



ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Basic Concepts Foundation
Building Thinking – Harnessing Potential

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Basic Concepts Team

Dr Louis Benjamin (CEO)

Ms. Aimee Chiat (Operations Manager)

Ms Gill Brand (trainer and focus school leader)

Mrs Michele Lothian (trainer and focus school leader)

Ms. Josephine Tendai (trainer and field work leader)

Ms Poppy Petla (field work leader)

Mr Anton Berkovitz (financial consultant and resource mobilizer)

Ms Ruby Tooze (social media operations manager)

Basic Concepts Foundation Board

Dr Louis Benjamin

Mrs Fezeka Stuurman

Mrs Diane Goldsmith

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Donors and Partners

Douglas Murray Trust

Maid Foundation

Nussbaum Foundation

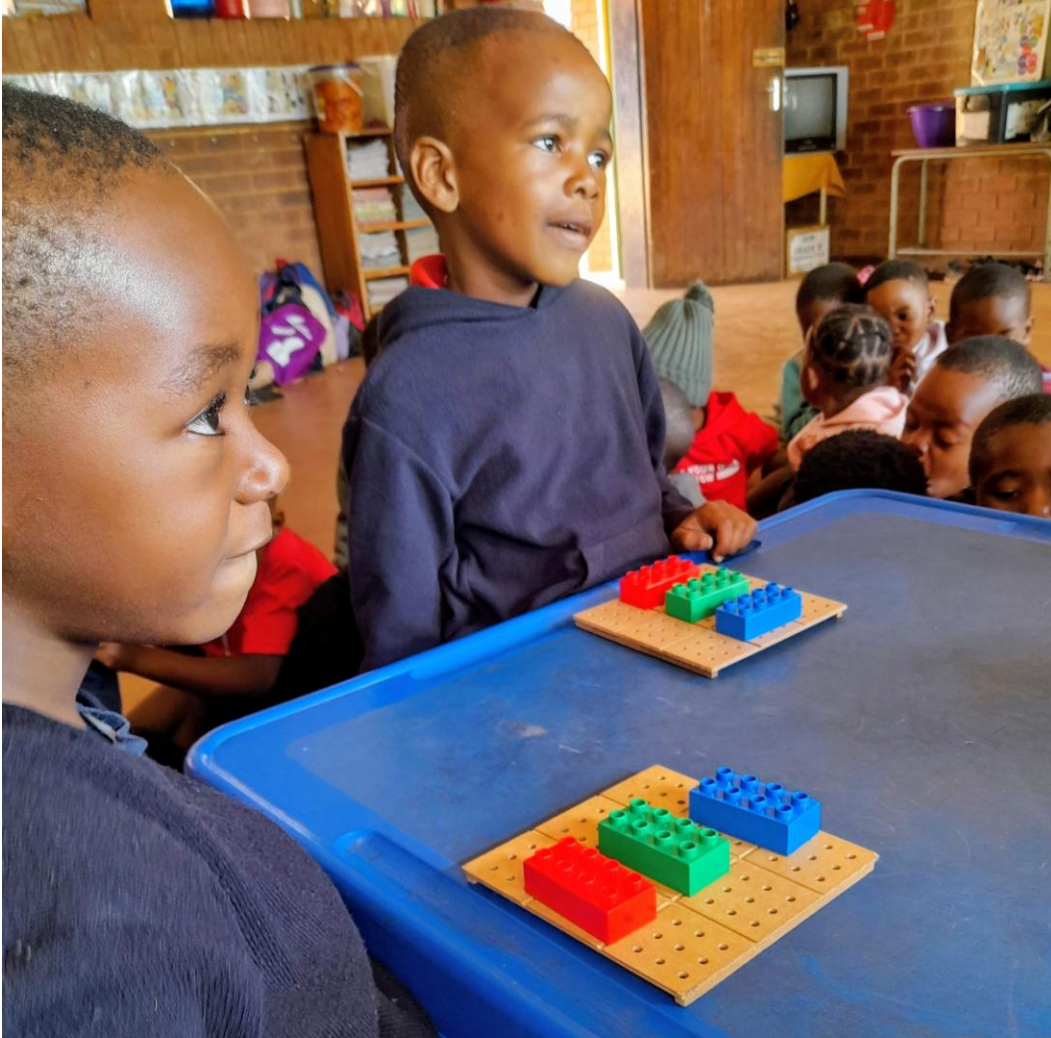
Anne Kreitzer Will Trust

Wilfred and Faye Back Trust

Sygnia Asset Management

Durbanville Schools Foundation

CEO's Message



This year has been one of remarkable productivity and growth for the Basic Concepts Foundation. Across our projects, we have seen sustained progress in classrooms, stronger teacher engagement, and powerful evidence of the impact that structured cognitive mediation can have on young learners. Our newsletters have shared only a glimpse of the work happening on the ground — the depth of training, mentoring, modelling, and day-to-day support carried out by our team has been exceptional.

A major highlight of the year has been the growing commitment and capability within our BCF team. Team members have taken on increasingly independent roles in facilitating training sessions, supporting teachers directly, and promoting the programme within their districts. From next year, one team member will be working half-time on project coordination and training. This shift marks an important step toward strengthening our internal capacity and building a more sustainable leadership pipeline within the organisation.



We have also benefited from more reliable and consolidated support from our funders. Their continued confidence in our work has allowed us to think more strategically about the future. From next year, our business manager will take on a focused role in resource mobilisation, helping us secure the partnerships and funding needed to expand our reach and deepen our impact.

Financial systems have been another priority. As our work grows, so do our administrative and reporting requirements. We will therefore be transitioning to a new financial management company that is better equipped to meet our needs and support our expanding operations.

Looking ahead, the future feels both promising and energising. With three new projects in development, increased awareness of our work across South Africa, and a solid foundation of evidence and partnerships, we are well positioned for substantial growth. The demand for meaningful, scalable cognitive education continues to rise — and the Basic Concepts Foundation stands ready to meet it.

Impact at a Glance



This year delivered strong, measurable gains across all areas of our work. The scale and reach of the Basic Concepts Programme continued to grow, supported by multiple active projects, an expanding team, and deepening relationships with schools and districts. Our impact reflects both the breadth of our footprint and the depth of engagement within classrooms. The data below reflects the consolidated activity of the Basic Concepts Foundation across five active projects in 2025.

Our 2025 Reach

5 Active Projects

A diverse portfolio operating across circuits, districts and provinces, each adapted to local needs but grounded in the same cognitive mediation principles.

3 Provinces Reached

Western Cape, Northern Cape, and Mpumalanga — demonstrating the programme's relevance across very different educational contexts.

Teacher Development & Support

262 Teachers Trained and Mentored

This includes intensive training sessions, classroom mentoring, modelling, session planning support, and reflective feedback. Many teachers are now independently applying the six-step mediation model with growing confidence.

Learner Impact

9,170 Learners Reached

These are children experiencing strengthened cognitive pathways, improved language and conceptual understanding, and greater classroom participation and confidence.

Resources & Tools

419 Cognitive Toolkits Distributed

A significant investment in classroom-quality materials that enable teachers to deliver structured, hands-on, concept-driven learning experiences.

Our Team

8 Team Members

6 trainers/mentors working directly with schools, plus 1 business manager driving organisational systems and resource mobilization as well as a social media manager. This growing team has been central to BCF's expanding footprint this year.

Update on Active Projects



1. Metro East Education District, Western Cape

2025 Progress:

The Metro East project showed strong progress this year, with 53 teachers completing all six Basic Concepts training modules. Our team conducted six rounds of in-class support visits, where teachers demonstrated high attendance, strong preparation, and growing confidence

in using the mediation model. Classrooms showed clearer conceptual teaching and improved learner engagement across the five participating schools.

2026 Outlook:

Next year's focus will be on consolidating implementation, with the five participating schools positioned as model sites for district-wide observation and for introducing the next cohort of teachers. While planning with the district is ongoing, the long-term aim is for district officials to take an increasing leadership role as the programme evolves.

2. Kwena Basin Extension Project, Mpumalanga

2025 Progress:

The Kwena Basin Extension Project officially launched this year, reaching 1,307 learners and 38 educators across two primary schools and four ECD sites. Training began with the Colour and Shape modules, receiving 94% top ratings from teachers. Follow-up classroom visits showed teachers starting to apply the Concept Teaching Model with growing confidence, and learners responding positively. A strong foundation for this multi-year project is now firmly in place.

2026 Outlook:

Next year we will conduct three scheduled visits to complete the full training process and strengthen early implementation. Baseline data will be gathered from both project and control schools to support long-term evaluation. The focus will remain on building teacher mediation capacity and deepening classroom application of the Basic Concepts Programme.

3. Focus Schools Project, Western Cape

2025 Progress:

The Focus Schools Project showed strong progress this year, with noticeable gains in learners' vocabulary, reasoning, and confidence across participating schools. Marine Primary completed the full Grade 3 BCP cycle, while Jupiter Primary continued steady implementation and strengthened mediation practice. Thirty teachers at Edendale, Red River, and Mitchells Plain successfully completed all BCP coursework under close guidance from BCF trainers. Across all sites, teacher commitment and classroom enthusiasm continued to rise.

2026 Outlook:

In 2026, 18 teachers have confirmed interest in beginning BCP training, which will be hosted at Marine Primary as the cluster's central training site. Interest continues to grow across schools in the wider Fishhoek–Ocean View area. We will also support teachers at Red River, Edendale and Mitchells Plain as they move into the implementation phase and begin working toward full mediator certification.

4. Durbanville Schools Foundation – Metro North, Western Cape

2025 Progress:

The Durbanville Schools Foundation project reached a major milestone this year with 18 teachers from four schools certified as Mediators of the Basic Concepts Programme. The graduation at Alpha Primary celebrated two years of intensive professional development and strong classroom transformation. Teachers demonstrated clear growth in mediation practice and reported significant improvements in learners' vocabulary, confidence, and engagement. The project now has a committed cohort of trained mediators across all four participating schools.

2026 Outlook:

Next year we will complete the project's endpoint data collection and offer BCP training to newly appointed teachers in the four participating schools. Additional implementation support will be available to any mediators requiring further guidance. We will also explore the potential inclusion of the remaining four DSF schools, responding to growing interest in expanding the programme across the full foundation network.

5. Basic Concepts Advocacy Project – Northern Cape Province

2025 Progress:

Training advanced across all districts, with most practitioner groups completing sessions up to Size, Position and Number/Letter. Engagement was strong in several areas, though implementation remained uneven and required continued monitoring by district officials. Districts also coordinated the distribution of 350 sets of materials to strengthen classroom implementation.

2026 Outlook:

The focus next year will be completing the remaining domain training for existing cohorts and starting new groups through cost-efficient, combined district sessions. A district-by-district BCP Symposium is being planned to revitalise implementation and strengthen advocacy across the province. Support visits and improved monitoring tools will help ensure more consistent practice in schools. These steps position the project to move steadily toward full provincial coverage.

Evidence of Impact



Two major evaluations concluded in 2025 added strong new evidence to our long-running impact record. In the Durbanville Schools Foundation project, school-readiness scores rose sharply—from an average of 42.5% in 2024 to 72.5% in 2025—with all four schools surpassing the preparedness benchmark after none had done so at baseline. Similar gains were observed in the Northern Cape’s ZFM District, where Grade 1 TBCK scores increased from 16.36 to 19.63, shifting learners from the “Weak” range into “Average” and “Strong” performance categories. These results reinforce clear patterns seen across earlier Northern

Cape districts and confirm the programme's positive early-learning effects in diverse contexts.

These new findings are consistent with the 15-year meta-analysis conducted by Alacrity Development, covering 14 controlled studies. Across the full dataset (2007–2022), BCP learners consistently outperformed comparison groups, scoring 18.04 vs 14.56 with a large effect size ($d = 0.83$). On average, 66% of learners receiving BCP mediation achieved readiness levels, compared to 31% of non-BCP learners. Together, this cumulative evidence provides compelling confirmation that the Basic Concepts Programme reliably strengthens conceptual understanding, language, reasoning, and overall school readiness at scale.

These findings will inform our implementation priorities and monitoring frameworks in 2026 as the programme expands into new districts and provinces.

New Directions for 2026



In 2026 we plan to expand our reach through several new initiatives aligned with our long-term strategy to deepen implementation, build local capacity, and extend the BCP into new communities. In the Northern Cape, a province-wide BCP Roadshow/Symposium will showcase live demonstrations across all five districts, supporting stronger, more consistent implementation. In the Western Cape, the Barrydale Project will bring the programme to six

underserved multi-grade schools in the Overberg, while our Bridges of Learning Project will connect teachers from different contexts to strengthen practice through shared learning. We are also exploring a partnership with Ripples for Change to launch a new initiative in the Eastern Cape. All three proposed projects are ready for implementation pending funding approval. Together, these projects—and those already active in three provinces—signal a year of meaningful growth, broader reach, and increasing demand for our work.

Final Reflections and Words of Appreciation



As we look back on 2025, this has been a year defined by growth, commitment, and deepening impact. Across three provinces and five active projects, we have seen teachers embrace new ways of thinking, learners step forward with confidence, and school communities rediscover the power of structured, meaningful mediation. None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our team, whose work in classrooms and communities continues to be the heartbeat of the Foundation.

We extend our sincere appreciation to our partner schools, districts, and provincial departments for their trust and collaboration. We also express deep gratitude to our funders, whose belief in cognitive modifiability and equitable education enables this work to reach the children who need it most. To the teachers who continue to learn, experiment, and grow—and to the thousands of learners who remind us every day of the potential that lies within every child—thank you.

As we move into 2026, we do so with optimism, strengthened capacity, and an unwavering commitment to expanding opportunity through thoughtful mediation. The year ahead holds great promise, and together with our partners, we look forward to continuing this important journey.



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