

SISANDA FUNDAYTION 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



CONTACT DETAILS

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ORGANISATION REGISTRATION DETAILS

Trust number: IT 3973/2009

NPO number: 080-949 NPO

Section 18a: PBO 930033409

B BBEE Level 1 status



Sisanda FunDaytion is an organisation changing the lived experience and future outlook of vulnerable children and youth in Cape Town by Connecting through Play. We are a fully registered and compliant public beneficiary organisation (080-949-NPO) with Section 18A and BBBEE Level 1 Status.

Our Mission

To inspire and empower positive role models who, through a trauma-informed approach, uplift the mental well-being and foster resilience in vulnerable children through play.

2024 marks our 15th year! From a small group of women one Saturday 2009 striving to give a few children an unforgettable experience, to an organisation which has reached over 10 000 children. Adding to their experiences, skills and tools they have for life - providing moments helping them to dream about the future they want.

We equip adults, youth, and children to handle life's curveballs while igniting and reinforcing the Power of Play. We provide information on mental health, normalise emotional experiences, and foster improved self-awareness all while building relationships, equipping with tools and reigniting a passion for play.

This report encapsulates the achievements of the past year and highlights our impact.

1. ORGANISATION OVERVIEW



Team Sisanda currently runs with the assistance of a handful of committed part-time employees: Leesa Flory-bright, who has been on the journey with us since 2010; Nkulee Gwele, whose long journey with Sisanda began as a child attending our programmes before becoming an activity leader, Melanie Lippert, our programme manager who started with zoom storytime in covid, Vusumzi Gqwaka, also an activity leader, and Megan de Villiers, stepping in in 2024 to help communications. Nicky Seymour, co-founder and current director, steers the ship and manages the day-to-day running of the NPO. This year saw the sad departure of Bonga Myekeni who had been with us for close on 10 years. We wish him well.

Goals

To uplift the mental health and build the resilience of vulnerable children and youth

To reach: 20 000 children

To date: 10 515 (direct and indirect)

By inspiring and empowering Positive Role Models (Play Ambassadors, Carers and Volunteers)

To reach: 5 000 positive role models

To date: 3699

and creating Enriched Play Experiences

To create: 7 000 experiences

To date: 3570

Geographic areas of our work

We have intensified our focus, specifically serving the communities of Gugulethu, Manenberg, and Tambo Village, areas with high levels of violence, gangsterism, poverty which lack services and community resources.

We also respond to partnership requests in broader Cape Town area with child and youth care centres, community organisations, and schools, and children's hospitals.

Our Programmes

PLAY
AMBASSADOR
PROGRAMME

ENRICHED
PLAY
EXPERIENCES

PLAY@HOME
PROGRAMME

Fun days

Community
playdates

Circles

2.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023



- 2023 was a challenging year for the mental health of our team, several of whom live in the communities we serve. Daily challenges with violence, loss and transport issues take their toll on stress levels and fear. We are proud of our **team cohesion** that we have been able to stay connected and supportive of each other.
- We **reached 510 children** this year facilitating enriched experiences for them to release stress and gather life experiences.
- We had a dramatic increase in our training of parents, youth and caregivers. The **skills development** will support them in their roles in the home, community and workplace thus expanding our reach indirectly.
- With a focus on programme improvement we extended our **Play Ambassador Coordinators team to include Parent Play Ambassadors**. They are well positioned to increase the support to PAs in the community and reinforce the narrative on the Power of Play in family relationships.
- **Stellenbosch University students** in the Post Grad Monitoring and Evaluation Diploma used Sisanda FunDaytion as a case study and provided valuable insights and positive reflections on our work.
- **New income streams** through initiating our training approach through Resilience Toolbox, progressing partnership agreements with Wings of Support (KLM staff charity), and driving a number of fundraising campaigns.
- Ups and downs with securing new corporate donors is always to be expected. We have continued, since the challenges of the COVID pandemic in demonstrating our impact and our strength as a community partner and have started a partnership with 3 new corporates. We also passed the annual **Community Chest Due Diligence assessment**.
- Opportunities to share our mission with a new network through media outlets including Cape Talk, and other events such as Major vs MatersChef 2023 motivated us to update our marketing material. **We now have a new brochure and this Video helping to tell our story.**

IMPACT

2022

2023

EVENTS AND PROJECTS
ACTIVATED
10 FUN DAYS
2 PLAY@HOME



EVENTS AND PROJECTS
ACTIVATED
9 FUN DAYS
2 PLAY@HOME



CHILDREN
PLAY OPPORTUNITIES
497



CHILDREN
PLAY OPPORTUNITIES
510



PLAY AMBASSADORS
14
VOLUNTEERS
73



PLAY AMBASSADORS
21
VOLUNTEERS
73



FAMILIES REACHED
95
PEOPLE TRAINED
28



FAMILIES REACHED
85
PEOPLE TRAINED
117



Our work is built on 4 pillars:

- Play
- Connection
- Resilience
- Active Citizenship



HISTORY WILL JUDGE US BY THE DIFFERENCE WE
MAKE IN THE EVERYDAY LIVES OF CHILDREN.
NELSON MANDELA

3. PLAY AMBASSADOR (PA) PROGRAMME



Empowering vulnerable youth between the ages of 16 and 25 to become positive role models for children and families in their community.

PAs participate in our training, various play programmes and other opportunities. They build their confidence along with myriad other skills and share their energy and learnings with children, families and their communities.

PAs run our Play@Home programme and facilitate all the Play experiences we create.

Along with an increasing number of new PAs, 2023 saw several PAs from previous years continue to participate in our programmes. Ten PAs have been involved for over 18 months, building their confidence and experience through delivering our programmes, engaging with a diverse range of people and mentoring new PAs.

Vuu-see one of our original Play Ambassadors became part of our Sisanda team making this the third young person who was initially a Sisanda beneficiary move to a paid Sisanda staff member.



PAs have a range of activities to opt into and to learn from. This year included:

- Training sessions on resilience, relationships and play.
- Child Protection training on their role in ensuring safe relationships for children in their community.
- 9 Fun Days and 2 Play@Home programmes
- Opportunities to represent Sisanda FunDaytion: Cape Talk Radio interview, a mental health convention, Youth Day events, Parent Workshops.

Listen to Aliya reflect on being a Play Ambassador, 16@16 and Sisanda FunDaytion - [Lunch with Pippa Hudson - Omny.fm](#)



By supporting Play Ambassadors in building networks, developing emotional regulation skills, and growing their confidence, we empower them to excel in various facets of life, contributing to their resilience and empowering them as positive influencers for children in their community.

"Most of the time I would want to give up because of the load and heaviness, but something would tell me to pick up myself. Sisanda FunDaytion really painted it very well that if you fall you can stand up again and when you stand up you must do it better." - Anelisa

"Now I know that communication is not only about talking, but HOW you talk." - Phumelele.

"I want to be the safe place for children in my community." – Onele



Thandi, 18, has been a PA for 1.5 years

"I am most proud of changing people's lives as young as I am.

When I started the programme, I was going through an emotional breakdown, I was lost. The support I got at Sisanda changed my life completely.

I have turned into a beautiful young woman because of Sisanda, I believe more in myself now."

3. ENRICHED PLAY EXPERIENCES



Enriched Play Experiences are one off events or short programmes during which Play Ambassadors and volunteers connect with children to expand their world view, stimulate curiosity and impart life skills. Varied experiences are essential for social and emotional development and resilience building. They stretch our boundaries, expose new ideas, people, places, and ways of being. These encounters ignite our senses, stimulate our minds, and evoke emotions, fostering creativity, and problem-solving skills.

Fun Day outings provide an opportunity to explore nature and places of interest around Cape Town. **Community PlayDates** bring the fun to local communities enabling more parent involvement. **Sisanda Circles** are extra-mural groups which foster a developmentally relevant skills or teach a hobby,



12-YEAR-OLD BOY'S REFLECTION ON A FUN DAY OUTING:

"I will tell my parents that today I walked in a garden. I have never walked in a garden before. I learnt that I loved creatures (insects) more than I thought I did."

In addition to expanding horizons, our events also shine a light on making connections, reducing stress and learning coping skills. We facilitated nine enriched experiences, reaching 297 children. Six outings provided children with a much-needed break from their daily challenges by immersing them in nature at various locations, including Green Point Park, Fish Hoek Beach, Boschendal Farm, and Kirstenbosch Botanical Gardens.

It's the first times I'm very, very happy in a long time.

Children from neighboring streets and communities with rival gangs and high levels of violence, bullying and discrimination, were brought together, supported in fun, stimulating, safe spaces in which they were able to experience different ways of connecting with each other.

As one child said: "I didn't know we could be friends."



DISABILITY INCLUSION THROUGH PLAY

We also introduced three 'Community Playdates', to ensure children with varying abilities could have the chance to be spoilt, have fun and realise their uniqueness. These opportunities are purposefully planned in the community to also encourage attendance by more parents and caregivers.

Two events this year created magical moments for children with disabilities and health conditions. Opportunities to engage with children with such diverse needs are rare for many volunteers and play ambassadors and this supported environment provides a safe space to shift mindsets and learn inclusive strategies.

"I realised that even though the kids are not physically and mentally well, we are still the same and were all capable."

A caregivers said explained "We definitely learned a lot from your team. A lot of play that we will include with the children from now on."

This opportunity to have fun and to have no expectations encourage attendance from several learners who had not been attending school for some time. "This Fun Day brought back our participants & parents that we haven't seen for a long time".

5. PLAY[AT]HOME

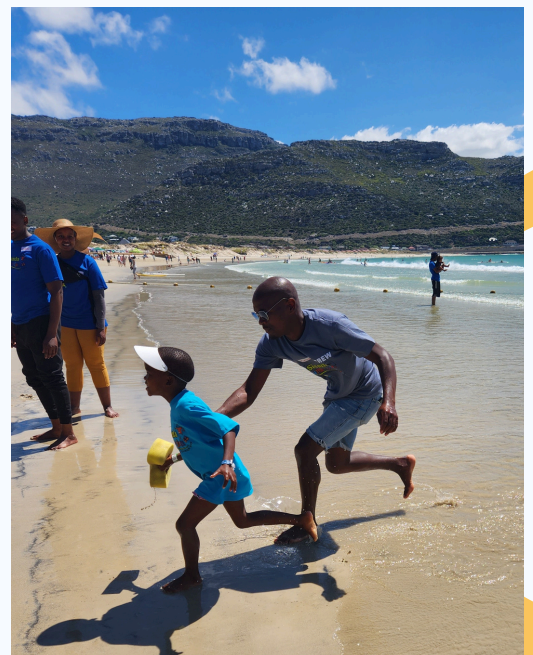


Many adults don't know how to support play, and through our programmes and specifically through our Play Ambassadors, we are trying to change this. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the risks of this to children's development and allowed us the opportunity to work with the Play Ambassadors to understand how we could impact social change and family and community cohesion.

During the Play@Home Programme Play Ambassadors (PAs) undertake to support several families in their own community for a 2-month period. Through weekly visits they promote play to strengthen relationships and share information about mental health and coping mechanisms.

Relationships and the ability to connect with others form the cornerstone of resilience, mental wellness, and social cohesion. This year we increased the focus on resilience through our resources and conversation prompts provided to Play Ambassadors for their family visits.

The results we are gathering from this programme ranges from parents taking a greater interest in their child's schooling, less fighting in the home and a more cohesive family unit with better emotional regulation and higher levels of self-esteem.



We value our partnership with Sisanda FunDaytion and recognise the impact they are making to the lives of children and young people in our communities. The parents of our participants have expressed joy, gratitude and excitement for the services carried out which allows them to be better parents and so assisting in the positive development of their children. The ethos and method that Sisanda Fundaytion is built on, corresponds with ours and we are very appreciative of the partnership with have with them.

Yours in child development,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frida'.

Frida Vesterberg, co-founder and director





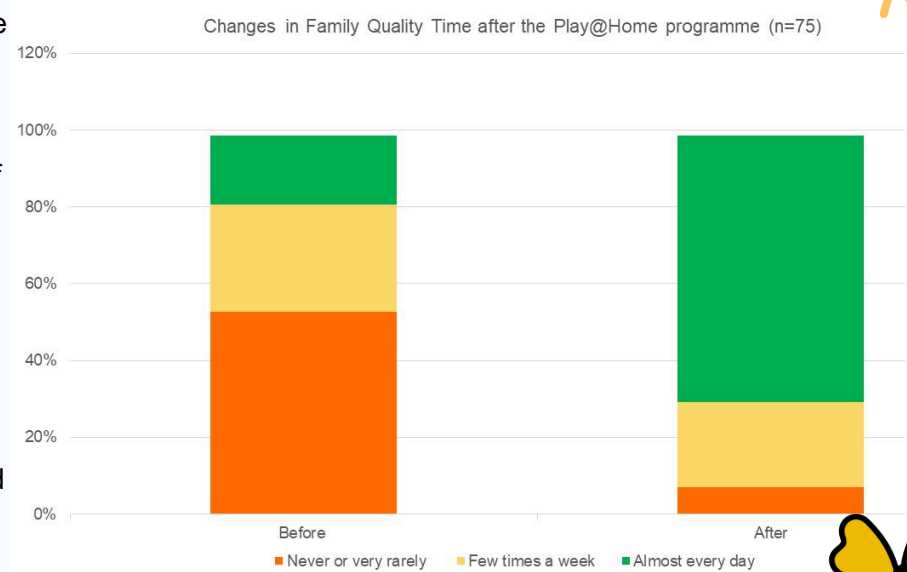
Bonga, our former Play@Home Co-ordinator from Gugulethu, documented the profound impact our programme had on one family, showcasing how active community engagement can challenge and transform entrenched cultural attitudes.

"Our family relationships have improved. Before the programme no one really cared about who is doing what and yet even if someone needs help, they will just keep quiet, eat and sleep. I am not saying this because we hated each other no, it's a matter of lacking communication."

"Now the attitude toward each other has changed. We are able to communicate clearly and more maturely, helping around the house again and being there for the kids. My daughter is not shy anymore outside, she now has self-confidence. I have noticed so much change also from the kids in the community who have done the Sisanda programmes. They have created friendship amongst each other. It's something we want to see as parents', kids having fun and playing together with no fights."

One of our Play@Home goals is to increase family time. We ask families perceptions of the amount of time they spend together before the programme and again 2 month following completion of the programme. The graph shows a 40% increase in the number of families who have started to spend regular weekly time together.

We gather qualitative feedback to better understand the impact on families. These range from changes in confidence, family relationships and behaviour.



• "My children don't get body shamed and teased by strangers anymore, they have overcome many bullies at school and in the community."

"I learnt how to be a better parent to my grandchild just by being able to communicate and being an open minded parent."

"Everything starts at home, with family. If I could take the time to understand my kids, because of the program, do you think in the next 10 yrs I will have kids that are raping? Have the kids that will drop out from school? It starts at home. "

Active Citizenship is a core pillar of ours and we pride ourselves in identifying and nurturing volunteers, young and old, who have a big heart, some time, some passion and something to share. We love this and realise the magic these individuals add to our world.

Ross Metcalfe, one of our most enthusiastic volunteers, has shown a commitment to storytelling that stands as testament to the profound impact of creativity and play on well-being. Ross tells captivating tales and has provided invaluable hours of joy and inspiration this year for children and staff at St. Joseph's Home for children with chronic and debilitating illnesses. At 79 he's taken on a degree in Psychology researching the impact of play and storytelling on the health of children, which should contain valuable insights from his time with Sisanda and vice versa.



Anelisa 'Mariza' Kakaza, who joined as a volunteer, is instrumental in the success of our Play programmes today. She has been a Play Ambassador with us since 2020 and plans to train as a teacher. When she joined Sisanda, she was afraid to speak publicly and was challenged with a stutter. Today, she says that she has almost managed to completely overcome this because of the work she does in her community with Sisanda. Her plan is to commence tertiary studies in 2025 and she's moving forward with a lot more confidence in her abilities.



RESILIENCE TOOLBOX IS A TRAINING PLATFORM EMPOWERING PLAYFUL AND RESILIENT ROLE MODELS

An exciting new step for us has been sharing our knowledge more formally—through training workshops—as activities integrated into our Play events, and through educational resources. Through *Resilience Toolbox*, a collaboration with *Resilience Hub*, we have facilitated training for parents, youth and the staff of our partners, including Christine Revel Children's Home, St. Joseph's Hospital, Desmond Tutu Health Foundation and VUSA Rugby and Learning academy. In 2023, this new aspect to our work indirectly influenced the lives of 613 children.



Eighteen facilitators from VUSA Rugby and Learning Academy have completed the 6-module course. 93% of them reported significant learning in ways to support children and manage their behavior. Additionally, 38 personnel from St. Joseph's Children's Hospital and Christine Revel Children's Home reaching a combined total of 220 children completed the 6 modules. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to positively impact these children's lives and those of future generations through these dedicated carers.

"We have become more mindful of our engagements and communications with children. We really do now understand the value of play, not only for our children but also for ourselves. This is an invaluable resource that should be experienced by professionals and caregivers alike."

"The team left the training feeling energised, motivated, more connected to themselves and one another, and better equipped to manage their challenging role." –
DTHF Adolescent Social Behaviour Project Lead



6. ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY



We are extremely grateful for the on-going support of Nucleus, Zestcore, The CP Trust, Nussbaum Foundation Truworths, HCI and others. We are thrilled with our newest partnership with Wings of Support, the initiative of employees of KLM. We are very efficient with our use of resources and ensure timely reporting and annual audits. Our funding situation is a challenge after some disappointments in 2023 however we continue with grit towards our mission and are eager to find strong partners who are ready to commit to joining us in uplifting South Africa's future leaders.

We've hosted a variety of sport fundraisers this year. With the help of passionate individuals and corporate supporters, we successfully hosted our 6th #Ride4Resilience Cape Town Cycle Tour group of 30 riders and #Steps4Smiles Two Oceans and Comrades Marathons campaigns. While definitely fun and a fabulous way to connect these events have also kept us going financially through the most challenging times, reminding us to "never underestimate the big importance of small things" (Matt Haig).



We were featured in the 2023 the Mayor vs. MasterChef cooking competition for charity. The cook-off not only enabled us to raise funds but also elevated children's mental health on the local government agenda. Hosted by former MasterChef winner and CEO of LED Lighting SA Shawn Paul Godfrey, the competition brought together positive role models like Cape Town Mayor Geordin Hill-Lewis to support public benefit organisations like Sisanda. Reflecting on his motivation to give back, Godfrey shared, "This past year, a nagging desire has arisen to do better with sharing, giving back, and challenging myself and those around me to have a positive influence."



"Let me tell you about the best day of my life: it was a Sisanda Fun Day."



Our goals for 2024 include integrating our Connecting through Play approach into more homes, schools and health care programmes. We will do this through Play Ambassadors, cross-sector partnerships, and training programmes.

We will increase our numbers of Play Ambassadors and build a training team to increase their skills and expand our reach to strengthen family relationships and influence community cohesion.

We aim to raise sufficient funds to allow us to rent office space again, and to recruit additional staff who can help with fundraising and programme delivery.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONNECTING WITH YOU TO MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN THE FUTURES OF SOUTH AFRICA'S CHILDREN.

