

ORCHARD: AFRICA



2023
annual report

“For I am the Lord, your God, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.”

Isaiah 41:13



FROM VULNERABLE TO SECURE

a message from our CEO - michelle tessendorf

The mission of Orchard: Africa is to equip the Church to care for the vulnerable.

A person who is vulnerable is someone who is defenseless or weak or exposed; the person is at risk of something or someone harming them. Children are, by nature, vulnerable because they are not yet fully formed in many areas of their life. They cannot fend for themselves. Society understands this and puts laws and safeguards in place to protect children. Once they have developed into adults, many of those safeguards go away as the assumption is that, with development, comes the ability to care for themselves.

Theoretically, all fully grown and fully functional adults have the potential to care for themselves. Unfortunately, for reasons we can all think of, our world does not have equal development opportunities. This means that some adults, in some areas of their life, are vulnerable. In the communities where Orchard: Africa serves, we see this every day. Adults with all the potential needed have not had opportunities to develop and can therefore not provide for themselves or their family.

There are two overarching beliefs that we at Orchard: Africa hold close to our heart:

Belief #1 - It is the responsibility of the household of faith (the Church) to care for the vulnerable.

The basic building block of our faith is to love God, love our neighbor and love ourselves.

Love motivates us and love compels us, therefore we cannot but care for our neighbor, especially the one who is vulnerable.

Belief #2 - Relief, reconstruction, and development are the basic building blocks needed to move a person from vulnerability to sustainability.

It is my hope that as you read through this year's annual report, you will see these two overarching beliefs in action. You will see how you, our Orchard Community, and we, the team on the ground together have displayed our love for God by loving our neighbor.

We have taken care of immediate and pressing needs and provided relief in the form of food for the hungry, blankets for the cold and care for the sick. We have provided for reconstruction through various social services to individuals and families. Our largest focus has been on development, for it is development that brings true sustainability. It is development that moves a person from being vulnerable to being secure.

This journey of relief, reconstruction and development has been made possible through your support. God's love has been made evident through your care.

Michelle

WHEN FOOD ALONE ISN'T ENOUGH

The first and basic response to anyone who is vulnerable is relief from the immediate problem. If a child or an adult is hungry, relief, in the form of a meal, is the priority. Food, however, is not enough. The long-term solution is development – a way for a person or community to provide for themselves. At Orchard: Africa, we do both.

Orchard: Africa provides food to churches for their feeding projects. The amount we provide to each church varies depending on how many children they feed.

The outcome is a bowl of cooked, nutritious food per child, at least five days a week.

In addition to providing food, we also provide components of what is necessary for development to take place, such as seedlings, compost, tools, as well as ongoing training and support to church gardeners. Church gardens exist to supplement feeding projects, to serve as a training ground for community members to start their own gardens, and for income generation when any excess food can be sold.

here is what we provide to churches for food and agriculture projects

Fortified maize porridge is a staple food in all South African homes. When cooked, it expands and fills hungry tummies. This is true for rice as well. Beans are also a staple in most homes. In addition to these staple foods, we provide flavored soya kernels that, when cooked, is a saucy protein topping that resembles a bolognese sauce. Canned fish is also provided.

All these items are non-perishable for at least 30 days which is essential when working in vulnerable communities without access to refrigeration and electricity.

Some of the fresh foods added from church vegetable gardens include: leafy greens such as swiss chard & spinach, carrots, potatoes, tomatoes, onions, pumpkin.



the gardener's prayer

Gracious Creator, bless our families with strength and resilience as they tend their garden. May the soil be fertile, the rains be timely, and their efforts fruitful. Nurture their spirits as they nurture the earth, and let their garden be a beacon of hope, sustenance and community.

Amen.



THE UNKNOWN BARBER



Ayler Msolo is a natural artist. Growing up, he loved being creative. As he got older, he knew that he needed to work and provide for his family. Ayler came up with a great way of using his creative side to earn a living – being a barber.

Cutting people's hair gave him an outlet that made him feel good and his clients look good. Although his clients were delighted with his services, they were young and unemployed which did not make for a great business model.

Through his pastor, who is part of the Orchard Network, Ayler was invited to attend training at the Orchard: Africa Impact Center where, in collaboration with two other non-profits, small business owners receive training and development.

After completing the training, Ayler's marketing skills improved. He was assisted with the design of a brand and a logo. He was provided with a creative signboard for his premises as well as a stack of business cards.

Prior to this business training, Ayler made door-to-door house calls in his desperation to find clients. Now his clientele has grown to the point that getting a booking with him has to be done well in advance. His barber shop, called The Unknown Barber, has people standing in line for his services. He is not so unknown anymore.

Not only can Ayler now provide for his family, he has also created an additional job by employing an assistant.

TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

Mrs Pumla Matiwane is a Women's Empowerment 2023 graduate. During the training program, the women are asked to decide on the next step towards one of their goals and Orchard: Africa will assist them as best we can. Mrs Matiwane asked for driving lessons. This surprised the 2023 group because of her age (54) but at Orchard: Africa, we work around preconceived limitations.

Mrs Matiwane believes that a driver's license will help her since they have a car for the family but only her husband drives. Learning to drive will give her a much-needed skill as well as give her

some independence instead of relying entirely on her husband to drive her everywhere she needs to go.

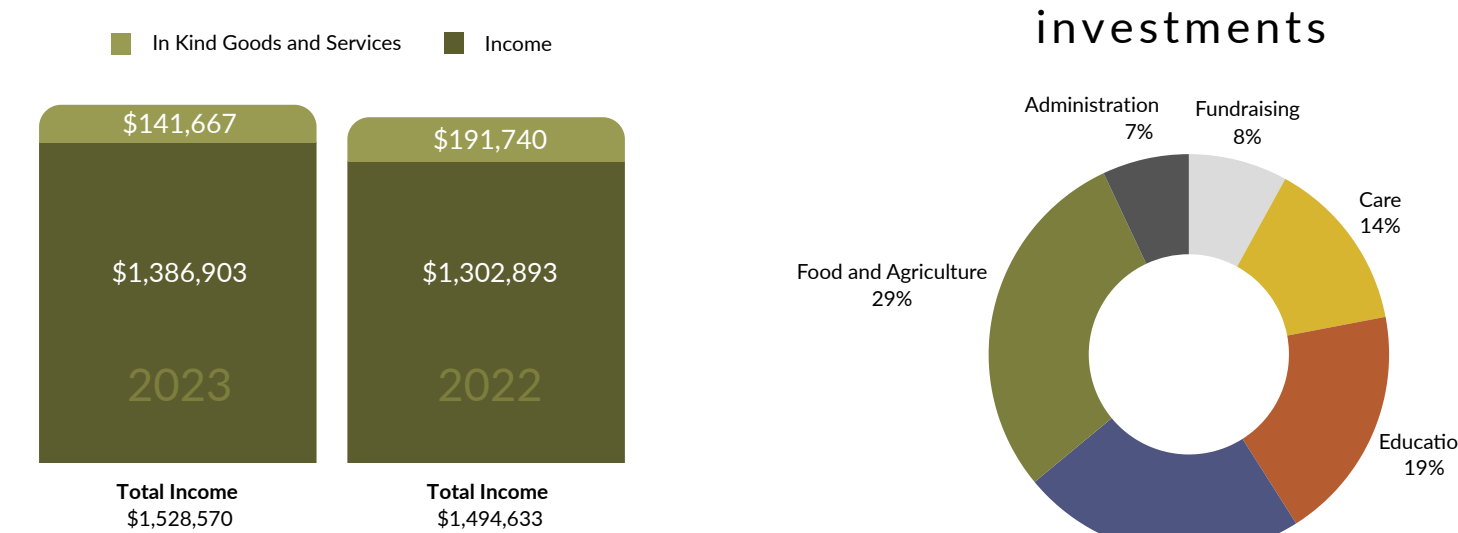
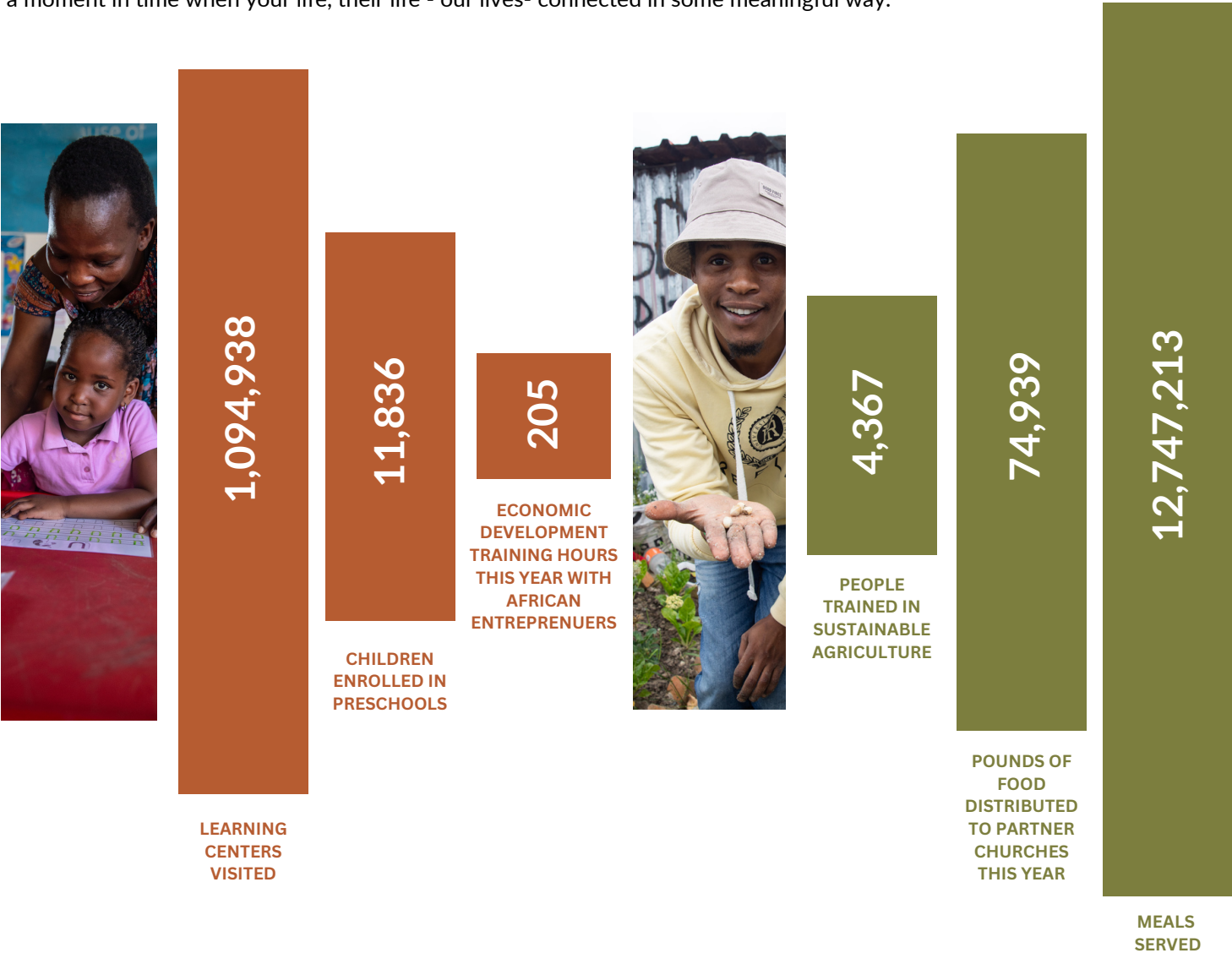
She was very excited to hear that her request to learn to drive had been granted. She studied hard for her learners' test but failed twice. This did not deter her and Mrs Matiwane did not give up. She tested again and passed the third time.

Orchard: Africa has booked ten lessons at a professional driving school for her, and she is off! With her determination and grit, we have no doubt that Mrs Matiwane will soon be going places on her own.

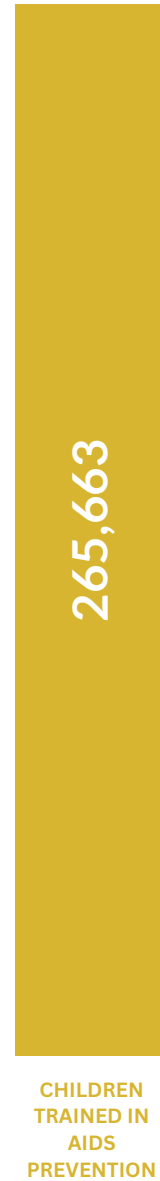
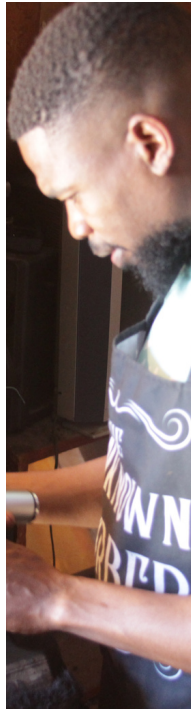


OUR IMPACT

We keep statistics to measure our progress, which is important. However, what is ultimately important is the people these statistics represent. Each one with hopes, dreams, joys and sorrows; lives that deeply matter. Every number here represents a moment in time when your life, their life - our lives- connected in some meaningful way.



*Unless specified, figures are cumulative.



OUR COMMUNITY

Over three decades ago, a small group of people made a pot of food and fed a group of hungry children at a city garbage dump. Compelled by the compassion of Christ, they saw a need, took action and responded with kindness. The impact of that one step of kindness was more than they ever could have imagined.

Since that first meal, a small group has grown into a community of thousands of people from South Africa, the United States and from many other places around the world. This is what we call the Orchard Community--people who are passionate about equipping churches to care for the most vulnerable in our world. The impact illustrated on this page is made possible through the time, talents, collaboration and generosity of so many people serving together to advance God's kingdom.



WHEN CHURCH LEADERS ARE DISCIPLED

The mission of Orchard: Africa is to equip the Church to care for the vulnerable. To achieve this goal, a large part of our strategy is the development and mentorship of church leaders. Two events that took place this year made a deep impact in the lives of some of these leaders.



a pilgrimage

The executive leadership of Orchard: Africa spent over a year writing and designing a program that explores the core values of what we do and why it is deeply important to the Church. The final product is a discipleship pilgrimage called “Repairers of the Breach.”

Midway through this year we piloted this week-long pilgrimage with a small group of hand-chosen and experienced church leaders. Learning the ways of Jesus and exploring the kingdom of God is a never-ending journey.

The group wrestled through some difficult matters that deeply affect our faith amidst current world issues. They dug deep, examined their hearts, and tested their thinking. To lead well requires a lot of introspection.

Meals and daily excursions were enjoyed together. There was a lot of reminiscing, stories of hardships they have endured and of successes they have enjoyed. And there was laughter. So much laughter. Discipleship, done well, bonds people together.

what people are saying

“It was a spiritually enriching, educational, and enjoyable experience, filled with meaningful connections, exploration, and reflection. A great experience indeed. The message about repairing and restoring spiritual walls and understanding the teachings of Jesus is highly relevant and timely for the Church. It gave me a new burden for the poor and needy.”



“We were skillfully taken through history, epistemology, inquiry, reflection, religion and faith and the state of justice in our society and world and asked to match that up against the original design and intent (blueprint). It was fascinating to observe all the physical and intellectual structures and constructs.”



“I’d recommend this pilgrimage because it carefully unpacks and challenges our assumptions, awakens a practical desire for impact and equips the mind and soul for the kingdom mission to love God, walk humbly and love mercy (justice).”



“This is a pilgrimage I will never forget and I pray that it will mean as much and even more for subsequent groups!

“...and you will be called the
repairers of the breach, the
restorer of the streets in
which to dwell”
isaiah 58:12



a marriage seminar

As part of the equipping and development of church leaders, Orchard: Africa, in partnership with First Baptist Church of Glenarden, presented a three-day marriage seminar entitled The Seasons of Marriage, for church leaders from the Western Cape of South Africa. (The plan is to present this same seminar to our pastors in the North West next year.)

The seminar was attended by couples of different age groups and different races. The oldest couple was over 70 years old, while the youngest was in their 20's. Those who have been married for decades as well as those married for less than a year feel that they have become better spouses because of the seminar.

The marriage seminar was held in a local hotel and, for most of the church leaders, this was their first time in a hotel. They feel privileged to have had the time to relax and, instead of ministering to others, have others minister to them. This, they felt, was a great gift from God.

what people are saying

"Indeed Orchard: Africa cares for us pastors. We were really spoiled and pampered. We spend so much time caring for our congregations, it felt good to be cared for as well."

...

"I never realized that there were issues that I was unfair to my wife with, till they were addressed at the seminar, and my wife had the chance to openly face me in that regard. Whenever we are at home, we remind each other of stuff mentioned that we need to improve on."

...

"The practicality of washing feet was a highlight for me. We practiced it last Sunday and intend for it to be our custom so that the culture of serving each other with humility, becomes our identity."

...

"I attended sessions alone because my wife was committed to matters she couldn't escape from, but when I got home every day, she saw a different and better man in me. She said, even though she couldn't attend, she's grateful for the fruit of the seminar because of the man I'm becoming."

EARLY LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

by nicola vermeulen



The partnership between Orchard Africa and Little Seeds started in 2021. Both are faith-based organizations who believe in the importance of early childhood development (ECD). We joined forces to equip educators, pastors, and volunteers in this vital ministry to children.

We provide quarterly training and capacity building sessions for church leaders as well as women who work with children in their communities. A wide range of topics are addressed ranging from the importance of early learning, legal requirements when working with children as well as a lot of practical training on learning through play. The training sessions are well attended, and the participants show eagerness to put their newfound knowledge into practice.

Two of our training sessions had mission teams from the United States join in. Along with the trainees, they discovered how to play with everyday items such as toilet rolls, bottle caps, different sizes of containers, wine corks, and wooden blocks. Disadvantaged communities don't have ready access to toys purchased in stores, so some innovation is needed. The trainees and the mission teams re-discovered the importance and the power of play in early learning which forms the basis of life-long learning.

At the beginning of 2023, we also started training ten women who formed part of Orchard: Africa's Women's Empowerment Program. These women were carefully selected and well prepared to be trained as day care workers. Through this initiative, these women were equipped and supported to start playgroups in their homes.

Most of the women who attended the training do not have formal ECD training. Through this project they receive the necessary support, guidance, and training to help them run successful playgroups in their communities while earning much needed income.

We covered themes like the daily routine, setting up play areas, ensuring that each play area is safe, managing conflict, understanding different learning styles and how to read to children.

The Orchard: Africa and Little Seeds partnership is an ongoing success story that ultimately benefits many children from vulnerable communities while creating much needed jobs for adults.



Orchard: Africa provides the startup equipment needed for the playgroups such as kid sized tables & chairs, wall posters and books. Each day care worker also receives a professionally printed and branded sign to hang outside her home, giving her playgroup a much needed marketing boost.



AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE

by tara mclaughlin

My first mission trip this summer was nothing short of amazing!

I have worked for this incredible organization for almost 6 years now and I had planned on going on several mission trips before this one but between Covid, country lockdowns, and schedule conflicts– it just wasn't happening and I was getting pretty frustrated! But God, in His timing, provided me with this trip, at this time, going with an amazing team, including my oldest daughter, and it was absolutely perfect!

To be able to witness firsthand the impact that Orchard: Africa is making in the villages of Mahikeng through the local churches, the village champions, and the community leaders, and seeing God's hand in all of it was truly a life changing experience.

To see the joy in the children's faces when we showed up to teach VBS all week in the village of Dihatshwane, or the love and gratitude felt from the sick that we delivered care packages to, or the appreciation felt when we planted a garden for an elderly woman – my heart has been forever changed. Being able to spread the love and grace of God, share His word and pray with and over the children, the teachers, the elderly, the sick, the pastors and the community was both humbling and exciting. Watching almost every child in our VBS raise their hand up to say they wanted to pray to receive Jesus - I know that God is working here.

This is an experience I will never forget. South Africa, you have a piece of my heart and I cannot wait to return!

He said to them, "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation."

Mark 16:15





Orchard: Africa
1176 E. Warner Rd
Suite 201
Gilbert, AZ 85296