

**30 YEARS
OF IMPACT**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Over the past 30 years, Breadline Africa has held the belief that when children have a safe learning environment, their imaginations are unlocked, and possibilities are opened up. Breadline Africa's vision is realised through infrastructure solutions and initiatives that give children in impoverished communities the best opportunity for a strong foundation for learning and a potential path out of poverty.

To better understand the impact of our work, Relativ Impact was appointed to develop Breadline Africa's Impact Report by analysing our data for the past two years. The first step was to co-create and validate our Theory of Change through stakeholder engagement sessions with partners, team members and board members. Following the development of our Theory of Change, an Impact Management Framework was created to support the management and measurement of our proposed outcomes. As part of this process, indicators were selected to measure the contribution of programmes. Qualitative indicators made use of thematic analysis to gain insight into children's experiences of seaside outings. Further qualitative data has been collected through interviews with parents and principals. Quantitative indicators made use of baseline data collected through the application process, as well as data collected following the provision of infrastructure. This report covers data collected over the period of April 2021 to March 2023.

Analysis of this data showed that following the provision of infrastructure, more pre-schools had registered or were eligible for government registration; more children were attending pre-schools (3,492 at baseline and 4,152 at annual assessment); and more children were receiving government subsidies. Additionally, there were more teachers with higher qualifications teaching at the pre-schools at follow-up (141 compared to 115 at baseline); teachers' average monthly salaries had increased (from R1,547.88 at baseline to R2,496.50 following our initiatives); and more parents were paying school fees. Positive impacts were also seen in terms of the provision

of libraries. On assessment, it was found that a higher percentage of children were taking books home; there were more books available to children; and 64% of primary schools were offering literacy-based activities.

It is clear from qualitative feedback that parents recognised the positive impact of the new infrastructure, and in the fact that 100% of parents interviewed reported having "a lot" of confidence in the safety of and education provided at their child's pre-school. Positive impact was also seen through qualitative feedback in response to nutritional support, and in the fact that there was a 67% increase in the number of pre-schools receiving feeding support from baseline to follow-up. In terms of qualitative feedback from the children themselves, pictures children drew following their seaside outings depicted memorable experiences of being in nature; being able to play with others; being in the ocean and in the sunshine; and sharing food and bus rides with their classmates.

Overview of Impact 2021-2023



Data collected over the period
April 2021 to March 2023



9 Pre-schools obtained government registration (enabling them to receive subsidies)

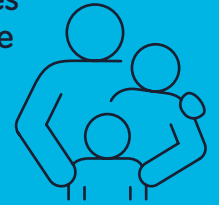
836



Children were receiving government subsidies (providing financial support to registered pre-schools)

61%

Parents were contributing towards school fees (increasing revenue for pre-school programmes)



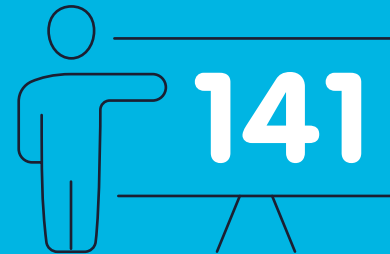
4,152

Children enrolled at pre-schools

139



Safe pre-school facilities provided (which will see them on the path to applying for government registration)



Teachers had an NQF level 4 qualification or higher (ensuring quality early childhood education)



34

Pre-schools were assisted in becoming eligible for government registration (through provision of safe infrastructure, learning materials and training)

85%

Of learners checked books out their school libraries (in Bohlabela District)



Books available per primary school learner (enabling children's access to storybooks)



64%

Of primary schools offered literacy-based activities (providing opportunities for learners to improve literacy)



67%

Increase in pre-schools receiving feeding support and food supplies (children can access the nutrition they need to participate in school)

INTRODUCTION



In Breadline Africa's 30th year, it is important that we take the time to reflect on three decades of opening children's imaginations to possibilities – allowing them to choose a path for their own future.

The organisation was established in 1993, with poverty alleviation as its cornerstone. Recognising that a great deal of grassroots development would be required as part of South Africa's nation-building process and understanding that government structures would not be in a position to provide all of the resources to facilitate this process, our resources were primarily focused on the needs of community-based organisations, providing more than R117-million in grants to over 320 organisations during our first 21 years.

As our mission and vision evolved over the years, we have turned our attention to providing educational infrastructure for early childhood development (ECD) - children between the ages of one and six years in townships and informal settlements and also libraries, feeding kitchens and pit toilet replacements at low quintile primary schools. In March 2023, we launched the "Flush Challenge" and have installed 66 toilets and 18 urinals at five schools since commencing the programme.

Today, Breadline Africa is one of the biggest suppliers of both traditional and innovative infrastructure solutions for poverty relief in South Africa, having supplied more than 1,200 units – impacting over 267,000 children across the country.

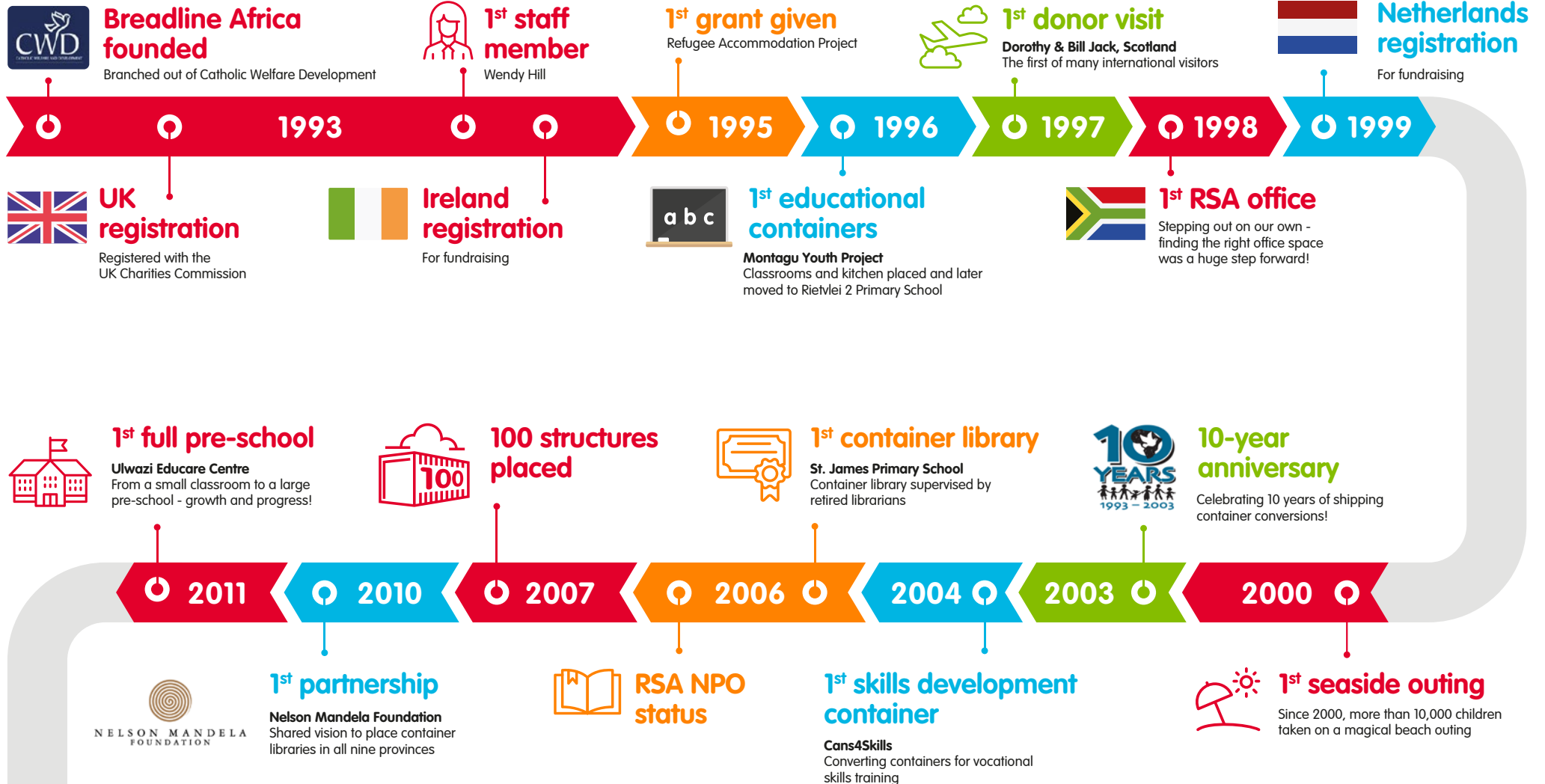
None of this would have been possible without the commitment and support of numerous implementing partners who work together with Breadline Africa on a range of interventions, such as capacity-building of pre-school practitioners around early literacy and numeracy interventions.

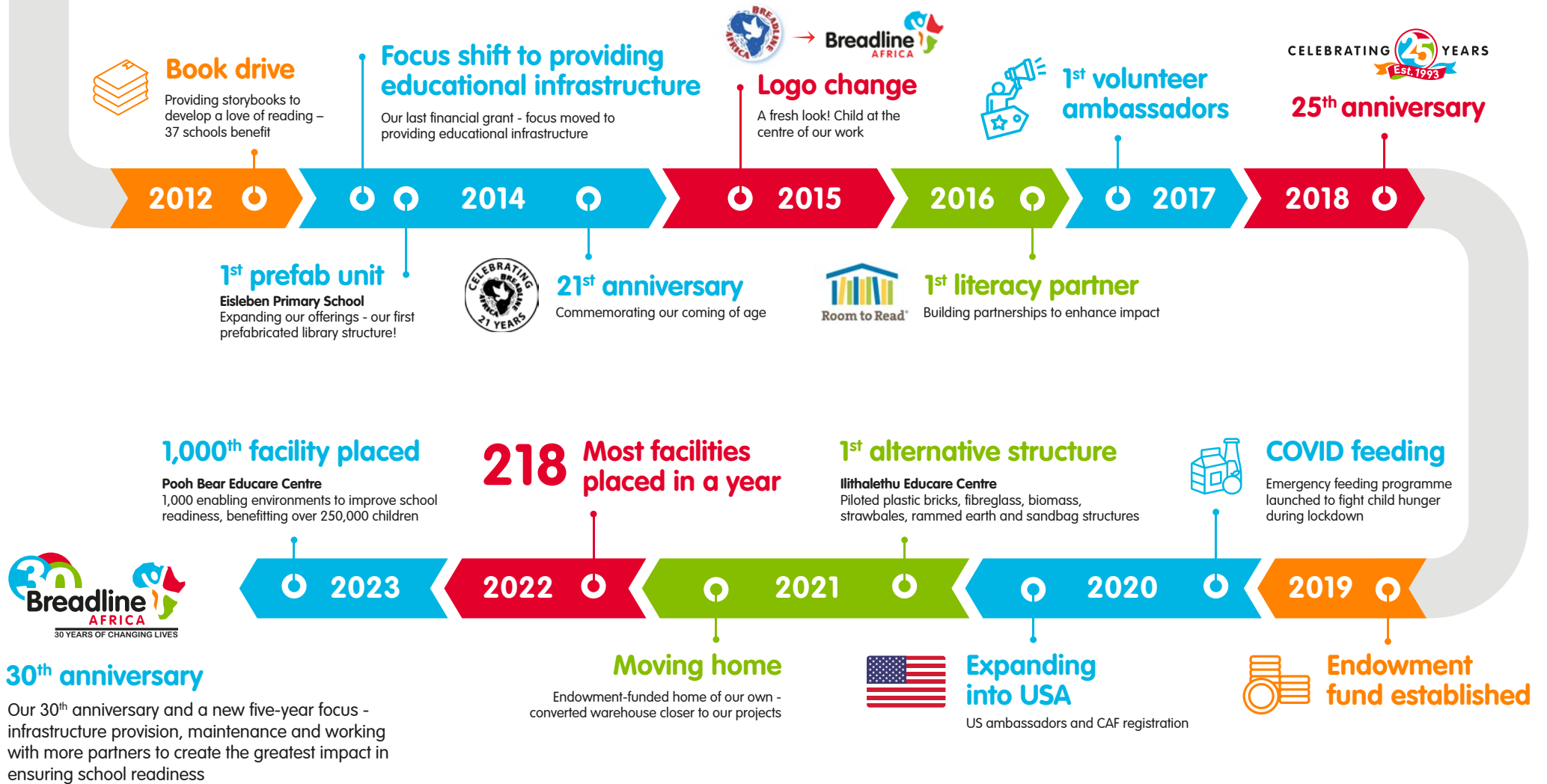
We would like to thank our supporters, partners, board members and staff for helping us to create the impact chronicled in this report – here's to the next 30 years of opening imaginations and changing lives.

Henk Kleizen
CHAIR

Marion Wagner
CEO

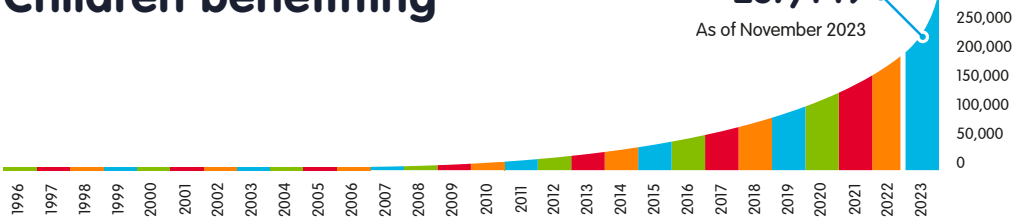
Milestones





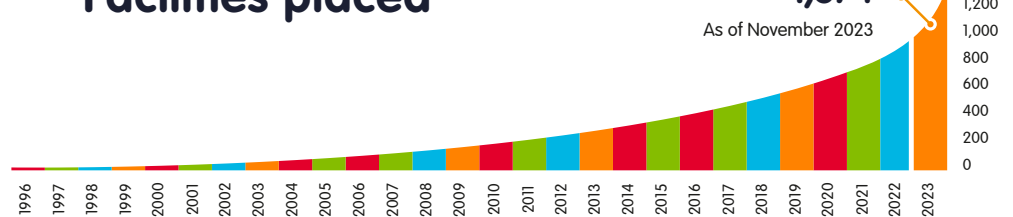
Children benefitting

267,449
As of November 2023



Facilities placed

1,374
As of November 2023





We believe that every child has the capacity to do something amazing with their life. When a child's imagination is unlocked, possibilities are opened, allowing them to choose a path for their future."

BACKGROUND



Since its inception in 1993, Breadline has provided infrastructure and initiatives to support childhood development in South Africa.

Impact is amplified through the work we do with our partners. Breadline Africa's infrastructure solutions give children in impoverished communities the best opportunity for a strong learning foundation and a potential path out of poverty.

Our core elements are infrastructure creation, replacing pit toilets in schools, pre-school feeding programmes and recreational activity initiatives.

1 Infrastructure provision:

Only 30% of children under the age of six attend a pre-school – of which only 45% are school-ready^{1,2}. Many schools across South Africa are overcrowded, unsafe and susceptible to adverse weather conditions. Breadline Africa's goal is to change this status quo by assessing needs and building either full pre-schools or classrooms, toilet facilities and kitchens. These structures also assist sites in obtaining government subsidies, which are critical for sustainability.

The recent *Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* report shows that 82% of South African children can't read for meaning by the age of 10³. Breadline Africa constructs libraries in primary schools, nurturing a love for reading and creativity, all while providing a haven from the distractions and pressures of the external world. Fully functional kitchens are also placed in schools to support feeding programmes.

In 2021, Breadline Africa began implementing alternative environmentally friendly infrastructure options, including biomass/carbon neutral solutions. These structures further contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2 Emergency response:
The Pit Toilet Campaign

The tragic death of another child in a pit toilet in 2023 triggered the Pit Toilet Campaign, with the goal of replacing 4,000 unsafe pit toilets in 240 schools, benefitting 120,000 children.

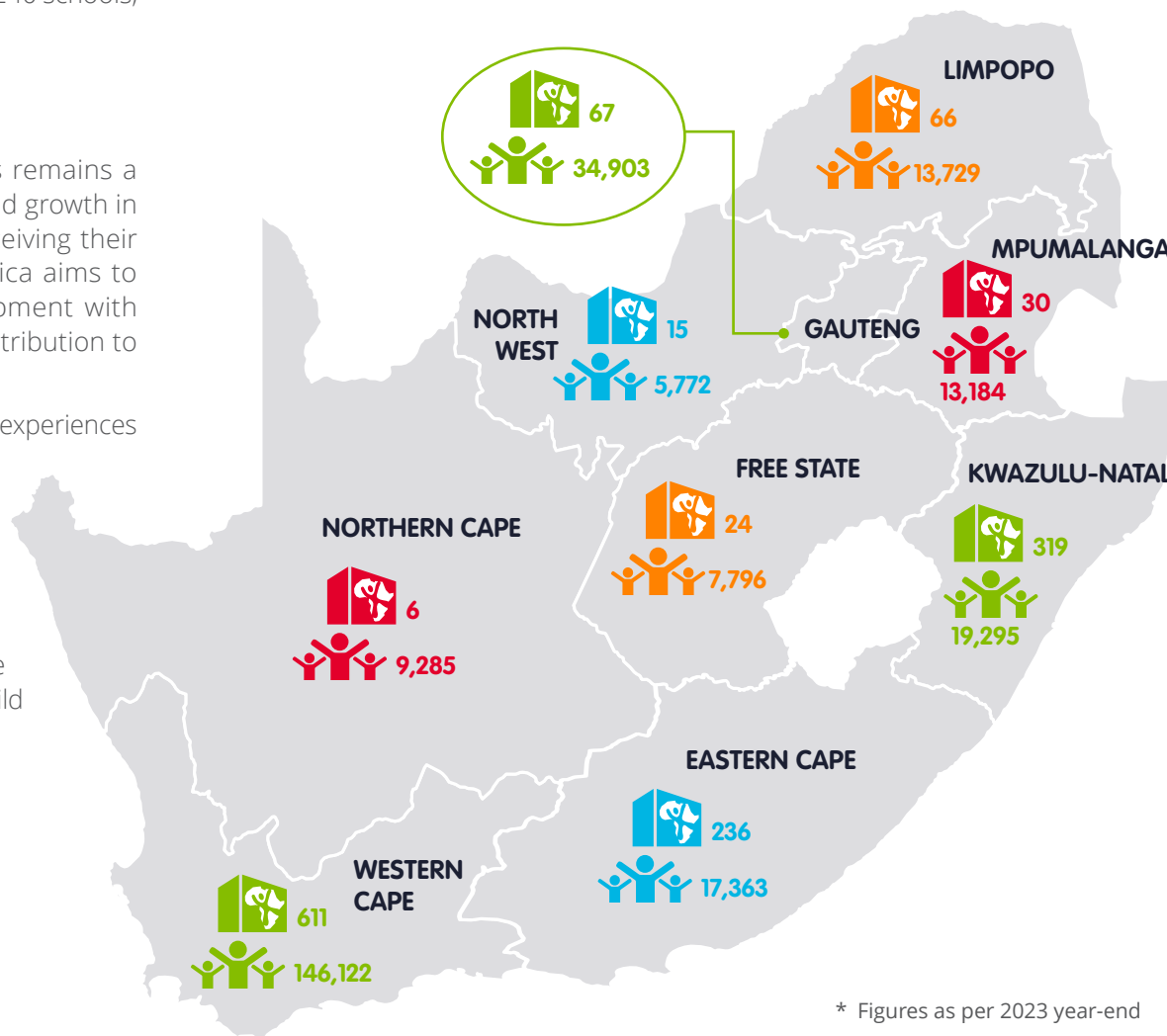
3 Initiatives:

Inadequate nutrition in pre-schools remains a significant impediment to learning and growth in South Africa, with many children receiving their only meals at school. Breadline Africa aims to support healthy childhood development with pre-school meals and food parcel distribution to families in need.

The organisation believes that dynamic experiences – such as seaside outings – broaden children’s horizons and enrich their life experience, but many families can’t provide such opportunities. Over the past 23 years, Breadline Africa has taken thousands of children on fun, educational outings that encourage imaginative, innovative thinking and build lifetime memories.

The figure below shows the amount of infrastructure placed in each province across South Africa, as well as the number of beneficiaries reached through our interventions*.

Programme locations:



* Figures as per 2023 year-end

-  **473 CLASSROOMS**
-  **194 LIBRARIES**
-  **182 KITCHENS**
-  **385 TOILETS**
-  **140 OTHER**


1,374
TOTAL FACILITIES


267,449
BENEFICIARIES

How Breadline Africa is supporting childhood development in South Africa

This section offers a high-level overview of some of the social challenges that Breadline Africa is addressing. The infographic below provides insight into the way in which initiatives implemented by the organisation address them.

30%

of South African children under the age of six attend pre-school²

Through our initiatives, parents gain confidence that their children are in safe and equipped educational spaces, increasing pre-school enrolment.

45%

of children enrolled, are adequately prepared for primary school²

We aim to create an environment that is conducive to learning through infrastructure while partners supply learning materials and teacher training.

82%

of South African children can't read for meaning by the age of 10³

Breadline Africa provides libraries and resources in primary schools, nurturing a love for reading and creativity.

42%

of South Africa's pre-schools are registered⁶

Our provision of safe infrastructure assists sites in obtaining government registration, which is critical for sustainability.

Many schools across South Africa are overcrowded, unsafe and susceptible to adverse weather conditions



Breadline Africa's goal is to change this status quo by providing safe and healthy educational spaces.

Inadequate nutrition in pre-schools remains a significant impediment to learning and growth in South Africa



Through initiatives with our partners, 67% more pre-schools received feeding support, including food supplies since April 2021.

Dynamic experiences broaden children's horizons, but many families can't provide such opportunities



Breadline Africa has taken thousands of children on fun, seaside outings that encourage imaginative, innovative thinking and build memories.

PARTNERS



Breadline Africa works with pre- and primary schools in South Africa that are also supported by other resource and training partners. In this way, we can leverage teaching and learning resources, nutritional, training, literacy leadership support and mentoring for these organisations, thereby building their long-term sustainability.

There are five key groups among our partners, providing varying elements of support:

- Pre-school support: for infrastructure, mentoring, training, resources and feeding, with the goal of obtaining government registration.
- Nutritional support at pre-and primary schools: for infrastructure and feeding.
- School library support: for infrastructure.
- School literacy support: for infrastructure, access to books, training and resources.
- School leadership and management support.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all our partners for your unwavering support. Your commitment has helped us create a lasting impact in countless lives. Through your generosity, we've provided educational resources, food and infrastructure to communities across South Africa. Your belief in our mission inspires us. Together, we will continue transforming lives and building a better future for all.

Tracey Chambers, CEO of GROW ECD, stressed the importance of partnerships between non-profit organisations in the ECD sector:



By working together, rather than in silos, we are maximising impact for children and small business owners in South Africa."

Our partnerships:



Cotlands



FCBAFRICA



GROW ECD



impande



N.A.N. FOUNDATION



PATHFINDER UBUNTU



RAD RISE ABOVE DEVELOPMENT



Shiloh community in action



UTHANDO South Africa



OUR APPROACH



Our team and partners are driven by a shared vision that every child has the capacity to do something amazing with their life. This is supported by our belief that when children are provided with a safe learning environment, their imaginations are unlocked and possibilities are opened up, enabling children to choose a path for their own future.

As a result of our infrastructure solutions, pre-schools are eligible for government subsidies. We build functional libraries in primary schools, supporting access to age- and language-appropriate storybooks and opportunities to improve literacy, nurturing a love for reading and creativity, all while providing a haven from the distractions and pressures of the external world. These improved and safe facilities create an environment for teachers that is conducive to learning, engaging children in positive educational activities and in doing so, **prepare children for primary school**. When children are attending schools with safe, equipped educational spaces, their parents' confidence increases and community trust is built, not only in the pre-schools, but in Breadline Africa too. As a result, **staff, partners and communities are empowered to provide nurturing safe spaces for children**.

It is important for us to ensure that while we focus on improving educational infrastructure, we cannot ignore hunger. Children cannot learn on an empty stomach, and this is where our nutritional feeding partners, along with community feeding



programmes, play such an important role. During COVID, we actively supported feeding kitchens in four provinces and in the 18 months following, have shifted our focus to supporting pre-schools. Since the lockdown, we have supported the provision of more than 4.5 million meals and continue to provide food parcels to families in need. It is important for **children to have the nutrition they need to actively participate in day-to-day life**.

Annual seaside outings give children the opportunity to “just be a kid” in a safe, fun and educational space. During these outings, children are exposed to new experiences broadening their horizons, allowing their **imaginations to flourish through new ideas, along with building lifelong memories**.

Breadline Africa's vision is realised through infrastructure solutions and initiatives that give children in impoverished communities the best opportunity for a strong foundation for learning and a potential path out of poverty.

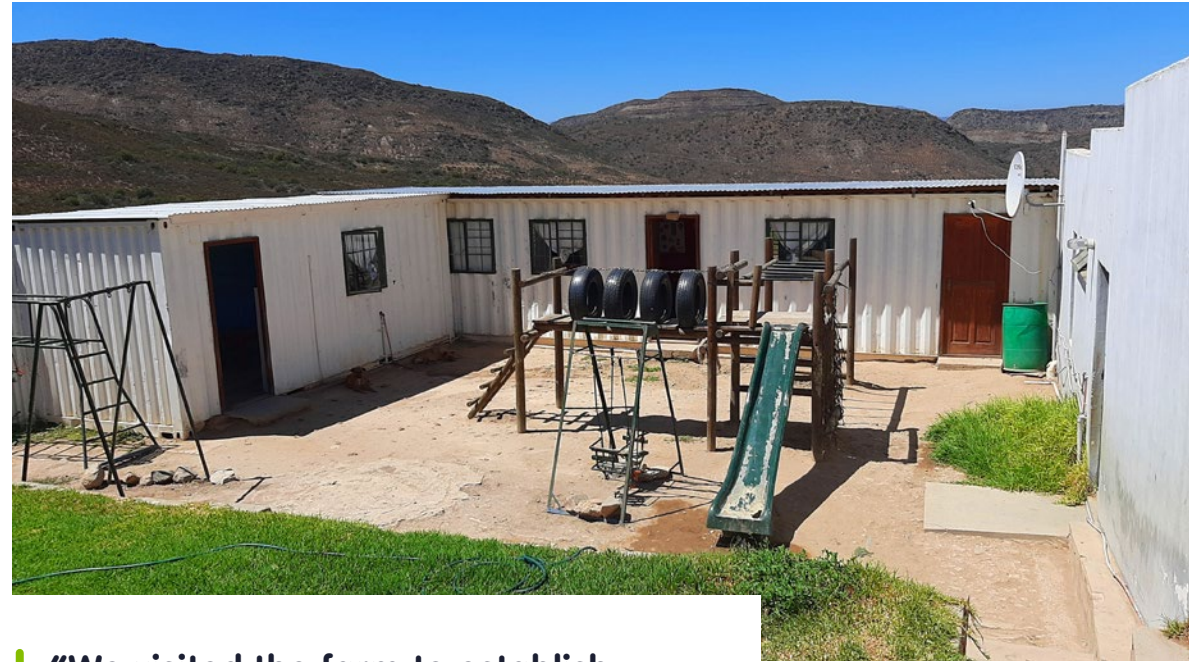
A SUCCESS STORY 30 YEARS IN THE MAKING



Thirty years ago, Breadline Africa placed its first converted shipping containers at the Montagu Youth Project, an organisation providing educational support to the children living on rural farms outside the farming community of Montagu in the Western Cape.

When the project closed in 1996, the containers were moved to Rietvlei 2 Primary School, which was founded to serve the children at a cluster of nearby farms. The three containers served as a school for approximately 30 children, until funding was obtained to build brick structures. From there, the containers continued to serve a purpose. They were moved to the nearby Stemmet Farm and converted into a pre-school for the younger children of the resident farm workers.

At the pre-school, we met Anneline Koker, who was born on the farm and teaches the pre-school children while their older siblings attend Rietvlei 2 Primary School. The farm has provided a new corrugated roof for the containers, and they are in good structural condition, but they could do with de-rusting and a fresh coat of paint, some new flooring, and educational materials such as books, puzzles and stationery.



“We visited the farm to establish the condition of the containers after so many years and we were delighted to discover that the 12m container classroom and 6m container kitchen were still in daily use and good condition.”

Anneline told us that tending to the children is incredibly fulfilling, and that she even has two of her own grandchildren in the pre-school, with her own daughter having attended previously. This is a wonderful testament to the longevity of our projects, and we plan to support the renovations and provide educational materials.



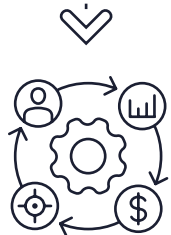
OUR IMPACT



Relativ Impact was appointed to develop Breadline Africa's Impact Report by analysing their data for the past two years.



The first step in ensuring that the correct impact goals are being measured was to co-create and validate our Theory of Change (ToC) through stakeholder engagement sessions with partners, team members and board members. Our ToC, as shown in this document, simplifies the complexity of the systemic changes addressed through our work by mapping out the unique pathways to realising the vision of providing safe educational environments for children in impoverished communities so that they have the best opportunity for a strong learning foundation and a potential path out of poverty. It describes what we strive to achieve and provides a blueprint that aligns stakeholder roles and purpose, providing a co-created framework for impact performance management across our organisation.



Following the development of our ToC, an Impact Management Framework (IMF) was created to support the management and measurement of our proposed outcomes. Indicators and metrics identified in the IMF were evaluated by our partners, with each giving feedback on the status of their current measurement and assessing whether further relevant metrics could be measured going forward. Our partners gave additional input on other indicator ideas, elements they believed were missing and any areas that require some improvement in the early childhood development space. Through this helpful feedback, we were able to accurately revise the IMF.



Each of the impact areas in our IMF corresponds to indicators associated with a relevant SDG. These SDG indicators are sourced from the United Nations Metadata Repository and offer specific links to broad impact goals within the context of Breadline Africa's operations. We proudly contribute to nine of the United Nations' 17 SDGs.⁴

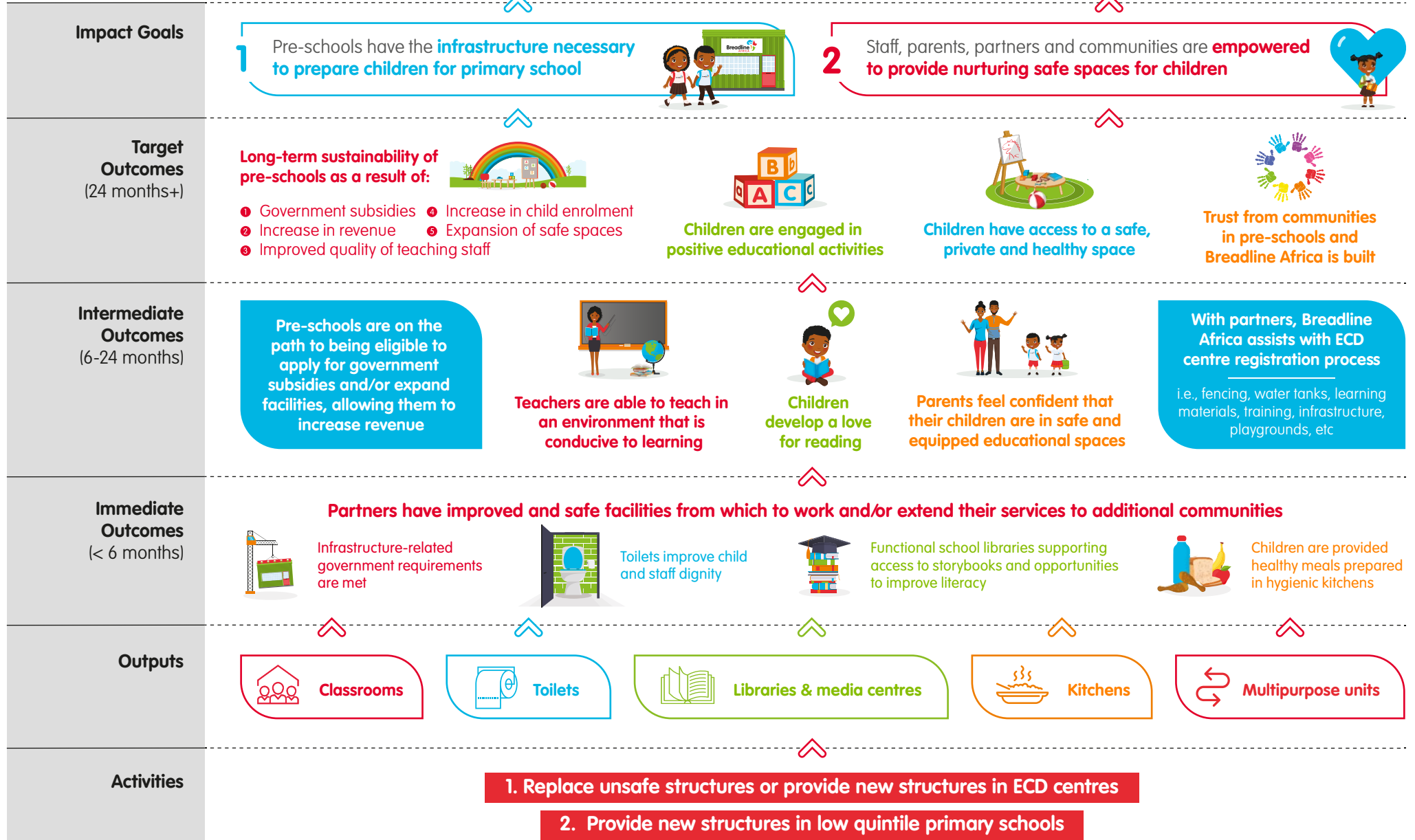


Theory of Change



PURPOSE STATEMENT:

Children's imaginations are unlocked, and possibilities are opened up, allowing them to choose a path for their own future

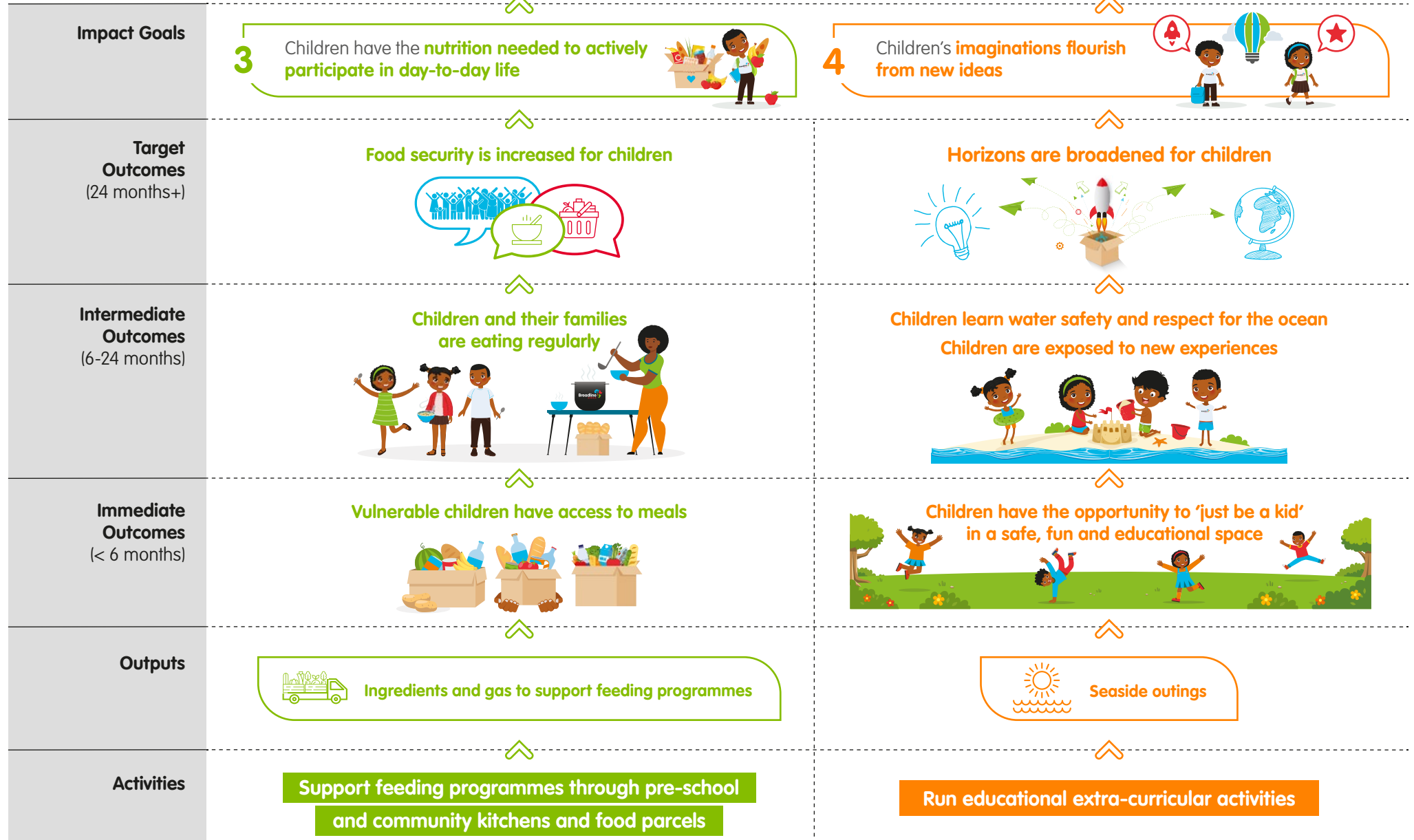


...continued



PURPOSE STATEMENT:

Children's imaginations are unlocked, and possibilities are opened up, allowing them to choose a path for their own future



Measuring what matters

Qualitative and quantitative indicators were selected to measure the contribution of programmes implemented by our partners towards our impact goals during the reporting period. These programmes included the provision of infrastructure, pre-school feeding support and literacy programmes at primary schools across South Africa. Partners who contributed to the data analysis include Ikamva Labantu, The Unlimited Child (TUC), GROW ECD, Impande, Do More Foundation, Peninsula School Feeding Association (PSFA), True North, Topsy Foundation, Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD), Ntataise, Sikhula Sonke and Room to Read. This report covers data collected over the period April 2021 to March 2023.

Breadline Africa selected 127 pre-schools, 23 primary schools and one high school to extract data from and to participate in the qualitative portion of this evaluation. Of the sample, 81 pre-schools, 23 primary schools and one high school were selected for data analysis. Due to challenges such as poor connectivity for communication, access to schools due to geographical location, unforeseen circumstances such as schools permanently closing and protest action, some data entries were incomplete. For the purpose of this report, indicators that did not have both baseline and follow-up data were not included in the analysis.

Quantitative indicators made use of baseline data, as well as data collected following the provision of infrastructure. During the reporting period, baseline data was collected





from schools through their application process, as well as following the provision of infrastructure. In terms of baseline data, schools submitted online applications requesting support between 2020 and 2022. These applications included questions about whether the pre-school was registered, subsidies received, the number of children attending the pre-school, the number of teachers working at the pre-school and the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels of teachers (among others). Following the submission of these applications, we conducted telephonic interviews with each pre-school principal to verify this information. In 2023, our partner organisations conducted telephonic interviews with pre-school principals and gathered this same data to assess what sort of change had occurred. Partners also requested additional information on teacher salaries, school fees and feeding support programmes (among others) during these annual assessments.

Qualitative indicators made use of thematic analysis to gain insight into children's experience of seaside outings. After their outing, learners were asked to draw a picture illustrating their visit to the seaside. These pictures were then engaged with to identify common themes across the learners' drawings, giving us a perspective into their experience of the outing. The Breadline Africa team responsible for organising the seaside outings was interviewed to collect information about the activities of the day, as well as feedback on the team's engagement with the children following the excursion. Further qualitative data has been collected through case studies. These case studies highlight particularly powerful change and impact. In addition to case studies, Breadline Africa and our partners aimed to explore the perspectives of school principals and parents of learners attending pre-schools. Parents



were contacted telephonically and asked to rate their degree of satisfaction with the infrastructure provided, the level of confidence they have in the level of safety and quality of education provided by the pre-school, the likelihood of them recommending the pre-school to other community members and how they felt the pre-school compared to other pre-schools in the community in terms of quality, resources and outcomes. Pre-school principals were contacted telephonically and asked to provide their perspective on the impact that our programmes have had on the learners at the pre-schools, as well as on the operations of the pre-schools.

The following table describes the indicators used to measure the contribution that we are making towards achieving our impact goals.

	OUTCOME	INDICATOR
 <p>IMPACT 1 Pre-schools have the infrastructure necessary to prepare children for primary school</p>	<p>Long-term sustainability of pre-schools as a result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government subsidies - Increase in revenue - Improved quality of teaching staff - Increase in child enrolment - Expansion of safe space 	<p>Teachers' average monthly salaries</p> <p>Number of pre-schools that are registered with government</p> <p>Number of children for which subsidies are being received</p> <p>% of parents paying school fees</p> <p>Number of children enrolled</p> <p>Number of facilities provided</p> <p>Number of teachers with NQF 4 or higher</p>
	<p>Schools are on the path to being eligible to apply for government subsidies and/or expand facilities, allowing them to increase revenue</p>	<p>Teacher: learner ratio</p> <p>Number of pre-schools that are eligible to apply for government registration</p>
	<p>Children receive healthy meals prepared in hygienic kitchens</p>	<p>Number of kitchens provided</p>
	<p>Access to toilets improves child and staff dignity</p>	<p>Number of toilets provided</p>
 <p>IMPACT 2 Staff, parents, partners and communities are empowered to provide nurturing safe spaces for children</p>	<p>Children develop a love for reading</p>	<p>% of children taking books home</p>
	<p>Functional libraries supporting access to storybooks and opportunities to improve literacy</p>	<p>Average number of books per child</p>
	<p>Children are engaged in positive educational activities</p>	<p>% of primary schools offering literacy-based activities</p>
	<p>Parents feel confident that their children are in safe and equipped educational spaces</p>	<p>Number of children enrolled</p>
 <p>IMPACT 3 Children have the nutrition needed to actively participate in day-to-day life</p>	<p>Vulnerable children have access to meals</p>	<p>Number of beneficiaries supported by feeding programmes</p> <p>Feedback from principals</p>
	 <p>IMPACT 4 Children's imaginations flourish with new ideas</p>	<p>Children are exposed to new experiences</p>

IMPACT 1

Pre-schools have the infrastructure necessary to prepare children for primary school



1 NO POVERTY



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



4 QUALITY EDUCATION



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Introduction

Safe and engaging pre-school structures help foster an environment that is conducive to learning. By replacing old structures or providing new structures, pre-schools can meet requirements for registration with government. Registration allows pre-schools greater access to government subsidies, which can lead to expansion and an increase in revenue. These improved learning environments and this increased revenue also motivate and support teachers, as well as increase the level of trust parents have in these spaces, along with their confidence in their children's safety and learning. Children are therefore able to attend pre-schools that are safe and well-equipped; are staffed by quality ECD practitioners who are motivated to teach as they have access to increased resources; and that are trusted by their communities.

“This container classroom has made it possible for us to assist our struggling learners with the necessary skills required to make them school ready. It is also a safe environment where children can learn new skills, like musical instruments. This space is not only used by the learners, but by the community as well. We are currently running parent programmes and teachers’ workshops from this space. The amazing thing is that the container came in the colour green, which for us means prosperity, progress and nature. All the ingredients for a brighter future for Ubunye.”

Felecia Jones, principal of Ubunye Educare Centre

Impact achieved

Through upgrading and providing safe infrastructure, pre-schools are more able to register with government and receive government subsidies, which increases their income and allows greater financial sustainability. Indeed, the Centre for Early Childhood Development (CECD) notes that supporting pre-schools to achieve this registration is critical for their sustainability and capacity to offer quality early learning programmes⁵. However, many remain unregistered. For example, 46% of pre-schools in the Western Cape are registered, less than 30% of centres are registered in Gauteng, and 31% of pre-schools in Limpopo are registered⁶. Overall, 42% of South Africa's pre-schools are registered⁶. Some of the most prominent reasons behind this low rate of registration include centres having inadequate infrastructure, equipment, staff, suitably qualified staff, and health and safety protocols⁶. Registration is important, as not only does it provide parents and caregivers with reassurance of the quality of safety of the centres, but also allows the centres to access funding and resources supplied by government⁶.

The provision of 139 structures to these pre-schools and primary schools (including 37 toilet facilities, 65 classrooms, 29 kitchens and 11 libraries, as well as office buildings and jungle gyms) has allowed pre-schools to become safer, more engaging spaces. The provision of infrastructure that meets government standards has contributed to 9 pre-schools successfully registering, and another 34 pre-schools being eligible to register and/or have applied for registration and are waiting for government to confirm their status. This means that there are 45 pre-schools that are registered, have applied for registration or who can register, compared to two before the infrastructure was placed.

An important component of pre-schools having and sustaining necessary infrastructure is related to their financial situations and sustainability. To become more financially sustainable, pre-schools can apply for government subsidies (provided they meet the necessary requirements); increase their revenue through school fees; expand the pre-schools themselves; and increase enrolment. Improving the quality of the teachers at these centres is an important part of this, as the provision of quality pre-school care will motivate and encourage parents and caregivers to pay school fees and will increase interest in the pre-school, which can increase enrolment. Related to this, baseline data showed that there were 115 teachers with an NQF level 4 or higher, and this had increased to 141 at follow-up. The number of children enrolled had also increased from 3,492 at baseline to 4,152 at annual assessment of the pre-schools. Therefore, not only are there more teachers with higher qualifications, but there are also more children attending these pre-schools. Teacher-to-learner ratios remained consistent, at 1:17, despite these changes. Minimum requirements for staff-to-learner ratios differ, depending on the ages of children⁷:

- For children between the ages of 18 months and three years, there must be one staff member for every 12 children.
- For children between three and four years of age, there must be one staff member for every 20 children.
- For children between five and six years of age, there must be one staff member for every 30 children.

100%



of parents interviewed were very satisfied with the infrastructure (classroom/ kitchen/toilet) at their child's pre-school

139



safe pre-school facilities provided (which will see them on the path to applying for government registration)

9



pre-schools obtained government registration (enabling them to receive subsidies)

34



pre-schools were assisted to become eligible for government registration (through provision of safe infrastructure, learning materials, and training)

141



teachers had an NQF level 4 qualification or higher (ensuring quality early childhood education)


As mentioned above, another way to increase revenue is through government subsidies. As a result of pre-schools being registered, the number of children receiving government subsidies increased from 746 children to 836 children at annual assessment. Additionally, a higher percentage of parents were reported to be paying school fees, compared to baseline. On initial assessment, approximately 56% of parents were paying school fees and at progress assessment of the schools, this increased to about 61%. These increases in revenue also contributed to changes in teacher salaries. At baseline, the average salary was reported to be R1,547.88 per month, and this increased to an average of R2,496.50 on annual assessment. While a positive impact can be seen, teachers' salaries remain below South Africa's minimum wage (R25.42 per hour) and continued focus is needed to ensure teachers earn a fair living wage⁸. An increase in the percentage of parents paying school fees is promising, as research has shown that income from fees (particularly in marginalised communities) can be inconsistent due to limited parental or caregiver ability to pay, as well as seasonal changes in demand and attendance⁹.

“ There is a big difference, especially when we received the toilets. Before, [they] used a potty in a small shack. Now, with the toilets, parents want to place their children at our pre-school.”


Principal feedback

“ He couldn't speak English and now he can and every time he comes home, he shows us something new that his teachers taught him. They have more resources than other centres. When he comes home, he always tells us of the art that he does – I never hear other children speak about doing art at their pre-school.”

Parent feedback

 **4,152**
learners enrolled at pre-schools

 **836**
children were receiving government subsidies (providing financial support to registered pre-schools)

 **61%**
of parents were contributing towards school fees (increasing revenue for pre-school programmes)



IMPACT 2

Staff, parents, partners and community are empowered to provide nurturing safe spaces for children



Introduction

By replacing old and providing new classrooms; toilets; libraries and media centres; kitchens; and multipurpose units, government registration requirements are met, learners and staff dignity is increased, opportunities to improve literacy are provided and children have safe, private and healthy spaces that are conducive to learning. These improvements motivate and allow school staff to provide engaging and safe learning environments for children. Parents' confidence in these learning environments increases because of these changes, and parents feel empowered to support their child's learning, which leads to greater enrolment and an increase in the number of parents paying school fees. Schools therefore not only have improved and safe facilities from which to work but are also able to extend their services to other communities through increased revenue from fees and registration. Communities trust these pre-schools because of the improvements made, and so pre-schools are sustainably supported by the communities themselves.





books were available per primary school learner (enabling children's access to storybooks)



of learners checked books out of their school libraries (in Bohlabela District)



of primary schools offered literacy-based activities (providing opportunities for learners to improve literacy)

Impact achieved



All 25 of the parents interviewed reported having "a lot" of confidence in the safety of and education provided at their child's pre-school

As mentioned above, the provision of safe and engaging infrastructure is linked to providing increased opportunities for children to learn. More specifically, the provision of libraries has provided children with greater access to age and language appropriate reading materials, which supports learning. Breadline Africa, together with Room to Read, provided libraries and books for 11 primary schools. In addition to these schools, Breadline Africa provided a further five libraries at primary schools within the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. At baseline, none of the children were taking books from school libraries home as these resources were not available. However, following availability of library resources, children at 60% of the 16 primary schools were taking books home with them. This is also related to the number of books that were available to children after the provision of libraries, with 2,58 books

per child becoming available. Data collected from primary schools in Bohlabela district in Mpumalanga showed that following the provision of library resources, 85% of learners had taken books home from their school libraries. This is hugely significant, as a 2023 study commissioned by the Department of Basic Education and UNICEF South Africa found that 43% of the households surveyed reported having zero access to books at home, and while 58% of caregivers surveyed noted that they have books available, only 32% reported using them regularly¹⁰. This means most South African children arrive at school without important early home learning experiences that support language development, literacy, imagination and creativity, critical thinking and emotional intelligence^{11,12}.

The provision of library infrastructure has also allowed for an increase in literacy-based activities that are taking place at schools. At baseline, no schools indicated that literacy-based activities were taking place. Following the implementation of the libraries, 64% of primary schools reported that these activities were taking place. These activities include shared reading, reading aloud, paired reading, independent reading, checking out books, group reading, guided reading, group discussions and Q&A sessions, storytelling and book reviews. These activities are not only important for the reasons mentioned above, but also because they allow children to connect with and learn from one another, build confidence, learn from their teachers and work on critical thinking skills^{13,14}.

“ Thank you to the donors. You have invested, not just in our learners and teachers, but the entire community, as we plan to open the library to the public in a year's time. When you make an investment at the bank you would be lucky to get an interest rate of 10% back, but you won't get that from us, our return on investment starts from 60% and above. The children will be able to read with understanding, they will be able to read with meaning – that is the investment you have made. They will be able to enter competitions such as spelling bees and compete against other schools. The future looks bright for the children of Noluthando and the community of Khayelitsha.”

Ayanda Ncinane, principal of Noluthando School for the Deaf



As part of providing safe learning environments for children and communities, Breadline Africa, in collaboration with Funda Wande, embarked on a project in 2020.

It aimed to evaluate a scalable model for providing classroom libraries to foundation phase classrooms. In the first year of the project, Breadline Africa designed three library prototypes, installed them across 40 foundation phase classrooms, and put together a collection of 100 Sepedi, English and wordless storybooks sourced from Biblionef, Mikhulu Trust, CopyCat Publishers, Book Dash and Bargain Books. In year two, Breadline Africa placed an additional 140 libraries in Grade one, two, and three classrooms in 35 schools that were to receive training, mentoring and support from Funda Wande.

To assess the impact of this project, an evaluation was conducted at the beginning of 2023. This evaluation found that having the classroom libraries provided a significant benefit to students who might otherwise have no access at all to books, or very limited access, at best. Additionally, the majority of teachers involved in the evaluation reported a large or medium perceived improvement in learner's reading abilities, and while it was difficult to attribute competence to the impact of the libraries alone, observations of vocabulary, reading confidence and comprehension suggested that learners' skills were at an acceptable level. Moreover, the evaluation shows that group guided reading and shared reading modalities were executed by all teachers with a high degree of competence, and these modalities had been integrated into lesson plans. Many teachers were

also using evidence-based practices to encourage interest in the books in the library. These included rotating the books kept in the library, displaying book covers, reminding learners to look at the library books, using reward systems, reading books multiple times and so on. While self-initiated use of the libraries by learners was relatively low, the evaluation showed that many teachers were engaging with and making use of the libraries.

66% of teachers reported using the libraries two to five times per week

Roughly 1/3 of educators reported there was a large improvement and half of the educators reported that there was a medium improvement in terms of the perceived impact of the classroom libraries on learner literacy

6% of educators indicated that there were more than 100 books, and **41%** indicated that there were between 51 and 100 books in the classroom libraries

84% of educators believed that the books were appropriate for their learners

84% of educators had a reading corner in their classroom

Overall, evidence from the evaluation suggested that having libraries in the classroom increased learners' interest in reading. Children found the books interesting and engaging, and were excited by the prospect of both reading themselves and being read to by the teacher. Teachers felt that the classroom library encouraged learners to read and improved their reading skills, and that improvements in reading abilities helped learners to understand the rest of their work.

In order for staff, parents, partners and communities to be motivated to provide and maintain safe school infrastructure, these individuals need to see its value and need to trust the quality of these spaces. Building a level of trust through upgrading and providing safe infrastructure for children is an important way for this work to be sustainable. To assess this level of trust, the number of children enrolled in pre-schools has been considered, as this is one way of identifying how much value parents and communities ascribe to these pre-schools. At baseline, 3,492 children were enrolled in the pre-schools, and this had increased to 4,152 on evaluation of the schools' progress after intervention. Parent and community trust and confidence in the pre-schools was also considered by looking at the percentage of parents paying school fees. The rationale for using this indicator as a proxy is that if parents are satisfied with the pre-schools and want them to continue running and to continue to improve, then they will be motivated to pay school fees (if they are financially able to do so). As mentioned in impact area 1, a 5% increase in the number of parents contributing to school fees was seen, following the provision of safer infrastructure.

“ They benefitted a lot. In winter, the old structure was leaking and cold and sometimes they had to move to a different location. Now they are happy, and the parents are happy. The new classroom is warm, and we can turn the lights on. They don't need to use their paraffin heater anymore. It's bright and they can put their posters on the wall. They are safe and dry during winter. In summer, it's cool.”

Pre-school principal feedback



IMPACT 3

Children have the nutrition needed to actively participate in day-to-day life



Introduction

In supporting feeding programmes through food parcels and pre-school and community kitchens, as well as providing ingredients and gas to these feeding programmes, more children have had access to meals. More specifically, through these efforts, vulnerable children who are facing food insecurity have greater access to nutritious food on a more regular basis. This reduces food insecurity and enables the children to have access to the nutrition they need to be able to take part in daily activities, including learning. This food security support also fosters a greater sense of trust between community members and partners.

“The small children in our pre-school come from poor communities and the majority don’t receive any breakfast at home. We are so thankful for the porridge that Breadline Africa provides. It offers the children the nutrition they need to concentrate, understand and perform academically.”

Buhle Mntuyedwa, principal of Telitebies Academy Pre-school



67%

increase in schools receiving feeding support and food supplies (children can access the nutrition they need to participate in school)

“

The porridge that Breadline Africa provide is very beneficial. There are times parent[s] do not have food at home and at least we know that we can fill the kids' tummies up. This makes it less heartbreaking when parents say that they can't feed their kids. Food in their tummy makes a difference. I believe that even if parent[s] cannot feed the children at home, they can let us know and we make sure that they receive a meal... Thank you."

Principal feedback

Impact achieved

Undernourishment impairs a child's concentration and their ability to retain information. When children have access to regular meals and are no longer hungry, they are able to learn properly, and their academic outcomes are improved¹⁵.

The provision of a kitchen, serving as a hygienic space where food can be prepared for children, is a prerequisite for pre-schools aiming to receive government registration. This is important, as government reviews of pre-school programmes have shown that there is a shortcoming in the delivery of nutritional support to infants and young children, especially for children under the age of two, and those living in poverty and in under-serviced areas¹⁵. Over the reporting period, Breadline Africa provided separate kitchen facilities at 21 pre-schools, enabling them to meet registration requirements. Subsidies received by registered pre-schools contribute to the cost of food supplies and gas in the provision of meals to the children. With all partner pre-schools providing porridge, the financial sustainability of these pre-schools, along with their ability to continue providing children with a meal, is supported through Breadline Africa's efforts in assisting pre-schools in achieving registration, along with facilitating feeding programmes. Through these initiatives with our implementing partners, there was a 67% increase in the number of schools receiving feeding support, which included assisting schools with food supplies.

In partnership with the Peninsula School Feeding Association (PSFA), Breadline Africa provided kitchens to eight primary schools within the Western Cape. The intervention provides daily meals for 2,789 primary school children. The principal of Elswood Primary School in Elsie's River shared that school attendance had improved, remaining consistent during states of disaster (such as the August 2023 provincial taxi strike)

because meals provided by the school were the only food that children had access to, and learners were therefore motivated to attend school. Fortified porridge was provided daily to 380 learners in pre-schools within the Western Cape, implemented by PFSA with support from Breadline Africa's donors.

Feeding programmes implemented by Breadline Africa and True North ensured 720 children in pre-schools in Capricorn and Vrygrond in the Western Cape had access to breakfast on a daily basis. A telephonic interview with the principal at Butterfly Way pre-school offers perspective on the difference that a bowl of porridge makes to the daily lives of the children. The principal highlighted that the feeding programme helps pre-schools to feed children who have limited access to meals at home. In some cases where parents have shared that they cannot feed their children, the principal mentioned that the pre-school will assist in giving these children lunch in addition to the porridge supplied by the feeding programme.

Pre-school principals further shared how the provision of safe infrastructure by Breadline Africa enabled them to meet government requirements for registration, allowing for subsidy provision. They explained how, through their experience, pre-schools are now able to provide meals for the children as a result. Principals went on to share how food assistance through Breadline Africa's programmes has enabled the pre-schools to feed more children and has improved their overall nutrition and development. There is a recognition that meals provided by Breadline Africa help families in need, particularly during times when parents may struggle to provide food at home. Principals see this support as essential to ensuring that the children have "full tummies" and can focus on learning.

IMPACT 4

Children's imaginations flourish with new ideas



Introduction

Taking children on extra-curricular outings to the seaside provides an opportunity for them to have fun, create memories and explore a new environment. Children learn about the ocean and water safety in a safe and fun way through this new experience, broadening their minds and horizons, and ultimately, these new experiences expand their imaginations. This supports new ways of thinking, new ideas and increased creativity, which supports learning. This increased imagination and creativity helps children better understand the world around them and they become more aware of possibilities and opportunities available to them.

“The seaside outing played a huge role in the children’s year as for most of them, it was their very first time going to the beach. As a centre, we could never even consider taking the children on an excursion like this, as the cost would be too great for their parents – most of whom are still teenagers. For the children at the centre who were fortunate enough to go the seaside, it is still a great memory that will not vanish easily. Seeing the waves and sand at the sea, seeing people full of love towards them and receiving Christmas presents from Breadline Africa was so wonderful for the children and their parents.”

Precious Petros, principal of Masakhe 2 Pre-school



Collage of seaside drawings by children aged two to eight years

Impact achieved

Annually, we send hundreds of children under the age of seven to experience the ocean and, through play, learn about the environment around them and how to preserve it. The primary objective of these seaside outings is to provide a secure environment for children to have fun, play, interact with peers, create joyful memories and just enjoy being children. The creation of these safe spaces for children to play is essential, as research by the Department of Basic Education and UNICEF South Africa found that 71% of caregivers rarely engage in traditional game playing with their children¹⁰. The study specifically emphasised the scarcity of safe spaces for children to play, as children are exposed to harsh discipline, domestic violence, and unsafe home and learning physical conditions¹⁰.

Children engage in activities such as shoreside games and water playtime¹⁷. Seaside outings help children build motor skills through play, encourage imaginative thinking through beach games and foster storytelling. They also promote kindness and co-operation by sharing toys, learning about water safety and taking responsibility for keeping the beach clean. Children engage in programmes hosted by ocean-based organisations such as Shark Spotters, where they are educated about the ocean and its inhabitants, making life under the sea seem more real to them. Exposure to the ocean during the outings is intended to enhance children's appreciation for nature and the environment, fostering a desire to preserve it. Indeed, research has shown that children who play outside are more likely to protect nature when

they become young adults¹⁸. Research has also shown that increased exposure to nature has positive impacts on physical and psychological health, including improved academic performance, increased ability to concentrate, reduced stress levels and reduced risk of obesity^{19,20}.

There are limited opportunities for children to have seaside experiences besides those organised by Breadline Africa. In addition to experiencing playing at the seaside, the learners receive meals and are visited by Father Christmas. Families and caregivers perceive the impact of the seaside outings positively, expressing gratitude and interest in their children participating in the programme in subsequent years. Positive changes observed in children after the outings include overcoming fear of the water, expressing enjoyment of the experience and making real-life connections to what they've learnt.

Children's feedback after the outings reflects the programme's success, as they **enthusiastically discuss and cherish the memories of the outings, signifying their enjoyment and positive experiences**. Children find the entire day of the seaside outing to be enjoyable, with some loving the water, others enjoying building sandcastles and the majority appreciating the entertainment and meals. The highlight of the seaside outing varies for each child, with each aspect of the outing contributing to their excitement and enjoyment, making it a memorable experience for them.



Further evidence of the positive experiences children have at these seaside outings is seen through the pictures they drew afterwards. These drawings are valuable to consider as feedback from the children, as interviews were not conducted due to ethical clearance requirements. Additionally, because some children are very young, verbal interviews may not be the best way to collect their feedback and experiences. Therefore, using non-verbal information (like the drawings) provides another form of qualitative insight.

While it can be difficult to identify and interpret all the elements of a young child's drawing, common features of these drawings included **bright primary colours** being used when illustrating what appeared to be the ocean, the sun, birds and butterflies. **These could indicate some of the highlights of the day for these children – the ocean, the warmth from the sun, being outside and being in nature.** The depiction of the seaside setting varied from child to child. Notable elements found across the drawings included what could be interpreted as the iconic houses on St James Beach, the destination of the seaside outing, as well as smiling figures that appeared to be walking or playing together on the grass or in the water, with each figure holding an object. Another element featured across the pictures was what appears to be a bus, which could represent their experience of the bus used to transport the children to the seaside outing. This perhaps indicates the novelty of these experiences for some children, which is important for developing a child's imagination. Indeed, adjustment to new and/or unfamiliar experiences requires

flexibility, adaptation, and at times, problem-solving¹⁹. Research has found that imagination greatly influences children's problem-solving abilities, and that children are able to develop innovative solutions and responses through blending rich and diverse experiences with imagination²⁰.

While it is not completely guaranteed that children have not had a similar experience before, **these pictures do indicate that children found their experience at the seaside outing memorable, or at least there were elements of the outing that stood out to them.** This speaks to children having fun and being able to "just be a kid" when playing in a safe environment. This is important, as the evidence for the developmental benefits of play is overwhelming. These benefits include (amongst others) emotional well-being; language development; and the development of metacognitive and self-regulatory abilities²¹.

CONCLUSION



As we celebrate our 30th year of impact, we reflect on the contribution of our interventions and partner support programmes towards realising our belief that when children are provided with a safe learning conducive environment, they are empowered to shape their own future.

Through the provision of safe structures, pre-schools have received government registration, or are now eligible to apply for registration, contributing significantly to their long-term sustainability. This has meant that more children are eligible for government subsidies, a greater percentage of parents are paying school fees and teachers with higher qualifications are employed (due to the availability of funding for salary payments and due to work environments being more attractive to teachers). This improved infrastructure and revenue (from subsidies and from parents paying school fees) has also meant that pre-schools have been able to expand their services, offering more children access to early learning.

In providing libraries and media centres, more children have been taking books home and there are more books available for children at their school libraries. Schools have begun offering literacy-based activities, which helps foster a love of reading. Due to their children having access to safe, healthy spaces where they can engage in positive educational activities, parents and communities feel more confident in the learning being provided by schools. This increased confidence empowers parents and communities to provide nurturing safe spaces for their children.

By supporting more school feeding programmes, along with community kitchens and providing food parcels, more children have regular access to food. This has provided

children with some of the nutrition they need to be able to actively participate in school, and in life generally. Principals have emphasised the importance of this nutritional support.

Taking children on seaside outings gives them the opportunity to play and learn in a safe environment. Through exposure to these new situations, children have been able to broaden their experiences, which contributes to expanding their perspectives and their imaginations. Drawings from the seaside outings highlight that children experienced these outings as memorable and were more aware of their natural surroundings.

As we look ahead to the next 30 years, it is important to recognise indicators that require attention to ensure continued progress towards realising our vision. These include teacher:learner ratios for children aged 18 months to three years old and teacher's salaries. Teacher:learner ratios are challenging to address, given that more and more children need to be in pre-school but salaries for teachers remain relatively low (and the demands of the job are significant). Correspondingly, a greater percentage of parents are paying school fees at follow-up compared to baseline, but this does not mean that this percentage will continue to rise. Some parents may want to pay school fees but are unable to, as the economic factors governing this ability fluctuate (such as parents having seasonal jobs).

We seek to continue developing our impact measurement and reporting through reviewing our ToC and IMF annually to check whether indicators and measures align with our operations, updating indicators where necessary. Our measurement tools will be reviewed against our outcome indicators to ensure we are gathering the correct data and that the measurement tools are suited to our organisational capacity and the implementation context.

We celebrate the milestones achieved over the past 30 years and look forward to the next 30 years of impact.



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GLOSSARY



Early Childhood Development	A comprehensive approach to programmes and policies for children from birth to seven years of age, aimed at protecting the rights of children to develop their full cognitive, emotional, social, and physical potential.
Impact	The change in outcomes (positive or negative) caused by an organisation, directly or indirectly, wholly, or partially, intended, or unintended, measured over distinct and agreed periods of time.
Impact Measurement Framework	An impact measurement framework builds on the organisation's theory of change by identifying what data will be used and how it will be collected to measure the desired outcomes and ensure that impact can be evidenced.
Indicators	A standardised measure related to an output or outcome to assess performance and comparability in time or theme.
Inputs	Resources that are required to execute an activity i.e., skills, equipment, materials, capital.
National Qualifications Framework	A structure that organises and classifies qualifications and competencies in South Africa. The objectives of the NQF include facilitating access to, and mobility and progression within, education, training and career paths, and to enhance the quality of education and training.
Outputs	Tangible, quantifiable results of the activities or efforts of an institution or individual (i.e., number of clients purchasing a product or service).
Outcomes	Effects of an activity that are an aspect of social, environmental, or economic well-being. (i.e., the difference a product or service made to a beneficiary's life and/or the community or environment).
School Readiness	The knowledge, skills and abilities that children need to succeed at school, including early numeracy, language and literacy skills, cognitive skills, sustained attention skills, self-regulation, social emotional skills and motivation.
Theory of Change	A roadmap or blueprint for what an organisation needs to measure to track progress, impact performance and identify possible areas of intervention.

ACRONYMS



BLA	Breadline Africa
CECD	Centre for Early Childhood Development
DBE	Department of Basic Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
IMF	Impact Management Framework
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToC	Theory of Change
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund



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