



Annual Summary Report

2023

RDSP Prayer

Dear God,
 Thank you for the opportunity to serve
 Your people throughout Southern Africa.
 In particular, we commit ourselves
 And our resources to assisting Rural
 Communities.
 We ask you to continue to grace us with
 Your gifts of energy,
 Creativity, integrity and compassion,
 So that we can bring hope where there is
 none
 And help people to reach their full
 potential.
 Lord, protect us as we travel,
 Take care of our loved ones
 And bless us and those who support us in
 our work.
 We look forward to the day
 When all communities no longer live in
 isolation and poverty,
 But prosper in Your peace and love.
 We ask You this in love and faith.

Amen.

St. Isadore, Patron of Rural communities.

Stories of Impact

The Year of Meaningful Change...

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for the journey we have travelled together. The theme of this year's report, "Stories of Impact: The Year of Meaningful Change," encapsulates the essence of our collective efforts and the transformative power of our work.

2023 was a year of significant milestones and achievements for RDSP. Thanks to the generous support of our partners and stakeholders, we were able to expand our programs and initiatives, working deeper with more rural community leaders and organisations, and making a tangible difference in the lives of countless individuals.

One of the key highlights of the year was the increased funding that enabled us to enhance our capacity development efforts. Through targeted training and mentoring programs, we empowered community-based organisation leaders to become catalysts for positive change within their communities.

The stories within this report are testaments to the impact of our work. Each story showcases the meaningful change that RDSP is driving across rural South Africa.



We are proud of the progress that the community organisations have made, but we also recognise that there is much work still to be done. As we look ahead, we are committed to building on these achievements, forging new partnerships, and continuing to create lasting impact in the communities we serve. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our dedicated team, partners, donors, and the communities themselves for their unwavering support and collaboration. **Together, we are making a difference, one story of impact at a time.**

~ Brenda Snyders, RDSP Director ~

Organisational Capacity Development



RATANANG'S JOURNEY...

IRENE'S TESTIMONIAL

RDSP's programmes for the last 3 years made a very great impact on our organisation. There were things in our organisation that were not in order, things we did not understand and that we did not know that we learnt from the trainings of RDSP. When DSD came and looked for documents for the building we received for the shelter, everything they were looking for was in order. Even our business plan was in order, when they asked us for a business plan I had a business plan. That is why I just want to say thank you to RDSP for the trainings for the last 3 years.

I know that you are not done yet but so far it has had a great impact on Ratanang Victim Support Centre. We achieved so much during the time that Brenda gave the training to us. When she came to us the organisation had no policies, nothing. Brenda worked very hard so that at this point we have everything in place, but maybe not everything. We know there are still things that we need to do, but the most important things that an organisation needs is in place, and this is what Brenda helped us with. DSD was wowed with Ratanang when we gave them our presentation. The manager of DSD said Ratanang we did not know that you are doing so much in the community and that you mean so much to the community, and that everything is so organised and in order.

So I want to say thank you very much for the trainings that we received. And I want to say don't stop what you are doing because the people in the rural areas have NPOs and they don't understand. I can testify and say that I did not know a lot of things myself, i.e., what must I do and what must I have, but because of RDSP's trainings I was top at DSD last week. Those people were in awe when they saw my presentation.

- Irene Bothman, Project Leader
Ratanang Victim Support Centre -

The aim was to improve the capacity of CSO's within seven specific organisational areas, i.e.

- Leadership Capacity
- Staff & Volunteers
- Target Group and Programmes
- Fundraising and Resources
- Finances
- Networking and Profiling, and
- Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation



Success Story

"RDSP has helped us to have everything in place, from our policies, plans, etc. I did not know how to unpack our Activities, but now I am able to break it down. I now know what long-term and short-term means. I also learnt how we can give advice to others.

It's a wow! In the beginning I was not so interested, but once I got into it I saw that we need these things. We now know how to report on our activities. I am standing on a step now, I was taken from the ground up. Like a tree that is growing, you guys gave us the compost and you are watering the plants. It is nice to see that we are growing.

Even the vision and mission we did not have when RDSP started with us, and now we have it. Now the funders can trust us, they can see what we did with the funding. RDSP motivated us. Now we can help others in our community. What you are giving to me is something that stays forever. I can now talk to the other centres. We have since received funding from Letsatsi to expand our facility. When RDSP came here at first we had a small building, and met outside, now we have the space we needed." – (Project Leader, Sebastian Day Care for the Disabled).

Kristien Bahumi
Project Leader, Sebastian
Day Care for the Disabled



Organisations often face challenges in maintaining a focused approach, diverting from their core activities. Strengthening their internal focus is essential for maximising impact. – Brenda Snyders –



Building the resilience of rural community-based organisations involves not only training, but also intensive mentoring, in order to bolster their ability to withstand and adapt to challenges.

The intervention over a 3-year period, has had a significant impact on Civil Society Organisations (CSO's) from Ritchie, Barkley West, Riverton and Kimberley in the Northern Cape. Support was given to organisations remotely and in person post training, allowing participants to implement their learnings and to try to address any challenges they faced.

Overall 89% of the organisations assessed improved in two or more capacity areas.

LIFE123 Coaching & Mentoring



PARTICIPANT COMMENTS:

Group Drumming vs. Individual Practice:
During the training, I found that playing in a group setting made more sense to me than practicing alone. Drumming in a group allowed me to experience the power of collective rhythm creation and the sense of unity it brings. It was a more enjoyable and meaningful experience, as I could feel the energy and connection with others while playing together.

Confidence Building through Structured Training:
Understanding that I was working within a structured framework significantly boosted my confidence in both working with drumming sessions and facilitating them. The clear structure of the training program provided a sense of direction and accomplishment, which positively impacted my self-assurance as a facilitator.

Application of Facilitation Skills in Larger Groups:
The training emphasized learning facilitation skills and understanding different rhythms. I noticed that these skills made more sense and felt more relevant when I applied them in larger group settings. Working with real participants during drumming sessions allowed me to validate my learning and gain practical experience in leading engaging and cohesive drum circles.

Feeling Confident and Empowered:
As a result of the training, I now feel much more confident and empowered to lead drumming sessions with participants. The combination of structured learning, group drumming experiences, and hands-on facilitation practice instilled a strong sense of self-assurance in my abilities as a drum circle facilitator. I am enthusiastic about putting my newly acquired skills and knowledge into practice.

Nine CSO leaders underwent intensive training as LIFE123 Facilitators, which included advanced sessions in Drumming and Facilitation techniques. Following this, they received personalized coaching and mentoring to effectively implement the #LIFE123 Life Skills Course within their organizations and communities. The primary objectives were to:

- Gain a comprehensive understanding of youth work methodology and principles.
- Utilize effective communication strategies when engaging with young individuals.
- Implement behavior management and support strategies in various youth settings.
- Collaborate effectively within teams, supervised, to support youth development.
- Utilize the Asset Building Tool to identify key elements of Holistic Healthy Development.

These leaders were closely observed during the delivery of three Lifeskills modules to youth from their respective communities. The overarching goal was to empower young individuals with the knowledge, skills, and positive mindset needed to navigate all aspects of life successfully.

Substance Abuse Prevention

The Joseph Project

The Joseph Project aimed to combat the issue of substance abuse, dependency and family violence in the Keimoes-Upington Diocese of the Northern and part of the Western Cape. Implementation of the programme was mirrored in two regions, i.e.

- Cluster 1 – Olifantsrivier (Vredendal) and Namakwa (Springbok).
- Cluster 2 – Boesmanland (Poffadder/ Pella) and Oranjerivier (Upington)

This project focussed on providing training and intensive mentoring to local leaders, empowering them to implement effective programs addressing substance abuse, dependency, and family violence in their respective rural communities.

Rochelle always wanted to run support groups for those involved with drugs and those coming out of rehab and she feels the biggest benefit has been that she can now make a difference in her community with this knowledge she gained.



Uncontrolled drinking leads to family problems and inability to fulfil responsibilities.

- from the Baseline Study conducted by Prof. Roestenburg for SANCA -



Substance abuse remains a critical social crisis in rural areas, exacerbated by geographical isolation, poverty rates, and limited prevention and treatment resources.

Studies highlight the prevalence of substance abuse and its negative consequences, including a causal relationship with issues like child abuse,



Cemelia felt **the biggest benefit** of the training was that it allowed her to **think bigger and in different ways**, for example being able to reach more people and being encouraged to speak in front of people. She felt **she learnt a lot especially about drugs and the effects of drugs on a person's brain**.

Whenever she is in the company of younger people she uses the opportunity to educate them about drinking and limits and drinking water.



Substance Strategy

RDSP was contracted by the DGMT to manage the formulation of a strategy for reducing harms related to substance abuse project which is to be implemented within a radius of 50 kilometers of the Lesedi Solar PV Project in the Northern Cape and the Letsatsi Solar PV Project in the Free State. RDSP was partnered with SANCA National Directorate and The South African Alcohol Policy Alliance (SAAPA) to execute this project. The project resulted in a larger collaboration amongst role players that included the research and the development of an intervention strategy suitable for and incorporating local contextual factors of each town.

- RDSP was responsible for:
- the overall management of the project
 - the initial joint community workshops, and
 - the stakeholder mapping

This combined effort is designed to lead to a holistic response to substance abuse within these communities. A 3-year strategy was formulated.



GBV Healing through Art

The **aim** is to encourage rural local community members in the Nama Khoi and Richtersveld Districts to **create safe learning spaces and opportunities** for victims of GBV to explore, experience and develop creativity, and to acknowledge and **find appropriate ways of dealing with emotional hurt and pain and heal through art.**

This project is being rolled out in partnership with Butterfly Art Project (BAP).

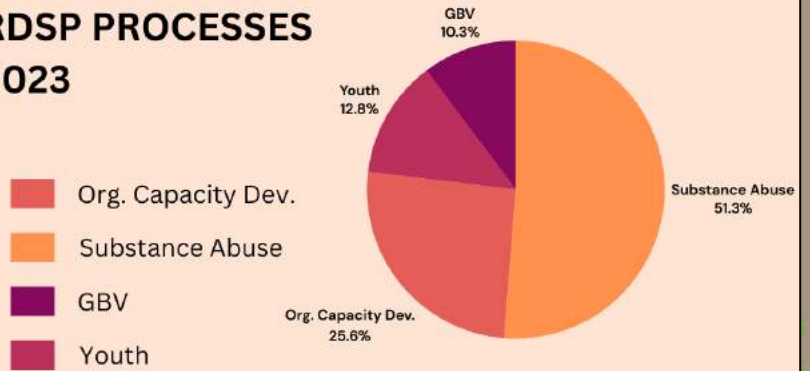
Participants are trained as Community Art Facilitators (CAF) to provide children and youth in their local marginalised communities with access to visual art classes with a therapeutic element.

Children and youth in these communities are now gaining access to visual art classes facilitated by trained CAFs, providing them with a therapeutic outlet for healing and self-expression.





RDSP PROCESSES 2023



TOTAL PROCESSES - 39
TOTAL PARTICIPANTS - 822

Mary Lack Community Grants Programme

The Mary Lack Community Grants Programme was established in 2021 to support grass-roots projects of rural community based organisations in RDSP's network, through small grants.

In 2023 a **2nd Round of Allocations** were made to projects. The call's focus was on:

1. The Establishment of Substance Abuse Support Groups, in the Diocese of Keimoes-Upington

In rural areas there is a general lack of access to support services. The establishment of local support groups through the CBOs provides access to a support network to those who are addicted or those affected by Substance Abuse and the related link to Gender-Based Violence.

2. Substance Abuse Awareness Raising through Info Talks, in the Diocese of Keimoes-Upington

To share info around the issues of Substance Abuse. During the process of raising awareness the CBOs usually identify community members with related issues. This then results in the start of a support group.

Final Thoughts...

As always we would like to extend a **warm thank you** to all our **donors, funders and partners** for their unwavering support during 2023.

- Misereor
- DG Murray Trust
- Papal Foundation
- National Lotteries Commission
- SACBC Lenten Fund
- Ann Kreitzer Will Trust
- Global Giving

STRENGTHENING RURAL COMMUNITIES SINCE 1992

OUR VISION

Productive and caring rural communities living with dignity

OUR MISSION

Rural Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) bring about changes in their communities by providing services and initiating development programs, so as to improve people's living conditions and leave a legacy



Rural Development Support Program

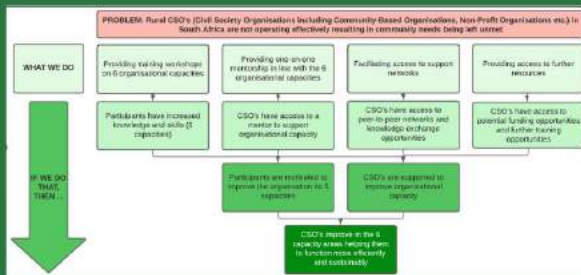


God Bless!

OUR PROGRAMMES:

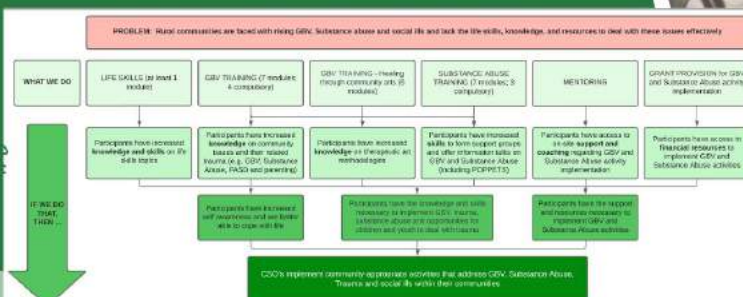
Rural Organisational Development Programme

- Ensuring that organisations are operating effectively.



Rural Community Development Programme

- Ensuring that organisations and their staff are equipped to implement programmes that address identified community needs.



“There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about.”
MARGARET J. WHEATLEY



Rural Development Support Program

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