



Sandisa iFuthe – Expanding our Impact



ANNUAL REPORT
2025 | **2026**



Contents

Chairman's Report	1
The Starting Chance Inclusive Training Centre	2
Welcome to Sakha Ithemba	4
The Starting Chance School Network Map	6
The Starting Chance School Network in Numbers	7
Board of Trustees	8
Shack to Chic	9
Training and Development	12
Assessments	16
Ready for School	19
Tech Savvy	22
Friends of Starting Chance	24
Highlights	26
Financial Report	28
Partners and Donors	30



Chairman's Report
Sandisa iFuthe – Expanding Our Impact

This year's theme, *Sandisa iFuthe – Expanding Our Impact*, reflects both our achievements over the past year and our vision for the future.

For the past 16 years, we have worked alongside children, families, practitioners and principals to improve the quality of Early Childhood Development in an underserved low-income community. Throughout this journey, one lesson has remained constant: meaningful and sustainable impact is achieved by going deep before reaching wide.

Mfuleni has been our classroom, where we have developed a blueprint for systemic improvement in early childhood development.

Established 50 years ago and now one of the fastest-growing communities in the Cape Town Metro, Mfuleni presents both significant challenges and extraordinary opportunities. It reflects the future of an urbanising Africa, where increasing numbers of young children require access to quality early learning, care and support.

By working deeply within this community, we have learnt what works, refined our approach and built a model capable of embedding lasting change. In the process, we have moved from concept through implementation, creating a strong record of impact.

Since 2009, Starting Chance has evolved from supporting five schools to working alongside 47 schools, approximately 50% of ECDs in the community, reaching more than 2 600 children and 179 practitioners. Yet our ambition extends far beyond these numbers.

As we developed our Starting Chance 2030 Vision, it became clear that our greatest opportunity lies not only in continuing to support children directly, but in sharing the knowledge, systems and expertise we have developed over many years of community work.

For this reason, the opening of the Starting Chance Inclusive Training Centre represents one of the most significant milestones in our history.

The Centre is far more than a building. It is a platform for growing inclusive impact.

It is a place where principals, practitioners, parents, specialists and community members can learn together; where good practice can be demonstrated, new ideas tested and inclusive approaches strengthened. Most importantly, it is a place where the lessons learned in Mfuleni can be shared with communities far beyond its borders.

Through accredited training programmes, demonstration classrooms, practitioner coaching and mentoring, parent support initiatives and specialist inclusion programmes, the Centre will enable us to multiply our impact while maintaining the quality and community-centred approach that has defined Starting Chance from the beginning.

This next phase of growth is already underway.

Alongside the opening of the Inclusive Training Centre, we have expanded our training programmes into the Cape Metro and Langeberg Municipality. We are preparing for our first rural satellite office in Robertson and Ashton and are strengthening partnerships that will allow us to reach many more children, families and practitioners in the years ahead.

Inclusion remains at the heart of this vision.

Every child deserves a starting chance, regardless of ability or circumstance. Through the continued development of Tangram Academy and the introduction of Rehabilitation Fieldworkers, we are building pathways for earlier diagnosis, rehabilitation intervention and support for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Foetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) and other developmental challenges. Our goal is simple: to ensure that no child is left behind.

As you read this report, you will see evidence of what is possible when communities, practitioners, principals, parents, donors and partners work together around a shared vision.

The achievements described in these pages are the result of many hands, generous hearts and a belief that every child deserves the opportunity to have a fair start and to thrive.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who has walked this journey with us.

The next chapter of Starting Chance is about expanding impact, not only by reaching more children ourselves, but by equipping more people to change children's lives.

With your partnership and support, we can continue building stronger communities, more capable practitioners, more confident parents and brighter futures for thousands more children.

Because when we invest in the adults around a child, we multiply the opportunities available to that child.

And when we multiply opportunity, we dramatically expand impact and change futures for good.



Dr Ian Corbett
CHAIRMAN



The Starting Chance Inclusive Training Centre

Expanding Impact Through Inclusion, Learning and Leadership

Sandisa iFuthe – expanding our impact

For 16 years, the team at Starting Chance has worked alongside children, families, practitioners and principals in Mfuleni. During this time, we have learned valuable lessons about what helps children thrive and which barriers prevent them from reaching their full potential.

We have witnessed the consequences of exclusion: children unable to access support, parents struggling to find guidance, practitioners lacking opportunities for professional development and principals carrying enormous responsibility with limited access to knowledge and expertise.

The Starting Chance Inclusive Training Centre is a purpose-designed facility enabling us to respond to these challenges.

More than a building, it is a place where knowledge, opportunity and support come together. It is a space where children, families, practitioners, principals and community members can learn from one another, access expertise and build a more inclusive future.

The Centre represents an important milestone in the evolution of Starting Chance – from direct service delivery towards creating systems, skills and leadership that can multiply impact across communities.



A centre designed for learning

The Inclusive Training Centre has been purposefully designed to support practical skills transfer through training and demonstration. It is also a centre to enable collaboration and community engagement.

Key facilities include:

- A large multi-purpose hall for workshops, indoor sport, community events and conferences.
- A shared demonstration classroom with a one-way observation mirror, allowing practitioners, principals and students to observe best-practice teaching in action.
- Breakaway meeting rooms for mentoring, coaching and small-group learning.
- Catering facilities that enable full-day training programmes and community events.

A team to drive the centre

Under the leadership of Bulelani Futshane, the Starting Chance Inclusive Training Centre will be driven by a team that is passionate, committed, and deeply dedicated to creating lasting change in Early Childhood Development. Bulelani brings over 20 years of experience in community mobilisation and development, having served with distinction in several leading NGOs across South Africa. His strategic leadership, combined with the expertise of the Starting Chance Fieldworker team, represents more than 50 years of collective experience in the Early Childhood Development sector.

This wealth of knowledge has been built through years of working directly with children, families, practitioners, and principals in Mfuleni and surrounding communities. Their practical, community-based experience will be at the heart of the Centre's work, ensuring that its training, mentoring, and support programmes remain responsive to the realities and needs of ECD centres.

With this experienced team at its foundation, the Starting Chance Inclusive Training Centre will be more than a place of learning. It will be a centre of excellence where lived experience, innovation, and community knowledge come together to strengthen inclusive

practice, develop confident leaders, and create lasting impact for children, families, and communities.



A centre designed to multiply impact

Through the Inclusive Training Centre, Starting Chance will be able to expand its reach far beyond the schools it directly supports.

The annual programme will include:

- ✓ C.A.L.M. training courses for practitioners working with children from birth to five years.
- ✓ Bridging the CAPS (BTC) courses for Grade R practitioners.
- ✓ Demonstration Days showcasing best practice in literacy, numeracy, music, outdoor learning, storytelling and play.
- ✓ Parent support programmes and workshops.
- ✓ Inclusive education and special needs workshops for parents, practitioners and community members.
- ✓ Mums and Tots mornings that promote early learning and parent-child interaction.
- ✓ Community events and support programmes designed to ensure people with disabilities feel welcomed, included and valued.

Building inclusion into the future

One of the Centre's most important roles will be supporting Starting Chance's growing commitment to inclusion.

The Centre will provide a platform for specialist workshops, practitioner development, parent support and the expansion of services linked to Tangram Academy and children with intellectual and cognitive developmental challenges from Lonwabo Special Needs School.

The Starting Chance Inclusive Training Centre shares facilities with the Sakha Ithemba ECD Centre. This enables us to bring together Tangram Academy (autistic children) and Lonwabo Special Needs Centre's educators, specialists, families and community leaders. We aim to improve early diagnosis, strengthen referral pathways and ensure that more children (and their families) receive the support they need during the critical early years of development.

Why this matters

- Every practitioner trained influences hundreds of children.
- Every principal supported strengthens an entire school.
- Every parent empowered creates a stronger learning environment at home.
- Every child included changes the future of a family and the child.

The Starting Chance Inclusive Training Centre, therefore, does not simply reflect investment in a facility. It is an investment in people, knowledge and the long-term sustainability of impact.

As we look towards 2030, the Centre will serve as a hub for innovation, inclusion and excellence in Early Childhood Development – helping us expand our reach while ensuring that no child is left behind.

The greatest impact is not the number of children we reach ourselves, but the number of people we equip to change children's lives.

– UNESCO

Welcome to the Sakha Ithemba Team

Building Hope. Building Futures.

In 2016 we experienced the benefit of inclusion with Thandeka Mafila and the children in the Lonwabo Special Care Centre. Differently abled children were perceived as the 'hidden children' in the community.

During September, 2016, we challenged Lonwabo and the ECDs in our programme to host inclusive activity days. We witnessed the power of interaction in encouraging children at Lonwabo to speak and walk for the first time. For this reason, as we worked to create a larger Lonwabo facility, we researched and designed an inclusive campus. Sakha Ithemba is the keystone in that development.

It is with great joy and excitement that we welcome the team who will lead and nurture children at **Sakha Ithemba Educare Centre**.

Sakha Ithemba, meaning *'We Build Hope'*, represents an important milestone in the Starting Chance journey. After 16 years of working alongside children, families, practitioners and principals in Mfuleni, we are proud to open a fully inclusive, best-practice early learning centre that will serve as a model for quality Early Childhood Development.

Sakha Ithemba has been designed to provide a safe, stimulating and inclusive environment where every child is valued, supported and given the opportunity to thrive. The school will also serve as a centre of learning and inspiration for practitioners, principals and visitors seeking to strengthen Early Childhood Development in their own communities.



About Sakha Ithemba

Sakha Ithemba has been purposefully designed within the Starting Chance Inclusive Centre as a fully inclusive, practice demonstration Early Childhood Development centre for the Mfuleni community.

The facility combines high-quality learning environments with opportunities for practitioner development and community engagement. Key features include:

- Five fully equipped classrooms designed to support children's learning and development.
- A shared demonstration classroom with a one-way observation mirror, enabling practitioners, principals, students and parents to observe best-practice teaching without disrupting learning.
- A large shared multi-purpose hall that can be used for indoor sport, training workshops, parent-children events and practitioner development.
- An innovative outdoor learning environment that promotes active play, exploration and inclusion, including a purpose-designed jungle gym, mini-sports facilities, gross motor development areas, and dedicated sand and water play spaces.

Sakha Ithemba is more than a school. It is a demonstration centre where children can thrive, practitioners can learn, and the wider community can experience what high-quality, inclusive Early Childhood Development can look like.



Leading this vision is a dedicated team of qualified, experienced and passionate educators who share a commitment to giving every child the strongest possible start in life.

Noma-Efese Nodliwa (Principal)

My name is Noma-Efese Nodliwa, and I am honoured to serve as the Principal of Sakha Ithemba Educare Centre.

With more than 16 years of experience in the Early Childhood Development sector, I am passionate about inclusive education and believe that every child deserves equal opportunities to learn, participate and succeed, regardless of their abilities or background. My goal is to create a safe, nurturing and inclusive learning environment where children feel valued, supported and empowered to reach their full potential. My commitment to quality education, child development and community upliftment continues to inspire my work every day.

'Every child deserves the opportunity to learn, grow and thrive.'

Nozipho Ndarala (5–6 Year Practitioner)

My name is Nozipho Ndarala. I am currently completing my Diploma in Grade R through CPUT and have 16 years of experience in Early Childhood Development.

I am passionate about working with young children and laying strong foundations that will support their future success. I believe that quality early learning experiences can have a lifelong impact and I am committed to helping every child develop the skills, confidence and resilience they need for their educational journey.

'Strong foundations create brighter futures.'

Nombulelo Dingiso

I am a passionate Early Childhood Development (ECD) fieldworker and mentor with over 20 years of experience in the sector. My journey began as a caregiver at Monterey Educare in Wynberg, and since then I have dedicated my career to supporting and developing ECD principals and practitioners.

As the Coordinator of the Starting Chance Mentorship Programme, I provide ongoing mentorship and support to ECD centres while working closely with the Sakha Ithemba Educare team.

'I am passionate about empowering educators and improving the quality of early learning for young children.'

Amahle Tima (4–5 Year Practitioner)

My name is Amahle Tima, and I am proud to be part of the Sakha Ithemba team.

I have worked in the ECD sector since 2019 and have had the privilege of supporting young children during some of the most important years of their development.

Working with children brings me great joy and fulfilment. Through my experience, I have discovered that teaching is truly my calling. I am passionate about making a positive difference in children's lives and helping them build confidence, curiosity and a love for learning.

'Helping children grow and learn is my greatest reward.'

Nomzamo Tarato Ngqola (2–3 Year Practitioner)

My name is Nomzamo Tarato Ngqola, and I am a proud mother of three.

I have worked in Early Childhood Development for the past four years and have found my true calling in nurturing and teaching young children. One of the most rewarding parts of my work is seeing a child move from saying, 'I don't know' to confidently saying, 'I can do it.'

I believe every child is unique and deserves patience, encouragement and a safe environment in which to learn and grow.

'Every child deserves a chance to shine.'

Together we build hope

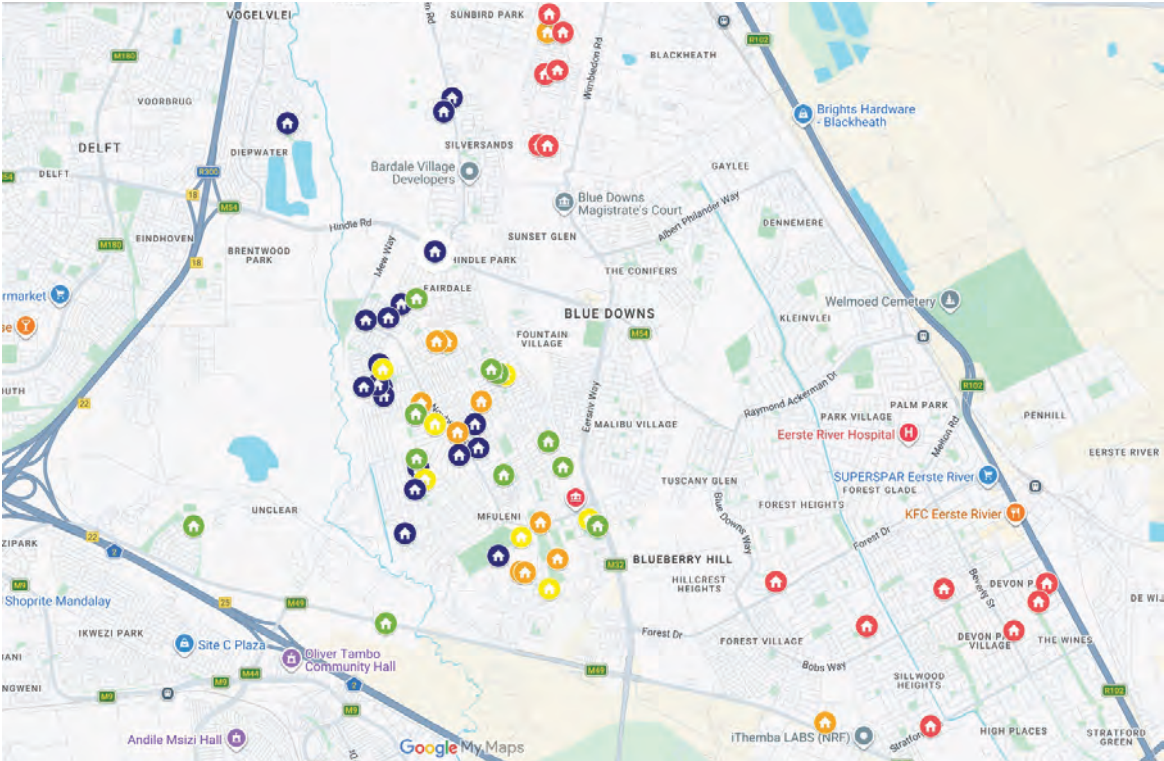
The Sakha Ithemba team shares a common vision:

to provide children irrespective of ability or circumstance with a safe, inclusive and inspiring learning environment where they can develop the confidence, skills and curiosity needed to succeed in school and in life.

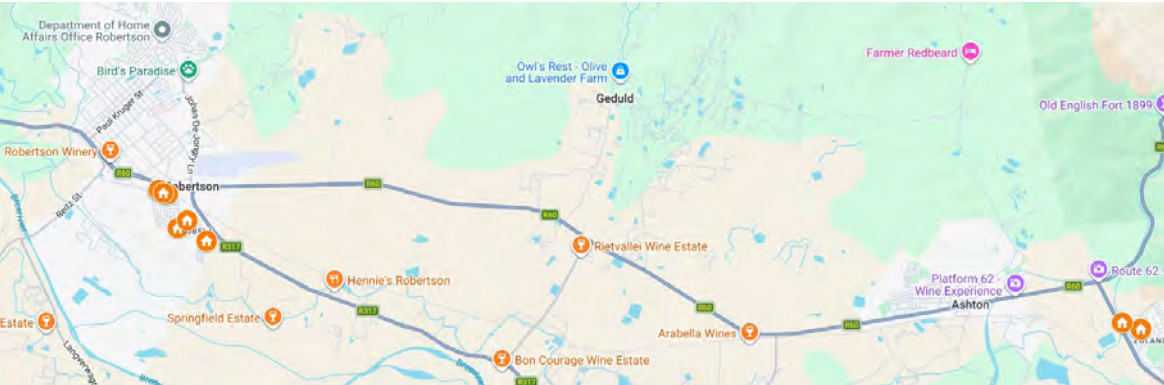
Together, we are building hope, one child at a time.

The Starting Chance School Network 2026

MFULENI & CAPE METRO EXPANSION



ROBERTSON & SURROUNDS



- Alumni Schools
- Hub & Hub+ Schools
- TTinT Schools
- Community Schools
- Expansion Schools

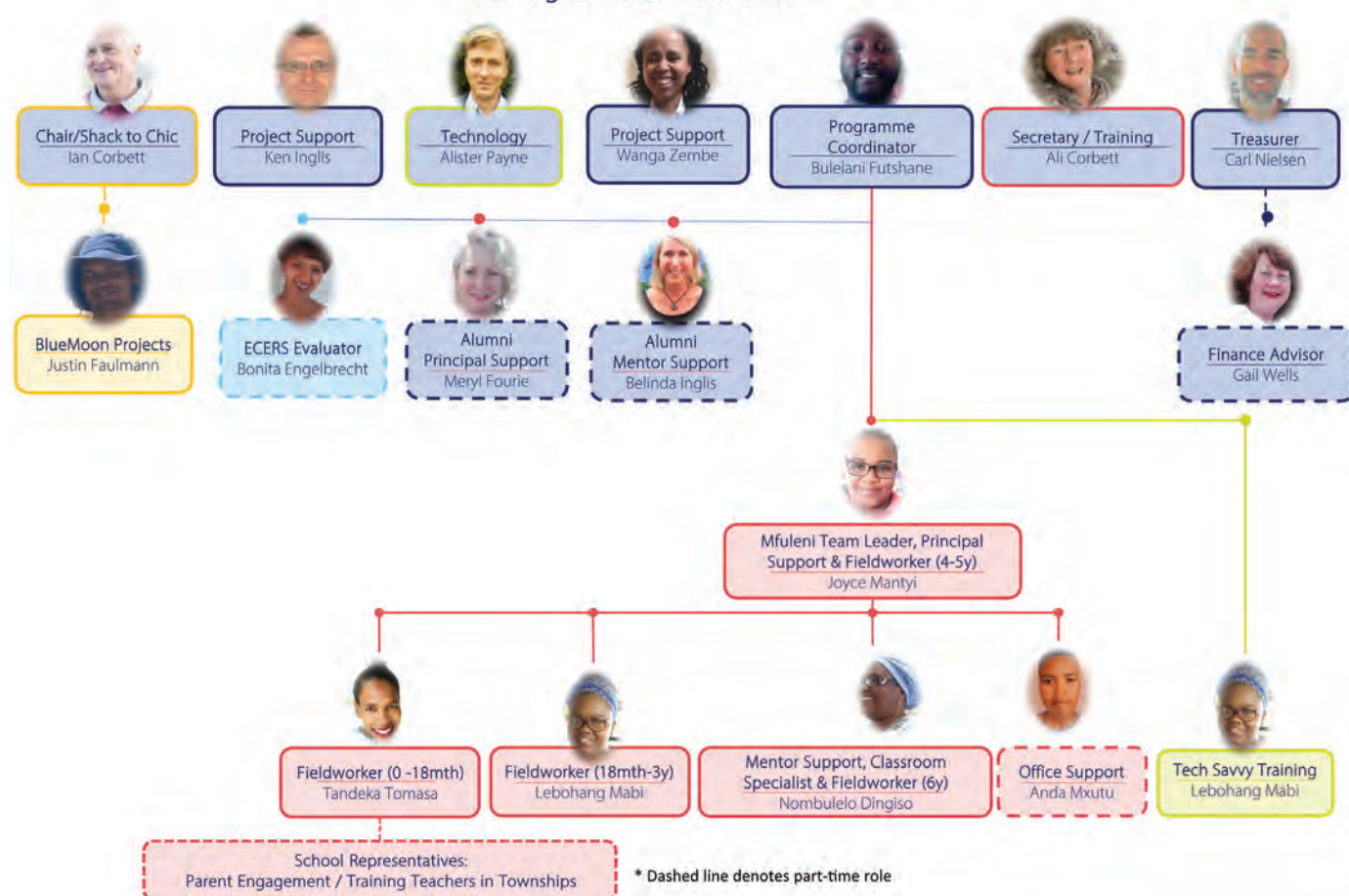
The Starting Chance School Network in Numbers

ALUMNI	HUB PLUS	TTinT SCHOOLS	COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	EXPANSION SCHOOLS
Annie's Day Care 2 Practitioners 22 Children	Bavumeleni Educare 4 Practitioners 53 Children	Emanuel 2 Practitioners 12 Children	Future Generations 2 Practitioners 39 Children	Cape Metro
Blooming Stars 1 8 Practitioners 189 Children	Hope 4 Practitioners 76 Children	Inkanyezi 3 Practitioners 16 Children	Good Care 4 Practitioners 23 Children	Elim Preparatory 3 Practitioners 33 Children
Blooming Stars 2 2 Practitioners 30 Children	Lithemba 3 Practitioners 59 Children	Jabulani Educare 2 Practitioners 21 Children	Ihla 2 Practitioners 14 Children	Hands on Learning 3 Practitioners 31 Children
Empire 6 Practitioners 110 Children	Phanduulwazi 4 Practitioners 38 Children	Liyabona Educare 2 Practitioners 22 Children	Lisakhanya 3 Practitioners 55 Children	Kidz Paradise 3 Practitioners 27 Children
Hluma 8 Practitioners 121 Children	Tangram Academy (Special) 4 Practitioners 23 Children	Powerchild 3 Practitioners 54 Children	Mzamowethu 4 Practitioners 51 Children	Charmies Little Bright Minds 3 Practitioners 15 Children
Ikusalethu Educare 3 Practitioners 26 Children	Asakhe Educare 2 Practitioners 23 Children	Qaqamba 3 Practitioners 47 Children	New Beginning 2 Practitioners 11 Children	Maya's Educare 5 Practitioners 45 Children
Little Shining Stars 6 Practitioners 118 Children	Noncedo 3 Practitioners 58 Children	Three Bee's Educare 3 Practitioners 41 Children	Olothando 2 Practitioners 14 Children	Grace Autistic 2 Practitioners 9 Children
Little Stars 4 Practitioners 77 Children	Phakamani Educare 4 Practitioners 79 Children	Total 18 Practitioners 213 Children	Sizimisele 6 Practitioners 70 Children	Lolla's Baby Nest 4 Practitioners 27 Children
Lentsana Zethu 3 Practitioners 27 Children	Sakhi Ithemba 4 Practitioners 13 Children	62 educares 235 practitioners 3 395 children	Young Mind 4 Practitioners 101 Children	Agatha Educare 3 Practitioners 60 Children
Lonwabo 12 Practitioners 134 Children	Sinothando 3 Practitioners 40 Children		Zizamele 2 Practitioners 34 Children	Little Lillies 4 Practitioners 25 Children
Lutho 4 Practitioners 75 Children	Total 35 Practitioners 462 Children		Zosuliwe 2 Practitioners 27 Children	Happy Educare 2 Practitioners 21 Children
Mzamomhle Educare 10 Practitioners 142 Children			Total 31 Practitioners 439	Total 32 Practitioners 293 Children
Nkcubeko 4 Practitioners 61 Children				
Nokwezi Educare 5 Practitioners 126 Children				Robertson
Qingqamntwana 1 Practitioners 7 Children				Lihle Educare 3 Practitioners 28 Children
Raise of Hope 5 Practitioners 86 Children				Phakamani 8 Practitioners 136 Children
Sakhuluntu Educare 5 Practitioners 86 Children				Siyakha 2 Practitioners 10 Children
Shining Stars 2 Practitioners 44 Children				Sunshine Stars 3 Practitioners 44 Children
Westline 5 Practitioners 72 Children				Vulindlela 9 Practitioners 110 Children
Total 95 Practitioners 1553 Children				Total 25 Practitioners 328 Children



Board of Trustees and Staff

Starting Chance Team: 2026



Shack to Chic

Building Safe Spaces. Unlocking Futures.

Shack to Chic remains one of the most important components of Starting Chance's holistic approach to improving Early Childhood Development. Quality infrastructure does far more than provide a building. It creates safe and inclusive learning environments, unlocks registration and government subsidy opportunities, restores dignity, strengthens community resilience and creates the foundation upon which children, practitioners and families can thrive.

Shack to Chic also contributes to the local economy through employment opportunities, skills development and the procurement of local materials and services.

Registration progress and sustainability

During the reporting period, we continued to focus on registration compliance projects across our programme schools. We are delighted to report that a growing number of ECD centres have not only achieved Bronze Level registration but have also progressed towards Silver Level registration.

For many principals, reaching Silver Level represents a transformational milestone. It brings the possibility of accessing government ECD subsidies for the first time and creates a pathway towards long-term financial sustainability for centres serving vulnerable communities.

A year of expansion

This year marked an important Shack to Chic milestone. For the first time in Starting Chance's history, three substantial infrastructure projects were implemented concurrently.

1 School Street Campus, which includes:

- Starting Chance Inclusive Training Centre
- Sakha Ithema Educare

2 Qingqamntwana

3 Tangram Academy

Although occupancy was originally scheduled for September 2025, significant delays by the main contractor resulted in handover taking place in June 2026. The facilities will be brought into full operation during the third quarter of 2026.

Together, these facilities represent a major investment in Starting Chance's future capacity to expand impact. While Sakha Ithemba will provide high-quality inclusive early learning opportunities for children, the Inclusive Training Centre will enable practitioners, principals and parents from across the Western Cape to access training, demonstration programmes and professional development opportunities.



Qingqamntwana Educare Centre *before & after* upgrades

Qingqamntwana Educare Centre

30 Children benefit annually

The second project substantially upgraded Qingqamntwana Educare Centre, improving both the learning environment and the living quarters of the principal and her husband. The project has enhanced safety, compliance and quality of care while supporting the wellbeing of a family dedicated to serving their community.



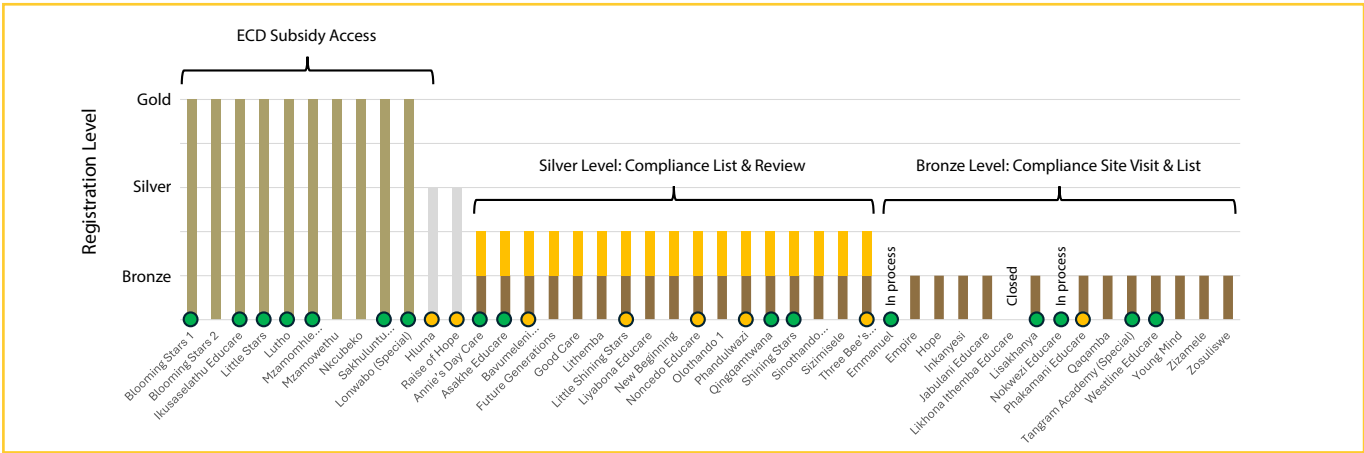
Tangram Academy

40 children with additional needs benefit annually

The third project delivered a purpose-designed, expanded facility for Tangram Academy, a specialist centre providing small-group early learning opportunities for children with autism.

The upgraded facility creates a more inclusive and appropriate environment for learners with diverse developmental needs and provides an important platform for Starting Chance's growing focus on early identification, intervention and support for children requiring additional assistance.

MEETING REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS



Looking towards 2030

As we work towards our Starting Chance 2030 Vision, substantial progress has been made in preparing schools to meet registration requirements.

Our goal is always to help centres achieve Gold Level registration wherever possible. However, challenges relating to land ownership, land use rights and tenure continue to prevent some schools from progressing as quickly as they – and we – would like.

The graph below demonstrates the progress already achieved.

Green markers indicate ECD centres and Special Needs Centres where Shack to Chic infrastructure projects have been completed.

Orange markers indicate centres where compliance projects have been completed and where future infrastructure upgrades may be implemented as part of the Starting Chance 2030 Vision.

Responding when it matters most

The availability of infrastructure funding not only accelerates planned projects but also allows Starting Chance to respond rapidly when emergencies occur.

This became critically important during the past year when Noncedo Educare Centre suffered severe flooding after the roof of its main classroom block began collapsing due to retained stormwater following torrential rainfall.

Thanks to the rapid intervention and generous support of Stichting Mzamomhle, emergency funding was secured to replace the roof with a compliant structure that meets planning regulations. The project ensured that one of Mfuleni's oldest ECD centres could continue operating safely whilst progressing towards higher-level registration compliance.

Launching the Starting Chance Building Fund

The increasing demand for compliance upgrades, emergency repairs and infrastructure development has highlighted the importance of establishing the Starting Chance Building Fund.

The Building Fund is designed to create flexibility, responsiveness and readiness. It enables Starting Chance to move quickly when opportunities arise, respond rapidly when emergencies occur and accelerate infrastructure projects that unlock registration and long-term sustainability for schools.

The fund has three key objectives:

- 1 To ensure projects can move rapidly into construction once planning approvals have been obtained.
- 2 To provide immediate support during emergencies caused by extreme weather events and infrastructure failures.
- 3 To encourage principals participating in the Principals Toolkit programme to proactively plan for the future infrastructure needs of their centres and engage with Starting Chance to achieve registration readiness.

We invite donors and partners to join us in building safer, more inclusive learning environments for children across the communities we serve. By contributing to the Building Fund, supporters help accelerate project delivery, improve learning environments and ensure schools can respond quickly when unexpected emergencies arise.

An emerging challenge

It is with concern that we report a growing trend of criminal activity targeting ECD centres in vulnerable communities.

Several schools that benefited from Shack to Chic compliance projects experienced repeated theft and vandalism shortly after improvements were completed. As a result, security upgrades are increasingly becoming a necessary component of projects designed to achieve Silver and Gold Level registration.

While these measures increase project costs, they are essential to protecting infrastructure investments and ensuring that children continue to access and learn in safe environments. We welcome partnerships, donations and practical support that can help us address this growing challenge.

The impact of Shack to Chic

- ✓ Three major infrastructure projects were implemented simultaneously over the past year.
- ✓ More than 250 children are benefiting annually from new and upgraded facilities.
- ✓ One Inclusive Early Childhood Centre was established.
- ✓ One Inclusive Training Centre was established.
- ✓ 24 schools were built, renovated or upgraded since 2009.
- ✓ Growing numbers of schools are progressing towards Silver and Gold registration.

Every upgraded classroom, repaired roof and compliant facility contributes to a larger vision:

- ✓ Safe and healthy learning environments
- ✓ Access to registration and government subsidies
- ✓ Dignity for children and practitioners
- ✓ Stronger and more sustainable ECD centres
- ✓ More inclusive opportunities for children of all abilities
- ✓ Better futures for the communities we serve

Every upgraded classroom, every compliant facility and every inclusive learning space creates opportunities that extend far beyond the school gate. By investing in infrastructure, we are investing in healthier children, stronger practitioners, more sustainable schools and communities where every child has the opportunity to thrive.

Every child deserves a safe, inclusive place to learn, grow and thrive.

T Training and Development

Expanding Reach. Strengthening Impact.

The 2025/26 financial year marked an important milestone for Starting Chance as plans for strategic growth translated into action. Through the Training and Development Department, we successfully expanded our reach beyond Mfuleni into the Langeberg Municipality (Robertson and Ashton) and the Cape Metro (Eerste River and Blue Downs), bringing quality and inclusive Early Childhood Development training opportunities to new communities.

The opening of the Starting Chance Inclusive Training Centre marks a significant milestone in this journey. The Centre will serve as a hub for practitioner development, principal leadership, parent support and inclusive education, enabling us to expand our reach while maintaining the quality and community-centred approach that has defined Starting Chance over the past 16 years.

Training for scale

Our expansion was launched through the delivery of two accredited C.A.L.M. (Classroom and Learning Management) 5-Day Training Programmes. The C.A.L.M. 0–3 Years programme was implemented in the Cape Metro, while the C.A.L.M. 4–6 Years programme was delivered in Robertson.



These programmes form a key component of Starting Chance's scaling strategy and represent an important step towards increasing access to quality professional development for ECD practitioners across the Western Cape.

While expanding into new areas, Starting Chance remained firmly committed to Mfuleni as its implementation hub and centre of excellence.

The Training of Teachers in Townships (TTinT) programme continued to demonstrate strong growth throughout the reporting period, reflecting both the demand for quality professional development and practitioners' commitment to improving outcomes for young children.

There was strong attendance during the second half of 2025, with 91 practitioners attending in July, 78 in August, 58 in September and 65 in October. This momentum continued into 2026, with participation consistently exceeding our target of 80 practitioners per workshop. Attendance reached 106 practitioners in February, 109 in March, 89 in April and 98 in May.



These figures represent more than attendance statistics. They reflect a growing community of practitioners committed to strengthening their knowledge, improving classroom practice and creating better learning opportunities for children.

Importantly, growth in both reach and participation did not come at the expense of programme quality. Through the involvement of practitioners from Sakha Ithemba Educare as co-facilitators alongside Starting Chance fieldworkers, we strengthened our facilitation capacity while simultaneously creating leadership pathways for experienced practitioners.

This approach reflects our commitment to building expertise from within communities and ensuring that quality learning continues to be shared, demonstrated and sustained.

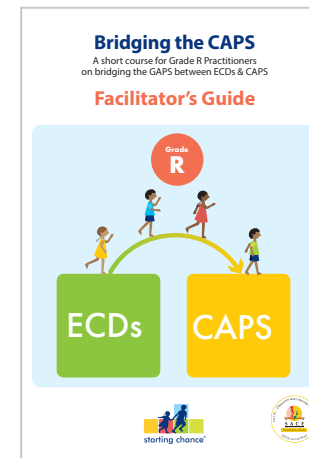
Bridging the CAPS gap

The Grade R year plays a critical role in preparing children for formal schooling. Strong foundations in literacy, numeracy and life skills are essential for future learning success.

Through assessments, classroom observations and engagement with teachers across our programme schools, Starting Chance identified a recurring challenge: many Grade R practitioners had not received sufficient training in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and lacked confidence in translating curriculum requirements into effective classroom practice.

As a result, foundational concepts were not consistently or effectively taught, potentially limiting children's readiness for Grade 1.

In response, Starting Chance partnered with a Grade R specialist to identify the most significant learning gaps and develop a practical, context-specific training programme. The result was Bridging the CAPS, a short course designed to strengthen practitioners' understanding of the curriculum while providing practical tools and strategies that can be implemented immediately in the classroom.



A major milestone was achieved in May 2025 when Bridging the CAPS received accreditation from the South African Council for Educators (SACE). This accreditation recognises both the quality and relevance of the programme and provides teachers with access to recognised professional development opportunities.

The first cohort of teachers will begin the course at the Starting Chance Inclusive Training Centre in July 2026.

Bridging the CAPS represents more than a training course. It is an investment in practitioners, an investment in quality education and an investment in ensuring that more children enter Grade 1 equipped with the skills, confidence and readiness they need to succeed.

Bridging the CAPS in a nutshell:

- ✓ Identified through classroom observations and assessments
- ✓ Developed with a Grade R specialist
- ✓ SACE accredited in May 2025
- ✓ Launching July 2026
- ✓ Focus areas:
Literacy + Numeracy + Life Skills
- ✓ Delivered through the Starting Chance Inclusive Training Centre.



Professional Development Programme

As ECD registration requirements continue to be strengthened across the Metropole, principals are under increasing pressure to meet regulatory standards or risk closure of their centres. While infrastructure remains essential, registration readiness also depends on strong leadership, sound administration and professional centre management.

Starting Chance has played a key role in supporting principals to become registration-ready in the fullest sense: not only by improving physical environments, but by strengthening the way centres are led, managed and sustained.

To support this goal, we continue to deliver the Principals Toolkit, a practical short course aligned to Department of Basic Education requirements.



The programme is designed to help principals move towards best-practice centre leadership and covers:

- Skilled leadership techniques
- Team management
- Administration systems
- Resources and infrastructure
- The learning environment

Through interactive learning games, facilitated discussion and peer learning, the Principals Toolkit helps leaders see their role not simply as running a centre, but as leading a professional learning environment that changes children's lives.

Training is reinforced through monthly site visits, regular management meetings and opportunities for one-on-one support. In this way, principals are not only trained but accompanied as they implement stronger systems and practices within their centres.



Mentorship Programme

Building sustainability from within

'The most powerful sustainability comes when principals become leaders for one another.'

As Starting Chance expands into new communities, the Mentorship Programme is becoming an increasingly important vehicle for transferring knowledge, leadership and best practice beyond Mfuleni.

Starting Chance continually seeks ways to strengthen sustainability and ensure that impact lasts beyond direct programme support. As new schools join the programme, we are committed to embedding skills, confidence and leadership within the communities we serve.

As principals complete the Starting Chance training and development journey, their schools join our Alumni cohort. Experienced principals are invited to volunteer as mentors to support schools entering the programme.

Mentors receive ongoing training and are paired with a Starting Chance fieldworker, whom they shadow and learn from as they develop their mentoring skills. They then visit schools, share their lived experience, encourage best practice and offer practical guidance rooted in the realities of running ECD centres in underserved communities.

We are also beginning to utilise mentors within our expansion programme, enabling successful principals to support schools in new geographical areas.

This model is building confidence, strengthening peer learning and creating a growing community of best practice. We have seen meaningful development not only in the schools receiving support, but also in the mentors themselves as they step into leadership roles and share their expertise with others.

The programme has also nurtured a spirit of generosity. Mentors have shared advice, encouragement and resources with newer schools, helping to create an atmosphere of mutual support and care.

'The mentorship programme not only strengthens individual schools but also contributes to building a more resilient, knowledgeable and effective education community.'
Cornelia MacMaster, Empire Academy Centre

Mentorship is becoming a key pillar of our sustainability model. It ensures that knowledge, confidence and best practice continue to circulate within communities, creating lasting impact long after Starting Chance's direct involvement has ended.

Looking Ahead

Together, these programmes demonstrate Starting Chance's commitment to building local capacity, strengthening inclusive practice and creating sustainable systems of support.

By investing in practitioners, principals and mentors, we are ensuring that quality Early Childhood Development reaches more communities while maintaining the standards and values that have guided our work for 16 years.

As we look ahead, the Inclusive Training Centre, growing practitioner leadership and expanding mentorship network position Starting Chance to extend its impact to even more children, families and communities across the Western Cape.





Assessment for Impact

Measuring Progress, Guiding Support

Measuring impact

Measuring impact is central to the Starting Chance model. Through a robust monitoring and evaluation framework, we assess the progress of children, practitioners, principals and centres, while also measuring the long-term sustainability of our interventions.

Children's development is monitored through internal baseline assessments conducted in February and endline assessments conducted in September. These assessments are led by the Starting Chance Field-Working Team under the guidance of Mrs Joyce Mantyi and Mrs Nombulelo Dingiso. To further strengthen the reliability and credibility of our outcomes data, we have begun integrating the Early Learning Outcomes Measure (ELOM), a nationally recognised external assessment tool.

As Starting Chance expands its focus on inclusion, assessment is becoming increasingly important as a tool for early identification and intervention. Strong assessment practices enable practitioners and fieldworkers to identify developmental concerns earlier, support children more effectively and create referral pathways for children who may require additional support.

The quality of teaching and learning environments is evaluated through a combination of internal assessments conducted in June and external assessments undertaken in October using the internationally recognised Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS) methodology.

To strengthen the assessment process further, Starting Chance has also incorporated fieldworker observations into the evaluation framework. This provides a richer understanding of school performance by capturing progress and challenges throughout the year rather than relying solely on end-of-year assessments.

The evaluations consistently demonstrate measurable improvements in classroom practice, learning environments and programme quality, particularly in schools that have received support for two years or longer.

Key assessment successes

- Consistent improvements in teaching and learning quality across supported schools.
- Strong gains in classroom environments and play-based learning practices as measured through ECERS evaluations.
- Introduction of ELOM as an external assessment tool to strengthen outcome measurement and reporting.
- Growing practitioner capacity to observe, assess, record and respond to children's developmental needs.
- Evidence that improvements are sustained beyond direct programme support.

Building teacher capacity. Tracking child development.

At Starting Chance, we believe that sustainable impact is achieved when teachers have the skills and confidence to independently assess children's development.



Assessment is not about testing children. It is about understanding each child's progress, identifying areas where support is needed and ensuring that every child receives the best possible start to their learning journey.

Using the Starting Chance Modl for Assessment, together with training, mentoring and classroom support, we help practitioners build the skills needed to use assessment as a tool for learning and development.

What the assessments tell us

Assessment is valuable because it helps us understand what is working and where further support is needed.

Results from the 2025 and 2026 assessment cycles demonstrate that Starting Chance's combination of training, mentoring, monitoring and onsite support continues to improve both teaching practice and child development outcomes.

More active children

One of the most significant improvements was observed in children's gross motor development.

Following the 2024 assessments, the Starting Chance team identified a lack of structured outdoor learning opportunities across many partner schools. In response, the first two TTinT workshops in 2025 focused specifically on planning, structuring and facilitating meaningful outdoor learning experiences.

Through ongoing coaching and classroom support, practitioners and principals implemented these strategies more consistently, resulting in measurable improvements in children's gross motor skills.

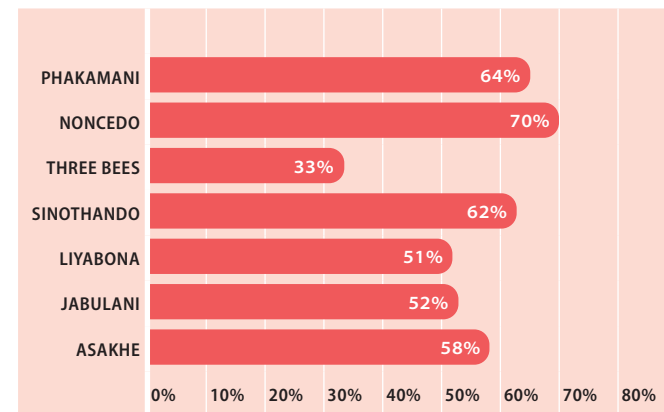
More creative learners

The assessments also revealed encouraging gains in Creative Arts and fine motor development, particularly among children aged 4–5 years.

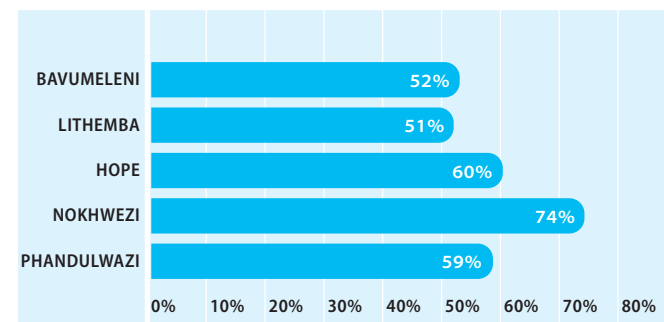
These improvements can be directly linked to the ongoing mentorship provided by the Starting Chance Field-Working Team. Through regular classroom visits and practical support, practitioners were encouraged to place greater value on activities such as drawing, painting, cutting, pasting and construction play.

These experiences not only foster creativity but also strengthen the fine motor skills that are essential for later writing and school readiness.

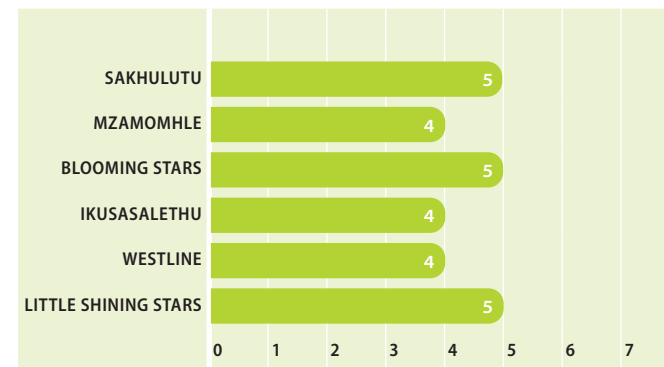
2025 TTinT SCHOOLS: ECERS AND FIELDWORKER FEEDBACK SCORES



HUB & HUB PLUS SCHOOLS: ECERS EVALUATION RESULTS



ALUMNI SCHOOLS: ECERS EVALUATION RESULTS (EXTERNAL)



More child-centred classrooms

Perhaps the most encouraging finding was the shift in teaching practice observed across many schools.

In previous years, some practitioners completed activities on behalf of children to ensure classroom work appeared neat and perfect. Through ongoing coaching and mentoring, practitioners developed a deeper understanding of child-centred learning and now recognise the importance of allowing children to explore, create and learn independently.

Rather than doing the work for the child, practitioners increasingly provide guidance and support while allowing children to develop confidence, creativity and problem-solving skills through their own efforts.

These findings demonstrate the value of Starting Chance's onsite intervention model, which combines training, mentoring, monitoring and practical classroom support to strengthen teaching practices and improve developmental outcomes for young children.

Assessment is not simply a measurement tool. It is a professional development tool that helps practitioners reflect on their practice, identify opportunities for improvement and strengthen learning outcomes for children.

Sustainable impact: Do improvements last?

While improvements within programme schools are encouraging, the true test of sustainability is whether these gains continue after direct support has ended.

A key milestone during the reporting period was the launch of the Starting Chance Alumni Evaluation.

This initiative was designed to assess whether improvements achieved during programme participation continue after schools graduate from direct support.

Six schools from the original Starting Chance cohort were selected for an independent external ECERS evaluation led by Mrs Bonita Engelbrecht.

The findings were highly encouraging.

Alumni schools continued to maintain quality learning environments, implement child-centred and play-based learning approaches, and demonstrate strong leadership and management practices.

Alumni evaluation results

- ✓ 6 Alumni Schools Evaluated
- ✓ Average ECERS Score: 4.5
- ✓ Several schools achieved scores above 5.0
- ✓ Evidence of sustained quality after programme completion

These results provide compelling evidence that the improvements achieved through the Starting Chance model are not short-term gains but are sustained over time.

The Alumni Evaluation reinforces the effectiveness of our holistic approach, which combines practitioner development, principal support, quality learning environments and ongoing mentoring.

Most importantly, it demonstrates that investments made today continue to benefit children long after schools have completed the programme.

Perhaps most significantly, the Alumni Evaluation demonstrates that the Starting Chance model builds lasting capacity rather than temporary change. Schools continue to apply best practice, maintain quality standards and create positive learning environments long after formal programme support has ended.

Sustainable impact is not measured only by what changes while we are present, but by what continues to thrive after we have stepped away.



Ready for School

Growing the Triangle of Collaboration: Principals, Practitioners and Parents

At Starting Chance, we believe that every child deserves the opportunity to start school ready to learn, participate and thrive. Achieving this requires strong partnerships between principals, practitioners and parents, while also ensuring that parents of children with additional needs receive the support they require as early as possible.

Our Ready for School Programme focuses on strengthening the partnership between homes, schools and communities to create consistent support for children's learning and development.

Parents are a child's first and most influential teachers. By equipping families with practical skills, resources and confidence, we help to extend learning beyond the classroom and into the home.

Strengthening parent engagement

Through our Parent Support Programme, Starting Chance provides workshops that help parents understand how they can support literacy, numeracy, life skills and school readiness using everyday opportunities at home.

Support for the programme is growing rapidly. During 2025, 180 parents attended the March workshop, while 98 and 108 parents participated in the May and July workshops respectively.

A significant milestone was achieved in August 2025 when Starting Chance piloted a decentralised workshop model. Schools were encouraged to host their own parent workshops with support from the Starting Chance team. Not only does this bring learning opportunities closer to families and change the traditional mindset that education happens at school but also increases school ownership of the parent programme.

Feedback from parents and schools is overwhelmingly positive. Parents reported feeling more confident in their ability to support their children's development, while schools welcomed the opportunity to strengthen relationships with families.

Building on this success, the decentralised model is being expanded during 2026 to include all of the alumni schools and the hub and hub



plus schools. In total we will be aiming to involve almost 50 schools, allowing many more families to access support and resources.

Parent Support Programme impact

- ✓ 386 parents attended workshops during 2025
- ✓ Decentralised parent workshops successfully piloted
- ✓ Practical school readiness resources shared with families
- ✓ Stronger partnerships between homes and schools
- ✓ Alumni schools joining the programme in 2026

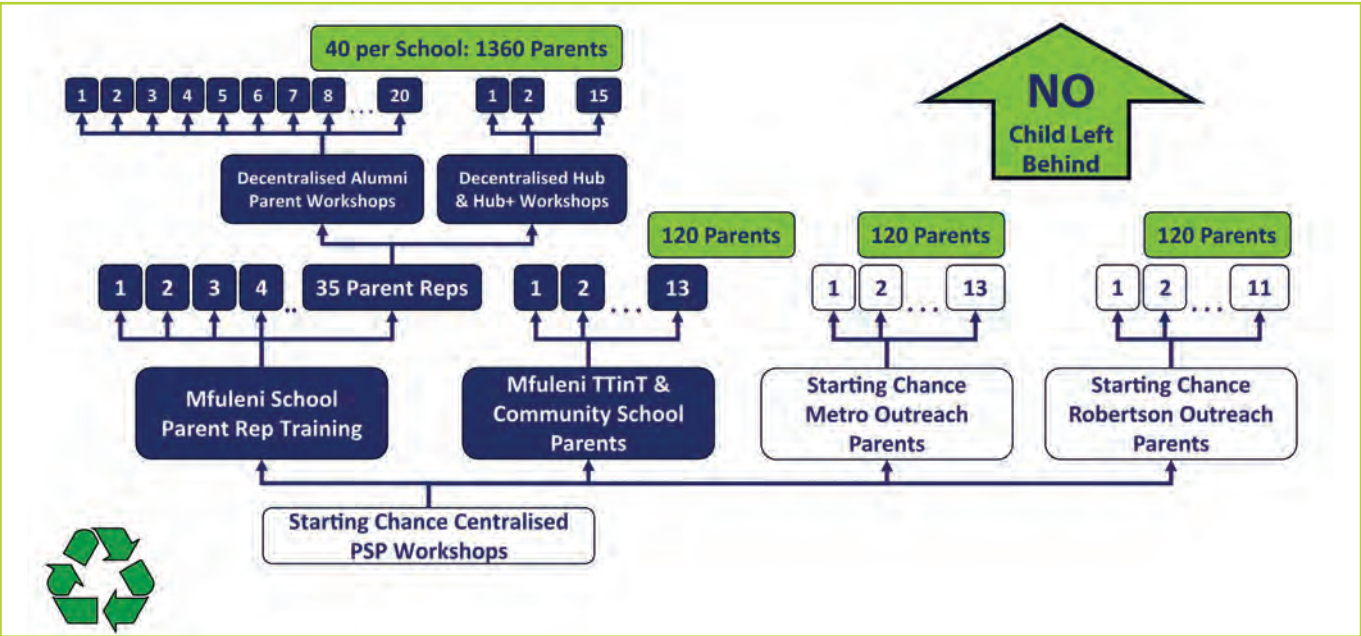
Voices from participating schools

'The workshop reinforced the importance of parents as their children's first and most influential teachers. Parents left feeling empowered, motivated and better equipped to support literacy, numeracy and overall child development.'
– Jama Gada, Mzamomhle Educare

'Many parents told us they had never attended a workshop like this before. They left with practical knowledge and a better understanding of the critical role they play in developing reading and numeracy skills at home.'
– Cornelia MacMaster, Empire Academy Centre

Through the Parent Support Programme, Starting Chance is strengthening the triangle of collaboration between principals, practitioners and parents, creating stronger foundations for children's success at school and beyond.

PSP EXPANSION: DECENTRALISING PARENT SUPPORT



No child left behind

Tackling the challenge of inclusion

In a country that celebrates diversity, it is easy to assume that inclusion happens naturally. Yet for many children living with developmental challenges and intellectual disabilities, opportunities often come too late—or not at all.

Many of these children remain invisible, hidden behind closed doors and unable to access the diagnosis, support and early intervention services that could dramatically change the course of their lives.

Since 2023, creating opportunities for children with additional needs has become a strategic priority. The completion of the Tangram Academy expansion marks an important milestone and creates the platform for the next phase of our inclusion journey.

Inclusion in action

- ✓ Tangram Academy expansion completed
- ✓ Introductory Special Needs Course in development
- ✓ Inclusive Training Centre opening in 2026
- ✓ Rehabilitation Fieldworker model being developed
- ✓ Earlier identification and referral pathways being established



Building a Centre of Excellence

Our vision is to develop Tangram Academy into a Centre of Excellence for Autism and developmental support services.

With the support of specialist therapists and trained rehabilitation fieldworkers, Starting Chance will begin creating pathways for earlier identification, intervention and referral. Children identified through our programmes will be able to access specialist assessment and support through partnerships with professionals and referral pathways such as the Tygerberg Developmental Clinic.

Early diagnosis changes lives

A key component of this strategy is the development of an Introductory Special Needs Course at the Starting Chance Inclusive Training Centre.

The Inclusive Training Centre will provide a platform for practitioners, parents, fieldworkers and specialists to learn together, strengthening community capacity to identify and support children with developmental challenges at an earlier stage.

Through this programme:

- ✓ Fieldworkers will be trained to recognise developmental concerns earlier.
- ✓ ECD practitioners will gain confidence in identifying children who may require additional support.
- ✓ Families will be guided towards appropriate assessment and intervention services.
- ✓ More children will gain access to support before entering formal schooling.

Looking ahead

As Starting Chance expands into new communities, including areas where Foetal Alcohol Syndrome is prevalent, early identification and intervention will become increasingly important.

Research conducted in regions such as Robertson demonstrates that early diagnosis and rehabilitation can significantly reduce the long-term impact of developmental challenges.

By strengthening families, supporting practitioners and creating pathways for early diagnosis and intervention, Starting Chance is helping to ensure that every child—regardless of circumstance or ability—has the opportunity to begin their educational journey with confidence.

True inclusion means ensuring that no child is left behind.



Technology for professional principals

Technology is increasingly essential for running a successful Early Childhood Development centre. From maintaining records and communicating with parents to completing registration requirements and managing finances, digital skills are no longer optional.

Through the Technology Support Programme, Starting Chance equips principals with the practical skills and confidence needed to use technology effectively in their daily work. Led by Mrs Lebo Mabi-Nopulula, the programme complements the Principal Development Programme and the Principals Toolkit by helping principals apply leadership, administration and management practices using digital tools.

For many principals, this training represents their first opportunity to confidently use digital tools to manage and develop their centres. As their skills grow, so too does their ability to manage their centres more effectively, communicate with stakeholders and meet increasing compliance requirements.

As the Starting Chance Inclusive Training Centre comes into operation, technology training will form an important component of practitioner and principal development, ensuring that schools are equipped to operate effectively in an increasingly digital world.



Digital skills supporting sustainability

A major focus during the second half of 2025 and the first half of 2026 was supporting principals through the Department of Basic Education registration process, particularly schools progressing towards Silver and Gold Level registration.

The registration process requires extensive documentation, record keeping and evidence submission. For many principals, this can be overwhelming. Through one-on-one support, computer training and administrative coaching, Starting Chance helped schools navigate these requirements successfully.

Registration impact

- ✓ 10 schools achieved Gold Level registration
- ✓ 2 schools achieved Silver Level registration
- ✓ 12 schools achieved Bronze Level registration
- ✓ 17 schools are currently progressing towards Silver Level registration
- ✓ 2 619 children are benefiting from improved, compliant learning environments

These achievements represent far more than compliance milestones. Registration strengthens school sustainability, improves accountability, unlocks access to government support and creates safer, higher-quality learning environments for children.

Technology for children's learning

Technology also plays an important role in preparing children for the future. Through the Tablet Fun programme, children are introduced to age-appropriate digital learning experiences that complement hands-on, play-based learning.

The goal of Tablet Fun is not to increase screen time, but to introduce children to technology in a structured, purposeful and age-appropriate manner that strengthens learning while maintaining the importance of play.



Schools become eligible to receive tablets as they progress through the Starting Chance programme. Before tablets are introduced, practitioners receive specialised training to ensure technology is used responsibly and effectively.

Practitioners are trained to:

- ✓ Balance screen time with active and concrete learning experiences
- ✓ Link tablet activities to developmental milestones
- ✓ Use digital tools to strengthen literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills
- ✓ Ensure technology enhances rather than replaces play-based learning

Ongoing support from the Starting Chance Technology Team helps schools integrate tablets in meaningful ways that support children's development.

Technology also has the potential to support inclusion by providing alternative ways for children to engage with learning and by helping practitioners respond more effectively to individual learning needs.

EdShed: Building early literacy through technology

During the reporting period, Starting Chance partnered with EdShed, an innovative educational platform that combines structured literacy learning with engaging interactive games. The programme has been enthusiastically embraced by both practitioners and children. Teachers successfully integrated EdShed into their literacy routines,

using lesson plans, sound activities and interactive games to reinforce early reading skills.

One of the most encouraging outcomes has been the growth in children's confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Children eagerly participated in activities and celebrated their progress through the platform.

EdShed impact highlights

- ✓ Strong practitioner engagement and implementation.
- ✓ Structured literacy support linked to classroom learning.
- ✓ Average of 27 children per participating school achieved Top Achiever status.
- ✓ Increased confidence, participation and enjoyment among learners.

Technology impact

- ✓ Principals building confidence in digital administration.
- ✓ Technology supporting registration and compliance.
- ✓ Stronger systems for sustainable school management.
- ✓ Digital tools strengthening literacy learning.
- ✓ Technology enhancing play-based learning.
- ✓ Growing opportunities to support inclusive learning.

Looking Ahead

Technology is becoming an increasingly important part of both education and school management. Through digital skills training, registration support and innovative learning programmes, Starting Chance is helping principals become more confident leaders while ensuring children develop the foundational skills needed for success in an increasingly digital world.

The goal is not simply to introduce technology, but to use it purposefully to strengthen learning, improve sustainability and create opportunities for every child.

By building digital confidence among principals, practitioners and children, Starting Chance is helping to ensure that technology becomes a tool for inclusion, learning and sustainability rather than a barrier to opportunity.



Friends of Starting Chance

Sandisa iFuthe – Expanding Our Impact

In 2009, we sat in a newly built school in Tokwana Street with the Mfuleni Forum for Early Childhood Centres. The room was full of expectant faces. We had little funding, but we had passion, commitment and expertise. We asked whether a few schools would be willing to join us in changing children's lives.

- *Five brave women put up their hands.*
- *Five shack schools took a chance on us.*
- *Two donors believed in our vision.*

Since then, Starting Chance, together with its donors and friends, has invested more than **R35 million** into the early childhood sector. Together, we have built, renovated or upgraded **24 schools**, supported practitioners and principals, and helped transform the lives of thousands of children and families.

Friends of Starting Chance have been part of this journey from the very beginning. Some have contributed financially, others through their time, expertise, resources, networks and encouragement. Every contribution has helped us deepen our impact and extend our reach.

Today, friends from around the world continue to visit, invest in and champion our work. Thank you for your trust, generosity and belief in our vision.



Friends in Action

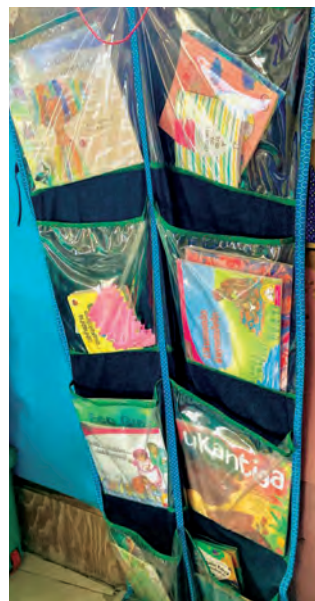
Building literacy

Bargain Books, Biblionef and Book Dash continue to play a transformative role in our literacy programmes.

Bargain Books raised more than R465 000 through its customer donation initiative, with an additional R66 500 raised during Mandela Month and matched by the company.

Biblionef has equipped 38 schools with hanging libraries, ensuring children have access to books even in limited spaces.

Book Dash donated more than 6 000 books, enabling children to build home libraries and develop a love of reading.



Equipping schools

Support from organisations including iPay, Øresundslinjen, Woodside Village, Sweet Valley Primary, Grace Primary School, Stenstroms and many individual supporters has enabled us to provide schools with technology, learning resources, toys, books, stationery and recycled materials.

These contributions strengthen learning environments and ensure practitioners have the resources needed to support children's development.

Building opportunities

Partnerships with organisations such as Hewlett-Packard Enterprises, Grassroots Cricket South Africa, QuickSiLVA, Bluemoon and Radio Tygerberg have enabled us to extend opportunities beyond the classroom.



Highlights included:

- ✓ Resource packs assembled through the HPE Donor Day initiative
- ✓ Upgraded cricket facilities at Mfuleni Primary School
- ✓ A mini five-a-side soccer pitch and basketball facilities at Sakha Ithemba
- ✓ Ten wheelchairs for children attending special needs schools within our network.

Giving time and expertise

Many friends support Starting Chance by sharing their professional knowledge and experience.

Advisory panel members, workshop facilitators, accreditation specialists and programme volunteers continue to strengthen our work through mentoring, training, curriculum development and technical support.

Their contribution reminds us that lasting impact is built not only through financial support, but also through people who generously share their skills and time.

Together we made possible

Because of the support of our Friends of Starting Chance, we were able to:

- ✓ Provide 2 900 children with a Starting Chance
- ✓ Train 179 practitioners
- ✓ Support 47 principals
- ✓ Renovate and improve three schools
- ✓ Provide 450 resource packs
- ✓ Distribute over 6 000 books
- ✓ Impact 2 900 parents

Thank you to every donor, volunteer, partner, school, church, company and individual who has walked this journey with us.

*Together we are expanding
our impact and creating
brighter futures for our children.*



Highlights – *We Build Hope*

Life Skills and Cricket Initiative

In September 2025, Starting Chance partnered with Grassroots Cricket South Africa, Mfuleni Primary School and Mfuleni Cricket Club to launch the Life Skills and Cricket Initiative. Supported by former Australian cricketers Paul Wilson and Trevor Chappell, the programme combined sport and life skills to help children build confidence, resilience, teamwork and discipline.

Thanks to the generous support of DORMAC, Starting Chance upgraded the cricket nets at Mfuleni Primary School and provided a full cricket kit as part of the school's 50th anniversary celebrations. The initiative created opportunities for children to learn important life lessons both on and off the field.



Family Heritage Day: Building Blocks for Life Skills

On 27 September 2025, approximately 1 000 families gathered to celebrate culture, learning and community at Starting Chance's Family Heritage Day.

Under the theme Building Blocks for Life Skills, families participated in interactive activities designed to strengthen the connection between home and early learning. A highlight of the day was the donation of more than 6 000 children's books by Book Dash, ensuring that every child went home with a book of their own.

The event demonstrated the power of families, schools and communities working together to support children's development.



Celebrating 10 years of impact

In 2025, Starting Chance celebrated a decade of changing children's lives.

Our 10-year milestone provided an opportunity to reflect on how far we have come while reminding ourselves how much more remains to be done. At our Open AGM, Lorenzo Davids challenged us to continue solving complex problems with courage and innovation, while recognising the potential of our CALM programme to influence early childhood development far beyond Mfuleni.

The celebration marked not an ending, but the beginning of our next chapter of growth and impact.

Conference and confidence

This year, members of the Starting Chance team attended professional conferences in Durban and Cape Town for the first time.

Stepping outside familiar environments required courage, but the impact has been significant. New ideas, stronger facilitation skills, increased confidence and renewed inspiration have strengthened our team and enhanced our ability to serve the communities we work with.

Investing in our people is an investment in the future impact of Starting Chance.

Looking forward

As we celebrate 16 years of impact, we remain committed to expanding our reach, strengthening our programmes and creating opportunities for every child to thrive.

The best is yet to come.

- ✓ Sport builds character
- ✓ 1 000 Families celebrating learning
- ✓ 10 Years of impact

*Growing our team,
growing our impact.*

Financial Report

During this year, Starting Chance has changed our reporting year end from February to December. In order to be comparable, the numbers presented in the table for the previous period are, accordingly, the 2024 calendar year.

We are very pleased to report a year on year increase in income of 32%. This is driven largely by an increase in project-specific funding, which are typically large grants earmarked for specific purposes. General gifts and income from fundraising showed a small decrease year on year. In light of a tough economic climate, the small decreases are not a cause for concern. Our needs have been met, and as will be seen at the bottom of the report, we have been able to grow our reserves as expenditure has been more than covered by income.

Investment income has increased significantly due to large earmarked donations having been received in advance of the projects for which they are needed, so that the funds could be held on deposit to earn interest in the interim. We are grateful to funders who have been willing to make their contributions on this basis.

After a relatively quiet season in terms of our Shack to Chic construction activities, the 2025 calendar year saw the bulk of the work on Phase 2 of our inclusive campus on School Street in Mfuleni taking place, accounting for the large increase in expenditure. Accordingly, our reserves for development have decreased marginally, but we have funding to continue with the projects that are ongoing into 2026. But there is lots more still to do!

The expansion of our training and development programme, particularly in respect of supplying tablets and laptops to the ECD's for our Tech Programme has also resulted in an increase in expenditure in our T&D project category. Administration costs have also increased, but at only 1.7% of total expenses, we are still proud to say that almost all our funds are used directly in implementing our projects. We have also seen an increase in funding for these programmes – more than sufficient to cover the increased expenses.

Our contribution into the endowment fund decreased slightly year on year, in line with the decrease in non-specific donations and fundraising on which it is based. In spite of that small decrease, it is pleasing to see that the value of the investment increased by 32% year on year.

Looking to the future, in 2026 we have turned our focus outwards from Mfuleni, expanding our programmes into other areas of the Cape Metropole and also into the Overberg, specifically Robertson and Ashton. We are also hoping to expand our Classroom And Learning Management (CALM) accredited education programme, ultimately nationally. We have been blessed with seed funding for these initiatives, but are trusting for additional funding to bring these dreams to fruition. We are deeply grateful to our partners and friends whose faithful support makes our work possible. Together, we can continue investing in the futures of the children in the early childhood development facilities we support, giving them the best possible starting chance in life.



Carl Nielsen
TREASURER

	2025	2024	Change
Income			
Project-specific	4 581 173	2 841 663	61%
Non-specific donations	2 070 000	2 113 617	-2%
Fundraising	671 456	698 248	-4%
Investment income	635 199	388 633	63%
Beneficiary contributions	84 634	71 875	18%
Total Income	8 042 462	6 114 036	32%
Expenditure			
Shack to Chic	5 176 765	569 511	809%
Training & Development	2 237 155	1 703 670	31%
Administration	128 028	98 475	30%
Property holding costs	20 411	41 939	-51%
Total Expenditure	7 562 359	2 413 595	213%
Transfer to endowment	137 073	140 694	-3%
Reserves			
Funds available for infrastructure projects	3 232 163	3 427 044	-6%
Funds available for training, development and other activities	3 289 395	2 866 036	15%
Endowment	1 492 277	1 132 206	32%
At cost	1 042 757	897 996	16%
+ value growth	449 520	234 210	92%
	8 013 835	7 425 286	8%

Partners and Donors

Individuals

Adrian Rose

Alistair Longman

Anne Lawton

Anthony Hodges

Arne & Sandra Nielsen

Brandon Bowers

Carolyn Elder

Cassandra Eng

Chris Brathwaite

Claire Procter

Clinton Filen

Dereck & Nici Palmer

Gero Wassweiler

Graham Blyth

Henty & Renee Waker

Ian & Ali Corbett

Ivanna Granelli

Joel van der Schyff

Ken & Belinda Inglis

Kimberly Duncan

Liza Levy

Lo Dagerman & Brian Levy

Lumley & Colleen Hulley

Lynne Franco

Malcolm Dingle

Marcus Price

Mark Long

Michael Smith

Mike De Wit

Mike Robinson

Ntaoleng Mohapi

Paul & Amy Speirs

Richard Gurney

Rinse van Beusekom

Rob Serne

Rob Zipplies

Roel Assies

Sam van Embden

Sue Manning

Travers Waker

Viwe Gqiba

Institutions

Ackerman Family Educational Trust

Adrenalin Fishing

Albert Wessels Trust

Amathemba Environmental Management Consulting

Bargain Books

Beerguevara

Cento Capital

Dandelion Trust

DG Murray Trust

Din Din Trust

Dormac Marine

Douglas Joost Trust

Electric Storm

Farm Italy Imports

Federated Employers Mutual Assurance Company

Gemini Data Loggers

Grace Primary School

Gradons Transport Services

Halabi Thomaz Foundation

Home Choice Development Trust

International Community Empowerment

iPay and iPay Services

Kamoeba

Libra Roofing

Marion Lahann Testamentary Trust

Ontec Systems

Öresundslinjen

Pest Relievers

Pinelands Village Veterinary Clinic

QuickSilva

Reformed Church of Buelach

Stenstroms

Stichting Mzamomhle

Stichting Wilde Ganzen

Stuart Software & Consulting

Sweet Valley Primary School

Terminix

Then Studio

Whimsical Collection

Wordsworth Books





**To find out the many ways in which you can contribute,
please visit our website:**

www.startingchance.org.za/take-action

We are a Christian based Not for Profit Organisation passionate about giving children in the ECD sector a Starting Chance on their educational journey.

Starting Chance is registered as a Section 18A Public Benefit Organisation. Accordingly, all donations we receive from South African residents are eligible for tax deduction subject to the provisions of the Income Tax Act.

Receipts in support of tax deductibility are issued on request.

The Starting Chance Trust

Trust Reg No: IT2472/2015 • NPO No: 164-217 NPO • PBO No: 930051444

VAT Reg: 4450272614

tel: 082 491 1171 • email: info@startingchance.org.za