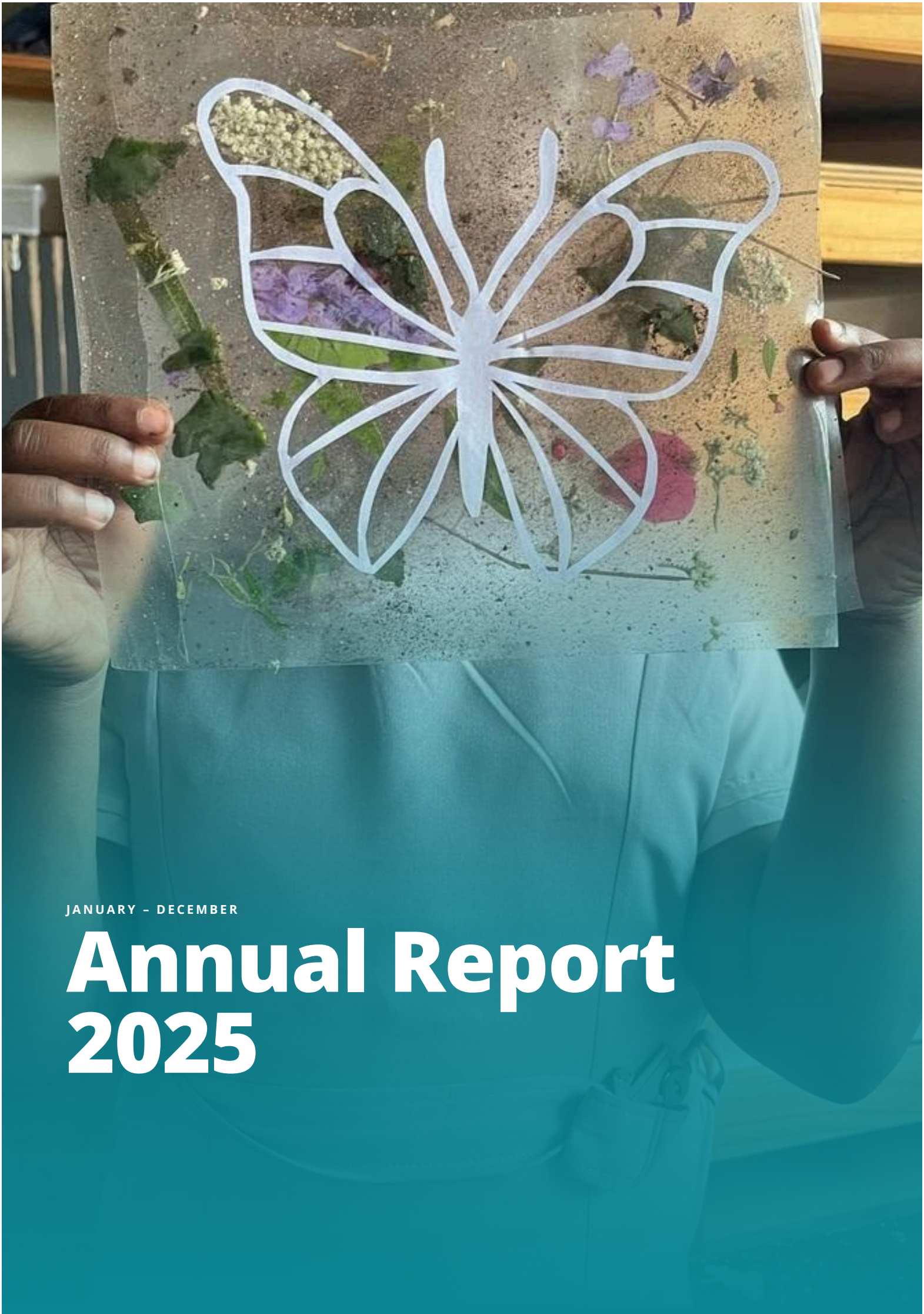


JANUARY – DECEMBER

Annual Report 2025

2025 AT A GLANCE

"At school, I feel left out, but here I feel like I belong. When I feel sad, I draw, and it helps. I'm not alone anymore."

Thabo, 14, after-school programme (name changed)

In 2025 Lefika La Phodiso worked with **about 826 children, young people and adults**, from the after-school room in the inner city to schools, townships and informal settlements across Gauteng.

404 children and teens in the after-school programme, each counted once	**2,948** times a child came to one of 317 after-school sessions	**8.95/10** safety and sense of community, as rated by 22 facilitators	**45–60** children fed before each session, every day
185 children and young people in GBV groups at 12 community sites	**39** high school learners trained as PhePha peer supporters	**68+25** people in community art counselling training: 68 online, 25 community workers in person	**50** clients at the low-cost clinic: 35 children and 15 adults

WHAT CHANGED

- Young people moved from isolation and anxiety towards safety, self-expression and belonging.
- Children's groups moved from calling violence "normal discipline" to marching against GBV in their own streets.
- 15 of 16 PhePha learners surveyed passed what they learned on to friends and family.

WHAT MADE IT POSSIBLE

- A three-year Gender Links core grant, to December 2027.
- A two-year Born This Way Foundation grant, from November 2025.
- GBVF Response Fund support for a two-year model: 12 community workers trained, then running GBV groups at 12 sites. Renewed with a new two-year grant for March 2026 – February 2028.
- EMpower support renewed to June 2026, and weekly food from SA Harvest.
- Food donations from Boxer Superstores, Debonairs Pizza and Sue-Anne Hamer.
- 57 facilitators, interns and volunteers.

RECOGNITION

- Story of Change named runner-up at the Gender Links Learning and Sharing Summit.
- In the media: IOL's *Saturday Star* and *Daily Maverick*, and radio interviews on Kaya 959 and Chai FM.
- Lefika's "volunteens" model cited in *Approaches*.
- A clean audit for the financial year.

LETTERS

A year of consistency and growth

From the Chairperson

It is my privilege, on behalf of the Board of Directors, to present the 2025 Annual Report of Lefika La Phodiso Community Art Counselling and Training Institute NPC.

The year under review was one of consolidation and growth. Lefika continued to deliver its core after-school programme to children and adolescents in the inner city of Johannesburg, Snake Park (Soweto) and Tjovitjo (Orange Farm), recording more than 300 group sessions and close to 3,000 participant attendances. The organisation extended its reach through community art counselling training, delivered online to an open cohort and in person to community workers in the gender-based violence sector, and through new work in schools and in the community of Alexandra.

Financial sustainability. The Board's principal responsibility is to ensure that the organisation is well governed and financially sound. I am pleased to report that Lefika received a clean audit for the financial year ended 28 February 2026, and that its income continues to come from a diversified group of funders. Of particular significance in 2025 was the securing of multi-year funding: a three-year core grant from the Women's Voice and Leadership fund, managed by Gender Links; a two-year grant from the Born This Way Foundation's Kindness in Community Fund; the renewal of EMpower's support; and the GBVF Response Fund's support for a two-year programme that trains community workers in community art counselling and then supports them to run GBV-focused groups in their own communities, now renewed with a new two-year grant for March 2026 – February 2028. Multi-year and core funding of this kind strengthens the organisation's ability to plan, retain skilled staff and invest in quality.

Accountability. Lefika reports regularly to each of its funders on both finances and outcomes. In 2025 the organisation strengthened its monitoring and evaluation, collecting session reports, registers and participant and facilitator surveys across its programmes. This report draws directly on that evidence, and the Board commends the team for the discipline with which it has been gathered.

Recognition. The Board notes with appreciation that Lefika's Story of Change was named runner-up at the Gender Links Learning and Sharing Summit in March 2025, and that the organisation's work was featured in the media and cited in academic literature during the year.

Appreciation. On behalf of the Board, I thank the whole Lefika team: the staff, facilitators, interns, trainees and volunteers whose skill, care and commitment make this work possible. I extend our sincere gratitude to our funders and partners for their confidence in Lefika, and to my fellow directors for their service.

The Board remains committed to sound governance and to supporting Lefika in its mission of creating safe spaces in which creativity and containment nourish emotional development and strengthen relationships.

Yours faithfully,

Khayelihle S Sithole
Chairperson, Board of Directors, Lefika La Phodiso

From the Managing Director

Dear friends, partners and members of the Lefika family,

At Lefika La Phodiso, the rock of healing, much of our work in 2025 was about consistency: the same room, the same time, every week. A meal before the session. A group contract on the wall. An adult who listens. For many of the children who come to us, this predictability is rare, and it is what makes therapeutic work possible.

Within that structure, children began to engage. Facilitators recorded more than 300 after-school sessions and nearly 3,000 attendances. Children who arrived withdrawn began to communicate through art materials: an angry clay monster, a matchbox lined with soft fabric to hold what feels safe, a mask with one face for the world and another for themselves. Over the year, we saw children develop the emotional vocabulary to name experiences they had not been able to put into words.

Healing at Lefika happens in relationship, not in a single technique or session. It happens between people: a child and the facilitator who remembers her name and notices when she is missing, a group of peers who learn to listen instead of laugh, a grandmother and a granddaughter who sit at the same table. Our facilitators, in turn, are held in weekly supervision and debriefing, so that they can keep holding others. Relationship is not a by-product of the work; it is the work. Over time, through these relationships, children come to see themselves in a new light.

Gender-based violence was present throughout 2025: in children's drawings, in their play and in their stories. With the GBVF Response Fund, community workers trained with us in person and carried what they learnt into their own communities. With Gender Links, girls and young women found a space to name what they had lived through, and our Story of Change was named runner-up at the Learning and Sharing Summit. In Alexandra, grandmothers and granddaughters made dolls together and gave them superpowers, and in doing so found words for conversations that had been kept silent for generations. In June, our children took their posters into their own streets with a clear message: this must end.

The work also extended beyond our own groups. High school learners in PhePha Peers in Empathy learnt to hold space for their friends: “I am able to say NO, and set boundaries.” Our online trainees, our low-cost clinic, our interns and our volunteers each extended the reach of the work.

There were also limits. Children miss sessions because of rain, exams or the danger of the walk home. The stories our facilitators hold are heavy, and some needs are deeper than a group can carry. We take these limits seriously and have adjusted our approach: stronger supervision and referral, sessions that welcome a child whenever they are able to come, and the habit of asking young people what they need.

Thank you to the funders and partners who made this work possible: the GBVF Response Fund, Gender Links, EMpower, the Born This Way Foundation, the Sarraounia Public Health Trust, goGOGOgo, The Trinity Session, SA Harvest, Boxer Superstores, iTOO, SAPPIN, and the universities who share their students with us, including the University of Johannesburg, University of Witwatersrand, the University of Pretoria, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal, SACAP (South African College of Applied Psychology) and the University of Cape Town. Thank you to our team, facilitators, interns, volunteers and board. Above all, thank you to the children, young people, families and communities who place their trust in us.

With new multi-year partnerships in place, we begin the next year with stability and a clear sense of purpose.

With gratitude,

Rozanne Myburgh
Managing Director, Lefika La Phodiso

A CHILD'S JOURNEY AT LEFIKA

From the first quiet session to helping someone else

The path below is drawn from our four children's stories and from what facilitators reported across the year. Not every child takes every step, and no one takes them in a straight line. Beneath each step is the facilitators' end-of-year rating for that outcome.

1

Arriving

Many children come anxious, withdrawn, angry or hungry. Nearly half (47%) worry about not having enough food at home.

"Sad most of the time."

Thabo, 14, describing how he felt when he joined

2

Feeling safe

A meal first, then the same room, the same adults, a group contract the children help write, a check-in and a closing ritual.

"A space where participants felt safe enough to talk about things that are normally kept quiet."

8.95/10 community of care

3

Finding a language

Clay, masks, dolls, body maps and puppets let children show what they cannot yet say.

"I like it here because it's fun. I can draw my feelings."

8.64/10 expressing experience through art

4

Belonging

Children make friends, learn to repair conflict and choose to keep coming back.

"When I get cross, I draw or talk instead of fighting. I have friends now."

8.45/10 children actively choosing to attend

5

Giving back

Older young people lead, advocate and help the younger children.

"I want to help others the way Lefika helped me."

8.45/10 self-esteem

CHILDREN'S VOICES

Four children, four turning points

These stories come from interviews with children in the after-school programme, their parents and guardians, and their facilitators. They are shared with consent, and every child's name has been changed.

AGE 7

Ayanda: finding her voice through play

BEFORE	AFTER
Clung to her older sibling and rarely spoke in the group.	Plays with other children on her own and draws at home. “Less fearful,” says her mother.

Ayanda came alive in free play and imaginative drawing. In sessions with storytelling and puppetry, she began to give her fears to the characters she made, which helped her facilitators understand how lonely she felt.

Slowly, she began to speak more in the group, and asked for materials so she could keep drawing at home. For the youngest children, safety and confidence grow through play. It is the foundation for everything that follows.

“I like it here because it's fun. I can draw my feelings.”

AGE 11

Sipho: from fighting to talking

BEFORE	AFTER
Described as “hot-tempered”. Clashed over materials and stormed out when upset.	Apologised to another child for the first time. His guardian saw a better mood and fewer suspensions.

His facilitators brought in structured group activities that focused on cooperation and peer support. At first Sipho resisted, but over time he began to accept help and to think about what happened in a conflict. He told his facilitators: “Here I can talk when I'm angry instead of fighting.”

Art and group work gave Sipho new ways to cope, and a place where he belonged.

“When I get cross, I draw or talk instead of fighting. I have friends now.”

AGE 14

Thabo: from isolation to belonging

BEFORE	AFTER
Felt sad “most of the time”. His mother shared that teachers described him as withdrawn and quick to anger.	Made friends, concentrates better, and volunteers to help the younger children.

In his group of 13–15-year-olds, Thabo first sat alone and doodled. Over time he joined in, especially with storytelling and music. In the group's sharing circles he began to talk about being excluded at school and feeling lonely at home, and his peers responded with empathy.

He began to say he felt “safe at Lefika”. He cried in a session without fear of being laughed at, and found that “art helps me calm down” when he is anxious.

“At school, I feel left out, but here I feel like I belong.”

AGE 17

Lerato: from worry to advocacy

BEFORE	AFTER
Very anxious about her future. Trouble sleeping, worry about unemployment, periods of hopelessness.	Plans a career in art therapy, mentors younger participants and is “a voice of advocacy” in her group.

In group discussions Lerato came alive in debates about justice and leadership, and her facilitators encouraged her to turn these ideas into advocacy. She joined a peer-led art exhibition, *Dreaming Futures*, showing her paintings about resilience.

She now shares her own journey with anxiety and coping with the younger participants.

“Before, I thought I had no future. Now I know I have something to give.”

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMME

The same room, the same time, every week

In August, the 9–11-year-olds lined matchboxes with soft fabrics to make small safe spaces of their own. The session began with shy, reluctant check-ins and ended with reflections on love, safety and what it means to be held.

404
children and teens, aged 6 to 18

317
group sessions across four terms

2,948
attendances

116
children came back in more than one term

Because of EMpower, five weekly groups met in 2025: three at our main office, one in Tjovitjo (Orange Farm) and one in Snake Park (Soweto). **Because of SA Harvest's weekly donations**, 45–60 children ate before every session. For many, it was their only meal of the day. Intern **Sue-Anne Hamer donated nutrition** for the children, and **Debonairs Pizza** donated pizza for the children's closing party.

Safety and belonging. Children came back week after week, often by choice, even when school attendance was irregular. Group contracts, check-ins and closing rituals made the space predictable.

Art as a language. Most sessions used community art counselling, arts and drama therapy, art skills or psycho-education. “Children were able to express emotions they usually struggle to put into words.”

Identity and self-worth. Through trees, mini-me figures, “letters to myself” and mask work, children moved from describing themselves through possessions to naming their own qualities. Facilitators saw shifts in posture, eye contact and willingness to share.

Facilitators grow too. Weekly supervision helped facilitators hold heavy stories. “I have learned to separate the mother in me and the facilitator role.”

Each facilitator referred one or two children for further support on average. The programme was rated 4.7 out of 5 for how much it benefits participants.

How 22 facilitators rated each outcome (out of 10)



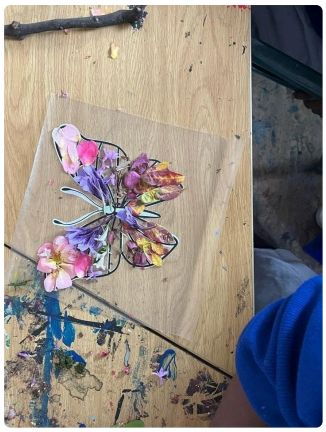
Bars start at zero; the full width is 10.

Individual children by age

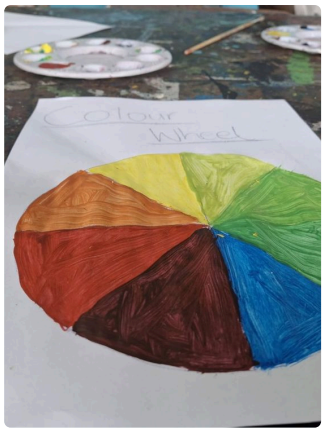




January. “Feelings cups” that turn to show a different emotion on each side.



February. The 6–8s collected leaves and petals around the Children's Memorial Institute for their butterflies.



March. Colour theory with artist Humbu Nsenga.



August. “The power of little things”, with intern Sue-Anne Hamer.



Every child received a certificate of participation at the closing party, where Debonairs Pizza donated the pizza.



The year-end party photo frame.



From left: Sinazo Konza (Financial Manager), Jessica Maseko (Operations Coordinator), Rozanne Myburgh (Managing Director) and Happy Boitumelo Bapela (Operations Manager).

What we learned from the EMpower final report (January–June 2025)

The most significant change was that young people moved from isolation, anxiety and emotional distress towards greater safety, self-expression, resilience and belonging. Younger children leaned on play and trust. Pre-teens worked through friendship, belonging and conflict. Teenagers explored identity, social justice and their mental health. The oldest participants were focused on independence and readiness for work.

Harder than we expected: mental health needs were more intense than anticipated, including severe anxiety, depression and suicidal thoughts in some older participants. Young people asked for practical things: better food, more art materials, structured art and music classes and help with careers. Peer conflict came up at every age, and facilitators carry a heavy emotional load.

What we changed: referrals to the low-cost clinic for individual and family therapy, and Lefika Wednesdays as a weekly skills-sharing space. Next, we plan to build referral pathways to specialised mental health services, add peer mediation, anti-bullying work and career readiness for older youth, seek partners for food and materials, co-design activities with participants and protect facilitator well-being.

Source: Lefika's final report to EMpower (January–June 2025), drawing on 2025 facilitator reflections and 2024 participant surveys.

RESPONDING TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Naming it, and saying it must end

In June, ahead of Youth Day, children from our groups carried their own posters through their own streets in peaceful marches against gender-based violence.

AT THE START

Many children did not know the word GBV, or saw violence at home as “normal discipline”.

→

BY THE END

“If GBV continues there is no hope for the future for us as kids.” Children named the adults they trust and set boundaries.

Gender Links: Women's Voice and Leadership

Because of Gender Links, 74 children and teenagers (64 of them girls) joined five GBV support groups in Snake Park, Tjovitjo and one other community site in Term 2. From April to December, 74 sessions across the programme dealt with GBV, gender, consent or abuse, with 788 attendances.

In drama-based psycho-education groups, 12–13-year-olds used role-play to explore GBV, safe and unsafe secrets, body autonomy and trusted adults. Teens worked through consent, privacy and safe and unsafe touch. In an informal-settlement group, children mapped GBV in their community and made posters. At the close of one group, participants said they are “now always keeping themselves safe”.

The three-year core grant runs from March 2025 to December 2027. In March, Lefika's Story of Change, presented by Happy Boitumelo Bapela and Rozanne Myburgh, was named runner-up at the Gender Links Learning and Sharing Summit.



Runner-up at the Learning and Sharing Summit, March 2025.

GBVF Response Fund: training community workers to run groups

Because of the GBVF Response Fund, 12 community workers completed in-person training and ran GBV-focused groups at 12 sites across Gauteng. Between July and December their groups recorded 97 sessions and 1,017 attendances by 185 children, young people and adults. The Fund has renewed its support with a new two-year grant for March 2026 – February 2028.

At the Jeppe taxi rank, a group run with Umthomb'ngashi began among drinking and public violence. After two sessions, participants arrived sober and engaged, and a surprising number of men came. Several disclosed that they were experiencing violence themselves, and one received individual support.

BEFORE TRAINING (SEPTEMBER 2024, 26 TRAINEES)

18 had never used arts-based methods. 19 said it was difficult or very difficult for GBV survivors in their community to get mental health support.

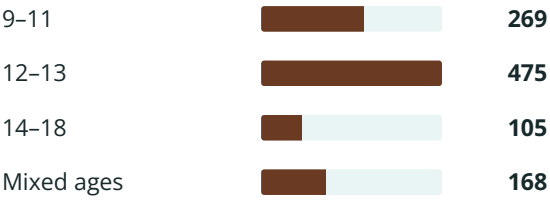
AFTER TRAINING (MAY–JUNE 2025, 7 RESPONDENTS)

All 7 said their empathy with survivors had improved significantly, all 7 feel more confident offering support, and 6 of 7 feel very or extremely empowered in their role.

> *"Seeing the change in myself through the training gave me the confidence to believe change can occur in others as well."* GBVF trainee

> *"The people, the culture, the knowledge I gained — I can say it was my safe space."* GBVF trainee

GBVF group attendances by age, July–December



97 session reports. Mixed-age sessions can't be split by age.



GBVF trainees at the in-person group-work weekend, January 2025.

KINDNESS IN COMMUNITY: PHEPHA PEERS IN EMPATHY

Teenagers who hold space for their friends

"I started asking him how he felt, the colour, texture, and weather element he was feeling. That got me to understand his feelings." A PhePha learner, using a check-in from the programme with a sad friend.

Because of the Born This Way Foundation, 39 learners at National School of the Arts (15), Alexandra High (15) and Greenside High (9) were trained as peer supporters between February and June. In November the Foundation awarded a new two-year grant: work in 16 schools reaching around 500 learners, and paid work for 8 community art counsellors.

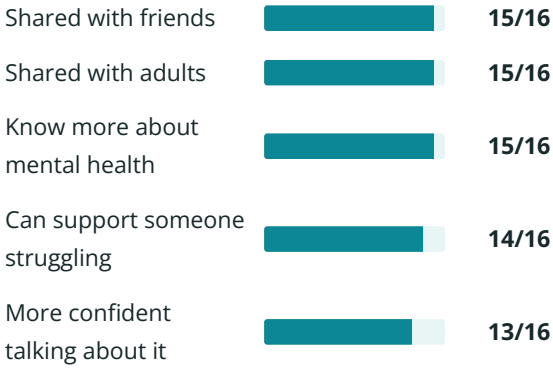
The programme taught containment, boundaries, mindfulness, listening, empathy and mental health first aid through art-based activities.

> *"I am able to help my peers, and even people older than me. I am able to say NO, and set boundaries."*

> *"Phepha had truly been a life changing point in my life."*

> *"I got hit on my head multiple times at school and they helped me stay calm and not fight before I got suspended."*

June follow-up survey: learners out of 16



COMMUNITY ART COUNSELLING TRAINING

Growing the people who hold others

Every Tuesday evening from February to November, trainees met on Zoom from 19:00 to 21:00. A WhatsApp group ran alongside, so no one fell behind when loadshedding hit or data ran out.

68
joined the yearly online training

13
attended sessions for all eight modules

25
community workers started in-person GBVF training; 12 completed

10
young adults from UCT did a one-day Module 6 workshop

The eight modules run from the counselling process, psychoanalytic theory and group work through trauma, social action and visual research, social entrepreneurship, and bereavement, loss and endings. An online Open Day on 28 January welcomed people interested in joining.

On 11 October, Rozanne Myburgh and Brandon Bitros ran Module 6, *Visual research and social action*, in the Sunshine Room of the Sensory Space for 10 young adults from UCT's Centre for Social Science Research, coordinated by Chelsea Coakley. They practised body mapping, community mapping and the SHOWED method.

> "*No is a full sentence. The power of art. We in this together.*" Online trainee

> "*It is always daunting to show people something we have created, but it was also empowering.*" Online trainee

> "*Got the chance to face one emotion that was setting me back.*" Online trainee



Artworks from the 2025 online training.


The UCT group at work on Module 6.


Body maps laid out for group reflection.



The Open Day invitation, January 2025.

LOW-COST CLINIC

When a child needs more than a group can hold

Alongside its group work, Lefika runs a low-cost clinic offering individual and group arts therapy and counselling, with fees on a sliding scale. It is run by Lefika's yearly intake of drama, art and music therapy interns and student registered counsellors, all supervised by qualified professionals.

In 2025 the clinic became an important next step for children in the after-school programme. When a child's needs went beyond what a group could hold, including disclosures of abuse and serious mental health concerns, facilitators raised this in supervision and the child and family could be referred for individual or family therapy.

Clients came with grief and bereavement, trauma, anxiety, stress and depression, family conflict and divorce, relationship difficulties, self-esteem, school and career pressures, and support around gender identity.

50
clients in 2025

35
children

15
adults

IN THE COMMUNITY

Grandmothers, granddaughters and a gogo knitting a blanket

Masikhulume: breaking the silence through art

In workshops at Itlhokomeleng in Alexandra, girls and gogos made puppet dolls to tell their own stories, gave each doll a superpower, and mapped the safe and unsafe places in their community together.

Led by the Sarraounia Public Health Trust with The Trinity Session and goGOGOgo, and funded by the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture, the pilot reached **44 gogos and 115 girls** aged 10 to 19 between September 2024 and March 2025. Lefika's community art counsellors co-facilitated, gave on-site psychosocial support and referred participants for counselling.



Gogos and a puppet doll at a Masikhulume workshop.

> *"Today I have learned how to talk to my grandchildren about sex without being embarrassed."* Gogo

> *"I learnt more about the power I have and the power of consent."* Girl

> *"The burden is removed from my shoulders."* Gogo

In 2025 the partners published The Masikhulume Toolkit, co-authored by Rozanne Myburgh. Gogos asked for help with their grandsons too, and in September the partners proposed a second phase that adds adolescent boys.

University of Johannesburg: a sensory wall for Lefika

The children's favourite panel on their new sensory wall is a gogo knitting a blanket, "because their own gogos knit as well". In a "my safe space" session they asked permission to paint on each other's aprons, and the room filled with laughter.



The sensory wall.



Clay creatures.

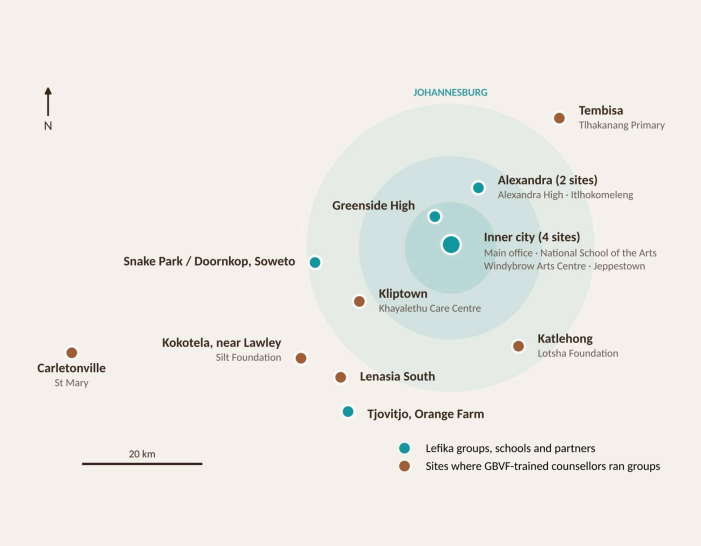
UJ art therapy honours students did their community practice placements at Lefika. One pair ran eight weekly sessions with the 12–13 group, who chose the skills they wanted to learn and set two goals: a new art skill each week, and a sensory wall of their own. By the end of term they were using new words such as “missing”, “free” and “nervous”, and had taught the student isiZulu and Setswana words like “Imnandi” and “shesha”.

Source: Jade Booysen, Community Engagement Reflection, UJ community practice module CPH8XY4, 2025.

WHERE WE WORK

From the inner city to Carletonville

Our main office is at the Children's Memorial Institute in the inner city. In 2025 our work reached schools, townships and informal settlements north, south, east and west of Johannesburg.



AREA	PLACES
Inner city	Children's Memorial Institute (main office), National School of the Arts, Windybrow Arts Centre, Jeppestown (Umthomb'ngashi)
Northern suburbs	Greenside High
Alexandra	Alexandra High, Itlhokomeleng
Soweto and the south	Snake Park/Doornkop, Kliptown (Khayalethu Crisis Centre), Lenasia South, Kokotela near Lawley (Silt Foundation), Tjovitjo (Orange Farm)
East	Thembisa (Tlhakanang Primary), Katlehong (Lotsha Foundation)
West Rand	Carletonville (St Mary)

IN THEIR WORDS

What 2025 sounded like

We read through about 117,000 words of session reports, facilitator reflections, supervision forms, surveys and group reports. The larger a word appears, the more often it was written.

Feeling comes first. Feel, feeling and felt appear more than 800 times, more often than “children”.

Safety is built, week by week. “Safe space” is one of the most common phrases in the year's records. In one group, a participant suggested adding “no stealing” to the group's rules.

GBV is a thread through the whole year. GBV, violence and abuse together appear more than 450 times.

What is quieter. “Listen” appears far less often than “express”, and difficult feelings appear more often than “happy”. Everyday hardships surface in small details: children arriving late after fetching younger siblings, and sessions lost to the weather.

Related forms were grouped, and each unique passage was counted once. Registers, personal documents, templates and other organisations' documents were left out.



THE YEAR IN MILESTONES

2025, month by month

February Gender Links core grant signed for March 2025 – December 2027.

27 February Guests "Make your mark!" on a shared canvas at the iTOO Special Risks Unconference.

March Story of Change named runner-up at the Gender Links Learning and Sharing Summit. Masikhulume Phase 1 completed in Alexandra. Rozanne Myburgh interviewed on Kaya 959 *Point of View* (31 March).

May Groups take part in the Hey Hillbrow! parade.

June After-school groups march against GBV ahead of Youth Day. EMpower grant renewed to June 2026.

July Rozanne Myburgh quoted in *Daily Maverick*: "Gauteng special needs children's NGOs face closure" (9 July). Interviewed on Chai FM's *Chai Chinuch* about the impact of after-school programmes and new programmes at Lefika (14 July).

August IOL *Saturday Star* features Masikhulume (1 August): "Healing across generations". SAPPIN director Wilmi Dippenaar visits Lefika.

September Masikhulume Phase 2 proposal submitted, adding work with boys.

11 October Module 6 training for 10 young adults from UCT.

November Kindness in Community grant signed (2025–2027). Boxer Superstores donates groceries on 19 November.

December Born This Way Foundation names Lefika one of 55 Kindness in Community grantees in 11 countries. Lefika's "volunteens" model cited in *Approaches* 17(4).



"Make your mark!" at iTOO.


Groceries from Boxer Superstores.


Wilmi Dippenaar of SAPPIN with Rozanne Myburgh and Jessica Maseko.


St Teresa's matrics Erin, Thembi, Tiara, Jennifer and Gaby helped with admin in January.

THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE WORK

57 facilitators, interns and volunteers

Because our work is therapeutic, every volunteer is trained and supervised. Art therapist Kamal Naran led four free volunteer trainings at the Children's Memorial Institute in 2025, and interns met every week at Lefika Wednesdays to connect, learn and develop. Interns came through Wits University, Drama for Life, the University of Johannesburg and UJ Art Therapy, SACAP and the University of KwaZulu-Natal.



Some of our 2025 interns: Nomusa Ndlela, Khutso Matlaila, Sue-Anne Hamer, Zainab Seedat and Kathryn Magee.

Abby Brozin
Abueng Mkhonza
Aletta Leshega
Amanda Khumalo
Amy-Jane Jenkins
Angelique Mintchev
Anna Mabena
Bianca Viljoen
Boikanyo Mokoena
Boitumelo Maili
Brandon Bitros
Busisiwe Mboneli
Chané Ferreira
Cia (Siyabuswa) Skosana
Dainah Reese
Humbu Nsenga
Itumeleng Moeketsi
Jade Booysen
Jane McMurray
Jedidiah Mathe
Jessica Maseko
Jessica Powell
Juanita Carreira
Julia Ikking
Juliet Sasabona Ntimani
Kathryn Magee
Katya Bergmann
Kayla van Niekerk
Khutso Matlaila
Makungu Murhombo
Marry Racheku
Michelle Groth
Micke Cotzee
Minien Hattingh
Noluthando Kholane
Nomusa Ndlela
Ntando Duma
Ntando Ntombela
Ntswaki Tlou
Phetego Chiloane
Prudence Fry
Pumla Maloka
Refiloe Sebakeng
Robyn Strydom
Rosaland Wood
Sebenzile Mtande
Shaun Chiwetu
Sisa Magama
Sue-Anne Hamer
Tholakele Godo
Thoriso Moalusi
Tshegofatso Ramogale
Tshepiso Sarelwa
Yahya Mayet
Zainab Seedat
Zenzele Murhombo
Ziyanda Magadla



Volunteers at the July training.



A Lefika Wednesdays dollmaking workshop.



Getting ready for the year-end party.

Thank you to our funders and partners

Gender Links: Women's Voice and Leadership
EMpower
GBVF Response Fund
Born This Way Foundation
SA Harvest
Boxer Superstores
Debonairs Pizza
Sue-Anne Hamer
Sarraounia Public Health Trust
goGOGOgo
The Trinity Session
Department of Sports, Arts and Culture (Masikhulume)
iTOO CSI
SAPPIN
Windybrow Arts Centre
Creative by Nature
Umthomb'ngashi
University of Johannesburg
University of the Witwatersrand
University of Pretoria
University of KwaZulu-Natal
SACAP
University of Cape Town

CHALLENGES AND WHAT WE LEARNED

What was harder than we expected

The children's needs in 2025 were deeper than group work alone can hold. The most useful responses were flexible session designs, more supervision and clear routes to individual therapy.

Needs beyond what a group can hold

Suicidal thoughts, severe anxiety and GBV disclosures.

Clearer referral to the low-cost clinic, with children flagged through supervision.

Irregular attendance

Weather, exams, family duties and safety on the way.

Grounding activities, one-on-one work when only one or two come, plans that welcome irregular attenders.

Language barriers

Mixed-language groups.

More non-verbal, movement and visual work, translating co-facilitators and simpler emotional vocabulary.

Bullying and conflict

Teasing and exclusion at every age.

Group contracts revisited weekly, changed seating, conflicts addressed directly.

Heavy emotional loads

Facilitators at risk of burnout.

Weekly supervision, debriefing and a search for more pro-bono supervisors.

Hunger and shortages

Not enough food, materials or shelter at outdoor sites.

A wishlist for Tjovitjo and Snake Park (gazebo, tables, chairs, art boxes) and outreach for food donations.

Trainee drop-out

Fewer GBVF trainees finished than planned; too few host organisations.

Support with data and workspace, and earlier work with smaller community organisations.

Older teens' futures

Requests for help with careers and independence.

Life-skills and career-readiness work planned for 14–18-year-olds.

APPENDIX

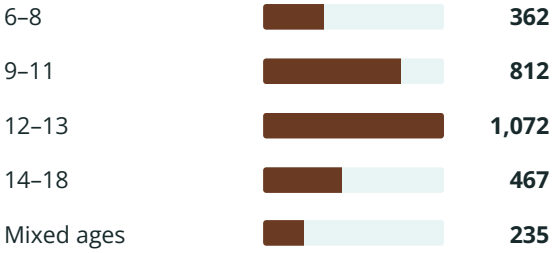
How we counted

Every number in this report comes from Lefika's 2025 registers, session reports and surveys. **Attendances** count each child at every session they came to; **participants**, **learners** and **trainees** count each person once.

Everyone we worked with, each counted once (about 826)



After-school attendances by age (2,948)



Show the full attendance table and counting notes

AGE GROUP	AFTER-SCHOOL ATTENDANCES	GBVF ATTENDANCES	GBVF PARTICIPANTS	GENDER LINKS PARTICIPANTS	PHEPHA LEARNERS	ONLINE TRAINEES	TEAM
6–8	362	–	4	16	–	–	–
9–11	812	269	115	32	–	–	–
12–13	1,072	475	33	16	–	–	–
14–18	467	105	29	10	38	–	–
Adults (19+)	–	–	4	–	1	68	57
Mixed-age sessions	235	168	–	–	–	–	–
Total	**2,948**	**1,017**	**185**	**74**	**39**	**68**	**57**

- After-school figures include the groups funded by EMpower. Sessions that mixed age groups are shown on their own row.
- Some GBVF and Gender Links sessions may also be on the after-school form, so the columns overlap. Don't add them together.
- GBVF participants come from the group registers kept from October to December: 207 names, 185 once duplicates are removed. The true number reached is likely higher.
- Individual children (404) are counted from the term registers. Names in more than one register, or with small spelling differences, are counted once, so treat 404 as accurate to within about ten. 209 are girls, 165 boys, and for 30 gender was not recorded consistently.
- The total of about 826 matches children across the after-school, Gender Links and GBVF registers, and counts adults once across the team, trainees, UCT participants, clinic clients and adults in groups. Treat it as accurate to within about 20.

- National School of the Arts learners have no recorded dates of birth, so they are counted as 14–18. Clinic clients have no age breakdown.

Thank you

Siyabonga · Re a leboga · Dankie

To the children, young people, families and communities who place their trust in us.

To our facilitators, interns, volunteers, staff and board, whose care holds every session.

And to our funders and partners, whose support made this work possible in 2025.



The Lefika team getting ready for the children's year-end party.

lefikalaphodiso
COMMUNITY ART COUNSELLING AND TRAINING

Lefika La Phodiso Community Art Counselling and Training Institute NPC. PBO 930031509. Children's Memorial Institute, Johannesburg. Children's faces in this report are blurred, and the children in our stories have had their names changed.