

Ikamva Labantu

Stories of **Change**



Introduction



It is our great pleasure to introduce you to some of the amazing people that we are proud to work with and support every day.

As we enter our 55th year, we recognise how far South Africa has come since we first started working in townships across the country. We also acknowledge that despite this progress, widespread poverty is still the norm in township communities. Our participants live in volatile areas, rife with abuse, violence and gangsterism, and with limited access to basic services and housing. The need to support these communities is as pressing today as it ever was.

Ikamva Labantu prides itself on working hand-in-hand with active citizens towards our shared vision of strong, sustainable communities. The stories featured in this report illustrate the deeply personal nature of our daily work, and reflect the difference that can be made by simply offering a helping hand to those who are committed to their own development.

2017 was a year of change for Ikamva Labantu, as we adapted and responded to the communities that we serve. With new leadership and new projects underway, we look forward to reaching even more people this year.

We hope that by offering you a glimpse into the lives of those we work with, you can share in the joy of our successes.

Lindiwe Dlakala



Each afternoon, as the school day ended in a rural village in the Eastern Cape, 15-year-old Lindiwe Dlakala would settle down with some homework. It was 1989 and against the backdrop of a country in the grips of Apartheid, she was determined to work towards a more hopeful future. Armed with the knowledge gained during school hours, Lindiwe would tackle homework late into the evening; but it wasn't just her own homework that she was working on.

When the last class of the day ended, Lindiwe transitioned from pupil to teacher. "I used to teach other children after school, because there was no educated person in their home. I would visit the homes of grandmothers in my village and help their grandchildren with their homework."

At just 15 years old, Lindiwe was already setting the groundwork for what would become a lifelong career.

Today, the 44-year-old is Principal at her own pre-school in Khayelitsha. Founded in 2014, Ethembeni Educare cares for 67 children, aged 0-5, from the surrounding area.

Lindiwe's pre-school has been registered for one year now, though the process to reach registration status took almost twice as long.

In South Africa, a pre-school needs to be registered with the Department of Social Development in order to access an early learning subsidy, a form of government funding. But this can be a long process with many delays and challenges. According to provincial government officials, there are about 2,000 unregistered pre-schools in the Western Cape.

To meet the requirements for registration, Ikamva Labantu assisted Lindiwe in upgrading her pre-school. "I had to change all the doors and floors. We needed to have one toilet per 20 children, so I changed the bathrooms too."

For an informal pre-school with no external funding, an exercise like this is often unaffordable, making registration a distant reality for thousands of pre-schools across the country.

But together with Fezeka Sibidla, a community-based worker from Ikamva Labantu, Lindiwe overcame numerous obstacles and received her registration certificate in 2017.

Lindiwe charges just R200 (\$17) a month for school fees, which she uses to pay salaries for her four practitioners. "Sometimes I don't get a salary of my own because I want to satisfy the staff. Our staff only receive R1,500 (\$126) per month."

When she opened the doors to Ethembeni in 2014, Lindiwe looked after 20 children. Today, at almost 70 children, the pre-school is still growing.

Although this is Lindiwe's pre-school, Fezeka has walked the road to registration with her and is equally proud of the outcome. "The place has been transformed. It was not colourful outside before, it was just brick walls. You can see that Lindiwe is using the funding in a good way," she says.

And the changes aren't only physical; the children's learning has improved too. "We have a relationship with the local schools," says Lindiwe. "The teachers come to me and tell me that our children are doing really well – they are writing properly and are at the right stage of development." This is, of course, the ultimate goal for any pre-school; to get children ready for the start of their schooling career.

More than 20 years since Lindiwe first started helping other children with their homework, she is still hard at work, striving towards a better future for South Africa.



Lindiwe took part in the Ikamva Labantu Principals Training programme, learning about leadership and management. Two of her staff members have done the Practitioners Training programme where they learnt practical skills for the classroom and how to engage with children and parents.

Fezeka is a community-based worker who works for the Ikamva Labantu Registration Help Desk; helping principals to navigate the registration process for pre-schools. We have reached 556 community pre-schools through this initiative.

Nandipha Jalavu



Nandipha gave birth to her first child, Mary, when she was 26 years old. When she took her baby to the clinic to check her weight, the nurses noticed that Mary's muscles were not as strong as they should be. "They asked me why my child was not sitting on the scale," says Nandipha "and they said that I should go to the Red Cross Hospital in case there was a problem".

Nandipha did just that, and at 5 months old, Mary was diagnosed with epilepsy and cerebral palsy. As a young, first-time mother, Nandipha all of a sudden had to learn how to care for a child with a disability. With the support of the Red Cross, her sister and later on, her other children, Nandipha and her family have raised a young girl who, despite all her health struggles, is communicative, happy, and exudes love. The first thing that strikes you about Mary is her beaming smile; she greets visitors with arms wide open and a quiet excitement.

Now 16 years old, Mary still sits in the same wheelchair that she was given at the age of four. A brand new wheelchair received just a day earlier sits in the corner, ready to be broken in. But there is little improvement between the two, and the wheels are not designed for the dusty roads of Gugulethu.

Since Mary's birth, caring for her daughter has been a full-time job for Nandipha. Public transport is inaccessible to Mary, so Nandipha has to hire transport to take her to the clinic and to school. Employment has not been an option as there is no one else to care for Mary during the days.

"It has been very hard for me to raise a disabled child. I still have to wash her and change her nappy. She cannot go out and enjoy herself like other children. If I was working, who would collect her from school?"

For 16 years, Nandipha has cared for Mary day in and day out. Her life's work has been to ensure that her daughter is happy and safe. When Mary was 12 years old, Nandipha became ill and was hospitalised with long-term high blood pressure, which led to kidney damage. She was unable to care for her daughter, and had to pay for Mary to stay in a night shelter.

During this time, Nandipha became desperately worried about Mary's future and what would happen if she was no longer around to care for her daughter.

With financial struggles and chronic illness, the toll of caring for Mary has become too great for Nandipha and after much painful deliberation, she has decided that it would be best to move Mary into a full-time care facility that can provide the necessary support that she needs.

Lingeka Ntsoko, a Community-based worker from Ikamva Labantu, has worked with Nandipha for many years to lighten her load and to ensure that Mary's needs are taken care of. Nandipha was concerned that the family would not support the idea of placing Mary in a care home. "Mary's siblings and cousins love her very much. They love to play with her."

To assuage Nandipha's fears, Lingeka helped to facilitate a family meeting where options for Mary's care could be discussed. Fortunately, Nandipha received support from her family and Lingeka is now assisting in finding the right placement for Mary.

"I hope that we can find a nice place for her where she can learn sign language, so that when she wants to communicate with people she can be understood," says Nandipha.



Lingeka Ntsoko has been a Community-based Worker at Ikamva Labantu for 15 years. She has worked alongside Nandipha and Mary Jalavu to provide emotional, disability and social support.

Ethel Fanelo



Ethel Fanelo was born in Cape Town in 1949. Now 69 years old, she lives at her home in Nyanga with her four grandchildren, her sister, and her sister's husband. Ethel receives a pension grant of R1,600 (\$135) per month which she uses to buy food and basic necessities.

But as with many elderly people in South Africa, this pension is stretched across the extended family and very little, if anything, is left for the senior's own self-care.

"The pension is better than nothing but it's not enough for my grandchildren and myself, and I have to pay the rent too," says Ethel. "My daughter helps by giving me food when I am short."

Ethel attends the Noluthando 2 Senior Club, where she has opted to join the Relate beading project. In partnership with Ikamva Labantu, this project allows seniors to earn supplementary income from beading bracelets for the non-profit organisation, Relate.

"The beads have allowed me to be a good grandmother," says Ethel. "I use all the money from beading to buy bread and to help with bus fares for the children's school."

Ethel is one of 18 seniors at her club who have joined the beading project. Collectively, they earned R27,875 (\$2,345) in 2017. Sazi Gunya, the Relate Project Manager, remarks that the club is very good at beading. "Especially me!", Ethel chimes in.

And she may well be one of the best – craftwork is not new to Ethel. When she divorced her husband of 11 years, she started working as a seamstress to make ends meet for her two young daughters. "I love sewing and I still have a sewing machine in my house but I'm too old to use it now. That's why I like beading – because my hands need to work. If I don't bead my hands will get stiff; I need the exercise. These beads make me happy!"



Ethel Fanelo attends the Noluthando 2 Senior club daily, where she is provided with two warm meals, healthcare and counselling services and exercise activities. She is one of 410 seniors taking part in the Relate income-generation project across 19 Ikamva Labantu senior clubs.

Gloria Bebeza



In 2001, at the height of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa, Mama Gloria Bebeza set up a soup kitchen in Khayelitsha. There were many people in Gloria's community who were living with HIV/AIDS, and Mama Gloria hoped to ease their burden by providing a simple meal. "It was not easy for people to disclose their status. Some husbands would run away, leaving their wives and children behind and some mothers would be sick in hospital, unable to care for their children," says Gloria. "So we had a lot of people coming to us for food."

The HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa has left behind the highest number of AIDS orphans in the world – some 1.2million children have lost at least one parent to the disease. Grandparents have been left to raise their grandchildren and the number of child-headed households climbed to around 150,000. In many cases, communities have had to step in to care for children that have been orphaned, and foster care has been one such solution.

Just one year after Mama Gloria opened the doors to her soup kitchen, she started to foster children who had been orphaned, or whose parents were too sick to care for them. "It all happened very quickly, because there was such a great need. Within two weeks of taking in my first child, my garage was full." At the time that she met Helen Lieberman, Founder of Ikamva Labantu, Gloria was looking after ten children who all slept in her garage. She became one of the many foster mothers who would take AIDS orphans under their wing.

Together with Helen, Gloria established a centre that would become a large preschool for the children in her community. "We did not charge anything at the time, even though we were looking after more than 50 children."

Gloria insisted that she needed training in order to care for the children adequately. She went through several training courses with Ikamva Labantu, learning about home-based care, childcare and social development.

Today, Gloria's foster children are all grown up. But her centre in Khayelitsha is still a hub of activity. "I am part of Afternoon Angels, an afterschool programme for children. We have 20 children who come to us after school every day, and I have staff who assist them with homework. We educate them and we work on their life skills."

In the same building, Gloria's preschool now teaches 200 children and her soup kitchen still churns out meals twice a week for HIV+ community members.

17 years since she first served her first meal, Mama Gloria shows no signs of slowing down and is only more determined to provide a solid foundation for the children and young adults in her care. "I would love to see these kids doing well, passing Grade 12 and going to university," she says. "They are the presidents of tomorrow!"



Mama Gloria Bebeza has worked hand-in-hand with Ikamva Labantu for many years, building up her ECD centre and more recently, joining hands with the Afternoon Angels programme to provide afterschool care to vulnerable children.

Thank you



We hope that this report has highlighted the impact that Ikamva Labantu's work can have on the life of an individual. With your continued support, we can keep joining hands with people and enabling them to reach their full potential.

Thank you for believing in us and for touching the lives of so many people.