

Connect Network is a collaborative network of NPOs and churches
working together for women and children at risk to see communities transformed in South Africa.



ANNUAL REVIEW 2023

MARCH 2022 TO FEBRUARY 2023

www.connectnetwork.org.za

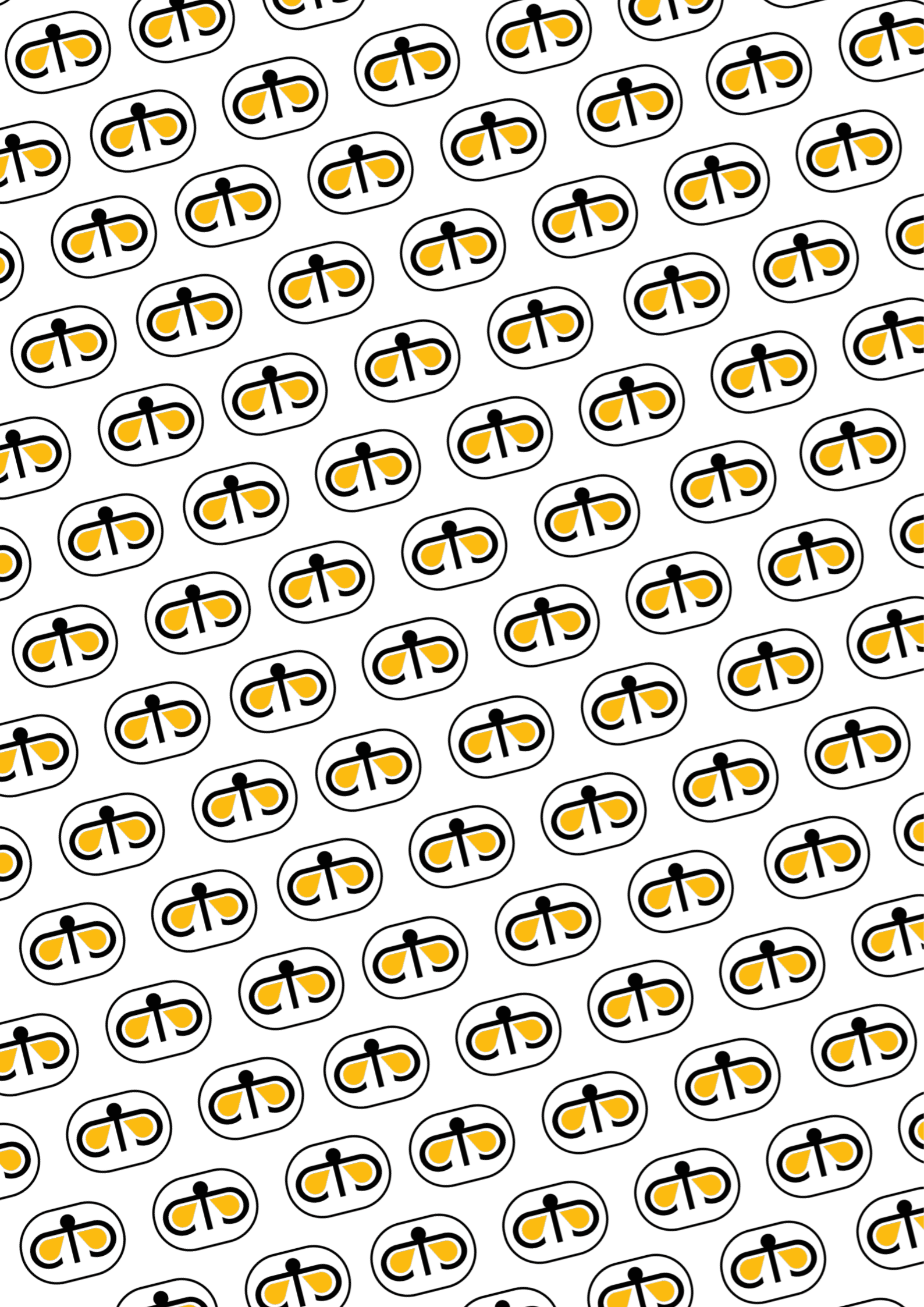


Photo courtesy of MercyAIDS

**IF YOU WANT TO
GO FAST, GO ALONE.
IF YOU WANT TO
GO FAR, GO WITH
OTHERS**

African Proverb

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON



“In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ ”

- Jesus, Acts 20 v35

When new organisations approach us to join Connect I often ask them two questions: Are you keen to learn and grow? And secondly, are you prepared to give and share? In Connect, we encourage one another to keep improving and so too, to help others to improve as well. This past year we are grateful to the many member organisations who have

given their time, skills and efforts in building each other up in growing their influence in our City. Thank you!

The generosity of the network has been wonderfully expressed in the establishment of numerous working groups. These are groups of members that have focussed on various significant areas of child and family wellbeing around the city: Gender Based Violence and Femicide, Child Participation (Child Ambassadors) and Early Childhood Development with Youth and Family Strengthening in the pipeline. A special thank you to all our members who are participating in leading and growing these working and learning groups.

The main training platform of the network has also grown this year thanks to the QIS Online team. This past year we have launched the wellbeing module. Thank you also to all the trainers for your input, especially those from within the Network!

Giving and receiving is also a blessing we are grateful for in light of our supporters. To all of our donors, we thank you sincerely for your trust and support and hope that you are as enriched in your giving as we are in receiving.

Connect is blessed with a network of many organisations and I would

like to especially thank those organisations who form our NPC and lead the network. Providing guidance, context and direction and thereby serving and supporting other organisations beyond themselves in the City. To the Board, my sincere thanks for your wisdom and oversight. It is a pleasure to serve alongside such dedicated and passionate individuals.

And of course, sincere appreciation to Mrs Grace Nkomo, our Executive Director and your wonderful office team for your courageous, visionary and thoughtful leadership.

Lastly, we are as always, grateful to God that we are able to celebrate another year of journeying together towards a safer city for children and families

Dr. Vaughan Stannard

“The currency of real networking is not greed but generosity.”
- Keith Ferrazzi

A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The 2022-2023 year continued to be a year of consolidation and building for Connect Network. We are ever mindful of the need for the work of the protecting and supporting of women and children across our communities. We continue to be devastated by the impact of violence on the most vulnerable across our city and are more convinced than ever that the only response that will be effective is a collective one.

Connect Network, in partnership with amazing affiliate organisations, has continued to develop strong programmes that Connect organisations can use. This supports the work that all our organisations

are doing with those who need protection, care and support. We trust that the foundational work in terms of Quality Improvement System capacity building, Gender Based Violence and Femicide and Child Ambassadors will continue to ensure that women and children are increasingly protected and safeguarded in our communities.

It was a privilege to be part of the many projects and activities that took place this year. The teams that made this work possible have been amazing in their dedication to seeing Connect Network goals fulfilled – from the incredibly hard working financial and administrative team, the passionate and capable project coordinators to the knowledgeable and dedicated working group members.

I continue to stand in awe of the sacrifices made by Board members and Non-Profit Company representatives from affiliate organisations, who commit so much in terms of time, expertise and passion to ensure successful networking, equipping, collaboration and advocacy. Excellently and skillfully led by our Chairperson, Dr. Vaughan Stannard.

Our donors and partners have given generously to support the plans and goals and we express our deepest thanks to each one of them.

The work of Connect Network would simply not be possible without the amazing support and hard work of the Connect core team. A big thank you to Lindy and Priscilla for continuing to keep the wheels turning smoothly! And to Campher and Verum for your financial oversight. And to Siyoli, Heather, Barbara and Mdebuka who have so capably, energetically and excellently developed dreams into tangible projects. Well done and thank you all!

It has been an absolute pleasure to see so much of our vision being brought to life through the commitment of so many. Despite dealing with the difficult issues that we are confronting in the lives of women and children, it is greatly encouraging to be facing them together.

Thank you to each one who has played a part in the life of Connect Network this year.

Masihambisane.

Grace Nkomo

CONNECT NETWORK'S STRATEGIC GOALS 2020-2023



TO PROMOTE THE SAFETY AND WELLBEING OF CHILDREN AND TO HELP FAMILIES THRIVE IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS CAPE TOWN, THROUGH NETWORKING, CAPACITY BUILDING, COLLABORATION AND ADVOCACY.

- NETWORK
- EQUIP
- COLLABORATE
- ADVOCATE

Connect Network works to support the development of community-based networks of care and protection through our Safe Communities strategy. Community-based organisations connect with other organisations working in their geographical areas to ensure that children and the vulnerable are well supported and cared for. Organisations within Connect Network that are thematically focused work collaboratively within working groups to support these community networks with relevant information and training.

THESE WORKING GROUPS WORK TOWARD COLLABORATIVELY ESTABLISHED GOALS, SUCH AS CURRICULUM AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT, TRAINING AND ADVOCACY.



NETWORK

WE NETWORK

Central to the vision and mission of Connect Network is the bringing together of organisations and individuals with the purpose of uniting around the common cause of improving the lives of women and children. Individuals and organisations are provided with opportunities to meet, to find synergies and ways to meaningfully move forward together.

CONNECTING LEADERS: LEADERS FORUM

Connect Network is very privileged to be uniquely placed as we work with a number of Directors of organisations who are serving children, women and families in our city. This presents the unique opportunity to support them as individuals and as a group. A Connect Network Leaders Forum was

created during 2021 to give Directors of organisations a place to connect, be equipped and provide the space for them to engage around pertinent issues.

Our inaugural Leaders Forum event was held in April 2021. The trauma informed session that was facilitated at the Leaders Forum provided the platform for the work that continued through the trauma informed working group for the remainder of the year, culminating in our Gender Based Violence and Femicide project. For further details on the GBVF project please see below.

We continued the Leaders Forum with a second event entitled "Leadership in the current South Africa" by Cain Matloko, the South African regional Director of the Mergon Foundation. 45 leaders from different organisations attended and reported finding it helpful to engage with other leaders about issues that

are relevant to the current South African context. Being challenged on relevant contextual issues and engaging with peers, ensures that leaders are well placed to continue to respond appropriately to challenges within their organisations and communities.

CONNECTING SPIRITUALLY: PRAYER MEETINGS

During the course of 2022, prayer meetings were held online. These have been led by and well attended by Connect affiliates who were able to unite around issues that women and children are dealing with, as well as share, pray and receive support for the challenges that they were facing. Online prayer meetings enabled affiliates and partners from across South Africa and Africa to attend.



INTERSECTORAL COLLABORATION IS IMPERATIVE FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY TO HELP VULNERABLE PERSONS. INCREASING THE KNOWLEDGE AND CONNECTIVENESS IN THE SECTOR REGARDING THE WORK OF THE NPA IS A HUGE BENEFIT

Janice King: Western Cape Street Children's Forum

CONNECTING THROUGH CHILD PROTECTION AND SAFEGUARDING

One of the key focus areas of Connect Network is Child Protection and Safeguarding in order to ensure the holistic wellbeing of our children and young people.

CHILD PROTECTION MONTH

Connect Network affiliates used the annual Child Protection campaign during the month of May to promote child protection and to support the development of their safe communities.

This culminated in Child Protection week, which serves as a focussed reminder of the continued vulnerability of children and the importance of protecting children in all our communities. This week corresponds to the Department of Social Development's National Child Protection Week.

To mark the beginning of Child Protection week, Connect Network held the monthly online prayer meeting on the 24th of May 2022. The focus of this meeting was Child Protection and led by affiliate Moussa Mulamba from Think Twice.

CONNECT NETWORK CHILD PROTECTION EVENT

Child protection week was commemorated with a Child Protection event, held in collaboration with affiliates Matla a Bana and Western Cape Street Children's Forum. This event featured Lizelle Africa, who is a Senior Prosecutor from the National Prosecuting Authority: Sexual Offences Court. 94 people attended this event where Lizelle shared with affiliates important information to effectively and legally handle child abuse disclosure to support the court process. She provided information on the relevant legal Acts to inform engagement with sexual offences offenders and victims.

The time together was opened with a candle lighting ceremony and prayers for three groups of people - those that have been victims of abuse, neglect or maltreatment, those that work to support child protection and those that are perpetrators of abuse.

MEDIA

CAMPAIGN

RADIO

Connect Network had the opportunity to create awareness about Child Protection Week on radio stations this year. Interviews were held on Cape Talk (Grace Nkomo) and CCFM.

Vaughan Stannard from Beautiful Gate, Barbara Clarke from MercyAids, Wiseman Zondiwe from Kuyasa Horizon Empowerment and Grace Nkomo were interviewed. Those interviewed were given the opportunity to fully explain different aspects of protecting children within all our spheres of influence, as well as how their own individual organisations were contributing to this cause. In addition to this, Primedia Broadcasting created a 30 second advert and played it on their group of four radio stations: Kfm, 702, 947 and Cape Talk and Fine Music Radio played our 30 second jingle to create awareness of child protection week and directed listeners to our website.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We kept social media updated with regular posts about Child protection related issues, with an emphasis on the difference that each person can make.

WEBSITE

The Connect Network website also contains information and links to report abuse and materials to download for use within communities, schools and churches to create awareness around child protection.

LEADING THE WAY:

CHILD PROTECTION WEEK EVENTS WITHIN SAFE COMMUNITIES

Many Connect Network affiliates conducted child protection events in their local communities with the children that they work with. Themes centred around empowerment, prevention and equipping, with information on what to do if something does happen to oneself or another child. A sample of some activities that were conducted:

BEAUTIFUL GATE SOUTH AFRICA:

Held a child protection event at Beautiful Gate with children from local primary and high schools. Information was shared by social workers on the rights of the children, types of abuse and where to report if abuse was being experienced. 229 people attended the event. Posted about child protection throughout the week through an online campaign.

ADVANCED EDUKOS FOUNDATION

Children from the community made placards with messages against child abuse, child trafficking and gender based violence. Held a silent demonstration on the sidewalk displaying the placards. Each child wore a green ribbon in support of child protection week. They received lots of support from the community passing by in cars and blowing on their horns. The children played various games and had refreshments.

HEART TO HEART CARE CENTRE: GROOT BRAK AREA

During Child Protection week 12 professional stakeholders gave input to the children in 13 schools (820 learners) on issues of concern. This included SAPS, Child Welfare, the WC DOE, the Mossel Bay municipality and Heart to Heart speaking about

the issues such as the impact of various forms of bullying and criminal offences. Learners were empowered to identify steps to take if in a situation of bullying. Many disclosures of bullying were received following these sessions.

HOPE TO THE HOPELESS

Hosted a child protection event in Ravensmead. It was held in an area with a lot of gang related activity, where Hope to the Hopeless runs a feeding scheme. They had a prayer walk and raised awareness against child abuse and violence, with a motivational speaker who had been a victim of abuse. 123 Children and 95 adults attended. Children and parents were given tools to report abuse and encouraged to speak out against abuse wherever possible.

JUST GRACE

Held an interactive awareness session with 50+ learners from Langa High School. Learners shared their understanding of child protection, different types of abuse and symptoms of abuse. Children were given information about their rights, as well as how to report abuse.

LIVING HOPE

During Child Protection week, Living Hope focussed on assisting children,

within Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs), with skills to regulate their emotions and talk about them. The ECDs were in Red Hill, Capricorn, Overcome Heights and Masiphumelele. Living Hope conducted 12 sessions in 7 schools, with 1558 learners attending.

SIKHULA SONKE

The first child protection event Sikhula Sonke commemorated this year was the World Play Day. A community dialogue was included which was led by Sikhula Sonke with the following participants: South African Police Services, Heads Up, Safe Hub, City of Cape Town Sports and Recreation, City Health - Kuyasa Clinic, Micheal Mapongwana Hospital - (Oral and Hygiene), For Afrika - Nutrition, FAMSA, Metro Police, Traffic Department-Traffic Safety & Education, Khayelitsha ECD forum, Nal'ibali and St. Francis Ambulance. This event took place in Mandela Park Stadium in Khayelitsha, Cape Town and was used to launch Child Protection week.

This community dialogue resulted in key decisions for the area, which included: to have quarterly meetings to discuss the status of young children in Khayelitsha, the local police station to ensure that

the children's help desk is active 24 hours a day, and other child protection related issues. Children on the other hand were exposed to different learning materials in different work-play stations that were set up across the stadium. Children had the opportunity to visit the dentist for teeth cleaning, have immunisations and were referred for further health checks during the event.

During child protection week Sikhula Sonke had further community dialogues focusing on child wellbeing and the protection and safeguarding of children in all aspects of life. These community dialogues which happened for the whole week were about empowering caregivers/parents and the communities at large, especially people who live in the informal settlement.

THE SOZO FOUNDATION

Child protection week events took place at the Sozo Foundation at a local primary and high school where Sozo gave input to learners on internet safety, mental health and stress. They also hosted a discussion about healthy relationships and sex with a group of grade 7 girls. Sozo published a blog on social media platforms about internet safety and held a training session on building rapport with learners for Edu centre staff.

All new Sozo employees were screened by the Guardian against the child protection register and did criminal background checks, to ensure they are safe to work with children.

TRUE NORTH

True North took part in Safeline's annual event, held at the Vrygrond Gospel Faith Mission Church in partnership with the Vrygrond ECD Forum. The teachers and children from 12 Early Childhood Development Centres attended. The Chairperson of the Vrygrond ECD Forum, Faranaaz Johnston's key message focused on 'communities standing together to protect our children'. Her message was also directed towards our children, encouraging them to keep safe and reminding our them how important and special they are.

VILLAGE CARE CENTRE

Events were held during Child Protection week in Lavender Hill with the theme "Children's Lives Matter". Commencing with a Memorial service which was held at one of the local churches, in memory of all the children who died, either due to covid or senseless killings, in the past year. This was a collaborative effort with organisations in the area. This was followed by a talk from community stakeholders about drug abuse.

The children then took part in a demonstration along a main road in the area with key community role players followed by an awareness programme. Gangsters took part in the event as they came for food that was offered. The family of deceased gangsters and victims took part in the memorial service.

CONNECTING THROUGH ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

The monthly info page compiled by Connect Network and sent to affiliates provided current and relevant information on happenings and opportunities within the sector. The social media platforms of Facebook, Instagram and Twitter also provided public communication on Network activities and helped affiliates to stay connected with each other.

CONNECTING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

Research into the food security status and needs of the network was conducted through a partnership with Ikapa Impact. Connect Network had the opportunity to host a Masters student from Syracuse University who conducted interviews with a sample of organisations and compiled a report. The findings of this research was presented at an event at Living Hope. Living Hope presented their work to improve food security. The group were then taken on a tour of Living Hope's agricultural facilities. This research will form the basis of Connect's food security initiatives going forward.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TOUR

In February 2023 we were delighted to host a group of young Belgian students who came to discover more about South Africa. We enjoyed a tour of Kayamandi, learning about the highs and lows of living in the area. We finished our time together with a meal at a local restaurant with an African drumming session.



EQUIP

WE ENGAGE AND EQUIP

Integral to the purpose of Connect Network is the equipping of organisations who are part of the Network. This is done through capacity-building training, workshops and forums where subject experts share relevant and current knowledge. Through equipping, organisations become stronger and better placed to serve the women and children within their communities. Our capacity building programmes also provide tools for further community engagement.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

The Quality Improvement System (QIS), implemented by Connect Network in partnership with Viva International has had another milestone year. The Quality Improvement System (QIS) Programme, plays an important role in strengthening Connect affiliates and other non-profit organisations with their organisational development goals towards sustainability. This capacity building programme not only provides a framework for organisations to put their own structures and policies in place, but also equips delegates to become committed champions for child protection and child wellbeing. During 2022-2023, QIS was a key focus area for Connect and the Safe Communities strategy.

Several key changes have recently been introduced to the Quality Improvement System, which continued to be developed in 2022-2023. Improved accessibility to the training for more organisations was central to the rationale behind the changes. Quality Improvement System modules were developed and released to the network on an online platform to ensure that organisations who want to continue strengthening



94 AFFILIATES

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM

COLLABORATING

CHILD PROTECTION AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE INTERVENTIONS

their organisations could do so in an accessible, engaging and user-friendly manner.

The Child Protection & Safeguarding and Financial Accountability modules were again made available to the network during 2022.

QIS MODULE DEVELOPMENT

The Child Wellbeing Module was the module of focus for development this year. This module saw a collaboration of trainers representing various organisations in the network. Topics and trainers include: children and spirituality (Beautiful Gate), understanding child development (Arise Family), care during the first thousand days (Common Good), what all children need to thrive (Common Good), modern day village around families (Common Good), the need for play (Resilient Kids), child participation (Resilient Kids), family strengthening (Arise Family), positive discipline (Arise Family), children and drugs (Living Hope), and cyber bullying (Techbear Online).

The Child Wellbeing Module was opened to the network for registrations in July 2022. 15 organisations (53 individual participants) signed up, with 12 of these organisations (49 participants) graduating in February 2023.

SINCE THE QIS MODULES HAVE GONE ONLINE, WE HAVE HAD A TOTAL NUMBER OF 129 ORGANISATIONAL SIGNUPS ON THE LEARNER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, REPRESENTED BY 322 INDIVIDUALS. WE CELEBRATE THIS SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENT.

A simplified Child Protection and Safeguarding (CPS) module was created for organisations training in large groups that used facilitators. This was released in February 2023. This version was to allow participants to have access to key training videos and learning material outside their group sessions, but without the need to produce documentation for review. Submission of key documents would only need to be done by an appointed individual representing the group. Each participant would still be recognised for their attendance on the training.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SYSTEM VERIFICATION PROCESS DEVELOPMENT

VERIFICATION BY MODULE
Verification for organisations for each QIS module remains an important part of the process. Verification allows organisations the opportunity to demonstrate that they have

completed the necessary work for due diligence in each area. This ensures that their organisations have the necessary systems and processes in place to protect all their associated stakeholders. Changes have been introduced to the QIS verification process, such as having a modular focus as well as changes to the levels of verification. Organisations are now able to complete QIS one module at a time and achieve verification per module. In addition to this, an additional level of verification was introduced – Bronze level - to supplement the Silver (previously Foundations) and Gold (previously Accountability) levels. Verification for QIS is completed in partnership with Viva International.

During this period, the verification process was adjusted to be accessible on the online platform. Gold Verification for Child Protection went through a testing process in the first half of 2022, and then made available online from July 2022. Silver and Gold verification modules for Financial Accountability and Governance were also included during the same period.

QIS GRADUATIONS
A graduation is held for each cohort of QIS participants in March and September each year. We were thrilled to celebrate with each individual and each organisation that

Photo courtesy of True North

reached specific milestones in their Quality Improvement System journey.

SINCE QIS HAS BEEN ACCESSIBLE ON THE LEARNER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, CONNECT HAS CELEBRATED BY AWARDING 212 INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION CERTIFICATES, 56 ORGANISATIONAL IMPROVEMENT CERTIFICATES AND 26 ORGANISATIONAL BRONZE VERIFICATION AWARDS. WE ARE VERY PROUD OF EACH INDIVIDUAL WITHIN EACH ORGANISATION WHO HAS WORKED SO HARD TO ACHIEVE THESE SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES AND DEMONSTRATED THEIR COMMITMENT TO THE QIS JOURNEY.

MAPPING

In a landscape of restricted resources, it is essential that we know the assets and strengths in each community. Mapping provides the foundation of a community networking response. Mapping provides an opportunity for identifying gaps that effective collaborations can assist to fill and avoiding duplication of service offerings. Connect Network affiliates, 360 Transformation held a mapping workshop attended by 30 people in February 2023. This workshop gave participants information to effectively research the resources within their own communities in a participatory and inclusive manner.

SMALL GRANTS

Connect Network continued to facilitate small grants to affiliates that donors identified as meeting their criteria.

THE MAPPING WORKSHOP WAS GREAT AS IT HELPED ME TO BEGIN TO IDENTITY THE RESOURCES THAT SURROUND ME AND THE ORGANISATION I WORK WITH. I LEARNT THAT OFTEN WE SAY WE CANNOT ACCOMPLISH CERTAIN PROJECTS DUE TO LACK OF RESOURCES BUT ACTUALLY IF WE PARTNER AND COLLABORATE WITH LIKE-MINDED PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS WE CAN DO MUCH MORE.

Phumeza Jack: Kin Culture

COLLABORATE

WE COLLABORATE

The ultimate goal of Connect Network is for organisations to join together to bring solutions to address the challenges that are facing the vulnerable in our city. Our strategy is to create Safe Communities throughout the city, with Lead Agent organisations at the forefront of these community collaborations. The partnerships formed around the Covid and crisis responses as well as the engagement with Quality Improvement Systems training provided opportunities for collaboration never experienced before. Community organisations joined hands to provide solutions and build networks of care. The activities below were additional opportunities for collaboration and community response in the Western Cape and beyond.

WORKING GROUPS

Central to the work of Connect Network is to provide opportunities for collaboration for organisations working to provide safer spaces for women and children. These working groups can be either geographically or thematically based. A focus of Connect Network during this period has been to develop the thematic working groups around key issues of vulnerability. The Trauma Informed, Child Ambassadors and Early Childhood Development working groups have gathered groups of Connect affiliates working towards solutions within focus areas. In the planning stages are Youth Focused, Family Strengthening and Food and nutrition security working groups. The following were the activities of the existing working groups:

TRAUMA INFORMED: GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND FEMICIDE

Connect Network embarked on a journey to equip organisations to deal with Gender Based Violence and Femicide (GBVF) in a Trauma Informed manner. Emerging from the Trauma Informed work already begun in the network, **12 ORGANISATIONS** working within the Safe Communities strategy began a process of deeper understanding of trauma within our communities and systems and the impact of this trauma on those we work with.

The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that organisations can better support those affected by GBVF in their care. Importantly, each organisation will develop a new initiative with a GBVF focus during the duration of this process. This was a truly collaborative initiative as 6

Connect Network affiliate organisations from the network were involved in the design of the curriculum and input was received from additional specialist organisations.

The process created was a 3-fold progression in learning and praxis that focused on the health and wellbeing of; first the individual, then the organization/team and finally the beneficiaries served. All organisations accepted into the program are community-based, working with GBV survivors on a weekly or daily basis.

DURING THE FIRST 12 MONTHS OF THE PROCESS, 7 WORKSHOPS AND 94 MENTORING SESSIONS WERE COMPLETED.

NETWORK

EQUIP

COLLABORATE

ADVOCATE

Full and regular attendance in both workshops and mentoring sessions was maintained for nearly all organisations. Four organisations led the mentoring process, of which three facilitated the workshops. Regular meetings took place between the mentoring and facilitating teams. In the first six months of the training process, an online platform through Connect's LMS was created to support the learning and provide further study. A 6-month M&E meeting was done with the design team and a full assessment of progress and learning conducted with all 12 organisations in November 2022.

As anticipated, each organisation is facing its own challenges. Many individuals within these organisations are processing trauma that has been carried over from the covid pandemic, in addition to other types of personal and interpersonal trauma. All participants are processing and/or coping with secondary trauma from the work they are involved with in communities. Most organisations are also managing heavier resource scarcity post-covid. This compounds the stress and anxiety experienced by all staff and in particular, directors.

In line with the 3-fold progression laid out by the design team; we began the training process with enhancing the overall health and wellness of each team member. The focus of the first year has been on improving each individual's understanding of what it means to be trauma informed on a personal level. This new understanding and skill set is being used in the families and personal lives of team/staff members as well as in the team they work with. Trauma informed skills were on-boarded through experience-based learning and the coaching of new practices in mentoring sessions. Much personal healing and relational health has taken place in this upskilling process. Safe and sustainable work with trauma survivors can only be done when team members are able to maintain personal wellness, know

Photo courtesy of Kin Culture



THESE WORKSHOPS HAVE BEEN EXTREMELY HELPFUL IN UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA. THEY HAVE MOTIVATED US TO SCREEN OUR LIFE SKILL COURSES TO BETTER INFORM OUR CLIENTS AS TO RECOGNIZE TRAUMA, AS TO HOW TRAUMA HAS INFLUENCED THE WAY THEY RELATE IN RELATIONSHIPS, WITH COMMUNITY AND BROADER SOCIETY. IT HAS ENABLED US TO EXAMINE OURSELVES IN THIS REGARD, AND TO ACTIVELY ENGAGE IN CREATING NEW WAYS TO REGULATE OURSELVES AND THEN HELP OTHERS TO DO SO AS WELL. WELL DONE TO THIS TEAM – THE LEARNING HAS BEEN INCREDIBLE

Stephanie Van Wyk: Beauty for Ashes

when and how to get help when they need it and experience safety through both their personal support networks and the organisation/team they work in.

The second focus of the first 12 months was to enhance the overall safety of the teams and organisations through the introduction of trauma informed practices and more collaborative power-sharing leadership models. When an organization maintains steep top-down power structures, the culture within the organisation mirrors the fear-based power dynamic that is present in GBV. Motivating change through fear eliminates safety in the work environment. One of the key issues to address has been looking at historical trauma and how this is reflected in the functioning of an organization. With a greater understanding that abuse of power and restriction of agency are the roots of violence; organisations are shifting the way they solve problems and work together. Creating emotionally safe and trauma informed environments requires experience in participating in these spaces and understanding the "feel" for yourself. The more staff experience this in the workplace and team, the easier it becomes to facilitate this with beneficiaries.

Getting familiar with trauma informed power dynamic and what safe shared

space feels like has been a big part of the process in both the workshops and mentoring sessions. Participants reported an increased understanding in what safety is and feels like. They reported significant increases in their understanding of the impact of trauma on the brain and body, as well as how intergenerational cycles of violence are perpetuated and how to disrupt these. Most of the group strongly agreed, or agreed that they understand their role in helping to shift cycles of violence in their communities better and feel more equipped to do so.

From the beginning of 2023, the focus of the GBVF training has expanded to include work with beneficiaries. As staff and individuals become healthier and the organization grows in a trauma informed mindset and practices, the work done with all beneficiaries will automatically become more safe and trauma sensitive. A model for trauma informed (TI) project design was introduced as a tool that works to maintain safety and a TI power dynamic throughout the project cycle. TI project design creates a supportive peer group with those responsible to execute the project. Use of this approach ensures long-term sustainability and deeper participant ownership; therefore, supporting and strengthening the healing experiences of self-efficacy, voice and shared power for trauma survivors.

A GBVF Men's work group has been one of the outputs of this expanded focus on impacting those we serve in community. It is clear that to have true impact on the cycle of GBV in communities and families, work that targets support and healing for men must take place. There are currently seven organisations participating in the Men's work group. They are looking to create collaborative projects that can grow safe spaces for men to see improvement in their overall spiritual, emotional and relational health. The men

participating in the work group recognize that these types of spaces for men are essential, yet at the same time very rare. They are also creating a safe shared space for all members within the group, supporting one another on both a personal and

professional level. Most of the 12 participant organisations have already used the information and experiences offered in the training with beneficiaries. Participants reported sharing knowledge and experiences from the training with

a total 250-300 people in the period from May to November 2022. We now have the opportunity to enhance, grow and further support the role out of this work in the second half of the GBVF training.

CHILD AMBASSADORS: CHILD PARTICIPATION CAMP AFRICA

Connect Network was thrilled that the Child Ambassadors camp went ahead in March 2022! After being postponed by Covid lockdown restrictions for 2 years, the leaders and children thoroughly enjoyed getting together at Rocklands campsite in Simonstown. **46 CHILDREN ATTENDED WITH 19 LEADERS.**

From the time the bus arrived at the different organisations across Cape Town to collect the children to the time they dropped them back at home after the camp was a time of learning, sharing, fun and friendships.

Prior to the children's camp, a Leaders Camp was held with 20 leaders from 7 affiliate organisations. This provided an opportunity for all leaders to understand the process that the children would go through and how to best support them, as well as building relationships themselves.

Skilfully facilitated by Resilient Kids and UCSA (United Christian Student Association), the children spent three days being taught invaluable lifeskills. Emotional regulation, resilience, team work, positive sexuality and relationship skills were all on the agenda. The exciting but somewhat unsettling presence of the arrival of a troop of baboons provided the perfect opportunity to teach the children some important regulation skills!

CHILD AMBASSADOR PROJECT

Child Ambassadors within organisations were tasked with identifying and acting on an issue of concern within their contexts. The children had to organise their groups, research the topic, decide

together how to address the issue. Seed funding was given by Connect Network to support the implementation of these plans. Plans were developed to address Gender Based Violence, Child protection, substance abuse and food insecurity.

CHILD PARTICIPATION TRAINING WORKSHOPS

Meetings were held in 2022-2023 with leaders from Lead Agent organisations in order to strategise, envision and give input on child participation and the child ambassadors programme. It was agreed that it is vital that space is given for voices of children to be heard and their agency recognised. In order to achieve this, caregivers within organisations and communities need to understand the dynamics of child participation and explore how it can be implemented within their spheres. It was established that parents also need to be engaged and these meetings also established ways in which this can be done.

Training workshops were facilitated for leaders of the child ambassador groups within network organisations. Barbara Clarke (Resilient Kids) and Nathan Panti (Living Hope) gave input about the fundamentals of child participation and project management.

Top level leaders of Safe Communities organisations were engaged with about the importance of child participation within their organisations and challenged to find ways to include the voices of the children that they work with. These leaders were encouraged to think deeply about how to bring these voices into the work they do in different structures and forums.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Early Childhood Development was identified by affiliates as being a key sector for intervention. It is so important that children from the earliest ages, which includes pre-birth, are assisted towards optimal development. To achieve this, an approach combining the strengths and skills represented by the network needs to be adopted. The first ECD working group meeting was held in February 2023, with Mdebuka Mthwazi facilitating.

STRATEGIC MEETINGS

Central to the Connect Network Safe Communities strategy are key community organisations, referred to as Lead Agents. In addition to serving their communities as Lead Agents, the leaders of these organisations also serve as Connect Network Non-Profit Company members. Strategic meetings were held throughout the year to ensure that the Connect Network strategy continues to be relevant and impactful for local communities. The representatives of these community organisations are able to provide feedback from community stakeholders and thereby shape the strategy and activities of Connect Network according to community needs and desires.

One of the strategic meetings held during 2022 was the Connect Network AGM with an event held at Jubilee Community Centre. The Board was re-elected and the NPC saw the addition of a new member. We very sadly said farewell to our long-standing, very capable and much loved Chief Financial Officer Beverley Stoffberg at this AGM, but were excited to have Campher Serfontein representing Verum Consultancy take her place.



ADVOCACY

CHILD PROTECTION COLLABORATIVE

Connect Network has remained an active member of the Child Protection Collaborative and met during the year to discuss how the Collaborative can continue to mobilise various stakeholders within the Western Cape to ensure that the rights of children are protected and needs met.

SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL CHILD RIGHTS COALITION

Connect Network continued to be part of the South African Child Rights Coalition (SACRC), with one of the founding members being a Connect Network affiliate. The SANCRC is an advocacy and communications coalition to support coordinated action for effective child rights governance in South Africa.

CAPACITY SUPPORT CIRCLE

Connect Network took part in a developing community of practice with stakeholders who are involved in capacity building in the NGO sector.

THANK YOU TO CONNECT NETWORK, THE TRAINING OUR STAFF RECEIVED THIS YEAR WAS USEFUL AND VALUABLE. WE ARE ABLE TO USE THE ACQUIRED KNOWLEDGE FROM THE CHILD WELL-BEING TRAINING BOTH IN THE WORKPLACE AND PERSONAL

Wendy Abrahams: Advance Edukos''

GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

NON-PROFIT COMPANY MEMBERS

The Non-Profit Company members' role is to determine the goals and strategy of the Network.
The NPC members are:

Beautiful Gate SA
Kuyasa Horizon Empowerment
Living Hope Trust

Sikhula Sonke
The Sozo Foundation
Think Twice

Mercy Aids
Prochorus Community Development
Just Grace NPC



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors provides governance to the finances and resources of the NPC as well as strategic direction for the network.



Chairperson



Advocacy Governance



Finance Governance



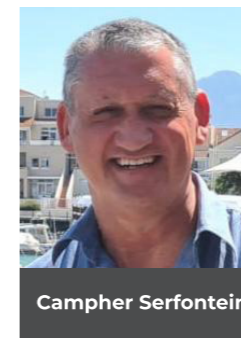
Executive Director

NETWORK COORDINATION TEAM

The coordination team is made up of individuals who are committed to the Network's vision and received remuneration either through employment or a contract.



Chief Finance Officer



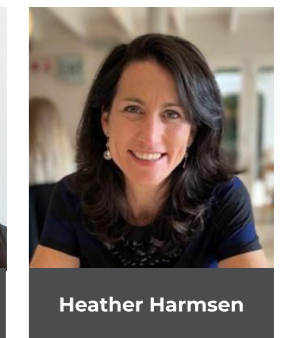
Chief Finance Officer



Network and Finance Administrator



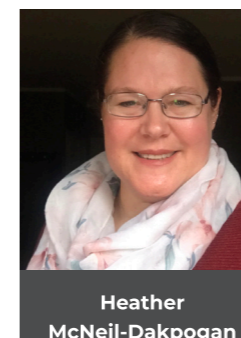
Network Office Administrator



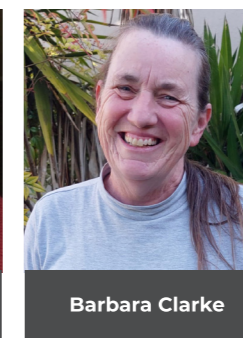
Marketing Coordinator



QIS Development Director



Trauma Informed GBV Project Director



Child Ambassador Project Director



QIS Project Team

CONNECT NETWORK COMMUNITY

360 Transformation
ACVV Bright Lights
ACVV Somerset West
Advance Edukos Foundation
Anchored Hope
Arise Family
Bayakhanya Foundation
Beautiful Gate SA
Beauty for Ashes
Bridges of Hope SA
Bridging Abilities
Carehaven Salvation Army
Choices Centre
Circle of Unity
Common Good Foundation
Dignity Campaign
Eagles Nest Ministries
Emyenzweni Pre-school
Ethel's Place
Film School Africa
Free To Fly
Friends of Child Protection
Grace 2 Learn
Heart2Heart Care Centre
Heatherdale Children's Homes
Heaven on Earth Projects
Helderberg Development Centre
Home of Compassion Ministries
Hope House Counselling Centre
Hope Prison Ministries
Hope to the Hopeless
Ikhaya le Themba Home based care
Ikwezi Community Development
Projects
Joya Homes and Educare Centre
Jubilee Health Centre
Just Grace NPC
Kibwe Kids

Kichi
Kin Culture
Kingdom Vision Bible School
Kings and Queens
Kuyasa Horison Empowerment
Lerato's Hope
LifeChild
Living Hope Trust
Matla-a-Bana
MeCAHT
Mercy Aids/Resilient Kids
Metro Kids Africa
Naomi's Joy
Open doors NPC
Open Schools World Wide
Paarl Youth Initiative
Percy Bartley House
Phambili Community Development
Philippi Children's Centre
Philippi Trust SA
Prochorus Community Development
SA cares for Life
Safeline Child Abuse & Treatment
Centre
Salt & Light Kids Discipleship
S-Cape Home (JusticeActs)
Scripture Union Western Cape
Seasons Crisis pregnancy Centre
Sikhula Sonke
Sisters Incorporated
Siyakhula SA
St Annes Home
Tereo project
Thando Trust
The Ark City of Refuge
The Father's Heart Community
Development NPC
The Healing Heart Foundation
The SOZO Foundation
Thembalisha Foundation
Think Twice
Touch Community Network
Trinity Childrens Centre
True North Consulting NPC
Tshireletso Ya Sechaba NPC
UCSA United Christian Students
Association (UCSA)
uThando leNkosi
Valcare Trust
Village Care Centre
Vineyard Houses
Warrior Woman
Western Cape Street Children's
Forum
World Vision Atlantis

PARTNERS



The Active Education Group creates programmes that provide holiday activities and childcare for children in the UK. They provide language schools for international students and sports coaching academies. AEG partners with Connect Network by providing funding for the annual Child Ambassador camps. The aim of these camps is to provide a fun, activity-packed, learning environment for 60 children per year.



Barney II Foundation was established by Bill and Sabra Reichardt (from New York, USA) to support, through funding, value-based initiatives that focus on the education and wellbeing of children. The foundation was introduced to Connect Network by Viva and has partnered with us in establishing the Connect Small Grants programme since 2009.



A civil society child protection movement made up of representative practitioners and professionals from various entities. The Child Protection Collaborative focus collaboratively on disseminating research, advocacy and child protection awareness. Connect is a founding partner.



Equipped to Serve, Inc., based in the United States, has an agreement with Connect Network to use the South African edition material of The Ministry of Listening: Caring for People in Crisis. The course provides training in basic crisis intervention counselling skills to enable participants to effectively minister to people in crisis.



Mergon is a private investment group that exists to impact lives, and seeks to equip others to do the same. Mergon and Connect Network have worked in partnership since 2016 in order to further develop the networks ability to make meaningful impact for children.



Kerk in Actie is the programme for missionary and diaconal work of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands and of 10 smaller churches and ecumenical organisations. Kerk in Actie facilitates relations between local congregations in the Netherlands and churches and organisations abroad regarding the proclamation of the Gospel and promotion of justice. Their partnership with Connect Network is supporting the Safe Community Strategy for children.



Viva International is a world-wide network of Christians working with children at risk operating in 28 different countries, supporting thousands of projects working with children at risk in 39 city-wide networks. Viva is the standard bearer for Connect's Quality Improvement System. Viva and Connect Network are committed at all times to exploring mutually beneficial collaborations through joint programmes.



The WCSCF is a network of organisations working in partnership to create a coordinated, integrated and collaborative sector for children living or begging on the street and always acting in the best interest of the child and are partnering with Connect to synergise common efforts to safeguard children.

SOUTH AFRICAN DONORS

Ackerman Family Foundation
Beautiful Gate South Africa
Beckman Coulter South Africa
Beryl Britten
Claytile (Pty) Ltd
Elmarie Becker
Lee-Ann De La Hunt
Mergon Foundation
Robyn Williams
Rodolfo Bruno
Santam
The Rolf Stephan Nussbaum Foundation
The Sowers Trust
The Sozo Foundation

CALENDAR DONORS

Cape Agricultural Products (Pty) Ltd
Cebano Consultants (Pty) Ltd
Claytile (Pty) Ltd
Cobble & Slab Concrete (Pty) Ltd
GEOSS SA Pty Ltd
Ikapa Impact Pty Ltd
Purple Line Plastics Pty Ltd
Social Causes Foundation
The Isipho Trust
The South African Christian Directory
Rawson Properties

OVERSEAS DONORS

Kerk in Actie
Viva Network
Barney II Foundation

DONATIONS IN KIND

Beautiful Gate SA
Ikhaya Le Themba HBC, Wellington
Jubilee Community Church
Living Hope Trust
Phambili Community Development
Rocklands Centre, Simons Town
Scripture Union WC
Will Smithson
Kuyasa Horizon Empowerment



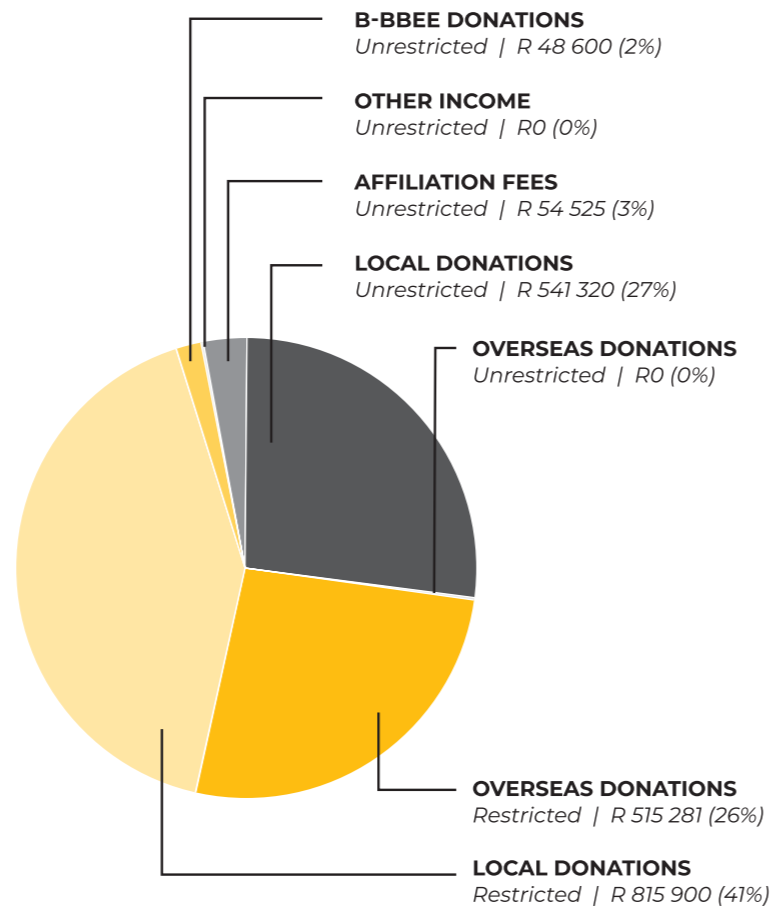
Photo courtesy of Ranyaka Community Development

**I'D RECOMMEND THE QIS PROGRAM,
ESPECIALLY FOR NEWER ORGANISATIONS.
IT'S GREAT FOR BUILDING A SOLID
FOUNDATION THAT WILL BE REALLY
HELPFUL IN THE LONG RUN**

Salome Geiger: Free to Fly

INCOME

Approximately R20 000 was contributed to the overall network income through donations in-kind including volunteer time, equipment loaned for free and donated meeting space and resources. This equates to just over 1 percent of revenue although Connect Network also received discounted hours from consultants which would increase the donations in kind to a similar level than the previous year. Affiliation fees and QIS income was 3% with local donations 71% and foreign donations 26%. The overall income reduced from the previous year by 13,8% and requires a specific focus to develop new revenue initiatives and partnerships for the future.



EXPENSES

Connect Network's strategy to equip affiliates to be more effective and impactful continued. The financial spend over the past year reflect this focus as Connect continued to Equip and collaborate through trainings, workshops, and partnerships.

The development of the QIS modules and LMS will further allow Connect Network to convert this important expenditure into a revenue generation opportunity.

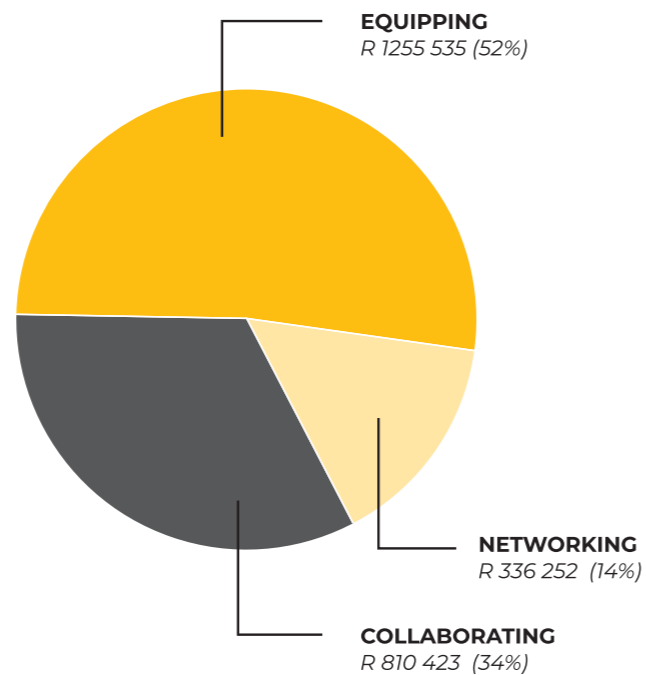


Photo courtesy of Kin Culture

THE GBVF WORKSHOPS HAVE HELPED ME TO BE MORE TRAUMA INFORMED, UNDERSTAND AND RECOGNIZE THE SYMPTOMS. RATHER THAN BEING JUDGMENTAL I AM MORE SUPPORTIVE. I AM DAILY CONFRONTING AND DEALING WITH MY TRAUMAS IN A POSITIVE WAY.

Martin Gumpo: St. Annes Homes



TOGETHER FOR

WOMEN AND CHILDREN

AT RISK

Registered as: Connect Christian Network NPC 2006/012058/08 | NPO: 040-987 · PBO: 930031187 (Section 18A Status)
PO Box 1005, Somerset West 7129, South Africa · +27 (0)21 852 9900

Bank Details: Account Name: Connect · Account No: 1060 191 113 · Bank: Nedbank
Branch: Somerset West · Branch Code: 10-60-12 · Swift Code: Nedszajj

We are a Level 1 B-BBEE contributor with 135% procurement recognition and 100% B-BBEE SED recognition.
Photos of children used with permission and in accordance with Connect Network's Child Protection Policy.
Many of the photos were taken before Covid protocols were necessary.

Front cover photograph courtesy of Film School Africa
Back cover photograph courtesy of Connect Network

info@connectnetwork.org.za | www.connectnetwork.org.za



Together For Women and Children At Risk