



SEPTEMBER 2023

ISITHATHA TRUST

Grant Proposal

Presented To: []

Presented By: **Sharon Rother**

12 NINTH AVENUE WALMER, PORT ELIZABETH, EASTERN CAPE, SOUTH AFRICA

Our purpose

Mission

Uplift underprivileged youth and break social barriers.

Vision

To create a unique brand of South African theatre.

Isithatha is a professional theatre & a registered NPO. It has been serving the community of Walmer for +14 years, **enriching people's lives through the arts.**

"Isithatha" is the Xhosa word for a pinpoint of light in the distance, that keeps us from despair. It is intended to represent hope for the communities we work in, empowering them to create a better future.

Our primary services are education & community building.

Education

We provide weekly lessons in the performance arts. These are open to all members of the public at no cost. Classes include swing, traditional, hip-hop, and acting.

Public performances

We host a variety of artistic events, produced either by Isithatha or a third-party. Audiences can enjoy plays, dance recitals, & musical productions.

Support young artists

Having a venue to perform encourages young artists to produce work. They can build their repertoire and grow as performers, while generating an income.

Learning

Our facilities are used by individuals to host workshops, which are targeted to the community.

The Communities We Serve & Why

Social context



Our Learners

Our learners are between the ages of 9-28. They are predominantly black teenagers, with a 30:70 ratio between male & female learners.

We are 300m from the Walmer township, which is where all our young learners attend school & reside.

The township is fraught with poverty & crime and our youth face multiple social issues, from substance abuse, parental neglect, sexual abuse to gang violence.



Our Audiences

Isithatha Theatre caters to people of all ages, cultures and social backgrounds, with a diverse range of performances & events.

In Walmer, the Apple Express railway line draws a clear distinction between the township and what is predominantly an affluent suburb.

Few activities occur in the area frequently enough to develop social cohesion.



Young Artists

Young artists, from musicians, dancers to playwrights need help establishing themselves.

Isithatha Theatre supports them with a venue to perform, so they may showcase their work & generate a living.

Our Impact

How we make a difference

Our Learners

Our training is of a global standard, where learners can conduct examinations through Trinity College London (TCL). With an “Advanced Performance Certificate”, adult learners can apply for acting jobs and secure an agent. Learners who do not complete TLC exams still receive a certified learning, but both enable learners to pursue a higher education.

Using class material relevant to their lives, learners can develop tools to cope with personal challenges & process trauma. They also develop important life skills, which they can apply to any chosen career. Critical thinking, communication, emotional agility & teamwork, to name a few.

Having lost a former learner to gang violence, our learners make a choice every day for a place which is safe & stable. Classes run every Friday, but learners are onsite all week. They have access to free wi-fi and students spend their time doing homework. Sometimes they also receive a meal, which has been generously donated.

Learners receive exposure to different works, where attending exhibitions and theatrical productions form part of our syllabus. They are also exposed to newly qualified professionals, who act as role models and instill a sense of purpose in their lives. We also provide them access to an advanced network within the industry.



48%

LIVE IN
POVERTY
(2018)

38%

<20
YEARS OLD
(2016)

35.7%

UNEMPLOYED
(20)20

8.3%

HIGHER
EDUCATION
(2016)

*Population statistics for the City of Port Elizabeth

Our Audiences

How we make a difference

Building social cohesion

Art is a wonderful way of bringing people together. As one of the 4 active theatres in the city, none match our capacity for social engagement, which Isithatha achieves with location and space. Our heritage building is set on 5,200m² and hundreds of people attend events every month. One of our biggest is the “Friendly City Food Market”, where we drive a unique genre of entertainment, from African drumming, poetry to traditional Xhosa choring. This, together with our theatrical productions, Isithatha has positioned itself as a **centre of culture**, using strong social themes to influence audiences and deepen their cultural understanding.

Art can also inspire social change by raising awareness of important issues and inspiring activism. “Picture Frame”, which was written by the late Gift Buqa, & former Isithatha Trustee, on life & poverty in the Walmer Township is just one such production and is still being performed today. Another is Mike Van Graan’s, “My Fellow South Africans”, on the discourses that will shape our 2024 national elections.



Supporting Young Artists

How we make a difference

Driving Employment

On a case-by-case basis, we waive our venue hire, to encourage young performers to keep producing & performing their work. This applies to any artist who performs with us, when their show is for free. We also support young artists by way of props, costumes and promotion on social media, to help build their audiences.



Increasing our impact

Isithatha's Funding Needs



Our Arts Programme

R2,3 Million

Our arts programme addresses a major skills gap within our local schools. Of the 175, only 7 schools offer Dramatic Arts, as a subject. The majority who follow the CAPS syllabus, offering Creative Arts, which is rarely taught by a qualified drama or dance teacher. This dilutes the students' expectations of the subject and reflects how little our educational system values the arts.

With funding, we can elevate our programme and grow it from 25 to 300 learners. Classes will then run Mon-Fri, by a seasoned group of 20 part-time teachers, providing lessons in acting, swing, ballroom, hip hop, and traditional dance.



Our Heritage Building

R3,66 Million

As a community theatre, where people congregate and engage, the condition of our building is key. As an organisation that relies heavily on venue hire, this impacts our earning potential and our ability meet our financial needs.

As a result, we have had to prioritise our spending at the expense of our building, where maintenance is well overdue.

Included in our sustainability plan is the hiring of 3 full-time personnel, to manage the theatre and oversee daily operations, with the intention of generating enough income to sustain our property's needs.

Isithatha's Arts Programme

Annual Financial Budgets

A. Isithatha's Arts Programme

TOTAL | R2,274,100

PROGRAMME EXPENSES	ZAR
Quarterly class productions	R400,000
Class outings with transport	R64,000
Technical & Auditioning skills training	R85,000
Portfolio building	R200,000
TCL Exam fees	R175,800
Indepedent evaluator	R50,000
Daily meals / refreshments	R130,000
TOTAL	R1,104,800

OPERATING BUDGET	ZAR
Staff wages (22)	R880,000
Utilities	R72,000
Consumables	R187,800
Stationery & Printing	R20,000
Transport Allowance	R3,500
Breakage allowance	R6,000
TOTAL	R1,169,300

Isithatha's Premises

Description of work

B. Our Premises

TOTAL | R3,657,173

Our building is estimated by the Heritage Society to be 117 years old. Its beautiful sash windows and floors are all the original Oregon pine. Included is the buildings' original water tank which is accessible by stairs to the basement. It is however exacerbating the damp in the building, affecting walls and all our floors.

The bulk of the maintenance & repair work include:

- Decommissioning the water tank
- Treatment of damp
- Interior/exterior painting
- Roof/ceiling repairs
- Treatment of wood finishings

Renovations include replacing all wooden floors & converting our kitchen into a cash bar. The latter forms part of Isithatha's sustainability plan, along with installing solar and harvesting rainwater. These will reduce overheads, which grow significantly during productions. They will also ensure that water shortages & loadshedding (national power outages) do not impact our or our ability to operate.

Our palisade fencing has rusted & is a security risk, along with other weak points making us vulnerable to vandalism & theft. Replacing our front fencing will provide the property with more visibility from the road, deterring criminals who target us frequently. It will also place us in full view of the community and help build awareness.



Isithatha's Premises

Annual Financial Budgets

2. Our Premises

TOTAL | R3,657,173

CAPITAL EXPENSES	ZAR
Theatre Equipment	R326,304
Office Equipment	R43,995
Office Furniture	R32,725
Fencing & Security	R339,571
Building Repair & Maintenance	R963,672
Building Renovations	R605,640
Sustainability Upgrades	R604,766
TOTAL	R2,916,673

OPERATING BUDGET	ZAR
Salaries (2)	R508,251
Wagers (1)	R66,000
Contract worker (1)	R80,000
Telephone	R20,000
Stationery & Printing	R22,000
Marketing	R16,000
Utilities	R7,249
Consumables	R15,000
Breakage allowance	R6,000
TOTAL	R740,500

Our Key Resources

Revenue streams

- Rental income
- Venue hire
- Costume hire
- Cash bar (productions)
- Back-A-Buddy (online donations)
- Cash donations
- The “Book Shack” (we sell donated books)

With the exception of Bulelwa, our full-time cleaner, Isithatha runs solely on **volunteerism**, with an average of +30 full & part-time volunteers. They are mostly teachers, donating their skills to classes, while others to the garden, or towards our efforts to raise funds.

Alliances

- ASSITEJ South Africa
- Theatre & Dance Alliance (TADA)
- South African Dance Alliance (SADA)
- Linga Creatives

Collaborator	Resource	Years of association
Masifunde	Technical support Transport for our learners to outings	8
Stageworld	Furthering our learners' qualifications Technical support & sharing of information	8
PE Gilbert & Sullivan	Information sharing & technical support	10
USA Ewe Masenze	Financial support	11
African Drumbeat	Instruments for products	1

Meet the Board

A snapshot us and our history



Isithatha's Board of Trustees

Phambili Ngcayisa

Worked informally in the township, acting and directing and training young actors and acquired a vast knowledge of workshop theatre techniques during "The Struggle". He is our cultural guru, guiding us in Isixhosa cultural traditions. He is passionate about the role of drama in the lives of township folk, believing the worst kind of poverty is spiritual, and that the Arts can fulfill that gap.

Fundiile Makhosi

Fundiile is a former student & is passionate about the township. He is highly knowledgeable in marketing and youth empowerment, dedicating his time to youth upliftment projects, at Masifunde. He was instrumental in creating "Candoz", a highly successful weekly event held in a theatre shack in Gamanda Street, before Isithatha acquired its theatre. This was the first branch of the Isithatha Youth Theatre movement.

Gavin Rother

With a BComm degree in Economics and Public Administration, Gavin provides Isithatha with his competence in planning and administration. He offers incredible support to the team in the area of improving the facilities and enhancing security. As a qualified Health and Safety Officer, he ensures we remain compliant.

Tracy McIntyre

Tracy formerly worked in audit and handles the financial side of Isithatha, managing all our accounts and budgeting. She is also a qualified Clinical Psychologist and is able to provide support when required. Tracy is meticulous and thorough and ensures that our audits remain clean and free.

Sharon Rother

Sharon is a drama teacher and lecturer who believes in the power of the Arts to uplift poor communities. Isithatha was her vision together with the late Gift Buqa and Phambili Ngcayisa. She provides drama lessons, directs plays and handles the day to day running of Isithatha, whilst teaching and running her own business.