

Focus on iThemba

End of Year Report - 2022

Focus on iThemba (RF) NPC is an accredited non-profit, public benefit (18A) organisation - a place of Hope
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FOCUS ON ITHEMBA
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PUBLIC BENEFIT ORGANISATION (PBO) NO. 930003051

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#OurVisionMissionandGoals



OUR VISION

Growing Hearts and Minds.

OUR MISSION

To be a catalyst for contagious joy by providing bridges of hope for life-altering positive change by investing in children through quality education.

OUR GOALS

- To identify and collaborate with **Friends and Donors** with common passions and connect them with our programmes and initiatives to experience the contagious joy of giving.
- To expand our elevating **iThemba Educare Programme** to ensure more young children receive quality age-appropriate education within their first 2000 days and beyond.
- To engage with our community by **sharing knowledge**, building partnerships and thereby uplifting the Pre-Schools we partner with.
- To expand our life-changing **iThemba Scholars Programme** to broaden the opportunity for previously disadvantaged boys and girls to attend Waterfall Schools and to guide them through their educational journey.
- To continue to support our iThemba foster children in our **Esther Model** with their schooling and living costs up to Grade 12 by providing professional support.
- To continue to create an **indigenous haven** for flora and fauna on the iThemba Campus.
- **To halve the carbon footprint** of our iThemba Campus by the year 2025.
- To ensure the organisation is **sustainable** over the long term and to prioritise effective communication with our Friends and Donors.

MESSAGE FROM OUR TEAM LEADER



Dear friends, donors and partners,

On behalf of the iThemba team and board members, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to you for your partnership in 2022 and the life changing impact we have made together. It was a remarkable year to reflect upon our growth and achievements across our programmes in the educational space. Focus on iThemba is celebrating our 20 year founding anniversary this year, an outstanding milestone to reach in the NPO sector. It is our privilege to be facilitating positive change together with you, and to have the wisdom and strategic guidance from our founders and board members.

Our highlights from last year includes seeing our two new iThemba Scholars settle in so well in Grade 0000, our first Grade 8 iThemba Scholars at Waterfall College, Project Star's phase 2 which includes the third classroom delivery; a variety of teacher and principal training, expanding outside of KZN and into the Western Cape; celebrating our founders on the iThemba Campus, and the successful parenting workshop in our partner Pre-Schools. Our partner on the iThemba Campus, Waterfall Schools, started the construction of the SALT Centre (Science, Art, Language and Technology) for the Prep students. I look forward to seeing our iThemba Scholars enjoying this new addition to their academic journey.

I look forward to continuing our partnership and together make a lasting impact in quality education for the leaders of tomorrow. We have exciting goals and projects planned which I look forward to sharing with you. Thank you once again for your support, together we are stronger.

Yours in making a difference,

Tayla-Anne Goss
Focus on iThemba Team Leader



Reaching an extraordinary milestone



2023 marks our 20th founding anniversary! A milestone of this great significance requires a response of genuine humility and appreciation. It serves as an opportunity to reflect on the last two decades and take stock of all the lives that have been impacted over this time, heartfully honouring the friends, donors and partners who have played an instrumental role in helping us achieve this.

We look towards the future with hope and anticipation of the many great things to follow!

On behalf of our Founders, Board Members and Team, we say THANK YOU!



2022: OUR YEAR IN REVIEW



Our iThemba Educare Programme expanded into the Western Cape.



Our eldest iThemba Scholars started Grade 8 at Waterfall College.



Project Star received their third container classroom - allowing them to increase their numbers.



Honoured the legacy of our founders at the unveiling of the Legacy Standing Stone on the iThemba Campus.



Facilitated quality education to 662 children through our Educare and Scholars Programmes.



Increased conservation efforts on Campus through the installation of water purification stations, removal of alien vegetation and asbestos roofing in old buildings.



Celebrated 10 years of partnership with the two first ECD Centres who joined our iThemba Educare Programme in 2012.



Provided flood relief support to our Programme's beneficiaries and the wider community.

iTHEMBA EDUCARE PROGRAMME

CELEBRATING TEN YEARS OF INVESTING IN THE FIRST FIVE YEARS

We cannot believe how quickly 10 years has gone and how in this time our iThemba Educare Programme has gone from strength to strength. Our journey first began with Siyjabula Pre-School and Embo Child Educare Centre who at the time were simply offering child-minding services to the local community of Embo but had the deep desire to expand the minds of the children in their care. Through a shared belief that every child has potential and deserves access to quality education, our blossoming partnership took root and has produced an abundance of fruit over the passing years. Apart from empowering and upskilling their teachers through training and other development initiatives, our involvement in the growth of these two schools has included: facilitating a structural renovation for Siyjabula, introducing them to GROW with Educare Centres and encouraging them to adopt GROW's curriculum, on-going mentorship, guidance and monitoring, and selecting a number of their children to join our iThemba Scholars Programme. Not only do both schools provide a valuable ECD service to the Embo community today, but they have respectively opened up a Grade R and Foundation Phase schooling facility as well.

In honour of this significant milestone, our Team enjoyed a small celebration at both schools where cake and juice was enjoyed by all.

A NEW BEGINNING - EXPANDING INTO THE WESTERN CAPE

In 2019, our Founders, Danie and Judy van den Heever, took the decision to relocate to Knysna in the Western Cape. Carrying the spirit of Focus on iThemba in their hearts, Danie and Judy soon identified the opportunity to provide hope and meaningful change to the under-served community, once again through the vehicle of quality education. As believers in Early Childhood Development (ECD) and its fundamental role in shaping and strengthening the minds of children, their focus was steered towards an ECD Centre in the Bongani Community called Bongani Pre-School.

Providing an essential service to the young and growing minds of the Bongani Community in Knysna Western Cape, is Bongani Pre-School. This endearing little Pre-School has been fostering an environment of learning for a number of years and has taken up much room in the hearts of Bongani residents over this time. The School, which has capacity for 120 children, is steered by a team of amazing women and qualified teachers who share a passion for education and possess a unique set of skills that promote the holistic development of the growing minds in their care. Boasting a richness in cultural diversity and abounding in character and personality, any visit to them is a memorable and heart-warming experience. Although children come from different language backgrounds, the School believes in exposing learners to the benefit of speaking multiple languages and as such, has adopted an English based curriculum to promote the learning of this universal language.

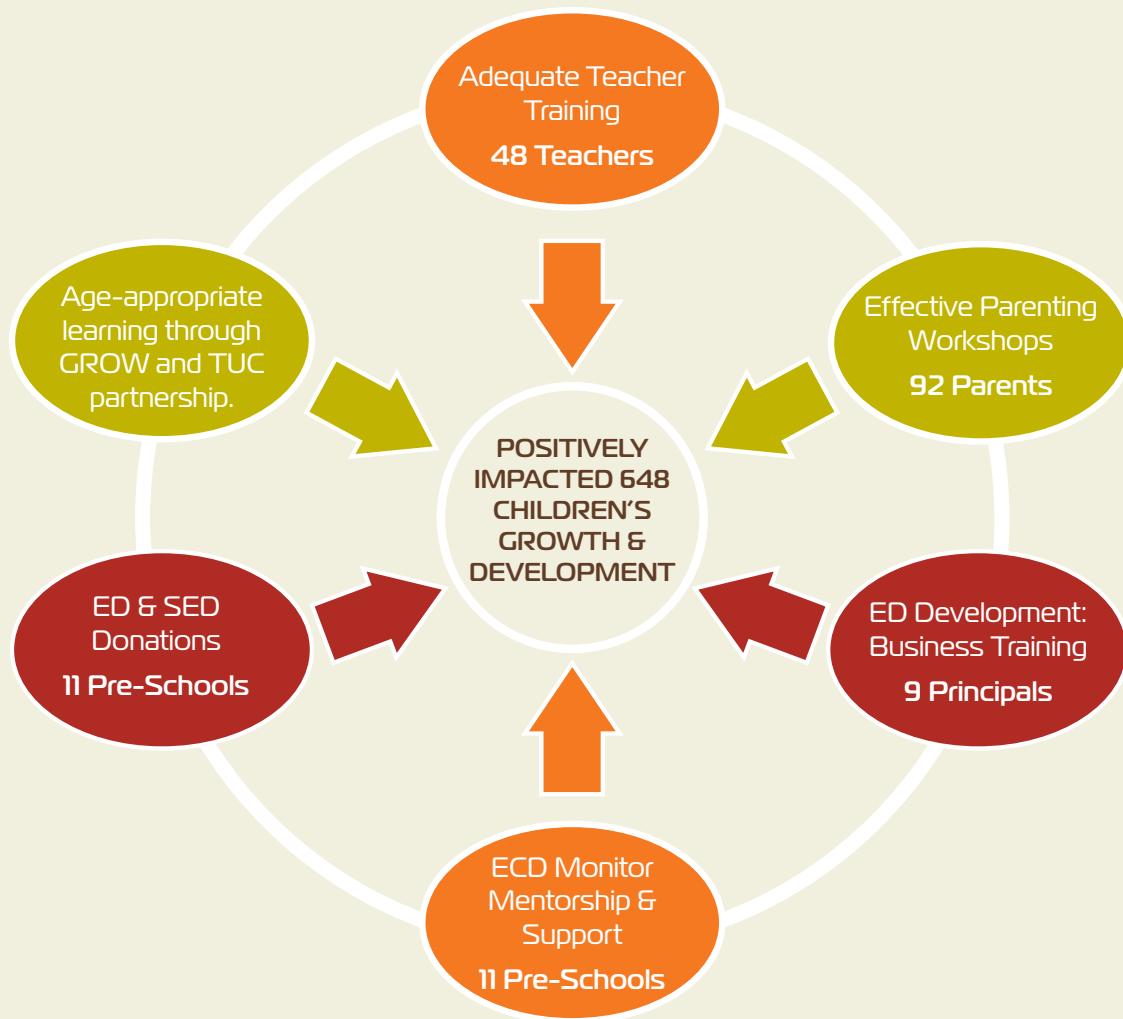
Taking on the role of oversight and ownership, Focus on iThemba helps steer the systems and operations of Bongani Pre-School by offering direction, guidance and leadership. This new model of operation allows us the opportunity to appoint a director, principal and school administrator as key role-players in the running of a sustainable community Pre-School. Further to this, the property on which the school is based is in the name of Focus on iThemba.

In affiliation with the Knysna Education Trust (KET), a Knysna based Non-Profit Organisation who shares our belief in investing in early learning initiatives, we ensure that quality teaching is taking place through the regular monitoring and mentoring of a KET field monitor.



iTHEMBA EDUCARE PROGRAMME CONT.

Demonstrating an appreciation for the significance of supporting a child's social, emotional and cognitive development in their most formative years, our Educare Programme adopts an integrated approach to Early Childhood Development which involves multiple areas of influence. The illustration below indicates our Educare Programme's direct reach in 2022.



A big achievement this year has been a handful of teachers completing their NQF Level 4 Course at NELRU. This is an intensive 18 month course that requires a lot of focus and commitment from teachers. Having this qualification means teachers are more experienced and better equipped to foster a learning environment that promotes high-quality Early Childhood Development.

We also saw this Programme produce two Scholars from Siyabaphephisa Pre-School for the iThemba Scholars Programme 2023 scholarship intake. At selection, these boys were only two years old showing the value of a well-run early learning programme like the one Siyabaphephisa offers.

Our partnership with Focus on the Family Africa is reaching more and more parents. Nearly 100 parents, most of whom are single and unemployed, benefited from learning about how to raise and support capable, well-adjusted children. There is a great need for this in the community which is why this number is significant.

Busisiwe Khumalo - iThemba Educare Programme Monitor

iTHEMBA SCHOLARS PROGRAMME

The continuous growth of this Programme never ceases to amaze us. From an operational standpoint, the Programme pioneered its first year of taking in children from the age of 2 years old to start their education at Waterfall Pre-Primary earlier in Grade 0000. The benefit of this decision was seen in the advancements the two children made throughout the course of the year as starting them earlier allowed them to adjust to an English based learning environment much sooner resulting in their language skills developing faster.

Another operational milestone that 2022 held was having our first and eldest iThemba Scholars start their final years of schooling in Grade 8 at Waterfall College. These two children have helped pave the way for their younger peers by demonstrating the qualities and attributes of an iThemba Scholar.

While there is great significance in celebrating the operational successes of this Programme, there is even greater significance in acknowledging the annual growth of every child. A few noteworthy achievements include: Junior Half-colours for Drum Majorettes, being selected to participate in KZN provincial hockey trials and participating in various cultural events. There was also much to boast on the academic front with one of our Prep Scholars advancing to the second round of a Maths Olympiad.



IN 2022

14 SCHOLARS
GR 0000 - 8

4 At Waterfall
Pre-Primary

8 At Waterfall
Preparatory

2 At Waterfall
College

10 GIRLS

4 BOYS

Our fourteen iThemba Scholars, spread throughout the three Waterfall Schools across the campus, have certainly done us proud as they navigated the devastating floods which crippled the region and endured many hours in the dark due to load shedding, to maintain good academic progress enabling them to transit to the next grade in their educational journey.

As is common in every child's developmental patterns, there have been ups and downs, but the commitment of the teachers and the positive interventions made by our Social Worker, Lunga Mazeka, have equipped the scholars with the skills they need to navigate these seasons in their lives.

The two youngest scholars joined us in Grade 0000 at the Pre-Primary. This has been a wonderful experience for these children as they developed early learning skills and benefited from exposure to English on a daily basis. We shall continue to identify children suitable to join our programme in Grade 0000 each year through a multi-disciplined approach involving our ECD Monitor, our Social Worker, and the Principals of our Pre-Schools, the Waterfall Pre-Primary Principal and staff members and myself. Of prime importance is the interest of the parents in securing excellent education for their children.

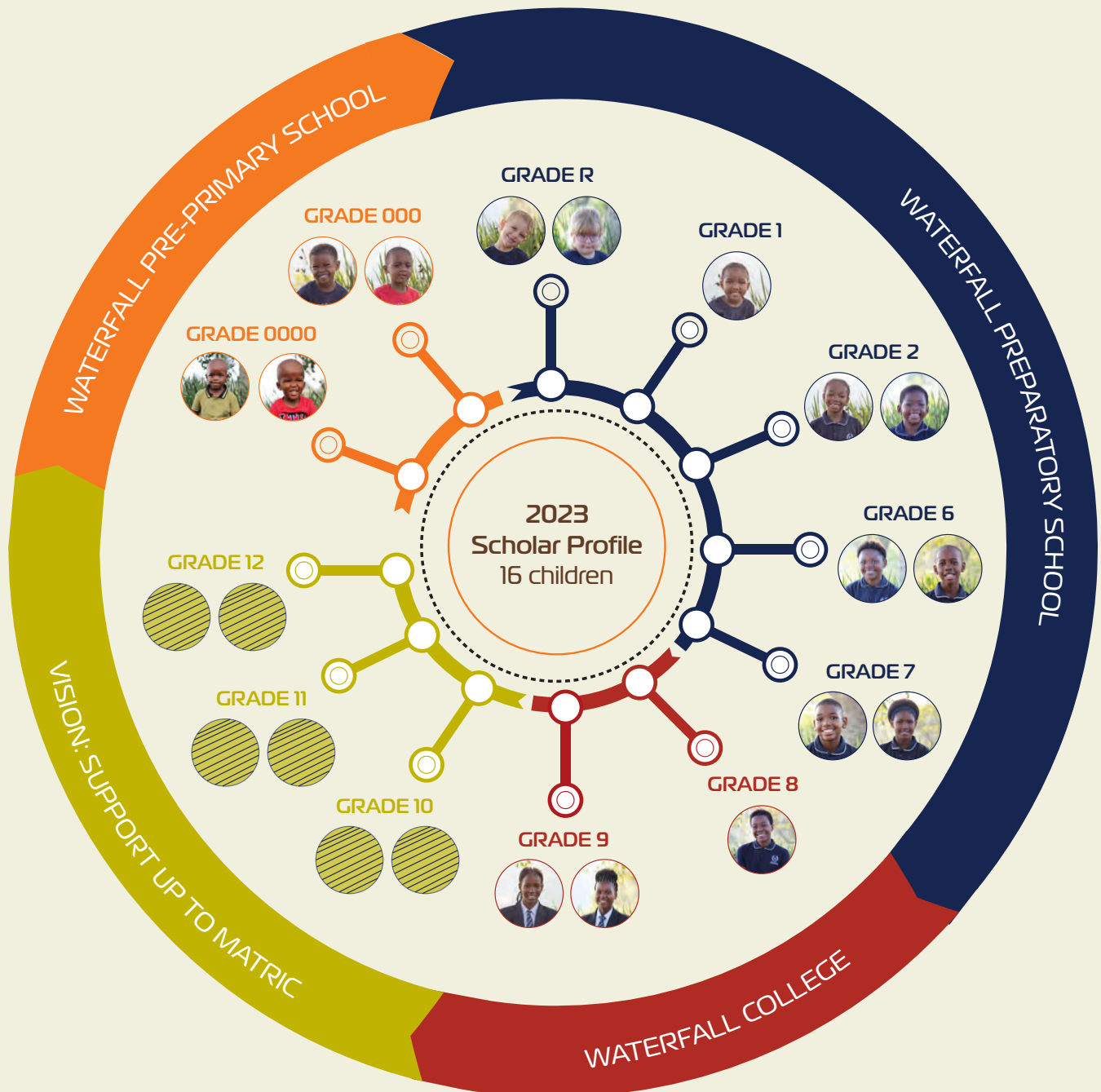
Our iThemba Scholars are being given a wonderful opportunity to excel and we look forward to identifying some future captains of industry to take our beloved country to new heights.

Sharron Lane - iThemba Scholars Programme Manager



iTHEMBA SCHOLARS PROGRAMME CONT.

The below infographic illustrates the educational journey of a Scholar who belongs to our iThemba Scholars Programme and also outlines a profile of the composition of our Programme in 2023.



WHY WATERFALL SCHOOLS

Apart from being our sustainability partners on Campus, the educational offering of Waterfall Schools aligns with our expectations of quality and holistic education, affording our Scholars the opportunity to reach the potential we see in them at a young age. Their philosophy is to nurture each pupil in order to unearth the treasure that lies within. Teachers are carefully selected to ensure that they are the moulders of dreams encouraging the children and young adults in their care to fully participate in the varied academic, outreach, arts and culture, sporting and entrepreneurial programmes on offer.

#MakingALastingDifference



iTHEMBA ESTHER MODEL

For many years our involvement in cluster foster care was a very significant part of who were. Over this time we had the privilege of knowing, loving and caring for 24 orphaned and vulnerable children, providing them with a place of hope, safety and belonging as they navigated through their first few years of life. As the years passed and these children left to pursue life outside of the nest, our focus shifted from providing them a physical home to mentoring, encouraging and supporting them as they journey through the highs and lows of life. Today we remain in touch with most of our beloved iThemba Kids, thanks to the work of our Social Worker, Lunga Mazeka.

iTHEMBA KIDS DEVELOPMENT FUND

The introduction of this Fund has been one of our greatest highlights. Not only has it allowed us to maintain relationships with each of our children, but for those who have benefitted from the Fund, it has added tremendous value and enrichment to their lives.

The Fund aims to support the further development of a former iThemba Kid by contributing financially towards an area of their academic or self improvement. These areas include: education, life skills, health and welfare, arts and culture and sports development. iThemba Kids up to the age of 35 are invited bi-annually to submit an application to the Development Fund Committee for consideration, and if successfully approved, are then provided with the necessary financial support.

In the last year, the Fund contributed towards the following: the cost of several learners and drivers license lessons and tests, several beauty courses, a Teaching English to Foreign Learners (TEFL) course and an advanced course in Writing a Business Plan.

iTHEMBA KIDS CHRISTMAS GATHERING

An event that has become a favourite yearly tradition of ours is the iThemba Kids Christmas Gathering. It is a special time of fellowship where our children get to re-connect, catch-up, reminisce and celebrate Christmas as a family. The gathering this year was made even more special with the honouring of a few iThemba Kids Development Fund graduates.

IN 2022

20 DEVELOPMENT
FUND APPLICATIONS
WERE RECEIVED

11 APPLICATIONS WERE
APPROVED

8 SUCCESSFUL
COMPLETIONS



ITHEMBA CAMPUS

HONOURING THE LIVING LEGACY OF OUR FOUNDERS

Wednesday the 9th of November 2022 will forever be etched in our hearts and minds as a day of great significance. We had the privilege of honouring our founders Danie and Judy van den Heever and the legacy they have built over the years by officially unveiling the Legacy Standing Stone on the iThemba Campus. This feature is symbolic of the humble beginnings of Focus on iThemba and Danie and Judy's unshakable foundation of faith, hope and courage.

With Focus on iThemba celebrating our 20th founding anniversary in 2023, this occasion evoked a deep sense of reflection and appreciation for all that has been achieved over this time, recognising that this journey has been filled with many meaningful moments, and friends, donors and partners who have walked with us along the way.

In 2003 a dream came to fruition for Danie and Judy when their aspiration to facilitate significant change for the youth in the Valley of 1000 Hills was realised through the establishment of Focus on iThemba. Moved by the words of Arthur Ashe, "Start where you are, use what you have, do what you can," Danie and Judy transformed our iThemba Campus into a haven of hope for orphaned and vulnerable children from the Valley. Over the years, and as the children grew older, this vision to make a significant difference broadened to impacting not just the hearts of children but their minds also. This led to the birth of our education based Programmes, the iThemba Educare and iThemba Scholars Programmes. Today we are incredibly blessed to be making a difference to the hearts and minds of so many children.

A sentiment across all the messages shared on the day was how greatly Danie and Judy's vision has impacted the lives of so many, both on and off Campus. Their sizable steps of faith, courage and forward-thinking creativity has successfully steered us through every season, while also reminding us of the significance of humble beginnings.

As we look ahead to the future and imagine the many more opportunities that our amazing Organisation will take to make a difference, we give thanks to our founders for the firm foundation which they have laid.



#PrioritisingConservation

iTHEMBA CAMPUS CONT.

Our beautiful iThemba Campus is situated in Hillcrest, KwaZulu-Natal, with a breath-taking view of the Valley of 1000 Hills. Since the inception of Focus on iThemba in 2003, founders Danie and Judy van den Heever have poured love and intention into stewarding this piece of land and creating a Campus filled with indigenous flora and fauna that is cherished and respected by all those who enjoy the Campus.

Once filled with alien vegetation, this piece of land, 41 acres in size, now hosts a profusion of endemic plants, a protected wetland area, indigenous grasslands and an abundance of birds, insects and reptiles.

Recognising that we have a responsibility to conserve and protect the unique and diverse ecosystem around us, our TreadLightly Philosophy seeks to cultivate a sense of 'Biodiversity Stewardship' both on and off Campus, and to foster an attitude of respect and responsibility towards the environment.

In 2019, Focus on iThemba officially adopted 'Halving the carbon footprint of iThemba Campus by 2025' as one of our Organisation's strategic goals. Since then, conservation efforts have formally been rolled out across Campus beginning with the addition of solar panels on Waterfall Pre-Primary's roof in 2019. Since then, we have also seen the installation of hydration stations across Campus, with the aim of filtering our borehole water and reducing reliance on single-use plastic; the removal of alien invasive vegetation to support soil health and protect indigenous plant life; kitchen waste reduction through bokashi composting systems; and the removal of asbestos roofing in old buildings on iThemba Campus.

Another highlight for Focus on iThemba this year, was receiving an invitation from the Kloof Rotary Anns to showcase our indigenous office garden as part of their Rotary Open Garden Event. Our garden was one of four in the Upper Highway area to be opened to the public, and we so enjoyed the opportunity to share this special place with our community.

Our conservation efforts on Campus form part of a collaborative initiative to create a sustainable future in which we are all aware of our interdependency and relationship with nature, and in which we are all active in adding value to the world around us.

Furthering this thinking of 'Biodiversity Stewardship' off Campus, 2022 also saw our team broaden our conservation responsibilities and efforts to Knysna in the Western Cape, through a partnership with the Knysna Basin Project, an environmentally oriented Non-Profit Organisation that focuses on promoting the conservation of marine life in the Knysna estuary.



What a privilege it is to be the stewards of this unique piece of land! We are humbled by the rich value it adds to the lives of those who learn, play and work here and which spills over into the broader community. Our conservation efforts, stemming from the hearts of our founders, have been embraced with open arms by families and staff across entities on Campus and we are inspired by the chorus of voices adding to this important conversation. We look forward to the open spaces this journey is leading us to, spaces in which we explore the potential of our relationship with iThemba Campus and the natural world around us.

Heather MacGregor - Environmental Campaign Co-ordinator

CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT

We had the pleasure of facilitating the renovation of the Campus Cafe and Kitshop buildings in June 2022. These two businesses provide an important service to our Campus community and are great value add to our Campus offering. Among other things, the renovation involved the removal of asbestos roofing, painting, the installation of new windows and window pains, the installation of concrete flooring and a redesign of the exterior building.



LOOKING TO 2023

Every new year holds another opportunity for us to continue our mission of providing bridges of hope for life-altering positive change by investing in children through quality education. 2023 will have several key moments which we as a team are looking forward to with great anticipation and excitement.

1. The commemoration and celebration of our 20th founding anniversary.
2. Our iThemba Scholars Programme increasing to 16 Scholars ranging from Grade 0000 to Grade 9.
3. Selecting two locally based ECD Centres in the Valley of 1000 Hills area to join our iThemba Educare Programme.
4. Continuing to impact the lives and futures of our iThemba Kids through the continuation of the iThemba Kids Development Fund.
5. Advancing our goal of halving our Campus carbon footprint by the year 2025 by continuing to implement and create awareness around our conservation efforts.
6. The completion and opening of the Science Arts Language and Technology (SALT) Centre on our Campus.
7. Our resident Social Worker expanding her role to include supporting the parents of the children in our iThemba Educare Programme through facilitating parenting workshops.

GIVING OPPORTUNITIES

We would love to partner with you in bringing contagious joy to the lives of SO many! Here are a few ways we can make a difference together.

Focus on iThemba is a Public Benefit Organisation (PBO) which allows donations received to be tax deductible, in addition we are B-BBEE compliant and can assist organisations with Socio-Economic Development (SED) and Enterprise Development (ED) points.

Be in touch for a funding proposal!

tayla@focusonithemba.org



BE A HERO OF HOPE
IN EDUCATION AND
BECOME A MONTHLY
PARTNER OF OURS



INVEST IN EARLY
CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT
BY SUPPORTING OUR
EDUCARE PROGRAMME



SUPPORT QUALITY
EDUCATION THROUGH OUR
SCHOLARS PROGRAMME



BECOME A BONGANI
PRE-SCHOOLPARTNER
CONTACT US FOR MORE INFO



BECOME ONE OF OUR
TRANSFORMATION
PROJECT PARTNERS



JOIN OUR CAMPUS
CONSERVATION &
SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

One of our core strengths is our professional team who have an inherent passion for non-profit work and for making a significant difference to South Africa's youth.

Our Team



* Danie van den Heever
CEO AND FOUNDER



* Gavin Simpkins
STRATEGIC VOLUNTEER



Tayla-Anne Goss
TEAM LEADER



* Sharon Lane
ITHEMBA SCHOLARS
PROGRAMME MANAGER



Lunga Mazeka
FAMILY SERVICES



Shelley Barron
MARKETING &
DONOR RELATIONS



Heather MacGregor
COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT
& ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGN
CO-ORDINATOR



Busie Khumalo
ECD MONITOR



Lene Venter
FINANCE



* Kerry Luyt
BUSINESS MANAGER



Prudence Mbambo
HOUSEKEEPING



Leanne van den Heever
WESTERN CAPE
PROJECT MANAGER

* Part-time

Our Board Members

Danie van den Heever	Focus on iThemba Founder & CEO
Judy van den Heever	Co-Founder & Non Executive Director
Ronel Goosen	Executive Director
Gavin Simpkins	Executive Director
Anthony Gibb	Executive Director
Patrick Tsele	Non Executive Director
Rudi van den Heever	Non Executive Director



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