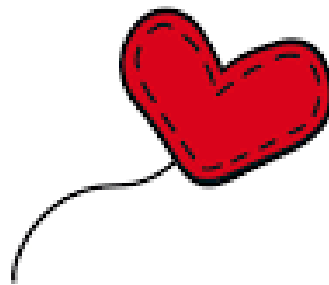




**Young Children, Our Future**

**&**



**UTHANDO**  
**PROJECT INC.**

**DOLLS FOR THE CHILDREN OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

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TREE's vision is to ensure that young children develop to their full potential in line with their rights and needs and as an organisation we are proud for having the ability to achieve this in our areas of operation. TREE believes in a holistic approach to child development which is achieved/supported through TREE's Essential Package as pictured below.



TREE's Essential Package of Services forms the foundation of the programme's strategic thrust that aims to ensure the holistic development of children. This package of essential services has been a vehicle for cost-effective and efficient delivery that has maximised opportunities for early childhood interventions. The intended impact is to promote dramatic increased access to quality developmental opportunities for children aged 0-4 years.

We also ensure that we provide a holistic approach through the essential package of services (illustrated in the above diagram) to promote and support the development of young children through:

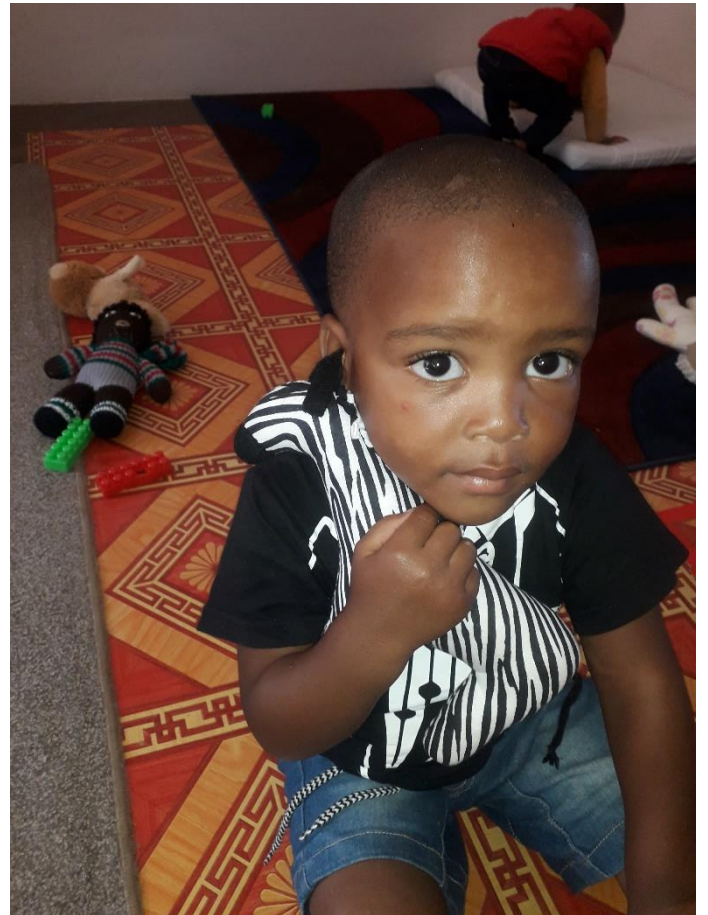
- Correct Water and sanitation practices
- Social security; access of social grants, disability grants and caregiver dependency grants
- Access to documentation; Birth registration, Road to Health Cards
- Access to Health services, immunizations
- Opportunities for children to learn together in structured programmes in preparation for formal schooling.



*There is still a ways to go but we are slowly approaching our goal of making it a norm for boy children to feel free and enjoy playing with dolls. As an ECD Sector we need to break down the gender roles and stereotypes of society in order to nurture a greater calibre of men. These pictures with the joy written beautifully on their faces depict that we are on the right track!*







*Receiving different items other than dolls is amazing, it widens the variety of resources in the classroom and the children absolutely love them. "Teaching to throw and catch with a wool ball is much better than with a plastic one as the children often get hit with the ball when they are learning to catch the wool does not make them cry." – ECD Centre teacher.*







*Dolls allow for children to explore their imagination as far as it stretch.*

*This young child is using a stethoscope and seems that he has not yet figured out its purpose but he is happy and he is exploring!*

*This young girl is developing her mothering skills through re-enacting how she got carried by her own mother as a baby.*



*This young boy's caregiver expressed that this was the first doll, he has ever had to take home and keep for himself and this was why he was so happy to receive it.*





#### Uthando Dolls for Educational Supplement and Coordination:

These beautiful baby dolls are effectively used during the engagement with practitioners on capacity building and training. They are further used to facilitate skills in a range of early learning stimulation mechanisms that develop language, life skills, promote family values and gender responsiveness. Moreover, they are distributed to children when doing monitoring and site support visits to ECD centres.

#### Conclusion

The relationship TREE has with Uthando Dolls is absolutely invaluable. The joy on the children's faces when they receive and play with their very own dolls is priceless. The holistic development that is brought through by the dolls is amazing, it is developing emotional, physical, language, social & cognitive skills.





# UTHANDO PARTNERS' REPORTS 2020-2021



From the Family Literacy Project

September 2021

Greetings to you dear friends and 'colleagues' in the quest for whole and happy children in Africa! The arrival of another consignment of dolls and thought of all of you continuing to craft them in these tough Covid times is particularly moving to us at FLP. We all, including yourselves, have had to face so many challenges, disappointments and losses, and in comparison, the beautiful dolls are a pure and unadulterated delight! Thank you, thank you, thank you.

We have continued with our learning 'nests' whether schools are open or closed. We feel that the children have lost so much learning that we must continue to nurture any child within our reach. Most of the schools that have opened work on a rotation system to maintain social distancing so that in every village there are children 'at a loose end'. Parents seldom have the money for data to link into educational programmes. Thus, we meet the children with carefully balanced learning themes covering literacy, language, simple mathematics and emotional development. It is hugely experiential and includes lots of fun, craft and reading in every form.

The theme at the moment is Spring. It is slowly getting warmer and there was a huge Spring snowfall in Underberg last week. Here is one of the little groups talking to their dolls about changing seasons: "How did you feel when the snow came? And how did you feel when the snow went away?"



We are part of an exciting new partnership with Wits University and the Education Department to establish and monitor new classroom libraries in some of the schools nearby. Most of them are schools in which we have not previously worked. The new Box Libraries have been delivered and the teachers have been trained. We are presently doing follow up support visits and plan to take each library a bag of dolls to add colour and fun to the whole idea of reading. A church group has made 40 hanging "Dolly hammocks". We plan to put 4 or 5 dolls in each, a couple of balls and puppets.

We will be sharing with these teachers all the ideas that we have developed, using dolls for learning to read and write. The child is unaware that his letters- sounds and shapes- are being assessed not only by the doll







Director, Pierre Horn, has discovered that there is a huge need for Dolls in the Eastern Cape. He said:

“I delivered dolls to a Pre-School in the E. Cape, where I have been assisting, a couple of days ago. As always the dolls were loved and brought such joy to the lives of the recipients – it is a very poor, isolated area so toys are not something any of the kids ever own!”

He went on to say that as a result of seeing one of the beautiful dolls, he was approached by a Doctor from Lusikisiki requesting dolls for young children that she treats at her surgery. She said she often refers children to hospital and that the dolls would provide comfort to them on the long journey. Both Lynne and Irene thought this was a wonderful idea and Pierre reported back that dolls will be given to children in the hospital too, when they have to undergo vaccinations and procedures.

We wish you all a sense of deep well-being as you look back on this year and plan for the next one. Be assured that you bring great joy and healing to the children of Africa.

From Pierre, Jill and the whole FLP Team



## Message from Lifeline following donation of additional funds

We are blessed to have you as part of our donor family, and due to your generosity we are able to further our mission in better supporting the survivors of Gender Based Violence. LifeLine will utilise the additional funds to buy care pack items.

We saw an increase in the total number of GBV (Gender based Violence) incidents per month, and the intensity/ cruelty involved during these acts has also increased which is very worrying.

Comfort pack are used as a way of giving the survivors her dignity that was taken away. After the medical examination, survivors are given a comfort pack and allowed to freshen up before they go home. The comfort pack are given to the survivors who are in need of them and those who reported within 72 hrs. Below is the list of the items that goes into the comfort pack:

1. Tooth paste, tooth brush, soap, face cloth, comb, body lotion, roll-on, pads, panties (different sizes)
2. Sachets of: sugar, coffee, creamer, tea and small packets of biscuits. Sometimes survivors wait for too long for medical examination and they get hungry.
3. Little toy for kiddies.
4. Small bottle of sanitizer and a mask

***Warm Regards,  
Sinikiwe Biyela***





## 2020/2021 dlalanathi Report to Uthando Dolls

Submitted by Robyn Hemmens

**Overall Aim:** Emotionally vulnerable children in Willowfontein experience responsive care through play as a vital part of their development.

**Objective 1:** Establish Relationship with Stakeholders, Community Health Care Workers, and parents and caregivers.

**Objective 2:** Build Capacity of community members to play, parent and protect children.

**Objective 3:** Provide emotional support to caregivers and children.

**Objective 4:** Monitor and support implementation of responsive action towards emotionally vulnerable children.

In the second half of 2020 dlalanathi was finally able to reenter Willowfontein which is a new community we have entered and focus on relationship building with an invitation to participate in Play for Communication. This our signature process that gently invites participants to connect with how important play is in the life of their children through remembering their own story of play. Over the past 12 months we have moved through a number of lockdowns as we faced Wave 2 and Wave 3 of the COVID pandemic. During the peaks of these phases we have had to be wise in how we interact with the community in order to keep ourselves safe and those that we serve. This process has been very frustration for staff as it is a constant “stop/start” dance that make. And yet, every time return we find our relationships strong and community members grateful and excited that we have returned.

Despite the upheaval of COVID we have found Willowfontein open and responsive to participating in our processes and a real desire to improve relationship with children. Over the course of the last 12 months we have run 11 Play for Communication workshops with 119 women who have gone on to work with 223 children (either their own children or children in their community). Caregivers/parents have found the Child Protection workshops very helpful as these have been spaces where together they can assess what is safe and not safe for their children and together agreed to how they can improve safety for children as well as engage with very sensitive issues related to child abuse and discloser. Our of these workshops have come a number of cases that have needed immediate referral as caregivers feel more able to take action in order to protect their children.

Trained community members have immediately wanted to create safe spaces for children to play and as a result we have trained 45 women to run holiday programmes and play days with children. These 45 women will become the core groups that we will work with to establish our ABs (Abadaduze Bezengane: Comforters of Children) the name that they call themselves.

We are very excited about our work with vulnerable pregnant moms and Ibhayi Lengane “the baby’s blanket”, our 1<sup>st</sup> 1000 days process. Today we have trained 25 community facilitators with an organization called Thandanani Children’s Foundation and 9 Community Health Care Workers based with the Department of Health and we are supporting their implementation of this process. Our 4 community facilitators are also working with 20 moms in Willowfontein and are working closely with the local Clinic. The Clinic Manager feels that this programme will assist moms to present to the Clinic for pre and postnatal care which will improve outcomes for both mom and baby.

Dlalanathi has continued to provide support to ABs from Mpumuza and Sweetwaters, the previous community that we worked in. During lockdown an organization called “a chance to play” asked us to review and test a socially distanced play programme called “play bubbles”. This process is designed to be participative and uses hoola hoops to designate a safe playing distance between children. Training included santising hoops and all play materials, a regular routine of washing hands before and after play, the use of masks and social distancing. This has made such a

difference to the community as play is able to be coordinating in a way that feels safe and also responds to the needs of children. We have provided materials and food to women who have run 23 “Play Bubbles” (each play bubble runs as a weekly play activity for 9 weeks) with 385 children.

To support play in the home, dlalanathi established relationship with 2 ECD sites and provided ECD packs which children took home that encouraged parents to play with their children and get a better understanding that they as a parent can also participate in their children’s learning. 77 parents took packs home and reached 177 children all together in their homes.

Alongside our usual work we have provided food vouchers and seedlings to very vulnerable households. This is not a usual practice of dlalanathi’s as we don’t want to create an expectation that this is a service that dlalanathi provides or is our core business. But the generosity of donors have enabled us to provide consistent support to 100s of households and seedlings and garden equipment to almost 150 families.



Women received food vouchers that enabled them to shop at a local store and buy what their family most needed.





Families worked together in their gardens, planting seedlings that provided food for not just their family but also for their neighbours. Caregivers shared that their food garden made such a difference to their family emotionally, particularly during the every hard lockdown. Working together, singing together, playing together helped ease the stress of their situations and made them feel that they would get through this hard time.



The doll making kits provided by Uthando Dolls has enabled caregivers to make over 100s of dolls for children in their own homes, and to give to children in their community.



Women map the safe and unsafe spaces in their community, assessing together the practice and places that in their area that put children at risk and agree together what steps they will take to ensure that their children are protected from these things.



Play Days are being run on weekends in the community. Children arrive excited to be together and with adults who are kind and gentle and want to play with them. Parent's share that having a safe place where they can send their children for a few hours makes such a difference as it allows them to attend to personal matters and not worry about how their children are.



The ECD packs got parents and children playing at home. And every pack had a doll for every child and a knitted ball to play with.



Thank you Uthando for your friendship, and for walking closely to us even though far away. We do valued your commitment to our work. When things feel overwhelming in our work, and our lives in general is it is partnership with you that helps us feel steady, called and purposed in our work.