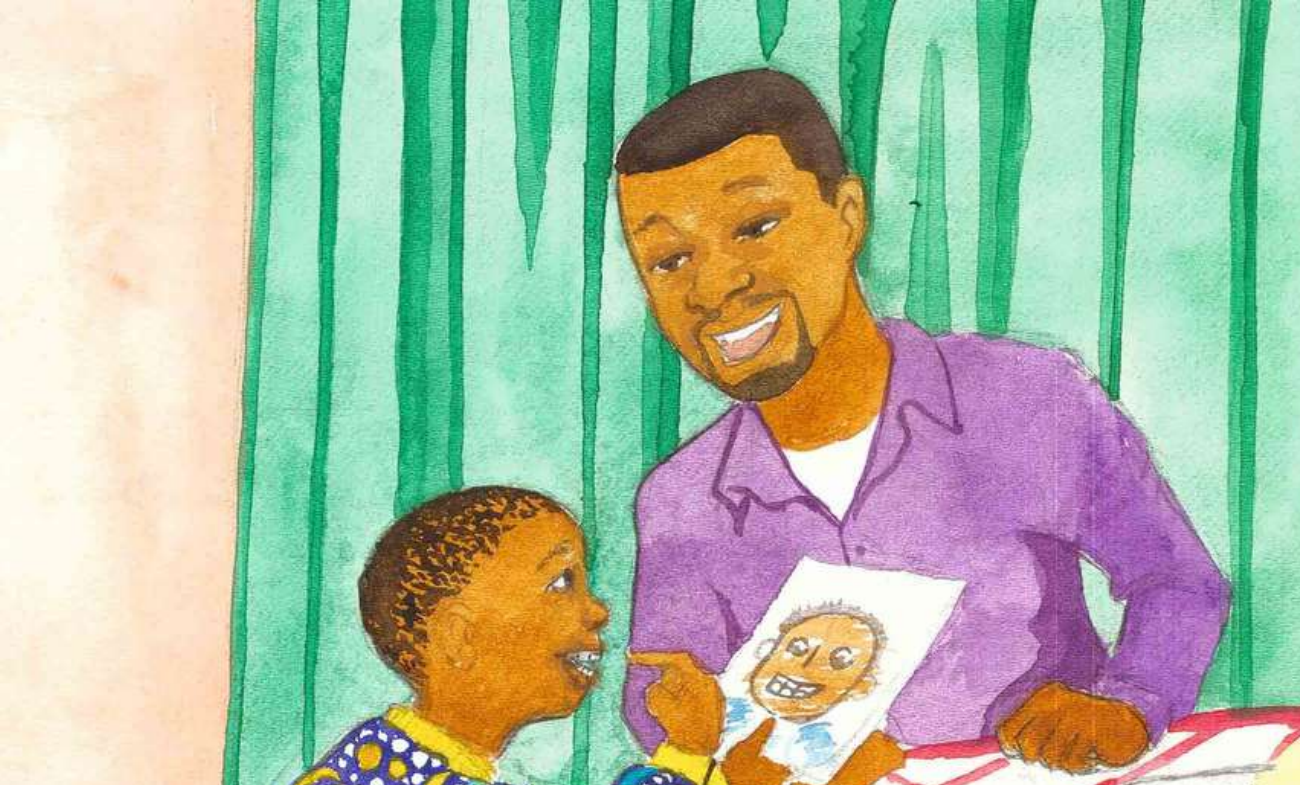




# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



## OUR MISSION

We aim to strengthen young children's support networks by delivering quality training, support and materials on evidenced based Early Childhood Development (ECD) interventions, so that primary caregivers can provide children with nurturing cognitive and socio-emotional support.

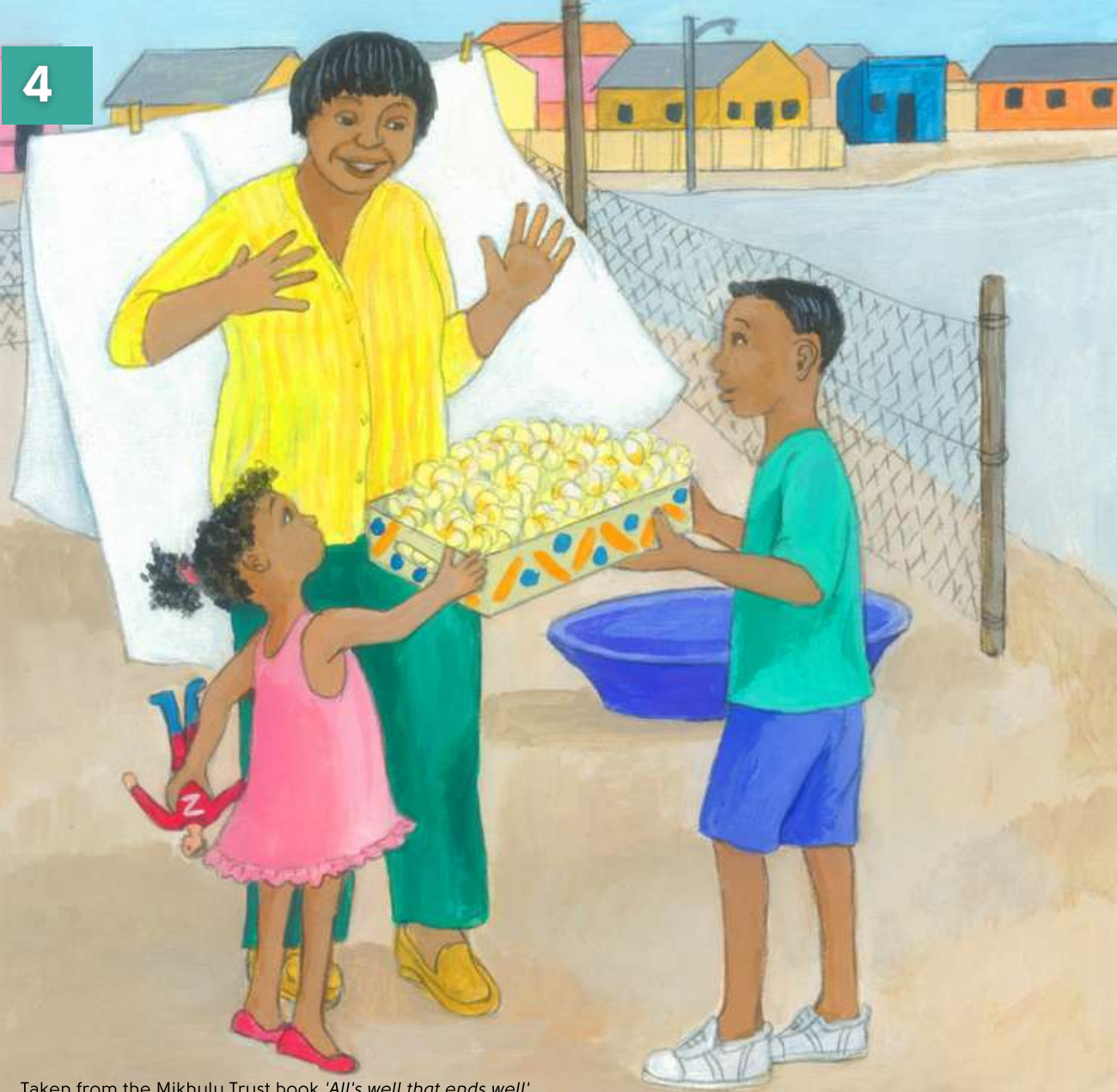






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# 1. DIRECTOR'S NOTE

When I first joined Mikhulu Trust, I admired and respected the organisation for their focus and interest in delivering evidence-based interventions. Now, and throughout the pandemic period, my motivation and love for our work comes from our impact on parents and caregivers who spend their days at home with their young children, and who now feel supported to develop loving and stimulating relationships with them.

At Mikhulu Trust, we truly believe that all parents and caregivers, regardless of their education or income level, can be their children's first and best teachers. This is one of the narratives that we believe is missing in South Africa's ECD sector.

ECD centres and their workforces have been fighting a long and tough battle to get sufficient government support for the care and stimulation they provide to children at their most critical life stages. The small wins over the decades still leave large gaps, but through this hard struggle, we have forgotten the voices of the parents or caregivers of these young children. I believe that our work fills this critical gap.

There is lots to be said about our organisational struggle during the pandemic. We certainly did not come out unscathed. But we recognise the larger struggle of parents and young children, and we are set on driving their agenda forward. All the decisions and changes we have made throughout the year were with this vision in mind: that "all parents are supported to develop positive, nurturing, and stimulating relationships with their young children".

We are more motivated now than ever before to advocate for the celebration and elevation of the role of the parent and caregiver. For the year ahead, we intend to use our work with partners, the government, and other networks to drive this forward.

Kaathima Ebrahim  
Chief Executive Officer



# 2020 IN NUMBERS

15

**implementing partners trained and supported**

This training reached around 85 community-based facilitators, librarians and community health workers who delivered book-sharing before and during the pandemic

700

**Mikhulu Trust books distributed through food parcels and care facilities during the pandemic**

600

**books donated by Book Dash distributed to book-sharing parents and caregivers**

113%

**growth in social media audience and 37% increase in engagement rate (Facebook)**

46 000

**people reached through our #LockDownBookShare campaign**

# OUR COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS



## MEDIA APPEARANCES

The #LockDownBookShare campaign featured in 7 media appearances including radio, community newspaper, an online 'good news' blog and on the popular Parent24, which is part of News24.



Beautiful News, a popular positive news source followed by over 1.8million people on Facebook and 57k on Instagram, featured Kaathima Ebrahim and Mikhulu Trust. They developed a short 60second video which gained 271.2k views and 2.5k reactions. They also shared an article featuring on East Coast Radio, and we had an interview on Jacaranda FM.



Cadbury Dairy Milk's Glass & a Half Project joined hands with Mikhulu Trust to distribute picture books to children across South Africa. As part of the campaign, Mikhulu Trust was featured on the Expresso Show - a prime time TV show - in which Kaathima Ebrahim talked about the campaign and the impact book-sharing has.



The manifesto of the First Thousand Days [Campaign] states that relationships matter most and building children's brains is everyone's responsibility.

Integrating book sharing into the parent caregiver support package provides opportunities for responsive care and enhancing crucial relationships.

**Hilary Goeiman**  
**Western Cape Government: Health**  
**Deputy Director : Integrated Nutrition Programme**  
**& Project Manager First 1000 Days Initiative**



### 3. PARTNERING WITH GOVERNMENT TO SUPPORT PARENTS IN THE FIRST THOUSAND DAYS

Systemic change to how society supports families is not possible without close partnerships between government and civil society. Mikhulu Trust has been privileged to work with the Western Cape Department of Health (WCDOH) and various Municipal Libraries for the past few years. Over the next three years, with support from the DG Murray Trust, we will continue our work in training and supporting community health workers (CHWs) and librarians to deliver book-sharing and early stimulation support to parents and caregivers accessing their services.

The National Integrated ECD policy identifies the Department of Health as the first point of contact for ECD. The Department of Health strives to provide parental preparedness and early stimulation support to mothers who have given birth. For the WCDOH, the book-sharing programme is one of the core mechanisms to deliver on this.

Since 2017, Mikhulu Trust has been working closely with the WCDOH's First Thousand Days (FTD) team, which hosted the Parent-Infant-Child Health (PICH) working group. It was in this cross-sector working group that we conceptualised and co-developed how book-sharing might reach mothers already receiving FTD support.

Starting with three districts (Saldanha Bay, Eden Karoo, and Drakenstein) training of CHWs commenced in 2019, and was gaining momentum early in 2020. Most of these activities were put on hold due to the pandemic, but with an enthusiastic and energised team in Saldanha, in November 2020, we trained 25 CHWs and Allied Health staff. The teams started introducing mothers to early stimulation and book-sharing concepts early in 2021.

A key part of extending this support offered to FTD mothers by the WCDOH is to create a larger system of book-sharing support. We have done this through public libraries. Once mothers are introduced to book-sharing, they will be able to access more intensive book-sharing training and support at their local library. In each of the districts, librarians will be trained to offer more in-depth book-sharing support to parents. In 2020, we trained 10 children's librarians to run this programme.

The offering by the WCDOH and the Municipal Libraries will be connected through a campaign hosted by both departments (within the district). With this approach, the two departments are able to work together to create supportive stimulating spaces for parents and their young children.



## 4. CREATING CONNECTIONS IN UNEXPECTED WAYS

During the book-sharing facilitator training, we focus on building relationships to help facilitators feel supported and confident in their abilities to deliver the programme to parents. This in-person interaction facilitates rich discussion and allows facilitators to openly share their experiences. Naturally, we felt daunted by the possibility that we would lose these very meaningful interactions and collaborations if we were to start delivering our training online.

Knowing that there were groups eager to be trained, we took up the task and redesigned our Book-sharing Facilitator Training (5-day training) to be delivered online (six 3-hour sessions). The first group to be trained were 8 librarians from the City of Cape Town. As part of the City of Cape Town Library Service's strategy, they had taken up to deliver book-sharing to parents of young children – as they saw this as an opportunity to bring young families into libraries.

We learnt a lot during this first online training, and we found many new and interesting ways to keep the training interactive and engaging. Since that first group, we trained 3 additional groups online. The most exciting part is that these groups would likely never have been trained if it had to be in-person. Training online opened a new set of partnership possibilities with partners who are remote and under-funded.

“

*The librarians have been used to doing storytelling sessions with toddlers but are now using the book-sharing skills to focus on the parent's role in the development of the child*

*The new skills have been used to develop pram jam sessions and storytelling sessions with parents and children and support groups for parents that include book-sharing techniques. They are also in the working group, designing and giving input in the 1000 Stories Before School reading programme that is planned for September 2021.*

**Christelle Lubbe,**  
**Head of Professional Services and Programmes**  
**Library and Information Services**

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## 5. #LOCKDOWNBOOKSHARE CAMPAIGN

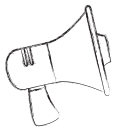
When the national lockdown was announced on 23 March 2020, The Mikhulu Trust quickly realised that its book-sharing programmes needed to be shared in new and innovative ways.

The #LockDownBookShare campaign combined videos, Facebook Live events and infographics to ensure that book-sharing was continued across South Africa. The campaign used social media, our website, traditional media and WhatsApp to access thousands of people, encouraging them to use lockdown as an opportunity to implement and benefit from book-sharing.

Beginning on 14th April 2020, the Mikhulu Trust released one of its illustrated books, every week, online, for free. This was accompanied by a video with instructions and an infographic. The books and videos were hosted centrally on one webpage.

Videos were released on Facebook, which linked into the webpage hosting the books, and on Youtube. Infographics were sent on WhatsApp via partner organisations and other NGOs.

In each of the releases, three 'top-tips' of book-sharing were presented. Once the video was watched, or the infographic was read, parents and caregivers could click on the link to access that week's book. Between these releases, The Mikhulu Trust hosted a Facebook Live session, providing more interactive support to beneficiaries.



**46 000**  
REACHED ONLINE



**17 850**  
VIDEO VIEWS

**114**

SHARES



MEDIA APPEARANCES







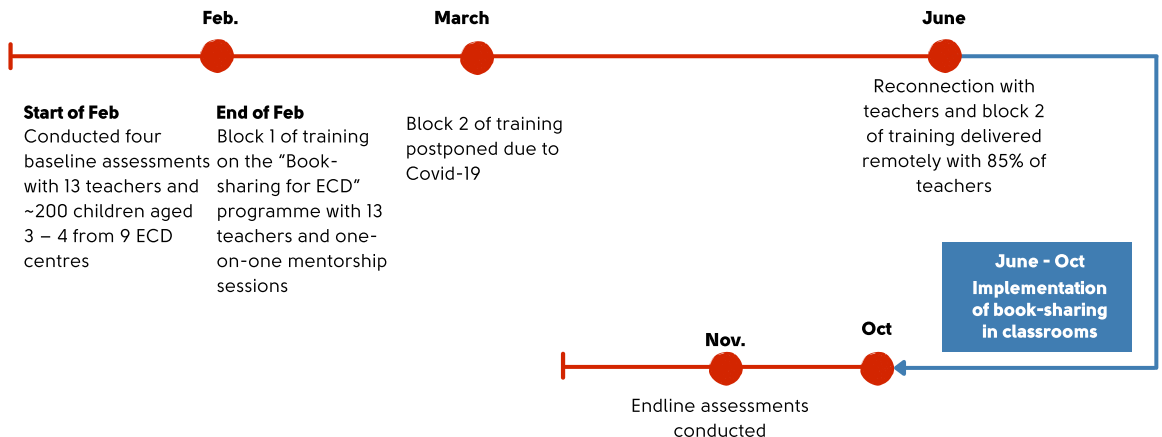
## 6. STUDYING HOW BOOK-SHARING IMPACTS THE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT.

Mikhulu Trust has its roots in the academic research world. It was started by academics who ran a very successful study on book-sharing in 2014. This focus on research and evidence remains core to our work.

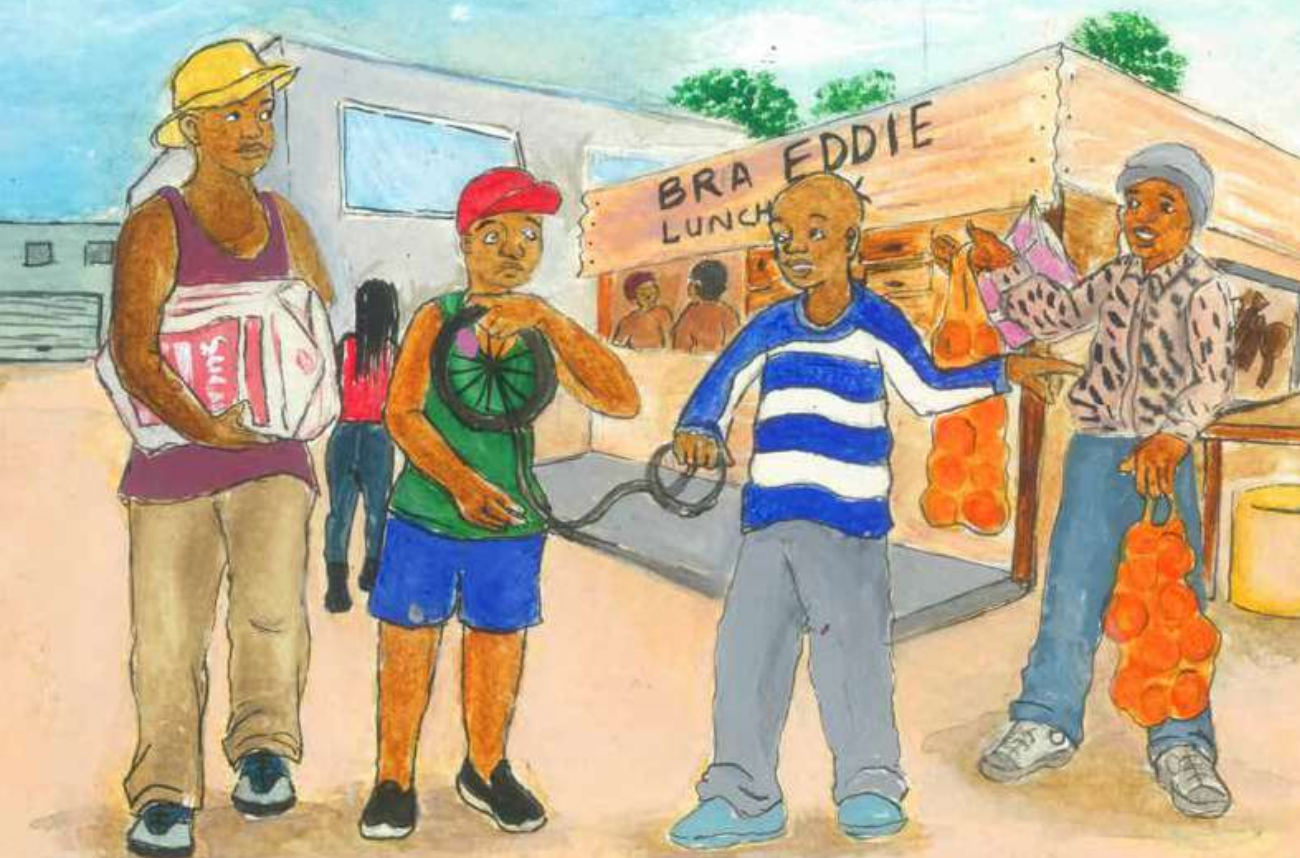
In February 2020, Mikhulu Trust started a research project in Namibia, funded by the University of Reading, to study the impact of book-sharing on ECD teachers and children. The study was designed by Mikhulu Trust founders, Professors Lynne Murray and Peter Cooper. The study was implemented in partnership with the University of Namibia's Education Department, and with ethical approval from Namibia's National Commission for Research Science and Technology.

The purpose of the study was to understand the impact of the "Book-sharing for ECD" training on

1. Teachers' behaviour with classroom book activities,
2. The classroom approach to books and
3. Children's reactions and behaviours with books.



Teachers initially struggled to create an engaging and interactive environment. At the beginning, children were reluctant to speak during the book-sharing session. However, over the course of the training and implementation, the teachers started thinking about ways to get the children to share and interact more easily. We are in the process of finalizing the data analysis and report for the study.



## 7. CONNECTING TO A WORLD BIGGER THAN OURS

As an education organisation, we faced difficult decisions when the pandemic hit. People across the country had lost their jobs or businesses, were living in unsafe circumstances and were without food. We had to ask ourselves what we had to offer and how we could contribute.

Mikhulu Trust has always participated in and supported partnerships, collaborations and networks, and this is where we felt we could contribute to larger societal needs.

### Partnerships



#### 500 BOOKS

**500 Mikhulu Trust books**  
**donated** into food parcels  
distributed by FCW



#### 120 BOOKS

**120 Mikhulu Trust books given**  
**to 22 child and youth care**  
**centres** in partnership with  
Cadbury Dairy Milk Give the  
Gift of Childhood campaign



#### 600 BOOKS

**600 Book Dash books**  
**donated** to existing book-  
sharing families



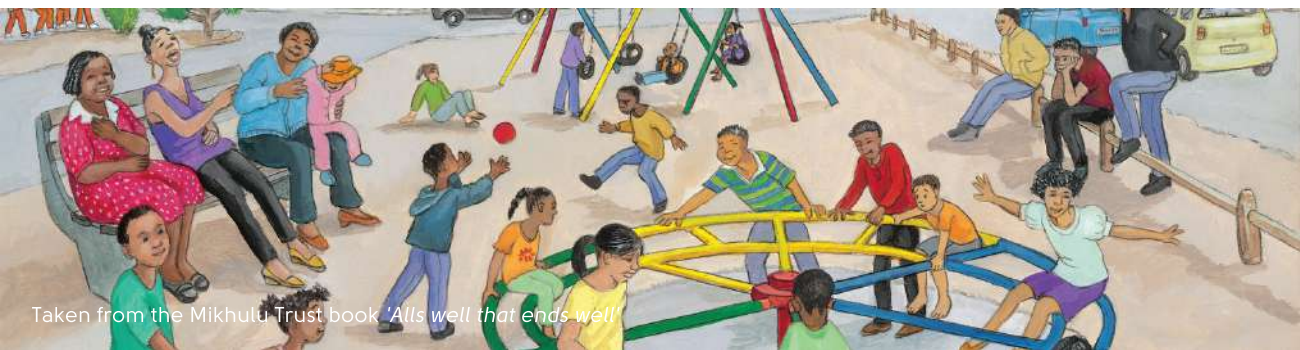
## **SOUTH AFRICAN POSITIVE PARENTING IMPLEMENTERS**

Organisations that form part of the South African Positive Parenting Implementers Network, (SAPPIN) help families build warm and non-violent homes for children.

The purpose of the network is to strengthen the collective voice of the civil society organisations advocating for, and working with, families. Through collaboration and shared learning, they aim to enhance organisations' capacities to implement, research and advocate for the delivery of quality programmes that are sustainable across South Africa.

SAPPIN organisations are connected to each other through the policies and practices that keep children safe and that prevent violence against children. Positive parenting interventions, informed by these policies, have been proven to have a direct link to the reduction of violence within homes and the promotion of alternative disciplinary strategies, contributing to more securely attached children. These children have increased resilience and have more improved opportunities for a better future, impacting all of South Africa.

Mikhulu Trust participated in network activities throughout the year. The network developed "Calming Classrooms" - a programme developed to support teachers develop positive and calm spaces for learners during the Covid-19 pandemic. The network also embarked on conceptualizing "Parenthood SA", a collaborative digital approach to parent support.



## LITERACY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICAN

The Literacy Association of South Africa (LITASA) promotes literacy development through research, sharing of best practice by supporting community collaboration.

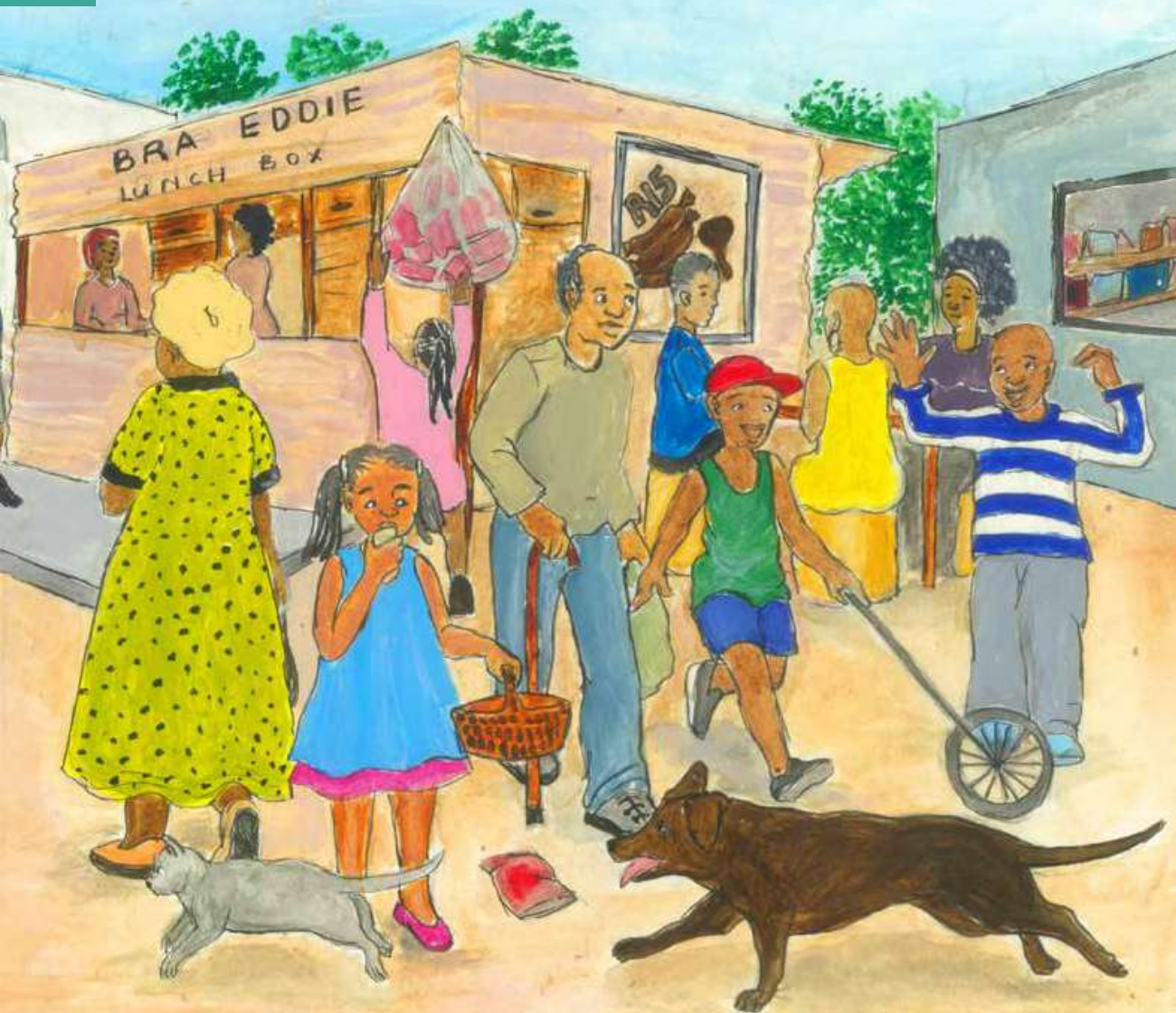
LITASA hosts events throughout the year to promote literacy with their annual conference being their main event for the year. This past year, they hosted their first virtual conference under the theme “There is no frigate like a book: Literacy and children’s literature in contemporary Africa,” which was a resounding success. The conference hosted ~400 attendees, with 4 key-note speakers and 16 presentations throughout the day. Mikhulu Trust presented at the conference on “How book-sharing and wordless books support the literacy ecosystem”.

Mikhulu Trust’s CEO, Kaathima Ebrahim, also serves on LITASA’s Western Cape committee, where we supported the hosting of three events throughout the year.

## C-19 PEOPLE’S COALITION

The C-19 People’s Coalition was formed early during the onset of Covid-19, with the goal of ensuring that the South African response to pandemic is just, equitable, effective and meets the needs of the most vulnerable. The coalition is an alliance of social movements, trade unions, community organisations and NPOs, united under the “Programme of Action” adopted by the coalition.

The coalition was organised into 18 geographical and functional working groups, with democratically appointed working group convenors. The working groups then convened under the Convenors Forum. The Mikhulu Trust formed a part of the ECD and Schooling working group, and made key contributions to projects such as their involvement in the “C-19 Parenting Guide” and the #SaveOurECDworkforce campaign. We also convened the ECD and Schooling group for a period of 3 months.





## 8. THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the ongoing support of our funders and our implementing partners.

### Funders:

World Childhood Foundation | Oppenheimer Memorial Trust  
Jim Joel Fund (Childwick Trust) | University of Reading  
DG Murray Trust | HCI, through a partnership with Lebone Centre

### Implementing partners:

Living Hope | FCW | Save the Children | Seven Passes Initiative  
Inceba Trust | Mfesane | Western Cape Department of Health  
City of Cape Town Libraries | George Libraries | Lebone Centre  
Centre for Social Development at Rhodes University | Denis Goldberg House of Hope  
Kidshaven | Cape Town Multi-Service Centre | Love to Give

**We also want to say a special thank you to all the partners who participated in our Collaborative Print Runs, enabling us to print larger volumes of books at a reduced rate.**





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**United Kingdom:** Registered Charity number 1158733

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