Masikhule, a registered Non-Profit (NPO) and Public Benefit Organisation (PBO), was founded in the Helderberg area in 2005 and offers a wide variety of services in ECD to not only enable ECD educators to effectively stimulate and nurture preschool children in their communities, but to also provide opportunities for job creation and employment.

Message from the Founding Director

Living in South Africa certainly provides ample challenges and with these, opportunities to be creative, adaptable, resilient, courageous and generous in our responses. We continue to learn and be inspired by the women in the communities we serve and feel deep gratitude for all those who believe in and support the work we do – no matter how big or small. Ubuntu, meaning ‘I am because we are’, is a distinctive South African quality that includes the essential human virtues of compassion and humanity, social unity and generosity of spirit. What a privilege it is to be part of breaking barriers and building relationships.

The foundation of our work is built on our values statement which states that we embody integrity, honesty, trust, respect, inclusivity, empathy and positivity to ensure that through partnerships, true empowerment can take place. We remain steadfast in our mission to train and develop educators and caregivers to ensure that all children living in marginalised communities of the Helderberg area and beyond are cared for at Early Childhood Development Centres that provide a holistic child development and stimulation program, so that these children may enter formal schooling with a solid foundation of knowledge, maturity and independence.

Thank you to all of our donors, partners, volunteers and supporters for sharing these ideals with the Masikhule team and our deserving beneficiaries. Our gratitude also goes to the ECD principals and educators who show commitment, courage, fortitude, love and concern for the vulnerable children placed in their daily care. You are the true heroes.

Léanne Keet

Masikhule is dedicated to the upliftment and transformation of marginalised communities through education, upskilling and empowering women and young children through Early Childhood Development (ECD).
Masikhule offers 5 main pillars of service to the community:

1. Training in ECD
   The need for practical, relevant and accessible training continues. With the calibre of educators entering the ECD sphere improving, we embarked on a project this year to upgrade and refine our training content and material. We however remain conscious of the need to ensure learning and stimulation is creative and cost-effective, using mostly waste material.

   Our training includes Basic Educator Training in ECD (5 modules); Advanced ECD Training (7 modules); Baby and Toddler – First 1000 Days (5 modules); Best Nutrition for ECD cooks (5 modules); Business Management for Principals (8 modules) and Teaching Enrichment Workshops (11 modules).

   All of our training is accompanied by mentorship and support visits to ensure successful implementation and to offer the opportunity for further on-site training. We also provide training manuals and, in most of the courses, Resource Kits for the ECD Centres’ implementation of the training.

   ECD Training: Total 180

   Monitoring and Evaluation of Training:
   It is important for us to monitor and evaluate, not only to ensure the consistent and successful implementation of course material, but also for us to make sure our training maintains its standard of excellence.

   Results following our Advanced ECD Course for example, show that the skills and knowledge that the educators gained after attending the Basic Educator Training course were still evident, and the new knowledge and skills acquired during the Advanced Course enhanced the depth of their skill and implementation – as well as their confidence as educators.
2. Mentorship of ECD educators and Centres:
Over 50 community-based Early Learning Centres received mentorship visits after receiving training, thus gaining the necessary support and guidance with a goal to them becoming confidently independent centres of learning. The aims of mentorship include:

- to offer further guidance and in-service training to ensure ECD Programme implementation
- to ensure that resources were being used optimally
- to provide an opportunity for further collaboration and communication between Masikhule and our beneficiaries, so that course material and content remain relevant, practical, accessible and useful.

3. Early Intervention
Our Early Intervention pillar, which involves Teaching Enrichment Workshops, mentoring and support; the monitoring of 100 x four to five year olds; group Occupational Therapy and access to educational material through our Early Learning Resource Library, has been profoundly successful.
Masikhule initially screened 100 children in March 2019. The purpose of this screening assessment was to gain as much information as possible about the holistic development of the children in marginalised communities between the age of 4 and 5, which can be considered as a vital age developmentally before the big leap into Grade R. The results were disturbing.

Results found: 76% of children in this sample group experienced delays in the essential areas of development, with only 24% of children showing competent development according to age group. It was evident that the main problem areas were consistent among all the children screened and so we embarked on a series of intervention strategies to address the challenges the children were facing. These included:

- Teaching Enrichment Workshops (facilitated by an Occupational Therapist) for 20 senior educators
- Monthly mentoring of these educators in their classes by an OT
- Specialized educational games and resources, including activity ideas and creative activities using mostly waste materials
- Access to our Early Learning Resource Library for more educational games, toys, books and teaching aids
- Group Occupational therapy to address the main concerns, with further on-site training of the educators.
Results of Re-Screening in October/November 2019:
The results showed an almost total reversal - only 22% of the children tested in October/November showed delays, with 78% of children showing developmental competencies according to their age group.

With such positive and affirming results, we will not only be continuing with this Early Intervention program in 2020/21 but will expand our reach to ensure more educators and more children benefit from this intervention.

4. Early Nutrition
13 ECD cooks attended our Best Nutrition training which concentrates on nutritious menu planning, budgeting, portioning and healthy food preparation methods. With the ECD cooks realizing how important they are in the development of the children (and receiving affirmation of this), they happily reported positive results such as significant savings (with savings being used for infrastructure and other resource development) and improved behaviour of the children, especially their level of concentration. What is very positive is that children at these centres showed no growth/nutritional stunting when assessed by a dietitian following this training being implemented.

Besides the training, through our partnership with Joint Aid Management (JAM) and The Lunchbox Fund, we have been able to feed over 2 000 children from 48 ECD Centres with daily nutritious meals. This is significant in ensuring that the children, during these formative growth years, receive the nutrition they need to thrive. Thank you to our partners for making this possible!

Over 2000 young children from 48 Centres being fed daily
5. **ECD Resources**

Our Early Learning Resource Library continues to be a valuable source of educational games, equipment, teaching aids and books. Educators, who have access to the Library twice a week, can also collect theme bags which include theme lesson plans, theme table items, activity ideas, books and games related to the themes. Due to the increase in membership numbers and thus increased needs, we had to purchase extra educational items – items in the library increased by 33% during the 2019/2020 book year. [Our immense gratitude to DGMT for making this, as well the Early Intervention programme, possible].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March 2018-Feb 2019</th>
<th>March 2019-Feb 2020</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Library members</td>
<td>(Feb 2019) 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits to library</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme bags issued</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Items issued</td>
<td>3900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Other ECD Resource Upgrades and donations:**

We have many generous donors who have committed funds to the upgrading of ECDs in terms of infrastructure and the capacitating of the educators through training, mentorship and resources. Thank you for all donations – big and small – for making sure learning spaces are areas of fun, nurturing and safety.

Special thanks to the following donors for contributions they have made to ECD infrastructure upgrades:

◊ Golden Sunbeams ◈ Gerda Jung, Rotary eClub Hamburg-Connect & Supporting Friends ◈ CheAfrica ◈ JAM SA
Other Projects:

A. Partial Care Facility (PCF) Registration
In partnership with the Department of Social Development, Masikhule has been tasked with the auditing and registration of all PCFs within the geographical areas of Somerset West, Sir Lowry’s Pass and Chris Nissan Park. This has been a time of great learning for our team with positive outcomes in terms of not only the registration of Centres, but the positive collaboration and communication between communities. An ECD Hub in this area has been established by Masikhule to encourage further engagement, sharing and interest.

B. Masikhule Curriculum
In 2019 we embarked on an ambitious project to develop a curriculum for 2 to 5 year olds that is relevant for South African children. We were constantly made aware of a need for relevant, practical, accessible, developmentally appropriate and stimulating curriculum material. Through the combined knowledge and expertise of 2 occupational therapists and an experienced preschool educator, amongst other team members, this project is well on its way to providing incredible support to ECD Centres in the community.

Thank you in particular to the Belgian-based Kiewiftonds and Simon Farr in the UK for sponsoring this project for 3 years.

Fundraising and marketing:
Once again we had a great year with regards to donations and fundraising, allowing us to not only continue with our work, but to expand our offering and introduce additional training and resources. For this we are immensely grateful.

Highlighting our fundraising and collection events for the year:

Cast on 4 Kids was a wonderful event, as it is every year on Mandela Day. Our special thanks to Erinvale Hotel as well as to the various groups and individuals who supported us with heaps of beanies, blankets, beanbags and books that were distributed to children in the Early Learning Centres that we mentor.

Get Me to 21 - an inspiring morning with Gabi Lowe in August as she shared her personal story about her epic battle to save her daughter Jenna’s life. Thank you to everyone who contributed, attended and was involved in making this beautiful event such a success.

Each year the special teams at Santa Shoebox Project and Shoeboxes of Love collect personalised gifts of essential items and treats for underprivileged children. We are immensely grateful for these wonderful initiatives and to each person who pledged.

Thanks to Helderberg Sunrise Rotary Club for including us in their annual Wines2Whales vehicle transport in October/November. A total of 44 trips were made!

Balwin Charity Hat Walk was held in November and great fun was had by all. 11 local charities receiving a generous R50 000 each! Thank you to Balwin Properties and their staff, as well as everyone who supported this fun walk.

Ongoing funds received from MySchool card holders and people purchasing our Relate Bracelets are really appreciated. Thank you also to everyone who purchases our Wonderbags and our unique and creative calendars each year – YOU make a difference!
Financial Matters

Despite a challenging economy and thanks to funding received from a wide range of local and international sources - corporate, organisations, companies, trusts, individuals and our own fundraising efforts - we have managed to not only continue with our core business of training and mentorship, but to extend our services according to the needs of the community. [Note: the loss showed was as a result of funds received for specific project in the previous financial, but spent in this financial year.]

Income March 2019 – February 2020:  R1 859 374

Expenses March 2019 - February 2020: R 2 134 582

Our constant thanks to our monthly donors - we value you more than you know! Also to all the companies, individuals and organisations who have donated financially, with resources and with support - we are truly grateful, as are our beneficiaries.
Staff Matters

We welcomed Erika Kruger to our Advisory Board in August 2019. Our core team consists of Léanne Keet, Karen Bufé, Coreen Vlok, Jeanine Andro, Sandy Immelman, Rachille Morison, Anjo du Preez and Amanda Bangani. All managing specific projects within the scope of Masikhule’s vast offerings. We are also blessed with many volunteers and professionals who give so freely of their time and expertise. Our Advisory Board members Dr Garth Japhet, Dr Nadia Kamies, Greet de Wulf and Erika Kruger add value and grounding to what we do – thank you.

“The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team.”