Elkana Childcare Annual Report Period 01 April 2020 – 31 March 2021





WELCOME

This Annual Report consists of the past years activities, goals and achievements for the period of 01 April 2020 - 31 March 2021.

1 TEMPORARY SAFE CARE





2 WESBANK AFTER SCHOOL CARE



3 RIVERLANDS AFTER SCHOOL CARE



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CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

It is with great pleasure, as Acting Chairperson to present the Annual Report to all Stakeholders. With the resignation of our previous chairperson Richard Kruger earlier this year, the Board nominated me as the Acting Chairperson for the time being. With COVID 19 still amongst us, it was really a challenging time to appoint new board members and a chairperson.

Changes in the Board

COVID 19 had its impact on our Board as three of our Board members were elderly people who had much more challenges in this time. They have resigned from the board and we are privileged to have new members joining the team. We are now in the process of amending our records with CIPC to get all the new members on the registration documents and to remove the previous members. We are privileged to have board members registered with professional bodies from the Legal, Social Welfare, Accounting and Education sectors giving guidance and assistance.

Overview

Yes, this year was certainly not easy, especially with our head Mrs. Veronica Mehl whom passed away in June 2020. Our employees suddenly had to face this strange and scary times and dealing with her sudden death. We are really proud to announce that Roché Afrikaner, who was our social worker at that time, was appointed in Mrs. Veronica Mehl's chair. Roché was really thrown in the deep end but she, together with her team are really a pride to Elkana. Our children, under the circumstances, also surprised us with their understanding, behaviour and cooperation at all times. With all the necessary COVID 19 measures and PPE in place, Elkana was a safe haven for our children and staff. We were really blessed that our children remained healthy. We are blessed with companies and individuals coming forward spoiling our children and contributing so that Elkana remained safe and conducive for our children. The contributions ranged from monetary contributions and donations to make rooms look neat, tidy and colourful.

Challenges

We had and still have challenges. To keep children indoors for so many months was really challenging for them and we had to find activities and ways to keep their minds and bodies healthy. Schools were closed for long periods of time, and when it opened it was only for certain days a week. This had a huge challenge on our afterschool staff helping and assisting our children to face this rather strange school system. It also stays a struggle to keep children in our school systems especially after COVID hit us. It stays a challenge to keep our staff positive and their mind healthy. Our staff had to deal with a lot, some of them losing loved ones due to COVID, some families contracted COVID and were sick at home. Above all, our staff stayed loyal and assist one another and for this we as board salute them.

Finances, especially in this time, will always stay a challenge, especially for day to day running cost, because without the staff and structures we cannot serve our children.

The future

We as Board are super excited about Elkana's future. We have the new gardening project that MAMAS has financed for us that is really bringing much joy. Not only for the mothers working in the garden and benefiting from it, but also for our children seeing how growth is taking place and learning to see how vegetables actually grow till it gets to our tables. We have a lot to be thankful for, our premises is now almost fully surrounded by a very neat vibracrete wall. We have a new front gate. Our front doors that needed very urgent care was replaced. We spent money on our building to maintain it and also make it safe for our children. We realize that maintenance on the building was left behind for quite some time and we could see that we had to do maintenance urgently in order to save money for future maintenance.

Our dream is to get land in Riverlands where our other afterschool is situated. Currently we are using the school building but this has its own challenges. We started looking around and identifying land and which people to talk to. Riverlands really has the need for this aftercare and runs at full capacity at the moment. Roche Afrikaner has started implementing programs and structures to get staff to new heights. We as Board believe that you must uplift your staff and give them tools to get maximum benefit for our children.

New programs were rolled out for our children. A new reading program was also started to help our children in this much needed field. We have professionals available to assist our children with therapy when necessary. The Steelband is still one of the great benefits giving our children the opportunity to live themselves out through music.

Last words

It's not possible to say thank you to all donors personally, but you know who you are and we are deeply thankful. For me it's just one big pleasure and blessing to serve Elkana and its staff and children. Let's keep positive and look ahead of us, because the past cannot be changed, but what lies before us is a blessing waiting for us to discover.

Catharina (Karen) Bester



TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial year 2020/2021 was for sure one of the most challenging years with the COVID 19 hitting the world and our country. Our financial year kicked off in isolation start of April 2020. The uncertainties were so much, not being sure of how this virus would affect our funding, etc.

Despite all the uncertainties and challenges we closed our year with a nett surplus of R694 814.27. This is a growth of 16.7% from the previous year. One of our challenges were that we budgeted for certain expenses which due to COVID did not materialized. We did incur new expenses like the Personal Protective Equipment and materials that were not budgeted for, but we were very privileged to get Funding for this extra expense. What was a great reality is the fact that we accommodated much less children in our after school programs as our schools were closed down for long periods of time.

We are very thankful for our funders, who despite all of the challenges still supported us. We thank the following funders, some of whom we walk with for many years, for their ongoing support:

Kinderfonds MAMAS (Netherlands) – CYCC & After school care Malmesbury	R 606 250.00
Kinderfonds MAMAS (Netherlands) – Riverlands After school care	R 306 250.00
Kinderfonds MAMAS (Netherlands) - Garden project	R 85 197.00
Department of Social Development Western Cape: Temporary Safe Care CYCC	R1 192 292.00
Department of Social Development Western Cape: After School Care	R 235 224.00
Friend of Zelda House (Ireland)	R 220 713.60
Marionne Knops (Steelband)	R 45 000.00
Swartland Municipality	R 49 802.00
Beansa Trust	R 16 000.00
Capitec Foundation	R 60 000.00
Investec	R 65 000.00
Old Mutual	R 63 382.00
Sun Slots	R 150 000.00
Syania Assets Management	R 40 000.00
Mergon Gap Fund	R 10 000.00
Donations - Various Donors	R 2 378.32
Total	R3 147 488.92

Although this is just over R160 000 less than the previous year, we had a drop in expenses which led to the extra surplus on year end. As said, this drop in expenses can be directly linked to the COVID situation over most of the financial year.

From the start of 2021 the COVID situation changed quite a lot, our children returned to school and Elkana, on a more regular basis, and everything started to normalize again.

We are really hopeful that slowly but surely all will revert back to normal and that we will be able to do more outreach programs and activities with our children again. Record of allocation of funds are kept very accurately and where necessary we did, and will ask Funders for reallocation of funds. No reallocation of Funds will be done without the consent of the specific funder.

We at Elkana are privileged to have dedicated Funders who believe in the work we do, loyal employees who walk the extra mile and a Board that carries the interest of our children. Our children are our future and we are thankful to be in their lives.

Catharina (Karen) Bester

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



"Stepping out of my comfort zone and trying new things in order to grow", this is the best way to describe what this year has meant to me. Sadly we, the Elkana family had to say goodbye to our late MAMA Ronni (Mrs. V. Mehl) very suddenly in June 2020. Being the social worker at the time I did what I thought I was supposed to, I ran the everyday business as well as my own load (social worker duties) but never could I dream that I would someday be filling MAMA Ronni's place. It was very overwhelming once it was on black and white, I have been at Elkana now for 9 years, 8 of them being the social worker. Mrs. Mehl always used to tell me, come let me show you, because you will be taking over when I retire, we used to laugh about this often but as destiny would have it, that is exactly where I am and feel honoured to be filling this huge seat.

I was officially appointed as Executive Director on the 1 October 2020, so I am roughly 1 year in and loving it. COVID has meant that things were done differently and situations were dealt with differently. We have been through a year where many have lost loved ones, saw loved ones very sick and even experienced COVID ourselves. Through it all we maintained to give our best to the children we serve.

Overview of programs:

After school care program: Despite all the trials and difficulties COVID placed on our afterschool care programs we were able to be partially operational during the hard lock down and currently we are fully operational and we hope that the levels stay as they are so that we can provide our essential services to our communities children.

Residential program: Our residential facility was declared an essential service and had to stay open and fully functional throughout the hard lock down. There were many precautions and procedures put in place and at times it felt overwhelming for all our staff as well as our girls but we pushed through.

We managed to remain to full capacity (24 girls) throughout all the levels of the COVID lockdown.

Special thank you goes out to Volunteer Ministries who have sanitized our buildings every week since COVID arrived. It has really made a huge difference and we appreciate it.

Going through the COVID pandemic:

COVID has impacted many organisations, many have closed due to lack of funding but we have been blessed with the most faithful and understanding funders, they have stressed with us, they have listened to our concerns, they did check inns and most importantly, they made sure that we had everything we needed. Their funding allowed us to be fully operational throughout this pandemic. Due to the fluctuating levels of the COVID pandemic, DSD could not do any quality monitoring or evaluations but did regularly check inns via email. We had great supportive structures in different forms from all our funders and therefore we are extremely grateful.

To the local community of Malmesbury, we are extremely thankful for all donations received throughout the pandemic, it has made a huge difference in caring for our children.

We move forward into the next year with lots of faith and aspiration to do what we set out for ourselves and the children that we serve.

Roché Afrikaner

SOCIAL WORKER'S REPORT



Introduction:

This year I was one of the new additions to the Elkana family. I am Thembisa Jacquelene Makubalo, a qualified social worker. I obtained my Bachelor Degree in social work at the University of the Western Cape. During my time as a student, I was exposed to different parts of social work. I conducted my practical in schools, at a hospital as well as at Cape Town Child Welfare. My first employment was in the field at Cape Town Child Welfare, where I was employed for two years as a foster care social worker, where I rendered supervision services towards the foster families as well as facilitated the path to reunification and I was also exposed to the statutory part of social work. I also had the opportunity to be employed at Marsh Memorial Home, however, it was short lived due to transportation challenges. Before commencing at Elkana, I was employed at the Department of Social Development where I was on a two year contract, I also had exposure on the statutory level, liaising with rehabilitation centres, SASSA as well as hospitals. This year brought on new changes and new challenges. Unemployment has increased and with this the increase in domestic violence within the household increased at a rapid rate, leaving our children vulnerable and at risk.

Residential Temporary Safe Care Program (TSC):

Elkana is registered with the Department of Social Development as a Child and youth care centre specializing in Temporary safe care. It can more simply be defined as an immediate access to care and protection for vulnerable and at-risk children. Temporary safe care is for 3-6 months, within this time the child is assessed and the social worker will then determine as to what help is needed so that the child concerned gets the intervention most needed. Most of the children who enter Elkana have more than one type of trauma and therefore assessments are important to look at which areas to develop first. This is quite a daunting task but it is in the best interest of the child and in this regard, I rely on my Child and Youth care workers to give feedback on the child as they work within the life space of the child and could most definitely pick up on issues that I have not picked up on.

Once assessments are completed which includes external and internal therapy interventions, medicals, IDP's (Individual Development Plans) and care plans there are four main referral options. They are as follows:

- **CYCC's** (Child and Youth Care centre's), specializing in programs that could potentially help the child. There are different levels of CYCC's, namely level 2, 3 and secure care.
- **Family reunification**, either back to biological parents or extended paternal or maternal family.
- **Foster care placement**, placement is secured for a minimum of 2 years, it does not have to be biological family. In this regard, a grant will be issued to help with financial liabilities. All foster placements must be screened by an external social work agency and police clearance certificates are essential.
- **Adoption**, this option is very rare for older children, but it still remains one of the referral options.

Elkana accommodates 24 girls 4-17 years of age. Our total intake for this financial year stands at 23. The reason for the decrease of the intake numbers is due to the Covid 19 lockdown. Children did not go out to other Children's Homes as they were also on lockdown and the movement of children coming in and out only picked up after the lockdown was lifted.

Children were placed out during this period as follows:



Re-unification: 6

Re-unification back into the family system has decreased compared to last year. Families lost their employment during the covid19 pandemic and most of the substance abuse cases escalated. Panels for this year were very minimal as we still facing the pandemic and I commenced my employment in December 2020.



Foster care: 6

Foster care placement was minimal due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Most extended families could not accommodate the children due to loss of employment or retrenchment. External social worker's contact were also minimised due to the pandemic and were mostly focused on assessing emergency situations.



Long term CYCC: 12

This number has decreased compared to last year. However, due to weak family bonds and addiction the number does not necessarily decrease a lot. The start of the COVID 19 pandemic also played a huge role as many parents lost their jobs and home circumstances deteriorated.



Secure CYCC: 0

These children needed deeper interventions which Elkana was not equipped with as we are only a temporary safe care facility.

Adoption: 0

This remains an option but Elkana has not had one adoption thus far. It is very rare but still one of the best options should it present itself.

Core functions of my role:

- Assistance and support to each child at Elkana with adherence to and in compliance with the Children's Act 38 of 2005. In addition to act as a custodian of the aforementioned Act and to ensure that it is complied with internally at Elkana.
- Act as a mediator between the child and the relevant external organizations to ensure that decisions are made in the best interests of the child and in compliance with the abovementioned Children's Act.
- Facilitate communications between child, family and significant others through family conferencing and panel meetings to ensure that family/significant others are involved as much as possible in interventions concerning the child.
- Help to ease the adaption of children into Elkana and prepare children for the eventual shift to a future, more permanent placement.
- Ensuring that the child's developmental needs are met on all levels possible and this includes education (schooling).
- Assessment of children and to transfer for external therapeutic services where needed.

Therapeutic interventions:

Individual therapy:

This type of therapy commencing on intake. Assessments are done on intake to ensure that the child concerned understands why he/she is placed at Elkana and all misconceptions are dealt with. During the first individual sessions expectations are discussed and a plan of action is formulated with the child. Emotional trauma is assessed and referrals are done accordingly as well. The importance of schooling is also discussed as to prepare the child for school. Elkana rules and regulations are also discussed and implemented.

Group therapy:

These groups are formulated from individual sessions with the children. Through individual therapy, group therapy is formulated depending on the issues of concern. Group therapy can be formal or informal. The set up and information will change depending on the different age groups. All groups are presented in an age appropriate manner.

Play therapy:

Elkana uses play therapy as one of the external therapeutic interventions to help the children with complex trauma adjust to their new environment. Play therapy aims to do the following:

- Teach the child to communicate better
- Change existing dysfunctional behaviour and understanding where it comes from
- Help the child develop coping mechanisms that are not destructive or harmful to themselves and others
- Enhancing the child's natural ability to express their feelings to resolve conflict through play.

Our children have one session per week and we send about 4 children at a time. We have seen remarkable changes in children since they started play therapy. It does not have an effect on all our children but the majority have proven that it has altered the way they deal with difficult situations and has eased traumatic experiences so that they can be part of group work and interact with others. Directive and non-directive approaches are used in this type of therapy.

Highlights:

One of the highlights this year is that most of the children who were transferred to other children homes were at least reunified with their siblings as the home circumstances did not allow for them to be returned home. The pass rate for the year was approximately 95% even though we were going through a pandemic. The huge highlight is that during the pandemic of Covid 19, none of our children tested positive for the Covid 19 virus and they remained healthy throughout the pandemic.

Conclusion:

This year was difficult for me as I commenced in December and we were still facing covid19 pandemic. This year I learned a lot, on how to handle different situations in a CYCC environment as well as work within a life space of different children. Children were in quarantine when they arrived at Elkana and we had limited interaction with them while in quarantine and most of the children were on attacking those trying to help, they were angry at world and did not understand why they had to be removed from home. The staff assisted a lot in making the children stay comfortable.

"We need more light about each other. Light creates understanding, understanding creates love, love creates patience, and patience creates unity" – Malcom X

Thembisa Makubalo



WESBANK ASC REPORT



Beneficiaries

100 school going children living in challenging circumstances
Daily programme: Monday to Friday
Area: Malmesbury

Wesbank afterschool care was initiated to support the children and youth in the broader community. For many children, the afterschool is a place of safety and a place where they are stimulated and fed a daily meal, for some children this is the only meal for the day.

Daily programme and activities

Our daily programme could not be followed due to the level 5 restrictions that were set in place in March 2020 during the Covid19 pandemic. The afterschool staff continued to work with the residential learners and followed a schoolwork and homework routine daily and some recreational activities. The learners and staff did a Youth day poster to commemorate the day and for father's day Elkana Childcare gave back to the community by spoiling the frontline workers with a sweet treat. We tried to make every activity as fun as possible for the learners as they are also stuck at home for the long period of time. When the level of restrictions eased, the afterschool started a feeding scheme to provide a nutritious meal to all afterschool learners. In October 2020 the schools opened and we had to adjust the normal daily program. The afterschool set all Covid19 protocol in place.

The learners attended the afterschool on a rotary basis, the same as they attended school. Staff and learners had to adjust to the new normal very fast.





Highlights and challenges

Wesbank afterschool care learners and staff were spared the virus, all by the grace of God. Not falling ill during this time is an accomplishment in our new normal lives.
The challenge of getting learners to adhere to the Covid19 protocol was a bit difficult. It was an adjustment to adults so just think how big and difficult it has been to them. They got used to it in a matter of time and with the help of staff.

Feedback on school progress

All learners got promoted to the next grade because a normal curriculum was not followed due to the Covid19 restrictions. Only the grade 12 learners completed an examination, but the afterschool did not have any grade 12 learners at that time.

Conclusion

The staff and learners of Wesbank afterschool care would like to thank everyone who made it possible for us to render this service to our community. Even through troubled times we managed to make ends meet.

Muneebah Sulaiman











RIVERLANDS ASC REPORT





Beneficiaries
100 learners of Riverlands Primary living in poverty and challenging circumstances.
Daily programme: Monday to Friday
Areas: Riverlands

Elkana-Riverlands afterschool care are in operation for nearly three years. This afterschool receives incredible helping hands and support from Elkana management and the staff of Riverlands Primary. The project was initiated by the late Mrs. Veronica Mehl and the late Mr. Jonathan Saunders to support 100 learners from poverty-stricken circumstances and to encourage them to remain in school and not to drop out of school due to various challenging circumstances at home. Prevention of children landing on the street is also pertinent here as is the proven case with most school drop-outs in the community.

The Covid 19 pandemic came with a big bang and changed our normal to what seems to be our new normal on a daily basis. All aspects of the afterschool had to change and staff, learners and parents had to adapt to the new normal as difficult as it may have been.

Daily programme and activities

When the level 5 restrictions hit in March 2020, the hearts of many people dropped. Thousands of people were unsure of their tomorrow. The staff of the afterschool and management had to make decisions and changes and most of all we had to make sacrifices. We could not follow our normal daily programme or run our planned programmes. Our smiley faces quickly changed to sad and worried faces when this communication reached their ears. The management made a decision and in April 2020 all Elkana-Riverlands staff started working at the Wesbank afterschool care while working with the residential children.

Staff had to plan different programmes and adapt to how things are done at another division. Afterschool staff supported with schoolwork during this time as children were at home. Through teamwork and good communication we made ends meet. The staff residing in Riverlands worked 8hours shifts for two days a week and staff living in Malmesbury worked 4 hour shifts daily.

Elkana-Riverlands had to face the most challenges and it came to our attention that our children in Riverlands stomachs are growling most of the days and therefore management decided to start a feeding scheme in Riverlands. Elkana- Riverlands operated from the house of Pastor Arnold in the Riverlands community and we could put a smile on our little ones dials again, even if it just for a while. Pastor Arnold was so kind and opened his home to us through troubled times and for that we are eternally grateful. The feeding scheme were successful.

October 2020 we returned to the school and had to adjust yet again to a new normal. Scanning, social distance, masks, fever, please sanitise… Words and phrases our ears familiarised within a matter of days. Thankfully we could follow our daily programme as planned but with a few slight changes. All contact sports or activities were banned for the time, no free play. That made the fidgety hands a bit restless. Soon we learned what to do to keep those hands busy and clean. We designed and made activity books for each afterschool learner and each learner received their own stationary pack and workbook. Every item that were used got cleaned and sanitised after every use. We had the privilege to treat the learners of Elkana-Riverlands afterschool learners with an end of year treat and give them a proper send off for the summer December school holiday. The staff and learners understood and accepted all the changes in a short amount of time.

Highlights and challenges

By the grace of the Almighty Covid19 took a U-turn at the afterschool's doorstep. All children and their parents are healthy and hopping around. Elkana-Riverlands afterschool was blessed with new kitchen appliances as it was needed. To have seen the smiles during the feeding scheme, warmed our hearts. We knew in our hearts that the parents and children appreciated the plate of food that were provided to them. The children got a proper Easter spoil.

Covid19 came with a big stack of challenges. For the staff living in Riverlands that had to travel to work had to make use of public transport and public transport at that time was not an option and having to use the transport meant that they were exposed to the virus more than the others. We had families at home and had to leave our homes also taking the biggest risk with our health and the health of our loved ones. All the challenges we overcame as a team.

Feedback on school progress

Due to the pandemic the learners did not follow a normal curriculum and the work had to be adjusted. All learners got promoted to the next grade.

Conclusion

Elkana- Riverlands wishes to extend their gratitude towards each and every individual who helped make the three years possible. Thank you for loving our children as much as we do.

Muneebah Sulaiman















ELKANA CHILDCARE

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THANK YOU

FUNDERS:

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Friends of Zelda House (Ireland)
Lotto
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Various Cash Donors (Named in Annual Financial Statements)

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