

2026

A THEMBALITSHA FOUNDATION PROGRAMME



# CHILDREN'S BOOK CLUB

*Serving our community with education,  
literacy, and promoting a love of reading.*



[www.hope.org.za](http://www.hope.org.za)

## MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

## WE ARE HOPE RESTORERS. WE ARE THEMBALITSHA.

The Thembalitsha Foundation has been working with communities in South Africa since 1997, inspiring change and offering a hand-up rather than a handout. We are a diverse team of people, committed to addressing the socioeconomic challenges of the vulnerable and marginalised people of the Western Cape through healthcare, education and training.

OUR MISSION is to transform the lives of the destitute, forgotten and vulnerable in South Africa through educational, health and training projects. OUR VISION is to restore hope and develop people to a point of self-reliance. Our CORE ORGANISATIONAL VALUES are Teamwork, Integrity, Compassion, Stewardship, Professionalism, and Loyalty.

## THEMBALITSHA FOUNDATION

Thembalitsha Foundation is a registered Non-Profit Organisation that was established in 1997 in South Africa. Thembalitsha operates in the Western Cape, in Somerset West, Strand, Stellenbosch, Grabouw, and Kuyasa, Khayelitsha.

The Foundation is committed to addressing the socio-economic challenges of vulnerable and marginalised people of South Africa by developing them to the point of self-reliance through the provision of healthcare, education and training in order to restore new hope.

Thembalitsha Foundation has seven community-based programmes, including two recently launched initiatives. Our services are open to all people in need. These services embody our core values of empowerment, development and social uplifting in order to effect positive change.

Thembalitsha's initiatives in health, training, and education equips individuals with the necessary skills, motivating their beneficiaries to contribute to their own communities, impacting positively on the economic and social well-being of South Africa.



### DONOR BILL OF RIGHTS

*We honour the Donor Bill of Rights. Your gift, our promise of protection, transparency and respect.*

# WHO IS CHILDREN'S BOOK CLUB

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Children's Book Club is a feeding and reading initiative based at Kuyasa Public Library in Khayelitsha, serving children aged 4 to 18 years. The library functions as a safe and structured space where children can read, study, access the internet, and receive supervision in an environment many do not have at home. Every day after school, primary and high school learners gather at the library where desks, WiFi, and staff supervision provide a quiet and structured environment for homework and studying. Many children remain at the library for several hours, particularly during school holidays when they arrive as early as 9 am and stay until closing time at 5 pm. Librarians have observed that many children attend the library for long hours without any food. Children's Book Club responds to this need by combining nutrition with literacy and educational activities, supporting children's physical wellbeing while stimulating a love of reading and learning.

The programme began as a pilot project in January 2025, initially serving twenty children. A nutritious meal is provided at 2 pm, followed by reading sessions and educational activities facilitated by librarians and community volunteers. The long-term goal is to expand the programme and eventually reach more children across multiple libraries in and around Khayelitsha.

## OUR MOTIVATION

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### WHAT WE DO:

The Children's Book Club supports children attending Kuyasa Library by providing a regular, nutritious meal for those who come to the library after school and during school holidays. Alongside this, the programme includes reading sessions and educational activities led by librarians, encouraging literacy and a love for learning. The library also provides a safe and structured environment where children can complete homework, study, and access the internet. For younger children, the programme includes storytelling and early literacy activities through the library's existing programmes, helping to nurture language development and a love of books. This initiative works alongside the library's existing services, supporting its mission to promote education, literacy, and community development. Over time, we aim to increase the number of children served and expand to additional days of the week and school holiday periods.

### WHY WE DO IT

The purpose of the Children's Book Club is to support the vision and mission of Kuyasa Public Library by promoting literacy, encouraging a love of reading, and responding to the broader developmental needs of children in the community. The programme combines access to books and educational activities with the provision of a regular, nutritious meal, recognising that children cannot learn effectively when they are hungry. By addressing both literacy and nutrition, the project supports children's physical wellbeing as well as their intellectual development. Children's Book Club also strengthens the role of the library as a community hub where children and young people can learn, grow, and connect in a safe environment.



# WHO THE PROGRAMME SERVES

**WE SERVES CHILDREN ACROSS MANY DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS, PROVIDING AGE-APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES, SUPPORT, AND RESOURCES TO MEET THEIR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS.**

- **PRESCHOOL CHILDREN (AGES 4–6)**

Planned storytelling sessions take place during weekday school mornings. The library works with local educare and preschool principals, rotating participation and lending up to twenty books per school to encourage reading in early childhood programmes.

- **PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNERS (GRADE R–7)**

Children attend the library unaccompanied after school from 2pm to 5pm and during school holidays from 9am to 5pm. Many of these learners rely on the library as a safe place to spend the afternoon while completing homework and studying.

- **HIGH SCHOOL LEARNERS**

Older learners use the library as a quiet, supervised space where they can complete homework, research school projects, and prepare for exams.



## WHY THIS MATTERS

The Children's Book Club seeks to ensure that children who come to the library in search of learning, safety, and structure are not hindered by hunger, and that they are supported to develop the literacy skills essential for their future education and wellbeing. Additionally, the programme:

- ***Supports early learning & cognitive development***, giving younger children a strong foundation for school success.
- ***Encourages a lifelong love of reading*** which is linked to improved academic performance and personal growth.
- ***Provides a safe & structured environment*** for children who may lack supervision or quiet space at home.
- ***Strengthens the library as a community hub*** fostering social connections, mentorship, and access to resources.
- ***Addresses inequality in educational opportunities***, ensuring that all children, regardless of background, have access to nutrition, books, and educational support.



## DID YOU KNOW?

Children who grow up in homes with books typically receive three more years of schooling than children from bookless homes.

# LITERACY CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AFRICA

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## READING TO YOUNG CHILDREN HAS A MEASURABLE IMPACT ON LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT.

South Africa continues to face a deep literacy crisis that limits children's ability to learn, progress, and succeed. In the 2021 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), learners in 253 schools across all nine provinces were assessed, representing all 11 official languages.

*The findings are stark:*

- **81% OF GRADE 4 LEARNERS CANNOT READ FOR MEANING.**
- **56% OF GRADE 6 LEARNERS ARE READING BELOW A GRADE 4 LEVEL.**

Learners who do not reach the most basic benchmark struggle to interpret even simple texts, placing them at a significant disadvantage as they move through school and drastically reducing their chances of completing Grade 12.

Early exposure to language and reading plays a decisive role in reversing this trajectory. Children who are regularly read to before starting school hear up to 1.4 million more words, building the vocabulary and comprehension skills essential for learning. Research shows that children in homes with books gain, on average, three additional years of schooling, while those read to consistently demonstrate stronger cognitive development and improved literacy outcomes.

*Reading with a child just once a day can significantly expand vocabulary by age five, while more frequent reading accelerates development even further. These early gains translate into long-term educational success, making early literacy support one of the most effective interventions for breaking cycles of inequality.*



# THE IMPACT OF GOOD NUTRITION AND LEARNING

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## GOOD NUTRITION IS EQUALLY CRITICAL FOR CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS:

- ***In South Africa, an estimated 27% of children under five are stunted due to chronic malnutrition, which is approximately one in four children.***
- ***Many households continue to experience food insecurity, limiting children's access to consistent, nutritious meals during their early years.***

Children who are nourished and nurtured in their early years, and who have access to learning opportunities at home or through Early Learning Programmes (ELPs), are more likely to start school on track and succeed academically.

Adequate nutrition supports brain development, concentration, and memory, all of which are essential for learning to read. It is therefore a foundational component of any effective early literacy and education programme.