71,073** children in ECD centres. *Refer to section 2, thematic area 2.*

- 3) *Axiom Nobalisa Project - Education Support and Early Childhood Development:* Axiom supported **21** of the targeted 21 schools (100%) and reached **2,546** children. Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) assessments were conducted to group the learners according to their reading levels. Each group of children was then taught at their level. The TaRL approach benefitted learners who might have failed to catch up with other learners in the same grade if they were still taught as part of the bigger group. *Refer to section 2, thematic area 3.*
- 4) *Reading clubs:* The project established and supported **190** reading clubs across the 7 provinces. Children in these reading clubs met at least once a week, and a total of **28,534** reading club sessions (96% of the targeted 29640) were held, reaching a maximum of **82,646** children recorded in April 2024. *Refer to section 2, thematic area 4.*
- 5) *Materials distributed:* A variety of good quality, age-appropriate reading resources for children were distributed to participating families, ECD centres, reading clubs and during community activations. A total of **368,416** reading materials were distributed (93% of target of 396,044), in languages relevant to each community. Material comprised of the following: **67,152** books, **8,557** anthologies **8,325** compendiums, **272,144** supplements, and **12,238** digital materials. Targets for books and anthology distribution were exceeded, and only 74% of the Nalibali newspaper supplement was distributed due to the closure of most of the SA Post Offices. Supplement distribution started improving halfway through the project when mitigating strategies were implemented which involved sending the supplements directly to the project teams by courier for distribution to their beneficiaries. *Refer to section 2, thematic area 5.*
- 6) *Community activations:* The SEF project teams conducted a total of **1,572** activations in public spaces such as parks, taxi ranks, clinics, post offices, drop-in centers, shopping malls, and traffic jams. The total number of people reached during this phase is **179,356**, far exceeding the target of 38,400. There were **145** partnerships, **223** Caregiver and ECD Practitioner networks established. A total of **122** meetings were held where issues relating to literacy development were discussed with caregivers and partners. *Refer to section 2, thematic area 6.*

The project's achievement of key **project outcomes** was assessed via an **external evaluation of the project** (report attached as addendum). This evaluation assessed both the implementation success and outcomes of the project relative to the baseline. The three main outcome areas and related outcomes are outlined below, followed by the key evaluation findings for each outcome area.

1. For unemployed people who were recruited to work in the project, the intended outcomes were to:
  - i. create opportunities for dignified, meaningful work
  - ii. increase income and financial security
  - iii. provide unemployed people with skills and build networks that would prepare them well for their next employment opportunities after participating in the 10-month project

Through the SEF project, Nal'ibali created 1,193 jobs which provided a source of income for the Literacy Facilitators, Team Leaders and Provincial Administrators. Their involvement in the project also helped them to learn career-readiness skills such as teamwork, communication, chairing community meetings, time management, leadership and problem-solving skills. Working with partners and community members to achieve

a common goal, for example when planning events such as World Read Aloud Day, was also reported as being a significant growth opportunity for SEF staff. Through their work in building networks with partners and community members, and SEF employees reported being well-positioned to use those networks to seek employment post-SEF.

2. For communities, the intended outcomes were:
  - i. increase the availability and use of age-appropriate home-language reading resources
  - ii. create and sustain regular reading habits in families, preschools and communities.

There is strong evidence to show that both Nal'ibali and implementing partner Axium enhanced literacy access in the communities where they operated in terms of materials, opportunities to engage in literacy activities and the capacity of caregivers, community partners and ECD practitioners to support reading. Reading resources made available in homes assisted families to develop home libraries, making it easier for children and caregivers to find stories to read. The endline evaluation also found that parents reported an improved engagement with reading activities. The report also affirms that the way Literacy Facilitators engaged with the children in reading clubs was captivating, drew children's attention and this led to active participation. There is evidence to show that contact time with children meant that children were reading more, or they listened to stories more as they had someone visiting them frequently to share stories or read, and this was helping to improve their capacity to learn. Some ECD practitioners benefitted from classroom-level interventions and mentoring, but others may have been over-reliant on SEF employees to facilitate literacy activities on a weekly basis and may need more encouragement and support.

3. For children, intended outcomes included:
  - i. increased capacity of children to learn
  - ii. increased psycho-social well-being and resilience
  - iii. stronger family relationships, ultimately contributing to a range of positive outcomes in communities.

Evidence cited in the evaluation report and from testimonies gathered from SEF staff throughout the project duration show that the home-literacy intervention also helped children who are not attending ECDs not to fall behind in terms of their literacy development, despite their economic status. Some of the data also shows that there were improvements in literacy skills, greater vocabulary, more independent reading, practice with different languages, reading aloud more confidently, reading more often. However, evidence of children having improved their academic performance or early reading and language skills is limited as the evaluation did not conduct child-level assessments. Implementing this project encouraged both the beneficiary families and SEF participants themselves to strengthen their relationships with their families during story time or reading time at home.

In addition, by executing this programme, Nal'ibali Trust and Axium were hoping to:

- i. learn how to implement programmes at a low-cost and at a larger scale
- ii. improve relationships with government, other NGOs working at scale and thereby opening doors to new collaborations and funding

The evaluation found that scaling up existing activities and branching out into offering new but similar activities has proceeded smoothly because both Nal'ibali and Axium drew on existing knowledge and expertise within the organizations. This has significantly improved the reach of both organisations and our capacity to partner and manage largescale activities. Community-level engagements with communities and partners helped communities to appreciate the value that Nal'ibali was bringing to their communities and building the Nal'ibali brand.

## **2. Reflections on the Project Design**

*Provide a narrative summary on the effectiveness and efficiencies of the project design including training, activities undertaken, and the extent to which the design enabled targets and impact being achieved. To the extent possible, this must address each of the thematic areas and include areas of improvement in the respective design.*

**Thematic Area 1: Community outreach**

The project took the literacy development campaign to the community and into the homes so that caregivers who are believed to be children's first teachers could be equipped with the necessary skills to read to or tell stories to their children. In order to achieve this, Nal'ibali trained **1,014** SEF participants (**85%** of the 1,193 participants) over a period of 3 days on topics relevant to the work that was to be done in the ECDs, families and reading clubs. The training was not accredited and it covered the following topics: Nal'ibali and Social Employment Fund, workplace etiquette, child protection, running reading club sessions, ECD storytime, hosting activations, conducting home visits, basic library information, and monitoring and evaluation.

Through this home literacy intervention, a total of **46,984** home visits (74% of target of 63,232) were conducted by pairs of Literacy Facilitators, of which 5,337 were conducted in May, reaching reaching up to 5,815 children per month. These sessions conducted at home provided valuable learning opportunities for children who are not attending ECD centres and helped them not to fall behind in terms of their literacy development. During home visit sessions the Literacy Facilitators demonstrated to caregivers how to make reading and storytelling fun and enjoyable, and also provided reading materials in the family's home language or in a language they were more comfortable with. Families also received information of where to access more reading resources e.g. from their closest libraries, and there were **32,187** library membership cards issued (624% of the targeted 4,446) of which 3,695 were issued in May. Literacy Facilitators also shared information on how to download digital stories from the Nal'ibali website. Home visits have been effective and some of the impacts achieved, substantiated by testimonies below, show that: a) children have benefitted from the story reading/telling skills in some families, b) there have been improvements in reading habits, and c) reading together has helped to strengthen the bond amongst family members.

*"They teach my child, she can now read, write, follow instructions when I send her to do, something memory has improved (hardly forgets what she has been taught) ... Because I cannot afford to pay for creche because I am not working. So, their program covers that gap and will be knowing stuff when they go to school as if they were attending creche." Gauteng, parent.*

*Even when there is no homework, I promote reading books while we sitting as a family." Kwa-Zulu Natal, Literacy Facilitators.*



*Left: SEF participants training  
Right: Children enjoying their books at home in the Eastern Cape*

Challenges:

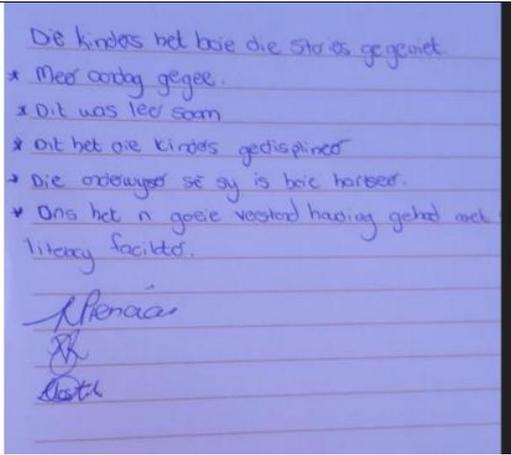
- **High staff-turnover**, which ended at 21%, resulted in 246 new participants joining after the training had been completed. When teams lost members who had been trained, replacements were trained on the job. Even though the new replacements did learn on the job, they had missed the theoretical foundations of what the project is all about. This affected results achieved in some sites but the Provincial Administrators provided the necessary support to ensure all teams were functional.
- **Community mapping** was not completed on time and this led to under-achieving in terms of reading clubs established, ECD story sessions conducted, home visits conducted, and ECD Practitioner and caregiver network meetings held. In the next phase, teams will be allowed to continue recruiting households and ECD centres for at least 6 months as it is noted that negotiating entry in some communities and households can take longer than anticipated.
- **Indicators not adequately defined** before the project started, some of the indicators could have been better defined e.g. some were non-cumulative and therefore the frequency of data collection and reporting should have been different. Such indicators have been identified and will be properly defined in the next phase and data reporting tools set in such a way that duplications are eliminated. Some duplications were not picked up during community mapping and baseline e.g. number of ECD centres, number of reading clubs. To address this, a database listing all ECD centres, schools, and reading clubs will be developed and maintained to record the name of centre, address, principal/matron/reading club leader, and number of children to ensure no similar name with the same characteristics is reported. The number of children in each centre will be recorded once, and only new additions will be recorded in each month.
- **SEF participants prior work experience and training not tracked** – it has been a challenge to get information about whether participants who resigned were going to better employment opportunities or not because prior work details were not recorded, and the same applies to training completed. For the next phase a tracker will be developed to track type of work and training done prior SEF involvement and this will be updated when each participant completes a particular type of training or when they resign.

**Thematic Area 2: ECD story sessions**

The SEF team conducted **50,349** story sessions (170% of the targeted 29,640) of which 2,669 were achieved in May, in **623** participating ECD centres reaching **71,073** children in ECD centres. For SEF Literacy Facilitators, working closely with ECD practitioners has given them a better understanding of children's learning environment. In some ECDs the Literacy Facilitators worked together with the Practitioners in planning story themes such that the stories could connect to the classroom lesson plan, serving as reinforcement of what the practitioner would be teaching in that period. This positively contributed to children's learning experiences because story time is always presented in a fun and enjoyable way as per the Nal'ibali strategy and methodology. Through these shared and interactive story sessions, the children developed their appreciation and love for books and stories; built and enriched their vocabulary; learnt to express their emotions in a healthy way; and learnt to retell a story through drawing and scribbling. Feedback from ECD Practitioners has been positive as per testimonies shared below:

*I have worked with Future [Literacy Facilitator] for a period of 5 months at my ECD center which is Bantiejwame Day Care Center. She creates engaging and inclusive learning environment and reading to meet diverse needs. She excels in communication and keeping parents involved and informed". From Bantiejwame Day Care Practitioner.*

*"We have cases such as 'Mvuno' who barely spoke 2 words to now actively participating in the sessions and actually speak a few words there is great visible improvement. Games, poems we as parents keep enjoying as well as the books are indeed having a great impact on our daily lives". ECD Practitioner, Masihambisane Creche and Day Care Centre.*



**Translation**

- The children really enjoyed the stories.
- More attention paid
- It was instructive
- It disciplined the kids
- The teacher says she is very sad
- We had a good understanding with literacy facilitators

**Thematic Area 3: Axiom Nobalisa Project - Education Support and Early Childhood Development**

Axiom supported **21** of the targeted 21 schools (100%), conducted 550 lessons per month, and reached **2,576** children as recorded in the May report. The programme was expanded to new sites because of the growing capacity afforded by SEF. Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) assessments were conducted so as to group the learners according to their reading levels. The TaRL approach benefitted learners who might have struggled if they were still taught as part of the bigger group. There is evidence that the programme has made good progress towards achieving impact:

*“The current cohort of learners who are able to read and are displaying confidence in all other subjects”. Principal of Bhekizizwe Primary School.*



Left: A Nobalisa Facilitator conducting an assessment  
 Right: Grade 3s writing CSA (assessments)

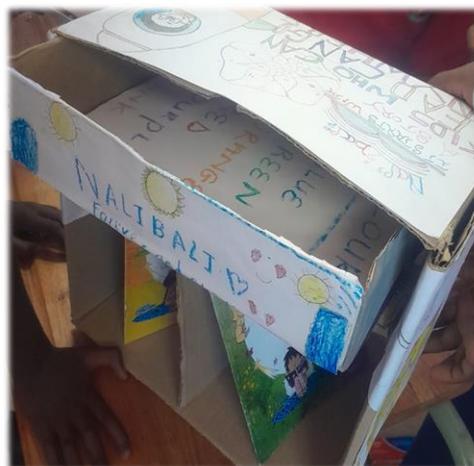
**Thematic Area 4: Reading Clubs (RCs)**

The SEF team established and supported **190** (38% of target) reading clubs across the 7 provinces, and conducted **28,534** reading club sessions reaching **82,646** children and **9,048** adults. The target for reading clubs was not achieved due to unavailability of community volunteers who were interested in running reading club sessions. In

the next phase, each pair of Literacy Facilitators have a target to establish a reading club and conduct at least one session per week. Data from the endline evaluation report affirms that the manner in which Literacy Facilitators engaged with the children was captivating, drew children's attention and this led to active participation.

One of the immediate impacts of the value added by Literacy Facilitators in KZN was the result achieved by KwaMyeza Primary School in Unit 6, Hammarsdale, KZN in a Storytelling Competition. Learners from this school attended reading club sessions and the Nal'ibali SEF Literacy Facilitators coached them on storytelling techniques in preparation for the competition. The school came first position in both IsiZulu and English categories and was awarded R20 000,00 as a prize. This demonstrates the value added by the presence of Literacy Facilitators in the school and community.

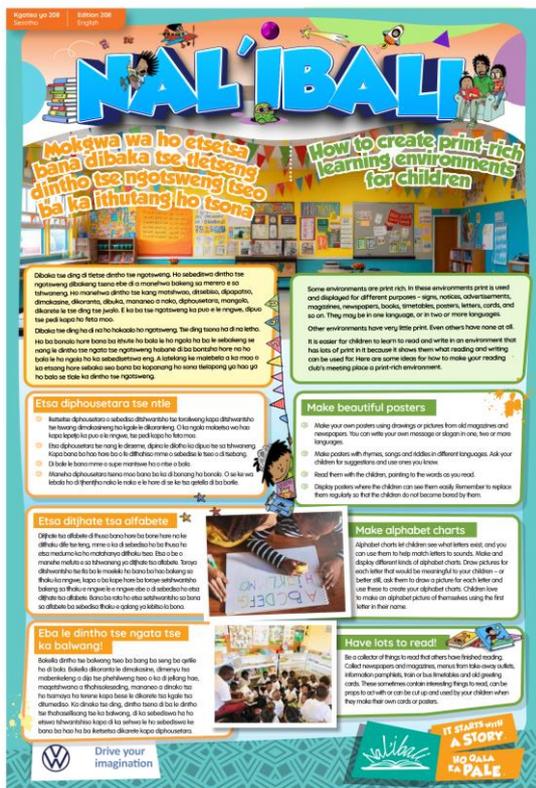
In some provinces like Gauteng, reading club activities in Palm Springs extended to topics about taking care of the environment which were meant to encourage teamwork and social responsibility. Children used waste material to create items like book shelves, skipping ropes, mats, and clothes. In the next phase, Nal'ibali will explore this further as part of the recycling sub-programme. The impacts achieved in reading clubs demonstrate that the Literacy Facilitators had appropriate skills to make valuable contributions and this had a positive impact in the children.



Left: A reading club session at the library, Gauteng  
Right: Bookshelf made of waste cardboard, Gauteng

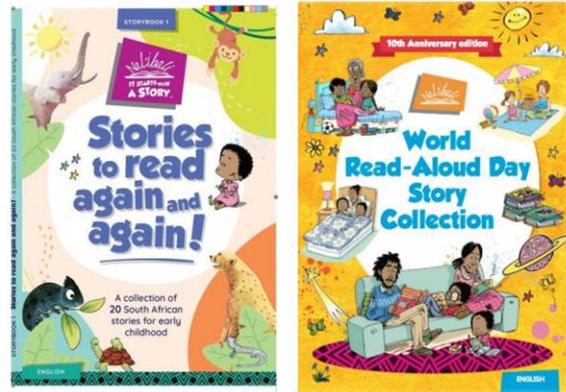
#### ***Thematic Area 5: Materials distributed***

A total of **368,416** reading materials were distributed (93% of target of 396,044), 46,610 of these were distributed in May in languages relevant to each community. These materials were distributed to the homes, ECD centres and in the community during activations. The following quantities were distributed: **67,152** books, **8,557** anthologies **8,325** compendiums, **272,144** supplements, and **12,238** digital materials. Targets for books and anthology distribution were exceeded. Distribution of the Nal'ibali supplement was at 74% by the time the project ended and this was due to delays experienced with the SA Post Office. Good progress was made since direct deliveries to project sites were made halfway through project implementation. The challenge was that the project could not recover supplements that had already been sent to SAPO sites that closed down. For the next phase all project sites will conduct an assessment of appropriate delivery methods, and materials will be couriered directly either to Provincial Administrators or to the nearest schools/ libraries in areas where SAPOs are dysfunctional or have closed down. The availability of reading materials in the communities, coupled with correct messaging during activations, and a team of Literacy Facilitators actually visiting the homes and ECD centres made a big difference in communities where reading is not common practice.



These are some examples of reading materials that were distributed to the homes and ECD centres, made available in all South African languages. Stories are suitable for different age groups. Other stories are found on Nal'ibali website:

<https://nalibali.org/story-resources/multilingual-stories>



Left: Latest edition of the Nal'ibali supplement, available in all South African languages. Right: Some copies of the Nal'ibali collection of story books that were distributed.

**Thematic Area 6: Community activations**

Activations are conducted in public spaces such as parks, taxi ranks, clinics, post offices, drop-in centers, shopping malls, and traffic jams. The messages communicated at these activations help to enlarge the visibility of the programme amongst the general public and provide an opportunity for the public to consider the role they can play in promoting literacy development in their homes and in the broader community. Activations attract a large number of people especially when there are promotional items such as books and supplements.

The SEF teams conducted a total of **1,572** activations since the project started, with 139 of these conducted in May. One of the highlights in activations conducted in May was the opening of the Boitumelo Sebothelo Library in the Free State. The library was named after the late Boitumelo who passed away during apartheid. Along with the Sebothelo family other institutions present included the University of free State (UFS), Free State Department of Sports & Agriculture, Free State Department of Education, ward counsellors, representatives of the Municipality, and were made aware of the SEF programme and its potential benefits to the greater community.

Another highlight from the activations conducted during this phase was the KZN train activation which was a huge success. The total number of people reached through these activations is **179,356**, far exceeding the target of 38,400. There were **145** partnerships established by Team Leaders, **223** Caregiver and ECD Practitioner networks established and **122** meetings held in total.



Left: Train activation in Umlazi, KZN

Right: Parent and caregiver network session in Braamfisher, Gauteng

### 3. Skills acquired and pathways for participants

*(Provide an overview of the training undertaken as part of the programme including whether training is accredited or prospects for accreditation, skills acquired on the part of participants including certification where applicable, entrepreneurship training, business development support offered, participant attrition rate from the programme and the reasons thereof.*

The project provided various training opportunities for participants and these have added value in their skills and prepared them well for other opportunities. Some of the courses attended include:

- a) **playSA Online Learning Course** - PLAY is an acronym for Powerful Learning Around You and the aim of the course is to strengthen the inclusion and utilisation of play as a powerful tool and method of early learning and development. Nal'ibali provided information about this course which is **accredited** by the Department of Basic Education and is offered in partnership with UNICEF, the LEGO Foundation and Cotlands, and is accredited with the South African Council of Educators (SACE). The aim of the course aligns with Nal'ibali's reading for enjoyment and storytelling which is aimed at helping children learn new words and improve their comprehension, and ultimately contribute towards improved educational outcomes. The course is a free in-service training that compliments existing and formal training, and was available to all SEF participants at no cost to Nal'ibali or the participants. The course offers different modules which are: Birth to 2 years; 2 to 5 years; Grade R, Grade 1-3. Participants learn at their own pace, and a certificate is issued at the end of each module. More information about the course is available at [www.playsa.org](http://www.playsa.org). A total of **235** participants (**20%** of the 1,193 SEF workforce) completed the course during phase 2 of the project.
  
- b) **Nal'ibali in-house training** - Nal'ibali used various sources of its training content which was directly relevant to the work that was to be done in the ECDs, families and reading clubs. A total of **1,014** participants completed the training which was conducted between September and October 2023 (**85%** of the 1,193 participants). The training was not accredited and it covered the following topics:
  - Nal'ibali and Social Employment Fund (Overview)
  - Workplace etiquette
  - Child Protection
  - Communicating about Nal'ibali to various audiences
  - Running Reading Club sessions
  - Storytime sessions at ECD centres
  - Hosting activations at various locations
  - Conducting Home Visits
  - Basic library information
  - Monitoring and evaluation

Participants who were appointed after the formal training was completed did not attend training but were trained on-the-job by being paired with participants who had completed training. This worked for the teams in terms of what had to be done, however, there were some challenges as these participants did not have the theoretical foundations of why Nal'ibali was doing that kind of work in the ECD centres and in the homes. In terms of the training material, Nal'ibali is in the process of developing its own curriculum, which will undergo accreditation, during the current year and may only be ready in 2025 due to challenges encountered with the service providers appointed to complete the training manual and start the accreditation process.

In addition to training, SEF participants also learnt various technical and soft skills learnt while employed as Team Leader, Literacy Facilitator or Provincial Administrators which include:

- Stakeholder Relations and Management
- Negotiation Skills
- Communication and Interpersonal Skills
- Facilitation skills
- Leadership, mentorship and coaching skills
- Administration
- Time management
- Collaboration
- Adaptability
- Persuasion

The table below provides a summary of participants who left the project before the end date and the reasons for leaving:

<b>Number of participants who left the programme</b>	246
<b>% of participants who have moved onto better roles as a result of the SEF. Better = higher paying / longer-term work</b>	10% (119/1193)
<b>% of participants who have taken up studies as a result of the SEF.</b>	1% (17/1193)
<b>% of participants who have started or been able to sustain enterprise as a result of the SEF.</b>	0

It is anticipated that the training provided and daily activities conducted can open the following doors in respect to employment:

- Facilitating ECD/School based activities
- Providing private tuition to young learners
- Assisting schools at foundation phase with literacy activities (storytelling, reading aloud, language and communication development)
- Being part of the DBE – Teacher Assistant programmes
- Providing events coordination and management
- Library Assistant or Classroom Assistant

#### 4. Summary of key lessons learnt

*(Please provide a summary of key lessons learnt over the implementation period – these should include project specific lessons as well as lessons to potentially inform future design of social employment programme/s)*

Key lessons during this phase can be summarised as follows:

##### 1. Role of Provincial Administrators enhanced project implementation

The appointment of Provincial Administrators (PAs) brought in a level of administrative and management support at local level, i.e. in each province. The PAs travelled extensively across their provinces and played a key role in ensuring the sites were functional, adequately resourced, and also attended to concerns raised by Team Leaders. The endline evaluation found that team dynamics were crucial to the management and effectiveness of the Nal'ibali and Axiom SEF programs both at upper and middle management as well as at local level between Team Leaders and Literacy Facilitators. Some of the strengths and challenges were common across and some were context-specific. There were a few reported cases of conflict and misconduct which the PAs had to escalate to the Human Resources Department. For the next phase, Nal'ibali will provide some basic training on conflict management, and how to deal with cases of misconduct. All SEF participants will also be oriented on HR policies and procedures. PAs will also be trained on report-writing to help improve the quality of reports and to give them a skill that they can use post-SEF.

##### 2. Building partnerships takes time and effort

The project teams had a responsibility to build partnerships to enable smooth working relationships and sustainability of the work undertaken on the ground. Whilst most teams established meaningful relationships and were able to collaborate with partners on community events and other support for ECDs and reading clubs, some of the teams could not achieve any tangible results from the partnerships reported. In practice, some partnerships may take longer as they are dependent on gaining trust in the communities and families where they intend to work. The endline evaluation found that the involvement of SEF employees and the establishment of community partnerships contributed to strengthening community support systems. One of the partnerships which resulted in positive outcomes include one in the Eastern Cape, where a community member donated a laptop to one of the reading clubs, and the children are now able to listen to audio stories or watch movies during their reading club sessions. Another team secured space which they could use for their check-in and check-out, at no cost.

##### 3. Strengthening Literacy Access

Nal'ibali enhanced opportunities for reading by distributing good quality reading material and demonstrating how to capture children's interests when reading or telling stories. This increased chances that children would read, be read to or have someone tell them a story at home, at an ECD or school. The programs also supported literacy development, and built capacity for accessing literacy resources. For example, the library drive that was conducted whereby Literacy Facilitators assisted families to access library membership cards, or setup home library corners, created an environment where children had access to books. Some children in the Eastern Cape, Gauteng and KZN were reported to have had an opportunity to visit their local libraries for the first time. Both qualitative and quantitative evidence from the endline evaluation indicates that the SEF project broadened access to physical reading materials, human support, and literacy facilities. Whereas both Nal'ibali and Axiom primarily supplied and promoted paper-based reading, there was some limited digital sharing of stories using WhatsApp which was piloted in Limpopo, KZN and Gauteng. The lesson learnt from this is that WhatsApp is a viable medium through which these stories can be shared as it is widely used in the country. For the next phase Nal'ibali is working on a potential partnership with Reading Apple, a learning platform which uses WhatsApp to share stories, and also helps learn how to spell words.

#### **4. Encouraging Reading Habits**

The regular home visits, ECD visits and reading club sessions have encouraged children, their families, and the SEF teams themselves to read regularly. In some communities like in Mpumalanga, KZN children have also been encouraged to write their own stories, to share during their reading sessions. These stories will be shared with the content creator at Nal'ibali for possible publication in the Nal'ibali supplement where they can be featured as upcoming young authors.

*“Through your storytelling, our children have not only developed a love for reading but have also experienced the magic of stories that ignite their imaginations and enhance their learning”. From Sadia Samuaels, Principal from Zamat Educare.*

#### **5. Impacting Teaching and Learning Capabilities**

The SEF project allowed a two way learning opportunity between the SEF teams (Literacy Facilitators and Nabalisa). Their interactions with teachers and ECD practitioners were generally supportive, fostering a collaborative learning environment and this enhanced the learning platform. Endline evaluation data showed that these programs positively impacted children's literacy capabilities, including reading engagement, interest, appreciation, exposure, experimentation, and confidence. However, the impact on academic reading achievement and skill levels was not assessed.

#### **6. Exposure to Career Pathways**

The SEF project exposed Nal'ibali and Axiom employees to professional roles in the early education sector. Employees gained insights from training, job experience, and observing partners like librarians and social workers. SEF employees also gained substantial career-readiness skills, including professional work experience, teamwork, public speaking, time management, problem-solving, and knowledge about teaching and promoting reading. This exposure expanded their professional networks and occasionally led to informal peer assistance. Axiom also provided formal employment opportunities to **14** SEF participants, and offered various training opportunities for the SEF participants. A Literacy Facilitator expressed her appreciation towards the SEF team and the journey they embarked upon together.

*“Not only is my child now performing well at school, I was also motivated to go back to school. I am now in ABET level 4, thanks to the SEF Literacy Facilitators for building my confidence enough to go back to school as I am still young. I will continue to ask for help from the Literacy Facilitators I worked with even though it is so sad that the project is ending.” Kelebogile Sethole, Free State.*

#### **7. Project Legacy and Sustainability Prospects**

*(Provide an overview of the legacy the project will leave behind and the sustainability prospects of the project including funding avenues being explored)*

Nal'ibali has appointed Reading Club Amplifiers across five provinces (Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, and the Western Cape), who will provide support to reading club leaders in terms of training and basic resources, and also ensure proper monitoring of reading club activities. It is encouraging to learn that some of the reading clubs are receiving support from other members of the community, e.g. providing venue for reading club meetings, resources for children to use during sessions. This is an important element towards sustaining the initiatives started by the SEF teams. Nal'ibali is also following up on a potential partnership with Pick n Pay School Club.

At household level, SEF teams have reported that home-based interventions have empowered parents to become their child's first and most influential teacher. By providing parents with Nal'ibali free reading materials and the skills literacy facilitators acquired during training, parents are better equipped to support their child's

literacy development. Some of the Literacy Facilitators have received positive feedback about the progress of children who participated in the programme, from both ECD practitioners and caregivers.

## 8. Value generated through the SEF Programme

*(Provide an estimate of the value generated through the SEF programme. This includes values of tangible products like agricultural produce as well as intangible values like services rendered.)*

The SEF project has added value in the following areas:

- **Training and practical skills development:** The project has provided training opportunities and practical skills which help participants stand a better chance to obtain employment after their involvement in SEF.
- **Professional training opportunities:** SEF has provided participants with formal training opportunities, such as those offered by Axiom and the playSA course.
- **Value for Nal'ibali and Axiom:** Through implementing this project, Nal'ibali and Axiom have improved in operating a programme at a big scale, managing contracts, generating new knowledge, seeing what works and what doesn't. Axiom has even provided full time employment for some of the participants.
- **Collaborations and innovation:** SEF has resulted in stronger collaborations in various sites, allowing SEF teams to become part of local stakeholders who participate in various platforms, with local municipalities, local libraries, and educators.
- **Media and social media coverage:** SEF has provided many opportunities for Nal'ibali and Axiom to be on the media and social media because of the extent of the project in 7 provinces.

## 9. Conclusion and Overall Recommendations

The SEF Family Literacy project has achieved what was planned, despite the challenges encountered. The challenges have been an opportunity to learn and mitigation plans are in place for the next phase. Both Nal'ibali and Axiom appreciate the opportunity that has been provided by IDC to provide employment to 1,193 people and give them skills, knowledge and resources to do meaningful work that is helping to solve one of the main problems the country is facing in early education. The project has contributed in improving reading habits in families and assisted children with reading resources, especially in communities where these are scarce.

### Recommendations for Future Phases

The endline evaluation has provided detailed recommendations which are noted and will be considered for future phases of the project:

- a. *Enhance training and support:* most of the trainings offered in phase 2 were not accredited and relevant accredited trainings are being sought for the next phase.
- b. *Increase dosage and evaluation, where possible:* Literacy Facilitators and Team Leaders only work 2 days in a week and this limits the time they spend in ECDs and with the families. If more financial resources become available, Nal'ibali and Axiom can expand the frequency and duration of contact time with beneficiaries. There is also a suggestion to implement rigorous evaluation methods to track literacy gains and better attribute improvements to the program.
- c. *Enhance resource distribution and availability:* Distribution challenges encountered in phase 2 led to revised strategies which include sending reading resources by couriers, directly to project teams. Whilst this is costly, it has been accommodated in the budget for phase 3 and it will help mitigate occurrences of teams that are unable to access reading resources. Use of digital reading resources are also being explored.
- d. *Continue to strengthen parental and community engagement:* Partnerships established in SEF phase 2 show that there is potential, however, SEF teams need to be strategic in terms of their approach. This element will be covered in training sessions. Caregiver networks have functioned well in some communities and in SEF 3 learning platforms will be established so that teams share what is working well in their sites.
- e. *Formalise some aspects of career support:* Consider establishing some structured career support services, such as job search assistance, CV writing workshops, and networking opportunities, to help facilitators

transition to other employment or further education. This also includes establishing a tracking system to monitor SEF employees' career aspirations and their future progress.

- f. *Evaluate and adapt programme components and address team cohesion and coordination:* Nal'ibali has identified that in SEF 2 the project could have done better in monitoring the sites and this will be improved in phase 3. SEF field teams need to feel that they are part of the bigger picture at Nal'ibali and that they represent the organisation in their communities. The endline evaluation recommends regular team-building activities and regular check-ins; and that these should also be assessed at given intervals.
- g. *Ensure sustainability:* Develop a plan for the long-term sustainability of the program's impact, including strategies for maintaining momentum once facilitators move on. This could involve creating a repository of resources and best practices for educators to use independently.

**This report is completed by (Name):**

Bawinile Peters

**This content of the report is confirmed to be a valid reflection of the SIP activities (signature):**



**Report review by IDC (Signature):**

\_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION TWO: CLOSE-OUT ACTIVITY CHECKLIST**

<b>CLOSE OUT ACTIVITY</b>	<b>Yes/No</b>	<b>Verified by IDC</b>
Have Minutes from all board meetings been submitted to IDC	<b>Yes</b>	
Have all supporting documents been submitted for all outflows from the SEF bank account	<b>Yes</b>	
Have copies of employment contracts been uploaded onto Kwantu	<b>Yes</b>	
Have UI19's been issued to all participants who have been offboarded since the start of the programme?	<b>Yes</b>	
Have POPs been provided for all PAYE, UIF and COID payments and have all submissions been provided?	<b>Yes</b>	
Have participants been provided with certificates of employment and participatory certificates for all training?	<b>Yes</b>	

**SECTION THREE: FINANCIAL REPORTING**

USE THIS FINANCE SECTION TO TRACK ACTUAL FIGURES FROM INCEPTION THROUGH TO CURRENT MONTH. ONLY COMMENT ON MATERIAL VARIANCES.

**SECTION TWO: MONTHLY FINANCIAL REPORT**

Income	Signed Budget ITD	Actual ITD	Variance ITD	% Variance	Comment
Grant	-	-	-	#DIV/0!	
Own Contribution	-	-	-	#DIV/0!	
Other	-	-	-	#DIV/0!	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	-	-	-	#DIV/0!	
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Ordinary Wages	17 830 605	17 830 605	-	0%	
<b>Ordinary Wages Total</b>	<b>17 830 605</b>	<b>17 830 605</b>	-	0%	
Skilled Worker/Team Leader	2 960 922	2 959 227	1 695	0%	
<b>Skilled Wages Total</b>	<b>2 960 922</b>	<b>2 959 227</b>	<b>1 695</b>	0%	
UIF & COIDA	415 831	415 831	-	0	0%
<b>TOTAL WAGES</b>	<b>21 207 358</b>	<b>21 205 663</b>	<b>1 695</b>	0%	
Tools	50 000	73 543	-	23 543	-47% Numerous breakages
Materials	2 834 500	2 909 377	-	74 877	-3%
PPE	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Inventory Total</b>	<b>2 884 500</b>	<b>2 982 921</b>	-	<b>98 421</b>	<b>-3%</b>
Technical Services	-	-	-	-	
Training	315 899	794 153	-	478 254	-151% Catering costs overspend due to catering for all training sessions. Ground transport as a result of more distance covered to the training sites
Other	-	-	-	-	
<b>Services Total</b>	<b>315 899</b>	<b>794 153</b>	-	<b>478 254</b>	<b>-151%</b>
Programme Management	1 000 000	608 204	391 796	39%	
Monitoring and Evaluation	600 000	340 822	259 178	43%	
Other	375 750	639 827	-	264 077	-70% Background check costs resulting in an overspend due to constant staff turnaround
<b>TOTAL NON-WAGES COST</b>	<b>5 176 149</b>	<b>5 365 926</b>	-	<b>189 777</b>	<b>-4%</b>
<b>TOTAL BUDGET (WAGES + NON-WAGES)</b>	<b>26 383 507</b>	<b>26 571 589</b>	-	<b>188 082</b>	<b>-1%</b>

**SECTION FOUR: BANK RECON**

<b>Balance within the SEF Bank Account:</b>	<b>R'000</b>
<b>Less: COID not yet paid over for the programme</b>	<b>R'000</b>
<b>Equals unspent monies</b>	<b>R'000</b>

**Provide comment on how unspent monies will be channeled towards the contracted Grant Activities**

**Note: this section will be uploaded on SEF Cloud once completed.**

**SECTION FIVE: TARGETS**

<b>Impact Indicators per Thematic Area</b>				
<b>Description</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>% Variance</b>	<b>Comment/Remedial Action where applicable</b>
<b>Nal'ibali personnel</b>				
Literacy Facilitators	988	998	-1%	
Team Leaders	96	96	0%	
Project Administrators (Project based)	7	7	0%	
Project Administrators (Operations based)	9	8	11%	1 PA resigned in the last two months of the project
<b>Axium personnel</b>				
LFs	100	84	16%	Axium absorbed 14 Literacy Facilitators into permanent employment positions within the organisation.
<b>Training</b>				
Literacy Facilitators	988	922	7%	
Team Leaders	96	92	15%	Participants who started after training was concluded in October did not receive structured training but were trained on the job.
<b>Reading Clubs</b>				
# of registered Reading Clubs	494	190	62%	In some sites there were challenges in getting volunteers to facilitate reading clubs. In phase 3 each pair of LFs will have a responsibility to establish and support 1 reading club.
# of children reached via RCs	14820	69069	-366%	
# of reading club sessions held	29640	28534	4%	
# of ECD centres	494	623	-26%	
# of children reached via ECD centres	14820	82347	-456%	

Nal'ibali SEF Close Out Report – Round 2

# of ECD centre story time sessions held	29640	20709	30%	Participant resignations affected the number of sessions that could be conducted each week in some of the ECDs.
<b>Home visits</b>				
# of households	3952	4788	-21%	
# of children reached via home visits	11856	16691	-41%	
# of families visited - home visits	3952	4788	-21%	
# of home visits conducted	63232	46984	26%	Participant resignations affected the number of visits that could be conducted each week in some of the sites.
# of library cards	4446	32187	-624%	
<b>Partnerships</b>				
# of partnerships established	96	145	-51%	
# of ECD practitioner and caregiver networks	96	223	-132%	
# of ECD prac + caregiver network meetings	384	122	68%	Some of the sites started their networks late into the programme and could not have their meetings quarterly as planned.
<b>Community Activations</b>				
# of community activations conducted	1536	1572	-2%	
# of people reached via community events	38400	179356	-367%	
<b>Reading resources distributed (total)</b>	<b>396044</b>	<b>368416</b>	<b>7%</b>	
# of Digital materials distributed	40508	12238	70%	The deal for digital resources could not be confirmed with Qualibooks as access to their resources was not zero-rated.
# of books distributed	30724	67152	-119%	
# of anthologies distributed	3952	8557	-117%	
# of supplements distributed	365320	272144	26%	Some SA Post Offices closed down and alternative delivery methods were introduced halfway through implementation.
# of compendiums distributed	0	8325	-100%	The compendium is an additional resource that was not targeted but distributed to increase reading resources.

**Other evidence: Axiom's published article and Letters of appreciation to Nal'ibali**

<https://www.axiumeducation.org/post/nobalisa-social-employment-fund-social-impact>

