



Afrika Tikkun
Bambanani

Adopt an Early Learning Centre

“The first five years have so much to do with how the next 80 turn out.”

— *Bill Gates*



A. Our background

Founded in 1995, Afrika Tikkun has become well known for its Cradle to Career model. Our 360° approach has evolved over the past 28 years to where it is today, serving children and youth from preschool all the way through to early adulthood.

We believe that every young person deserves the opportunity to realise their potential. Our Cradle to Career 360° model is a comprehensive approach to child and youth development that considers the needs of each young person across different stages of their lives (preschool → primary school → high school → post matric) by offering a set of programmes and support services to counter the effects of poverty and inequality for each young person that comes through our doors. In this way, we are actively working towards the reduction of youth unemployment in a sustainable manner.

To strengthen our service delivery and achieve our 360 model, we have recently absorbed Afrika Tikkun Bambanani (ATB) into our company. The Afrika Tikkun Bambanani (ATB) programme has brought together a team of ECD practitioners, theorists, educators, investors and therapists to create the best ECD curriculum available in South Africa and make it available to ECD practitioners and children living in under-resourced communities around South Africa.

B. The challenge we are tackling

Early Childhood Development (ECD) is the period spanning from birth until the year before a child enters formal schooling. Research shows that children who do not have access to adequate ECD are more likely to struggle academically and have lower earning potential as adults, and they are also more likely to engage in risky behaviours, such as substance abuse or criminal activity. Furthermore, the effects of inadequate ECD can have an intergenerational impact, in that they are likely to struggle as parents themselves, and be trapped in a cycle of poverty.

On the other hand, investing in ECD can lead to better school readiness, improved academic achievement, higher earning potential, and better health outcomes in adulthood. Additionally, a nurturing and supportive early childhood environment can promote positive social-emotional skills and behaviours, which can lead to stronger relationships and increased well-being throughout life.

We can change the trajectory of many young children currently at risk if we equip ECD practitioners with the skills needed to deliver quality early learning programmes that meet children's developmental needs. The period from birth to six years old is the most vital stage of brain development for children. These informative years represents a crucial window of opportunity for education.



C. Our programme - Afrika Tikkun Bambanani (ATB) programme

Many ECD centres in under-resourced communities are not able to employ qualified practitioners, and although a lot of their staff do have years of working experience, they do not have the formal training to design outcomes-based programmes. To support these centres, we have developed an innovative and comprehensive ECD curriculum that is designed to meet the developmental needs of children aged one to six, and can be implemented by ECD practitioners who have little or no formal ECD training.

Our curriculum includes:

- Play-Based Learning
Our play-based programme nurtures vital life skills including social, emotional and cognitive development. This enhances the whole child by providing the self-confidence required to explore new environments and experiences.
- Broad-Based Curriculum
Our curriculum is based on an eclectic education system which combines knowledge from multiple disciplines and educational theorists that is developmentally appropriate. The approach encourages children to think independently. We teach a child how to think, rather than what not to think.
- Child-Centred Approach
The approach is child-centred and children play an active role in the classroom. Children are encouraged to share their thoughts and ideas, enabling them to learn from each other.
- Measurable Results
Our assessment model monitors key learning areas like cognitive, physical, and social-emotional development. These skills are continuously assessed through our tracking sheets and screening tools.

Our overall objective is to equip and capacitate under-resourced ECD centres to implement this curriculum, which will provide our children access to quality education through the standardisation of the ECD curriculum across South Africa. Practitioners are given one week of pre-training before the syllabus is implemented. The trainers then continue with practical training in the classroom for at least 3 months, and mentorship is provided for at least one year after implementation.

In 2022 we reached 50 schools, 300 ECD practitioners, and 4 500 young learners. Our target for 2023 is more ambitious:



The ATB programme is developed for early childhood care and education that is truly inclusive. It is much more than just preparation for Grade 1. ECD is the foundation for emotional wellbeing and learning throughout life and is one of the best investments a country can make as it promotes holistic development, gender equality and social cohesion.

The key activities to support participating ECD centres to implement a quality ECD programme include:

- Developing an outcomes-based ECD curriculum that provides the framework for children aged one to six years to meet their developmental milestones and are equipped with the skills needed for future academic success.
- Providing the ATB curriculum to participating schools in the form of printed manuals, workbooks, theme posters and assessment portfolio files. A data-free online version of the curriculum is also available.
- Offering off-site training to ECD practitioners and principals to up-skill them to implement the ATB curriculum, as well as outcomes, and teaching methods
- Providing in-classroom training and mentoring for the first year of implementation.
- Monitoring and assessing practitioner progress through a data-free online teacher progression assessments and monthly tasks they are required to upload. Any gaps identified will be addressed by our trainers through offering additional training sessions, as well as on-site implementation support.
- Using tracking sheets to assess the termly progress of all children aged 2 – 6 years that are in the programme.
- Providing the schools with screening assessments tools for children aged 6 months to 6 years.
- Providing ongoing support through bi-annual site visits from year 2, and into year 3.

These activities are supported by two innovative data-free technologies, thereby removing geographical limitations:

1. Learner Tablet App – Bamba Learn

BambaLearn is an app that allows young children to develop their critical thinking and to reach their milestones through play. Created by experts, designed for (and loved by) children ages 2-6, this app ensures that age-appropriate milestones are reached through rigorous performance monitoring through games. These include a wide variety of educational puzzles, story books, numeracy activities, problem solving games, literacy, shapes, tracing, counting, letter and number recognition. Our app ensures that no child is left behind by enabling stronger learners to work ahead and providing extra revision and repetition for weaker learners.

2. Bambanani Assessment Centre

Our goal is to improve and standardise the ECD content in our nation's ECD centres, empowering practitioners to spend more time with the children. Our ATB assessment centre ensures that no child or teacher is left behind. We provide tracking sheets and termly reports to monitor learner progression, focusing on critical developmental milestones, screening tools to red-flag learners that require intervention, and practitioner tracking and evaluating.

Our state-of-the-art remote upload portal allows us to assist and observe our learners and teachers, especially schools in remote areas. We have online trainers who assess and report on all activities and video tasks assigned to the practitioner for the week.

D. How we monitor our progress

The true success of the programme can only be determined in the long term, and that is when we see young children firstly, testing school ready in the year before they enter formal schooling, and secondly, tracking their progress through their academic career. To get there, we need to ensure that the programme is achieving its outcomes, which we do by by measuring how effectively the ECD practitioners are understanding and implementing the curriculum, and the children's progress towards school readiness.

This is largely dependent on how well we do our part, so to measure our performance we have developed a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework that assesses if our ECD trainers are achieving the desired results, both in terms of reach and capacitation. This is all done through the Bambanani Assessment Centre.

E. Our approach to sustainability

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) goals aim to promote sustainable and responsible practices, with the SDGs addressing a wider range of development issues on a global scale, and ESG goals focusing on the environmental, social, and governance factors of companies and organizations.

The underlying value of the ATB programme is to “leave no child behind”, and in so doing supports several SDGs, including:

- **SDG 1 (No Poverty):** Effective ECD programmes can break the cycle of poverty by improving children's development, health, and learning outcomes, which ultimately leads to better employment opportunities and higher incomes in adulthood.
- **SDG 4 (Quality Education):** Our ECD programme has been designed to prepare children for school and lifelong learning by providing high-quality early learning experiences, such as language and literacy development, social-emotional skills, and critical thinking.
- **SDG 5 (Gender Equality):** As inclusivity is one of our priorities, our programme aims to address gender inequality by providing equal opportunities for boys and girls to learn and develop, addressing gender stereotypes, and empowering parents to support their children's education.
- **SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities):** Our programme can be adapted to include all children, including those living with disabilities, and has been designed to be relevant to all children, including those from poor households, in the spirit of “leave no child behind”.

Although not currently part of our ECD development programme we are looking at how we can link our participants to our health and psychosocial programme, which focuses on nutrition, psychosocial intervention and screening for developmental delays and disabilities. Once we include this, we will also be supporting SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).



F. Our costing model and funding request

The cost to capacitate an averaged sized ECD centre (four practitioners caring for 50 children) to implement a quality programme is set out in the table below. **However, different funding models can be considered on request:**

Budget item	Monthly cost	Once off cost	Total
Curriculum pack, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Term 1-4 manuals – all ages- Term 1-2 Grade R workbooks- Term 1-4 posters – all ages- Portfolio files- Teacher guides- Pre-training (off site)- Mentorship and on-site training- Monthly up-skill training- Resource kit- Digital tablet- App to download manuals and workbooks- Data free links		R 67 000	R 67 000
Implementation support, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- License fee- Term 1,2,3,4 Assessments- Screening Tools- Teacher progression- Teacher remote tasks- Termly Reports	R 1 233 X 12		R 14 796
Total for one year per school			R 81 796

G. Conclusion

The potential of millions of young children is lost due to our inability to provide families living in marginalised communities access to quality early childhood education programmes. Our vision is to uplift the lives of our children and improve the quality of ECD teaching in South African. With your support we can reach our goal of equipping 115 ECD centres with the knowledge and resources needed to implement an effective ECD curriculum, changing the trajectory of thousands of young beneficiaries of this programme.

Name:

Email address:

Telephone number: