
UTHANDO PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT 2021 - 2022

Our Mission

To create handmade dolls for our partner organisations in KwaZulu Natal, to use in their work with disadvantaged and vulnerable children, to strengthen relationships through play.

To create opportunities for community, shared creativity and purpose for doll makers in Australia and around the world.

Our Partners in KZN

dlalanathi: Works in impoverished rural and remote communities, building capacity through developing communications between carers and their children and teaching the value of play for development.

TREE: Training and Resources in Early Education. Provides high quality child care and early years education; training of workers in these these fields and providing resources in a sustainable way.

Family Literacy Project: Develops literacy skills of adults and children in rural and remote communities.

Lifeline: Provides support and counselling to child victims of physical and sexual abuse.

Sizabantwana: Supports classroom teachers in their work with vulnerable children.

Our Board

Lynne Jones - Chair
Ann Vivers - Secretary
Pat O'Donnell - Treasurer
Lynne Tognolini - Vice-Chair
Robin Hamilton
Karin Maltby
Susan Cromb
Christine Johnson

Members of Uthando Project acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which we meet. We honour the ancestors of yesterday, the custodians of today and those of tomorrow. We recognise their continuing connection to land and waters and how culture is held, nurtured and shared. We pay our respects.

Amidst the natural and man-made disasters creating havoc this year it is a pleasure to be reporting on something so positive as Uthando Project. Our hundreds of doll makers continue to spread joy by creating a special toy for a child they'll probably never meet. This year, at least 4000 children have had something to smile about, thanks to our wonderful knitters and stitchers.

For many, life is not the same as it was three years ago but we are all learning to cope and adapt to the changes we've experienced. Here in Perth, Western Australia we have been extremely lucky to have had an easier COVID journey than most and to have had fewer 'disasters' to cope with and our thoughts go to all our Uthando family who may have been impacted by natural disasters and the economic hardships gripping the world.

Uthando Project is adapting to cope with the rapid increase in the cost of the freight to send our dolls to South Africa. By cutting down on any additional items and focusing on our standard size dolls we are ensuring that as many children as possible receive a doll. We don't know what is around the corner, who does in this life, but the board is working hard to ensure that we practise sound financial management, keeping administration costs to a minimum in order to maximise funds available for shipping costs. Recent news items have been very promising in regard to shipping costs falling so we have all fingers and toes crossed that our next shipment will be no more expensive and hopefully less than the last.

Our partners experience far more difficulties in their day to day lives than we do and we acknowledge the work they do in caring for the communities around them and especially the children who are the future of South Africa.

Thank you all who help in any way - shining sunbeams on special children



Doll Making

Doll making is still keeping many hands and minds busy. The creativity of our doll and toy makers is always a joy to see.

A recent request from Lifeline for some anatomically correct dolls has resulted in the development of some wonderful examples of both male and female dolls. Lifeline are going to be most impressed, I'm sure. These dolls will be useful in counselling sessions with victims of sexual abuse.

Due to increasing costs of shipping the dolls to South Africa, we requested that dolls be kept to our standard size and no larger. In this way we are able to ensure as many children as possible will receive a doll. We have committed to finding homes locally for larger dolls.

In addition to dolls we have been sending small knitted, crocheted or sewn African animals, balls and rattles. Again, more individual children will receive a toy.

Additional bulky items such as play rugs have also been omitted from our shipments to maximise the number of dolls we can send. We'll reassess this situation if and when the shipping costs are reduced.

Groups of volunteers continue making dolls while supporting the social and emotional health of all concerned, ie having fun. The value of this social interaction is immeasurable for our well-being. We share stories, develop bonds of friendship and learn from each other whilst we are interacting in the purposeful, creative activity of doll making. Uthando Project is not just caring for the children who receive the dolls but also caring for those who make them.

Groups still operate in Forrestfield, Sorrento, Hamilton Hill, Mundaring, Gosnells, Kwinana, Bunbury and Albany in WA and in Tasmania. Julie Timewell keeping things going in Victoria and Julie Dodds in the Sydney area.

Group leaders do a wonderful job of not only coordinating the doll making but also assisting with packing dolls and lessening the load for Judith at HQ.

We have many doll makers who are not attached to groups and we would welcome hearing from you. The Uthando team is always available to assist with materials.

Dolls continue to arrive at Forrestfield from around Australia. Unfortunately some arrive anonymously so we are unable to thank the senders. Please include your name in the parcel as we love to be able to acknowledge your contribution.



The variety in Uthando Dolls and the photo that tells how special they are!

Uthando Community Workshops

Covid is still with us and we continue to feel its effects with the number of community workshops still lower than previous years.

Community workshops provide an opportunity for Uthando to promote the project, generate funds, generate more dolls and hopefully recruit more volunteers who will go on to making more dolls. They also provide an opportunity for members of a community to come together and develop relationships whilst learning new skills.

A community workshop for the City of Melville at the Blue Gum Community Centre was held during school holidays and children came along to make dolls which they were then donating to Wheelchairs for Kids. Uthando Project provided the kits and the workshop facilitator. The event was in recognition of the International Day of People with Disability. Thanks to Ann Vivers for organising that workshop.

Robin Hamilton organised a workshop at the Beaufort Street Community Centre, Neighbourhood House in Mt Lawley and Ann again went along to demonstrate doll making to a group of knitters and sewers there.

Iris Whitelock, an Art Therapist and long time friend of Uthando, took dolls into St John of God Hospital. Iris sewed and dressed a doll for a very lonely elderly patient. The woman loved to cuddle the doll and kept it with her on her bed. Iris has placed doll kits and dolls on the Art Therapy trolley.



Promotion and Fundraising

Uthando Project has been promoted again through the Have-a-go day at The Burswood in Perth. A stall at which we displayed our dolls, toys, books, posters and kits generated lots of interest and received some very welcome donations.

Once again a few community fairs have been missing from the calendar but we have managed to have a presence in a few others throughout the year.

Uthando volunteers set up stall at the Mosman Park Men's Shed Market in November and Cannington Craft Fair in June. Bunbury Group had a stall at the Tree Street Art Safari

A variety of items which were specially created for the craft markets such as small dolls with bright clothing, babies' rattles and comfort rugs are among the popular items we are selling.

It's important to point out that we don't sell any of the dolls that have been made for the children in South Africa. Any dolls being sold are with the permission of the doll maker or have been made specially for selling to raise funds.

The Destash Markets have continued to be a way for us to generate funds and also to reduce the fabric stored at Forrestfield. We are fortunate to be the recipients of beautiful fabrics from a variety of sources but sometimes the supply is somewhat overwhelming. The fabrics we can't use are rolled



and bundled and sold at the Destash Market. It's a little like the 'Magic Porridge Pot' - we never empty the shelves! However, we know we have saved many kilos of fabric from ending up in landfill so we are also helping the environment whilst we add to our funds.



Containers for Change is one of our ongoing ways of fundraising. Every little helps and we are grateful to all who have used the Uthando Project Number when dropping off their cans and bottles. (C10555881 in case you'd like to use it)

Our grateful thanks, once again, to Diana O'Kane who opened her lovely home and garden to hold another delicious High Tea to raise funds for Uthando. Diana, along with family and friends worked hard to cater for about 60 guests and raised over \$3200.



Destash Market in Mundaring

A grant of \$5000 from ABEC has allowed us to purchase twelve rolls of the brown fabric we use for doll bodies and this saves valuable funds that can be used for the shipping. We also generate some funds through sales of the fabric to anyone wanting to make brown skinned dolls.

Community Development Grant of \$1000, authorised by MLC East Metropolitan Region, Lorna Harper, was very useful to offset some of our Administration costs.



Uthando Secretary, Ann, set up the Containers for Change account for the project

Social Events

Our annual retreat was again held at the St John of God Retreat Centre in Shoalwater. Approximately 20 doll makers had a fun time sharing ideas and stories in a very relaxing environment. The retreat centre is in a peaceful garden setting, complete with labyrinth for the contemplative. Dolls, doll clothing and toys were

produced amidst the chatter of friends old and new. Jo and Ann both celebrated birthdays in the time we were there.

Our Christmas get-together at Forrestfield is open to all our doll makers and in December 2021 there were 22 friends to share the celebrations. Thanks again to Sharen for ensuring a very festive atmosphere with impressive table decor and Christmas cake.



In February fifteen doll makers visited Albany and caught up with Julie Fletcher and the Albany doll makers as well as taking in the attractions of the area - including the many op-shops. Thanks to Rose Stout for making all the arrangements for the accommodation at Albany Holiday Units.

The photo was taken in the CWA Hall in Albany, where Perth and Albany doll makers spent an enjoyable day making dolls and monkeys.



Another social gathering was held as a busy bee to help put together over 300 sewing kits to be sent to *dlalanathi* for their work in communities.

The photo shows a group of young women using their kits during a *dlalanathi* workshop.

Shipments

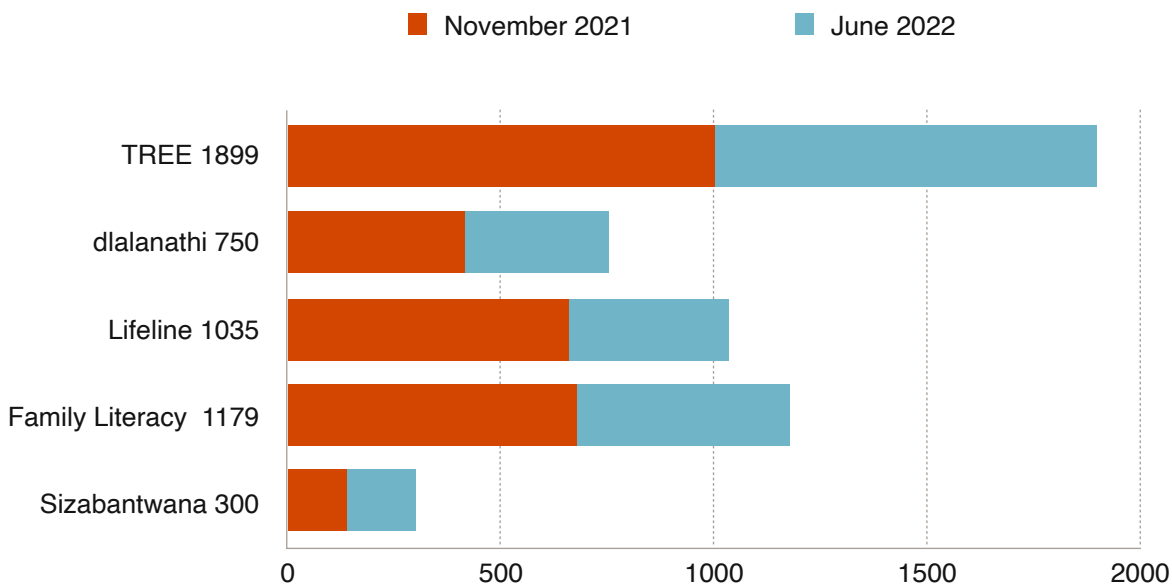
Uthando dolls are carefully packed into large striped bags which are collected from our HQ in Forrestfield by the shipping company. They are then packed onto pallets and into a container bound for Durban.

Given the ongoing problems with shipping around the world, we have been lucky to send two shipments in this reporting period, both without any major glitches other than continuing increases in the freight costs from Perth to Durban.

The Uthando Board made a decision that, to ensure sufficient funds for continuing increases in shipping costs, it would be necessary to limit items sent to South Africa to mainly dolls and toys. In this way we have been able to stabilise the cost and ensure we have sufficient funds to weather the increases in the next year or two.

For each of the last two shipments we paid approximately \$10 000 but the November shipment was a total of 73 bags of dolls and the June shipment was only 62 bags. This is approximately \$136 per bag in November compared to \$164 per bag in June.

Distribution of dolls and toys to our partners in KZN



We are very grateful to TREE for collecting our shipments from the wharf in Durban and assisting in distribution to the other partners.



Thanks once again to members of the Foothills Men's Shed who are a huge help in loading the dolls onto the truck at pick up time.



Packing team under the leadership of Judith

Financial Report

The Uthando Project is extremely grateful to a number of individuals who have generously donated to us throughout the year. They have helped us weather the storm of the rising shipping costs. As mentioned earlier, the shipping costs almost doubled within 18 months. In order for us to protect against further increases we have tried to maintain a healthy bank balance that could carry us into at least 2 further shipments.

Funds trickle in constantly from our various groups and fundraising events and we thank the group leaders who assist in finding ways for their groups to help fundraise.

The graphs below give an overview of our Income and Expenditure.

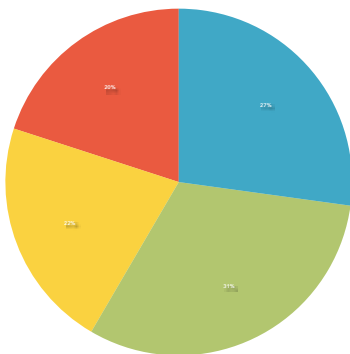
On the **Income** side Miscellaneous Sales includes any items we sell through markets, and online. It also covers sales of kits and fabric.

DGR - (Deductible Gift Recipient) - these donations have been receipted for tax purposes

On the **Expenditure** side, Administration costs include PO Box rental, PayPal fees, Website, Printing and Stationery as well as any costs associated with kit making. Insurance is our Public Liability and Volunteers Personal Accident Insurance.

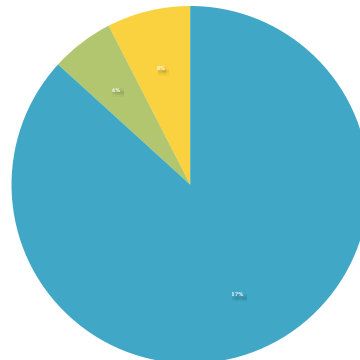
Income

- Donations DGR
- Donations non DGR
- Miscellaneous sales
- Grants



Expenditure

- Freight
- Administration
- Insurance



Uthando Sponsors

We thank the following individuals and organisations and businesses who assist in reducing our costs in a variety of ways:

City of Kalamunda for use of Anderson Road Community Centre as our HQ

Mosman park Men's Shed and **Perth Hills Events** for free space at their markets

Gabrielle Doyle, Principal of Our Lady of Grace School for use of their hall by Sorrento Group.

Ford and Doonan for provision of stuffing

Members of **The Foothills Men's Shed** for their help on shipping days.

Dave Gillam, **Mustang Print**, Joondalup for assistance with printing costs.

Ian MacCallum for auditing our books

(I apologise if I have missed out anyone else)

Uthando Volunteers

We don't really know how many people around Australia, even the world, are involved in making dolls as part of the Uthando Project. Every single one is valued and appreciated. There are some doll makers who produce phenomenal numbers of dolls or toys and others who might produce one or two each year. They are all very special and we welcome them to Uthando, whatever their contribution.

There are many additional jobs within the organisation that have to be undertaken by volunteers and they keep the wheels rolling.

The Friday volunteers at Forrestfield, Jo, Isabella, Anne B, Di B and Lynne T work on fixing dolls that might need a stitch or two; they sort out deliveries of donated items, cut up fabric and other items to go into the kits and receive dolls that arrive for shipping.

Di Cunningham, assisted by husband, Ken, puts together hundreds of kits for selling. Pauline Marlborough continues to cut out thousands of doll bodies

Judith Allen and the Monday volunteers at Forrestfield sort all the items for shipping and pack them into the bags for the partners in South Africa. Judith liaises with the freight company to complete all the paperwork for the shipments.

Sharen Smith continues to streamline the space at Forrestfield and sets up our Craft and Destash market stalls.

Jo Loader collects and sends mail on our behalf. Group leaders keep their group members in doll making supplies and cups of tea. They are all very special: Doris in Hamilton Hill, Carolyn in Bunbury, Gerry in Kwinana, Wendy in Mundaring, Mary in Mindarie, Marlene in Gosnells, Robin and Ann in Sorrento, Julie F in Albany, Julie T in Victoria and Julie D in Sydney. Special thanks to Judy Gadd who organised many doll makers in Queensland but has recently 'retired'.

Members of the Board give their time for meetings and other tasks that help keep us on track and working as effectively and efficiently as we can.

Special thanks to Pat O'Donnell, Treasurer, for keeping our finances in order and to Ann Vivers for her Secretarial duties and ensuring that we operate according to the rules governing charities.

Special thanks

This year Irene Swan, who has been a part of Uthando from the start, has retired from her coordinator's role in Tasmania. Irene has been an extremely dedicated group leader who has worked tirelessly to connect people in various communities in Tasmania through doll making. Irene was instrumental in running workshops in Perth before moving to Tasmania. We look forward to seeing Irene's exceptional dolls now she will have more time to make her own dolls and thank Ann Crocombe for taking over the leadership in Tasmania.



Uthando in Schools

COVID has had a long lasting effect on our work in schools with fewer workshops involving Uthando facilitators. Some schools are continuing to make dolls and occasionally new schools will purchase kits to include doll making in their curriculum.

Santa Maria College continued their workshops with Pauline Marlborough and Doris Van Keulen working with a group of students during 2 terms, ensuring the quality of the dolls produced was up to the required standard for Uthando.

Thanks to the following schools that have contributed to our project this year,
Our Lady of the Cape, Dunsborough,
Harrisdale Senior High School
Greenwood College
Swan Christian College,
Santa Maria College
Iona Presentation College



Family Literacy staff (above) and children reading with their dolls and dressing them during a lesson on The Weather.

