



Annual Report 2015

2015 has been another busy, productive year for Flying Children, which saw us add to our capacity and become more stable as an organization. We kept the scale of our network of centres and the numbers of student's more or less steady, working to consolidate our operations.

We were deeply saddened when Lindelwa Magindane, one of our first students who had become a gifted mentor and treasured colleague, died in November. She will be much missed, but we hope her daughter carries on with her centre.

Centres and upgrades

We started 2015 with the three oldest centres having reached the point where they are able to stand on their own feet. They remain part of our network, but need less active support. They also allow us to send 1st years there to observe the programme and help with the community workshops as presenters. We accepted five new centres into the programme at the start of the year. However, one of them was only a project to start a new centre, and the student involved decided not to proceed and instead joined an

existing centre. By the end of the year, our network consisted of 18 centres, of which the four new ones were provided with the basic upgrade. This involves supplying basic toys, educational and art materials, and other equipment; securing safety and comfort and providing basic toilet facilities.

Further improvements included the creation of five new playrooms for older children in four centres. One of these was built afresh and the others were finished, which meant providing them with furniture, play and learning equipment, including one for older disabled children.

Three baby rooms were created in three centres, and all existing baby rooms were improved.

We have also put up fencing at two centres, one of these being a centre catering for disabled children.

Flush toilets were organised for two centres, with several other centres now fundraising towards toilets and buildings on their own.



There were fewer corporate workdays held in 2015, although we did get support from Absa at Entlantleni (see below). We have found that in many cases corporates wanting to support our work in this way have a poor understanding of what would be really useful, and make quite unreasonable demands on us. They display little understanding of the work that organizing events of this kind requires of us. This kind of support can be useful, but is sometimes more trouble than it is worth.

We have been working towards getting a lawyer to draw up a contract between us and the centre owners to specify that if we help them with infrastructural funding they contract to continue to use the centre as a preschool during the 3 years we are working with them and for the next 3 years after that. Failure to do that would mean we can demand the cost of the improvements back from the centre owner. This would help reassure funders that their donations will actually help ECD services.

Training

In 2015, we had five classes of students at three levels, who were in class once a week and were given intensive on-site mentoring virtually daily. Additional workshops and seminars were held as follows:

- Day-long workshops for the first year class were held at the start of each term to introduce that term's work.
- We try to insist on having both the principals and the staff at the centres we work with on our course. In order to deal with some situations where this has not worked, and to focus on particular issues of leadership and their duties as

- employers, we introduced principals' workshops. Five of these were held through the year.
- We held two week-long seminars for our students.
- Our 2nd and 3rd year students are required to hold parenting sessions with the parents in their schools. This means that four of these are held with parents at each of the schools where we work.
- We held two-day fire and first aid courses for all students, conducted by firemen and paramedics from Jabulani Fire Station, and 43 students received this certification, which is necessary for registration.
- Africa Food for Thought arranged a very successful cooking class for the centre owners to receive a basic qualification in cooking for institutions. They will take the centre cooks for the next training. These are required by the health departments.

We have also introduced a Grade R stream to ensure the older children are prepared for school. This has involved holding a special workshop on Grade R readiness, and creating a Grade R curriculum to run alongside our other programme.

In addition, we have adjusted elements of the programme to allow for those working with 2-year-olds to suit their needs.



We are particularly pleased that two of our graduates have been taken on as trainers & mentors for Flying Children. One of our students has been working as a trainee trainer.

After written and practical exams at mid-year and at the end of the year, we were able to hold a graduation ceremony on 8 December. There is always some drop-off of numbers during the year, but we were able to award the following passes:

- 1st Years: 9 of a class of 11 (1 fail, 1 had a baby and will complete in 2016)
- 2nd Years: 13 of a class of 14 (1 fail)
- 3rd Years: 11 of a class of 15 (2 fails, 2 had babies and will return for practical exams.)

We have done a considerable amount of editing of our training manuals, to take into account what we have learned about how to be most effective in teaching ECD skills.

Altogether around 600 children attend the centres where we work, including 12 disabled children. (We are going to take on 2 more disabled centres next year.)

Accreditation of the Flying Children course

This continues to be a challenge. We were unable to find a suitable partner, and in 2015 embarked on the challenging road of getting our own independent accreditation. We want to apply for accreditation for both NQF4 (which would cover our first two years) and NQF5 (which would cover the third year.) We have been putting together the considerable documentation required by the ETDP Seta. We took this to them, and had a very positive discussion, although there were some parts they highlighted for further expansion. After further work, the application was formally submitted early in January 2016.



Centre registrations

Having centres registered with the Department of Social Development continues to be an aim, since it would unlock government subsidy and make them more viable. However, it remains a difficult task, since there is a lack of clarity on the requirements, involves several complex steps and because the social workers who play a key role often are often ignorant of the rules, of the real needs of ECD and can sometimes be simply obstructive. We cannot

organize registration for the centres we work with, but can support their efforts. This includes infrastructural aid, obtaining forms, aiding the filling out of forms, and helping them to put the correct administrative and financial systems in place. Owners do need to do the work of taking in the application forms, making requests for health workers and social workers to visit and so on. We did hold a very useful workshop with the centres on the steps they need to take. We also continue to build relationships with social workers on the West Rand, in order to smooth the road.

Two of our centres are now formally registered. Two more have fulfilled all requirements and we hope they will be registered shortly. The others are at earlier stages as follows:

Stage 1 (finalizing their NPO registration): four

Stage 2 (getting municipal permission to allow the use of the land as an ECD facility): seven

Stage 3 (working with social workers to meet health and safety requirements): eight

The new centres starting with us in 2016 will have to begin the process from the start.

Community

We held two community workshops for the broader ECD communities. Attendance far exceeded our expectations, and people came from as far as Randfontein. 130 attended the first and 67 attended the second one. These workshops have generated strong demand for our involvement in other areas and from other centres, and have helped improve relations with some of the social workers in the area. A lack of capacity has so far prevented us from responding to this interest in the way that we would like to.

Public engagement

1. We are still members of 'The Bridge' and the ECD Stakeholder associations. We attend the meetings (usually about 4 a year). These have helped us to understand government policies around ECD as well as to network with other ECD NGO's.
2. Lindy Harris presented a paper at the conference of the Gauteng Association of Infant Mental Health, and was involved in organising the event, which took place in November.



Community workshop

Funding and support

After a period of around six months in late 2014 when we had hardly any money, DGMT gave us support of R405 000 for 2015. This was on the understanding that we needed to find new sources of income, and they made it clear that they would like to reduce their support for Flying Children in the medium term. However, they also gave us the assurance that they would not simply walk away.

We were also grateful to receive donation from the Iqraa Trust (R50 000), from Roedean (R7000), Rodean Old Girls (R10 000) and Russel Alsop, who donated R15 000 to Emang, as well as time and equipment to create a toilet area for the centre. ABSA helped us to upgrade Entlanleni. Various other smaller amounts were donated, which we are very grateful for.

We were very fortunate to be introduced to Ilse Tennant, a professional fundraiser, who began working with us from August. She has worked with upgrades manager Joe Kiggel to develop new fundraising strategies and formulate pitches. Most promisingly, she identified the opportunities opening up through the new BBBEE scorecards, as corporates face new requirements for spending on enterprise development, skills development and socio-economic development. It seems that these new requirements will open significant new sources of funding for NGOs like Flying Children. There are some complexities, and require some understanding of a new and specialised field.

However, we are currently working to get the elements in place to allow us to tap into what we hope will be a good new source of funding.

We continue to receive donations of toys and other useful things from a range of donors, for which we are profoundly grateful.

Governance

We were sorry to accept the resignation of Nan Howie from our board. She has been with us from the very start, and her valuable contribution will be missed. We are currently looking to identify a few new people who might be able to serve on the board, in order to broaden our base of skills and contacts, and improve the board's representivity.



Staff, systems, organisation

Teaching continues to be in the hands mainly of Lindy Harris and Caroline Tuckey, although Khanyi Ncube joined us as junior trainer and has proved a fantastically valuable addition to the team. Joe Kiggel joined us as upgrades manager, which involves fielding many offers of help, scheduling opportunities for pupils to do their voluntary community service and helping with many practical tasks. As discussed, she is also

taking on a growing role in fundraising.

We conducted much of our training in two venues in Tshepiso and Slovo, since having it locally makes it easier for our students to get to class. Towards the end of the year, we found a new venue in Tshepiso where we will be able to consolidate our classes. In time, we would like to create our own centre.

Flying Children developed a statement of vision, mission and values, and these are attached. In the course of putting together the documentation for the accreditation of our courses, we needed to develop a raft of policies, and this was done.

Lindy Harris's ageing Renault Clio has taken a beating on the roads of the West Rand, and we are looking for some support to find a new and more suitable vehicle.

We were able to obtain PBO status, which also included needing to register with SARS as a taxpayer. We now hold monthly management meetings, in addition to weekly teachers' meetings, which have helped improve our functioning. An audit was also conducted.



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Thanks

Many thanks to all who have so willingly and expertly helped us in 2015: donors, partner organisations, board members and staff. We particularly need to thank AFFT for being so helpful all through the year.

Lindy Harris
Director
20 January 2016

Flying Children Vision

Young children in disadvantaged areas get a foundation of top quality Early Childhood Development services to enable them to take off and fly like eagles.

Mission

To work with parents, ECD providers, authorities and others to ensure young children in disadvantaged areas get safe, educationally stimulating and appropriate care to ensure their potential is not wasted.

Values

We **respect** children, parents and caregivers.

We believe in **holistic, child-centred** development.

We believe that **play** is an integral and important part of childhood development.

We commit to doing all our work with **integrity**.

We believe **excellence** can be achieved even in poor environments.

We work **cost-effectively**, and believe in harnessing community support.

Strategic objectives

We aim to

1. extend the network of private ECD centres offering quality care in disadvantaged areas.
2. Upgrade the skills of teachers at these centres through teaching and mentoring, and provide recognised qualifications to them.
3. Upgrade the centres to ensure basic safety and educational standards are met and they can run sustainably.
4. Support centres efforts to gain official registration.
5. Work with parents to improve their skills.
6. Co-operate with the broader ECD sector to improve the overall provision of care.