



Annual Report

April 2021 to March 2022



Table of contents:

About us	1
Chairperson Report	2
Homework	3/5
Highlights	6/7
Crisis Relief	8
Building	9
News	10
Thank you	11

**“Education is the most powerful weapon
which you can use to change the world”.**

Nelson Mandela



Due to the many challenges that come with poverty, parents in the township of Masiphumelele, South Africa, have little to no time or resources to help their children with their education. The schools in the township are underfunded and overcrowded, which leads to poor educational outcomes. Many of these vulnerable children lack parental involvement, basic needs and health care. Unfavorable educational outcomes in the township often leads to a lifetime of poverty.

History:

Karin Drescher saw a need for educational and family support while working with children and their families in the poorest parts of Masiphumelele. As a response to this need, she founded Clever Kids Homework Centre, a nonprofit and public benefit organization located in Masiphumelele. At the centre the main focus is underprivileged primary and high school students who need extra help with homework and a safe place to go in the afternoons.

Clever Kids Homework Centre was established in 2015 with a handful of volunteers and only 7 children. It has grown to now employ 6 local staff members, professionally trained tutors and South African volunteers and serves 57 children between the ages of 6-20, who regularly attend.

What we do:

To combat poverty, we provide a safe place to study while creating a positive family atmosphere where children are encouraged to overcome failures at school, build self-confidence, discover their passions and develop their abilities. They receive individualized homework help and learning support in a loving environment. To achieve this we offer tutoring, by qualified staff, in all relevant subjects and teach based on the textbooks used in school.

We provide a hot nutritious lunch every day, computer access for research projects, online learning programs, and computer literacy programs. We offer financial help with the purchase of school uniforms, school supplies, hygiene products and provide health care. We celebrate each child's birthday, go on various outings, enjoy playtime and explore their creativity with crafts.

We also offer family support by providing food parcels, aid after house fires or other disasters, and other support evaluated on an individual basis.

Clever Kids Homework Centre offers children access to better education and the opportunity to break the cycle of poverty.



Chairperson Report

As I looked at this picture I realised what a privilege and honour it is to have been closely involved with these children over the years and to have helped them grow up. When we started in 2015, the first children were in grade 1 to 3. Today they are teenagers and it has been a joy to guide them and see how much they have changed not only academically but also personally. We have become a family and have added many more over the years to our current total of 57 children.

We were very aware of the psychological effects that the Covid pandemic and the devastating fire in December 2020 caused in our children. We have been given feedback from many families and children that knowing Clever Kids is there to help has given them a sense of comfort and safety. They knew where they could turn to in their time of need and where they would be helped. This brought us closer together and softened the effects of the trauma they had gone through.

The Masiphumelele public schools were still operating on a rotational basis, where each child only attends school half of the time, on alternate days.

In a statement, DA leader John Steenhuisen said: "South African schoolchildren in no-fee schools have lost over half of their normal school days since the start of the pandemic and have learnt less than half of what they would normally learn."

This made it even more essential that Clever Kids was open all day, so that the children were tutored by us on those days when they were unable to attend school. This gave us much more time with each student and allowed us to practise and learn effectively. For both the children and us, it was a positive experience to be spending more time together in smaller groups and to be able to respond individually to their school needs.

In February 22 Cabinet announced the ending of the rotational school learning system, which allowed the return of all pupils to classrooms. This was great news, especially because we were already planning to rent a second house, which will provide us with more classrooms. We are very much looking forward to the year ahead under "regular" terms without Covid-19 regulations.



Primary School Tutoring

Grade 1 to 7

Besides all the homework help, tutoring in maths, IsiXhosa and all the other subjects, our focus this year was on teaching English. We paid two trained teachers to help our primary school children progress in English.

In the local public school, the main language from grade 1 to 3 is IsiXhosa. From grade 4 onwards it changes to English. New subjects such as natural science and social science are added.

The children find it difficult to adapt because their knowledge of English does not correspond to the level of the subject matter.

We try to overcome this problem with purposeful English lessons and saw positive results.



Highschool Tutoring

Reflections from Puselethso a Long Term Volunteer

In the beginning of 2019 some siblings (9th graders of the Masi High School) asked if it would be possible to join Clever Kids as they had no opportunity to study at home. A request was sent out for a high school tutor and I (Puselethso) responded. The tutoring sessions for this group were held twice a week for about 2 hours in the beginning, but we soon noticed that extra time and more resources were required.

In secondary school, students are introduced to a different way of learning, more subjects are added and a lot of independent studying is expected since the students are thought to be more mature and equipped with the foundational education from primary school. Most students struggle to follow what they are taught in the overcrowded classrooms and require extra tutoring, privileged families arrange after-hours private tutors for their children, but this is not the case for most of the children in Masiphumelele as there's a high unemployment rate and most parents can't afford to pay for private tutoring. Unfortunately, a lot of secondary school students drop out of school because of this frustration and end up adding to the unemployment rate or joining gangs and the cycle of hopelessness continues.

Our after-school tutoring for secondary students at Clever Kids is student-needs led, meaning each student focuses on subject matters that they found challenging with the tutor - a tutor supports the individual student in tackling the problems, but eventually, the student has to be the one owning their learning. In this way, we are trying to bring the joy of learning back into the lives of our students. We don't want them to see education as an obligation, but as a passion to pursue beyond high school and tertiary institutions. The secondary school leg of Clever Kids has grown over these three years, from one class of grade 9s to a fully representation of all six classes of a South African High School.



Learning is Hard on an Empty Stomach

Breakfast and Lunch

For many of our children, the daily lunch at Clever Kids is often the only meal they eat.

Due to the rotational system in the public school this year, half of our children came to us at 9.00 a.m. and arrived with empty stomachs.

It became clear that we needed to feed them breakfast before their learning started.



Five Computers Arrived

The computers donated in April 2021 from Switzerland were a great help and the need through the year was very significant, so we wouldn't have known what to do without it. Internet access and printing is available for free for our students.



School Uniforms



We assisted with school uniforms, school bags and school supplies throughout the year to those who needed them. We also made sure that school uniforms are in good condition. Broken shoes are repaired and torn clothes are mended.

Health and Hygiene

Our teenage girls had lots of questions about women's hygiene and about the changing of their bodies. We had circle time discussion about facts and myths. We always have sanitary pads in store and provide it on request.

For all our children we held a day with different stations on health and hygiene topics. Each child received a hygiene kit consisting of soap, toothbrush and toothpaste.



School Craft Projects



Craft supplies and tools are always available so that students can build their school projects.

Craft Activities, Beach Outing, Christmas Party, Fun Days



Crisis Relief

Fire Victims and Winter clothes

Finally in April 2021, almost 5 month after the devastating fire in December 2020, a large number of our families received the keys to their new shacks and we were able to provide them with the fire relief package.

We still had some fire relief funds left and decided to buy all our children a winter jacket, winter shoes and a warm outfit. Winter was around the corner and many children had lost all their clothes in the fire. That was well appreciated by the parents.



Demolishing and Building

In 2021 we received unfortunate news. The classroom on the left side of the house was built 1,5 m too far on land that belonged to our neighbors. After the surveyor had measured the boundary, it was clear that the garage building had to be torn down.

Since Clever Kids has been growing so much we needed every square meter possible. Together with YWAM (Lessor) we discussed the best utilization of the space that was left. It was decided to built an extra toilet and storage space. Both these are very valuable to Clever Kids.



Exciting News

A second house will be added!

The present venue is too small for the growing number of learners who needs support. During summer we were able to teach groups outside but in our rainy and cold winter season this is impossible.

Thankfully, the neighbour to the right has offered us his house for rent with the prospect of buying it in a few years time.

As of May 2022 we will have three beautiful new rooms to educate in.



Thank you

Dear partners, sponsors and friends,

Thank you so very much for your kindness and generosity. Your support means so much to us and every donation helped Clever Kids tremendously to reach our goals.

Dear Volunteers,

Thank you so much for the wonderful job you do and the big heart you have for our children. You bring a positive aura around you and inspire all of us to work even harder. May God bless you for your tremendous initiative.

ENKOSI KAKUHLU!



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