INNOVATION EDGE

Theory of Change.

Igniting the ecosystem around mission-aligned entrepreneurs and ventures that focus on solving early life and early learning challenges in South Africa

IMPACT GOALS

1 Children have positive early life experiences that build the sturdy starting blocks that lay the foundations for life-long learning and wellbeing

2 Social Entrepreneurs are supported so they can provide solutions for young children and those who care for them

3 Diverse teams apply their skills to support innovators solving ECD challenges

TARGET OUTCOMES (24 months+)

- Home learning environments are enriched with responsive caregiving interactions between caregivers and children
- Learning outcomes are enabled through high quality ELPs
- Children's mental, physical and cognitive development are stimulated
- Loving, protected and safe environments are enabled for children
- Investee prototypes, products and business models demonstrate potential for scale
- Sustained support from investors and customers
- Ventures create continuous and lasting impact through their innovations
- Social entrepreneurs are inspired to develop new and improved early childhood learning solutions
- Ventures have diversified their funding
- Innovation Edge contributes to an environment where stakeholders feel capable and motivated to collaborate and form partnerships
- Improvement in employee attraction and retention
- Improved inclusivity and diversity across workforce
- Improved performance against company objectives/goals
- Diverse team has the necessary tools and environment to enable ongoing learning

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES (12-24 months)

- Children's early learning foundational skills are enabled through reading, storytelling and daily conversations
- High quality ELPs are provided prior to starting school (for at least two years)
- Health related barriers to learning are identified and mitigated early by caregivers and teachers
- Safe and secure home and school environments enabled by caregivers and teachers
- Investees providing solutions in the early childhood development sector received funding for their innovations and ventures
- Investees use the developed tools and resources to demonstrate their social impact and financial returns
- Early stage ventures and investees contribute to providing success stories in the sector
- Awareness of challenges and opportunities in the early life phase is created
- Early stage ventures receive additional funding from new partnerships formed
- Diverse stakeholders are connected to support the flow of information, talents and capital
- Teams understand their roles and responsibilities, and potential growth opportunities
- More diverse leadership representation in teams
- Improvement in employee wellbeing

IMMEDIATE OUTCOMES (<12 months)

- Parents and caregivers regularly engage with resources and tools and gain the confidence to express behaviours consistent with responsive caregiving
- Pre-school teachers ELP operators are motivated and able to deliver high quality ELPs
- Healthcare service providers are providing promotive, preventive, and responsive healthcare services for caregivers and children
- Parents, caregivers and teachers are motivated and equipped to provide supportive and responsive care
- Investees have a minimum viable product with the required product market fit to get significant results
- Investees are able to demostrate their value proposition and venture offering
- Monitoring and Evaluations Frameworks are developed
- Financial projections and valuations are developed
- Marketing and communications strategies are developed
- Investees are partnered with providers who can support their growth
- Investees are equipped with the required knowledge, skills and competencies for the early childhood development sector to grow their ventures
- Investees have access to insights and collective processes on successes and failures in the sector
- Roles and responsibilities are developed and aligned to individual strengths and strategic objectives
- Individuals of different age, gender identification, disabilities and races have access to leadership oppotunities
- Increased diversity and inclusion awareness and commitment for the individual and the company

OUTPUTS

- Parents and caregivers have acces to afforable resources and tools to support their childs early learning
- Teachers and operators are equipped through quality training and development opportunities
- Teachers have access to quality preschool services and programmes to teach the children
- Operators have access to quality preschool programmes to teach the children
- Health care services and workers have access to quality tools and resources
- Fathers, caregivers and teachers are equipped with the knowledge and training to transform harmful gender norms for children
- Each investee has a product prototype
- Each investee has a Theory of Change
- Each investee has a financial model and long-term financial plan
- Each investee has a market assessment and customer segmentation
- Early stage ventures are connected to addtiional external funding sources
- Investees have access to mentor networks and industry advisors
- Access to a peer network (investee community)
- Transparent hiring policies, talent management policies and performance management policies are in place
- Policies and procedures are in place that best support a diversified and inclusive work culture
- Teams have access to mentorship and trauma-support opportunities through advisors

ACTIVITIES & INTERVENTIONS

- Supply parents and caregivers with affordable resources and tools for early learning activities with their child
- Provide operators with the training and resources required to manage ELP including empowering staff and parents
- Supply and develop training opportunities and the development of contextual resources
- Provide healthcare services and workers with tools and resources to deliver quality care
- Support initiatives that encourage the active participation of male caregivers (fathers, biological and social)
- Support initiatives that enable caregivers to create safe spaces for children
- Provide in-house and expert support on Product Development, market segmentation, track record of impact performance, and a financial model and plan
- Connect promising ventures with funders and operators well placed to support their Innovation ecosystem for Early growth
- Provide access to a circle of advisors and experts
- Review and align hiring, talent management and performance management policies to they key areas of diversity and inclusion
- Develop policies and procedure frameworks that align to focusing on diversity and inclusion for all employees
- Provide team mentorship opportunities

IMPACT AREAS

- Early Learning in the Home (ELH)
- Quality Early Learning Programmes (ELP)
- Early Health and Wellbeing (EHW)
- Early Security and Safety (ESS)
- Financial and non-financial support for ventures
- Innovation ecosystem for Early Childhood Development
- Innovation Edge Human and Social capital optimisation