Vision and Mission

Since 2005, the Lunchbox Fund has responded to the education crisis faced by millions of children in South Africa by offering targeted nutrition in school and preschool settings. Our meals offer a behavioural incentive for children to attend school, and enable them to concentrate and learn while there.

We work in townships and rural areas across South Africa, helping children get the education they desperately need to build a life free of poverty for themselves and their families. All education efforts are wasted if a child is too hungry to focus, participate and learn. We believe no child should be kept from learning by hunger.

Lunchbox Fund supports children at all stages of education; in preschool, primary, secondary and after-school settings. Our meals provide nourishment for physical health and growth, and aid mental concentration. They offer an incentive for a child to attend school daily, and for their families to support their educational progress.

The schools and preschools we serve are situated in vulnerable communities, home to the most food-insecure children in South Africa. Our schools are either ineligible for government support or require additional support to alleviate food shortages.

Improving food security and educational attainment for children in poverty cannot be approached in isolation; the two issues are integrally related. Research has shown that nourishment and education help children grow to be healthier young adults, equipped with the skills and knowledge necessary to build secure futures for themselves, their families and their communities.
Lunchbox Fund Achievements 2022

- 9 M school meals delivered
- 47,945 children reached each school day
- 1,754 partner schools and playgroups served
- 62 core staff, food mama and fieldworker jobs sustained
- 361,090 relief meals provided
“Today, national school feeding programmes are increasingly embedded in national policy on poverty elimination, social protection, education and nutrition … they are contributing to children’s learning by avoiding hunger and advancing cognitive abilities.”

World Bank
School Nutrition Reach 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Meals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Cape</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>1,570</td>
<td>314,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>5,433</td>
<td>1,169,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>11,905</td>
<td>2,235,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>4,744</td>
<td>935,869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2,630</td>
<td>531,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>3,455</td>
<td>559,700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>2,605</td>
<td>495,400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>5,045</td>
<td>848,250</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kwazulu Natal</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>10,558</td>
<td>1,916,200</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
South Africa has faced profound challenges during 2022. Eskom failed to master electricity provision, resulting in constant load-shedding—often for four plus hours a day. The resultant economic effect coupled with 14% inflation across essential food items, has lead to even greater unemployment and hunger throughout the country. In June, the Labour Force Survey estimated that 11.7 million of 60 million South Africans remain unemployed. The burden being born by black women—40.6% of whom are without jobs, against a 34.5% national average. (1)

Women often raise their children alone and, without income, they rely on scant social grants to keep their families fed and housed. The impact of this poverty on their children is profound: 30% of SA’s young are stunted due to early childhood malnourishment. When you consider that 50% of a child’s cognitive capacity is influenced by their environment and 90% of a child’s brain develops by age five, a malnourished child’s outcomes look grim. 71% of SA’s children under six are not on track to meet their developmental milestones by the time they reach Primary School. This is a deficit they never make up. And the poverty cycle continues. (2,3,4,5)

This year we have seen a marked growth in attendance across the early childhood development spectrum—especially in playgroups aimed at children under four years old. School meals have become a crucial part of a parental survival strategy—they are provided free of charge and are guaranteed five days each week. Mothers know their children will be fed at school. (5)

Lunchbox Fund’s Team has grown our reach from 30,000 to 48,000 children within the year. This is a tremendous achievement. I can’t emphasise enough the unstinting work that goes into the pre-evaluation of sites, community mapping and in-person site visits that inform our growth strategy.

Our Fieldworkers are experienced individuals who share our vision, ethics and empathetic response to sometimes difficult situations. They drive long hours for weeks at a time, often over broken roads, to reach communities in rural areas. Their roles are two-fold: audit the implementation of the feeding program, and provide a support resource to the principals, teachers and cooks.

Recently our Free State Fieldwork team discovered that three migrant children based on an abandoned farm, had died from long-term malnutrition. News like this hits us hard; how do we ensure we don’t lose another life? We responded by focusing growth on reaching the most vulnerable children in extreme rural areas unserved by other nutrition providers. Together with our Education partners we are working to ensure that no child goes unseen, no child unfed.

Lunchbox Fund currently manages a waitlist of 43,000 children. We know these children are hungry, every single day. We know this hunger is a barrier to learning. We know a meal served at school incentivises attendance. We know our meals are way more than just consumables, they disrupt the poverty cycle, fuel learning and underpin education—the surest route to an employed future.

We thank our partners for their incredible support in 2022, and look to you for greater and sustained support as we move into 2023.

Topaz Page-Green, Founder
Food Mamas

Women are more vulnerable to the effects of poverty than men, and the knock-on impacts on maternal- and child-health, as well as education, are far reaching. 47% of African children live in female-headed households, and female-headed households experience higher poverty than those headed by men. 60% of the 3.4 million estimated jobs lost through COVID, were lost by women, further deepening disparities. [6, 7, 8]

Over the past 7 years Lunchbox Fund has addressed Female Empowerment through our Food Mama Program, and in 2022, with the support of the Molteno and Sterkstroom Community Trust and The Ball Foundation—we were able to facilitate the employment of 48 women. Food Mamas are employed in schools that are not able to pay someone to cook the meals. Teachers become overstretched trying to teach and prepare meals at the same time, and education suffers.

Our Food Mamas are drawn from the school’s immediate community—ensuring that opportunities are provided at grassroots level. They are usually the mother or grandmother of a child at the school. Each Food Mama receives a monthly stipend, income which helps them to support their own households and to uplift the surrounding community through their increased buying power. Food Mamas learn new and transferrable skills such as: meal preparation, stock management, register maintenance, hygienic food storage and reporting. They help Lunchbox Fund to monitor food usage, highlight meal preferences and provide invaluable feedback on school and community matters. Although they receive a monthly menu, many women are wonderfully creative—putting careful thought and effort into creating interesting recipes putting their personal twist into the meals.

Female empowerment through employment not only improves a woman’s ability to care for her own family, it also increases self-esteem, promotes social connections and community standing through daily involvement with children, parents and fellow employees.

“Massive inequalities persist in South Africa and this is evidenced in measurable child outcomes at age 4 to 5 years. Before they even enter their first school classroom, most poor children in South Africa face significant barriers to success. This is likely to impact their progression through school, and their long-term economic prospects, reinforcing intergenerational cycles of poverty and exclusion.”

Thrive By Five Index
Financial Summary and Sustainability

The Lunchbox Fund’s fundraising strategy in 2022 included:
- Corporate Partnerships
- Grants and Donations by Foundations, Privately Held, Community and Family Trusts
- Sustained, long-term relationships with Private Donors and Funders
- In-kind donations
- Monthly private donations via website and PayPal

Lunchbox Fund’s core administration and staffing costs are covered by funding designated specifically as being for operational expenses. 100% of all other funds raised: via trusts, private donors, foundations, grants and corporate social investment programs, is channelled directly into the provision of nutrition programmes for children in educational settings.

Lunchbox Fund maintains separate income accounting to differentiate between those funds received for Relief Feeding Programs and those intended for school nutrition. This income split reflects independently on the table adjacent.

The economic climate impacted by Covid-19 and the ongoing war in Ukraine contributed to substantial cost of living increases in South Africa, with food prices increasing by 14% in 2022. While Lunchbox Fund works to keep our meal prices significantly lower than retail rates, increased costs, particularly fuel, electricity and essential commodities like wheat, oil, pulses, sugar beans and milk powders impacted the overall price per meal - increasing breakfast by 10% and lunch by 12% from August.

Lunchbox Fund’s Financial Year runs 1 January - 31 December.
Funding for School Nutrition Program

South Africa

FUNDERS, TRUSTS AND GRANTORS


INDIVIDUALS

The increase in inflation and economic impact of the war in Ukraine has propelled even more vulnerable South Africans into chronic food insecurity. Added to this, KwaZulu-Natal has experienced the effects of climate change - enduring devastating flooding and landslides in April.

During 2022 Lunchbox Fund raised R932,352 and provisioned 2,116 boxes of critical food relief delivering 254,440 meals to families across all provinces and settings in South Africa. Through an in-kind partnership with Albany, Lunchbox Fund was also able to supply bread into feeding programs working at grassroots level to assist their immediate communities, reaching 2,880 beneficiaries with 106,650 meals.

FUNDERS AND FOUNDATIONS:
Add Hope/KFC — Harry Crossley Foundation — HCI Foundation — Love to Give

INDIVIDUALS:

IN-KIND DONATION:
Albany
“The children wear the smile when we bring food. Even the small children love the food. Parents when they leave their children here, they’re telling us their children don’t eat at home because of no jobs—they are happy as its not the case here. There is Lunchbox food for each and every child, each and every day.”

Phathiswa Tsoni, Principal, Sibongumusu Creche, Kayamandi
IN REMEMBRANCE OF OUR PATRON
Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu

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Regina Previti

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DIRECTOR PROGRAMS
Liana du Toit

MANAGER PROGRAM MONITORING
Pienaar Motabere

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Rene Markgraaf

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SA FIELDWORKERS
Phumelani Khumalo  Lelethu Madolwana  Lerato Mafenyana  Chikumbutso Maluwa  Gcina Mondi  Mthuthuzeli Qambela  Thandeka Twala

SA FOOD MAMAS

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@thelunchboxfund

SOUTH AFRICA

Registration Number: 2012/168298/08
Enterprise Type: Non-Profit Company
Tax Exemption Status: Section 18A (SARS)
PBO: 93004275

UNITED STATES

Registration Number: 2653536
Enterprise Type: Registered Public Charity
170(b) (1) (A) (vi) / 2370d
Tax Exemption Status: 501(c)3

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