



MATJANA PRESCHOOL NEWLETTER

WRITTEN AND COMPILED BY NCOBILE MBONANE AND MICHELLE BREAR

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations sustainable development goals recognise the important role of early childhood education in creating a foundation for healthy, sustainable futures. Signatories to the goals committed to, “ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education” by 2030.

It's a goal we see the importance of first hand at Matjana Preschool. Growing up in a rural area, our kids don't have much ac-

cess to libraries, toys, writing and drawing tools and many of the other things that help them develop cognitive and physical skills that will allow them to achieve optimally later in life. We see how much a five year old can learn in just a year at preschool, and hear from the primary school teachers how the education we provide contributes to our student's achievement at primary school. We expect, and there's plenty of research evidence to support our intuitions, that attending preschool for two years will have a bigger and

better impact on our students' development.

Although the Sustainable Development Goals are high-level targets, which governments sign onto, we're committed to making our contribution to achieving the goal for early childhood education in Swaziland, at the community level. That's why in 2016 we embarked on the ambitious project of building a second classroom so we can enrol four year olds at our preschool.

Building a classroom might not seem like that big a

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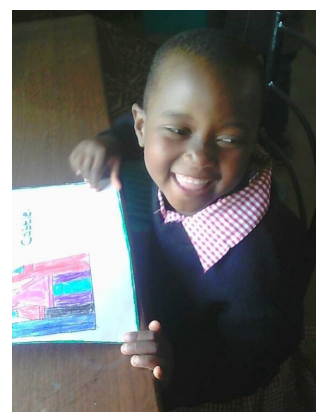
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deal, but in the context of our economically marginalised community, in a country where the government does not pay preschool teachers or cover the costs of operating preschools, it's hugely ambitious. Every year we need to raise all the money we require to pay our teachers, feed our kids, and keep our infrastructure in good order. We're extremely grateful to the group of international supporters

MEET THE



MATJANA KIDS



NAME:	Sipehelele Nkabinde	Fisokuhle Shabangu	Tenkhosi Dlamini
MEANING:	Enough	Wishing for the best	For the king
FAVOURITES AT SCHOOL:	Playing with dolls	Plying on the swings	Painting
FAVOURITE FOOD:	Sour milk and bread	Rice and fish	Bread and cheese
WANTS TO BE A:	Teacher	Police officer	Nurse
TEACHERS SAY:	She likes teaching and leading other preschoolers	He is shy but loves sharing with other kids	She loves trying new things

MATJANA'S 10TH CLASS

whose financial contributions have enabled us to do this. But we need even more help.

For the past six months we've been directing money that would usually go into our operating budget to buying building supplies. We've run out of money, and we need to urgently raise some funds to ensure our dedicated staff, three teachers and a security guard, receive their living allowances.

Paying these community members to work at our school is part of our commitment to a second sustainable development goal, promoting "full and productive employment and decent

work for all". Employment opportunities are very scarce in our community, and many adults have to move to town to find jobs. Often the work they find does not constitute what many of us would consider "decent jobs". So we're proud of the very small role we're playing in promoting employment with training opportunities, in our community.

Child care is work that is notoriously under paid and performed in difficult conditions. Most of the care children receive comes from women who work in isolation, receive no pay, get no holidays, and can't complain to a union if they don't like their conditions. Yes,

we're talking about mums, and certainly they do it for love. But that should not negate their entitlement to decent work and pay. And we believe that paying women to care for children in community facilities like Matjana Preschool is a great way of promoting the important and skilful work women do, to raise happy, healthy children.

Which brings us to another important sustainable development goal, achieving "gender equality and empowering women and girls". We believe valuing women's role as child carers, and ensuring facility-based child care work is paid like all other work, is fundamental to achieving gender equality. We try to make working at Matjana Preschool an empowering experience for our teachers, who are all young women from our community. We know they stand as role models for the young girls they teach.

We need your help to continue with our ambitious project, and doing our part to make sustainable development a reality in Ndabeni community, Kaphunga. We're asking new and old supporters to dig deep and help us finish our second classroom and pay our teachers and ensure our students keep learning in the best way they know how, through play.



FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Donations from the Armidale-Dumaresq Lions Club, James and Hester and the Hedgers have kept us afloat over the last couple of months. We're extremely grateful to these long term, regular supporters, but we need more support to get our classroom finished and our teachers paid. If you can help, please deposit money to one of our bank accounts.



	Swaziland	Australia
Bank	Standard Bank	The Community Mutual Group
Account Name:	Matjana Preschool	Friends of Matjana Preschool
Account Number:	0140078375401	719585
Bank SWIFT code:	SBICSZMX	-
BSB Number:	66056441	932000