

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



Reaching a million children



smart
start

GIVING EVERY CHILD THE
POWER TO SUCCEED.



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Get behind the young children of South Africa!

'One million more children in quality early learning programmes in South Africa by 2026'.

That's the aim of SmartStart, which would more than double the number of young children who benefit every year from early learning – and would place South Africa on a viable path to meeting the national policy goal of universal early childhood development services by 2030.

It would also mean that South Africa is making the most powerful investment in human capital that a country can make.

However, up until now, it hasn't been clear HOW we can provide quality early learning services at scale. In the commercial space, franchising has proved an effective way of creating massive demand while providing a quality service that meets customer expectations. Why not apply the same franchising and market building principles to early childhood development – focused not on commercial return, but on harnessing the energy and capacity of a network of practitioners who can unlock the potential of even the poorest children?

Why not show that large-scale quality early learning programmes can be provided through playgroups, day-mothers and other non-centre based models of enriched childcare – and properly managed and monitored – so that more public and private social investment in young children can be stimulated?

ENTER SMARTSTART!

SmartStart is building this delivery platform and showing how it can be done. With the support of the sector and a small start-up team, as well as strategic guidance from Hollard Trust/Yellowwoods, the DG Murray Trust (DGMT), and the ELMA Foundation, SmartStart began implementation in May 2015.

Over this first year of operation, we have clocked some impressive achievements: a brand that is already loved and valued by its network of over 1 000 licensed franchisees; franchisees who are empowered to provide quality, affordable early learning services at community level; more than 10 000 children being reached monthly.

This could only be achieved because of the many partnerships that have been built, with franchisors and other partners across the country – including ECD NGOs, community organisations, businesses and government departments and agencies whose collective resources, efforts, capabilities and networks together make SmartStart work.

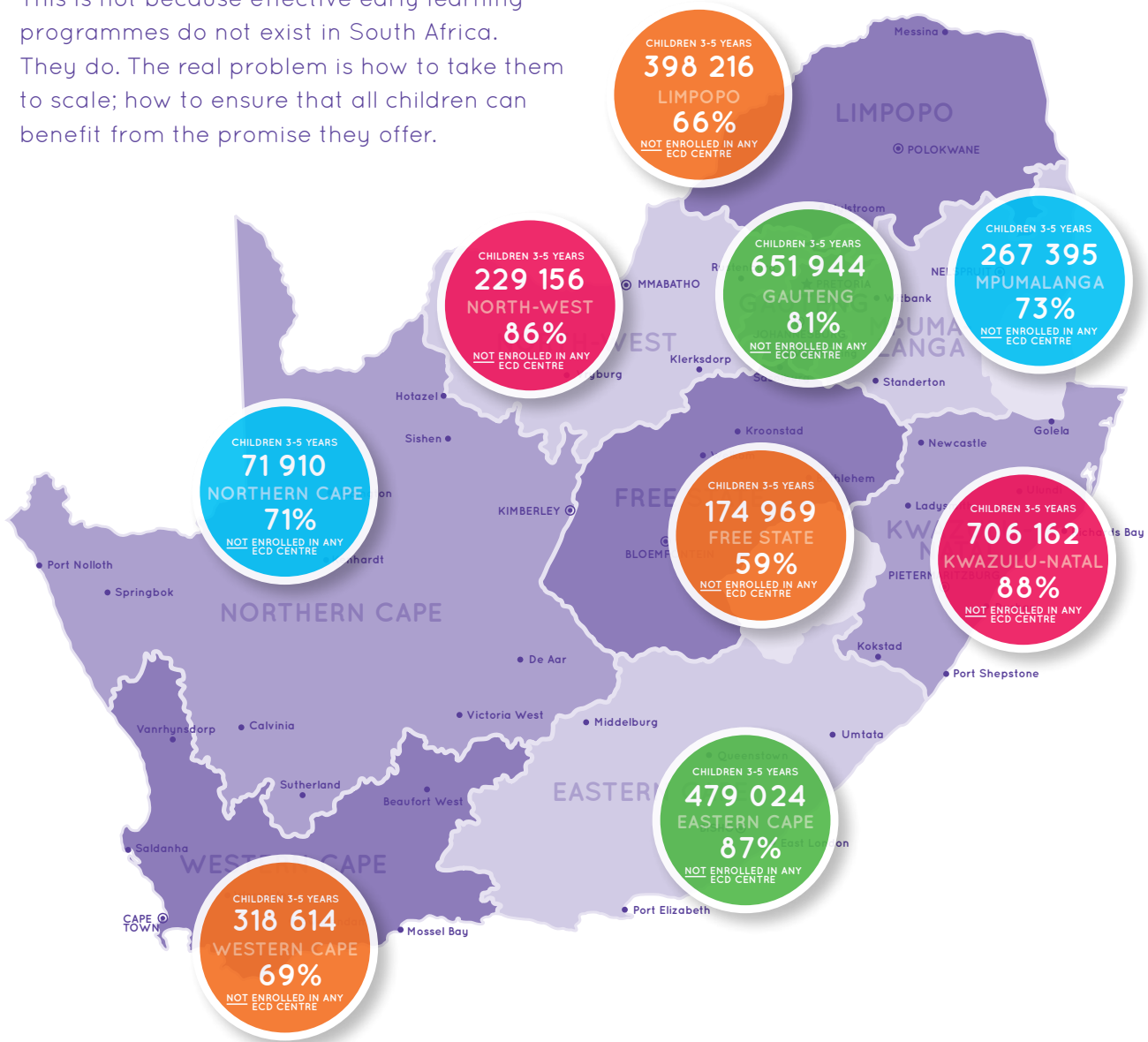
Ahead of us we have the national goal of access to ECD for all children in South Africa. This will require public funding and public-private partnerships. As the board, our hope and intention is that by showing how it can be done, SmartStart will be embraced by business, civil society and government as a powerful vehicle for achieving that goal.



* High quality early learning programmes have lasting positive impacts on educational and life outcomes for children.

Children from disadvantaged homes stand to benefit most. **By putting the right foundations for learning in place before children start school, ECD programmes have the unique potential to break the cycle of educational underachievement and poverty.** Yet provision of early learning programmes remains inadequate, with a minority of children benefiting from the types of programme that are likely to transform their life chances.

This is not because effective early learning programmes do not exist in South Africa. They do. The real problem is how to take them to scale; how to ensure that all children can benefit from the promise they offer.



✱ It is this challenge – the urgent need to scale up quality early learning – that is the driving purpose of SmartStart. Our vision is ambitious – to reach one million children in ten years, making SmartStart the largest early learning initiative that South Africa has seen.

Our response has been guided by three powerful drivers – that of **scalability**, **affordability (to both parents and government)** and **effectiveness**. With this in mind, we are building a national franchise network, and specifically a network of licensed franchisees, that is able to provide quality early learning services to every child. We aim to have 3 200 franchisees in our 3rd year and 52 000 franchisees by our 10th year. Along with our partnerships with government, to ensure sustainable financing, as well as a visible and trusted brand, our goal of one million children can be achieved.

The impact would change the future of South Africa, for good.





Hello

Number of
10 3
reached in

Child targets:
YEAR ONE **11 500**
YEAR THREE **50 000**
YEAR TEN **1 000 000**

* We are growing and developing social-emotional, language, cognitive and physical skills so that SmartStart children are engaged, curious, confident and, most importantly, ready to learn at school!

f children
385
Year One



SMARTSTART CHILD QUALITIES

This year, SmartStart reached over 10 000 children. But our achievements aren't just about the numbers – they're also about the changes and developments in each child that the parents and SmartStarters observe and track over the 12 to 24 months that the children are with us.

Alice Khanyile, a SmartStarter in Msinga, KwaZulu-Natal, says: "When Ayanda* joined the playgroup, she never liked to interact with the other children. She would often sit in the corner and didn't like to share her toys. I did all I could to make her feel part of the group and provided her with positive attention. One month down the line I could see changes as

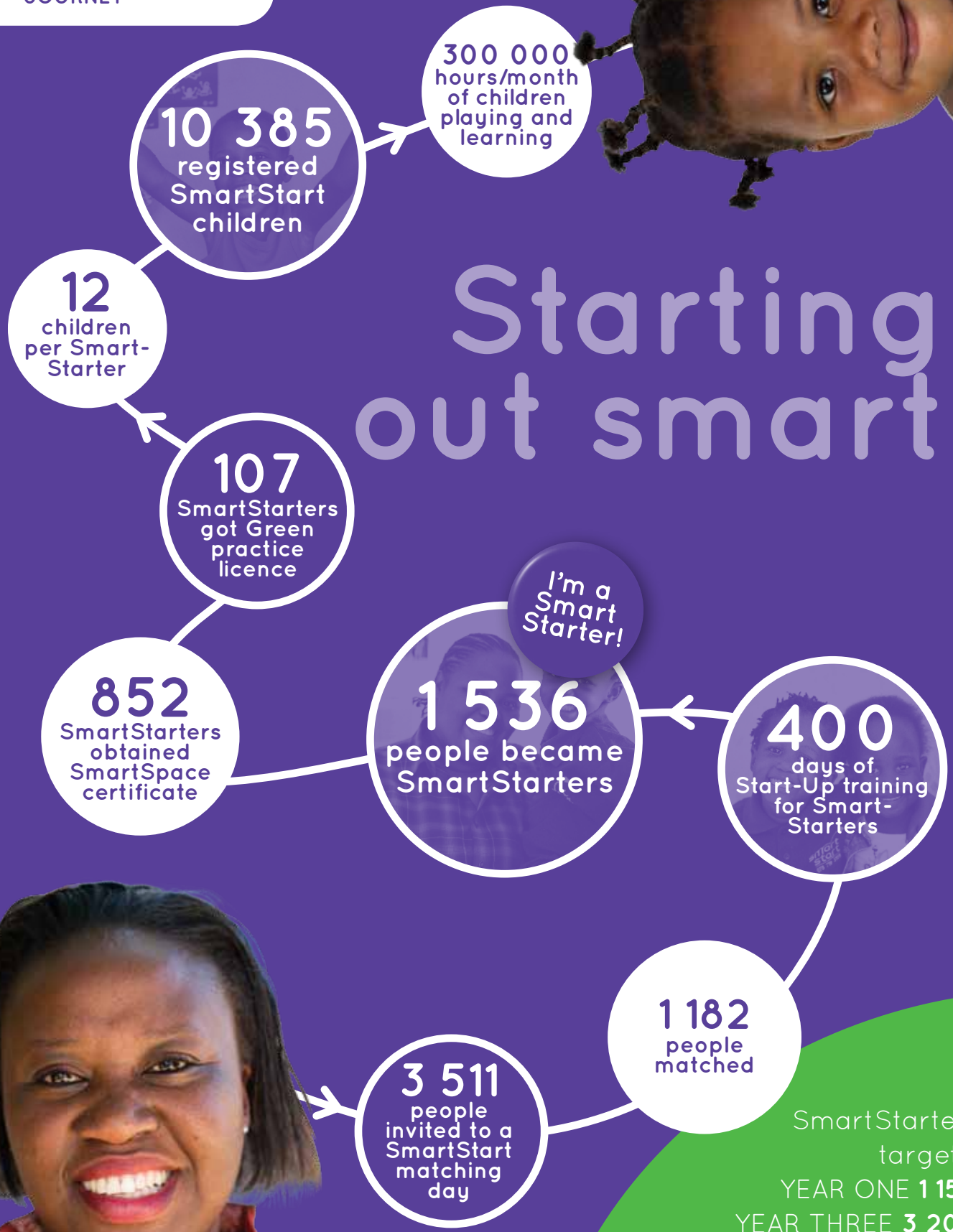
she began to be more interactive and excited, taking part in activities with other kids."

Another SmartStarter, Phetile Vezi, says: "Ever since I started running my playgroup, I have seen how much the children have grown and developed in terms of sharing and caring.

"I share everything we use with them during the playgroup session i.e. toys, paints, food. When a child is crying or sad, I show concern and care. I try to teach this to the kids and I can see that most of the children have learnt this. There is less fighting for stuff during the play session. They are also able to give each other chances when there is not enough."



Starting out smart



SmartStarter* targets:
 YEAR ONE 1 150
 YEAR THREE 3 200
 YEAR TEN 52 000

* Our SmartStarters (also known as franchisees) are ordinary women and men who are doing extraordinary things for the children of South Africa.

In our first year, we have focused on strengthening our value proposition to SmartStarters. We currently offer:

IN-DEPTH START-UP TRAINING (5 days) for new or existing franchisees plus ongoing refresher training;

OBSERVATION AND MENTORSHIP SESSIONS for SmartStarters provided by our trained coaches;

MONTHLY PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT GROUPS through the club network;

CONTENT SUPPORT for delivery of the daily routine and the monthly caregiver sessions;

SUPPORT TO ACCESS START-UP STIPENDS to enable franchisees to get on their feet, before they start generating income through parent fees.



We have learnt many lessons about the challenges facing SmartStarters and the opportunities that are available to them from start-up all the way through to growth and maturity:

CONSIDERATIONS	START-UP	PRACTICE	GROW
CHALLENGES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Finding a venue > Finding children > Uncertainty about operational environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Inconsistent parent fees > Deregistration of children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Unfamiliarity with legal requirements when child numbers increase > No formal qualification
OPPORTUNITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Starting a micro-enterprise > Earning additional income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Preparation for expansion > Access to DSD child subsidy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Growth into an ECD centre/ hub > Potential DSD grant
VALUE PROPOSITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Free start-up training > Club network support > Coach support > Start-up subsidy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > SmartStart level 2 training > Smartstart brand awareness to attract more children > Accreditation incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Incubator infrastructure grant > SmartStart level 2 training

First steps...

From the moment franchisees arrive for training, they are referred to as SmartStarters. Their learning journey has begun. This new identity is crucial, as these men and women become change agents in their own communities.

During the 5-day programme, SmartStarters are introduced to the importance of early learning and how crucial it is for the future of South Africa. They become aware that it is a national imperative. More importantly, they discover how they can play a role in making early learning accessible to the children of South Africa by starting up their own early learning programmes.

“I thank SmartStart because it taught me about the importance of developing a child.”

“It’s given me an opportunity to become someone.”

“It taught me how to improve my community and make the best playgroup.”

“If we do a good job, we are building the future of our nation.”

SmartStarters are encouraged to reflect on what they know and leverage this experience as they learn. They are also exposed to new ways of working with children, where children get to make choices and learn through play.

“I found a passion in education, thanks to SmartStart.”

“This training was so interesting, it changed me completely. I am a better ME, thanks to this experience.”

“I learned a lot about children and about myself. It has changed my teaching completely.”

SmartStarters learn how to support children in play and extend their learning. They are given a daily routine which helps them to plan and prepare, ensuring the full development of each child. Creative techniques for managing conflict are also introduced.

Early on in the training, SmartStarters form clubs with their peers. Through various activities, clubs engage in healthy, happy competition, which engenders a spirit of accountability and pride. These clubs become an important mechanism for peer support and learning long into the future.

Number of
people trained in
Year One

1 568

Training
conversion rate

98%

SmartSpace
conversion rate

55%

**All of this was done
with two full-time
trainers and nine
associate trainers!**



ZANELE'S STORY

“Whenever I meet new learners on the first day of their Start-Up training, I see HOPE. It reminds me of my first day at SmartStart. I know that if I made it to where I am today, these learners can also make it. SmartStart has empowered me and now I empower others.”

I have learned about the importance of early childhood development. It MAKES a person. It shapes their lives. We are changing the world because we are preparing future leaders. We are making sure that South African children are getting what I never got as a child.”

These are the words of Zanele Ngwenya. She started her journey as an Associate SmartStart trainer in July 2015. In January 2016, she decided to take up a full-time position as a SmartStart Lead Trainer. Over the last 18 months, Zanele has learned to put herself into other people's shoes. She has developed a new level of selflessness and often finds herself thinking about the future of her learners as well as the future of the children who come through the SmartStart programme.



ABOVE:
SMARTSTART LEAD TRAINER ZANELE NGWENYA

“I appreciate this opportunity. My job is about quality and making a difference. And... I am now a better parent because I practise everything that I have learned. I feel as though I understand children more and know what it means to liberate them.”

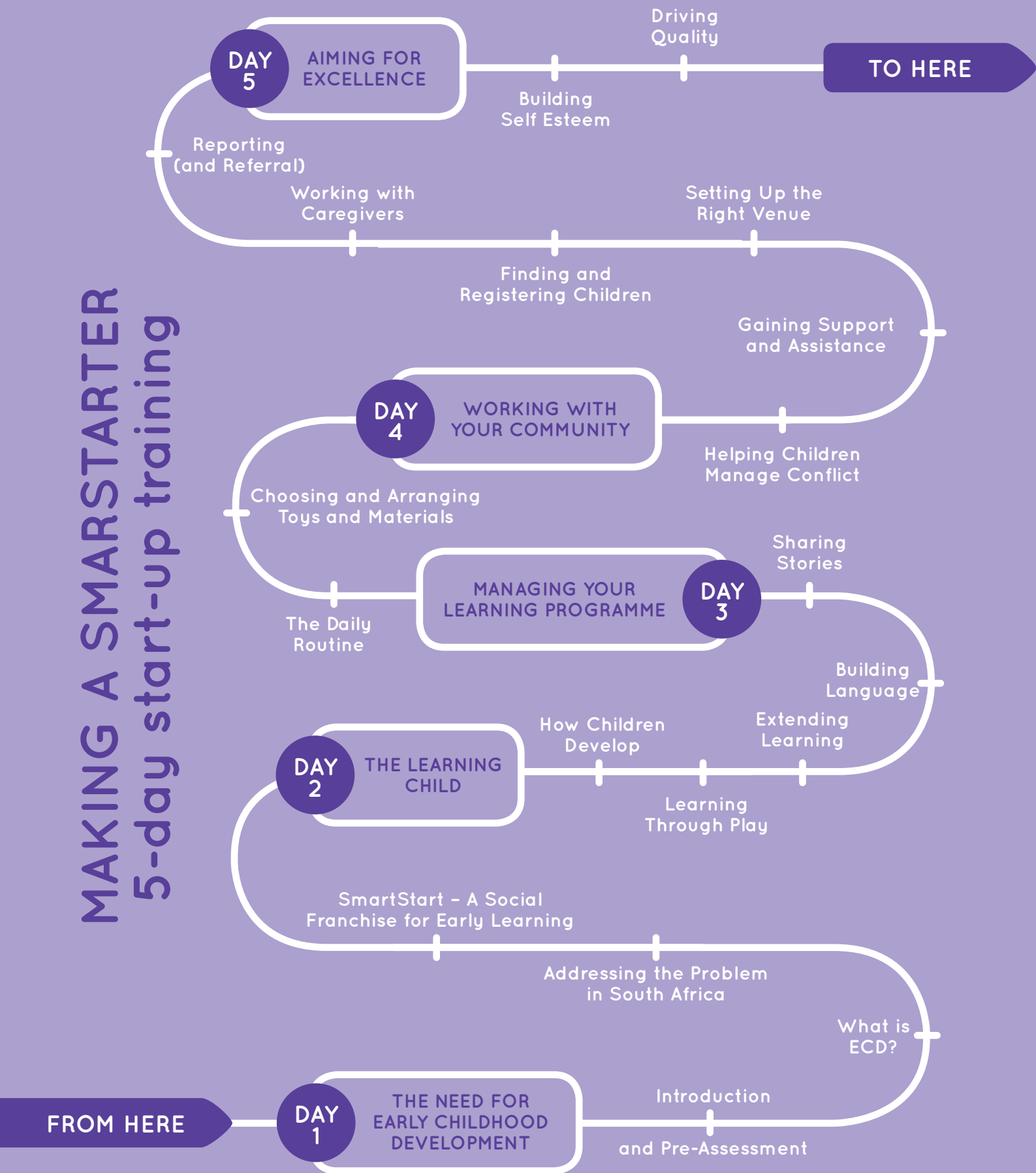
Zanele observes how the SmartStart training develops happy, responsible and confident learners. The materials and activities are structured in a way that can accommodate people of varying levels of literacy. The modules link well, and they are an excellent build up.

“On the first day, we always have participants who have lost hope, who look broken. By the end of the week, they express gratitude and explain that they have found their purpose in life. For some people, training is actually therapeutic as it gives them an opportunity to reflect on their own lives and the way that they parent their own children.”

Zanele continues: “The training moves the head because people learn new things and link this to their past experience. It moves the hand because they acquire skills to make their own toys. And it moves the heart, because they develop a love for what they are going to do.”

 **ZANELE IS A VALUABLE AND INSPIRING MEMBER OF THE SMARTSTART TEAM**

MAKING A SMARSTARTER 5-day start-up training





LULEKA'S STORY

If you ask a young entrepreneur about their very first office, it's not uncommon to hear the answers 'my garage' or 'my dining room table'. For Luleka Nkayi though, it was her nine-year-old son's bedroom. And it wasn't her first office, but her first classroom.

Luleka is one of our SmartStarters from Orange Farm. From a young age, she has always loved being around children. But it wasn't until she came across SmartStart that she realised it was her calling to work full-time with them.

A 30-year-old single mother, Luleka had been working in the corporate world as a receptionist and call centre agent. After graduating from high school in Johannesburg, she took a series of short courses in marketing and financial management. While she enjoyed the work, it wasn't what she was truly passionate about.

It was while she was pursuing new career options at Harambee, a national youth employment accelerator, that Luleka heard about SmartStart. It immediately piqued her interest and she grabbed the opportunity with both hands.

After attending and completing the five-day Start-Up training, Luleka opened her SmartStart playgroup in September 2015. She was quick to bring six children into her playgroup, as the community remembered her as a young woman who loved being around children.

"I was happy when Luleka said she would start a playgroup," recalls Elizabeth Zwane, the grandmother of four-year-old Siphon Zwane who attends the playgroup. Siphon had

never attended any kind of early learning programme before. Instead, he was spending his time at home playing with his cars and watching television while his mother worked full-time.

"If a child is just sitting at home, a lot of things pass them by. At home, we just give him food, bath him and let him play. There is nothing that the child is learning, so I was happy because if he goes to a playgroup, he will be smart."

The community loves Luleka's playgroup and she receives a lot of support from parents. In addition to paying a small fee, parents also help by providing fruit and vegetables. She has a waiting list of parents wanting to enrol their children.

In January 2017, Luleka will be moving out of her son's bedroom and into a bigger venue. She will also be bringing in two new SmartStart trained assistants, so that she can grow her playgroup from six to 18 children.

Luleka also has plans to open more playgroups, including one in her hometown in the Eastern Cape.

"This has been a wonderful learning journey for me. I am so grateful for all the support I have received. Since joining SmartStart, I have never looked back," she says.

Making early learning child's play



* In our first year, we have focused on designing a daily routine that is easy for SmartStarters to learn and implement but which contributes to the child outcomes that we seek to achieve.

Getting with the programme

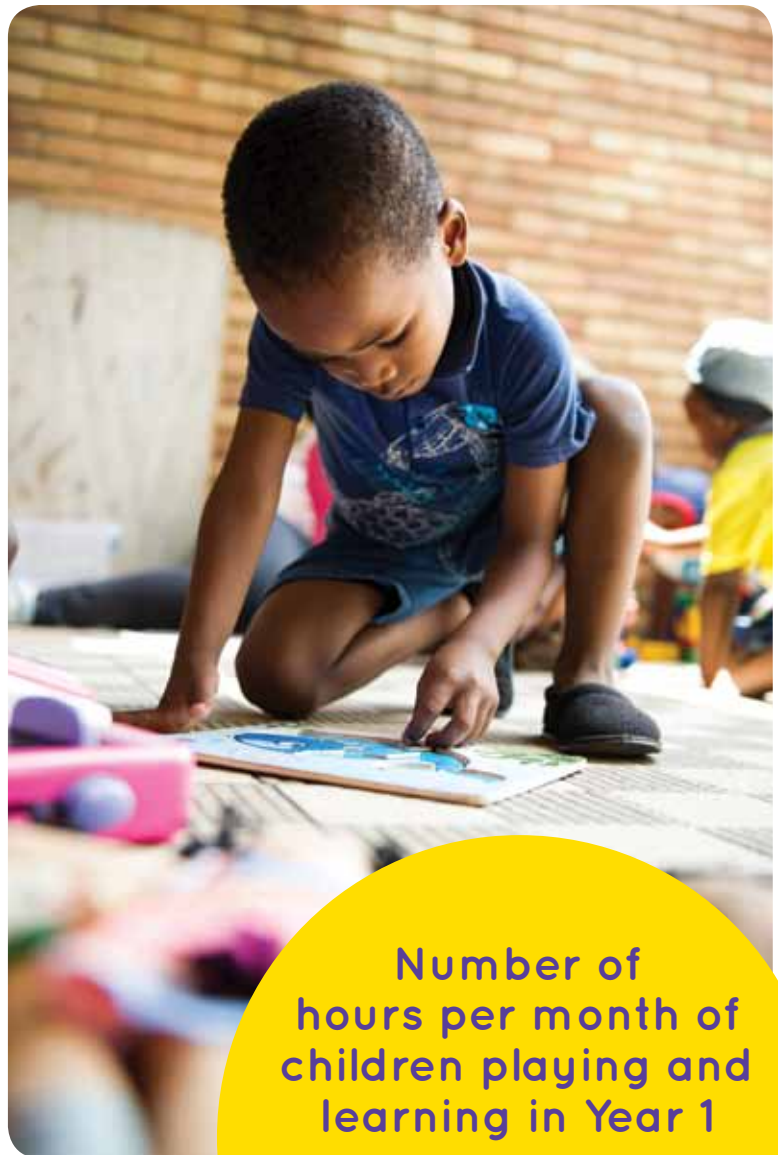
The SmartStart daily routine always includes the same elements, and focuses on learning through play. It is designed for a three-hour session, but the different elements can be extended for the programme to run over a longer period.

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES may include activities such as finger-painting, cutting and pasting, or playing with bottle tops or toys. This section should last for at least 10 minutes.

FREE PLAY should last for at least 45 minutes. It should always include planning time before, and clean-up time and recall time afterwards.

STORY-TIME should last at least 15 minutes.

LARGE GROUP TIME may include activities like singing, games and outdoor activities. It should last for at least 10 minutes.



Number of hours per month of children playing and learning in Year 1
300 000

In Year 1, SmartStart designed and shared 66 small group activities and 30 large group activities for SmartStarters to use.



GROSS MOTOR SKILLS



THREADING & LACING



Resourceful resources

Our playkits help to facilitate learning as well as enable variety in the implementation of the daily routine. They provide important support for new SmartStarters. The toys and resources provided in the playkit are laid out according to 5 different SmartStart areas: Building area, Pretend area, Games area, Reading area, and Art area.

Number of playkits distributed in Year One

852



CONCEPT TOYS



PUZZLES



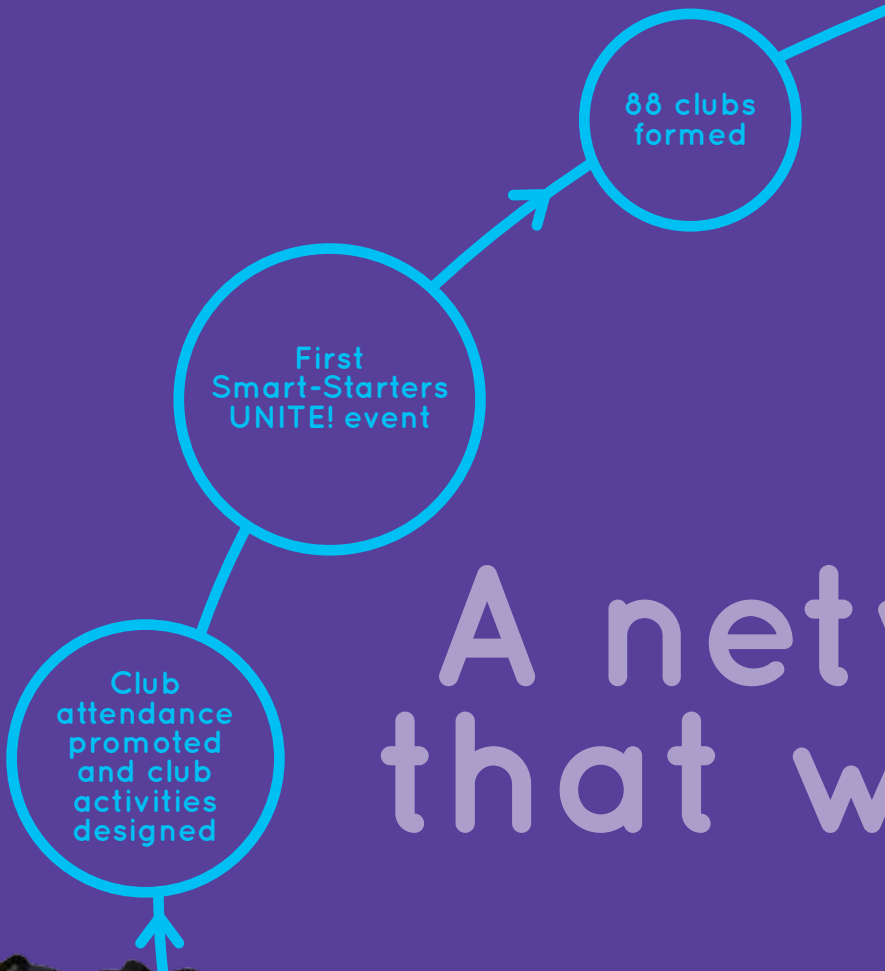
CONSTRUCTION

EARLY NUMBERS

CREATIVE PLAY

FANTASY PLAY

BOOKS



A network that works



Club targets:
YEAR ONE 100
YEAR THREE 300
YEAR TEN 5 200

* Our clubs play a crucial role in sustaining the social franchise model. SmartStarters who live close to one another form a club (of not more than 16 people) who meet on a monthly basis to encourage, share and learn together. Club leaders are responsible for organising and facilitating club meetings. These clubs create a network across the country that builds a sense of belonging to a national effort that will change the trajectory of growth for one million children.

In our first year, we had 14 coaches working in four provinces to support 88 club leaders

“I found it very motivational and it helped me better understand how things work. We need more events where we can come together with other clubs and share.”

ROSELINE KGALA

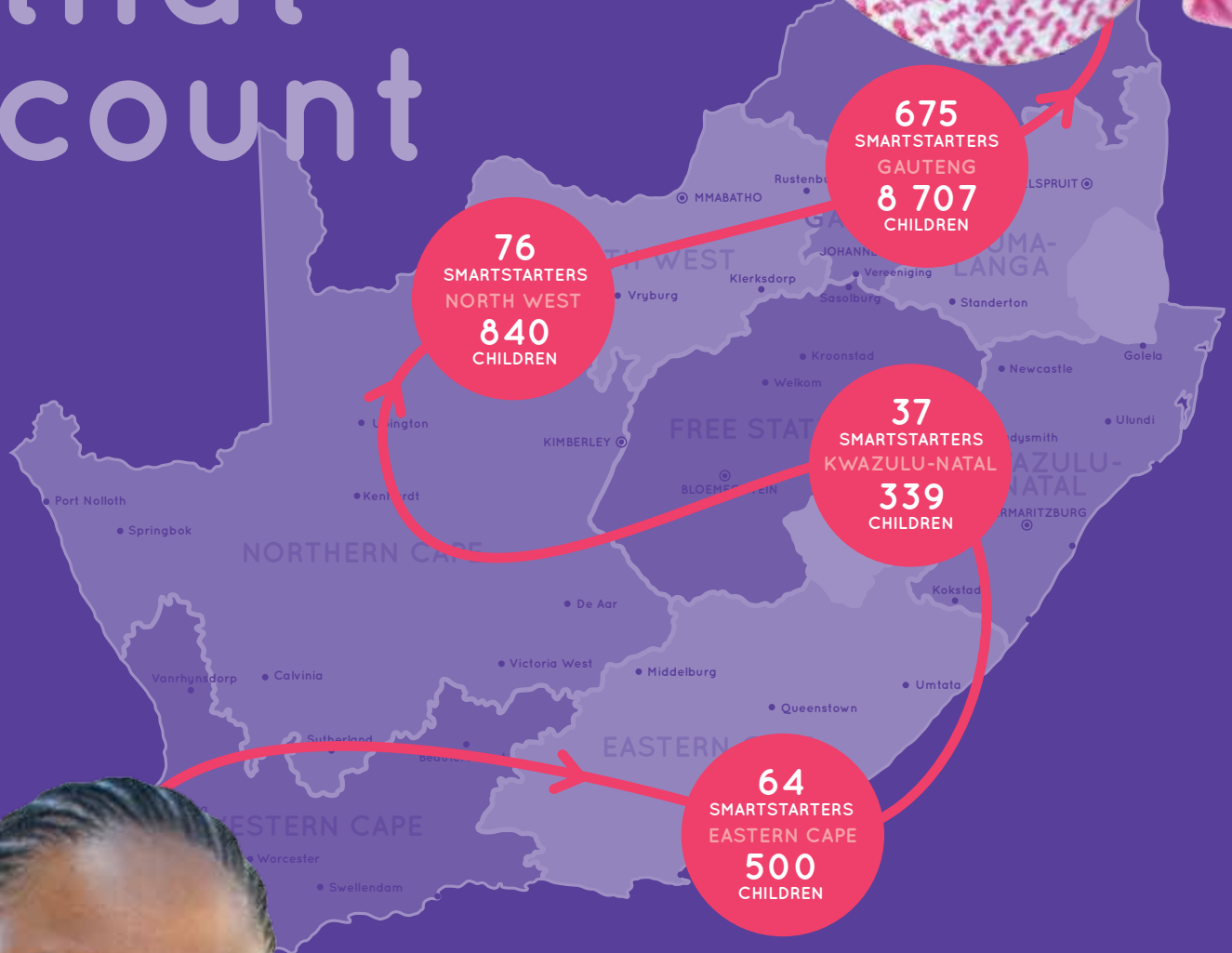
SmartStarters UNITE!



In May 2016, we launched our first SmartStarters Unite! Event. This brought together over 200 SmartStarters from clubs across the City of Johannesburg, who shared their experiences and learning. Celebrity actress, Nomzamo Mbatha, was invited as a surprise guest. SmartStarters had an opportunity to engage with her during the group activities and to take pictures with her at the end of the day.

PICTURED: SMARTSTART'S FUNANANI RABAMBI WITH NOMZAMO MBATHA

Numbers that count



*** Our franchisors play an important role in the scale-up of SmartStart across the country. They are responsible for systems and implementation, at a local level, relating to training, logistics, budgets, and targets. They also manage club coaches, quality assurance (monitoring, data gathering and reporting) as well as partnership building (community buy-in, and local government relationships).**

In our first year, we have worked hard to support our franchisors (implementing partners) so that they are able to understand and implement the many different components of the SmartStart model. In particular, we developed an in-depth franchisor induction process (which includes training for the project teams and coaches) as well as a comprehensive Operations Manual. The Operations Manual is supported by an online portal, accessible to all franchisors. This portal is a repository of the tools, templates and documents needed to implement SmartStart programmes. Hosting this online helps to ensure that all franchisors are accessing the latest version of documents whenever they need them.

“SmartStart has opened our minds to the possibilities of going to scale, and challenged us to be more creative in our thinking and adaptable in our approach.”

LIZANNE HUDSON Khululeka

THEY DID IT!

In our first year, we had five franchisors working in four provinces.

**KYB (Gauteng)
675 SmartStarters
8707 children**

**LETCEE (KZN)
19 SmartStarters
160 children**

**TREE (KZN)
18 SmartStarters
179 children**

**Cotlands (North West)
76 SmartStarters
840 children**

**Khululeka (Eastern Cape)
64 SmartStarters
500 children**





Recruitment process supported through brand awareness and collateral

Launch of the parent mobilisation campaign

Website developed

Production of marketing and brand materials for franchisors and trainers

Internal and external communications function developed

Brand identity established and collateral developed

A brand making a mark



* The intention of our brand has always been to unite and inspire; to give SmartStarters (and other partners) a sense of belonging to something much bigger than their individual efforts. As a result, it has also been a brand that is infused with the creativity of what's happening on the ground. To receive inspiration as much as to give it.



“Our biggest success this year was finding solutions and seeing the power of the brand.”

NAOMI KOATLA Project Manager, KYB

Sharing the brand

If you watched The Magic School Bus while growing up, you'll know about a particularly exciting teacher, who takes her children on all sorts of out-of-this-world learning adventures.

Here at SmartStart, we have our very own Ms. Frizzle. She is 28-year-old Simo Ledwaba from Doornkop, Soweto. Trips to the Johannesburg Zoo, playing in the Dobsonville pool, picnics on Heritage Day, dressing up for Funny Day ... Simo has done it all – taking any opportunity to extend her classroom far beyond its four walls.

As a child in her playgroup, you would have also received your very own purple golf shirt, with the SmartStart logo printed on it!

Simo stands for everything that the brand represents: playfulness, imagination, resourcefulness, passion. We applaud her, and other SmartStarters like her, who are living the brand on a daily basis. We can't wait to see what she does next.



THE SMARTSTART HUB

NTHABI MOFOKENG
Club Activator



MPHO RAPHALALANI
Trainer



KATE FINNEMORE
Office Manager



SAMU BUTHELEZI
Office Administrator

FUNANANI RABAMBI
Communicator



The engine room

MAMEETSE SEBESHO
Training Manager



NOMSA MUTHAPHULI
Operations Lead



GRACE MATLHAPE
CEO



ZANELE NGWENYA
Lead Trainer



CAMILLA DRIES
Network Co-ordinator



VANESSA LOWNDES
Training and Curriculum Design Specialist

JUSTINE JOWELL
Programme Design and Development Lead



CAROL-ANN FOULIS
Brand and Communications Lead



* We are proud of having delivered BIG results with a small team in the hub office. Just 13 people giving strategic direction to the social franchise as well as to the design and delivery of branding and communications, the early learning programme, the network of franchisors and franchisees, and operations!

This year we clarified and defined the values by which we will work (and play):

IMPACTFUL Our programme makes a difference in the lives of children. This success is driven by a network of people who are innovative, passionate and professional.

RESOURCEFUL We find affordable, clever and imaginative ways to overcome difficulties and make the most of opportunities. We constantly build this capacity in others.

PLAYFUL We have fun while we work because this is the best way to learn.

COLLABORATIVE Across the network, we work together and leverage each other's strengths.

AMBITIOUS We have to think big all the time because no child should miss out on this early learning opportunity.

TRUSTED We do what we say we will do and are reliable in our actions.

PASSIONATE We love and believe in what we do and pursue our goals with energy.

“It’s very exciting to see the number of children and franchisors ticking over daily, rather than waiting for the month end to see the franchisor reports.”

NOMSA MUTHAPHULI

Operations Lead, SmartStart

Connecting the dots

From the beginning, we have had to design with scale in mind. This is particularly important for our customer relations management system, which will need to be able to track one million children. This year, we started to develop the system, calling it SmartLink. SmartLink will allow for data collection, management and reporting across the entire franchise network and value chain.



ABOVE:
SMARTSTART CEO GRACE MATLHAPE





In the pipeline

Collaborating on a social impact bond (SIBs) for ECD

Working with other NGOs to develop appropriate norms and standards for playgroups and day mothers, to enable access to government financing

Setting up a process evaluation and a small quasi-experimental study, to provide lessons on programme delivery and evidence of child outcomes

Launching our national league of clubs with exciting incentives

Exploring opportunities for a national early learning communications campaign with other large ECD players

Developing a financial sustainability model for our SmartStarters



* Year One has been about putting in place solid foundations. We will continue to build and consolidate these foundations in Years Two and Three, to allow for the scale-up planned for Year Four.







STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

as at 30 June 2016

ASSETS

Non-Current Assets

<i>Property, plant and equipment</i>	72 853
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Current Assets

<i>Trade and other receivables</i>	361 577
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<i>Cash and cash equivalents</i>	4 924 297
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	5 285 874
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TOTAL ASSETS

	5 358 727
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EQUITY AND LIABILITIES

Equity

<i>Accumulated loss</i>	(1 790 778)
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Current Liabilities

<i>Trade and other payables</i>	1 343 298
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<i>Deferred income</i>	5 806 207
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	7 149 505
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TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES

	5 358 727
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STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS

16 months ended 30 June 2016

REVENUE	14 360 460
Other operating expenses	(16 410 127)
OPERATING LOSS	<u>(2 049 667)</u>
Investment income	258,889
LOSS FOR THE PERIOD	<u>(1 790 778)</u>
Other comprehensive income	-
TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE LOSS FOR THE PERIOD	<u>(1 790 778)*</u>

* The loss we're reflecting in our financials is not a real loss, it is due to the income being recognised as and when the expense relating to the income is incurred. In addition, one donor paid half of their grant in the 2016 year-end, with a delay in the payment of the second half only occurring in early 2017. As such, this loss is merely a timing issue which rectifies itself in the 2017 year-end and does not mean overspending of grant income by the organisation.



STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

16 months ended 30 June 2016

CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	
Cash generated from operations	4 781 909
Interest income	258 889
NET CASH FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES	<u>5 040 798</u>
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES	
Purchase of property, plant and equipment	(116 501)
TOTAL CASH MOVEMENT FOR THE PERIOD	<u>4 924 297</u>
TOTAL CASH AT END OF THE PERIOD	<u>5 358 727</u>

Figures in Rands



DETAILED INCOME STATEMENT

16 months ended 30 June 2016

REVENUE

Grants received	<u>14 360 460</u>
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OTHER OPERATING EXPENSES

Administration and management fees	784 569
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Bank charges	1 020
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Branding costs	1 033 011
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Consulting and professional fees	190 923
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Delivery expenses	44 340
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Depreciation	43 648
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Employee costs	2 785 876
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Franchisor costs	4 546 131
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IT expenses	724 892
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Lease rentals on operating lease	71 171
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Office sundry expenses	58 335
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Recruitment costs	11 749
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Staff welfare	7 278
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Team resources	2 329 981
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Telephone and fax	118 656
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Toolkit costs	1 588 424
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Training	1 787 687
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Travel - local	282 436
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<u>16 410 127</u>

OPERATING LOSS

(2 049 667)

Investment income

9 258 889

LOSS FOR THE PERIOD

<u>(1 790 778)</u>

SMARTSTART EARLY LEARNING (RF) NPC

Reg / NPO Number: **54-752 NPO**
PBO Number: **930/049/914**
Physical Address: **22 Oxford Rd, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193, Gauteng**
Postal Address: **Private Bag X777, Houghton, 2041, Gauteng**
Contact person: **Grace Matlhape (CEO)**
010.595.3910
grace@smartstart.org.za

Directors: **Tshelisehang Bellina Ntjantja Ned**
David Brandon Harrison
Nicola Rae Galombik
Carley Furness-Symms

Meetings: **Annual General Meeting**
 Special General Meeting
 Board Meeting (Quarterly) x 4
 Others

NO Constitutional changes were made this reporting period.

PRIMARY ACTIVITIES

SOURCING: Different types of people were made aware of the importance of early learning and were invited to a matching process that provided an opportunity to potentially be part of early learning.

MATCHING: Beneficiaries were assessed in terms of their suitability for working with children as well as their desire to run potential micro-enterprises.

TRAINING: Matched candidates were invited for 5-day Start-Up training. For the reporting period, over 1 500 people underwent SmartStart training.

LICENSING AND COACHING: More than 852 people who passed the training were licensed to start practising the SmartStart programme with recruited children. Ongoing coaching and mentoring was provided.

IMPLEMENTING THE SMARTSTART PROGRAMME: More than 10 000 children were part of the SmartStart early learning programme in ECD centres, playgroups and full-week day mother programmes. Some children had previously not been exposed to any form of early learning.

QUALITY ASSURANCE: Practising franchisees were quality-assured to ensure they were implementing the programme properly for the benefit of the children. This helped with practice improvement and motivation of practitioners.



The Villa, 22 Oxford Rd
Parktown, 2193

www.smartstart.org.za

hello@smartstart.org.za

SMARTSTARTER (on front cover)
BEAUTY MNGCITHA

smart
start

GIVING EVERY CHILD THE
POWER TO SUCCEED.