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Early Childhood Nutrition & Play

2019

ACTIVITY REPORT



IT IS WITH GREAT PRIDE THAT WE PRESENT OUR 2019 ACTIVITY REPORT. It highlights the many outreaches, projects, programmes and workshops that we have organised and hosted in the Early Childhood Development (ECD) Sector during a busy, productive and rewarding year.

We will remember 2019 as a remarkable year of growth of all our three programmes and the year where we managed to roll out our nutrition programme in the second province being the desperately needy Eastern Cape.

August marked a month of big change, we moved office and are now hosted by the wonderful Bigen Group on Bellevue Campus in Kloof. Our team of trustees also went through a big change this year and we welcomed 2 new members.

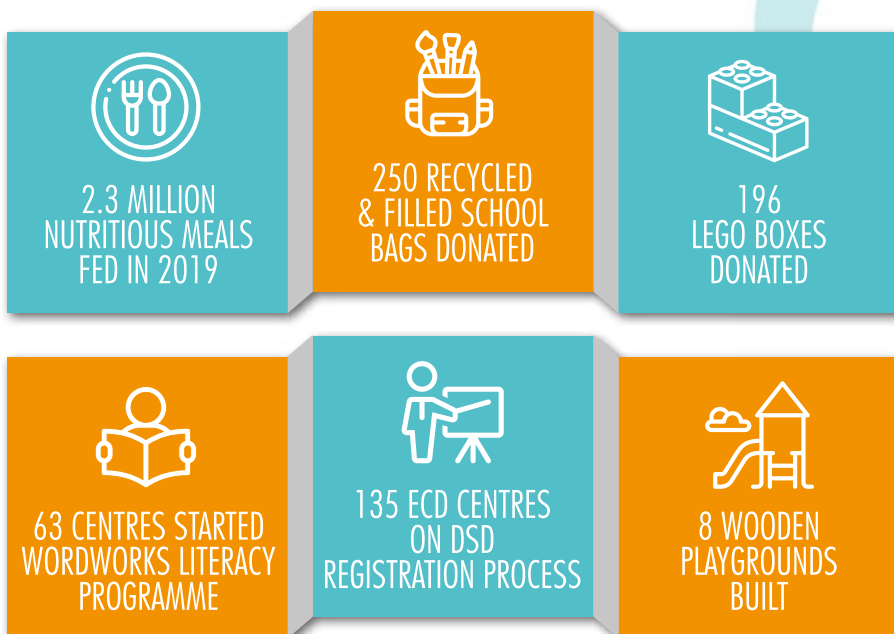
We are now guided by:

Chairman: Nicolas Kinsley, practicing attorney;

David Sweidan, Vice Chairman; Michael Dos Santos, Treasurer; Belinda Francis Scott, Trustee; Nathi Ngubane, Sport Programme Co-ordinator; Evidence Neliswe Ntaka, Project Co-ordinator.

Our management team remained the same with Julika Falconer as the CEO and Nokubonga Hlongwane as our ECD Programme Director, also known as "ECD Agent Poppy".

SOME OF OUR 2019 WORK IN NUMBERS:



"We wish to express a heartfelt thank you to all our partners and funders. There are now many more thriving children and better-resourced ECD Centres in Kwa-Zulu Natal and the Eastern Cape.

The challenging socio-economic environment continues to underpin the necessity and value of our various ECD services, enabled by their generous support."



PARTNER & SPONSORSHIPS

NEW PARTNERS ALWAYS BRING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND THE CORE, LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS KEEP THE SHIP AFLOAT.

FUTURELIFE HEALTH PRODUCTS PTY. has been on board with monthly and substantial donations of their highly nutritious instant food as far back as 2009, our still “informal years” when we moved from making peanut butter sandwiches to mixing Futurelife breakfasts. Our nutrition programme has been built on this rock and we are most grateful for the thousands of children we were able to watch grow and thrive through these years.



Our education and play programme would not be possible without the regular donations from our German partner **INHLANHLA e.V.** who has been supporting us since 2007. Unmeasurable joy has big-hearted to thousands of children with the donations of one playground every month to ECD sites or Primary Schools. When temperatures dropped in May, our German partner donated 250 blankets to learners at Inchanga Primary School.



The Income Specialists, **MARRIOTT**, continued to donate towards nutrition and education in 2019 and we are most grateful. They provided 1200 learners with a weekly breakfast and this year with everyone receiving a new bowl and lunchbox.



DGMT has been the catalyst for our growth with their operation strengthening grant in 2018 which was extended to November 2019.



The **VICTOR DAITZ FOUNDATION** joined our group of funders this year and came on board with nutrition and education support for the Eshowe area, KZN.

Our crowdfunding partner **DIFFERENT.ORG** allows us to raise funds for specific projects on their platform throughout the year and with a great deal of input from their treasured Different Group client base.

Our valued partnership with **NETWORK ACTION GROUP** has enabled us to supply much-needed nutrition into 116 ECD Centres in Ugu, one of the embattled districts in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) which needs assistance the most. We received welcome funding from the **NATIONAL LOTTERY COMMISSION (NLCSA)** which allowed us to be able to finally extend our reach to the Eastern Cape. In January 2019 we had the first truckload of 2 tonnes Unity meal tracking to the Bizana District in the northern region of the Eastern Cape. None of these outreaches would have been possible without our logistics partner **CITY LOGISTICS**, absolute angels on the road. They accommodate our collections and deliveries at no charge whenever we have a larger load than our bakkie can take.



Gauteng based non-profit organisation (NPO) **CARE FOR EDUCATION** has continued to supply us with LEGO brick donations for training and distribution to worthy ECD Centres and Primary Schools.



PARTNER & SPONSORSHIPS

Our free and beautifully shelved unit at **LOCK-UP STORAGE** in Goshawk Road, New Germany, has made a huge difference to our ability to accept, store and allocate donations of food items and learning materials. It has been a very busy place this year with shelves filled and emptied each week.

The artfully branded **TOYOTA HILUX SPONSORED BY THE THEKWINI TOYOTA GROUP** has travelled 22 000 kilometres into urban, semi-rural but mostly rural areas in KZN this year. It has become a beacon of hope in the areas we serve and visit on a monthly basis.



We started receiving wonderful and much anticipated **BARROWS GLOBAL ECD EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS** early in the year. Barrows produces thousands of retail display units for companies all over South Africa. Very often, the printing of those units results in 'waste' in the form of blank space - areas of cardboard or paper not covered with artwork. The team at Barrows found a way of repurposing that waste to generate educational material for young children.

RISE AGAINST HUNGER AFRICA (RAHA), the African branch of the US NGO Rise Against Hunger came on board as a partner for our nutrition programme in August and supplies us with lunches for 1 000 children on our programme.



It has been on our agenda for many years to complete our nutrition programme with the implementation of handwashing and hygiene promotion programmes. We found a wonderful partner in the Pietermaritzburg based **WILLOWTON GROUP** and introduced a pilot project at 15 ECD Centres in October.



We were found in several publications this year thanks to Shirley Williams Communication Services. What luxury to have a skilled, interested, and generous publicist and her team on our side for support.

OUR NUTRITION PROGRAMME

Our main mission remains the alleviation of hunger and malnutrition among South African children and we are most grateful for the continuous support from our main funder Futurelife® Health Products Pty.

THE SOUTH AFRICAN EARLY CHILDHOOD REVIEW 2019 estimates that a whopping 2.5 million young children are living below the food poverty line. This is of great concern because it means that these children are in households where there is not enough money to cover even basic nutritional needs. This increases the risk of malnutrition and stunting in children and evidence shows, that these children might never reach their full potential. Close to an unacceptable third (31%) of children under two years in South Africa are stunted. Food poverty among young children is high (30% or more) in all provinces except Gauteng and the Western Cape with the highest poverty rates for young children being found in **Limpopo, KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape**. These three provinces combined are home to nearly half of all young children in South Africa, and they also have the largest rural populations. As much as it is difficult to reach these children in rural KZN and the Eastern Cape, we know that this is where our resources are needed, the most.

At the beginning of 2019, Nokubonga Hlongwane received training at The Baby Clinic Hillcrest for growth assessment in babies and children from 0 - 5 years of age. This training included measuring the weight and growth of baby or child, head circumference, upper arm circumference, handling of WHO recommended equipment and the plotting of data on appropriate graphs. She has been monitoring a sample group of 116 children at 4 ECD Centres in the Estcourt area, uThukela District, KZN in 2019. Twenty-one of the 116 children were identified with suboptimal nutrition status at the baseline assessment, all of whom were underweight, two of them even wasted. All children were measured regularly according to WHO recommendations. Data captured into the WHO Anthro software programme, and an interpretation of the measurements was generated. The final step was the documentation of the process and a summary of the findings by an independent, registered dietitian. After receiving a daily Unity meal breakfast for 6 months, most children improved significantly and gained weight and height. We will further and expand such research and measurements next year and have taken an additional training course to improve our processes.

In 2019, we supplied 2.1 million Futurelife® meals and 42 120 fortified lunches to children at unfunded ECD Centres and grade R's at primary schools in KZN, and a further 150 000 meals to registered children's homes and our sports development programme.

The athletes and development sport teams we were able to support in 2019 can be found in cricket, soccer, hockey and athletic stadiums and fields all over the province and we are proud to watch them play and perform.



OUR PLAY & LEARN PROGRAMME

Our much treasured German NGO partner, Inhlanhla e.V. supports the play and education pillar of our ECD programme. With their donations, we installed another series of welcome jungle gyms this year, six at the following ECD Centres: Tholithemba Creche, Sgalokusha Pre-School and Shakina Crèche in Kwa-Ximba and Zehntele Crèche, Bambizandla Crèche and Ikusasaletu Day Care Centre in Chesterville. We furthermore spoiled the learners at Egcekeni and Inchangea Primary School in eThekwini with big new playgrounds and an outdoor classroom.

Our partner the Danish **LEGO FOUNDATION** also brings much excitement and joy to the children we serve. The LEGO Foundation provides LEGO Play Boxes to organisations around the world that are supporting and working with children from disadvantaged and troubled environments. Each Play Box contains a variety of elements that are valuable as teaching and learning tools in any curriculum, from early childhood to adulthood. A Play Box provides opportunities for activities which promote skills development and learning through play. We received **196 LEGO boxes** in 2019, which we entrusted 58 ECD Centres in Kwa-Ximba, Estcourt, Mpophomeni, Howick and Ntshongweni with, where 62 practitioners look after 1890 children.

We completed our training and implemented the **WORDWORKS** *Every Word Counts (EWC)* early literacy programme at 63 Centres with a total enrolment of 2700 children in 2019. **INHLANHLA e.V.** supplied the much needed WordWorks booklets for the ECD practitioners and extra **BOOKDASH** books for the children. Our partner **BARROWS GLOBAL** supplied us with excellent ECD learning materials right through 2019 to compliment this EWC literacy programme. We received 21 072 educational boards in 2019 for all the communities we serve.

It is already safe to say that this promises to be a fruitful, easy to teach AND understand, home language programme.



The **LEGO** Foundation

OUR EDUCATION & TRAINING PROGRAMME

"A good head and good heart are always a formidable combination. But when you add to that a literate tongue or pen, then you have something very special." - Nelson Mandela

In 2019, we gave nutrition talks in isiZulu to 198 ECD practitioners, owners and cooks. These covered basic food groups, the particular needs of a growing child, forms and dangers of malnutrition and stunting, the possibilities of food gardens and how to use the ECD Centre's individual budget most effectively in complying with the DSD menu for ECD Centres.

Through our partnership with the LEGO Foundation / Care for Education, we furthermore trained 62 ECD practitioners in several four-hour workshops on how to use the variety of elements in the LEGO Play Box as teaching and learning tools for early childhood. A Play Box provides opportunities for activities which promote skills development and learning through play.

We completed our WordWorks "Every Word Counts" training for early literacy this year. We now feel equipped to integrate the programme and resources into our work with ECD practitioners. We commenced sharing our freshly gained knowledge about early learning and practical ideas for supporting the development of language, early literacy and maths concepts, from birth to 5 years of age with ECD practitioners in the first cluster groups. In 2019, we started training 102 ECD practitioners in using WordWorks EWC programme in their home language, isiZulu.

We are assisting ECD Centres with the Department for Social Development (DSD) registration processes since June 2018 and so far, of the 135 ECD owners/practitioners on the programme,

- a total of 123 ladies have submitted their application packs to their local DSD offices;
- 24 of these ladies have received their partial care certificates already;
- 8 have received notification that they will receive subsidies;
- 12 still need to finalize forms/address compliance issues.

We are confident that we optimized our ECD Programme this year and strengthened the ECD Centres we reach out to.



SPECIAL OUTREACH DAYS

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MEALS DAY (ISMD) | 14th March 2019

ISMD is a unique campaign, with the aim of raising awareness of good nutrition for all children, regardless of their circumstances. The theme for 2019 was 'Who makes my meal?', encouraging young people to think about their favourite food; where it comes from and who provides it. As ever, the day was a great celebration and brought together children and communities across the world to share their experiences, stories and news.

During the morning of the event, we provided an extra 50 000 breakfasts to several primary schools in KZN and took the grade six Highbury Preparatory boys for an outreach day to their partner school in Inchanga to serve them a super breakfast that included fruit from our friends from The Juice Kitchen®.

Our partner organization, the Robin Hood Foundation, spoiled the 1200 children with further gifts and sweets to take home and share with the families.



MANDELA DAY | 18th July 2019

Nelson Mandela's birthday is on 18 July, and people everywhere celebrate his birthday by acting on the idea that every person has the power to change the world spending time on a charitable project. The grade 8 girls from St. Mary's DSG set the morning aside to make 1800 sandwiches with Clover cheese, Willowton SUNSHINE margarine and Futurelife bread and fill 1800 new lunchboxes donated by Marriott. We had several teams of volunteers at two Primary Schools in Shongweni Dam to spoil 1800 learners and celebrate the day. Our cheerful partner PeacePlayers South Africa joined the celebrations at both schools with their sports programme.



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