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FUNDER SUMMARY · UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

Every student reading for meaning

The [Funding Country] Reading for Meaning Project — University of Pretoria: building the reading speed and comprehension students need for academic success.

Endorsed by the South African National Commission for UNESCO as a partner organisation · 24 May 2026

38
years of reading research and development since 1988

230,000+
learner profiles across eyebraingym® and LAB-on-line

11,886
Grade 6 learners in Reading Riot 2026, all nine provinces

LectorSA (Pty) Ltd · Level 2 B-BBEE · Menlyn Corporate Park, Pretoria
October 2026 · www.lectorsa.com · www.eyebraingym.com · www.reading-riot.com

University of Pretoria project — Funder Summary

13 October 2026

LectorSA is a Level 2 B-BBEE, family-owned South African company that has built reading-development systems since 1988. Its platform, eyebraingym®, trains learners to read for meaning and measures every gain. In May 2026 the South African National Commission for UNESCO endorsed eyebraingym® and named LectorSA a partner organisation.

The ask: fund the [Funding Country] Reading for Meaning Project — University of Pretoria: €985,000 in Year 1 for 19,181 students, growing 50% a year to 43,158 students in Year 3, with funding committed a year at a time against agreed reading targets.

Key fact	Detail
Track record	38 years; 147 schools reached, plus 13 universities and colleges and 36 reading centres
Reach	230,000+ learner profiles
Typical improvement	4–6 years of reading-with-comprehension level
Languages	English, Afrikaans, Sepedi live; Tshivenda and isiZulu imminent
Leadership	Thomas and Minda Marshall (founders); Dr Mike Nkuna (Masingita Group); two former provincial Heads of Education
Funding to date	Bootstrapped; no external investors

The problem

81% of South African Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning — the lowest result of all countries in PIRLS 2021. Only 51% of the 2013 Grade 1 cohort finished Grade 12. About 674,000 learners repeat Grades 4, 6, 8 or 10 each year, costing the state roughly R17.3 billion.

The gap opens in Grade 4, when learners switch from mother-tongue instruction to English or Afrikaans. A child who cannot read for meaning cannot learn any other subject.

What we do

Five connected components take a learner from first sounds to fluent, measured reading for meaning. Funders can back one or the full pathway.

Component	What it does
WordPlay	Teacher-led phonics curriculum for Grades R–4 that builds decoding
eyebraingym®	Web and mobile app that places each learner by diagnostic, adapts in real time and reports speed and comprehension against international norms; 6–8 active hours per learner, no curriculum change
SACE-accredited training	Eight-module science-of-reading course for Foundation and Intermediate Phase teachers
Phonics to Meaning (P2M)	Research programme with international reading scientists; 66 teachers in 54 rural Limpopo schools in 2026
Reading Riot	National Grade 6 reading competition; 11,886 learners in 630+ schools in 2026

A live dashboard lets schools, districts and funders see each learner's progress, so every rand can be traced to a measured gain.

Track record

eyebraingym® is the latest generation of a system refined over 38 years, from desktop software to a cloud and mobile platform.

Year	Milestone
2026	UNESCO National Commission endorsement; Reading Riot reaches 11,886 learners; National Treasury investment case submitted
2025	Mokopane Destiny Academy Grade 1 class reaches 100% functional literacy; Masingita Group partnership for public-sector expansion
2024	Reading Riot national competition launched with the University of Pretoria
2020	eyebraingym® web app launched, developed with M3line
2011	LAB-on-line cloud platform launched; long-term school clients begin
2008	University of Pretoria JuniorTukkie partnership begins
1992	Eyes Only, South Africa's first computer reading programme
1988	Ecoltech reading research company founded

Proof of impact

Learners typically gain 4–6 years in reading-with-comprehension level. At every level they roughly double their silent reading speed while holding or raising comprehension, and partner schools report higher marks. These are programme data, not yet a controlled trial — which is what the funding would deliver.

Group	Learners	Result
Mokopane Destiny Academy, Grade 1 (2025)	Whole class	100% functional literacy; 49 → 75 words correct per minute in 7 weeks
Silent reading assessment, 15 sessions	2,971	100 → 208 words per minute (Grade 1 → Grade 8 level)
Grade 4 learners (2019)	427	89 → 199 wpm; comprehension 54% → 65%
University of Pretoria JuniorTukkie (2008–2017)	1,754	135 → 307 wpm; comprehension 67% → 73%
Grade 12 distinction candidates, one school	133	Average marks 74% → 81%

> *"We saw tangible results in the improvement of their marks." — Catherine van Wyk, Hoërskool Nelspruit*
>
> *"With Lectorsa, failure is not an option." — Cedric Esterhuizen, Head of Languages, Christel House SA*

Partners

LectorSA works with government, universities, corporates and schools; its longest partnership, with the University of Pretoria, has run since 2008.

Type	Partners
Endorsement and government	SA National Commission for UNESCO; National Treasury (investment case); Namibia Ministry of Education
Universities	University of Pretoria; Stellenbosch University; University of the Free State; UNISA; Tshwane University of Technology; University of Namibia
Sponsors	ABSA and BAIC (Reading Riot 2026); Investec (JuniorTukkie)
Delivery and strategy	M3line (platform developer); Masingita Group
Schools and NGOs	147 schools reached, incl. Christel House, Lebone II College and the Click Foundation
International	Licensed operators in Namibia, Malaysia, Indonesia and The Bahamas

The opportunity: the University of Pretoria project

This summary accompanies a stand-alone proposal to [EMBASSY OF FUNDING COUNTRY] for the [Funding Country] Reading for Meaning Project — University of Pretoria. The project starts with €985,000 in Year 1, reaching 19,181 students, and grows by 50% a year to 43,158 students in Year 3 — €4.68 million (R86.6 million excl. VAT) over three years. Every student report, certificate and the app carry the funding country's name. Funding is committed one year at a time against agreed reading targets; in Year 4 the aim is to bring the University, and through it the Department of Higher Education and Training on board to continue the work.

Year	Funding	Funding (R, excl. VAT)	Students
1	€985,000	R18.2m	19,181
2	€1.48m	R27.3m	28,772
3	€2.22m	R41.0m	43,158
Years 1–3	€4.68m	R86.6m (R99.5m incl. VAT)	91,111

A long partnership. Many students arrive at university reading too slowly, and with too little comprehension, for the volume of academic reading their degrees require. LectorSA has worked with the University since 2008 — JuniorTukkie (2008–2017), Vice-Chancellor's Merit Award scholars (since 2019), Tuks Sport School (since 2024), a Veterinary Science pilot (2025) and the Reading Riot finals (since 2024). Merit Award scholars moved from about 150 to over 365 words per minute.

Programme fit. Students start with first-year and extended-programme groups, then widen to senior students; lecturers and student-support staff see a live dashboard. No change to the curriculum is needed. [TARGET GROUPS — TO BE AGREED WITH UP]

How the funding works. Before Year 1, the funder, the University and LectorSA agree the targets — for example, at least 50% of students completing up to session 10 and average reading speed at least 30% above each student's baseline. Results are checked at the end of each year. If the targets are met, funding for the following years becomes firm; if not, the partners review delivery and the funder may cancel the remaining funding on notice. Years 2 and 3 compare module pass rates and first-year retention with similar students who do not take part.

Cost. The project is priced at R950 per student per year (excluding VAT), against R2,100 at the private price. Amounts are converted at R18.50 per euro, fixed at contracting. The price covers the eyebraingym® licence and its delivery only. Independent evaluation, devices and data are not included, and WordPlay and teacher training are quoted on request according to the project's scope; LectorSA's advisors can help compile it.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA PROJECT AT A GLANCE

From reading crisis to reading for meaning

Measurable reading development for university students — eyebraingym® is endorsed by the SA National Commission for UNESCO

THE CHALLENGE

81%
of Grade 4 learners cannot read for meaning (PIRLS 2021)

674,000
learners repeat Grades 4, 6, 8 or 10 every year

R17.3bn
yearly cost of those repeated grades to the state

51%
of the 2013 Grade 1 cohort finished Grade 12

THE PATHWAY — ONE ECOSYSTEM, FIRST SOUNDS TO FLUENT READING

WordPlay — Phonics, Gr R–4
→ **eyebraingym®** — Assess · train · measure
→ **SACE training** — 8 teacher modules
→ **P2M research** — 66 teachers, 54 schools
→ **Reading Riot** — National Gr 6 contest

PROVEN RESULTS

Silent reading speed after 15 sessions (2,971 learners)





functional literacy, Grade 1 class, Mokopane Destiny Academy (2025)

74 → 81%
average marks, 133 Grade 12 distinction candidates

135 → 307
wpm, 1,754 UP JuniorTukkie students

REACH

38 yrs
of research since 1988

230,000+
learner profiles

147
schools reached, plus 13 universities and 36 reading centres

11,886
Reading Riot learners in 630+ schools, 9 provinces

VALUE FOR MONEY

R2,100 eyebraingym® licence, private, per student → **R950** per student for this project (excl. VAT)

€4.68m
three-year funding (R86.6m excl. VAT) for 91,111 student places

+50%
growth a year in funding and students, Years 2–3

Prices cover the eyebraingym® licence and delivery only. WordPlay, teacher training, evaluation, devices and data are scoped per project — our advisors can help compile it.

THE ASK

€985k Year 1 budget

19,181 students in Year 1

43,158 students by Year 3

Funding tied to agreed reading targets; in Year 4, bring the University on board

Sources: LectorSA programme data, PIRLS 2021, UP programme data 2008–2025, LectorSA Country-Branded Projects Model v11 (Oct 2026). Results are programme data, not a controlled trial.

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