

Uncovering SA's education innovators

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The South African education system is underperforming. In Grade 4 "more than half of our students cannot read for meaning and interpretation and a third are completely illiterate in any language". Secondary school is not better off with "80% of our Grade nine pupils achieving results at a Grade 5 level in Mathematics with the backlog starting in Grades 1 to 3".

"The poor outcomes of our education system have driven a huge and promising response from South Africans to develop innovative models to improve both the quality and outcomes of the system," said Dr Francois Bonnici, Director of the [Bertha Centre for Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship](#).



Image courtesy of Shine Literacy

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Recognising this response all over the country, the Bertha Centre, a specialised unit at the UCT's Graduate School of Business (GSB), will this month be launching the first **South African Education Innovator's Review**. The publication will showcase innovations in the education sector which have proved their impact in addressing the key challenge of improving access to quality education for those that need it most.

"We've uncovered what is being done by over 120 programmes to address the challenges in the education sector. This research was then taken deeper by identifying the components of these models that have impacted the system in order to share the learnings of the innovations in our publication," continued Dr

Bonnici.

Professor Jonathan Jansen, who wrote the *Review's* foreword, said, *"Innovative cultures do not emerge from teaching and learning environments that are risk-averse, test-driven, teacher-centred, authority-based and that value rote learning over experiential thinking."*

The review has seven chapters that explore various programmes from across the country adopting innovative approaches along the learner's full journey, from cradle to career: taking in early childhood development (ECD), examining the acquisition of vital skills in literacy and numeracy, then building on these foundations in Maths and Science, and mapping the pathway that links what we learn in the classroom to what we implement in the workplace, and in society. The curated case studies and snapshots of 'innovations to watch' further help to illustrate what is possible in terms of impact.

"This *Review* shines a spotlight on the sometimes under-recognised role that frontline actors who interact directly with learners, school and communities can play, and on the hope that lies in their stories. We trust that readers will be inspired to support these organisations and embark on their own journey to support education in our country," concluded *Louise Albertyn and Camilla Swart, who co-authored the publication with Bonnici*.

A free electronic version of the review will be available online from the 23rd September 2015 on the Bertha Centre's [website](#), alternatively those who prefer hard copies can pick one up from the Centre's offices at the GSB, 9 Portswood Road, Green Point, V&A Waterfront, Cape Town.

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