



EDUCATION
AFRICA

20 24 ANNUAL REPORT





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KANANELO MAKHETHA
President, Education Africa

01

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

2024 has been yet another landmark year for Education Africa, and it gives me great pleasure to present the 2024 Annual Report.

Having adopted the 10-year Strategic Direction for the organisation in 2023, we set out in 2024 on an in-depth look into our fundraising strategies so that we could ensure the financial backing and income to be able to actualise our vision moving forward. This has been a fascinating and insightful exercise, and I wish to convey my sincere thanks to James Urdang, Mbali Sebokedi and the management team at Education Africa for their tireless efforts. A special word of thanks also to the bright strategic minds (you know who you are!) who have volunteered their time, guided us and assisted us through this process. We could not have done this without you!

I am proud to say that our 2024 Fundraising Strategy was unanimously accepted by the Board of Trustees as well as our international stakeholders and representatives (please refer to the CEO Report for additional information). It is therefore with confidence that I can say that Education Africa continues to move in an upward trajectory and is firmly positioned as one of the leading NGOs in southern Africa.

Importantly, we continue to deliver on our projects, and we have seen significant growth and scaling - which is very exciting a mere year after adopting our strategic direction - whilst always maintaining our excellent standards. Education Africa truly is **Making real change Happen** by improving the lives of our many beneficiaries, disadvantaged learners and youth. As always, **Poverty alleviation through Education** continues to be our driving mission.



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The Education Africa team

Our dedicated team at Education Africa has gone the extra mile and it shows in their work ethic but also in their passion, which shines through so clearly. One of the big innovations this year has been the pilot of our ECD Teacher Mentorship Programme and I have no doubt that this programme will have an enormous impact on the ECD sector.

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A big thank you also to our Boards of Trustees worldwide and to our many donors and sponsors, for their continued support and unwavering commitment to Education Africa.

A couple of milestones were also reached among our staff: On behalf of the Board of Trustees I wish to congratulate Mbali Sebokedi on her well-deserved appointment as Director: Communications & Partnerships. Karin Fieldgate celebrated 30 years with Education Africa in March, and we noted the retirement of both Wendy Saner and Joan Lithgow, two formidable women who have played an instrumental role in the success of Education Africa. We wish them well in their retirement!

A big thank you also to our Boards of Trustees worldwide and to our many donors and sponsors, for their continued support and unwavering commitment to Education Africa.

Yours in education

Kananelo Makhetha

President, Education Africa



JAMES URDANG
CEO & Founder,
Education Africa

02

FROM THE DESK OF OUR CEO

As I reflect on the work and developments at Education Africa during the course of 2024, I am overcome by an immense sense of pride at the efforts, commitment and achievements of the Education Africa team. In a financial year that has been turbulent on a global scale, we have managed to achieve impact at an unprecedented level as our organisation grows from strength to strength.

The year started with some good funding commitments – always a great way to start the new year – so it was with renewed energy that we hit the ground running when we reopened our doors after the December break.

In April our long-awaited move into a bigger office space became a reality, and we were delighted to welcome stakeholders and friends to our beautiful new offices. In line with our corporate colours introduced last year, our office walls reflect the brightness and energy that have become synonymous with Education Africa, while also showcasing our history and significant milestones. I would like to take this opportunity to thank our sponsors who ensured that the move went off seamlessly, particularly Growthpoint Properties, Nashua Central and VNS.

I also would like to take this opportunity to thank our corporate sponsor, Blue Label Telecoms and our many

donors, many of whom wish to remain anonymous, for their continued and significant support which enables us to do the work we do. Being an NPO we are only able to operate through the kindness and generosity of others – be it in the form of financial donations, donations in-kind, or the sharing of expertise. A big thank you also to our Trustees both in South Africa and at our global offices, as well as our Patrons, who continue to give of their time on a voluntary basis to support the work we do in South Africa.

Our projects continue to enjoy significant successes, and we have been able to scale in line with our projections for 2024. Our M&E systems demonstrate that we are achieving great impact throughout our projects, reaffirming our commitment to **Making real change Happen.**

Special mention must be made of the Matric class of 2024 at our school, Masibambane College, who once again achieved excellent results. Our learners achieved a 98.1% pass rate and amassed 55 subject distinctions.



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Mbali Sebokedi: Director of Communications & Partnerships and member of the Education Africa Board of Directors



We have employed new staff and have given opportunities for some of our existing staff members to take on new positions.

76% of our matric learners achieved a university pass, which is testament to the high level of education at the College (the country average was 47%). We wish the Masibambane matrices of 2024 much success in their future endeavours.

More details on our project work can be found in the relevant section of this report. Please also refer to the 2024 Highlights.

STAFF DEVELOPMENTS

As part of the significant scaling of our projects we have employed new staff and have given opportunities to some of our existing staff members to take on new positions:

- Mbali Sebokedi was promoted to Director: Communications & Partnerships. She also joined the Education Africa Board of Directors
- Rachel Silber was appointed Grant Writer and Researcher in the Communications & Partnerships team
- Ayanda Nkosi was appointed In-Studio Technician/ Production Assistant Support
- Rodney Selbst was appointed Financial Manager
- Nicita Sukhdeo was promoted to Manager, Train the Teacher for the ECD Project
- Mpho Moleko was promoted to Quality Assurance Manager for the ECD Project
- Bolao Phatang was promoted to Manager, Teacher Mentorship for the ECD Project
- Cathrine Sweetie was promoted to Quality Assurance Assistant for the ECD Project
- Mamello Harris was promoted to Manager Assistant, Train the Teacher for the ECD Project



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We remain steadfast in our resolve to help achieve Poverty alleviation through Education.

- 2 of our ECD interns were promoted to the position of Trainer in the ECD Teach the Teacher Programme
- 6 of our ECD student graduates were appointed as Trainer Interns
- Anita du Plessis was appointed Regional Marimba Hub Manager for the North-West
- Kamohelo Mokwatlo, one of our 2023 Marimba Alumni Interns, was appointed Marimba Assistant
- Following Joan Lithgow's retirement towards the end of 2024, Khabonina Motaung was promoted to Marimba Project Manager

Additional staff news include the celebration of Karin Fieldgate's 30-year association with Education Africa. Wendy Saner, our Financial Director, retired after 15 years' service to Education Africa. Both Wendy and Joan (who worked for Education Africa for the past 12 years) will be sorely missed, and we wish them much happiness and continued good health in their retirement.

On a personal note, I achieved the distinction of reaching my 60th birthday and can proudly say that I have spent more than half my life serving Education Africa and our beneficiaries. My birthday celebration, which was held in November, took on the form of a fundraiser in aid of Education Africa and I was humbled (and left at a loss for words) at the kindness and outpouring of love I received from friends and stakeholders. I have also renewed my passion for competitive long-distance running and have committed to use the platform to raise funds for, and increase awareness of, Education Africa. The writing of my memoir is progressing well and we anticipate publication in the third quarter of 2025. I would like to thank the Board of Trustees for their support for this project, and for encouraging me to tell my story.



James Urdang with Stan Amaladas, Director of the Mauro Institute for Peace and Justice at St. Paul's College, University of Manitoba, Canada

I also had the opportunity to share my story incorporating Education Africa at the University of Manitoba in Canada in October. I was humbled to present the annual Sol Kanee Peace and Justice lecture, focusing on the role of education delivery through social cohesion.

In closing, I would like to reaffirm Education Africa's commitment to serving South Africa's marginalised and disadvantaged communities for many years to come.

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I would like to reaffirm Education Africa's commitment to serving South Africa's marginalised and disadvantaged communities for many years to come.

We remain steadfast in our resolve to help achieve **Poverty alleviation through Education** in line with our vision: Education Africa is the catalyst for enabling scalable, sustainable, digitally-enabled high-quality blended education for disadvantaged Africans and their communities.

Education Africa's sustainability is reliant on funding, and we have developed, with the help and guidance of industry experts, an Education Africa Fundraising Strategy to take us into the future. We look forward to implementing this in 2025 as we set our sights to achieve further growth and impact among our beneficiaries.

James Urdang
CEO & Founder

2024 HIGHLIGHTS



JAN

The hard work and dedication of our Masibambane College learners and educators has paid off, with the Matric Class of 2024 once again achieving exceptional results.

The Education Africa All Star Marimba Band performed on Australia Day at the Australian High Commission in Pretoria.

MARCH

The Marimba Team held their first upskilling workshop of the year for all our Gauteng-based Marimba Hub Teachers. It was a fantastic opportunity for our Hub teachers to meet each other, share experiences and learn some new music, as well as recognizing the teachers' commitment to our Marimba Hub programme.

Congratulations to our ECD Team for achieving second place in the Ntataise ECD Championship.

FBS once again came to the support of Masibambane College, by funding the restoration work of the school clock and ensuring that it was returned to its rightful place – the school's clock tower.

Our 40-hour Introductory Marimba Workshop attracted 71 enthusiastic participants representing 20 different schools and institutions.

A new cohort of students began their 18-month ECD Train the Teacher Programme with an energetic start across all eight Education Africa training centres, diving straight into their English Fundamentals.

The pilot of our ECD Teacher Mentorship Programme is launched, addressing the ongoing challenge of continuous professional development for ECD educators. This programme is poised to revolutionize preschool teacher enrichment.

After months of planning and preparation, we officially opened our new offices on 18 April, marking a new chapter in Education Africa's story and celebrating our growth as an organisation.



APRIL

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

MAY

The Masibambane College Founders Day was held on 18th May, celebrating 28 years of Care and Excellence in the Orange Farm community.

The 19th Education Africa Social Architecture crèche – Matshela Daycare, built by the University of Nottingham and partnered with Thušanang Trust - was officially opened on 10 May, in Limpopo.

As part of our ongoing commitment to Educate • Equip • Empower, Education Africa hosted an upskilling workshop for our Marimba Hub teachers.

Education Africa was thrilled to host the talented Austrian trumpeter Franz Hackl, who visited and did workshops with some of our Marimba Hubs while in South Africa. He also performed at the Masibambane Founders Day alongside our All-Stars Alumni Marimba Band.

Module 1 of the ECD Train the Teacher programme kicked off, focusing on the fundamentals of child development and exploring topics like physical, cognitive and socio-emotional milestones, as well as effective teaching methods and positive behaviour guidance.

JUNE

Mbali Sebokedi is promoted to Director: Communications & Partnerships.

Our All Star Marimba Band has had a busy month, performing at the World Universities Network Dinner and at the Austrian Business Chamber Golf Day.

We officially opened an Education Africa Marimba Hub at Emaromeni Catholic Primary School in Benoni. One of our Alumni is teaching at the Hub.

ABRSM Stage Project selected the Education Africa All Star Marimba Band to kick off its new YouTube series. [Click here to view.](#)

We introduced Support Days for our ECD Train the Teacher students where our trainers and interns provided clarity around some of the difficulties the students were encountering, and helped them grasp their work.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

JULY

We had an incredible Mandela Day at one of our supported ECD centres. Our ECD Train the Teacher team as well as a group of supporters collaborated for a day of fun, learning and giving back to the community.

AUG

We are incredibly proud of Rorisang Motsamai, of the Education Africa Alumni Marimba Intern Programme and member of the Education Africa All Star Band, who was selected to do a month-long music residency in Finland.

The 2024 Education Africa International Marimba & Steelpan Festival took place at the end of July. With over 2,300 marimba players from more than 85 institutions across Africa, plus international virtual entries, it was truly an event to remember.

Stakeholders and Education Africa management consolidate their mandate to create a Fundraising Strategy Plan for Education Africa.

SEPT

Our tenth Sounds of Celebration Concert took place at the Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg. This year's theme was 'Believe,' and we are immensely proud of our Marimba Team and all the performers for their flawless performance which showcased the power of social cohesion through music.

Our students in the ECD Train the Teacher programme have been having a blast diving into module three where they explored new and exciting child-centred teaching methods.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS



OCT

Saturday, 26th October marked an exciting step forward in our mission to enrich early childhood development through music. Our Marimba Team hosted a workshop for our ECD Team where they were introduced to our *The Adventures of Little Grey Squirrel and Friends*, preschool Marimba Hub programme that draws upon music, drama, art, movement and fantasy play to engage young children in arts and culture.

Still in Canada and James laced up his running shoes to take on the Road2Hope Half Marathon in Canada, using the occasion to raise funding and awareness of Education Africa while running a personal best of 1h35.

On the 26th of October, James Urdang jetted off to Canada, where he was invited to deliver the annual Sol Kanee Lecture Series for Peace and Justice at the University of Manitoba. Past speakers of this event include Nobel Laureates such as Professor Muhammad Yunus, Jody Williams, and Dr Oscar Arias to name a few. It was a great honour for James to be invited to share his insights on how education can be a powerful tool for promoting peace and justice through social cohesion.

Masibambane College holds its Valedictory Service for Grade 12 learners, ahead of their final matric examinations.

NOV

The Education Africa Fundraising Strategy is presented to the Board of Trustees and key stakeholders, who unanimously adopt the Strategy as a way to grow the funding of Education Africa in the short to medium term.

The Education Africa Marimba All Star Band is featured on SABC Morning Live.

We have embarked on a Monitoring and Evaluation drive to assess the impact of our ECD Teacher Mentorship Pilot.

Friends and supporters came together for a memorable party at the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) to celebrate James Urdang's 60th birthday. Thanks to the generous support from Sun International, the evening was more than just a birthday bash - it was a fundraiser for Education Africa, and a chance to spotlight James's lifetime of accomplishments and commitment to **Making real change Happen**.



03

COMMUNICATIONS & PARTNERSHIPS

The Education Africa Communications & Partnerships team has grown in 2024, reaffirming Education Africa's continued commitment to heightening awareness of the organisation, growing our digital voice as well as focusing on the all-important function of grant writing.



The Education Africa Communications Team

During 2024, we welcomed Rachel Silber to the Communications & Partnerships team in the capacity of Grant Writer and Researcher.

Mbali Sebokedi was promoted to Director: Communications & Partnerships and Karin Fieldgate continued in her role as a consultant.

GRANT WRITING

It has been a busy year for our grant writers, both overseas and in South Africa. In an effort to become less reliant on our overseas grant writers, Mbali Sebokedi and Rachel Silber have been doing extensive training, and we would like to express our gratitude to our US-based grant writers for their commitment to Education Africa and for sharing their expertise with us. Grant writing is a highly specialised field of communication and vital to the ongoing sustainability of both Education Africa as an organisation, as well as our projects.



Making an impact with our new corporate branding

promotional items reflect our vibrant corporate colours and have greatly enhanced our presence and visibility at many events.

We have also updated and reprinted our corporate brochure.

SOCIAL MEDIA REPORT

In 2024, Education Africa continued to harness the power of social media to share our story, celebrate impact, and build community. This year marked a shift in how we connect with audiences online—moving beyond just sharing updates to creating a space where our work could be seen, heard, and felt across the globe.

Our presence on Facebook and Instagram grew steadily, thanks to more consistent storytelling, stronger visuals, and intentional efforts to highlight the voices of those we serve. We opened the year with energy, launching content that resonated with both our loyal supporters and new followers discovering us for the first time. This early momentum carried through key moments in the year, especially when showcasing our Marimba Hubs, celebrating programme milestones, or spotlighting inspirational individuals in our network.

Additionally, the grant writers take on the responsibility of writing regular reports to our many donors and sponsors – an essential function in maintaining partnerships and growing relationships with the donor community.

CORPORATE BRANDING

We have updated some much-needed corporate branding in the form of corporate banners and gazebos. In line with our new corporate identity launched in 2023, these



Our goal is to move beyond broadcasting, and into meaningful dialogue – inviting our followers to not only witness the work we do but to feel part of it.

Instagram, in particular, evolved into a creative storytelling hub. It became the platform where our work truly came to life—through vibrant photos, short-form videos, and behind-the-scenes glimpses of our teams and beneficiaries in action. Whether it was learners performing with joy, educators being trained, or special events being documented, Instagram allowed us to capture and share the emotion, energy, and real impact of our work. Moments from concerts, community visits, and even everyday classroom scenes were able to shine in a more dynamic, visual way. We found that Instagram helped us reach new and younger audiences—those who may not yet know our name but are deeply connected to causes that matter. Though there’s still room to grow in terms of interaction and follower participation, the foundation we laid in 2024 has set the stage for deeper connection and creative experimentation in the year ahead.

While LinkedIn was a little quieter, we still welcomed 232 new followers to our professional network, offering a promising opportunity to re-engage with partners, funders, and alumni in 2025. YouTube, though underutilised, showed powerful potential. Despite fewer uploads, the platform attracted 574 new subscribers this year—and even more encouraging were the supportive, heartfelt comments that came through. These moments remind us that people are not only watching but rooting for us.

Looking to 2025, we’re excited to continue building on this momentum. Our goal is to move beyond broadcasting, and into meaningful dialogue – inviting our followers to not only witness the work we do but to feel part of it. Through thoughtful content, consistent updates, and more opportunities for engagement, social media will remain a vital part of how we build awareness, inspire action, and expand Education Africa’s impact across borders.

We look forward to increasing our digital marketing footprint further in 2025.

Did you know?

1. MySchool Card is an easy, hassle-free way to support Education Africa. Simply list Education Africa as a beneficiary and remember to swipe your card at participating retail outlets.
2. We have partnered with Famous Brands Coffee Company through their Sustainable Giving Initiative which ensures that a percentage of sales for every bag of Loba Blend No 2 coffee sold, goes to Education Africa.



PROJECT REPORTS

04



4.1

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD) PROJECT

2024 has seen the Education Africa ECD Project enter a new phase of delivery and impact with the launch of our ECD Teacher Mentorship Programme. As of 2024, our ECD Project consists of the following: Train the Teacher programme, ECD Trainer Intern programme, and ECD Teacher Mentorship programme. With this much-needed addition to the project, Education Africa is now able to offer SAQA NQF Level 4 qualification to ECD teachers; our

interns not only job shadow our trainers, we also enrol them in a SAQA Level 5 training course which allows them to qualify as trainers themselves. This, together with our brand new ECD Teacher Mentorship Programme which offers ongoing training and support to our qualified teachers, means we are rapidly establishing ourselves as one of the most comprehensive training and support facilities in the ECD sector in South Africa.

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TRAINERS

Over **200** student teachers enrolled in our Train the Teacher Programme

6
INTERNS

40 Preschools registered in our Teacher Mentorship Programme

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TRAINING CENTRES



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The Education Africa ECD Team

ECD TRAIN THE TEACHER PROGRAMME

The Education Africa ECD Train the Teacher programme is a robust, multi-faceted programme which enables preschool teachers from vulnerable communities to attain their South Africa Qualifications Authority (SAQA) National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Level 4 Certification in ECD. Beyond SAQA-level requirements, our training curriculum employs a creative, experiential methodology particularly beneficial for low-resource teachers. We offer a blended online and in-person teaching methodology with ongoing enrichment opportunities enabled by distance-learning, and the outcomes (besides the formal qualification), include that students can effectively deliver a high-quality, play-based early learning experience while successfully facilitating children’s cognitive, physical, and socioemotional development, ensuring school readiness.

Major scaling of this programme has taken place this year, expanding from 125 student teachers across five training groups in 2022/2023 to over 200 student teachers across eight training centres for the 2024/2025 student intake. Enrolment requirements include a matric certificate, police clearance, and a commitment fee of R1 500. To successfully graduate, student teachers must maintain a 75% average attendance rate and complete 140 credits in fundamentals, core modules, electives, and workshops.

There have been many developments in the Education Africa ECD Project, and we are delighted to announce the following promotions to managerial positions:

Nicita Sukhdeo (Manager: Train the Teacher), Mpho Moleko (Manager: Quality Assurance), and Bolao Phatang (Manager: ECD Teacher Mentorship). Tessa Wolfaardt continues to head up the Education Africa ECD Project in her capacity as ECD Specialist & Senior Manager.





Our ECD Trainers and their interns conduct Baseline Assessments at each student teacher's preschool to gather performance data, followed by a mid-programme site visit and a subsequent post-baseline visit towards the latter half of the second year.

Quality assurance includes reviews of student files followed by internal pre-moderation and subsequent external moderation. Finally, all student files are submitted to the ETDP SETA (Education, Training, and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority) for system integration and SAQA NQF Level 4 accreditation.

Education Africa recently partnered with DataDrive2030 to evaluate the impact of our NQF Level 4 graduates' ECD programmes using the Early Learning Outcomes Measure (ELOM) tools. The ELOM LPQA (Learning Programme Quality Assessment) is used to assess the quality of our Train the Teacher programme, and the ELOM 4 & 5 tool assesses children's development across five key areas: Gross Motor Development, Fine Motor Coordination and Visual Motor Integration, Emergent Numeracy and Mathematics, Cognition and Executive Functioning, and Emergent Literacy and Language. Of the children assessed (aged 50-59 months), 89% are on track in Emergent Literacy and Language, performing well above their peers attending comparable ECD programmes. Notably, 86% showed high concentration and persistence during the assessment.

ECD TRAINER INTERN PROGRAMME

Six new interns have joined the Education Africa ECD team this year and will be with us for the durations of the two-year training cycle that began in January 2024. Five of the interns are in our Train the Teacher programme and one is in our ECD Teacher Mentorship Programme.

Our ECD Project has evolved organically over the past few years. A common difficulty for programmes like ours is sourcing high quality trainers. Our ECD Trainer Intern programme addresses this challenge by upskilling selected NQF Level 4 graduates who, over a two-year period - will complete their SAQA NQF Level 5 training, the SAQA Accredited Assessors Course, and the Ntataise Training course.

ECD TEACHER MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

Education Africa's new ECD Teacher Mentorship programme was launched this year, with the aim of revolutionising preschool teacher enrichment. Leveraging cutting-edge ICT methodologies at our in-house, state-of-the-art studio which transcends traditional video conferencing to foster dynamic interactions between our graduate preschool teachers and our seasoned mentors, the programme will set a new standard for educational support for our graduate teachers (from the Train the Teacher Programme) when back in

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My student told me she only learnt to make resources by observing us during training and THAT is what really got me. I had a moment with myself where I actually fully realized that what I do matters, and it has a direct impact on children's lives. My heart swells from just thinking about it.

SINALO JULAYI

the classroom. Our mentorship helps teachers to refine their skills, build their professional identity, and create enriching learning environments for young children.

The initial pilot programme was launched on 1 March 2024 and included graduates who have obtained their SAQA NQF Level 4 through Education Africa, bringing 40 ECD centres into our Education Africa Preschool network and reaching approximately 600 children.

The students were carefully selected and subscribed to the ECD Teacher Mentorship programme. Official onboarding sessions were also held at designated locations in Soweto and Orange Farm, with 20 teachers participating each day. Baseline visits to ECD centres were also initiated. Tablets and data were distributed



Mandela Day ECD centre make-over

to all participants as well as ECD Teacher Mentorship programme activity boxes which encompass 14 thematic elements to be covered throughout the programme.

The programme's structure is meticulously organised, including an implementation plan, mentorship meetings, and scheduled fortnightly, live-streamed interactive video sessions led by our in-house expert, Bolao Phatang who ensures that teachers receive high-quality, relevant instruction through interactive activities, creative storytelling, and hands-on demonstrations to make the concepts both engaging and educational for young learners. Topics included child-centred learning, play-based education, and classroom design. Additionally, a total of 46 training videos were produced, offering practical insights into areas such as language development, mathematics in everyday situations, and creative learning approaches. These videos were made available to participants via Google Classroom.

Through high-quality mentoring we aim to ensure that Education Africa graduates in peri-urban areas will become known in the education sector as top-tier ECD teachers. We commissioned a Monitoring and Evaluation Report on this pilot project which clearly demonstrates the positive impact the Education Africa Teacher Mentorship Programme is having on ECD teachers as well as the young learners in their classrooms. [Click here to view the full report.](#)



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MARIMBA PROJECT

Through the Education Africa Marimba Project, we aim to create opportunities for South African youth, in under-resourced communities, to participate in cultural and academic enrichment programmes. This Project revolves around the Marimba, a keyboard percussion instrument also known as the African Xylophone. The main components of our Marimba Project are: Marimba Hubs; the Education Africa International Marimba & Steelpan Festival; Sounds of Celebration; and the Marimba Alumni Internship Programme. We are pleased to announce that 2024 was yet another bumper year for our Marimba Project.

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MARIMBA HUBS

9 of our Alumni are now paying their love of music forward and teaching in our Marimba Hubs

17 of our Marimba Hubs cater specifically for physically impaired, sight impaired and hearing-impaired learners

2 000 learners are attending weekly practices in our Marimba Hubs during the school term

Over **2 300** musicians participated in the Education Africa International Marimba & Steelpan Festival

200 musicians participated in the Sounds of Celebration Concert

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PRESCHOOL
MARIMBA HUBS





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Our goal for the year was to scale the project by launching new Marimba Hubs and increasing the number of learners who attend practices at our Hubs on a weekly basis.

It's been an eventful year for the Education Africa Marimba team. We started the year welcoming a new team member Kamohelo Mokwatlo who joined us as a Marimba Assistant at head office, having completed the Alumni programme in 2023. Anita du Plessis was appointed Regional Marimba Hub Manager in the Northern Cape.

Education Africa was thrilled to host the talented Austrian trumpeter Franz Hackl, known for his versatility in genres from jazz to classical as well as being an accomplished instrument maker. During his time with us, Hackl worked with and performed 3 short concerts with 3 of our Marimba Hubs: Sibonile School for the Visually Impaired, MCK Special School, and Ithembelihle LSEN school for physically disabled learners. Another highlight was Hackl's performance with the Masibambane College Prestige Band at the school's Founders Day celebrations on 18 May. It was a delight to witness this cultural exchange and the joy it brought to our students and community.

Hackl's passion, skill, and dedication to his craft were an inspiration to all who engaged with him. We are grateful for the enriching experience he brought to our Hubs and the lasting impact on our marimba learners and their peers.



The Education Africa Marimba Team

MARIMBA HUBS

Our goal for the year was to scale the project by launching new Marimba Hubs and increasing the number of learners who attend practices at our Hubs on a weekly basis. On both





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We were excited to run our first combined workshop for the ECD and Marimba team, marking an exciting step forward in our mission to enrich early childhood development through music.

To support the Marimba Hubs we not only equip them with the necessary instruments and teaching aids, we also hold regular marimba teacher training workshops:

- **The 40-hour Introductory Marimba Workshop:** This is for current, new and prospective teachers, and this year we trained 71 enthusiastic participants representing 20 different schools and institutions. Among them were officials from the Gauteng Department of Education, demonstrating their commitment to music education, as well as teachers from 6 schools that cater to the needs of learners with disabilities, underscoring our dedication to accessibility and inclusivity. We were also delighted to host 8 teachers from the Northern Cape, further expanding our reach across provinces.
- **Upskilling Workshops:** These are open to all the teachers at our Marimba Hubs. We held two upskilling workshops during 2024 as well as an additional workshop to support the Boschrand Hub in Mpumalanga.

counts we exceeded our expectations. At year end we had 26 Marimba Hubs and 11 Preschool Marimba Hubs with over 2 000 learners attending weekly practices during the school calendar. While most of our Hubs are located in Gauteng, we also have Hubs in the Northern Cape, North-West and Mpumalanga. Out of the total 37 Marimba Hubs, 17 are specifically for learners who have physical disabilities or are hearing or sight impaired. Our Marimba Hubs have proudly represented Education Africa at numerous functions and events, including eisteddfods, concerts, performances for Education District offices, and private events.



Aligning with Education Africa's ideals of excellence, respect, and friendship, the 2024 Festival was centred on the theme *Peace and Harmony* to commemorate 30 years of democracy in South Africa.

Additionally, our Marimba Team visits the Hubs regularly to offer assistance to the Marimba teachers to ensure the methodology is implemented and that the learners are fully engaged in the learning process.

We were excited to run our first combined workshop for the ECD and Marimba team, marking an exciting step forward in our mission to enrich early childhood development through music. The workshop, which took place on 26 October, was designed to introduce our ECD trainers, interns, and Quality Assurance team to our *The Adventures of Little Grey Squirrel and Friends*, Preschool Marimba Hub programme that draws upon music, drama, art, movement, and fantasy play to engage young children in arts and culture. Our goal is to grow the programme within our network of ECD Preschools, reaching more communities and enriching the educational experiences of young children in the coming years.

To monitor the value of the Marimba Hub programme, Education Africa commissioned a three-year independent evaluation and impact study in 2023. The study explores the direct outcomes of participating in the Marimba Hubs, as well as the longer-term impact that the Marimba Hubs have on the young musicians' lives. Importantly, the study also explores the factors contributing to the

successes of this programme as well as the challenges that the programme faces. Results from the 2024 data (compared with the 2023 data) are positive, encouraging and clearly demonstrate that the programme is on track and achieving desired outcomes – notably addressing the learners' emotional needs, emotional intelligence and emotional expression while improving self-confidence and instilling a sense of belonging. Benefits on a cognitive/intellectual level were also noted. [Click here to view the detailed 2024 report.](#)

EDUCATION AFRICA INTERNATIONAL MARIMBA & STEELPAN FESTIVAL

On 27 and 28 July we hosted the Education Africa International Marimba & Steelpan Festival at St. Dominic's Catholic School for Girls in Boksburg. We once again succeeded in bringing together musicians from across the globe to celebrate cultural exchange, musical excellence, and unity through the power of marimba and steelpan music.

Aligning with Education Africa's ideals of excellence, respect, and friendship, the 2024 Festival was centred on the theme "Peace and Harmony" to commemorate 30 years of democracy in South Africa. Inclusivity was also a cornerstone of the Festival with accessible competition





Our tenth Sounds of Celebration Concert featured young musicians from our Marimba Hubs and showcased the power of unity

“

2 300 participants took part, setting a new participation record for an event which has established itself to be the largest of its kind in the world.

categories allowing musicians with disabilities to perform alongside their peers, fostering an environment of equality and mutual respect. In total, 2 300 participants took part, setting a new participation record for an event which has established itself to be the largest of its kind in the world.

There were over 330 performances from young musicians from across South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Trinidad and Tobago. More than 90 interactive sessions on marimba, steelpan, gumboot dancing, djembe drumming,

and activities for children aged 3–8 took place throughout the course of the Festival.

SOUNDS OF CELEBRATION

Our tenth Sounds of Celebration Concert took place at the Linder Auditorium in Johannesburg on 10 September this year. The theme was *Believe*, and for the first time ever we hosted it as a hybrid event allowing us to include professional musicians from all over the world sharing the stage with over 200 young performers.

Our Marimba team put on an unforgettable evening honouring the vibrant musical talents that unite our community. A big thanks to Thato Rampedi, our brilliant emcee for the evening, and Afriikan Papi who brought his unique Afro Pop vibes to the stage. They were joined by our hugely talented All Star Marimba band and our brilliant Marimba Hub bands, including bands made up of learners with disabilities. The event truly showcased the power of unity and we are immensely proud of all the young performers. A special thank you to the National Lotteries Commission (NLC) and Blue Label Telecoms for sponsoring the concert.



Austrian trumpeter: Franz Hackl is accompanied by the Education Africa All Star Marimba Band

EDUCATION AFRICA MARIMBA ALUMNI MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

This programme entails teaching selected Alumni from our Marimba Hubs how to be Marimba teachers, arts administrators, crew for shows and events, performers etc. In 2024 we had 12 alumni as part of our mentorship programme.

We are incredibly proud of Rorisang Motsamai, one of our Alumni Mentorship Programme graduates and member of the Education Africa All Star Marimba Band, who was invited to do a month-long music residency in Finland in July . Rorisang performed and conducted marimba workshops at the prestigious Kaustinen Folk Music Festival and presented the “Sisu Meets Ubuntu” project at the ISME conference, the leading global music education conference.

EDUCATION AFRICA ALL STAR MARIMBA BAND

Our All Star Marimba Band has had a busy year, having been invited to do 12 gigs throughout the year – including a performance at our CEO’s 60th birthday fundraiser for Education Africa. Another highlight was the opportunity to perform on SABC Morning Live. We are incredibly proud of our All Star Marimba Band for representing Education Africa on such a prominent platform and for continuing to inspire audiences with their skill, creativity, and passion for music. Our aim for next year is to manage and promote the band so that it becomes an income-generating programme for the Education Africa Marimba project, as well as the band members.

MASIBAMBANE COLLEGE

Situated in Orange Farm, a township 50km south of Johannesburg, our school – Masibambane College – has firmly established itself as a beacon of hope and opportunity in a community historically marked by high levels of poverty.

2024 has been yet another outstanding and memorable year for Masibambane College. Established in 1996, the school continues to grow from strength to strength,



and we would like to acknowledge St John's College, our partner school, for its ongoing commitment to Masibambane and the wonderful support it provides to the academic staff and learners of our school.

While much has happened during the year, the first and foremost thing we need to brag about is the school's continued academic performance.

Another year of outstanding results and achievements

Masibambane College's matrics have delivered again! We are immensely proud of the class of 2024 for achieving the following results:

- 98.1% pass rate (up from 95.7% in 2023)
- 76% of matrics secured a Bachelor Pass (a significant increase from 59% in 2023)
- 15% of matrics achieved a Higher Certificate Pass
- There was a total of 59 distinctions, with our top learner achieving 5 distinctions



Distinguished guests at the Masibambane Founders Day included Austria's Deputy Ambassador Oliver Grünbacher, James Urdang, David Jennings (Executive head of Masibambane College), Renate Brauer (President Friends of Education Africa in Vienna) and Rowan Burger

This incredible achievement resulted in Masibambane College being recognised as the Top Performing Independent School for 2024 in the Johannesburg South Circuit 1 district.

Our brilliant educators were also recognised for their outstanding contributions:

- **Mr Dongo** – Top Mathematics Teacher
- **Mr Maja** – Top Mathematical Literacy Teacher



Masibambane College: Top Performing Independent School for 2024 in the Johannesburg South Circuit 1 district.

- **Mr Nyamayaro** – Top Life Sciences Teacher
- **Mr Johnson** – Top Business Studies & Accounting Teacher
- **Mr Zivuku** – Top Geography Teacher

Masibambane College also achieved top results in Grade 9 Mathematics and English, affirming the school's continued academic excellence across the board.

These achievements are testament to the hard work and dedication of both our educators and our learners who despite living in a historically under-resourced community, have once again proved that circumstances do not define potential.

For us and our partner, St John's College, it also proves that it is possible to run a highly successful school in a



disadvantaged community. In 2024 we had 1 252 learners enrolled at the school.

FOUNDERS DAY

On 18 May we held our annual school Founders Day – a momentous occasion as we gathered to commemorate what would have been Tata Sisulu’s 112th birthday and celebrate the incredible legacy he left behind. We were



We also welcomed Thomas Zilk, another steadfast supporter and champion of our work, as well as The Deputy Ambassador Oliver Grünbacher from the Austrian Embassy and representatives of the Sisulu family, who continue to support the school.

thrilled to welcome representatives from Friends of Education Africa Vienna, including Renate Brauner, the former Deputy Mayor of the City of Vienna and a regular visitor to the school. We also welcomed Thomas Zilk, another steadfast supporter and champion of our work, as well as The Deputy Ambassador Oliver Grünbacher from the Austrian Embassy and representatives of the Sisulu family, who continue to support the school.

INFRASTRUCTURE

We have converted the former home economics classroom (home economics is no longer taught at the school) into two much needed additional classrooms for the primary school.



SOCIAL ARCHITECTURE

Matshela Daycare Crèche, the 19th preschool to be built as part of the Education Africa Social Architecture Project, was officially opened in May this year. Once again, we welcomed students from the Nottingham University Department of Architecture and Built Environment – our partners in this project alongside Thušanang Trust – to rural Limpopo where the students enthusiastically completed the final phase of the project, the actual building of the preschool.

In demonstrating the transformative power of social architecture and the incredible impact that can be achieved through collaboration and community engagement, the keys to Matshela Daycare Crèche were officially handed to Maria Rammala, who previously operated her preschool from a shack. She expressed her deepest gratitude to all present at the opening ceremony, saying that her new creche would be a beacon of hope for the children in the Molepo community.

Social Architecture focuses on applying affordable building theories to impoverished areas with inadequate or non-existent facilities.

An exciting development during this past year has been our discussions on the design, systemisation and build of modular preschools with Nottingham University Department of Architecture and Built Environment, Wits University and Grimshaw Architects in London. Education Africa hosted a workshop for these key stakeholders in July.

WATCH THIS SPACE FOR EXCITING DEVELOPMENTS IN 2025!





WALTER SISULU SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Education Africa, together with Walter and Albertina Sisulu, established The Walter Sisulu Scholarship Fund in 1995 with the view of providing scholarships for disadvantaged high school learners who are excelling in Mathematics and Science.



Masibambane College Scholarship Recipients pictured with distinguished guests and members of the Sisulu family at the Masibambane College Founders Day

In 2024 we awarded 12 scholarships:

- 8 scholarships to learners from our school, Masibambane College in Gauteng
- 2 scholarships to learners from Durban Girls High School in KwaZulu Natal
- 2 scholarships to learners from Newton Technical High School, Eastern Cape

Of the twelve scholarship recipients, 7 were female and 5 were male. Ten scholarship recipients are South African citizens and two are Zimbabwean citizens.

We are extremely proud of our 2024 Scholarship learners, all of whom achieved excellent matric results (see chart below), with all twelve meeting the minimum requirements for admission to bachelors' degree. The future looks bright for these young achievers, and we look forward to seeing what the future holds for them.

4.5

IN TOTAL,
3 758 SCHOLARSHIPS
HAVE BEEN AWARDED SINCE 1995.



“ *It was an incredible honour to be selected as a recipient of this scholarship and I am very thankful for the generosity and support. Receiving this scholarship motivated me and allowed me to have faith in my abilities and that there is nothing that can stop me from achieving my dreams and aspirations. It allowed me to focus on my schoolwork without financial constraints.*

Your generosity has truly inspired me to continue to strive for excellence... I also hope to one day give back by helping others achieve their educational dreams. ”

NOKUTENDA GOVHA

MATRIC RESULTS: 2024 WALTER SISULU SCHOLARSHIP FUND RECIPIENTS

| Name | School | Grade | Subject Results | Physical Science | English |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-------|-----------------|------------------|---------|
| Nokutenda Govha | Durban Girls' High School | 12 | 73 | 66 | 82 |
| Andisiwe Mkhondwane | Durban Girls' High School | 12 | 83 | 86 | 80 |
| Thula Kekana | Masibambane College | 12 | 75 | 63 | 67 |
| Kgotso Maleka | Masibambane College | 12 | 78 | 69 | 58 |
| Dineo Maseko | Masibambane College | 12 | 81 | 76 | 78 |
| Siphehile Mdlalose | Masibambane College | 12 | 62 | 51 | 66 |
| Gugulethu Mngomezulu | Masibambane College | 12 | 63 | 54 | 67 |
| Siphehile Moloji | Masibambane College | 12 | 71 | 60 | 63 |
| Siphehile Sibisi | Masibambane College | 12 | 76 | 56 | 63 |
| Ntando Tsoloane | Masibambane College | 12 | 68 | 42 | 56 |
| Lathitha Dasa | Newton Technical College | 12 | 65 | 60 | 70 |
| Tyrone Phiri | Newton Technical College | 12 | 62 | 50 | 64 |



Due to your belief and assistance with my school fees, a weight was taken off the shoulders of my family and I. For that I am truly grateful as it really gave me the platform and the confidence to push myself and do my utmost best in order to ensure that the opportunity you gave me was not in vain.

ANDISIWE MKHONDWANE





SUSTAINABILITY

Education Africa was founded in 1993. Since then, the organisation has been committed to achieving **Poverty alleviation through Education** and **Making real Change Happen** among South Africa’s marginalised communities. We plan to be around for many more years to come as the need for breaking the cycle of poverty for many of our disadvantages communities continues to be one of the greatest challenges facing South Africa as a nation.

As such, securing funding for Education Africa and our projects remains one of our top priorities, and this year we have placed a great deal of emphasis on developing a Fundraising Strategy that will keep Education Africa on course for future growth. In this regard, we would like to acknowledge the incredible support and expert guidance we received from global strategy advisers who enabled us to achieve a clear and exciting future strategic direction for fundraising.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank Blue Label Telecoms, our corporate partner, for its continued and ongoing support. A big thank you also to the National Lotteries Commission for their invaluable support of our Marimba Project.

A big thanks as always to our global independent international structures in the UK, USA, Germany and

Vienna who have continued to support our work with a number of fundraising activities.

Our CEO’s 60th birthday celebration was held as a fundraiser for Education Africa and provided an excellent and joyous opportunity to connect with old and new friends of our organisation, who have played an integral part in our story.

Our grant-writing team has had a busy year and submitted many grant applications during the course of 2024, resulting in new donors coming on board to support our important project work. Their contributions, along those of our committed long-term donors, are essential to the success of Education Africa, and we thank them for their trust and belief in Education Africa. Without their support it would not be possible for us to Educate • Equip • Empower disadvantaged communities.

We continue to enjoy Level 1 B-BBEE contribution status.

05





FUTURE PLANS

2025 promises to be a landmark year for Education Africa as we continue to grow and build our projects in terms of scale, delivery and impact while always focusing on excellence and social cohesion, which remain cornerstones of our organisation. Much focus will also be placed on the sustainability of the organisation as a whole, as we look to implement the findings and recommendations of our new Fundraising Strategy. Staff development will also continue to be a priority.

In line with our motto to **Educate • Equip • Empower**, we will also continue to leverage technology in order to reach more beneficiaries and help more communities break the cycle of poverty.

SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO IN 2025 INCLUDE:

2025 will be the **final year of the Marimba Impact Report**, and we look forward to **sharing the measured 3-year impact with stakeholders.**

The **construction of the Masibambane Marimba Centre at our school**, Masibambane College in Orange Farm.



The planned the **collaboration** between the **Education Africa Marimba Team** and the **Education Africa ECD Team**, who will jointly identify **early learning centres** that have the potential (and storage space for the equipment) **to become an Education Africa Preschool Marimba Hub.**

Our goal is to **grow the ECD Teacher Mentorship Programme** within our network of ECD preschools, **reaching more communities, empowering more women and enriching the educational experiences** of young children.

We plan to **expand our Marimba project** to interested community centres and schools in Cape Town, **subject to funding availability.**

New developments are in the pipeline for The Education Africa Social Architecture Project. **Watch this space!**

As from next year we plan to hold **annual Education Africa Founders' Day events** during March (our birthday month) to **showcase and grow awareness** of our work as well as trends and developments within the sectors that we operate in. In 2025, our focus will be **Early Childhood Development.**

In **keeping with our commitment to systemise and institutionalise our organisation**, (and inspired by our reception area which is showcasing our organisation's 32-year history) **plans are afoot to embark on a structured process of formally archiving our extensive documents, visual images and memorabilia.**

James Urdang's much awaited memoir is set to be published in 2025.





07

AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Education Africa NPC
(Registration number:
1992/001394/08)
Annual Financial
Statements for the year
ended 31 December 2024

Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2024

| | 2024 R | 2023 R |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Assets | | |
| Non-Current Assets | | |
| Property, plant and equipment | 1 495 808 | 525 883 |
| Other financial assets | 3 270 846 | 2 754 991 |
| | 4 766 654 | 3 280 874 |
| Current Assets | | |
| Trade and other receivables | 163 125 | 59 121 |
| Cash and cash equivalents | 7 207 774 | 3 973 632 |
| | 7 370 899 | 4 032 753 |
| Total Assets | 12 137 553 | 7 313 627 |
| Equity and Liabilities | | |
| Equity | | |
| Eskom/Sisulu Scholarship fund capital | 5 000 000 | 5 000 000 |
| Reserves | 1 426 675 | 945 962 |
| Accumulated surplus/(deficit) | 268 916 | (1 208 583) |
| | 6 695 591 | 4 737 379 |
| Liabilities | | |
| Current Liabilities | | |
| Trade and other payables | 590 499 | 278 081 |
| Deferred income | 4 569 328 | 2 195 564 |
| Provisions | 282 135 | 102 603 |
| | 5 441 962 | 2 576 248 |
| Total Equity and Liabilities | 12 137 553 | 7 313 627 |



07

Statement of Surplus or Deficit and Other Comprehensive Income

| | 2024 R | 2023 R |
|---|--------------|--------------|
| Revenue | 17 457 047 | 13 054 787 |
| Other income | 294 386 | 78 677 |
| Operating expenses | (16 808 906) | (13 627 500) |
| Operating surplus/(deficit) | 942 527 | (494 036) |
| Investment Income | 534 972 | 355 633 |
| Surplus/(deficit) for the year | 1 477 499 | (138 403) |
| Other comprehensive Income: | | |
| Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss | | |
| Fair value adjustment on other financial assets | 480 713 | 525 545 |
| Other comprehensive income for the year | 480 713 | 525 545 |
| Total comprehensive income for the year | 1 958 212 | 387 142 |

Education Africa NPC

(Registration number:

1992/001394/08)

Annual Financial

Statements for the year

ended 31 December 2024





REFLECTION BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

As we reflect on another year of impact, resilience, and transformation, I am reminded of the unwavering mission that drives Education Africa: to make a meaningful difference by providing quality education opportunities to those who need them most. Education is not just the key to unlocking individual potential – it is the foundation upon which societies build prosperity, dignity, and hope.

ABDULLAH VERACHIA
Chairman of the Education Africa Board of Directors

In today's complex and ever-changing world, the role of education has never been more critical. The turbulence of our times – whether economic, social, or technological – demands that we, as an organisation, remain clear on our purpose, adaptive in our approach, and steadfast in our commitment. It is here that strategy becomes our guiding force.

A clear strategic direction is not merely a roadmap; it is the framework that enables us to make intentional decisions, mobilise resources effectively, and ensure that our impact is both scalable and sustainable.

For Education Africa, this means staying focused on:

- **Access & Opportunity:** Ensuring that our programmes continue to reach the most underserved communities, breaking down barriers to education.
- **Innovation & Relevance:** Embracing new learning methodologies, leveraging digital tools, and refining our delivery models to remain impactful.
- **Collaboration & Partnerships:** Strengthening relationships with key stakeholders – governments, corporates, and philanthropic partners – to enhance our reach and effectiveness.
- **Sustainability & Growth:** Creating long-term value by aligning our initiatives with both immediate needs and future imperatives.





At the heart of all of this is the human spirit – the passion of our educators, the dedication of our partners, the generosity of our supporters, and, most importantly, the incredible resilience of the learners we serve. They remind us why we do what we do.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Education Africa team, the board, our donors, and every individual who continues to believe in and

contribute to this mission. Together, we are not just changing lives; we are shaping the future.

Here's to another year of purpose, impact, and strategic clarity.

Abdullah Verachia

Chairman, Education Africa Board of Directors

