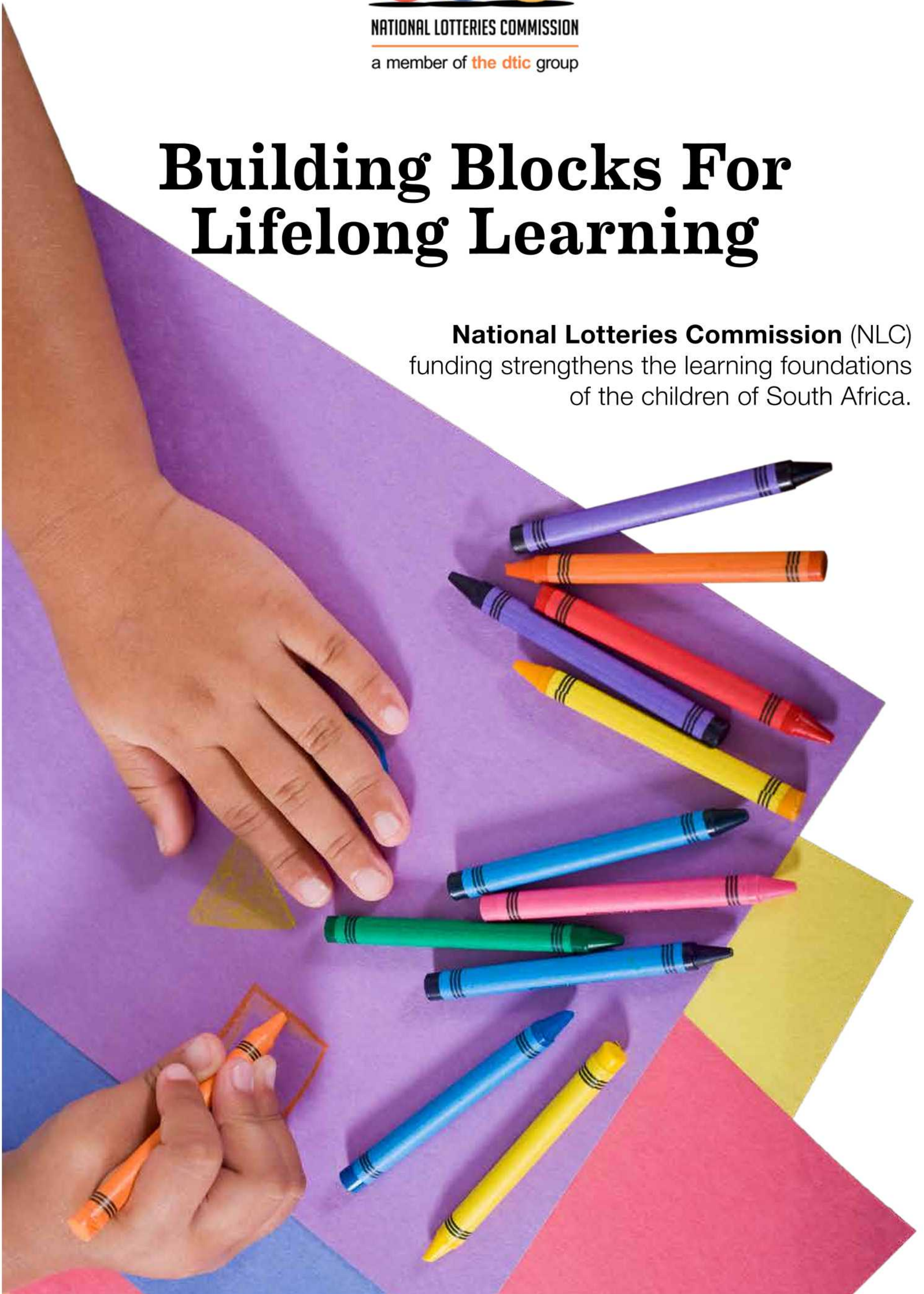


Building Blocks For Lifelong Learning

National Lotteries Commission (NLC)
funding strengthens the learning foundations
of the children of South Africa.



ELIMINATING INEQUALITIES THROUGH EDUCATION

When matric results are released every year, the spotlight is placed on some of the reasons that contribute in some learners not finding success in the education system. Often times, this has little to do with their academic ability, but more with the socio-economic issues around them and a lack of support from various avenues.

The connection between facilities, infrastructure, support services and excellence cannot be denied, and no child should have to face an uphill battle in the quest to acquire education.



Some of the Lotto-funded buildings from the ECD infrastructure legacy project



In 2021, the NLC and DSD returned to funded ECDs to hand over PPE for Covid-19 prevention.

Education is the one tried and tested tool that continues to fight poverty, but inequalities continually make this an uphill battle.

The formative years of a child's life are largely responsible for the people they grow up to be. It is during these years that the most basic skills are formed, and early childhood development (ECD) structures and systems are vital during this time.

The National Lotteries Commission (NLC) has made a commitment to support ECD to level the playing field by strengthening the learning foundations of the children of South Africa.

In December 2014, the NLC called for applications in the

charities sector targeted at ECD infrastructure, with an aim to provide funding for brick-and-mortar structures, as well as ready-to-occupy edutainers.

Over 5 000 applications were received with 95 organisations approved for new buildings, and 103 edutainers provided and installed. The construction of the buildings was managed by NLC-appointed engineers.

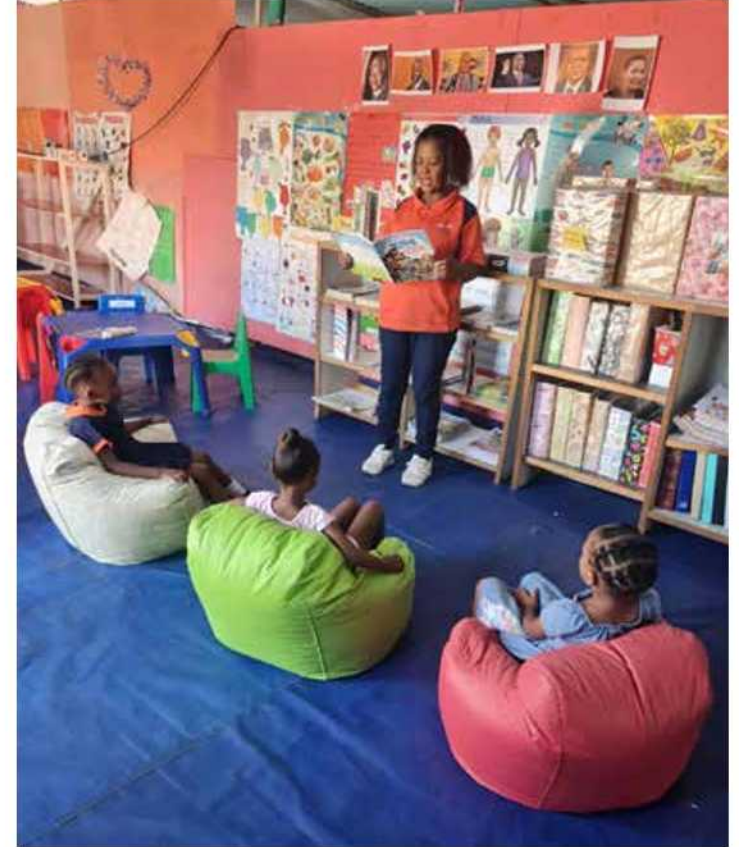
The infrastructure was formally handed over to the communities and the Department of Social Development (DSD) in 2020. The ECD buildings funded by the NLC can accommodate up to 120 children and include fencing and outdoor equipment. The edutainers consist of a classroom with tables, chairs, and all necessary learning materials.

A second service container contains a kitchenette in which to prepare food for the children, and a sick bay. The DSD is responsible for identifying communities with the most pressing needs.

Access to education is a critical focus area in SA, and we are doing our part to reduce inequalities in the development phase, particularly those from poor communities.

Karabelo Creche & Preschool

A solid start ensures a brighter future



Karabelo has seen growth in enrolment after successfully applying for NLC funding.

When Ester Mabena and her three friends from Botshabelo near Bloemfontein in the Free State started an Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre with only three children, people did not take them seriously. Today, the centre caters for more than 200 children, and creates jobs for locals.

Mabena, who grew up assisting in her mother's preschool, says the funding injected by the National Lotteries Commission (NLC) in 2018 has helped grow the Karabelo Creche & Preschool.

"Truly speaking, it was hard to keep the centre going. We were struggling financially, and we did not have enough equipment," says Mabena.

"With the funding that we got from the NLC, we have managed to employ more than 15 full-time staff, started a food garden, bought toys for the children, bought furniture, televisions and other useful things.

"In Botshabelo, when someone gets employment, they usually take care of more than one household. This means when you employ 15 people, you have managed to put bread on the table for many families."

The centre also provides food parcels for the children's families for weekends. This, to fight starvation in the abject poverty of their surroundings.

Founded in 2010 by Mabena and Mohono Tsepang,

Mpolampula Mmatokelo and Refilwe Matsikitla, the centre started operating from their houses, where they used their own groceries to feed the children.

"When we started, we did not believe that we can go this far. Our aim was merely to gather the kids in one place and to keep them safe from the streets," she says.

In 2018, however, Mabena and her colleagues heard about the NLC on radio. It triggered their interest and they attended the NLC's planned roadshow in the area.

And so the journey began, taking them from Bloemfontein to the NLC's offices, where they successfully applied for funding.

Karabelo takes care of children from 0-6 years. It also offers partial after-care service to the parents who need it, and assists primary school pupils with their studies. NLC funding provided for operational costs, kitchen equipment, gardening project equipment, air conditioners and baby room furniture.

Plans are in the pipeline to also use the centre as a sports clinic to teach and expose the youth to different sporting codes such as hockey, tennis and many others.

"The centre is beautiful and it provides a good environment for learning. Now every parent wants their child to come here," she says.

Sivuyile Preschool and Day Care Centre

ECD: A proven catalyst for change

After more than two decades of operating in a one-roomed house with a local church providing space for classrooms, Sivuyile Preschool and Day Care Centre has found a new lease on life after receiving funding from the National Lotteries Commission (NLC).

The NLC's grant has enabled Sivuyile to procure three 'edutainers' to create a safe space conducive to learning.

The funding was also used to renovate the one-roomed structure while another portion of funds was spent on operational costs and other necessities.

"On behalf of the children, parents and our staff, I would like to thank the NLC for saving us from poverty," says Monica Pike, the centre's manager.



The new-look centre, renovated with funds sourced from the NLC, now accommodates 81 children.



One of Kimberley's oldest day-care centres, Sivuyile, has managed to produce successful young men and women since it was founded 28 years ago.

"Before we got the first funding in 2018, we were surviving on the support from [the Department of] Social Development and donations, which were not enough. We were struggling with stipends and many other things.

Explains Pike: "The first funding was used for salaries, paying for rent at the church, buying educational toys for children, renovating the church's interior to create a conducive learning environment, and buying furniture.

"Now we are enjoying the new-look day-care centre and preschool, which accommodate 81 children." The facility employs six educators, an administrator, a gardener and a cleaner.

She says the facility had never received any financial injection that would have enabled it to build classrooms and buy equipment, noting that although the centre was struggling financially, it had managed to produce successful young men and women.

"Remember, we have been operating for 28 years. Some of the kids we used to teach are now well-educated and working as professionals. They regularly visit the centre, and some come to my place to say thank you."

Founded in 1994 at the dawn of democracy and amid political unrest, the centre sought to keep the children off the streets and to offer protection from abuse.

"During that time, many children were roaming around, which was very dangerous. There were also many incidents of child abuse taking place in our area," says Pike.

Itereleng Preschool

NLC builds a safe space for young minds

When the National Lotteries Commission (NLC) issued a call for funding for ECD infrastructure, it was in a bid to address the educational and socio-economic gaps caused by historic inequalities, and with the aim to change the trajectory of the lives of South African children, particularly those from poor communities.

The Bushbuckridge-based Itereleng Preschool and Creche is a beneficiary of that early childhood development (ECD) infrastructure legacy project by the NLC.

Sambo says, “The NLC has really been heaven sent. They do not only fund good courses such as ours, but they actually change lives of people on the ground.”

Every year the NLC receives an overwhelming number of applications from organisations that advocate for rural, under-privileged and poor communities to support development of children in the 0-5 years age group.

Itereleng, which started operating in 2000, struggled for almost 16 years without funds to build a proper structure for teaching and learning, paying stipends, and nutrition and toys for children.

“When we started this centre about 20 years ago, life was tough. We did not have any sponsorship. We would bring food from our homes to make sure that the kids had something to eat,” says Mercy Sambo, the centre’s manager.

“One day, we were at the social workers’ offices in Thulamahashe, just outside the Bushbuckridge business districts, complaining that we don’t have the money to upgrade the centre.

“One of the social workers told us about the NLC and we were impressed by her presentation. We went to their offices in Nelspruit and applied and our application was later approved.

Sambo says the funding helped take care of operational costs, building a new structure, and taking care of other essentials, adding that focus also fell on a sports field for the kids, an outdoor play area, and stipends.



The centre, which received funding from the NLC in 2017, currently employs six full-time employees including three teachers, two cooks and a centre manager.

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Tswelopele Preschool

Progress in Action



In a bid to address the educational gaps, the NLC has committed to investing in ECDs.

A shaky foundation in early childhood can seriously undermine the social and economic vitality of a nation.

In a bid to address the educational and socio-economic gaps caused by inadequate investments, the National Lotteries Commission (NLC) continues to reinforce its commitment to investing in Early Childhood Development (ECD) initiatives and ensuring that such programmes become game-changers in the lives of many children, particularly in poor communities where inequality finds a home.

And the Tswelopele Preschool in Ga-Maphalle village near Giyani, Limpopo is a beneficiary of that commitment.

From its origins in a community member's dilapidated two-roomed house, to the solid structure that now houses it, Tswelopele lives up to its name – Sepedi for progress – in true form.

The centre's manager, Elizabeth Masonta, says the funding has brought dignity to the organisation's work.

"After five years struggling to keep the facility operating, we managed to get funding from the NLC, which assisted us a lot," says Masonta.

"We used to operate in a tiny two-roomed house accommodating about 50 children. Since there was no other similar facility in our village, parents felt obliged to bring their children to our dilapidated structure, but those who could afford to took theirs to other villages. Currently, we have 65 children.

"All that changed after we received funding from the NLC, which we used to install a borehole. The funds were also utilised for staff development, buying equipment

and other things. We would like to thank the NLC for assisting us to develop our facility."

Masonta says since the facility was upgraded, the community members whose children were enrolled at other preschools are now choosing Tswelopelo, adding that they have applied for more funding that will be used for fencing, paving, stipends, and buying furniture.

She notes that the facility has been making life easier for the locals.

"I got inspired to start the centre after noticing that there were parents who wanted a place in which they could safely leave their children.

Though the preschool was her brainchild, Masonta partnered with Flora Makhubele and Joyce Modjadji to start Tswelopele. The trio has since employed three other caregivers.

"We have been knocking at different doors, especially business and individuals, but we never got any assistance. I don't even want to imagine what would have happened to our project had the NLC not come to our aid.

"On behalf of the centre, I would like to thank the NLC for saving the lives of our children and creating employment within our community."

Precious Ramaano, a parent in the village, has commended the facility's management for the new structure.

Explains Ramaano: "I am happy with the facility's new look and the fact that now there is a borehole in the yard. My sister and I have been sending our children to this school for many years. I am excited that it is developing."

Obedience Creche

New building presents new beginnings

For many years in Khomo village in the North West, Bridget Khomo was running her day care, Obedience Creche from a shack, which got too small to accommodate all the learners. As a result, some of the children were forced to learn outside.

After responding to the National Lotteries Commission's (NLC) call for applications for ECD infrastructure and being approved for a grant, they are now housed in a new structure that has allowed teaching and learning to take place in a conducive environment.

The NLC allocates funding to help address educational and socio-economic gaps caused by historic inequalities at foundation phase to positively affect the trajectory of children in ECD centres.

The ECD buildings funded by the NLC can accommodate up to 120 children and include the equipment required to provide an enriching learning experience.

Molapo says the funding has been a game-changer for the ECD sector.



The NLC helped fund the building of a new structure that comprises classrooms, a kitchen and an office.

“What I like about the NLC is the fact that when they give you the money, they will constantly make follow-ups to give advice where it is needed,” says Molapo.

“Since the construction of the new school, we have attracted more learners, and can now regularly pay stipends to our employees. Our focus now is to teach and make sure that we prepare learners for primary school.”

“Things got better when we received funding from the NLC to build the new structure. It comprises classrooms, a kitchen and an office. The money also covered operational costs.”

The NLC's also gave oversight on the construction of the building.

“We will forever be grateful to the NLC for giving our children the dignity to learn in a safe space.

“We pray that the NLC doesn't tire in doing this good work. Their reward is in these children's smiling faces and the peace of mind of their parents who now know that their kids learn in a building par excellence”.

“We will forever be grateful to the NLC for giving our children the dignity to learn in a safe space.



Some learners at Obedience had to receive lessons outside because the shack they called a classroom was too small to accommodate all of them.



Boemo Bogatsu – Ebenezer Child Development Programme, Gauteng

“We would like to thank the National Lotteries Commission for helping our wings to grow, our centre has grown, thanks NLC.”

Magdeline Sesoko – Jericho, North West

“We have such a beautiful building

that creates a beautiful view of our rural area. I am so grateful for the NLC funding because it has made a great change in our lives as a community.”

Hester Wondererlik – principal at Sonskynhoekie Preschool, Western Cape

“We are so grateful for a wonderful new school that they have built for us, there are not enough words to

express my gratitude towards them.”

Morwedi Sello – Khensani Combined Preschool, North West

“We have been working with kids for more than 21 years, today the NLC has changed our community, lives of our children, and our centre by funding us with this big, well-equipped structure for the betterment of our children education.”



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