

IMPACT REPORT: CONFRONTING COVID

April 2020 – October 2021



LOOKING BACK TO
THE BEGINNING AND
FORWARD INTO THE FUTURE



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The past 18 months were unlike any. Our original plans to empower the Mtwalume community were turned upside down, but thanks to our loyal and flexible funders and donors, these strategies were adapted into **new action** plans to continue achieving the same goals, allowing us to stay true to our mission to **empower people to create positive change.**

THE JOURNEY OF ADAPTATION

“In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity” – Albert Einstein



Potable water access site in Mnsinsini Community.



Thanda Home Visitor Neli reading and unpacking Learning at Home theme, Circles.



Mthembu family receiving food parcel delivery during lockdown.

March 2020
The Beginning

April 2020
ThandaLEARN


June 2020
Neighbourhood
Mobile Library
adapted

October 2020
Youth Organic
Farming Programme
established

December 2020
Thanda Community
Centre opened

March 2021
Literacy Programme
established

December 2020
Household Garden
Programme began

May 2020
Learning at Home
and Home Visiting
began

November 2020
Access to water
projects started

January 2021
Inclusion Programme
expanded

April 2020
Food Parcels
and Resources
started being
delivered to homes

September 2020
Neighbourhood ECD's
and Thandukwazi
Outdoor Programmes
developed & started

December 2020
Siyazazi Outdoor
Programme
designed & started

April 2021
Baby
Programme
pilot launched

THE BEGINNING OF LOCKDOWN

"Individually we are one drop, together, we are an ocean!" - Ryunosuke Satoro



Mdex at Organic Farm with a gigantic cabbage.

"At the beginning, most farmers were scared. They were too scared to go to their gardens. Then we, as Thanda, came to them and explained to them that lockdown could be manageable as long as they follow safety procedures."

- Mdex, Organic Farming Initiative Manager



Children drawing with charcoal after their guardian received WhatsApp activities during the first lockdown.

WhatsApp Learning:

Our programme managers started sending activity ideas to guardians.

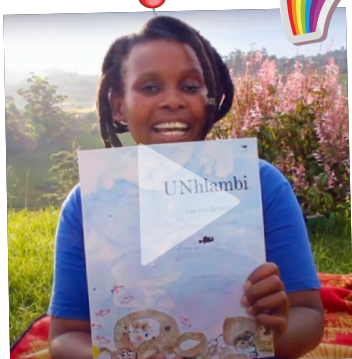
"On a daily basis I send guardians suggestions on what activities they can do. Some guardians do the activities and then share photos of their children's work. For example they assist them with collecting cardboard to make different shapes. They have so much enthusiasm. I am so grateful for their dedication."

- Nokuthula Msimango,
Early Learning Initiative Manager



We Created Pamphlets

With mounting fears, we needed to provide clear information. Pamphlets were created by our staff and shared far and wide at spaza shops and taxi stops.



Data-Free Online Learning Resource:

Within two weeks, we created ThandaLEARN, containing story read-alouds, parent workshops and activity resource packs for children anywhere in the world to access!

"Well, my son, Sam who is turning 6 in July, and I enjoyed this morning listening to the story of clever mouse in the story *The Gruffalo*."

- Jamala Safari, CEO of
HCI Foundation

11 English Books
12 isiZulu Books

DETERMINING COVID-19 INTERVENTIONS: A Look at Sustainability

To determine how we could assist in the most sustainable way possible, we looked at fractures that existed in the community before COVID-19, and would therefore continue to be a problem after COVID-19 without an intervention. We also looked honestly at our own strengths and weaknesses, and identified the following key areas where we could assist...



Visiting Organic Farms all around the community with our partners.

Community Resource

Existing Fracture

Thanda Intervention

Local Clinics



Water Crisis at Local Clinic

X

Tiny Waiting Room at Local Clinic

X

Lack of Emergency Vehicle

X

Local Schools



Water Crisis at Schools

✓

Insufficient Classroom Space

X

Insufficient Number of Teachers

X

Community



High Unemployment Rate

✓

Food Insecurity

✓

Lack of Guardian

Involvement in Children's Learning and Development

✓

Vulnerable Elderly Headed Households

✓

Lack of Access to Clean Water

✓

PROVIDING ACCESS TO WATER

83% of households collect water from a non-municipal source such as a stream or spring

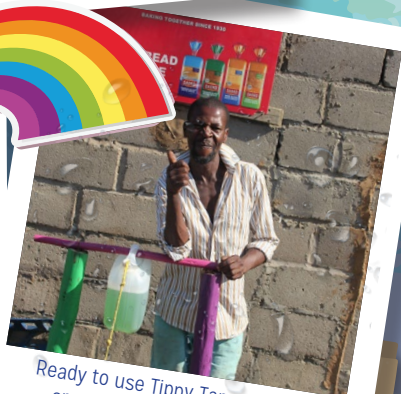


Interview with Nomathemba about the impact of water scarcity in the Maforoza community

"We get water here from this well, there's no other place where we get water because the taps are basically nonexistent, there's never any water (in the taps), even as we speak there's none."
- Nomathemba Hadebe



Tippy Taps being constructed by Thanda maintenance team near roadside bus stop.



Ready to use Tippy Tap at a local spaza shop in the Ecabhane community.

98 Tippy Taps

installed around the community and continuously filled with soap and water

LONG TERM SOLUTION

Water Access Projects




Over **43 000** people will have access to safe drinking water by the end of the projects in progress.



"I am very happy and grateful to Thanda for giving us a source of water. We are very happy, it will definitely make a lot of change in myself and my family." **- Mrs Mkhize**



 Complete	In progress
Springs Made Potable	11 14
Boreholes Repaired	5 2
New Boreholes	1 6

BUILDING FOOD SECURITY

With immediate school and programme closures, children not only faced learning loss, but loss of access to feeding programmes. Thanda's library became a food parcel distribution centre to ease the effects of loss of access to nutrition in our community.

According to census data, the annual average household income locally is at **R14 600** and **51%** of infants and young children in South Africa are malnourished.

365 tonnes of food delivered, reaching **19 000** individuals.



Mqadi family receiving food parcel delivery during lockdown.



Interview with Dlamini family about the impact food parcels have had on their household.

"Food parcels meant more happiness because they added to the little we had left; it was going to help a lot."

- Ngoneni Dlamini, Childs Guardian

LONG TERM SOLUTION

The Household Garden Programme Began!



Since December 2020, **360** Household Gardens have been established!



R253 378 worth of produce has been harvested from these gardens



Our M&E data has show that: **85%** of produce is being consumed in households **10%** is being given to neighbours, and **5%** is being sold in the community

CHAMPIONS THROUGHOUT: Our Farmers

“The future depends on what you do today.” - Mahatma Gandhi

Due to the outdoor, socially distanced nature of Thanda's Organic Farming Programmes, they could continue throughout lockdowns with minor adjustments. Not only did our 394 farmers show bravery and resilience by continuing in our training and mentoring programmes, but they produced more than any previous years. This played a critical role in keeping the community fed and immune systems strong.

R6.5 million

harvested within Thanda's Organic Farming Programme since lockdown began.



79% of produce was eaten, given away, or sold in the local rural community.



Organic farmers counting seedlings at Dweshula Farm.

“What I love about farming is that I can survive and provide for my children, I can also get what I need to get. Like buying household items and other types of food. After I have harvested my crop, I don't only sell it, I also give to my neighbours in need.”

- Zanzile, Organic Farmer

According to an official survey in 2016, only **10%** of community members are employed.



We added **3** farms in **2020!** Now totaling **29** local farms which cover **30 hectares** of community land.

95% of Farmers are earning an income from produce

44% more youth now farming with Thanda!



Organic farmer ploughing her plot of land at Mlamula Farm.

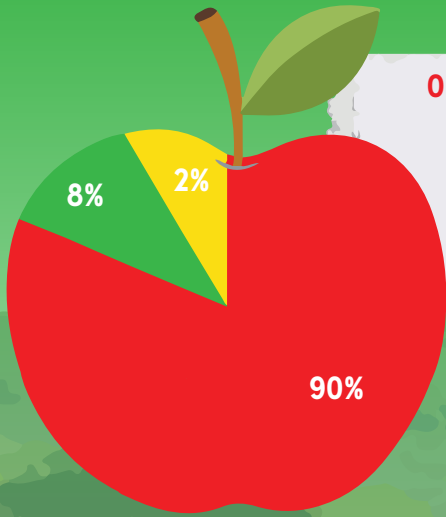


Happy farmers harvesting produce at Gqayinyanga Farm.



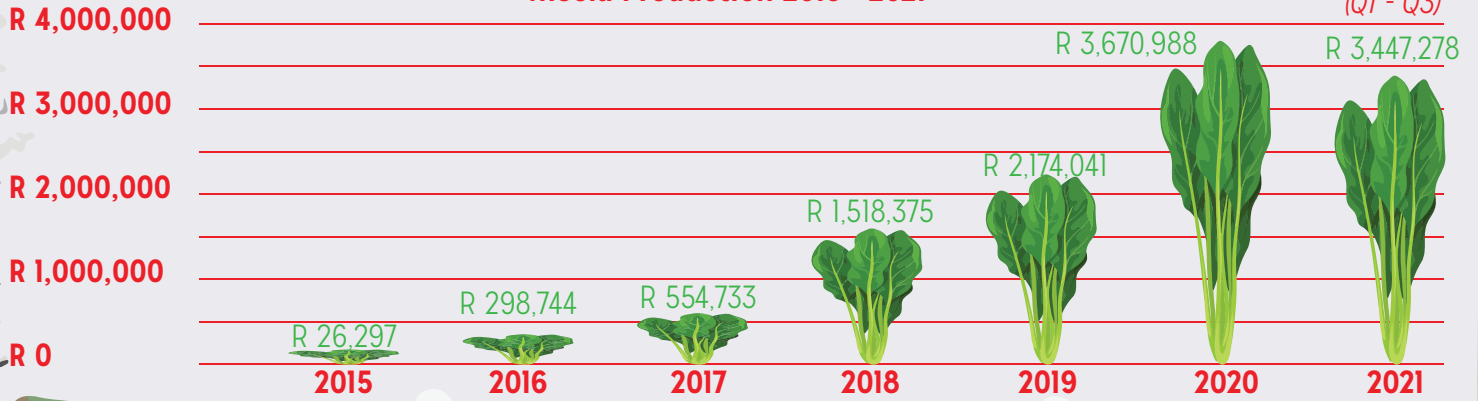
Lush produce growing at Masakhane Farm.

Organic Farming Production Breakdown - Q2 2020 - Q3 2021



- SOLD
- Given Away
- Consumed

Nisela Production 2015 - 2021



1 more farm to be added before end of **2021**

Fencing and Irrigation improvements at all **29** farms since lockdown began



Farmers working on their plots at Masakhane Farm.

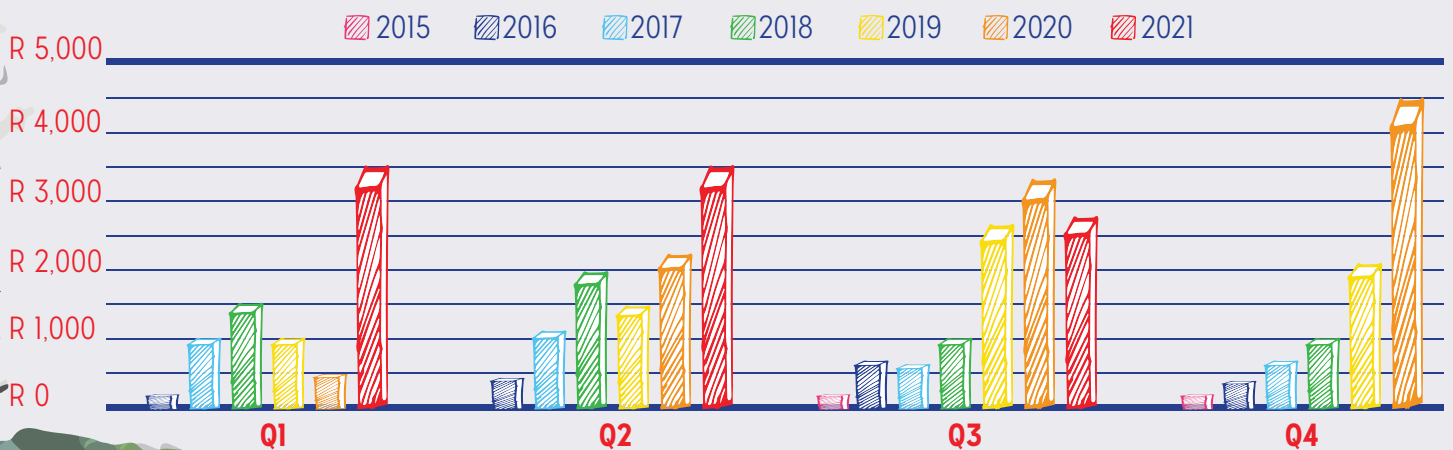


Organic Farmer watering cabbage at Zizamele Farm.



Organically grown greenpepper at Vusisizwe Farm.

AVG. Production Value Per Farmer Over Time



THE JOURNEY

Learning continued in the communities Thanda serves through the development of a Learning at Home programme.

To ensure learning never stopped for children in grade 000 to five, we started a Learning at Home Programme in April 2020. We developed simple-to-implement activity packs around Book Dash books, with resources and daily lesson plans for guardians to follow.



24 Book Dash books have been given to **EACH CHILD** to keep at home forever!

Learning at Home Packs

13 720 delivered and we are still continuing to deliver monthly.

"He just goes into his room, takes out all his books and reads until he falls asleep. He really loves reading. We didn't have books before these we got from Thanda. We feel so grateful to Thanda because we see that they really do love us."

- Florance Shinga, Stembiso's Granny on Learning at Home



Shinga family reading "Lara the Yellow Ladybird" Learning at Home Book Dash book.

95% of households implemented Learning at Home to some extent, spending an average of **75 minutes** on learning with their children per day.

49% of households implemented the programme fully.

74% of school days lost due to COVID-19 were replaced with Learning at Home.



COMING TOGETHER



To ensure guardians were not navigating the pandemic and becoming teachers on their own, our facilitators became a Home Visiting team and would check in with them frequently...

"I feel like the parents have a support system now. I've realised some of the things that the parents didn't take initiative when it comes to parenting and giving children attention, it's not because they don't actually want to, it's because they didn't trust their ability to do it. So now that we are there, you know, we journey with them."

- Janet Duma, Home Visitor



746 Households visited each month

Home Visiting has been a process of **INCREDIBLE** discovery and has led us to continue this programme into the future. It also led us to pilot a Baby Programme in our community with the support of Siyakwazi.

The baseline scores below clearly demonstrate the **NEED** for this programme.



Mthembu family household.



Qumbisa family participating in Baby Programme with facilitators assistance.



Baby Smangalisso, one of the participants in our Baby Programme.

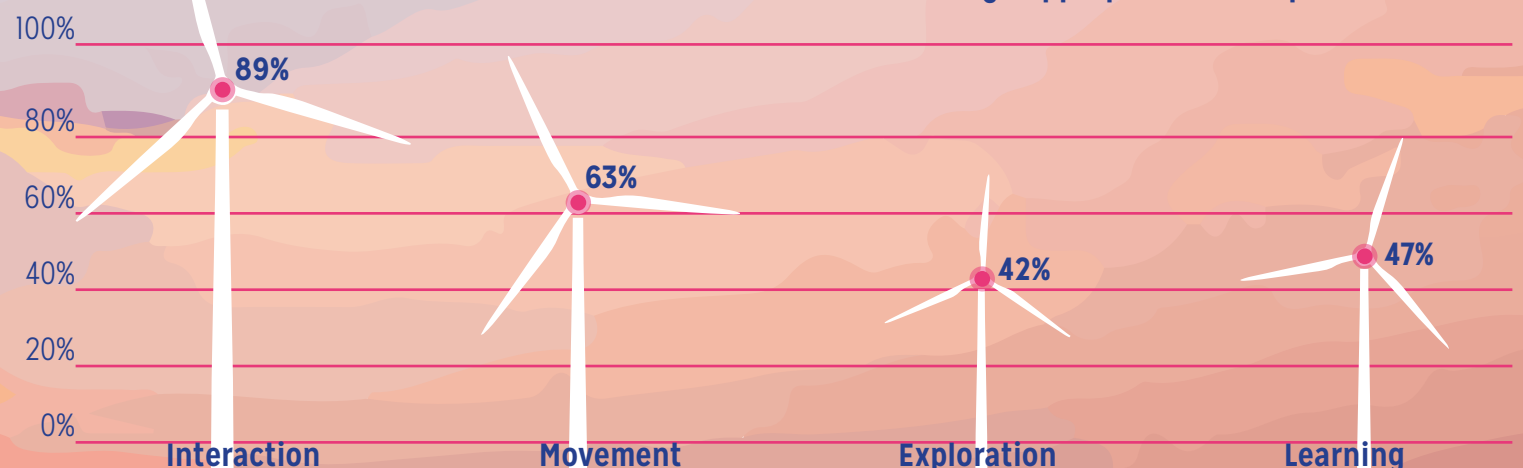
Baby Programme Pilot



Building capacity of guardians with children aged 0-2 to support early learning and development before ECD.

19 Households enrolled

Baseline Assessment - % of Babies on Track Towards Age-appropriate Development



THE NEXT STEP: Learning in Neighbourhoods

In September 2020 we started in-person learning, for small groups with a Thanda facilitator in each neighbourhood. Each neighbourhood provided a back yard and hut to use, as well as a volunteer to assist. This structure helped to ensure that COVID-19 outbreaks were contained to each neighbourhood, but it also created a new sense of community ownership over children's learning and development.



Interview with Khomo family about the impact of neighbourhood learning on their community.

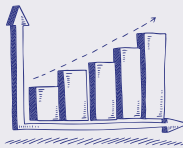
"I feel at peace now because I was upset when learning came to a halt at the beginning of lockdown. When I heard that Thanda children needed space to hold group lessons, I figured, since I have a spare two-room cottage... I'll let them use it. So that the children can learn for the remaining months. Let them gain knowledge."

- Mrs Zandile Khomo



220 Children supported in Early Childhood Development annually

61% Improvement in four skill areas



88% Improvement in Creativity



55 community volunteers in **18** neighbourhoods!



Neighbourhood ECD enjoying Academic Centres in the Maforosa Ndelu community.

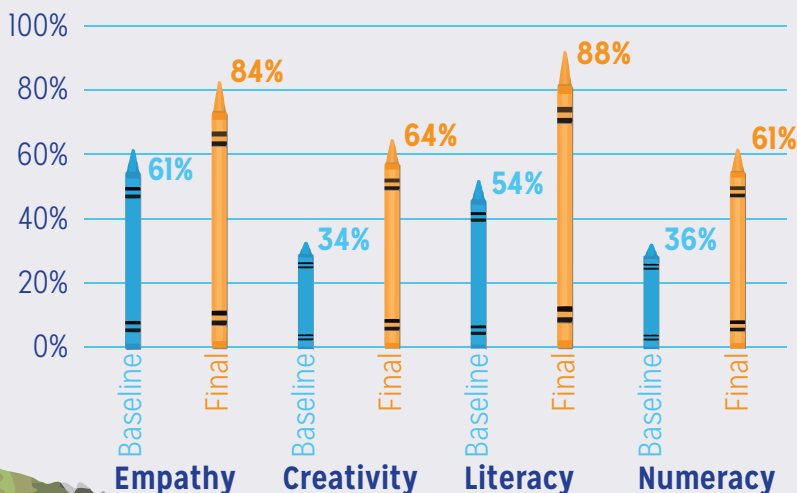


Neighbourhood ECD participating in Free-play in the Gumedede community.



Neighbourhood ECD reading "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" in the Maforosa Ndelu community.

Neighbourhood ECD Improvements in 2020

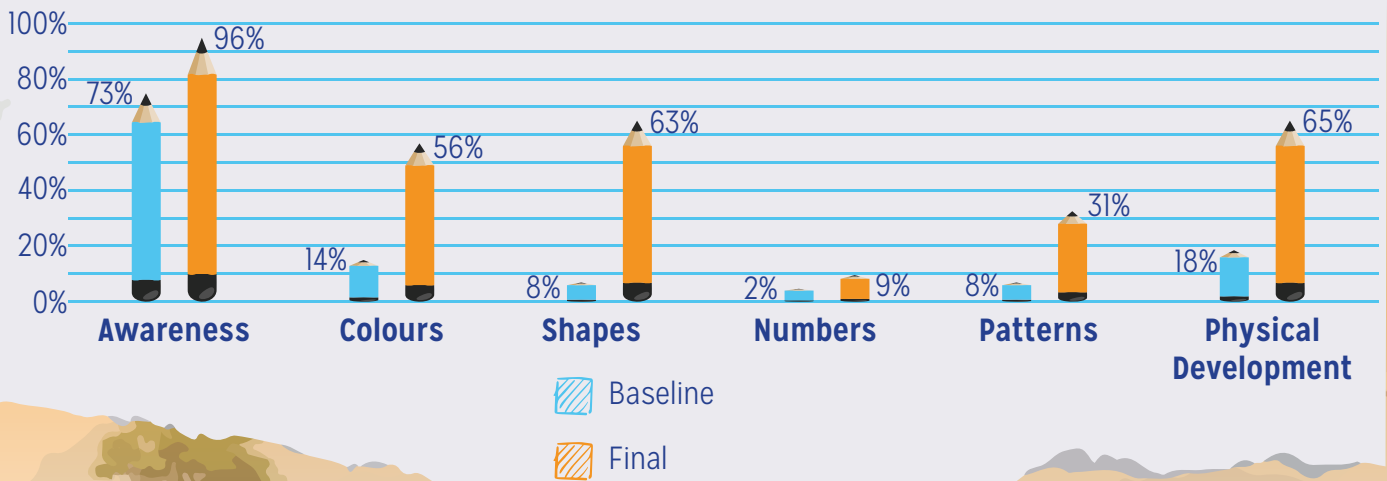


90% of brain development takes place before the age of **five!**

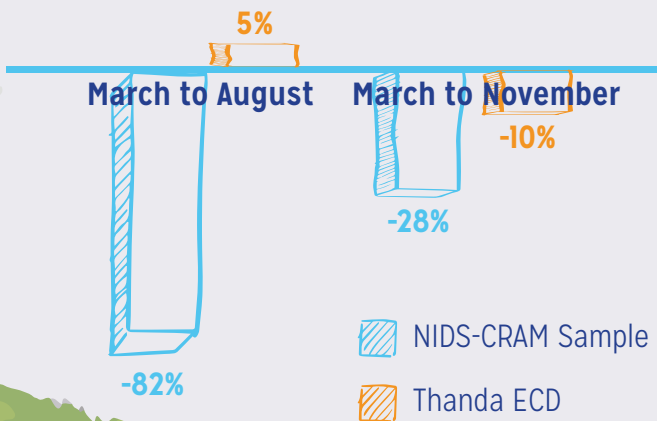


Neighbourhood ECD reading "The Gruffalo" in the Maforosa Ndelu community.

Fun Foundations Improvements 2020



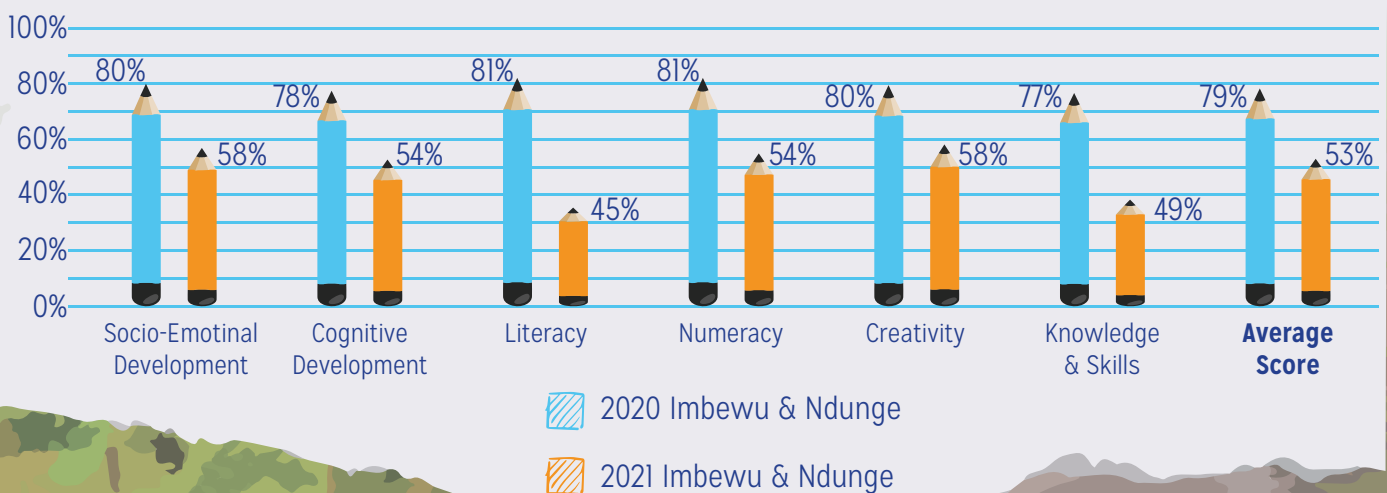
Percentage change in ECD attendance in 2020



While the NIDS-CRAM sample's attendance declined by 82% between March and August (from 39% to 7%), Thanda's attendance actually increased by 5% (from 77% to 81%) – this may be because guardians were eager for their children to return to Thanda ECD, or because home visiting had made guardians more invested in Thanda.

When looking at the March to November period, while both attendance rates took a dip (NID-CRAM's from 39% to 28% and Thanda's from 77% to 69%), Thanda was less affected...

2020 vs 2021 Average Baseline Scores (Grade 00)



Overall children in Gr. 00 in 2021 are 33% behind where their counterparts were at the start of 2020. This is to be expected due to the hard lockdowns and adjusted programming, but was minimised thanks to our Learning at Home Programme.

THE EXPANSION OF INCLUSION

Our Inclusion Programme has grown from six children in 2020 to 18 in 2021. This increase is a result of bonds of trust grown between Thanda and guardians throughout the lockdown period. In addition, we are slowly chipping away at the stigma related to children with different learning needs in the community. In the past these children were hidden indoors but now, their families are seeking the specialised support available from Thanda, which we have been able to tailor for each child with the help of our partner, Siyakwazi.



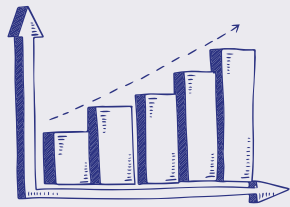
Inclusion at the Neighbourhood ECD in the Ndelu community.



Singakwenza Inclusion Therapy Sessions at the Thanda Community Centre.



Wandiswe has cerebral palsy and she received her first buggy as result of a referral to the clinic in April. The buggy means that Wandiswe can sit up and join in activities and day to day life more easily.



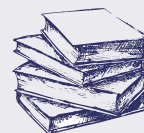
200% enrollment increase!



Books being borrowed from Thanda's Mobile Library at Thandukwazi Outdoor Programme in the Mlamula community.

Reading for love, wonder and fun!

Thanda's Library is the ONLY library in the whole community, but children were not able to visit to choose books with COVID-19 regulations. Instead, we have been taking baskets of books to their neighbourhoods!



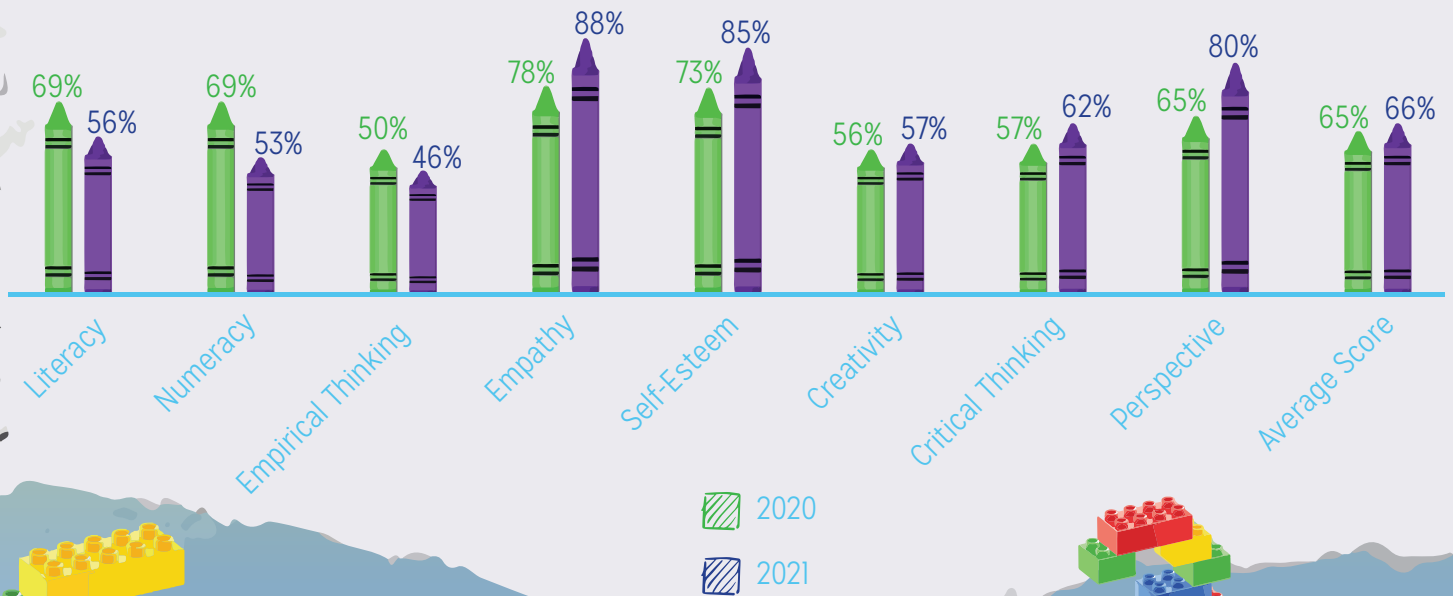
7133

books have been borrowed since the start of COVID-19!

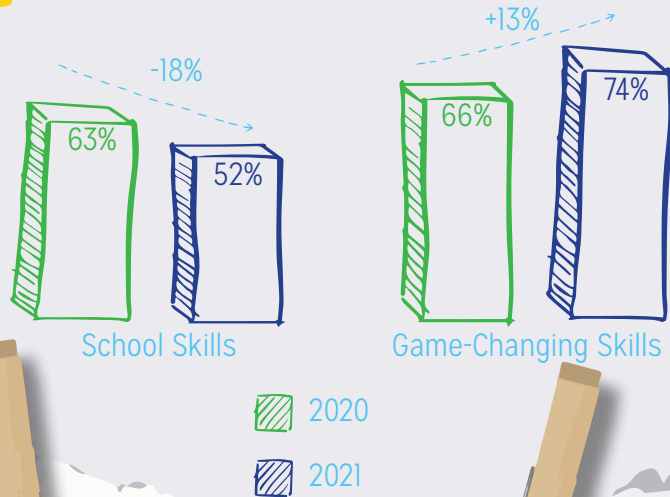
THANDUKWAZI OUTDOOR

Thanda's After-school Programme for children in Grade R-3, also moved into neighbourhoods in September 2020. Here, children continued to play and learn with their friends.

2020 vs 2021 Performance of Children in Grade 2



Further Analysis of Grade 2's Performance in 2020 vs 2021



Thandukwazi Outdoor Programme children drawing colourful self portraits in the Foksen community.



Thandukwazi Outdoor Programme reading Rabbitness in the Qwabe community.

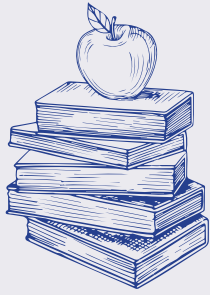


Thandukwazi Outdoor Programme creating "The Gruffalo" masks in the Gumedede community.

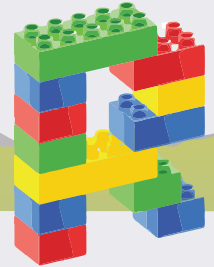


Thandukwazi Outdoor Programme children with drawings of insects they imagined in the Mlamula community.

Percentage Decline in Performance in School Skills in South African vs Thanda Children

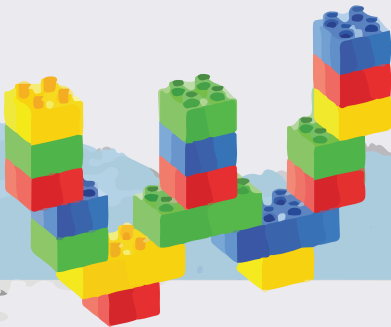


- South Africa at Large
- Thanda Grade 2's



While the results indicate that there was a decline in performance of Grade 2 children at Thanda, this was markedly less than learning losses across the country, which may be attributable to our efforts to enforce Learning at Home during lockdowns. Overall, children at Thanda were **57%** less affected by school closures than their counterparts nationally.

78% of grade 4 learners in South Africa cannot read for meaning.



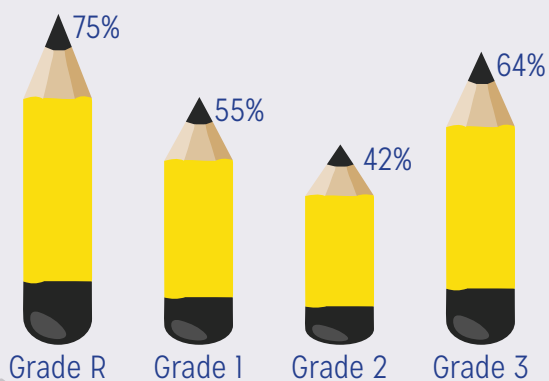
Thandukwazi Outdoor Programme children painting arts and crafts activity in the Gumede community.



Literacy Programme children reading "The Gruffalo" and reenactment in the Mazibuko community.

When South African schools returned to intermittent timetables, Thanda had an opportunity of time! Thandukwazi facilitators work with children in their assigned neighbourhoods in the mornings for two hours on days when children are not attending school. Using games and other fun activities, Thanda facilitators provide individualised support for children to improve their literacy skills - with the goal for children to read at their grade level.

Baseline Literacy Pass Rate by Grade



Literacy Programme "Sound Box" activities in the Mlamula community.



Literacy Programme "Animal Sound Cards" activity in the Qwabe community.

REINVENTING PROGRAMMES: Our Community Centre

"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."
- Franklin D. Roosevelt

In December 2020, we started Siyzazi Outdoor- a weekend programme for children in Grade 4-7 at Thanda's Community Centre.



Boys and Girls Day group discussion at Thanda Community Centre



Skateboarding at Thanda Community Centre for children of all ages.



Chess Club on weekends at Thanda Community Centre for Grade 4 - 7

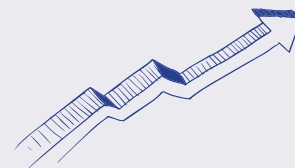
3 631 visits to Community Centre Since December 2020.



We also reopened Umthombo, our drop-in programme for children on all weekends, school holidays, and public holidays.

Boys and Girls Day

In a supportive and confidential environment with positive role models, boys and girls attend same-sex sessions at Thanda's Community Centre on alternating Sundays. These sessions provide skills and support systems for over 130 tweens and teens to navigate their way through difficult times in their development with a real focus on self-esteem and mutual respect.



401 Children Enrolled.



Performing Arts Club practicing drama and stage presence warm-ups.

72 014 porridge and meals served across all our Early Learning and Education Programmes since March 2020.



Sindiswa preparing meals before they get packed and delivered to neighbourhoods for the ECD and Education participants.



Children playing on the Thanda jungle-gym at the community centre.

THE WAY FORWARD

Over the past 18 months, we have moved continuously between three risk-adjusted versions of our programmes depending on infection rates.



Programmes in School Classrooms



Neighbourhood Learning



Learning at Home

2020

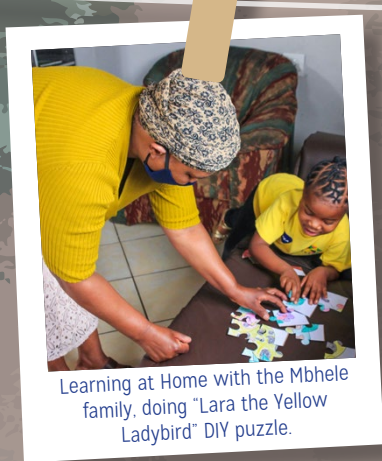
2021



MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT



February 2020, After-school Programme in school classrooms at Hlaba Primary School before lockdown.



Learning at Home with the Mbhele family, doing "Lara the Yellow Ladybird" DIY puzzle.



Neighbourhood Learning during Thandukwazi Outdoor Programme in the Sasenyonyane community.

Moving forward, we will continue to use this model as needed, but hope to be able to move our Early Learning Programmes back into the classrooms at Thanda's Community Centre in January 2022. We plan to continue running After-school programmes in the neighbourhoods in 2022.

Thank you to all our funders and partners for making everything possible!



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Thandukwazi Outdoor Programme unpacking unrest with storybook *"This is Not My Hat"* by Jon Klassen and made different hats of people like police officers, soldiers and nurses.

APPENDIX

Initiative	COVID-19 high risk	COVID-19 medium risk	COVID-19 low risk
Early Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No in person education - Learning at Home Packs are delivered - Home visiting, depending on the severity of infections. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 12 Neighbourhood Early Learning Groups hosted by Thanda's ECD facilitators and neighbourhoods. - Thanda's proprietary ECD curriculum. - Learning at Home Packs handed out at ECD - Neighbourhoods ECD Facilitators distribute books in neighbourhoods - Porridge, snacks and cooked lunch provided daily 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ECD children return to the Thanda Community Centre for their proprietary curriculum. - Learning at Home Packs handed out monthly - Home visiting by dedicated Home Visitor. - Children borrow books from Thanda's Library. - Porridge, two snacks and a cooked meal is provided daily.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mobile Library visits children's homes - Access to nutrition through food parcels (2020) and Household Gardening Programme 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 32 Thandukwazi Outdoor (neighbourhood learning groups) utilizing Thanda's former After-school curriculum for grade R-3's. - Bi-weekly Siyazazi Outdoor learning sessions at Thanda's community centre on weekend's (Grade 4-7) - Bi-weekly boys and girls day at Thanda's Community Centre - Learning at Home Packs handed out at neighbourhoods - Home visiting by dedicated Home Visitor - Thandukwazi facilitators distribute books in neighbourhoods - Porridge and cooked lunch provided daily. - Umthombo Weekend Programme available for all children (with number restrictions) 	
Organic Farming	<p>Due to the outdoor, socially distanced nature of our Organic Farming Programmes, we have not needed to create COVID-19 operating models. However, careful care and attention has been applied for the safety of our mentors and beneficiaries.</p>		