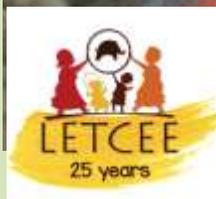


# LETCEE ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21



Compiled by  
Mary James  
Director



## Message from the Director

2020 was a year like no other. When the Covid 19 pandemic hit, and the lockdown was declared, there was no precedent of how ECD could be implemented, or how to ensure the children remained well-fed and healthy. I am immensely proud of how quickly LETCEE was able to implement a home-based programme and to make arrangements for families to receive food parcels.

I would like to pay tribute to the staff who, from the outset, was always prepared to go the extra mile to ensure the packs and food parcels were distributed, and despite their initial fears, were happy to monitor the centres and visit the children to check that they were safe and healthy. To honour their contribution to LETCEE's success in the year the world changed, we have used their voices to share our work.

We hope you enjoy reading the report.

Mary James D.Ed (hc)

## The Year in Numbers

### To provide early stimulation to children

- 3852 children accessed our quality ECD services from 427 ECD facilitators.
- 728 activity packs for children, including 1500 sets of Lego 6 bricks were issued.
- 22476 children's books were distributed
- 1750 different messages with covid education and ideas for activities were each sent to 183 recipients.
- 60 ECD practitioners were enrolled for the National Certificate in ECD at NQF Level 4

### To improve children's well being

- 30 bin bags of warm clothes, with almost 200 beanies were shared with the families
- 253 blankets were given out to keep children warm.
- 150 children received multivitamin syrup as necessary

### To ensure food security for the beneficiary families

- 105 600 meals were served at the 5 centres
- 130 home gardens and 21 community gardens were established and maintained.
- 9,4 tons of fortified porridge meant that all the children ate at every play session.
- During the lockdown, 23 tons of food parcels plus 4 tons of vegetables were distributed.

## Training

LETCEE is accredited to provide training, at NQF Level 4. We also offer skills courses and workshops to improve the quality of crèche and playgroups programmes.



**Zandile Mchunu**, the Training Manager, shares what 2020 was like for her team. “When the Covid crisis hit many students dropped out of their course because they were no longer earning anything. We quickly made a plan to get the learning resources to the students so that they could continue their studies.

Unfortunately, more than 30% of our students dropped out in total. Since January 2021, we have been training as normal, and some of the students have rejoined. 105 students have completed their training during this time, and are awaiting verification before they graduate.”

## Community ECD projects

During 2020, LETCEE’s ECD projects, in 8 communities in the Umvoti local municipal area, enabled 1040 children to access early learning opportunities. Before lockdown, 42 trained facilitators (known as Abahambi) facilitated playgroups twice a week for children 3 years and older, and visit the younger ones at home.

Every child received a bowl of fortified porridge at each playgroup and benefitted from regular visits to a toy library. (Either a fixed structure or a mobile unit)

When the lockdown was announced, we were concerned that the children would miss out on play to learning opportunities, but also socialising and much-needed nutrition. Within days, the staff had permits to work.



**Musa Booyesen**, from the Community Development team, tells more:

“ Covid-19 made me realize that we as the organization can come together as a team and focus on the goal, that every child is taken care of. It was amazing to see that how the younger staff members especially, took the risk to be out in the communities and took on new responsibilities. This passion flows within our team. LETCEE was there every day delivering activity packs for the children, food parcels and establishing food gardens.”



**Poonam Dwarkaram** is the ECD projects manager. Poonam explains how the ECD programmes were able to respond to the new situation very quickly.

The Covid 19 pandemic, came too fast, and we had to very quickly change many things, as well as understanding the Safety and Hygiene protocols, and making the staff aware of these.

We needed to reach the children in their homes, so decided on making activity packs. We packed and distributed over 700 activity packs. These packs included books, Lego 6 brick sets, crayons and activity booklets. Immediately we began sending daily Whats Apps to our facilitators and the caregivers. This was a mix of information on Covid 19, the safety protocols, as well as simple activities for adults to do with their children at home.”

The Toy Librarians made and shared videos of how to make toys, and fun activities to do together.

**Lindelwe Zakhwe**, one of the Toy Librarians, made a lot of toys and educational materials out of waste and recorded weekly videos to encourage caregivers to keep playing with the children. She says “It was the hardest time in my life. Being isolated really got to me. The only highlight was realising how creative I can be. I made so many lovely resources out of waste and I surprised myself with how good I am.”

#### Mobile Toy Library in Action



## Children's Centres

LETCEE runs 5 centres in the Umvoti area. The Barracks in Greytown, Sgedlane, Upper Thulini, Nseleni, and Potspruit. At the start of lockdown, the ECD activities were put on hold, and we distributed food parcels to the families of the 160 children who had been receiving meals daily. After a few weeks, at the request of the caregivers and community committees, we resumed providing meals. Now we needed to include all the children who were not receiving a meal through the Schools' feeding scheme. As children fetched their food, the staff were able to monitor the well being and health of the children. Fortified porridge, provided by the Lunchbox Fund, continued to be distributed to families.



## Inclusive ECD



The Play AblePick Up project reached 23 children with disabilities or special needs. During the year, Sbu visited the children at their homes and facilitated a play session together with the parents and the siblings. During the lockdown, he dropped toys and food parcels at the gate, so that the children did not miss out.

Sbu says: "The pandemic really hindered my work. I have to be close to the children. Also, I wasn't able to transport them to their therapy sessions. It was horrible!"

Since January 2021 LETCEE has employed an experienced physiotherapist who joins Sbu when possible. Working together with the rehabilitation team from the local hospital, they ensure that the children receive therapy to improve their condition and access the necessary adaptive equipment. We are pleased with how the project is breaking down the stigma of disability in the communities. Instead of hiding their child away, more and more families are coming forward wanting to join playgroups and seeking stimulation for their children.

## Food gardens

During the year, LETCEE worked hard to improve family food security, especially as the pandemic affected income negatively. There are now 130 home gardens and 17 community gardens, providing food for the children and their families. Families have shared the significant impact the gardens have had, with families harvesting to feed the family, and even selling the surplus for extra income.



## SmartStart Programme

LETCEE has been a SmartStart franchisor since. In 2020 we had oversight of the 360 playgroup facilitators in Msinga and Pomeroy. The playgroups provided access to early learning for 1990 young children. All of these children benefitted from a bowl of fortified porridge at each play session. We know that full tummies mean active bodies and brains!

**Nomcebo Sithole**, the Smart Start lead, shares the impact of Covid on this work. "Covid- 19 had a devastating effect on our programme. Many playgroups closed down and it is very hard to re-open them. When the time came and I had to call my team back into the field I was worried that they were too scared to go. I was very scared myself. To my surprise, they were all keen to do the work and we knew the children needed us. I am very proud of our accomplishment."

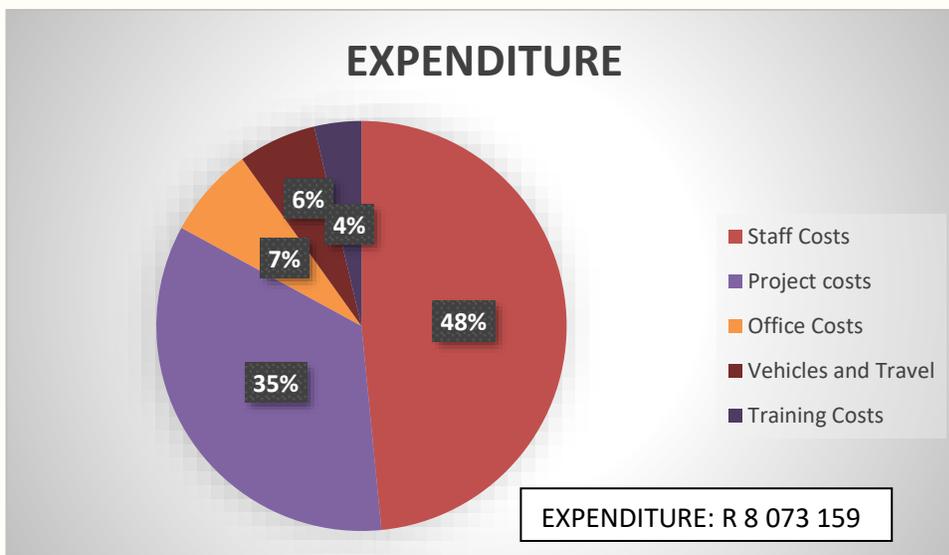
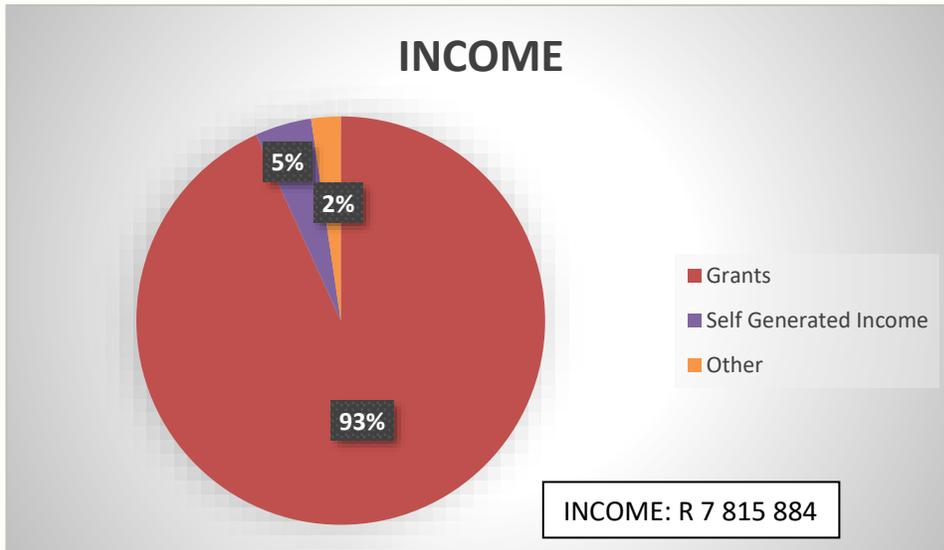


## PowerGirls programme



The PowerGirls Programme focuses on empowering and developing young girls, aged 9-16years, from disadvantaged backgrounds to live a positive, responsible life. It is a national programme developed and supported Kinderfonds Mamas. This year, we had 3 groups with 48 girls in each group, situated in Greytown, Sangweni and Njengabantu.

## Financial Report



## Our Partners

**We are grateful to all our partners and friends, supporting our work.**

Kinderfonds Mamas

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HCI Foundation

SmartStart

Oppenheimer Memorial Trust

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| NCT Forestry         | LA Hill Farming    | Greytown Junior School          |
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## Thank You!

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