

The Unlimited Child aims to exponentially increase its ECD impact

The Unlimited Child has expanded its reach from five crèches in KwaZulu-Natal in 2008 to over 3,200 early childhood development (ECD) centres countrywide. It has impacted over one million children since inception but aims to reach many more.



Source: Supplied

In South Africa, some 64% of children who start Grade 1 will not finish school. Set against this harsh reality, The Unlimited Child aims to shift the country's future through its ECD model.

“Massive. Exponential. Shifting lives. These were the words used to describe The Unlimited Child at our inception. If a child does not have access to ECD, their potential in life will be a 3/10 with no possibility of ever reaching a 10/10, and no teacher in the world will be able to change this. Our work is urgent if we are to change our country for the better,” says Candice Potgieter, CEO of The Unlimited Child.

Investing in children is investing in future society

If the early foundations of the three 'Rs' – reading, writing and arithmetic – are not formed, a child will experience a lifetime of challenges.

“A child under the age of six holds the greatest promise for change in our society. By investing in children from a young age, we invest in a society that stands the chance to thrive in 20 years’ time,” says Potgieter.

The highly scalable expansion of the organisation has been achieved by unlocking the potential of pre-existing childminding facilities. Working with The Unlimited Child, these facilities have been transformed into well-functioning ECD centres through skills development, provision of age-appropriate toys, and training of ECD practitioners to ensure that effective learning through play takes place at these education spaces.



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Ability to scale

According to an [independent research study](#), the model has shown to have the best impact in taking children from being at risk of never being school-ready to being without a doubt school-ready.

“From the outset, our unique model was developed with an ability to scale, by being easily duplicated across any geographic context. This is why today we operate across sub-Saharan Africa, having launched in Lesotho and Zimbabwe in 2021,” says Potgieter.



Source: Supplied

High-impact model

Neither the Covid-19 pandemic, civil unrest, nor the flood disaster in KZN has kept the organisation down. “We were able to recover and sustain over 95% of our ECD centre network by pivoting to supply more than R30m in relief aid to make sure that not a single child was left behind,” she adds.

“The high-impact model of The Unlimited Child is a simple solution of skills development, toys and resources, mentoring and coaching so that every ECD centre exists with the single goal of school readiness in mind. We know that if we don’t pitch our goals high, children will be left behind, and we cannot let that happen on our watch because their future starts now,” concludes Potgieter.

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