



15 Years of Life-Changing Art

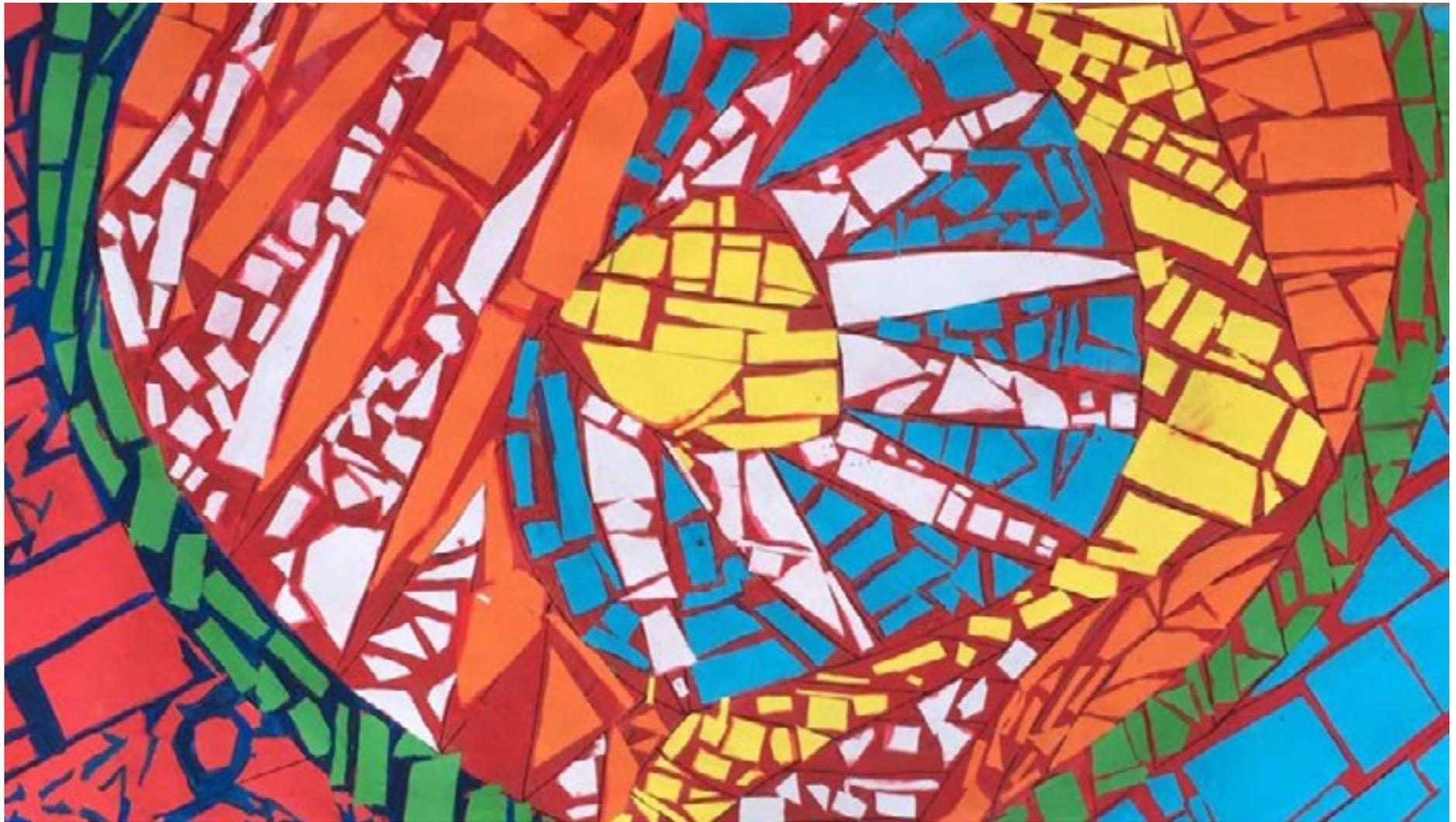
# LALELA

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



# Our Mission

Lalela provides educational arts for youth from under-resourced communities to spark **creative thinking** and awaken the **entrepreneurial spirit**.



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# Dear Lalela friends,

Fifteen years of Lalela, and what an extraordinary journey it has been. We have built partnerships that have shaped lives, held exhibitions that celebrated possibility, developed curricula that open minds, and created spaces that have become a second home to thousands of children across Southern Africa.



**Andrea Kerzner**  
Co-founder & CEO

After 15 years, we now see the impact of our mission. Our educational arts programmes have fostered entrepreneurial thinking, resilience and success in the workplace, helping to address high unemployment rates in South Africa.

What has defined Lalela's journey is not just what we've done, but who has done it. From our founders who believed art could change a young person's life, to the facilitators who show up with compassion and creativity, to the learners whose courage continues to humble us, Lalela's story is, above all, one of people.

Our first learners taught us to listen, inspiring the Lalela methodology: using art to unlock potential and create lasting change. Through art, we addressed difficult themes like bullying, gender-based violence, diversity and social cohesion. It became a language that transcended words; a space where children could dream, connect and develop life skills. Facilitators became anchors of safety and consistency, the steady presence every child needs.

Many of Lalela's practices grew directly from the classroom. Meditation at the start of sessions helped learners regulate emotions and build self-awareness. The Heart Maps curriculum was born from moments of tension between learners from different backgrounds, encouraging them to recognise one another's humanity. Through Heart Maps learners from different racial cultural, religious and economic backgrounds challenged stereotypes and connected across divides, countering the legacies of apartheid and an increasingly fractured world. These lessons have extended far beyond our classrooms: 1,358 teachers from 983 schools were trained, reaching over 171,679 learners. In addition,

we have trained 1,371 teachers from 628 schools to create trauma-informed learning environments, reaching more than 142,000 learners across the country.

In 2024, we brought children from schools of different racial, cultural, religious and economic backgrounds to the South African National Gallery. There, they challenged stereotypes and connected across divides, countering the legacies of Apartheid and an increasingly fractured world. This year also marked ten years of Lalela's participation in the National Shakespeare Schools Festival. A proud moment came when one of our alumni returned to direct a production, volunteering his time to give back to the programme that launched his theatre career – a true full circle moment.

**We are proud of our 2024 Matric results: a 100% pass rate, with 70% earning Bachelor's passes and 30% Diplomas.**

Many of our alumni are now teachers, designers, artists, health professionals, lawyers and entrepreneurs, building the kinds of homes and communities they once imagined in our classrooms.

Our 2024 theme, The Art of Ses'fikile (We Have Arrived), captures what this milestone means: fifteen years of growth, learning and transformation. Through every challenge and triumph, one truth remains – people make Lalela possible.

To our donors, community supporters and the Lalela team, thank you for carrying this vision forward. And to our learners, our greatest teachers, we celebrate your resilience, brilliance and light. You are the reason Lalela continues to grow.

In gratitude,  
**Andrea and Firdous**



**Firdous Hendricks**  
Executive Director



Art became a language that transcended words; a space where children could dream, connect and develop life skills.

## LALELA

*la-le-la*

Lalela is an isiZulu word that means **“to listen”**, and it is at the heart of what we do. By listening to children’s stories and each community’s needs, we are able to understand the challenges and, in turn, provide creative solutions and a way forward.



# Our story

Fifteen years ago, Lalela began with just twenty learners in Imizamo Yethu during the 2010 Soccer World Cup. From those humble beginnings, our weekly after-school arts classes have reached over 58,000 young people across the Western Cape, Gauteng, Limpopo and Zimbabwe.

We create safe, creative spaces where children can explore, express and grow during the crucial after-school hours. Starting as early as age six, our learners stay connected to us through Matric and increasingly beyond it, as our alumni carry Lalela’s lessons into their studies, careers and communities.

Over the years, we have also used art as a powerful tool to build social cohesion across race, gender and economic differences, fostering understanding

and connection where it is most needed. This experience has helped us shape thoughtful ways of working with learners affected by trauma, using creativity to strengthen resilience and open new pathways for growth and possibility.

At the heart of our approach is a curriculum that bridges the arts with academics and life skills, nurturing creative confidence and guiding young people to imagine and build meaningful futures.

*“Lalela’s programmes are not only about making art, but about building confidence, resilience and problem-solving abilities. The art lessons are connected to real-life themes, helping develop learners emotionally, socially and creatively. Through creative expression, learners are encouraged to explore their thoughts, emotions and ideas in a safe and supportive environment. Lalela inspires learners to believe in their potential and to use their creativity to achieve their goals and make positive contributions to their communities.”*

**MARK OPPELT, SENIOR ART FACILITATOR**



ANTHONEY PANSEGRUW © IMPACT STORIES

# A journey to self-discovery

Anthony joined Lalela in 2011 during his fifth year at Sentinel Primary and remained with the programme throughout primary and high school. After graduating, he completed an internship with the organisation.

“Making friends didn’t come easily. I often felt out of place, as if thinking differently meant standing apart. I learnt early on that depending on myself was safer than trusting others, because trust, where I came from, wasn’t easily given. Then I found Lalela. There, I discovered friendship and belonging – people who thought like me, who were kind, and who made me feel seen. The air was always alive with laughter, bright ideas, and the comforting smell of peanut butter and jam. Looking back, I can see myself at that school desk, smiling softly at the memory. A gentle reminder of how far I’ve come, and where it all began.”

“What stood out most during my time at Lalela were the facilitators. Their care, guidance, and almost motherly support played a pivotal role during my adolescence. The community they created, especially within the programme, gave me a sense of safety and belonging. It became a space where I could express myself

freely, explore creativity, and develop the confidence to build and create beyond what I thought was possible.”

One of the most impactful parts of his journey was the Heart Maps programme. “It encouraged deep self-reflection, looking back at where I’d been, where I was, and where I wanted to go. It became a personal blueprint that helped shape my ambitions and continues to guide me today.”

## Where is he now?

Today, Anthony works as a Senior Marketing Manager for a leading UK cybersecurity organisation, Opliciti. His role focuses on communicating the company’s vision, creating data-driven strategies, and educating businesses on the importance of cybersecurity. “I develop go-to-market initiatives that amplify brand presence and help organisations of all sizes adopt safer, more innovative digital practices.”

Reflecting on his journey, Anthony says, “Looking back, I can see how

Lalela’s teachings, particularly its focus on entrepreneurship through the arts, built the foundation for my professional journey. The principles I learnt there continue to influence my work, merging creativity with strategic thinking. I often say that a single shape can transform the outcome of a product. That idea was born from my time with Lalela, from exploring beyond the circle or the square and seeing not just what something is, but what it can become.”

Ultimately, Anthony attributes much of his success to Lalela. **“It was instrumental in shaping who I am today. Any child who joins this programme joins a journey of self-discovery; a journey towards a vision that’s waiting to be realised.”**



*“I’ve learnt the importance of appreciating every stage of the process, the small moments, the learning and the growth that happens along the way. Lalela has taught me that creativity is not only about the outcome; it is about the journey. That journey is where the memories, meaning and transformation truly happen.”*

**THULANI PRINCE MLANGENI, FACILITATOR,  
JOHANNESBURG**

# The Lalela methodology

At Lalela, creativity is the starting point for learning and growth.

Our methodology, in development since 2010, connects the arts to everything important in a child’s life, from academics to critical life skills. **Ideas, Art and Music (I AM)** form the foundation of every Lalela curriculum, reminding learners of their own potential and agency: I AM capable, creative and full of possibility.

Grounded in ongoing needs assessments, our approach is strengthened by facilitator training and deep community

partnerships. Experiential learning allows knowledge to be gained through participation and reflection, and learners are supported to explore, innovate and grow within a safe, consistent environment. Our model recognises that every child has something to teach and something to learn. Lalela’s model continues to create meaningful and lasting impact beyond the classroom, shaping futures through the transformative power of creativity.

## Our values

- A** Always inspire with creativity
- R** Reimagine challenge as opportunity
- T** Trust we can be Trailblazers of change

*“Lalela has touched many learners and changed the way they view life in general. I have been a facilitator at Lalela for the full 15 years of its existence, and in my experience, I have seen learners dream of changing their lives - and then succeed in doing it. Learners have become confident and hopeful because Lalela has provided a safe space for them, creating a sense of belonging and identity.”*

**TANDILE MAKHABENI, COORDINATOR AND FOUNDATION PHASE HEAD, CAPE TOWN**

Lalela supports and is aligned with these Sustainable Development Goals:



# Why the arts?

Research proves that arts education enriches the lives of students, increasing their academic, social, mental and economic well-being over the long-term. Lalela's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) efforts have affirmed these findings, demonstrating that arts education contributes to six key outcomes crucial for life and academic success.



## Outcomes



### Academic achievement

Students engaged in the arts are five times less likely to drop out of school and three times more likely to graduate from college, leading to better career prospects. For Lalela's students, arts education boosts attendance, motivation and academic success, with these students consistently outperforming their peers on standardised tests.



### Critical problem-solving

Art students continuously re-evaluate their work, developing advanced problem-solving skills by adapting to new perspectives or materials. This process fosters patience and innovative thinking, equipping students to approach challenges with a unique perspective that is crucial for solving complex problems, both in and out of the classroom.



### Communication & collaboration

Arts education immerses students in collaborative projects like painting murals or performing skits, which enhance their teamwork skills. By navigating each other's strengths and weaknesses, students learn to listen actively and interpret social cues, building the communication skills necessary for effective collaboration in all areas of life.



### Grit & perseverance

Students in the arts receive constant feedback, learning that it is a tool for growth. Through persistent practice and revision, they develop the grit to refine their work and embrace criticism. This resilience, fostered in the arts, translates into academic success and perseverance in all aspects of life.



### Creativity & innovation

Arts education centres on cultivating creativity and innovation. Students are encouraged to explore multiple solutions and try new approaches, fostering a mindset open to experimentation. This creative thinking is foundational to innovation, equipping students with the skills needed to thrive in a competitive, ever-evolving world.



### Confidence & leadership

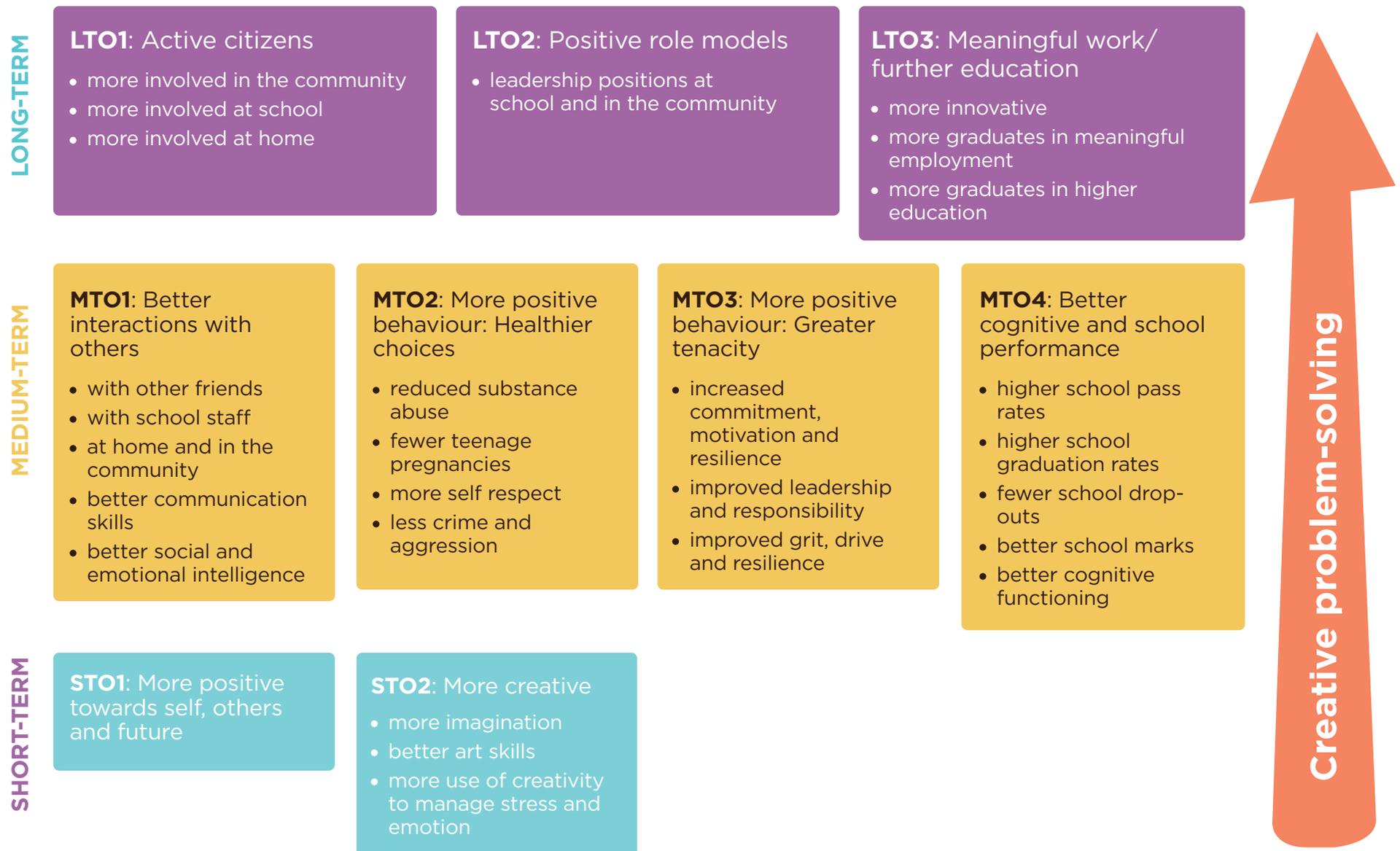
Presenting their work, whether through exhibitions or performances, instils a sense of accomplishment in art students. This experience strengthens their confidence, helping them develop a strong sense of identity and the ability to express their opinions. These qualities are essential for effective leadership within their communities.

# Our Theory of Change

Lalela’s Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning model measures the short and long-term impact of our work. Developed collaboratively and grounded in real experience, it is fully embedded in our daily practice.

Our Theory of Change is rooted in the understanding that when young people develop creativity, critical thinking, confidence and a sense of purpose, they are able to shape their own futures and contribute meaningfully to the social and economic growth of their communities.

## Indicators



## 2024 THEME

# The Art of Ses'fikile

Ses'fikile, meaning “We have arrived” reflected a year of presence, self-recognition and growth.

It captured the essence of what it means to feel fully arrived after fifteen years of Lalela and see the long-term impact of our work as our children grow into confident young adults who carry the programme's lessons into their lives, studies and communities. For our learners, too, Ses'fikile represented that same journey of becoming: recognising how far they have come, finding their voice, and standing firmly in their place in the world.

*“Ses'fikile, to me, means we have done incredible work and the results are showing. Through trying times, failures and achievements we can say that we now see the fruits of Lalela's work.”*

**TANDILE MAKHABENI, COORDINATOR AND FOUNDATION PHASE HEAD, CAPE TOWN**



### Term 1: The Art of: | AM (Ideas, Art and Music)

The year began with a focus on self-discovery and confidence through art-making. Learners explored identity, curiosity and creative expression, using projects like Positive Affirmation Portraits, inspired by the Johari Window, to challenge negative self-talk with self-belief and celebrate their individuality and strengths.

### Term 2: The Art of: We Connect

Learners explored connection and belonging by creating collaborative artworks that symbolise unity and the interconnectedness within their communities. Through the Circle of Connection project, they discovered the value of empathy, communication and shared purpose, recognising how their voices contribute to the collective.

### Term 3: The Art of: | ACT (Imagination, Activation, Collaboration, Transformation)

Learners applied their creativity to take meaningful action, focusing on initiative, leadership and using the arts to respond to challenges in their communities. In Reimagined Community, they participated in local clean-ups and used salvaged materials to create fantasy landscapes and characters, representing how they hoped their communities could look and feel when shaped by collective care.

### Term 4: The Art of: We Shine

The final term celebrated collective achievement and growth. Learners reflected on how far they had come as individuals and as part of a community, and shared their learnings through exhibitions, performances and acts of generosity. Through My Safety Bubble, they explored what it means to feel safe and supported, identifying the environments and relationships that help them thrive. This reflection deepened their sense of belonging and confidence as they stepped forward together.



# A place to thrive

Demi joined Lalela in Grade 3 and stayed until Matric, the final year of high school. She credits Lalela with giving her hope and the belief that she could aspire to more than her circumstances.

Throughout those years, Demi was a consistent participant in Lalela’s after-school educational arts programme, which she remembers as a space where she could thrive.

“What I really loved about Lalela was how fun and inclusive it always was,” Demi recalls. “Even if you weren’t necessarily good at art or the typical creative stuff, it was much bigger than that. Everyone was welcome. There was always a sense of community and laughter.”

That sense of belonging, along with creative expression through making art, left an indelible mark. Demi remembers how Lalela opened her eyes to new possibilities.

“Lalela showed me there’s more to life than where you grow up. It gave me perspective, hope and the belief that I could aspire to something beyond what I could see.”

One of her favourite memories is from Grade 12, when she worked on

a large group poster. “I was having a really tough day,” she shares, “but the teamwork and jokes completely lifted my spirit. That moment really stuck with me. It showed me how one experience or connection can change a person’s entire life path.”

## Where is she now?

After Matric, Demi went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Cape Town (UCT) and later completed a Postgraduate Certificate in Education at Varsity College. Her passion for education led her to the classroom.

“I saw first-hand as a tutor how good teachers can change lives,” Demi says. “That’s something I’ve always wanted to be part of.”

Demi is a role model in her community and is living proof of how Lalela’s educational arts programmes enable young people to gain confidence, resilience and the skills needed

to create productive futures for themselves. From a Grade 3 learner discovering her voice to an educator inspiring the next generation, Demi’s journey reflects Lalela’s work of nurturing confident, resilient young people who go on to lead and contribute meaningfully to their communities.



# Our 2024 impact



*“Lalela’s spirit is dynamic awesomeness! Because every moment is an opportunity to spark creativity, nurture confidence and empower young minds to see possibilities where others see limitations.”*

**VIKA MJOKA, CENTRE MANAGER, JOHANNESBURG**

**58K+**

*Learners have experienced Lalela’s life-changing arts curriculum to date*

**2,709**

*Learners attend Lalela per week, with 77 weekly classes*

**32**

*Number of low-fee, no-fee and other schools in partnership with Lalela*

**1,371**

*Teachers trained in Lalela’s Guide for Educators Working with Learners Affected by Trauma*

**142K**

*Learners across South Africa impacted by Lalela’s trauma-informed teacher training*



## Lalela’s Trauma Guide

Drawing on our years of experience and tested methodologies, Lalela developed the Guide for Educators Working with Learners Affected by Trauma to equip teachers to create trauma-informed classrooms that help learners thrive academically. Through arts-based approaches, educators learn strategies to support students in grounding themselves, self-regulating and processing experiences, enabling them to engage fully in learning and creative exploration. By integrating these tools into everyday lessons, teachers foster safe, supportive spaces where learners can flourish despite emotional challenges.

By the end of 2024, 1,371 teachers from 628 schools had been trained, reaching over 142,000 learners across the Western Cape, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and KwaZulu-Natal. Over the coming years, we aim to expand this training to teachers in every province of South Africa.

*“Despite all the challenges our learners come across, Lalela gives them hope and the tools and motivation to become the trailblazers of change for themselves and their future generations.”*

**TANDI GAJI, ART FACILITATOR, CAPE TOWN**

# 100%

Pass rate for Lalela Matrics  
(Grade 12) final exams.

# 70%

Received a Bachelor's pass,  
allowing them to enter  
university institutions.

# 30%

Received a Diploma pass, allowing them  
to enter universities of technology,  
colleges and other tertiary institutions.



## Grade 12 exam results

All of our 2024 Matric learners passed, with 70% achieving a Bachelor's pass and 30% a Diploma pass, meaning every Lalela matriculant qualified for tertiary education. These achievements highlight the role of the arts in holistic learning, as Lalela's programmes strengthen intellectual curiosity, emotional intelligence and creative problem-solving, equipping learners to succeed across all areas of their education.

### HERE'S WHAT SOME OF OUR MATRIC GRADUATES ARE CURRENTLY DOING:

**Siyavuya Hayde Chepape** from our Maboneng Programme in Johannesburg is studying Financial Management at Tshwane University of Technology.

**Nathan Robertson**, with Lalela from Grade 4 to 12, was the top achiever at Hout Bay High and is pursuing a career in Cyber Security.

**Thimna Mpambani** from Masiphumelele earned four distinctions and is studying Finance at the University of Johannesburg.

**Iminathi James**, Silikamva High's top achiever, is pursuing a degree in Mechanical Engineering.



*"I'm proud of myself for what I've accomplished. I started working hard in Grade 10, spending hours studying at the library. My environment motivated me. I come from an underprivileged community, and I want to create a future where I can support myself without struggling. My motivation came from seeing what was happening around me... I joined the Lalela Leadership Programme. That programme changed my perspective - we worked on vision boards, and I could picture where I wanted to see myself in the future."*

**NATHAN ROBERTSON, LALELA MATRICULANT**

## Western Cape

### Hout Bay:

- Hout Bay High
- Silikamva High
- Oranjekloof Primary
- Sentinel Primary

### Bonteheuwel:

- Disa Primary

### Masiphumelele:

- Ukhanyo Primary
- Masiphumelele High
- Simon's Town High

### Bertha Foundation:

- Bertha House, Mowbray - Thandokhulu High
- Bertha Retreat, Franschoek - Pniel Primary, Nondzame Primary
- Philippi Village, Philippi - Imbasa Primary School, Intsebenziswano High School, Mzamomhle Primary School, Nelson R Mandela High, Sinethemba High School

### Zeitz MOCAA:

- Dryden Street Primary
- Prestwich Street Primary
- St. Paul's Primary

### A4 Art Foundation:

- Salt River High
- Harold Cressy High

### Cape Town

- Tomorrow Trust
- One&Only Cape Town
- Investec Cape Town Art Fair
- V&A Waterfront
- Goodman Gallery

2024

# Lalela overview

- School partners
- Programmatic partners
- Strategic partners

Intentional partnerships with low-fee or no-fee schools and youth development organisations enable us to expand our reach and position Lalela at the forefront of educational arts in Southern Africa. These partnerships strengthen our ability to demonstrate the arts as a catalyst for academic achievement, socio-economic progress and innovation.

## Zimbabwe

### Bulawayo

- Zara's Centre

## Limpopo

### Thohoyandou

- Thohoyandou Secondary School

## Gauteng

### Lalela Centre for Arts and Innovation

- Busy Bee Academy
- City Rand College
- Destiny Girls College
- Doornfontein High
- Jeppe Girls High
- Johannesburg Polytech Institute
- JW All Saints College
- Metropolitan College
- Phumelela College

### Johannesburg

- Tomorrow Trust

## Western Cape, South Africa



### Imizamo Yethu

Imizamo Yethu (IY), meaning “our efforts” in isiXhosa, is where Lalela began in 2010 with informal after-school workshops following the Soccer World Cup. Now home to around 40,000 residents, IY has a vibrant community of youth from across the continent. Our work here bridges cultural divides and creates inclusive spaces where young people can learn, express and connect.

**School partners:** Oranjekloof Moravian Primary, Silikamva High

*“The combination of poverty and high population density creates an environment conducive to many societal ills, putting many of our learners under severe stress and leading to psychological trauma. This is where an organisation like Lalela comes in. Their after-school arts programme not only teaches children art techniques but also acts as a stress relieving mechanism for those who are part of it. It also aids their academic development, especially language. Their behaviour also improves, with us getting little to no complaints about the learners.”*

**RYAN CROUSE, ORANJEKLOOF MORAVIAN PRIMARY PRINCIPAL**

### Hangberg

Perched on the mountain slopes above Hout Bay harbour, Hangberg is a community bound by resilience and pride. Despite facing social and economic challenges, parents and youth alike are deeply committed to growth and opportunity. Lalela has become part of that movement, with learners’ strong connection to the land and sea shaping art that advocates for belonging and change.

**School partners:** Sentinel Primary, Hout Bay High

### Masiphumelele

Meaning “let us succeed” in isiXhosa, Masiphumelele is home to some of Lalela’s most determined and creative learners. Since 2011, this community’s youth have impressed with their ambition and artistry, making the most of every opportunity to learn and thrive through the arts. In 2024, we had the privilege of partnering with Masi Sports, whose support has enabled us to sustain and strengthen our long-standing impact in the community.

**School partners:** Ukhanyo Primary, Masiphumelele High

### Bonteheuwel

Launched in 2018 at Disa Primary, Lalela in Bonteheuwel represents a true community partnership. Despite facing daily challenges of violence and limited opportunity, this Cape Flats community lives out the spirit of ubuntu – “I am because you are.” Parents, shop owners and teachers actively support our work, creating a shared commitment to nurturing their youth.

**School partner:** Disa Primary

### A4 Arts Foundation

Our partnership with A4 Arts Foundation offers a creative home for Lalela’s high school learners from inner-city schools. A4’s experimental space invites curiosity, collaboration and serious play, connecting learners with artists, writers and curators who expand their ways of seeing and thinking. Together, we explore bold ideas, new perspectives and creative possibilities that shape confident, thoughtful young voices.

**School partners:** Salt River High, Harold Cressy High

## Western Cape, South Africa



### Bertha Retreat, Cape Winelands

Since 2019, Lalela's programme at Bertha Retreat offers a creative home for children from Pniel and Languedoc. The youth are proud, curious and driven, and the classroom has become a space that celebrates heritage, nurtures possibility and builds social cohesion across these diverse communities.

**School partners:** Nondzame Primary, Pniel Primary

### Philippi Village

Opened in 2020, our classroom at Philippi Village sits in a bustling Community Development Hub that encourages creativity and entrepreneurship. Learners from surrounding schools are confident, expressive and full of ideas, turning artistic exploration into tools for innovation and self-expression.

**School partners:** Imbasa Primary, Intsebenziswano High, Mzamomhle Primary, Nelson Mandela High, Sinethemba High

### Bertha House, Mowbray

In partnership with the Bertha Foundation, Lalela launched its Bertha House classroom in 2022. Surrounded by activists, educators and storytellers, our learners from Thandokhulu High are encouraged to think critically, express creatively and engage as active citizens through art.

**School partner:** Thandokhulu High



### Zeitz MOCAA

Our partnership with the Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art, launched in 2018, brings the arts to learners from inner-city schools across Cape Town. Experiencing world-class exhibitions and creating art in a museum setting gives learners confidence and pride, showing them that their creativity belongs in spaces of significance.

**School partners:** Dryden Street Primary, Prestwich Primary, St Paul's Primary

*"Attending classes in the largest art museum in Africa is a great benefit for our learners. They have seen and done things they would not have been able to in our school. They get to be in a safe space, where there is access to resources."*

**JOE-MARI THERON, DRYDEN STREET PRIMARY TEACHER**

## Gauteng, South Africa



### Lalela Centre for Arts and Innovation, Johannesburg

In Johannesburg's inner city, Lalela provides a creative refuge for learners from diverse backgrounds. Despite daily challenges, these young people are bold, entrepreneurial and full of drive. Our programmes foster expression and innovation, empowering learners to turn ideas into action. Through our partnership with the Tomorrow Trust, Saturday workshops extend this opportunity to learners from Soweto and Diepsloot.

**School partners:** Busy Bee Academy, City Rand College, Destiny Girls College, Doornfontein High, Jeppe Girls High, Johannesburg Polytech Institute, JW All Saints College, Metropolitan College, Phumelela College

*“Lalela has cemented its position of empathy, value and involvement within our communities. We see this through how communities regard Lalela as a changemaker during normal times and an empathetic partner during times of difficulty. Lalela brings hope to thousands of families within communities.”*

**VIKA MJOKA, CENTRE MANAGER, JOHANNESBURG**

## Limpopo, South Africa

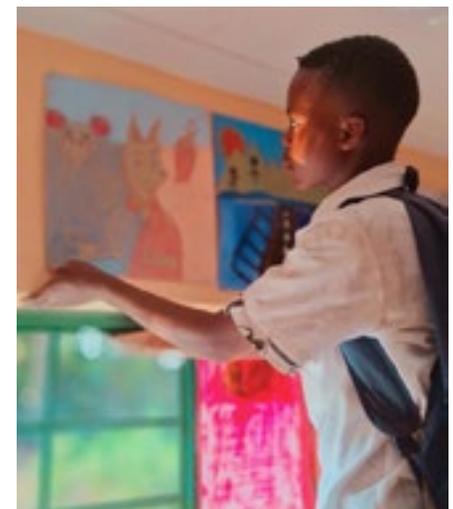
### Thohoyandou Secondary School

In 2024, Lalela expanded to Limpopo, launching a new project in Thohoyandou, a homecoming led by alumna Makhadzi Livhadi. After attending Lalela in Johannesburg, she returned to Limpopo determined to bring the programme to her community. Her call to action - “Lalela made a great impact in my life, and I am who I am because of it.” - inspired the opening of a new classroom at her former school. Today, 60 learners participate in the programme, discovering their voices and imagining new possibilities for their futures.

**School partner:** Thohoyandou Secondary

*“What excites me about Lalela is the light it continues to spread. Since it began, this light has grown brighter, bringing change, healing, and transformation through creativity. I have seen Lalela's impact in the way many learners express themselves with confidence and creativity. The community has become more open to art as a tool for growth and healing. Personally, Lalela has helped me grow as a facilitator and reminded me how powerful creativity can be in changing lives. I believe the arts remind learners that they are more than their background or challenges; that they are the creators of their own stories and futures. Art heals what words sometimes can't express and gives them hope for what lies ahead.”*

**VERONICA MUTHELO, LALELA ART FACILITATOR, THOHOYANDOU SECONDARY, LIMPOPO**



## Bulawayo, Zimbabwe

### Zara's Centre

Since 2017, Lalela has partnered with Zara's Centre in Bulawayo, a safe haven for orphaned and vulnerable children. Over the past seven years, we've watched our learners grow from curious primary schoolers to confident young leaders, using art to express their stories and shape their futures.





# The power of community

Siyolisi’s journey is a story of growth, transformation and the power of community. It began in 2011 when he joined Lalela as a Grade 11 student at Masiphumelele High.

“Lalela offered me so much more than just an ordinary after-school activity. It was a platform where I could learn, express myself through various forms of art, and develop the essential skill of networking. Lalela broadened my horizons, giving me a new perspective on life and helping me see the world through a different lens.”

But Lalela was more than an art programme for him. It provided a safe space, mentorship and a Leadership Programme that shaped Siyolisi into the person he is today. “The Leadership Programme, in particular, had a lasting impact on my life, teaching me how to carry myself with confidence, be a positive influence in my community and make informed decisions about my life. I learnt valuable skills that enabled me to navigate the challenges of life and take charge of my own destiny.”

In 2013, Siyolisi became Lalela’s first intern, and Loyiso Skoti became his mentor. “Loyiso’s guidance and mentorship had a profound impact on my life, making me question my own aspirations and values. I had always dreamed of making a name for myself in the corporate world as a graphic designer, but Loyiso’s influence made me realise that there was more to life than just personal success.” He asked himself, “Who will inspire and mentor the youth in my community if I don’t? If we all opt for the corporate world, who will bring about change and create opportunities for the next generation?”

In 2015, unrest in his community made it unsafe for facilitators to enter and work with learners. Lalela’s programme was at risk of being withdrawn, but Siyolisi stepped up. “I had to step in and take charge of running the programme, juggling

my responsibilities with my university studies. I was determined to keep Lalela alive, not just for my own sake, but for the sake of the young people in my community who deserved the same opportunities that I had received.” He graduated in 2016 with a degree in graphic design and continued to expand his skills, studying photography and videography at the Orms School of Photography in 2018.

Siyolisi now works as the head facilitator and co-ordinator of Lalela’s Bertha Retreat programme in Franschhoek, guiding young learners through transformative experiences in a safe and creative space.

Reflecting on his experiences, Siyolisi says, “Throughout my journey, everyone at Lalela played a pivotal role in shaping the person I am today. They allowed me to

grow, mentored me, and guided me in the right direction. I will forever be grateful for the opportunities I received through Lalela and for the community that supported me every step of the way.”

To other students, he shares this advice: “We are capable of achieving great things, no matter our strengths or backgrounds. Our circumstances should not define our future, and we should never allow ourselves to be victims of circumstance. There is a community out there that we belong to, and for me, that community is Lalela. It’s a place where we can find support, guidance and opportunities to grow and thrive. So, let’s make the most of the opportunities we have, and let’s work together to create a brighter future for ourselves and for those around us.”



# 15 Years of LALELA

LIFE-CHANGING ART



2010

Lalela started its **first informal arts classes** during the Soccer World Cup at the South African National Gallery and Iziko Lobomi in Imizamo Yethu, Hout Bay, during the June holidays.

*Holiday programmes became a core part of our work, and over the following 15 years we ran **45 programmes** across southern Africa.*

2011

**Lalela Project Trust was registered** as a nonprofit and formally began establishing its arts education model in Imizamo Yethu, Hangberg and Masiphumelele, reaching 50 learners.

As part of French artist JR's global **Inside Out Project**, Lalela learners created large-scale portraits challenging racism and harmful stereotypes. Displayed across Cape Town, the portraits amplified their voices and transformed how they were seen and how they saw themselves.



2012

Lalela launched the **Leadership Programme** in response to learners' call for positive role models.

Over 2,000 learners have taken part in Lalela in Masiphumelele since 2010



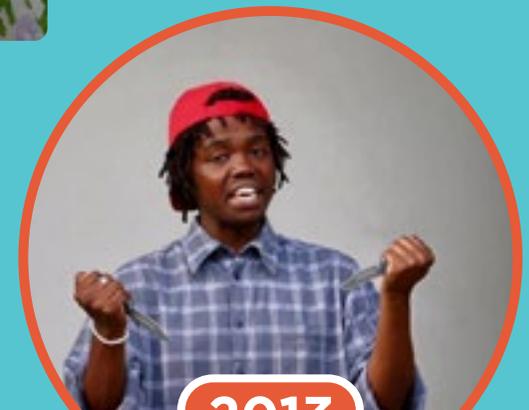
**Archbishop Desmond Tutu** painted a mural with Lalela on World AIDS Day at the Tutu Centre in Masiphumelele, home to one of our founding programmes.



Lalela high school students took part in the **Photography for Change workshop**, learning both the technical and social aspects of photojournalism. Their work was exhibited in their communities, with two images selected for the Cape Town Month of Photography, showing how art can open doors and help learners to tell their own stories.

2013

Lalela staged its **first Shakespeare production**, with Apendule Sixishe in the lead role.





**2014**

Lalela was commissioned by the V&A Waterfront to paint the **Breakwater Steps** in traditional Ndebele patterns, giving learners public art experience. *The steps became one of Cape Town's most photographed sites, showcasing Lalela's transformative work.*

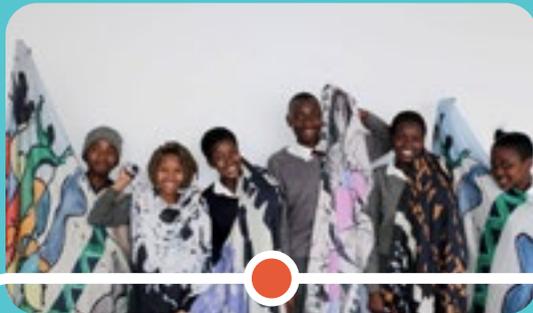
Lalela partnered with the **Cape Town International Jazz Festival**. Learners took part in skills development workshops, designed artwork for the VIP lanyards, attended the Gigs-4-Kids event, and hosted artists at the CTIJF Golf Day, Prizegiving, and Auction.



**2015**

The **Lalela Centre for Arts and Innovation** opened in Maboneng, Johannesburg.

*Since then, more than 4,000 learners have attended the centre.*



The **Lalela Scarf** was launched to support our after-school arts programmes. Each scarf features original learner artwork, with all profits donated to Lalela.

*Starting with 27 girls in Hout Bay, the Female Empowerment Programme has grown to 70 participants across four communities, helping more girls complete high school and continue their studies.*



Lalela launched the **Female Empowerment Programme** in response to high school dropout rates among girls.



Lalela participated in its **first Cape Town Art Fair**, exhibiting learner work alongside top artists and raising funds through Lalela Scarves. Alumni led the Kids 4 Kids art tours, making the fair accessible to school children. *It's become a yearly highlight of creativity and impact.*



**2016**

Hout Bay High learners created a **stop motion animation honouring children that have been victims of violence**. The film was shown during *We Cannot Be Silent* at the Castle of Good Hope, an exhibition that raised awareness about violence against women and children. The work was received with deep emotion, showing learners the power of art to drive change. *Many of these learners have continued their advocacy against gender-based violence.*

2017



Lalela partnered with Zara's Centre to provide **arts education in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe**, for children from Grade 1 to Grade 5. *Those same learners continued with Lalela into high school.*

Lalela began training teachers in its **Heart Maps curriculum**, developed in 2011 to address tensions between learners from diverse backgrounds and foster social cohesion.



Between 2017 and 2019, 1,358 teachers from 983 schools were trained in Heart Maps, reaching over 171,000 learners.

2018



The **Community Chest** awarded Lalela with the Impumelelo Social Innovation Platinum Award, recognising our creative solutions to social challenges. We were selected from 28 shortlisted NGOs.

2019

The **Institute for Justice and Reconciliation** awarded Lalela the Reconciliation Award for celebrating the arts and recognising people who pursue justice and reconciliation through imagination and creativity.



When the world went into lockdown due to **COVID-19**, Lalela became a beacon of hope for young people and their families. We provided **food aid and launched Lalela Virtual**, a WhatsApp classroom where learners used everyday items to create art, meditated, and played word and emoji games. Families joined in, finding joy, connection and creativity in a time of uncertainty.



2021

During the COVID-19 lockdown, Lalela developed a **resource guide to help educators create trauma-informed classrooms** where learners could thrive – academically and emotionally.

2020



Lalela partnered with the **Give Her A Crown campaign**, where learners designed and exchanged crowns to explore empathy, identity and equality, addressing gender-based violence and stereotypes.

**Training for trauma-informed classrooms** began, and by 2024, 1,371 teachers from 628 schools were trained, reaching over 142,000 learners across four provinces. *Lalela aims to expand this training to every province in South Africa.*



Lalela learners created a **collage-style mural at the Denis Goldberg House of Hope** in Hout Bay, inspired by his life and values.



Lalela was selected as one of only 15 global projects featured in Louis Vuitton's **Louis 200 campaign**, celebrating creativity and young visionaries.

2022



Lalela launched a new programme at **Bertha House** in Cape Town.

For the first time, Lalela's **work in education was recognised** when a paper on Lalela Virtual was showcased at the Southern African Comparative and History of Education Society (SACHES) annual conference. The paper highlighted how online arts classes help learners strengthen English skills, build confidence and foster positive relationships.



Learner artwork featured in the (then) new illuminated "Cape Town" sign at the V&A Waterfront, turning each letter into a visual story and giving young artists a major public platform.



2023

Our high school learners took part in the exhibition **A Gaze From Within** at Zeitz MOCAA, responding to the acclaimed *When We See Us* exhibition. This was the first time that student artwork was exhibited beyond the museum's education department.



Lalela launched a new project in Limpopo, inspired and led by alumna **Makhadzi Livhadi**. Having joined Lalela in Grade 7 and overcome many obstacles, Makhadzi worked with Lalela staff to establish the programme at her former high school. She now studies Industrial and Organisational Psychology, driven to open doors for young people in her region.

Lalela received the **award for Best Arts and Culture Programme** at the 21st Cultural Affairs Awards, presented by the Western Cape Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport.



2024



Every single Lalela Matriculant received **Bachelor and Diploma passes**, making them eligible to enter tertiary education.

From 50 learners in 2011 in the Western Cape, Lalela now facilitates nearly 3,000 learners across the Western Cape, Gauteng, Limpopo and Zimbabwe.



## APHENDULE SIXISHE © IMPACT STORIES

# Finding a home in theatre

Aphendule’s journey shows how creativity and dedication can transform passion into purpose. Growing up with a love for performance, he discovered the stage through Lalela, where he developed not only artistic skills but resilience, leadership and a passion for teaching others.

“I joined Lalela in 2012 when I was in high school. My first performance was at the Shakespeare Schools Festival in 2013. My hands were trembling as I stepped onto the stage for the first time. Claire Elizabeth Baker, our director, always reminded us that nerves were good. For me, there was no option but to do well. The moment the audience clapped, I felt exhilaration and knew I had found one of my greatest loves.”

Over the years, Aphendule took on protagonist roles, assisted with directing, and managed sound and lighting at various theatres – including Artscape, Baxter, and Fugard. Each production brought new challenges and opportunities to grow, from performing under pressure to mastering technical aspects of theatre.

Lalela also nurtured his creativity behind the scenes. He contributed to set

and prop design, learning to transform recycled materials into storytelling tools. Between 2013 and 2020, he participated in seven Shakespeare Schools Festivals, first as a Lalela learner and later as an alumnus, volunteering his time to give back to the project he had come to call home. Each experience deepened his love for theatre and collaboration. In 2024, he directed his first Shakespeare production for Lalela, taking the helm of Macbeth, a role he had performed as a student – bringing his journey full circle.

Aphendule matriculated in 2014 as valedictorian, the top academic achiever in his year, proving that his dedication extended beyond the stage.

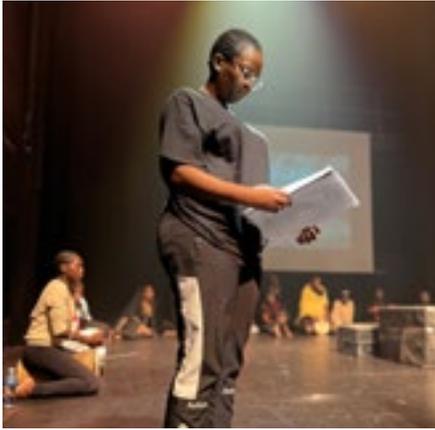
He now works as a theatre practitioner with Educasions Theatre Company, performing plays for schools across the Western Cape to help learners understand their studies. This ignited a

new passion: mentoring younger learners and sharing the transformative power of theatre.

**Reflecting on his journey,** Aphendule says: “Lalela gave me more than artistic skills – it gave me confidence, a sense of purpose and a home in theatre. Moving from participant to director taught me responsibility and the joy of shaping others’ experiences. Seeing a production come together and watching audiences respond is exhilarating.”

Today, Aphendule dreams of continuing his work in theatre and education, inspiring the next generation. His words to youth are simple but powerful: “Embrace your nerves, commit to your passion, and give your all to what you love. With dedication, creativity and resilience, you can transform your talent into something meaningful – not just for yourself, but for those around you.”





# Special programmes

## Leadership

Lalela's Leadership Programme nurtures emerging student leaders by equipping them with the knowledge, skills and values to become role models in their schools and communities. The young leaders are Grade 10 and 11 learners from Lalela's partner high schools in Hout Bay: Silikamva High in Imizamo Yethu and Hout Bay High in Hangberg. We are incredibly proud of our 2024 graduates, who have shown the power of youth to drive positive change, inspire their peers and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

## Shakespeare

Lalela learners dazzled at the annual Shakespeare Schools Festival South Africa with a captivating performance of Macbeth.

The festival offers a transformative platform for our learners to hone not only their acting skills but also their confidence, discipline, communication and collaboration, qualities that extend far beyond the stage.

The path to opening night was a rigorous one, with learners rehearsing every week for months, balancing schoolwork and other commitments with remarkable dedication. For many, rehearsals became more than preparation, it became a space of refuge – a place to process pain and transform it into art. That spirit continues to define Lalela's productions – layered, honest and deeply human.

What made this year's

performance particularly special was the involvement of Lalela alumni in key production roles. Apendule Sixishe, a former Lalela learner who took part in several of our previous Shakespeare productions, returned as director. Two other alumni also stepped in as stage manager and sound and lighting technician, volunteering their time to guide and mentor the next generation of performers. Their return to the stage not only demonstrated the lasting influence of the programme but also showed how Lalela's creative community continues to grow and give back.

All props were designed and produced by learners during our holiday art programmes, blending visual art with theatre to create a truly Lalela performance. The result was a bold, imaginative production that captured Lalela's spirit of creativity and collaboration.





## Civic engagement

### HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

Observed on March 21, this day reminds us of the sacrifices made for freedom and equality in South Africa.

At Bertha Retreat, young people from Lalela programmes and the surrounding communities participated in a variety of workshops and activities. Facilitated by Lalela staff, youth explored the meaning of human rights, the responsibilities that come with them, and the importance of voting (ahead of the national elections).

In Johannesburg, Lalela Maboneng participated in the Constitution Hill Human Rights Festival, where children created posters for the “We the People” march. The posters addressed critical themes,

including gender-based violence, LGBTQI rights, children’s rights and migration. The festival celebrated the sacrifices of those who fought for freedom, particularly during the Sharpeville Massacre of 1960, and showcased artistic expression through theatre, poetry and film.

In Bonteheuwel, learners engaged in a talk with local skills development practitioner Gillian Grootboom, exploring human rights and encouraging dialogue about their role in society.

Across all sites, Human Rights Day celebrations highlighted the importance of understanding and acting on one’s rights, fostering civic engagement and inspiring young people to contribute meaningfully to their communities.

### MANDELA DAY

Lalela learners celebrated Nelson Mandela’s legacy by painting a colourful mural at Sentinel School in Hout Bay. The mural symbolised Mandela’s values of unity, resilience and hope.

Through discussions about his life and contributions, learners reflected on how his principles can guide their actions in their communities. Special thanks to our Stanford University interns, Sam Dizon and Adam Golomb, for leading the event and supporting the learners’ creative engagement.

### WOMEN’S DAY

Women’s Day commemorates the 1956 march of women to the Union Buildings in Pretoria, a powerful demonstration of the impact of women standing together for their rights and equality. In the spirit of that legacy, Lalela hosted an inspiring afternoon that created a cross-generational space where professional women from various sectors connected with Lalela’s Grade 8 girls. Through art and interactive activities, participants explored identity, talents, challenges and dreams, fostering mentorship, learning and growth while celebrating the strength and potential of young women.



## HERITAGE DAY

Heritage Day at Freedom Square in Bonteheuwel brought together Lalela learners and local youth to celebrate their heritage. The event offered opportunities for the learners to connect with culture and express themselves through dance, art and discussions on the value of diversity. Participants created artworks reflecting their families, communities and traditions, telling stories that showcase the richness of Bonteheuwel. Events like these help learners link creativity with heritage, deepening their understanding of the diverse world around them.

## HEART MAPS - BUILDING BRIDGES PROGRAMME:

This year, learners from six schools took part in the Heart Maps Project at the South African National Gallery. We worked with Grade 7 learners from across the city - young people from diverse racial, cultural, religious and economic backgrounds. In a country still deeply shaped by the legacies of Apartheid, this project created a rare space for learners who might never have met normally, to get to know one another's hearts and challenge harmful stereotypes.

In response to an increasingly hostile global climate, this social-cohesion initiative fostered empathy, understanding and ubuntu among youth. Through the transformative power of art, it broke down barriers of culture, gender, religion and socio-economic differences, creating opportunities for dialogue, mutual respect and genuine connection. By encouraging young people to see the world through each other's eyes, the project helped build bridges between diverse communities and nurture a generation that values unity and mutual respect.

## Female Empowerment

Lalela's Female Empowerment Programme remains one of our most impactful initiatives, designed to encourage young women to stay in school, build confidence in their academic abilities, and imagine futures beyond societal expectations. Each week, 70 Grade 8 learners took part in the programme across Masiphumelele High, Silikamva High, Hout Bay High and Bertha House, engaging in discussions, creative workshops and activities that nurture self-awareness, confidence and mutual support.

In 2024, the learners explored new worlds through enriching visits to Zeitz MOCAA, Norval Foundation and Goodman Gallery, where they connected art with their own sense of identity and possibility. The programme concluded with a joyful graduation at Clay Café in Hout Bay, a celebration of their growth and achievements. The event reflected the spirit of the programme: a safe and affirming space where young women develop confidence, community and courage to define their own paths.



# Learning to take up space

When Okuhle joined Lalela in Grade 8 at Silikamva High School in Hout Bay, she was a quiet and thoughtful girl, newly arrived from Willowvale in the Eastern Cape. Growing up in Imizamo Yethu meant facing many challenges – limited opportunities, constant uncertainty and a community where so many dreams seem to fade after Matric.

“Being surrounded by such experiences made me fear for my own future,” she recalls. “But Lalela helped me realise that while the communities we come from shape how we see the world, they don’t have to define our future.”

Through Lalela, she discovered that art could be more than creativity – it could be a way to dream beyond what seemed possible. “Art gave me a voice, a space to express my hopes and fears, and a sense of belonging,” she says. “Lalela became more than a programme, it was a home, a safe escape from the chaos around us, and a reminder that beauty and hope can exist even in the hardest places.”

The kindness and support she found there left a lasting impression. “Everyone was so kind to one another. I remember once being unhappy with my painting, and instead of laughing, everyone offered help and advice. It was a space where we lifted each other up.” These moments shaped how she understands collaboration and community – an environment rooted in care and mutual respect.

The Female Empowerment Programme became the turning point in her story. As a shy girl who often doubted her intelligence and belonging, she found her confidence through the group’s activities and reflections. “The programme encouraged me to step out of my shell, stop dimming my light, and to embrace my voice and experiences,” she says. “I discovered that I wasn’t alone; many other girls were just like me – quiet and uncertain, but full of potential. Together, we learnt to take up space boldly.”

Meditation sessions, creative exercises and shared storytelling brought peace and connection. “Art itself demands time and patience, and that’s exactly what Lalela taught me: to approach every challenge with calmness, confidence and determination.”

## Where is she now?

Okuhle is in her final year of studying towards a Bachelor of Social Work degree at UCT. Choosing this path, she explains, came from her own experiences of inequality and hardship. “I’ve always been passionate about social justice and creating spaces where people feel seen, heard and valued,” she says. “Too often, people are taught to suppress their pain instead of confronting it. Social work allows me to help people rediscover hope, find joy again and believe in themselves.”

Looking back, she recognises Lalela as the foundation of her growth and success. “It was more than an art programme. It was a space of healing, growth and self-discovery. Lalela taught me that where you come from doesn’t define where you can go. Even when life feels tough, there’s always room to dream, hope, and to create something beautiful out of your experiences.”

Through her story, **Okuhle represents the lasting impact of Lalela’s Female Empowerment Programme**, showing how creativity and compassion can give young women the courage to shape their own paths.





# 2024 Highlights

## Lalela fundraisers: Cape Town and New York

We are grateful to all who joined our 2024 fundraisers. In Cape Town, over 100 guests attended a benefit luncheon at The Yard at the V&A Waterfront, enjoying art workshops and a vibrant performance by alumna Mbali Makhoba. Our New York fundraiser brought together supporters from across the globe, celebrating the Lalela community. These events highlight how generosity and shared vision sustain and grow Lalela's impact.

## Investec Cape Town Art Fair

Lalela made a vibrant impression at the 2024 Investec Cape Town Art Fair, with over 150 youth from our Western Cape programmes participating in exclusive Kids 4 Kids tours guided by alumni. At the Lalela stand, selected learner artworks were exhibited and sold alongside the Lalela Scarf, with proceeds supporting our programmes. Visitors also took part in an interactive activity where they shared how art impacts their lives - this made the stand a lively hub of creativity, learning and community engagement.

*"The experience showed us that art is not just art; it allows us to explore different cultures and perspectives."*

**PERCY MAREHWA, KIDS 4 KIDS ART FAIR TOUR GUIDE**



## Honest Chocolate

Lalela and Honest Chocolate partnered for a special collaboration featuring limited-edition chocolate wrappers designed by youth in our Masiphumelele programme. With only 100 slabs available, each showcased the learners' vivid imagination and unique perspectives. All proceeds went directly to supporting Lalela's educational arts programmes.

*"Despite the harsh realities of their environment, the students' artworks beautifully captured the surrounding landscapes. Learners were overjoyed to see their designs come to life!"*

**AA'ISHAH SATCHIPIA, MARKETING COORDINATOR AT HONEST CHOCOLATE**



## H&M South Africa

H&M South Africa launched a special Role Models kidswear collection in partnership with Lalela, featuring t-shirts and hoodies designed by Lalela learners. The artwork celebrated the creativity of young minds and was inspired by the book series by 11-year-old H&M Role Model, Bontle, from Pretoria. Proceeds from the collection supported Lalela's after-school educational arts programmes.

*"This collaboration celebrated the imagination and creativity of children, showing the power of the arts to inspire hope and help young people dream big."*

**CAROLINE NELSON, H&M SOUTH AFRICA COUNTRY MANAGER**



## Johnathan Butler

Lalela welcomed Grammy-nominated musician and board member Jonathan Butler during his birthday celebration in Cape Town. Butler and his guests visited learners from our Hout Bay programme at Oranjekloof School and Sentinel Primary. They experienced a Lalela classroom first-hand, participating in a collaborative art activity where they decorated a Lalela tote bag with uplifting messages.

# Monitoring & evaluation

**Lalela carefully monitors the efficacy of our programmes through a combination of methods, including:**

- daily attendance tracking,
- monthly facilitator reflections,
- curriculum and programmatic reviews,
- alumni tracking, and
- ongoing feedback from partners and communities.

In our 2024 curriculum reviews, 94% of learners reported that they had learnt something new from the curriculum, 82% felt more positive about themselves and their future, and 87% indicated that they had a better understanding of who they are.

**Feedback from our partners shows the tangible impact of our programmes:**

*“Lalela provides an artistic outlet for all our children within challenging social circumstanced communities such as Disa Primary School. I have seen children making positive changes within their demeanours as well as in class.”*

**LIEZL VAN DER MERWE, DISA PRIMARY**

*“Learners gain confidence and resilience through the programme. It also improves their creative, artistic and communication skills. They get an opportunity to express themselves through art (freedom of expression). They also get an opportunity to understand themselves better and how to interact with others.”*

**MRS DALISILE, UKHANYO PRIMARY SCHOOL**





CHUMA MLINDI © IMPACT STORIES

# Finding strength in creativity

Chuma joined Lalela as one of the first Thandokhulu Secondary School learners at the Bertha House programme in Mowbray. Her peers consider her one of the founding members. She quickly discovered that Lalela offered a space unlike any other: a place to explore creativity, reflect on life and grow as a person.

“Growing up, I faced challenges at school, in my family, and within myself,” Chuma recalls. “I felt overwhelmed, struggled with low self-esteem, and often didn’t know where to turn. During Lalela sessions, we played games, meditated and spoke openly about life. Rowan, our facilitator, would give advice on how to cope, offer comfort, and remind us that everything would be okay. Through Lalela, I began to appreciate myself more, worry less, and prioritise my mental health.”

Lalela became a supportive, caring community. “My favourite part was meditation, where we reflected on the day, focused on the positives, acknowledged the negatives, and let go of whatever was heavy on our hearts. I also loved the artistic side of the programme, like painting and creative projects, which I did not have the privilege of doing growing up.”

Through Lalela, Chuma discovered that everyone has an artistic side. “I remember the first time we painted: I did not know where to start and said, ‘What will I even paint? I don’t know how.’ Rowan told me, ‘You can do it. Everyone is capable of creating art.’ That lesson stayed with me – self-expression has no rules.”

The programme helped her recognise her self-worth and express herself more freely. “Lalela taught me patience, self-love and emotional awareness. It showed me that art can be a powerful coping strategy for life’s challenges and helped me focus on my well-being.”

## Where is she now?

Today, Chuma is studying for a Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery at UCT. “I love working with and helping people. Each day, I aspire to change and save lives, make a difference in my community, and inspire others. Lalela helped me build the confidence to believe in myself and my dreams. At one point, I did not think I would be accepted into medical school. I felt unseen despite my efforts. Lalela helped me realise my worth and potential.”

For Chuma, Lalela was more than an after-school programme. “It taught me that creativity and self-reflection can help us navigate life’s challenges, and that believing in yourself is the first step to making your dreams a reality.”



At one point, I did not think I would be accepted into medical school. I felt unseen despite my efforts. Lalela helped me realise my worth and potential.



NCEDO JAKO © IMPACT STORIES

# Art as a door to growth

Ncedo joined Lalela in 2011 while at Hout Bay High School, drawn by the excitement of the first arts programme in Hout Bay – a rarity in government schools at the time. Lalela offered him a chance to explore and express emotions through different artistic mediums. “I wasn’t the greatest artist, but I wanted to test the waters and see how the experience could change my life, and it did,” he recalls.

Growing up in Imizamo Yethu presented many challenges. His mother was diagnosed with cancer in 2010 and wanted to spend her last days in the Eastern Cape. As the youngest, and with his sister finishing school, he lived alone at 16, learning to take care of himself. Financial struggles, peer pressure and limited role models added to the difficulty, and drugs and alcohol were common among peers. He often stayed at school late to avoid being alone, hitchhiked to school, and began working at nine to have pocket money like other children. Lalela became his safe space.

“My favourite memory is the Inside Out

project with JR,” he says. “It was incredible learning photography in a professional studio and seeing our work displayed at the Grand Parade. The process was tough, hiking in the heat to install it, but it bonded us and changed how people saw us. We were part of something bigger than we thought possible.” Lalela also provided access to computers, helping him research, complete university applications, and develop essential digital skills.

After high school, Ncedo received funding to study Radiography at university and graduated in 2015. He completed community service in 2016, then worked for Morten & Partners Radiologists in Cape

Town for four years, before moving to KwaZulu-Natal, marrying, and eventually migrating to New Zealand in 2022, where he had his first child. “Being a father has been the most life-changing experience, especially since I didn’t grow up with a father. I can now give my son everything I needed as a child.”

**Beyond visual arts**, the biggest lessons came from the Lalela Leadership Programme. Today, Ncedo is a union representative at his work, using the leadership and advocacy skills he gained through Lalela to support and empower others. “Lalela exposed me to different mediums of art, taught professionalism and presentation, and gave me experiences I carry into my everyday life. It showed me that creativity can be a tool for growth and transformation.”

To the youth of Lalela today, Ncedo offers this advice: “Accept challenges, but refuse to retreat. Life isn’t always easy, but having a goal – even a distant dream – is important. Work towards it, seek help, and make the most of the opportunities around you. Lalela is not just about art; it’s about hope, skills and preparing for life. You don’t need to be the best artist to benefit; take everything you can from it and use it to grow. Focus on your schoolwork and go forward with purpose. Everyone is allowed to dream. The sky is not even the limit; you can go beyond if you are willing to try and work hard. Ask for help, don’t be afraid. There are people like me who have been where you are. Learn from us and seek our guidance, we will be here for you.”





# Lalela Scarf

Lalela Scarf continues to evolve as a leading expression of our organisation's commitment to sustainability and creativity. This year, we opened up two official Lalela Scarf showrooms, one in Cape Town and the other in London.

Based on 2024 profitability, Lalela Scarf South Africa donated R436,854 (\$25,000) for the year. Lalela Scarf's line of pyjamas and scarves can be purchased in high-end retail outlets and are available for purchase in our three showrooms as well as online at [www.lalelascarf.org](http://www.lalelascarf.org), [lalelauk.com](http://lalelauk.com) and [www.lalelascarf.co.za](http://www.lalelascarf.co.za).





MARK OPPELT © IMPACT STORIES

# From learner to leader

Mark has gone from being one of Lalela’s first high school learners to becoming Senior Art Facilitator at his alma mater, Hout Bay High, earning recognition in his community as a mentor, a trusted figure to parents, and a role model for teachers.

Mark grew up in Hangberg, the small, tight-knit community in Hout Bay where Lalela first started its programme. Families in the area face high unemployment, substance abuse and gangsterism, yet a strong sense of community persists. “I never thought I would see myself where I am today,” Mark says of his recent promotion. “From my first day participating in a Lalela workshop as a learner to now leading workshops at the same school, in the same community; I can’t quite believe it.”

“What I loved most about Lalela as a student was the community. It felt like family, filled with encouragement, motivation, laughter and creativity. The facilitators cared about us as people, not just as artists. I always enjoyed exploring different art forms and learning how art can tell powerful stories. It made me realise that creativity can change the way we see the world, and Lalela wanted us to see that. Lalela taught me discipline, confidence and the importance of giving

back. Creativity showed me a way forward, and these lessons still guide me in my work and personal life.”

As both a student and facilitator, Mark has shown resilience in the face of adversity, using art as his tool for transformation. “With younger learners, I could be a bit like a child myself. With older learners, I take on a more encouraging and motivating role, both in and out of the classroom.” He has known many of these students since they were little, and these long-standing relationships deepen the impact of his teaching.

Mark’s approach as a facilitator is shaped by his own experiences. “What I hope to do is create safe and inspiring spaces where young people can see their potential and believe their voices matter. I want to nurture creativity that leads to confidence, growth and opportunity. Experiential learning can make small differences that ripple through communities. Because I’ve walked the

same path, I aim to instil self-belief, resilience and a sense of belonging. Lalela gave me direction and hope, and I want to do the same for my learners.”

He continues, “Lalela teaches that it does not matter where you come from, but where you are going. I want my learners to know that their background does not define their future. Their creativity and courage can make them doers and dreamers, not just in art, but in life. I always try to give them what Lalela once gave me – direction and hope.”



# Our people

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Andrea Kerzner

### Chief Creative Officer and Co-founder:

Sandy Tabatznik

### Programme and Commu- nications Administrator:

Melissa Jester

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Lara Stein  
Carmen Zita



## CAPE TOWN HEAD OFFICE:

### Executive Director:

Firdous Hendricks

### Senior Programmes Manager:

Nwabisa Ndongeni

### Programmes Development

**Manager:** Rowan Roman

### Events and Content Manager:

Linda Daniels

### Office Administrator:

Maxine Christians

**Interns:** Asange Tshwela,  
Avumile Mahlali, Pecinancia  
Marehwa, Simnikiwe Venge,  
Tameron Samuels

## MABONENG PRECINCT LALELA CENTRE FOR ARTS AND INNOVATION:

### Programme Manager:

Vika Mjoka

### Facilitators:

Thandiwe  
Sibanyoni, Portia Qhemekoane,

## CAPE TOWN ART FACILITATORS:

### Bertha Retreat Facilitators:

Siyolisi Bani

### Bertha Retreat Co-facilitator:

Yoliswa Bambiso

### Bonteheuvel Facilitator:

Marilyn November

### Bonteheuvel Co-facilitator:

Cheldon Booysen

### Hout Bay Programme

**Coordinator and Senior**

### Foundation Phase Facilitator:

Tandile Makhabeni

### Hout Bay Senior Facilitator:

Mark Oppelt

### Hout Bay Facilitator:

Thandi Gaji

### Hout Bay Facilitator:

Ryan Lott

### Hout Bay and Female

**Empowerment Facilitator:**

Carol Dube

### Masiphumelele Facilitator:

Phumelele Guma

### Philippi Village Coordinator

**and Senior Facilitator:**

Chuma Nozewu

### Philippi Village and Tomorrow

**Trust Facilitator:**

Siphosetu Gagela

### Zeitz MOCAA Facilitator:

Simamkele Sitwebile

### Female Empowerment

**Facilitator:** Livhuwani

Mukhondo

## ZARA'S CENTRE (ZIMBABWE)

**Facilitator:** Rebecca Gopito

## THOHOYANDOU, LIMPOPO

**Facilitator:** Veronica Muthelo

# Our sustainable FUTURE

Lalela's continued impact depends on sustainable funding and strong strategic partnerships. We are expanding our focus to include long-term grants, alongside corporate sponsorships, private donors and digital campaigns, to secure reliable support for our programmes.

Our sustainability is anchored in deep-rooted relationships within the communities we serve, including principals, teaching staff, after-school stakeholders and community leaders. These connections are strengthened through ongoing engagement in events, murals, educational programmes and student support initiatives.

We prioritise programme quality through rigorous monitoring and evaluation, tracking attendance, assessing impact via focus groups and teacher feedback, and continuously training staff to implement best practices. Each classroom, led by trained facilitators, provides experiential learning that extends beyond the school walls into the wider community.

By securing long-term funding and maintaining strong partnerships, Lalela can sustain and expand our work, nurturing creativity, critical thinking and resilience in young people across South Africa.

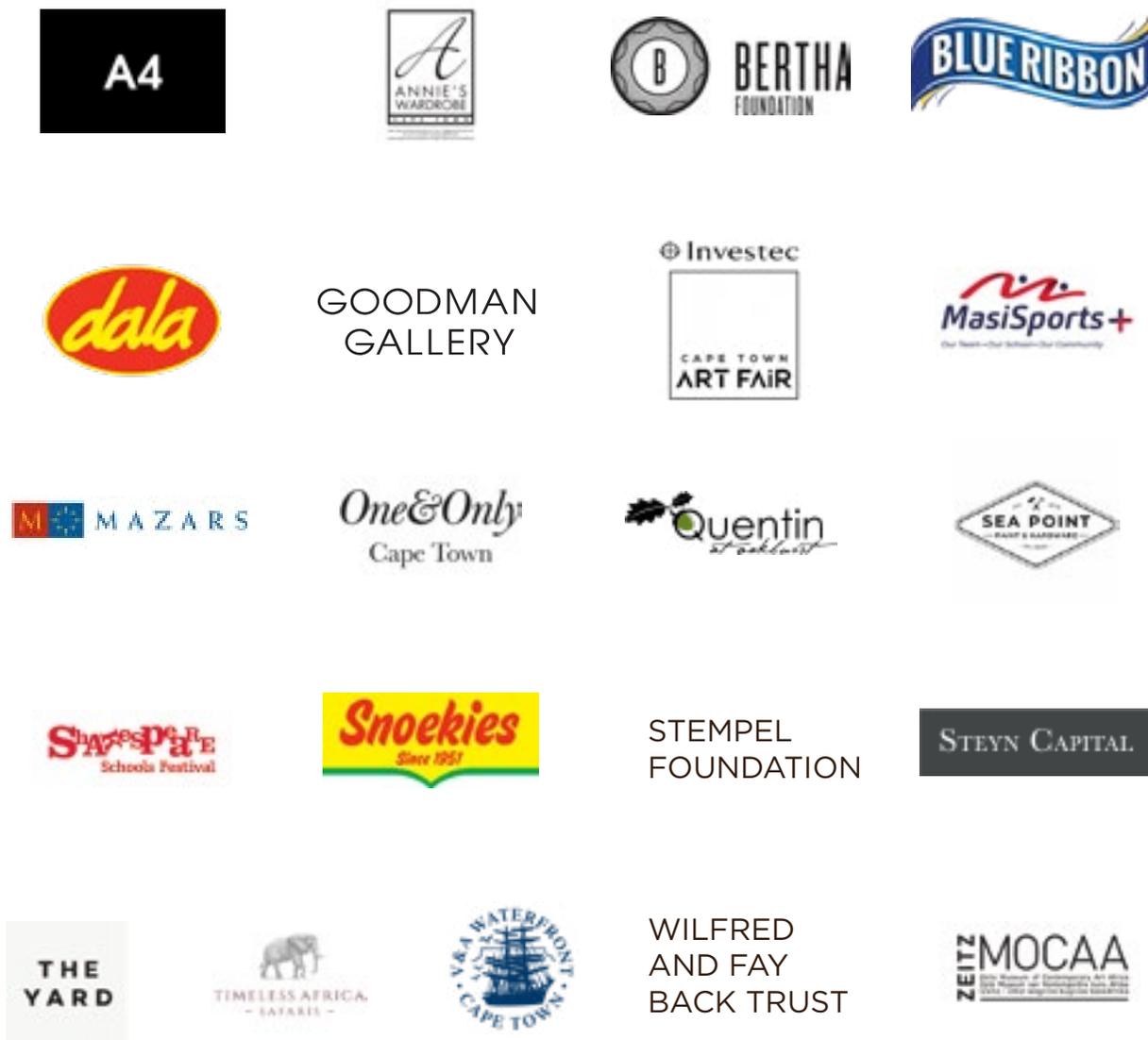
Visit [www.lalela.org](http://www.lalela.org)



# 15 Years of generosity

Our work is made possible by the generosity and trust of our partners, both longstanding and new. Their support creates lasting impact in the communities we serve and enables us to nurture the next generation through the transformative power of the arts.

## STRATEGIC PARTNERS



# Our financials

Financial summary for the year ended 29 February 2024.

## Statement of Financial Position

Figures in Rand	2024	2023
<b>Assets</b>		
Non-Current Assets		
Equipment	76,641	123,759
Other Financial assets	3,983,030	-
	4,059,671	123,759
Current Assets		
Trade and other receivables	49,680	28,060
Cash and cash equivalents	14,780,701	15,411,470
	14,830,381	15,439,530
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>18,890,052</b>	<b>15,563,289</b>
<b>Equity and Liabilities</b>		
<b>Equity</b>		
Trust capital	100	100
Accumulated surplus	17,975,671	14,635,839
	17,975,771	14,635,939
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Trade and other payables	914,281	927,350
<b>Total Equity and Liabilities</b>	<b>18,890,052</b>	<b>15,563,289</b>

## Statement of Comprehensive Income

Figures in Rand	2024	2023
Donations received	9,894,320	13,670,199
Sundry income	(550)	(381)
Operating expenses	(7,630,156)	(10,515,495)
<b>Operating surplus</b>	<b>2,288,478</b>	<b>3,154,323</b>
Investment revenue	1,051,354	737,400
<b>Surplus before taxation</b>	<b>3,339,832</b>	<b>3,891,723</b>
Taxation	-	-
<b>Surplus for the year</b>	<b>3,339,832</b>	<b>3,891,723</b>

MAZARS  
REGISTERED AUDITOR

PARTNER: NICOLA THELANDER  
REGISTERED AUDITOR  
CAPE TOWN



ESETHU VILAKAZI © IMPACT STORIES

# A calling to care for people

Esethu joined Lalela in Grade 6 as part of one of the first classes in Maboneng, Johannesburg, and stayed with the programme until Matric. From the start, Lalela became more than just an art class for her. “Lalela is not only about art – it is a place you can call home,” she says.

During school holidays, Lalela kept her engaged through creative activities that helped her develop her drawing skills and sense of self. “It helped me grow and see that nothing is impossible if you believe in yourself,” she reflects.

Growing up, Esethu faced many challenges, including being teased about her appearance and struggling with acne. “People used to call me ugly,” she recalls. “But Lalela helped me fight all of that. Now I go out proudly, wearing my beauty with confidence.”

## Where is she now?

Her time at Lalela also nurtured her compassion for others and shaped her calling to care for people. Esethu went on to study nursing at Mpilo Nursing College and now works at Charlotte Maxeke Hospital (formerly Johannesburg General Hospital).

“I love taking care of people, especially those who are vulnerable or living with mental health

conditions,” she says. “In our communities, people often call them crazy because they do not understand mental health. I want to change that – to change lives and attitudes – and that all comes from Lalela. We care.”

One of Esethu’s favourite memories is performing in Lalela’s Shakespeare programme. “Shakespeare is my passion,” she says. “It gave me the confidence to express myself and share stories with others.”

Looking back, Esethu says Lalela helped her become a confident and joyful person who always wants to make others happy. “It taught me the importance of creativity, care, and leadership,” she says. “Lalela encouraged me to listen, to create, and to see myself as a future leader of change.”

For Esethu, Lalela will always be a place of belonging. “It shaped who I am,” she says. “The love, the lessons, the laughter – I carry it all with me every day.”



*In our communities, people often call those living with mental health conditions crazy. I want to change that – to change lives and attitudes – and that all comes from Lalela. We care.*





*“The greatest transformation happens when young people realise that creativity isn’t something they do, it’s something they are. That’s where the future begins – in the imagination of the young and brave.”*

*FIRDOUS HENDRICKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR*



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