

# Britehouse, Diepsloot Preschools Project address SA shortage of ECD programmes

Over the past 26 years, the Diepsloot Preschools Project (DPP) has developed more than 30 preschools - mainly in Diepsloot and the surrounding areas - but also in outlying areas where demand is high, such as Polokwane, Bushbuckridge, and Sinangwana near Umtata. They are currently building a new preschool outside Mokopane and are completing a new preschool at Riverside. Two large, portable buildings were also supplied for a new preschool in Venda.



Image source: [Facebook](#)

The project was born from founder and developer, Patti Hanley's desire to live a life of purpose, and to uplift the community. She identified an urgent need for preschools in Diepsloot, where she had volunteered at the primary school.

Part of DPP's vision was to drive the development and sustainability of the preschools, and to introduce a structured education system based on the government's CAPS objectives, which would facilitate better education standards for young preschool children in the townships. To date more than 7,000 children have received a solid grounding because they attended a DPP-developed preschool.

## Building strong foundations from successful collaborations

Dimension Data has been involved with DPP since its inception back in 1993 when Bruce Watson donated a portion of the funds that were used to build a schoolhouse that replaced the original storeroom that was initially used as a preschool to teach children from the Diepsloot and Riversands areas.

In 2011, Dimension Data Britehouse became more actively involved with DPP, through Automate, and later through Emmeline Bester of Britehouse, who was instrumental in developing the Computer Hub at the Sunrise Secondary School in Diepsloot, which DPP was given access to, for their training one day a week.

In 2013 Britehouse became an 'adopt-a-preschool' host, supporting Dikeledi Ramathoka owner of Kganya, and later Britehouse Preschools. Neither of these preschools receive any funding from the Department of Social Development, or the Department of National Education, and as such the schools rely heavily on the DPP to help them find funding for renovations, new buildings and preschool equipment.

Britehouse sponsored the development of various preschools during FY2015 until FY2018. The sponsorship enabled the provision of preschool equipment such as furniture and stationery, and much needed maintenance, for a number of existing schools, and aided in the development of new preschools. The funding was also used to pay a stipend to some of the additional teachers as school fees in the extensions of Diepsloot are minimal and thus the paying of salaries can be challenging.

"One of the greatest rewards for me is meeting past learners. I've met a number of children from our very first class at Riversands back in 1993 who have achieved wonderful things. One is a very successful preschool owner, another - Kgomotso Phiri - achieved a university degree and is a journalist. Another original learner is now a manager of a Pick n Pay Clothes store. She told me she would never have been able to get this job if she had not had the good foundation of pre-schooling," says Hanley.



Image source: [Facebook](#)

## Empowering the community

The project is also focused on the upskilling of unemployed women, and in doing so, has facilitated the founding of new micro-enterprises, as a number of these newly upskilled women have started their own businesses.

Britehouse provided sponsorship for 36 Diepsloot adult learners to attend a year-long business administration course which they completed in April 2018. The feedback from the head-teachers has been positive as many had never had any kind of formal accounting training and this course has facilitated better office systems and practices. Many people have asked for

a second business administration course.

In June 2017 DPP ran its first childhood development training course for township women. This SAQA Level 4 blended platform course (digital content and face-to-face tuition) has now been accredited by the ETDP SETA. The second ECD course in Tembisa ran between January 2018 and January 2019. Two courses ran in Diepsloot between June 2018 and June 2019. During the past year DPP has upskilled 109 township folks on ECD, and business administration.

“In 26 years, DPP has never received any funding from government, Lotto, Mandela Foundation, or any significant overseas donations,” says Hanley. “Funds for the development and ongoing support of the preschools and the adult education courses, have come from fundraising golf days, and ladies’ luncheons, as well as collaborative corporate partnerships, like the one we enjoy with Dimension Data Britehouse.”

Britehouse also sponsored the digitisation of the ECD course material, including the uploading of daily lesson plans, Children’s Bill of Rights, etc., onto tablets which are awarded to each of the successful graduates after each year-long ECD course. The graduates are added to the National Database of Learners and will be able to teach at any preschool in South Africa.



### Growing quality ECD centres in disadvantaged communities

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## Sowing the seeds of success

There have been positive outcomes from these investments in the community. Of the 109 learners who attended courses in 2018/2019, a further 12 preschools have been opened by some of these learners. The result of those schools opening is the creation of approximately 48 new jobs, and this too has a ripple effect throughout the communities in which these schools have been seeded.

The course was hugely beneficial for Pastor Mois who attended the business administration course in 2018. The skills he learned has enabled him to better administer the accounts for both his church and his preschool in Diepsloot. He and his wife Maria Baloyi are in the process of opening a second preschool and a new church in Limpopo. Together they run three preschools in Diepsloot and are expanding their ministry and the schools in Limpopo.

Maria Baloyi is one of DPP’s biggest success stories. The first preschool building DPP built in Diepsloot Ext 5 in 2010 - Little Lambs - was built for Maria Baloyi. Maria was inspired to start the school when she saw how many young children were running around unsupervised in Diepsloot, she decided on the two days that she wasn’t working she could provide a place of safety and somewhere educationally stimulating for them. “We started with four children and were growing fast – soon we had 20 children sitting on mats on the floor of a garage.”

That was when she met Hanley who assisted her to build the bigger school and today there are 106 children at that school. The building of the school was funded by TFMCC. It is a double-storey structure with three classrooms, an office, kitchen, and toilets. With the team’s encouragement, Maria has attended several courses including the Britehouse administration course, which helped her to better understand the systems that were needed to run the school, and how to work with the learners’ parents. In March 2018, Maria graduated with a Bachelor of Education Degree.

Florence Tshabalala is another success story. Tshabalala attended the ECD course and has started a nursery school, Clever Kids ECD, in her small home in Diepsloot. She is hugely motivated to give the children the best start possible, and her aim is to grow her nursery school and to find new, bigger premises.

“I named my school Clever Kids ECD, because I want all children to be clever and to be open-minded,” says Tshabalala. “I

opened my school in February 2019, and I have 12 children now between the ages of three months and six years.” Her school is open from 5am to 6pm to allow for parents to drop their children and make it to their jobs on time.

The ECD course has helped her to create structured daily activities for the children, and Tshabalala introduces new themes to them each week. She was given an iPad on graduation, from the ECD course, which is preloaded with the year’s course material which she can refer to while teaching. Hanley has also provided workbooks based on the CAPS curriculum which will ensure the children are ready to graduate into the primary school system.

Tshabalala's hope for the future is that she owns and successfully runs a bigger preschool, where she’s able to help more children, “I also want to help mothers in the community like I was helped with this ECD course.”

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