



Funding Proposal

Maths Tutoring Centre Project

(Chairperson), Anthea Taai (Deputy Chairperson), Roy Hewett (Secretary).


72 Devereux Avenue, Vincent, East London, South Africa, 5241


+27 66 541 6240


info@iZibalo.africa


<https://iZibalo.africa>

Organisational Background

Founded in 2022, iZibalo NPC derives its name from the isiXhosa word for 'mathematics' or 'counting'. iZibalo is a non-profit company dedicated to addressing one of South Africa's most pressing education challenges: **the poor performance of learners in mathematics**. iZibalo is a member of the Association for Mathematics Education of South Africa (AMESA).

In 2023, iZibalo became the overall winner of the Inspirational Awards an event acknowledging inspirational achievements by NPOs and individuals in East London. In the Mercedes Benz / Laureus Sports for Good NPO Incubation Programme 2.0, iZibalo was crowned the best performing non-profit organization.

The **vision** is to empower **every learner to excel in mathematics**, thereby expanding opportunities for tertiary education and fostering meaningful participation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) careers.

The South African Mathematics Catastrophe

South Africa is sitting on a ticking time bomb: fewer than **two in ten** learners pass pure mathematics in Grade 12. The country's future workforce faces being left behind in a world driven by Artificial Intelligence (AI) and advanced technologies. Without urgent action, South Africa risks a generation without sufficient maths teachers, medical professionals, engineers, and innovators to compete on the global stage.

Schools in the Duncan Village, Gompo Town and Buffalo Flats areas of East London have mathematics classrooms of over 70 learners in Grades 8 and 9 (ages 13 to 15), making individual attention nearly impossible. Teachers are overwhelmed and unable to meet the diverse needs of their learners. At the end of Grade 9, learners need to decide whether they continue with pure mathematics in Grade 10. However, most learners are forced to choose mathematical literacy, **not because they lack potential**, but because they fear failure.

In South Africa, all **Grade 12 final examinations are written in English**. Most schools in our area have English as a second language and lessons are taught in **isiXhosa**. This results to a serious disadvantage for the learners, especially in subjects like **mathematics and science**, where understanding the *language of the question* is as important as knowing the *content*.

Traditional mathematics & physical science interventions begin in Grades 11 and 12 (Ages 17 to 18), when learners are preparing for their final exams. Foundational gaps from earlier grades are too deep to bridge, leading to failure and wasted resources. iZibalo performed a baseline assessment for Grade 8 learners from five feeder schools and the results revealed that only **eight out of 513 learners assessed, achieved over 50% for Grade 7 work**.

MATHS TUTORING CENTRE PROJECT

iZibalo's founders bring a combined experience of over 45 years in mathematics education, tutoring, and programme design. Drawing from this expertise, the team developed a maths tutoring initiative, which combines structured tutoring, technology integration and teacher development. The initiative aims to develop **young, unemployed STEM graduates** from the local community, by offering them teaching experience, practical skills and clear career pathways into mathematics education and broader STEM professions.

The **Maths Tutoring Centre** is a fully resourced former shipping container converted to a cutting-edge tutoring space with 20 laptops, internet connection and the latest mathematics teaching software. The Centre is located within the grounds of Greenpoint Secondary School in Buffalo Flats. This is within a 2.5km walking distance of five non-fee-paying high schools. Learners attend the Centre after school for structured, long-term support from Grade 8 to Grade 12, ensuring mastery and confidence in mathematics.

The approach is distinctive in its focus on **early intervention**. While remedial efforts target Grade 11 and 12 learners, iZibalo recognises that it is too late to close foundational gaps at this stage. **The investment is in learners from Grades 8 and 9**, equipping them with the skills, confidence, and habits necessary to sustain success through to Grade 12. For Grades 8 and 9 learners, **iZibalo provides English remedial assistance** as English comprehension affects how learners understand mathematics. The iZibalo baseline assessment highlighted that new learners need to be taught concepts from up to two grades prior to their current level, due to existing gaps and misconceptions.

The Maths Tutoring Centre serves 100 learners and maintains a **tutor-to-learner ratio of 1:8**, ensuring personalised attention. All learners commit to a minimum of **three hours of structured mathematics tutoring each week**, supplemented by access to technology that allows daily independent learning at home. **Each learner is tutored over a period of four to five years**. Learners enrol in the project in their Grade 8 or Grade 9 year and continue until they complete their Grade 12 year. For Grade 10 to Grade 12 learners, physical science tutoring is provided. Therefore, iZibalo provides consistent mentorship and support, enabling learners not only to achieve academically but also to thrive holistically.

Over the past three years, iZibalo has made a measurable impact on learner outcomes for more than **350 learners**. In 2024, **74% of Grade 9 learners** at the Centre chose to continue with pure mathematics, far exceeding the **national average of 42%**. With a **learner attendance rate** of 84% and an **average achievement of 70% in mathematics** for learners who have been beneficiaries for more than 2 years. This highlights the project's effectiveness in building confidence and academic performance.

The project has built partnerships among schools, parents, and the local community to support learner progress at school and home. Teachers share marked scripts and results with parental consent, enabling tutors to advise both learners and parents on improvement steps. Parents help by ensuring learners complete homework and practice as required.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

iZibalo has established a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) system to closely track learner progress and maintain high standards of accountability. This system incorporates several key components to ensure that every learner receives the necessary support and that outcomes remain transparent.

All learners undergo a baseline assessment upon enrolment. This initial evaluation determines each learner's current level of mathematical proficiency and to identify any foundational gaps that need to be addressed. The results of the baseline testing inform the tutoring approach for each learner, ensuring that support is tailored to individual needs.

Tutors maintain detailed records of each learner's attendance and engagement during sessions. Weekly progress is monitored as learners advance through the curriculum, enabling tutors to promptly identify and address any challenges or setbacks. This continuous monitoring helps to keep learners on track and maximises the effectiveness of the tutoring support.

Each term, learners are required to submit their school report cards. These termly assessments, combined with ongoing monitoring through learner management programmes, allow for a holistic view of curriculum mastery. Regular review of academic progress ensures that learners' understanding is consistently reinforced and that interventions can be made whenever necessary.

Teachers play an active role in the MEL process by providing termly evaluations of improvements observed in the classroom, as well as feedback on learner confidence and participation. There is a collaborative exchange of learner data between iZibalo and classroom teachers, fostering mutual learning and enabling both parties to better support each learner's development.

Financial Sustainability

30% of learners are required to pay fees. This income is used to offset overhead expenses and support the Centre's ongoing operations.

Budget for Maths Tutoring Centre to support 100 learners.

1 January 2026 to 31 December 2026

<u>Project Expenses</u>	<u>Total</u>
Centre staff: 5 Maths Tutors, 2 Science Tutors, 2 Supervisors, 1 English Tutor	R1 596 000
Software licences – Maths, Science, English, and learner data processing	R 130 000
Consumables - Headphones, Calculators, Notes, Stationery, exam papers	R 75 000
Textbooks, study guides and printing costs	R 63 000
Internet Connectivity, Electricity & Water, Telephone	R 60 000
Computer Maintenance	R 16 000
Staff Training	R 19 000
Project Expenses Sub-total	R1 959 000
Contribution towards overheads (15%)	R 293 850
TOTAL	R2 252 850
Income from paying learners	-R 187 000
Total Amount Required	R 2 065 850
Amount Required per learner	R 20 660