

Turning grey todays into colourful tomorrows

Our Story



In IsiXhosa, the word “Imibala” means “colours”. “Turning Grey Today’s into Colourful Tomorrow’s” is a phrase that The Imibala Trust has embodied to bring colour and meaning into the lives of countless people in the Helderberg and Graaff-Reinet areas, with the new additions in Hermanus and Moorreesburg.

In 1999, Mrs Gaynor Rupert rented a property in Andries Pretorius Street in Somerset West. The aim was to create employment for women by training them to sew, bead, cook etc. Mrs. Rupert then bought a property around the corner in Bright Street, and over the years has added seven more properties which today make up the Imibala Village.

How did this develop? The initial property purchased by Imibala Pty Ltd was to promote the work of the charity. Imibala was registered as a Trust in 2005. One of the trustees, Dr Harold Riley, an artist from Manchester, donated a portrait of the late Nelson Mandela to be auctioned at a gala event in New York. Mr. Johann Rupert was the highest bidder and the price he paid was donated by Dr Riley to Imibala, the start of an endowment fund for the newly established Trust. The Sponsor-A-Child programme with an Art programme (initiated by Gaynor Rupert’s mother, Donna Downie, and run by volunteers) was established.

In time, drama, pottery, ballet, music, mathematics, and life skills programmes were introduced as Imibala grew organically to meet the identified needs of school children of our time. Today, there is an Imibala precinct, which extends over eight properties along Bright Street and Stellendal Road in Somerset West. One belongs to the Imibala Trust while seven others are made available to the Imibala Trust for their commercial and philanthropic purposes. All funds received from sponsors and donors are allocated exclusively to the children.

With the move to Bright Street, the focus shifted from assisting adults to encouraging primary school children in disadvantaged Helderberg communities to go to school. It was established that a basic need for a school uniform could not be provided in many households. This was a concern for school principals as it negatively affected the academic performance, self-esteem, and dignity of the children. The sponsorship of school uniforms was implemented. In 2002, Imibala sponsored children from two schools and in 2024, children from twenty-one schools in the Helderberg, ten schools in Graaff-Reinet and one school in Hermanus, received school uniforms. With the opening of Imibala in Hermanus and Moorreesburg in 2025, the number of children supported by the Sponsor-a-Child programme will significantly increase. Also provided are a number of extramural programmes and a nutritious meal for over eight hundred Imibala children every week. More than eighty-seven-thousand lives have been touched and transformed by these initiatives.

The Rupert family has conveyed their passion for Imibala so effectively that friends, acquaintances, and business associates have contributed to the significant growth of The Imibala Trust over the years. Today, with the support of more than two-thousand donors, sponsors, and volunteers, the Imibala Trust is growing from strength to strength, preparing the youth for a better future.

A Message from Imibala's Founder



Imibala is about giving disadvantaged children a happier childhood. Besides the school uniform they receive, they also have access to an array of programmes which include art, pottery, ballet, modern dance, hip hop, coding, literacy, life skills and many others.

This then impacts positively on the lives of the parents and grandparents, often in families with no one employed.

We now have three Imibala's, one in Somerset West, one in Graaff-Reinet and a newly acquired space in Hermanus. In time we hope to open more satellite Imibala's and to fill a need for the many children in our country.

- Mrs Gaynor Rupert | Imibala Founder

A message from our CEO

“To be a child in today’s world has become a privilege”



The Imibala Trust: A creative and safe space of happiness and excellence, where a child can truly be a child.

Under the leadership of our founder and chairlady, Mrs. Gaynor Rupert, The Imibala Trust is a beacon of hope and a space of creativity and happiness for children from impoverished backgrounds for twenty years. We have premises in Somerset West and Graaff-Reinet. We are opening a third Imibala in Hermanus. The evident transformative power of education and creative expression at Imibala is truly remarkable. We have seen firsthand the profound impact that a new school uniform has on a child. Art, dance, music, drama, pottery and ballet classes positively impact children for generations to come. This is why we, at The Imibala Trust, strive to offer our children a number of opportunities.



With the invaluable support of our sponsors, donors, and volunteers, we can provide our children with top-quality school uniform packages and introduce them to the astounding world of the creative and performing arts, using only the finest tools and equipment. Our state-of-the-art computer lab allows us to offer coding and online safety training to our children, while our fully equipped library serves as a centre for daily literacy and mathematics classes.

The “Imibala Awards” programme provides children with the opportunity to attend premier schools and universities through sponsorships and bursaries.

Our “World of Work” programme prepares our youngsters for internships at various establishments country-wide, giving them a taste of the professional world. We have recently introduced international internships in collaboration with our corporate partners, providing our children with a global perspective and invaluable experiences.

At Imibala, we have come “full circle”. It is heartwarming to welcome back successful adults who were once Imibala children, returning to give back and pay forward the gift of Imibala to the next generation. Imibala’s holistic approach, rooted in kindness, respect, grace, and courtesy, has proven to be extremely effective.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our sponsors for their trust in Imibala. Your support is invaluable in helping us shape a brighter future for our children.

-Theo Willemse | Imibala CEO

Our Team



Esme



Cale



Lucky



Noxie



Willem



Thuli



Nina



Joshua



Vuyiswa



Marlene



Kara



Ruthala



Pieter



Hannah



Yolanda



Ankia



Debi



Solly



Harold



Tracey



Grace



Charlene



Nikki



Ruben



Antoinette



Theo



Jade



Asemahle



Quentin



Cindy



Megan



Mari

Sponsor-A-Child



The Sponsor-A-Child uniform programme is the predominant method for supporting children. Currently, it impacts the largest number of children who pass through Imibala's doors. The Imibala Trust provides a basic school uniform to vulnerable children from challenged backgrounds, with a current group of three-thousand children from twenty-one schools in the Helderberg, ten schools in Graaff-Reinet and new schools added to our Hermanus and Moorreesburg programmes.

As part of responsible Corporate Governance, the Trust conducts an annual verification process to determine the status of each child. New children are identified and adopted into the programme as part of the continued effort to support parents facing extreme financial and social constraints.

By sponsoring a child, you are providing a life-changing gift to a child in South Africa, creating a positive overall impact.

Learn more about Sponsor-A-Child:

<https://imibala.com/imibala-trust/sponsor-a-child/>



Creative & Performing Arts

The Creative and Performing Arts Department encourages more than five hundred children to discover and develop creative skills in a way that is not always possible at school. Imibala facilitators and volunteers nurture the children and help them with life skills wherever possible.

The programmes are informal and aimed at giving children exposure for a period of one year, except for ballet and music, where children develop their skills over a longer period. These activities are carefully coordinated with their school schedules to ensure their academic school day is not disrupted.

This department provides a platform from which to offer programmes that make a substantial difference in the lives of the children currently, and as they prepare for their lives after school.

For more information on the Creative & Performing Arts Department:
<https://imibala.com/imibala-trust/creative-arts/>



Learner Advancement

Imibala's Learner Advancement Department offers a variety of academic and personal development programmes to more than two hundred learners. The focus of this department is to provide programmes that complement the school curriculum and add value to each child's developmental journey.

Programmes are targeted at both primary and high school learners and offer a range of subjects: computer-enhanced mathematics lessons, LEGO play, coding, life skills, and leadership development. More recently, Learner Advancement has launched two projects aimed at preparing Grade 12 learners for the world of work, particularly in relation to the hospitality industry.

The success of the Learner Advancement Department is achieved through a learner-centred educational approach that focuses on empowering learners to take charge of their personal development.

Learner Advancement is an exciting and very dynamic space in the collection of projects at the Imibala Trust.

For more on Learner Advancement:

<https://imibala.com/imibala-trust/learner-advancement/>





Integral to the founding vision of the Imibala Trust in Somerset West has been the wish to replicate the model developed there in other parts of the country.

With the opening of the Imibala Gallery in Graaff-Reinet in 2014, the Trust had a launch pad in this beautiful country town. The basic entry programme of Sponsor-A-Child has now been rolled out into ten schools. Through outreach into the community and advertising at the Drostdy Hotel and in the Gallery itself, more than four-hundred children now receive school uniforms.

The Trust encourages any partners to assist in growing Imibala Graaff-Reinet. Imibala's aim is to provide these children with programmes that will be relevant to their development on their individual paths to responsible citizenship.



An Overview of Imibala's Programmes



Learner Advancement

Learner Advancement offers an array of academic and personal development programmes including:

- Mathematics
- LEGO Play
- Coding
- Literacy
- World of Work
- Computer Literacy
- Imibala Awards

Creative & Performing Arts

The Creative and Performing Arts Department is comprised of several programmes including:

- Art
- Drama
- Pottery
- Dance
- Cooking
- Needlework
- Ballet
- Music



Graaff-Reinet

At Imibala Graaff-Reinet, the team has a number of new programmes up and running. These programmes include:

- Traditional Dance
- Art
- Nature programme

Additional Programmes

Among the Learner Advancement and Creative & Performing Arts programmes, there are a number of additional programmes at Imibala::

- Golf
- Gardening
- Recycling
- Carpentry
- Skills



Selfless contributions are amongst the greatest assets of our society. The Imibala Trust has a number of incredible volunteers who generously dedicate their time and talents to assist the Trust by facilitating a variety of programmes. The support of volunteers at Imibala is a luxury that is never taken for granted.

There are many areas for volunteering, and the focus is on providing a safe space for children to develop exciting new skills and improve self-esteem. The Imibala Trust would not exist without its sixty active volunteers.

“Volunteering is at the very core of being human. No one has made it through life without someone else’s help.” – Heather French Henry.

To find out more about volunteering visit: <https://imibala.com/become-a-volunteer/>



Testimonials

I am very glad and privileged to be one of the lucky recipients of support from the Imibala Trust. Our school is situated in a very poor community with parents who are unemployed and households who depend on social grants. Some of my learners come to school without having breakfast and enjoy their only meal for the day at the school. Some of them stay with their grandparents and in most cases are their fathers absent and they must struggle on their own.

Now we can provide them with school uniforms and food with the help of the Imibala Trust. We are so thankful to the Trust and its supporters.

With your help can we give direction and offer a more comfortable and positive learning environment to these poor learners.

I want to thank you on behalf of all our learners and the school community.

-Mr. B. Jacobs | Principal - Lingcom Primary School

Imibala is a place where you hear a lot of laughter. It became an important part of my weekly routine as a volunteer. Serving Imibala's vision with the community, the Imibala team's dedication and how the children benefit from this, inspires me greatly.

To be a little added value drop in the ocean of need is a discovery journey of awareness. Facilitating and creating art with the children, giving direction to problem-solving skills, and finding solutions, is very rewarding!

Thank you Imibala for this creative path.

-Sanet Visser | Art Volunteer

Tereo is a school for street children and children from extremely challenging circumstances, including abuse, violence, neglect and extreme poverty; the opportunities that Imibala offers through their sponsored uniform programme and extra mural activities give these learners access to experiences that they would never normally be able to participate in.

The unique approach that Imibala use with dedicated, enthusiastic teachers, ensures that these learners are exposed to amazing learning experiences which challenge both their intellectual as well as their artistic abilities. From dance, to music, drama, pottery, etc. ensures that they have learning experiences that are not only fun but help equip them to develop holistic life skills that can be used throughout their school years and beyond.

-Ann Coetzee | Principal - Tereo School

I am a qualified and experienced Nature Guide amongst many other undertakings. Still, specifically, I have over my career been involved with many Outreach programs, particularly for young minds and hearts.

I believe from what I have experienced that the founders of Imibala Trust are truly doing something great. In addition, that in time the Imibala Trust Graaff-Reinet (ITGR) with support will perfect their reach. Interaction with ITGR has been notably pleasing and nothing is too much. It is my opinion that their focus is on serving, a truly admirable undertaking and the most important.

Make no mistake such programs can and do change the hearts and minds of the young, our future.

-Ken Taytasaç | Nature Guide

My wife and I have for almost 10 years been "in partnership" with the Imibala Trust through supporting their "Sponsor a Child" programme. Our contribution is to make an annual donation to the Trust which they then use to find underprivileged children in the Helderberg area and provide and support them, amongst other things, with school uniforms and learning materials. The benefit to the Trust is that our donation, and those of other like-minded people, make it possible for them to carry out their invaluable work.

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There is no better feeling than to receive a letter from Renee (one of "our" children) thanking us for sponsoring her over the years and informing us that she is now in Grade 12 and is next year going to Boland College to study to be a Chef!

Our commitment to the Imibala Trust is for these reasons ongoing; please Google the Trust to see the amazing work they are doing and then join us in this remarkable and worthwhile journey.

-Julian and Lauraine Weil | Sponsor SA

We have sponsored several needy children through Imibala for many years while visiting S. Africa and have always been impressed that each child receives clothing and school equipment to the full value of the sponsorship fees. The children are treated with great kindness when receiving their gifts.

Because of our satisfaction, we have encouraged friends, schools and our local Rotary Club to also sponsor children through Imibala.

We have seen 'our children' grow in confidence and self-esteem because of sponsorship.

-Peter and Margaret Wood | Doncaster

Governance



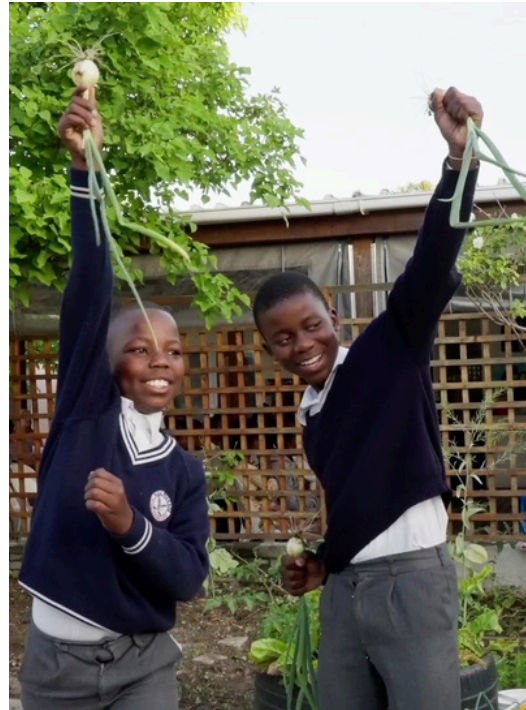
The Imibala Trust was founded by Mrs. Gaynor Rupert and is supported by four additional Trustees: Ms. H. M. Rupert, Mrs. L. White, Mr. G. le Roux, and Mr. S. Puwani.

This Board of Trustees has monthly oversight of the income, expenses, and all activities of the Trust.

The accounts of the Trust are audited annually by PWC. The Trust is a registered not-for-profit organisation, NPO 046-758, and also has a PBO status, number 93001 7783.



The Imibala soundwave icon was inspired by children's laughter, with each colour representing one of Imibala's initiatives.



Get in touch

SCAN TO FIND
OUT MORE ABOUT US



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Visit: www.imibala.com for more information

Make a donation



Snap here to pay



EFT DONATIONS

The Imibala Trust
First National Bank
Account number: 62173955918
Branch code: 260505
SWIFT Code: FIRNZAJJ



I'd like to thank you all guys for the school uniform that you offer us as the children can't buy the uniform for their self.

And I also want to say to you...you don't just help us you also help our parents. Thank you very very much this means everything to us. May you always keep on doing this.

-Neliswe Yengiwe | 16 years old

I thank you for the nice clothes and I would like to tell you how grateful I am to be in The Imibala. Thank you for the shoes, thank you for everything I get from you.

Ek is dankbaar vir al die klere en goed wat ons kry en al die mense wat dit koop.

I love you so much.

-Tayden Moses | 14 years old

THANK
YOU!

Greeting to my lovely sponsor... I wrote this letter to inform you that I've received my uniform and thank you for giving me a wonderful gift in time of need.

I appreciate you and thanks for giving me so much which I couldn't afford and thank you for all these years that you have been sponsoring me.

-Sisipho Ndzeku | 14 years old

I'd like to say thank you once again on another year for

coming through not for me but for my mother who is a single parent. Thank you for your blessing.

I shall make the best of it and make my name great as you intended.

Sincerely.

-Someleze Baduza | 17 years old