

# FIRST TERM REPORT 2026

## SEWING Project



We opened the Skills Centre during the third week of January, as I first needed to open the computer classes in the other village. When we opened, the ladies from last year returned and were very willing to continue with the sewing class. They shared that there were still some techniques they wanted to learn and improve on this year.

At the start of the term, we had four ladies from last year's group and two new ladies joining the sewing classes, making a total of six participants. The four returning ladies are Liyema, Nosive, Anganathi and Nosimele. The two new ladies are Isthandile, also known as Slindokuhle Zinto, who is 27 years old, married into the Gxala family and has two beautiful children, a boy and a girl; and Alakhe, who is 30 years old, from Mngcibe village, and was recently married in December 2025. The ladies had already been calling me to ask when the sewing classes would

open again, so I promised them that this year I would try to be more hands-on and make time for them as much as possible.

Before we began the practical sewing work, I held a small workshop with them so that we could talk about how we would work together during the year. We also discussed personal stories, because I could see that some of the ladies were not yet comfortable sharing in that way. I explained that a personal story can simply include what they do when they are not attending sewing classes, and what they enjoy about being part of the sewing group. Anganathi is still attending classes when she has time, although she now has a nanny job at Mdumbi Backpackers and stays with Petra's children. When Petra is around, Anganathi gets the opportunity to attend the sewing class. The two new ladies are mostly helped by Liyema, who already has more sewing experience.



After the first session, we checked all the sewing machines to see which ones needed servicing. We oiled them and placed them in the sun so that they would be ready for use the following day. Unfortunately, the next week, when we planned to test the machines, there was an electricity outage. The whole town of Ngqeleni in the Eastern Cape was without electricity for a week. It was a difficult and stressful time, as many businesses were also struggling to cope. The ladies were disappointed and kept calling to ask when the electricity would return, but I had no clear answer to give them. During that time, they had to stay at home and were unable to continue with the sewing work.

When the electricity came back, we were able to continue, but we first had to wait for material to be bought before the sewing could begin properly. During the first week of February, the material arrived, and the ladies were very happy to start again. We sat together and spoke about how we would manage the work this year. Like last year, Transcape bought material once, and after that we used the money earned from sewing for people to buy the extra items that were needed. I explained to the ladies that this arrangement would continue this year as well, especially because there were already sewing orders waiting to be completed. This year we will also begin learning how to sew dresses, and Transcape will buy cheaper fabric for the

ladies to practise on. We will start by helping the two new ladies learn how to sew shweshwe skirts.



One of the ladies, Liyema Jampo, is willing to help teach the new ladies, which is a great support for me when I am not around. Lilitha Mafukula, who was pregnant last year, has given birth to a beautiful baby boy. She has also found work as a caregiver at Mdumbi Home-Based Care. She would still like to attend sewing classes once her baby is six months old, and she said she plans to leave him with her mother-in-law during class time. Thumeka Mpukwana, also known as Sikholise, is still mourning the loss of her husband.

The sewing ladies began by making shweshwe skirts, which were orders from people in the village. They sewed three skirts. Unfortunately, the person who ordered the third skirt did not come to collect it. Later, Andisiwe Masiphula

bought it for herself and was very happy because it fitted her so well. The money earned from the items they sew is used to buy more fabric, so that when someone wants to place an order, there is already fabric available. When Lungiswa Makaula did not return this year, I asked about her whereabouts and was told that she is staying in Mthatha with her children. Her daughter is in high school and is doing Grade 10, so Lungiswa moved there to support her child's education. She said that she would attend sewing classes during the holidays.

Here in Lujizweni, I was also approached by the Naluncedo Disability Project to assist them with their sewing machines. They already have four machines that they received from Social Development, and they are looking for someone to teach them sewing. I am planning to help them in my spare time, as I am already doing computer classes there. I asked them whether they had material and other sewing supplies, and they said they have everything they need, including large rolls of fabric. One roll will be used for learning, and the other will be used for sewing once they have gained some skills. They said they would like to start with people living with disabilities first. I will check their equipment and materials when we open for the second term, to make sure everything is in order.



## PERSONAL STORY OF LIYEMA JAMPO

My name is Liyema Jampo. I am 35 years old and married to Sivuyile Jampo, who is 40 years old. We live in the Mankosi Administrative Area in Ngqeleni, Eastern Cape. I have three children who stay with me, while my husband works in the mines in Rustenburg. I was born in the



Lwandile area, which is also in Ngqeleni. At home we are three girls, and I am the only one who got married at an early age.

I am a housewife, and I was given the opportunity to learn sewing at the Mankosi Skills Development Centre. When I first heard about the sewing project, I was very excited, but also scared, because I knew I would need to ask my husband for permission to attend the classes. I first spoke to my mother-in-law, and she did not have a problem with it because I do not live with her; I have my own home. When she agreed, I was very happy because I knew she would speak to my husband before I asked him. In Xhosa, we say she was going to “hoe the road for me.” I then called my husband and asked him, and he also did not have a problem with it. He only said, “If I need you

here in Rustenburg, please come,” and that was not a problem for me.

I went to the Mankosi Skills Centre to register for sewing in March 2025. When Khanyisa told me that I had been accepted, I was very happy. Seeing the other ladies already working on the sewing machines made me want to start immediately, but I was told that I would begin the next day. On the morning of my first lesson, I woke up early and prepared my children for school. After they left, I quickly cleaned the house because I had to leave by 9:00. My classes started at 10:00, and the centre is not too far from where I live.

When I first started attending the classes, some ladies in the village spoke behind my back. They said, “We will see if she is going to finish that,” and in Xhosa they said, “Ubaleka imisebenzi yasemzini wakhe uyozilibazisa kula Transcape,” meaning that I was running away from my household responsibilities to keep myself busy at Transcape. I chose to ignore those comments because I knew what I wanted. I believe it is very important not to listen to everything people say behind your back, because that can make you lose focus and go back to where you were before.



I am a person who is able to communicate well with the people I work with. When I started sewing shweshwe skirts, it was easy for me to learn and catch up with the other ladies. As a result, I am now one of the people who helps show others some sewing techniques. The people who did not trust me before are now the same people who ask me to sew for them after seeing my work. I do not have a problem with them, because I am a person who loves to see other people happy. I sew for them, and they pay me fully for the work.

Sewing has made me a very busy person. Sometimes I receive phone calls from people asking me to sew shweshwe items for them. During the June holidays, when the schools are closed, I usually go to visit my husband because during the school term I cannot go, as I need to take care of the children. This year I decided to buy my own sewing machine so that when I go to Rustenburg, I can take it with me. When I am there, I usually only cook for my husband and clean the small room where we stay. Having my own machine will give me the opportunity to stay busy and continue sewing even when I am away from home.

### COMPUTER LESSONS

We opened during the first week, on 14 January 2026, which was the second week after New Year. We decided to start with meetings because, when we closed last year, we had promised the youth of Mgojweni village that we would meet with them. In Lujizweni Number 4, there were also students who were left behind last year. We wanted to hold these meetings so that we could check how many students were still interested in joining the computer lessons.

I spoke to Mrs Mzantsi, one of the project managers of Naluncedo Disability Organisation. She has been helping me with recruiting students in this village. She said that there were 30 students who were left behind last year. I arrived in the village on a Monday, and she called all the students who were left behind to come to the hall. They came on Tuesday and Wednesday so that we could take their names and ID copies. We managed to register 30 students between the ages of 20 and 38 years.

During February, we were also busy planning the certificate ceremony for the students from last year. The ceremony was planned for 13 March, and 86 students who were taught last year were going to receive their certificates. While I was busy teaching the class, I was also helping with the planning. We also went to Mgojweni for a meeting, where 60 students attended.

While waiting for 13 March, I continued with my class of 30 students. In basic computer skills, I teach important skills such as how to use the operating system, file management, internet safety, and an introduction to computer software. I started by introducing the students to Typing Land, which is an app we installed to help beginners. Typing Land works like a game and helps students learn how to type faster on the keyboard using both hands.



During the first week of class, we focused on this typing programme. The following week, I checked whether their fingers were becoming familiar with the keyboard. After checking, I asked them questions based on what they had been doing, and I could see that they were learning. In the last week of February, we started Microsoft Word. At that time, there were only 23 students attending, and I do not know what happened to the others because they stopped coming to class.

I taught Microsoft Word for one week, and then I was called to help prepare for the certificate ceremony that was going to take place the following week in March. I left the classes three days before 13 March. On 12 March, I went to Mthatha to buy groceries for the ceremony, as we were going to cater for 86 students.

The day of the ceremony arrived, and the students from last year were very happy as they waited to receive their certificates. There was a lot of excitement. Some students were cheering, and others were performing poems in isiXhosa. Some students could not attend the ceremony because of work, so they sent their parents or friends to collect their certificates for them.

One of my students from last year, Sikuyo Bhayiyana, who is 22 years old, was accepted at WSU after taking a two-year gap. I met with her and asked how she managed to be accepted after that gap. She said that after attending the basic computer skills classes, she was able to apply for herself. The last time she applied, someone had to help her because she did not know how to use computers. She said that the programme brought by Transcape really helped her and other students.

Another student from Welese in Nomadolo was also accepted at college. Her name is Isiphile Zizi, and she is 23 years old. Her mother was very excited when she came to collect her certificate. She gave a speech and thanked Transcape for bringing computer skills to their village. She said the programme had brought good luck to her child.

One of my current students, Nokulinda Makhwezi, was involved in an accident on 14 March while attending a family wedding in another village. On the Saturday morning, the taxi she was travelling in left the road and caused an accident. Most of the passengers were injured, and Nokulinda injured her leg. For now, she cannot walk long distances. She used to walk 5 km from her home to attend class. She will not be attending classes for now, but I promised her that when she gets better, she can call me and we will make a plan for her to join another group.

On 23 March, I divided the students into groups so that they could revise what we had already covered. I noticed that some students learn more easily in groups because they get the chance to understand things they did not understand before and to learn from one another. This was our last week before starting exams. On Thursday, 26 March, we were going to close for Good Friday, and when we returned, the students would start writing their tests.

Our computer classes take one month per group. I will be closing this group with 19 students: 18 females and 1 male. Every Monday before we start class, we do exercises because we believe Mondays can be difficult days. Some people struggle to concentrate or feel sleepy in class because they are tired from the weekend. That is why I decided to do activities with them every Monday before starting the lesson.

I also have a student named Zonele Sinawo. She is very shy and is a slow learner, although she does not want to admit it. One day I called her and said, "If you are struggling with anything, please do not be shy to speak to me, because I can see that you are shy." She smiled and said, "Okay, Ma'am, I will."



## PERSONAL STORY OF NOMPUMEZO MQOBI



### WHEN MY DREAM WAS PUT ON HOLD

My name is Nompumezo Mqobi. I am a 20-year-old young woman from Ngqeleni, in Lujizweni Number 4. My dream was put on hold at a time when I thought I would be the first person in my family to help break the chain of poverty at home.

Earlier this year, I was ready to start a new chapter of my life at Nelson Mandela University (NMU). I had worked hard to get there, and I was full of hope for the future. However, when it was time to register, everything fell apart. NSFAS did not approve my funding, and my family could not afford the registration fee of R10,200.00.

I remember standing in the line at the university, watching other students complete their

registration while I kept checking my phone, hoping for a message from NSFAS. When it became clear that the funding would not come through, I felt crushed. All my plans and excitement turned into worry and disappointment. My parents tried their best to comfort me, but I knew how difficult things already were at home. With no other choice, I packed my bags and went back home. It was one of the hardest things I have ever done: leaving a place where I felt I belonged before I could even begin.

When I arrived home, I struggled with feelings of failure and uncertainty. Over time, however, I realised that this setback did not mean the end of my journey. It was only a pause. I started looking for other ways to move forward by applying for bursaries, speaking to people who could guide me, and reminding myself why I started in the first place.

Even though I could not study this year, I have not given up because I am still young. I am glad that I started computer lessons, because they have taught me resilience, faith, and patience. I am not going to give up on my dream. I plan to apply for myself next year using the computer skills I am gaining from Transcape. Every day before I go to class, I make sure that I clean the house and cook breakfast for my parents. I also walk with my sibling to school because her school is close to where I attend computer classes. In class, I am always the person who asks questions when there is something I do not understand. I was the same in Matric, and that is why I passed with a Bachelor's pass. My classes start at 8:00 and end at 12:00. After class, I walk home alone because my sibling is still in class at that time. When I arrive home, I rest for a short

while and then start cooking supper, although my mother always helps me. I now understand that sometimes life delays dreams, but it does not take them away if you believe in yourself. I can say with confidence that next year I will be doing my first year.

#### AFTERSCHOOL REPORT FOR THE 1<sup>ST</sup> TERM 2026

Schools reopened on 14 January. At the beginning of the term, I had 56 students from Grade 1 to Grade 9. On the first day, I did not teach. I only did registration to see how many learners would attend afterschool classes this year.

On 15 January, the children brought their progress reports so that I could see who did not do well in 2025. Only two learners did not pass to the next grade, and I knew I needed to support them more this year. I encouraged them to work hard and do better. I also spoke to their parents to understand why they had failed. I found out that one learner did not show her work to the teacher, which resulted in her repeating the class. The other learner's mother had previously stopped her from going to school and made her look after a baby. Both learners are in Grade 2.

I visited the learner's former teacher and reported the situation. The teacher was very shocked and disappointed. That child had stopped attending afterschool for some time, until I saw her coming back again this year. When I asked her about it, she said her mother had stopped doing that to her, and she is now doing well in class. Out of the 56 students, there are 40 girls and 16 boys.

On 12 February, I worked with the younger children in Mathematics. The lesson focused on "after and before," "less than and greater than," and numbers that come in between. With the younger children, we also continued learning letter sounds, letters, word building, and tracing letters. They are now able to read words, write them, and sound them out loud. They can also draw a line to match a picture to the correct word. Saying the word aloud while doing the activity helps them a lot.

On 12 February, the older children learned about sentence building in English. They built their own sentences to show their understanding. On 18 February, the older children learned about nouns and verbs. With the younger children in Mathematics, I taught even and odd numbers. As a teacher, I noticed that this was new to them, as they had not heard about it before.

On 20 February, the older children learned more about describing words in English. They learned that words which describe nouns are called adjectives, and they also learned about adverbs, where a describing word is added to a verb. To test their knowledge, I give them a test every Friday.

On 9 March, the older children learned about punctuation in English. I wrote down all the question words and explained them one by one. After the explanation, I gave them an exercise. They did well, although it was not easy for them. They tried their best.

The older children also joined the Gateway into Reading programme, which is normally done by the younger children. They joined because they wanted to improve their English. They heard the younger children answering questions in full sentences without needing translation. They are also learning pronunciation and spelling step by step. I call this a fast-track programme for the older children because they will not learn in the same way as the younger ones.

On 10 March, the older children learned more about tenses. The younger children are now on Step 5 in English. With the younger children, I focus on sounds and letters, which helps a lot with spelling and pronunciation. Sometimes I do not teach Mathematics separately because it is integrated with English. For example, when the children underline certain words using different colours, Mathematics is also included. When they circle words using different shapes, Mathematics is also included.

On 11 March, I worked with the younger children in Mathematics. We solved transport problems by counting the wheels of a cart, taxi, bus, and train. The children were doing addition and also counting in twos.



On 16 March, I read a story with the younger children in English. They listened carefully and concentrated because they knew that questions would follow after the story. Some children are afraid to answer in class, not because they cannot answer, but because they are shy. On that day, they learned about drought. The title of the story was “How Kaola Lost His Tail.” The story was very interesting. I asked them whether it is important to be lazy, and they said no, because Kaola lost his tail because of laziness. I also asked if there was anyone lazy like Kaola in the class, and they pointed at one another while laughing. As the Gateway into Reading programme works in steps, we have completed Step 5 and will continue with Step 6 after the March holidays.

Because the children are busy writing their first-term exams, the number of students attending my class is lower than usual. They are also busy with sports. I expect the number to increase after schools reopen. Transcape is still supporting the children with snacks so that they have something to eat and can concentrate in class. My class does not focus only on theory; we also do art, crafts, and games. When the class is full, I divide the students into groups so that I can reach all of them. Group work helps them learn to discuss and share ideas at this age.

There is a little girl named Yonwaba Yhoyho. She is 8 years old and is doing Grade 2 this year. She started attending afterschool when she was in Grade R. She often cries in my class because she does not like to be behind the others, especially in English. Yonwaba is very curious, and her curiosity has helped her improve. She can now read by herself, and she can write according to her level.

On 21 March, I did a word-building competition with the younger children. I divided them into groups of four. They enjoyed the game, and at the same time they were learning spelling and how to work quickly. They also learned how to put words in order and correct one another. The game also helped with discipline because no one was allowed to laugh at another child. Before we started, we made the rules clear. As a teacher, this activity also helped me learn how to motivate the children, plan better, and manage activities well.



## PERSONAL STORY OF SINOTHANDO MASISISO



My name is Sinothando Masisiso. I was born on 7 August 2013, and I am 13 years old. I was born in a small village called Manangeni, in Ngqeleni. I am an only child, and my mother is not married. I am currently doing Grade 7 at Sikhoma Junior Secondary School.

I did my primary schooling in Pretoria, where my mother was working to support me and her family. The school I attended there was very good. The teachers were responsible, caring, and made sure that all the learners in the class could keep up with the work.

My afterschool teacher noticed that when she asks questions in English, she does not need to translate for me. If I know the answer, I can answer in English. She then asked me where I had done my primary grades. I am also not afraid to ask my teacher to repeat something when I do not understand or when I am left behind.

At home, we are a family of four: my grandmother, my cousin, my uncle, and me. My mother is no longer in Pretoria; she is now working in Cape Town as a security guard. She said that next year I will stay with her in Cape Town. I grew up in Pretoria, where life was easier for me. When I arrived here in the rural area, life was very different. One day, I went to the forest with my friends to collect firewood. I did not collect even one piece of wood. My friends collected the wood, made a bundle, and put it on my head. I did not reach home with the wood because my neck became sore, so I threw it down. I told my grandmother that I did not want to go there again. She told me that this is rural life, and that I must learn to do these things.

I enjoy playing netball, and I also joined the local team. There was a tournament in my community called the Mayor's Cup, where I was awarded a medal because I was the highest goal scorer of the match. My position is goal shooter.

My mother was very proud and encouraged by my achievement, and she bought me new takkies. My grandmother often says that maybe one day they will watch me on television.

## SCHOLARSHIP REPORT

Schools reopened on 14 January for the 1st term. Transcape has two scholars this year, namely Onelihle and Asonale. Onelihle is in Grade 12, and Asonale is in Grade 9. Asonale is our new scholar for this year. Onelihle is still at Nogemane High School. We chose Nogemane High School for our scholars because of the good pass percentage they achieve each year. When you look at the building, you may not have much hope, but there is strong academic work happening inside. The teachers support the learners closely and make sure that no one is left

behind. Asonale was supposed to be at Nogemane, but because of health issues, she is not there. Andisiwe brought all the documents that were needed at the school. Asonale is part of the scholarship programme, although she is not attending the school that was originally chosen for her.

Transcape chose Asonale to be one of our scholars because she passed the assessment that I gave to the Transcape learners. The assessment was in Mathematics and English. Some learners did not finish their tests and gave up, but Asonale completed her work. She is very kind and open. Asonale is one of the learners who performs at a high level, even according to her progress report from the community school. Asonale's attendance at afterschool classes was also one of the reasons I chose her. I also noticed that, even in my class, she is the only learner who always improves in the tests I give. She is very flexible. Her mother told me that she does not have many friends and is usually at home. She attends afterschool classes often. Onelihle still has a water challenge at Nogemane. She is already staying inside the school, but the water tanks are not enough for the whole school. She manages to do what the other students do. They fetch water from the river to wash their uniforms and their bodies. There are not even water pipes in that village.

One day, Onelihle phoned me crying and said that her jersey had been stolen from the washing line where they hang their clothes. She also said that some of their snacks had been stolen by other learners. The problem is that they use their classrooms as bedrooms and as a place to keep all their belongings. There is no hostel where they can keep their food safely in lockers. She was sad at the beginning, but later she made a plan for herself. She bought a box with a lock, put all her things inside, and locked it. Now that Onelihle is staying inside the school, the learners have different times for attending different subjects. They stay with their teachers, who teach different subjects and monitor them to make sure they study seriously as they prepare for the end of the year. There are also aunties who cook for them during their study time. These aunties are employed by the parents.

During the March holiday, there was a programme called JAN, where they were joined by students from other high schools in the area. They studied together, shared their knowledge, and helped one another understand the work better. It is a very good programme because it gives them the chance to learn from other learners. The programme only takes seven days. Asonale and Onelihle have already written their March exams, and they are waiting for the results, which they will receive in April. They promised to pass in this first term. Since Onelihle changed her subjects, she is no longer struggling, even in Mathematics. She has also joined group studies. Onelihle moved from the hostel where she was staying to the school in February. They use paraffin stoves to heat water for washing. They only use electricity during study time, and they use an electric iron for ironing.

## PERSONAL STORY OF ONELIHLE YHOYHO

When I was in Grade 10, I studied Mathematics and Physics. In Grade 11, I decided to change some of my subjects to History because I was struggling a lot with Pure Mathematics, Life Sciences, and Geography. When I told my guardians that I was struggling with Agriculture and Life Sciences, they organised a teacher to help me overcome these challenges. I am not the only learner who finds these subjects difficult. I attend extra classes with other learners who are facing the same challenges.

This year I am doing Grade 12. I stayed in the hostel only during January. At the beginning of February, I moved to the school premises as a Grade 12 learner. I will stay there until September, after we have finished our trial exams.

In February, we had a tie ceremony. The tie I now wear is different from the one I wore in Grade 10 and Grade 11. The ceremony was arranged at short notice, so my mother was not able to attend. She asked someone else to stand in for her. My mother works as a housekeeper in a small town called Mqanduli. She works at the same house as my father. My father looks



after the cows and cooks for the dogs. They both decided to move there so that they could support my siblings.

### My Challenge

One of the biggest challenges I have at school is the shortage of water. We have to walk to the river to fetch water, and it takes about 15 minutes to get there. Waking up as early as 4:00 in the morning to fetch water and heat it with wood is not easy. Our principal said that we must only use electricity for lighting when we are studying.

### Hope for Improvement

The Department came to the school to do a survey, and they promised that the school buildings will be improved. They said that the containers we use as classrooms will be removed and that more water tanks will be installed. This means that learners will no longer have to go to the river for water.

However, this will only happen after I have completed Matric.

Security at the school is very strict, which is good because it helps to keep us safe. Our teachers stay with us at school and support us through the difficulties we experience. They monitor us during study time, and no learner is allowed to leave the school yard without permission from the caretaker. There are also mamas who are employed to cook for us while we attend these study sessions.

There is also a programme called JAN. It is a very good programme where we join learners from other schools and share our views, knowledge, and understanding. They come to our school with their teachers, and their teachers work together with our teachers. We also have group discussions, which are very helpful.

I am a very shy person, and I do not like speaking much. Most of the time, I prefer to be alone. Even though I am shy, I am determined to work hard and pass my first term. I do not want to disappoint Transcape or my parents. I want to fulfil my dream, and one day I hope to change the situation my parents are in now.

#### PERSONAL STORY OF ASONELE GXALA

My name is Asonle Gxala. I am 14 years old, and I am doing Grade 9 this year at Sikhoma JSS. At first, I was supposed to stay away from my parents for the first time, and I was not happy when the day arrived. I asked my mother not to take me there. She was very worried that Transcape might disqualify me if I did not go.

During my first week at the new school, I thought I would be happy because I had a close friend there, and there were also many learners from my former school. However, I am not very talkative, and I often feel lonely. I started becoming sick and reported this to my class teacher. She said I should go home for a few days. I later came back to school and continued with my lessons. In our culture, people believe that when you think about home too much, you can become sick. I cried every day and asked my parents to take me back home, hoping that maybe next year would be better. The school was in good condition, the teachers were kind, and the learners were not bullying me. The problem was that I was struggling emotionally.

I am grateful that Transcape accepted me as one of their scholars, even though I did not continue studying at the school that was first planned for me. Transcape is supporting me with stationery, uniform, and other school needs. I am continuing at my current school. I have finished my first-term exams and am waiting for my results, which I will receive in April when schools reopen. In April, I will have a tie ceremony. This ceremony is a symbol for all Grade 9 learners. Our tie and jersey are different from the others, which makes it easy for people to see which grade we are in.

I am still doing the same subjects, and I will change subjects when I am in Grade 10. I have not stopped attending afterschool classes. Mathematics is my favourite subject. Transcape has played a big role in my life. I now look the same as other students because I have the correct school uniform. Before, I was wearing training shoes instead of school shoes. I did not realise before that a difficult situation at home can affect your studies, but now I understand this better. I believe my March progress report will be very good. I am creative, and I also play netball as a goal defender. I enjoy helping my father when he works in the garden.



My father works voluntarily as part of the Community Police Forum. My mother works as a domestic worker in the community so that she can help put food on the table. My twin sister is in Grade 8. My younger brother dropped out of school while he was in Grade 6. He also has special needs, which my parents only discovered later. When they tried to take him to a school that could support him, they were told he could not be accepted because of his age.

At home, I like cooking, cleaning, and collecting wood from the forest. My afterschool teacher encourages me to choose books from the library, and I do as she advises. She also encourages me to come to her when I need help with my homework. In the future, I want to change the situation my family is living in now, and I know that looking after my books and working hard at school will help me. When I am at school, my father cooks for me because my mother is at work. Since our home is far from water pipes, we collect water from the dam and streams. We use wood for cooking. There is electricity at home, but we save it mainly for light so that I can do my homework and iron my uniform. We use cow dung to keep the floor clean. I wash my clothes myself and cook with a black pot. The distance from my home to school is one hour and



fifteen minutes, but now I have transport to school. I am a kind person and I try to stay positive. At the same time, I do not like it when someone hurts me.

#### REPORT FOR NONKQUBELA PRE SCHOOL 2026

In 2026, we started the year with 42 learners: 20 girls and 24 boys. In previous years, we usually had more girls than boys, but this year was different. Before the school opened, we prepared the classrooms and cleaned the school yard. We hired a grass-cutting machine to cut the grass and make the yard safe and neat for the children.

We also painted the classrooms and rearranged the tables to make the learning space more exciting and welcoming for our young ones. According to the children who were registered before opening, we were expecting 32 learners. However, on the first day of school, the number increased. This is always a challenge because some parents do not register their children beforehand, but instead arrive on the opening day to ask for space. It is difficult to turn them away, especially when the children arrive at school excited and ready to join the others. My assistant teacher and I even said, "It is always the unregistered children who do not cry on their first days."



As a teacher who lives in the same village where I teach, I always expect walk-ins. I have realised that many parents do not always take early registration seriously, or sometimes they wait until the last minute because of their circumstances. We continue to teach parents about the importance of registration. We explain that one day they may arrive and find that there is no longer space available for their child.

The first week was full of crying from some of the little ones. Some children were a bit confused and unsure of the new environment, but we comforted them with school songs, gentle encouragement, and play activities. Many of them were excited to touch the puzzles, while others rushed to play outside with the scooters and toys. Helping the children understand that they are now at school takes time. However, within a week, many of them had already started adjusting to the school routine. They began learning how to ask for permission to use the bathroom, follow instructions, share toys, wait for their turn, and understand the daily schedule. With patience and repetition, they adapted well.

We open the school at 7:00 a.m., and the children usually arrive between 7:30 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. We serve morning porridge at 8:00 a.m. and begin classes at 8:25 a.m. On Mondays, we do table work, drawing and colouring, outdoor games, and story time. On Tuesdays, we focus on table work, fine motor skills, and coordination activities. On Wednesdays, we do table work, puzzles, and gross motor activities. On Thursdays, we focus on table work, writing practice, sticking, and pasting. On Fridays, we do table work, creative arts, outdoor games, music, and dance. The children enjoy these activities very much. It is encouraging to see that some of them already know what activity will come next before we even give instructions. This shows growth and progress from when they first started.

During the term, we also included other preschool activities to support the children's development. These included learning colours and shapes, counting objects, singing action songs, listening to stories, role play, building with blocks, playing with dough, matching pictures, sorting objects, threading beads, and practising how to hold pencils correctly. We also encouraged good manners, sharing, teamwork, cleaning up after activities, handwashing, and listening carefully during group time.

#### PERSONAL STORY OF LUKUWE

Lukuwe is a 5-year-old boy who started school with us this year. By the age of 5, we usually expect a child to be able to do certain things independently, but this was not the case with Lukuwe. He was not speaking at all, found it difficult to engage with others, and was not familiar with sharing or communicating. We paid extra attention to him because we noticed that he needed more support. We encouraged him to speak, play with others, share toys, and take part in class activities. By the end of the term, Lukuwe was a different child. He started showing up more confidently, became willing to learn, and began engaging with other children. We are very happy with his progress and look forward to seeing his growth in the next term and throughout the rest of the year. His parent was also grateful and shared that, at one point, she had thought he might have special needs.

With the help of the parents, the school was properly fenced so that cows and goats cannot enter the yard and make it dirty. We are very grateful for the involvement and support of the

parents. We are also happy that Social Development is assisting us. We are planning to build a small room for the kitchen. This will help us use both existing rooms fully as classrooms, especially because the number of learners is growing. By the second term, we hope that the kitchen will be completed.



One of our challenges is that some of the children's equipment gets damaged easily because it is used every day. During this term, we identified the following items that we would like to add:

1. Colouring pencils
2. Scooters
3. Dolls
4. Books, Tipp-Ex, charts, and learning posters, for example a weather chart
5. Farming and gardening resources
6. Laminating machine

We appreciate all the help we receive and are very grateful for the continued support. The children are growing, learning, and becoming more confident each day, and we are excited to continue supporting their development in the next term.

#### HIV AND AIDS EDUCATION

##### HIV AND AIDS COUNSELLOR

Over the past three months, our HIV and AIDS Counsellor has been actively involved in school education programmes, home visits, and community awareness initiatives. Her work has focused on HIV prevention, prevention of teenage pregnancy, and promoting treatment adherence.

At the beginning of this year, reports indicated a rise in new HIV infections in South Africa, particularly among young people in the Eastern Cape Province. This highlighted the need to strengthen awareness and prevention efforts, especially in schools. As an organisation, we believe that by providing young people with accurate information and education, we can help reduce new infections and promote healthier lifestyles.

According to the counsellor:

“I have noticed that with kids these days, they need to hear about the same thing many times before they fully understand and apply it.”

These statistics reminded us that, although HIV and AIDS awareness has increased over the years, there are still many misconceptions. Some people are unaware that HIV remains a serious virus that continues to spread and that treatment does not cure HIV but helps individuals manage the condition and live healthy lives.

During this reporting period, the counsellor conducted educational home visits to 59 households. She distributed educational booklets, provided HIV education to family members, and conducted one-on-one counselling sessions for individuals who required additional support. While some parents were reluctant to discuss HIV-related issues, most households were welcoming and eager to participate in the educational sessions.

When visiting homes with several teenagers, the counsellor would first provide education to the entire family and then hold separate discussions with the young people. This approach created a safe and comfortable space for teenagers to ask questions and discuss personal matters that they might not feel comfortable sharing in front of parents or guardians. By relating to their experiences and sharing lessons from her own youth, she was able to build trust and encourage open communication.

One of the counsellor's unique strengths is her ability to connect with families through music. She often begins visits by singing and opening with prayer, helping to create a warm and welcoming environment. This approach encourages participants to engage openly, share their experiences, and discuss challenges they may be facing. Many community members have felt comfortable enough to discuss their treatment journeys and even share their clinic records for support and guidance.

A notable success story involved a young woman who disclosed that she had stopped taking her HIV treatment after travelling to visit her boyfriend during the holiday season. She had missed her medication from November through February and was afraid to return to the clinic. The counsellor provided emotional support, explained the importance of restarting treatment, and referred her to a nurse with whom she works closely. The young woman successfully returned to care and was re-enrolled in treatment monitoring. This intervention demonstrates the importance of home visits in identifying challenges, providing hope, and linking individuals back to essential healthcare services.

Overall, the home visiting programme continues to be highly effective in educating families, supporting treatment adherence, reducing stigma, and connecting vulnerable community members with healthcare services. Through ongoing education, counselling, and community

engagement, the programme is making a positive contribution to HIV prevention and awareness in the Eastern Cape.

The main challenge I faced during home visits was that some men promised to go to the clinic but did not follow through. Many of them said they wanted to avoid long queues at the clinic, while others said they felt embarrassed to speak to nurses, especially when they had symptoms of STIs or STDs. Some shared that they felt judged because nurses sometimes asked them why they had not used protection. This made them afraid to seek help. This is a serious challenge because untreated infections can continue to spread and take the community back to where we started. I have already spoken to some of the nurses I work with, and I am also planning to visit the clinic so that we can discuss how to overcome this challenge together.

### SCHOOL EDUCATION

Over the past three months, I have conducted five school visits. I am very grateful that many schools opened their doors for me to provide HIV and AIDS education. Many teachers and parents have become concerned after seeing reports that HIV and AIDS infections are increasing, especially among young people. School visits are important because they allow us to reach young learners at the right time, while they are still growing, learning, and beginning to explore life. Our aim is to help them make informed decisions with caution and knowledge. Each school visit is usually 40 minutes long, and all the schools have given me the same amount of time. When I arrive at a school, I introduce myself to the learners and begin the session by asking basic questions, such as “What is HIV?” and “How is HIV spread?” This helps me understand how much they already know and how willing they are to share. I then explain the facts about HIV and use educational pamphlets, which are given to each child. These pamphlets help the learners follow the lesson and also allow them to share the information at home. The booklet includes information about HIV and AIDS, ARVs, HIV prevention, STIs, STDs, and PrEP, which is medication that can help prevent HIV infection in people who may have been exposed or are at higher risk.





One of the positive developments is that HIV prevention medication is now available at the clinic. People can take PrEP for a period of six months if they know they may be at risk of HIV infection. However, because of shortages and the high number of people who want to access it, PrEP is currently available mainly to pregnant women, sex workers, and people who have been assaulted. This service can help reduce the spread of HIV, although we continue to emphasise that using protection remains one of the best ways to prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Over the past three months, I have provided HIV and AIDS education to 162 school learners.

#### PERSONAL STORY OF MAVUBEZA SCHOOL

When I visited Mavubeza School, there were 21 boys and 16 girls present for the HIV and AIDS education session.

After I had given the education session, it was time for questions. The boys asked if they could have a separate session because there were personal things they wanted to ask and discuss without the girls present. This made me realise that, in some school sessions, it may be helpful to divide the learners so that both boys and girls can feel free to ask questions openly. I was

grateful that the teacher allowed me to use another empty classroom so that I could speak privately with the boys. The girls remained with the teacher and were asked to write down the topics they would like me to focus on more during my next visit.



The boys' session focused mainly on the safety of circumcision, whether circumcision can prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS, how STIs can be treated, and whether it is possible to know if someone is HIV positive without that person telling you. This showed me that learners still have many important questions and that they need more safe spaces where they can speak honestly without fear or embarrassment. I explained that HIV cannot be identified by looking at someone, and that the only way to know one's HIV status is through testing. I also encouraged them to visit the clinic for professional advice, testing, and treatment when needed