Facilitators of Empowerment Lead in Sustainable Rural Development: A Case Study of Thanda

Emma Milford
SIT Graduate Institute - Study Abroad

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection

Part of the Civic and Community Engagement Commons, Community-Based Learning Commons, Community-Based Research Commons, Family, Life Course, and Society Commons, and the Growth and Development Commons

Recommended Citation
https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/2163

This Unpublished Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Study Abroad at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.
FACILITATORS OF EMPOWERMENT LEAD IN SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THANDA

Emma Milford
Angela Larkan, Executive Director and Founder of Thanda
School for International Training
South Africa: Social and Political Transformation
Fall 2015
# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements........................................................................................................4

Abstract.............................................................................................................................6

Introduction.........................................................................................................................7

Literature Review................................................................................................................10
  Introduction.....................................................................................................................10
  The Gaps.........................................................................................................................11
    Tension over Local Power.............................................................................................11
    HIV/AIDS Epidemic.....................................................................................................12
    Orphans and Vulnerable Children..............................................................................15
      Single Caregivers.....................................................................................................16
    Negative Effects of the OVC Crisis............................................................................20

Sustainable Development...............................................................................................22
  Defining ‘Sustainable Development’............................................................................22
  Community-Based Organizations..................................................................................24

One NGO’s Approach.......................................................................................................26

Thanda Fills Those Gaps.................................................................................................29
  Food Security................................................................................................................29
  Early Childhood Development......................................................................................31
  Afterschool Programming.............................................................................................33
    Self-Esteem Building..................................................................................................33
    Hands-On Experiential Learning.................................................................................34
    Creative Arts...............................................................................................................35

Conclusion.........................................................................................................................37

Methodology.....................................................................................................................39

Limitations..........................................................................................................................43
# Table of Contents

Data Analysis..............................................................................................................45  
  The Needs of the Community.................................................................................45  
  What Could be the End Goal?................................................................................48  
  Thanda’s Multi-Faceted Response...........................................................................52  
  Measuring Impact...................................................................................................55  
  At the Center of the Impact: Facilitators..............................................................56  
    Theory of Change................................................................................................56  
    Hiring Process....................................................................................................57  
    Role in the Community......................................................................................58  
    Training................................................................................................................59  
    Facilitator Development.....................................................................................62  
    Transfer of Thought............................................................................................63  
    More Change to Come........................................................................................64  
  Challenges Not Met by Thanda.............................................................................65  

Conclusion................................................................................................................67  

Bibliography.............................................................................................................70  

Appendices..............................................................................................................76  
  Appendix A: Consent Form..................................................................................77  
  Appendix B: Post-Interview Handout.................................................................78  
  Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Questions.............................................79  
  Appendix D: Janet Duma Interview by Sarah Boeckmann, April 2015..............80  
  Appendix E: Definitions of Sustainable Development........................................83  
  Appendix F: Thanda’s Theory of Change..............................................................84  
  Appendix G: Thanda 2014 Annual Report............................................................85  
  Appendix H: Thanda On-Site Pictures.................................................................89  

Glossary.....................................................................................................................94
Acknowledgements

The inspiration for this ISP project happened long before I arrived in South Africa this fall. If I am to properly acknowledge all those who encouraged me along this journey, I have to go back to two high school teachers, Ms. Panahi and Ms. Holstein. Through her love of African Studies, Ms. Panahi not only motivated me to come on my first trip to South Africa in 2013, but she is one of the reasons I tailored my International Area Studies major around African Studies. Through Ms. Holstein’s senior creative writing class I was introduced to her daughter Abigail Holstein, who, at the time, was writing U.S. grants applications for Thanda. Abby Holstein graciously let me intern with her for my high school Senior Project during which time I began to learn about the incredible work of Thanda and was introduced to Angela Larkan.

I am hugely indebted to my advisor, the Executive Director and Founder of Thanda, Angela Larkan, for her guidance and wisdom throughout this whole process. Her enthusiasm and investment in my research experience has been uplifting and I cannot thank her enough for her support. Secondly, I would like to greatly acknowledge Tyler Howard, Thanda’s Program Director, for guiding my research at the site, introducing me to other staff members, and for driving me to and from the site on numerous occasions.

Additionally, I would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who agreed to speak with me and share their thoughts about the work Thanda is doing. This includes Lucie Diemunsch, Gina Buchanan, Kristine (Kris) Fowles, Janet Duma, Nosipho, Musa Ntobela, Xoliswa Maphumulo, and Joy Mkhwani. A special thanks to Janet who welcomed me into her Grade R and 1 class twice and helped enhance my knowledge of how an afterschool class runs. Thank you to the entire staff of Thanda for not only allowing me to be a part of your community for a few days, but for all of the work you are doing. You are some of the most passionate people
I have ever met and I have no doubt that you are each doing your part in changing this world for the better.

Of course, my ability to do research at Thanda could not have happened without the support of the staff and students at SIT. Imraan, thank you for encouraging me to pursue this project even though it was logistically challenging. Shola, thank you for driving me to and from Hibberdene and for being a constant source of support and laughter during my time on this program. Scott, thank you for your detailed edits and for pushing me to clarify my arguments and analyses. Bryan, thank you for letting me be uMama Afrika and for helping me minimally impress the staff and leaners at Thanda with my isiZulu skills. Sdu, thank you for the many car rides, your willingness to share your opinions, and for playing my favorite songs on repeat.

Thank you, also, to everyone at Mantis and Moon Backpackers in Umzumbe for being so welcoming and making me feel safe and at home during my stay. And to my fellow SIT students, thank you for continually broadening my mind and challenging me to think more critically about this world.

Finally, these acknowledgements would not be complete if I did not recognize the unwavering support of my family and friends at home, especially my parents. Mom and Dad, thank you a million times over for allowing me to go on this adventure and for encouraging me to follow my dreams both here and on that side.

Ngiyabonga!
Abstract

In a world searching for more innovative models of development, it is important to highlight successful programs that offer insight into effective, impactful interventions. In this study, I investigate Thanda as a case study for rural sustainable development where investment in individual empowerment results in community empowerment.

Thanda was founded in 2008 with the original intent of addressing the orphan crisis due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in rural communities near Hibberdene, South Africa. Since then, Thanda has implemented afterschool education programs, feeding programs, agricultural development programs, early childhood development programs, and a 100% green community center. Their curriculum emphasizes critical thinking skills, creative problem solving, active citizenship, environmental sustainability, and, arguably most importantly, the development of self-esteem. Not only do the communities support this unique approach, but Thanda’s monitoring and evaluation reports suggest that they are making a considerable positive impact.

Through participant observation, interviews, and a focus group with staff members, many of whom are from the local communities, I evaluate which aspect of Thanda is most central to their impact. I argue that the key to their success is empowering the individual, which they achieve by training community members to be education facilitators, leaders, and mentors. These facilitators then promote community development by focusing on the self-development of each learner, which, I predict, has the potential to bring about more cohesive, cooperative, and conscientious communities. This project is relevant to funders, policy makers, governmental authorities, and other NGOs who have an interest in promoting effective sustainable development strategies, especially in low-resourced rural areas, because it provides detailed insight into one developmental strategy that has the potential to be implemented elsewhere.
Introduction

After the end of Apartheid, the new government inherited a system wrought with problems formed during the colonial and apartheid regimes. Due to disorganization and the immense scale of these problems, the government has had a limited response to social problems, especially in regards to the development of rural areas and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. As a result, rural communities like those in Umtwalume in KwaZulu-Natal now face tremendous issues like a massive orphans and vulnerable children crisis, food insecurity, poverty, unemployment, poor healthcare, and poor education. Sustainable, community-based development strategies are necessary to uplift these communities and their future generations.

In this study, I investigate Thanda as a case study for rural sustainable development through individual empowerment, resulting in community empowerment. Thanda was founded in 2008 with the original intent of addressing the orphan crisis due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in rural communities near Hibberdene, South Africa. Since then, Thanda has implemented afterschool education programs, feeding programs, agricultural development programs, early childhood development programs, and a 100% green community center. Their curriculum emphasizes critical thinking skills, creative problem solving, active citizenship, environmental sustainability, and, arguably most importantly, the development of self-esteem. Not only do the communities support this unique approach, but Thanda’s monitoring and evaluation reports suggest that they are making a considerable positive impact.

Because this study provides detailed insight into one developmental strategy that has the potential to be implemented elsewhere, this study is relevant to funders, policy makers, governmental authorities, and other NGOs who have an interest in promoting effective sustainable development strategies, especially in low-resourced rural areas.
Through participant observation, interviews, and focus groups with staff members, many of whom are from the local communities, I set out to understand five main objectives. The first objective was my central research question: to evaluate which aspect of Thanda is most central to their impact on the communities with which they engage. I left this objective broad and undefined to encourage natural interpretations and responses, which also let me recognize how different people evaluated what ‘impact’ means. Along those same lines, my second objective was to understand how various staff members, who work for this sustainable development NGO, define ‘development’ and ‘sustainable.’ Their answers hint at not only Thanda’s potential long-term goals, but also what the leaders in the communities dream about for their futures. Thirdly and fourthly, I planned to evaluate both the challenges Thanda is and is not meeting in the communities in context with their mission to address problems that affect the learners. Finally, I sought to determine whether their strategy could be implemented elsewhere in communities facing similar challenges.

This paper consists of five sections, beginning with a literature review. The extensive literature review is broken into six sub-sections: Introduction, The Gaps, Sustainable Development, One NGO’s Approach, Thanda Fills Those Gaps, and Conclusion. In this trajectory, I explain some of the main actors in the extremely complex history of why there was and remains a crisis of orphans and vulnerable children, many of whom live in single caregiver environments that cannot provide the children with enough support to properly physically, emotionally, and mentally develop. I then explain why sustainable, community-based development NGOs are necessary to help provide support for these children. In the third sub-section, I explain Thanda’s history as an NGO and introduce the variety of interventions they provide to support their learners. Before concluding, I use the literature to verify Thanda’s many
intervention strategies including Food Security, Early Childhood Development, and Afterschool Programming (which I further break down into Self-Esteem Building, Hands-On Experiential Learning, and Creative Arts).

After supporting Thanda’s approach with existing scholarly analyses, I delve into my Methodology for this case study project of Thanda. In recognition of how my methodology may have been restricted, I follow with a section outlining the limitations of this study. At the core of this paper is the Data Analysis, which is broken into six sub-sections: The Needs of the Community, What Could be the End Goal?, Thanda’s Multi-Faceted Response, Measuring Impact, At the Center of the Impact: Facilitators, and Challenges Not Met by Thanda. In reporting on my findings, I explain the community-reported problems and opportunities of area and how Thanda plans to address the challenges as seen in their Theory of Change model. I then explain how I define ‘impact’ and I argue that the facilitators and the way they promote the self-development of each learner is the most impactful aspect of Thanda. My argument about the importance of the facilitators is then broken down into seven sections that explain how integral the facilitators’ role is to the success of Thanda. Finally, I address the shortcomings of Thanda and where there remains areas of improvement.

The Conclusion summarizes my findings and further suggests the potential community-wide impact in which facilitators are playing a role by helping learners develop themselves. Though Thanda is now enriched by adequate resources and funding, the high-impact aspect of their approach requires relatively few resources and I propose that their method has the potential to be implemented in other communities facing similar challenges. I end by recommending that this evaluation be repeated in five to ten years when all of Thanda’s current programs have had enough time to take root in the community.
Literature Review

Introduction

When the National Party’s regime officially ended in 1994, South Africans had high hopes for how much their country would change. Housing, healthcare, education, and equality for all seemed to be attainable in the near future. After Nelson Mandela’s inauguration, the African National Congress (ANC) went to work trying to address the wounds left from the Apartheid era and developed policies and programs that would help South Africa move forward to be a strong competitor in an increasingly globalized world. The government, however, inherited a society wrought with large problems embedded from both the colonial and apartheid regimes. As a result, the new government inadequately addressed the growing needs of the people in rural areas, especially in terms of the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the resulting orphan crisis.

Due to its continued disorganization and the immense scale of problems, the South African government is extremely limited and development NGOs like Thanda are necessary to fill the gaps. Since Thanda’s founding in 2008 to address the orphan and vulnerable children (OVC) crisis through an afterschool programming model of care, their learners have shown dramatic increases in both their academic performance and their self-esteem levels. A great deal of literature supports Thanda’s response to fill the gaps and challenges faced by rural communities.
The Gaps

Tension over Local Power

Although the new South African government created new policies with the intention of developing the nation, much of the development was in the control of local government which had a “strong urban focus.”¹ Local government was probably best suited to address the local developmental issues; however, the idea of local government was not a well-defined entity, especially in rural areas. Immediately following apartheid, Lungisile Ntsebeza, Associate Professor of the Department of Sociology at the University of Cape Town, notes that rural areas were often “characterised by tensions and conflicts between elected councilors and the incumbents of apartheid-created Tribal Authorities (chiefs and headmen)”² because “there was no clarity about the role of traditional authorities.”³

The two bodies of governance often clashed over local development jurisdiction, especially when it came to land allocation. At first, rural residents, rural councilors, and South Africans “assumed that the newly elected councillors would take over the vital function of land allocation,” but the South African Constitution stated that the allocation of land in rural areas would continue to follow the Bantustan outlines from the Apartheid era.⁴ By 1999, there was still “no clear-cut policy that would guide development planning in rural areas under Tribal Authorities.”⁵ The next year, with the redefining of the municipality borders, the Office of Deputy President released the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy which continued to focus on the importance of local government without clarifying whether the Tribal

⁴ Ntsebeza, “Rural Development in South Africa,” 446.
Authorities or municipalities had more power over the issue of land allocation. It wasn’t until 2004, ten years after the new government was installed, that land allocation policies officially changed under the Communal Land Rights Act. The Act essentially gave most of the local land-granting power to traditional councils. Since “control over land in rural areas is crucial to the development projects in these areas,” the decade-long debate over who should be in charge of land allocation dramatically slowed the South African government’s dreams for rural development.6 Because of this governmental confusion, it is no wonder that many rural areas today continue to face problems such as extreme poverty, food insecurity, poor education, and poor infrastructure.

HIV/AIDS Epidemic

During this tension about the power of land allocation and rural development, a huge public health crisis had emerged: the HIV/AIDS epidemic. By the end of 2003, the estimated number of adults and children living with HIV in South Africa was 5.3 million people.7 In other words, 21.5% of South Africa’s adult population was infected with HIV.8 Of that estimate, 2.9 million, or almost 57% of infected adults, were assumed to be women.9 Since HIV destroys the immune system, it was much easier for a person to contract a coinfection of another disease like tuberculosis. Due to their weakened defense systems, bodies that had seemingly been healthy

---

7 5.1 million infected adults (ages 15-49) and 200,000 infected children. 
years before were falling victim to infections that should not have necessarily had the power to kill.

As anti-retroviral drugs (ARVs) became available in 1998, AIDS activists pushed the South African government to invest in this new treatment plan. Their efforts, however, were met with much backlash, especially from President Thabo Mbeki who believed that HIV was not the cause of AIDS and that ARVs were “too expensive to distribute.”

In April 2004, South Africa reluctantly launched its national antiretroviral treatment program, but participation in the program was not encouraged by the government. Even in late 2005, the South African Health Minister Manto Tshabalala-Msimang “advocated the consumption of African foods such as garlic, lemon and beetroot by HIV-positive individuals as a viable alternative to ARV treatment.”

Government action to prevent, treat, and provide support for HIV/AIDS patients remained fairly stagnant until Jacob Zuma was elected in 2009. Yet even after the end of 2010, only 55% of the people who required ARV treatment were receiving it, 25% less than the government’s 80% coverage goal.

Despite the eventual shift in government attitude towards the epidemic, there remained and remains today, a prevailing stigma around those with the virus. HIV/AIDS presents a particular challenge, especially to health workers and policy-makers because the “infection is directly related to areas of social, personal and sexual life that are regarded as private, and are

---


usually hidden from public gaze.” Not only do those involved with healing this public health epidemic need to combat a virus that spreads in such a private matter, but they also are up against barriers that stigmatize anyone who seeks treatment or is associated with the epidemic. Additionally, health services often stress that they are challenged by a “lack of coverage, severely limited funding and a lack of well-trained staff to deliver the services that are planned and reflected in policy documents.” The spread of HIV is also often closely associated with communities facing poverty, food insecurity, and economic underdevelopment. Additionally, women have higher statistics for HIV infection than men. In rural communities, one explanation for that statistic is that women are commonly infected by their husbands who work in urban areas, and who often have or have had girlfriends from those urban areas.

Since those infected with HIV/AIDS had little access to proper treatment for so long, a large number of people died. The UNAIDS’ 2004 Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic estimated that by the end of 2003, there were 370,000 adult and children deaths in South Africa due to AIDS. What is perhaps even more tragic, though, is that, by the end of 2003, the UNAIDS estimated that in South Africa alone, there were 1.1 million orphans (ages 0-17) due to AIDS. By 2009, this number had increased to 1.9 million with the high estimate being 2.4 million. Some predict that mortality rates will not plateau until 2020, which means that the number of orphans in South Africa will not begin to decrease until 2030 at the earliest.

---

Orphans and Vulnerable Children

Soon after the HIV/AIDS epidemic started receiving attention, the orphan and vulnerable children crisis became a prevalent issue. The South African government, responded by advocating “community-based care and… placed a moratorium on children's institutions in the belief that the extended family will absorb AIDS orphans.”20 In traditional Zulu culture, children orphaned as a result of the death of one or both parents, were often taken in by aunts or uncles. Since, however, those caregivers are also about the age of the deceased parent(s), they had likely fallen victim to AIDS as well.21 In that case, the next option is for the children to live with their grandparents who, because of their age and health status, may find it difficult to properly care for the children’s psychological, legal, economic, and other basic needs.22 In other situations in which children have not been removed and placed in government-run or NGO institutions, children will form child-headed households. In the wake of parental death, children often legally lose the right to their family land and sometimes other family members will attempt to exploit the children by moving in and taking possession of the property and other assets without providing proper childcare. Child-headed households, though often also the result of having no interested relatives or other potential caregivers, are a way for the children to remain together, avoid further harm from inappropriate caregivers, and continue to hold ownership over their family’s land and property.23 Though their situation is not necessarily more secure, they retain the stability of their home, which can be a source of comfort.

21 Subbarao and Coury, Reaching Out to Africa’s Orphans, 28.
22 Subbarao and Coury, Reaching Out to Africa’s Orphans, 29.
Regardless of their specific living structure, orphaned children often usually have inadequate psychological, emotional, social, physical, or economic support. Alta van Dyk, author of *HIV/AIDS Care & Counseling*, states,

AIDS orphans suffer more frequently from malnutrition, illness, abuse and sexual exploitation than children who are orphaned by other causes. In most cases they live without basic human rights and dignity. They don't know how to protect themselves and they have no access to doctors, nurses, and other health care workers and facilitators. Some studies have shown that death rates among AIDS orphans are 2.5 to 3.5 times higher than those of children with a parent (HIV Infant Care Programme, 2000).

South Africa’s next generations were being uprooted from stability and support by the HIV/AIDS epidemic and many were left to fend for themselves in a world they could not understand.

**Single Caregivers**

The social impact of HIV/AIDS was compounded by the fact that many children were already only being raised by one caregiver. One reason for this situation was the expectation of high *lobola* payments. Traditionally, *lobola* was a Zulu marriage engagement payment (a sort of bridewealth) from the man’s family to the woman’s family to “compensate the bride’s family for the transfer of her productive and reproductive labor power.” The groom’s father often helped pay the *lobola*, but if the groom could not provide it, he could “offer a symbolic payment of stones, with the agreement that the cattle paid for the marriage of the groom’s first daughter would belong to the father-in-law.” After 1846, however, Natal colonizers introduced a

---

26 Posel and Rudwick, “Marriage and Bridewealth,” 54.
property tax called the ‘Hut Tax,’ and young men were forced into migrant labor to help pay for their father’s homestead.\textsuperscript{27} Not only did this cause a mass migration of young men away from their homes, but their poverty became so extreme that some fathers began to expect increased \textit{lobola} prices from expectant grooms as a last resort to break out of poverty.\textsuperscript{28} In the early 1800s, a commoner’s daughter, for example, was worth no more than five cattle, but by late 1860s a groom could expect to pay fifty or more cattle, making marriage “an unattainable goal for many young Zulu men,” and a dangerous trade for the daughters who were sometimes married to bring their family more wealth.\textsuperscript{29}

In 1869 in the colony of Natal, Theophilus Shepstone, Diplomatic Agent to the Native Tribes of South Africa and the colony’s first Secretary for Native Affairs, put a regulation on the Zulu marriage customs under Law 1. The regulation was a restriction on the practice of \textit{lobola}, fixing it at: “ten head of cattle for commoners’ daughter, fifteen head for brothers and sons of hereditary chiefs, twenty head for appointed chiefs, with no limit for hereditary chiefs.”\textsuperscript{30} Because \textit{lobola} was reduced, young men were no longer dependent on their elders to help them pay it and they became expected to pay for \textit{lobola} on their own.\textsuperscript{31} During the following century, as urbanization and cash-dependent communities became more prominent, these \textit{lobola} payments also transitioned from cattle to cash.

Migrant labor was common after the 1846 Hut Tax and African men during the Apartheid era were “pulled and pushed into mining and other industrial employment.”\textsuperscript{32} Men were housed in single-sex hostels and were thus unable to live with family or partners. Families and

\textsuperscript{27} Posel and Rudwick, “Marriage and Bridewealth,” 54.
\textsuperscript{28} Posel and Rudwick, “Marriage and Bridewealth,” 55.
\textsuperscript{29} Posel and Rudwick, “Marriage and Bridewealth,” 55.
\textsuperscript{30} Martens, “‘Civilised domesticity,’ Race and European,” 343.
\textsuperscript{31} Sheik, “African Marriage Regulation,” 82.
\textsuperscript{32} Posel and Rudwick, “Marriage and Bridewealth,” 54.
relationships were split apart and marriage rates declined as couples could not even find basic urban accommodations for themselves.\textsuperscript{33} Even in the first decade following the end of Apartheid, unemployment rates rose from 36.3\% in 1995 to 49.5\% by 2003.\textsuperscript{34} Unemployment rates continued to be especially high in rural areas; for example, the Umzumbe Municipality of KwaZulu-Natal had a 51.9\% unemployment rate as of 2011.\textsuperscript{35} High unemployment rates, especially in rural areas often accompany rural to urban migration of young men seeking jobs that allow them to pay lobola or to support their families and/or children. Because of the combined structural inequality of poverty and high respect for this marriage custom, men were once again forced out of the family picture, depriving their children of a second source of parental support, which is especially important if the other parent dies.

In the twenty-first century, though the price of lobola has stayed relatively fixed at eleven cows, “ten cows (and one for the bride’s mother),”\textsuperscript{36} the price of a cow has dramatically increased to be equivalent to about 7800 Rand (about 559 USD).\textsuperscript{37} In February of 2015, Mail & Guardian released a figure from StatsSA indicating that over 27 million people, about 54\% of South Africa’s population lives below the poverty line which is at most R25.50 a day.\textsuperscript{38} Those in the rural areas, especially, are living under this poverty line. How is a man who is already sharing his yearly salary of R9,320.25 to support his family’s household supposed to pay a lobola of R85,800?

\textsuperscript{33} Posel and Rudwick, “Marriage and Bridewealth,” 54.
\textsuperscript{34} Posel and Rudwick, “Marriage and Bridewealth,” 56.
\textsuperscript{36} Posel and Rudwick, “Marriage and Bridewealth,” 65.
Herein lies the problem. In a study performed by Posel and Rudwick, they discussed marriage rates and the custom of *lobola* with Zulu adults. Although over the decades many factors such as urbanization, a cash-based economy, and migrant labor have had a significant impact on Zulu relationships, their findings show that, despite expressing a strong desire to marry, marriage rates were rather low because the price of *lobola* is so high.\(^{39}\) The tradition is still highly revered and respected and the majority of informants said “marrying without the payment of ilobolo would not be possible or desirable.”\(^{40}\) In this study, men “indicated that they did not feel financially ready to get married” especially since the ability to pay *lobola* has also been strongly tied to a Zulu man’s sense of masculinity.\(^{41}\) Not only is it a problem that couples are unable to culturally declare their love for one another, but in Zulu culture, a woman can only become a member of the man’s family, move out of her mother’s home, and have her children associated with her husband’s lineage when this price is paid and the marriage ceremony can happen. Thus, if a child is born out of wedlock or without *lobola* being paid, a father may not have rights or access to his child even if he wishes to be part of the family. In some cases, “unmarried men are able to claim rights to the children through the payment of ‘damages’ to the mother’s family;” however, he still forfeits the rights to live with the mother and children until *lobola* is paid.\(^{42}\) Some fathers may even find this option of paying ‘damages,’ or *inho lawulo*, more financially feasible because it is significantly cheaper than paying *lobola*.\(^{43}\) Because fathers are financially struggling to pay this marriage fee, they are often excluded from the child rearing process and the children are raised in a single-parent environment. This not only removes a

\(^{39}\) Posel and Rudwick, “Marriage and Bridewealth,” 66.
\(^{40}\) Posel and Rudwick, “Marriage and Bridewealth,” 67.
\(^{41}\) Posel and Rudwick, “Marriage and Bridewealth,” 66.
\(^{42}\) Posel and Rudwick, “Marriage and Bridewealth,” 68.
\(^{43}\) Posel and Rudwick, “Marriage and Bridewealth,” 56.
potentially very important mentor from a child’s life, but it also weakens the family’s financial status. An unstable financial situation can lead to a stressful home environment, which can then result in a child feeling vulnerable and insecure.

*Negative Effects of the OVC Crisis*

Communities are now facing huge challenges due to this mass orphan and vulnerable children crisis. According to Subbarao and Coury, authors of *Reaching Out to Africa’s Orphans*, an ‘orphan’ is defined as "a child under the age of 18 years (or 15 years) whose mother (maternal orphan) or father (paternal orphan) or both (double orphan) are dead," and a “vulnerable child” is one “whose safety, well-being, and development are, for various reasons, threatened” often as a result of “lack of care and affection, adequate shelter, education, nutrition, and psychological support.”44 Especially in the case of children who have lost one or both parents due to illnesses such as AIDS, their early exposure to life’s extreme uncertainty can have life-long impacts on the way they interact with the world around them. The child’s basic needs for “love, trust, security, and parenting are threatened” as the “general trajectory involves the arrival of new stressors, lack of predictability, and inadequate and dwindling resources.”45 Children have incredible resilience and coping skills, but losing a parent and living in a stressful environment has been proven to adversely affect a child’s mental health, weaken their “brain architecture,” and inhibit their ability to learn.46 Studies performed in the 1960s and 1980s, respectively,

---

showed that children who have lost a parent have “twice the rate of psychiatric disorder” and show “more symptoms of depression, anxiety, and withdrawal.”\textsuperscript{47} Not only do these children present with mental health illnesses, but psychiatrist Karl Menninger also postulates that a child may learn to distrust all potential caregivers and adults:

> When caretakers fail to meet a child's most basic needs, the child learns that they are unpredictable or unreliable... Those more seriously damaged become 'relationship-resistant,' viewing even friendly, helpful adults with deep distrust. Expecting rejection, they employ protective behaviors learned in prior encounters with threatening persons.\textsuperscript{48}

As this situation persists, a child’s self-esteem dramatically decreases as they are unable to form lasting relationships with mentors or other caregivers. In a downward spiral, a child’s distrust may evolve into a strong sense of not belonging, resulting in disobedience against authority figures and authority systems, which ultimately push the child to the outskirts of society where they are left once again to fend for themselves.

Despite the need for national government competence and support in this issue, local communities are best-fitted to respond to this crisis. Not only does the community understand the history of the affected family and the resources available to assist the children, but communities can implement “general development schemes” that lessen the burden of a caregiver by improving access to basic needs and services.\textsuperscript{49} These ‘development schemes,’ however, reside under local government jurisdiction which, as I have previously discussed, lacked authoritative clarity for a decade, and remain today ill-equipped to handle any development strategies.

\textsuperscript{49} Needs and services such as access to water and fuel-efficient stoves. Subbarao and Coury, Reaching Out to Africa's Orphans, 57.
Sustainable Development

By inadequately implementing development schemes in rural areas and placing inappropriate foci on urbanization, the South African government left communities incompetently prepared to cope with issues such as food insecurity, education, poverty, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and the growing orphan crisis. These communities desperately needed long-term solutions that would address their challenges. In short, they needed a sustainable, community-supported development scheme.

Defining ‘Sustainable Development’

‘Sustainable development’ is a popular term in modern-day development discourse, but its history dates back to the mid-twentieth century. Following the end of World War II, people all around the world began to have a strong interest in four key areas: “peace, freedom, development, and environment.” About twenty years later, at the 1972 Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment, development and environment were juxtaposed together. The connection between these two ideas was furthered at the 1980 World Conservation Strategy of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature where conservation was defined as a way to “assist development and specifically for the sustainable development and utilization of species, ecosystem, and resources.” The main turning point in the history of the concept of ‘sustainable development,’ came in 1987 when the Brundtland Commission, as a result of the 1982 World Commission on Environment and Development initiated by the General Assembly.

of the United Nations, published its report *Our Common Future*. In this report, the Brundtland Commission defined “sustainable development” as the “ability to… ensure … the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This definition was based off of the committee’s chairman, the Prime Minister of Norway Gro Harlem Brundtland, who critiqued the ideas that the environment was somehow an isolated concept from human actors and that development should have a narrow focus on poor nations only. He stated that “the ‘environment’ is where we live; and ‘development’ is what we all do in attempting to improve our lot within that abode. The two are inseparable.” The official joining of these two concepts was the first step in the path to promoting sustainable development programs that had both an eco-conscious-focus and a human-focus.

Following the release of the Brundtland Commission report, the United Nations had a conference in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro on Environment and Development, otherwise known as the ‘Earth Summit.’ In this conference, members detailed and issued Agenda 21 which listed “desired actions, international agreements on climate change and biodiversity, and a statement of principles on forests.” Once again, in 2002 at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, committees reaffirmed their commitment to sustainable development by defining the “three pillars of sustainable development: economic, social, and environmental… at local, national, regional and global levels.” With the continued global support, this relatively new approach to understanding development caught more traction among international organizations and policy makers.

---

Sustainable development, though a widely accepted development scheme, remains a very broadly defined concept. In a chart developed by the Board on Sustainable Development in the Policy Division of the U.S. National Research Council, the concept has been divided into three main areas: (1) What is to be sustained? (2) For how long? and (3) What is to be developed?\(^5^8\) The three main areas of what is to be sustained includes nature, life support, and community. “For how long?” lists three main time categories: 25 years, “now and in the future,” and forever.\(^5^9\) Finally, the last column focuses on the things that need to be developed: people, economy, and society.\(^6^0\) Each subcategories lists three to five sub-subcategories to further define or give examples of what a sustainable development organization should be achieving. No final end goal is stated; rather, the chart and definitions seem to point back to Brundtland’s idea of collective improvement of the place where a person resides while respecting the available resources and environment.

*Community-Based Organizations*

Those suited to perform these improvements are those who know their ‘lot’ the best: the local community. Community-based organizations (CBOs) are essential, not only because of their wealth of local knowledge, but because they usually do not have specific timeframes in which they must work and they have the ability to gather local input.\(^6^1\) They often do not employ professional staff and instead use volunteers which is both cost-effective and encourages commitment from individuals who have a genuine interest in the organization.\(^6^2\) CBOs also

\(^{58}\) Kates, Parris, and Leiserowitz, “What is Sustainable Development,” 11. See Appendix E.
\(^{60}\) Kates, Parris, and Leiserowitz, “What is Sustainable Development,” 11.
\(^{62}\) Opare, “Strengthening Community-Based Organizations,” 253.
typically have their headquarters in the community and operate without formal or well-marked offices.\textsuperscript{63} In terms of rural development, CBOs have been recognized as “essential ingredients” for “promoting community empowerment.”\textsuperscript{64} Warren Nyamugasira, Director of the Advocacy Centre for Strategic Change in Uganda, in reference to CBOs in Uganda, notes that they are “making substantial contribution in forging community solidarity, uplifting the human spirit, promoting togetherness, and helping to combat the feelings of helplessness that poverty can induce.”\textsuperscript{65} CBOs are also highly effective in monitoring the status of orphans and vulnerable children in their community and they are well equipped to identify which children require the most attention.\textsuperscript{66} They are an excellent method of engaging a community in a collective effort to make improvements to their living situation; however, they are not without their downfalls.

While CBOs are often better than NGOs at being able to incorporate local input, especially in rural areas where people are “preoccupied by the struggle for survival,” CBOs have limited time to invest in voluntary organizations that look at long-term goals.\textsuperscript{67} The voices, therefore, of the poorest of the poor who need the development the most are often hardest to hear because those people do not have the time and means to become involved. Nyamugasira goes even as far to say that “CBOs are too small and localised to have an impact on poverty reduction, let alone on its elimination.”\textsuperscript{68} Additionally, CBOs often lack proper funding and their members are not well-equipped with leadership skills because this extra training could upset the power dynamics between these members and regular community members.\textsuperscript{69}

\textsuperscript{63} Opare, “Strengthening Community-Based Organizations,” 253-254.
\textsuperscript{64} Opare, “Strengthening Community-Based Organizations,” 252.
\textsuperscript{66} Subbarao and Coury, Reaching Out to Africa’s Orphans, 87.
\textsuperscript{67} Nyamugasira, “NGOs and Advocacy,” 11.
\textsuperscript{68} Nyamugasira, “NGOs and Advocacy,” 11.
\textsuperscript{69} Opare, “Strengthening Community-Based Organizations,” 257-258.
The importance of community involvement and input cannot be overstated, but it is also clear that those responsible for change must have dedicated staff, a financially stable backing, and long-term goals and plans to properly approach sustainable development in rural areas.

One NGO’s Approach

Thanda, a sustainable development NGO working with rural communities in the Umtwalume area of the South Coast in KwaZulu-Natal, has tried to merge the most essential characteristics of an intermediary NGO and a community-based organization to create an impactful development strategy. Intermediary NGOs are supposed to assist community groups by providing “appropriate technical and financial support” so that community groups can implement the interventions that they believe will be most effective to improving their community. Since its founding in 2008, Thanda is a hybrid of the two types of organizations. Thanda is an NGO that is influencing local sustainable development through the medium of local community members but also with the benefit of international funding and resources to invest in the local community.

In 2005, Angela Larkan, the founder and now executive director of Thanda, wrote her senior undergraduate thesis about the emerging orphan crisis due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic. She was originally born in South Africa but during her childhood, her family moved to the United States, then to England, and she chose to return to the United States for college. In 2003, before writing her senior thesis, she went to KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), South Africa to conduct research about the care methods available for these orphans and vulnerable children. KZN today is home to over one-third of South Africa’s orphans. After conducting in-depth research,

---

70 Subbarao and Coury, *Reaching Out to Africa’s Orphans*, 87.
Lankan proposed a new method of care for these orphans and vulnerable children that involved afterschool programming at its center, a method of care she had not found anywhere in her research.

Her model of afterschool programming became the basis of Thanda, which she would found in 2008. Before the Thanda Community Centre and Art Centre were built, Thanda’s programming happened only in the pre-existing infrastructure of school buildings, which had no other purpose at the end of the school day. Thanda continues to use school buildings after classes are finished in five of the further schools that they reach, but they also now have a 100% green Community Centre building that serves the children at a school that is within easy walking distance.\(^{72}\) Their programs are free and open to all learners, not just the orphans and vulnerable children. Additionally, Thanda has a feeding scheme that provides all afterschool learners with one nutritious meal a day.

Unlike a typical South African school experience, Thanda’s curriculum places more emphasis on the development of the child into a good person and places less emphasis on their ability to recall facts and figures. Their curriculum has four main foci that improve the learners’ abilities to succeed in various school subjects, but mostly aims to increase their self-esteem, critical thinking skills, and to help them see their potential to be active citizens in their communities: Education, Creative Me, Sustainable Communities, and Confident Me.\(^{73}\) In 2014, Thanda saw a 45% improvement in literacy rates, 116% improvement in science skills, and 38% improvement in library skills.\(^{74}\) Another testament to the impact Thanda is making is in regard to

---

\(^{72}\) Their Community Centre is powered entirely by wind and solar energy. They also conserve rainwater in water tanks and convert waste to gas with a biodigester that powers their kitchen.  
\(^{74}\) *Thanda Annual Report: 2014*, 3. See Appendix G.
their HIV prevention program: 87% of their youth have an “accurate knowledge of HIV prevention” compared to the national statistic of a mere 27% of South African youth.\textsuperscript{75} Teenage pregnancy is also a shocking five times lower among their learners than the learners in the local high school who do not attend Thanda.\textsuperscript{76}

In the past couple of years, Thanda has also been busy adding other programs to continue addressing the challenges faced by children in the area. For example, to address food insecurity, Thanda started an agriculture training and mentorship program that emphasizes organic farming and provides prospective farmers with practical, hands-on education about how to have successful small-scale farms. Another new development is Thanda’s Early Childhood Development program that tries to reach vulnerable children as early as possible and provide the care and attention they need to develop properly.

A benefit of their involvement as an NGO is that they receive funds from South Africa grants, and from private donors in the U.K., U.S., and South Africa to support their efforts.\textsuperscript{77} They also have the benefit of coordinating with other NGOs and international organizations to garner support and constructive criticism of their method and intervention programs. Because they have been working in this community for eight years and seek local feedback, their approach is very community-oriented. All of their education facilitators, the staff who work directly with the children after school, are members from the community which means that not only is Thanda providing jobs for the local community, but they are also providing these children with local mentors who encourage positive relationships and support. Especially for the children who come from very unstable homes or homes headed by caregivers that are not invested in the

\textsuperscript{76} Thanda, “Our Impact.”
\textsuperscript{77} Thanda Annual Report: 2014, 4.
development of the children, having local mentors can begin to fill the emotional and social
development gaps in the child’s upbringing.

Thanda’s method seems to effectively integrate the benefits of a community-based
organization into their NGO approach and so far their impact reports show very positive results.
Larkan and her administrative team continue to develop interventions that have been proven to
support the development of children, especially those who have been orphaned or are otherwise
vulnerable.

Thanda Fills Those Gaps

Thanda’s programs seek to fill the gaps that caregivers are unable to provide. The three
main interventions discussed in this paper include food security, early childhood development,
and their afterschool programming. To understand what the learners are gaining from the
afterschool programming, I have broken that section down into three main components which
highlight the skills taught in each component: self-esteem building, hands-on experiential
learning, and creative arts education.

Food Security

In the KwaZulu-Natal province, 80% of households face food insecurity. The land is
incredibly fertile and the weather allows all-year faming, but over the years men, many of whom
were farmers, have been forced from their homes to become migrant laborers, supporting their
homesteads from afar. As the men vacate the rural areas, local knowledge about how to farm the
land has dwindled. Additionally, as genetically modified crops, chemical fertilizers, and other

---

78 Thanda, “The World We Live In.”
pesticide-controlling sprays have become more prevalent in the recent decades, farmers have forgotten how to farm using organic and sustainable methods. In KZN, 75% of children live in households below the poverty line and this massive food insecurity has an extremely negative impact not only on their sense of stability in the home, but also on their ability to properly develop.\textsuperscript{79}

Thanda recognized how the food insecurity was affecting their learners and realized that simply feeding them would not address the root of the problem. Thus, they initiated the Agriculture Development program to teach farmers about sustainable, organic farming that can produce high yields with positive long-term results for the environment. They have formal workshops and training programs with farmers, but they also encourage their learners to invest in home gardens and now 95\% of their high school learners have started their own gardens.\textsuperscript{80} Thanda also guarantees that the farmers will have a market by offering to buy the crops directly from the farmers, either by reselling them to retailers and to other rural communities that have less fertile soil, or using the produce in their feeding scheme.

At every afterschool session, each learner receives one meal. Annually, Thanda serves an average of 85,000 meals to these learners.\textsuperscript{81} Thanda’s feeding scheme has been an integral part of their approach since the beginning because proper nutrition is essential for a child’s physical and mental development. UNICEF reports, “Poor nutrition prevents children from reaching their full cognitive and behavioural potential, impacting success in school and lifetime learning,” whereas “[s]tudents participating in school feeding and take-home ration programmes have

\textsuperscript{79} Thanda, “The World We Live In.”
\textsuperscript{80} Thanda, “Our Impact.”
\textsuperscript{81} Thanda, “Our Impact.”
improved cognition, school achievement, and participation rates.” The majority of growth failure occurs in children between 6 months and 24 months of age, which can result in iodine deficiency, anemia, and chronic malnutrition. The earlier nutrition problems can be addressed, the more the effects can be reduced and less damage will be done to the child’s cognitive and physical well-being.

Thanda is trying to find a sustainable solution to food insecurity in the affected communities through the promotion of both a long-term organic farming solution and a short-term feeding scheme solution. However, it will be a number of years before the communities will see the lasting effects of their farming and gardening efforts and food insecurity will become a problem of the past. In the meantime, assuring Thanda learners that every time they come to Thanda they will receive a nutritious meal is a very simple way to provide a source of consistency, earn trust, and add stability to a vulnerable child’s life.

*Early Childhood Development*

Early Childhood Development (ECD) programs are not only extremely effective in teaching learners the skills they need to be successful in a school environment, but they can also result in future success in the workplace and community. Especially for orphans and vulnerable children who have experienced or who are experiencing stressful home environments, ECD can be a powerful tool in reversing the adverse effects of those environments. Harvard University’s Center on the Developing Child states, “Scientists now know that chronic, unrelenting stress

---

[and the accompanying release of high levels of cortisol] in early childhood, perhaps caused by extreme poverty, neglect, repeated abuse, or severe maternal depression, for example, can be toxic to the developing brain” resulting in “weaker brain architecture.” 86 Young children, though, who receive “supportive, responsive relationships… can prevent or reverse the damaging effects of toxic stress” and avoid the adverse cognitive effects of toxic cortisol levels on the brain. 87 These relationships are essential and influential because they provide the child with “consistent, nurturing, and protective interactions with adults that… promote well-regulated stress response systems.” 88 Thus, early positive interactions not only help children to heal and recover from the experiences that have made them feel stressed and vulnerable, but they also help the child develop a more moderate, less toxic response to future stressful situations, building their capacity for resilience. Additionally, providing care and support to children early can have incredibly positive effects on their well-being later, whereas trying to address those same issues when they are older can be challenging if not impossible. 89

Although, ECD is Thanda’s newest program and they have yet to document its long-term effects on the children, there is a plethora of literature describing all of the positive impacts of providing children with ECD experiences. This intervention strategy will likely take years for Thanda to evaluate the full impact; however, it has the potential to be an important factor in the creation of safe, trusting communities where members feel a sense of belonging.

86 Core Concepts in the Science of Early Childhood Development (Brief).
Afterschool Programming

Thanda’s longest-running intervention program is its afterschool programming that serves over 550 learners with a curriculum that prioritizes building self-esteem. Through its hands-on experiential learning and creative arts programs, learners also improve their critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Self-Esteem Building

All of Thanda’s afterschool facilitators are members of the local community. While this provides jobs to the community members in an area with a 51.9% unemployment rate, these facilitators are first and foremost there to support the children and act as role models. Children need positive mentors who they can connect with and aspire to be like. Teachers in school should be filling this role if the parents or other caregivers are not; however, “[r]esearch shows that at each progressive level of the education system, relationships increasingly lack meaning and personal satisfaction. Not surprisingly, students at greatest risk of dropping out of school are those who have never been friends with any teacher.” The Thanda facilitators fill this gap in a child’s development by acting as teachers, mentors, confidants, and friends. They encourage their learners to speak openly, talk to them if something is wrong, and also to have fun together. The learners have respect for their mentors and desire to engage with them and form meaningful relationships. These relationships foster the emotional development of children and can be a strong force in helping children overcome past or current trauma and stressful environments.

Providing a child with a stable figure who they trust and know they can go to for help or support

---

90 “Umzumbe,” Statistics South Africa.
91 Brendtro, Brokenleg, and Van Bockern, Reclaiming Youth at Risk, 13.
will have beneficial long-term effects on their emotional, social, mental, and self-esteem
development.

Additionally, all of the activities that learners do with these facilitators focus in some way
on improving the child’s self-esteem. Activities may include performances, public speaking,
creating with arts, and other problem solving activities. Every encounter between the learner and
facilitator is one of empowerment and encouragement, not of punishment or degradation. One of
the most important tools Thanda can equip a child with is the belief in the self: the belief that
their ideas are important and should be heard, that they deserve just as much respect as the next
person, that they are worth all the opportunities this life has to offer them.

*Hands-On Experiential Learning*

Another fundamental aspect of Thanda’s curriculum is the hands-on experiential
learning. Hands-on learning allows a “direct experiential encounter… [that] requires active
engagement of the student as opposed to passive engagement commonly associated with teacher
directed instruction.” 92 The leaders of Thanda’s activities are ‘facilitators’ rather than ‘teachers.’
They are there to encourage learning and knowledge instead of simply ‘delivering’ it. 93
Interactive learning is not necessarily the most effective learning strategy for all learners;
however, Flowers and Osborne found that learners often have a preference for the “problem
solving approach” over the subject-matter approach because, although “achievement did not vary
based on teaching approach,” learners who engaged with the more interactive problem solving

---

approach were able to “retain information better.” Clark, Threeton, and Ewing argue that learning from hands-on experiences, like interactive laboratory and agriculture exercises, should be treated as part of the entire learning experience and that it is just as important as practical application and reflection. Hands-on learning is an integral part of the cycle and cannot be ignored in the learning process. Most importantly, because of their inherently interactive quality, hands-on experiences cause learners to fully engage with and become passionate about their learning, which increases their knowledge retention, thus boosting their confidence in their skills, and ultimately learners become excited about knowledge acquisition, critical thinking, and problem solving.

**Creative Arts**

At the beginning of 2015, Thanda officially opened their Arts Centre which sits directly across from the Community Centre. The Art Centre will mostly be used by youth and learners who live within walking distance to the centers, but its presence has spilled over into the rest of Thanda’s activities and programs. Due to all the beneficial effects art can have on a child’s self-esteem, critical thinking and problem solving skills, physical development, and emotional development, Thanda is in the process of adjusting its 2016 curriculum to put more emphasis on artistic activities.

Art is unique in that it “engages the learner wholly – intellectually, socially, emotionally, and physically,” and provides an environment for “active engagement in learning that unites mind and body, emotion and intellect, object and subject.” Art engages the whole being and

---

develops a learner’s “self-confidence, social skills, and metacognition,” three areas on which Thanda already puts a huge emphasis. Additionally, Ellen Dissanayake suggests art makes the ordinary special. For vulnerable children who have faced great adversity in their lives to be able to see beauty in an ordinary or even seemingly ugly world around them shows us that art may be able to build resilience, promote optimism, and encourage learners to find and take advantage of potential opportunities.

The arts are also being increasingly associated with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) for its promotion of critical thinking and problem solving skills. The acronym STEM was widely publicized and promoted in the United States (and soon after in China and South Korea) to endorse the studying of these fields, but relatively recently STEM has shifted to STEAM to incorporate the importance of arts in innovation. Early creative expression in the arts is thought to foster “out-of-the-box thinking,” which is exactly the type of thinking these children will need to lift themselves out of poverty, or at the very least, make a better life for themselves and their community around Umtwalume.

Art is a holistic activity that reaches different levels of thinking than a typical lecture class and may be the key to unlocking the potential of the learners with which Thanda is engaging. Creative arts is a new program to these communities and it will be interesting to follow the impact of the Arts Centre and the new curriculum on the development of Umtwalume.

http://www.etfo.ca/Resources/ForTeachers/Documents/Arts%20Education%20for%20the%20Development%20of%20the%20Whole%20Child.pdf.
Conclusion

The South African government inherited a system wrought with problems entrenched from both the colonial and apartheid regimes. Due to disorganization and the immense scale of these problems, the government has had a limited response, especially in regards to the development of rural areas and the HIV/AIDS epidemic. As a result, rural communities like those in Umtwalume in KwaZulu-Natal still face tremendous issues including food insecurity, poverty, unemployment, poor healthcare, and poor education. Additionally, mostly due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, South Africa is home to over 1.9 million orphans and vulnerable children, one-third of whom live in KZN. These children are the future of South Africa and require proper support, care, and love to develop into productive, active South African and global citizens. They could be the change-makers of South Africa, but they need the current generation of adults to help them grow and realize their potential instead of pushing them off to the side. As Mamphela Ramphele states in her book Conversations with My Sons and Daughters, “investments in nurturing and promoting the capabilities of the next generation are in the enlightened self-interest of all of society and social stability and sustainable prosperity are not possible without them.”

To help uplift these rural communities, Thanda is using a new approach in sustainable development that started with afterschool programming. It has since expanded to also incorporate a feeding scheme, agriculture training, early childhood development, and an arts center to holistically address the challenges faced by the communities with which they engage. Thanda’s approach so far seems to be very effective, but no available literature has determined what makes Thanda’s model so impactful. My research seeks to investigate that answer, understanding what it is about these interventions that makes them so effective. In the process, I

will also be able to evaluate whether Thanda’s approach could also be expanded to other communities that face the same or similar challenges.
Methodology

Before arriving on site at Thanda, I tried to read as much material about the community challenges and about what Thanda is doing to meet those challenges. This included reading annual reports, blog posts, brochures, and news articles. At the site, however, my research was much more hands-on. Not only did I conduct interviews with key managerial members, but I also spoke with a number of community staff members who work directly with the learners. Finally, I participated while observing afterschool sessions and experienced what a day looks like through the eyes of a facilitator.

I spent my first day at Thanda in their administrative office talking to the Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, the Bookkeeper, and the Executive Director. Each of these interviews had a semi-structured question format in which the questions varied depending on the flow of the conversation, but each informant was asked questions relating to (1) their role and experience at Thanda, (2) Thanda’s objectives and impact, and (3) the definitions of ‘development’ and ‘sustainable.’ These interviews were individual and easy to perform because we were in a quiet office environment, voice recording was an appropriate option, and each staff member, though busy, seemed easily able to make the time to talk with me for about 40 minutes. Unfortunately, I did not have enough time to interview the woman in charge of marketing and I had planned to return later that week, but spending the remainder of my time at the Thanda site seemed more informative and was logistically easier.

My next three days with Thanda were spent at the site interviewing, holding a focus group, and doing participant observation. Again, all informants were asked questions around the same three categories previously listed; however, I tended to ask fewer questions so that the interviews could move faster and take less of their time. Taking time away from the facilitators
and managers was one of the largest ethical problems I faced while doing my research because, on the one hand, I wanted to get the chance to speak in depth with as many people as possible for 30-40 minutes, especially the managerial staff, but on the other hand, I felt it was unethical to take their time away from their lesson preparations because that would impact their ability to work with the kids later that afternoon and later that week. Of course, I always asked whether they had the time to speak with me, but I was not always sure if they said ‘yes’ to be polite or if they actually had free time. Therefore, I tended to seek those staff members who looked less busy, which did not always allow me to speak with the breadth of people with whom I would have liked to speak. Additionally, because I was holding impromptu interviews, we were often in environments too loud (e.g., the Thanda library) or too informal (e.g., car rides, after the afterschool class) for it to be appropriate for me to use a voice recorder, which in some regards is a weakness in my research.

That being said, at the site I interviewed the Art Director, a primary school facilitator, and a high school facilitator; held a focus group with three high school facilitators; attended two afterschool sessions with the aforementioned primary school facilitator; observed an art class training session with the Art Director and facilitators; ate the meals served to the staff and learners by the kitchen staff; observed an agriculture training class; and sat in on meetings with the Program Director and facilitators. Much of my research was impromptu and informal, and I often spoke with individuals as they were working on other tasks that needed to be done, like organizing supplies for the art class or photocopying worksheets. The focus group I held was an effort to talk to as many facilitators as possible in the limited time I was allotted in the mornings before they went off to their respective classrooms around 1PM.
Although I wish I had been able to voice record all of my interactions, I think my choice to handwrite notes during and after these informal conversations and interviews instead was often the more appropriate choice and while I cannot provide exact transcripts of these conversations, I was able to capture enough detail from each conversation for my research to not be in question. My choice to let the interactions flow more informally allowed me to build a stronger rapport with the staff, which is an equally important part to obtaining accurate research.

In terms of my participation in meetings, afterschool programs, classes, and meals, I am sure my presence as an observer may have caught those involved off-guard at first; however, each encounter was long enough that all those involved seemed to settle in and ignore my presence or treat me as part of the regular scene. For example, Tyler had just hired a new high school facilitator the week of my visit and he invited me to sit in on the two introductory meetings he had with her over the course of two days. Although, I believe she was hesitant about (and probably did not fully understand) my presence because I did not have time to explain in detail why I was there other than the brief introduction Tyler had given about me, she seemed to relax and was able to easily engage in the conversations with Tyler. To a lesser extent, this also happened when I sat in on a meeting Tyler had with all of the high school facilitators to discuss the film they had just watched (Frozen).

The only exception to my participatory observation not blending in well was in the afterschool class setting. I helped Janet, the primary school facilitator for the Grade R and 1 class, serve meals to the learners and, especially on the second day when the learners were practicing counting by rolling a die then taking out that many plastic animals from a basket, I helped with the activities. The learners, however, clearly recognized me as a foreigner both because of my white skin and the fact that I speak very minimal Zulu, and on that first day they
treated me with very formal respect. Although I would have liked to observe a classroom of older learners, my choice to return to that same class the second time instead of attending another class allowed me to interact more with the learners and they began treating me more as a part of their classroom and less as a stranger to their environment.
Limitations

Although I tried to avoid shortcomings in my research, this project is not without its limitations. The most poignant limitation was the fact that I was only able to be at the Thanda site for four days, including one day at the Thanda administrative office. I suppose it is the nature of any research project that one could always spend more time at the site; however, because this independent study period is only five weeks, serious time-constraints were placed on my ability to stay at Thanda for a very long period and conduct all the interviews that I would have liked. Additionally, limited funding, logistical challenges, and my dependency on other drivers to get me to and from the sites shortened my stay.

The time-restricted nature of my stay, though difficult, motivated me to make proper use of all the time I had with informants. Unfortunately, because my stay was so short, I was unable to set up proper interview times and I often sought staff members who seemed less busy as to not interrupt the flow of their work. For example, I would have like to talk with the Manager of Education Programs; however, his week was extremely busy and it felt unethical to ask for his time when he was clearly busy attending to important managerial responsibilities. Additionally, because the timing of my interviews were often impromptu, I was unable to pull informants away from the noisy setting to properly voice record our conversations in an quiet environment so that I could transcribe the conversation later. Along those same lines, I gathered some of my conversations from more informal settings like the car rides during which time I feel that it would have been inappropriate to voice record. I took copious notes to try to compensate for the lack of interview transcripts; however, I also realize the limitations of my notes and recognize the important data that could have been captured had I recorded every encounter.
A third limitation is that I only talked to Thanda staff, people employed by Thanda. If I had had more time, I would have liked to organize focus groups with community members, parents, or other people who may have opinions about why Thanda has been so impactful and what part of Thanda has been most central to its impact in the community. Thus, not only are the responses of the informants swayed towards a positive outlook of Thanda, but I also acknowledge that I have a positive bias towards the work Thanda is doing. I have tried as best as I can to critically examine Thanda’s work, but, of course, that is much harder when I am only collecting information from those who work for Thanda.

Limitations create areas of future improvement and I am sure that were I to do research with Thanda again that I would spend more time at the site so that I would be able to maximize the number and variety of people with whom I was able to talk. Additionally, having more time would have allowed me to set up a proper interview schedule so that I could better organize with who I would be able to talk and also so that I could ensure voice recording the conversation would be a viable option.
Data Analysis

The following is an overview of the many conversations, interactions, and meetings I had while at Thanda. I will start by outlining the community-reported specific problems and opportunities. Afterwards I will describe the different interpretations of what a ‘developed’ community could one day look like to illustrate what the interventions or modes of impact are perhaps moving towards. Before defining ‘impact’ and narrowing in on what I argue to be the most impactful part of Thanda, I will briefly discuss other aspects of Thanda that are already or will have the potential to make a great deal of change. Finally, after thoroughly examining why the facilitators and their emphasis on the self-development of each learner is so impactful, I will speak to some of the challenges Thanda has been unable to address.

The Needs of the Community

In order to evaluate the impact Thanda has on the communities in the Umzumbe Municipality, one must understand the various challenges faced by these particular communities. Thanda’s five-year strategic planning meetings identify these needs by including community input in understanding the breadth and currency of each problem. Being able to target whether a problem is new, current, or old allows Thanda to implement the most effective method of addressing the issue. For example, if an issue, like poverty, is ‘old,’ meaning that it has been engrained in the community for a long time, Thanda cannot simply promote interventions that say “don’t do…” or “beware of…” because those methods are better at addressing new or current issues like drugs and prostitution, rather than addressing the root problem that is causing poverty.102 Because one cannot say, “Don’t do poverty,” Thanda’s approach to address this

102 Angela Larkan, email message to Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
challenge is creatively focused on building self-esteem and critical thinking skills of the children to help them see opportunities to lift themselves out of poverty. Angela Larkan, Founder and Executive Director of Thanda, stated,

Our anti-poverty solution is probably going to have nothing to do with poverty. It’s going to have nothing to do with handing anything out… we’re not going to be handing out food, we’re not going to be handing out clothes, we’re not going to be doing anything related to poverty, we’re probably, cause we’re not trying to address these problems as problems, we’re trying to get to the root of the problem so we’re going to be doing things like… teaching art so that kids can think, you know, develop the creative side of their brains so they can solve problems. So when they do encounter a new problem in their future, they come up with a different solution so they don’t end up being poor.103

In addition to poverty, some of the other older issues brought up by community members at the July 2015 meeting are malnutrition, violence and domestic violence, poverty, child abuse, fragmented homes, lack of skills, poor quality schools, lack of recreational facilities and activities, unemployment, lack of awareness (health, law, careers), and teenage pregnancy.104 Current issues include generation gaps and the use of whoonga (drug).105 Prostitution and strangers taking children are listed among the newest of the problems.106

These meetings address not only what the community lacks or needs, but also make a point of listing what the community already has because, as Larkan expressed, “it’s important that people see the positives.”107 These positive attributes are listed as “opportunities” and include “old” topics like Ubuntu, “beautiful community,” low crime, bartering system, fertile land, free land, community pride, neighbors sharing and caring for each other, preserved culture, warm climate, herbal medicine knowledge, and no natural disasters.108 Current opportunities

---

103 Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
104 Angela Larkan, email message to Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
105 Angela Larkan, email message to Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
106 Angela Larkan, email message to Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
107 Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
108 Angela Larkan, email message to Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
include free education, good road system, entitlement, pit latrines, Thanda, and most have electricity and cell phones that provide access to information in emergency situations.\textsuperscript{109}

By examining both the positive and negative attributes of the community, Thanda aims to help the communities feel proud of what they have, and to acknowledge how they will need to work together to address the problems. Thanda does not have an interest in necessarily fixing these community problems or “waiting for the community to come to us with their issues;” rather, they focus on an approach that centers on the developing child, which helps prevent these problems from running a deeper course.\textsuperscript{110} Even Thanda’s seemingly short-term interventions, like the feeding scheme, are prevention-based and depend on a partnership between Thanda and the communities with which they work. By giving meals to learners, they are promoting mind-body nutrition which allows the children to properly develop and be able to gain more from their school and Thanda afterschool experiences. Their increased knowledge retention rates will create a greater long-term impact on their ability to problem solve and thinking critically about their world.

Thanda works to accurately identify challenges and opportunities with the communities with which they work by assessing the needs of the children. They place a strong emphasis on developing partnerships and trust with their communities by incorporating constant local input. With community support, Thanda promotes interventions that address the underlying causes of problems, while also continuously encouraging the opportunities that are available in the communities. Although Thanda has long term goals, as outlined in their “Theory of Change” diagram,\textsuperscript{111} Larkan stresses that they are “always staying really flexible and adapting to

\begin{small}
\footnotesize
\textsuperscript{109} Angela Larkan, email message to Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
\textsuperscript{110} Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
\textsuperscript{111} See Appendix F.
\end{small}
changes,” which is why their strategic planning meetings only look five years down the road.\textsuperscript{112} Thanda develops creative ways to address the challenges in communities; however, Thanda is not interested in defining an end goal for what the communities should look like.

**What Could be the End Goal?**

Although Thanda does not attempt to define exactly what the communities should look like, they do outline a final stage in their “Theory of Change” diagram. The diagram proposes that the final stage (which is really just the farthest stage noted in the progression as the diagram represents each stage, including the last, with arrows, suggesting that the Theory of Change will continue past this last noted stage) is “Rural communities are self-reliant, healthy places where people respect one another and live sustainably.”\textsuperscript{113} This stage remains broadly defined because Thanda wants to let progress and improvements occur in the way that best fits the community, rather than pre-determining what should be their way out of poverty. The one part that is certain is that the progress should be sustainable, or able to continue for many generations without harming any other entities.\textsuperscript{114}

Thanda considers itself a sustainable development NGO, and as I have discussed in the Literature Review, sustainable development is just as broadly defined by the United Nations as Thanda’s Theory of Change. That is not to say that broad is wrong; rather, the lack of a specific definition or projection leaves the communities with the power to determine their future.

\textsuperscript{112} Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
\textsuperscript{114} Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015. In accord with Janet Duma, interview by and in discussion with Emma Milford, November 5, 2015; and Nosipho, Musa Ntobela, and Xoliswa Maphumulo. Focus group discussion with Emma Milford. November 5, 2015.
In speaking with Thanda’s education facilitators who are from the communities, I learned a great deal about what they consider to be ‘development.’ Many informants listed tangible goals like better education, better healthcare and less disease, absence of poverty, clean water, good shelter, employment, good infrastructure, food security, and less crime as characteristics of what a ‘developed’ community looks like. But they had more to say than just listing these attributes about what this the final stage of a society should look like.

Janet Duma, a Grade R and 1 facilitator, defined ‘development’ as people “expand[ing] knowledge they already have,” in other words, a willingness to build upon and understand more about their world. Additionally, she imagined youth would be working towards their goals and taking positive risks and opportunities that could change their situations without the fear of society pressuring them into a pre-determined mold of what should and should not be. Essentially, she was speaking about youth having the self-esteem to choose a new path and break the traditional, usual path.

A high school facilitator, Joy Mkhwani, saw ‘development’ as more theoretical. He classified ‘development’ as a “gradual change to being better at something” or “better than what it was.” ‘Better,’ of course, is subjective and leaves ambiguous who is to determine what ‘better’ is. We discussed how ‘development’ is a ‘movement word,’ as in it never seems to stop or define an end – it simply notes a moment in the present, in the passage of time towards some unknown end.

On a unfortunately more realistic note, a focus group with three high school facilitators pointed out that in ‘developed’ places, communities are often selfish and greedy, “us[ing] more

---

115 Janet Duma, interview by and in discussion with Emma Milford, November 5, 2015.
116 Janet Duma, interview by and in discussion with Emma Milford, November 5, 2015.
117 Joy Mkhwani, interview by Emma Milford, November 5, 2015.
than they should have.”\textsuperscript{118} They also noted that ‘developed’ countries have huge wealth gaps.\textsuperscript{119} In highlighting these all-too-real characteristic of many so-called ‘developed’ societies, the facilitators suggested that even the language to describe a situation that is supposed to be improving is flawed and backward.

Though all of these definitions and characteristics of ‘development,’ have a great deal of merit, Larkan’s definition comprehensively encompasses all of the societal ideals while also pinpointing the individual ideal. To her, ‘development’ is “the absence of suffering.”\textsuperscript{120} It’s the ability to take advantage of opportunities or to have opportunities. So it’s just the ability to have freedom and choice in what you’re going to do… when we think about developing the community… we think about buildings, and we think about roads… [but] it’s really about… what’s going to make this a happy, cooperative, tolerant, peaceful community… obviously the absence of suffering makes people happy. After that, buildings don’t necessarily make people happy.\textsuperscript{121}

Of course, the absence of suffering necessitates food security, proper healthcare, good education, and many of the attributes the facilitators listed, but she put into words what this ambiguous, unknown ‘end to development’ should be, in her opinion. And it makes sense that all of the strategies, plans, and goals to ‘develop’ are just to relieve a little more suffering from this world. Why else would we want to change the way things are if we did not think that a happier life with less suffering could exist?

By referencing the abundance of opportunities, I do not believe Larkan was suggesting that opportunities do not already exist; rather, she was expanding upon the idea that in a place without suffering, a person has almost limitless chances to be able to do what they want.

\textsuperscript{118} Nosipho, Musa Ntobela, and Xoliswa Maphumulo. Focus group discussion with Emma Milford. November 5, 2015.
\textsuperscript{119} Nosipho, Musa Ntobela, and Xoliswa Maphumulo. Focus group discussion with Emma Milford. November 5, 2015.
\textsuperscript{120} Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
\textsuperscript{121} Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
Especially in rural areas like Umzumbe, unless a child has incredible aptitude and natural talent for a subject, the child has a very slim chance of ever leaving that community to become, for example, an engineer. In a conversation with Tyler Howard, Thanda’s Program Director, he told me that Thanda is not trying to create a utopia; rather, Thanda is providing these learners with an education that’s applicable to their situation by providing them with the skills and knowledge to survive, to farm, to live sustainably, to be productive members of their community, to live the best lives they possibly can in those communities.\(^\text{122}\) His reasoning recognized that there is almost no purpose of having a member in the community who is amazing at Calculus, but cannot relate to other people in the area or thinks that violence is the way to work out differences. Thanda’s priority is to equip their learners with the skills they need to live cooperatively and peacefully with each other.

Thanda recognizes the current limits of possibilities for the children in their communities, but one of Thanda’s main objectives is to open up as many opportunities as possible. Larkan stated, “We don’t tell them what to become or kind of have an outcome for them. It’s very much about giving them the skills to make their own decisions… We’re not going to force them to do anything, but the opportunity is there.”\(^\text{123}\) Thanda is providing their learners with the opportunity to learn how to seek future opportunities by thinking critically, problem solving, and being creative. In a sense, they are teaching the skill of resilience: how to, in the face of adversity, pull yourself back up and find a new way, perhaps even a better way, to carry on. Thanda is teaching their learners to seek change, to seek opportunities for self and community improvement, and to be that opportunity for growth. As Lucie Diemunsch, Thanda’s Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, stated, “Thanda’s goal is to… open people[‘s] mind[s] and change people and  

---

\(^\text{122}\) Tyler Howard, discussion with Emma Milford, November 3, 2015.  
\(^\text{123}\) Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
improve their quality of life... first through education then... to give them a chance... [to] make a living and be positive and be confident.”

Thanda’s Multi-Faceted Response

Thanda provides a range of interventions that serve the learners by creating opportunity. Opportunity for nutrition, a community centre full of resources, and early childhood education allow the children to “blossom.”

Thanda has undertaken both a long-term and a short-term response to the food insecurity problem by not only providing learners with one meal at every afterschool session which gives them the nutrition to properly develop their minds and bodies, but also by starting up an agriculture training and mentoring program. The land is “very fertile” and farmers have “great weather all year round,” and the farmers in the program are learning the basics of small-scale, sustainable, organic farming. Larkan predicts that it will be about five years before they start to see a real impact in food security because they are trying to “build an economy and change the way people look at agriculture,” not just teaching people the basics of how to farm. Once, however, sustainable farming that does not require the purchasing of chemical fertilizers and pestilent sprays is reintegrated back into the communities in the form of organic small-scale farms and homestead gardens, food security may begin to turn around. Not only will that mean that individuals and learners will be healthier, but a community that no longer needs to struggle to find or buy food can focus on other issues of importance to them. Although agriculture has the potential to cause massive change in the community, it is not currently the most impactful part of

124 Lucie Diemunsch, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
125 Lucie Diemunsch, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
126 Lucie Diemunsch, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
127 Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
Thanda. Additionally, even though food security is vital for survival and helps provide a sense of stability in a household, having a meal each day does not guarantee that a person is thinking more critically about how to make their world a better place. It is only one part of breaking the cycle of poverty.

Another part to Thanda’s approach is the resources that they provide to the learners. Thanda was founded originally with a “bare bones model” that was low cost and high impact. From the start, facilitators, who were local community members, used the classrooms after-hours in schools to work with the learners. Thanda still reaches over 500 of its leaners this way, but 30-60 leaners from the nearest school have access to Thanda’s beautiful Community and Art Centre with the only library (which has over 10,000 books) in the entire municipality. Thanda also has the only playground and they are about to have the only science lab in the community, and Larkan speculates, probably in the municipality. As impressive as these resources are, without the facilitators to supplement the resources with their lessons, the use of the resources would depend on the local school system which functions very poorly and would most likely not be able to use the resources appropriately. The resources, though they greatly enrich the work the facilitators are doing, cannot stand alone on their own to create a cycle of change and continuous development.

Finally, if this study were to be done again in five to ten years, I believe that one might discover that the early childhood development (ECD) programming is making the most impact among the generations at Thanda. ECD allows early intervention support to vulnerable children.

128 Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
129 Many facilitators bring library books to their classes at the schools for their learners to check out. Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
130 Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
131 Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
at such a young age that, as the literature shows, adverse effects of stressful environments can be repaired. Additionally, if Thanda facilitators are able to reach the children at such a young age and expose them to critical thinking and creative problem solving skills even earlier, who knows what their potential will be in the classroom and in their communities. There is a plethora of literature available to support the long-term, lasting impacts of ECD on a child’s development and I predict that once this program has been in place long enough to start to compare the progress of ECD learners with those who did not attend ECD, Thanda will see a huge difference between them. Yet, because I am examining the most impactful part of Thanda at the current moment, I must focus on how things are now – not how they could be.

In my quest to understand the most central part to Thanda’s impact in the communities with which they work, I found my answer to be two-fold, but both pieces are highly intertwined. The success of Thanda’s unique approach in which they promote self-development, is highly interwoven with the importance of the actors of this development process: the facilitators. I will speak in greater detail about the facilitators later, but now I will focus on Thanda’s development approach.

Often development strategies focus on the community development as a whole and try to implement bodies of change or structures of change without emphasizing development of the self. Perhaps that is why there is more discourse now about education being a way out of poverty because education is supposed to focus on self-development. However, in poor functioning schools like those in the rural areas, learners often lack these experiences that develop reflective thought, critical thought, and problem solving skills. Rather than addressing community problems, Thanda addresses the problems that affect their learners (which also happen to affect the majority of the community) and develops the community by focusing on the development of
the individual young learner first. A community is made up of individuals, and if Thanda is able to mold the younger generations into healthy, confident, critical, creative, active citizens from the start, just imagine the massive impact that could have on their future community.

**Measuring Impact**

In order to evaluate the amount of development and change Thanda has brought about in their communities, I had to determine how that change was being made. I had to understand what about Thanda was making such a positive impact.

‘Impact’ is yet another word that challenges the clear-cut lines of definitive terms. Impact can be qualitative, quantitative, and even trying to measure an amount of something that did not happen, like the amount of girls who did not become pregnant or the amount of learners that did not become criminals.

When I was assessing the most impactful part of Thanda, I purposefully left the question as ambiguous as possible to capture the most genuine, natural responses. Though I had expected that informants would choose specific intervention programs, like the agriculture training program, as their answers, I did not define ‘impact’ in any specific terms. This also allowed me to implicitly learn what ‘impact’ meant to the informants, like whether they thought impact had specifically to do with health, academic grades, low cost solutions, infrastructure, etc. In the end, the definition of impact that I use is that which has the potential to create more impact, more change, more development, to create a better community. Many informants, when asked this question, noted that it is the facilitators who are the most impactful part of Thanda. The programs themselves are integral to the success and self-development of the learners, but I am confident that those who facilitate the programs are the ones making the real difference.
At the Center of the Impact: Facilitators

The local facilitators were an integral part of Thanda at its founding and continue to be the most impactful part of Thanda’s approach because they have the power to inspire new generations to seek opportunity and change their world for the better. They are the ones on the ground encouraging the development of the self through esteem building, critical thinking, and problem solving skills. They are the executors and motivators of positive change.

Theory of Change

Even in Thanda’s “Theory of Change,” the first foundational arrow block focuses on the facilitators.132 The block reads, “Thanda hires members of the local community and, through an internal training programme, builds their capacity to become facilitators.”133 The facilitators then allow the support of the development of individuals of all ages through their involvement in the different programs.134 The third step, resulting from the programs led by the facilitators, involves people who are well-nourished, understand nutrition, have a strong educational foundation and desire to learn more, want to apply their knowledge, demonstrate creative and critical thinking skills, and feel a sense of self-worth.135 The self-development of the individuals in the community then lead to the final stage, previously discussed, which reads, “Rural communities are self-reliant, healthy places where people respect one another and live sustainably.”136 Though I would argue Thanda is currently oscillating between those first two stages and just starting to enter the third successfully, the most important point to note is that the Theory of Change

132 See Appendix F.
133 Thanda, “Programmes Overview.”
134 Thanda, “Programmes Overview.”
135 Thanda, “Programmes Overview.”
136 Thanda, “Programmes Overview.”
depends on the local community members who are chosen to be facilitators of Thanda’s programs.

*Hiring Process*

Becoming a facilitator at Thanda is not an easy process. Candidates must show outstanding dedication to their community and a passion for working with and supporting learners. Most importantly, candidates must be open-minded and prepared to challenge their world perspectives. Some of the facilitators learned about the job opportunities from word of mouth, but there are also a few who are Thanda alums and wanted to give back to their communities by supporting the learners. According to Tyler, Thanda often hires community members who show potential to be facilitators but who have no previous training in education or government work because those individuals often have not yet been trained to think that education should happen a certain way with a certain hierarchy.\(^{137}\)

An equally challenging part of hiring facilitators is that those who become facilitators become full time mentors in the communities. When they leave Thanda at the end of the day, they cannot just switch hats and no longer represent Thanda. As Nosipho, a high school facilitator who has been a high school facilitator since 2008, emphasized in the focus group, Thanda facilitators “have to give it [their] all.”\(^{138}\) She admitted the work itself is hard and can be taxing because the learners form close relationships with the facilitators. Because of this trusting, open relationship, learners will sometimes share problems they are having at school or home with the facilitators, which can be a tough burden to bear. The upside is that those who commit

---

\(^{137}\) Tyler Howard, discussion with Emma Milford, November 4, 2015.

\(^{138}\) Nosipho, focus group discussion with Emma Milford, November 5, 2015.
and become part of the facilitator team are extremely dedicated to and passionate about their work.

**Role in the Community**

Facilitators play a main role not only in Thanda programs, but in the community. Firstly, they are mentors to the learners. Thanda was founded to serve as a model of care for orphans and vulnerable children, and continues to attract some of the most vulnerable children in the communities. Because many of these learners’ parents have died, if they live with an adult caregiver, that caregiver is often a grandparent. Despite the traditional Zulu ideals of treating elders with high respect, many of the learners believe their grandparents are out of touch with the times and that their thoughts are less relevant. Grandparents also find it equally hard to relate to the young generations, and this can create a volatile generation gap that prevents transfer of knowledge and encourages a lack of respect for authority and elders.¹³⁹ In the focus group, Nosipho emphasized that Thanda “bridge[s] the gap” between the generations because the facilitators act as intermediate mentors.¹⁴⁰ The facilitators encourage the learners to “let out their ideas”¹⁴¹ and the learners know that they “always have someone to talk to” if they need support.¹⁴² The facilitators encourage activities and expressions of self-esteem and support the learners through their daily interactions. The learners then learn more about how to connect with and respect their grandparents, and the grandparents are more easily able to reciprocate those efforts and form more meaningful relationships with their grandchildren.

---

¹³⁹ Angela Larkan, phone conversation with Emma Milford, November 13, 2015.
¹⁴⁰ Nosipho, focus group discussion with Emma Milford, November 5, 2015.
¹⁴¹ Janet Duma, interview by and in discussion with Emma Milford, November 5, 2015.
¹⁴² Janet Duma, interview by Sarah Boeckmann, April 2015.
Secondly, because facilitators grew up in and/or live in the communities now, they are responsible for helping mediate Thanda’s relationship with the communities. Part of their role is to bring up local issues that are affecting the children in the communities so that Thanda can help find a way to address the problems. For example, the local staff reported that there had been recent issues of kidnapping so Thanda facilitators created a ‘stranger danger’ awareness show to perform at local schools. Also, while I was at the site, the local reservoir ran dry and the only water coming through the tap was salt water. After the end of the focus group I conducted, the three high school facilitators with which I spoke had to leave to go work with older high school learners, showing them how to collect spring water and teaching them about the benefits of spring water as an alternative water source. Thanda relies on these facilitators to constantly be aware of the needs of the community so that Thanda can best help their learners.

Training

All facilitators go through intensive training once they are hired, which teaches them the same skills their learners will be gaining from the afterschool sessions, just at a higher level. In Larkan’s opinion, “the transformation in them is massive” and at this time, this aspect of Thanda has the “most impact in one person.” All facilitators, from the first day of work, go through a training process that is essentially a liberal arts education that encourages application of knowledge, drawing connections between topics, challenging and opening one’s world view, and learning creative ways to address new issues. They study philosophy, psychology, literature, geography, history, art, activism, and any other topics that are applicable to the current

143 Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
144 Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
145 Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
challenges they are trying to address. All of these subjects help to shape their understanding of how they can best relay and facilitate information to the learners. For example, they have to know psychology to understand that there’s a sub-conscious and “that the way kids behave isn’t always what they intend.”

I was fortunate to observe two meetings with Howard and a newly-hired high school facilitator as he introduced the basics of how facilitators are supposed to interact with the learners in the classroom. To support Larkan’s point about the breadth of subjects covered in this training, in one of the discussions, Howard spoke about history, psychology, philosophy, art activism, music, and literature, all in explaining that facilitators should ‘facilitate’ knowledge – not simply ‘deliver’ it. To teach history, Howard recommends using Neil MacGregor’s *A History of the World in 100 Objects* because it provides the learners with tangible examples of why scholars know what they know. This presentation of proof and evidence should begin to trigger their critical thinking skills and to encourage them to question everything around them: why is paper called ‘paper’? who says our community has to be like this? who put government in place and what should it do? As Howard so simply put it, it’s “good to question everything.”

In teaching the facilitators to teach through examples, evidence, and others’ interpretations of situations (like art, lyrics, and literature), Howard is pushing the facilitators to expand their critical mindsets and become more well-rounded thinkers who help their students come to their own conclusions and engage with their knowledge. Instead of handing out information, Thanda facilitators must guide learning through stories (e.g., Dr. Seuss’ *Sneetches* to discuss racism and *The Lorax* to understand greed and sustainability), movies (e.g., *Iron Man*)

---

146 Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
147 Tyler Howard, discussion with Emma Milford, November 3, 2015.
to teach active citizenship and *Frozen* to examine sacrifice and fear), music lyrics (e.g., Nas’ “I Can” to understand addiction), and history (e.g., MacGregor’s *A History of the World in 100 Objects*, Thoreau’s “Civil Disobedience”).

From sitting in on a few meetings with Howard, I have no doubt that these facilitators are receiving (at least what I would consider in an American context to be) a liberal arts education while working at Thanda. They even had homework to read selections for their next session from a basic philosophy book that uses African examples: Philip Higgs and Jane Smith’s *Rethinking Our World*. I observed these facilitators pull apart complex ideas, metaphorical lyrics, and literature themes just the way that I would do in a class at my liberal arts university.

Not only are the facilitators learning to stretch and pick apart the world around them from Howard’s incredible breadth and depth of knowledge, but as of mid-2015, the facilitators are also taking art classes with Kristine Fowles. Fowles has two jobs: (1) to provide the facilitators with a resource bank of art ideas that encourage problem solving skills (e.g., memory games, Pictionary, paper maché), and (2) to critically engage their minds through art. In regards to her latter responsibility, for example, she implemented a series of lessons about advertisements with the goal of showing the facilitators how corporations manipulate images in advertisements, causing the consumer to desire something they do not need. Instead of engaging with written word, Fowles encourages critical thinking through the mediums of making art and analyzing art.

Unlike a liberal arts education, these facilitators are exposed to the types of interactions in meetings and classes on a daily basis for the duration of their work with Thanda. Their education has no end. One strong similarity in liberal arts schooling, however, is that these facilitators are surrounded by peers that are also learning to think more analytically about the
world around them. They are in a constant environment with each other and have the unique ability to learn from each other’s ideas and challenge each other’s perspectives.

Facilitator Development

As the facilitators spend more time in the training program, their interactions with each other and with their learners begin to change.

Joy Mkhwani, who started August of 2015, has already noticed changes in himself. He had been working at a financial institute in Johannesburg before quitting his job and starting work at Thanda. He said he wanted to changehis work because he did not feel that drive to go to work, that what he was doing was meaningful. Now that he has been working at Thanda, even for few months, he has noticed that he is excited to go to work each day. He is passionate about broadening the learners’ minds and worlds to help them see opportunities. Most importantly, he said that working at Thanda has helped him to self-reflect and learn about who he is and what he values the most.149

Similarly, Janet Duma noticed changes in her behavior as well once she started working for Thanda in 2011. Her biggest transformation was in how she related with her colleagues.150 Duma said,

When I first got here I was not good a communicating with people. I think I improved my ways of communicating with them. The way I spoke with people before I don’t think it was that good. Now I think; so and so is this kind of person so this is how I should related to them. When I first got here I didn’t care about that kind of thing. I used to think people should accept me for who I am but I shouldn’t care about who they are but that has changed now.151

---

149 Joy Mkhwani, interview by Emma Milford, November 5, 2015.
150 Janet Duma, interview by Sarah Boeckmann, April 2015.
151 Janet Duma, interview by Sarah Boeckmann, April 2015.
Additionally, she notes that Thanda has helped her to self-reflect and recognize her strengths, which is also a testament of her increased self-esteem.\textsuperscript{152}

\textit{Transfer of Thought}

As the facilitators are working on broadening their minds and understanding their world through the training provided by Howard, Fowles, and through interactions with their peers, they are transferring their skills to their learners. As they begin to process how to question the world and seek proof and evidence, they will become better at asking guiding questions that elicit similar thinking from their learners. Similarly, many of the facilitators, like their learners, have never been exposed to art projects, so as they learn different games, activities, and crafts, so do their learners. The idea is that as they go through their learning, “the kids are almost going through the same thing through what they’re learning in Thanda.”\textsuperscript{153} This transfer of thought processes is slow and only moves at the pace that the facilitator can develop their mind, but each step is incredibly meaningful. Even though the kids are receiving the lessons in a less intensive way, Thanda will not know for many years how much change exposing a child to these complex thought processes at an early age can really cause.\textsuperscript{154}

Nevertheless, former Thanda student Duma is well aware of the changes that occur to develop the learners’ minds. She said,

\begin{quote}
If you are a Thanda student you think more outside the box. It makes them more prepared for the future. Makes them know what is happening in the world. It helps them to think about the creating solutions themselves and not just sitting and point out the problem. Strengthens their minds to be willing to make change where they are.\textsuperscript{155}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{152} Janet Duma, interview by Sarah Boeckmann, April 2015.
\textsuperscript{153} Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
\textsuperscript{154} Angela Larkan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
\textsuperscript{155} Janet Duma, interview by Sarah Boeckmann, April 2015.
In other words, Thanda students, because of the way they have been encouraged to come to their own conclusions and to understand the world, have developed mindsets that foster the engagement and questioning of new material. Thanda students want to actively understand the world around them, instead of passively noticing it.

More Change to Come

The impact of actively engaged learners can have a tremendous effect on their communities. By helping each student reach their potential, Thanda is shaping a future community of individuals who are confidently pursuing opportunities for change.

The ripple effect begins in a single Thanda learner but has the potential to quickly spread throughout the classroom. First, Thanda learners are more passionate about their schooling. They have a reported higher attendance rate, have more respect for their teachers, and are more disciplined about their work.\textsuperscript{156} When learners arrive to school more attentive, excited, and confident about their learning, they are able to change their classrooms from the bottom up by encouraging not only their peers, but also their teachers to put in more effort and dedication.

Because the facilitators guide learning, children naturally develop self-esteem, critical thinking skills, and creative problem solving skills. Most importantly, facilitators are “helping [the learners] become somebody who they can be proud of.”\textsuperscript{157} Students are encouraged to think out-of-the-box and speak their minds, with the classroom expectation that every person has something to add, even if their reasoning needs tweaking. Because students are stimulated by coming to their own conclusions, they also learn that they do not need to be dependent on others to wait for solutions – they can figure out or create their own answers to problems. And because

\textsuperscript{156} Angela Larkan, phone conversation with Emma Milford, November 13, 2015.
\textsuperscript{157} Gina Buchanan, interview by Emma Milford, November 2, 2015.
they are challenging their perceptions of the world, they are also learning that their actions and decisions affect other people, not just themselves.\cite{JanetDuma}

All of these skills have the potential to build a community that works collaboratively and cooperatively to solve their own problems while also being extremely sensitive to the needs of people in different situations. In short, they will have a community of conscientious problem solvers who will be looking for opportunities, ways to improve their situation. As Joy Mkhwani noted in relation to Thanda’s presence, but which is also applicable to this potential future community, “people saw the need for change,” and sometimes you need someone different to look creatively at the problem and be the first to make a new change.\cite{JoyMkhwani}

**Challenges Not Met by Thanda**

With the strong community backing and parent support, it is hard to dispute that Thanda is not making sustainable, positive change. Yet Thanda is not without its own challenges.

For one, a common challenge among NGOs is the challenge to get funding that is both substantial and directed at the right cause.\cite{Nosipho} Often donors choose projects or specific programs at which to direct their funding, which may give assurance to the donor but is often inconvenient for the NGO because it limits their ability to use the money for what the NGO believes is the most essential project.

Additionally, although Thanda has provided a consistent partnership with their communities since 2008, some parents still view Thanda as a completely outsider organization

\begin{flushleft}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Janet Duma, interview by Sarah Boeckmann, April 2015.
\item Joy Mkhwani, interview by Emma Milford, November 5, 2015.
\item Nosipho, focus group discussion with Emma Milford, November 5, 2015.
\end{enumerate}
\end{flushleft}
and are suspicious of their motives.\textsuperscript{161} This refusal of acceptance is fueled by elder community
members who are reluctant to or afraid of change, and the additional belief that youth do not
know what is best for them and that they are misguided.\textsuperscript{162} Thanda holds focus groups,
community meetings, and conduct home visits to raise awareness and emphasize their
importance in the learners’ development to try and combat the stigma.

Finally, Thanda has been unable to include some of the most vulnerable members of the
community, notably children child-headed households or in other situations that require them to
go home immediately after school to attend to their chores and other responsibilities.\textsuperscript{163} Thanda
can emphasize their importance to the caregivers, but that is not necessarily going to remove the
burden from the child of helping to care for their siblings and other family members.

Thanda is certainly doing their best to make their programs as accessible as possible to
the learners in the communities by not only opening their Community Centre but by dropping
facilitators off at various primary and high schools; however, there may continue to be learners
they are unable to reach due to funding or program constraints. Ideally the learners not in Thanda
will still indirectly benefit from Thanda’s work because they will be surrounded in their classes
by peers motivating them to think similarly to how Thanda is teaching them. At some point, the
leaners will continue the cycle and become facilitators of knowledge themselves and hopefully
that culture of thought will spread to everyone so that even those with burdens preventing them
from attending Thanda will be able to develop themselves into more thoughtful, engaged
community members.

\textsuperscript{161} Nosipho, focus group discussion with Emma Milford, November 5, 2015. Janet Duma, interview by and in
discussion with Emma Milford, November 5, 2015.
\textsuperscript{162} Nosipho, focus group discussion with Emma Milford, November 5, 2015.
\textsuperscript{163} Janet Duma, interview by and in discussion with Emma Milford, November 5, 2015.
Conclusion

On my first day at Thanda, I was asked to help touch-up a huge black and white newspaper collage of a zebra standing in tall grass. The image was breathtaking from afar, and even more beautiful as I examined closer and saw each individual sliver of newspaper glued together. I was told that Thanda learners had been given blank small square sections of the collage with only the outline of where to place the black and white newspaper. They did not know what the final image would be, but they were each responsible for creating and completing their squares. Thanda facilitators, site staff, managerial staff, administrative staff, volunteers, interns, and even I had a hand in piecing it together and fixing up the loose ends. But it was not until all the individual pieces were complete and combined together before the learners discovered the final image.

This art project represents how Thanda is influencing continuous positive change in the communities around Hibberdene. Facilitators, guided by administrative staff, first have to understand the project and their responsibilities. Then the facilitators guide the learners as they try to make sense of their individual squares, their individual roles in the community. Together the facilitators and learners develop the squares until each seems complete. As the squares are puzzle-pieced together, the learners gain a stronger understanding of how they connect to the people around them. They realize how their choices about where to put the black and white newspaper affected how all of the squares joined together to create a beautiful piece of art.

Just as Thanda cannot predict how their communities will change and develop over the years, the learners would never have known what the final collage image looked like until they had each completed their individual squares. According to Thanda’s model, the development of the self is absolutely critical to the development of a community. Only when each person
thoughtfully internalizes how they relate to the other people in their communities and beyond, will the communities begin to see lasting, positive development.

After a careful evaluation of Thanda’s many intervention programs and unique characteristics, I argue that the most central key to their impact has been their focus on self-development of the communities’ learners through the employment of community members. I define impact as that which has the potential to create more impact, more change, more development, to create a better community. These facilitators not only experience their own development through the intensive training process, but they also encourage and motivate self-development of the learners through afterschool sessions that promote critical thinking skills, creative problem solving, active citizenship, sustainability, and self-esteem. They act as mediators between Thanda and the communities and also fill the generation gap between many of the learners and their caregivers, many of whom are grandparents. The care the facilitators provide support a ripple effect whereby the self-development of individuals results in the overall development of community.

Through the promotion of self-development with supportive mentors and facilitators from the local communities, I argue that Thanda’s model could be implemented elsewhere in a community with similar needs. Thanda’s model is not high-cost, though it is more effective with more resources and ample funding. For the most part, Thanda uses resources available to the community and fosters a ‘partnership’ mentality rather than a ‘donating’ or ‘giving’ mentality. Consistency, access to an education that challenges and critiques a person’s world view, and a local staff dedicated to building up the people around them through incredible levels of passion are the top factors necessary for Thanda’s method to be rolled out so that every struggling community can one day piece together their zebra collage masterpiece.
Recommendations for Further Study

As I mentioned in my Data Analysis, Thanda has a number of new programs, notably their early childhood development program (started in 2015) and agriculture training program (started in 2013). Additionally, with the recent success and interest in the new Art Centre, Thanda is currently in the process of adjusting their curriculum to have a stronger arts focus. My study evaluates the most central aspect of Thanda’s current impact; however, I would highly recommend that this study be reevaluated at the end of a five to ten year period. By that point, per Larkan’s predictions, Thanda should be beginning to see measurable change from their new programs and approaches. These changes may influence the conclusions that I have reached and may shed further light on how sustainable development in rural areas can be approached.
Bibliography

Primary Sources

Angela Larkan. Interview by Emma Milford. November 2, 2015.

Angela Larkan. Email message to Emma Milford. November 2, 2015.


Angela Larkan. Email message to Emma Milford. November 25, 2015.

Contributors: Photograph taken by Kristine Fowles.
Summary: Image of zebra collage on Title Page.


Secondary Sources


---

164 She did not give consent for her last name to be used.


http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.hisfam.2009.08.005.


http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/african_studies_review/v057/57.2.sheik.pdf.


http://www.etfo.ca/Resources/ForTeachers/Documents/Arts%20Education%20for%20the%20Development%20of%20the%20Whole%20Child.pdf.

Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form
Appendix B: Post-Interview Handout
Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Questions
Appendix D: Janet Duma Interview by Sarah Boeckmann, April 2015
Appendix E: Definitions of Sustainable Development
Appendix F: Thanda’s Theory of Change
Appendix G: Thanda 2014 Annual Report
Appendix H: Thanda On-Site Pictures
Appendix A: Consent Form

Each informant signed this form in order for me to use their information in this research.

CONSENT FORM

My name is Emma Milford. I am a student in the School for International Training Program studying Social and Political Transformation while living in Durban. For my final project I am conducting a short case study and the data that I collect today will be used in that project. Additionally, I may choose to use the data I collect during this case study in a final senior thesis project at my home university in the United States (Washington University in St. Louis).

Rights Notice
In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT ISP proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by a Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review Board. If at any time, you feel that you are at risk or exposed to unreasonable harm, you may terminate and stop the interview. Please take some time to carefully read the statements provided below.

a. Privacy – all information you present in this interview may be recorded and safeguarded. If you do not want the information recorded, you need to let the interviewer know.

b. Anonymity – all names in this study will be kept anonymous unless the participant chooses otherwise.

c. Confidentiality – all names will remain completely confidential and fully protected by the interviewer. By signing below, you give the interviewer full responsibility to uphold this contract and its contents. The interviewer will also sign a copy of this contract and give it to the participant.

Photo Consent
This serves to confirm that I, ______________________________, hereby consent to my photograph being used in Emma Milford’s research paper.

_________________________________  ________________________________
Participant’s name printed                                         Participant’s signature and date

_________________________________  ________________________________
Interviewer’s name printed                                         Interviewer’s signature and date
Appendix B: Post-Interview Handout

At the end of each interview, I gave the informant a sheet of paper with the following information so that they could contact me if they had any anonymity, confidentiality, privacy, or other problems or concerns with my research.

My Contact information:
Emma Milford
Cell: 079 919 8042
Email: emma.milford@wustl.edu

Thank you for your participation in my research project. You have until November 15 to contact me if you wish for your data or your name to not be represented in my ISP project and potential senior thesis project.

If you have any further questions or would like to make a complaint about this study or the researcher, you can anonymously contact Imraan Buccus of the School for International Training at 082 644 6088.
Appendix C: Semi-Structured Interview Questions
The questions I asked varied based on the flow of the conversation; however, each informant was asked questions from each of the three sections. Most commonly asked questions are bolded.

*Intended for the Administrative Office Staff*

**Section 1: Your Role**
- What are you responsible for at Thanda? Daily? Yearly?
- When did you start?
- Where else have you worked?
- How do you feel about working at Thanda?

**Section 2: Thanda**
- In your own words, what is Thanda’s overall goal?
- How do you identify the community’s needs? What are they?
- How does Thanda address those needs?
- Have the needs changed since you started?
- Is Thanda achieving its goal effectively?
- What are the challenges Thanda is not meeting?
- How is impact measured?
- Which aspect of Thanda do you think is the most central to its impact?

**Section 3: Development and Sustainability**
- What does ‘development’ mean to you?
- What are they key development needs of the area?
- What does ‘sustainable’ mean to you?
- What are the key sustainable needs of the area?

*Intended for the Facilitators, Alum Staff, & On-Site Staff (18+ years old)*

**Section 1: Your Role**
- How old were you when got involved with Thanda? (Or how did you get involved with Thanda?)
- What are you responsible for at Thanda? Daily? Yearly?
- Where else have you worked?
- How do you feel about working at Thanda?

**Section 2: Thanda**
- In your opinion, what are the most/least important parts of Thanda?
- Which aspect of Thanda do you think is the most central to its impact?
- What are the challenges of the community that are not being met by Thanda?
- What challenges does Thanda pose to the community?

**Section 3: Development and Sustainability**
- What does ‘development’ mean to you? What does a ‘developed’ community look like?
- What does ‘sustainable’ mean to you? What does a ‘sustainable’ community look like?
Appendix D: Janet Duma Interview by Sarah Boeckmann, April 2015

This interview is now part of Thanda domain and was originally intended to just be for Thanda’s use. I contacted the informant, who I had previously worked with during my visit, and let her review the transcript below. She has given me explicit consent to use this information in my research. I also have explicit consent from Angela Larkan at Thanda to use this interview.

On Being a Student

For all of these questions try to think about your own experience and time at Thanda when you were a student, not during your time as a facilitator.

- **How old were you when you joined Thanda as a student?**
  - 15

- **How long were you in Thanda as a student?**
  - 2 years

- **How did you first learn about Thanda?**
  - They came to my school to introduce Thanda

- **Why did you decide to join?**
  - I wanted to do something extra rather than just school. I wanted to use my time productively. I don’t learn anything just doing chores and sitting around. And wanted to learn new things. Wanted to experience a new thing that was just starting. I had time to do chores and go to Thanda instead of just doing my chores and then sitting around.

- **How do you think being a student at Thanda impacted or changed you? Which of those is most important?**
  - It made me realize so many things I never realized before. Helped me at school. My school work improved I think. For some subjects in school we didn’t have teachers (ex. math AND science) but then the facilitators were the source of knowledge for those subjects. That helped with matric. Teachers were always coming in and out and changing.
  - Being interested in learning about things, I wasn’t like that before. I became curious. Wanted to try, try try. Before I was just focused on studies but I wasn’t interested, just wanted to finish and get good marks, go to college and get a job. I wasn’t thinking about any alternative things I could do.
  - It also helped me to think about others and helping people. Made me recognize the importance of helping people and how what you do affects your community and the people around you.
  - **Most important:** Being able to think about other people when you are making decisions.

- **What was your favorite thing about Thanda when you were a student?**
  - It was fun. Learned new things.
  - I got to practice my English language skills. Now it is my first language. I used it as a tool to practice my English with the foreign facilitators.
It was the only time I got to get involved in sports and outdoor activities, I never did that in school. I thought I didn’t like sports and wasn’t good at them but at Thanda I realized I could do them and liked them.

I got to learn about other cultures, a bit of international experience. You don’t normally do that at school. We learned about other countries and their lifestyles.

- **What was your least favorite thing about Thanda when you were a student?**
  - When I was a student I wasn’t comfortable with people noticing me and the facilitator’s always took note of any change in behavior.

- **Do you feel your perspective on the future changed? How?**
  - I started to think about different things

- **Do you feel that your perspective on your community changed? How?**
  - I think it did. The community sees what Thanda does and that Thanda helped me set an example for the community.

- **Do you feel your confidence and self-esteem changed? How?**
  - Sure I think so. At school when we did Oral exams for English I wasn’t good at that and Thanda really improved that. I got higher marks because of Thanda. I would always volunteer to do presentations when other students didn’t want to.

**On Being a Facilitator**

- **How long have you worked for Thanda?**
  - Almost 4.5 years.

- **How do you think working at Thanda has impacted or changed you? Which of those is most important?**
  - It made me love kids more.
  - Changed my attitude and how I relate to colleagues. It has really changed since I started here. When I first got here I was not good at communicating with people. I think I improved my ways of communicating with them. The way I spoke with people before I don’t think it was that good. Now I think; so and so is this kind of person so this is how I should related to them. When I first got here I didn’t care about that kind of thing. I used to think people should accept me for who I am but I shouldn’t care about who they are but that has changed now.
  - Working at Thanda has helped me realized my strengths and abilities.

- **In what ways do you think Thanda affects the students?**
  - It really helps developing their minds. If you are a Thanda student you think more outside the box. It makes them more prepared for the future. Makes them know what is happening in the world. It helps them to think about the creating solutions themselves and not just sitting and point out the problem. Strengthens their minds to be willing to make change where they are.

- **In what ways do you think Thanda affects the community?**
  - Thanda is a resource for this community. It’s the only library. It’s created a safe environment for the youth. They know they belong. If they feel bored or they want to do something they just come. It’s helped the community with so many
things oh my gosh! When I meet parents they say all the time that they appreciate the program and see changes in their kids. The feedback from parents it’s really positive: they do better in school, they read all the time.

- **What is something you would want kids to know who haven’t joined Thanda yet?**
  - Being at school is good but your mind needs more than that, you need something extra. You need to do something extra, you need to be physically active (example of those constructive stimulating games). You learn in a more fun way.

- **Strengths of the Thanda program?**
  - That it’s fun. All the resources that kids can use and that they like. Like Skateboards, it’s a big deal, the parents couldn’t afford to buy them.
  - Good Facilitators 😊 friendly facilitators. We are easier to talk to than other adults. The kids always have someone to talk to when they need to speak to someone.

- **Weaknesses of the Thanda program?**
  - Sometimes in our classes we have big groups and it prevents giving close attention to kids that need it. I am afraid that all the kids don’t get the attention they need (she had a class with 43). It can also hinder safety. Something might happen without you noticing with all of those kids.

- **What is your favorite part of the curriculum to do with kids? Why?**
  - Superhero[s]-specifically [S]piderman. The kids really like it. Making masks of [S]piderman, the kids wore the masks all week, you can see they are really proud.

- **Are you pursuing higher education?**
  - I started something I wasn’t sure she was interested in (finance) so I am waiting to change. I was doing good in finance but I didn’t like it. I want to work in an airport but there is so much you can chose from, so I am trying to figure it out.

- **How many people are in your household?**
  - 10

- **Is anyone in your family in Thanda now?**
  - Sister. Grade 3.

- **How many other people in your household earn an income?**
  - None. Grandma is a pensioner.

- **Where would you like to see this community in 5 years?**
  - I would like to see my community not be so afraid of change. They are nervous about good things that are happening (like Thanda) and I want them to see the opportunity.
  - To treat people equally, to see white people or an Indian or a coloured and think they are all the same. Less racism.

- **Where would you like to see yourself in 5 years?**
  - Working in an airport.

- **Describe Thanda in 1 word:**
  - Light
Appendix E: Definitions of Sustainable Development

Figure 1. Definitions of sustainable development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT IS TO BE SUSTAINED:</th>
<th>FOR HOW LONG?</th>
<th>WHAT IS TO BE DEVELOPED:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature</td>
<td>25 years</td>
<td>People</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>“Now and in the future”</td>
<td>Child survival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biodiversity</td>
<td>Forever</td>
<td>Life expectancy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecosystems</td>
<td></td>
<td>Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Equal opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life Support</td>
<td>Linked by</td>
<td>Economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecosystem services</td>
<td>Only</td>
<td>Wealth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>Mostly</td>
<td>Productive sectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>But</td>
<td>Consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>And</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Or</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td></td>
<td>Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultures</td>
<td></td>
<td>Institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td>Social capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places</td>
<td></td>
<td>States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Regions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


---

Appendix F: Thanda’s Theory of Change

Thanda hires members of the local community and, through an internal training programme, builds their capacity to become facilitators.

Thanda supports people through all stages of their development by offering Early Childhood Development, After-school Education and Agriculture Development programmes.

People engaged in Thanda’s programmes:
- Are well-nourished and understand basic principles of health & nutrition
- Have the educational foundations to apply knowledge and the desire to learn more
- Demonstrate creative & critical thinking skills and feel a sense of self-worth

Rural communities are self-reliant, healthy places where people respect one another and live sustainably.

---

166 Thanda, “Programmes Overview.”
Accomplishments

Early Childhood Development (ECD)

We identified a pressing need to start an ECD Programme in our community. Building on the success of our After-school Programme model, we plan to start an ECD Programme to offer a stimulating, arts-based curriculum adapted to the developmental needs of children ages 2–4 and a feeding scheme to supply children with proper nutrition to fuel learning.

100% Green

Our Community Centre is powered entirely by wind & solar energy - water tanks conserve rainwater and a biodigester converts waste into gas to power our kitchen stoves.

Creative Learning Curriculum

Primary School Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Creative Me</th>
<th>Sustainable Communities</th>
<th>Confident Me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy &amp; Library</td>
<td>Science &amp; Maths</td>
<td>World We Live In</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Learning to Express Myself</td>
<td>Care for the Environment Learning to Garden</td>
<td>Health &amp; Nutrition Respecting Others Respecting Myself</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High School Learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>Creative Me</th>
<th>Sustainable Communities</th>
<th>Confident Me</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Literacy &amp; Library</td>
<td>Science &amp; Maths</td>
<td>World History Computer Literacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual &amp; Performing Arts</td>
<td>Social Change Through Art</td>
<td>Agricultural Skills Protecting the Environment</td>
<td>Healthy Choices My Role in the Community Specialised Groups</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

New Curriculum

We introduced a more creative way of structuring our curriculum that focuses on four key areas: Education, Creative Me, Sustainable Communities, and Confident Me.

Art Centre

Within our Community Centre, we’ve built a brand new Art Centre. The space will be used for learners in our After-school Programme to engage in artistic activities, but will also be open to children & youth in our community.
## Impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expansion</th>
<th>180</th>
<th>87,400</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We added 180 new children &amp; youth to our After-school Programme</td>
<td>We served 87,400 meals to children &amp; youth in our After-school Programme</td>
<td>We expanded to three local schools in our community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education</th>
<th>45% improvement in Literacy rates</th>
<th>116% change in Science skills</th>
<th>38% improvement in Library skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[Score at Baseline]</td>
<td>[Avg % Accurate at Baseline]</td>
<td>[Score at Final]</td>
<td>[Avg % Accurate at Final]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of students (1-5)</td>
<td>% of students (1-5)</td>
<td>% of students (1-5)</td>
<td>% of students (1-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseline score (1=lowest)</td>
<td>Baseline score (1=lowest)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final score (5=highest)</td>
<td>Final score (5=highest)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Capacity</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>150</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We hired six new facilitators from within our community to lead our After-school Programme</td>
<td>We’ve established ten small-scale farms that are feeding over 1,157 people in our community</td>
<td>We’ve created over 150 jobs for previously unemployed members of our community as educational facilitators, staff, and farmers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Library Lending Rates Doubled
Financials

Fundraising by Group

Fundraising

In 2014, 61% of our funds were raised through South African grantmakers. We fundraise through private donors in the US (Even Ground), UK (Thanda UK), and South Africa.

Thanda Zulu

Thanda Zulu is an income-generating project that employs local Zulu beaders to create traditional Zulu beaded jewelry. Through this project, women are able to earn an income and carry on a longstanding cultural craft. All proceeds benefit Thanda.

Fundraising Totals by Event

Thanda 10 & 20

Thanda supporters in the US & UK raised over R200,000 through our annual walkathons.

ThandART

Our annual ThandART event in the UK featured over twenty artists and raised over R180,000.
Appendix H: Thanda On-Site Pictures
Sosukwane Primary School classroom for Grade R. Class size is about 60 learners. Thanda uses this classroom for Janet Duma’s Grade R and 1 afterschool session, serving 39 learners.
Thanda Site Exterior (top: Community Centre, bottom: Art Centre and Skate Park)
Thanda Site Exterior Continued (top: Latrines and Pig Pen, bottom: Chicken Coop)
Thanda Library in the Thanda Community Centre.
Thanda Art Centre.
**Glossary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AIDS</td>
<td>Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>early childhood development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV</td>
<td>Human Immuno-deficiency Virus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>inhlawulo</strong></td>
<td>‘damages’ payment to mother’s family so that an unmarried man can claim lineage rights to his children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KZN</td>
<td>KwaZulu Natal, an area on the eastern coast of South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>lobola / ilobolo</strong></td>
<td>type of bridewealth in Zulu tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OVC</td>
<td>orphans and vulnerable children</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>