

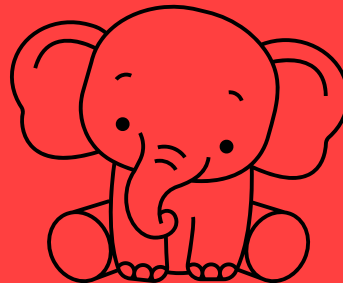
LETCEE

Annual Report

Little Elephant Training
Centre for Early
Education



2022 - 2023



A Word from the Chairperson

The 2022/2023 year brought on the challenge of change for LETCEE as it embraced its life as a valued and respected 30-year-old member of the ECD community, fully 'adulthood' for the first time without the watchful guidance of its co-founder, Dr Mary James.

Despite a fluid handover, a difficult environment and new roads needed to be traversed from the get-go. Whilst these difficulties were being systematically addressed and overcome, what became remarkably clear to us as the non-executive team was the extreme resilience, dedication, and talent of the LETCEE family. There is a deeply entrenched culture which I believe is the key ingredient that ensures both LETCEE's continued successes, and its commitment to young children and their associated communities. I would therefore like to thank the executive directors for their hard-work and the associated sacrifices that were made in steadying the ship, whilst congratulating the greater LETCEE team for their devotion and passion in playing the incredibly important role of implementing LETCEE's core role of bringing positive change to the lives of the young children in the greater Umvoti community.

Unfortunately, LETCEE's work is never done, and as the organisation continues to bring new innovations and developments in its commitment to its role, I hope that the report gives you some insight into the organisation's reach and progress that is being made on the ground. Enjoy the read.



Colin Corbishley

The year in Numbers

To provide stimulating early learning

- We support 300 ECD practitioners
- Who offer playgroups for more than 4000 Children
- 99 new enrolments for NQF level 4 ECD training
- 223 trainees in progress in NQF level 4 training
- Over 4500 Children visited Toy Libraries
- 44 Workshops held for ECD practitioners
- 15 huge bags of toys distributed
- 19 000 Book Dash books distributed

To improve children's wellbeing

- 462 big bags of warm clothes and blankets distributed
- 26 Caregiver workshops given

To ensure food security

- 38 040 kg of porridge delivered
- 40 Food parcels to families in distress
- 20 ha Vegetable gardens
- 5 Irrigation systems installed
- 40 000 Seedlings distributed
- 171087 plates of food

To improve ECD practitioners' well-being

- 161 ECD practitioners received training in self-care.
- 950 in-service support visits to trained ECD practitioners



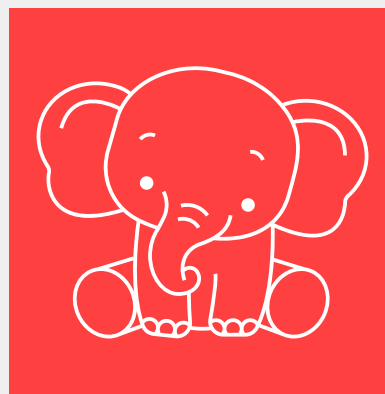
Seta Accredited Training NQF Level 4 ECD

In 2022, LETCEE achieved a significant milestone by enrolling 99 new students in our NQF Level 4 training program. This remarkable increase in enrollment demonstrates the growing recognition of the value and excellence we offer in education. It also reflects the dedication of our team to attract, engage, and nurture a motivated cohort of learners who are keen on enhancing their skills and knowledge in ECD. With the enrollment of 99 new students in 2022, LETCEE's NQF Level 4 training program now serves a total of 223 students. 66 of these students should have graduated but due to the Covid 19 crisis and the long closing period, the moderation and certification process was delayed.

Throughout the year, our NQF Level 4 training program has been characterized by several key highlights:

- Our experienced trainers have continued to provide high-quality instruction that combines theoretical knowledge with hands-on practical experience.
- The curriculum remains dynamic and responsive to trends, ensuring that our students are equipped with relevant and up-to-date knowledge.
- LETCEE's commitment to a supportive learning environment has been further enhanced through personalized guidance and mentorship

The Department of Higher Education informed us that the SETA ECD training qualification will move to the QCTO system. LETCEE has been taking relevant steps to make the change by submitting the relevant documents and applications and our ECD training Manager has been trained as a Master Trainer to prepare for the new qualification.





Non-centre based ECD programs

Our Abahambi Playgroups have been instrumental in providing early learning opportunities for children aged birth to 5 years old. We are proud to share that we successfully facilitated 42 playgroups, fostering a supportive and stimulating environment for 887 children to explore, discover, and develop essential skills. LETCEE has started its home visits again after a long break due to Covid-19. The Abahambi support families with children aged birth to 2 years old. The program has empowered caregivers with the tools and knowledge needed to provide nurturing environments that stimulate healthy growth and cognitive development. Throughout the year, our Non-centre- based program has been characterized by several key highlights:

- Distribution of 22 wonderful hanging libraries to improve early literacy levels donated by Bilionef.
- ELOM (Early Learning Outcome Measure) and child progress assessments using the new Grow App were done to evaluate the progress of our children and therefore the program's impact. Areas of concern (Fine motor coordination and numeracy) were addressed.
- 19 000 Book Dash books were distributed to children to keep for good, as a start of home libraries to improve literacy levels and an appreciation for books
- 1 playgroup managed to register as an NPO with the Department of Social Development
- 2 trainers went to Lego training and big boxes of Lego were distributed.



Centre based ECD programs

In Centre-Based Early Childhood Development, LETCEE continues to open the pathways of growth and learning for young minds. Operating across five centres, we have remained steadfast in our mission to provide a nurturing environment where 87 young children can flourish. Our commitment to holistic development is exemplified through initiatives such as fortified porridge for breakfast, ensuring vital nutrition for the start of the day, as well as the provision of balanced, cooked meals for lunch, promoting healthy growth.

Throughout the year, our centre-based programme has been characterized by several key highlights:

- For Mandela Day the centres' playgrounds and jungle gyms were revamped
- Vegetable gardens for each centre were established or improved upon
- The Izingane Zethu Centre at the barracks in Greytown was able to continue feeding over 100 school-going children with healthy breakfasts and lunches.
- The afterschool programme at the Izingane Zethu Centre was re-started, supporting school-going children with homework and extra classes.

Toy Libraries

LETCEE supported 4 stationed Toy Libraries and only 2 mobile toy libraries this year. One mobile Toy Library was put on hold due to restricted funding available. None the less, we reached over 1000 children, 298 Caretakers and 42 ECD practitioners. Plans are in place to reactivate the mobile Toy Library for the next financial year.

This successful program provides play and early learning resources to children in hard-to-reach places, in our communities. The mobile toy libraries also provide awareness amongst the caregivers about the importance of early learning, good nutrition and monitoring the child's progress. Many children attending Toy Libraries, will play with their first toys, read their first books or do their first puzzle.

Throughout the year, our Toy Library programme has been characterized by several key highlights:

- Reading clubs for extra literacy were established
- The stationed Toy Library in Matimatolo was beautifully repainted by the Deutsche Schule Hermannsburg
- Together with TLASA we raised awareness about the importance of play in over 480 adults and over 3600 children on World Play Day



Play – Able Programme

The Play-Able project catered for 24 children with special needs and their families. The project beneficiaries grow and develop along three pathways, Inclusive Playgroups, Interdisciplinary Rehab, and Psychosocial Support.

Some of the key highlights were:

- We established a close partnership with the local school for special needs, Buhlebomvoti. Even our profoundly disabled beneficiaries will now be able to enter school when they graduate from ECD at age 6.
- We work hand in hand with a specialized unit of the Department of Education that consists of highly qualified educational psychologists, physiotherapists, OT, speech therapists and an educational specialist. Together we make sure that all of our children get what they need and deserve.
- Our wonderful relationship with the Rehab-Team of Greytown Hospital continued and our children can enjoy multi-disciplinary health care.



Community Development

The Community Development Team of LETCEE continued to implement a multi-faceted program that consists of foodsecurity and nutrition provisions, social services, and capacity building in communities. These activities strengthen a community fit for children.

Some of the key highlights were:

- 25 community gardens were maintained to provide nutritious food to children and income generation through selling the surplus
- 45 home gardens were supported for food security
- When the April floods set the Potspruit community underwater, food parcels and blankets were distributed to 40 families. Potable water was provided and counselling took place.
- Vegetable tunnels, irrigation systems and fences were erected
- Some gardens achieved sustainability as they started buying their own seedlings to continue to produce vegetables.



SmartStart

We continued our partnership with SmartStart a national, social franchise with its head office based in Johannesburg. SmartStart's and LETCEE's missions align to ensure that every young child has access to quality early learning programmes in preparation for the opportunities ahead. LETCEE supports the 3rd largest SmartStart branch in South Africa which grew to over 3600 young children this year.

Some key highlights were:

- 2600 Kick-off packs were distributed
- The team attended the UNITE event in Johannesburg and brought back lovely awards.



PowerGirls Programme

Going into its 4th year now the PowerGirls programme is an initiative that aims to empower young girls from underprivileged communities and equip them with the necessary skills to pursue their dreams. We maintained four active groups of 48 girls in each group, situated in Greytown, Sangweni, Eshane, and Njengabantu. A total of 192 girls participated in wonderful weekly sessions. The project offers a range of activities and resources to girls aged 9 to 16.

Some of the key highlights were:

- Workshops on perseverance
- Mentorship on mindfulness and positive thinking
- Distribution of materials on responsibilities and healthy choices
- The girls went on a field trip to Pietermaritzburg and engaged in fun activities
- A ceremony for the “First Badge” took place as a special award.

Boys Programme

LETCEE is running the boys' program as a pilot project this year. This initiative seeks to support 24 young boys and help them grow into responsible men. The project provides mentorship, life skills training and educational support to boys from disadvantaged backgrounds. We work with boys from ages 9 to 16. The project is implemented on a community level and it is run by a team of 2 trained mentors.

Some key highlights were:

- The programme was influxed with boys who wanted to attend, showing a high demand for such programmes.
- Selection of the 24 boys enrolled in the programme was difficult as there was a flood of boys wanting to join.
- A Workshop that covered communication skills, financial literacy and leadership.



Operation Impact

Operation Impact is a support programme that bridges the mathematics and language skills gap for learners in grades R–3 who are struggling in these subjects. The programme began as a trial with 4 schools and 100 students this year. All activities and tasks given to learners are aligned with the CAPS curriculum.

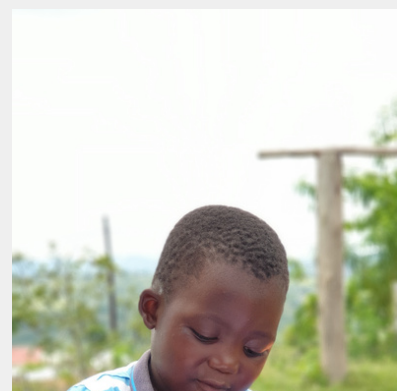
Some key highlights were:

- While the programme is still in its early stages, it is showing promising outcomes.
- Since the programme is offered after school, the participating learners receive a snack before they start the session.

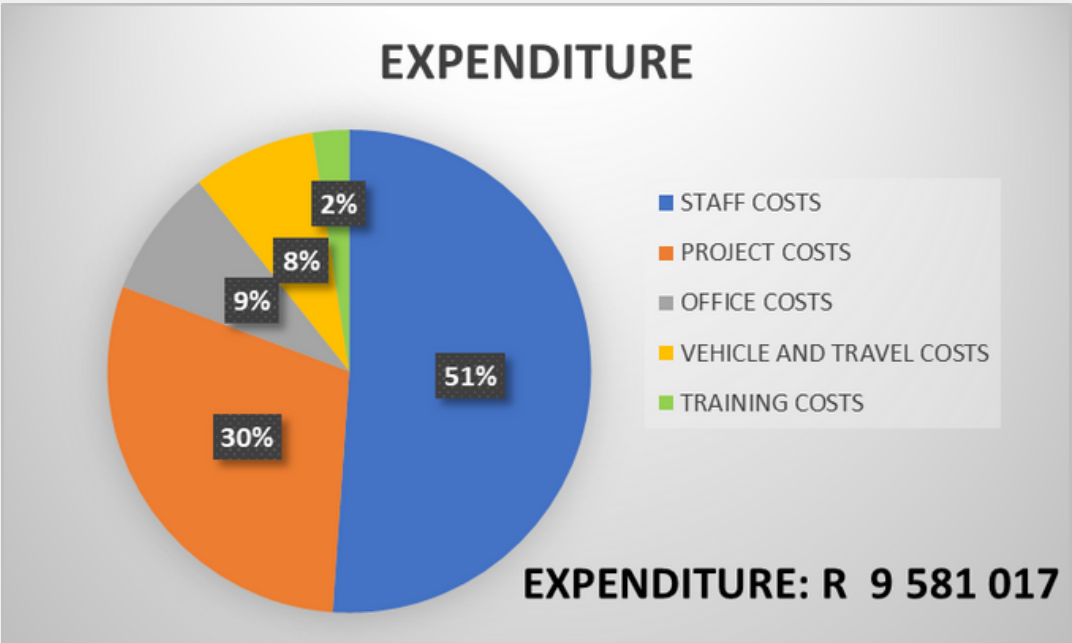
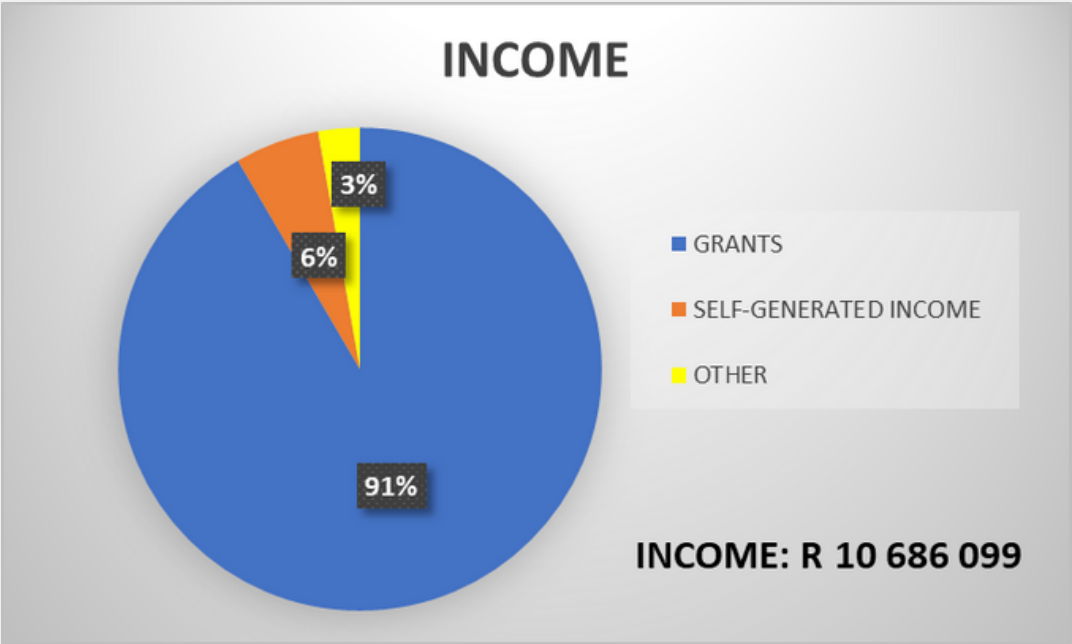
Challenges

LETCEE NPO faced a number of challenges in 2022 and 2023, including:

- Increased cost of living. The rising cost of living made it difficult for LETCEE NPO to operate on its existing budget. The cost of food, transportation, and other essential goods and services increased significantly in 2022 and 2023, which put a strain on LETCEE NPO's resources. Decreased and delayed contributions from funders put a strain on LETCEE's finances. We are happy to say the situation has normalized during the course of the year and funding exceeded our hopes.
- In 2022, LETCEE NPO welcomed a new Managing Director, Poonam Dwarkaram. She brought a wealth of experience in the ECD sector to LETCEE, and she played a key role in helping the organization adapt to the challenges of the rising cost of living. However, Mrs. Dwarkaram resigned from her position on February 1, 2023, which created some uncertainty for the organization. LETCEE board of directors and staff were able to quickly step up to fill the gap and ensure that the organization continued to operate smoothly.



Financials



Partners, Funders and Friends

We would like to thank our current funders and partners for their generous support.

Kinderfonds Mamas	HCI Foundation	SmartStart
Oppenheimer Memorial Trust	Grindrod Family Centenary Trust	Jim Joel Fund
VW	Izingane Happy Foundation	Lunchbox Fund
IQRAA Trust	Victor Daitz Foundation	Credit Guarantee
OMSVFT	Scot Bader	Investec
National Lottery Commission	Care for Education	MONDI SA
NCT	NECDA	Ackerman Pick n Pay Foundation
RTS Greytown	First Rand First Jobs	BookDash
BiblioneF	Wordworks	Plennegy
Sunshine Seedlings	CPS Seedlings	BlueCrest Holdings





THANK YOU


LETCEE NPO is a beacon of hope for children and families in KwaZulu-Natal. Despite the challenges that the organization faced in 2022 and 2023, LETCEE remained committed to providing high-quality ECD services to the children and families it serves.

We are grateful for the support of our funders, partners, and staff. With their help, LETCEE can make a real difference in the lives of children and families in need.

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