



NTATAISE

To lead a young child by the hand

Annual Report 2023



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Ntataise:

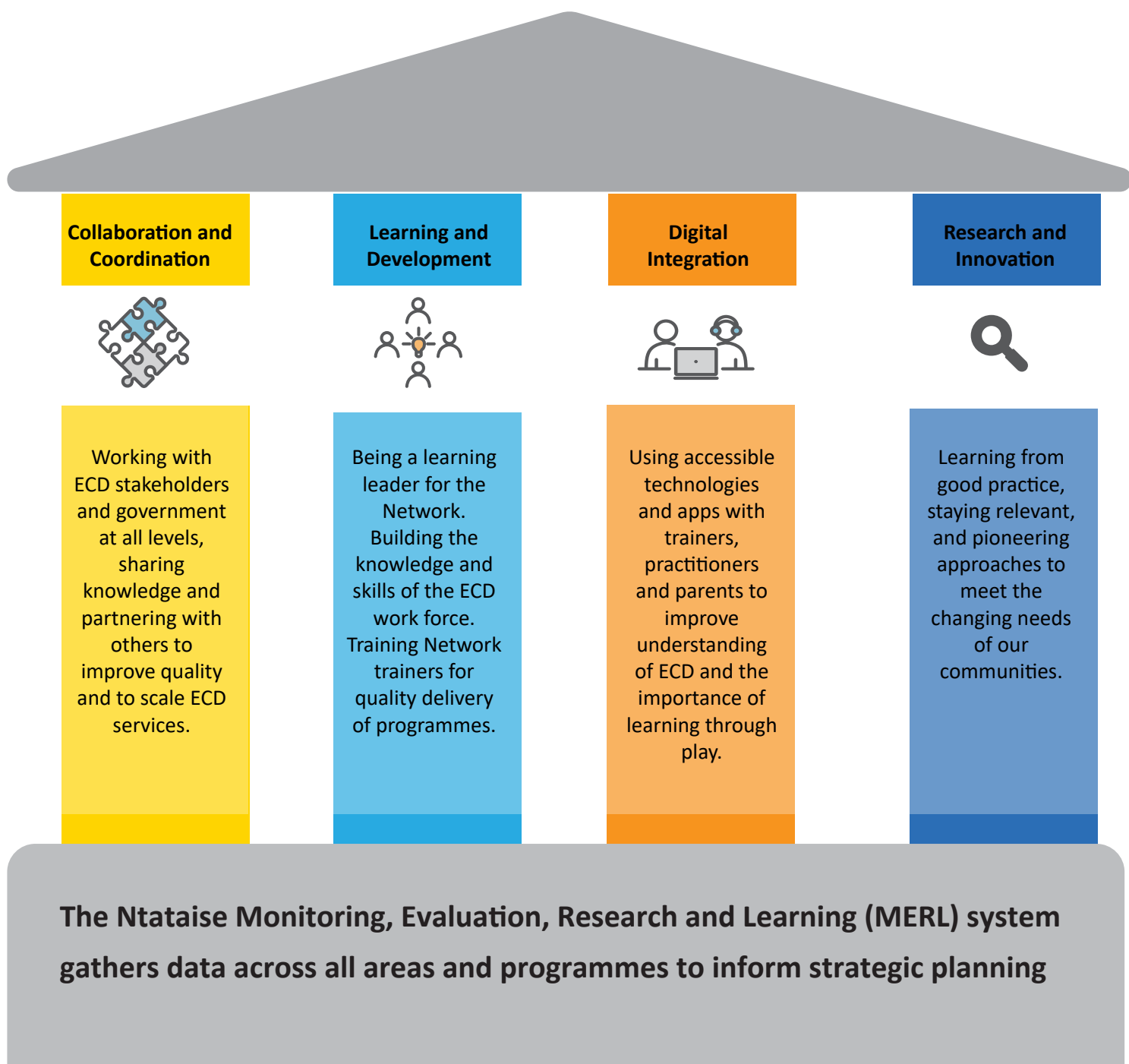
”To lead a young child by the hand



We serve young children by improving the quality and reach of Early Childhood Development (ECD) provision. Established in 1980, we now work with 21 independent organisations across eight provinces. Together we partner with a range of players at national, provincial and local levels, providing ECD training and other programmes. The Network supports vulnerable children through offering quality services in under-served areas.

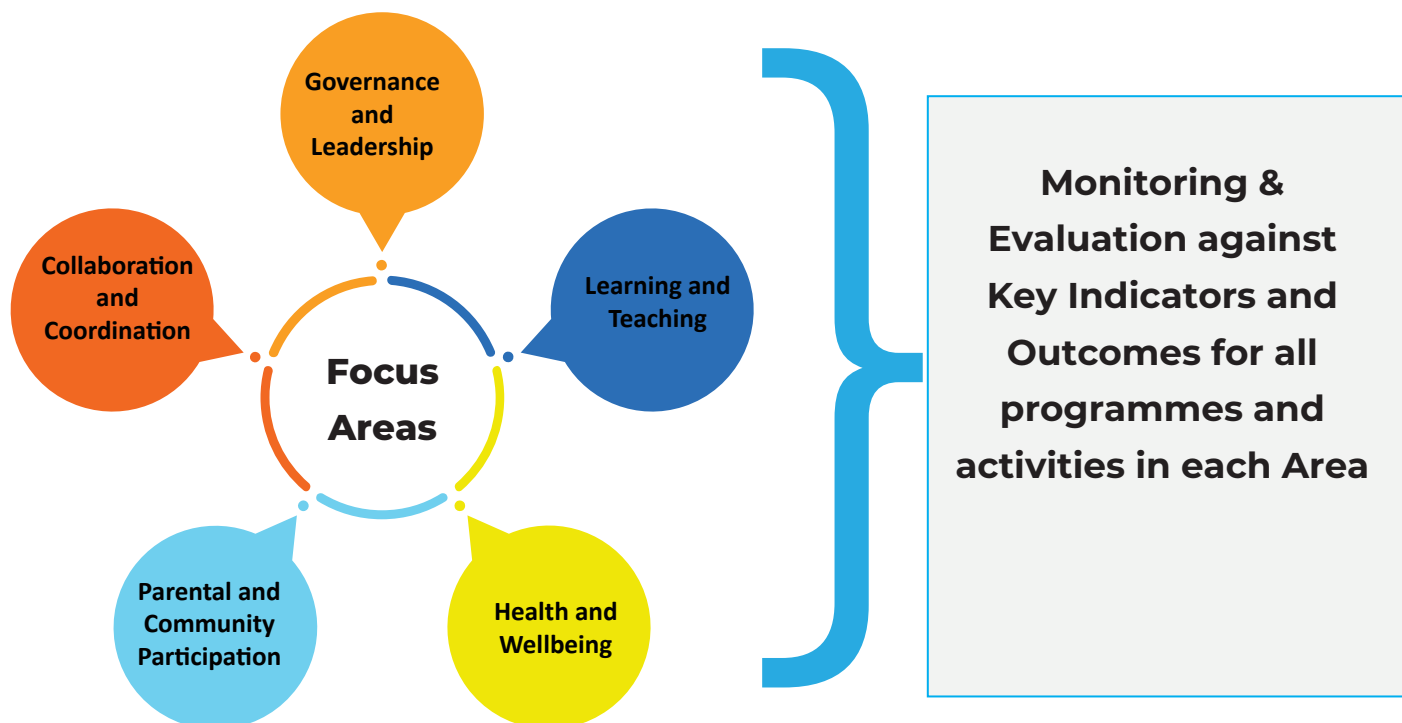
1. About Us

We build quality through four strategic areas



We build quality in our programmes through our focus areas

All Focus Areas are informed by ECD Policies and Contexts



We work with the Ntataise Network to increase reach

The figures below show our reach in 2023.

4,663
community and
home-based ECD
centres and playgroups
reached

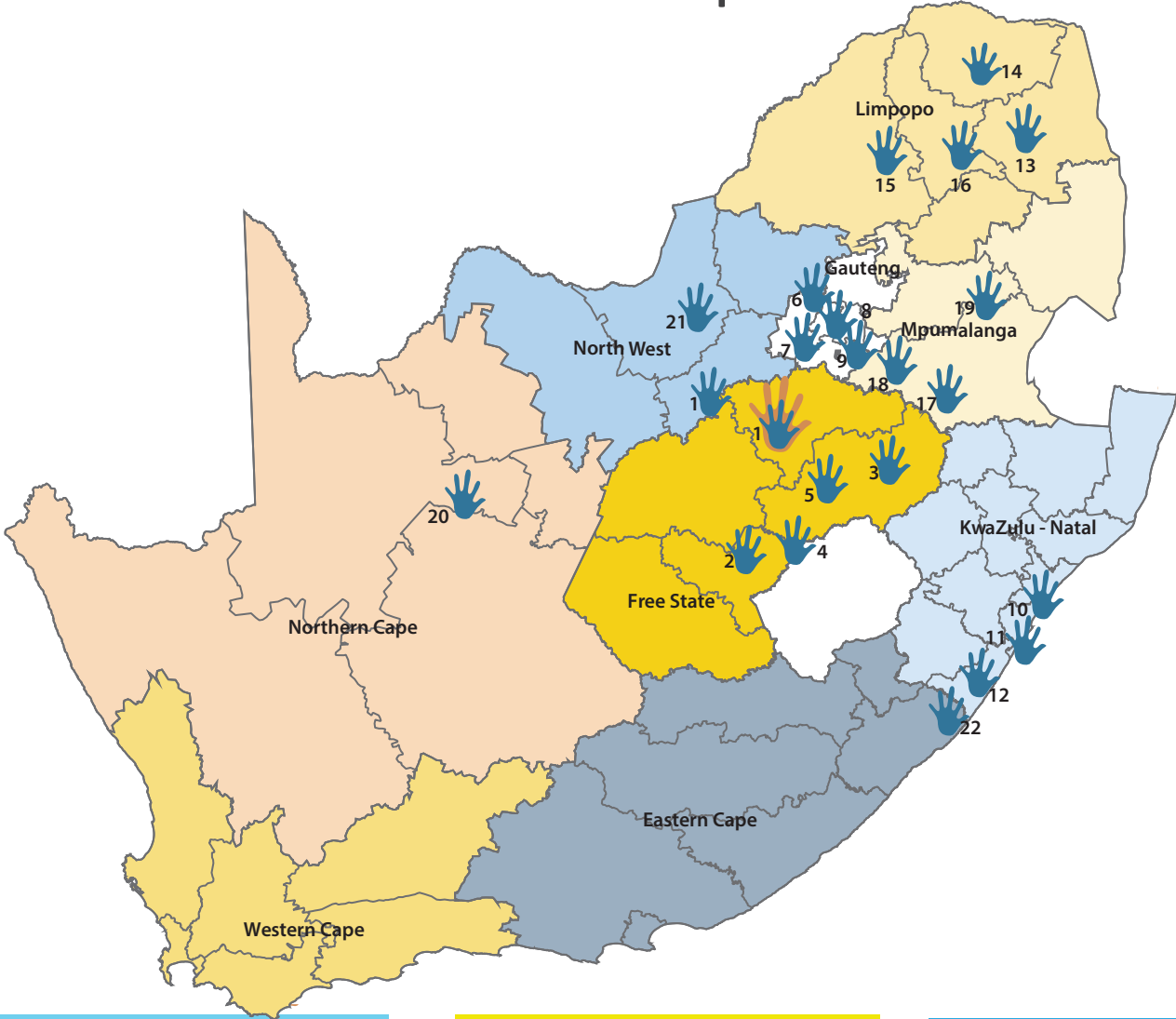
9,643
ECD practitioners
reached

183,137
children reached

47,733
parents/caregivers
supported



21 Ntataise Network members across 8 provinces



Free State

- 1. Ntataise
- 2. Lesedi Educare Association
- 3. Ntsoanatsatsi Educare Trust
- 4. Realeboga-Bakubung Training & Development Agency
- 5. Tshepang Educare Trust

Gauteng

- 6. Education Africa
- 7. Greater Soweto Association for Early Childhood Development
- 8. Katlehong Early Learning Resource Unit (KELRU)
- 9. Safe and Sound Learning Association

KwaZulu Natal

- 10. Natal Early Learning Resource Unit (NELRU)
- 11. New Beginnings Training and Development Organisation
- 12. Impande

Limpopo

- 13. Golang Kulani Early Learning Centre
- 14. Kanimamba Training & Resource Centre
- 15. Thukakgaladi

Eastern Cape

- 22. Impande

Mpumalanga

- 16. Thušanang Trust
- 17. Masakane Trust
- 18. Siyathuthuka Nursery School Projects
- 19. Ntataise Lowveld

Northern Cape

- 20. Custoda Trust

North West

- 21. Royal Bafokeng Institute

2. Themes and Highlights in 2023

In 2023 Ntataise and its Network members strengthened three of the main drivers of Ntataise's work: the power of collaboration, the centrality of play in early childhood development, and the importance of using data to improve implementation.

Directors' Reflections



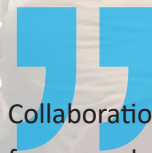
Ntataise is founded on the principle of collaboration and cooperation through the Ntataise Network in order to reach more children. By working together and supporting each other as partners, we improve the quality

of our ECD programmes.

The growing strength of these collaborations was shown in a number of ways in 2023, especially through the Centres of Excellence programme. Another significant example was member engagement with Ntataise's emerging MERL (Monitoring, Evaluating, Research and Learning) system in a mapping exercise aimed at testing an Early Learning Programme (ELP) mapping tool. This tool will create a comprehensive database of ELPs, visually illustrating geographic reach and identifying focus areas, needs and gaps to inform programme direction. The goal of sharing data and standardizing ways of measuring impact as a collective continues to be supported by Ntataise Network members.

These examples feed into our continuing reflections on the power of the Network to increase scale and access, and the process of revising the Network structure to these ends. In 2023 we explored a number of issues around formalising a Terms of Reference for the Network; we are confident that open airing of concerns as well as benefits will lead to stronger agreements and relationships going forward.

-Sarah McGuigan
Executive Director



Collaboration takes many forms and happens at many different levels. As non-profit organisations, Ntataise and its Network members are the voice of the sector – we have history and knowledge of ECD

on the ground, we are trainers and practitioners, we have relationships with centres and with under-served communities. At the same time, we work with government through structures such as the Inter-sectoral Forum (ISF), Task Teams and at district and local municipal levels. 2023 showed that open, regular and clear communication between these levels is critical.

In 2023 Ntataise continued to take part in structures such as the ISF which support government and civil society cooperation, and to share the important policy debates of these bodies with our Network members. We also facilitated some engagements around how to work with local government and municipalities, which Ntataise Network members found very helpful. Our message is that partnerships at all levels need to be based on a supportive rather than a competitive mindset, recognising different kinds of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

-Puleng Motsoeneng
Director

2.1 Collaboration

Leveraging the Network

In 2023 Ntataise and its Network members continued talks on how to formalise the Ntataise Network further as a collaborative platform, in support of these goals:

- Use our collective offerings, data, provincial spread and community footprints for impact.
- Communicate impact to investors and partners in order to improve our own services, reach and capacity.
- Use our collective strengths to support government and contribute to enhanced quality in early childhood care and education (ECCE) and expanded services at scale.

In 2023 the focus was on the underpinning principles and vision, and views on what a more formal structure might look like.

Working with government

The 2023 Ntataise Network Annual Conference events highlighted the importance of working with officials at all levels of government. At a pre-conference online preparatory event, guest speakers Nobayeni Dladla (Local Government Partnerships, Kago Ya Bana) and Tshepo Mantjé (Real Reform for ECD) considered how to grow relationships at local and municipal levels, giving specific guidance on how to get ECD services and infrastructure included in Integrated District Development Plans (IDPs). Ntataise Network organisations found these discussions extremely useful, and some partners in turn shared their experiences with district officials. At the main in-person conference held in November, Ntataise Network members engaged with ideas on public/private partnerships in the context of a presentation on the DBE's new service delivery model given by Ms Mpho Papale from the ECD Directorate at the Department of Basic Education (DBE). ECD is everyone's business: successful provisioning rests on these partnerships, and with a shared vision we can reach our shared goals.

Collaborating with stakeholders

Ntataise and the Ntataise Network members collaborate with other entities beyond the Network. One example is the assistance given to the professionalisation team of the Funda Udlala Nathi programme, a national initiative aimed at the holistic development of young children and the professionalisation of the ECD sector. The Funda Udlala Nathi team responsible for the development of ECD professional teaching standards and the professional pathway drew on Ntataise Network trainers for input to their work, through consultative workshop sessions at both the online and in-person conference events. In addition, at the request of this team the Ntataise Network members facilitated consultations with practitioners and parents on issues related to teaching standards for quality ECD.

2.2 The importance of play

Since inception Ntataise has recognised that play has a foundational role in a child's development. Play builds children's brains, engages all their senses and develops their social, verbal and physical skills. It is for these reasons that all Ntataise programmes emphasize the role of play in ECD, and that practitioner training has a strong focus on play pedagogies and methodologies. Ntataise has also recognised the importance of play for adults, whether this involves introducing adults such as trainers and practitioners to the notion of 'play-filled learning' as a means to improve their own competencies, or helping parents and caregivers use meaningful play to interact with their children and help them learn.

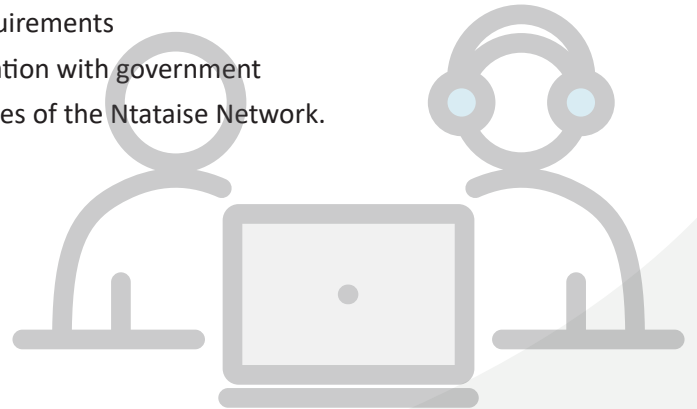
In 2023 this focus on the critical role of play took shape in a number of ways.

- The external consortium members of the Caregiver Learning through Play project joined the Ntataise mobile online App and Annual Championship. This extended the impact of the App to a wider group of trainers and practitioners, and reached more parents and caregivers to increase their understanding of how to use play as a learning tool with their children.
- The Ntataise App also used play methods and online gamification tools to help practitioners and trainers using the App to reflect on, and improve, their own practices.

2.3 Data and digitisation

Ntataise gathers evidence on the outcomes of its work in the sector in order to continuously improve the quality of its programmes. In 2023 the importance of collecting, analysing and using data effectively for this purpose has been front of mind for Ntataise. In addition, Ntataise is working towards creating a shared digital system for all data gathered through monitoring and evaluation of all programmes and special projects. To these ends, Ntataise has worked with its Network members and other partners on developing and implementing standardised M&E tools for common programmes, and has begun building capacity in their applications. Ntataise also undertook a mapping exercise to collect data on all Early Learning Programmes (ELPs)/ECD sites which are part of the Ntataise ECD Centres of Excellence Hub Programme. The aims of this exercise were to:

- Develop a comprehensive and updated database of ELPs across the Ntataise Network
- Visually illustrate our geographical reach
- Deepen our understanding of needs and gaps, in order to help shape programmes
- Use the data for reporting and feedback to meet donor requirements
- Use the data for proposals and for local/provincial collaboration with government
- Strengthen monitoring systems, tools and M&E competencies of the Ntataise Network.



3. Who we are

Trustees



Simon Moklodise
Chairperson



Maggie Nkwe



Robyn Evans
Cunningham
Treasurer



Jane Evans
Founder



Johannes Machatola



Kalim Rajab

Staff



Sarah McGuigan
Executive Director



Puleng Motsoeneng
Programme Director



Kaley Le Mottee
Monitoring, evaluation and
project manager



Sophie Masilela
Quality assurer and
project manager



Sibisiwe Ndlovu
Quality assurer and
project manager



Simone Rawling
Fundraising and PR



Mantoa Mokhothu
Facilitator and assessor



Moleboheng Leburu
Facilitator, assessor and
moderator



Melita Kakudi
CLTP Facilitator



Tseleng Mkhwanazi
CLTP Facilitator



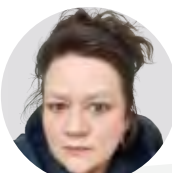
Maria Sellalia
CLTP Facilitator



Palesa Tsuela
CLTP Facilitator



Kiewit Motsoeneng
Data capturer



Carla Prinsloo
Administrator



Pearl Ndovela
Administrator



Nisoake Msimanga
Hub facilitator and mentor



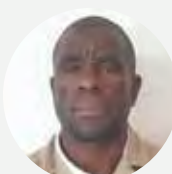
Molebogang Moopeloa
Hub facilitator and mentor



Emma Guza
Housekeeping



Margaret Sothoane
Housekeeping



Mohanoe Tsie
Driver and caretaker

Welcomes



Matshidiso Mabena
Data Capturer

Farewells



David Evans
Ntataise Trustee

4. Donors

Funding

- 1st for Women Fund
- Bokamoso Solar Energy (RF) (Pty) Ltd
- Deutsche Bank South Africa Foundation
- Ford Credit
- HCI Foundation
- Jawitz Properties (Pty) Ltd
- Jim Joel Fund
- National Department of Social Development
- National Department of Basic Education
- New Settlers Foundation
- Old Mutual Staff Volunteer Fund Trust
- Standard Bank Tutuwa Community Foundation
- The Davies Foundation Trust
- The Federated Employer's Mutual Assurance Company (RF) (Pty) Ltd
- The Grain Care Trust
- The Haggie Charitable Trust
- The Inglis Family Charitable Trust
- The LEGO Foundation through HOPE worldwide South Africa
- The LEGO Foundation through VVOB

- The Ruth and Anita Wise Charitable and Educational Trust
- The Sisi and Savita Charitable Trust
- The Oppenheimer Memorial Trust
- UNICEF

Donations from individuals

- Antoinette & Basil Hersov
- Julian Ogilvie Thompson
- In loving memory of Virginia Ogilvie Thompson

Donations in kind

- AVI
- Book Dash
- Do More Foundation
- JC Decaux
- Claire Evans
- Mzansi Playdate
- Volkswagen Group South Africa



183137
children reached
(birth to 6 years)

5. Ntataise Programmes



5.1 Ntataise Network Support Programme

Ntataise provides its Network members with on-site support, training, mentoring and quality assurance to strengthen the quality of their service delivery and organisational operations. Ntataise also ensures that all Network members are kept informed of important policy issues and debates in the sector. In 2023 the focus was on strengthening the ways in which Ntataise Network members can work together, tackling what this means in a rapidly changing environment and thinking through how to respond to new government and funder strategies. These themes ran through Network gatherings such as Directors Forum Meetings and the Ntataise Network Annual Conference.

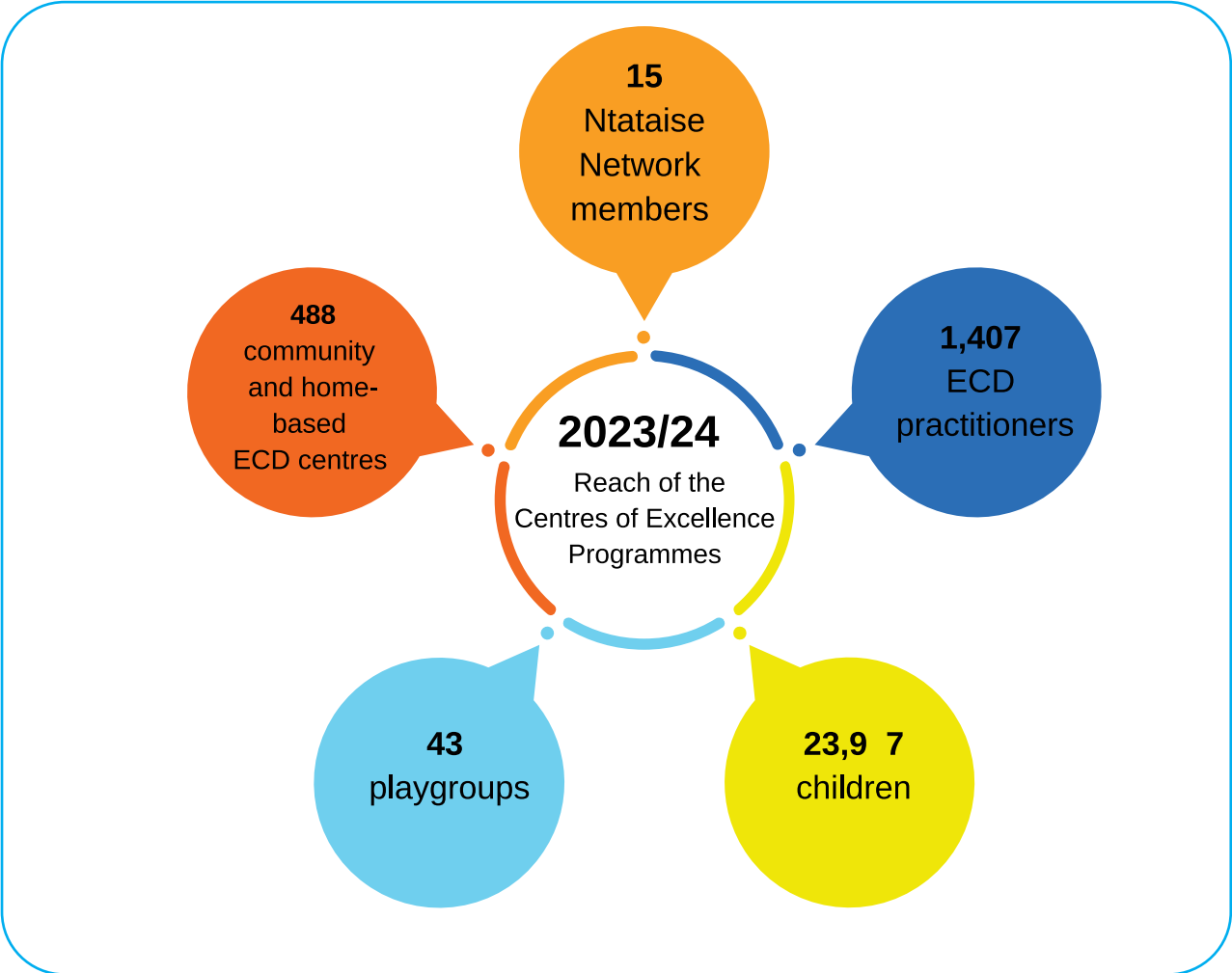
5.2 Ntataise Centres of Excellence Programme



The Ntataise ECD Centres of Excellence Programme is central to Ntataise's efforts to create a cohesive network that delivers integrated, quality ECD services at scale in marginalised South African communities. This programme improves quality through its four pillars: building sustainable ECD programmes through capacity-building workshops and registration support; delivering targeted interventions, comprehensive training and on-site support; engaging parents, caregivers, and communities to support child development and raise ECD awareness; and strengthening systems and governance through

stakeholder engagement and advocacy. Key elements include peer learning, community engagement, compliance, good governance, and resource maximisation, all aimed at fostering innovations to meet the evolving needs of children and communities.

In 2023/24, members and partners delivered capacity-building workshops and on-site support as shown below, reaching 23,917 vulnerable children aged birth to six years in marginalised communities.



In 2023 the development of processes and tools for standardizing data collection began, so that the Ntataise’s Network’s collective impact across Hubs can be quantified and better understood.

5.3 Ntataise Training and Development Programmes



Ntataise offers an accredited training programme for the Ntataise FETC Level 4 Qualification. In 2023 49 ECD practitioners in the northern Free State successfully completed the 18-month programme, showing significant improvements in delivering quality ECD programmes through on-site support and assessment visits. Three new groups of 77 practitioners began their training in 2023, with two starting in May and one in November. On 1 December 2023, Ntataise hosted a graduation ceremony for 87 practitioners from the 2018-2021 enrolment cycles. Over the past year, there has been a substantial increase in youth interest in the FETC ECD Level 4 qualification, with 58 of the current practitioners being between 18 and 35 years.



**46% of
practitioners
aged
between 18
and 35 years**

During 2023 Ntataise began preparing for the transition to the new ECD Practitioner Occupational Qualification at NQF Level 4 which will replace the legacy FETC qualification. An intensive process of reviewing and updating existing materials was begun, as the basis for developing a new Toolkit in line with the Occupational Qualification to ensure that the course material and programme meet the highest standards. The rollout of this new qualification marks a significant step towards the professionalisation of ECD practitioners, introducing them to the latest ECD best practices based on research-driven, play-based pedagogy, nurturing care, and neuroscience.

5.4 The Ntataise Digital Learning Experience App: Adults learning through Play

While play is crucial for a child's development, it is also increasingly recognised that 'learning through play' applies to all ages. The App offers an innovative approach to continuous learning by adult users, including practitioners, trainers and centre managers as well as any other interested adults such as parents and caregivers. Adults get to 'learn through play', engaging in play-filled activities for points and rewards which incentivize content learning linked to areas such as curriculum and methodology in ECD, as well as encouraging reflective learning and self-improvement. Most importantly, for practitioners the process of using play for their own learning and professional development increases understanding of how children learn through play. Parents and caregivers get to understand how to use play to interact with their children for better relationships and for helping them learn.



***Congratulations to Education Africa as the winners
of the 2023 ECD Championship!***

Play is meaningful	Play helps children make sense of the world around them. For adults, a 'play-filled' context can help develop a new perspective on something familiar.
Play is actively engaging	Children get involved in their play, using movement, thinking skills and language. For adults, dealing with content through play-based activities can help with focus and collaboration.
Play is developmental	For both children and adults, play progresses and changes, bringing in new challenges and practices for deeper learning.
Play is motivating	Both children and adults are motivated to improve, whether this is through winning, getting better at something, or through other types of incentives.

2023 saw a significant increase in the use of the App. The annual Ntataise ECD Championship extended its reach to parents and caregivers through a collaboration with partners in the Caregiver Learning Through Play project. 1500 practitioners registered for the championship game there were 50 thousand submissions in response to questions on the App.

Increase in participant numbers 2022-2023 for the Ntataise App ECD Championship


	Breakdown of players (completed)			
	Total # players enrolled	ECD practitioners	ECD managers/supervisors	Parents/caregivers/childminders
2022	330	160	55	23
2023	564	246	109	122

5.5 Ntataise Community Outreach Programme

Ntataise toy library and mobile playgroups, along with special community events and activities, provided play and learning opportunities for pre-school aged children not in a pre-school or home-based ECD programme.



6. Special Projects 2023



Ntataise believes in the power of collaboration and partnerships to increase the impact of early childhood care and education interventions, helping them to reach scale and stay sustainable. Our commitment to collaborative partnerships can be seen in the projects described below.

6.1 Caregiver Learning Through Play

Description

Play is an essential strategy for learning, and is critical for learning and development in the early years. The Caregiver Learning through Play Programme (CLTP) helps parents and caregivers understand the benefits and methods of learning through play in their interactions with their own children, helping improve early learning and playful parenting in the home. The programme uses a mixed delivery model which includes direct training offered by Ntataise Network members to communities, as well as ECD practitioner training on the programme so that they in turn can increase the beneficiary numbers by cascading the training to parents and caregivers in their own communities.

Partners

CLTP is funded by The Lego Foundation. Ntataise is part of the CLTP consortium led by HOPE Worldwide South Africa, Save the Children South Africa and the Early Learning Resource Unit.

2023 Impact/achievements

In 2023 the CLTP consortium reached 86% of its target for the training of caregivers, and 74% of its target for the training of practitioners. Since the project's inception in 2021, Ntataise and fifteen member and partner organisations have directly trained 45,741 parents. In 2023, 1576 practitioner were trained and have cascaded this training to additional 24,254 parents.

Ntataise Network members in the project have themselves benefited through increased understanding of the use of common monitoring tools and data management systems in the project.

Support for the programme by the Department of Basic Education is shown by the fact that CLTP materials have been integrated Modules 3 and 7 of the DSD / DBE parenting programme.

6.2 Funda Udlale Nathi Programme

Funda Udlale Nathi translates from IsiZulu as 'Learn and play with us'

Description

The Funda Udlale Nathi (F.U.N.) programme is an initiative aimed at the professionalisation of ECD practitioners and Grade R teachers, with a specific emphasis on the effective use of learning through play methodologies.

Partners

The lead partners in this project are VVOB, Ntataise, and Neil Butcher and Associates working in collaboration with the KZN Department of Education. Ntataise, together with Network members New Beginnings, Masakane Trust, NELRU and Ntataise partner Midlands Community College, has been working in KwaZulu Natal on the development of this pilot.

The programme is funded by The Lego Foundation through VVOB. Stakeholders include the National Department of Basic Education, the South African Council for Educators (SACE), UNICEF and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

2023 Impact/achievements

In 2023 Ntataise drew on its deep understanding of play in relation to child development to produce and develop the course content for an online training programme for Grade R and ECD practitioners to support the programme's aims.

6.3 The First for Women Fund Think Equal Programme

Description

The Think Equal programme developed a curriculum for children in the 3 to 5 years age bracket, which aims to bring social and emotional learning to these children. The early development of attitudes such as respect for others and the valuing of diversity lays a foundation for combatting gender-based violence. Ntataise supports implementation of this curriculum through training, provision of resource packs and on-site support in the Diepsloot area in Gauteng.

Partners

Ntataise works with Think Equal UK and selected ECD centres in the relevant areas. In 2023, Ntataise and Think Equal partnered with Action Breaks Silence to extend Think Equal into Grade R and Grade 1 classrooms in ECD centres and primary schools in Diepsloot.

2023 Impact/achievements

In 2023 Ntataise trained 110 Grade R practitioners from 91 ECD centres and, with the support of Action Breaks Silence, trained 7 Grade R and 13 Grade 1 primary school teachers in Think Equal in Diepsloot.



To lead a young child by the hand

**Ntataise Free State Training
& Resource Centre**

Stand No. 1616/17
Rammulotsi
Viljoenskroon
9520
Tel: (+27) 56 343 0034
Email: info@ntataise.org

Ntataise Gauteng Office

2 Campbell Street
Waverley
Johannesburg
2090
Tel: (+27) 11 025 7099
Email: ecd@ntataise.org

PO Box 41, Viljoenskroon, 9520, South Africa

www.ntataise.org

app.ntataise.org



Ntataise



ntataise_trust



@NtataiseSA



Ntataise Trust



@ntataisesouthafrica773



+27 67 040 8497