

2022

Annual Report



2022 was Axiom's most successful year to date across a range of metrics - from adding new schools and students to those same students achieving better results. Thank you for your part in making this all happen. Stay with us on this journey towards "all rural students leaving school with purpose, agency and options."

axiumeducation.org



NPO number 076-728-NPO | PBO number 930034907 | Reg. 2009/005913/08



AXIUM EDUCATION 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

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**"2022 was our year to
prove that with an incredible
support network, careful
planning and a little faith,
a deep rural organisation
could grow both bigger
and better."**



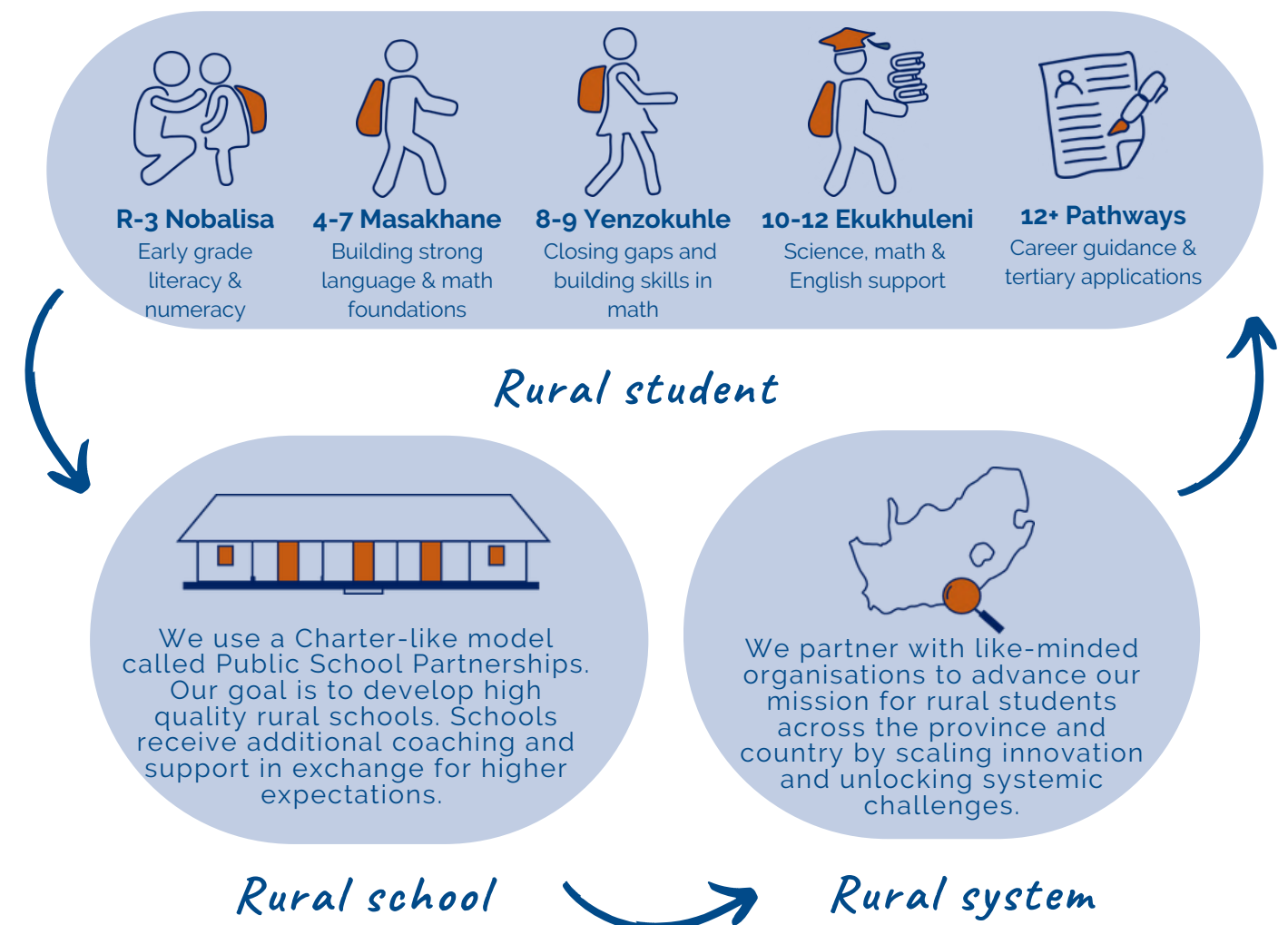
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Our mission is to raise student achievement in rural South African communities.

We choose to work at three different, but connected levels: student, school and system. Our student-focused programmes have a direct and immediate impact on student learning, while our school and systems work is often longer term and involves working with and through others, but is equally important if we want to raise achievement levels for all rural learners.

In 2022, our grade R-12 programs provide 4000 rural students with a range of additional supports.



How do we know if we're succeeding?

As an organisation we use these 7 questions to measure our success, with answers carefully supported by data - essentially our yardstick for whether we're succeeding or not.

1. Are we growing the number of students we serve?
2. Are our students on track for success in earlier grades?
3. Are our students completing school?
4. Are our students leaving school with purpose, agency and options?
5. Are our alumni accessing further study or meaningful work?
6. Are we building an effective talent pipeline?
7. Are we building a sustainable operating model?

Introduction

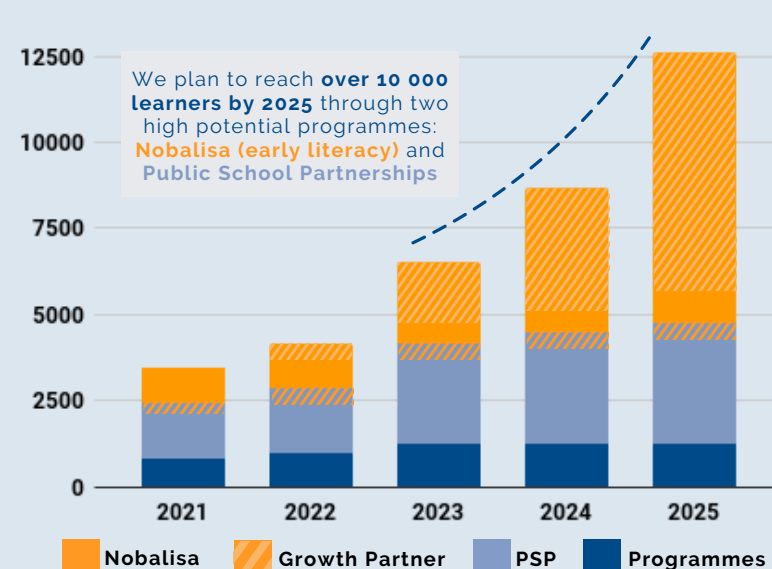
Greetings to all our friends and supporters, new and old

2022 was a hugely exciting and significant year for Axiom Education. Not only were we able to put the uncertainty, disruption and loss of the COVID years behind us, but the careful growth planning we had done during this period finally found a launchpad. As the first of three years of growth, 2022 marked the start of expansion of two areas of work which hold huge potential for Axiom to advance its vision of "every rural student leaving school with purpose, agency and options".

These two areas are our early literacy (Nobalisa Programme) and rural schools (Public School Partnerships) work. We added a new Public School Partnerships school as well as four new schools working with the Nobalisa Programme - serving a total of 900 additional learners. Two developments underpinned the success of this expansion: a new partnership with the Social Employment Fund (SEF), a government mass employment scheme, through whom we employed 65 part-time staff on government stipends; and, the new leadership opportunities for existing staff that were created by the growth. The latter brought huge amounts of energy to our team, as we saw many new leaders step up and lead significant new teams and projects.

At the heart of our motivation for growth was the belief that as we grew we could become both bigger and better - and this has certainly been supported by our experience thus far. We have seen solid gains during the 2022 year. At our PSP schools, since we started in 2018: the dropout rate has decreased; the matric pass and tertiary access rates have increased; in the early grades, learners are reading and doing basic maths well above comparable schools; maths, English and science remain a challenge. At our Nobalisa schools: implementation of the programme appears strong and there are early signs of significant learning gains on Teaching at the Right Level (TARL) assessments (although COVID has made causation hard to attribute). Our Senior Schools programme continues to create a pathway for motivated science and maths students at the six high schools around Zithulele towards tertiary study.

Finally, 2022 was also marked by transition. After 13 years of living in Zithulele, myself, Michelle and our family made the decision to move back to Cape Town at the end of the year. I will be staying on as Executive Director, with regular visits to site, and while Michelle has stepped down from her role as COO, she will be supporting the team remotely during the transition. We are confident in the plans put in place and the incredible team implementing them to manage the change process and lead Axiom into a new chapter



As we look ahead to 2023, we're excited by the opportunity to add a further 2000+ learners through an additional PSP school and eight Nobalisa schools - all while ensuring we're growing both bigger and better." In this report you can read about Axiom's growth, opportunities and challenges as well as stories that keep us motivated and inspired.

Yours serving rural students, teachers and schools for success.

Craig Paxton
Executive Director

2022 marks **13 years of work** with schools in the rural Eastern Cape Province of South Africa,

From an initial science & math focused team of two, Axiom has grown to a staff of 164 serving:



Looking at our impact in numbers this year, we have calculated...



It is really inspiring to hear about the growth of Axiom. It was always a dream of mine to see Axiom reaching out to other students and schools because the value of what Axiom does - it's hard to explain in words - it's more than just getting up in the morning and attending Saturday classes - there was so much more to learn. Hearing that Axiom is making an impact in the Eastern Cape and seeing that dream come into fruition in such a short space of time is really fulfilling to me and I'm sure to other alumni, community members and families.

-Alumnus, Luvo Vice

Core Values

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"Understand First to me simply means that I shouldn't assume."

"Overcoming the challenges even during tough times. Keep excelling in tough times."

"I believe these are the people who guide, protect and lead the team and learners by motivating them to revitalize and be strong."

"We are here to serve others."

"For me it means that you do exactly what you say and make sure that you do it in a good way so that you can achieve the goals."

"To me it means team spirit and to get things done in solidarity or unity which instills in the mind the spirit of being undefeated and comprehensive!"

Learning is a never-ending journey. We are all still learners.

"The value child centered to me means whatever decision I take regarding my work, it should always cater to the needs of the children that we serve at all times."

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Understand First: We put people and relationships first. Through sensitivity, empathy and humility, we listen to and respect differences and diverse contributions. Sikhona - we are present in the context in which we work. We don't make assumptions without understanding the context or situation first. We operate from an attitude of Ubuntu, embracing humility and compassion in our interactions with people, and acknowledging each other's human-ness. **Striving for Excellence:** We work to be the best that we can be, producing high quality work and striving for excellence in all that we do. We are intentional, thoughtful and realistic about the scope of our work, but also have big dreams about what we can achieve working together. We plan ahead and take responsibility for doing what we need to do as efficiently and effectively as possible. We are faithful stewards of the time and resources given to us to do the work, mindful that these are finite and that future work depends on good stewardship now. We are proactive, constantly looking for opportunities to improve what we do.. **Motivated Motivators:** We are passionate about the work we do. We recognise that demotivation is characteristic of many of the contexts in which we work. With this in mind, we strive to create a fun, positive learning and working environment. We are intentional about motivating and sustaining ourselves, our team and our learners.. **Servant Leaders:** We are about service. We consistently ask ourselves how we can serve others that we lead, supporting and empowering others to thrive. We lead by example. Our leadership style models the kind of leadership we would like others to grow in. We cultivate leadership. We intentionally provide and create opportunities for cultivating leadership qualities in those we interact with. In all of this we regularly reflect on whether we are being helpful to the schools, teachers and students we work with. **Do what we say:** We take responsibility for our decisions and behaviour, and commit to honesty and accountability. We are reliable. When things go wrong we communicate early and own our mistakes, trusting that we will be Understood First. **Never Stop Learning:** We are all still learners. We actively embrace learning opportunities and are open to constructive feedback. We welcome mistakes as opportunities to grow. The challenges we face are not easy. To achieve our goals and to consistently deliver high quality work requires creative problem solving and resilience, and the ability to learn, adapt and persevere. **Masambeni:** We share a common, audacious goal. To achieve this requires all of us, actively earning and building trust, and working together. Our work can't happen without effective, clear and honest communication - within our teams, within Axiom and with our partnering schools and institutions. We voice our expectations, concerns, questions, comments, criticisms and praise promptly and with respect. **Child-centered:** We are here because children are not receiving the education they deserve. We make decisions with the child in mind. We ask ourselves regularly, "what is best for the children we serve?".

Meet the Team

We have grown from a team of 2 in 2011 ...to a team of 102 + 65 SEF staff not pictured here!



Nobalisa Literacy

An isiXhosa word that means "one who tells stories", which speaks to the roots of this programme's desire to share a love for reading and stories with our youngest learners.

The focus of the Nobalisa programme is early grade isiXhosa literacy, using a Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL), small groups methodology in foundation phase classrooms. The team also run reading and numeracy clubs in the homes of team members, with the aim of increasing children's love of reading, numbers and learning.



Gr
R-3



2022 was a landmark year for the programme: the moment when we shifted from years of planning and deep investment in the quality of the programme to our first phase of a multi-year growth plan. Central to this story was a partnership with Nal'ibali, through whom we were able to access the Social Employment Fund (SEF) - a government employment initiative designed to simultaneously increase employment and create social good. The SEF allowed us to employ 65 additional staff, the majority of whom were deployed at four new Nobalisa schools along the Coffee Bay road, about 30 minutes' drive from Zithulele.

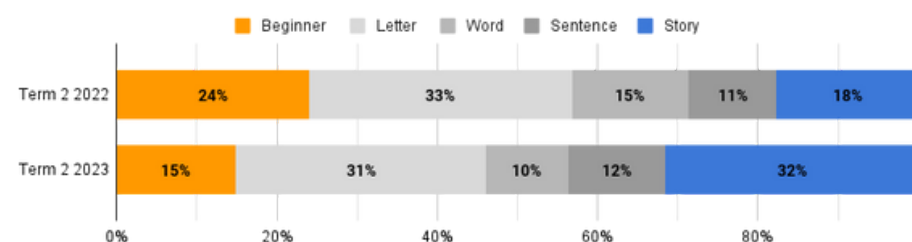
There have been several wins so far. The growth has energised our staff and has created opportunities for aspiring leaders to take their first steps as Nobalisa Mentors and School Team Leaders. Most exciting has been the surprisingly fast uptake of the programme by the new SEF staff. With only two weeks of initial training and only a month in the classroom, our SEF Nobalisa were implementing the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) programme 'with fidelity'... as the following quotes underline:

"The Coffee Bay Road Nobalisa have been implementing effective TARTL lessons. This has been all due to the training and coaching they get from their leaders. The flexibility that we have installed into the team has helped them so much, to kindly receive the feedback they get from us the leaders and make the better use of it, that is why now they are confident and can lead group sessions independently"

- Abenathi, SEF Team Leader.

"...the four schools we currently work with continue to validate how much our literacy intervention is a need in such schools. The TaRL approach caters for each child's learning development and that is what our teachers love the most because they see the results during "normal lesson times" and when we are not there. Learners are now motivated to learn and are not shy about whether they are doing it right or not." - Babalwa, Growth and Logistics Manager.

The buzz about the programme coming from schools, communities, our staff and the District is encouraging. Equally exciting are the initial results after a year of implementation at these four schools: the percentage of learners reading at Story Level had increased by 14% (the blue bars, nearly double) and the percentage in the Beginner group had decreased by 10% (the orange bars, nearly half). While TARTL data is informal, and there are likely to be other post-COVID effects, this is a promising indication that we can grow while maintaining quality results. With the SEF positioned as our vehicle for growth and these strong early successes, we're on track for our goal to reach 50 schools by 2025.



Public School Partnerships

Towards the end of 2021, as the initial four-year pilot of Public School Partnerships (PSP) was drawing to a close, Axiom's plan to extend and expand the pilot was approved by the PSP Funding Group and the Eastern Cape Department of Education. The goals in doing so were to develop further proof of concept by testing the model in schools outside the Amajingqi community, and to increase the footprint of the project in a new District. Results from the first four years had been promising, without being spectacular, and this expansion represented our best opportunity to demonstrate that significant improvements in learner results were possible in deep rural schools.

Over four years we plan to add another four to five schools to our network, all in the OR Tambo Inland District, and in 2022 we onboarded Sea View Primary School as the first of these. Sea View, located two minutes' walk from our Zithulele office, is a school of 300 learners and shares all the characteristics of chronically under-resourced rural schools. It has tended to be among the weakest of the schools we work with academically, but the strong commitment from the School Management Team (SMT) suggested that partnership with the school held strong potential for improvement. Thoko Mkombe, Axiom's School Development Manager at this new PSP site, has led the initial work with the SMT and School Governing Body primarily focused on establishing the vision, values and policy environment that would enable future work.

"At Amajingqi PSP Schools, 2022 was a year of change. Our energies and resources were directed towards programme and curriculum recovery, building and regaining team ethos and motivation, as well as ensuring that our programmes are strengthened to meet the new challenges of working in a post-Covid era." -Jacob Chirumanzi, Regional Manager



At our Amajingqi site in 2022, there were several key breakthroughs that demonstrated a shift in the support for the Partnership from government: an underperforming principal at Dimalisile Comprehensive High School was moved on by the Department and replaced with a strong interim leader; several schools received much needed infrastructure upgrades; and vacancies across all schools were filled. For some schools this represented the first time a permanent appointment had been made in the four years we have been working there.

In terms of learner outcomes, over the four years of the initial pilot we've seen strong gains in literacy levels in the early grades, a reduction in the dropout rate, improvements in matric results and pleasing gains in the number of learners gaining access to tertiary study. Maths, English and science remain a challenge. Perhaps as important as these academic improvements, the project has strong support from communities, teachers and the district, which is providing us with a solid platform to launch into the next three years.



Programmes

Over the years Axium has developed several student-focused programmes that meet rural children's needs at each stage of their development. These programmes are at different points in the innovation process but they all share four common characteristics in their design: **Local models of success, Individual attention, additional resources for key subjects and opportunities to belong and extend.**

Masakhane

After-school maths & language

An isiXhosa word that means 'let's help build each other'. This name speaks to the programme's focus on building robust, skillful learners who are able to thrive personally and academically in challenging environments.



Gr
4-7

The focus of the Masakhane programme is on supporting the transition to English as a medium of instruction at the beginning of grade 4, and nurturing the skills that learners in grade 4 - 7 will need to thrive in a complex, multilingual schooling environment. We focus on developing bilingual skills, agency and basic maths competencies. In 2022 we piloted a Teaching at the Right Level approach (supported by TARL Africa) with 120 learners in an after-school environment that we hope to embed in schools in future years.

Yenzokuhle

In-school maths

Yenzokuhle: do it well. This speaks to the programme's focus on building skills in Mathematics and developing learners' agency, motivation and determination to succeed.

The focus of the Yenzokuhle programme is on closing gaps and building skills in the basic mathematics required for success in the early grades via the medium of various digital Maths practice services, such as Olico, Siyavula and GreenShoots. Lessons are taught and facilitated by a team of post-school youth. In 2022 Yenzokuhle worked with 345 learners in three schools at our Zithulele site, and in a similar programme with the seven primary schools at AmaJingqi. While we continued to improve implementation throughout the year, results indicate that there is still some way to go, and we anticipate that 2023 will likely be a point of decision for the programme in its current form.



Gr
4-9

Senior Schools/Ekukhuleni

Additional maths, English and science

An isiXhosa word that means 'place of growth'. This name speaks to the programme's focus on growing skills in core high school subjects and developing learners' agency, motivation and determination to succeed.

This programme creates pathways to success for already motivated and academically strong learners in their final three years of school. This means honing their Maths, Physical Sciences and English skills through 60 additional days of tuition at Ekukhuleni, providing exposure to other highly motivated learners from neighbouring schools, and encouraging diligent study habits through the facilitation of weekly study groups in which they pass their knowledge on to their peers. In 2022 the programme served more learners than ever before, with 140 learners at Ekukhuleni and touch points with approximately 400 students at weekly Study Groups. Results continue to be strong, with the vast majority of students earning Bachelor passes and finding places at tertiary institutions around the country.



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10-12

Pathways

Career guidance and tertiary application support



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9-12

The Pathways programme provides learners with access to the skills and knowledge they require to make informed decisions about their futures and next steps after school, whether that is university, college, internships or employment.

During 2022 the Pathways team assisted more than 500 learners from 10 different high schools with university and college applications. This is a huge feat considering that each learner was assisted with approximately seven applications! In the upcoming year they are hoping to develop their understanding of the complexities around college systems and commit to continually expanding their knowledge around post-matric opportunities for our learners.


"2022 was a year of tremendous growth in quantity and quality. Amidst all of this strategic growth, our regular programming continued to steadily impact the lives of our learners. We hope that our distinctive "MTN" yellow bus will continue to be a symbol of hope and child-centred caring in our surrounding communities."

- Joanna Reynolds, Head of Education



Hear from our Alumni

Axium played a hugely important role in my educational life from my school days until now. I am very ambitious and I loved school and got good marks. In high school, I was selected to participate in extra Axium classes. Axium supported my education by giving me study materials, extra lessons, study groups and career guidance. Axium gave me more reasons why I should pursue my dreams, supported my education and respected my wish of what I wanted to study.



I was very excited and proud when I got into Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth. No-one from my family had been to university before.

I have always wanted to be a role model in my community. My dream of providing for my family and being a role model has come true. I am now working for Axium as the Pathways Program Coordinator, helping high school students in my village and the surrounding area get into university. I am passionate about community service and I am very happy to be working with Axium and helping more students do what I did.


-Zodwa Nho

"I cannot believe it has been seven years since I left Axium's Ekukhuleni Programme as a high school graduate. Thinking back on this time brings back all the memories we shared together from Saturday classes, study groups, bootcamps and the time we spent doing university applications - which is one of the things that gave me hope for a better future. One of the highlights was being given an opportunity to use laptops. I still remember the first day we had a chance to use them and make email accounts to do our applications. Having a gmail account was something I could brag about to my friends when I got home (of course I helped them create their own accounts, but I was the master!). The other memory that stands out was the Saturday Mich told me that they had applied for me to do a Higher Certificate in Business Administration at a Private College called TSiBA Education.

I graduated in 2019. After working for a LegalTech Startup for four years, I'm now working as the Platinum Client Manager for DigiCert, a global digital security company and a leading global provider of digital trust. I am also working on a business plan to start a farming business back home. Farming has been part of my family and it has been a source of income for generations in my family through selling of fresh vegetables.

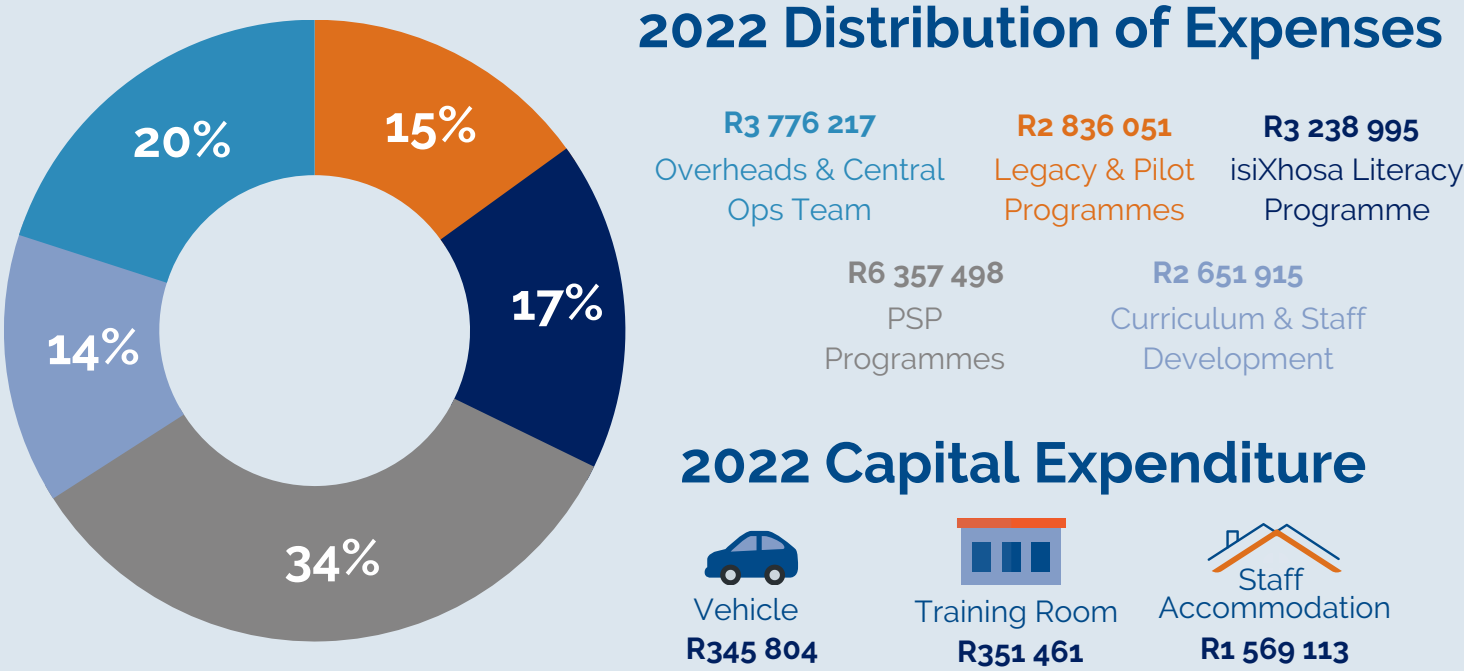
There were a lot of lessons I learnt at Axium, but the willingness to learn is one of my biggest takeaways and today it is one of my biggest strengths. Developing a love of learning is the biggest gift anyone can give you.

As Axium grows, it will be important to keep the culture of learning and to continue to promote the willingness to learn. When a student comes home and tells their families what they learnt - that means a lot and makes a whole lot of difference. Hold onto that culture. It has changed my life in many ways."

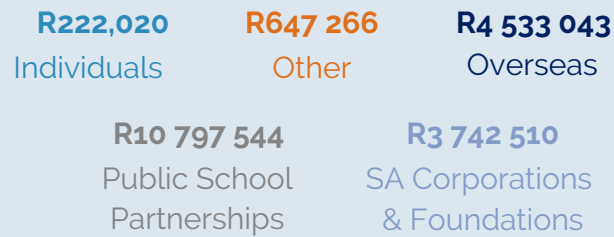


-Luvo Vice

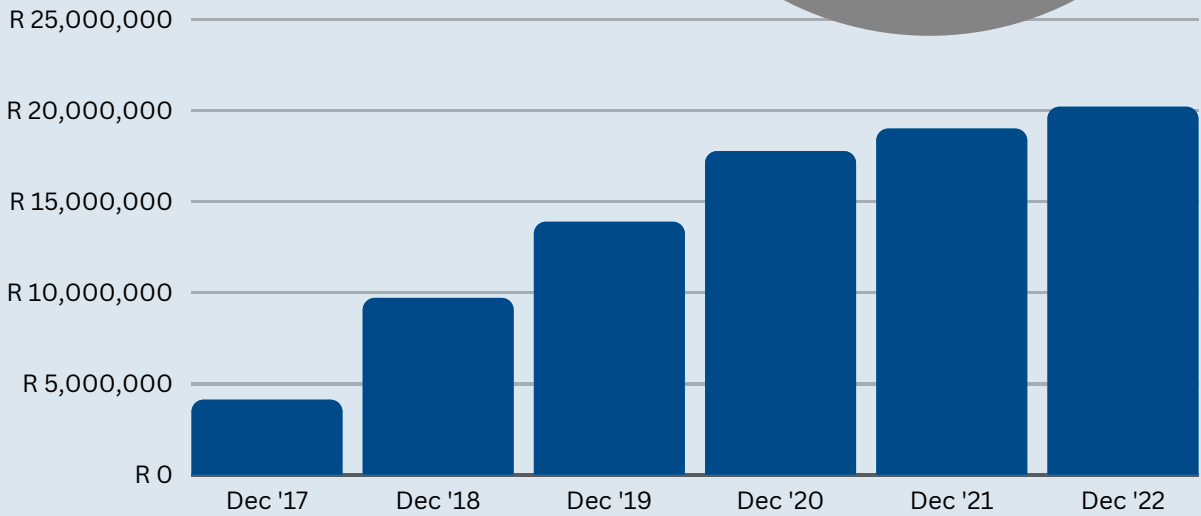
Finances



2022 Income Streams



Historical Income



Perspectives from our Supporters

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"The community appreciates Axiom as it creates employment opportunities for the youth of Zithulele and we see improvement in the performance of the children. The schools also appreciate Axiom because Axiom assists teacher's with other methods of teams, topics and makes remedial work for teachers."

- Seaview Primary School Principal



Mrs Petse



Chwayita Sogoni

"uAxiom uyasinceda nathi singabazali njengokuba sifunda nabantwana bethu. They come home with books from Masakhane. They read to us, and sometimes read together as friends. It's nice to see that."

- Parent of a Masakhane Learner



Sanele Madliswana

"Before the job exhibition Axiom Education organised for us at Zithulele Hospital I didn't even know what pharmacy was, let alone what a pharmacist does or that it even existed. I believe it takes a village to raise a child. Coming back to the village is a way for me to give back and also a motivation to the youth in the community."

- Axiom alum & pharmacist at Zithulele Hospital



Evan Torrance

"In South Africa, investing in education remains the single greatest opportunity to uplift families, communities and the nation overall. I benefited from a stable home life and a world-class, foundational education, and my experience of the virtuous cycle where education offers enlightenment, provides community, drives purpose and creates opportunities has driven my personal interest and investment in this work. It simply offers the greatest return on investment that anyone could achieve - either financially or through fulfillment for time that was invested. I've been fortunate to be a part of the Axiom team since its inception, and I'm constantly in awe of the hard work, the dedication, and the vision that exists to expand the influencer and impact of Axiom for generations to come."

-Axiom Board Chairman

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Our Partners

Thank you to the incredible support and generosity of our partners who believe in our vision and without whom this work would not be possible.

