



science & innovation

Department:
Science and Innovation
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



SAASTA

South African Agency for Science
and Technology Advancement

Durban University of Technology

Project Leader: Prof Raisuyah Bhagwan

Academic Disciplines: Social Work, Child and Youth Care

Project Description

The deep impact of HIV/AIDS and more recently the COVID-19 pandemic, has given birth to many child-and granny headed households, which entrenches the vulnerabilities of South African children who are orphaned or abandoned. There are few spaces where children can engage in developmental activities, play, or benefit from positive peer support and consequently, these children are at risk for substance use, pregnancy, school drop-out and other social ills. Similarly, those left to care for these children, be it elder siblings or elderly grandparents are without any form of help and support in these spaces. They grapple with having to serve as parents to those who are their siblings or grandchildren and face a multitude of struggles both financial and psychological to ensure the best care for these children.

Project Description Continued

The DUT's community-based participatory approach creates more safer physical and psychological space for children and these diverse families to thrive in is crucial. Both with the intellectual resources of the university and through tapping into the wisdom and strengths of elders and community leaders, these deep rural villages can be reconstructed into more safer spaces together. Students and academics can train rural men and women to better support child and granny headed households. of significance is the fact that these rural spaces can be reconstructed into field placements sites not only for student training but that final year students can share their expertise in training rural men and women to support the child and granny headed households.

Research questions

1. What are the issues challenging the health and well-being of children and families in the Isibindi villages?
2. How can spaces in the Isibindi villages be reconstructed to promote the wellbeing of children and families?
3. How can these villages use the cultural/spiritual wisdom of elders to strengthen the wellbeing of children, youth and their caregivers.
4. How can the spiritual and cultural wisdom of the community be used to reconstruct the physical and psychological spaces of these rural contexts?
5. How can the intellectual expertise of the child and youth care Department and final year child care students be used to train rural men and women in addressing the needs of vulnerable families and in co-constructing the physical and psychological spaces of the Isibindi villages?

Project Team Roles and Responsibilities

