

2023



ANNUAL REPORT

April 2022 - March 2023

Table of Contents

01

Introduction

02

Overview of
2022

03

Seniors Self-help
Group Network

04

Vegetable
Garden and
Crafts

05

Aftercare
Programme

06

Our Team

07

Our Supporters

A message from our Chairperson

Dear readers

It gives me pleasure to write an introductory message for the 2022 annual report, beautifully prepared by our occupational therapist Buhle Maseko-MacArthur, which provides a narrated account of events across GAPA's programs: respectively Senior Self-help Groups Network; Vegetable Garden & Crafts; Aftercare and Engagements with Visitors and Volunteers.

As GAPA, we are all deeply grateful that the organization has weathered the aggravating challenges brought on by the pandemic years, and that on 10 November 2022 we got to celebrate GAPA's 20th anniversary: "20 Years of Not Giving Up"! Not only did we appreciatively look back at how far we have come, GAPA also completed a long consultative process of reviewing and newly vitalizing its Constitution. Allow me to share with you the most relevant information:



Grandmothers Against Poverty & AIDS (GAPA) is a multi-partnerships driven public, non-profit organization, constituting a network of township-based self-help groups (about 34, > 600 grandmothers) across the Cape Town metropole (population 3.8 million), financially supported by the Canada-based Stephen Lewis Foundation, the Western Cape Provincial Department of Education, and local and international individual donors.

Chronic poverty concerns include increasing cost of living, gender-based violence, rampant substance abuse, high unemployment, gangsterism, overall poor municipal service delivery, regular protests. And the prevalent ill-health conditions are HIV/Aids, High Blood Pressure, Diabetes Mellitus, Arthritis, Cancers, Depression, Dementia/Alzheimers.



Dr. Frank Kronenberg

GAPA's mission is to strengthen the capacity of grandmothers to cope with the effects of chronic poverty and ill-health within their families and communities in ways that enhances their dignity and rights. The strategic objectives are: [1] Provide opportunities for psycho-social support for grandmothers who are emotionally vulnerable because of the traumatic effects that chronic poverty and ill-health conditions have on their families; [2] Develop practical strategies for dealing with the chronic poverty and ill-health conditions, offering support at the household and community level and improving the grandmothers' ability to contribute to household income; [3] Increase access to public and private sector resources through strategic partnering with relevant organisations and associations; and [4] Ignite the grandmothers' citizenship power, positioning and preparing for raising their collective voice in the political arena.

A big THANK YOU to all the local and international partners and people who continue to support GAPA and may our Ubuntu-driven rallying cry '**Together We Are Stronger**' continue to be lived in ways that persuade and encourage other seniors and supporters to join and contribute to the collective strengths of the wider network.

Dr Frank Kronenberg
Chair of the GAPA Board of Directors

GAPA IN 2022/23

An overview



34 senior self-help groups



Seniors sewing classes were introduced



130 children registered in our aftercare



Resumed weekly health clubs following the lifting of lockdown restrictions



Celebrated 20th anniversary with 400 seniors and partner organizations

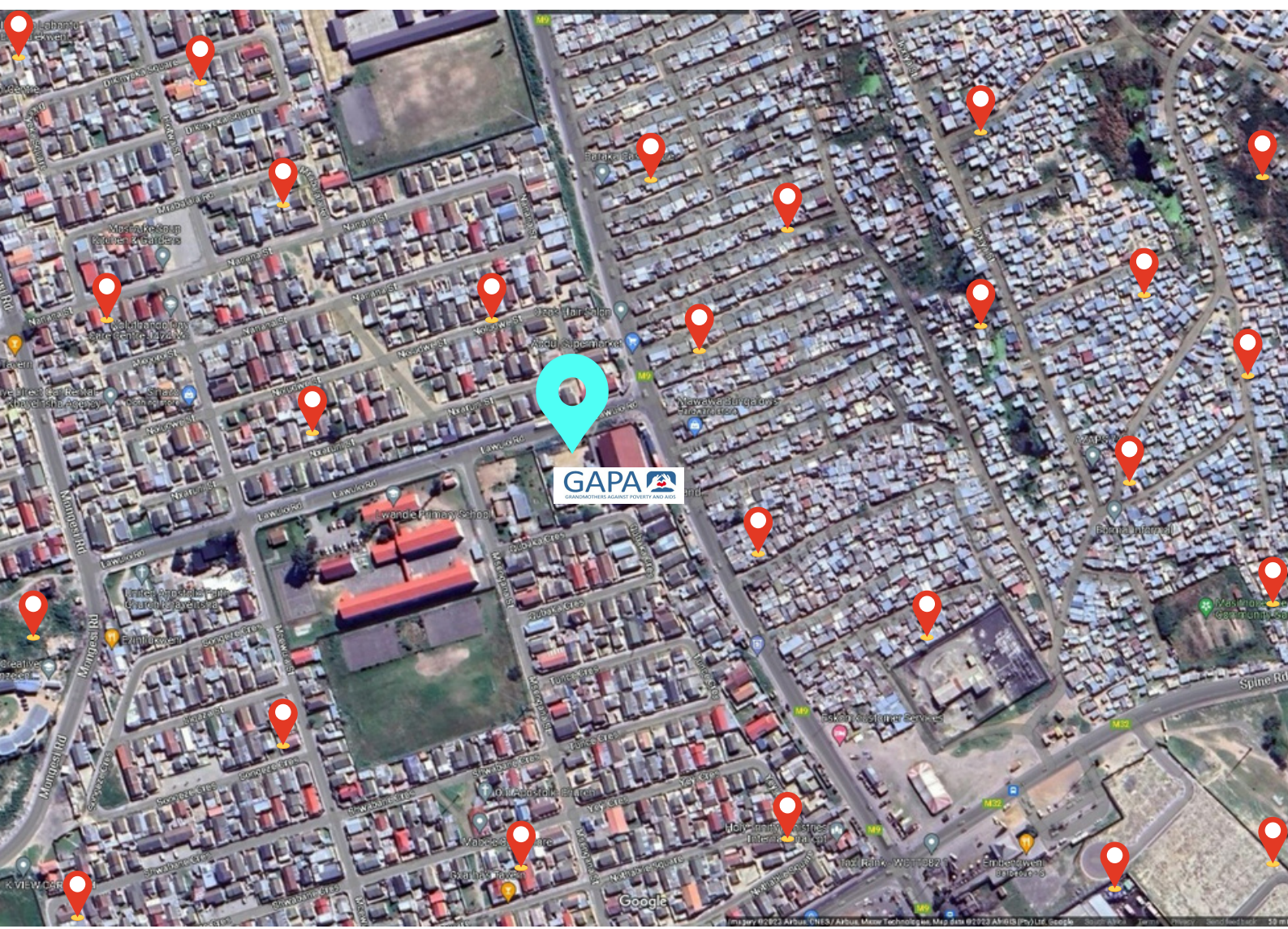


250 seniors assessed on physical, mental, emotional and social health

Senior Self-help Groups Network

The self-help network is composed of 34 health clubs situated within and around Khayelitsha. Grounded on each elderly member's vision of active aging, these health clubs empower seniors to cope with the effects of chronic poverty and ill health within their families and communities. Seniors meet in their homes or in community halls.

These health clubs foster each member's sense of community and dignity by chartering their collective struggle. While the clubs run independently in their own points of assembly, GAPA's programming team maintains regular and accountable counseling, supervision, and fieldwork visits to each club.





BECAUSE
"TOGETHER WE
ARE STRONGER"

Home-based Support Groups

Meetings are held to support each other **emotionally**, share problems and solutions, work together at **crafting**, and **learning new skills**. Some groups meet daily, some twice/thrice a week, and some weekly. We estimate that approximately 60–80 group meetings are held each week.

Weekly Health Club

We average between 50-70 attendees from the senior self-help groups at our Health Club. Over the past year, we have had 40 meetings. These are always opened by an exercise session led by a volunteer fitness trainer and followed by a vocational or informational workshop led by occupational therapists and representatives from partner organizations. The seniors are also provided with breakfast and lunch.



The past year's workshops have seen a focus on themes of cardiovascular health, dementia care, gender-based violence, legal processes for wills and testaments, and active citizenship. Our partnerships with the Heart and Stroke Foundation, DementiaSA, and ENS Africa in these workshops have provided seniors with quality resources and professional advice.

In addition to these workshops, the occupational therapist on duty and visiting clinic staff routinely check the blood pressure, heart rate, and blood glucose levels of seniors to monitor those at risk. This helps to identify individuals who may need further treatment in their local clinics.

Health Assessments

GAPA has begun rolling out the InterRAI Check-up Self-report Tool in collaboration with the Samson Institute for Ageing Research (SIFAR). This partnership builds on an existing relationship between GAPA and SIFAR, which included piloting a version of this assessment with some of our seniors in 2018.

The relationship has since expanded to include shared health-promotion initiatives such as the C-19 Vaccine Social Mobilisation Steercom. We have completed assessments of over 250 seniors from multiple groups.

The questionnaire evaluates each senior's cognitive function, ability to perform daily activities, mental health, social engagement, and overall health status. Seniors who are flagged as "at-risk" are referred to their nearest clinic, along with a summary of their assessment results.

These assessments have highlighted prevalent health concerns and have aided us in planning relevant programming to address them.



Support in Mourning

We had our annual memorial service in April 2022 where we took a moment to honor the lives of GAPA members who passed away in the preceding year. We invited their loved ones to this service where they heard how their family members were appreciated and cherished in their groups. This was especially significant as we were not able to have such a moment over the last 2 years due to COVID-19 preventative measures. Coming together and offering encouragement during times of mourning is an important part of Xhosa culture and therefore an important part of GAPA.

Development Forums and Research Engagements



The past year has seen a number of collaborative engagements between the health clubs, research initiatives, organizations, and government forums. The Grandmothers' Movement in South Africa (GMISA) and The Western Cape Older Persons' Forum, of which several of our grandmothers are a part of, have used our convention hall in multiple occasions. These congregations collected key development priorities and canvassed the interest of grandmothers to participate in sports events, social events, and aging conventions like the International Grandmother Gathering. Representatives from The Family Caregiving Project and Khayelitsha Development Forum (KDF) also gathered qualitative insights into the priorities and conditions of care among our main stakeholders.

Programming Spotlights for 2022-2023

20th Anniversary Celebration

On the 10th of November 2022, we celebrated our 20th anniversary! Our seniors shared with us how they would like to mark this occasion; and we were able to deliver on their vision. We hosted 400 guests at our center, over 300 of which were seniors who are current members of clubs as well as former members who made significant contributions to our journey. We were also able to share this moment with representatives from partner organisations who have understood GAPA's vision and helped us fulfill it. We had representatives from ENS Africa, Black Sash, UCT, AJF Foundation, Grandslots, HSFSA and African Impact. We were able to use local vendors for the tent and some refreshments; and our staff worked together to cook lunch for all 400 guests. We appreciated the celebration as it allowed us to reminisce about and reflect on our history as well as energized us in visioning our future.



End-of-year celebration

In early December 2022, we had our annual end of year celebration. We had more than 100 seniors in attendance—a sight that made us realize GAPA's growth and the impact our health clubs have had on the community. The members expressed their gratitude for the opportunities and resources they have both received and given.

Vegetable Garden

More than 14 types of fruits and vegetables

The Vegetable Garden aims to produce a natural sustainable source of food to provide the GAPA kitchen with a basic-vegetable-basket in order to feed the children and seniors that come to our center with nutritious meals contributing for the community well-being and preventing illness and/or malnutrition in a long-run. The garden has been flourishing for over 5 years.

We are grateful to supporters like Tia's Arms that continue to fund this project.

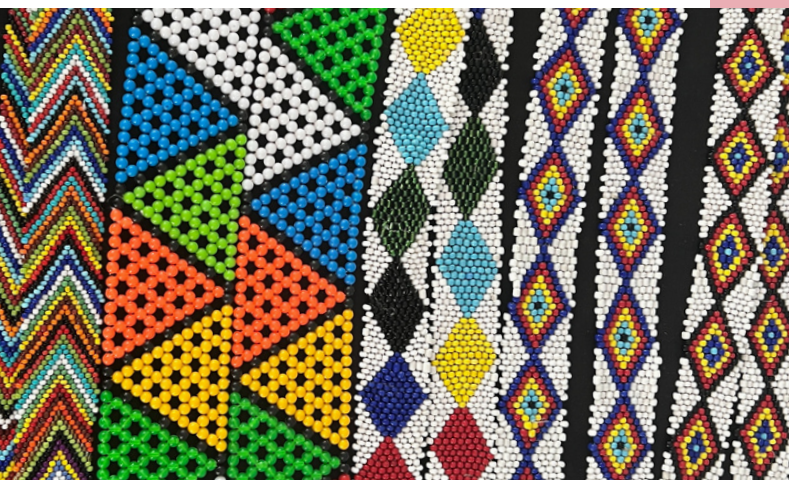
GAPA Vegetable Garden aims to:

- Be a space of teaching and learning for seniors and children.
- Supplement the food supply for meals prepared at the center.
- Sow and harvest sufficient crops to be shared with seniors to prepare in their own households.
- Have a steady cycle that is responsive to seasonal climate changes and maintains the health of the soil.



A sustainable food security practice

Sewing and Craft



Skills development and income generation are one of our key strategies to respond to the reality of poverty in Khayelitsha. We started our first sewing class for seniors in 2022. We were excited to see 11 grannies complete the course. Florence, our income generation coordinator, has been an excellent teacher, being patient but firm with her students. She has fostered an environment of care and sharing in her classes, with many of them feeling emotionally supported while sewing with their peers. Now they are also starting their own small businesses using the skills they've acquired.

We resumed these classes with a new cohort in 2023.



Aftercare Programme

What we do?

GAPA Aftercare caters to children aged 5-13 from the neighboring primary schools. They are received at GAPA Center when they are dismissed from school and are watched over until a guardian arrives to take them home.

GAPA aftercare aims to provide:

- a context whereby intergenerational play is both celebrated and manifested, so as to enhance meaningful occupational engagement.
- a stimulating environment and effective occupation-based programs that will contribute to enhancing child learning and development; and
- a safe space for vulnerable children to come to afterschool in the afternoon;



Over 100 children are regularly cared for by 5 grandmother teachers.



Most notable events in the past year:



- We were able to fully resume our aftercare programming following the changes to COVID-19 restrictions in 2022. We had 110 children registered to attend our aftercare programme.



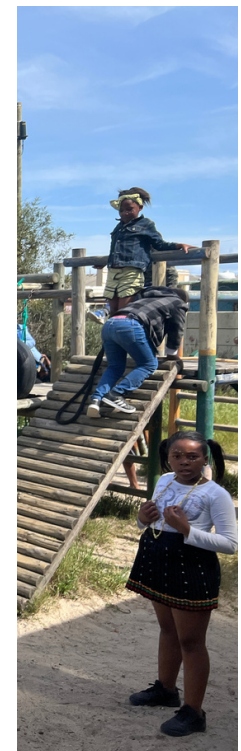
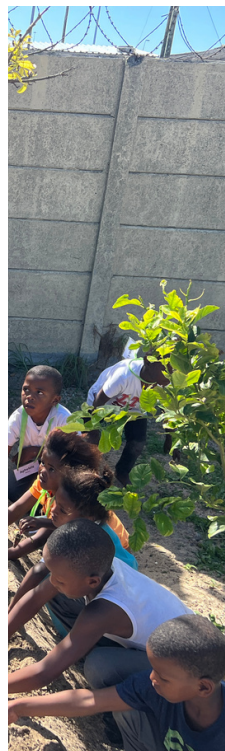
- African Impact and their volunteers were able to resume their partnership with our aftercare programme in the beginning of 2023. They had to cease operations in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions.



- Aftercare programmes moved from the Department of Social Development to Western Cape Education Department. We received increased funding from them which has allowed us to increase our cooked meal provision from 2 to 3 meals a week. We provide sandwiches on the other 2 days.



- We were able to host an end-of-year party for our children in December 2022 where the children enjoyed fish burgers sponsored by I&J as well as fun party packs. They shared how much they appreciate the love and safety they received from being at GAPA and the teachers shared their words of wisdom and well wishes for the children.



Our Team



Donovan Adonis – Manager

Elda Sidlabane – Seniors Group Coordinator

Buhle Maseko-MacArthur – Community Occupational Therapist

Cheryll Richter – Admin and Finance

Natalie Adonis – Fundraiser

Florence Hlangadala – Income Generation Coordinator

Gcinikhaya Feke – Groundskeeper

Nomfusi Memani – Aftercare cook

Nosibongiseni Tsusane – Aftercare cook

Noxolo Nongogo – Aftercare teacher

Nobakunjani Mabede – Aftercare Teacher

Thandi Ngushelo – Aftercare Teacher

Nompumelelo Mwanda – Aftercare Teacher

Ntombizodwa Femela – Aftercare Teacher

We are grateful to our team whose efforts ensured that we had a successful year in our senior and aftercare programming!

Together we are stronger

Staff changes



Siphokazi Sompeta

Former Occupational Therapist

It has been our pleasure to welcome Buhle Maseko-MacArthur to the team as our Community Occupational Therapist in June of 2022. She has expressed her joy to be working with us. We are grateful for the contributions she has already made and look forward to her continued service.

We were sad to bid farewell to our Occupational Therapist, Siphokazi Sompeta, in April of 2022. She served our seniors and children with dignity, compassion and great skill. We wish her well in her next chapter, where she is continuing her work with the senior population in Khayelitsha at Ikamva Labantu.



Buhle Maseko-MacArthur

Occupational Therapist

Board

Frank Kronenberg – Chair
Kathleen Brodrick – Dep Chair
Kurt Ackerman
Wim Schippers – Treasurer
Sivuyisiwe Toto

At the beginning of 2023, the seniors unanimously voted for Mr. Sivuyisiwe Toto to join our board. Mr Toto was born in Mthatha and grew up in All Saints, Engcobo – his eastern cape home. He is also from Guguletu in Cape Town. He is a member of the AmaQwathi OoDikela clan. Siwe obtained a Bachelor of Science in Occupational Therapy in 2013 and recently, a MSc in Occupational Therapy, both at UCT. He has worked as an Occupational Therapist in Matatiele, Khayelitsha, New Crossroad, Lwandle in Somerset West and Groote Schuur Hospital. He currently works as an academic, teaching first year students at the Faculty of Health Sciences at UCT. He is an avid hiker, runner and walker. We are delighted to welcome him to the team and expect to benefit from his expertise and experience.



External Engagements: Visitors and Volunteers

Tourism and educational visits have returned to the forefront of our engagements. These have always been a welcomed opportunity for our grandmothers to showcase their hospitality, personal stories, and crafts in a way that truly represents how they have grown empowered over their time here at GAPA.

Day Visitors


On May 2nd, 2023, a large group of visitors, including students, parents, and educators from the Occupational Therapy program at the University of Alabama Birmingham in the USA, as well as two families from The Netherlands, participated in a showcase of GAPA's mission and impact.

We are currently developing ongoing partnerships with the local tourism industry and educational institutions from various parts of the world.



Volunteers and Interns

Three organizations funnel volunteers and interns into GAPA's human resources: African Impact, VACorps, and Global Citizen Year. This past year, we've had a rotation of 10+ aftercare volunteers from African Impact, three interns from VACorps, and three interns from Global Citizen Year.



GAPA has benefited greatly from these volunteer and internship programs in terms of logistical planning, general administrative work, media representation, fresh programming perspectives, and multicultural learning. Moreover, the interns' initiatives on issue and asset mapping have helped implement GAPA's mission in tangible ways.

Our Supporters

The work we do is made possible by the various people, businesses and organisations who connect with our vision and decide to support us financially and/or in kind. We are so grateful them all and hope that our collaborations will continue!

