

UTHANDO PROJECT

ANNUAL REPORT 2024 - 2025

Our Mission

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

To create opportunities for communities for shared creativity and purpose in doll making 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 workers in 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
Lynne Tognolini Vice Chair
Ann Vivers Secretary
Pat O'Donnell Treasurer
Robin Hamilton
Karin Maltby
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.



Our latest shipment has just arrived in South Africa, bringing joy and delight to all those opening the bags and setting about their work with the children who will soon be playing with the thousands of dolls and toys from Uthando

What a privilege to be involved in this process, bringing something positive to people whose lives often lack the basic needs that we, so easily, take for granted.

The call for dolls to weave their magic continues to grow. South Africa now faces a rise in HIV/AIDS cases due to US cuts to foreign aid and particularly the provision of ART medications. This, added to already widespread poverty, crime and corruption, does not bode well for the population of children we care about.

It is a pleasure to see the reports from our partners, who work so hard to improve the lives and potential of the children in KZN and to see how well the Uthando dolls are received

We are so lucky to live in a stable democracy, with a standard of living that must be one of the best in the world, but we should never forget that other countries don't share such fortune and we need to help, wherever we can, to bring about positive change, especially to the lives of children.

Thank you for all you do.

Please keep making those dolls and supporting Uthando.

DOLLMAKING

Almost 5000 dolls have been sent in our last two shipments, along with hundreds of balls, puppets and small animals. Doll makers continue to develop their skills, try new ideas and share their creativity.



Forrestfield group has benefit from new member Sharon's use of her embroidery machine to produce doll skins with embroidered faces, ready for the Friday group to stuff and dress. The group is now very small so Sharon's dolls have been a great help for the group to produce a large number of dolls. We receive many donations of lovely dolls clothes and these are very useful for these dolls.

Julie Dodds in NSW has recruited knitters and crocheters who are adding clothing to the dolls produced by Julie and her various workshop participants. Shipping from NSW is obviously expensive but people visiting Sydney are being asked to assist in bringing dolls from Julie when returning to Perth. Julie has also produced a pride of very handsome lions.

In order to help produce more dolls, we have been holding monthly Sewing Sundays at Forrestfield. These have been well attended and have resulted in lots of simple dolls and Onesie dolls as well as zebras, giraffes and elephants to help us provide items for one of the additional organisations asking for our dolls.



Numerous individuals regularly send or deliver their dolls and toys to Forrestfield. Ann Jeffries' solo efforts have now produced over 1300 dolls for Uthando. Special mention also for Lynn Fisher who has made 6664 dolls in the past 10 years. What an achievement! Like all doll makers, Lynn feels the wonderful personal satisfaction from thinking of the children playing with her dolls.

A number of dolls are now being produced by some of the participants in a Women's Social Group being held monthly at Mosman Park Tennis Club. The group was formed by Uthando as a social group and, following a talk about

Uthando, many of the women began to make dolls and dolls clothes or assist in some other way.



Following a request from Lifeline for possible toys for boys who might not respond well to having a doll, much thought has gone into items we could make for them. With the help of the Curtin Volunteers we have produced TicTacToe games with two sided felt discs to represent the noughts and crosses and Hamilton Hill group has been sewing sets of 3 small bean bags or Hacky Sacks packed into a small cloth bag. Uthando volunteers are as creative, thoughtful and resourceful as ever.

We are in the process of making floor mats incorporating Snakes and Ladders games to be sent for child-friendly rooms in 32 Police stations across one area of the Lifeline network, where children are interviewed following allegations of abuse. Thanks to Diana O’Kane for the prototype and Sharon Larkan for the embroidery work and finishing of the mats, the squares for which had been put together by the I Spy Quilters in Fremantle.



Lifeline also requested dolls with genitalia, to be used when talking with children who have suffered sexual abuse. A special thank you to the talented ladies who produced these dolls, especially Judith Allen and Lynne Tognolini, who made 32 girls and 32 boys.

Our regular WA groups - Hamilton Hill, Bunbury, Mundaring, Sorrento, Mindarie, Gosnells/Bentley and Kwinana continue to produce their beautiful dolls, toys and balls. We recognise the dedication and commitment of the leaders of these groups who keep their group members connected and well resourced.

The group of doll makers in Cygnet, Tasmania, continues to produce dolls that travel to South Africa via Forrestfield. The group is now ably led by Jeannie Schultz who has taken on the role of coordinator on the retirement of Irene Gill.

Dolls and doll clothing made by numerous individuals continue to arrive in Forrestfield from other parts of Australia. Thank you to those of you who continue to give your time and creativity to Uthando, even though we don’t get to meet you, we know you’re out there.

UTHANDO IN SCHOOLS

A few schools continue to make dolls each year and these dolls are sent to schools in KwaZulu Natal through Sizabantwana, a teachers' support group. Schools that have made dolls this year include,

Iona College
Greenwood College
Kennedy Baptist College
Our Lady of Cape
Mel Maria Primary School
Cygnet Primary School



Rossmoyne SHS students make dolls in a textiles class under the guidance of our Uthando volunteer Sharen Smith.

A group of students at Mel Maria Primary School made dolls as part of their after school programme and our volunteers Pauline Marlborough and Doris van Keulen have facilitated this activity. A former student who had made dolls previously with Pauline and Doris, came along to assist and made a little passport for each of the dolls.



UTHANDO PROMOTION AND FUNDRAISING

In November, Uthando had a stall at the Destash Market held at the Woodlupine Community Centre in Forrestfield. We were able to promote the project in the local area of our headquarters and hope to gain members for the Friday group at Forrestfield.

Uthando had a stall at the Mundaring Artisans Market, selling dolls and toys.

Also in November we were invited to give a talk on Uthando to the U3A at the State Library, Perth. The presentation generated much discussion on the plight of children in South Africa.

Sorrento group has been very busy in their local communities



- In October they put on a display of dolls and dress a doll activity at the Henderson Centre
- In June they gave a presentation on Uthando to members of Feltwest, resulting in some Feltwest members making dolls and the organisation choosing Uthando as their charity for this year. We look forward to more dolls.
- A Sorrento volunteer has given a presentation on Uthando at Mercy Retirement Village, Wembley.
- Sorrento members promoted Uthando during a festival in Toodyay
- Various workshops were facilitated at Sudbury House Community Centre, including a dress a doll session for an Early Childhood Group and doll making workshop for one of the Friendship Groups.

UTHANDO COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS



The Sunday workshops at Forrestfield have become a regular monthly fixture to the Uthando calendar. Between 10 and 16 people usually attend and work through sewing Onesie dolls, simple dolls, African animals and toys as well as the pouches and bags for the sewing kits. These workshops provide a social get together as well as a productive few hours of sewing. Thank you to all who come along and make things happen and a special thank you to the new faces.

The Sunday sessions provide an opportunity for people who work during the week to come along and be part of the social side of Uthando.

Pauline Groom, longtime member of the Sorrento group, as well as being a talented member of the WA Doll Makers, held a doll making session in her home with the challenge being to produce 70 dolls for Uthando.

Margaret Sutton, who generously provided pieces of her textile art for our 20th Birthday Exhibition last year, has been promoting Uthando through her church group and is in the process of producing a set of 40 beautiful sewing cases for women working with *dlalanathi*.



UTHANDO VOLUNTEERS

This year we have been fortunate in linking with Curtin University Volunteers. The volunteers meet regularly on campus and they have been helping Uthando by preparing items that go into our sewing kits. Having committed to sending 700 kits each year, we have quite a few components to be organised, eg button and bead packs, felt pieces for faces, cutting elastic to length The student volunteers and their coordinator, Norma, have whizzed through these tasks and kept up our supplies.



More recently the Curtin Volunteers have been helping cut out some of our Onesie dolls

In addition, the volunteers have been out to Forrestfield, assisted by driver, Allison, to help Judith, to assemble the kits and prepare them for shipment. With this assistance we are well on our way to the 350 kits for *dlalanathi* in our next shipment.

The Uthando Project has always run on volunteer energy and enthusiasm. It is always a privilege to welcome people to ARCC, our headquarters, when they arrive to deliver bags of beautifully crafted items they have made themselves or with the help of their craft/knitting group. Recent deliveries have arrived from a Knitters and Natters group and Rosstrata Craft group. These groups are not Uthando groups but they contribute on a regular basis and help increase our donations to KZN.



FINANCIAL REPORT

The graphs below give an indication of where our funds come from and how they are expended.

The Uthando network is a web of generosity with donations being made continually whether in the form of donations by group members at their meetings, regular direct debit donations, one-off donations or annual donations as well as donations by friends, families and community members.

This year, thanks to Robin, Board member and Sorrento group leader, we have been fortunate in receiving a grant from Sudbury House to cover the cost of 12 more rolls of fabric. In part exchange for the funds, members agreed to facilitate workshops at Sudbury House which contribute to the community but also possibly generate more doll makers.

It has been a quieter year for large fundraising events but we have still been in a position to send a total of \$10 000.00 to our partners in South Africa.

Through this donation,

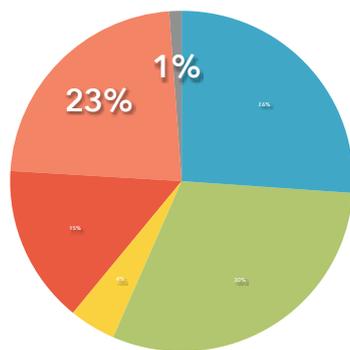
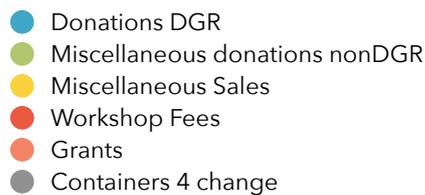
- *dlalanathi* was able to print a children's story book, used in trauma groups for children.
- Lifeline purchased therapy toys for their counselling rooms.
- TREE and Family Literacy were able to purchase additional resources for their programmes.

Uthando has a Containers for Change ID which continues to add to our funds.

Destash and Artisan markets add to the general sales of dolls, books, kits etc. throughout the year.

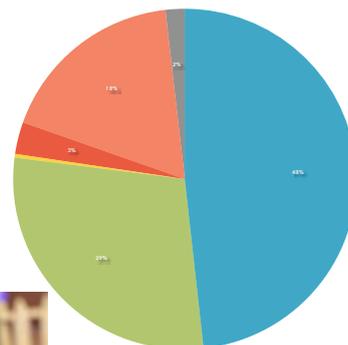
Donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

INCOME



EXPENDITURE

(Administration costs include website management)



A priceless smile



UTHANDO SHIPMENTS

Having sent a shipment in July, 2024, one other shipment was sent in February 2025. Shipping costs dropped slightly and the cost per bag was around \$130.

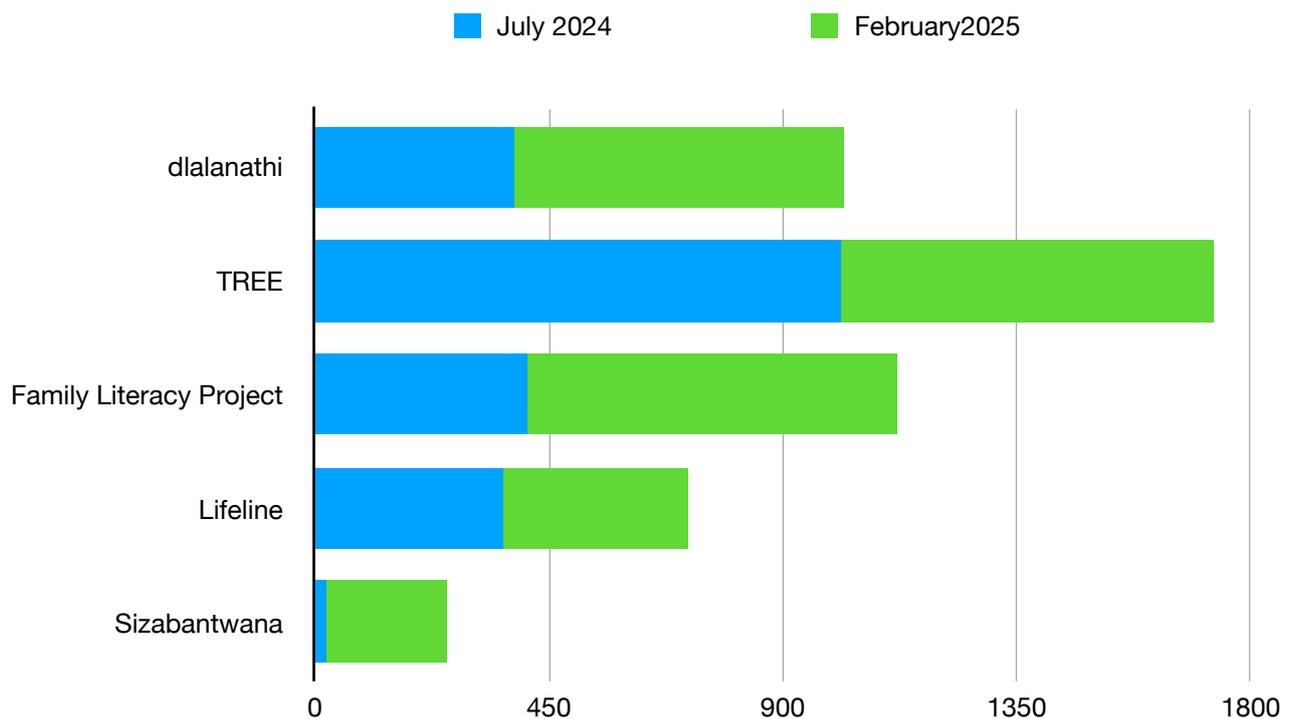
In the last shipment, in addition to 2,647 dolls, we sent 17 sets of puppets, 50 single puppets, 198 animals and 617 balls.

325 sewing kits were sent to *dlalanathi*.

Monday afternoons are still used by Judith Allen to sort and pack dolls into 115L bags, carefully counting the contents and preparing labels for the various partners in South Africa. Judith can always find a task for volunteers who drop by. Dealing with 60 - 90 bags is a mammoth task. The room at Forrestfield shrinks as the dolls arrive and are packed with all their accessories.

Judith takes care of the paperwork required by the shipping company and organises for the pick up day, when we are very grateful for the assistance of the volunteers from Foothills Men's Shed, who provide the muscle to load the bags onto the truck.

Figures for the last two shipments



SPECIAL EVENTS

In February, fellow Board member Robin Hamilton and I were lucky enough to be able to travel to Tasmania to visit the wonderful group of doll makers in Cygnet. We were very impressed by the number of people involved in the group, some of whom travel from Hobart. Irene, who was the coordinator at the time, drove at least an hour each way to Cygnet from her rural property. In addition to the Cygnet group we met a local primary school teacher and some of her students who make dolls.

A very special acknowledgement here of the many years Irene has given to Uthando, initially in Perth and for the past ???? years in Tasmania. On moving to Tasmania, Irene developed the very productive group which is based in Cygnet but has a network scattered around Tasmania. Irene has stepped back this year and Jeannie Schultz is now leading the group, though Irene, an extremely talented doll maker, still attends group meetings and makes dolls for Uthando as well as other programmes in Asia and Africa.



Another successful retreat at the St John of God Retreat Centre in Shoalwater in November was attended by 20 women. The retreat provides a space and environment for us to gather in doll making and friendship, sharing stories and laughter, resources and ideas.



Christmas 2024 end of year event was a much lower key at Forrestfield but still a time for us to catch up with some doll makers from other groups



SPECIAL THANKS

The Uthando Project is a network of wonderful people who make dolls and toys, coordinate events, coordinate groups, collect and deliver materials and dolls, prepare materials for kits, sort fabrics, coordinate groups the list goes on. To all of you go special thanks, for the care and love you show for vulnerable children.

To all our wonderful donors, your contributions, small and large, are very much appreciated.

Extra special thanks to:

Judith Allen, for all the hours she gives to preparing the shipments and attending Anderson Road on Mondays

Pauline Marlborough, who continues to cut out thousands of doll skins each year.

The doll making groups are such a special aspect of Uthando. They provide an opportunity for friendship, fun and laughter as well as making dolls. The generous women who open their homes/community space to these groups are very special people.

Group	Leader
Tasmania	Jeannie
Sorrento	Robin and Ann
Hamilton Hill	Doris
Kwinana	Gerry
Bunbury	Carolyn and Janet
Mindarie	Mary
Mundaring	Wendy



Gosnells/Bentley Marlene and Gay

Victoria Julie Timewell continues to knit and sew

NSW Julie Dodds leads a network of doll makers

The Uthando Project couldn't function as a charity without the services of the Board Members. Every board member gives of their time and energy to keep us operating within the rules and regulations laid down for charities. Ann, as Secretary and Pat, as Treasurer take on the extra duties that safeguard our operations.



Thank you to the following individuals or organisations for their support:

City of Kalamunda for the use of the space at Anderson Road, Forrestfield.

Ian MacCallum for auditing services

Perth Hills Events for provision of market stalls

Sudbury House Community Centre for the grant which allowed us to purchase the brown fabric we use for the doll skins

Zoe Vivers for her time and expertise in updating our website.

Ken Cunningham for winding hundreds of thread cards for our sewing kits



Uthando dolls can talk, walk, sing, dance and play. They can listen and understand. They teach and they learn. They are a friend and a comfort.

Thanks to all that our wonderful contributors provide, thousands of children, who might never own one otherwise, get to experience the magic of a doll.

Uthando dolls seem to improve with age and the quality of dolls and clothing we receive is stunning.

Please keep up your support so that the joy continues to spread.



