



PLAY AFRICA

ANNUAL REPORT  
2021





**EXPLORE  
CREATE  
INNOVATE  
CONNECT**







# WELCOME!

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**Play Africa Group NPC**

Registered Non-Profit Company #2014/101533/08

Registered Public Benefit Organisation #930048005

VAT #4020288181

**Play Africa at Constitution Hill**

11 Kotze Street, Braamfontein, 2001

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info@playafrica.org.za

**Registered Office**

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Africa Tel: +27 11 303 5000 | info@rmbprivatebank.co.za

**Legal**

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**B-BBEE Advisors**

Transcend Corporate Advisors First Floor, Grapnel House, 3

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Africa Tel: +27 11 442 2433 | info@transcend.co.za

**Auditor**

PwC 2 Elgin Road, Sunninghill, 2157, South Africa. Tel: +27 11

797 4000 | roshan.ramdhany@pwc.com







# BOARD CHAIR'S STATEMENT



Play Africa has a reputation as a responsible and visionary non-profit organisation with a mission to bring children, families and communities together through play and playful learning. I was honoured to be appointed Board Chair in September 2017, soon after it had moved to its new home at Constitution Hill. Play Africa is notable for its ability to leverage meaningful and mutually-beneficial partnerships to achieve its mission, and in just a few months it had already built strong relationships with local businesses, communities, schools and community-based organisations. It is now a thriving and unique cultural centre dedicated to children and families, open five days a week to the public.

I am eager to join my fellow Board members in providing strategic guidance and support through these exciting times. This past year, the Play Africa team continued its focus on expanding its reach to more children, families and schools, and in enhancing visitors' experience in order to establish regular operating hours as a lean, agile and locally-relevant children's museum in Johannesburg. Play Africa does this by creating new, original exhibits and programmes, deepening employee and volunteer training, developing new partnerships, and drawing on volunteers, including senior professionals, to create the internal systems and controls necessary of a world-class organisation. Meanwhile, it contributes to a broader developmental agenda by supporting local suppliers, micro-entrepreneurs and unemployed youth. This is all part of an effort to serve children, and to provide all our visitors the best possible playful learning experience.

In the last year, we have nearly doubled our reach to more than 7,000 children. But our vision is much bigger. Every day, Play Africa places a high priority on providing every child with a superb, self-directed learning experience while at the same time continuing to deepen partnerships to scale and grow. Funding remains the key challenge for the sustainability and growth of the organisation, and diversifying and growing our donor mix is a focus area for the CEO and the Board.

The Board and management team strive to provide excellent operations along with lean and responsible fiscal management. Our success this fiscal year was driven diligent oversight and control of expenses and developing strategic partnerships to help us bring our unique offering to more children. I like to thank the Board, CEO and staff for their incredible dedication to the organisation – as well as our donors who make our existence possible.

## ALTON SOLOMONS

Chairperson, Play Africa Board of Directors

# CEO'S STATEMENT

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Grit. Tenacity. Flexibility. Courage. Resilience.

These are the worlds I'd use to describe the Play Africa team amid the Covid-19 pandemic. While it has been an extremely challenging year, it's been a powerful opportunity to test our mettle as the first interactive children's play and early education museum of its kind in Southern Africa.

Disrupting the idea of a "museum," Play Africa has always created transformative learning experiences to promote creativity, innovation and connection to a divided society. Through replicable programmes and exhibits, Play Africa empowers children, parents and teachers with learning approaches that bring global thinking to classrooms and communities. How could we do this amid a pandemic?

During the COVID-19 crisis, we leveraged technology and design thinking to expand our reach substantially across southern Africa. Since March 2020, we developed new virtual programmes to offer locally-relevant cultural and play-based programming to children, play training and psychosocial support to parents, and new training to educators. Technology has enabled us to create entirely new and innovative ways and spaces for Africa's children and parents to connect with one another.

This work has propelled us on a new pathway to growth. The world is on the brink of a technological revolution. The so-called "Fourth Industrial Revolution" (4IR) will impact the future employment and employability of today's children. To thrive in the 21st century, children must become lifelong learners, with ever-evolving skills to identify and solve problems with collaboration and empathy.

This year, Play Africa created groundbreaking new opportunities for children and families to play and discover together, thanks to donors who make the work possible. Thanks to the support of our families, schools, partners, board and team, we are creating truly inclusive, vibrant and meaningful opportunities for children to strengthen critical developmental skills while connecting with other.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gretchen'.

**GRETCHEN WILSON-PRANGLEY**

Founder and CEO

# COMMUNICATION OF ENGAGEMENT - UNITED NATIONS GLOBAL COMPACT

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16 April 2021

To our stakeholders:

I am pleased to confirm that Play Africa Group NPC reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption. This is our Communication on Engagement with the United Nations Global Compact. We welcome feedback on its contents.

In this Communication of Engagement, we describe the actions that our organization has taken to support the UN Global Compact and its Principles as suggested for an organization like ours. We also commit to sharing this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.



Gretchen Wilson-Prangley  
CEO  
Play Africa Group NPC





# UN GLOBAL COMPACT

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## ACTIONS 2020

Play Africa continues to participate in UN Global Compact activities in Johannesburg, specifically by:

- Engaging with Global Compact local networks;
- Supporting corporate sustainability initiatives, particularly those led by the financial and mining sectors;
- Supporting businesses and other stakeholders in establishing sustainability initiatives that are transparent and beneficial to the city of Johannesburg and greater community;
- Engaging corporates on Global Compact-related issues, particularly those related to children, children's rights, urban development and sustainable, resilient cities;
- Supporting special initiatives;
- Participating in Global Compact local events.

## MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOMES

- Reached more than 395,000 unique adult individuals through regular social media engagement;
- Engaged more than 10,000 members of the public on Global Compact-related issues from our base at Constitution Hill;
- Provided expertise to 5 corporates to further the aims of the SDGs, specifically with regard to SDGs 4, 5 and 11, and the Global Compact Local Network in South Africa;
- Partnerships formalised with 10 corporates, 6 universities, 43 civil society organisations, 2 government departments and 2 international embassies in South Africa with mutual aims to advance the UN Global Compact principles;
- Spoke at three conferences locally and internationally regarding our work to advance the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4, SDG 5, and SDG 11.

We look forward to ongoing participation in the UN Global Compact and the local network.



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## **Leila Akahloun**

An international development professional with 15 years' experience, Leila Akahloun serves as special advisor to Mrs. Graça Machel. Through her work with the Graça Machel Trust, she advances international advocacy efforts around child health and nutrition, education, women's economic empowerment, leadership and good governance. She sits on the Board of Trustees of Ashoka Southern Africa and the Ngalo Foundation, and in 2018 was named Global Top 100 Most Influential People of African Descent under 40 in the Humanitarian Sector.

## **John Lightfoot**

John is a chartered accountant (CA) and senior business rescue practitioner. He brings decades of experience in negotiation experience with development banks/DFIs and has worked as an interim manager of businesses in distress, and in property development and construction. He is founder and chair of the Gumboots Foundation, which supports community-based programmes in Alexandra township.

## **Shelleen Maharaj**

A compliance, risk and audit professional, Shelleen brings 17 years' experience leading risk and audit teams, including as the previous head of compliance for business banking with Barclays/Absa. In addition to the finance sector, Shelleen has professional experience in several other areas, including consulting and retail.

## **Rehana Moosajee**

Rehana is founder and owner of The Barefoot Facilitator. Formerly Member of the Mayoral Committee (MMC) for Transport at the City of Joburg, Rehana now is a facilitator in systems-change processes ranging from developing wellbeing economies, food systems, eco-mobility, place-making and staying connected to nature in rapidly urbanising contexts. Rehana also serves on the board of the Institute of Transportation and Development Policy (ITDP).





**Lawrence Ndlovu**

A Diepkloof, Soweto born author, writer, social commentator, lecturer, poet and speaker. As a writer he has contributed for several publications including The Daily Maverick, The Thinker, The Southern Cross and The South African. Lawrence read philosophy and theology at St John Vianney Seminary Pretoria, Heythrop College, University of London. Lawrence is the Director of the Centre for Ethical Business Leadership at St Augustine College, and serves on several boards including the Johannesburg Roads Agency and is Chairman of Ithemba Recovery Foundation.

**Vuyiswa Nzimande**

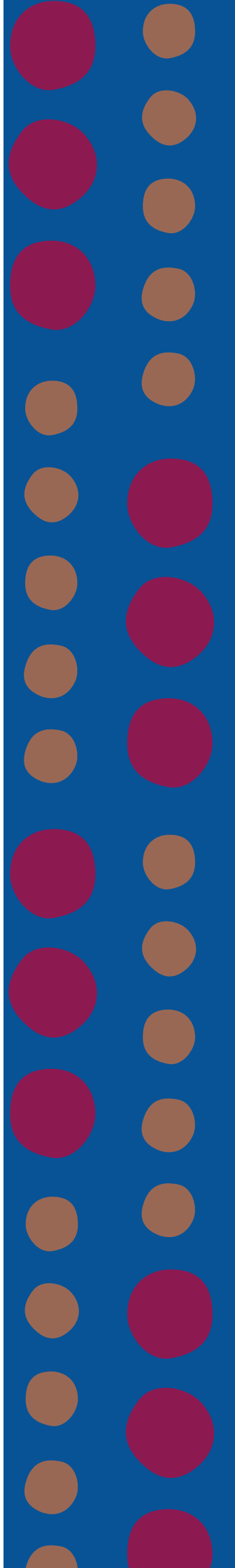
Bringing 10 years' professional experience in quantitative and strategy analysis, financial engineering and private equity, Vuyiswa is currently an Associate Principal at Edge Growth Ventures, funding early stage and growth stage businesses in South Africa. She is a board member for the Student Enterprise Programme at African Leadership Academy, and a candidate for a Doctorate in Business Administration.

**Dharshni Padayachee**

Dharshni is currently Transformation, Inclusion and Equality lead at Rand Merchant Bank, where she is associated with several initiatives including the FirstRand Volunteers Program and RMB Fund. Dharshni has held several roles at RMB, including business manager for global markets talent and various finance roles, including head of finance banking group treasury. Prior to her tenure at RMB, she was an articled clerk and audit supervisor at PwC South Africa.

**Alton Solomons (Board Chair)**

A chartered accountant (CA) and chartered financial analyst, Alton is the founder of Ademia Capital, a company specialising in private equity advisory and fund raising services. Previously he was CEO, partner and investment principal, of Sanlam Private Equity. He has experience as a deal maker for the Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa (IDC). Alton is the past director for Southern African Venture Capital Association (SAVCA) and other companies and private equity funds across sectors.



# GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

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Play Africa Group is an independent registered non-profit company (NPC) and public benefit organisation (PBO) with section 18A tax-exempt status.

Under the latest B-BBEE guidelines, Play Africa can offer corporates points on B-BBEE scorecards, via Socio-Economic Development (SED), ownership, Enterprise Development (ED) and Skills Development (SD). The governing document of Play Africa is its Memorandum of Incorporation.

Play Africa Group is governed by a board of directors, who provide the mix of skills, competencies and profiles appropriate to the needs of the organisation. The board conducts board evaluations and skills audits in order to evaluate recruitment priorities. New board members are briefed on their legal obligations under South Africa's Companies Act, the content of the Memorandum of Incorporation, the committees and decision-making processes, the business plan and recent financial performance of Play Africa Group. The board of directors reviews the financial health of the organisation and ensures that all documents and records are prepared in accordance with international best practices for the independent, external auditors. The board also addresses all matters related to governance and ethics in line with global best practice.

Day-to-day management of Play Africa Group is delegated to the CEO, Gretchen Wilson Prangley, who reports to the board of directors.





The objectives of Play Africa, as set out in the Memorandum of Incorporation, are to establish and run permanent and temporary 'children's museums' in South Africa and to advocate for every child's right to play, to provide quality early childhood development opportunities, and to access vibrant, safe and child-friendly public play spaces in South Africa.

Play Africa creates safe, child-centered public play and learning spaces that are vibrant, fun and inclusive as part of the global movement of 'children's museums,' 'children's parks,' and other public spaces dedicated to children's enrichment. It is part of a growing global movement that believes in the transformative power of play and experiential, hands-on learning to unite children and unlock their imaginations. Play Africa does this by helping young children access, organise and process the information in the world around them through self-directed discovery and play.

#### VISION

A society that honours children and celebrates the human dignity, vivid imagination and unique, creative spirit inside every child.



#### MISSION

Our mission is to pioneer inclusive public learning spaces that create engaged citizens and healthy communities. We do this by inviting all visitors to discover new worlds, to wonder, to ask questions and to imagine a better future through interactive, hands-on exhibits, programming and play.

We strive to offer every child an educational experience worthy of his or her potential, to nourish a sense of belonging, and to engage and inspire all visitors to dream about the possibilities inside themselves, their families and their communities.



# OUR STEWARDSHIP VALUES

Play Africa seeks to attract resources in order to better the lives of children and families in our communities. We know that this will only be possible if we are responsible stewards of the resources we hold in trust. When people partner with us, they invest their valuable resources with us in order to build a more positive future for children and families. We therefore stand behind the following values whenever we have to make a decision regarding those resources. These values are, and will continue to be, the foundation of decisions regarding these resources. In other words, if it is not aligned with our values, it's not going to happen.

**We exist to serve all children and families in our communities.**

Our reason for being is to provide kids and their grown-ups with safe, child-centered play and learning spaces that are vibrant, fun and inclusive. We do this through strategic partnerships with partners who understand that our foremost goal is to serve kids and families.

**We deliver excellence.**

We are not content with "good enough." We seek to transform our communities with bold and visionary ideas that are executed with world-leading standards of excellence.

**We are transparent and ethical.**

We are transparent and ethical. We are committed to international standards of fiscal, legal and ethical accountability. We are one of only a few non-profit signatories to the UN Global Compact.

**We are impact driven.**

We build measurable social value in our communities through a sustainable nonprofit business model. We are a social enterprise. We are innovative and entrepreneurial. We will consider a variety of investment structures and partnerships. Sustainability is at the heart of our decision-making as a 21st-century non-profit organisation.

**We partner wisely.**

We enter into partnerships when it makes sense for the children, families and communities we serve, and for us as a world-class non-profit organisation. We choose to associate with ethical and accountable organisations that seek to enrich the lives of children and families. We reserve the right to say no to partnerships, gifts or associations that might jeopardize our integrity, brand or values.



# OUR TEAM

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## Governance

Governance and strategic oversight are critical in successfully fulfilling our mission. Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, Play Africa conducted the following board meetings:

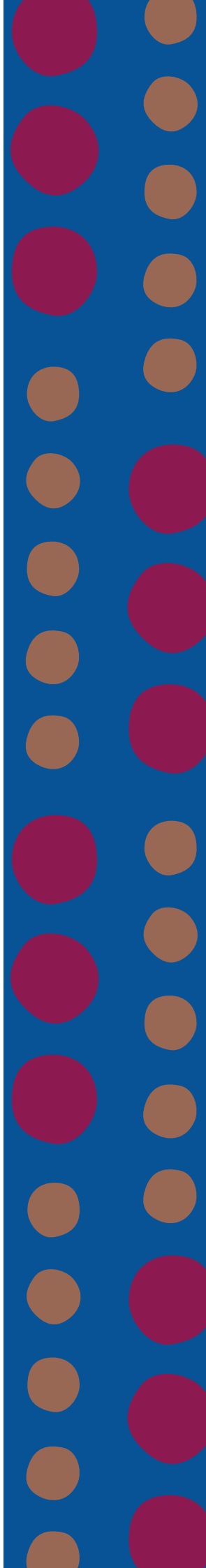
## Staff and Volunteers

Play Africa continued to employ Gretchen Wilson-Prangley as CEO, Futhi Mbongwe as operations supervisor, Tebogo Dube as programme manager and Ann Simmonds as project coordinator. On 1 January 2021, our play and learning supervisor, Mpho Tsele, tragically passed away. The team also included several contract team members, including outreach support Nelly Radebe, business development coordinator Heather Ngulube, programme manager Griezel Raphahlelo, and special projects lead Rachel Fowkes.

In addition, through partnerships with FirstRand's FirstJob initiative, as well as the Skills Development collaboration with Afrika Tikkun, Play Africa offered on-the-job training to 7 full-time play and learning facilitators during the period. It is not an overstatement to say that without their support, the reach of our work would not be possible.

Volunteers are an important part of Play Africa's team. They support Play Africa in professional and hands-on, public-facing roles, during activities such as our Creative Arts programming for children. Volunteers join Play Africa with clear guidelines and receive access to a Volunteer Handbook outlining expectations of all volunteers.

All of our team are trained in mainstreaming disability through all our programmes.



# WHAT ARE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

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We create shared, equitable public spaces for early learning, uniting sectors to:

- prepare children and families and for the future through child-directed, play-based learning
- link to game-changing ECD initiatives
- bridge divides and respond to spatial inequalities
- inspire a positive vision of South Africa's future, and what it can become.

Play Africa believes that every child is born with equal value and dignity. We believe every child has a deep desire to learn in a safe environment where they are seen, heard and valued.

At the same time, we create lifelong learners so today's children can thrive in the 21st century.

In this context, Play Africa Developed the first interactive play museum for children age 0-10, their families and schools in sub-Saharan Africa.

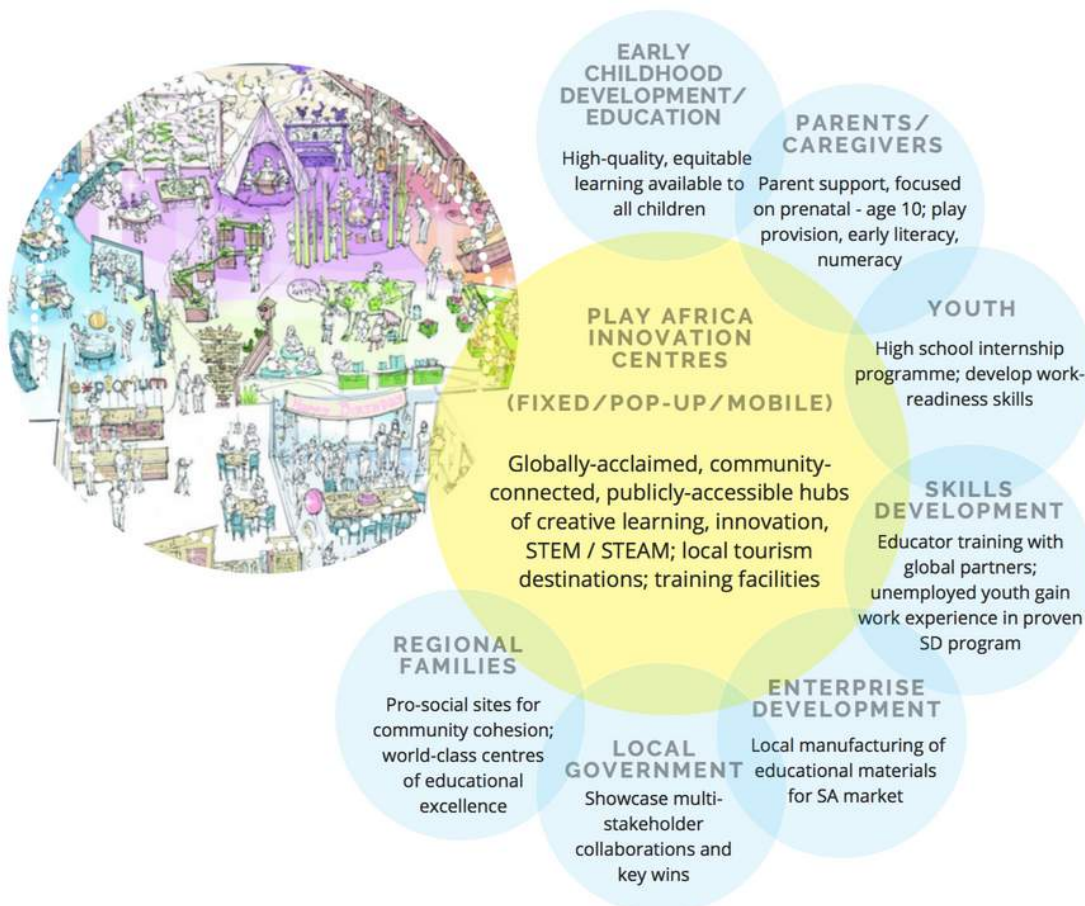
We give every child a memorable learning experience in which their rights are cherished, and in which we invite them to become self-directed learners. We champion children's rights and foster social inclusion, bridging divides and inspiring a positive vision of South Africa's future, and what it can become. We do this in partnership with leading brands, and with an unshakable commitment to world-class standards in accounting and business ethics. ·



# OUR MODEL

As a thriving, 7-year-old non profit social enterprise, Play Africa offers a globally-acclaimed public early learning centre, serving young children ages 0-10, their families and schools with high-quality STEM learning (science, technology, engineering and maths) and the creative arts. We use disruptive innovation to make quality early childhood development (ECD) and foundation phase learning accessible to all children and the public, creating unparalleled opportunities to strengthen family bonds and social cohesion.

At the same time, we have developed a unique approach that offers -- through the direct investment in young children and their learning -- related and win-win developmental opportunities to a range of other communities.





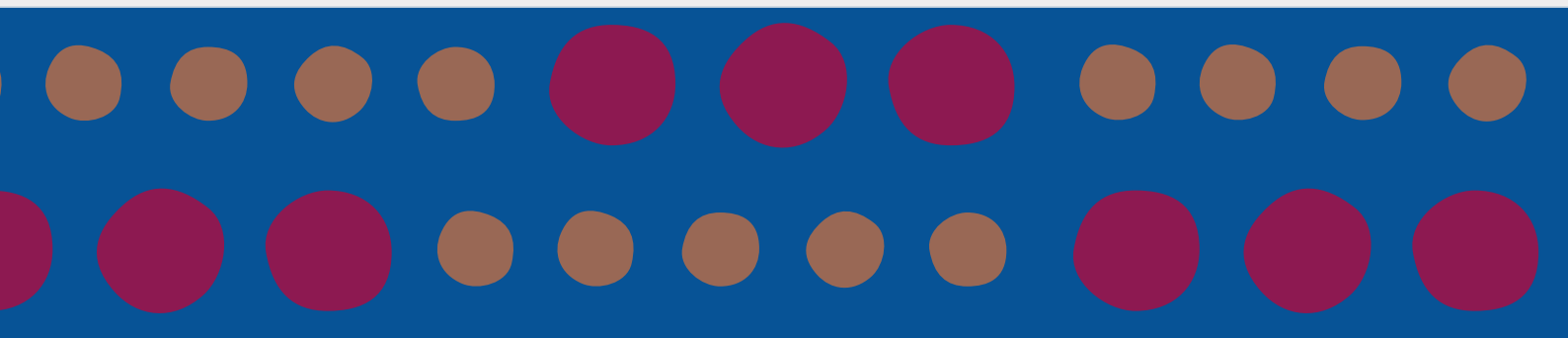
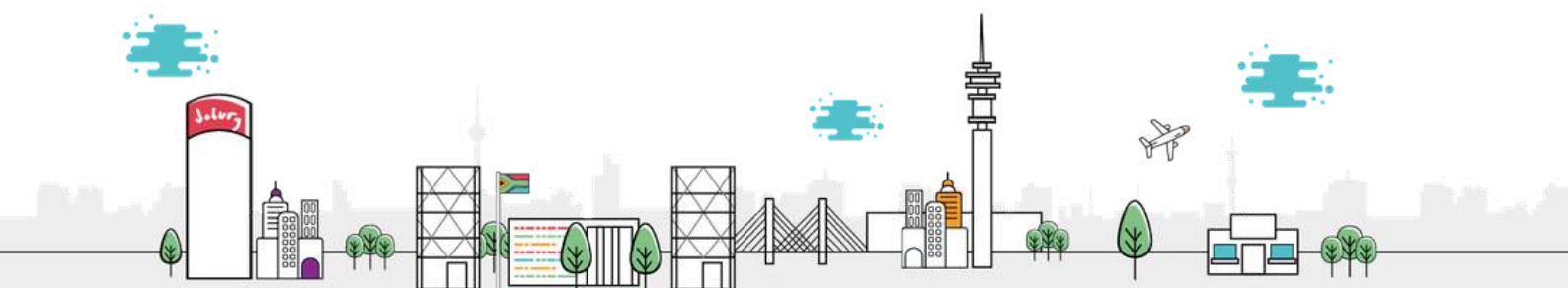
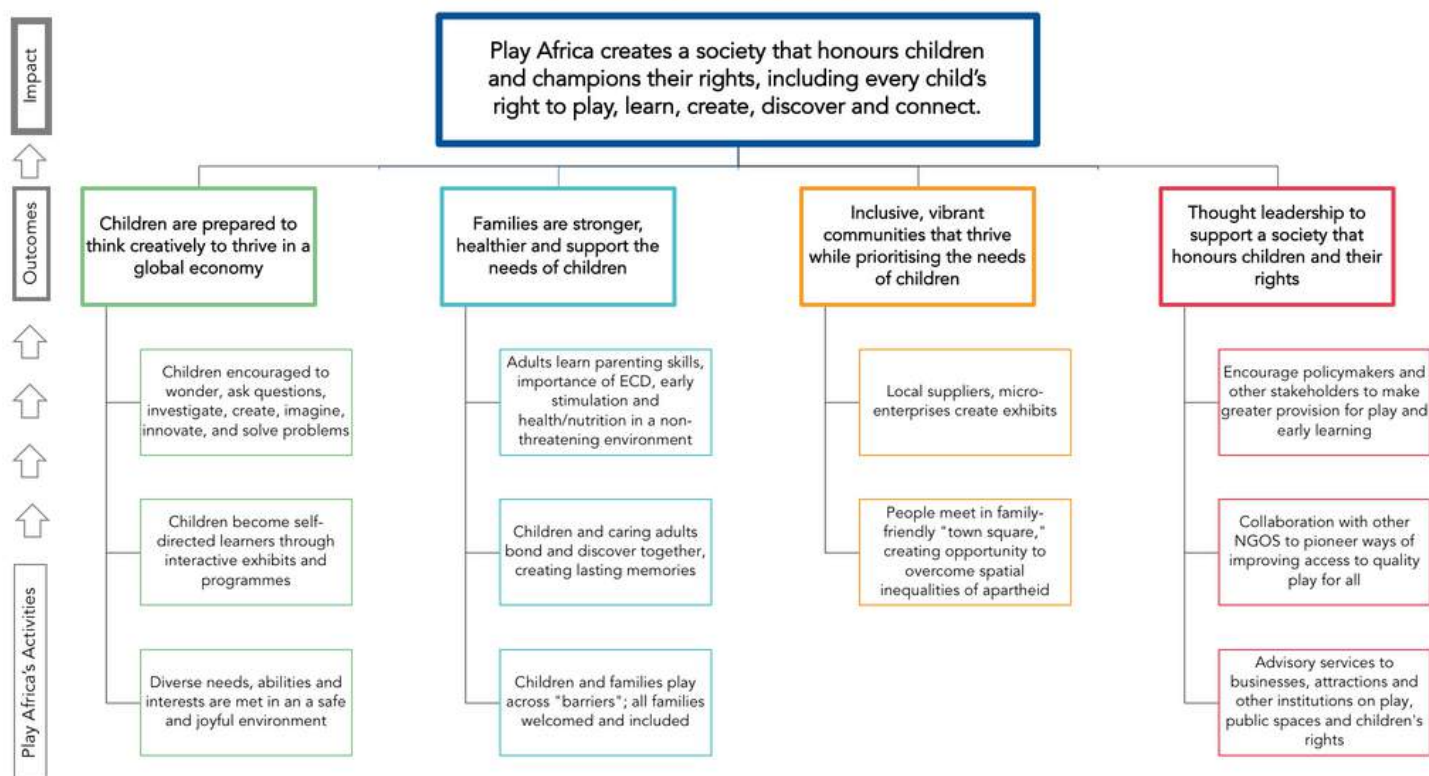


# OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Our Theory of Change outlines the kind of interventions we seek to achieve, all leading to specific outcomes. These outcomes, we believe, directly influence the impact we are trying to achieve: a society that honours children and champions their rights, including every child's right to play, learn, create, discover and connect.

While we are small, we are moving forward on all of the individual interventions in our Theory of Change. This progress has brought us recognition from local and global partners, who see the innovation of a cultural institution playing an active role in the wellbeing of children and society as a whole.

## Our Theory of Change

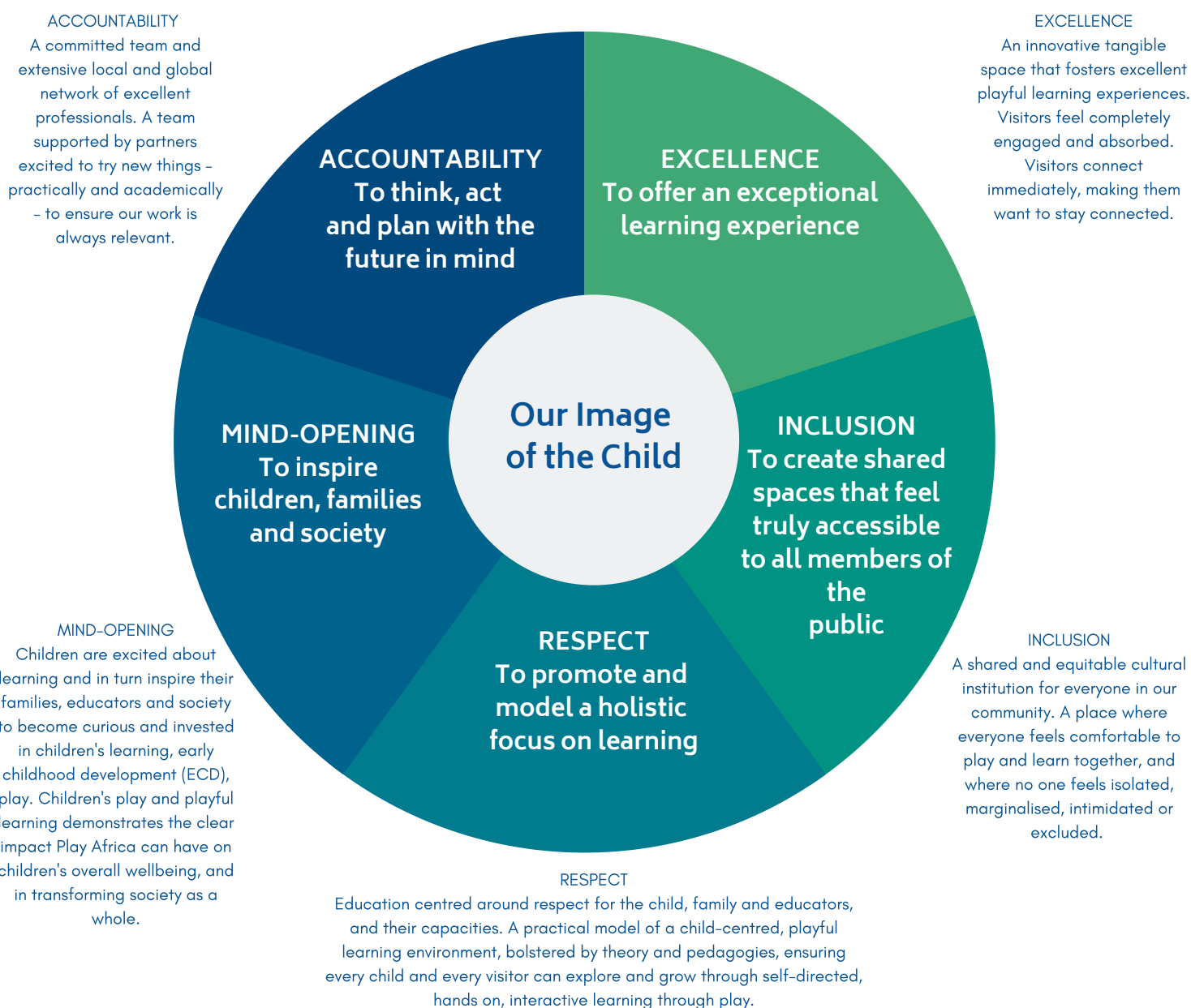




# OUR LEARNING FRAMEWORK

Our Learning Framework is a tool to consolidate ideas about the strategic and learning interest of Play Africa, and to make visible our position on our value-add in the greater learning ecosystem of Johannesburg. It is an expression of how Play Africa views learning, the learners we reach, how we see our value to the community, and how we see ourselves as a learning organisation.

While our 37-page Learning Framework is informed by current research and academic theory, it is not in fact an academic document, but rather a strategic one. It is a guide to inspire our organisation, reflect on our values, and understand our function within our context. It is not a static document; it is meant to be reviewed and adapted regularly.





# OUR LEARNING FRAMEWORK

## HOW DO WE USE OUR LEARNING FRAMEWORK?

Play Africa's Learning Framework sits at the heart of our Monitoring and Evaluation approach. Learning Frameworks are becoming increasingly popular within the international museum sector, as museums take accountability for their status as informal learning and community spaces and seek to articulate their value and relevance to their communities. Our Learning Framework articulates overall organisation objectives and how they are monitored.

Play Africa's Learning Framework guides the planning and evaluation of our exhibits, programmes and learning experiences to ensure we are fulfilling our mission and are relevant in the context of our community. It determines how we balance our priorities and allocate resources to achieve the greatest impact. As a policy and reference document, every person will take what they need from the contents. The Learning Framework can be used for:

- **Guidance** A manual to use internally for reference and inspiration.
- **Excellence** A standard for learning excellence and consistency within the organisation, and one that sets Play Africa ahead of other organisations.
- **Sustainability** A template to carry forward and adapt to new situations without losing the essence of the organisation's learning message.
- **Verification** A marker to ensure we are delivering on our learning objectives and strategic goals; a vital text for monitoring, evaluation and research.
- **Information** A helpful text for partners, funders, and interested parties as well as staff.
- **Innovation** A model for an African/South African context into museum and informal learning and research.







# WHAT DID WE DO?

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During this period 1 April 2020 - 31 March 2021, we have offered high-quality learning enrichment to more than 10,000 individuals. These are children, caregivers and educators who experienced a visit, programme, training or field trip designed to build a creative, growth mindset and to develop essential skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving and personal expression. Across the board, we exceeded expectations based on our targets.

As an agile, lean and responsive cultural institution that uses disruptive innovation to meet the needs of under-resourced children and families, 2020 has been, remarkably, a year of growth for Play Africa.

During the COVID-19 crisis, we leveraged technology and design thinking to expand our reach substantially across southern Africa. Our donors' support of Play Africa was more critical this year than ever before, empowering us to directly support children, their families and educators directly through the COVID-19 crisis.

We started 2020 as we expected: based at Constitution Hill, just metres from Nelson Mandela's former prison cell. Five days a week, we bring children and families together to play, explore, innovate and connect. As the first-of-its-kind free public learning centre for young children in South Africa, we are pioneering inclusive public learning spaces and transforming public spaces for children through creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking.


## **Pivoting during COVID**

With tenacity and entrepreneurial thinking, we embraced design thinking to pivot our organisation's many offerings supported by the RMB Fund and others to expand our reach and achieve our mission, despite all the difficulties that beset traditional operations. Through blood, sweat and tears, we grew our audience with meaningful, relevant programmes that had a positive impact on children's playful learning and overall wellbeing.

Between March and December 2020, we prototyped 10 new COVID-19 response programmes to offer locally-relevant cultural and play-based programming to children, play training and psychosocial support to parents, and new professional training to educators.







When we closed due to COVID, we knew we wanted not only to survive but to find innovative, collaborative solutions for our audience in crisis. To do this, we knew we'd need to transform and re-imagine Play Africa, developing a completely new set of programmes and remote daily operations, using limited resources. This was certain: We would put our "user" (the child, the parent and the educator in the vulnerable communities) at the centre of our solutions. The challenges: What solutions did research suggest might best support vulnerable children's healthy development in crisis settings? How best could we support those children when everyone was locked down at home? The majority of children we serve were already excluded from digital experiences in the 'pre-COVID' world, so if digital solutions were among the best possible ways to provide value to this audience, how would we bridge the divides?

We are proud of how we used accessible, low-cost technology to create entirely new and innovative ways for Africa's children and parents to play, learn, heal and connect with one another while remaining safely at home.

Above all, 2020 demonstrated our ability to pivot in times of crisis, finding original, locally-relevant ways to provide critical services to children, families and educators with dignity and respect. The design thinking process that guides our planning and programme development starts with empathy. Throughout 2020, we put empathy and human connection at the heart of all our new programmes. What was different this year compared to previous years was the focus on supporting parents' mental health and well-being, so they are better able to support children and their learning. In this way, we became a global leader in the children's museum sector in continuing to ensure our programming reacts to the needs of children in our communities.

#### **KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**

We are immensely proud of what we have achieved during the year. Our ability to pivot strategically has ensured that we could continue to advance our mission despite a radical change in operations. Key achievements:

##### **January - March 2020 (pre-COVID)**

1. Expanding our reach to new areas of the City of Joburg
2. Customer-facing, revenue-generating offerings for schools: field trips and teacher training
3. New strategic partnerships  
(Harvard Graduate School of Education; Nelson Mandela Children's Hospital; GDE; Wits School of Education)

4. Sustainable donor-funded customised programmes
5. Strong, innovative programmes with great team

#### March - December 2020

1. Embraced design thinking to create responsive solutions (10 new innovative programmes) that directly address parents, children and caregiver needs under lockdown -- enabling us to provide DIRECT support to 4,715 Children and 2,452 adults (parents, caregivers educators), plus tens of thousands more through digital programmes.
2. Strategic assessment of the best interventions and platforms and formats to reach the greatest number of children, families and educators in our target audience (traditionally underserved communities)
3. Programme linkages to global COVID-19 response frameworks (e.g. UNICEF, WHO, INEE, IASC)
4. Rapid upskilling of team in terms of technology and COVID protocols and pandemic risk mitigation
5. Team development and skills - learning how to work remotely, new project management skills, onboarding, new interns, monitoring and evaluation training and design thinking processes
6. Better-than-ever media coverage
7. Increased invitations to present on local and global panels on children's playful learning, children's creativity and children's rights
8. Increased global recognition and awards:
  - April - Chosen as partner for gLOCAL 2020 Khulisa Evaluation Design Competition
  - May - Bridges of Peace selected as one of 100 Beautiful Things exhibition at V&A Waterfront
  - July - Children's Court recognised by African Legal Awards/Save the Children for Children's Advocacy Award
  - November - Play Africa wins special mention in Real Play City Challenge
9. Realising that through COVID we have sealed our position as a major global leader in the children's museum sector







We Are  
Africa

Make a  
collaborative  
work of art.

Artists to  
together, these  
will form part of a  
work of art. This  
created "family album"  
page of welcoming  
all who visit.



# WHAT CHANGED?

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## **New funders**

We strive to diversify our funder mix to ensure long-term sustainability and growth. During the reporting period, we have brought on board new funders, including Discovery and Discovery Vitality, Telkom Foundation, Goethe-Institut South Africa, 3M, Old Mutual and RE/MAX Foundation.

## **COVID-19 response**

Play Africa used design thinking process to create 10 new responsive children's museum programmes for children, their families and educators. Our programmes were rights-based, embracing global recommendations from UNICEF, WHO, UNESCO, INEE and the IASC Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings.

We focused on strong community partnerships with other NPOs, schools, creches and government bodies providing direct support to:

- children in inner-city Johannesburg and surrounding townships
- children with disabilities
- children who are refugees/migrants from other African nations

These programme were flexible and responsive to changing government regulations. As a result, we equipped our team and the communities we serve with new skills to engage in technology-based programmes. Our team's roles and skills grew to meet our new programmes' requirements and obligations.

## **Projects closing / New ones opening**

Play Africa started 2020 with the aim to grow our programmes from our base as a children's museum based at Constitution Hill, just metres from Nelson Mandela's former prison cell. In January 2020, we were open five days a week, bringing children and families together to play, explore, innovate and connect.

Our work continued to gain visibility in early 2020 for its focus on creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking, empowering children with the skills to support a creative economy. These programmes included:



- Bridges of Peace programme (teaching empathy, ubuntu to deter xenophobia and bullying)
- Playful learning training for 28 primary school educators from Orange Farm in collaboration with the GDE and Harvard Graduate School of Education's Project Zero
- STEAM learning enrichment experiences for all children at Pohopedi Primary and Mfundo-Mtoti Primary in Orange Farm
- In-person African Storytelling (Talent Unlocked) at Constitution Hill

Then COVID hit. We closed our doors to the public on 16 March. In the months that followed, we created the following 10 new programmes:

- African Storytelling on Facebook Live
- Play Africa Connects - Expert-led information sessions for parents and educators on Facebook Live
- Parent support - virtual training of parents in high-quality play to support children's learning
- COVID-19 Stories
- Talking About Race
- Play Parcels - delivered to children's homes and orphanages to keep children stimulated at home
- Play, Heal and Connect - Prototype of our team providing "psychological first aid," psychosocial and mental health support for inner-city children and families
- Heal and Connect - Formal programme expanding the reach of direct psychosocial services to under-served families
- Science Film Festival
- I am a Scientist - STEM learning for Grade R-3

### Change in Reach

Prior to Covid, we had expanded our reach to include Orange Farm, 45 km south of Johannesburg.

Amid Covid, we grew our national and international reach through technology:

Mar 2020: 2,500 Facebook followers

Dec 2020: 12,688 Facebook followers

April 2021: 17,214 Facebook followers

As a result of this growth, in our recent teacher training partnership with Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (Jan 2021) we have attracted educators from 8 of the 9 provinces and 5 additional African countries.









### Change in operations

Moving to a digital platform meant that our operating hours were extended, as we designed programmes to speak to parents in their homes in the evenings and weekends.

We also created many new strategic partnerships to share knowledge through the Play Africa Connects programme (e.g. JPCC, Wits University, Diketo Inclusive Education).

Moving our team virtual meant that we developed a routine of daily "all team" check ins and check outs via Zoom. A surprising outcome of this practice is that the team unanimously felt it actually helped bring the team closer together.

We feel that as an organisation Play Africa was able to find creative ways to meet these objectives even in the new reality.

### CREATIVE LEARNING

Prior to lockdown, our creative learning and playful learning programmes at Constitution Hill and off-site at various schools helped meet these needs very practically.

When lockdown hit, our very first intervention for families was Play Africa Connects. These virtual sessions on Facebook Live directly supported stronger healthier families to support children's learning and wellbeing. We brought in several panel experts who provided crucial advice to parents regarding self-care, playful learning, children's wellbeing, parent and child mental health, and understanding grief and loss. The panelists made constant reference to the importance of play and provided practical examples of how parents could bring healthy play and connection into their own lockdown reality, no matter where they live. Each topic was chosen with care to make sure we still represented all of Play Africa's guiding principles and our conviction about the importance of play and creative stimulation for children and families, as well as being in line with global COVID-19 response frameworks and recommendations from international organisations such as UNICEF, WHO, IASC and INEE.

Our online African storytelling programme also gave children and families fun ways to engage with the skills they need to tackle the Fourth Industrial Revolution, creativity, critical thinking, seeing themselves as problem solvers. Baeletsi, one of our storytellers, explained that the joy of storytelling is that it shows children how a simple story with an often catastrophic and humorous problem can be solved. This is the format of most of the stories, a locally-relevant problem shared in an engaging way and a solution at the end, and even though the problems are often quite fantastical the subtle messaging that problems can be resolved is strong.

Our Science Film Festival gave children another opportunity to see themselves as possible scientists, explorers, critical thinkers - making them curious about their world and celebrating curiosity, scientific thinking and STEM in everyday life. An opportunity to meet with a real scientist as part of our World Science Day was a wonderful way for children to ask questions and learn about many different ways science appears in our lives. The learnings from these experiences shaped our I am a Scientist programme, which builds on these themes in 2021.

Heal and Connect is a programme that focuses on nurturing child and parent mental health during COVID-19, particularly encouraging parent-child connections through playful learning. When compiling play parcels for families through our various programmes we included elements of all of these objectives - support for parents and advice on the importance of play for children's mental and emotional wellbeing, especially in times of crises, colouring pencils and pages for families to bond while drawing and creating together, and DUPLO bricks for children to be able to be creative at home.

Our Talking About Race series was rooted in empathy, and using this as a starting point to exploring empathy as children and caregivers. Empathy forms the heart of our Design Thinking process, and is linked directly to effective problem solving.



## TALENT UNLOCKED

The four storytellers that were part of our weekly African Storytelling programme that ran on Tuesdays tell us this programme has been a year of growth for them. First, the emerging artists had to quickly learn new technology skills and new performance platforms, such as Zoom and Facebook Live. They then worked with Play Africa's team to strengthen their storytelling practice, discovering and experimenting with new ways to tell stories, finding creative ways to enhance their storytelling backdrops and props at home. Each week, the storytellers discovered different uses of music and lighting to complement their narratives.

In July, Play Africa collaborated with the first virtual National Arts Festival and their daily storytelling programme called iStimela Sendaba, along with African storytellers across the continent. Finally, Play Africa further developed its Talent Unlocked programme later in 2020 to create high-quality video stories, creating a library of locally-relevant cultural content for children with emerging artists. Our online programming grew our audiences outside of Johannesburg and South Africa, with viewers from our neighbouring countries and international visitors, too. The storytellers were able to grow their exposure and their network to a much wider audience, and in turn built confidence to mentor other artists in South Africa and globally.





# WHERE IS OUR MARKET?



## OUR DIGITAL MARKET

11 million children age 10 and under in South Africa, and several million more children across Africa and beyond

**TRANSPORT MODE**

N/A

**MARKETING CHANNEL**

Word of mouth; educator networks; social media



## OUR BROAD MARKET

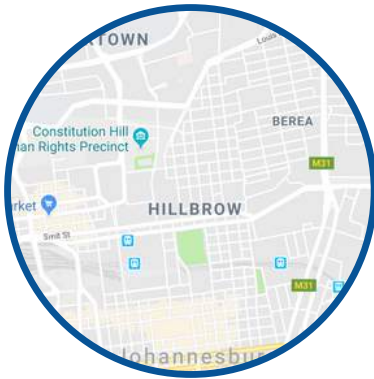
1 million children age 10 and under in greater Johannesburg, via school and family visits and outreach programmes

**TRANSPORT MODE**

Hired buses, school buses, private vehicles, public transport

**MARKETING CHANNEL**

Word of mouth; educator networks; social media



## OUR FOCUSED MARKET

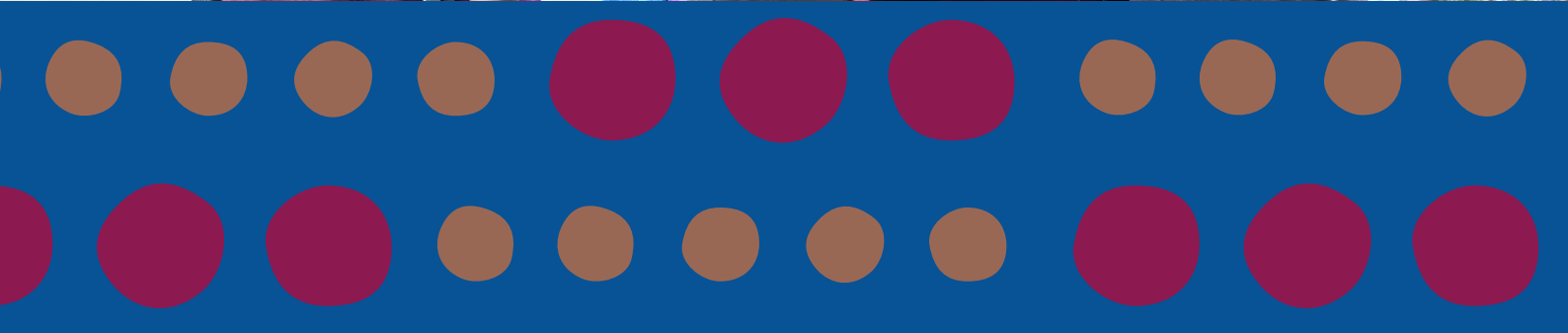
40,000 children age 10 and under living within 1.5 km, via school programmes during the week, and family visits on weekends

**TRANSPORT MODE**

Walking; school buses

**MARKETING CHANNEL**

Outreach coordinator building relationships with underserved school leadership; CBOs; word of mouth; past visits



# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

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## GOING CONCERN

Play Africa Group currently receives income primarily from donors, including corporates, foundations, and individuals. Receipt of these donations may be affected by factors outside board member's control, including government policy and uncertainties in the economic outlook. The board of directors receive quarterly financial reports and forecasts, which take into account variations in the level and timing of future income and funding. The board of directors has reasonable expectation that Play Africa Group has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for seven months from the approval of accounts. Accordingly Play Africa continues to adopt the going concern basis in conducting on-going operations and ultimately preparing its consolidated financial statements.

## AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Our signed Audited Financial Statements for 2019-2020, audited by PwC South Africa, can be made available as a complete and separate document.



# RISK MANAGEMENT

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Play Africa takes transparency, accountability and risk management very seriously and therefore sought to develop this report in an effort to demonstrate this commitment to its donors and supporters.

The board of directors has given consideration to the risks to which Play Africa is exposed, including the emergence of new competitors. A risk register, or active summary of risks which includes probability, potential impact and mitigation strategies is maintained by management. This is reviewed by the Board at least once a year.

Play Africa knows that donors trust us to be responsible stewards of its resources. As needed during the capital campaign, it will hold capital campaign donations in secure and internationally reputable financial institutions. It considers these donations as investments in South Africa's children and families, and will utilise these investments for the benefit of the children's museum.

In the unlikely event that Play Africa Group NPC dissolves, the money raised in the planning phase and in the capital campaign will be entrusted to a reputable and registered South African nonprofit organisation dedicated to advocating for play and creating safe, child-friendly public spaces in South Africa.

Our Risk Register is up to date and available for review upon request.





# FINANCIAL REVIEW

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In order to achieve its goals, Play Africa requires monetary and non-monetary resources. It secured R2.1 million for the 2019-2020 financial year, and developed a budget to reflect a conservative scenario for revenue, taking into account current economic conditions and headwinds faced by site development. This ensured Play Africa could remain a going concern even if it raised minimum income in the year. Play Africa's annual 2019-2020 budget, as part of a three-year budget, was approved by the board. While the company is geared for growth, the budget was developed with the mindset of controlling costs while focusing on what is essential to achieve the company's strategic goals.

The budget demonstrates Play Africa's ability to sustain basic operations at Constitution Hill while it explores both expanded mobile options and various sites for a permanent facility. Salaries for the period were low relative to similar non-profit organisations in South Africa, as benchmarked by Averlie Ryder Global Reward Specialists and PwC. In an effort to conserve costs, it starts with staff salaries below the 25th percentile relative to other South African non-profit companies. In the case of better-than-expected revenue Play Africa's CEO will revisit the budget as a whole, including salaries, to ensure the organisation is able to attract and retain the talent needed to get the job done. Its current policy in the Financial Policies and Procedures sets out board approval of changes. To build a dedicated and independent children's museum, whether at a permanent site or as a major mobile operation, Play Africa will need to raise greater funds and scale its operations beyond simply remaining sustainable. It therefore continues to work to secure significant additional funds.

Please see the 2019-2020 audited financial statements prepared by PwC South Africa and approved by our board on 3 September 2020 for more information.









# OUR NON-PROFIT BUSINESS MODEL

## INPUTS



### Financial Capital

Play Africa's financial capital is raised through grants from Foundations  
Individuals  
Government agencies



### Human Capital

Play Africa's staff compliment varied from 2-3 full-time employees, 12 fixed-term contractors in site developments and business development.



### Manufactured Capital



### Intellectual Capital

Play Africa's brand materials and internal documents.



### Social & Relationship Capital

Children, families and schools are the heart of our work. To ensure long-term success, Play Africa's "Best Minds Model" draws on support from leaders in business, government, civil society and academia.

These relationships are local and global, and we actively nurture these relationships.

## ACTIVITIES

During the period, Play Africa sought to secure a site for an iconic children's museum, piloting programmes with children, fundraising and ensuring sustainability and compliance. Our activities:

### Site Development

- Site scoping and research
- Pre-Feasibility & Feasibility research
- Negotiations with property owner (JCP)
- Legal compliance with MFMA
- Stakeholder engagement
- Design development
- Business model development and costing
- Security assessments

### Programmes

- Collaboration with local and international partners
- Acquisition of exhibits, materials
- Development of operational capacity and structures
- Execution of programmes
- Marketing of programmes
- Monitoring and evaluation of programmes
- Engagement with local, provincial, national and international bodies.
- Civil society and academia. These relationships are local and global, and we actively nurture these relationships.

### Fundraising

- Research on potential donors and partners
- Relationship development
- Proposal writing
- Reporting on grants
- Fundraising events

### Sustainability & Compliance

- Legal and tax compliance
- Workmen's compensations compliance
- Insurance, fraud and risk management
- Non-profit leadership

## OUTPUTS



### Financial Capital

During the period, R39K spent on staff training & development. Role profiles, recruitment, hiring process development with PwC. Pay scales researched.



### Human Capital

During the period, R39K spent on staff training & development. Role profiles, recruitment, hiring process development with PwC. Pay scales researched.



### Manufactured Capital

Play Africa began process of designing new, original exhibits during the period. Relationships with potential manufacturers developed.



### Intellectual Capital

Policies and procedures adopted >100 pages created on business model, site development, exhibit development and programmes.



### Social & Relationship Capital

Support from leaders in business, government, civil society and academia. Long-term relationship developed with City of Johannesburg agency, Johannesburg City Parks and Zoo.

## Outcome

An emerging world-class children's museum rooted in local community.

## Value Creation

New opportunities for children and families to explore, discover, create and imagine together.









PLAY AFRICA

## GET INVOLVED

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Play Africa Group NPC

Registered Non-Profit Company #2014/101533/08

Registered Public Benefit Organisation #930048005