

# ON THE WALK NEWSLETTER



## Message from the CEO Thriving

*Thriving* means to grow vigorously and flourish. Over the past year Sihamba Sonke expanded beyond the rural community where it put down roots almost seven years ago.

Our chess program launched in Kouga Municipality in South Africa's Eastern Cape province, with great success. This was only possible because of a dedicated team to help navigate through challenges as we launched new sites. Hats off to them!

The John Templeton Foundation, one of the largest philanthropic organizations in the world, has thrown its weight behind a two-year project to test and develop our *Move with Purpose* chess program. Their vision, *Inspiring Awe and Wonder*, resonates with what we're trying to achieve as well.

As the founder I look back on what it took to birth this vision over years, starting with little to no resources.

May you also be encouraged to take small steps with the vision in your heart as you follow our journey.

Three pillars guide our work: impacting the individual, developing mentors and cultivating healthy communities. In this newsletter you can read more about our projects to mentor young adults, provide skills training, stimulate small business, and offer safe spaces over weekends for young people.

Without our supporters, big and small, corporate and individual, none of this would be possible! These stories are your stories too. Celebrate the milestones with us, and come on board for 2025, a year of thriving!

Ruan Cilliers



Watch 2024  
Highlights





## Move with Purpose Highlights

The school chess program remains our strongest and fastest-growing initiative. Teachers and school principals have been eager to introduce chess to learners and offer skills for wise decision-making and problem solving at the same time.

Here are a few highlights from 2024:

### Zithulele

Our rural base of Zithulele ran programs in five schools, engaging around 150 students on a weekly basis. These are all schools that previously had no chess offering. Our local chess league ran for the third year. Forty players from four schools participated, with Sea View Primary taking the top spot.

We also served around 3800 meals during our chess programs. In an area with 77% unemployment, this is a meal many depend on.

A team from Zithulele took part in the Eastern Cape Provincials, and 9 players were selected for the provincial team.

For some this was the first time they ever left their district and we are immensely proud that our players can compete at that level.

A special shout-out goes to our 12 talented chess seniors, who have continued to do an outstanding job in mentoring and coaching younger players.

### Jeffreys Bay

Last year saw our program expand beyond Zithulele. Besides pockets of groups using the material elsewhere, we introduced chess programs to Grade 4 and Grade 7 classes at Oakridge Academy in Jeffreys Bay. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

We piloted a chess curriculum using tablets in the Grade 4 class (10-year-olds). Each class began with a chess puzzle designed to help students discover a deeper understanding of our values. This was followed by a discussion on how to apply these values in their daily lives.



**JOHN  
TEMPLETON**  
FOUNDATION  
*Inspiring Awe & Wonder*



**3800**  
meals  
served

Students then honed their skills on the tablets, and the class concluded with a fun, competitive chess game. This approach was very effective, and we are excited to continue piloting it in schools which have access to similar technology.

The Grade 7 class engaged deeply with the curriculum using our *Move with Purpose* workbook. What stood out was the program's holistic impact, which is grounded in our three pillars:

- ① **Impact the individual**
- ② **Grow mature mentors**
- ③ **Cultivate a healthy community**

The chess mentor's role is key in our model. One mentor, Henco Bekker, set an example of this. Half the students joined his Friday night youth group, which went to the beach, held movie nights and built friendships. This additional layer of connection strengthened the program's influence.

### **John Templeton Foundation**

The US-based John Templeton Foundation was set up by billionaire philanthropist John Templeton to 'support interdisciplinary research and catalyze conversations that enable people to pursue lives of meaning and purpose.'

A partner linked us with the Foundation because they felt our work aligned with its vision - *Inspiring Awe and Wonder*. It was a providential contact.


The Foundation has generously agreed to support a two-year project to develop *Move with Purpose*. The project includes:

- **New development & implementation staff**
- **Developing a module to train facilitators**
- **A monitoring and evaluation system**
- **10 new pilot sites**
- **Curriculum update**

We would like our program to be usable by anyone, anywhere. The project will help us dive deep and adapt so that it can be scaled.





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# Sakha iKamva Skills Program

In 2024 we presented a shorter version of our Sakha iKamva (*We Are Building the Future*) skills program for post-matric young adults in three months. This enabled students to benefit from the training but keep the flexibility to pursue other opportunities.

Sandiso Masondwana, Liyabona Mbonelwa, and Aviwe Cebani all became volunteers with Sihamba Sonke after finishing the program. They were involved in the *Move with Purpose* chess program and developed other organisational skills.

Through our career support services, Sandiso was accepted to North West University to study education in 2025, with applications for Liyabona and Aviwe pending. We look forward to seeing the bright futures these young men of character have ahead of them.



# Work & Business

## *Siyabonga Galada*

It has been encouraging to see former Job Excellence students return to enhance their skills through E-Cafe courses and earn multiple certificates in the Work 4 a Living program. Participants pay a nominal fee towards these short courses.

Students learn that upskilling is worth the investment - 4 out of 6 students secured jobs after completing their E-Cafe courses.

Our community-driven printing business started as a niche idea and is gathering momentum. We print T-shirts and mugs for clients like local schools and organisations.

*We offer printing for clients outside of Zithulele. Contact us at [info@sihambasonke.org](mailto:info@sihambasonke.org) with your needs.*



# Safe Spaces in Zithulele

## Computer Gaming Initiative

We launched a computer gaming group in May to create a safe space where young boys could come together, share laughs, and enjoy each other's company. In a world full of challenges, having a fun and supportive environment is important — and it has been heartwarming to see how much it has impacted everyone involved.

By the end of 2024 the group grew to 18 young players who meet on weekends and play matches against one another. We started with the classic FIFA 15, an old but cherished favorite. We don't have the latest consoles or games but the players are very excited for the tournaments.



## Community Sports Viewing

We've created an environment to watch sports matches without the risks of crowded taverns or other public viewing spots. Public venues can be unsafe, especially for underaged youth who want to enjoy watching their team play, but have nowhere else to go.

This safe space offers the community somewhere to relax in a worry-free setting, and for students to connect with our mentors in a social setting outside a structured program. We want everyone to feel at home — ready to share the highs and lows of the match with friends and fellow fans! Around 30 people attend matches from the national soccer league to big rugby encounters.





# IT Program Update

*Zine Mavitsho & Nkosie Mkutsu*

Our computer lab was started to provide internet access, learning opportunities, and a supportive online learning environment to Zithulele residents. It grew from a commitment to enhancing computer skills in our fast-moving technological world and a place of belonging and connection in the community.

After a year-long transition, Sihamba Sonke is now handing over the management of the IT Program to Axium, a partner organisation focused on education.

As Axium fully takes over the reins, we wish them well and look forward to seeing more students advancing, more learners engaging, and more people connecting.

## 2024 Highlights



**76 primary school learners trained in computer skills**



**30 community members do weekly online studies**



**90 people use labs for creative outlets like arts and gaming**



# Empower Communities Through Chess

## Your Monthly Support Makes a Difference

Sihamba Sonke walks alongside youth to cultivate character-based decision-making skills, so that together we live lives worthy of imitation.

Our mission is to transform the world, one action, one choice and one life at a time - both on and off the chessboard.

But we can't do it without you.

With your support, we can reach more schools and communities.

### FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

\$25 /  
R 500  
a month

Covers 100 meals at our programs.

\$50 /  
R 1000  
a month

Covers 10 chess workbooks at our pilot sites.

\$100 /  
R 2000  
a month

Provides a salary for a local intern to coach chess and mentor in schools.

Swipe your **MySchool Card** or link your **Woolworths Card** to **Sihamba Sonke** and THEY will contribute to our project. Just go online on your MySchool or Woolies profile to activate up to three beneficiaries.

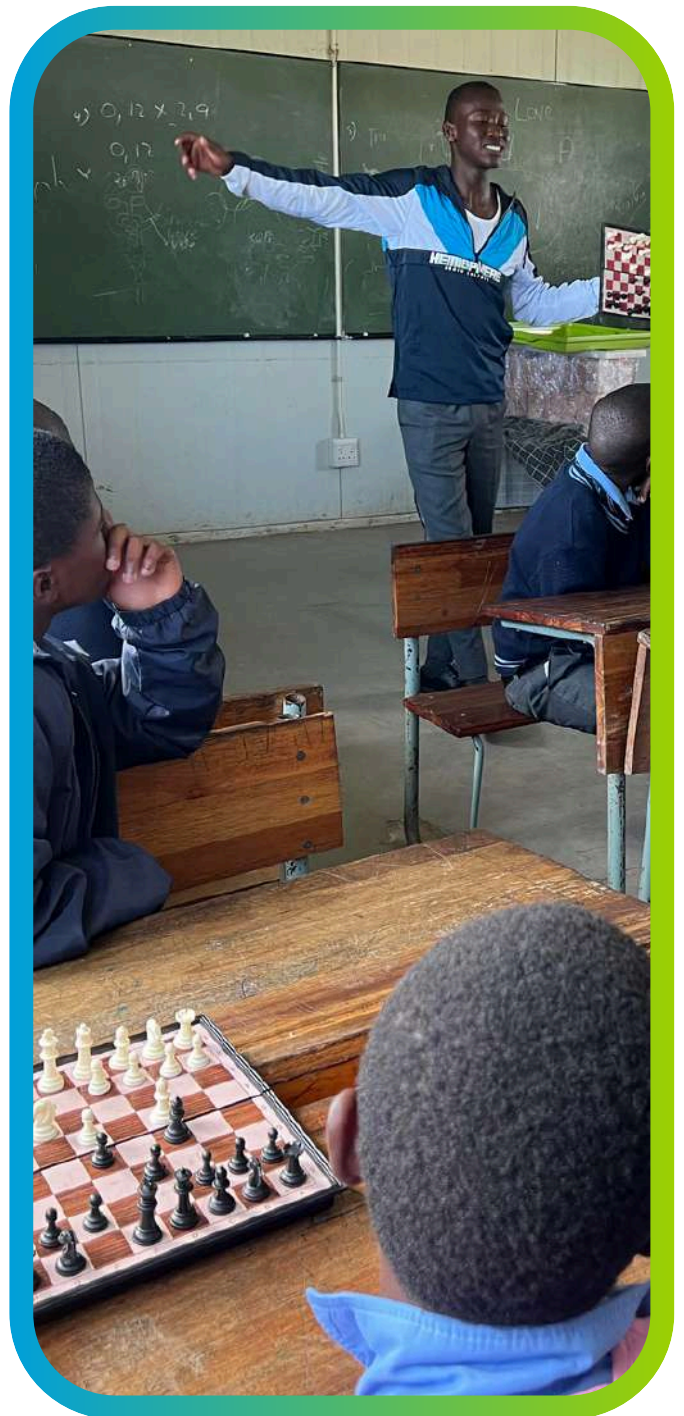
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WATCH CHESS OVERVIEW



ORGANISATION OVERVIEW



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**Bank:** First National Bank  
**Account Type:** Cheque  
**Account No:** 62759245676  
**Branch Code:** 210643  
**SWIFT Code:** FIRZAJJ  
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