



As always, Ikhaya Loxolo had a year of ups and downs in 2016, both in the care centre and on the farm.

On the downside in the care centre we had to say goodbye to a few of our residents despite some of them having been with us for less than a year, but the good news is that most are due to return early in 2017. There is no question that there is big need for a home and a safe haven in the rural Eastern Cape for youths with special needs, as is vividly illustrated by our waiting list, but what is just as clear is that the misappropriation of grants for such individuals and the financial difficulties which follow on such abuse continues to be hazardous and to present us with considerable challenges.

In addition to the ever-present reality of having to carry the costs of the service we offer, a variable which was quite glaringly brought to the fore when our local volunteers halfway through the year demanded an increase in their monthly stipends, we were also subject to our fair share of afflictions in the health department as time went by.

These include maladies and conditions which typically plague specific residents, such as skin rushes and bed-wetting, but what jumps to mind quite prominently is an outbreak of scabies which effected large parts of the Eastern Cape towards the end of the year. Though this initially was cause for much concern, especially among non-local volunteers, our excellent working relationship with the team of doctors at Madwaleni hospital fortunately made it possible to pretty much stamp it out right at the outset, however.

For the rest of it 2016 was relatively uneventful health-wise, except that the consequences of sexual abuse ever go on to wreck havoc on all levels, from severe emotional trauma to HIV dementia.

On the farm we continue to rue having lost all our Jerseys save two hardier crossbreeds that are the offspring of the original stock, not to mention that having also lost almost all our chickens to a wily African wild cat adds to our woes, but on the upside these setbacks are not only offset by us having started afresh on the poultry front and by expecting a new calf to be born before too long in the new year:

For one thing, the goats are thriving. Whereas most of our first two herds of pure Saanen went the same way as the Jerseys owing to being unsuited to the local climate and its tick-borne diseases, we have since then not only managed to establish a new herd of a mixed breed that is both more robust health-wise than their predecessors from the Karoo and of a better quality in milk production than local breeds, but also took the first steps of introducing the Saanen bloodline to other goat herds in the area.



In addition to our herd of goats now doing as well as our sheep, our free-ranging pigs are also a success story. Being of a sought-after breed, well-fed, de-wormed and kept well apart from their less healthy local cousins, they are prized far and wide and as such a good source of income.



The crown-jewel of Ikhaya Loxolo, however, remains to be its thriving organic croplands, set out at both the original estate and additional farmland we acquired nearby some years ago. Being unique in the area also in the sense of being drip-irrigated daily and producing a large variety of herbs and vegetables instead of just the usual corn, cabbage and spinach, our gardens have this year yet again grown in scope and yield, thereby enabling us to make inroads into new markets, thus adding larger sections of local communities to existing clients at the Haven hotel, the Madwaleni hospital, the Spar in Elliotdale and on occasion even its equivalents in Mthatha and East London.





Ikhaya Loxolo's trial-and-tested gardening methods have proven a winning recipe for years now and it hence did not come as a surprise when we were asked at the Wild Coast Forum of October to at a future assembly present a workshop for other NGOs on how to go about planting and growing crops in the area. Patheka Mhlatyelwa, Monica Mgonondi and their co-workers have all done as a sterling job over the past 12 months as ever and a yearly report on our activities would surely be incomplete without making specific mention of and complimenting them on their successes. Well done to everyone in the garden!



Organic farming has been an integral part and to a large extent the basis of our vision and business plan since their inception, but what has been as much part of the original overall idea behind Ikhaya Loxolo is for it to function as an economic growth point and for additional enterprises to therefore supplement agriculture with respect to obtaining an income and eventual financial independence.

It is therefore with no small measure of satisfaction that we can report that we went from strength to strength in 2016 as to retailing all from home-made bread and pesto sauce to lemon and herb salts to imported wearables, alongside profiting from providing our regular clients with a constant stream of fresh produce.



Whereas the farm has proven resilient and continued to be productive, generating an income on top of providing much of the diet of all who live and work here, the care centre has over the last year in its turn settled into the stable rhythm and viable routine of a well-managed living arrangement, thus falling out into the home and safe haven for youths with special needs it is meant to be, the earlier-mentioned setbacks notwithstanding. Even though we are some distance off from being on par with upmarket equivalents owing to there clearly being space for improvement as regards amenities, our residents are well taken care of, happy and healthy.

This has been the case throughout the year and we have all the reason to expect that it will continue in the new year too, also in the light of having acquired two new volunteers who have joined us in recent weeks and who have both worked with children with special needs before.



To be in the fortunate position of benefiting from volunteers' services is always a much-appreciated bonus, particularly if they are not completely new to care-giving and/or can draw on years of hands-on experience at a Camphill School (which on both accounts happens to be the case currently), but having mentioned that, it should at once be emphasised that it would not have been possible to run the care centre at all without the invaluable help of a committed team of experienced staff who are prepared to work long, arduous hours attending to typically thankless tasks.

It is hence with much gratitude that we can report that our existing team of caregivers, comprising father and mother figures as well as some younger personnel who are seen as brothers and sisters, will stay on at Ikhaya Loxolo in the new year, thereby allowing our residents to continue to benefit from the services and care of staff they can trust and have known for many years. Let there be no



doubt about it: our caregivers deserve as much a compliment as our farmhands. Thank you, guys!



In the light of the above and taking all things together there is clearly much evidence to conclude that the overall picture is an encouraging one and that the care centre is as much in the pink as the farm, a view which is in fact vindicated by residents' individual progress as born out in their respective case studies.

Some jump to mind:

When 'N' came to Ikhaya Loxolo she was the rescued victim of untold neglect and abuse, fearful of everyone else, wholly incapable of trust, practically mute, the mother of two unplanned-for children and on top of all that subject to up to 8 epileptic seizures a night. Today her kids are being taken care of, she sings a lot, she smiles a lot, she talks a lot and her fits are down to once a month and even less.

Likewise when 'A' came here he was extremely selfish, violent, wholly inconsiderate to whoever he shared his space with and as such disobedient to the point of being wholly uncontrollable. Today he is as energetic as before and still a handful, but also a lot more likeable and a much better integrated person socially than before, being positively helpful and evidently beginning to understand that the consequences of socially unacceptable behaviour and harming others are not in his best interest.

Similarly 'T' cries much less and is noticeably more stable emotionally than before, the toilet habits of 'N' improved quite drastically, 'S' does not hide his clothes under his bed anymore when he has an accident in it at night and so on. It is sadly just a fact of life that some of our residents are never going to get better, but most of them do, little by little and slowly but surely.



Life has both its ups and downs and it is no different at Ikhaya Loxolo, but in between it all life also goes on and in this respect we are also no different. It hence makes sense to bright-line some of the events and happenings that stood out during the course of the year:

First of all our new addition to the men team, Boyindana Bendlila, built us a brand-new tool-shed, thank you very much, Boy!



A while ago we also employed two new night watchman, who work half a month each, to keep an eye on the newly acquired farmland we mentioned earlier. Welcome to the team, Mpathi Vangeli and Mfowabo Pekiso!

In September we as always attended the annual Wild Run, both to sell our products and to make use of the opportunity to put the participants and the former donors among them in the know as to what it is we do exactly and the latests developments at Ikhaya Loxolo. And as before, it proved to be a worth while exercise indeed! Thank you very much again to the organisers for the invitation!



As mentioned earlier, we a while later also went to the annual Wild Coast Forum once more and a number of issues that were raised and discussed should be highlighted:

One that is particularly encouraging is that the government a while ago agreed to supply the nearby Ngeleni community of Bulungula with an ambulance service. Even though it took approximately 6 years since the application was first submitted for the process to bear concrete results, the fact of it actually happening is not only good news from the point of view of us having for many a year now acted as the unofficial (read unpaid) ambulance service of a sizeable portion of Hobeni, a service which is incidentally not cheap at all, given that it costs a pretty penny for a 4x4 vehicle to quite often drive patients 45 minutes to and 45 minutes back from the nearest hospital, but also in the sense of there at times being a life at stake.



Another issue that is related and that was as uplifting bears on a NGO that is currently both willing and able to speedily deliver medicine and/or equipment to folk who are in dire medical need, should such treatment not be available from governmental sources. For once, real help is really just a phone call away.

A final issue that wants to be mentioned is that help to the local people of the rural Eastern Cape is also under way from legal quarters. On the Forum it namely became known that a qualified legal professional is already in the process of establishing a para-legal body, consisting of representatives of all communities in the area, which will in the nearby future be in an informed position to advise locals, who have otherwise no idea of how the legal system works, on matters that concern them with regard to common law and human rights as manifest in constitutional rights.

From our side we have already identified and subsequently met with an individual who seems to be well suited to potentially serve on the said body, and have assured her that we will do all in our power to support her going forward in the process.

Prominent events on our local district's calender, furthermore, also include the Madwaleni hospital's annual Rolling Hills Wheelchair race, especially since some of our residents without fail participate in it. This year was no exception and even though it is Asiphe Qwesha who features in the pic that is included underneath, it proved to be Nontembiso Mponyothi's turn to this year win a prize in the form of one of the many generously-sized hampers on offer courtesy of the sponsorship of the Elliotdale Spar. A big thanks to them!



A further noteworthy event that showed up in 2016 is the genesis of the Hobeni Dynamos netball team. Put together by Patheka and her girls and being comprised by a mixture of residents and able-bodied staff members, our outfit is yet to win any matches and cause a stir on the local circuit, but do keep an eye out for them! For if how we do things here at Ikhaya Loxolo is any measure, big things are on the cards!



On balance, 2016 has been a good year for Ikhaya Loxolo and it is therefore our sincerest wish to once again thank all our sponsors and supporters, without whom our care centre and home would not have been possible and this report would have been a blank page:

### **Our ongoing supporters:**

- The Marincowitz Welfare, South Africa
- The Solheimar Community, Iceland
- Business Means Responsibility (BMR), Germany
- Kinder(t)raeume e.V., Germany
- The Wild Runners, South Africa, who invited Ikhaya Loxolo again this year to present our work and receive donations from their members
- Wilhelm Vranovsky, Greenbox, Austria
- Veneshree Naidoo, South Africa, sponsoring Nwabisa
- Chartwell Farms, South Africa
- private households and their contributions, South Africa
- the greatest Thanks to Ikhaya Loxolo Entwicklungshilfe e.V., Germany, and all its supporters; it is impossible to mention all of you here individually but rest assured, every cent is much needed and appreciated and has been used appropriately!

### **First timers:**

- Afrika und mehr.....e.K., Germany
- Matthew and Sue Chaskalson, South Africa. Alongside Edwin Ritchken, the said couple certainly count among the most incredible people I have ever had the pleasure to meet; they donated all of 2016's payable stipends and cannot be thanked enough for to what extent they mitigated Ikhaya Loxolo's financial challenges and lessened my vocational burdens!
- the WHEAT Trust

### **A further great thank-you to:**

- Edwin Ritchken for the critical role he played in assisting Michael and Alexandra Guenther to at long last not only obtain their permanent residency permit, but also the freedom that comes with it to plan into the future, privately as well as project-wise
- The Minister of Home Affairs, Mr Gigaba, for having granted these permits
- the Haven Hotel for all its generosity, including unfailingly purchasing our vegetables & herbs and selling our Lemon and Herb Salts to their visitors on our behalf, over and above even inviting us and our volunteers over to their splendid resort for a much-needed rest free of charge!
- The Madwaleni Doctor and Therapist teams, who not only support Ikhaya Loxolo hands-on by way of expertly looking after our residents, but also by regularly purchasing much of our produce, be it vegetables, breads or pestos
- Chandler's Guesthouse in East London and all their staff for the kind service they have been showering on us since as far back as 2010; a special thanks to them!
- Leli Hoch and Thomas Spall, for a great new website!

### **Our most pressing future needs include:**

- finance for running costs (e.g. R 160 000 for groceries per year)
- finance for our local volunteers' raised stipends
- the extension of our toilets and showers, for which a new house will have to be built
- a new vehicle (Ongoing repairs and expenses on our 16-year-old Toyota Hilux recently forced us to buy a new Hilux, one which is in a better condition albeit the same model and even though we



had to pay half of what is on the project's account for it. Clearly it is only a stopgap measure, but it will have to do until we can afford a more recent model/a reliable alternative.)

- a 'facelift' for the estate, specifically for ongoing maintenance on handmade structures which were erected by way of natural building techniques
- furniture for bedrooms
- pressing agricultural needs such as pipings, tanks, machinery maintenance, etc.
- a new hammer mill or the necessary finance for fixing the existing, broken one

And with that we once again thank you for taking an interest and your munificence, and wish you all the best for the New Year!

*Report by Christo Nel*