

Impact Report



Prepared By :

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January - September 2024



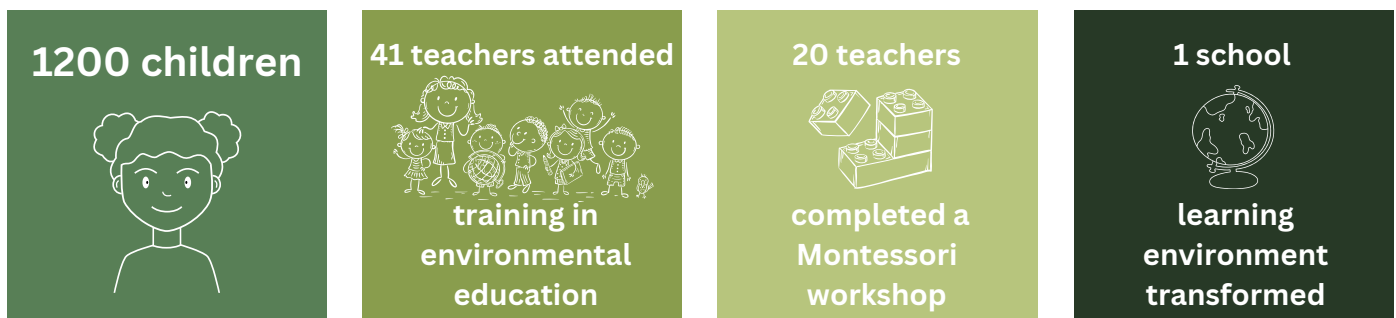


IMPACT OVERVIEW

Our Aims

- Provide children with quality environmental education that nurtures a curiosity and awe for nature and encourages the application of 21st Century Skills
- Enthuse 24 community teachers to teach environmental education
- Discover the nuances of community education
- Empower 20 community teachers with a better understanding of the capacity of the child - so that they can stimulate them appropriately
- Create effective and supportive learning environments - where children are engaged in their learning
- Uplift our local natural spaces so that our community are encouraged to access them

Our Reach



Key focus areas



OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS

We have coordinated five community projects this year. This report provides brief details on each project. If you would like more information about any of these initiatives, please feel free to request our full project reports.



Hyphae Programme

How can we care for something we do not know?

This initiative provided a series of play-based environmental lessons to children at community schools. We also provided the teachers with basic training on how to use nature as a tool for education and empowered them with several isiZulu educational resources.



Savanna Workshop: Montessori Education for Early Childhood Development

We designed and facilitated a 2.5-week training on Montessori Education for 20 Early Childhood Development (ECD) teachers based in Inanda. The training encouraged collective knowledge generation. During the training, the teachers were assisted in making their own Montessori materials for their schools.



Transformation of Ekuthuleni's Learning Environment

Through observations at Ekuthuleni, we discovered that the teachers required assistance in stimulating their learners. We designed a five-phase initiative that would empower the teachers with the knowledge, understanding and resources to best support the development of their children.



Maintenance and Upliftment of Virginia Bush

One of the nature reserves that we frequent is neglected, and so we formed a maintenance team. Our team work in the bush two days each week to ensure that the paths are maintained, fences fixed, and bridges functional. Our team also removes invasives and conducts litter clean-ups in the bush.



Londeka's Education

We have spearheaded the sponsoring of Londeka's education at Kincottage. We have a community of dedicated donors who contribute a monthly pledge for her education, transport and extracurricular activities.





*If children do not know nature, they will not understand it.
If they do not understand it, they will not protect it.*



"(The programme) has impacted my knowledge greatly and I have gained a lot of knowledge about environmental issues. I think this is going to be useful in my teaching too, where we groom the young ones to understand the environmental issues."

-Zanele Maphumulo, Isisekelo Primary School

On 15 July, Thando and I entered the Principal's office at Ikusasaelihle Educare Centre. We took our seats, and Mam Mphofana looked at us, smiling, and said, "I was wondering when you would come to my school. I was hoping you would come. I know what you are here to do, come and do it." We commenced the roll-out of the Hyphae Programme in Inanda in February. We were pleased to receive interest from every school we approached and easily managed to onboard 16 schools. While working with our first six schools (four of whom were Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres, and two were Primary Schools), we found that the ECD centres had the greatest opportunity to incorporate our teachings into their daily activities. The ECDs also had more natural space available and smaller classes. The teachers were less concerned about the children getting dirty, as they were not yet donning uniforms. These factors encouraged us to work with a greater number of ECD centres as the programme continued.

We contracted a lead facilitator, Noluthando Mlaba, and two assistants for her, Happy Mtsheli and Thabile Dlamini. Our Hyphae Team was joined by several volunteers, and together, they ventured into Inanda every Tuesday and Thursday to deliver lessons. Our team kept detailed reflections and assessed the impact of the sessions at each school, using these reflections to inform our following lessons and methods of teacher engagement. After four lessons had been delivered at a school, the teachers were invited to join a training workshop after teaching hours.

During the workshop, we unpacked our understanding of children, the earth, and the human-nature relationship. We also worked through methods for incorporating nature in education - as a resource and source of inspiration. This topic provided the perfect segue into supporting the teachers in designing their own nature-based lessons.

We enjoyed supporting the teachers in implementing these lessons, guiding them in real-time and through reflection. All of the teachers who attended the training workshop received a set of resources that they can use both inside the classroom and outside. The resources provide a basic understanding of different elements of nature (water, soil, plants, animals, habitats, landforms, recycling, etc.). We expanded the resource pack as we realised that there really is a dire lack of knowledge of nature in our communities. We had teachers reporting “Tiger” when asked to name an African animal. We had teachers exclaiming in surprise when shown the animals that live in different habitats; or cawing in awe at the water cycle. The resources are predominantly in isiZulu so that both the teachers and the children can fully understand the concepts they teach. We have conducted follow-up visits at each school and have been humbled to see the resources in use and the new addition of a “nature table” in many of the classrooms. On a recent visit, Florah, the principal of Impumelelo, remarked, “The children only want to be outside now. They like the soil and go to pick leaves to work with.” We have also conducted follow-up interviews with the teachers to partially ascertain the impact the programme had on them and their learners. We have a WhatsApp Group with the teachers, and we share additional inspiration there. It is wonderful to receive photographs back from the teachers of them conducting the suggested lessons with their learners.

Khula Education in Rorke's Drift heard about our programme and requested that we deliver it at eight schools that they work with. We edited the design of the programme delivery and spent an intensive week working with four ECDs and four Primary Schools in Rorke's Drift. We used this opportunity to have a video made capturing our work, in the hope that it will assist in raising funds for future programme implementation. We hosted an Indigenous Games Festival to fundraise for the video.



Click the green button to view our video.

We are grateful to have partnered with other organisations and non-profits to extend our programme beyond its initial design. We believe in establishing a lasting relationship with the schools that we have worked with, and these partnerships have allowed this to become a reality.

1. We partnered with the Mountain Club of South Africa (MCSA) and Giba Gorge Nature Reserve, allowing us to transport the children and teachers from Impumelelo, Thokozani, and Ekuthuleni to Giba Gorge for a morning of exploration while hiking to a waterfall. For many, it was the first time they experienced ‘clean nature’, and in seeing this, they were presented with a different reality of what their environment could look like.
2. We partnered with the Savanna Foundation to provide a three-week Montessori Training Workshop. Many of the teachers were very interested in the child- and play-centred approach that we apply to learning. They considered it a “new” approach and could not believe how successful it was in engaging their children. We conducted our training workshops at Montessori Life Pre-Primary in Sunningdale, and their interest was further sparked. They began requesting more knowledge on Montessori. Through our partnership with the Savanna Foundation, we were able to design and deliver a Montessori Training Workshop. Most of the participants who joined were from our Hyphae schools.
3. We partnered with Sithanda Upliftments to improve the quality of education at Ekuthuleni Childcare Centre. This has consisted of an intensive six-month journey with partner schools, training, and resource procurement.

Teachers that attended training:

To date, **41 teachers** have attended training. Some salient comments from the teachers during the feedback interviews:

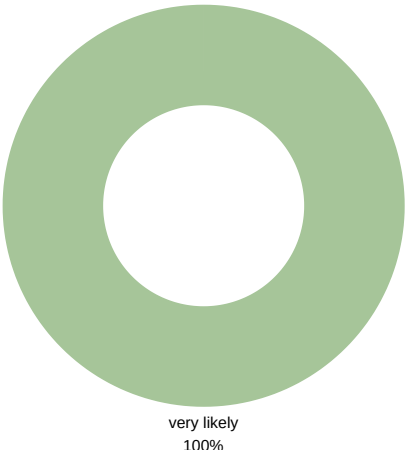
“The programme was very helpful. It opened my mind and it made things very simple for my students.” -Philisiwe Jali, Kasturba Gandhi

“The children were very engaged during the session and always looked forward to the lessons. I liked how the lessons were simple and taught concepts that the children can relate to. They are now more interested in nature. The programme made me realise a lot and has expanded my knowledge and how I engage with the children.”- Londi Ngwaza, Imbaliyamazulu PS

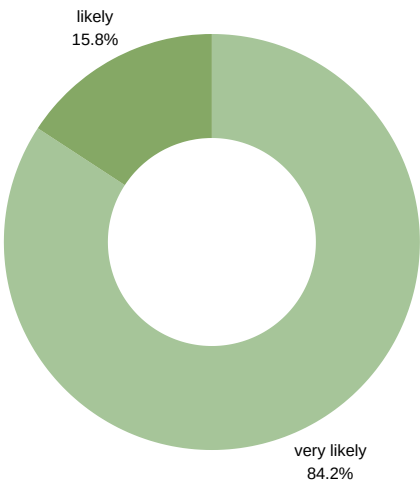
“The programme made me realise that we need to take care of the environment. My children are now very involved in recycling.”- Miss Dlamini, Amatikwe PS

“I loved the creative aspect of the programme also how they learn activities that will help them in future. The children now like going outside to pick up stones, leaves and grass.” - Florah, Impumelelo Creche

How likely are you to recommend the programme to other teachers or schools?

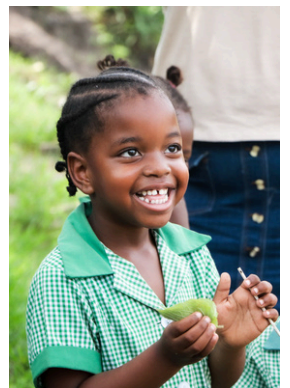


How likely are you to continue teaching environmental education?



A heartfelt thank you

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you AESSeal, our main funders for this project. Their generosity and support encouraged us to leap to this goal. We would also like to thank Zonke Engineering, Steady Lads, and everyone that participated in our fundraising drive. Your donations allowed us to complete the project at full capacity - giving every school all that they deserved.







CLOSING REMARKS

Our Montessori Workshop in Inanda took place between 19 June and 3 July, and was a resounding success.



Firstly, I would like to thank Montessori. I like their method of teaching. I have learnt that we must follow the children - not tell them how to do things, like we were doing before. We had a syllabus and this morning you must be doing this and that - but now we learn, no, we must follow them; what they like. And also, we must teach the children to be independent. The other thing that I've learnt, today, is to identify animals. I didn't know, sometimes you say a snake. I'm thinking a snake - a snake can stay all over. What is this, a camel, that is staying in the desert. Others in the bush. It was the first time I hear a rabbit is staying in the desert. And also, the water cycle, I like that - too much. The water evaporates from the sea - salt, salty water- and then it goes up into the cloud where it will come down as rain. That recycle, I like that. Thank you so much Montessori. I think next time too, you must keep on teaching us because we like that method. Me, I'm going back to my school. My class is already open. It is an open space for a Montessori class. I'm proud of that!

- Florah, supervisor of Impumelelo Creche

Florah saved the change from her transport stipend to purchase wood and make shelving so that she could prepare her environment, in the Montessori way, for the children.



The theme of this workshop was the absorbent mind. Now, I have become an absorbent teacher because I have absorbed every information from Montessori. To be yourself, you have a right, to be creative, to be independent. Use all your ability to perform outstanding. Do not let education system limit your creativity. Learn to understand each other and create good harmony between your children. And I would like to gain more interest into learning more for the Montessori System.

- Nothando, Orthandweni Iwenkosi Creche

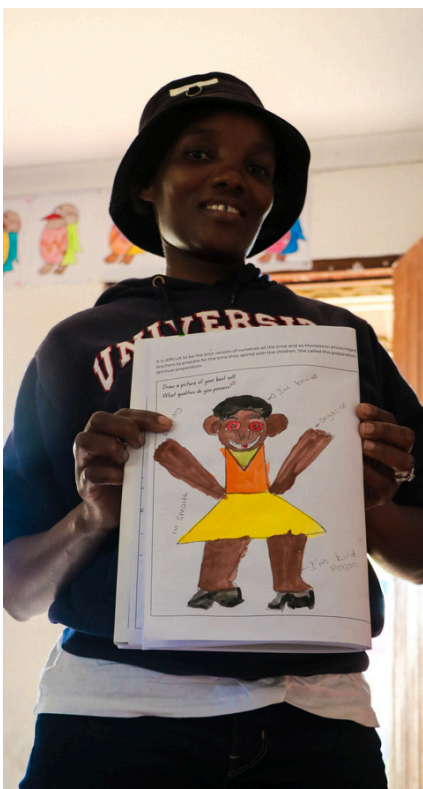
Nothando has prepared her classroom to encourage independence: all of her activities are laid out neatly at child height on overturned boxes. She has written signs detailing the importance of independence and has placed them around the classroom to inspire her team.

WORKSHOP DETAILS

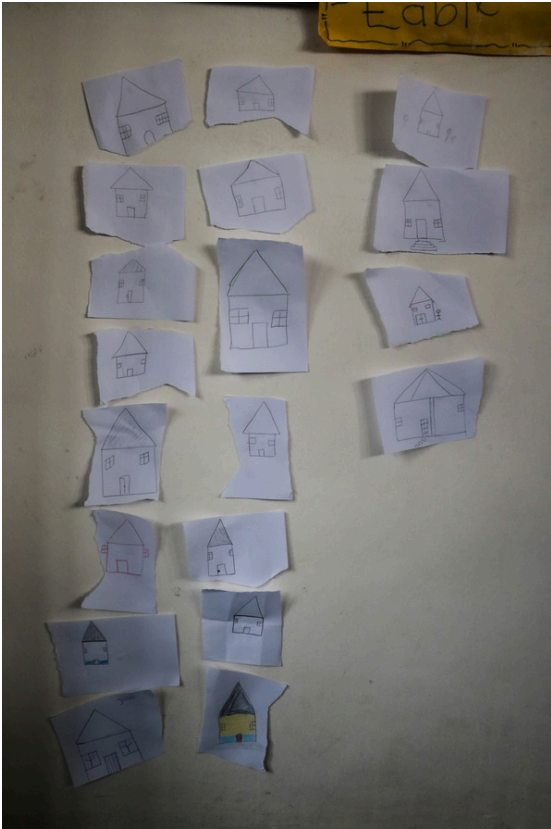
We were honoured to spend 2.5 weeks facilitating a workshop on Montessori Teaching at Ekuthuleni, in Inanda. Twenty teachers were enrolled for the course, and together we explored concepts of:

- Dreaming and Connecting (1 day)
- Child Development and Montessori Philosophy (2 days)
- Activities of Everyday Living (2 days)
- Grace and Courtesy (1 day)
- Learning with the senses (2 days)
- Language Development (2 days)
- Numeracy (1 day)
- Knowledge and Understanding of the World (1 day)

The workshop was designed to be interactive and practical and elicit as much of the teaching content as possible from the participants themselves. We wanted to acknowledge the deep wisdom and vast knowledge that all of the ladies have on child development and teaching. We believe in co-creating our lessons with the participants as this encourages engagement and a sense of belief in what is shared. It is so much more powerful than having one person stand up and preach. We achieved this through careful facilitation design, incorporating lots of small and large group discussions, storytelling, activities for understanding, and role play. We also included time for the participants to practice with various materials and make their own materials with the guidance of the facilitator. The participants were supplied with a detailed coursebook, daily meals (tea and lunch), and a weekly transport stipend. We celebrated the completion of the workshop with a reflection circle, certificates and donated t-shirts that read "I want to be a Montessori Teacher."



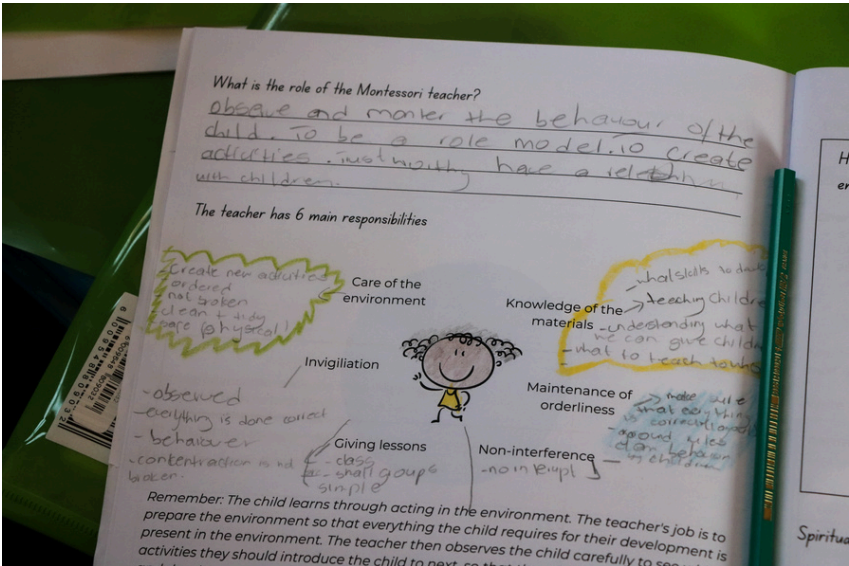
The participants thoroughly enjoyed our session on creativity, where we considered how to encourage creativity.

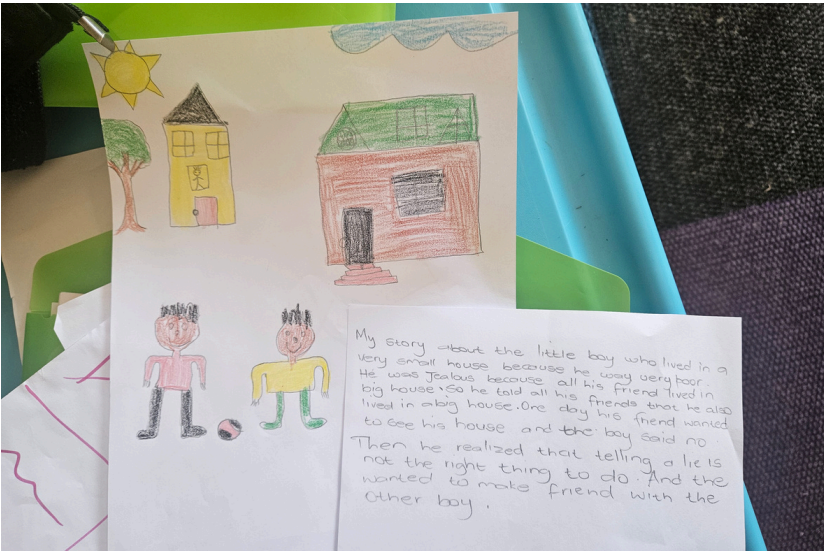


The result of detailed instruction (as is often given in schools).



The result of progressively less instruction.





CONTINUATION

As part of our feedback and evaluation phase, I was privileged to spend time in the classroom at Ekuthuleni, Impumelelo, Thokozani, and Orthandweni Iwenkosi Creche.

Reflections on site:

I'm seated in the Rondavel Classroom at Ekuthuleni, observing Lindiwe with her toddlers. She points to a chart and says, "What is this?" "Amajersey," they chorus. Then I see a light sparkle in her eyes: "Who is wearing an amajersey?"

"Me, me, MEE," the children shout and point at their jerseys.

With a growing smile, she says, "Can you take your amajersey off?" She dramatically removes her jersey and begins swinging it in the air. Clumsily, the children follow suit. They are laughing, happy, engaged. She relishes in this and appears transformed. Filled with excitement, she launches up, walking around the classroom, asking the children higher-order thinking questions. They follow her, drawn by her animation and happiness.

I compare this woman before me to the one who sat here three months ago. The other woman was disheartened, she felt so obliged to follow the curriculum that even when she noticed, "I am now talking to myself, the children have lost interest", she continued. Her light was dim and evidently fading.

And I know now, that this is why we offered this course.

These visits were extremely beneficial in assessing the impact of the course.





CONTINUATION

We also conducted a feedback interview, in Zulu or English as requested by each participant.

Important notes from the interviews:

- When asked, “How confident do you feel in applying the skills you've learned?” every teacher exclaimed that they feel very confident using the resources and applying the method because we practised it during our training. Nozuko remarked, “I feel very confident now, because the children are enjoying the lessons.” This is what I observed with Lindiwe at Ekuthuleni - this new, brimming confidence that the workshop has empowered them with.
- The teachers detailed the changes that they have made in their classrooms.
- All of the teachers stated that they would recommend the training to other colleagues and voiced their satisfaction with the overall experience. When asked what changes they would like to be made to the training, the overall response was either “No changes” or “More time, please, so that we can learn more. Please can we have more trainings like this?”



A heartfelt thank you

I would like to express a heartfelt thank you for making this possible. I couldn't have fathomed the transformative effect that it has had on some of the ladies in their classrooms, and I truly believe that their new confidence, pride, and happiness are going to do wonders for all of the learners that they teach, now, and in the future.

TRANSFORMATION AT EKUTHULENI



A PHASED APPROACH TO CHANGE

We partnered with Sithanda Upliftment Projects for a five-phase initiative at Ekuthuleni Childcare Centre.

Our aim was to empower the teachers to effectively stimulate and support the developmental needs of their children.

The project involved:

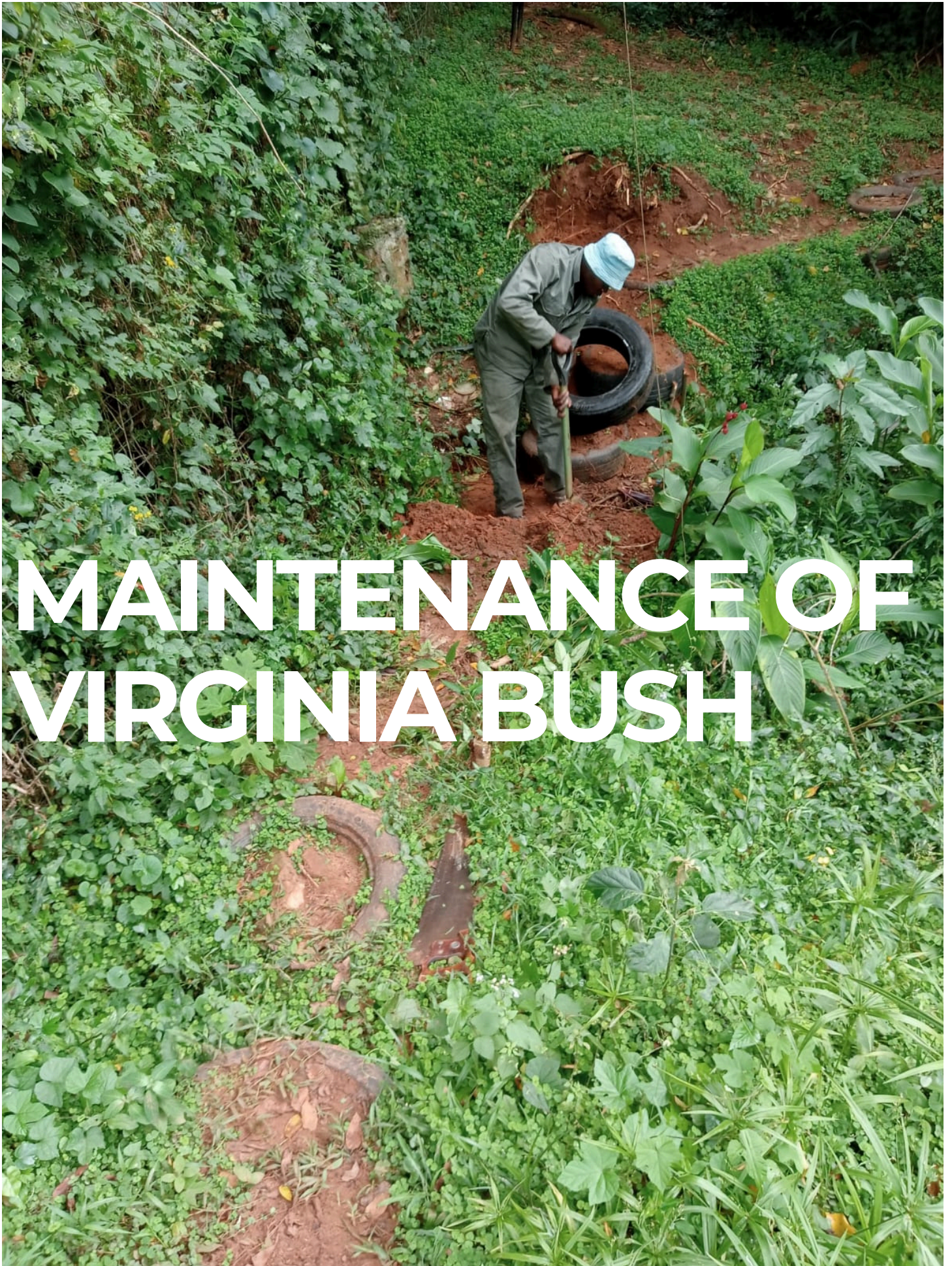
1. **Montessori Teaching Exchanges:** The teachers at Ekuthuleni attended weekly exchanges at Kincottage and Montessori Life, during which they observed Montessori in action. During these mornings, they were mentored by a qualified Montessori Teacher to ensure that all of their questions could be answered. This took place during Term 2.
2. **Montessori Training Workshop:** The teachers from Ekuthuleni attended the Montessori Training Workshop sponsored by the Savanna Foundation. This took place during the July holidays.
3. **Preparation of the environment:** Ekuthuleni has three learning environments (babies, toddlers, and pre-primary). We collected, built, and purchased shelving and materials for these rooms. During the July holidays, the teachers assisted us in preparing their classrooms so that the children would return to a transformed environment at the start of Term 3.
4. **Coaching on Montessori:** We had two Montessorians present at Ekuthuleni for the first three weeks of Term 3. They assisted the teachers with their daily routine change, offered support and guidance during the work cycle, and prepared additional lesson ideas and activities. The teachers found this support extremely helpful. As they grew in confidence, the experienced Montessorians faded into the background, observing the transformation in the teachers and children.
5. **Ongoing training and development:** For the remainder of the year, we will continue to offer Ekuthuleni training and support in the form of materials, teacher exchanges, and observations.



A heartfelt thank you

Ekuthuleni is a transformed learning environment. The teachers are engaged and confident. There is a new spark in each child's eyes. They are engaged. They are stimulated. They are happy. Thank you to Ryan, Matt, Nick and Gareth of Sithanda Upliftments for partnering with us on this project. Your support and emotional investment in Doris and her team lie at the heart of all the good that happens at Ekuthuleni. We look forward to a lasting relationship with you and Doris.





Moosa is one of the most hard-working men we have ever met. He spends his Tuesdays and Wednesdays in Virginia Bush, completing each tiresome task we give him.

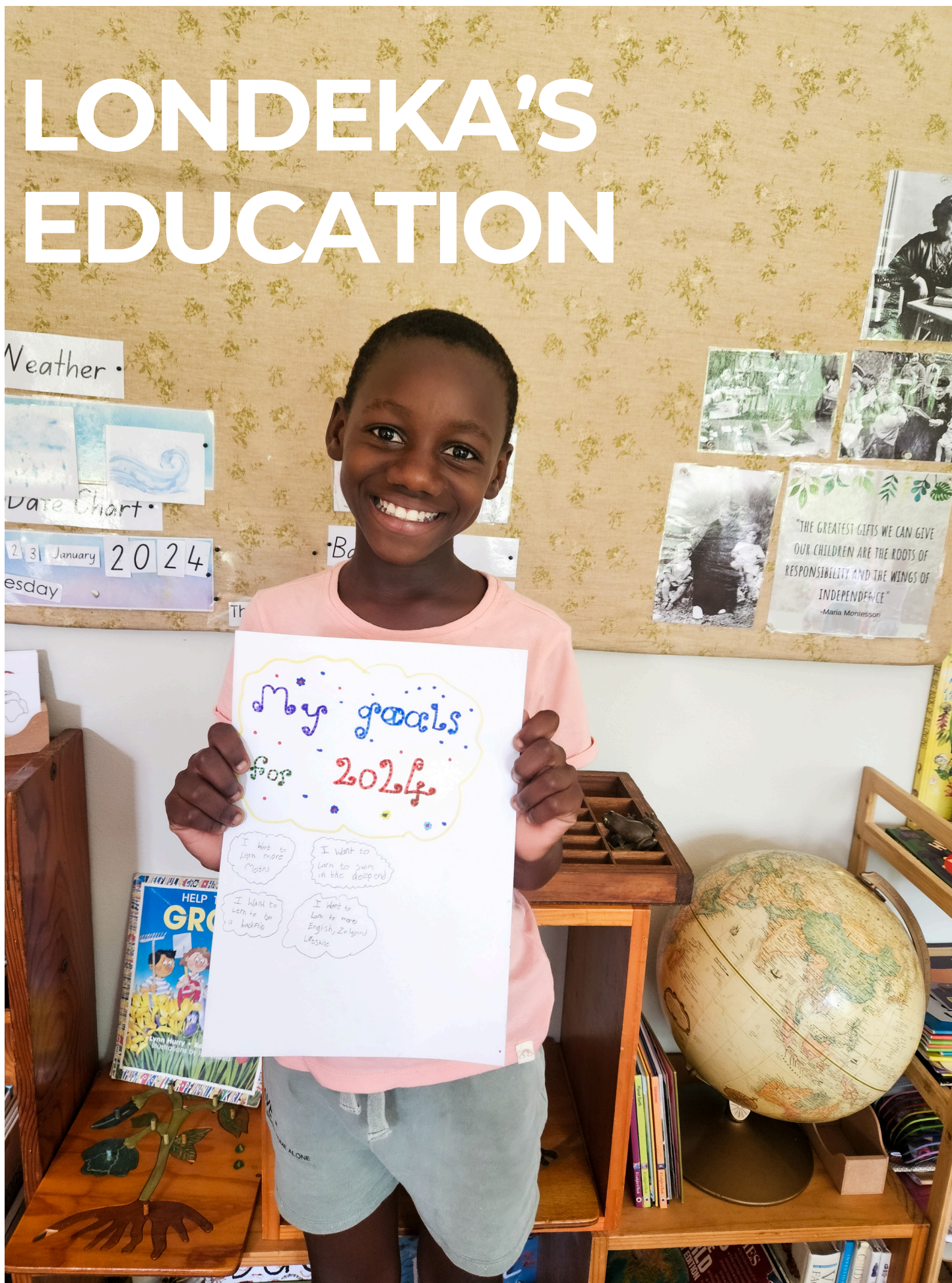
In this past year, he has:

- repaired over 150m of fencing
- repaired bridges
- built stairs and balustrades
- built, painted, and installed path signs
- cleared and maintained paths
- removed land and water invasives
- removed vagrant dwellings
- conducted thorough litter clean-ups in the bush



A heartfelt thank you

We are extremely grateful to our Virginia Bush Community, which monitors the state of the bush and assists us in tasking and leading Moosa. A special thank you goes to Buzz Bolton from Riverside Trail for the time he has spent guiding and assisting Moosa with larger builds. Thank you to everyone who has participated in our Fundraiser Fun Runs over the months. A thank you must also go to the Riverside Trail community for their fundraising efforts and donations towards this work. The funding raised at these events, supplemented by personal donations, has financed all of the materials for the work we have conducted, as well as Moosa's weekly wages. Your support is valued beyond words.





“Determined, meticulous, and helpful - Londeka possesses a combination of qualities that will help her succeed in life.”

Londeka joined Kincottage for Grade 3 in 2023. She arrived with a 98% aggregate for English, yet she was unable to read. We quickly realised the sad reality of her previous schooling experience and set to pave a new path for her future education.

We'd like to thank Londeka's Support Community for their monthly contributions towards Londeka's education at Kincottage, transport, extracurricular activities, and extra lessons. In the past year, she has learnt how to read, begun to think creatively, is now able to apply complex mathematical concepts, and is now ready to integrate into a Model C School. We are confident that she is well prepared and set to excel at Virginia Preparatory School next year.

A sincere thank you goes to:

- Bridget Widdows
- Moira Campbell
- Cheryl Wolstenholme
- Alexia Loubser
- Scott Rogers
- Nicky Rodseth
- Christine Loubser
- Lisa Lammers
- Matt Lammers
- Kaylee Smith
- Lisa Lovell
- Michelle Burke
- Gabriella Mackenzie
- Zeta Pontin
- Mesh



For changing the trajectory of Londeka's life.





OUR VISION FOR 2025

We envisage a community of enthused and empowered teachers fostering an understanding of and appreciation for nature in their ECD Centres.

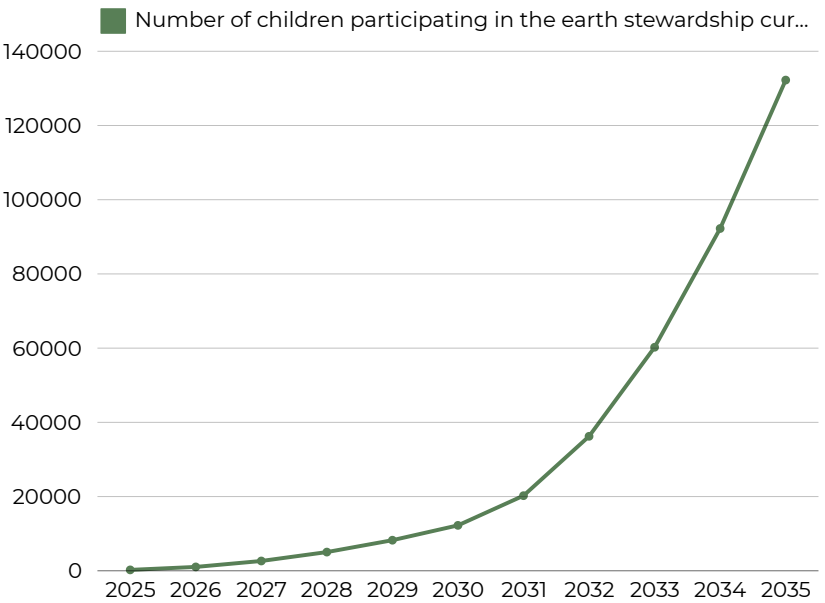
GOALS

Phase one (2025)

- Enthuse 15 teachers to educate about nature.
- Empower 15 teachers with the skills and tools to deliver lessons that are engaging and encourage creative and critical thinking, communication, and collaboration.
- Empower 15 teachers with sufficient knowledge to effectively educate their learners about the environment.
- Facilitate earth stewardship education in 15 underserved Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centres by providing them with a robust and effective environmental education curriculum that encourages the development of 21st Century skills & a connection to nature while exceeding the expectations of the CAPS curriculum.
- Have 15 trained teachers championing environmental education in each of their schools - ensuring that their newfound knowledge and skills are applied in the delivery of the provided environmental education curriculum, year on year, reaching many children.

Phases two and three action national implementation of the programme - reaching **1000 schools (130 000 children each year)** by 2035.

To view our **project proposal** for the Community Embedded Environmental Education project please contact us at michaela@kinshipprogramme.com



SUPPORT OUR WORK

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ZAPPER



PAYPAL

