



2025  
**Social Impact Report**

Resilience Starts Here

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Dear readers,

**This year's impact report feels like a special milestone. Not just because of what we've achieved, but because it marks five years of Little Lions. Five years of building, learning, questioning, and growing. Naturally, that invites a sense of reflection. But also projection.**

When I look back, I feel an overwhelming sense of pride. Pride in how far this idea has come; from something small and instinctive in 2019, to something that is now structured, evidence-based, and growing in ways I could not have dreamed of. I mean, who could have imagined that we now work in a big office in Salt River, that we have a team of 16 people in 2 countries, and that we have multiple programmes running throughout the year? I mean, pinch me now!

And then, alongside building Little Lions, I finally managed to complete my PhD in 2025. The PhD journey really tested me in ways I didn't know possible, but it now helps us deepen the foundation of the work we do. And still, the journey continues, evolving, unfolding, and constantly challenging us to do better.

What makes me most proud, however, is the people. I'm surrounded by a team of brilliant, young individuals who are not

afraid to use their voice. People who care deeply, who challenge ideas, who show up every day with energy and intention. They are the ones who carry this mission forward, often in ways that are unseen, but deeply felt in the communities we serve.

At the same time, this journey has not come without sacrifice. Being away from family, navigating uncertainty, and working in a space where there is no clear blueprint, it really asks a lot. We are building something that doesn't yet have a well-worn path. And that can be both exhausting and incredibly rewarding. Because every so often, you get to pause, look back, and realise: we are creating something meaningful. Something necessary.

As a leader, I've also come to understand the tension between vision and reality. In the social impact space, we often talk about scale: about going bigger, reaching more, doing more. And that ambition is very real for us.

But the day-to-day work can sometimes feel consumed by the details, the challenges, and the responsibility of always needing to have answers. I guess the truth is: sometimes we need space to think. To reflect. To realign. And in those moments, the vision becomes clear again.

I am incredibly excited for what lies ahead (see page 35). Not just for growth, but for intentional growth. Growth that is rooted in purpose, in community, and in pride. Growth that stays true to why we started in the first place.

Because if the past five years have taught me anything, it's this: When you build with heart and passion, with the right people, and with a deep belief in what is possible, you don't just grow a business, you really grow a movement.

Thank you for being part of ours.

Roaring with pride,  
**Your Big Lion,**  
**Stijn**





**Five years ago, Little Lions Child Coaching began with a simple belief: that every child, no matter their background, deserves access to mental health support. In a country where many young people grow up facing inequality, violence and limited access to psychological care, this wasn't just an idea, it was and remains a response to a real and urgent need.**

This idea gave rise to free mental health workshops for children in communities where support and resources are often hardest to come by or non-existent. Our workshops create safe spaces where children speak openly, understand their emotions and learn how to cope with the challenges they face every day. Our focus is on prevention, equipping children with the emotional tools they need before problems escalate, helping them build resilience early in environments where that resilience is constantly tested.

Our uniquely South African way is one of investing in the potential that already exists within the communities we serve. We train young people to become facilitators of our programmes. These are not distant experts, but familiar faces. Young people who have lived through similar struggles, who understand the weight of those realities not in theory, but in experience. Because of that shared history, they bring something far more powerful than instruction alone, they bring empathy, trust, genuine connection and hope.

Five years on, this model has created more than just programmes. It has built a network of local role models, strengthened community ties and opened conversations around mental health that are too often left unspoken within homes, schools and communities at large.

And for our young Little Lions, the impact of this work is not abstract. It is visible in the quiet, meaningful changes that unfold over time. Children who begin to carry themselves with growing confidence, a deeper sense of self-awareness and a renewed belief that their futures can look brighter than their present.

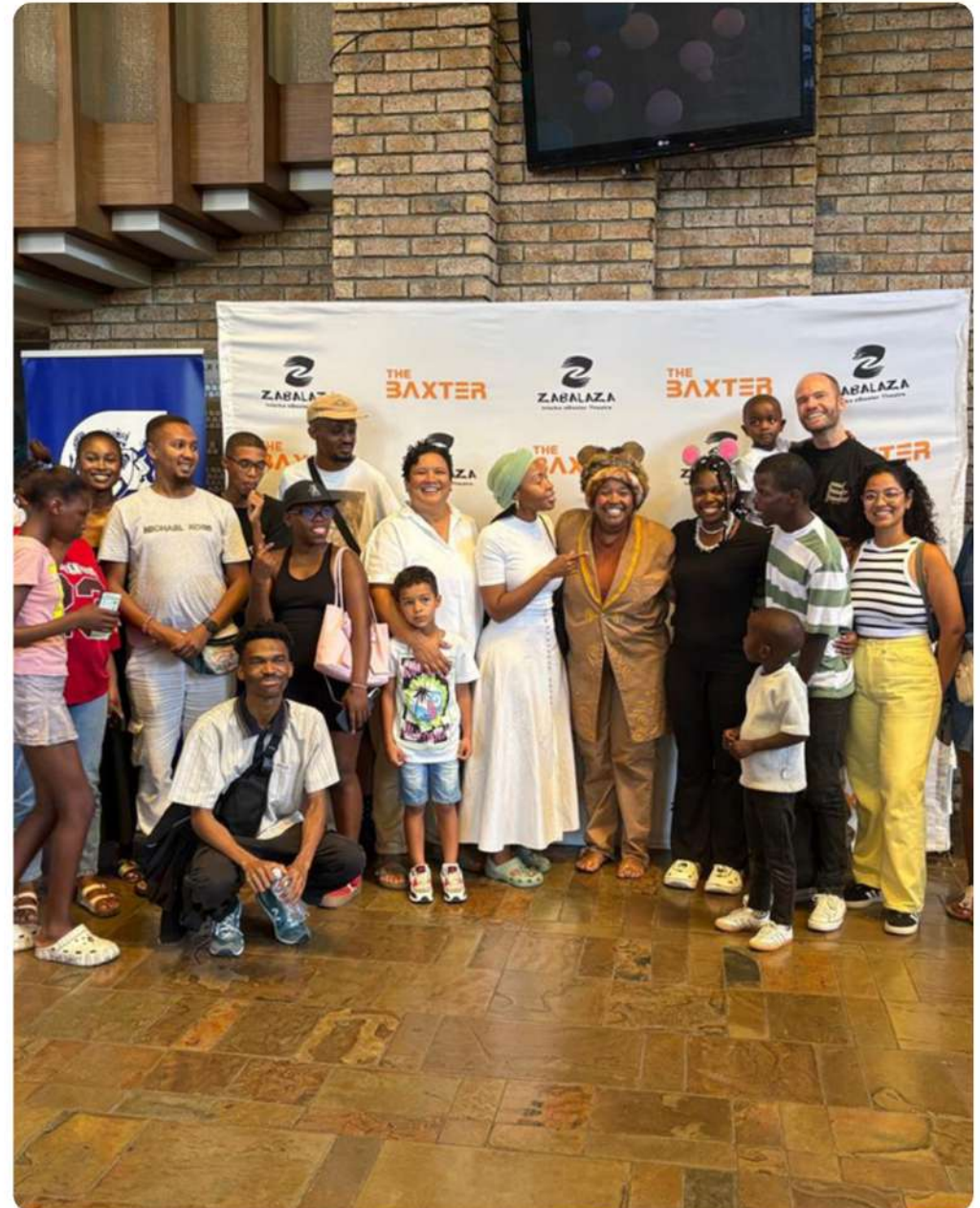
Little Lions stands as proof that meaningful change doesn't always start at the top; it grows from within communities themselves. I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to Stijn and the entire Little Lions Pride for five remarkable years of dedication, compassion and profound impact. This work is hard and requires emotional

strength, patience and resilience to consistently show up in spaces where needs are great and resources are limited. No matter the challenges, this team continues to persevere with unwavering commitment and heart. Thank you!

Of course, we cannot and do not do any of this in isolation. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to our funders and partners - your belief in this work, your generosity, and your partnership strengthen every workshop, every conversation, and every young life impacted.

I look forward to the next chapter of this journey in absolute awe of what has already been accomplished so far and genuine enthusiasm for what is still to come!

**On behalf of the board,  
Serene**



**In 2025, we hosted our first in person joint board meeting, bringing together both the South African and Netherlands boards. This significant milestone marked a full week of meaningful engagement and connection. Board members spent time meeting the broader team, engaging directly with our coaches, and visiting programme sites within the communities we serve. These interactions provided valuable, first hand insight into the realities on the ground, strengthening understanding of both the challenges and the transformative impact of our work.**

The week also created intentional space for in depth discussions on key strategic priorities. Together, the board and leadership unpacked critical elements of our programme design and delivery, ensuring that our approach continues to respond to the evolving needs of children and communities. Particular focus was placed on strengthening sustainability, deepening impact, and ensuring that growth remains both responsible and aligned to our core purpose.

Our board remains firmly committed to strong governance and the ethical application of the NPO Code of Good Governance. This commitment is demonstrated through ongoing efforts to maintain transparency, accountability, and sound decision-making practices. There is a shared dedication to safeguarding the integrity of the organisation, while continuously refining strategy to remain aligned with our vision and mission.

Through this collective stewardship, the board plays a vital role in guiding Little Lions towards long-term sustainability and meaningful, lasting impact.

As part of this, we also say farewell and thank Jaimy Siegersma for his valued contribution as Secretary since 2021, supporting strong governance and structure at Little Lions during a period of growth.



# Our Journey

## 2021-2025

2021



### Official Registration

2022



- Start of Little Lions Fellowship (Academy),
- Moving from 4 to 12 workshops & finalising programme structure

2023



- Kenya Expansion
- The Inner Lion Programme becomes a curriculum to be shared with implementation partners

2024



- Randomised Control Trial
- World Mental Health Day campaign - Reimagining Themba
- Optimised organisational structure

**2025**



First office space



Company vehicle



5000+ kids



10+ partners



Growth in funders and funder origin (SA/NL/USA/AUS)

# A System Under Strain

## High Exposure to Adversity

Children in under-resourced communities across South Africa are growing up in environments shaped by persistent adversity—poverty, violence, and instability. These conditions significantly increase the risk of poor mental health outcomes from an early age, particularly before adolescence when foundational emotional skills are still developing.

## High Need, Limited Access

Despite this growing need, access to mental health care remains extremely limited. With fewer than 500 psychologists in the public sector and minimal investment in prevention, the majority of children have little to no access to support. This creates a widening gap between need and care—where those who need it most are the least likely to receive it.

## A System Built for Treatment, Not Prevention

The current mental health system is largely individualised, clinical, and institutional. It is designed to diagnose and treat once challenges have escalated, rather than to prevent them early. In contexts where access is already constrained, this model is not sufficient. Mental health support cannot rely solely on one-on-one, clinic-based care—it must be more accessible, more collective, and more preventative in nature.

## A Lack of Contextual and Cultural Relevance

Where services do exist, they often fail to reflect the lived realities of the communities they aim to serve. Limited cultural and contextual alignment makes it difficult for children and families to engage meaningfully. At the same time, many available programmes lack consistent evidence or adaptation to local contexts, further limiting their effectiveness.

<500

Psychologists in  
South Africa's public  
sector

0%

Of national health  
budget directed to  
mental health  
prevention  
& promotion

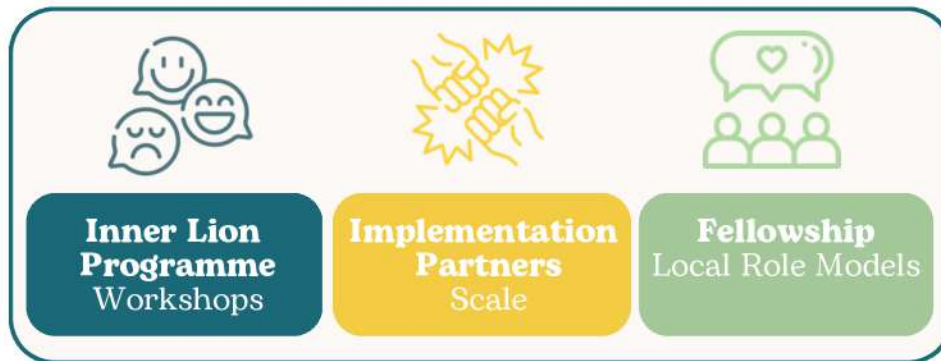
6-8

Traumatic  
experiences  
endured by children  
in townships  
annually

60%

Of primary school-  
aged children need  
mental health  
support

## Little Lions addresses this gap through a **prevention-based, community-rooted model:**



### **Together, this creates a system where mental health support is:**

- + Accessible
- + Culturally relevant
- + Locally sustained

### **Mission:**

To improve the psychosocial wellbeing of vulnerable children across Africa by offering free, daily, easily accessible mental health workshops in under-resourced communities hosted by trained local role models

### **Vision:**

To normalise mental health conversations and empower the next generation to tap into their emotional resilience so they can shape a brighter future for themselves and their communities



**Impact dashboard:**

**Children**

**1847**

Through our workshops, implementation partners, and alumni days nearly 2000 children were given access to crucial mental health resources

**Communities reached**

**3**

Workshops were delivered in high-need communities within Cape town: Mfuleni, Khayelitsha 1 (Kuyasa, SD), Khayelitsha 2 (Makhaza, Site B)

**Inner Lion Implementation Partner**

**12**

Our partner network continued to grow across the Western Cape, Gauteng, and Kenya, embedding mental health support within existing organisations.

**Mental health coaches**

**141**

Were trained to conduct structured mental health programmes to children & facilitate mental health conversations in their communities

**Advocacy & awareness**

**568**

Community members reached with mental health awareness activities

## Strengthening the Evidence Base

Our commitment to measuring what matters is closely linked to our broader focus on research and evidence.

This past year, we moved into the analysis phase of a Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT), designed to assess the programme's effect on child resilience outcomes. The findings further strengthen the evidence base for prevention-focused mental health interventions in low-resource settings (see more info on preliminary results on the next pages).

A key milestone this year was the presentation of these early insights at the International Association for Youth Mental Health Conference in Vancouver (March 19–21, 2025) where Founder and Programme Director, Stijn de Leeuw, shared learnings from the RCT. This marked an important step in contributing to the global evidence base on child mental health, while reinforcing our commitment to delivering programmes that are both impactful and measurable.

Alongside this, Stijn, completed his PhD at the University of Cape Town, with research focused on childhood resilience in South Africa. This work forms the academic foundation of the Little Lions model, grounding our approach in both theory and lived context.

## A Multi-Perspective Lens on Impact

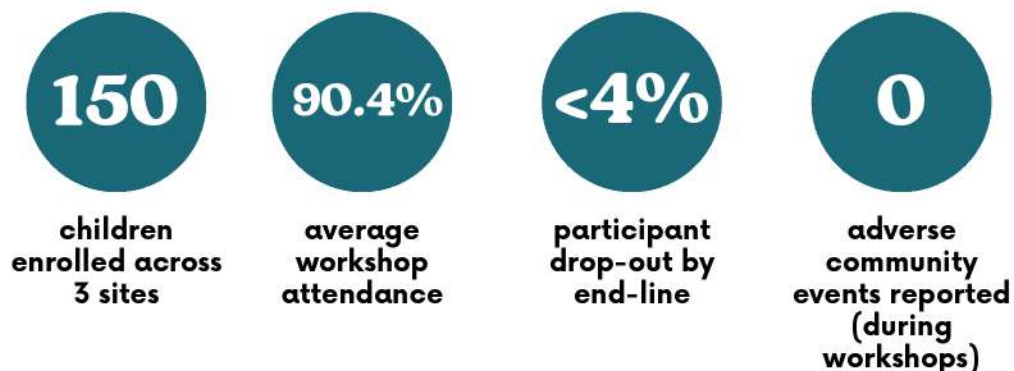
We took a significant step in strengthening our Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) approach by formalising a three-pronged measurement framework that captures multiple perspectives around the child. This approach recognises that impact is both experienced and observed, combining **children's self-report questionnaires** on emotions, coping, and confidence with **observations from local role models** in group settings, and **caregivers' questionnaires** on behaviour at home and in the community. Together, these perspectives provide a more holistic understanding of how change takes place and whether it extends beyond the sessions themselves. This framework was also shared externally by our impact manager Lwazi Shwala during a Nation Builder Knowledge Sharing session, contributing to broader learning on how community-based organisations can measure impact in complex, real-world settings.



# Building resilience from the ground up

In 2024-2025 we completed a rigorous randomised waitlist-controlled trial (RCT) evaluating the Inner Lion Programme's real-world impact, in collaboration with University of Cape Town and King's College London.

*Evidence from a randomised controlled trial across three Cape Town communities – Khayelitsha, Langa & Mfuleni*



## WHAT THE SCIENCE FOUND

### CAREGIVER-REPORTED RESILIENCE

Significant improvement from start to end of programme across all participants. Wilcoxon  $V = 3949$ ,  $p = .036$ ,  $d = 0.18$ . Effect confirmed across multiple sensitivity analyses including multiple imputation and site-stratified models.

### CHILD SELF-REPORTED RESILIENCE

No significant decline observed over time, important in itself. Universal prevention aims to protect against deterioration, not only produce short-term gains, particularly in high-adversity contexts.

### MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

Significant improvement in children's knowledge and attitudes about mental health.  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.38$ , with a small-to-moderate effect size. Robust across all sensitivity checks, yet the low internal consistency of the measure warrants cautious interpretation.

### BETWEEN-GROUP REPLICATION

When the waitlist group later received the programme, their caregiver scores converged with the first group. This suggests the effects replicated across independent cohorts in the same communities.



**How we gathered qualitative evidence**

Following programme completion, three focus groups were conducted. One with boys, one with girls, and one with parents (5 participants each, 15 in total). Discussions were held in isiXhosa in the communities where participants live, facilitated by trained coaches to ensure a safe and familiar environment. The aim was twofold: to assess the feasibility of the programme from those who experienced it directly, and to capture stories of change that go beyond what standardised questionnaires can measure.



**Why qualitative evidence matters in this context**

In high-adversity, low-income settings, standardised measures can be difficult to interpret. Children in these contexts may show 'resilience' on a scale not because a programme has changed them, but because they have adapted to hardship as their baseline. Conversely, scores may not shift because children lack the language or cultural frame to express internal change numerically. Qualitative methods allow us to hear how participants themselves describe what shifted (in their own words, in their own language) providing an important layer of evidence that strengthens and contextualises what the numbers show.

**EMOTION AWARENESS**

*"I used to get aggressive quickly... but now when someone makes me angry, I can control my anger"*

- Girl, focus group participant

**EMOTION AWARENESS**

*"But now that she has been attending Little Lions, she says she has things written on the wall about herself... she has confidence, something she didn't have at all."*

- Parent, focus group participant

**COPING STRATEGIES**

*"I did not know that when I do not feel okay, I can do breathing."*

- Boy, focus group participant

**RESILIENCE**

*"I used to not be able to do other things by myself, coach. I had to force myself, I wanted other people to do it for me... now I have learnt to ask others to help me."*

- Girl, focus group participant



### Why small effect sizes matter here

The ILP was delivered as a universal prevention programme, open to all children regardless of risk level, not just those showing signs of distress. In this design, modest effect sizes ( $d = 0.18-0.38$ ) are expected and well-established as meaningful in the prevention literature. Even small, early gains in protective factors such as resilience and mental health literacy can reduce the likelihood of later difficulties, particularly in contexts of chronic adversity. Crucially, the qualitative evidence gathered through focus groups with children and parents aligns with and deepens these findings: participants described concrete behavioural changes, new coping skills in action, and a growing sense of confidence and self-awareness. Changes that unfolded within the same context of ongoing structural adversity that makes numerical measurement alone an insufficient lens. Together, the quantitative and qualitative evidence point in the same direction: this programme is reaching children, being experienced as meaningful, and beginning to shift the protective factors it sets out to strengthen.



Throughout the year, insights from both research and implementation continued to inform one another—ensuring that our programmes remain not only accessible and engaging, but also evidence-based and continuously improving.



**Over the years, my journey with Little Lions Child Coaching has evolved from being a curious community member, to a coach, and now a program manager.**

I was first introduced to Little Lions Child Coaching when I was running my own community group of kids, and was approached by some of the coaches of that time who explained what the the program was about and why it would be beneficial for the children.

At that time my understanding of mental health was quite shallow, but I was curious to learn more myself. They ran the sessions with 20 of the kids, at the time it was only 4 sessions, which we now know as Chapter 1 of our curriculum.

It was eye opening learning about a broad concept in a simple, engaging and fun way. What stayed with me most was the children's enthusiasm during the sessions, their excitement, their curiosity, and the way they asked questions and really wanted to understand. Their energy made me want to learn more too. After the sessions, we made time to sit together and talk about what we had learned, and those conversations really mattered.

Fast forward to when I was approached by Little Lions to be part of their team as a Mental Health coach. I was genuinely excited.

When I joined, the program had grown to 3 chapters with 4

sessions each, and each Chapter building on the last. The training was in-depth and gave us the tools we needed to work with children in a meaningful way. You can only imagine the engagement and questions in those sessions. I am definitely one of the "talkers," so I can only hope the trainers were not too tired of me! But those spaces helped build my confidence and prepared me well, **yandiqhuqha kakhle!**

As we started working in different communities, we quickly realised that not everything fit well in the communities we worked in. That is when we started to listen to what the kids were saying and take note of how they were engaging with the content of the program. The changes started small: adjusting words, moving activities around, and sometimes letting go of things that did not land well. Over time, this made the program stronger and more relevant to the children we work with.

## Message from the Programme Manager

I also realised something important: to deliver this program well, you cannot just teach it, you have to live it. You have to understand it for yourself and apply it in your own life. In my words, **you have to LIVE and BREATHE the program.**

Seeing how the program has grown, shaped by the voices of the children and the team, makes me proud to be part of this journey. Today, I train others to deliver the program, and their questions and experiences continue to shape it. It is a never ending learning process, and that is what makes it special.

The changes and development of the Inner Lion Program gave birth to the programs we have now because we got to learn what mental health means in the communities we work with. We developed the fellowship program because we saw the need for more people to speak about and advocate for mental health, and actively host community-conversation events to normalise mental health conversations in our communities, just like we do for physical health.

We shared the Inner Lion Program with organisations that work with children because we wanted to make mental health resources available as widely as possible with the understanding that we cannot do this work alone.

Looking back at where it all started and where we are now, it is clear that this journey has always been about people, learning from others, growing together, and working together. That is where the real impact of Little Lions Child Coaching is rooted.

### Ululutho Mthana



# 524

### children took part in our mental health workshops

- + **58% of parents** noticed behaviour improvements related to resilience after the 6 week programme
- + **67% of children** reported improved resilience related behaviours
- + **13% increase** on average across key resilience domains observed by coaches in sessions



### Children's Perspectives: Focus Group Insights

A focus group conducted with children in Mfuleni provided deeper insight into how children experienced change over the course of the programme. Children were asked to reflect on who they were before and after Little Lions, using objects and discussion to describe their journeys.

#### + Building Inner Strength and Skills

*"Before the programme I was stubborn... now I am strong."*

*"Before I wouldn't listen... now when I'm angry I can take a walk."*

#### + Growing Confidence & Expression

*"Before the programme I was someone who was shy and didn't like to talk. But now... I'm able to say how I feel."*



### Children's Perspectives: Focus Group Insights

#### + Shifts in Social Behaviour

*"Before I was not helpful... now I am able to help other children."*

#### + Applying Skills in Real Life

*"When someone bullies me, I now report them to the teacher."*

### What Caregivers Are Seeing

#### + From reacting to responding

*"Before, when he was angry, he wouldn't listen... now he questions and tries to understand instead of just reacting."*

#### + Growing confidence

*"My child used to be ashamed to go to school because of her skin problem... but now she is free to go, with or without it. She is no longer shy."*

#### + Changing behaviour

*"Before, they would complain about homework... now they do it and even help each other."*

#### + Stronger relationships

*"When they play now, you see them helping each other... if one gets hurt, they are there."*

#### + Children are finding their voice

*"They can now tell you, 'I am still angry with you'... they are able to open up and speak about what is bothering them."*

#### + Why this matters

*"Programmes that develop kids are rare in our community."*

*"This programme helps children with what they deal with... these are things they will use in the future."*

*"To boost a child's confidence is not a small thing... you can see the change."*

# Alumni Spotlight

To celebrate our 5th birthday, we had a chat with one of the first Little Lions from 2022. Alulutho, now in grade 9 reflects on how Little Lions helped her into her teenagehood.



## Community Workshops Overview

Reflections from Alu highlight how the programme supported her early development—helping her manage strong emotions, understand her personal qualities, and build a sense of self-awareness. As a younger child, she describes learning practical coping strategies that helped her move from reacting emotionally to responding more intentionally:

**“Before Little Lions I would always cry... but after I joined I learnt ways to cope with the stress... and they worked.”**

These skills continue to influence how she approaches challenges such as peer pressure, relationships, and academic expectations, where she describes being able to set boundaries and make conscious choices: **“I will tell them ‘I don’t drink alcohol’... and I question why we must do this.”** At the same time, her reflections point to the evolving nature of adolescence, where confidence and identity become more complex: “The more I grow, the lower my confidence gets.”

While some tools are no longer used as consistently, the underlying awareness remains, suggesting that early intervention plays a meaningful role in shaping how young people understand themselves and navigate their teenage years

# Implementation Partners Overview

**Purpose of partner model:** As Little Lions continues to grow, implementation partners have become central to how we scale our impact sustainably. We work primarily with community-based organisations and NGOs, embedding mental health support into their existing programmes and daily activities. Through our training and ongoing support, these partners are equipped to deliver the programme themselves. This approach enables us to expand our reach while ensuring that mental health support is embedded and sustained within the communities we serve.

**Number of partners:**

12

**Number of children:**

791

### + Safe Spaces & Confidence

*“Children love the program. They develop a sense of belonging.”*

*“They find the group as their safe space, they do not want to miss even one session.”*

### + Emotional Awareness & Behavioural Change

*“The children are more open about their feelings.”*

*“I take deep breaths when I’m angry.”*

### + Applying Skills in Daily Life

*“The learners... are making use of the tools the program has taught them in their everyday lives.”*

## Kenya

We continued to expand our work in Kenya through a partner-led model focused on training and local delivery. By equipping coaches within schools and community organisations, the programme is embedded within existing structures, enabling consistent delivery and increased reach.

In 2025, this approach continued to strengthen, with local coaches leading implementation across multiple sites. This model not only supports scale, but ensures that mental health support is delivered in ways that are contextually relevant and sustained within the communities themselves. As the programme grows, Kenya continues to demonstrate the potential of combining local ownership with structured, evidence-based content.

Feedback from Kenya highlights how children are not only learning new skills, but actively applying them in their daily lives. Coaches consistently observed shifts in emotional awareness, behaviour, and confidence, indicating meaningful and sustained impact.

**Kids reached**

**418**

**Implementation partners**

**5**



# Voices from Kenya

Feedback from Kenya highlights how children are not only learning new skills, but beginning to apply them in their everyday lives—at school, at home, and with their peers.

### + Emotional Awareness & Expression

*“The children are now more aware of their feelings and emotions, and they are able to talk about them more openly. They are starting to understand what they feel and why.”*

### + Behaviour & Self-Regulation

*“Children are using the techniques they learned, like taking a moment to breathe or stepping away when they feel overwhelmed, instead of reacting immediately.”*

### + Emotional Awareness & Expression

*“The children are now more aware of their feelings and emotions, and they are able to talk about them more openly. They are starting to understand what they feel and why.”*

### + Confidence & Identity

*“Each child is beginning to recognise their own strengths. They are more confident in who they are and are starting to speak about themselves in a more positive way.”*



**Our team in Kenya proudly represented Little Lions at the Sarit Expo in Nairobi, sharing our model and connecting with other mental health champions**

# LLet's Talk! Fellowship

## **Purpose:**

The Little Lions Fellowship is designed to build local capacity by equipping young people and community members with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to lead mental health conversations in their own communities. Moving beyond programme delivery, the Fellowship focuses on embedding mental health within communities by developing role models who can facilitate dialogue, challenge stigma, and create safe spaces for others.

**Fellows  
Enrolled:**

**31**

**Community  
members  
reached:**

**177**

**Community  
conversation  
events:**

**10**

## **+ Normalising Mental Health Conversations**

*"It's important to normalise mental health conversations... in the backgrounds we come from it's not something we speak of. It's about creating a space where people can feel and express themselves—that's powerful."*

## **+ Connection & Shared Experience**

*"I came here to learn how to have conversations about mental health. And I met strangers who have become companions of change... when we have these conversations, we let each other know you are not alone."*





Since 2023, Lenneke has been a central part of the Little Lions Fellowship, co-facilitating the journey alongside Stijn and later Lutho, while also playing a key role in shaping and strengthening the Fellowship programme with the team.

Cohort 3 marked her final cohort, and with it, the close of a chapter that has deeply influenced both the programme and the people within it. Len brought a unique combination of care, insight, and intention to the space; holding fellows with both warmth and depth, and continuously pushing the work to be more thoughtful, relevant, and grounded.

Her contribution goes far beyond what can be captured in words. It lives on in the structure of the Fellowship, in the confidence of the fellows she walked alongside, and in the culture she helped build.

We are incredibly grateful for all she has given, and she will be deeply missed.



Lenneke; Ululutho; Nomfundo



# Launch Event: Bringing Themba to Life

Following the success of Reimagining Themba in 2024, this year's campaign began with a community launch event to mark the start of World Mental Health Month. Community members, partners, donors, and families gathered at Kuyasa Library in Khayelitsha to celebrate the importance of children's mental wellbeing. As part of the event, the story of Themba was brought to life through a play adapted and performed by Thandolwethu Mzembe and Abongile Mzembe for children, caregivers, and other community members, introducing themes of identity, strengths, and emotional awareness.

## Awareness, Fundraising, Highlights

Our coach Asanele was the MC for the event, showing how comfortable he is speaking on a big stage. There was music by a local artist Samora Magwa, and we had the honour of CapeTown TV capturing the whole event. Finally, we concluded with the unveiling of portraits of the participating boys, displayed outside the library on a massive billboard to remind the community of the importance of normalising mental health conversations.



# The 12 Little Kings: A Photography Campaign

Building on this moment, The 12 Little Kings photography campaign (created in collaboration with local artist and photographer **Mikhailia Petersen** for a second year) captured portraits of boys aged 8–13, each paired with the qualities they identified within themselves. These portraits were displayed along the streets of Khayelitsha and later exhibited at Kuyasa Library, bringing children’s voices, identities, and strengths into public space. The project created both visibility and dialogue, highlighting the importance of recognising and celebrating resilience within the community.



	<p><b>THE LITTLE KINGS</b></p> <p><b>I AM COURAGEOUS</b></p> <p>Ndiyazoyika imeko ezintsha, kodwa iLittle Lions indifundise ukuzama, ndafunda ukuzithemba.</p> <p>I get scared in new situations, but Little Lions taught me to try and I learnt confidence.</p> <p><b>MENTAL HEALTH MONTH</b> Oct2025</p> <p><b>LITTLE LIONS</b> Child Coaching</p>		<p><b>THE LITTLE KINGS</b></p> <p><b>I AM BRAVE</b></p> <p>Ndizokomelela nje ngaku Rock &amp; Water.</p> <p>I will stand strong like in Rock &amp; Water.</p> <p><b>MENTAL HEALTH MONTH</b> Oct2025</p> <p><b>LITTLE LIONS</b> Child Coaching</p>
	<p><b>THE LITTLE KINGS</b></p> <p><b>I AM SMART</b></p> <p>Ndikholelwa ukuba ukufunda ngundoqo ukuze uhlale ukrelekrele.</p> <p>I believe that reading is a key to staying smart.</p> <p><b>MENTAL HEALTH MONTH</b> Oct2025</p> <p><b>LITTLE LIONS</b> Child Coaching</p>		<p><b>THE LITTLE KINGS</b></p> <p><b>I AM LOVING</b></p> <p>Xa ndiziva ndithandwa, ukuzithemba kwam kuyakhula kwaye ndingenza nantoni na.</p> <p>When I feel love, my confidence grows and I can do anything.</p> <p><b>MENTAL HEALTH MONTH</b> Oct2025</p> <p><b>LITTLE LIONS</b> Child Coaching</p>
	<p><b>THE LITTLE KINGS</b></p> <p><b>I AM CALM</b></p> <p>Ukuziphatha, nokuzimisela kukukhokelela empumelelweni.</p> <p>Discipline and focus leads you to success.</p> <p><b>MENTAL HEALTH MONTH</b> Oct2025</p> <p><b>LITTLE LIONS</b> Child Coaching</p>		<p><b>THE LITTLE KINGS</b></p> <p><b>I AM FUNNY</b></p> <p>Ndinxibe ntswempu, ndiziva ndi moja.</p> <p>Outfit on point, mood on top.</p> <p><b>MENTAL HEALTH MONTH</b> Oct2025</p> <p><b>LITTLE LIONS</b> Child Coaching</p>
	<p><b>THE LITTLE KINGS</b></p> <p><b>I AM HELPFUL</b></p> <p>Xa ubukeka umhle, uye uzive kannandi.</p> <p>When you look good, you feel good.</p> <p><b>MENTAL HEALTH MONTH</b> Oct2025</p> <p><b>LITTLE LIONS</b> Child Coaching</p>		<p><b>THE LITTLE KINGS</b></p> <p><b>I AM FRIENDLY</b></p> <p>Ndiyakuthanda ukwenza iitshomi ezintsha, kuyandonwabisa.</p> <p>I love making new friends, it makes me happy.</p> <p><b>MENTAL HEALTH MONTH</b> Oct2025</p> <p><b>LITTLE LIONS</b> Child Coaching</p>

# Running for Resilience – Khayelitsha

Our Running for Resilience event was a community fun run in partnership with **Khayelitsha Athletics Club** that brought together children, families, and supporters to raise awareness around mental health. By creating a shared moment of participation and visibility, the run strengthened community connection and highlighted the importance of supporting children's mental health.



# Little Lions Loop - Cape Town

The second edition of the Little Lions Loop saw over 85 participants come together for a 5km run at Lion's Head in support of children's mental health. The event raised R60,000; enough to fund free mental health workshops for 50 children. Beyond fundraising, the event strengthened community ownership of the mission, with participants, partners, and Little Lions children themselves taking part.



## REPSSI Child Forum – Lusaka, Zambia

In October, we participated in the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (**REPSSI**) Child Forum in Lusaka (ZA), bringing together 60 children from across Sub-Saharan Africa. Over the course of the forum, children reflected on what mental wellbeing means to them and what support they need from adults and systems around them. The experience was a powerful reminder of the importance of centering children's voices in mental health work. As part of the programme, we facilitated a session on resilience and coping, inviting children to reflect on what adults can do better, reinforcing a critical insight for our work: children are not only participants in mental health conversations, they are leaders within them.



## Awareness, Fundraising, Highlights

## Toscanini Fundraiser – Amsterdam

International support continued to play a vital role in sustaining our work. The fourth annual **Toscanini** fundraiser in Amsterdam brought together 80 guests for an afternoon of connection and purpose. The event raised €35,000, supported by partners, sponsors, and the Dutch network, including a significant contribution from Salesforce. A special thank you to Jurjen Op De Weegh. These funds directly contribute to the continuation and expansion of Little Lions' programmes in South Africa.

Together, these initiatives reflect a growing community commitment to supporting children's mental health.



# 2025 Little Lions Pride **Donors and** **Volunteers**

## Partners

Futbol Mas Kenya  
George Child & Family Welfare  
Heartshine  
Hidden Halos  
Imibala Trust  
KipKeino Primary school  
Little Lions Kenya Primary school  
Lakisama  
Pebbles Project  
Stawi Camps  
Surfpop

### **Pride Sponsors:**

Joseph Klemenz  
Lutho Dabula  
Sophie de Valk  
Judith van de Laar-Elukpo  
Nienke Smid  
Rosa de Jong  
Rosalie van der Aa  
Merel Velu  
Malou De Ryck  
Nina van Herpen

Marjolein Buss  
Maaïke Langereis  
Sanne Heesters  
Sophie Fehervari  
Florien Scholten  
Cosima Richardson  
Alet Sterrenburg  
David Shields  
Gabi Mostert

### **Pride Volunteers:**

Talisa Toekimin  
Sharesca Clara  
Jermain Dorder  
Laura Schmidt  
Rinke Adema  
Ksenyia Fursova  
Tim Vredevoort  
Daniel Morres  
Lenneke van Nes  
Jurjen op de Weegh  
Mariam Time  
Zeddy Yahya

### **Toscanini Lunch:**

Thank you to Leonardo, Maud, Susan, and Bobby for inviting us for a 4th event. To our volunteers that made the day possible: Kristel, Anouk, Lot, & Sanne as organising team and on the day: Jurjen, Jori, Nick, Maria, Maryati, & Ruben for their support.

And thank you to all the sponsors for the amazing wine, food, and gifts!

## Financials

Income sources, expenditure allocation, percentage directed to programmes.

The organisation closed the year 2025 with a surplus of **R883,052** and **R1.52 million** in retained income, positioning Little Lions on solid financial footing. This stability reflects growing trust from funders and provides a strong foundation for future scale and long-term sustainability.

While financial growth has been significant, its true value lies in enabling continued, consistent support for the children we serve ensuring that more young people have access to safe spaces and the tools to build resilience for the future.

## Funders

Allan Gray Philanthropy Initiative	Lions Club Zandvoort
Born This Way Foundation	Multifix BV
Colton On Foundation	Mundo Crastino Meliori
DGMT	Nation Builder
Dovetail Impact Foundation	Oak Management
Familie Pinkster/Engbers	Salesforce
Familie Braken	Stichting MiCorazon
Harry Crossley Foundation	Stichting Wilde Ganzen
Hervormde Gemeente Brakel	van den Brink-Houtman Stichting

### Little Lions Child Coaching NPC

(Registration number: 2021/592679/08)

Annual Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2025

#### Detailed Income Statement

	Note(s)	12 months ended 2025 R	10 months ended 2024 R
<b>Revenue</b>			
Born This Way Foundation		181,361	347,933
Dovetail Impact Foundation		343,840	-
Orbis Foundation		1,000,000	-
Stichting Wilde Ganzen Ikon		3,379,873	1,881,718
The DG Murray Trust		259,184	272,816
Other donations		503,886	467,385
	7	<b>5,668,144</b>	<b>2,969,852</b>
<b>Operating expenses</b>			
Accounting fees		90,370	65,971
Bank charges		18,219	8,517
Conference expenses		25,845	22,058
Consulting fees		106,850	149,148
Depreciation		68,460	25,020
Digital hosting		162,162	-
Employee costs		2,513,171	1,890,012
Event expenses		135,554	120,946
Fines and penalties		6,697	-
Insurance		29,243	3,754
Intervention studies		42,441	145,244
Lease rentals on operating lease		387,513	121,598
Marketing expenses		158,941	109,106
Materials and uniforms		90,018	115,114
Motor vehicle expenses		29,045	-
Printing and stationery		3,819	10,362
Repairs and maintenance		16,524	-
Secretarial fees		450	-
Staff welfare		76,012	48,371
Telephone expenses		10,511	4,218
Training		67,052	10,950
Travel expenses		374,454	205,153
Workshop expenses		372,426	101,924
		<b>4,785,577</b>	<b>3,157,466</b>
<b>Operating surplus/(deficit)</b>		<b>882,567</b>	<b>(187,614)</b>
Investment income	9	485	129
<b>Surplus/(deficit) before taxation</b>		<b>883,052</b>	<b>(187,485)</b>
Taxation	10	-	-
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for the year</b>		<b>883,052</b>	<b>(187,485)</b>

# Looking Ahead to 2026

Priorities for deepening community presence, strengthening partner support, expanding fellowship, advancing prevention measurement.

## OUR PRIORITIES

 <b>Strengthening partner support</b>	 <b>Deepening community presence</b>
 <b>Expanding fellowship</b>	 <b>Advancing measurement</b>

Building a scalable, community-rooted model for long-term impact.

**Key Terms:**

- MH** - Mental Health
- M&E** - Monitoring and Evaluation (tracking programme impact and outcomes)
- LLW** - Little Lions Workshops (community-based delivery model)
- ILP** - Inner Lion Programme (core 12-session child resilience programme)
- ILSP** - Inner Lion Starter Programme (delivers interactive workshops designed to meet children where they are)

## Little Lions Child Coaching

Strategic Growth Plan - 2026-2030

Preventative child mental health - Southern Africa

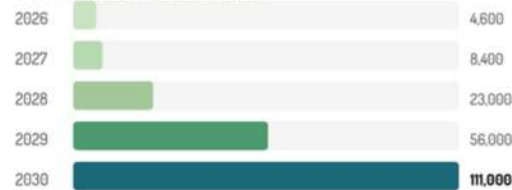
### STRATEGIC VISION

By 2030, Little Lions will be a leading community-based preventative child mental health model in Southern Africa — recognised for measurable impact, scalable delivery systems, and strong cross-sector partnerships.

### FIVE STRATEGIC PILLARS

<b>Programme Expansion</b> Scale quality emotional resilience workshops	<b>Financial Sustainability</b> Diversify revenue: no single source >35%	<b>Digital Enablement</b> Technology for M&E; and scalability	<b>Brand &amp; Leadership</b> Recognised authority in preventative MH	<b>Organisational Maturity</b> Governance, safeguarding, and capacity
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### GROWTH TRAJECTORY — CHILDREN REACHED



### 2030 IMPACT TARGETS

<b>100K</b> Children reached annually	<b>500</b> Active trained youth facilitators
<b>100</b> Active ILP & ILSP partnerships	<b>50%</b> Funding on multi-year agreements

### THREE DELIVERY PATHWAYS

<b>Community (LLW)</b> Depth & quality flagship <b>1,000</b> children/yr · 10 coaches · 1100	<b>Partner model (ILP)</b> Distributed scaling engine <b>20,000</b> children/yr · 500 partner coaches · 140	<b>School model (ILSP)</b> System-level reach driver <b>90,000</b> children/yr · 100 teams · 1900
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### PHASE TIMELINE



Growth projections are funding-dependent and reflect upside-case assumptions for ILSP, currently in validation phase.



2025  
**Social Impact Report**

Resilience Starts Here