



Funda Nenja 2009 – 2019
**Strengthening communities through
learning with dogs: A Programme Evaluation**
May 2020



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A community-based child and dog development programme



Arriving for Friday Dog-School



Sit; Stay

Executive Summary

The co-engaged research processes that informed this report; *Funda Nenja: Strengthening communities through learning with dogs*, has proved significant in our lives. Alongside learning and evaluating, informed by appreciative enquiry processes, we have learnt just how powerful this small, community-based programme really is.

In particular the programme has taught us:

- How *Funda Nenja*, or learning with dogs, is as much about people and communities, as it is about dogs.
- How stereotypes can be revealed and can then be overcome. As people learn to care for their dogs and each other, kindness and sensitivity rises. This, in turn, builds closer relationships, across barriers of culture, age and language.
- How care for dogs through indigenous practices is deeply part of Zulu culture.
- How un-learning unhelpful practices, habits and beliefs can become a powerful part of social change for a happier, more humane and sustainable way of life.
- How young people can develop leadership and continue to find meaningful career opportunities
- How inter-generational relationships can be strengthened.

This study has been centred on **learning** pathways, where as one applies oneself, one learns to better understand all relationships - not just the relationships with one's pets, but also with one's family and friends. Somehow building better relationships with one's pets offers the opportunity to strengthen human relationships as well. We learnt how *Funda Nenja* is an important catalyst to unlearn typifying habits. These include the expectation that harsh discipline is needed to train dogs. Working calmly with instructors in an orderly manner, young, and older people, are learning how much more effective encouragement and reward-based training is for pets. We noted how it is possible to learn that encouragement, kindness and consideration are the hallmark of getting along better with people and pets. We also noted how participants in the programme are learning that to be considerate and kind, are important characteristics in everyday life.

The study shows how **structures**, such as the seven systematic stages that are on offer through the *Funda Nenja* 'Dog School', offer a chance to learn, not only from one's instructor, but also from fellow learners. Participants soon learn how the struggles they are having with their own dogs, and even in their own families, at school or in their home life, are quite similar to the struggles others are having! The importance of healthy eating, the veterinary checks and inoculations, also teach young, and not so young people, how such procedures can save lives and build better futures.

As we learnt together in our efforts to document, review and evaluate the project, a sense of the centrality of **agency** became more and more pivotal. Here young people, who never dreamt that they had the potential to teach, were soon able to become young instructors, teaching others and caring for them. Of course the project is also all about **power** - so often people may feel inadequate and powerless to change the circumstances around them; but we found how *Funda Nenja* builds trust and commitment, both of which are crucial to avoid remaining a victim in society. We also noted that kindness and being given a second chance, is close to people's true nature. If only we give trust a chance, that is.

In Chapter 4, where we profile eleven stories of change told by the participants themselves, a different, more powerful way of living one's life becomes apparent. This portrayal of power is evident in the way young people, with their resolute commitment to build better relationships with

those around them, and of course, with their pets, is happening and developing through *Funda Nenja*.

As we went deeper into the research, we found that realist, critical perspectives began to emerge. Through this 'depth deliberation' we were able to critically look again (re-search) in more informed and more thoughtful ways, and that enabled us to question and re-question ourselves, and each other. Being curious, in this way, was certainly an important characteristic of the evaluation process to aspire to! In this same spirit of learning we would welcome further input and advice about this report.

Without being a utopian panacea, this study revealed how kindness, care and *uBuntu* practices are close to the surface in everyone's nature. A little cooperation, structure and agency go a long way in strengthening these values and make them real. The findings reported are not a blue-print or a magic recipe. However, they do represent a more co-engaged way of evaluating, and building community amongst people. Our concluding comment is how fortunate we have been to shed light on, and to be part of, the remarkable transformation of relationship building that can be associated with animal care and *Funda Nenja*.

Acknowledgements and contributors' profiles

Adrienne Olivier: *Adrienne is a founder member and is currently the Manager of Funda Nenja. She was born into a family of dog lovers, and from an early age had a deep love of all animals, especially dogs. She was introduced to dog training when she was twelve years old, and went on to train numerous dogs to championship status in several working disciplines. She started instructing dog training classes at an early age, and progressed to qualify as one of the youngest obedience judges for the Kennel Union of South Africa. Adrienne has run her own private dog training school for more than 30 years and enjoys helping clients to better understand and handle their dogs.*

Sarah Pryke: *Sarah is always availing herself to support others. Her ability to connect with people and develop deeper insights into their potential agency was very evident throughout this evaluation. Her research abilities, coupled with her public-spiritedness, enabled her to do most of the work for Chapter 4, the 'Stories of change' section of the report. This section is the most important part of the evaluation report. Sarah is also an excellent photographer, an acclaimed artist and helps with the Funda Nenja social media. Sarah took most of the photos in this report.*

Tembeka Dambuza: *Tembeka comes from a family of dog lovers. Her father made the famous statement that "....in our family there are only children. Some have two legs and some four. But they all must have the utmost care." She is a qualified teacher and specialises in environmental education. Tembeka currently works for the Duzi uMngeni Conservation Trust (DUCT).*

Sarah Hulley: *Sarah has learnt a great deal through her own dogs, and Funda Nenja makes her excited that others can gain so much as well. Her special interests are people and the environment and she values projects that contribute to the well-being of a community.*

Lisa Button: *Lisa has been involved with training dogs since she was about sixteen years old. She has always had a love for animals, dogs and horses in particular. Farm/country life is her happy place and where she finds inner peace. She is passionate about speaking up for animals as they have no*

voice. A member of the Mpophomeni community had this to say about Lisa: “Lisa is a very hard worker and is very dedicated to helping the community. Even if it means she has to take time out from her life, to come out and help, she is willing to do that, and go the extra mile. She is someone you can count on when in need of help.”

Yvonne Spain: *Yvonne is a former Board member and Chairperson of Funda Nenja. Her life epitomises a public-spirited outlook. She always works by putting others first, and her care for people from all socio-economic backgrounds is widely respected. A further talent is her incredible ability to edit. Her quick, efficient and professional editing of this book is greatly appreciated. Where mistakes are still apparent these are not her work!*

Jim Taylor: *Jim is fascinated by social research processes where people co-engage about the issues and risks that they are all part of. Applying critical realist methodologies in this study enabled a deeper enquiry into what makes Funda Nenja so special, and why it is such a powerful programme in the wider Mpophomeni community. Jim has a PhD from Rhodes University and is a research associate at the University of KwaZulu-Natal.*

Rob O’Donoghue: *Rob O’Donoghue is a retired Emeritus Professor from Rhodes University. His knowledge of research methodologies and action learning processes were invaluable in enabling this research to be undertaken.*

Liz Taylor: *Liz is the owner and manager of Dargle Dale Kennels. She is passionate about animals, and has always been a firm supporter of Funda Nenja. Her ability to co-engage with community members, edit aspects of this report, and generally encourage and guide all around her is greatly appreciated.*

Many other people helped us compile this report. We are especially grateful to all the *Funda Nenja* participants who were so ready and willing to share their insights and perspectives with us. We hope we have done justice to all that was shared with us. These perspectives are especially evident in Chapter 4 where co-engaged ‘report and respond’ processes proved so valuable.

From an evaluation perspective much gratitude goes to Heila Lotz-Sisitka and Eureka Rosenberg. Both know so much about evaluation in theory and practice and yet always share their ideas and expertise freely. Their insights on co-engaged research and the learning, power, agency and structure lenses proved very meaningful in this study.

Others who contributed invaluable insights to the evaluation process include Kevin le Roux and Debbie Cooke. Alex Craib also contributed valuable editing advice in Chapter four. Finally, we are grateful for perspectives from Linda Myburgh in New Zealand, from Dr Susan Friedman in the USA and from Petter Jacobsson, in Sweden.

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Chapter 1. Introduction and background

***Funda Nenja* and the early beginnings**

For ten years *Funda Nenja* has enriched the lives of hundreds of people, and their dogs, who live in the vicinity of Mpophomeni near Howick in KwaZulu-Natal. Initially focussing on the Mpophomeni area, the work is now extending further afield. Ten years is a good time to pause, reflect, reconsider and where appropriate, chart new directions. For this reason, *Funda Nenja* embarked on this evaluation process.

Just like the *Funda Nenja* training programmes, where anyone is welcome to participate, the evaluation adopted a similar approach. Anyone who had heard about *Funda Nenja*, or had participated in the programme in whatever way, was invited to contribute to the evaluation. In the beginning, contributions were collected as 'Stories of Change'. Here, people were able to reflect on how their lives, and those of their dogs, had changed for the better through their association with *Funda Nenja*. Other insights could be shared through social media, or simply as comments to the researchers.

In keeping with this spirit, a Facebook post about the evaluation was made on the 31 December 2019. This post invited all *Funda Nenja* enthusiasts, or critics, to share their stories, insights and what inspires them about *Funda Nenja*. All who follow the *Funda Nenja* Facebook site will attest to the heart-warming stories that are posted there.

What is this evaluation about?

In essence the evaluation process aimed to establish and clarify:

- The history of the project: documenting how *Funda Nenja* evolved?
- Proof of concept: What is it about *Funda Nenja* that really makes it work?
- Strengths and weaknesses: We can certainly learn from these ...
- The management of *Funda Nenja*: How does one manage a programme as diverse and wide-ranging as *Funda Nenja*?
- Issues of human dignity and wider capacity development.

As a participatory research process, the evaluation explored and probed the programme in depth, with the aim of strengthening its practice. (For more detail on the evaluation methodology, please see Chapter 2.)

Unintended outcomes

There have been many unintentional, positive spin-offs from the evaluation. After being interviewed, one group of public spirited people decided to contribute to the comfort of the dogs by making them beds out of recycled polystyrene; which helped to minimise the perennial litter challenges in Mpophomeni.

At times, Adrienne Olivier, a founding member of *Funda Nenja*, noted how the dialogue associated with the evaluation helped make some things more conscious and understandable. This is a helpful insight, because often we do things intuitively or habitually without appreciating their full implications. Furthermore, we may be unable to fully explain how and why we do things. In discussions with others, however, sometimes ‘aha!’ moments lend clarity to how we are doing things, and ideas that were sub-conscious, come into sharp focus.

The evaluation also revealed a number of social stereotypes.

These were typical assumptions that some people make about what living in township situations must be like. A number of volunteers, who live in predominantly white areas, were initially afraid and uncertain of entering and working in Mphahlele. Once they were part of weekly visits, however, a different sense of place developed, and warmth grew towards the people they met at the ‘Friday Dog School’. Encouragingly, they reported how they no longer felt afraid when travelling into the township.

The early beginnings of *Funda Nenja*

Funda Nenja started out as a short term July holiday project in 2009, in collaboration with uMngeni SPCA, with the goal of teaching humane dog handling and basic animal welfare. The original intention was developed by Adrienne Olivier and Heather Somerville, both SPCA volunteers at the time, who saw the need for a different orientation to the outreach work that the SPCA was engaging in the townships around Howick. Adrienne has spent her whole life working with, caring for and teaching people about how to manage their dogs. As a professional dog training instructor, she had many years of practical experience, which helped shape the format and the developing approach of the programme.

Thobani Ngubane describes how *Funda Nenja* developed:

“I think Funda Nenja started because the Funda Nenja ladies realised that although many people had dogs in the township, they did not care for them well. Although they didn’t mean to be cruel, sometimes the way they cared for their dogs was not good. Through Funda Nenja everyone learned to care for their dogs in a way that strengthened their relationship with their pets, and with each other!” (See Chapter 4, Case study 1).

The principles underlying the initiative were never formally debated, but by common agreement, included the qualities of kindness, empathy, nurturing, respect, collaboration, friendliness and a



Nelson Mandela with his dog, Gompo. Despite the challenges he was facing, in those times, the loving relationship he had with Gompo is very evident in the photo (Photo credit Alf Kumalo Archive / Africa Media Online).

non-violent approach when interacting with both people and dogs. These principles form the ethos of *Funda Nenja* and are fostered by all who work in support of *Funda Nenja*.

“Their approach is learning through encouragement. Because of the example they set, they taught everyone to love their animals and to care for them too.” Thobani Ngubane.

In July 2009, at the start of the mid-year school holidays, a group of volunteers held the first dog training class in Mpophomeni. It was attended by twelve boys and their dogs at the *Zamuthule Primary School* in Mpophomeni. From these early, small-scale beginnings the programme began to grow. Within six weeks, attendance of the weekly classes was averaging sixty participants, and it became apparent that the project should be extended, as the enthusiastic interest, as well as the obvious improvement in the handling of the dogs, was evident. At present, the current average number of participants in attendance is one hundred each week.



Mpophomeni is situated about 10 km from the Mandela Capture Site. This photo was taken the day after he died on 5 December 2013, and the many flowers that people brought to the monument are evident in the foreground.



This painting, by Amy Pike, represents the three phases of Mandela's life. His dog Gompo was part of the early activist phase.

The training days eventually settled on a Friday afternoon and became known as Friday Dog School. In the beginning, classes covered some animal welfare knowledge and very basic dog training exercises, such as loose leash walking, and how to teach the dog to “sit.” These lessons were taught by volunteers who had some dog training knowledge. Over time, youngsters who had been part of the programme themselves, became assistant class instructors, and eventually took full responsibility for classes of their own. Today all classes are taught by people from the local community, thereby giving them a sense of deeper understanding of people and dogs, as well as a greater ownership of the project.

The fact that young people, along with their dogs could progress through the programme - from being novice attendees in the first week, to eventually ‘graduate’ at Level Seven, is a remarkable feature of *Funda Nenja*. People often say that you only learn something properly, when you try to explain or teach it to someone else. Of the many *Funda Nenja* participants who shared their stories of change with us, during this evaluation, many noted how important this learning process was to them.

It became evident that the participants benefited from, and matured as a result of their leadership responsibilities, and from the faith placed in them. As is often the case in the poverty of township life, some young people suffer from all manner of challenges - from glue sniffing to crime, and sadly even abuse in some home settings. With *Funda Nenja*, a different opportunity presents itself. Here, committed young people can grow in stature and responsibility, and become mature leaders who share in and subscribe, often very strongly, to the principles of *Funda Nenja*.

As one visitor to the programme noted:

"I could not believe that around a hundred people, with about a hundred dogs, could gather in one place, with a sense of calm purposefulness. There were no dog-fights, no shouting matches, just helpful instructors of all ages, welcoming everyone and showing them where to go. A simple registration process, for all-comers, as well as clearly labelled class settings, with numbers on a short pole; help the organisation of the Friday Dog School a great deal."

From the start, the organisation was a team effort with regular meetings being held. An official public inaugural meeting was held on 16 November 2009 where a Committee was elected and a Constitution adopted. The original name of the project was The Township Dog Training Initiative, but shortly thereafter it was changed to *Funda Nenja* (which means "learning with a dog" in isiZulu); and a logo and brand colours decided upon. Official registration as a Non Profit Organisation with the Department of Social Development happened on 1 December 2010, which then made fund-raising much easier.

What started as an informal practical humane education project has over time evolved into a unique ground breaking initiative that follows a One Welfare and One Health approach. This addresses the needs of both people and dogs. *Funda Nenja* has a strong family support programme which includes the services of a qualified Social Worker. There is also an animal welfare programme which offers free sterilisation of dogs, weekly primary veterinary care clinics and access to specialised treatment for more serious cases. Today the initiative employs four members of staff in addition to paying stipends to the dog school team and instructors - approximately 22 in number. The organisation enjoys wide support from local, national and international organisations, some of whom provide generous financial support to the programme. *Funda Nenja* has become a recognised and celebrated organisation in Mpophomeni, providing vital services and making a positive impact on the local community.

The *Funda Nenja* programme may best be summed up by a local resident, Mlondi Mpungose. Mlondi is better known as Baba Cele. He has lived in Mpophomeni most of his life, and is very active in the *Enviro-Champs* movement for water and sanitation. Baba Cele is especially impressed with *Funda Nenja*. He says that in the old days wherever you went, pets were not treated well. But these days, thanks to *Funda Nenja*, you seldom see poorly treated or malnourished dogs. It is now evident that the pets in parts of Mpophomeni like eBumrandini, Korea and the Madala sections are very well cared for. He points out that people naturally do wish to do the best for their pets but sometimes they simply haven't learnt to care about them. This is what they learn through *Funda Nenja*.

Chapter 2. The *Funda Nenja* research methodology

A process of co-engaged research together

Evaluating a programme as complex as *Funda Nenja* was always going to be challenging. Documenting the statistics of people participating and the outcome of the programme was seen as important, but this only offers narrow perspectives on the programme and its functioning. As evaluators we were conscious that there are many shaping principles and intangibles behind how and why *Funda Nenja* operates as it does, and how this has changed over time.

At the outset of the proposed evaluation, it was clear that the leadership teams of *Funda Nenja* genuinely wanted to learn from, and through, working on an evaluation together. They did not simply want to receive a final report with a set of recommendations from an evaluation team. For this reason, an appreciative enquiry approach was adopted to get the evaluation process underway. By seeking to take the study deeper, a 'depth deliberation' style of research was also applied - drawing on critical realist perspectives on evaluation. Through depth inquiry and deliberation researchers collaborating in, and mediating an evaluation process, are well aware that there are many deeper issues and concepts beneath surface impressions. By seeking to go deeper, through co-engaged deliberation, one can learn a great deal from the dialogue or deliberation processes around the evaluative evidence generated by participants and the data generation tools used.

Seeking deeper meanings

An example of seeking deeper meanings illustrates this point. When community projects have a learning component, the question is often asked what information is 'taken in' and how much knowledge is being acquired? As we spoke to people, their peers and the instructors, at *Funda Nenja*, it became apparent how they had a sophisticated understanding of their dogs and dog behaviour. This competence had not been apparent at the outset of the programme. Young boys explained how they had previously assumed the best way to train a dog was to punish it if it did something wrong. But as the *Funda Nenja* courses progressed it became evident that there were other, more humane and effective, training methods. Participants were thus able to unlearn unhelpful and unkind approaches through developing a closer and more meaningful relationship with their dogs. The research data from respondents thus showed how a developing relationship, based on the love and reward advocated by the originators of *Funda Nenja*, had become the preferred method, and had permeated the ethos developed by participants.

These insights were also evident in research on *Funda Nenja* conducted by Drummond in 2013 (Drummond, 2013). Her results showed how a group of boys that she studied, benefitted emotionally and psychologically through their relationships with their dogs. The results also showed that dog ownership provided the boys with a strong sense of safety, protection and belonging. These findings were certainly corroborated in the research evidence that documented the relationships that young people had developed with their pets. This evidence can be found throughout Chapter 4 where we document 'Stories of Change' from a number of *Funda Nenja* participants.

The co-engaged and depth deliberation approaches to the research enabled a careful documenting of both obvious insights as well as deeper processes (causal mechanisms) producing these. This orientation to research draws on Critical Realism (Bhaskar, 2015). Critical realist research methodologies offer the tools for shedding light on less tangible aspects of social learning processes

such as the processes of unlearning and re-learning involved in the rapid transition from punishment to love, encouragement and trust. Such methodologies are increasingly being favoured when social science researchers wish to probe a situation deeper. Here it was noted that questionnaire surveys and even focus group discussions can tend to perpetuate the outlook or ideology of the researcher, or the questionnaire designer, unintentionally narrowing down the interpretative scope of an evaluation. In this study we favoured a co-engaged and deliberative approach to probe deeper issues, although we knew it was more difficult to manage and document. Here the evaluation researcher elected to undertake the evaluation research with the community members, working as partners, rather than researching using instruments to generate data on them and their activities and perspectives (Reason and Rowan, 1981). Such research is increasingly being preferred where the researcher wishes to place emphasis on the constructs and impressions evident amongst research partners or community members. By working with participants as research partners, a more enabling and in-depth review process is also possible. Meanings can be made, in community with the participants, whether they are *Funda Nenja* instructors, or leaders, or young community members learning about how to care for their pets.

In the past, social science research participants were often referred to as subjects, and did in fact, become the 'subjects' of the researcher or research process. This orientation to research may perpetuate a power-gradient from researcher to subjects, just as in colonial times where a ruling elite presided over the work of subjects or participants under review. We were seeking to avoid the common, although often unintentional, power-gradients that such narrow research styles may inadvertently perpetuate.



*An early evaluation steering committee meeting.
L-R Jim Taylor, Sarah Pryke, Lisa Button, Rob O'Donoghue,
Adrienne Olivier & Sarah Hulley (with the pets!)*

Our study of *Funda Nenja* is therefore mainly orientated within a collaborative approach situated in an interpretative perspective, as outlined in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) where they note:

"the central endeavour in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience". (p.17).

The interpretive perspective is well suited to the study because this approach seeks to probe the feelings, experiences and practices of the *Funda Nenja* instructors, the learners and their dogs. The research had strong qualitative dimensions although we applied quantitative methods where appropriate to document numbers involved, for example.

This work was undertaken as a co-engaged evaluation using a case study approach. Leedy and Ormrod (2010) highlight the importance of a case study methodology in that it promotes understanding of a specific situation under study, and is useful for investigating focused instances of humans, and in our study, their interaction with their pets. To add depth to the study, and indeed enable a deliberative evaluation intent, we found that developing 'stories of change' with any person who had had an experience of, or with, *Funda Nenja* was very useful. The 'Stories of Change'

became the data-set, or research narrative, from which we could derive our insights and conclusions.

Cohen et al. (2011, p. 289) noted that:

“case studies investigate and report the real-life, complex dynamic and unfolding interactions of events”.

The stories of change were thus developed to focus on the real-life contexts and experiences of the participants and their pets. Cooperrider and Srivastva (1987) suggest that inquiry into the social potential of a system in society should: be with appreciation, should be collaborative, should be provocative, and should be applicable. Thanks to the enthusiasm of all the people engaged in *Funda Nenja*; from the leadership, co-workers and beginner participants that we interacted with, we were able to achieve these research principles to a greater or lesser extent.

The importance of working with the well-being of the community in mind was a further important orientation within the research methodology. Indeed, when interviewed about *Funda Nenja*, Baba Cele, a long-time resident of Mpophomeni pointed out how much the community, as a whole, was benefiting from *Funda Nenja*, not just the participants themselves. How this was developing, and why he was able to say this with such conviction, required further ‘depth deliberation’. The research process thus developed as a co-engaged depth deliberation, going beneath the skin of what may usually be considered normal. We were thus able to develop deeper meaning than the conventional and common ways people often speak to each other. Deliberation reminds one of the importance of being deliberate, and therefore purposeful, in our efforts as we aim for the better understanding of processes that are in the interests of the common-good or *uBuntu*. We are reminded to weigh up alternatives thoughtfully and importantly, to unlearn former conventional wisdoms that are not doing much good for ourselves or the community.

In the study we explored:

1. How has the programme developed over the last 10 years? Here the stories of change, and the manner in which the programme has matured and developed towards a healthy and co-constructive programme development process. Responsive and adaptive programme management is important here.
2. How have the intended results/desires and outcomes been achieved? Data gathered and particularly the stories of change give voice to these questions. Indeed the intended results were superseded on a grand scale!
3. Evidence, through critical review processes of evaluation research, to identify what has been learnt. A key learning feature of the project has been the value of community education processes. *Funda Nenja* supports wider community participation - even hiring a social worker who is able to see to the well-being of all participants. *Funda Nenja* is thus a holistic project that works with the community as a whole.
4. How successful the programme has been in the community, and whether the research could guide future phases of the programme or the future up scaling of similar work elsewhere? These questions are addressed in Chapters 6 and 7.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly, were a useful reference in the evaluation process. They were thus included in the evaluation methodology, so as to explore the processes and outcomes in a wider sustainability picture.

The SDGs were developed through the largest and most inclusive participatory process in the history of humanity. They have subsequently been adopted and applied by every country of the world, most notably by South Africa, to guide the development agenda. Issues relating to SDG 1 *No Poverty*, SDG 2 *Zero Hunger* and SDG 3 *Good Health and Well-being* as well as SDG 4 *Quality Education* are all relevant to *Funda Nenja*. *Gender Equality*, Goal 5, and the *Partnerships for the Goals* (Goal 17) are also relevant to the activities of *Funda Nenja*.

Although all the SDGs might not be directly relevant to the work of *Funda Nenja* they are helpful when one considers human animal relationships. The SDGs could also be significant in certain funding circles where funders are obligated to fund projects that support, or are at least congruent, with the SDGs.

A key purpose of the evaluation is to understand the successes, failures and strengths of *Funda Nenja*. It is important to identify ‘what works, for whom, in which contexts and how,’ rather than merely ‘does it work?’ (Pawson & Tilley, 1997). Realistic evaluation, which also has critical realism links, aims to identify the underlying generative mechanisms that explain ‘how’ the outcomes are caused as well as the influence of context. These questions were progressively engaged with as the evaluation progressed and evidence of them is included later on in this report.

Understanding the agency, power, learning and structures

It is important to identify the underlying mechanism to the social or psychological drivers that constitute and influence the reasoning that can come from participants and the programme leadership. Issues like individual, as well as community engagement and improvement, which may be described as **agency**. The importance of having and developing influence, or **power**, as well as being able to find, generate and use information are all relevant to *Funda Nenja* and the **learning** that is taking place and therefore to this evaluation. The study also sought to understand and probe the **structures**, such as the seven systematic stages that are on offer through *Funda Nenja* training programmes, and through which each participant can move as they learn. The learning is not only from one’s instructor but also from fellow learners and the struggles they are having with their dogs!

Roy Bhaskar though his Transformational Model of Social Activity (TMSA) develops a stratified and nuanced approach to the relationship between agency and the structures within which this agency plays out. According to Bhaskar, society is both the ever present condition and the continually reproduced outcome of human activity. Reviews such as this needs to illuminate possible opportunities and constraints within the social structures that may have implications for the ability of participants to transform their situation and bring about desired change.



Figure 1: The Sustainable Development Goals: People Animal Relationships

In the evaluation the appreciative enquiry orientation followed the following steps

1. How did *Funda Nenja* come about? (Chapter 1).
2. How can/should we go about researching and evaluating *Funda Nenja*? (Chapter 2).
3. What is happening at *Funda Nenja*? (Chapter 3).
4. How can we deepen our understanding of *Funda Nenja*? (Chapter 4).
5. How is *Funda Nenja* managed and how is fund-raising and undertaken? (Chapter 5).
6. What partnerships are engaging, supporting and working with *Funda Nenja*? (Chapter 6).
7. What are the principles and core values of the programme? (Chapter 7).
8. And finally, how may the project be strengthened and improved? (Chapter 8).

An important aspect of a co-engaged evaluation process developing around an appreciative enquiry process, is to build on the positive, rather than focus excessively on what might be missing or not in evidence. The research was deliberately organised to involve as many people as possible. It therefore included participants, their parents, their teachers and family members. The leadership and instructors of *Funda Nenja* were also involved and this gave many people a chance to learn together as the evaluation process unfolded. Adrienne Olivier, the founder member of *Funda Nenja* and current leader of the programme, noted that the evaluation helped reveal many things that were previously largely at an unconscious level. The evaluation process helped make some of these processes more visible which strengthened her understanding of the how a programme as wide-ranging as *Funda Nenja* may work.



I love my dog!

By undertaking the research in a way that many people could be involved in the evaluation processes, the learning about the programme was both inclusive and extensive. Not only did the research team learn a lot, but the participants and leadership developed deeper insights through quite a number of ‘aha!’ moments. These insights may best be found in Chapter 4 where the ‘stories of change’ are presented. An interesting outcome of these appreciative enquiry processes is that by the time the evaluation was concluding many people were already acting on the insights and findings they had

developed during their work in the evaluation process.

Funda Nenja is essentially a volunteer orientated partnership programme. It is therefore important to acknowledge the voluntary nature of much of the work and the personal passion that has driven the many different contributions made by a variety of role players.

Collecting ‘stories of change’ from the community members and *Funda Nenja* leadership offers rich, and often deep insights, into how the programme is working and the meaning that it is helping create in peoples’ lives. The stories of change thus provide illustrative insights into the experiences of the participants, the achievements and impact of the project, and what can be scaled-up, adapted and possibly adopted in other areas.

To increase the validity of the stories of change and achieve rigor and objectivity in the way in which the review is developed, an inter-subjective objectivity approach was adopted. This recognizes that key insights are often biased in the telling. A triangulation methodology was therefore used where the opinions of key people were used to establish more balanced impressions. In this regard

Professor Rob O'Donoghue, Yvonne Spain and Liz Taylor played an important role. As compilers of the report we are very grateful for their insights and perspectives.

This report outlines the mechanisms, interventions and enabling/constraining factors that are evident or need to be considered in the future development of the programme or other projects such as this. This entire study provides insight into both how the different components of the programme were identified, and how they have been used within the work of the programme team, participants and other role players.

Broadening participation

Just as *Funda Nenja* programmes are open to all, so was this evaluation. Indeed to broaden the involvement a post was made on Facebook, inviting wider input about *Funda Nenja*.

This post is pasted below:

Invitation to Facebook users to contribute to the Funda Nenja Project Evaluation

For ten years Funda Nenja has enriched the lives of hundreds of dogs, and people, living in the vicinity of Mpophomeni near Howick. Initially focussing on the Mpophomeni area the work is now extending further afield.

Ten years is a good time to pause, reflect, reconsider and where appropriate chart new directions. For this reason Funda Nenja has embarked upon an evaluation process.

Just like Funda Nenja training programmes anyone is welcome to participate in the evaluation.

How would you like to assist with, or inform, the developing Funda Nenja programme? Do join the evaluation process. We invite you to share your story, your insights and what inspires you about Funda Nenja.

Feel free to post directly onto our Facebook site or, if you would like to share a personal insight, do call the Evaluation Coordinator, Dr. Jim Taylor (Cell: 0824580976) and email

jimtaylor835@gmail.com anytime.

Although very little direct responses appeared to come from the Facebook post it was read by many people and helped achieve a wider and possibly more thoughtful support for *Funda Nenja*. In some instances people acted out thoughts relating to the evaluation, without necessary communicating these directly or engaging directly with the research team. This only became apparent when one happened to be in a conversation with someone who then noted how they too, were learning from how the programme was structured and functioning.

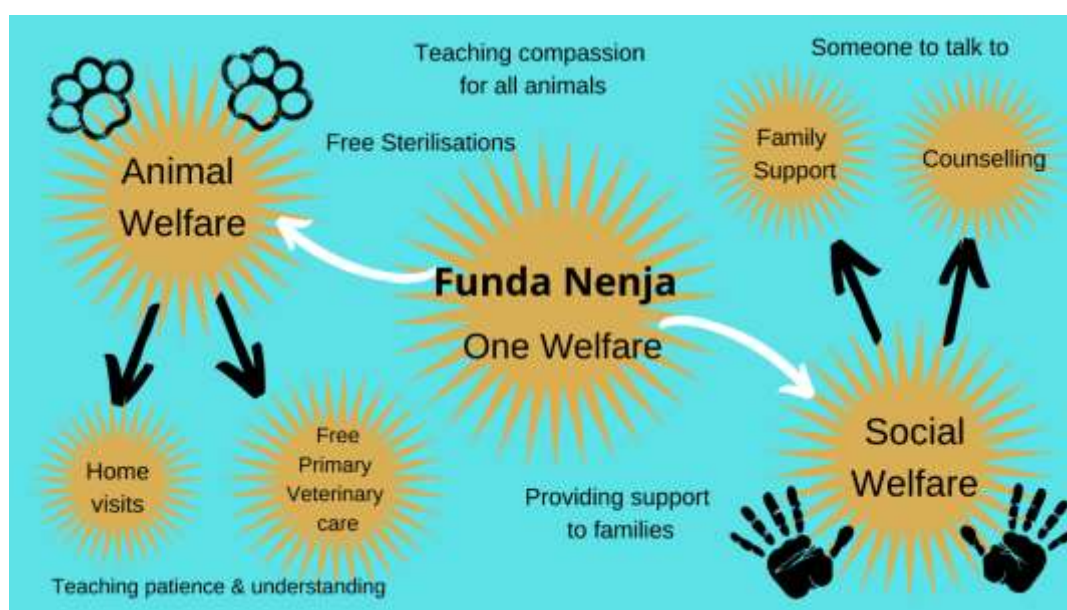
In the next chapter, Chapter 3, we will explore and describe how *Funda Nenja* is currently functioning and how it works.

Chapter 3. The present: How *Funda Nenja* works

Overview

In this Chapter, we describe the way *Funda Nenja* currently operates. It begins with how newcomers join the programme, how they are registered and integrated into the programme. This is followed by descriptions of the Friday Dog School, simply known as ‘Dog School’ which forms the main weekly activity of *Funda Nenja*.

The diagram below outlines the wide range of services offered by *Funda Nenja*. It is clear from this representation of *Funda Nenja*, how balanced the programme is in supporting dogs and pets, and yet at the same time, is a people-centered project.



How newcomers join *Funda Nenja*

Funda Nenja is well known in Mpophomeni, and this means that newcomers to the programme are continually wishing to join in. There is no charge to participate in the classes, which take place every Friday afternoon during school terms at Zamuthule Primary School. To ensure that there is structure and commitment, all children who join *Funda Nenja* are registered on the first Friday of every month. At this registration, the children are split into classes according to the ages of their dogs. All these dogs are given their full set of vaccines (including rabies) by qualified veterinary officials. The dogs are also assessed and treated for worms, or any other medical issues, should this be required. The children's names are taken down, and they are all issued with an information pack consisting of various animal welfare educational material, most of which is in isiZulu, as well as an indemnity and address form. This form is to be completed and signed by a parent or caregiver. The signed form must be brought back to Dog School the following Friday and this information is then captured onto the *Funda Nenja* data base. If the forms are not returned, the children are sent home and instructed to bring the form with them the following Friday. The form also serves as an indemnity, and gives *Funda Nenja* permission to use stories and photos of the children.

The Dog School

The Dog School takes place every Friday (during school terms), and starts at 3.00pm and finishes at around 4.30pm. The Dog School consists of ten classes, from Puppy 1 to Adult 7. A new class has recently been introduced which includes adult handlers, as it is evident that more and more adults are attending the Dog School. All the classes are run by Instructors who are teenagers from the Mpophomeni community. The Instructors are selected on merit, once they have progressed through the classes - from the beginner class to level 7. They need to have demonstrated their reliability, their ability to manage dogs and share their knowledge with others. During the classes the Instructors teach the children how to train their dogs, using positive reinforcement methods. They teach basic obedience, as well as tricks; and they also cover all basic animal welfare needs, such as not chaining dogs and making sure water is always available. Participants are also taught how to correctly handle dogs (especially small puppies), and how to ensure that the dogs have adequate shelter.



Training is fun but structure is important

A new class called “Pre-puppy” class has recently been started. This is for the very young puppies that are too young to join the main Dog School classes. The children in this class are taught the fundamentals of taking care of very young pups. They are also given educational material, and the concepts in the hand-outs are explained. Although many of the children struggle to read both English and isiZulu, they are so enthusiastic about the learning sessions, that the hand-outs form a valuable reading and revision resource. The young puppies are also vaccinated and de-wormed.

Many children, who don’t have dogs, watch the Dog School activities, longingly, through the fence. They wait patiently for their friends to finish their training.

Funda Nenja is therefore considering monthly lessons for the children without dogs, so that they too, can participate.

On the third Friday of every month, the *Funda Nenja* Education Officer, Nomonde Dlungwane, conducts a lesson to the three new intake classes. For this lesson they are told not to bring their dogs, since the lesson is only for them and takes place in the classroom that Zamuthule Primary School has kindly allocated to *Funda Nenja*. The topics covered in these lessons include “safety around dogs”, “the five freedoms”, “diseases that affect dogs” and “careers with animals”.

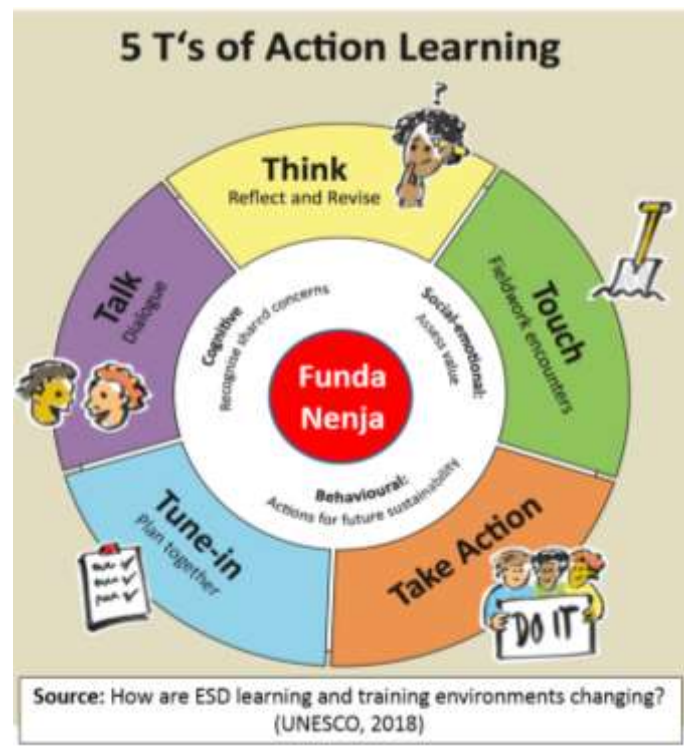
Funda Nenja is currently setting up monthly lessons for the children without dogs. This will include the children who sit outside the Dog School every Friday, waiting for their friends to finish their training. These lessons plan to include input on reading and crafts. The concept is in its formative stages, and *Funda Nenja* is currently looking for volunteers to run these lessons.

Evaluative comment: *The Dog School lessons are very popular, and this is evident in the large attendance each Friday afternoon. The learning that goes on during the training sessions involves dialogues with the dog-owners around what is required and how. At the same time, there are also practical demonstrations that provide opportunities for the dog-owners to try out what is being discussed. Peer-to-peer learning is also very apparent at the learning sessions, which can be a powerful way of developing understanding, as well as offering emphasis and reminders where appropriate.*

In evaluating the sessions, it was found that many aspects of “action learning” were apparent (Taylor, O’Donoghue and Venter, 2018). In an action learning process five ‘Ts’ are addressed. Many teachers or informal instructors are finding the five Ts of Action Learning useful for helping organise meaningful learning experiences.

The 5 ‘Ts’ refer to the following:

- **Tune-in:** The first T is for “Tune- in”. It involves engaging in a ‘Tune-in’ process that connects the learners with the topic that the instructor is dealing with. Often questions to the dog owner help establish just where the dog-owner is at, so that the lessons connect well with them.
- **Talk:** Another T is for ‘Talk’ (discussion by, with and amongst participants) as well as
- **Touch:** ‘Touch’ refers to real-life encounters such as the owner engaging in a practical lesson with his or her dog - such as ‘sit’. This T for ‘Touch’ includes practical outdoor experiences with one’s dog.
- **Think:** The next T is for ‘Thinking’ or reflection, amongst participants.
- **Take Action:** The last T is for Taking Action. This T is a reminder of the action a young dog owner could take, to ensure that his or her dog is well looked after and trained in a positive manner. Of course the 5Ts intersect and flow into each other, and are commonly mediated in a socio-cultural context. They apply open-ended methods to support co-engaged and experiential meaning-making.



Funda Nenja: Friday Dog School

Notes from Friday 24 January 2020, Zamuthule School, Mpophomeni

Township life is just like this. Everyone arrives in all manner of ways. On foot, mainly, but also in cars, old and new. Mini-bus taxis, bicycles, running, some with pets in wheel-barrows, you name it! And the whole event starts to get going from about 2 pm when the early starters get there. Everyone comes. Instructors, volunteers, patient onlookers, dog owners, want-to-be dog-owners, un-owned dogs, Vets, Vet Assistants and even people from Social Welfare. Everybody comes on a Friday!

The biggest group of all are the eager to learn youngsters, with their dogs - all of them, or nearly all of them, on nicely made leads. Dogs without leads soon have them! One youngster tried to control his dog by the ear because he didn't have a collar or a lead. Soon a more knowledgeable person kindly took him by the hand, and showed him how to put a collar on. Just one simple, friendly and engaged action and all was well. No yelling or criticism. Just warm, calm, example setting and knowledge sharing. For about an hour, while everyone gets organised, it looks like chaos. People and dogs milling around. When you get over 100 people and dogs together it can be chaos. You would expect outbursts of shouting people and fighting dogs. But that simply doesn't happen. The more you look beyond the evident chaos, the more you see the slowly emerging structure and organisation. Everyone, dogs included, gradually get taken up by the captivated focus. All start learning through friendly, engaged calmness - with enthusiasm everywhere.

Gradually the different groups take shape and all start working on the training focus for the day. Neatly labeled training areas help everyone know exactly where to go. Even the dogs know where to go. Have they even learnt to read, as well? And Epworth school was represented. Grade 3s, from Epworth Primary School in Pietermaritzburg, donated a neat pencil case with some learning materials for each participating young person. And each pencil case had a special, personalised message from an Epworth school pupil. What a generous, thoughtful gift!

Working in small groups, with similar ability or lack of ability, is the order of the day. By 3.30 everyone knows where they should be, and begin enjoying the learning that is the mark of each Friday afternoon. And the learning is learning by doing, through example setting and calm co-engagement. No wonder Friday Dog School is the highlight for many young people and for the dogs of Mpophomeni.

Evaluative comment: *For meaningful learning to occur, a fine balance must be found between structure and responsiveness. It's no good having everyone responding loosely in their own way. Neither is an excessive and limiting structure good for learning. The structure and responsiveness at the Friday Dog School is impressive to see. Within the structure, dog-handlers are allowed, and encouraged, to actually do things with their dogs, so there is a chance for co-engaged learning. Neither do the instructors spend too much time instructing. Most appeared to strike a good balance between sharing a few words, and then allowing the participants to try them out, with their dogs. Again the action learning components, described above, appeared to come to the fore, and all were engaged in a mixture of listening, experimenting, talking, thinking and re-thinking. And of course taking action - taking action to ensure their dogs are healthy, happy and well trained!*

Primary health care of pets

A 'One Health' system, is an approach to pet care where all aspects of an animal's life, and health, are linked to the life and health of the people and the environment. The One Health approach is applied, with veterinary input, through the Friday Clinic, which is offered in parallel with the Friday Dog-School. It is an integral part of the health of the dogs which live in and around Mpophomeni. The veterinary input links with the dog training principles of *Funda Nenja* and includes basic veterinary inputs. The results of this work are quite outstanding. Christine Klapprodt has developed these clinics and inspired a group of other professionals to get involved. Often, on a Friday afternoon, there are up to five veterinary professionals, including Dr. Steckler (from the Howick Vet Clinic) on site, providing consistent care in the community. There is now a broader scientific direction in diagnostics, more focused veterinary treatments, and inputs for long term health of the community as many animal diseases are linked to the health of people. Many welfare interventions are once off, however, *Funda Nenja* provides a sustained veterinary presence in the community which contributes significantly to the health of pets. This health is then complemented through the Dog-School training. It is also significant to note that this work has developed over time and has had a very significant accumulative impact on the health of people and their pets. The ongoing consistency of these processes is vital for the future.

Sterilisation clinics

These take place on a monthly basis, and are headed by Dr Lee Pachonick and her assistant Di Santoro. *Funda Nenja* provides a very efficient team of helpers, including the *Funda Nenja's* own Vet Nurse, Christine Klapprodt. Kevin le Roux and Debbie Cooke, (both Senior Animal Health Technicians) from Allerton Laboratories, assist at these clinics on a voluntary basis. *Funda Nenja* transports the sterilised dogs home afterwards.

The sterilisation work represents ten years of accumulated population management, spear-headed by the SPCA, and involving many important role players over the years. These include private veterinary practices who are always willing to help. It is interesting to note that sterilisation in Mpophomeni is considered to be 65% while the KwaZulu-Natal average is 2% (Kevin le Roux, pers.com.). Again this is a testimony to the entire program and what its network of partnerships have achieved over time.

Evaluative comment: *Before any sterilisation procedure is undertaken, the full implications of the operation and the outcomes are explained to the dog-owner. This is very important to build trust and to ensure that people don't feel misled.*

School holiday activities

Since there is no Friday Dog School during the school holidays, *Funda Nenja* offers holiday workshops for the children who are enrolled in the program. The Education Officer oversees these workshops, which include sessions on crafts, games, colouring competitions, reading and animal welfare. These workshops run from 9.00am until 2.30pm, and tea/snacks and lunch are provided. We limit these workshops to thirty children. The children do not bring their dogs to these workshops, although there are always one or two dogs that arrive with the children.

Social welfare

Many children who live in Mpophomeni are vulnerable and at risk. Single parents, child-headed households, elderly grandparents and relatives all assist in taking care of the children. Much of this

takes place in situations of extreme poverty with challenging social dynamics. Because *Funda Nenja* is essentially a community project, issues at home and at school are important to understand, and at times interventions may be necessary. In this regard *Funda Nenja* hires a Social Worker, Rene Morcom, who is responsible for assessing the home situation of each child who joins the program. Rene offers counseling for anyone who requires it, and she also assists in obtaining identity documents, birth certificates and government grants. When appropriate she makes referrals to organisations such as the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA), the South African National Council on Alcoholism (SANCA), uMngeni Hospital etc. She sees many cases of domestic abuse, substance abuse and teenage pregnancies, which are very real problems in the community.

Funda Nenja also operates its own feeding scheme, and families in need are usually identified by the *Funda Nenja* Social Worker or Education Officer. Where possible, *Funda Nenja* also arranges food distribution.

Home visits

Home visits are done for every new child that joins the programme. The home visits are conducted every Tuesday morning. The purpose of the visits is to check that the basic living conditions of the dogs are acceptable. This is also an opportunity for the *Funda Nenja* social worker to speak to the family members and assess the social welfare conditions of the whole family. Both our Education Officer and Social Worker keep records of every home visit and take photos of the dogs and their living conditions. These photos, as well as a brief report if applicable, are filed in the *Funda Nenja* case study files. Follow up home visits are done if the dog's living conditions are unsatisfactory and if the changes have not been made by the second visit, the SPCA is notified.

Evaluative comment: *In any community at risk, the needs and stresses are often all too prevalent. In addressing the many broader needs of the township, Funda Nenja has to be careful it doesn't use up its core resources. Resources such as funding and voluntary commitments are precious, and should not be used up at the expense of the core mission and vision of the programme which is essentially about **learning with dogs!** Neither should a not-for-profit organisation such as Funda Nenja, usurp the role and position of government departments who are better positioned and better resourced for dealing with such issues.*

Chapter 4: Stories of change

Overview

Throughout the evaluation process we were continuously made aware of the rich evidence pointing towards how successful the *Funda Nenja* programme really is. How does one document such rich material? How does one provide evidence or ‘proof of concept’? How does one avoid excessive bias, knowing that no meaningful research is ever unbiased! In writing this report we are fully aware that no neutral state is possible! Indeed many researchers would argue that the assumption that one is neutral is, in itself and by implication, a highly political position to assume.

In this chapter of the report we therefore decided to highlight, or rather profile, authentic stories of change. These are the stories from people who have had a lot to do with *Funda Nenja*. For most of the people their experience describes how, through *Funda Nenja*, their lives and those of their pets and the people around them, changed a great deal. And this change was always for the better. By reflecting the stories of change here, we also invite the reader to make up their mind as to the validity or authenticity of the accounts, and our interpretations of them!

In particular, we owe immense gratitude to Sarah Pryke for all her efforts in helping us document the stories of change. Sarah has a very special talent in the way she works with people. People naturally warm to her and are able to share, quite deeply, how they feel and how the *Funda Nenja* experience is shaping and re-shaping their lives, the lives of their pets and the people they live with.

While compiling the stories of change we were continuously aware of how the evaluation process was more of a co-constructed endeavour with people, rather than a research process on them, or an extractive research process that seeks to gain insights and knowledge from others. What this meant for us, is that we were seeking to reach a deeper meaning than what might have been possible from more conventional research, where one questions others about their understanding. Best of all, is that this research process enabled us, as evaluators, to learn a great deal, and what a privilege this proved to be. A co-constructed research process also enabled us to achieve a measure of ‘depth deliberation’ as we jointly deliberated with participants about their experiences with *Funda Nenja*. We were also able to deliberate and record how these changes had often had a remarkably positive effect on their lives, and now, on our lives too!

Recording such data is not easy but we found the concept of a ‘report and respond’ approach very useful. In our discussions with participants, we would report the essence of what they were telling us and then reflect this material, as written or recorded text, back to them a day or so later, to see if we really had reflected their views and perspectives accurately. Quite often, the next day, participants would have more to say or would reflect a little more deeply on something they had noted the day before. We thus jointly re-wrote the stories of change more accurately and, we believe, more insightfully.

We should also emphasize that the ‘report and respond’ process was not only in a written form. Quite often the people we were chatting with spoke English as a second language, did not have strong literacy skills, and had little practice in reading and writing in English, or isiZulu. For this reason much of the discussion, or depth deliberation, as we refer to it, was done verbally in a mixture of isiZulu and English, to gain clarity, before being finally re-written and recorded in English. These reports follow.

This chapter thus commences with Part 1 and includes the eleven stories of change. After the stories of change, we move onto the next section of this chapter, Part 2. In Part 2 we reflect the shorter testimonials that we received from the partners, funders or donors of *Funda Nenja*. These testimonials are significant, because they often portray how pleased, and proud, many funding organisations are of being able to contribute to *Funda Nenja*. Indeed, many of the contributors to *Funda Nenja* saw themselves as ‘partners to the programme’ rather than simply ‘funders’ or ‘funding partners’. Rather than feeling obligated to help *Funda Nenja* it is encouraging that many of the contributors are asking whether there is something more they can do to help the *Funda Nenja* programme as a whole. Often the most valuable contribution *Funda Nenja* receives is not the money, as important as financial support is, but the advice, expertise and links to other support, which may not be directly money related.

Part 1: Stories of change

1. Thobani Ngubane (now 24yrs old) and his dog Hayley

My name is Thobani Ngubane. I was born and grew up in Mpophomeni. When I was 14 years old I heard about *Funda Nenja*. I heard that the people from *Funda Nenja* really cared about people and their dogs and I realised I could learn from them too. I was hungry to learn more! The ladies at



Thobani Ngubane – Now 24 years old

Funda Nenja love dogs and know how to look after them well. Because of the example they set they taught everyone to love their animals and to care for them too. Their approach is learning through encouragement. What is special about the *Funda Nenja* ladies is that they always treat everyone nicely!

My dog’s name was Hayley and she loved the *Funda Nenja* classes as much as I did. We learnt that if you learn to love your animal you will grow together. It’s the same with all animals, even horses. Later on I was invited to become an instructor at *Funda Nenja* and this was a very proud moment for me. It then became my job to teach by example and to encourage all the younger people about their dogs and how to look after them nicely. I also try to teach through encouragement.

I think *Funda Nenja* started because the *Funda Nenja* ladies realised that although many people had dogs in the township they did not care for them well. Although they didn’t mean to be cruel sometimes the way they cared for their dogs was not good. Through *Funda Nenja* everyone learned to care for their dogs in a way that strengthened their relationship with their pets, and with each other!

We then invited Thobani to tell us about what he felt his dog Hayley thought of *Funda Nenja*. This was an interesting exercise for him and, in some ways, he appeared to speak more freely than when he was expressing himself about the programme.

Hayley’s story: My name is Hayley. I am Thobani Ngubane’s dog. I love going to *Funda Nenja* because there are a lot of dogs there and nice ladies who care about us. You can feel it! They teach us and our owners. We learn to respond well to our owners and our owners learn how to care about us. At *Funda Nenja* they make sure that we are healthy and that we have had all our medical inoculations. The people who work at *Funda Nenja* are also enthusiastic to help all the pupils who attend classes to further their schooling. This includes sponsoring some pupils where they are able. Sometimes *Funda Nenja* people even help people find jobs!

2. Goodluck Mvelase

Goodluck Mvelase has been a part of *Funda Nenja* since the organisation first started in 2009. When he was seven, Goodluck joined the weekly dog training class with his family dog, Puppy. A few years later, Goodluck acquired his very own dog, Spring - a very beloved and devoted dog, and these two grew up together. They powered through the training classes, and were part of the demo team for many years. Goodluck even qualified his dog as a Canine Good Citizen under the Kennel Union of South Africa.



Goodluck Mvelase

Goodluck has been an instructor at *Funda Nenja* since 2016. He has taught many different classes from the young puppies to the older dogs, and is currently instructing the top advanced class and demo team. Goodluck is a responsible, gentle and kind young man. His quiet manner, and extensive knowledge in animal welfare and training, endears him to the children and they really respect him and enjoy his classes.

Goodluck says that he loves teaching because “I learn so much from teaching, the children teach me all the time how to be a better teacher”. He says that “the best part of teaching the children at *Funda Nenja* is watching them learn to be good with animals and with their friends, and grow into good people”.

Goodluck has been part of *Funda Nenja* for ten years and says he has seen the huge impact that the programme has had on the community. “People here in Mphaheni are now taking care of their dogs, they are getting the dogs sterilised and they are treating them like family”. He says that “it is so different from other townships, where people don’t care for the dog or the other animals”. “Here people that don’t look after the dog get into trouble from the neighbours and from *Funda Nenja*, so they are learning to respect and care for the animals”.



Goodluck Mvelase helping a young learner

Goodluck says that he:

“Can’t imagine no *Funda Nenja*... *Funda Nenja* has been here helping me since I was very young. I can’t remember my life before *Funda Nenja*. *Funda Nenja* has taught me so much about being a good person, to be responsible, to love the dog and to treat all people and animals with respect and kindness. This is very important to learn.”

3. Izwilenkosi Nxumalo

Izwilenkosi Nxumalo first arrived at *Funda Nenja* after she rescued a tiny puppy from a man who had dumped it. She came to *Funda Nenja* to get her puppy rabies vaccinated and dewormed, and to learn how to care for her very young puppy. Izwilenkosi says that her grandmother did not want her to have a dog but that she “begged and begged and then I cried and cried”. Her grandmother relented and the lucky little puppy moved in with the Nxumalo family.



Izwilenkosi Nxumalo and King Vikas

Izwilenkosi named her tiny puppy King Vikas, and said it was because he is “so special and he needs to have a royal name because one day he will be big and strong”. Well over a year later, and Kingie is a very big and strong dog. He is also a very happy, confident and much-loved dog, who absolutely adores his young owner. “Kingie still thinks he is small as he likes to sit on me and to cuddle with me... he is so funny... but I just love him so much”.

Izwilenkosi is an only child who lives with her mother and grandmother. King Vikas lives inside with the family and “has a blanket to sleep on in my room, he is always with me”. Although her grandmother was reluctant to have a dog, apparently, she now “loves Kingie so much, she is always giving him chicken and talking to him”.

King Vikas has learnt basic obedience commands during the weekly Friday afternoon classes, and he has also “learnt how to be with other dogs and play nicely with his friends”. Izwilenkosi says that she “loves *Funda Nenja* because everyone is so happy and caring here, you care so much for dogs, but you also care for people too. I am so happy I came here to learn how to care and love my dog”.

Izwilenkosi says that the thing she most loves about King Vikas is that he “is happy, funny and naughty” and with a big grin “and is simply the best and most beautiful dog in the world!”

At the beginning of 2020, Izwilenkosi was made an intern and is now helping out the *Funda Nenja* instructors at Dog School every Friday afternoon.



Izwilenkosi Nxumalo and King Vikas as a puppy!

4. Nokulunga Ngcobo

Nokulunga arrived for her first class with a little puppy, Pookie, who was super clean, shiny and smelt beautiful. Nokulunga said that she "gave Pookie a bath so that she would be smart for the class". During the puppy classes Nokulunga spent the whole class time cuddled up with Pookie, constantly talking to and feeding her.



Nokulunga and Pookie

A year on and Pookie has grown substantially... but these two are still absolutely devoted to each other. The now 12 year old Nokulunga still spends the whole class cuddled up with Pookie, and is constantly talking to and touching her sweet dog. Pookie, in turn, has grown into a friendly, confident and very happy dog, that is also beautifully trained and very well behaved... and always very clean. Nokulunga says that she "brushes Pookie every day to make her clean and so that doesn't have any dust on her... if she plays with mud then I take her to the water tank, and bath her to make her clean".

Nokulunga and her younger sister are cared for by their older sister, as her mother works far away from home. She says that "Pookie is my other sister and she cares for me... and I love Pookie too much". Nokulunga says that the best thing about Pookie is that she 'always likes to play with me... she likes to play with the ball and run for the ball... that is my favourite game'. She also says that "Pookie loves the cuddle, the isisu (tummy) game... she never gets tired of that game and every day she makes me do the cuddle, the isisu".

Gugu, Nokulunga's sister, told us that "Nokulunga is such a good girl and she cares for Pookie like she is her baby. Funda Nenja has made big difference here, and lots of children are good now because of you. Nokulunga takes Pookie out walking with these children, but if they are Funda Nenja children, then I don't worry because I know they are the good children".

Nokulunga is gentle, sweet and kind, and she is absolutely devoted to Pookie. When she grows up, Nokulunga says she would like to "work for the SPCA so that I can help dogs and make sure that dogs are happy and not with bad people".



Nokulunga and a grown-up Pookie

5. Ntokhozo Khumalo and Scarface

One of the longest-term attendees and firm favourites at the dog school are Ntokhozo Khumalo and Scarface. Scarface loves to greet everyone on her arrival. Scarface was brought home by Ntokhozo's



Ntokhozo and Scarface

father as an adult dog that was not wanted by her previous family. Ntokhozo decided to name her Scarface "because she had scar here across her face". The scar has since healed, but the name has stuck.

The Khumalos run a local catering business and supply ready-made meals to the community, so their house always smells wonderful! With a big laugh and grin, Mrs Khumalo said "the dogs love my cooking more than anyone else!" Indeed, their waistlines indicate that they really appreciate all the good food!

Ntokhozo lives with his parents and younger sister, and next door to a few other regular *Funda Nenja* attendees. Mrs Khumalo says that "Ntokhozo is always going out with Scarface and his *Funda Nenja* friends... it makes me happy when he does this as I know that the *Funda Nenja* boys are good boys, I really love *Funda Nenja* and everything that it teaches our

children... it is the best".

Ntokhozo and Scarface are absolutely devoted to each other, and the very best of friends. As Mrs Khumalo says, "Scarface is always with Ntokhozo, these two do everything together... I hope Scarface will live forever and ever because if she dies Ntokhozo will lose a sister and best friend...". With a big laugh she says, "If I can't find Ntokhozo, I just call Scarface and then Ntokhozo will come too!".



The Khumalo family with their dogs

6. Phiwokuhle Kunene and Dot

Phiwokuhle Kunene and Dot are regular attendees at the Friday afternoon classes at *Funda Nenja*. His father, Sibusiso Kunene, often drives Phiwokuhle and Dot to class in his car, and sometimes accompanies them to class. Sibusiso feels that *Funda Nenja* has helped cement the loving bond between Phiwokuhle and Dot, and has really helped Phiwokuhle acquire a wide range of life skills.



Phiwokuhle and Dot

Phiwokuhle initially named his dog ‘Sniffer’ because he “would sniff everything” but has recently changed his name to Dot because “it is a better name for a beautiful dog”. Dot is the only dog in the family, and is very much a beloved pet. Mr Kunene says that “Dot lives indoors with us and is a big part of our family, we all love him”. Phiwokuhle absolutely adores his best friend, and the two of them always race into class together. Phiwokuhle is very diligent and works hard with his training during class - but it is not always easy, as Dot is not always the most attentive dog. “Dot can do sit and down, but he can’t do the stay or other things, because he likes to go smell instead”.

Phiwokuhle says that the most important thing he has learnt at *Funda Nenja* is “how to love your dog and to keep your dog safe”, and he says now when he walks Dot in the streets he keeps “him on my left side when we pass other dogs, and then the other dogs won’t fight with him”. He says that he loves Dot because “he is beautiful and funny, and he is my friend”. When he grows up Phiwokuhle would like to “work here at *Funda Nenja*”.

Transcription of a video in which Sibusiso Kunene, Phiwokuhle’s father, summarises the benefits of the *Funda Nenja* Programme

“I very much appreciate bringing my son to Funda Nenja. It gives him the capability of being able to learn new things, take responsibility, and learn things he didn’t know before he started attending these classes. It gave him responsibility, taught him to be punctual and to show up on time. This gives him the opportunity to do many things. He has learnt to do his homework, on his own, after school. Funda Nenja has done wonders for him. So, we very much appreciate Funda Nenja bringing this opportunity to our township and also to Mpophomeni at large. For the people and the kids, instead of going and doing other things, they to come to Funda Nenja which is helping them learn. Not only are they learning about dogs and animals but they are also learning about other important subjects.”



Sibusiso Kunene, Phiwokuhle’s father, with Phiwokuhle and his dog, Dot

7. Prince Nxele and Lion

Prince Nxele and his gorgeous dog Lion are long term attendees of *Funda Nenja*. Prince says that Lion was given his majestic name “because he is beautiful and has hair like a lion”. These two have noticeably grown into big teenagers during their time at *Funda Nenja*, and both Prince and Lion always wear the biggest and happiest smiles.



Prince Nxele and Lion

“learnt everything”! He says that the lessons at *Funda Nenja* have helped him in everyday life, as he has learnt “to be responsible, kind to animals and people, work as a team... and not to be so naughty”. He says that Lion has also “learnt to know things... he can do lots of clever things like sit, stay, down, trot and play with other dogs”.

Prince and Lion are absolutely devoted to each other and have a very special friendship. “Lion loves me, and I love him... we will be friends forever”.

Prince lives with his grandmother. Lion is one of two beloved dogs that are owned by his grandmother (the other dog attends *Funda Nenja* with Prince’s cousin). His grandmother is devoted to her dogs, and is a big supporter of *Funda Nenja*. “Gogo (grandmother) buys the dogs inyama (meat) to eat everyday... they don’t like the dog food like we get here”. Indeed, Lion is one of a few spoilt dogs that we bring special treats for, as he won’t eat the dry commercial food that is provided to the children each week for training!

Prince is a very kind, gentle and responsible young man, who says that during his time at *Funda Nenja* he has



Prince Nxele and Lion are very close!

8. Sandile Ndlovu

Sandile Ndlovu has a long history with *Funda Nenja*. Sandile attended the very first dog training lesson at *Funda Nenja* in June 2009 with his grandmother's elderly dog, Tiger. Sandile said that "I first went because I thought I could get Tiger vaccinated, but when I got there I saw it was about training the dog, so I stayed to learn... and I kept coming back every week because it was so good and I learnt so much". When Sandile first started training Tiger, she was a reactive and snappy dog, but "Tiger became a very good dog, she became good with people and with other dogs, and we graduated to be part of the demo team... that was the best, as we got to travel to different places in KwaZulu-Natal to show everyone how good we were at training".



*Sandile Ndlovu at work at
Chase Valley Clinic*

Tiger sadly died from old age but Sandile stayed with *Funda Nenja* as an instructor for a few years. When he left school, he went to work as a kennel assistant at the Umgeni SPCA in Howick for three years, before he moved to Chase Valley Veterinary Clinic as a veterinary assistant. Sandile is a respected employee at Chase Valley and he is also currently studying to be an animal health technician through UNISA.

During his time at the SPCA, Sandile adopted a small dog, named Ten, who was "surrendered because her owner only wanted hunting dogs". Ten is a very valued and beloved member of the Ndlovu family. "She lives with my family, and my younger brother cares for her during the week when I work, but I see her every weekend when I go home to Mpophomeni". With a big laugh he says that "she likes to sleep in my bed with me when I go home... and she is scared of storms, so when it rains or storms everyone knows that they must bring her inside, and put her in the bed under the blankets so that she won't be scared".

Sandile says that *Funda Nenja* has radically changed since he started ten years ago. "We started with just

six or seven children, now there are hundreds of children and dogs... and even girls! We never had girls in the lessons. There are also so many instructors and other important people working there now... it is just crazy how much it has grown... everyone knows about *Funda Nenja*, not just in Mpophomeni".

Sandile says that *Funda Nenja* has “totally changed the life of the dogs and people in Mpophomeni”. “Elderly people now tell all the children to go to *Funda Nenja* so that they can become good. Everyone takes their dogs to be vaccinated, before they didn’t even know that you must vaccinate a dog. They now buy kennels and dog food for their dogs. Before the dogs would have nowhere to sleep and just eat scraps, nobody knew that they must have shelter and proper food. You now see the gogos (grandmothers) carrying lots of meat and they say it is for the dogs. If someone is abusing a dog, everyone tells them that they will report them, and they will get into big trouble. It is a very different life for most the dogs in Mpophomeni now”.



Sandile Ndlovu is now a Veterinary Assistant

Funda Nenja has also had a huge personal impact on Sandile’s life. With a big laugh Sandile says that “my friends used to say that I was a silly guy to be with the dogs all the time, but now I have a career and others are still struggling to find jobs.

“My big wish for *Funda Nenja* is that you get your own clinic and that you go work in other places... every township needs a *Funda Nenja* for the children and the dogs”.



Sandile Ndlovu confidently handles all pets that come to the Chase Valley Clinic

9. Simphiwe Mpungose and Rocky

Simphiwe Mpungose and Rocky have been attending the Friday afternoon classes at *Funda Nenja* since 2017. Simphiwe joined when Rocky was “three months alive” and he was just 10 years old. Simphiwe had “never had a dog before so I didn’t know how to care for a dog or to train the dog... I didn’t know anything so that is why I came to *Funda Nenja* so I can learn to be good with the dog”.



Simphiwe Mpungose and Rocky

Both Simphiwe and Rocky have absolutely excelled at training. In well under a year, they moved from the beginner puppy class through all the various intermediate training classes, getting promoted each and every month (without exception), into the top advanced class. “Rocky is too clever... he just knows things and he likes to listen to me... he can do anything”.

Simphiwe lives with his older sister and her two young children. His sister, Lihle, says that “Simphiwe is a very good boy, and he loves Rocky too much and he cares for him all the time”. Simphiwe has built Rocky a large and sturdy doghouse out of concrete blocks, which is far superior to any commercially available kennel. “Rocky needs to have his own house to visit when I’m not here. When I’m here at home, then Rocky likes to come into my house and be with me. Rocky is my best friend. He always loves me and I love him too much.”

During 2019 Lihle desperately needed a job. *Funda Nenja* put out her CV and an appeal on social media. As a result, she was offered work at a local butchery, where she is still happily working today. Simphiwe

says that “Lihle loves her work and we are all so happy that she has this good work... it is all because of friends at *Funda Nenja*, we are just too happy”.

Simphiwe says that the most important thing he has learnt at *Funda Nenja* is “how to take care of animals and that it is important to love, respect and be kind to animals”. Simphiwe takes Rocky out walking daily, when he plays with his human and canine friends. “Rocky loves friends, so I take him to see them every day - even when there isn’t much time, we go play with the neighbours. On Saturday and Sunday when there is no school then we go walking together up in the mountains, sometimes just me and Rocky, it is the best time”.



Simphiwe Mpungose and his clever dog Rocky

10. Simphiwe Ndlovu

Simphiwe Ndlovu started at *Funda Nenja* in 2012 when he was just eleven years old. At the time he didn't have his own dog, so he brought along a neighbour's dog, *Taking*. He got his own sweet dog, *Danger*, the following year and the two of them were model students, excelling at training and graduating to the demo team. When *Danger* suddenly died, Simphiwe kept coming to *Funda Nenja* and has been working as an instructor for the last four years.



Simphiwe Ndlovu

Simphiwe is a responsible and incredibly kind and gentle young man, who teaches the adult dog beginner classes, one of the most challenging classes to teach. Simphiwe says that "teaching can be difficult when the children don't want to listen... but then we do something fun, like we sing or dance with the dogs, and then everyone starts listening again". Simphiwe is very popular, and says that the most surprising thing that he has learnt from teaching the dog classes is "how much the children want to learn... if you take time and talk to them, you can learn so much from them and they will also learn so much from you... children are always looking to learn more".

Simphiwe loves teaching the children, and says that the best thing about teaching is "talking to the children and sharing our experiences. Sometimes in class there is something bothering one of the children, and then we all just sit down together, and we talk. I share my

experiences, and then we can solve the problem together. *Funda Nenja* is important because it provides a safe place for the children to talk about what is worrying them, and because many of the problems are the same for all children, everyone can understand and try help. The children also see that we care, and they can trust us here at *Funda Nenja*, which is good because we can help by getting them support or help where they need it".



Simphiwe working as Instructor at Funda Nenja

Simphiwe lives with his mother and two younger sisters, and says that *Funda Nenja* has made a huge difference in the community. "The children here at *Funda Nenja* are good children; they are not on the street and not getting up to naughty things like the other children. The naughty ones are the children that don't come to *Funda Nenja*, the ones that run on streets and that don't learn to respect and be kind to animals and people... but the good kids from here are changing the naughty ones and influencing them in a good way".

Early in 2020 Simphiwe started a new job at *Vapor Wake K9 South Africa*, which is a leading K9 training centre in Benoni. The company has K9 Explosives Units based at all nine airports controlled by Airports Company South Africa. Simphiwe is excelling at his training and says that "*Funda Nenja* has taught me to be responsible, to be kind, to work hard and opened up new job opportunities... I will always love and be thankful to *Funda Nenja*, they are my other family".

11. Sisanda Zima

Sisanda Zima has been attending *Funda Nenja* since 2017. Sisanda arrived as a young nine year old with a gorgeous, but very active little puppy, who she named *Cry Cry*. Sisanda has really persevered with training *Cry Cry*, who is an absolute sweetheart, but also a very boisterous and strong dog for a young child to handle. While most children (and adults) would have given up, this young lady has incredible tenacity and has arrived for training with *Cry Cry*, every single week for the past three years. As a result, *Cry Cry* has grown into a well behaved, friendly and very loving dog.



Sisanda and Cry Cry

Sisanda is a very conscientious, bright and eloquent young lady. Each week Sisanda arrives with a bag full of recycling for us to take to the recycling bins in town, as there are none in Mpophomeni. She is also an avid reader and for the last year we have been giving her books to read. She regularly reads six to ten books a week, and always returns them in pristine condition. She particularly loves to read to *Cry Cry*, "I still read to *Cry Cry* every night... sometimes she looks and listens to me, and other times she just lies on her back and snores while I read".

Sisanda has been a top student in her local school for the last few years, regularly achieving scores well above 90% for her classes. Sisanda's mother, Zinhle, is a single mother who not only cares for her own children, but also her brother and elderly mother. Zinhle simply cannot afford to send Sisanda to a fee paying school. Zinhle has been privately tutoring Sisanda herself,

desperately trying to better her education and instil a love for books and learning. Zinhle is very proud of her daughter Sisanda "From when Sisanda was a baby, I would read to her. I taught her to read, both in isiZulu and English, and then Sisanda would read to me every day... and now I think she reads much better than me!" Zinhle says that Sisanda is a very bright child who "has a quest for education and learning, she is interested in everything and just wants to learn... she is always teaching me new things... and now she is teaching her brother to read".



Sisanda reading to Cry Cry

Early in 2020, *Funda Nenja* did a fund raiser appeal on social media, and managed to raise the funds to pay for the last two years of Sisanda's primary school education at a wonderful school in Howick. Sisanda is incredibly excited about this new opportunity. "I'm going to go tell *Cry Cry* about my new school now... and I am going give *Cry Cry* an extra big hug because if it wasn't for *Cry Cry* and *Funda Nenja* I wouldn't have this opportunity".

Part 2: Testimonials from Funding Partners



22 January 2020

To whom it may concern,

The Howick Small Animal Clinic, Midlands Veterinary Clinic and The Village Vet have been involved with Funda Nenja over the last few years through assisting with donation collection baskets to recently having a Vet involved on the Friday afternoon training sessions. We also got involved by assisting with Free Sterilizations and Vaccinations for 40 Funda Nenja pets as a part of our HM Vet 100 Campaign, an initiative where we performed 100 Sterilizations and vaccinations at no cost over a year for those qualifying Pets in our community.

We are honoured to be able to assist Funda Nenja with the great work they do in our local community, both for the pets and the children. Funda Nenja have strived to provide the best possible animal welfare measures by teaching the children the basic needs and care of their pets as well as provide veterinary services, sterilisations and rabies clinics.

From all of us we would like to thank Funda Nenja for all they do in our Community.

Warm Regards

Sr. Lauren de Freitas

Veterinary Nurse & marketing manager for Howick Small Animal Clinic, Midlands veterinary Clinic and The Village Vet



Funda Nenja
P.O. Box 845
Hilton
3245

26 July 2019

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Reverend P.S. Dlamini from Mphophomeni and I am employed by the Howick Small Animal Clinic.

I would like to thank Fund Nenja for the work they have done for the Mphophomeni Community. As a result of Funda Nenja's efforts and love for the community, the community now have an understanding and appreciation for animals in terms of how they treat and live with animals and realise the value of the animals in their lives.

Mphophomeni Community thank you very much for what you have done for them.

Yours sincerely,



Rev. P.S. Dlamini

A message from NCT Forestry

NCT Forestry is a proud supporter of the *Funda Nenja* (Learn with a Dog) programme, which uses dogs to develop and uplift the lives of children. The programme fits in with NCT's social responsibility policy to improve the quality of life in and around communities in which it operates.

NCT Forestry has visited the training site and seen first-hand the number of enthusiastic children who arrive for training with their dogs. The programme is run by passionate volunteers and primarily deals with the relationship between people and their pets. An on-site auxiliary social worker is also available to provide psycho-social and educational assistance to children when needed. *Funda Nenja* is an inspiring programme and NCT Forestry commends the work they do.

NCT Forestry Co-operative Limited
Pietermaritzburg

Testimonial from: The Stretch Foundation

The Stretch Foundation is motivated to create great opportunities and seeks to support those ordinary people within organisations who are always looking for ways to do things better, make things better, and achieve better results, not only for themselves but also for the world around them. We believe that the *Funda Nenja* Township Dog Training initiative teaches children to be caring and responsible with their animals - creating a 'knock-on' effect within their immediate communities, and ultimately generating respect and discipline in their relationships with their peers and parents and all others with whom they come into contact. This initiative falls in line with our Mission to support programs that "do things better" in order to build a better world around us.

Nikki Morris Head of Operations
The Stretch Foundation nikki@thestretchfoundation.org



'Dogs Trust Worldwide is pleased to be able to support the great work undertaken by *Funda Nenja* in their community.

We believe that their holistic and innovative approach to dog welfare is integral in fostering compassion and respect for all animals, while at the same time helping children flourish as individuals in the environment they live in.

Through the medium of positive reinforcement training, *Funda Nenja's* Dog School strengthens the bond between children and their dogs, and offers a safe and inspiring place to promote care and kindness towards all living beings. Their model is unique and we are hopeful that the impact of their work will bring long lasting positive changes both in animal welfare, and in society as a whole'.

Simona Zito International Projects Officer
Website: www.dogstrustworldwide.com Facebook: @DogsTrustWorldwide

Twitter: @_DTWorldwide Instagram: @dogstrust_worldwide

Gabby's testimonial:

This short testimonial, from the mother of one of the *Funda Nenja* participants, is indicative of the community's esteem and gratitude. It is also evidence of the inter-generational connectedness that the programme is becoming well known for.

"I would like to take this opportunity to thank you guys & your team. You guys are doing a great job, thanx for the lovely blankets & every support that you are doing to our community. Really, it touches my heart cause most of us cannot afford these animals, & we end up neglecting them, but because of you guys helping us life goes on. Thank you, thank you. From Gabby Makwasa (Bathandwa's mother)."

Chapter 5: Management, finances and fund-raising

The management of *Funda Nenja*

The management and finances of *Funda Nenja* were not part of the evaluation brief. In this short section, however, we briefly describe how the organisation is managed, and its approach to fund-raising. From this review, it is clear that the programme is well-managed and is doing very well – despite the difficult global donor climate that is challenging the existence of many NGOs in all sectors.

One issue that does stand out is the importance of succession planning and ensuring the continuity of leadership. A strategy to address this could be to look for management talent within the young instructors at Mpophomeni, and invite potential candidates onto the various management committees. If this is done, it may be necessary to ensure that they have support to attend meetings, especially if such meetings are increasingly over the internet due to the COVID 19 infection issues.

Funda Nenja is a Not for Profit Organisation (NPO No. 085-038) with a Public Benefit Organisation number (PBO No. 930-045-482). The organisation is managed through an Executive Committee which meets monthly while the Full Committee meets quarterly. Apart from the Chairperson and Treasurer, all the other office bearers actively assist with the running of the Dog School on Friday afternoons.

The volunteers and community assistants are mostly people from the local community, who either instruct a class of children or assist with the various functions at the dog school. The volunteers, community assistants, Vet Nurse, Education Officer and Social Worker all fall under the Project Administrator and General Manager.



The committees are made up as follows:

Executive Committee:	Full Committee:	
Neil Button (Chairperson) Glynn Harborth (Treasurer) Adrienne Olivier (General Manager) Lisa Button (Administrator) Christine Klapprodt	Adrienne Olivier Neil Button Glynn Harborth Christine Klapprodt	Lisa Button Mary Campos Winnie Sangcosi Sarah Pryke
<p align="center">Volunteers/instructors : 30</p> <p>The volunteer instructors are actually the interface of <i>Funda Nenja</i>. Such volunteers are nearly all young people from Mpophomeni who have grown up and learnt through the Friday Dog School. Once they achieve a level of maturity, reliability and knowledge they are invited to be instructors. For this they are paid a small honorarium each Friday.</p>		

Financial management

Funda Nenja prides itself in the way the organisation's finances are managed. Every effort is made to ensure that these are managed in an open and transparent manner. Nothing is hidden from the public and the financial situation is open for review at any time. The Treasurer, Glynn Harborth, is a retired Chartered Accountant (CA) who keeps a strict control of the *Funda Nenja* finances. A book-keeping firm in Howick has been appointed to process all monthly accounts. As is common business practice, the Treasurer signs off on accounts on an annual basis shortly before the AGM.

As *Funda Nenja* is a multi-faceted organisation, (covering both animal and social welfare), it incurs monthly costs averaging approximately R70 000 per month. These costs are generally covered by donations made throughout the year. Donations are usually made to fund the organisation as whole, and not for specific needs or projects within the structures and functions of *Funda Nenja*. *Funda Nenja* has a large following of supporters who frequently donate money to cover general running expenses. Some examples of these expenses are:

General Expenditure areas (animal and social welfare):

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Salaries & stipends • Travel (fuel) • Electricity & WiFi • Printing & stationery • Veterinary • Refreshments • Computer expenses • General maintenance • Bank charges • Telephone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accounting • Dog food & treats • Veterinary medicine • Kennels • Blankets • Dog bowls • Collars & leashes • Backpacks • Uniforms
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Funda Nenja and Facebook

Facebook has proven to be one of the most powerful forms of fundraising. From time to time posts are made where specific financial support is requested for projects or other needs. Most of these Facebook pleas have been met with tremendous support as our followers and supporters have faith in *Funda Nenja* and trust that their money will be put to good use.

A recent Facebook conversation illustrates the type of relationship *Funda Nenja* has with supporters:

Funda Nenja: Our financials are managed by our treasurer who is a CA and our books are up for public inspection at our AGM, so donations are accounted for in a responsible manner.

Supporter wrote: Thank you for the response. I certainly do not need to look at any of your records or books. Your success speaks volumes. I love you guys, you make my day!

When *Funda Nenja* appeals for assistance from supporters and followers for a specific need, donors are asked to reference their EFT accordingly. In this way, donations are correctly allocated and are thus strictly utilised for the sub-project for which they are intended. Funds received from large donors, where *Funda Nenja* has submitted an application or grant proposal, are also strictly controlled, and only utilised for the purpose stipulated in the application or proposal.

As *Funda Nenja* is a non-profit organisation, it relies entirely on donations to run the organisation. The *Funda Nenja* team is therefore extremely grateful to each and every local and international organisation, company and individual that offers support, be the support in terms of goods in kind or through financial support.



Recent donations received by Funda Nenja

Chapter 6. Partnerships

A wide range of partnerships

As the research process proceeded, we became more and more aware of the remarkably wide number of partnerships that *Funda Nenja* works with. Although some of these relationships are quite formal, such as cooperation with the State Vets, Private Vets, Social Welfare and the SPCA; many of the partnerships are informal - yet equally powerful in supporting the work of *Funda Nenja*.

Funda Nenja is about relationships. Relationships people have with each other, their families, their friends, their pets and with other institutions. The relationships *Funda Nenja* has developed over the years are integral to the future of the organisation; and it is important that *Funda Nenja* does everything possible to nourish and sustain these relationships, and not take them for granted, which would place the organisation at risk. In reviewing the evidence about the relationships *Funda Nenja* has with their partners, we were impressed to see just how well they are taken care of by staff and volunteers alike.

In this chapter we will list some of the partnerships and outline the role they play in supporting *Funda Nenja*.

Government partners

The State Veterinary Department

Funda Nenja has an extremely good working relationship with the State Veterinary Department. This partnership works at an institutional level and at an individual level. Most notably, the Disease Project Manager, Kevin Le Roux, has been a strong supporter of *Funda Nenja* from the outset. For over thirty years, Kevin has worked with people and pets - especially in township contexts, and has developed a wealth of knowledge in this area. Kevin feels strongly that the approach and philosophy of *Funda Nenja* is what is needed, especially in townships in South Africa. He points out that all too often; the pet owners and family members are not involved in the decisions that need to be taken with regard to pet care. Some organisations simply remove an animal without engaging with people about how to care for the pet properly. Similarly, injured or sick pets may be euthanised without adequate consultation or explanation. A similar problem arises when dogs are neutered or spayed, without the owners fully comprehending the value of the service, or the value of the animals as a critical part of the family unit. The more inclusive and co-engaged model developed by *Funda Nenja* is definitely a step in the right direction, as far as Kevin is concerned. Kevin continues to point out that when the pet is valued then primary health care will naturally follow.

Kevin's professional input, knowledge and assistance is thus invaluable. As an avid supporter of *Funda Nenja* he regularly volunteers his time on Friday afternoons; as does his colleague, Senior Animal Health Technician, Debbie Cooke. Debbie is also a regular volunteer at the *Funda Nenja* Friday afternoon vet clinics, as well as at the monthly sterilisation clinics.

Debbie had this to say about *Funda Nenja* and the people of Mpophomeni:

"I have worked in the field for 21 years as an Animal Health technician - much of this work has been in rural areas in and around KZN. There have been countless times over this period where I have left an area in tears because of the sadness and cruelty I have witnessed, and

the overwhelming feeling of helplessness on such a grand scale. Mpophomeni is unlike any rural settlement I have experienced in my working career. I visited Funda Nenja one Friday, out of curiosity, and left there feeling so elated and overjoyed, that I have been volunteering my time ever since. Funda Nenja speaks to my soul. It is not only about looking after the dogs, it is about teaching children to give and receive love, compassion, responsibility, punctuality, loyalty, pride, discipline, generosity - and this list just goes on. I have witnessed parents and grand-parents coming to Funda Nenja to thank them for what they have done for their child - a child who was once a problem child at school, now focused and diligent. Children who have come from troubled backgrounds finding love, solace and direction through Funda Nenja. I recall one wintery Friday afternoon where we handed out blankets to the children and jerseys to the dogs; and the sight of overjoyed children and equally excited multi-colored-clothed dogs bounding along the streets of Mpophomeni as I drove out, left a lasting memory for me - Mpophomeni is a place of happy dogs, and a happy dog-loving community. I am so proud to be a part of this initiative, as I feel they are making a genuine difference in the lives of the dogs and people of Mpophomeni."

The Department of Education and other schools

The Department Education allows *Funda Nenja* to use the Zamuthule Primary school premises and especially the school grounds. This permission was granted through Mr Ngema (the Headmaster) and the School Governing Body (SGB). The use of the premises has given *Funda Nenja* a base and a "home." More recently the school allowed *Funda Nenja* to use two empty classrooms, one of which is used as an office and teaching room, and the other more recently, for monthly sterilisation clinics.

Other school partners include Epworth, a private school in Pietermaritzburg. Epworth have developed a unique child-to-child approach to their support for *Funda Nenja* - their learners, who are mostly from privileged homes, sponsor pencil cases for the children that contain a special message for each recipient. These pencil cases are then distributed during the Friday Dog School classes.



Classes take place at Zamuthule Primary School

South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) and the Department of Social Development

There are many social challenges in Mpophomeni, and sometimes it is not easy for departmental officials to intervene where necessary. By working with *Funda Nenja*, however, children in difficult circumstances can be identified and referred to SASSA or the Department of Social Development. The structure of the Friday Afternoon Dog School enables a wide cross-section of the public to be in one place at one time, and here people are able to share and talk about concerns that may be able to be addressed by departmental staff.

Funda Nenja employs, on a part-time basis, a Social Worker who engages directly with the children and their caregivers; and assists them to obtain various grants through SASSA. The *Funda Nenja* Social Worker also does weekly home visits to the *Funda Nenja* families, and this is where the real

social work happens. Furthermore, every child entering the programme will receive an initial home visit to assess their home circumstances, and assistance is given where necessary.

NGO partners

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) is a key partner of *Funda Nenja*. Should incidents of neglect or cruelty become apparent, these are referred to the SPCA to be dealt with. The SPCA are legally permitted to do removals of pets should the need arise.

Funda Nenja is also open to collaboration with various NGO partners who may be working in the township. In this regard, talks have been given on topical issues such as hunting with dogs which is a controversial issue in conservation circles in KwaZulu-Natal. Relationships with environmental groups are also part of such collaboration, and efforts are certainly made to reduce littering through the various cooperative projects.

The DO MORE FOUNDATION in partnership with the Gabrielle Faickney Charitable Trust donates 650kg of dog food each month.

The Stretch Foundation (www.thestretchfoundation.org) also provides a monthly cash donation of R3 000 for operational expenses.

Private Veterinary partners

Funda Nenja also receives support in one form or other from many of the local vet practices, including Chase Valley Vet Clinic, the Hilton Vet Hospital, Townbush Veterinary House Clinic and the Umgeni Vets.

The Howick Small Animal Clinic, Midlands Veterinary Clinic and the Village Vet are all very supportive of *Funda Nenja* (For an over view of support please refer to Chapter 4 Part 2). Invaluable support from these practices has included 'donation collection' baskets, as well as the *pro bono* participation by Vets and Vet Nurses during sterilisation and inoculation sessions. In addition, many sick and injured dogs have been cared for by the vets, who, when they are able, only charge for the medication used. The veterinary practices also supply a certain amount of medications per month and give *Funda Nenja* a generous discount when their services are needed. *Funda Nenja* does have a modest budget for veterinary fees, both routine and emergency.

Hills Pet Nutrition has also been a longtime supporter of *Funda Nenja* and regularly arranges donations of pet food.

Support from the business community

Companies such as Spar regularly sponsor juices and other food products for distribution at Friday Dog Schools.

Meadow Feeds, who are based in Pietermaritzburg have, for several years, supported *Funda Nenja* with items such as dog bowls and blankets.

NCT Forestry have also been a generous donor for various projects.

Thistlewood Products have also been very supportive of *Funda Nenja* from time to time.

Community-Based Organisations

The local Rotary Club is very supportive of *Funda Nenja* and usually sponsors gift bags for the entire dog school at year end.

Evaluation Comment

The work of Funda Nenja is well known throughout the township. The opportunity to work with local leadership could well be a good thing to explore – especially with office bearers and officials in the Umngeni Municipality and the Umgungundlovu Regional Government. By developing such relationships, it might be possible to access further government support and cooperation.

Chapter 7. Principles and core values

Continuity, consistency and tenacity

One of the most powerful reasons that *Funda Nenja* has continued to thrive and grow over the past ten years, has been the continuity, consistency and tenacity demonstrated by the leadership of the project. Adrienne Olivier, who has effectively been the founder and leader of the programme since its inception, epitomises these qualities.

A programme like *Funda Nenja* also needs to be managed in an understanding and compassionate manner. Having said this, it also needs to be pragmatic, and not allow sentimentality to creep in! Balancing these two extremes of management is always a challenge. This is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

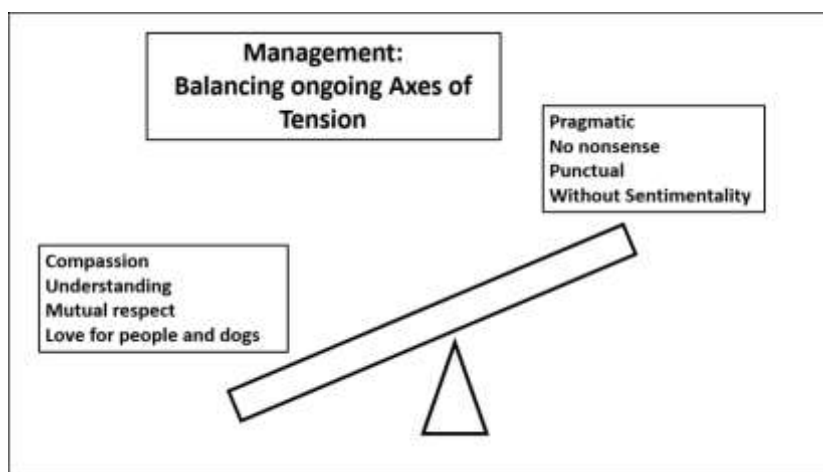


Figure 1: Management Axes of Tension

When dealing with, or navigating the axes of tension, it is also helpful for *Funda Nenja* to be aware of the key principles that are helping strengthen the programme. On the 28th of January 2020 the leadership of *Funda Nenja* met, with various interested and committed partners, including the young instructors from Mpophomeni. At this workshop the important goals, as well as key principles for *Funda Nenja* were brain-stormed.

The goals of *Funda Nenja*

These were explored, and developed in the workshop, and include:

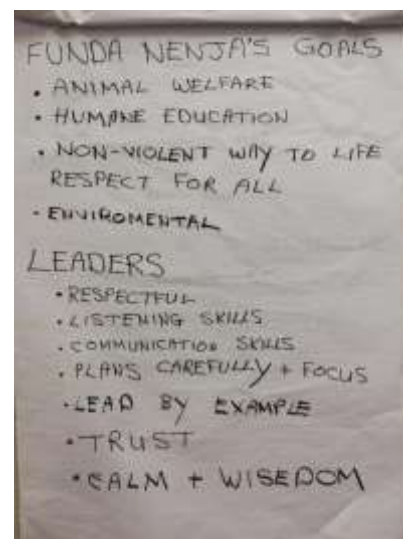
1. A **non-violent way to life!** In the longer term, kindness and inclusion are more likely to be effective and long-lasting, than tough or cruel measures to teach people and their pets.
2. **Humane education.** This means putting others first and encouraging learning that is kind and supportive, rather than being imposing and harsh.
3. **Animal welfare** is very important. This is only possible where the welfare of people is considered and encouraged. The two facets of *Funda Nenja*, the people and their pets, should be considered and encouraged together.

4. **Environmental issues** affect everyone and their pets. Air pollution, solid waste dumping and litter, unsafe water, inadequate sanitation and unhealthy food affect everyone and their pets. We need to learn about such issues and work together to find ways of overcoming them. Working with the *Enviro-Champs of Mpophomeni* may be one important way to address such issues.

How should a good leader behave?

The workshop continued to develop key principles for leaders, such as being:

- Respectful
- A good listener
- A good communicator (clear and able to be heard)
- Able to plan carefully with a clear focus for the lessons
- Able to lead by example
- Consistent, reliable and trustworthy and encouraging trust in others



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A calm leader who shows wisdom is more likely to be followed than someone who is excitable and inconsistent.

These principles were developed and integrated with other relevant principles that emerged from the various research processes followed in this study.

Key Principles to guide the future work of *Funda Nenja*

The principles outlined below drew on those from the leadership workshop, other wider interactions with *Funda Nenja* and the research literature on NGO principles more widely. The principles are reflected below so that they may be better understood and not neglected as the work goes forward.

Effective principles to consider include:

1. That the learning and issues dealt with by *Funda Nenja*, especially through the Friday Dog School need to be **relevant and appropriate** to the situation and context of the participants and their dogs. It is less helpful if the learning experiences are not connected to the realities that the participants are dealing with.
2. Learning experiences that seek to bring forward, wherever possible, the **prior knowledge or understanding** that the participants have, is more likely to be effective than learning that is disconnected from the real world of the participants. When participants have described their understanding of a situation (ie mobilised their prior knowledge) it can then be engaged with, and, where appropriate, challenged so that unhelpful ideas and perceptions can be un-learned or re-learned, to support an enabling 'learning for change' moment.
3. The Friday Dog School is **practical and applied**. This is its strength. Learning where participants are engaged in task or practice-based learning is usually more meaningful and

helpful than those that are predominantly theoretical, or conducted in a class-room learning context alone.

4. Through the *Funda Nenja* programme, participants experienced a form of **'blended learning'** where learning together experiences were followed by experiences at home. This was then reinforced by further learning together examples. Follow-up practices, with their pets, during the week are always worthwhile. It is no good to only rely on once a week lessons! In a 'post COVID 19' era blended learning practices become even more important. This is enhanced when small, local groups meet with their pets and learn together - followed up by further practising in the home.
5. Where possible *Funda Nenja* should **build on existing strengths** and the core business of learning with dogs, rather than becoming distracted by the wide variety of needs so evident in township life.
6. While studying the *Funda Nenja* learning sessions we became aware of how the programme applies a strong **Action Learning** approach (after O'Donoghue; UNEP, Taylor and Venter, 2017). Refer to Chapter 2, page 2, of this report for more details. **Action Learning** takes place during rich dialogue opportunities (discussion by, with and amongst participants), practical experiences with their pets, reporting on what they are learning and sharing ideas, as well as 'action taking' related to the learning. Action taking could be as simple as deciding to follow-up with a particular feeding approach, or making sure one's dog was always rewarded for good behaviour. The appropriate interlinking of such processes strengthened the learning a great deal.
7. Grappling with **challenges and discontinuities**. We live in a world where challenges or discontinuities are all around us. The ways in which pets are treated often leave a lot to be desired! Pets that behave badly are usually doing so because they have never been taught another way. Their behaviour may even be wrongly reinforced by the way their owners treat them.

Learning processes that enable such challenges or discontinuities to become visible and apparent to the dog owners are important and valuable for integrating different ways of learning with dogs. When a dog owner has an 'Aha!' moment from within their own perspective, it is much more meaningful than when they are simply told what to do.

Chapter 8: The future and some shaping recommendations

Strengthening community relationships

A powerful outcome of this research has been the immeasurable evidence of how the activities of *Funda Nenja* have helped directly, and indirectly, in building community commitment and vigour in Mpophomeni. The development of confidence and trust is enormously encouraging in a community that is facing so many challenges. Clearly the *Funda Nenja* processes are achieving way more than simply teaching people about their dogs and how to live more happily and effectively with them.

Inter-generational capacity building

One of the most significant insights from the research is evidence of inter-generational capacity building. In times where the gap between young people and older generations appear to be widening, *Funda Nenja* is proving that just the opposite, is possible. Not only are parents showing greater interest in their children's activities, often they are proudly co-engaging with their pets. Grand-parents are often involved as well, and many a proud *Gogo* (Grand-Mother) has described how well her grand-child is doing with his or her dog! Interestingly, *Funda Nenja* is also able to break-down stereotypes related to age and gender. At times older people seemed happy to learn from a young instructor, who knows a lot about dogs. The engagement of women in the programme is also increasing, and men are just as happy to receive advice from a young veterinary nurse as from an older man.

International perspectives on *Funda Nenja*

This study has been compiled through various iterations. This has meant sharing ideas and having people comment on them as is the case with a report-and-respond methodology that was described in Chapter 2 and 3. Linda Myburgh, after reading the first draft of Chapter 1, shared the following insights with us. It is interesting that her perspectives come from New Zealand where she draws on the traditions of Maori people. She notes:

"The belongingness that people feel in a group like this is powerful and relates to things like the maraes (meeting places) that are held in such high regard to the Maori people. Along with the place comes the rules and unique etiquette, boundaries, history and above all a direction and focus for all involved (Myburgh, pers.com.)."

In dialogue with Adrienne Olivier, Dr Susan Friedman, a psychology professor at Utah State University, who has pioneered the application of Applied Behaviour Analysis, had the following to say about *Funda Nenja*:

"I am an ardent supporter of FUNDA NENJA. The vision is unique and the product is tangible and long lasting. Teaching children how behaviour works using dogs as the medium, is no mere stone thrown in a pond of calm water. It is in fact, more like an asteroid hitting the ocean. The positive result of its impact will be felt on a society wide level, without a doubt, and it is so much more than improving dog welfare. As a behaviour analyst consulting with zoos and aquariums around the world, it is clear that by teaching children how to train dogs with positive reinforcement based procedures, trainers learn about the fundamentals of empowerment through choice contingencies, thoughtful arrangement of the antecedent environment to make the right behaviour more likely, and managing consequences to make the right behaviour more rewarding. The children will experience building behaviour, one approximation at a time, which produces persistence, flexibility, and compassion. Behaviour principles and procedures are a life altering knowledge base, and skill set, that the next generation of influencers and leaders should not be without. As an expatriate who lived in southern Africa from 1986-1992,

who was also the director of the first American school there serving dozens of nationalities, I can think of no more heart-filling, hopeful strategy for positive change, than FUNDA NENJA."

Petter Jacobsson is a conscientious dog owner and behavioural specialist who lives near Stockholm, in Sweden. Having read a first draft of the report he had the following to say:

"I can read between the lines that someone must have exercised very good leadership in transforming this into a social project with many unexpected outcomes. I'm sure that someone has done a wonderful job of lifting this project from "just a pet-handling thing" to a wider project with strong social transformative effects. It reminds me a bit about the changes I tried to capture in my writings 20 yrs ago about the garden project in Mpolweni where the true outcome of a small garden project was self-esteem, democratic training, and empowerment of young people.

Of course the immediate good outcome of better lives for pet-dogs in an economically poor area is good, but the other outcomes of improved lives for people is even better. The description of the breaking of the fear-barrier for the more privileged people coming to the township is also wonderful. The way of using Facebook for the evaluation is also a very good example of outcome-harvesting as we often talk about at my job."

The above testimonies, from New Zealand, the USA and Sweden all pick-up on the community spiritedness of *Funda Nenja*, lending emphasis to the observation that the programme is just as much, about people and their well-being and learning, as it is about dogs.

Thoughts for the road ahead

This evaluation process was completed in the midst of the COVID 19 virus lock-down period. We are aware that as we approach a 'new-normal' situation, times will be different, and the world will not return to the 'old-normal'. As a way of addressing these issues and concerns we have engaged with the *Funda Nenja* leadership to co-clarify the most productive road ahead given the changing circumstances. In this regard a think-piece, with guidelines for coping in COVID times, has been developed (Taylor, et.al., 2020). We are confident that the enthusiasm, strategic intent and goodwill, so evident in *Funda Nenja*, will ensure that the programme will continue to go from strength to strength.

Most evaluation studies conclude with some sort of advice for the future and this study is no different. What was more important to us as evaluators, however, was the chance to have dialogue with key leaders and participants within *Funda Nenja* whether they were young children participating with their first puppy, young instructors learning to teach, or with the senior levels of management and initiators of the programme. From this review it is clear that the programme is well-managed and generally doing very well. One issue that does stand out is the importance of continuity of leadership. Suggestions as to how this can be addressed are made below.

The points below are as much to do with our own insights and learning, as points of view that may prove useful to others.

1. More effort could be made to connect with, and cooperate with, the authorities or other people with influence in Mpophomeni.
2. The leadership of *Funda Nenja* is both its strength and its weakness. While Adrienne Olivier and Lisa Button maintain the energy and drive to manage and steer the programme, it will continue from strength to strength. Although many other people are emerging into leadership positions, such as

becoming instructors, it does need continuity. Considerable effort must be invested in emerging leaders.

A strategy to address this could be to look for management talent within the young instructors at Mpophomeni and invite potential candidates onto the various management committees. If this is done it may be necessary to ensure that they have support to attend meetings, especially if such meetings are increasingly over the internet, due to the COVID 19 infection issues.

3. Consistency is the hall-mark of *Funds Nenja*. Indeed, all community projects that have truly transformative outcomes require consistency and reliability. It is important that these facets are retained and strengthened and don't give way to complacency.

4. Funder relationships at *Funda Nenja* are carefully nurtured. For funders to continue to support the programme they need more than conventional and regular reports. *Funda Nenja* also has capacity to share the magic. It is this magic, often shared in the form of anecdotal snippets that really keep the communication channels alive and creative. The funders we spoke to as part of the evaluation are very positive about *Funda Nenja* and all wished they could do more to support the programme.

5. *Funda Nenja* needs to be careful not to erode its resources through important, but peripheral activities, such as community outreach. Townships will always have issues that need greater support. And attending to urgent and immediate needs such as pet cruelty or neglected animals will always be in demand. Organisations usually get good feedback when one does reach out. Such activities are very expensive, however, both in terms of time, money and energy, and it would be a shame if the core features of *Funda Nenja*, which are to teach people how to care for pets, became compromised.

6. Ethics and kindness at risk. This is a difficult issue to explain. As an organisation *Funda Nenja* advocates and lives for 'kindness, care, good listening and love' for people and animals. Once such an ethos becomes engrained in an organisation it becomes very powerful and transformative, indeed. But herein lies a challenge. As people start to believe they are nice and kind and listen well, they may no longer re-double their efforts in that direction. If you think you're a good listener, for example, will you make every possible effort to listen well, when someone is talking to you? Some of the cruelest acts have been committed by people who are part of organisations with the most lofty ethics and well intentioned missions and visions. *Funda Nenja* needs to be aware that 'kindness, care, good listening and love' are part of a never-ending quest to make oneself and one's organisation better. Such qualities are not a destination that can be arrived at, or an ethos that has been mastered.

Shifts in thinking and practices

Not only has *Funda Nenja* had a marked effect in building relationships between people and their dogs but it has also been part of, and influential in, developing shifts in thinking and practice. Some of these are outlined below:

Shifts in treatment: People associated with *Funda Nenja* described how their views of animal treatment have broadened from narrow treatments (catch, immunise, sterilise or euthanise) to treating the whole dog and involving the owner in context! From treating the dog as an "object of risk" to "One Health; where the dog is perceived as a family companion, integral to the family ecology." Here the well-being of people, their pets and the neighbourhood is important. This requires a deeper understanding of the human/dog relationships. This shift is epitomised by Kevin le

Roux who has over thirty years in the veterinary services. Kevin is outspoken in his praise of the *Funda Nenja* approach and its effectiveness in practice. He feels that similar projects should be developed in other parts of South Africa, both in the townships, and the suburbs. Kevin emphasises that *Funda Nenja* is about an understanding of the fabric of society, and the relationship between people and dogs, and how this is linked to so many aspects of the community.

Shifts in learning: How learning about family and pets has broadened from narrow “Telling people about health risk how to look after their pets and why” to a more holistic and integral process of learning with people and their dogs. This may be described as “co-engaged learning with people, their pets, addressing the health risks together while being sensitive to the family context.”

Kevin Le Roux continues to explain how the simple work of just vaccinating the dogs has now grown and is linked to education and the social welfare. To him the crux is education and empowering people. It seems that science is now able to drive this and is starting to try to understand the social dynamics of which the dog is part. A project like *Funda Nenja* can change the way we do education in the townships. Now, when there is a dog with diarrhoea, we try and educate the child as to possible reasons for the dog’s ill health so that they can make appropriate changes to diet, perhaps, rather than simply giving out medicine.

Shifts in stereotypes: As the research progressed a number of social stereotypes became apparent. For many outsiders the way pets are cared for in townships does not fit a typical middle-class model. Pets are often free-ranging and appear to be independent of the family and their owners. Once one gets to know the people and their pets, however, deeper more meaningful relationships become apparent. Many of these are evident in the stories of change in Chapter 4. Other stereotypes that were reviewed included the example of the Owls in Mpophomeni. Although the owl project was not part of *Funda Nenja* it is described here because it is relevant to how animals, including birds, may be viewed in the townships.

Rats are a major problem in Mpophomeni. When people plant vegetables, the rats eat the seedlings. Not only this, but rats have been known to bite the toes of babies, while they are sleeping! To overcome the rat problem poisons are often used with limited success and substantial side-effect risks. Dogs may also eat the rat poison, or eat the rats that have died from the rat poison and then they too, could die. The idea of re-introducing owls to the township was suggested so that the owls could then prey on the rats. Some outsiders expressed misgivings about this idea and pointed out that they understood that black people are afraid of owls!

Sometimes stereotypes persist when there is a lack of education about the topic of concern. Workshops about the owls, and how they could be introduced, through placing owl boxes in people’s gardens, led to much enthusiasm and helped overcome any stereotypes that may have existed. A number of elderly women expressed their gratitude for the ‘owl project,’ and explained that people need to move forward, with the best possible solutions, rather than rely on assumptions and stereotypes from the past. This experience showed how being able to reveal, or expose the stereotypes, helped people overcome them.

Other social stereotypes were also revealed and overcome through the *Funda Nenja* programme. No-one can pretend, for example, that racist stereotypes vanished the moment they were declared unconstitutional in South Africa. Despite racism being against the law, racist stereotypes still exist and a few people have even been sent to prison in South Africa, for using racist language and behaving in a racist manner. Through this study of the *Funda Nenja* programme, we were pleasantly surprised how often racial stereotypes were revealed and overcome. Mpophomeni residents noted,

for example, in their stories of change in Chapter 4, that they had assumed that white people only cared about animals, not people. They soon learned that the white volunteers, who assisted at the *Funda Nenja* activities, really did put people first, and cared about the participants as well as their dogs.

Before becoming involved in *Funda Nenja*, some white people assumed that isiZulu speaking people, who were poor and struggling to find sufficient nutritious food, would not have time or interest in their pets. Once they had attended the Friday Dog School, however, they were amazed to discover how close the young isiZulu speaking children were to their dogs. Their love for their pets was very evident despite the challenges at home. In challenging times, a strong relationship with one's pet can provide strength and build on a person's sense of agency and confidence. The experience of unconditional love from their dog can be heart-warming and empowering for a child. The Mandela photo, where he is portrayed with his dog, Gombo, in Chapter 1, is further evidence of a close relationship that a political activist had with his pet, despite being preoccupied and committed to the political struggle for liberation. Few people we spoke to, both white and black were aware of his relationship with his dog.

In reviewing the stories of change, from Chapter 4, we were reminded time and time again, how similar people are whether they are from rich socio-economic backgrounds or poor economic circumstances. The old adage that people are more similar than cultures rang true.

Funda Nenja has certainly strengthened people's sense of confidence and agency. This is evident throughout the various stories of change in Chapter 4. It has also strengthened human relationships across the gaps of culture, age and race. Quite remarkable has been the growing trust amongst volunteers, tutors and participants. Trust is not a characteristic that can simply be taught or acquired, but usually evolves through joint actions with a common purpose. Here the action learning, so evident in the *Funda Nenja* Dog School, has certainly played a significant role.

In the report we have touched on how prejudices are being addressed and overcome through *Funda Nenja*. This is not part of the overt goals of the organisation, but is more part of the hidden curriculum of unintended outcomes. While working together, with dogs, trust has grown amongst people who would not normally associate; and new friendships, and trusting relationships have developed. It is said that love is the natural in-between, and all that keeps people apart is the ideas they have in their heads. By working together, with the dogs, people have learnt how similar they are to each other and how unhelpful prejudices can be.

'No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite' Nelson Mandela.

Some concluding thoughts

Many people contributed to this study and we would like to express our thanks to all of them. The open manner with which everyone participated in the discussions and engagements is greatly appreciated. This really helped us learn more fully about what was going on as well as become true co-learners in the deeper meanings so many shared. We are thus grateful to all the *Funda Nenja* participants, the instructors, team leaders, supporters, donors, veterinarian professionals, government officials and other members of the public. All contributed in some way or other to the study.

Funda Nenja provides a **structure**, in fact various structures, that are enabling of change and we found a great deal of evidence of positive, enabling development amongst participants. Through

participating in the various learning opportunities *Funda Nenja* provides, there is much evidence of the development of **agency** within participants. This developing sense of agency and confidence is most encouraging. If the root of the word education, is educaré, which can be translated to mean ‘bringing out the potential within”, then the *Funda Nenja* programme is certainly achieving that. The learning associated with the project is also significant and widespread. Best of all has been the positive aspect of un-learning such as where former cruel habits and practices were ‘let go’ and, with the dogs, kindness and reward developed instead.

In many learning environments, power is an issue that can influence and even make or break the learning experience. Since the learning experiences of *Funda Nenja* had a strong ‘action learning’ orientation about them, and many of the learning moments were practical and applied, we did not become aware of any negative power-gradient that could be inhibiting the work. Issues of power, and control, are however, always present in any meaningful learning and one should never become complacent or assume that such risks don’t exist.

The *Funda Nenja* programme has proved deeply transformative, not only for the participating individuals, but even in the wider Mpophomeni Township as a whole. The way that prejudices and assumptions about people and society become evident, or at least more visible to participants, is encouraging. As our prejudices become evident or revealed, so we can engage with them, and where appropriate, overcome sometimes deeply rooted issues. Racist tendencies, for example, may be overcome by programmes such as *Funda Nenja*, as participants learn how similar to each other, apparently different people are!

Finally it is important to acknowledge how effective *Funda Nenja* has been in achieving its initial goals. Today, ten years after the *Funda Nenja* programme was initiated, one seldom sees starving and ill-treated dogs in Mpophomeni. And yet this was the norm before the *Funda Nenja* programme started.

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