



*Home is where the Heart is...*  
*Transforming care for children*



*Annual Report 2023*

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# Message from the Chairman



We thank the Almighty God for the opportunity He gave us to serve Him through GCF in the year 2023. We know that this organisation has come this far because God has made that possible. Had God not wanted GCF to continue serving Him, it would have already ceased to exist. The financial challenges that we continued to experience during the reporting year were enough reason to close shop. But this was not to be - God had other plans for us. Indeed, God has set before GCF an open door that no one can shut (*Revelation 3:8*).

Instead of being discouraged, we found ourselves full of faith because we know that He has promised that He *"will never leave us nor forsake us"*. Towards the end of 2023, we received Nozipho Tshabalala as a new member of the Board of Trustees. GCF is blessed to have Nozipho as part of GCF - she comes with a wealth of experience that we believe will be beneficial to our organisation. We welcome her into GCF and wish her a blessed stay here.

Due to the strategic transformation of the organisation and transitioning of Residential Care to Family Based Care into the community, we were forced to eventually consider laying off some of our valued staff members. This was a sad reality that we had to boldly look at and implement. It was not an easy decision to make considering the good quality of staff that GCF has. One thing we thank God for is that even after the announcement of these news, the staff morale did not degenerate. The strong unity among staff has held the organisation together even during these trying times. We continue to trust God for the future of all GCF employees and their families.

The decision to sell one of the properties that GCF owns was another way of trying to alleviate the financial constraint on the organisation. This is still an ongoing process a year later - a sign of hard times. Despite all these challenges, we continue to see the Lord's provision in many different ways, for He promised that He'll never leave us nor forsake us - a promise He has kept throughout the existence of GCF. We thank God for all the support we have received during the past financial year from all our partners from all walks of life. We also praise Him for the dedicated Board of Trustees and Staff as well as the good working relationships among them. Thank you, Monica and the Exec, for steering the ship so well through the stormy weather - under the directive of the Chief Captain - God the Holy Spirit.

## Dr George Mnisi



# Executive Director's Report

2023 marks the 6th implementation year of the GCF Strategic Plan 2018 - 2030, prompting a mid-review of our strategic plan set until 2030. Life these days is often referred to in terms of pre- and post-Covid-19. Despite our reluctance to do so, this differentiation is unavoidable. Many aspects of life have changed since Covid-19, and even four years later, challenges remain, whether financial, emotional, or physical. This (and other) world shaping events mean that we will review our strategy during 2024 and an update will be included in the next Annual Report.

**Challenges and Triumphs at GCF:** This year has been challenging for GCF in many ways: financially, emotionally, and physically. Our advocacy has had to be elevated, and challenges with government institutions persist. NPOs and NGOs in South Africa, like ours, often face difficulties as they are seen as threats by the powers that be. We are told we interfere and do things differently and are sometimes forgotten in deliberations and decisions. Despite being labelled as partners, we are not treated as such.

Transforming Care has consumed countless hours in discussions about what is best for children. It is challenging to convince those who should perhaps know better that a family is better for a child than an institution. This year has involved explaining ourselves to people, funders, and government officials, emphasising that children belong in families, not institutions. The doubters have clarified our resolve. We still lack full support from the Department, as the GCF Child and Youth Care Centre is seen as an "oasis of care", and they don't understand our mission. However, as Maya Angelou said, "Once you know better, you do better", and that is what we believe.

It has been painful to say goodbye to children and staff, starting the year with 48 children and ending with 35. The remaining children are challenging cases needing further time and commitment for suitable placement. However, it has been joyful to see some children reunited with long-lost family members or finding opportunities for reunification and restored relationships.

## Key Areas of Focus:

- *Children in Care at the Centre - Holistic Care:* Providing comprehensive support to the children in our care, addressing their physical, emotional, spiritual, and educational needs.
- *Movement of Children Back Home or to Families:* Successful but not without challenges. Ensuring safe and supportive environments for children to return to.
- *Strengthening Families in the Community:* Training parents to care more effectively for their children, preventing the need for institutional care.
- *Child Safety and Protection Education:* Teaching children about safety and protection to empower them and prevent abuse.
- *Safeguarding:* Of paramount importance in all spheres of work.
- *Community Resilience in Disasters:* Addressing the impact of fires, storms, and flooding on the communities we serve, providing support and aid where needed.
- *Networking:* Connecting, linking, and learning is our belief.
- *Value-Related Work:* Guided by strong ethos and values in all that we do.

**Political and Economic Challenges:** The country faced significant challenges, including load shedding, a struggling economy, high unemployment, and poverty at its highest level. We started the year facing numerous "giants in the land" such as war, poverty, climate issues, political unease, and organisational transformation. We knew we had to be brave and face these challenges with discipline, focus, courage, and faith. We learned to be purposeful, stand firm, and trust that the rest was in God's hands. We re-anchored ourselves in the word of God, prayed incessantly, and resumed our intercessory prayer meetings. We praised God daily, trusting that He is the Mighty One who can do real miracles.

**Conclusion:** As we reflect on 2023, we are reminded of the importance of our mission and the challenges we face. Yet, we are also encouraged by the progress we have made and the lives we have touched. We remain committed to making children and families our number one priority and trust that with God's guidance and support, we will continue to make a positive impact in the years to come.

Thank you to the Executive team for taking on extra duties and continuing to serve so faithfully following the passing of our dear Lydia Gordon. We've all had to jump in and tackle the challenges head-on, with little time to mourn. Re-allocating duties was part of the process and we've all shed a few tears. However, we remain strong and committed to improving our services to care for and protect children. To the staff, thank you for faithfully standing by us during this "waiting" period; we are truly grateful. To the children who have touched our hearts, we know God has BIG plans for each of you. You are not forgotten.

**A Testament to God's Glory:** "GCF is currently facing a critical financial situation due to a combination of the nation's economic challenges, significant cuts and shifts in funding priorities amid the ongoing global crisis, and a significant delay in the Department of Social Development's subsidies for the past three months." This extract from a letter sent out in November 2023 highlights our desperate situation at the time. Despite all the praying and trusting, we wondered how our year would end. I planned to attend a Presidency meeting virtually for our Coalition, but felt urged to attend in person two days before. Arrangements were made hastily, and after an emotionally charged staff meeting discussing retrenchments, I set off to the airport. Halfway there, I received a call from the organizer asking me to present on behalf of the Coalition. With help from others, I finished the presentation at 2 am, ready by the morning.

Being present at this meeting allowed me to quickly connect with a funder who had received our letter. They made a significant offer of assistance, helping us out of the quagmire. God is truly amazing. We are eternally grateful for all who gave at that time. Our hope is in God. We can be weak, but we cannot be hopeless.



Late and non-payments have made life very difficult for those organisations looking after vulnerable children.

## DSD late and non payments leave NPOs in dire straits

The Department of Social Development (DSD) has been in the news for all the wrong reasons, again. The latest is the dire situation with NPOs, and Child and Youth Care Centres (CYCC), which, as of the time of writing, have not been paid. Again. There has been news coverage about it on various TV stations. Some local workers went to Pietermaritzburg recently to hand over a letter to the HOD/MEC.

Locally, this affects at least eight CYCCs – that's an estimated 450 to 500 children. These are children who are already vulnerable, or who have been abused and/or abandoned, plus high-risk children. Then there's the special needs care and the elderly. An appeal has been made to local businesses to please support these organisations in this crisis.

Some can't pay their staff, or buy food for the children.

Monica Woodhouse, Executive Director of Give a Child a Family Africa, said most NPOs and CYCCs find themselves at a critical juncture, compelled to reach out to the local community with a plea for assistance.

Throughout the year, the non-profit sector in KwaZulu-Natal has borne the weight of constant pressure stemming from the delayed or, in some cases, non-existent disbursement of funding by the Department of Social Development (DSD). "Despite having diligently entered into service level agreements with the DSD, as partners our collective efforts in caring for the government's children have been met with a disheartening lack of respect," she said.

The late payments from the DSD have not only become the norm but also pushed the welfare sector in KZN to the brink of collapse. "As we express our distress, it is disheartening to report that several organisations are facing financial hardship. Some are grappling with some outstanding amounts dating back to August, while others have not received payments since September and October. The uncertainty of the funding situation for November and December 2023 looms ominously over our heads."

In light of these circumstances, they humbly implore businesses across the region, especially those considering tax rebates and similar opportunities, to contemplate supporting the organisations listed below.

"Now, more than ever, we turn to our local community for support. Your generosity has the power to make a profound difference in the lives of these vulnerable children and the dedicated individuals striving to provide them with a better future."

Monica believes that together, all can ensure that local organisations continue to serve as pillars of care and support for the community's most precious members. "In Ugu alone, we operate nine CYCCs, providing care for close to 500 children. Our dedicated childcare workers are facing insurmountable challenges, ranging from cash flow issues to unmet basic needs, pushing some organisations to the verge of closure. Despite the efforts of various media outlets, including letters to DSD, ENCA, and Daily Maverick, to shed light on our predicament, their plea for resolution has thus far gone unanswered. Let us unite in the spirit of compassion and solidarity, demonstrating that, as a community, we can overcome challenges and uplift those who need it most.

Your assistance is not only an investment in our organisations but also a testament to the strength of our community bonds. Locally, Child Welfare is in the same position.

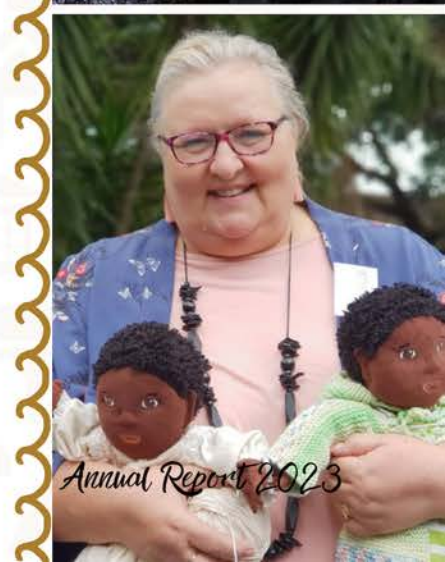
Chairperson of the Port Shepstone branch, Cindy Marais, explained how in August this year most NPOs travelled to Pietermaritzburg to be informed as to how the department would implement the new 'tranche' payment system.

Many questions were raised within the various sectors of NPO operations. "Most returned home confident that this would be a better option with less paperwork involved. So, the new system would involve us being paid three months in advance. Our first payment was due at the end of October and to date, we have not received anything," she said.

Most NPOs have children to feed and staff to pay. Port Shepstone Child Welfare has six subsidised positions which it is totally dependent on.

"Going forward, this could be detrimental to our office as we rely 99% on receiving our subsidy. This so that the needs are met in the community. If our social workers do not get paid, what a ripple effect that would be for our office and the community at large," she said.

"So our question currently is... where has the money gone?"



# Community Based Care



## Updating the Parenting 4 Life Programme

At the end of 2022, GCF launched the updated Parenting 4 Life Programme, successfully concluding the training in 2023 with **38 participants**. The initiative aimed to implement a new manual, Parenting 4 Life, which integrates Parenting Skills, Coping with Death and Trauma, and Healthy Living.

GCF is dedicated to ensuring the provision of services and effective support to families, enabling them to offer nurturing care within the Nurturing Care Framework for children. This approach helps children not only survive but also be protected, develop to their full potential, and participate in decisions that affect them. Aligned with our Strategic Plan, the Parenting 4 Life workbook was created based on evidence-based sources. It serves as a training tool to enhance the confidence, knowledge, and skills of parents.

In preparation for this update, GCF community workers received training in the content of the new manual. After completing the final preparations, the training commenced with a small group of women. We specifically targeted young mothers, believing that providing them with a solid platform would greatly benefit their families. The successful completion of the Parenting 4 Life Programme by these participants marks a significant achievement in our efforts to support and strengthen families in our community.

*"We appreciated the information we gained in the training."*

*"I have a child with special needs, and the training equipped me with knowledge on how to handle my child's hyperactive behaviour. I learned the importance of finding a special school, and fortunately, I managed to get my child enrolled in one."*

## Parenting 4 Life Updated Workbook and Programme - Learning Brief

Following the review of GCF's Parenting Skills Training manual in 2019, it has not only been updated but also developed into a comprehensive Parenting 4 Life workbook, successfully implemented in communities by our dedicated community workers.

The alignment with evidence-based training content and the Nurturing Care Framework has significantly enhanced its credibility compared to the earlier version. The content remains highly relevant, instilling confidence in parents and providing opportunities for them to adapt to evolving challenges through internalising knowledge. Importantly, it has transformed their perspectives on child protection, leading to proactive engagement and reporting of cases within their communities.

*"They don't want to be parents only; the programme has opened their eyes to the vulnerability of children. They are motivated and have begun reporting cases. Many are eager to contribute to their community and seek guidance on how to do so."*

*(GCF Community Worker)*

The training introduced entirely new topics for some parents, facilitating significant learning and understanding. However, it's acknowledged that there's a continual learning curve. Through pre- and post-training baseline assessments, we've gained insight into the challenges faced by participant families. It's apparent that a substantial number of them are at risk, primarily due to financial constraints such as food insecurity and unemployment. Additionally, genuine concerns about their children's safety within their neighbourhoods have been voiced. This underscores the ongoing need to address pressing issues and continue supporting parents on their journey towards nurturing parenting.

## **She's Found Her Voice** (written by Monica Woodhouse)

One ordinary day at work, I was in my office on the second floor, immersed in my tasks and thoughts. The cheerful sounds of children playing on the nearby playground, ringing through to my office daily, were absolutely delightful. Suddenly, a little nine-year-old girl named Phumi\* managed to sneak into my office, looking a bit nervous as she had just walked in. She had asked the "aunty" (Child Care Worker) for permission to tell me something.

"Mam Umkhulu" (Elder Mother - as the children call me), Phumi addressed me with respect. After exchanging a few pleasantries, she excitedly shared, "You know what? My mother is here and she is going to the 'GCF school for parents'."

"Do you know what school that is?" I queried. She explained, "It's the school where parents go to learn about being better mothers!" Her excitement was contagious, knowing this possibly meant she could soon go home to her mother. We both laughed, and I hugged her before she dashed back to the playground.

I was aware of the course at GCF for Care Givers/Family members called "Parenting Skills for Re-Unification". This course is for parents who had their children removed for various reasons, with specific criteria set by social workers to get their children back. In Phumi's mother's case, Mrs. Mzotho\* needed to end a toxic relationship and make structural changes to her dwelling to make it safer for her child. Initially reluctant, she called a week later, having made the necessary changes, such as asking the man to leave and making the structural changes, all ready to have her child back. But there was still another hurdle to meet the desired requirement: she needed to complete the parenting training. We arranged accommodation for her at GCF, since she lived too far to commute daily, allowing us to observe the bonding process with her daughter.

They both left happy as larks when the course was done. They were ready to go home, and nothing was going to come between these two again, it seemed, setting their lives on restart.

Six months later, our social workers visited the school where Phumi attended for a follow-up visit to assess her progress. As the social workers made their way to the teacher's classroom, they passed by the principal's office. He saw them, recognized them, and called out in a firm, serious voice, "Please come and see me when you are done there; I need to speak with you." Taken aback, the social workers agreed to meet with him, their nerves tinged with uncertainty about what could be so serious as to warrant his stern tone. A bit apprehensive, they finished gathering information from the teachers and then met with the principal.

Curious, he asked, "What did you do with Mrs. Mzotho?" Unsure what he meant, they asked for clarification. He explained, "She has changed dramatically. She's now telling other parents to get involved with their children, to read with them, do homework together, attend sporting events. She's incredible - she's found her voice! The change is so significant that we're considering her for the School Governing Body. She's speaking out and bringing change to the school."

The social workers were pleased with what they saw, and Phumi was extremely happy living at home with her mother. I believe the course set her up for success among other things that she did right.

Comment: At GCF, we believe that a mother will always be a mother. We find that regardless of the extent of violence, hurt, or damage done, she still remains the mother. (The children will keep asking the social workers at the centre about when they are going home.)

GCF's goal is to strengthen families, mothers, and primary caregivers, so they can live happily ever after, without children being removed at the first port of call. This is done by working with individual families in communities, helping them to address the issues head-on, and preventing breakdowns in the first place. We believe children should be nurtured and cared for by their mothers, and we need to put more effort into supporting their restoration, rather than removing the child. If more time and effort are put into this, then there will be fewer breakdowns.

Often, children are removed quickly based on calls from neighbours or relatives, without thorough investigation and work from the social workers. We must ask ourselves whether we've provided opportunities, time, and services to mothers like Mrs. Mzotho, who might feel trapped in despair with little or no way out. They need a loving, respectful person coming alongside them, to believe in them and help them make the right choices to change what needs changing.

(\*not their real names)



## Raising Awareness

Throughout the lively wards of Margate, Nyandezulu, Gamalakhe, and Boboyi, GCF's Community Team embarked on a mission of empowerment and education. By attending **27 strategic War Room meetings**, we actively engaged in ways that deeply resonated within the beautiful communities we serve.

Our journey of awareness in 2023 began within the education sector, where we were invited to engage with **20 schools**, initiating crucial discussions on bullying, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and behaviour management. These conversations reached a remarkable **1756 learners**, sowing seeds of awareness and fostering a culture of informed decision-making, allowing pupils to introspect.

Expanding beyond school grounds, we made a significant impact at **11 events** that hopefully left lasting impressions on community life. At the Bhuqu Sports Ground, we stood alongside various departments (hosted by Department of Social Development, SASSA, Home Affairs, Department of Health, Paddock South African Police Services, Nonz consultant), offering essential services to over **1200 eager participants**. Here, our team addressed critical community needs (Identity Documents, answering questions concerning grants, testing for HIV, blood pressure and diabetes), aligning services with actionable solutions.

World AIDS Day became a platform for dialogue at the Margate clinic, where community workers, representing GCF, delved into the pivotal role of parents in societal well-being, touching the lives of approximately **300 individuals**.

The Kwa Madlala Sports Ground witnessed another band of service, with GCF providing demonstrations of GCF training manuals, insightful presentations, and guidance on family matters to over **700 attendees**. This convergence of support exemplified GCF's commitment to empowering communities with knowledge and resources.

In the realm of governance, Operation Mbo/Sukumasakhe saw GCF at Gcilima, engaging with community concerns (such as lack of water, load shedding, people with no RDP houses, no proper roads) as the Premier of KZN, Nomusa Dube-Ncube, listened attentively to a hall brimming with **500 voices**, symbolizing unity and collaboration.

The Madlala Tribal Court became a platform for constructive dialogue as GCF presented our programmes to tribal council members, fostering understanding and cooperation. During the meeting, the Premier pledged to address the community's concerns and urged the ward councillor to take immediate action on overdue issues like water supply, RDP housing, and electricity. This engagement highlighted the importance of collaboration to improve community well-being.

As the year unfolded, our engagements expanded to include public events of significance. From the Mayor's Budget Speech at Maveshe Hall, attended by **600 stakeholders**, to Freedom Day celebrations at Lamont Sports Ground, where our community workers addressed pressing issues such as teenage pregnancy to over **700 attendees**.

The Methodist Church event underscored our commitment to education, reaching **28 foster children** and their caregivers with a message of empowerment through learning. Arranged by Margate Child Welfare, GCF was invited to speak on the importance of education, emphasising the transformative power of learning.

At the Teenage Pregnancy Indaba, held at Gamalakhe Sports and Leisure Centre, stakeholders and NGOs (including Siyamthanda at Gcilima, Special Programmes at Ray Nkonyeni, Give a Child a Family Africa, and Girls Gloves Up Foundation at Murchison) united to encourage teenagers towards self-awareness and openness. The event engaged **250 youth and adults** in crucial conversations about their futures.

Lastly, in a march 'Sports Against Crime' organised by the Nyandezulu War Room, in collaboration with GCF, **558 community members** joined hands in solidarity and action, symbolising our collective commitment to a safer and brighter future.

As Give a Child a Family Africa, we reflect not just on events and numbers but on stories of resilience, empowerment, and communal growth. Our dedication to empowering communities remains unwavering, as we continue to script tales of transformation and progress, painting a brighter tomorrow for all.

## Story

During a visit to Nyandezulu to deliver four boxes of lotion donations for the 'Sports Against Crime' event, GCF's Training Manager, Nozuko Mkhwalu, was approached by a member of the War Room panel. The panel member expressed immense gratitude for GCF's work in the community. GCF's Community Worker, Teresa Mkhize, who oversees operations at Nyandezulu, shows great enthusiasm for collaboration, making case referrals smoother and ensuring follow-ups with feedback.

One notable case involved a 16-year-old who had fled home due to challenges at her previous school. Despite being a beneficiary of a bursary subsidy, she had faced disciplinary issues, prompting her escape. GCF, with Teresa and Nozuko's coordination, embarked on a mission to locate her. After a journey deep into the Kwa Nzimakwe area, they found her at her paternal family's home.

In a heartfelt conversation, she expressed her reluctance to return to school, burdened by past experiences. After counselling about the importance of education, self-belief, and focusing on the future, she agreed to resume her studies. GCF's social worker facilitated her school re-admission, provided necessary clothing, school uniforms, and food parcels for her family. Teresa ensured her child support grant went to a responsible caregiver, addressing previous misuse.

The intervention brought relief and gratitude from the girl's family. Her grandmother, who had worried about her future and education, expressed immense relief. She is now back in school, thriving academically, a testament to the transformative impact of community support and guidance.

## Foster Care

GCF's foster care programme has operated smoothly for the past 22 years and continues to be the premier alternative care option for children abandoned by their families, prioritising placement in family environments. However, with the implementation of the new Children's Act Amendment, we have observed changes in the requirements of presiding officers. They now want to see more evidence that biological families have been investigated when parents are found unfit to care for their children. The biological family includes both maternal and paternal relatives. In some cases, the biological parent(s) will be asked to come to court and state their reasons for not being able to take care of the children. These changes particularly impact court proceedings and social workers' decisions regarding placements. The current focus on placing children with extended families has sparked concerns, as not all families may be suitable to take on additional children. However, we remain hopeful that all stakeholders in the child protection sector will prioritize the success of this programme and always prioritise the best interests of the child above all else.

We take pride in our foster parents who continue to open their homes, providing care and a warm family environment for children in need. Recruitment efforts have been successful primarily through word of mouth from community members, existing foster care parents, and other service professionals familiar with our programme. However, challenges persist in recruiting parents from diverse racial and cultural backgrounds, highlighting the urgent need for caregivers from all communities. Screening processes have generally run smoothly, with occasional delays due to document processing from screened foster parents. Form 30 submissions, handled at the district level, have expedited the screening process significantly. One ongoing challenge remains in matching children with disabilities to suitable foster parents. Many potential foster parents are hesitant to care for special needs children due to potential impacts on their employment. Efforts to address this challenge and find suitable matches continue.

Our commitment to aftercare services remains steadfast, being just a phone call away, providing continued support to children placed with unrelated foster parents. Through these efforts, we strive to ensure the well-being and positive development of every child in our care.

We maintained **five foster care support groups** throughout the year. Despite efforts to revive a sixth group in Gamalakhe, we faced challenges due to insufficient numbers. Tragically, a foster mother who had generously offered a meeting space passed away, further hindering our revival efforts. By the end of 2023, we had a total of **43 parents** recorded in our support groups, including 5 new members who joined during the year. Our facilitator conducts group sessions every two months, covering a range of topics to support and empower foster parents in their roles. For 22 years, GCF has maintained a database of between **20 to 25 foster parents** who are ready, screened, and trained to take in a child at any time, marking one of the programme's notable successes.

*25 Trained & Approved Foster Parents on Database*

*13 New Screenings*

*11 Foster Parent Requests*

*9 Approved Foster Parents*

*1 Foster Parent Training*

## Story

*"My neighbours are asking if I'm mad," Mrs Dlamini laughs. She enthusiastically shares her foster care journey with us, sitting on the family's sofa with the sun shining in through the open door. Chickens are running around in the garden facing the many houses on the green hills.*

For Mr and Mrs Dlamini, it began with taking in a relative's 5-year-old girl and has led to them currently having six other children from four different families placed with them.

*"I wanted two children from the start. I received two, but when the four others arrived later on I had some fears"* admits Mrs Dlamini. She tells how she had one child of her own before any of the others arrived. He was older and did not stay at home anymore. She felt as if there was a missing piece in her life and made contact with Give a Child a Family Africa to start the foster care process of screenings, home visits and training. The Dlamini couple was approved and put on the organisation's database for prospective foster parents. The first child came to the couple on an urgent request. A foster care placement had broken down, and instead of bringing the little girl to an institution, she was taken straight to Mr and Mrs Dlamini's home. The second child came a few years later. It was another girl, who had been back and forth from her own family to an institution a few times. Once again, the Dlamini's welcomed a child in need of stability in a family.

It was after becoming a foster mother, that she felt like she really found herself. *"I believe in the spirit of Ubuntu. I have a good heart and feel like I'm Jesus' sister, able to care and treat any children like they are related to me."*

One day, it was found out that one of the two foster children had younger siblings, also placed in one of GCF's foster families. When Mrs Dlamini was informed, she took the girl and visited the family. They kept in contact, but only a year later, their foster mother suddenly passed away. Their social worker phoned her, asking if she and her husband could consider having the three young children placed with them too, since they could not remain where they were. Mr and Mrs Dlamini discussed the matter. Even though she felt incredibly sorry for the children, she was a bit reluctant and doubted if she would manage. Her husband convinced her that the children must be allowed to come to be close to their older sister. And, he has been very supportive from the day they arrived. In the same foster family as the siblings, was another foster child placed. The couple welcomed her as well and their household doubled its members in only a few days.

Mrs Dlamini proves again and again in our conversation, how she does not hesitate to walk the extra mile when she believes it is best for the children. She tells us when one of the older girls wanted to find out more about her background, she found out where the biological mother lives through the social worker. They went to see her, which came to be a disappointment for the girl. Her mother-of-origin lived a lifestyle filled with destruction and did not show her any particular interest. Mrs Dlamini shares how she believes that it would have been devastating for the four siblings if they had remained with their mother. *"I can't see that they would be schooling. They would probably be on the streets to look for food. Maybe, they would be left with other people with bad intentions, who would have taken advantage of them."*

Mrs Dlamini and her husband are concerned about the children's future. Not one of their parents or relatives has come forward wanting to develop a relationship with them. The couple are considering buying a site for the children, that they can have when they are older and Mr and Mrs Dlamini are no longer alive. This strong woman loves how her foster children keep her busy. She feels like God has invested in her so that she can raise them. Her niece is an adult today and attends University studies away from home and her first foster girl, who arrived when she was 3 years old is in high school now. All children are of school-going age and the youngest has just begun Grade R. It has not always been easy, since challenges are coming with every child in different ways, but Mrs Dlamini is happy to see how her input in their lives has paid off.



## Helpdesk

We have been exceptionally active under this programme, particularly as we navigate the aftermath of Covid-19, which has profoundly affected the families we support. Many individuals have lost their jobs, and sadly, some have even lost their businesses. In response, we have offered trauma counselling to assist clients in comprehending and adjusting to their new circumstances.

Our Helpdesk has been instrumental in serving clients without limitations, facilitating easy access even to those in other provinces or districts. We have also collaborated extensively with local schools, addressing cases affecting their students, reaching out to families, and providing services as needed.

Working closely with our community workers, we have identified children in schools who require counselling, intervened in neglect cases, and helped children disclose instances of sexual abuse to teachers. Additionally, we have addressed material needs such as providing school uniforms for those in need, thanks to generous donations. Furthermore, we have referred clients to other organisations specialising in distributing second-hand school uniforms.

Our commitment to assisting clients has often required extensive travel, ensuring we provide the best possible support. We are grateful for the clothing donations received from the public, staff members, and a local church, which have been distributed to those in need within our communities. These efforts reflect our dedication to helping families navigate challenging circumstances and rebuild their lives.

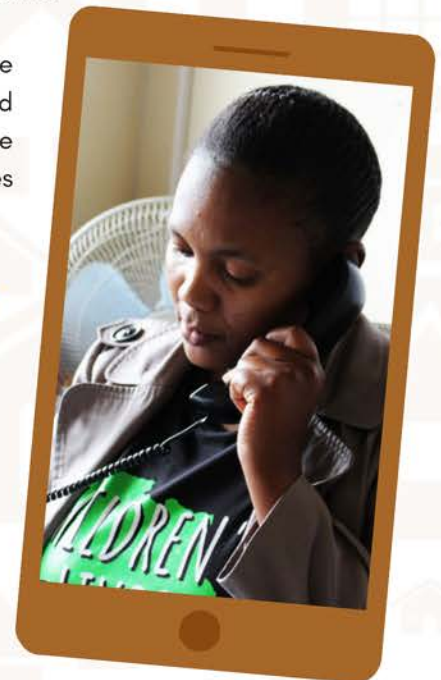
*122 Cases dealt with      9 Social Relief      4 Adoption  
8 VEP & Trauma Counselling      67 Child Protection  
56 Referrals to other agencies/government departments  
31 Other matters (domestic violence, disputes, abuse, etc.)*

## Social Work Forum

*3 Social Work forums*

These forums provide a valuable platform for social workers and social auxiliary workers to come together, strengthen networks, discuss challenges, share ideas, and occasionally unwind. In 2023, GCF organised **three social workers forums**, which were attended by a total of **100 social services professionals** from government departments and other non-profit organisations (NPOs).

Our recent forum in November was particularly memorable, as social services professional members visited Lake Eland for a day immersed in nature. This outing provided a wonderful opportunity for them to recharge and rejuvenate after dedicating themselves tirelessly to individuals, families, and children who have faced trauma and life challenges throughout the year. GCF deeply appreciates the invaluable work and dedication of social workers in our community, who are the unsung heroes.





### Victim Empowerment Programme (VEP) training

We have used the services of Mrs. Sylvia Mdluli since the early '90s for trauma counselling and victim empowerment. We felt that we wanted to be further trained and mentored by Mrs. Mdluli, as she has reached the ripe old age of 80 but is still going strong. We wanted to tap into her knowledge and wisdom in this area, and we are so grateful that we got the opportunity to do so.

We had done the level one training in 2022, and now we had the opportunity to be trained in level 2, dealing with family issues and trauma. Between the 11th and 15th of September 2023, we participated in the 2nd level VEP training with Mrs. Mdluli, during which **14 GCF staff members** were trained. This programme was initiated in response to the identified need within our communities, where mental health issues are often overlooked compared to other social problems.

Cases under this programme primarily come through our Helpdesk, as we receive the majority of our referrals through this avenue. Since the programme's inception, we have attended to approximately **14 cases**, providing much-needed support and assistance to individuals struggling with mental health challenges. These cases require more than a once-off session.



### Protective Behaviours (PB)

Protective Behaviours (PB) is an internationally recognised programme that offers simple, preventative, personal life skills, designed to assist people of all ages, and especially children and young people, in dealing with problems and finding the right kind of help. It endorses the development of lifelong skills such as assertiveness, self-confidence, problem solving, communication, resilience, and promote psychosocial support networks.

**250 children, 80 parents, and 16 foster parents** from Ugu Municipality attended a Protective Behaviours (PB) information session. Additionally, **100 children, 10 Sunday school teachers, and 10 pastors** from the Amajuba District were reached at the beginning of the year. Furthermore, **16 teachers** from an independent school in the Eastern Cape underwent PB Level 1 training.

Our trainer, Monica Nomlala, has been actively involved in enhancing the PB programme's reach and impact. She has attended train-the-trainer meetings, served on the PBSA Board, participated in various Board and senior trainers' meetings, and contributed to PB interviews for new programme candidates. Her dedication and contributions have been instrumental in the programme's success and growth.

# Temporary Safe Care

## Child and Youth Care Centre

### Childcare

Temporary safe care entails caring for children at a CYCC registered with the Department of Social Development, for a few days to some months where children are kept safe while awaiting a more permanent solution for their lives, and/or work is done with their families to see if they can be returned home.

In 2023, we embarked on closing one department of GCF. The CYCC stopped admitting children into the centre on 1 April 2023. The process of moving the current children into families, either through reunification or foster care, took longer than anticipated. We had **51 children** with us, and GCF's Transformation team worked tirelessly to ensure the smooth and safe movement of these children. The Executive met with the team bi-monthly to discuss challenging matters and provide assistance.

For the children who are still with us, Give a Child a Family is dedicated to providing child care services that prioritise safety, health, and holistic development. Our goal is to assure parents and guardians that their children will thrive in an environment that is emotionally supportive, socially engaging, and physically nurturing. We create a happy, warm, and exciting atmosphere that is inviting, comfortable, flexible, and manageable for children.

We offer an early learning programme designed to foster growth through planned play activities, enabling children to reach their full potential. Our focus is on developing children's confidence and fostering values of self-worth and respect for others through play-based learning. We also prioritise effective management by providing supervision, support, and training for our staff and casual workers.

Glenda Emmerson, who served us faithfully for up to 22 years, decided it was time to move on and be with her family, leaving us in July 2023. Her dedication to training and the development of staff was highly appreciated. Thanks to her work with special needs children, GCF made incredible strides in that area. Her passion for children and dedication to the work went above and beyond, including long hours and exceptional commitment.

*62 Children received restorative care in 2023*



### Health

All children at GCF receive preventative and curative health, and therapeutic care. On admission children are medically and developmentally assessed by our Residential nurse, and an individualised healthcare and therapeutic plan is put in place.

Our health department, consisting of a resident nurse collaborating with Child Care Workers (CCWs), plays a crucial role in ensuring the healthy growth and development of children. We focus on various essential aspects:

- Immunisation
- Child nutrition
- Recognising signs of illness and promptly seeking medical attention
- Accident prevention
- Facilitating play for holistic development

In addition to working with the children, it is crucial to involve and empower parents, caregivers, and foster parents in the ongoing care of children with chronic/serious illnesses or special needs/disabilities.



### Special Needs & Occupational Therapy

For children with special needs, including those living with disabilities and developmental delays, we create tailored individual health and therapeutic treatment plans to meet their specific needs and enhance their well-being.

Olivia Luke was magnificent in not only training the children in OT, but helping the CCW to work with the children the rest of the time, so the therapy was always ongoing.

*14 Children with Special Needs*

*372 Sessions with OT 1863 Sessions with CCW's*



### Education

In 2023, the Education Department experienced a mix of successes and challenges, marking a year of growth and resilience. At the outset of the year, there was a sense of excitement as teachers eagerly welcomed both familiar faces and new learners into the fold. The teachers were diligently preparing classrooms, gathering necessary school supplies, and distributing exercise books to students, setting a positive tone for the academic year.

Throughout the year, teachers and department heads engaged in several meetings to address various aspects of school life. These meetings encompassed discussions on children's needs, solutions to challenges, planning for school holiday programmes, and addressing staff-related matters. The administration diligently handled weekly, monthly, and quarterly reports, ensuring smooth operations and effective communication within the department.

In terms of student challenges and achievements, the Class of 2023, particularly Grade R, faced unique hurdles requiring individualised support. Through dedicated efforts and tailored interventions, the department celebrated successes as several students overcame learning obstacles and progressed successfully. Special programmes, events, and activities, including outings, a graduation ceremony, and a creative project titled "My Dream Book," enriched the students' educational experiences.

The statistics from 2023 reflect both the department's efforts and the individual journeys of the children, highlighting progress, resilience, and a commitment to quality education. Looking ahead to 2024, the department plans to continue with its successful strategies while remaining open to adapt to new challenges and opportunities.



*21 Children in Nursery ECD Playgroup (0-36 months)*

*11 Children in BrainBooster ECD class (3-5 yrs)*

*10 Children in Grade R @ GCF's Happy Days ECD*

*11 Children in after school remedial group*

*16 Children in community schools*

## Residential Social Work

2023 proved to be the most challenging year for our organisation, marked by the loss of a valued colleague, Lydia Gordon, who played a crucial role in our service delivery. Her passing had a profound impact not just on social workers within our organisation, but on all SACSSP practitioners in our district and even across other provinces.

Amidst this loss, we encountered numerous challenges, particularly as our organisation underwent a transition process. Communicating this transition from a Child and Youth Care Centre (CYCC) to community programmes posed difficulties, as GCF has long been recognized primarily as a CYCC. Efforts to inform our stakeholders about this transition and the benefits of keeping children within family settings rather than in a CYCC are ongoing as we strive to navigate these changes effectively.

The journey hasn't been easy, given the novelty of the programme. We are still in the process of familiarising everyone with our programme, having presented the changes to the Department of Social Development, our custodian, and collaborating with case managers from both government and non-profit organisations who have begun utilising our Temporary Safety Parent programme.

Our commitment to the belief that every child deserves a secure family led us to transition from a Temporary Safe Care Child and Youth Care Centre to a Community Temporary Safe Care programme. However, we acknowledge that there is still a considerable distance to cover, especially since this programme hasn't been implemented in our district.

Regarding admissions, we ceased admitting children in April 2023. As of that time, 51 children remained under our care at GCF. Many of these children would still face risks if returned to their biological homes due to unchanged circumstances. Between January and March 2023, we admitted 14 children, including one abandoned child, seven due to neglect, three were at risk at home, and three due to allegations of sexual abuse.

A concerning trend noted in 2023 was the significant number of school-aged children who had never attended school, a form of severe neglect that prompted their removal. This issue is becoming more prevalent in our district, with some parents citing protection concerns as reasons for not enrolling their children in school. Consequently, these children suffered mentally and emotionally, with one recorded case highlighting a seven-year-old child still in diapers and unable to speak, indicating profound neglect and developmental delays.

While challenges persist, particularly in placing children with special needs or severe medical conditions, we are dedicated to ensuring their well-being by securing the most suitable alternative placement for them, together with their case managers.

*14 Admissions - abandoned, neglected, high risk, sexual abuse*

*27 Discharges - 23 reunified with family,  
4 placed in foster care*

*30 Case conferences 47 Home visits*

*90 Management meetings 13 Case reviews*

*164 Individual Development Plans reviewed*

*13 Children referred to external professionals*

*271 Liaison meetings with Case Managers - face-to-face, phone calls, etc*



## Therapy

In 2023, all children over the age of two years are assessed for trauma and life development. However, a total of **32 children** were aided, with issues such as anger management, self-esteem, bereavement, trauma, and handling of emotions. Our therapy assistant took on the responsibility of preparing children for reunification and foster care placements, conducting home visits alongside the Centre's social worker to prepare for reunification with families. Additionally, our therapy assistant supported the Foster Care team by providing therapy and counselling services to children already placed in unrelated foster care, as needed.

Some cases involved exposure to sexual acts and pornographic material at home, leading to high levels of trauma in the children. Our therapy assistant provided trauma counselling in these cases. She also handled **4 bereavement cases**, with all children showing significant progress in coping with their loss.

Our therapy assistant also led groups on life skills and Protective Behaviours, with high participation from the children. Overall, a total of **63 individual and group sessions** were conducted.

One significant challenge we faced was the limited availability of Zulu speaking psychologists for referrals. While some cases were referred to private psychologists, others, unfortunately, couldn't be accommodated due to the scarcity of psychologists in our district. This was exacerbated by private psychologists being fully booked for the year or unavailable due to illness. The district only had one hospital psychologist available once a month, making access to psychological services a considerable challenge.

*330 Play therapy sessions*

*36 Children prepared for Reunification*

*20 Children prepared for Foster Care*

*13 Therapy plans reviewed*

*380 Therapeutic interventions recorded*

*165 Case Conference reports submitted*



## Temporary Safety Parents (TSP) - Emergency Care

In 2023, we focused on the Temporary Safe Parents (TSP) programme by organising **10 recruitment and information sessions**. These sessions were held in various locations, including homes of interested individuals, community gatherings, and welfare offices. In this learning process, as we strive for excellence, we've paused recruitment temporarily to fine-tune our approach, ensuring that we select the most suitable candidates. We've designed and developed a criterion to guide us in identifying the ideal TSP, and the training material will also be revised and updated in 2024.

We consistently engage with the Department of Social Development regarding our transformation of care, as they are also bound by the children's act and we keep having discussions around this for clarification of purpose. Once children are placed with a court order with the TSP, the department is then required to pay their fees on a daily basis. This matter has been challenging as it is officially being done for the first time, and there have been some challenges in the processing of this. In 2023, we achieved progress regarding fee payments, with three of our 10 TSP successfully receiving their fees. We remain vigilant in monitoring and following up on behalf of those awaiting payment.

Our TSP undergo a rigorous screening, assessment, approval, and training programme, and then receive ongoing support from GCF. However, these parents are sometimes utilised by other service offices without prior consultation with GCF, posing a significant operational challenge for the TSP department. This has been noted and discussed with the relevant authorities and we hope to find good solutions in working together on these matters.

*5 In-depth sessions*

*24 T&C parents on database*

*12 Statutory checks*

*6 Parents screened and assessed*

*4 Multi-Disciplinary Team meetings*

*10 Case reviews*

*14 Health check visits*

*7 Children placed with T&C parents*

## Story

*"If Amahle would not have come to us, she would have been dead now."* Emily and Michelle speak enthusiastically about the little girl they consider a miracle child. She is only one of several children who have been given a new chance to experience a loving family environment through their care.

We are visiting the two women, one warm summer morning to have an honest conversation about their involvement in Give a Child a Family Africa's Temporary Safe Care (TSC) Programme. We meet in the living room and through the open door we can hear children playing in the background.

Emily and Michelle, with their different backgrounds and dreams of family life, shared a common understanding of the situation faced by many South African children in need of stability and care. What makes them stand out is their decision to actually take that step that would change their lives completely. United by a shared calling, they are today fully invested in creating a warm, loving home where every child is cherished and valued.

Michelle describes how everything began with an empty, quiet house that today is a household filled with activities and toddler laughter. She did not know how it would turn out but wanted to create a warm and safe environment for children in need of a family. Today, Michelle is a mother of two adopted children, and since Emily came along with the same vision, children are welcomed on a short-term basis. Currently, with the help of sponsors and donations, they care for six children removed from their parents awaiting permanent decisions about their futures. Reflecting on their experiences, Emily expresses, *"I get so much from the children and I know they get something from me too. They are my family now."*

Observing the young children from a distance, it is clear how safe they feel and how they are flourishing. Briefly knowing what the children already have been through in their short lives, it is remarkable to see how they thrive. Neglect, malnourishment, health issues and severe family complications, all seem so far away. Thinking back at the arrival of the very first child, Emily shares how exciting it was. She felt ready to care for the little girl, whom she immediately felt a connection with. She had to learn quickly and in hindsight, she believes that added background information about the baby would have been more settling for everyone.

Emily and Michelle have experienced how TSC is a continuous process, children are coming and going and they have continued to learn as they go. They fully support children returning to their own families but are 100% open to giving them a permanent home if needed. *"We don't want to rejoice in someone else's agony, but we are grateful. Children's stories are thread into ours now."*

One of the children who first came for a short-term placement is now in foster care with one of them and another child is soon to follow the same path. It is a lie to say that everything is always running smoothly. Michelle shares, *"It can be frustrating sometimes. We don't always know where cases are going, things can change fast. Relatives come from nowhere. But, I don't want to stand in the way, that would be selfish. I have love and an open heart."*

Both complement the support of Give a Child a Family Africa's TSC team. They describe how they appreciate the organisation's engagement, the many home visits and how their guidance has been invaluable. *"No offense to the social workers, but unless GCF would not follow up with them not much would have happened."* As living proof that love knows no bounds and families come in all shapes, Emily and Michelle's story is one of resilience, compassion, true commitment and hope for children in urgent need of a home.

(Note that all names are changed.)



## **Transformation of Give a Child a Family Africa Child and Youth Care Centre to Family Care**

### **Negative Impact of Institutional Care vs Family Care**

#### ***Emotional and Psychological Impact***

- Attachment Issues: Institutional care often lacks the one-on-one attention necessary for secure attachments, leading to attachment disorders and difficulties in forming healthy relationships later in life.
- Emotional Deprivation: Children may not receive the emotional support and affection that family care provides, leading to emotional neglect, affecting self-esteem and emotional regulation.
- Increased Risk of Mental Health Problems: Higher rates of anxiety, depression, and behavioural problems are associated with institutional care due to the lack of a stable, nurturing environment.

#### ***Cognitive and Developmental Impact***

- Delayed Cognitive Development: Children in institutional care often experience cognitive delays due to limited stimulation and learning opportunities.
- Educational Deficits: Lower educational achievements are common due to the lack of personalized support and frequent changes in caregivers and environments.

#### ***Physical Health Impact***

- Poor Health and Nutrition: Institutional settings may struggle to provide adequate nutrition and healthcare, leading to growth delays and other health issues.
- Higher Mortality Rates: Children in institutional care have higher mortality rates due to neglect and inadequate medical care.

#### ***Social Impact***

- Social Skill Deficits: Limited interaction with a diverse group of people can impede the development of social skills, making it difficult for children to form peer relationships.
- Behavioural Issues: Lack of consistent discipline and positive role models can lead to behavioural problems, including aggression and difficulty in self-regulation.

#### ***Long-Term Impact***

- Difficulty in Adult Life: Adults who grew up in institutional care often face challenges in employment, relationships, and overall life satisfaction.
- Increased Risk of Criminal Behaviour: A higher likelihood of engagement in criminal behaviour is linked to the lack of stable, positive role models and emotional support during formative years.

### **The Underlying Problem**

More than 80% of children in "orphanages" have at least one living parent who could raise them with adequate support. The focus should be on empowering these families to keep children within a loving, familial environment whenever possible.

### **GCF's Role in Family Care for Children**

Every child has the right to a family. GCF believes in God's way that children should grow up within a family environment. In our Strategic Plan 2018 to 2030, we aimed to transition entirely to family care by 2030. Realizing the continued lack of well-being among children in our care, we decided to accelerate this transformation. As Maya Angelou says, "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."

In April 2023, we closed our doors to new intake, initiating our transformation from residential to family care. Despite challenges, we persist because children's lives matter. Our Foster Care Programme, started in 2000, highlighted the necessity for children to grow in stable and loving families.

### **Our Commitment**

Our preferable option is to work with families in the community to prevent the need for institutional care. When removal is necessary, we prioritize reunification, adoption, and foster care for long-term placement. Our commitment is to ensure that children feel safe and supported at all times.

# Development

## Safeguarding

As COVID-19 becomes a distant memory, partners are once again favouring face-to-face engagements over digital ones! In 2023, we undertook **8 trips** to Zimbabwe and conducted **17 online sessions** throughout the year. Many of these trips were consolidated to work efficiently with multiple partners during a single visit.

The year kicked off with a Safeguarding assessment visit to the esteemed Falcon College in Esigodini near Bulawayo, followed by a Safeguarding workshop in Harare for Heads of Institutions, Senior Teachers, and Child Safeguarding officers from the Zimcare Trust. Notably, senior staff from the Ministry of Learner Welfare also participated in this workshop. Despite the challenges of distance, GCF provided ongoing Official Safeguarding support to the Zimcare Trust throughout 2023.

Nozuko Mkhwalo conducted training for **96 delegates** from Zimcare Trust schools over two sessions, focusing on the Basics of Care Planning. This training has been instrumental in guiding care processes for extremely vulnerable children in resource-limited settings.

Steven Wetton was honoured to be a guest speaker at the Association of Christian Schools International Conference in Harare in August 2023, where approximately **450 delegates** discussed various topics, including Safeguarding. The enthusiastic engagement from schools and staff was encouraging.

The year concluded with an expanded engagement with the Zimcare Trust, including Organisational Capacity building. A Board induction Workshop was held at the Bronte Hotel in October, followed by working visits with selected Board Portfolio committees focusing on Finance, Fundraising, Human Resources, and Risk.

## Zimbabwe - Linking and Learning

A highlight of the year was hosting an exchange visit between delegates from schools in Harare and Siykwazi in KwaNzimakwe. This visit aimed to share knowledge and best practices for working with Children living with disabilities at home and supporting their parents or caregivers. The exchange, involving visitors from Zimbabwe and generous staff members from Siykwazi, was a significant step in uplifting vulnerable children in both South Africa and Zimbabwe.

## Programme Analysis and Development

2023, was a year where training content had particular attention for the Department:

### **Empowering Victims in Crisis Events**

GCF was assigned by the South African Human Rights Commission to conduct training in vulnerable areas of KwaZulu Natal that had been adversely affected by looting and riots, and had left scars that needed healing. Various training content and added information became a guide for the facilitator to effectively reach and support individuals in need of restoration. The main topics were:

- Empower victims of trauma
- Create child-safe environments
- Conflict Management
- Communication and Conversations
- Support group facilitation



### **Basic of Care Planning**

In Zimbabwe, GCF facilitated training in boarding schools and specialised centres caring for individuals, both children and adults, living with special needs. The training content was a thoughtful combination of relevant GCF manuals and information, ensuring successful facilitation. It included crucial insight into:

- Care Workers
- Importance of good teamwork
- Observations and loggings
- Reporting and communication
- Communication with children
- Care plans and individual development plans

### **Temporary Safe Care**

GCF's brand new Temporary Safe Care manual, designed for individuals preparing to become Emergency Safety Parents, was developed by integrating content from the organisation's Foster Care, Parenting 4 Life, Coping with Death and Trauma manuals, along with insights from external evidence-based documents. It encompassed essential perspectives on:

- Temporary Safe Care
- Child development
- Children with disabilities and special needs
- Loss, trauma and child abuse
- Attachment and bonding
- Dealing with challenging behaviour
- Welcomes and goodbyes
- Legal issues

## **Advocacy**

Our advocacy work spans international, national, provincial, and local levels, addressing a variety of challenges. We tackle issues faced by non-profit organizations, children's rights, family matters, deinstitutionalization, Justice4Children, safeguarding, and the lack of effective community services for families and children. One of our successful platforms is the South African National Child Rights Coalition (SANCRRC). GCF, represented by Monica Woodhouse is the Chairperson of the Coalition.



### **South African National Child Rights Coalition (SANCRRC) Development 2023**

#### *National Coordinator*

- A national coordinator was appointed to play the crucial role of facilitating collaboration amongst members of the coalition as well as the coalition's collaboration with other networks; ensuring coherence in strategy implementation; and representing the coalition's interests at the national level.

#### *SANCRRC registration as NPO*

- SANCRRC was officially registered with the Department of Social Development as an NPO in January 2024.

#### *SANCRRC's engagement in processes to development National Plan of Action for Children and support the migration of the Office of the Rights of the Child to Presidency*

- The migration of the Office of the Rights of the Child to the Presidency has encountered delays in reaching substantial progress and completion. SANCRRC has, as a result, found it necessary to reassess its participation in these processes in order to ensure participation that makes meaningful contribution while holding duty bearers accountable.
- Meeting with the Presidency in November 2023 related to the Accelerated Programme of Action for Children - SANCRRC were part of the discussions, Monica presented a position of purpose and statement for moving the Office of the Rights of the Child to the Presidency with a three-point proposal for real change

#### *Engagement in international and regional reporting processes*

- Engaging in processes where South Africa reports to international and regional bodies is essential. However, there are significant challenges in ensuring effective follow-up on the State's implementation of resulting recommendations, particularly among civil society members. Improving this aspect demands concerted efforts to enhance coordination, communication, and accountability mechanisms within civil society.
- Contributed to civil society interactions and provided feedback on South Africa's voluntary national report regarding the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in February 2024.
- A shadow report concerning adolescent health issues was submitted to the UNCRC, in collaboration with the SANCRRC Coalition and the South Africa Disability Alliance also submitted their report. Additionally, a report authored by children was submitted and well-received.
- Actively participated in the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child's pre-session interaction with civil society in September 2023
- Actively involved in initiatives led by the Presidency to formulate the forthcoming National Plan of Action for Children.
- Related to children's voices they have been part of writing a document on the list of issues that were presented to the UN.

# Support Services

## Human Resources

Throughout the year, we observed a decrease in staff numbers due to the ongoing transformation of Give a Child a Family Africa from institutional care to community-based care. As part of this process, the employees who left were not replaced, and some fixed-term contracts were not renewed, as we were initiating a retrenchment process anyway.

Despite these challenges, in-house training continued in the Childcare department, where Child and Youth Care Workers alongside the residential nurse shared their expertise on specific topics with their colleagues. Additionally, all social service professionals were provided opportunities to participate in online workshops to accumulate the required Continuing Professional Development (CPD) points.

Sadly, 2023 marked the loss of two valued colleagues. On 13 March 2023, we received the heart-breaking news of the passing of our director, Lydia Gordon, and on 3 September 2023, we mourned the loss of one of our esteemed Child and Youth Care Workers, Prudence Gcaba. Their contributions and dedication will always be remembered and cherished within our organisation.

STAFF HEADCOUNT	
Beginning of the year	67
Appointment for vacancies	5
Terminations	16
Head count at Year End	56
Number of Casual workers	8

REASONS FOR TERMINATION	
Resignation	7
Absconded	1
Deceased	2
Contract expired	5
Retrenchment	1

LONG SERVICE AWARDS	
Rejoice Gundane	25 years
Nozuke Mkhwalo	20 years
Thembi Mathenjwa	20 years
Veronica Qadi	15 years
Tandokazi Ntshembe	15 years
Thobeka Ntozakhe	15 years
Vuyokazi Mfithi	10 years
Steven Wetton	10 years
Nozipho Mbitamkono	10 years
Chris Louw	10 years
Linda Mavundla	10 years
Alvina Mtambo	5 years
Nompilo Sithole	5 years

STAFF MEETINGS	
Staff General and Information meetings	3





STAFF DEVELOPMENT TRAINING		ATTENDANCE
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-house Childcare: Stages of Development</li> <li>In-house Childcare: Communication</li> <li>In-house Childcare: Manner of Approach</li> </ul>	8 8 8
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-house Childcare: Participation</li> <li>In-house Health: Lungs and TB meningitis</li> <li>In-house Childcare: Stages of Child Development</li> <li>In-house Health: Measles</li> </ul>	9 23 6 23
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-house Childcare: Listening Skills</li> <li>In-house Health: Head injury</li> <li>In-house Childcare: Communicating with youth</li> <li>In-house Childcare: Honesty</li> <li>Child sexual behaviour that harms</li> <li>Children affected by domestic violence</li> </ul>	9 17 8 10 5 4
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-house Childcare: Working with youth at risk in families</li> <li>In-house Health: Eczema</li> <li>In-house Health: Guidelines for giving medicine</li> <li>In-house Childcare: Anger management</li> <li>In-house Childcare: Promoting and upholding rights within child and youth care work content</li> </ul>	10 21 21 11 9
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-house Health: Dehydration</li> <li>In-house Childcare: Working with young people at risk and their families</li> <li>Workshop amendments Children's Act</li> <li>Workshop Alternative Care</li> </ul>	22 10 2 2
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-house Childcare: Demonstrate basic caring skills in context</li> <li>In-house Childcare: Attitude</li> <li>In-house Childcare: Behavioural management - team 1</li> <li>In-house Childcare: Behavioural management - team 2</li> </ul>	8 8 10 8
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-house Childcare: Developmental approach</li> <li>In-house Childcare: Why relation building is an important aspect of care</li> <li>In-house Health: CPD points info session</li> <li>In-house Health: Asthma</li> <li>Demonstrate basic caring skills in CYCW context</li> <li>In-house Health: Appendicitis</li> <li>In-house CYCC: Observation in the moment</li> <li>Understanding children exposed to domestic violence</li> </ul>	10 8 18 21 10 22 8 6
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-house CYCC: Understanding developmental approach</li> <li>In-house Health: Burns</li> <li>In-house Health: Immunization</li> <li>5-day Victim Empowerment and Trauma management focus on children workshop</li> </ul>	9 22 23 14
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-house Childcare: Programming</li> <li>In-house Health: Lungs and Meningitis TB</li> <li>In-house Childcare: Developmental Assessment</li> </ul>	9 20 7
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-house Childcare: Life span developmental theories</li> <li>In-house Health: Cold and flu medication for children</li> </ul>	9 20

## In Memoriam

### *Lydia Gordon (written by Monica Woodhouse)*

I found myself amidst a group of trainees, conducting a session on Trauma, Family, and Child Protection at Khan Rd. As we were about to break for tea, my attention was drawn to an incoming call from Charmaine. Sensing its urgency, given that she knew I was engaged in training, I didn't hesitate answering the call. The news she delivered sent a shiver down my spine: "Lydia passed away last night in her sleep". Questions flooded my mind: How? Why?

Just last Friday, she had been with us at the Board meeting, weak but engaged. Despite the shock, I composed myself and carried on with the training, pushing through until the day's end. That night and the next morning, tears flowed incessantly. The magnitude of the loss was overwhelming.

She was here, there and everywhere, effortlessly connecting with countless individuals and possessing a vast array of contacts for various forms of support. She was our living database, a social worker of unparalleled knowledge and a master networker, adept at forging connections with anyone she encountered. Affectionately dubbed "Flash Gordon," she had a knack for gathering people together for those unforgettable snapshots, always ready with her trusted iPad.

She held an unwavering love for God, her family, and virtually everyone she encountered. Saying "no" seemed almost impossible for her, perhaps one of her weaknesses, yet her decisions were guided by her deep spiritual connection, with God's spirit earning our trust in her judgment.

Some comments from the staff who shared what Lydia meant to them.

*"Lydia was an example for all of us on how to love Jesus and she put her faith into action in the way she cared for all people around her, always having a kind and encouraging word and believing in their potential. You planted many apple trees in your life my friend! I miss her angelical singing during praise and worship."*

*"Lydia was my go-to person for any advice regarding children, whether it be my own or someone else's, whether it was about their behaviour or if you were in a situation that was unfamiliar to you and you didn't know what to do next, she always had the best advice, and I miss being able to pick up the phone to call her or speak to her in person. She was also a great motivator, and whenever I feel like I am not capable of doing something, I can still clearly hear her voice say to me "You can do it" .*

*"I recently came across a description of a biblical Lydia,*

*"Women like Lydia in Acts 16 vs13:15 were at the centre of the Early Church. They had a variety of roles including caring for local groups of believers, evangelising and furthering the Christian mission. The church at Philippi existed because of Lydia's generous heart and welcoming home. Her faith and intelligence, practical skills and initiative, courage and pastoral sensibilities continue to make her an ideal role model for women in the church today."*

*If I read this and fast forward roughly 2000 years, this accurately describes another Lydia, with whom we had the privilege of working. Her passion for God and for people shone out like a light into the community around her. She is sorely missed."*

*"As much as I can miss her with all her typical Lydia-things, how she used to pop into my office for a chat, asking what I thought in difficult cases and being taken on adventurous car trips after a work errand, I am incredibly thankful. What she planted in me, I can see growing now. What she prepared without me realising, is so clear today. What we did together are memories I will treasure for life."*

We were truly privileged to have her with us, passionately championing the rights and protection of children.



**Khanyisile Prudence Gcaba** (written by Maria Hufner)

On 3 September 2023, we received the heart-breaking news of our beloved colleague, Prudence's passing. Towards the end of 2022, she was diagnosed with a serious illness, and despite the treatments she received, she ultimately lost the battle.

Prudence's journey with us began as a volunteer, and on March 1, 2004, she was officially appointed as a Child and Youth Care Worker. She completed the Basic Qualification in Child Care course, proudly distinguishing herself as a qualified Child Care Worker, not merely a nanny. In 2018, she enrolled in the FETC Child and Youth Care course to enhance her knowledge and skills, a pursuit she excelled in and cherished sharing with others.

Her colleagues held her in high regard, and the children adored their "Aunty Pru". Prudence had a special affection for children with special needs. Known for her active and meticulous nature, she ensured that the children's environment was always clean and nurturing, and her dedication to their care was evident even during her illness. She remained genuinely concerned about the children's well-being, often inquiring about their progress from visiting colleagues.

Prudence's infectious smile and joyful laughter will be deeply missed.



### Maintenance & Logistics

Our maintenance team diligently oversees the upkeep of various facilities including CYCC (Alexander Avenue), Family-based Care (Raleigh Road), Lotto house (Lihle Lane), and two additional houses (across the dam). Their work adheres strictly to the National Building Regulations, maintaining a high standard across buildings, projects, and garden services.

Over the past year, they received **595 maintenance requests** and successfully completed **570**, along with accomplishing **974 scheduled tasks**. Noteworthy projects included:

- Painting the Girls and Boys sections,
- Installing a solar system,
- Upgrading the Admin toilet facilities, and transitioning showers to storerooms, while also
- Renovating the Admin area with a new self-levelling screed floor.

In addition to maintenance, our team ensures the cleanliness, servicing, and maintenance of our fleet comprising **12 vehicles**. They conducted **10 driver tests** and handled one reported vehicle accident without injuries, alongside **233 vehicle inspections**.

### Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)

GCF prioritizes Health & Safety, aligning with ISO 45001 standards. We believe in proactive prevention for the safety, health, and welfare of employees, residential children, volunteers, visitors, and service providers. Compliance with legislation is paramount, and we go beyond when possible. Our commitment is reflected in **67 safety inspections**, **3 OHS Committee Meetings**, **5 information sessions**, and **2 evacuation drill** practices conducted during the year.

### Housekeeping and Kitchen

Our housekeeping team plays a crucial role in donation sorting, building cleaning, and laundry operations. They washed **16 tons** of laundry!

The kitchen team excels in preparing nutritious meals for children, staff, and catering events. With food donations from various sources, they prepared a total of **85,633 meals and tea-times**, ensuring everyone is well-fed with culturally diverse and nutritious food options.

## Finance

Unfortunately, 2023 was another challenging year in terms of finances. Our operational funding support declined and cash reserve levels were under pressure the entire year. In line with the strategic plan the residential child care services were transformed to Emergency Safety families in the community which resulted in a retrenchment process which was only concluded after year end. This should assist to bring monthly operating expenses in line with committed funding in 2024.

### **GIVE A CHILD A FAMILY TRUST AFRICA**

#### **STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION as at**

		<b>31 December 2023</b>	
	Notes	<u>2023</u> R	<u>2022</u> R
<b>ASSETS</b>			
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Property, plant and equipment	2	6 622 558	6 222 291
Deposits	3	19 770	19 067
		<u>6 642 328</u>	<u>6 241 358</u>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Trade and other receivables	4	703 715	620 453
Cash and cash equivalents	5	4 507 239	4 348 748
		<u>5 210 954</u>	<u>4 969 201</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>		<u><u>11 853 282</u></u>	<u><u>11 210 559</u></u>
<b>FUNDS AND LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Funds</b>			
Trust capital	6	100	100
Accumulated funds			
- Funds representing fixed assets values		6 937 825	6 251 031
<b>Total Trust Funds</b>		<u>6 937 925</u>	<u>6 251 131</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Non-current liabilities</b>			
Project funds	7	1 320 731	2 241 468
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Trade and other payables	8	274 930	236 419
Project funds	7	3 319 696	2 481 541
		<u>3 594 626</u>	<u>2 717 960</u>
<b>Total liabilities</b>		<u>4 915 357</u>	<u>4 959 428</u>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS and LIABILITIES</b>		<u><u>11 853 282</u></u>	<u><u>11 210 559</u></u>

### **GIVE A CHILD A FAMILY TRUST AFRICA**

#### **STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR ENDED**

	<b>31 December 2023</b>	
	<u>2023</u> R	<u>2022</u> R
Revenue	7 471 760	7 640 498
Other income	4 945 690	4 377 572
<b>Total income</b>	<u>12 417 450</u>	<u>12 018 070</u>
Operating expenses	(13 832 732)	(13 846 092)
<b>Operating deficit</b>	<u>(1 415 282)</u>	<u>(1 828 022)</u>
Investment revenue	61 134	68 957
Capital recoupment	977 518	338 622
<b>Total comprehensive deficit for the year</b>	<u><u>(376 630)</u></u>	<u><u>(1 420 443)</u></u>

# Thank you!

Adore Nature  
Alan Assainov  
Alice de Mooij  
Allans Mobile  
Allison Winrow  
Althea Platt  
Amanda Batterson  
Amanda Bomvu  
Amanda Koemans  
Anand Krishna  
Annette Ingram  
Arjan Hufner  
Arlene Murray  
Aunty Barbara  
Austen Mobile Welding  
Banoyolo Ngxolashe  
Barbara Shield  
Basil Lotter  
Basil Woodhouse  
Beaver Creek Coffee Farm  
Beekman Group  
Beyers Joubert  
Blue Lagoon Restaurant  
BTF Boran  
Build It South Coast  
C M Abraham  
CAFSA  
Candice  
Cathrine Kubayi  
CD Liebenberg  
Cees van Doorn  
CGIC  
Chad Broom  
Cheryl Browne  
Christiana Paul  
Christopher Robin Nursery School  
Cindy Evans  
Cindy Rammouthar  
Clare Botha  
Clearwater Trails  
Conrad Sakhile Hlela  
Curnow KZN  
Danielle Organ  
Daryl Wright Strategic Management  
Debbie Brauteseth  
Department of Social Development  
DG Murray Trust  
Diana Ringo  
Dirk Bothma Pest Control  
DJ Boyd  
Doreen Schoeman  
Doug Dysart  
Doug's Hardware  
Dream Vacation Club  
Duduzile Mbanolwa  
Ebele Onwukike  
Edgars Shelly Centre  
Elize  
Ella Huisman  
Elmien Wingert  
Elsie van den Bergh  
Emrel Salter  
Errol Woodhouse  
Etienne du Plessis  
Eugene Louw  
Evangeliska Frikyrkan (Interact)

Fernanda Justo  
Flip Fourie  
FNB (Margate, Shelly, PE, PS)  
Food Lover's Market  
Fresenius Kabi  
Frey's Fresh Meat  
Friends of GCF Scotland  
Fulton Trust  
Gayle Borger  
Gayridge Chicken Farm  
GCF Sverige  
George Mnisi  
George Visagie  
Gerda Steyn  
Giorgio Express  
Gitta Birk  
Gitta imo Kerstin Sv  
Gretchen Logan  
Halfway Toyota  
Harding Electrical  
Haval Shelly Beach  
Heather and John Rossman  
Heather Frost  
Hendrik en Diana van Beelen  
Henns Arms  
Hibiscus Private Hospital  
Highland Water  
Hope for South Africa  
I Ehmke  
Identity IDF Capital  
Industrial Supply Centre  
Isaac  
Izuchukou Confident Nunsi  
J Espach  
J Hills  
Jack Glasbergen  
James Moss  
Jamie Dyer  
Jan en Renate Ebrecht  
Janeth & Mike Coles  
Jan-Willem de Mol  
Jenny Ooms  
Jet vd Zwart  
Joep  
Johannabode  
John Sifiso Malekane  
Joke Vooijs  
Jolanda Ligtvoet  
Jolene Hooper  
Julia Ljung  
Julie Rolland  
K de la Hunt  
Kayla Vosloo  
Kerrie Fleming  
Kerstin Oskarsson  
Kerstin Svensson Minne  
Kevin Imthorn  
Kevin Ingram  
Kevin Karregat  
Kevin Kloos  
Kheswa Mandlenkosi  
Klein Bosveld Butchery  
Korean Church of Qatar  
Läkarmissionen  
Lake Eland  
Lara Potgieter

Leaf Technologies  
Lee Maree  
Lenneke Mol  
Leonard Hoogendijk  
Lewis Stores  
Lindiwe Cele  
Lindiwe Farlane  
Liza Gresse  
Lower South Coast SPCA  
Lucky's Manaba  
Lutho  
Lynne  
M Electrical  
Mac Banana  
Maggie  
Malcolm van Rooyen  
Mandy McGrath  
Marco Faroani  
Marco van Stijn  
Margate Apostolic Church  
Margate Country Club  
Maria Hufner  
Mariette Venter  
Marizane Wagenaar  
Mark Mayes (Waltons)  
Marlise Booyens  
Martin Ouwehand  
Martin, Breda, Frankie Pegg  
Matthijs en Sanne Schoneveld  
Matty Borger  
Maxim Makulbekov  
Mbali Ngwane  
Mellin Moodley  
Mergon Foundation  
Miriam Hewitt  
Misa Qatyana  
Monica Woodhouse  
Mrs Breggie Panter  
Nanxia Bijlsma  
Natalie Abbott  
Natasha Ramdeen  
Natassja Bester  
Nella Nodo  
Nelson Mandela Children's Fund  
Nikkie Albrecht  
Ningie Mbanjwa  
Nokubonga Luthuli  
Nompilo Sithole  
Ntathu Ndabankulu  
Ongezwa Gqala  
Oribi Electrical  
P McDowell  
Pamela Madlala  
Pat Moore  
Paul Boelens  
Paul Wisken  
Pauline Dunlop  
Peter Grund  
Phindubuhle Mathenjwa  
Pieter den Edel  
R&B Timbers  
Reenie Winterburn  
Remax Coast and Country  
Renata Tobler  
Renet  
Rentia Williamson

Rhulani Mdemela  
Rinus Vooijs  
River Valley Nature Reserve  
Robert van der Boon  
Rooies Strauss & Span  
Roos Guijt  
Roos V  
Rosemary Guarrera  
Rosemary Moore  
Roto Tank  
Roy Pistor  
Ruben en Judith van Dijk  
Ruff Culture  
Sackaios  
Samantha Ntombela  
Sandra Schoeman  
Sandrisha Pillay  
Sarah Herndon  
Seaview Game Farm  
Seeff Hibiscus Coast  
Senzi's  
Shair Beharie  
Shannon Lang  
Shoprite Margate  
Siddarth Malik  
Simms  
Sindile Kubayi  
Skye Forsyth  
South Coast Vending Ola  
Speedy Margate  
Status Panelbeaters  
Stephanie Osborne  
Stephanie Werner  
Stichting GCF Nederland  
Surendera Balkisson  
Syd Howe  
T Downham  
TBO Church Mbango  
Teresa Moss  
Thulile Mqadi  
Tiaan Marais  
Tiago's  
Tibi n Caleb  
Tim Bawden  
Tony Pitwood  
Tracey Dekker  
UK Online Giving Foundation  
Ultimate Design  
Umthunzi Hotel  
Umzumbe Chalets  
Val Irvine  
Veronica Gunkel  
Voltex  
Walter Green  
Wayne's Auction  
Webster  
Weeshuis der Doopsgezinden  
Wereldkinderen  
Wild Coast Sun  
Wilde Ganzen  
Wim Hufner  
Woodpecker Handmade  
Yvonne Robinson Pre-Primary  
Zah Mpopana  
Zime Pato  
Zwelihle Dlamini

## Fundraising Strategy

We started the year with great uncertainty. We needed to raise a substantial amount of money and had initially tried an agency to assist us. While the agency's efforts were not as successful as we had hoped, we learned a great deal from the experience. However, there was still much more to be done. Determined to find a solution, we embraced teamwork and took on additional roles as staff members from different areas of work to focus on fundraising. We enlisted the help of Funding Solutions, with Asna Bhana coaching three of us for a year. Starting in May 2023, our first virtual class with Asna set the tone for a transformative journey. Asna patiently guided us through various learnings, continually emphasising "the seven touches." She taught us that funding requires courage and curiosity and that it is fundamentally about building relationships rather than sending out mass emails, which she referred to as "Spray and Pray."

Initially, we had pages full of addresses, contact names, and companies. The more we looked at these lists, the more confused and uncertain we became about where to start. Despite the excitement, doubt often crept in, and we hesitated to sign up for tasks. We also had to confront our fear of asking for funds and dealing with rejections. Throughout the process, Asna's calm and reassuring nature kept us motivated. Our primary goal was to build a large and enduring pool of diverse funders. Diversity in funding was crucial to our success, ensuring that our sources were not concentrated in one area. We aimed for a balanced mix of international funders, trusts, government, individuals, corporates, and self-generation. Despite the challenges, we are proud to report that our team managed to raise R 435,188 from new funders. This achievement was remarkable, especially considering our other responsibilities. Out of a total target list of 105, we had 13 prospects and secured funding from 5, yielding a 38% success rate, well above the industry trend of 20%.

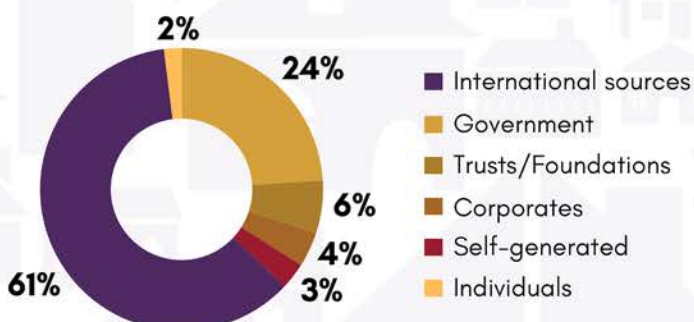
Asna helped us establish effective systems, starting with a solid plan. She introduced us to mapping tools and emphasised the importance of good data, which she described as our liquid gold. This data can only be effectively activated if embedded in a purposeful system. We aimed to simplify processes and reduce the administrative burden, preserving our energy for prospecting. We now have a framework with solid data, recognising that funding is a living organism, constantly changing and requiring alignment with our diary, organisational strategy, and budget gaps. We sorted through our data, discarding irrelevant information and enhancing the useful ones. We developed a momentum of weekly meetings and designated a working day for fundraising. We also created a dashboard to track our progress. Looking ahead, we are planning a three-year strategy with the goal of securing multi-year investments.

In recent years, there has been a significant shift within some parts of the funding landscape in the understanding of core funding for non-profit organisations. Core funding, unlike project-specific funding, provides unrestricted financial support that allows non-profits the flexibility to cover essential operational costs, invest in capacity-building, and respond dynamically to emerging needs. This approach is increasingly favoured by some funders who recognise that the sustainability and impact of non-profits depend on their ability to maintain strong administrative and infrastructural capacities. By offering core funding, donors are enabling organisations to plan long-term strategies, innovate, and scale their impact without the constant pressure of securing project-based grants.

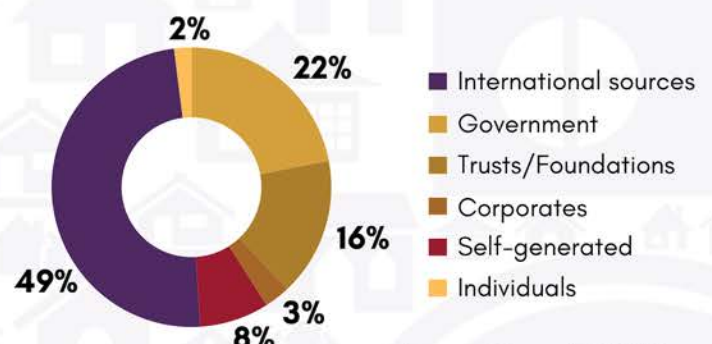
The movement towards core funding is also reflective of a growing understanding among funders about the complex realities faced by non-profits. Traditional project-specific funding often comes with stringent requirements and limited time frames, which can stifle innovation and lead to a cycle of short-term planning, and indeed limits impact, in contrast, core funding fosters a more trusting and collaborative relationship between donors and non-profits, promoting transparency and mutual accountability. This shift is not only empowering non-profits to fulfil their missions more effectively but is also fostering a more resilient and adaptive civil society sector, better equipped to tackle the most pressing challenges.

As we know the only thing we can be sure of is that things will change and if non-profits are forever trapped in a "funding starvation cycle", brought on by restrictive project funding that does not include a realistic core funding element, they are not able to adapt to meet ever changing needs!

**GCF income from 2021**



**GCF income from 2023**



## Fundraising

The absence of a dedicated fundraiser within GCF has spurred proactive engagement from team members to secure financial support for the organisation's critical initiatives. This collective effort spans beyond the Executive Team, involving individuals like Maria Hufner, who spearheads fundraising efforts in the Netherlands. Mareli Schwartz and Anna-Karin Öhrnstedt, along with Monica Woodhouse, actively participated in weekly digital fundraising coaching sessions led by Asna Bhana from Funding Solutions. Our fundraising team consists of **Maria Hufner, Mareli Schwartz, Anna-Karin Öhrnstedt, Charmaine Wagenaar, Steven Wetton and Monica Woodhouse**. Truly the dream team all bringing their unique skills and personalities to the success of GCF's fundraising strategy!



In July, Tracey Platt Dekker and her hiking team achieved the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro, dedicating their climb to raising funds for GCF. This remarkable feat not only contributed to financial support but also showcased the organisation's presence and impactful initiatives to a wider audience. Tracey raised 1,765 USD for Give a Child a Family Africa!

### Sweden trip

Amidst the enduring challenges of a prolonged pandemic and various hurdles, GCF successfully re-established connections with Sweden! Throughout April and May, Monica Woodhouse and Anna-Karin Öhrnstedt received a warm welcome from both familiar faces and new contacts, leading to three intense weeks of productive engagements.

During their visit, they shared valuable insights into GCF's programmes, emphasizing the pivotal shift from institutional care to community-based care. The message advocating for at-risk children to thrive in secure family environments rather than children's homes resonated strongly, sparking significant interest in GCF's strategic initiatives.

The team visited **14 churches**, many of which have been long-standing supporters of GCF, held impactful meetings with **three longstanding funders** (Läkarmissionen, Interact International, and Sackaios), and organised reunions with past volunteers and GCF Sweden members. An enlightening visit to BRIS, a prominent Child Rights Organisation in Sweden, provided valuable perspectives. Furthermore, meetings with influential figures like the Swedish Barnombudsman and representatives from other child-rights organisations added depth and richness to the experience.

They met with GCF Sverige to highlight areas of improvement for fundraising. This foundation is responsible for administering the Swedish bank account, allowing people in Sweden to deposit money directly into this account.

### Netherlands trip

In 2023, GCF did not conduct specific fundraising trips to the Netherlands. However, Maria Hufner, GCF Africa's liaison with the Dutch funding market, took every opportunity during her family visits to promote GCF Africa.

In January 2023, Maria visited the youth clubs of the Protestant Church Rijnsburg, where GCF was chosen as the charity for fundraising. Over several months, the youth raised a total of R 22,530.00 (1,115.00 EU), which was donated towards the Solar Panel project. Maria also visited the funder Wilde Ganzen with a Dutch board member, garnering support for a proposal on Solar Panels due to ongoing power cuts in South Africa. The Solar system was successfully installed in July, thanks to the contributions of various organisations, churches, and individuals.

The Stichting GCF Netherlands, comprised of dedicated volunteers passionate about GCF Africa's work, held **four meetings** during which Maria participated online. This was a valuable way to stay connected and update the group on the latest developments in South Africa.

Kevin and Linda Imthorn participated in the Valencia Marathon on December 3rd to raise funds for GCF Africa. Throughout their training, they kept friends and family updated via social media, and both successfully completed the marathon, marking a significant achievement for the cause. They raised 1,621 EU for Give a Child a Family Africa!

## Donors 2023 incl Capital Funding > R 50,000

- Department of Social Development - 23%
- Läkarmissionen - 14%
- GCF Sverige - 11%
- DG Murray Trust - 11%
- Wilde Ganzen - 8%
- Mergon Foundation - 6%
- Stichting GCF Nederland - 5%
- Weeshuis der Doopgezinden - 4%
- Various - Local 3%
- Fresenius Kabi - 3%
- Wereldkinderen - 3%
- Sackaios Stiftelsen - 3%
- Evangeliska Frikyrkan - 3%
- Johannabode - 2%
- Fulton Trust - 1%
- UK Online Giving - 1%
- Friends of GCF Scotland - 1%



Thank you to our valued funders for your unwavering dedication to Give a Child a Family Africa. Your continued support has been instrumental in our mission to strengthen families and place vulnerable children in secure, loving families. Your generosity and belief in our cause enable us to make a lasting impact on countless lives. We are deeply grateful for your loyalty and partnership.

## Marketing

The year 2023 has been a remarkable one for Give a Child a Family Africa (GCF) as we continued our mission to make a positive impact in the community. We are delighted to report that our monthly newsletters have received overwhelmingly positive feedback. The content, design, and relevance have resonated well with our audience, contributing to increased engagement and awareness about GCF's initiatives. GCF was honoured to be invited to speak at several prominent events throughout the year. These opportunities allowed us to share our insights, experiences, and the impact of our work, further establishing our presence in the community and beyond.

GCF executed a series of successful campaigns aimed at showcasing our contributions to the community. Notable highlights include:

- The **GCF Family Fun Walk** at Beaver Creek, which saw strong local participation and global engagement through a virtual walk, demonstrating our ability to unite supporters worldwide with our Child Protection message.
- Revival of the **Bikers Against Child Abuse** run post-Covid, showcasing resilience and commitment to important causes.
- **#TeeOff4Kids** charity golf day at Margate Country Club, raising an impressive R85,000 and emphasising our dedication to fundraising efforts.
- A well-received **GCF Christmas Shoe Box** campaign, spreading joy and support to children in need during the festive season.
- Our **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** was a success, reflecting the organisation's stability and strategic planning. The Annual Report, designed by Mareli Schwartz with contributions from the entire GCF team, highlighted our achievements and financial transparency.

In March 2023, GCF launched its new website, featuring a modern design and user-friendly interface. The website serves as a central hub for information, donations, and engaging with our community. In conclusion, 2023 has been a year of significant accomplishments and milestones for GCF. We are grateful for the support of our donors, volunteers, and partners who have enabled us to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve. Looking ahead, we are excited about the opportunities and challenges that await us as we continue our journey of philanthropy and community impact.



# Networking

Abounding Hope Development Centre  
Advocacy Aid  
Africa Cooperative Action Trust (ACAT)  
Africa Union (AU)  
Alfred Walter Hostel (Masvingo)  
Association of Christian Schools International (Zimbabwe)  
Association of Trust Schools (Zimbabwe)  
Buhlebezwe Primary School  
Chapter One  
Child Rights Network Southern Africa (CRNSA, Africa)  
Child Welfare Margate  
Child Welfare Port Shepstone  
Childline SA  
Children Without Parental Care (CWPC, Africa)  
Community Safety and Liaison  
Connect Network  
Department of Agriculture  
Department of Education  
Department of Health  
Department of Home Affairs  
Department of Social Development  
Eagle Learning (Bulawayo)  
Economic Development and Tourism  
Faith to Action (USA)  
Freedom Gate Church  
Friends of GCF Scotland  
Gamalakhe Junior Primary School  
Gateway Primary School (Harare)  
GCF Sverige  
Gender Based Violence & Substance Abuse Network  
Genesis Hope  
Good News Radio  
Heartlines  
Hope and Homes SA  
Ignite Revolution  
Ikhaya lethu Home of Love and Care  
Interact Africa  
Izingolweni Court  
Kindernothilfe  
KwaMavundla Tribal Court  
KwaNdwalane Church of Council  
KwaNzimakwe Tribal Court  
KwaXolo Tribal Court  
KZN Hotspots  
KZN NPO Network  
Läkarmissionen  
LGBTI NGO  
Life Line  
Local clinics  
Local ECD's  
Machovin Trading  
Margate Baptist Church  
Margate Clinic  
Margate Methodist Church  
Margate Primary School  
Mergon Foundation  
Murchison Hospital  
National Association Child Care Workers (NACCW)  
Nelson Mandela Children's Fund  
Netcare Margate Hospital  
Operation Mbo/Sukuma Sakhe  
Port Shepstone Correctional Services  
Port Shepstone Court  
Port Shepstone Hospital  
Protective Behaviours Southern Africa  
Ray Nkonyeni Special Programmes  
Rensia House  
River of Life Church (Graystone Park)  
SA Identity Rights Network  
SAPS Gamalakhe  
SAPS Margate  
SAPS Port Edward  
SAPS Port Shepstone  
SASSA  
Save the Children South Africa  
Siyakwazi Resource Centre  
Siyamthanda Home of Care and Love  
Siyavuna Abalimi Development Centre NPC  
South African Human Rights Commissioner (SAHRC)  
South African National Child Rights Coalition (SANCRIC)  
South African Parenting Programme Implementers Network (SAPPIN)  
South African Police Services (SAPS)  
South African Theology Seminary (SATS)  
South Coast Academy  
South Coast Food Support  
South Coast Herald  
Stichting GCF Nederland  
The DG Murray Trust  
The Evangelical Alliance of South Africa (TEASA)  
The Presidency  
Thuthuzela Care Centre  
Transform Alliance Africa (TAA, Africa)  
Ugu CYCC's United  
Ugu District Child Rights and Protection Forum (UGU DCRPF)  
Ugu District Municipality Special Programmes  
Ugu Youth Radio  
United Nations Child Rights Convention (UNCRC)  
University of Zululand  
War Rooms (Ward 6-Margate, Ward 24-Nyandezulu, Ward 26-Gamalakhe, Ward 23-Boboyi, Ward 7, 9-Gcilima)  
Waynol  
Wellbi  
World Without Orphans (WWO)

## Story

### What God did then, He can do now

When Mrs Cele's sister expressed interest in becoming a foster mother, she found herself drawn to the idea as well. They had already heard about suffering children in need of secure and loving families to welcome them into their homes. When they found out about Give a Child a Family Africa (GCF), the sisters took a taxi to Margate without knowing the organisation's location. After asking around at the crowded taxi rank, someone eventually gave them directions and they arrived safely.

Today Mrs Cele is a skilled foster parent, thinking back in time with a smile on her face. "At GCF, we received such a warm welcome. It gave us hope. We knew we were at the right place."

Both sisters successfully went through the foster care screening process and became part of the foster care database for approved foster families. When GCF asked Mrs Cele if she would be open to hosting three siblings from another centre during a school holiday, she did not hesitate to say yes. The children arrived and continued to stay with her every holiday for two years until they moved to relatives in another part of the country. She describes this experience as a beautiful journey, where they grew to love each other deeply.

Eight years ago, Mrs Cele welcomed two children into foster care, a 7-year-old girl and a 15-year-old boy. The children had a rough background of mistreatment and struggled in different ways. Initially, the boy suffered from ill health, while the girl faced challenges in school. Today things are much better. The girl excels academically and has dreams of becoming a nurse. Mrs Cele's foster son, now an adult man, feels a strong sense of belonging to the Cele family. He shows a great interest in cooking, which she encourages him to pursue at a local college.

"If they would have stayed where they came from it would have been much worse for them emotionally and physically", she reflects. "They remember how it was then. It was really not good for the boy; he was constantly beaten and scolded. He says that he never wants to go back."

Mrs Cele shows strength and perseverance when talking about her foster children and the challenges they have been through as a family. She mentions how her foster son befriended the wrong crowd and lost hope for the future due to complications in applying for his ID documentation, among other difficulties they have encountered together.

Drawing inspiration from David and Goliath, "The whole of Israel feared that David would be killed, but it did not happen. What God did then, He can do now." She passionately gives God thanks for giving her solutions to their problems.

Mrs Cele is satisfied with how GCF has walked a mile with her and so many other foster parents. She finds the GCF support group meetings particularly helpful, where they listen and learn from each other. It has built her as a person and has made her understand that others are living similar lives.

Being a foster mother has not been an easy ride, but Cele would do it all over again and bring another child into her care if she only would have been younger.



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