

Social enterprise in the form of an ECD centre (Eastern Cape)

By Ben Rycroft, issued by The Social Employment Fund

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In 2010, KwaBonda Village in the Eastern Cape, saw the start of a remarkable journey. Khanyisile Mpethwa, driven by her passion for young children, started on a mission to establish an Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre to cater for the needs of young children in her community. Zibanzini ECD Centre's story is one of determination, community support, and the desire to do something for the common good.

Starting struggles

The seed of Zibanzini was sown when Khanyisile noticed there was no creche in her area. She discussed starting a creche with community members who all agreed their children would benefit from a safe and structured learning space. She rallied the community and secured a site through the local leadership.

With few funds and sheer determination, Khanyisile and her committee collected corrugated iron sheets to build a basic structure. Piece by piece, the centre took shape, and in March 2010, the Zibanzini ECD Centre opened its doors, welcoming 36 eager children.



Stepping stones: Impande's support

But it was not at all plain sailing. As the centre was not yet registered with the Department of Basic Education (DBE) it did not qualify for an ECD subsidy. Children arrived hungry each day, and on top of that most parents couldn't afford to pay the fees. Khanyisile was unable to draw a salary, and often paid for children's food from her own pocket.

Things improved in 2019 when [Impande](#) partnered with Zibanzini, who provided the centre with porridge so that all children were assured of one wholesome meal a day. This eased Khanyisile's financial burden. Things improved further when Zibanzini joined the SEF programme, receiving a starter kit of toys, educational materials, and basic training that helped improve the children's learning experience.

A new chapter: important upgrades

In January 2022, Zibanzini's path took an exciting turn. Selected as a beneficiary for infrastructural upgrades, funded by

Impande UK, the centre was transformed. Two new classrooms, an office, a kitchen, a rainwater tank and a playground were built. Basic electrical installations and fencing around the property created a more secure environment for the children to learn and thrive.

A step forward: registration and future prospects

Encouraged by the building upgrades, Zibanzini successfully submitted an application for registration with the DBE, qualifying them for a guaranteed monthly subsidy. With added financial security Zibanzini will transition out of the SEF programme, but the Impande partnership will continue to support through learning groups and network meetings.

Empowering child outcomes

With Impande's assistance, Zibanzini will continue to focus on enhancing child outcomes through improved ECD programming. Now with a stronger foundation, Zibanzini is set to shape the future of its children, preparing them for school readiness and brighter educational prospects.

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