



Feedback on True North's activities July - September 2021

Introduction

We want to set a new standard for the education, nurture and holistic development of pre-school children and their caregivers, preparing them to assume the fullness of their God-given potential in every sphere of their lives.

This was our mission from the inception of True North and this is still our mission today. A 'new standard' is a standard of excellence and not perfection. An excellent way, which is rooted in love. We have seen as a team that there are different activities that we can implement in order to reach our goals, and we are comfortable with having to adjust and do things differently as long as we are true to **the way** in which we do what we are called to do. We took some time this term to remind ourselves of our ways, which are our values: **God first, humility, relationship, focus and learning.**

It is so refreshing to have a set of values that we can come back to in order to continually remind ourselves what is important to us, especially in a time where there is so much change and uncertainty.

We are keeping our focus on our 3 main outcomes:

- Pre-schools continue to progress through the Rainbow Development Framework (RDF) becoming established places which prepare children for grade R
- A local ECD coordinating body that is developed and sustainable so that they can continue to coordinate activities, facilitate connections, recognize opportunities and build relationships.
- Parents have increased understanding of the value of child safety and development, and they act accordingly.

Please enjoy reading about what has been happening over the last few months in the Vrygrond and Overcome Heights ECD sector. We have linked the activities to some of our goals (2021-2023).

Statistics and progress on all our goals will be provided in a full impact report in March 2022.

Governance Training

Eight pre-school Principals and two True North staff members had the opportunity to attend online governance training through our partner, Connect Networks. The training is run over a period of three months and principals have committed themselves to improve the governance of their centres with the necessary skills and knowledge.

Topics that are covered in the Governance module include:

- Intro to non-profit governance
- God's heart for governance
- Intro to non-profit Legal Entities
- Intro to legal compliance including key provisions of Companies Act, NPO Act, Income Tax Act.
- Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)
- Principles and practices of King IV Governance Code
- The Board role, policies, meetings, recruitment, succession planning
- Risk Management in NPO's



Trauma training

Judy Strickland from Hope House Counselling Centre provided an informative and practical training entitled "trauma-informed ECD's". A total of 86 ECD practitioners now have a better understanding of the different types of trauma and the effects it has on the brain. They have skills which help them deal with personal trauma, organisational trauma and trauma in children. It is really encouraging that pre-schools have staff who are better equipped to deal with the trauma that is so prevalent in their community.



Building Maintenance Workshop

The building maintenance workshop was held to familiarise principals with building maintenance basics and the do's and don'ts. Our building partner, Blue Moon Projects, co-presented this workshop with us. The session was informative and included both a presentation and discussion with the principals sharing their own experiences of building maintenance and challenges. Practical advice was given and all left better informed of cost-effective, but practical maintenance solutions.



Community Engagement:

Principals and True North staff came together for our Community Engagement. It was a special time where we contemplated and "unpacked" our united vision of seeing established places of light, safety, nurture and learning for children 0-5 years. We were also inspired by a video clip from Simon Sinek, reminding us of the Importance of servant leadership. Taking some time out from all the 'doing' so that we could discuss important matters and get on the same page, helps us

to grow in our unity as an ECD sector. We found this verse from Mark 10: 42-45 inspiring.

“Jesus called them together and said “ You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the gentiles lord it over them ,and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you, instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be a slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Please enjoy a [short clip](#) of our Community Engagement

These activities are carried out in order to reach our goal of **principals being trained and grouped appropriately so that they provide monthly support to each other in their holistic leadership development, so that 15 out of 29 principals achieve their full 21 credits.**

Fundraising support and workshop

Hedwich, from Tulp fundraising services provided a full day workshop with principals, brainstorming and engaging with topics like:

Fundraising tools; Social media do's and don'ts; How to develop a clear budget; How to develop a fundraising proposal; Transparency and reporting to donors.

Since the Covid pandemic it has become crucial that the principals find creative ways to bring additional funds into their pre-school. Many parents are keeping their children at home because they have lost income, other parents are struggling financially and only paying part-fees, there are also less children in the centres due to the need for social distancing.

Along with the training we also provided the opportunity for a few principals to receive one-one one support to put together a proposal for their pre-school.

This is in line with reaching our goal of **15 out of 29 pre-schools** being directly linked to government subsidy or private funding, so that they are financially viable.

Increase in nutrition for children

Two of our food partners have increased their food provision to pre-schools. This is wonderful news because it means that more children are receiving nutritious meals and have a better chance of being holistically developed.

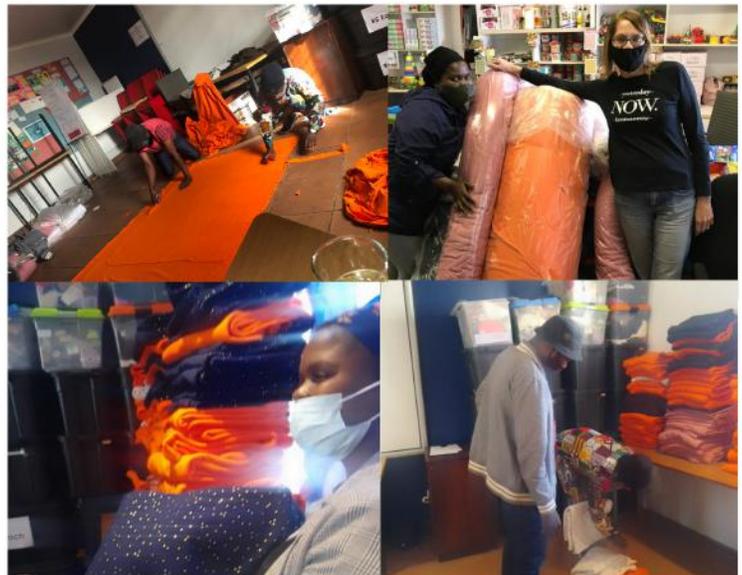
Four pre-schools have been added to the Rise Against Hunger feeding program, which means that an additional 121 children have a more substantial and nutritious lunch.

Four pre-schools have been added to the JAM feeding program which means that an additional 108 children receive porridge when they arrive at pre-school in the morning.

It won't be long until we reach our goal of **all children receiving two meals a day at pre-school.**

Fleece material donation

The students from the UCT Built Environment Department very generously raised funds for fleece material to be donated to True North in August. We then employed several community members to stitch the material into blankets. They did a fabulous job and this donation will enable 79 children to each have their own warm, child sized blanket at their pre-school.



We continue to resource our pre-schools through the Community Currency Shop and through the distribution of donations so that we reach our goal of **15 pre-schools having 80-100% of educational resources to run a quality program and 14 pre-schools having 60-80%**

Woman's Day event

Vrygrond ECD forum hosted a special Women's day event where there was much laughter, dance and fun.

Mymoena Scholtz from 'Where Rainbows Meet' blessed them all with chocolates and juice.



We love it when the ECD Forum runs with their special initiatives and we know that it is only a matter of time before we see the fruition of the goal of the **ECD forum executive and local True North staff members coordinating 100% of the training, support and resourcing activities.**

Be a research partner of The Children's Institute to gain further insight into safety, participation and inclusion from the perspective of children, parents and ECD practitioners.

Our Research project with the Children's Institute really kicked off this term with formalising the Advisory group for the community case study. Our first Advisory

group meeting happened in September and it was so energising to be in a room with a group of people with so much knowledge, experience and passion.

Our dynamic Advisory group consists of:

- Zaid, from the Butterfly Art Project
- Mymoena, from Where Rainbows Meet
- Nathan, from Living Hope
- Errol, from Siyakhula
- Faranaaz, Chairperson of ECD Forum
- Sellina, from Little Angels Educare
- Nonkosi, Chairperson of The Vrygrond Development Trust
- Leigh and Nyami, from True North

The research project will be conducted over a period of three years (2020 - 2023), with the focus being on the key concepts of safety, inclusion and participation in early learning.

Highlights

Bright Morning Star is a shining light

We are so proud of Doris and all the staff at Bright Morning Star (BMS). ✨ This special [video](#) which was shared on Espresso Morning Show - SABC 3 shows the love, nurture and learning that the children receive at BMS. The focus of the video is the incredible organisation, The Sprightly Seed, who has established a beautiful vegetable garden at Bright Morning Star.



We wish to acknowledge many of the other role players who are instrumental in supporting Doris at Bright Morning Star. Breadline Africa for the beautiful building, The Lunchbox Fund for providing lunch and Tokai Lions club for providing breakfast porridge, Sam and Colleen in collaboration with Chic Mamas Do Care for supporting BMS by funding some of their operational costs and resources, to all our funders who supported us in developing the staff through training and

providing access to resourcing and on-going support. This is a wonderful example of how working collaboratively really impacts the lives of children! 💙

Little Sunshine registration

After years of training, hard work, the completion of a major building project, and much patience, we are so pleased to announce that Little Sunshine Educare has finally been registered with the Department of Social Development. Portia Solomons is an incredible example of a passionate dedicated leader and her staff have the same passion for nurturing and teaching the children who attend Little Sunshine. This is an excellent accomplishment, well done Portia!



Working towards our goal of **15 out of 29 pre-schools (51%) being fully registered with the Department of Social Development.**

Come One Come All pre-school build

After several years of planning and approvals, the second phase of the Come One Come pre-school build began in August and is currently nearing completion. Principal Nicolette Lilielveld had added a brick classroom in 2017 but was unable to complete the project. Fortunately Newkidz on the Block and Shoprite assisted her in finishing this first phase in 2018.

However space was still limited and an additional classroom, kitchen and office was needed. Consent Use (Zoning) was applied for from the City, building plans were submitted and in 2021 funding for the second phase of the project was made possible by generous donors who supported an initiative led by Nicky and Johnny Sheridan who ran 21km and 42km respectively to raise funds! The funds were disbursed to True North via our partner Chic Mamas. Thank you to all the donors, Nicky, Johnny and the Chic Mamas team for making this project possible. We look forward to sharing more information and photos of the completed building, in our final quarterly report but in the meantime here is a [short video](#) from Principal Nicolette.

We are on our way towards our goal of **facilitating the completion of 4 building projects, so that 15 out of 29 pre-schools have established buildings which are safe and conducive to learning.**

Challenges

Fire in Overcome Heights

We are saddened by the fire in Overcome Heights on the 18th September. Our prayers are with all the families who have lost their home and their belongings. We are grateful for our relationship with Chic Mamas Do Care and for their donation of clothing and their love and care for the community. Samantha and Christine, from Overcome Educare, are well positioned to effectively coordinate the distribution of the clothing donation which was gladly received by many of the fire victims.



Stimulus funding for pre-schools

The greatest disappointment this year has been the promise of Stimulus funding from the Department of Social Development (DSD). 25 pre-school principals dedicated a huge amount of time, and some even outlaid money (that they didn't have) on travel and bank fees, so that they could apply for funding that would assist them with paying their staff who have worked under tremendous pressure through the pandemic, and many of them at a heavily reduced salary.

Five pre-schools received the Stimulus funds and they are the same five who are registered and receive government subsidy. Sadly the pre-schools who need it the most have been excluded thus far. In August, three other unregistered pre-schools received a visit from a DSD monitor who was sent to assist; those three pre-school principals have heard nothing back from the monitor and have not received any funds to date. The other 17 pre-school principals seem to have been completely forgotten.

Conclusion

It's been another fruitful term and we have so much to be excited about. Each one of you plays a special part in making all of this possible. Thank you!

The True North Team