2019 for Siyakwazi was about moving towards stability. Stability meant measuring impact more accurately through the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) processes and systems. Stability meant Siyakwazi’s funding base increased and enabled the organisation to increase its footprint into a new tribal authority, KwaXolo. Lastly, stability meant implementing structured programmes with specific curriculum and resources, supporting both the Inclusion and School Readiness arms of Siyakwazi’s interventions.

We believe Siyakwazi’s model is becoming more relevant to the community each year as we add initiatives like Learn and Play, Counselling and Therapy at the Resource centre. This signifies great growth in accessing much needed resources for families and their children. As Siyakwazi grows and evolves to support the community more effectively, we grow more excited and expectant, to break down more barriers that hold back inclusion and assist all children to learn, continuing our ethos “Every child can learn”. It is estimated that at the end of the financial year, Siyakwazi’s reach included some 1500 children. Siyakwazi shall endeavour to expand this reach as and when resources allow.

Thank you to all our funders, donors and partners who support us and of course to the directors, managers and committees. We would not be where we are, if it wasn’t for all your support. A special thank you to our Director Cathy Mather-Pike and the senior management team of Siyakwazi who have been instrumental in leading Siyakwazi to its next level of operation.

And of course, every single stakeholder who contributed to Siyakwazi in some way over the course of the year. All of you have enabled every child under 7, with barriers to their learning and development, move towards reaching their full potential. Thank you!
Since its design and inception in 2018, the Red Flag screening tool has proved extremely useful in supporting the School Readiness ‘arm’ of the organisation. Limited funding for some of Siyakwazi’s programmes in 2019 brought the screening to a halt in ECD Centres at the start of the year.

However, we saw this as an opportunity to improve the quality of the process and focus on improved accuracy in screening across the 5 schools and 2 tribal authorities that we work with.

Coupled with the Red Flag assessment is the Catch-up programme with a specialised curriculum design that supports the five basic areas of development which the Red Flag screening assesses. Namely, Language (Expressive and Receptive), Numeracy (Counting and Measurement), Fine Motor Development, Gross Motor Development, including Crossing the Midline and touching briefly on Social and Emotional Development. These basic areas of development are included in the Literacy, Numeracy and Life skill sessions that have been specifically aligned with South Africa’s CAPS Curriculum and the themes that teachers are expected to use in classes. This has strengthened the implementation of Catch-up in Grade R and 1, as it both compliments what the children are already doing in class and supports the teacher with the workload she has to fulfil through CAPS. Catch-up mentoring sessions are hosted termly with the schools team, introducing the new themes and resources. Robyn of Treasures for Thematic Teaching has been an instrumental resource in designing and supporting the implementation of the Catch-up programme.

As a full service school we have learners with different types of barriers. Us teachers don't always have enough time to support each learner individually as we are dealing with big classrooms.
Overall, we feel that the work conducted through our School Readiness arm is providing opportunity for identification of children who may experience mild to severe barriers to learning. Our interventions show us that a school classroom will have an average of 40-50 children per class in Grade 1 and Grade R. Considering that many ECD centres do not exceed this number per centre across all age groups, means that the potential jump from ECD to school can be ‘daunting’ for a child. In addition to this, the number of children in Grade R is on average 100 children less than in Grade 1 indicating that many children start Grade 1 without participating in Grade R.

**QUICK STATS**

- 5 schools where the Red Flag screening was implemented.
- 12 Grade R classes were supported and 14 Grade 1 classes.
- 182 children in Grade R and Grade 1 were supported through the Catch-Up programme.
- 1035 children in Grade R and Grade 1 were screened in 2019.
- 100% improvement in the children ‘Caught-up’ in Grade R.
- 97% improvement in the children ‘Caught-up’ in Grade 1. 2 children remained red flag.

**2020 GOAL**

Introduction of control group in a 6th school who will not be getting the intervention from Catch-up. This will help measure impact of the Catch-up programme. We will also be implementing systems and processes for referring children for diagnosis who display high red flag scores.
SCHOOL READINESS

EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMME IN ECD

Siyakwazi’s work with ECD Centres in kwaNzimakwe has seen enormous growth and success in the last few years. Emphasis for 2019 saw the development of a new focus on children from 0–2 years. The aim was to raise the quality of learning for this group in ECD Centres, preventing developmental delays. The focus for this year is to capacity-build practitioners and increase their confidence in implementing quality early learning on a daily basis.

QUICK STATS

13  ECD Centres in Kwanzikakwe were supported through the early learning programme.

215  children 0–2 years were supported on average each month.

2020 GOAL

We will be introducing the Baby (18months to 2 years) Red Flag screening tool across ECD Centres in 2020 and use it to support the age appropriate laddering activities which Mata has introduced. Because the ECD-based team has grown for 2020 there will be more involvement in under 2 learning practises as Mata capacity builds the Siyasizas to support practitioners.

Our team will be conducting Pre-Grade R Red Flag screenings for a total of 6 ECD Centres. 3 will be managed as control groups with no school readiness interventions whilst the other 3 (treatment centres) will receive some form of catch-up intervention for those children identified at risk of falling behind.

Mata has developed an Early Learning Ladder tool with various activities across different age groups (0–2 years) which will support practitioners in 2020.
At the beginning of 2019, Siyakwazi undertook an exciting ‘partnership’ with uHambo Foundation South Africa to introduce their Ndinogona programme, including Let’s Talk Disability to 5 ECD Centres in kwaNzimakwe who were identified, to be supported.

The main goal of this partnership was to heighten the philosophy that Siyakwazi has developed with its ‘Inclusive Hub’ approach with ECD Centres, where children of all abilities are included in the daily ECD programme, and provide a resource of information and support for parents/caregivers of children with disabilities.

Siyakwazi’s role in supporting the project:
- On-going mentoring/support to ensure action, skills to be practiced, confidence to implement and therefore increase in skills with teachers and parents, confidence has increased
- Increase in the number of referrals for therapy (these are monthly visits to the therapists who are positioned at the local clinic)
- Added a volunteer to support low teacher: child ratio and to support active learning for all children
- Babies are more included, stimulated, supported as they are visited bi-weekly by our mentor. Caregivers are now talking, engaging and playing with the younger group of children.
- This supports prevention of future learning barriers as well as early identification.

**QUICK STATS**

- **5** ECD Centres in Kwanzimakwe were supported as Inclusion Hubs.
- **277** children 0-5 years were supported in Inclusion Hubs.
- **10** children with disabilities in Inclusion Hubs. (5 children had diagnosis and 5 were referred for diagnosis).
2020 GOAL

Our team will continue to make use of the Ndinogona resources in 2020 in the existing 5 Hubs. We will be adding an additional Hub into the kwaXolo area and Siyakwazi’s Play and Learn group will become a 6th Hub in kwaNzimakwe. Each Hub will now have a dedicated Siyasiza to support the implementation of inclusive practises.

SUCCESS STORIES

Zothani was first identified by Siyakwazi in 2017.

Zothani is a child with Down Syndrome and has been attending Woza Entokozweni Creche. Through Siyakwazi’s support and the implementation of the Ndinogona programme, Zothani has had the opportunity to be included amongst his peers successfully, has strengthened weak muscles supporting his movement, knows how to use writing tools and communicates more effectively. He loves to help his friends with their work.

“The other children at the creche have learnt to understand the way Zothani communicates even though is unable to speak clearly all the time. He has made a lot of friends.”

Mkanti Creche

“The programme has helped us a lot. We used to isolate children with special needs because we did not know how to handle them. Children with disabilities would be put to one side when doing our daily programme and try and attend to them later, but we sometimes forgot.

Ndinogona taught us about different kinds of disabilities and letting us have more understanding about disabilities and how to teach children with disabilities. We have been able to use the activities with all the children and now the children with disabilities participate with all the other children. Our creche is not the same and we are grateful for the support Siyakwazi has given us.”
PLAY & LEARN GROUPS

The Play & Learn sessions which commenced halfway through 2019 have proved very useful and resourceful. The sessions work on a bi-monthly basis and are carried out from Siyakwazi’s Resource Centre. The focus of Play & Learn is to support parents of children with disability needs. Both parent and child attend together and are supported with new resources and activities. Part of this support is group counselling sessions called “Sinezwi” where parents are encouraged to share and tell their stories. Individual 1:1 counselling has also strengthened our partnership with parents and their participation in their children’s lives.

Siyakwazi has helped support me with understanding my child’s diagnosis and how to support him. I am more involved with activities with my child and can also take him for therapy at the clinic.

QUICK STATS

- 8 Play & Learn sessions were hosted in 2019.
- 6 parents were supported through Play & Learn groups on average each session.
- 8 children with disabilities and barriers to learning supported through Play & Learn groups on average each session.

2020 GOAL

Play & Learn groups will continue alternating weeks. We will also be introducing these groups to ECD Centres, inviting parents to bring their children with disabilities to the ECD Centre to support community inclusion and awareness. We hope to strengthen the capacity between ECD Centres and parents of children with disabilities so that more children with disabilities participate in their local ECD Centre.
THERAPY

Therapy programmes are designed to support children with specific exercises, activities and stretches dependent on each child’s individual needs. These programmes encourage implementation in the homes which our Siyasizas use to support and train parents/caregivers. A total of 23 children were supported with therapy programmes in 2019.

32 children were supported through Siyakwazi’s referral system for diagnosis, therapy, grant applications, assistive devices and referral to special needs schools. We have tightened the referral system around diagnosis and therapy so that parents/caregivers are able to better communicate with the clinics and received regular and appropriate care for their children. This has been particularly useful in supporting children who need a diagnosis or assistive devices.

Towards the end of 2019 we introduced an additional monthly physiotherapy resource to Siyakwazi, this is in addition to the termly physiotherapy resource provided and additional to therapy resources provided by the local clinic.

2020 GOAL

In addition to the monthly physiotherapy resource which Siyakwazi is providing we are happy to have an Occupational Therapist join the therapy services in 2020. This will allow us to not only support therapy programmes for children with physical disabilities but also children with cognitive, learning and sensory disabilities.

We would also like to use our referral system to support more children access devices to support mobility barriers.
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In just over 18 months Siyakwazi has moved from a very traditional (vertical) organisational hierarchy to a flatter structure. This has accelerated the development of individuals and the establishment of a management team. Through guidance from Patrick Vorster and a better understanding of how M&E can support performance management the team have grown from strength to strength in problem solving and decision making and have helped map out the best way forward for Siyakwazi.

How we support our teams:
- Involve Siyasizas in finding solutions to challenges arising
- Support through mentoring in both formal and informal ways
- Celebrate successes together
- Help each other across teams when necessary

2020 GOAL

Create a platform for managers to use available M&E data to support performance management processes. Align individual and team goals with organisational strategy. Encourage Siyasizas to put their names forward for the type of training that they would like to attend.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Financial stability saw one of Siyakwazi’s best years to date in terms of revenue income. This security has allowed us to move forward in expanding our various programmes and introducing new resources to our beneficiaries.

5 YEAR REVENUE GROWTH

2015 – 2018 were measured as 12 month periods.

"For the purpose of graphical representation 2019 was measured as a 12 month average

Actual Revenue for 2019 (18 month period):

R 1 730 774

There has been an amendment to the financial period (from 1 July to the 31 of June each year) to tie into Siyakwazi’s budgeting period being 1 January through to 31 December of each year. Therefore, 2019 Annual Financial Statement (AFS) is a once-off 18-month period which was approved by all Commitee members and DSD. Our financial year now runs from 1 January to 31 December of each year.
The addition of the hall to the resource centre has been one of our most positive infrastructure benchmarks. Currently the hall supports, therapy, Play & Learn Groups, parent support groups, training venue for some of the learnerships, team meeting venue and much more. We are overwhelmed with how quickly the Resource Centre has become a pillar within the community.

We have employed an additional 10 personnel, 4 of whom are on Learnerships, in 2019. Furthermore stipends for Siyasizas increased by 20% and manager stipends by 25%. Our goal is to not only meet minimum wage requirements, but also select people within the organisation who show growth and demonstrate excellence in what they do. It is important that we are able to retain key team members who drive the organisation’s work forward.

We have 3 key funders of which 1 were acquired in the current financial year. We continue to seek out partnerships with funders who share our mission and values.

As we reflect on 2019 and move forward into a new decade we are reminded of our pursuit for excellence. While we will endeavour to continue expanding our services into neighbouring areas and focusing on a developing and fine-tuning a ‘scaleable’ model, the essence of what we do is to ensure we support a whole community. The quality of our work should not be compromised by the pursuit of large-scale interventions, rather that we manage holistic growth that continues to make a sustainable difference in children’s lives.

Thank you to our donors & partners