

Gloria Nkosi of Hope Worldwide SA



By [Ilse van den Berg](#)

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Our beloved Tata Madiba said that, "History will judge us by the difference we make in the everyday lives of children." Perhaps just pause and read that again.

[2016 estimates](#) revealed that 250 million (43%) of children in low- and middle-income countries are unable to realise their full development potential.

Early childhood development (ECD) encompasses physical, socio-emotional, cognitive, and motor development between 0-8 years of age. The [World Health Organisation \(WHO\) notes that](#) the early years of a child's life are critical, because this is when the brain develops most rapidly and has a high capacity for change. Not only that, but that is when we have the opportunity to lay the foundation for a child's health and wellbeing throughout life.

It's inspiring to meet people like Gloria Nkosi, deputy country director of Hope Worldwide South Africa, whose sole purpose in life is to make a difference in the everyday lives of South African children - especially in the early phases of their lives.

Nkosi's role is mainly operational as she oversees Hope Worldwide SA's national pre-school, parenting, as well as training programmes which are all focused on ECD.



Gloria Nkosi, deputy country director of Hope Worldwide South Africa



#UnsungHeroes: Cornel Viljoen of A21

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The [WHO explains](#) that, "Nurturing care – defined as care provided in a stable environment, that is sensitive to children's health and nutritional needs, with protection from threats, opportunities for early learning, and interactions that are responsive, emotionally supportive and developmentally stimulating – is at the heart of children's potential to develop."



Gloria Nkosi and team at Plantina Creche.

Adding Hope with a R2

As one of KFC's Add Hope beneficiaries, when you add R2 to your KFC meal, Hope Worldwide SA receives a portion of the funds.

"Nutrition is a vital element of a child's development," says Nkosi. "When children get adequate nutrition and stimulation, they thrive."

"I am so grateful for KFC Add Hope's generosity and that they have such a passion for supporting children. They are our sole partner in terms of nutrition and with their support we are able to help address the nutritional needs of the most vulnerable young children - both at the ECD centres and at home," she explains.



Food distribution during Covid-19.

From teenage volunteer to adult pioneer

Nkosi's journey with Hope Worldwide SA goes back to when she was a mere 15 or 16 year-old highschooler. At the time

(early 90s), the organisation was focusing on orphans and vulnerable children and addressing issues around HIV prevention and care. She started working as a volunteer and would use her weekends to go around Johannesburg's CBD and taxi ranks to distribute pamphlets that explained more about the organisation and HIV prevention and care.

"We would wear our Hope Worldwide SA t-shirts and distribute condoms - at that young age! I was just so excited to serve and help make a difference. I never imagined I would one day work for the organisation," she recalls.

She finished highschool, got a degree as well as an honours, and then got a job in the corporate world. After some years, Hope Worldwide SA approached her - they knew she was passionate about community-based programmes and serving the needy.



#UnsungHeroes: Asanda Jonga of Grace Vision

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Nkosi says the love for making a difference is what motivates her to do her job. "The fact that I wake up knowing that I'm going to change someone's life and make sure that a child goes to bed with a full belly inspires me. We truly reach out to the most needy and vulnerable and that contribution I make in the lives of children and families motivates me to go all out and serve them to the best of my ability."



Food distribution during Covid-19.

Nkosi shares a touching event that happened recently during the coronavirus lockdown:

"We are running a relief programme during the Covid-19 lockdown period and I visited an area where we hand out food parcels. One of the parents came to me and told me that she was sitting in her house, praying for a miracle. She explained how she depends on a grant but since she has two little ones, all the money goes towards nappies and milk.

"They had no food left in the house and she said that when she got the call to go and collect a food parcel, it was like God was answering her prayer. This foodpack would see her and her children through for at least two to three weeks! Her story had me in tears and I realised once again that the little we do through Add Hope's support really makes a difference."



Food distribution during Covid-19.

From 5,000 to 30,000 children

When Nkosi started working at Hope Worldwide SA in 2016, she looked at their capacity in terms of the amount of work the organisation was doing and noticed that the funding was not adequate. The one goal she had was to grow the programmes to a point where they would be able to reach out to more children. When she started, they were reaching roughly 5,000-6,000 children in South Africa with their nutrition programme. Now, four years later, they are reaching over 30,000 children.



#UnsungHeroes: Migail and Morgan de Klerk of Rural Reach

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“That excites me. It shows me that we can always help more children and we can always find opportunities for more funding,” she says.

“When children thrive, a nation thrives,” says Nkosi. “The R2 people add to their KFC meal is changing people’s lives, I don’t think people realise this. It ensures that over 150,000 children in South Africa don’t go hungry every day. It enables us to make sure they get the nutrition that is necessary for healthy development,” she concludes.

To find out more, go to hopeworldwidesa.org or visit the [Facebook page](#).

ABOUT ILSE VAN DEN BERG

Ilse is a freelance journalist and editor with a passion for people & their stories (check out Passing Stories). She is also the editor of Go & Travel, a platform connecting all the stakeholders in the travel & tourism industry. You can check out her work here and here. Contact Ilse through her website here.

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