

2019 IMPACT REPORT

(1 of 4) Early Learning



Impact Report Overview

(1/4) EARLY LEARNING

Every year, we produce an Impact Report to share with the world the positive effect that Thanda has had on our community.

This year, instead of distributing the full report in hard-copy, we are publishing it online in sections so that each programme has time to shine and to give our funders, family, and friends (YOU!) the chance to digest each section in its entirety.

This is the first of four publications and it highlights the impact that our monitoring and evaluation tools have measured in 2019 in our **Early Childhood Development (ECD)** programmes.

If you have any questions or would like to get in contact with us please email info@thanda.org or visit our website www.thanda.org

(2 of 4) Education

Through after-school programmes, extracurricular activities, and workshops/events, our **Education** Initiative aims to empower children and youth with **Game-changing Skills** that are necessary for becoming resilient, **lifelong learners** who understand interconnectedness, can rebel against the crowd, and take responsibility for how their actions **impact the environment** and others.

(3 of 4) Creative Learning

Our **Creative Learning** Initiative aims to create systemic change in education. By sharing our programme **curricula**, **lesson plans** and **resources** with other organisations, as well as providing additional training and mentoring, we guide trainees through experiences that will help them build **Game-changing Skills** among children and youth in their own classrooms or education programmes.

(4 of 4) Organic Farming

Through ongoing mentoring and support, our **Organic Farming** Initiative empowers community members to sustainably improve household nutrition, strengthen self-reliance, and **build a local economy**.





*Angela Larkan & Tyler Howard,
(Co-founders of Thanda)*

Dear Thanda Family

As the world changed when Covid-19 arrived, people in our community were also suddenly thrown into a completely new way of life. This was scary and unprecedented, yet this is the type of thing for which Thanda is constantly preparing people.

We don't try to fix people's problems- we cannot change a household's income, bring back a parent that has passed away, or turn back time to erase a bad experience.

What we can do, however, is give people (even young children) the skills to cope and to thrive despite challenges that life inevitably throws their way. We can help them to see themselves as heroes, not victims.

We've seen this resilience in action over the last two months in our community. We're so proud of how guardians have stepped up as their child's educator, how farming households have come together to support those who are struggling, and how children have adapted to take full advantage of every new day to continue learning and discovering.

We thank you for your role in helping us all get to this point.

With gratitude,
Angela Larkan and Tyler Howard



EARLY LEARNING



Nokuthula Msimango - Early Learning Manager

Nokuthula has a soft smile and a big heart and openly shares her memories with us of caring for other children when she, herself, was still a child – not out of obligation, rather out of a deep-seated love for all children. She knew that working with developing minds was her calling so when the opportunity to return to her home community in Mtwalume for a position at Thanda came along, she jumped at the chance.

When she joined the Thanda team, our ECD programme was just 10 students in a tiny room. Year on year, the curriculum has been innovated and refined and the ECD classes steadily grew in numbers. All the while, Nokuthula worked at increasing her own knowledge, gaining her NQF level 4 certificate along the way. She climbed the ranks, to the position of ECD Manager and now oversees a group of 32 ECD facilitators and volunteers.

When asked to describe her favourite thing about working at Thanda, she finds it difficult to choose just one, but time spent playing with the kids tops her list. She's young at heart and this youthfulness shines through when she describes getting involved in high energy games like skipping rope. Nokuthula recognises the importance of being on a child's level in order to best connect with them and this means participating in activities right alongside them.

She can't suppress a wide grin when she speaks of the social and cognitive development that she's witnessed among children she's worked with over the years, especially the shining stars in her 2019 class. She loves them like her own and it's clear that the children (and their guardians too) feel just the same about Nokuthula.



90%

of brain development takes place before the age of five, making these the most important years for adequate nutrition, support, and stimulation, yet less than 9% of children in our rural community have access to early learning opportunities. At Thanda, we offer a curriculum centred around inquiry-based learning and imaginative play.



IMBEWU ECD

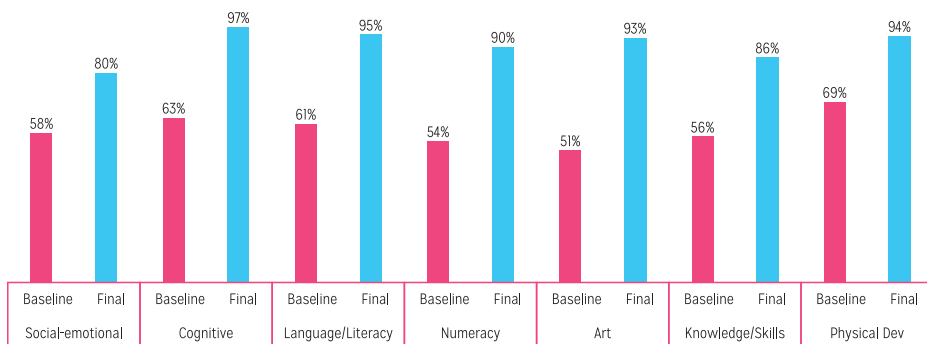
Our **Imbewu ECD Programme** gives children the foundational skills they need for a positive start in life.

We understand the importance of stimulating development from early on in a child's life and we have seen notable results using our specially developed methodologies, which have been honed and updated over the years to achieve the best possible results for each child. There are various factors that, combined, contribute to the success we have seen in the children that have come through our Imbewu ECD Programme. Some of these are:

- Innovative story-themed curricula
- Integrating the development of social-emotional skills
- Colourful classrooms with sustainable design based at Thanda
- Active parent/ guardian involvement
- Supportive learning environment
- Daily nutritious meal



Imbewu ECD Assessments 2019 (Grade 00 and 000 combined)



ENGLISH ASSISTANTS AT IMBEWU

Our Imbewu ECD was fortunate to invite three English assistants on board in 2019 to enable a dual language learning environment.

One of the English Assistants, Mo, is our only male ECD staff member which makes him a unicorn amongst ECD staff. We found that some of the younger children were lacking positive male role models in their lives and so Mo, with his calm but firm demeanour, made a great addition to the team.

Nokuthula, head of the ECD, believes that the English assistants have been an invaluable addition to the ECD team. *“It might not be very obvious to outsiders”* she says *“but the children’s English vocabulary has definitely improved since these assistants have been with us.”*

Our ECD participants read many books this year and their favorite was *“Elmers Special Day”* by David McKee. This book deep dives into self-esteem!



Bursting Personality

Empathy is one of the Game-changing Skills we focus on at Thanda and Sekhona Doncabe showed an incredible increase in Empathy in 2019. From baseline (assessed at the beginning of the year) she showed a 200% increase in her ability to empathise with others by the end of the year.

Sekhona had some prior experience with Thanda since she'd participated in one of our Fun Foundations playgroups but her 000 facilitator, Zandile, recalls that at the beginning of the year, Sekhona was very quiet. When asked a question, she would not answer but would instead quietly suck on her thumb. By the end of the year, Sekhona was confident and would speak in class without hesitation. She would also show interest in others, asking questions constantly.

Zandile laughs as she remembers one day when she was wearing two different coloured socks. Sekhona was intrigued by the mismatched pair and asked why her facilitator had chosen to do so. Zandile told her that it was purely for fun and she was tickled to see little Sekhona march into the classroom the next day wearing a pair of mismatched socks of her own.

One of her favourite playtime activities was fantasy free-play and Sekhona would always claim the doctor's lab coat and stethoscope during this time - travelling around the classroom and pretending to test each child with the utmost care.

She'd prescribe some of them make-believe medicine and others she'd bandage up, clearly intent on making sure that everyone was well.



Sekhona Doncabe, Grade 000

79%
Average
Attendance

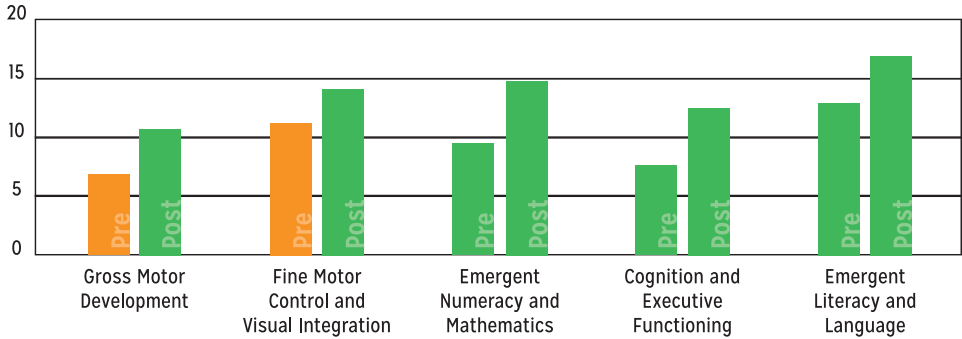
10
children
enrolled
(2015)

73
children
enrolled
(2019)

ELOM RESULTS

Each year, a small portion of our Imbewu ECD participants are externally assessed according to the **Early Learning Outcomes Measure (ELOM)**, which benchmarks children against where they would be without Thanda's programmes.

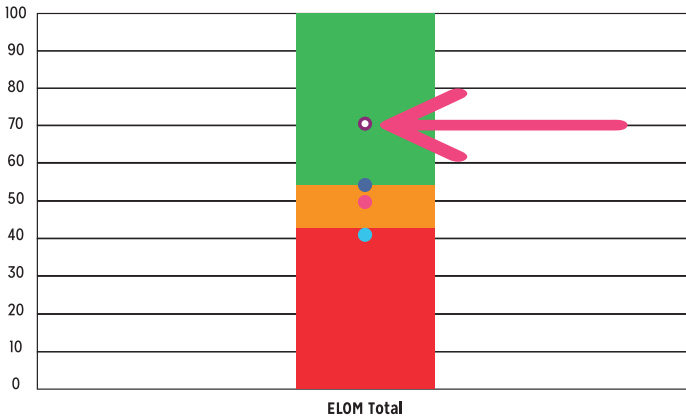
Thanda's Imbewu ECD Pre-Assessment vs Post-Assessment ELOM Results



ELOM performance bands: **At Risk** (Red) **Falling Behind** (Orange) **Achieving the Standard** (Green)

The graph below from our 2018 test, shows that while Thanda's ECD children are

ELOM TOTAL SCORE FOR YOUR THANDA'S ECD PROGRAMME COMPARED WITH QUINTILE REFERENCE SCORE



■ Achieving the Standard
■ At Risk
■ Falling Behind
● ELOM Standard Score in Quintile 1
● ELOM Standard Score in Quintile 4 & 5
● ELOM Standard Score in Quintile
○ Average ELOM Score (Thanda ECD Sample: n = 9)

classified as being from the poorest 20% of all communities in the country, by the end of 2018 they were performing better than those who grow up in more affluent environments. Similarly, the table above indicates that by the end of 2019 the children who attended Thanda's ECD were achieving the standard for all skills across the board.

**Although the sample size to date is small and therefore results only suggest tentative impact, the preliminary results are promising.*



Asanda Shange, Grade R

For the children attending our Thanda ECD, the benefits don't stop when they wave goodbye to their facilitators at the end of the day. This is because when children enroll in our ECD programmes, their guardians are enrolled too!

What does this mean?

It means that we require an active buy-in on behalf of the child's chief caretaker so that, when the day is done and the children head home, the learning can continue.

Busisiwe Shange



We do this by requiring that guardians attend monthly Guardians' Days and Workshops throughout the year where they learn simple, effective ways to engage their children at home so that their young minds are continuously stimulated.

We chatted to **Busisiwe Shange** about her child, **Asanda**.

From the first day at Thanda's ECD, Busisiwe noticed a change in her child: *"She came back singing songs from the ECD for me. She was even able to speak some English. I was just so amazed by how much she had learned."*

It was clear to Busisiwe that Asanda was thriving at Thanda. *"I could see the difference it made,"* she states. As the weeks flew by, Asanda went from strength to strength. Her facilitator even put her in charge of the class because she showed such an amazing aptitude for it. Busisiwe reflects on Asanda's continued progress, stating that, *"Her self-esteem is much higher and she's getting much smarter. She is unstoppable now."*

And when considering her own development, Busisiwe is earnest as she describes the benefits she herself has experienced, as the guardian of a child enrolled in our ECD programme. *"I've also learned so much through coming to Wordworks (one of our workshops) here at Thanda. I've learned how to best treat children and help them. I'm so grateful and truly appreciate the opportunity that Thanda has brought into our community."*

Here at Thanda, we believe that a holistic approach to learning is essential and including a child's guardian in the process is one of the most important ways to bring this approach to life. And, as can be seen in this story of Busisiwe and Asanda, an active, involved guardian encourages maximum development in a child.

NDUNGE ECD

The community-based **Ndunge ECD** opened in April 2019, with a beautiful adjacent playground added soon thereafter, and we welcomed 25 children for their first experience of early learning.



BEFORE



AFTER

Little **Aphelele Mzobe** is just one example. She attended ECD at Ndunge in 2019 and, when we compared her performance at the beginning of the year to the end of the year, we found that her literacy skills had improved by 75% and her numeracy skills had improved by 50%.

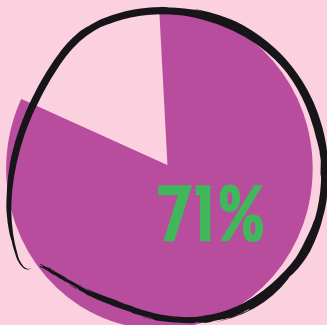
Her favourite book is *“Life on Mars”* by Jon Agee, a fun picture book about a young astronaut on a mission to find life on the red planet.



Aphelele Mzobe, Grade 00

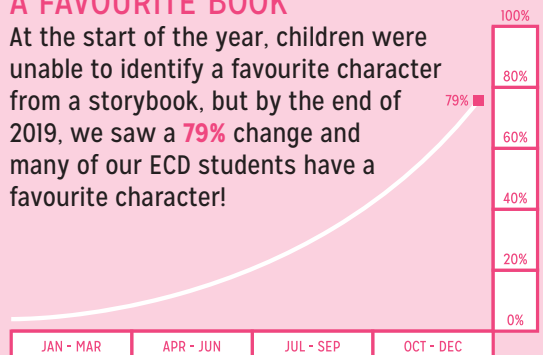
We are seeing improvements in all of the children who attend ECD at Ndunge.

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE



A FAVOURITE BOOK

At the start of the year, children were unable to identify a favourite character from a storybook, but by the end of 2019, we saw a **79%** change and many of our ECD students have a favourite character!



Ndunge ECD Programme Impact in 2019



54%

Improvement
in language & literacy



90%

Improvement
in numeracy



80%

Average Attendance at
the Ndunge ECD



62%

Improvement
in physical development



65%

Improvement
in social & emotional
development



5 278

Meals served



82%

Improvement in
knowledge & skills



126%

Improvement in
cognitive development



101%

Improvement in
creativity & arts



27

Children enrolled in
Ndunge ECD
Programme



FUN FOUNDATIONS



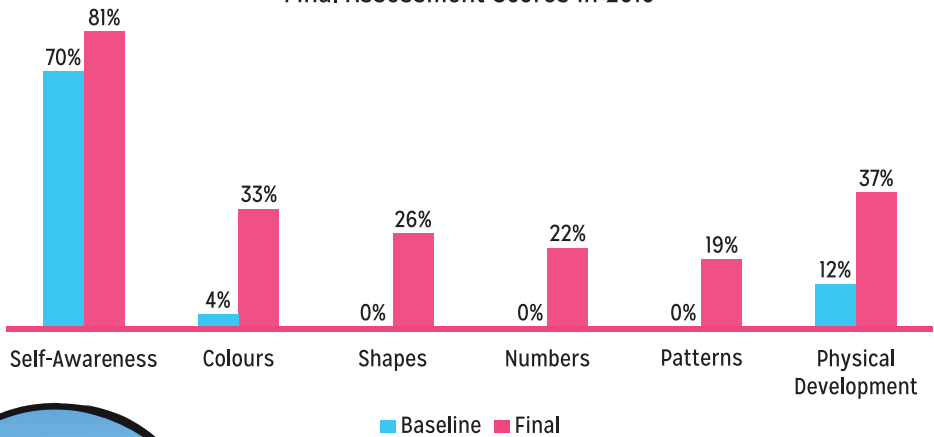
Fun Foundations playgroups take place at our Organic Farms in areas where there are no other local ECD services offered. Children are able to learn under the trees all morning while farmers tend to their plots. 2019 was the first full year of operation for the playgroups as it was introduced in late 2018.

Our Fun Foundations curriculum (developed by our partners at Singakwenza) is carefully designed to build the skills children need to reach their developmental milestones. Our volunteers (and even guardians) learn to transform recyclable materials (plastic shopping bags, bottle tops, etc.) into fun learning resources and toys.

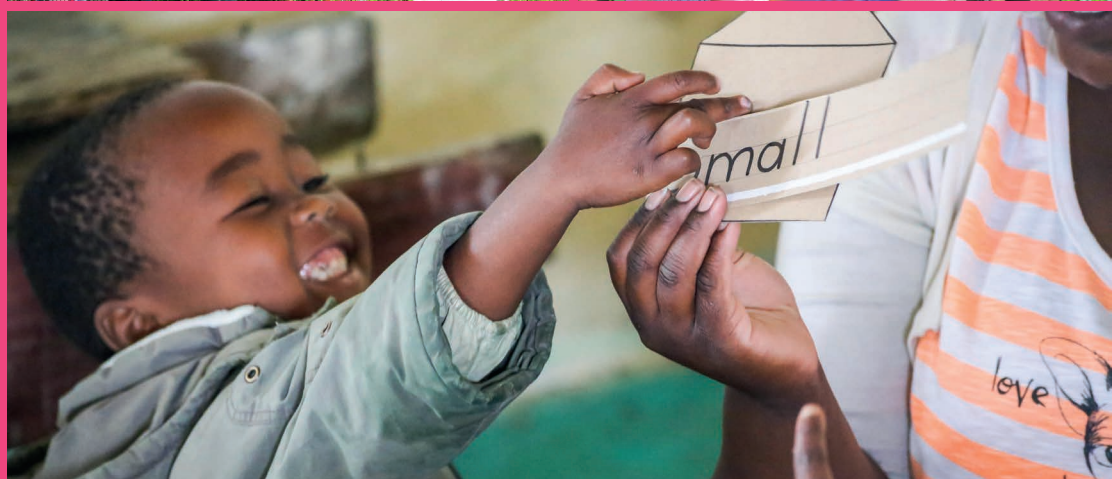


Samkeliswe, who volunteers at Mnambithi farm, said, *"The toys are very easy to make, and children in my playgroup know what all the toys are for and how to play with them."*

Fun Foundations Baseline & Final Assessment Scores in 2019



FUN FOUNDATIONS PLAYGROUPS



69% Average Attendance

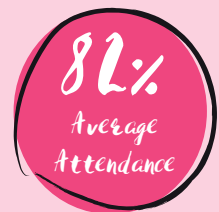
LOVE LEARNING



We introduced a new programme, **Love Learning**, at three local schools in 2019.

Love Learning places our specially trained assistants into Grade R classrooms at these schools. Our assistants help teachers to adopt a hands-on approach with children and to include experiential learning techniques to make the national curriculum more accessible and fun to Grade R learners.

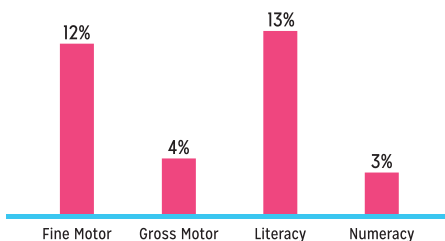
Mr Ngcobo C.S Sosukwana Primary School Principal: *“Thank you Thanda after school very much. We hope to receive this support in the years to come. Extending our gratitude for all the teaching materials and equipment you have supplied us with.”*



The Red Flag Assessment Tool and Grade R Catch-up Programme developed by partner organisation, Siyakwazi, were a valuable part of our Love Learning programme this year. The assessment enables facilitators to better understand and identify when children are experiencing barriers to learning and adapt lessons accordingly.

In June, Thanda facilitators identified three children in one of our Gr R Love Learning classes who were experiencing difficulties with learning (in other words “red flagged”). Our facilitators, using training from Siyakwazi and resources from the Red Flag Catch-up Programme, were able to bring all three children up to speed. By November, when the class was re-assessed by our facilitators using the same Red Flag Assessment Tool, it was confirmed that there were no longer any “red flagged” children in the class.

Love Learning
Improvements in 2019



13%
improvement
in grade R's literacy
who are in our
programme



STAFF DEVELOPMENT

• DISABILITY AND INCLUSION

- In 2019, 38 staff members attended disability and inclusion training with our training provider Siyakwazi.
- The workshops are designed to eliminate social stigmas surrounding disabilities and teach our team to recognise the important role that they can play in the overall development of children with barriers to learning.

• LETCEE

- Five of our ECD Facilitators continued their studies in the NQF Level 4 ECD Teacher Training through LETCEE. All 5 facilitators have found the training tremendously beneficial to their work.





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(We will get back to you
within 24 hours!)



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