2025 ANNUAL REPORT

ZipZap CIRCUS

Social commitment around circus arts

Inspiring and empowering kids for life

'Images courtesy of:
Amy Wood, Fannie Plessis, Glen Stubbe, Greg Wong, Irene McCullagh, Joan Ward, Vuyisa Notshe.

Contents

Message from the Chair 4

Message from the CEO 10

About Zip Zap 16

Mission, Vision & Values 17
History & Purpose 17
Governance 18
Organisation Structure 19
Meet the Team 20
Interns & Volunteers 22
Human Resources 23
Training 24
Staff Wellness & Team Building 26
Awards, Trophies & Prizes 28

Programmes & Impact 30

Ubuntu 32
Khula Nathi 34
2nd Chance 36
Vuka 38
The Hood 40
Isiseko (formerly Beginners) 42
Simunye (Now Ukwanda) 44
Zappers 46
Dare2Dream 48
On-site Residence (O.B.S.) 52

Shows 54

Partnerships & Collaborations 58

Fundraising 60

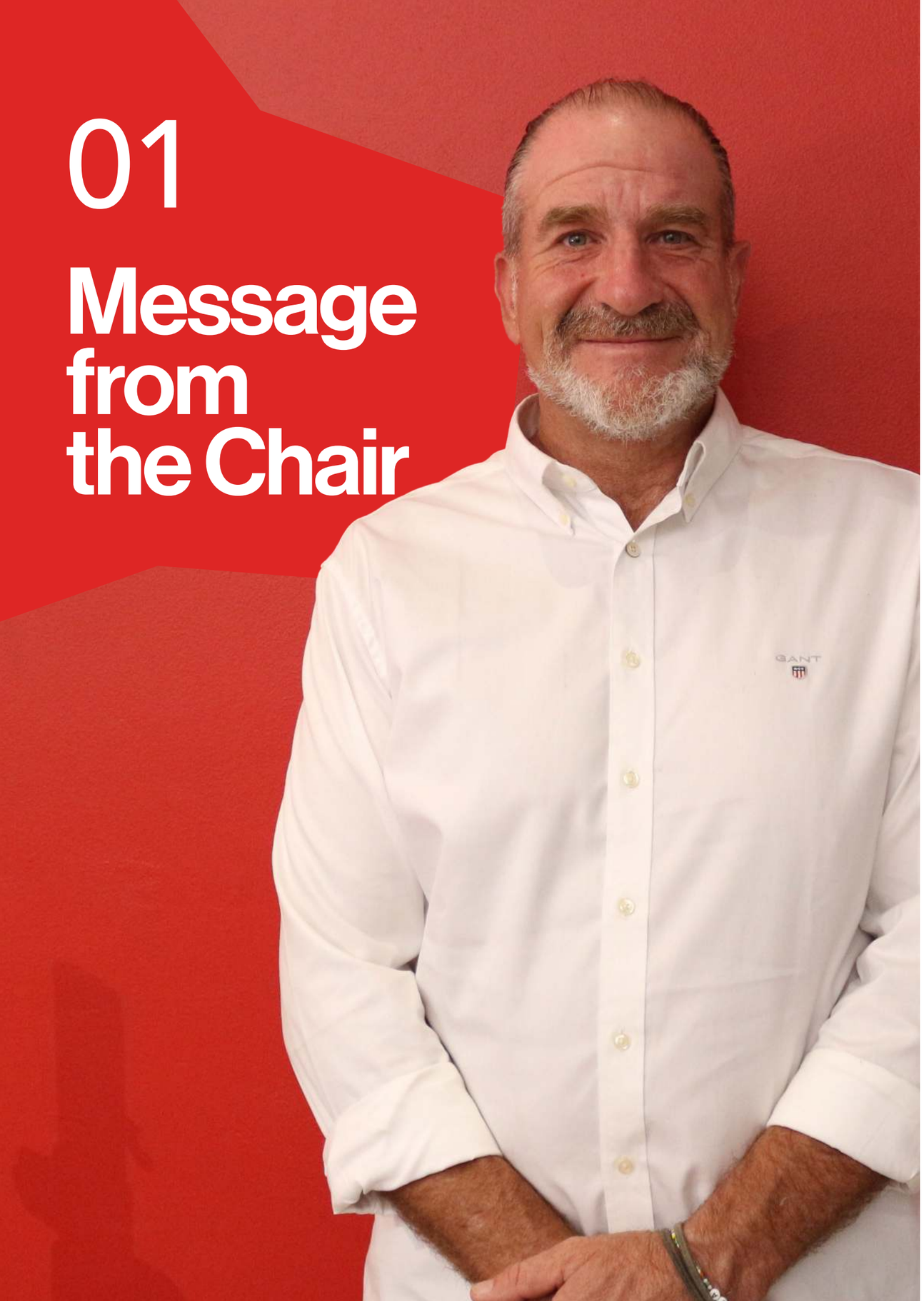
Marketing & Communications 64

Financial Statements 66

Looking Ahead 68

01

Message from the Chair



What a year it has been.

I first joined the Zip Zap Board back in 2003, under the leadership of a wonderfully humble, softly spoken lady called Vicky. At the time, none of us could have imagined the extraordinary impact she would go on to have. Victoria took on the role of Chairperson and led Zip Zap for an incredible 17 years. Now, as she spends most of her time in Europe, she has decided to step down from the Board. It has been an absolute privilege to serve under her leadership, and I am honoured to now take on the role of Chair at a time when Zip Zap is poised for its next chapter of growth and expansion.

Victoria, we are deeply grateful for everything you have done, and continue to do, for this wonderful family. You will always be our fairy godmother. Thank you.

As I step into this role, I do so alongside two longstanding friends and Board colleagues, Clarence Counsell and Michael Bagraim. Clarence has served 14 years, Michael for 18, and both remain as committed as ever to our mission and our young people.

Strategic overview

One of my priorities as Chair was to revitalise the Board, and I am proud to welcome a group of outstanding new members. Each brings fresh energy, sharp thinking and a heart for the work we do. The following new members have joined us:

Beverley Nelson

Beverley completed her BA.LLB at the University of Witwatersrand in 1983 and was admitted as an attorney, conveyancer, and notary public in 1986. Bev joined Shepstone & Wylie Attorneys as a candidate attorney in 1984 and became a partner in 1989, continuing until her retirement in 2025. Before studying law, Bev spent three years at UCT majoring in African politics and worked in the UK for two years.

Bonga Mriga

A proud husband and optimist, Bonga brings extensive experience in financial services, including expense management, budgeting, and investments to the board. Formerly a member of the Old Mutual Group Finance Executive Committee, he led investor relations and handled local and international roadshows. Bonga also managed Citadel's preference share portfolio and analysed equities for large-cap stocks. A South African from Mthatha, he is passionate about reading, writing, cycling, and the spoken word. A former SAICA top 35 under-35 finalist, he passed both SAICA board exams and CFA Level 1.

Gugu Madlala

Gugu co-founded Black Powder after leaving his role at Jupiter Joburg, building a 100% black-owned agency focused on impactful work for black consumers. He envisions Black Powder as a world-class, proudly South African agency network driving industry transformation. Gugu is committed to understanding clients' commercial needs and collaborating with agency partners for success. Currently optimising Black Powder for growth, he also leads the Aquaboost project, aimed at driving clean energy and economic growth in Eswatini. Gugu is dedicated to delivering exceptional work and expanding the agency's industry presence.

Jean Wessels

Jean serves as the finance director at Red Rocket Group, overseeing the group's financial management alongside the group CFO. As a chartered accountant with over two decades of expertise, she dedicates herself to mentoring her team and encourages innovation and problem-solving through teamwork within the company. She has an extensive background in auditing, which equips her to play a significant role in shaping robust financial and cost control measures within the organisation. She is firmly rooted in her principles, striving to make a positive, lasting difference in any capacity possible, believing that even the smallest change can have far-reaching effects. Beyond work, she enjoys reading biographies, jogging, exploring new places and cultures, and cherishing moments with her family.

Nomathibana Okello

Nomathibana is the MD of Cape Town-based boutique asset management firm, Terebinth Capital, where she is an equity partner and senior portfolio manager. In her role as MD, she oversees the strategic direction of the business. She also has portfolio management responsibilities across the fixed income product set, including income, bond and hedge mandates. Nomathibana has a Master of Philosophy degree, with a major in mathematics of finance and a Bachelor of Business Science, with a major in actuarial science from the University of Cape Town. She is also a CFA Charter holder.

Robert Gwerengwe

With 20 years of experience in the financial services industry, Rob is passionate about business and its potential to drive positive change. An avid sports enthusiast, he values teamwork and perseverance both on and off the field. His true mission, however, lies in making a lasting impact on the communities around him. Through his work and dedication, he strives to uplift others and foster a brighter future for all.

Nthabiseng Makgatho

With 20 years of experience in strategic marketing and branding across corporate and agency environments, Nthabiseng is a seasoned marketer with an Executive Master of Business Administration qualification. She is passionate about building bold, impactful brands and leading dynamic teams to drive business success. An adventurer at heart, she loves travelling, art, and the outdoors. Committed to youth development, she admires Zip Zap's role in empowering young people to achieve their dreams. Inspired by lasting change, she believes in nurturing future leaders for a thriving nation.

Safiyah Vally

With a background in politics, international relations, and digital marketing, Safiyah transitioned from corporate to entrepreneurship, launching her own business and the Undeniably You podcast. As a podcaster, business owner, and marketing consultant, Safiyah specialises in cross-channel marketing, business development, and brand innovation. Passionate about social change, she admires Zip Zap's transformative impact on young people. Outside of work, Safiyah enjoys yoga, meditation, travel, and meaningful connections.

Tshepo de Villiers

Tshepo is the co-founder and commercial director of Blindspot Communication, a consultancy that helps organisations drive meaningful internal change and connect more deeply with their people. With over 20 years of experience and a BCom Honours in Business Management, she is passionate about storytelling, building authentic brands, and creating spaces where people feel seen and heard. Inspired by the energy and heart of Zip Zap, Tshepo is proud to support its mission of using the performing arts to uplift communities. Outside of work, she prioritises holistic well-being and finds joy in hiking, meditation, good books, travel, and spending time with the people who matter most.

We are also fortunate to continue drawing on the wisdom and passion of our existing Board members – Laurence, Brent, Clarence, Michael and myself. Together, we represent continuity and fresh perspective, which I believe is exactly what Zip Zap needs at this exciting time.

Laurence Estève Van Rensburg

Laurence co-founded Zip Zap Circus in Cape Town in 1992, using circus arts to drive social change and empower youth. With degrees in physical & sports activities and sports institution management, she combines life skills development with professional training. As CEO, she has led Zip Zap to global acclaim, securing commercial growth and prestigious performances for world leaders. Recognised with top honours, including the Officer of the National Order of Merit (2024), her leadership has shaped a thriving circus family. A true change agent, Laurence continues to inspire children to dream bigger and create brighter futures.

Brent van Rensburg

Born in Cape Town in 1961, Brent has more than 50 years of circus experience, performing and instructing internationally before founding Zip Zap Circus with his wife, Laurence, in 1992. An accomplished rigger, stuntman, and artistic director, Brent has dedicated his life to training young performers from all walks of life. He has received numerous awards, including the Mayor's Medal for Youth Affairs and the Paul Harris Fellowship. A passionate advocate for the performing arts, he also served as a jury member for prestigious circus festivals in Monte Carlo and Paris. Brent loves his family, cold sea swims, cooking, and his dogs.

Clarence Counsell

Clarence's upbringing made him deeply aware of the challenges faced by underprivileged communities. Though he grew up comfortably, his father's work in township communities and his time as a Scout Master shaped his passion for youth development. While a busy career limited his involvement, more than 30 years ago, he provided rigging equipment to support Zip Zap's mission and, over time, the relationship grew stronger. Clarence is grateful to have contributed to Zip Zap's success and to support Brent and Laurence's incredible journey.

Michael Bagraim

A practicing attorney and founder of Bagraims Attorneys, Michael has been dedicated to law and public service for decades. Currently a member of parliament, he has held leadership roles in various organisations, including the Cape Chamber of Commerce, Zip Zap Circus, and multiple disability and human rights initiatives. Recognised for his contributions to labour law and human rights, he frequently engages with the media on these topics. Passionate about mentorship and advocacy, Michael balances his career with mountain walking and motorbike adventures. Married to Patsy, he remains committed to community impact.

David Froman

Born in Johannesburg in 1964, David built a career in finance and business leadership after earning his chartered accountant qualification. He held executive roles in international syndication and media before founding and leading AFS Group, a global fuel logistics company. Passionate about family, mentorship, wildlife conservation, and sports, David balances business with personal interests like golf, hiking, and scuba diving. David serves as a trustee for Zip Zap Circus School, Courage Community Relief, Loveinabowl, Sisonke and the African Children's Trust. His journey reflects a commitment to learning, people, leadership, entrepreneurship, and giving back.

Reflections on governance and oversight

This year we also formalised our governance structures with the introduction of Board subcommittees. These subcommittees are designed to improve oversight and focus in key areas like finance, marketing, operations and impact. Each one includes a mix of Board members and external experts, which helps us make better, more informed decisions while staying true to our values. It is a big step forward in making sure our leadership is thoughtful, accountable and well equipped for what's ahead.

The Board subcommittees are as follows:

Chair of Finance and Governance subcommittee:
Jean Wessels

Chair of Impact subcommittee:
Bonga Mriga

Chair of Marketing & Communication subcommittee:
Tshepo de Villiers

Chair of Zip Zap Arena subcommittee:
Gugu Madlala

Strengthening governance remains a key priority for the board. In the year ahead, we will continue to guide and oversee the organisation's strategic and operational integrity with renewed focus and accountability.

Future outlook from the Board's perspective

Back in 2020, we set ourselves an ambitious goal – to perform 50 international shows in 2025. The only show we did that year was part of the Match in Africa event, just before the pandemic. It was for 50 000 people at the Cape Town Stadium. And now, here we are, about to reach that target.

This year alone, our performers will take the stage in Mauritius and across Europe. We were in New York in April at the New Victory Theater, on Broadway. There is so much more potential for our artists, more shows to be done, and many more stories to be told.

Zip Zap is more than a circus. It is a family. A place that changes lives – every single day. Thank you to everyone who has been part of our journey this year. And if you are new here, please consider joining us. There is a place for you too.

David Froman
Chair, Zip Zap Circus

02

Message from the CEO

> **Let's be real. Not everything goes well every day.**

At Zip Zap, we teach our students that when you fall or miss a trick, you get up, look the audience in the eyes, and try again. As management, we have to walk the talk. Because we measure and evaluate, we are able to notice orange and red flags early. And because we are guided by a clear strategic plan, we can adjust course and still reach our goals.

Sometimes that means small corrections. Other times, it requires bold action. Isn't the definition of insanity doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result?

This year, we chose change as part of a deliberate, well-monitored strategy. After years of quarterly reviews and careful planning, we began restructuring both our **Board of Trustees** and our **management team**. Yes, change can be uncomfortable. But we believe it is necessary for growth, and by growth, we mean not just size, but quality, relevance, and diversity in our programmes, our people, and our products.

Highlights of the Year

We reached **100% of our grants target**, securing support from major international and local partners.

Our professional touring company **MOYA** brought Zip Zap magic to France, the USA, Reunion Island, and Mauritius with more shows booked in New York, Brazil and Europe for 2025 and 2026.

We took the first major steps toward **purchasing the Zip Zap Academy**, ensuring a stable future for our operations and training programmes.

We welcomed **2,322 beneficiaries** through our **9 core programmes**, and taught an additional **104 children** through Winter Tots and the Iziko Museum workshops. That is a total of 2,426 youth engaged.

With the support of **16 instructors** and **11 volunteers**, we delivered **2,498 hours of classes** across **four locations**: a public clinic, St Joseph's School, the Zip Zap Dome, and the Zip Zap Academy.

Our students performed **21 shows** for diverse audiences, including an old age home, multiple schools, and two large-scale productions at the Dome (Kaleidoscope in August and A Piece Of Us in December). We reached a combined audience of **5 762 people**.

We rolled out **two new initiatives**: a gender review and a healthcare programme for our full-time students.

We tightened financial controls and kept operations **consistently under budget**, finishing the year with a healthy cash reserve.

I was proud to represent Zip Zap and South Africa at the **Circostrada AGM** in Marseille, reconnecting with global peers and renewing our international ambitions.

100%
grants targets reached

2,322
beneficiaries welcomed

104
additional children taught

2,426
total youth engaged

21
shows performed by students

5,762
combined audience reached

Challenges and Realignment

Donations landed at 63% of our annual goal. Not all targets were reached. Efforts to monetise The Dome were hampered by human resources shortages, and performance bookings were impacted by unexpected cancellations. But every shortfall became a moment to re-strategise.

Recognising the financial and operational demands of the Zip Zap Arena project, we made the difficult but necessary decision to pause its development and respectfully conclude all contracts with professional partners, allowing us to refocus on our core programmes and mission delivery.

That is why this year's restructure has been so important. I am overjoyed to welcome 9 new board members, each bringing valuable skills and networks. They are now actively engaged in four subcommittees: Outreach & Impact, Finance & Governance, Marketing & Communication, and Arena & Academy. Yes, this means more meetings for me — but it also brings a sense of shared responsibility and renewed energy. With so many sharp minds and committed hearts around the table, Zip Zap's future feels safer and more exciting than ever.

Sustainable Developmental Goals: Growth That Matters

The kind of growth we envision is not just about numbers. It is about impact. It's about expanding the depth and breadth of our programmes, reaching more young people with better tools, greater empathy, and wider opportunity. That's the kind of growth that matters.

In line with this, we are proud to contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:

SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

SDG 4: Quality Education

SDG 5: Gender Equality and Empower All Women and Girls

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

A Personal Note

On 19 September 2024, I had the immense honour of being decorated Officer of the Order of Merit from the French Presidency Office by the Ambassador of France at the Leeuwenhof residence. I share this recognition with my team, my co-founder Brent, and every child, partner, and supporter who has been part of this journey.

I leave you with my acceptance speech which is a true reflection of Zip Zap's story, and my deep gratitude for everyone who believes in what we do.

Honorable Premier, First Lady, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, Madame la Consul, Members of the Zip Zap Board, distinguished guests, dear friends, and colleagues,

"What an honour to stand before you today. I am deeply humbled to receive this recognition from the French Presidency in such a historical venue surrounded by a mix of old and new friends, City and Province representatives, partners, boards members, and family. I could hardly have imagined this journey when it began over 30 years ago right here in Cape Town.

YOKO ONO said: a dream you dream alone is only a dream. A dream you dream together is reality.

This accolade is not mine alone. It belongs to every child who walked through the doors of Zip Zap with a dream, to every family that believed in our vision, and to every staff member, volunteer, and supporter who gave their time, energy, and resources to make this dream a reality.

When we founded Zip Zap, we envisioned a space where young people, irrespective of their background, could come together, learn, grow, and, most importantly, believe in themselves. We wanted to create a place where differences would be celebrated, where diversity would be a strength, and where every child would be given the opportunity to shine. I am incredibly proud that Zip Zap has become just that-a beacon of hope, unity, and creativity in South Africa.

This honour also reflects the power of the arts, not only to entertain but to transform lives. It underscores the importance of giving back, of building bridges between cultures, and of believing that together, we can create a better world. It is a reminder of the incredible resilience and talent of the young people of South Africa, who have inspired me every day to keep pushing forward. It illuminates the commitment that is mine and that of the teams that accompany me in strengthening the circus arts in South Africa.

This recognition comes at a crucial time, between the reality of 32 years dedicated to a dream and the challenge to ensure its legacy. Reflecting on this, I realize that we are on the right path. Our contribution in this multi-billion world has made a difference for more than one child. I am a dreamer, and I believe our children need to be given the opportunity to dream, to make the impossible possible, to dream of a better world, to dream of a better future, to dream with their eyes open.

You have seen and heard what Zip Zap is all about-the children who have grown up with us, the ones

Acknowledgements

To our funders and donors, we thank you for walking this journey with us. Your support allows us to keep our programmes free and accessible, and your trust keeps us accountable. To our team of instructors, administrators, creatives, and volunteers, your dedication is the heartbeat of Zip Zap.

To our new and continuing Board members, thank you for saying "yes" to the challenge and joy of governance. And to every Zip Zap student and graduate: your courage, artistry, and spirit continue to inspire us.

who have passed through our doors, and the ones still yet to come. It is very rewarding to see the children's achievements, from their first climb on shoulders to their first appearance on stage, from passing their driver's license to starting their own families. This is the transformative power of the circus arts in education. It has impacted the lives of at least 20'000 young people as well as millions through shows and media.

The fact that our professional company is currently performing in Minneapolis and soon will be in France emphasize the role of the circus arts in cultural exchange and diplomacy. We still have a huge project of building an arena that aligns with the broader goals of performing arts, education, and tourism.

It is our goal for Zip Zap to inspire audiences, children, and adults alike to see what can be done if we work together. Last month, I was asked how am I still passionate about Zip Zap. I quickly answered because helping a child is the most amazing, positive feeling and a fulfilling privilege.

My wish for the future is for Zip Zap to continue inspiring thousands of children to believe in their dreams, to continue working towards what is important to Brent and me: tolerance, fun, diversity, kindness, joy, inclusivity and CIRCUS!!!

My journey would have been different if I hadn't encountered each and every one of you here today. It is been 3 decades filled with choices, compromises, mistakes, and lessons learned. As well as incredibly proud, exciting, daring and joyful moments.

Today I feel an immense gratitude for all the people who have accompanied us and me on this journey. Diving into the past was incredibly emotional and the guests list quickly went up to 200 people.

Thank you dear First Lady Tracy and Honourable Premier Alan Winde for hosting us today at Leeuwenhof, bringing together my country of birth and my country of adoption. Apart from the rugby we work well together. Thank you for your passion and commitment to the country and the province as well as your support of Zip Zap for so many years.

A special thanks to Aurelien Lechevallier, French Ambassador to South Africa in 2022 who sent me the nomination letter, now currently Directeur Général de la Mondialisation at the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs in Paris.

Thank you David Martinon, Ambassador of France to South Africa, for your trust and benevolent interest, and for traveling from Pretoria specially for this today.

Thank you Sophie Bel consul general in Cape Town for your taste for action and collaboration. Your presence in Cape Town has uplifted and united the entire community.

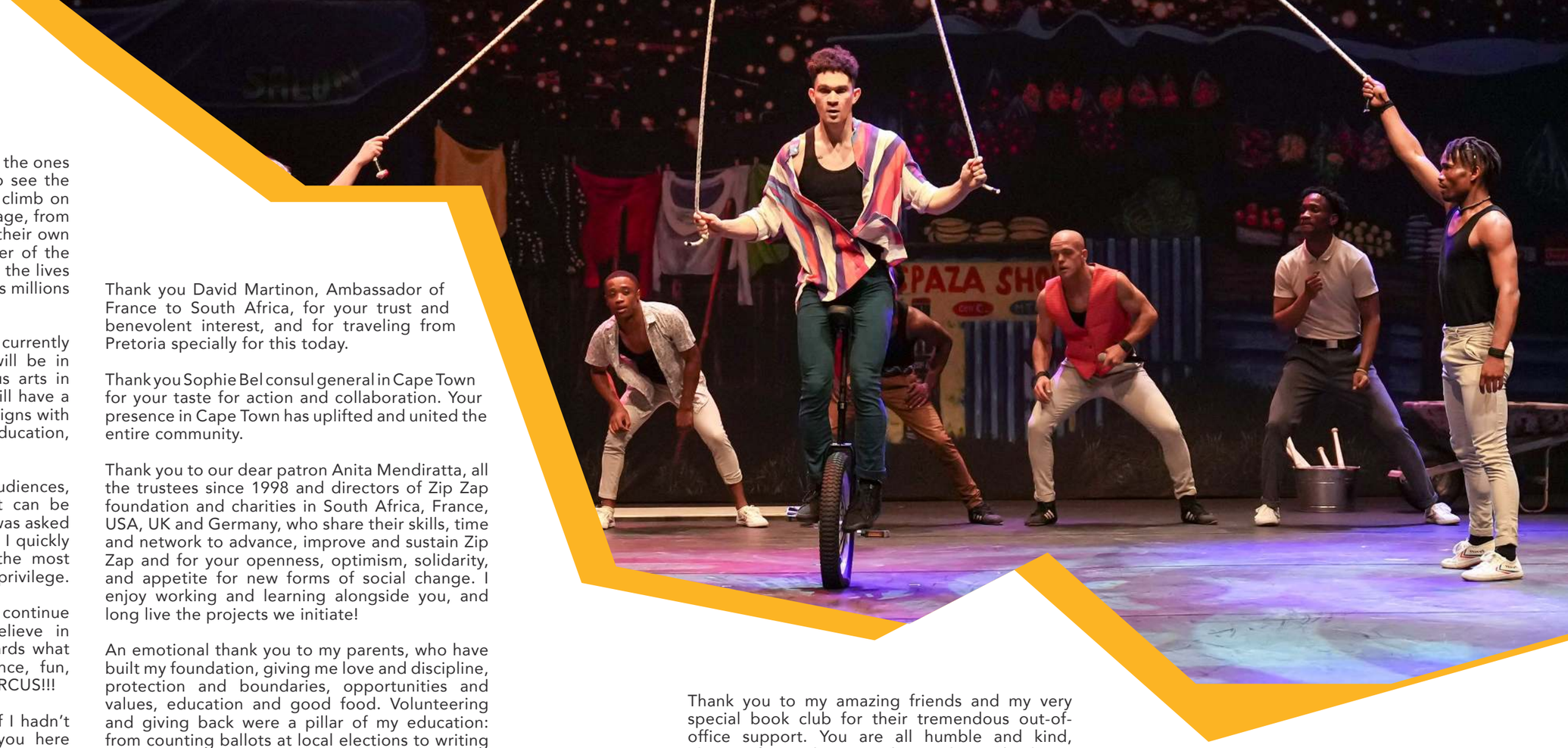
Thank you to our dear patron Anita Mendiratta, all the trustees since 1998 and directors of Zip Zap foundation and charities in South Africa, France, USA, UK and Germany, who share their skills, time and network to advance, improve and sustain Zip Zap and for your openness, optimism, solidarity, and appetite for new forms of social change. I enjoy working and learning alongside you, and long live the projects we initiate!

An emotional thank you to my parents, who have built my foundation, giving me love and discipline, protection and boundaries, opportunities and values, education and good food. Volunteering and giving back were a pillar of my education: from counting ballots at local elections to writing exams for physically challenged peers at high school. They did wonder what I was doing with a circus man at first, but now they are beaming with pride. Who knew that running away with the circus would lead to a knighthood?

Thank you to the first 15 children with whom we built Zip Zap in 1992 and their incredible parents who trusted us with our big dream, which had no track record nor governance, no structure nor bank account. Our first year in South Africa was made possible by all of them and many more who opened their homes for us to sleep and making sure we had a decent meal each week.

Thank you to all the children of Zip Zap today who make my life interesting every day!

Thank you to all the sponsors, supporters, and believers who are from the first tumbling mats to the multi-year, multi-programme funding, from sandwiches to airfares from government to individuals, corporates and foundations. Zip Zap would have not blossomed without your belief and support.



Thank you to my amazing friends and my very special book club for their tremendous out-of-office support. You are all humble and kind, elegant, funny, daring, and so resilient. Thank you for welcoming me with open arms and hearts and celebrating every precious life moment – I love you dearly.

Thank you to my two superheroes, our daughters Sabine and Saskia, who have lived a different childhood than their school mates and embraced every single day with passion, perseverance, and many sacrifices. They grew up with lots of different brothers and sisters, giving up their weekends and holidays to follow their Zip Zap family. Thank you both for constantly opening my eyes and my mind to the changing world, never giving up teaching, challenging, and loving me no matter what. Thank you for teaching me that juggling is not just for the circus, it is for life too!

Thank you to my friend, partner in life and work, my rock, inspiration, and husband. a pillar of strength and the soul keeper of Zip Zap. None of this would have happened if we did not meet. You introduced me to the infinite world of circus where there is no limit to acceptance and imagination, belief and perseverance. Thank you for bringing me to your beautiful country where I found my purpose, as well as good friends and excellent wines! Thank you for reminding me that sometimes, you just have to let go and enjoy the show.

This honour is for you all. I also dedicate this distinction to all of you who are resolutely committed to the future of Zip Zap and supporting the circus arts as a valuable aspect of the performing arts world. Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, on behalf of all at Zip Zap, I proudly accept this nomination."

Thank you.

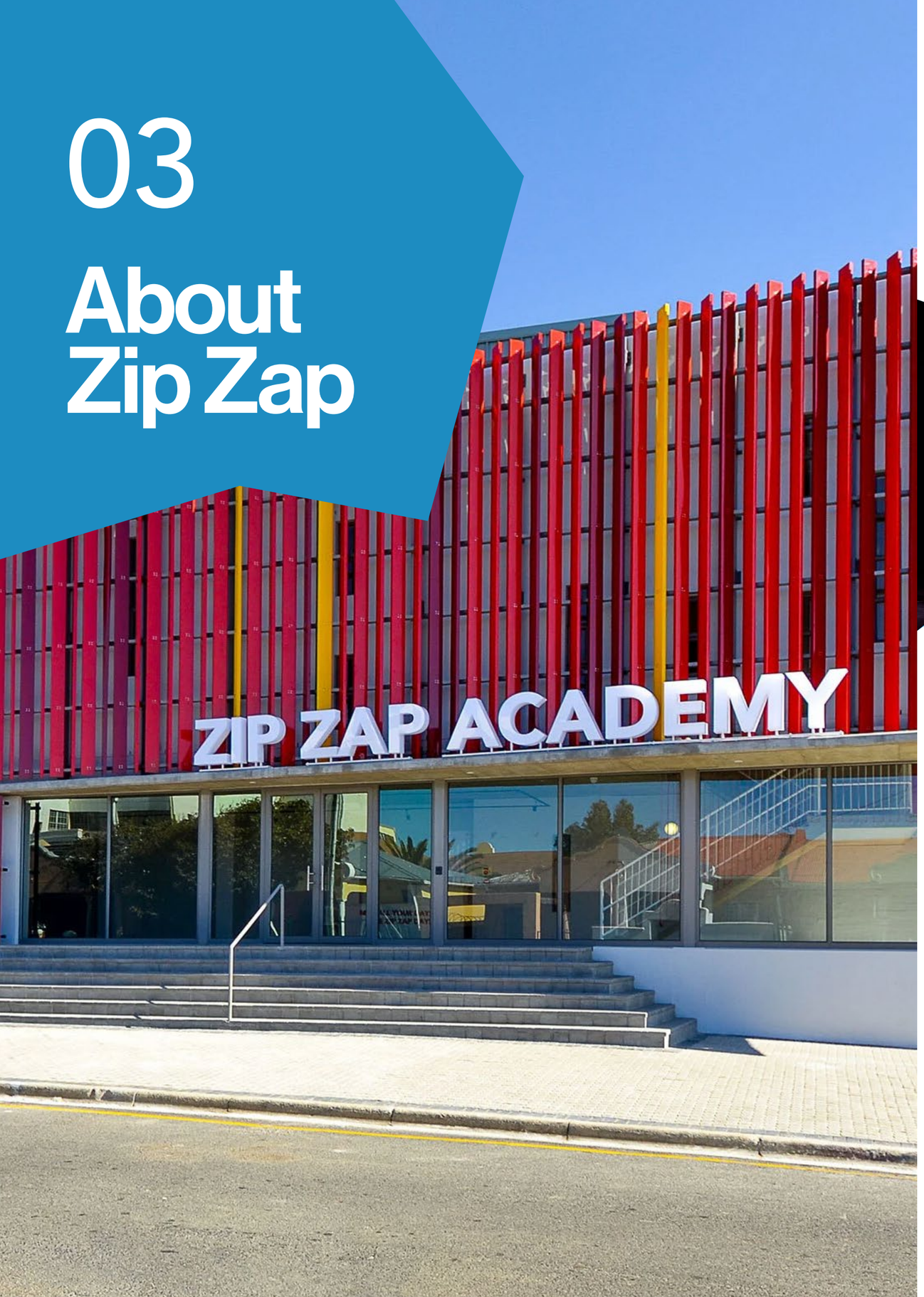
With heartfelt thanks,

Laurence Van Rensburg

Laurence Estève Van Rensburg
CEO & Co-Founder, Zip Zap Circus

03

About Zip Zap



Mission

Through circus arts we inspire and empower young people from all walks of life to pursue their destinies. We promote social cohesion, create opportunities, unlock potential and transfer skills for life.

Vision

A vibrant, uniquely South African social and professional circus, celebrating the Zip Zap spirit on the world stage.

Values

Family

We are a Zip Zap family. We share a sense of belonging and are connected by our common cause. At Zip Zap we strive to be a home that is welcoming, cohesive and safe. Our home is disciplined and has healthy boundaries.

Joy

We love what we do and do what we love. We consider it a privilege to bring happiness to our beneficiaries and stakeholders. This joyfulness underpins all that we do. We work hard, we celebrate our successes and have fun doing it.

Accountablility

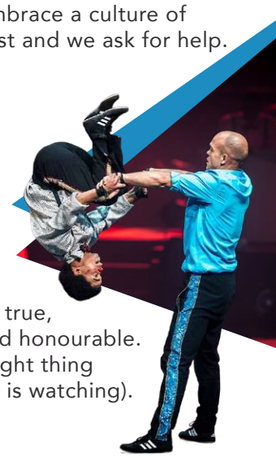
We take responsibility for our actions and our own mistakes. We are solutions-oriented, embrace a culture of trust and we ask for help.

Respect

We respect ourselves, each other, our beneficiaries, our stakeholders, Zip Zap property and the Zip Zap brand.

Honesty

We are consistently true, transparent, real and honourable. We always do the right thing (even when nobody is watching).



History & Purpose

"What started under a big top tent quickly evolved into a pioneering social circus model that brings together children from all walks of life, regardless of their background or circumstance."

Governance

Strong governance is the backbone of Zip Zap's ongoing impact and sustainability. As a registered Trust and recognised Public Benefit Organisation, Zip Zap is committed to maintaining the highest standards of accountability, transparency, and operational effectiveness.

To ensure compliance with regulatory requirements and to retain our Non-Profit Organisation status, Zip Zap undergoes regular internal reviews and external audits. One of our key tools for self-evaluation is the Shirika Health Check, tailored specifically for small to medium-sized organisations in the creative sector. This structured assessment is conducted twice a year and evaluates our performance across several critical areas, including:

- Arts and culture sector relevance
- Strategic planning
- Organisational structure and governance
- Financial management
- Human resources
- Monitoring and evaluation

Each department completes a self-assessment, with risk levels categorised as low, medium, or high. In the most recent review, the majority of Zip Zap's departments were rated low risk, with clear improvements noted in the areas of organisational governance and human resources. These enhancements are largely due to the recruitment of qualified staff into key roles, targeted capacity building, and ongoing professional development.

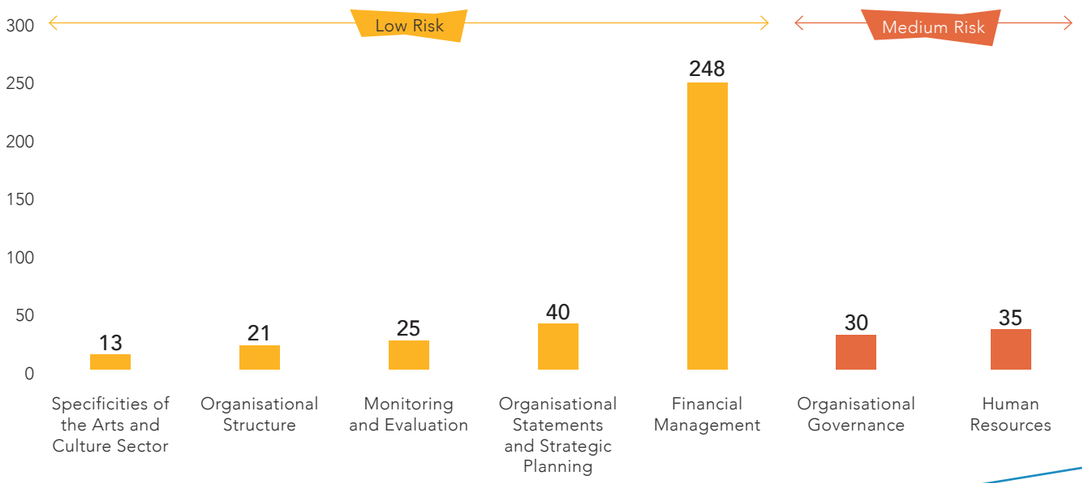
In 2024, Zip Zap strengthened its risk management framework by implementing a comprehensive Risk Register. This tool is reviewed quarterly by the Executive Committee and covers seven key areas

- Financial / fundingReputation
- Governance / compliance
- Operational risks
- Health & safety
- Technology / data
- Programme delivery

This proactive approach allows us to identify emerging risks, track mitigation strategies, and align decisions with long-term organisational goals.

Compliance is not just a legal requirement; it is an expression of our values. Whether meeting donor expectations, upholding child safeguarding protocols, or ensuring data privacy, we treat compliance as an essential part of our social contract with our beneficiaries, partners, and the public.

At Zip Zap, governance is a dynamic and evolving process. We are committed to learning, adapting, and improving so we can continue to build a safe, resilient, and inspiring space where young people can grow, learn, and thrive.



Organisational Structure

The Executive Leadership Team supported by the Board of Trustees provide strategic direction to keep Zip Zap relevant and innovative.

They also uphold fairness, transparency, and accountability in daily operations, ensuring we meet our core responsibility to our primary stakeholders – the children.

Meet The Team

Executive

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
Laurence van Rensburg

Chief Operational Officer
and Creative Director
Brent van Rensburg

Finance and Sustainability

Head of Fundraising
(from November 2024)
Liana Hendricks

Resource Officer
Thabisile Nqweniso

Sales
Shanaaz Stofberg

Marketing

Marketing Manager
Lindy-Lou Bailey

Social Media Coordinator
Amy Wood and Vuyisa Notshe

Graphic Designer
Anele Mthalane

Operations

Operations Manager
Melanie Boltman

Driver and Maintenance
Mphumzi Ngcikiza and
Ayanda Sityebi

Housekeeping
Bulelwa Mzazi-Stuurman

Office of the CEO

Executive Secretary
Kashiefa Adams

Programmes Manager /
Relationship Manager
(September 2024)
Vanessa Curnow-Fortune

Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
Jenna Morgan

Professional Circus

Shows & Events
Administrator
Elizabeth Barnard-
Scott

Instructor /
Performer
Jacobus Claassen

Instructor /
Performer
Jason Barnard

Instructor /
Performer
Phelelani Ndakrokra

Instructor /
Performer
Vuyani Lottering

Social Circus

Head of Social Circus
Tamryn Escalante

Programmes Administrative Support
Natasha Stewart

Departmental Secretary
Abongile Mbekeni

Pedagogy and Circus Expert
Iesu Escalante

Instructor
Riyaanah Dirks

Instructor and Technician
Siphelele Jan

Interns & Volunteers

Volunteers add immense value and play an essential role at Zip Zap. They not only share skills, but also a common passion for circus, innovation, and for pioneering fresh ideas. Our international visitors also bring global insights to life beyond our shores and enable a rich cultural exchange.

This year we were fortunate to welcome an array of volunteers from abroad.

Germany

Jona Tilkorn
Lilly Schlodder
Sophie Riethmuller
Lionel Rosener
Lennard Zondler

Italy

Anita Ballerini

UK

Leon Kraemer

Sweden

Kalina Pahlon-Moller

South Africa

Adele Blank
Althea Naude-Garcia
Katherine Hildebrand
Rynier Keet

When it comes to Zip Zap stalwarts and lifelong friends, we are eternally grateful as we celebrate another year of dance extraordinaire Adele Blank as our dance teacher, who has invested her time, passion, and extraordinary skills to Zip Zap since 2005. Althea Naude-Garcia has continued to put our students through their paces with her upbeat ballet rip, whilst Katherine Hildebrand continues to inspire and challenge our young adults with topics on current affairs and popular culture. Rynier Keet, our strategic sounding board and voice of reason, is always there to guide, support, and champion our vision. These super humans are in it for the long haul and that is how Zip Zap loves to work – once you are part of the family, you always will be.

Our volunteers personify the selfless contribution to social change. Thank you. We are immensely grateful. Contact us at info@zip-zap.org for more information on our volunteer programme.

Human Resources

The Human Resources Report covers the period from March 2024 to February 2025.

Resignations:

Kashiefa Adams
Executive Secretary
March 2024

Amy Wood
Social Media Coordinator
March 2024

Appointments:

Vuyisa Notshe
Social Media Coordinator
May 2024

Iesu Escalante
Pedagogy and Circus Expert
August 2024

Tamryn Escalante
Head of Social Circus
August 2024

We held performance appraisals from 5th to 20th March and 12th November to 12th December 2024. Zip Zap continues to monitor and evaluate the human resource component of the organisation and aim to address the gaps within the organisation's structure.

In October 2024 the senior management team attended a weeklong strategy retreat where the three year strategic plan was revisited. With the appointment of two circus specialists, there was the need for some restructuring within the organization.

With the appointment of Tamryn Escalante as Head of Social Circus, Vanessa Curnow-Fortune (our Programmes Manager) was moved to the role of Relationship Manager, a role created to ensure the nursing of existing relationships and the aim to build new relationships to a variety of different audiences. The workshops focused on, defining roles responsibilities, job descriptions as well as the operational budget for continued growth, development and sustainability.

Training

We continue to encourage staff to attend relevant staff training, taking into consideration their own capacity and availability. A total of **R13,964.00** was invested in training, with **R21,654.00 value in training** generated across 5 departments. This translated to 193 hours of training.

Total invested in training	R13,964.00
Value in training	R21,654.00

We are truly grateful for these partnerships allowing our team to grow without having to dispense cash:

Alkemi Collective

INYATHELO The South African Institute for Advancement

DG MT

La Guilde

GILC Global Initiative on Loneliness and Connection

HCI foundation

LinkedIn

iZinga Assist Doing good, done better.

MASA The Marketing Association of South Africa

MCE Solutions

Laureus Sport for Good

Advancing Olympism 365

France AFD

Google Skillshop

Papillon Events & Consultancy

Richemont

Deloitte.

SAMEA South African Monitoring and Evaluation Association

WiPSA Women in Philanthropy South Africa

The Open University

the resource alliance

udemy

Jill Ritche

Leaders Circle

Melanie Jackson

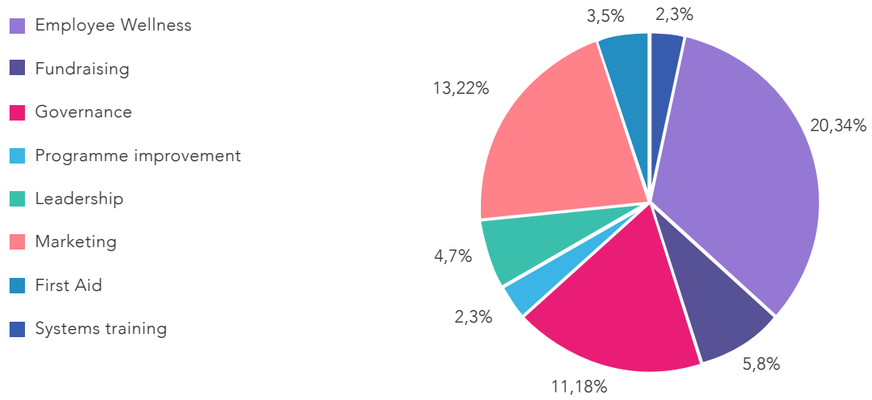
Norman Brook (Play International)

Tori Gardner

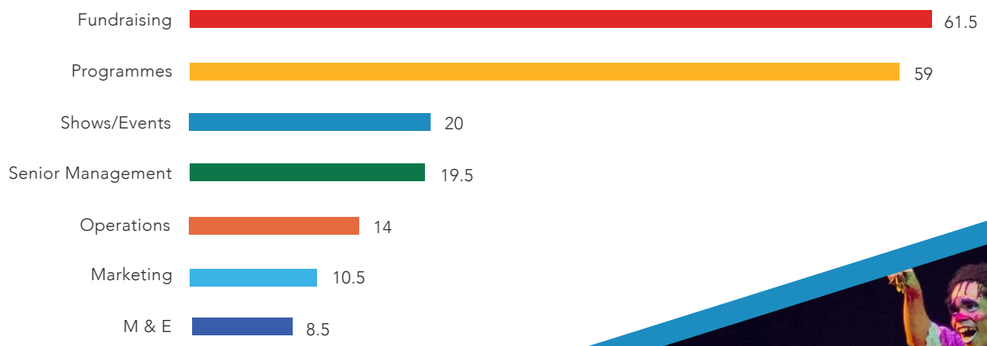
Activity Info

Robyn Whi

Staff training received - number of sessions and % per topic



Hours of staff training per department



Staff Wellness & Team Building

Zip Zap Circus continuously strives to enhance staff well-being and a shared culture amongst the team. We recognize random acts of kindness on a monthly basis within the team, as voted for by the team. We have also introduced quarterly team building and wellness activities. During the 2024/2025 period, the following activities were undertaken:

21st June 2024

Obstacle course at Total Ninja

8th August 2024

Women's Day movement session

4th October 2024

Meditation session at the Meditation Centre

6th December 2024

Year-end staff lunch at Blowfish Restaurant

Awards, Trophies & Prizes

Zalton Jacobs

Most Improved D2D Student of the Year 2024
Sponsored by Anita Mendiratta Foundation

Zalton's journey this year has been marked by dedication, determination, and impressive growth. His juggling skills have soared to new heights, thanks to countless hours of focused practice-even training alone to push his limits. His technical abilities have improved tremendously, reflecting his commitment to excellence. Despite challenges, he has pursued big dreams and achieved remarkable results. Always smiling and ready to help, he brings kindness and positivity to the team. A hardworking performer who stays behind to put in extra effort, Zalton inspires those around him with his passion and perseverance. Well done, Zalton-an outstanding achievement!

Liyema Nxobo

Performer of the Year 2024
Sponsor prefers to remain anonymous

Liyema is an exceptional performer who captivates audiences with his passion and presence. His all-round talent, dedication, and ability to perform with heart set him apart. Always respectful, kind, and supportive, he is a role model for his peers, embodying the values of Zip Zap. He is reliable, positive, and never hesitates to assist others. A natural leader, he holds his fellow students accountable while uplifting them. His outstanding performances, especially in the December show, showcased his growth and skill. Liyema is a true ambassador for Zip Zap, and we are incredibly proud of his achievements. Congratulations!

Morgan Moult

Best Student of the Year 2024
Sponsored by The Nel Family

Morgan is the definition of dedication, hard work, and passion. She pushes her limits, embraces challenges, and continuously strives for improvement. Fearless yet graceful, she shines on stage and was outstanding in the December show. Her hunger for growth is matched by her humility and care for others, making her a great mentor to younger students. She always gives 100%, never says no to new opportunities, and represents Zip Zap's values with discipline and consistency. With incredible determination and a positive attitude, Morgan is growing into a strong, versatile performer. We are so proud of you - congratulations!

Ayanda Nombelwu

Fellowship Trophy 2024
Sponsor prefers to remain anonymous

Ayanda is the heart of Zip Zap, embodying kindness, respect, and dedication. Always willing to work with others, he treats everyone with humility and care. He has grown in confidence, finding his voice and embracing his versatility. His outstanding manners, positive attitude, and willingness to go the extra mile make him a true role model. He applies himself with professionalism, faces challenges with determination, and remains committed to his goals. Always smiling, helpful, and respectful, he is a reflection of Zip Zap's core values. Ayanda, your growth and dedication inspire us all. Congratulations on this well-deserved recognition!

Siphelele Jan

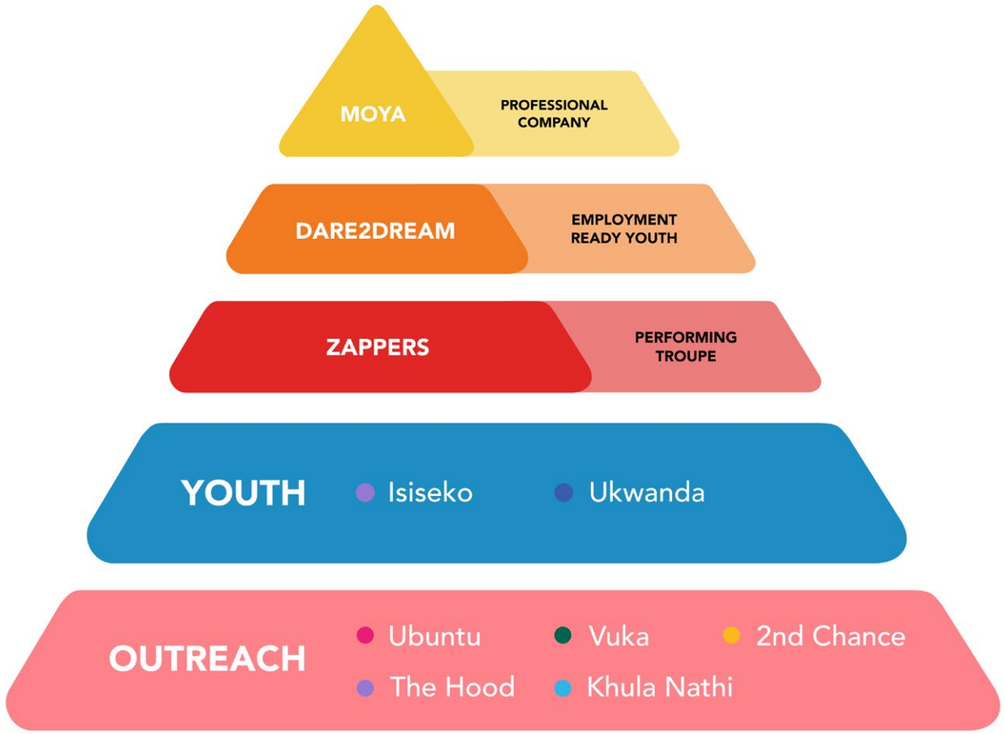
Staff Member of the Year
Sponsored by Zip Zap

Siphelele's dedication and commitment to Zip Zap are displayed daily. He is reliable, supportive, and willing to do whatever he asked to, always going above and beyond to deliver with a smile. Siphelele lives the Zip Zap values and is a valued employee. Congratulations Siphelele - we appreciate you.

04

Programmes & Impact

We empower children and youth for life through our 9 programmes, which are offered free of charge to youth from the age of 4 to 25 years.



5 Outreach Programmes

Cater for children aged 4 to 18 years, from under-served communities, facing various socio-economic challenges. Our beneficiaries include youth-at-risk who, because of their circumstances, are more susceptible to behavioural challenges.

4 Youth Programmes

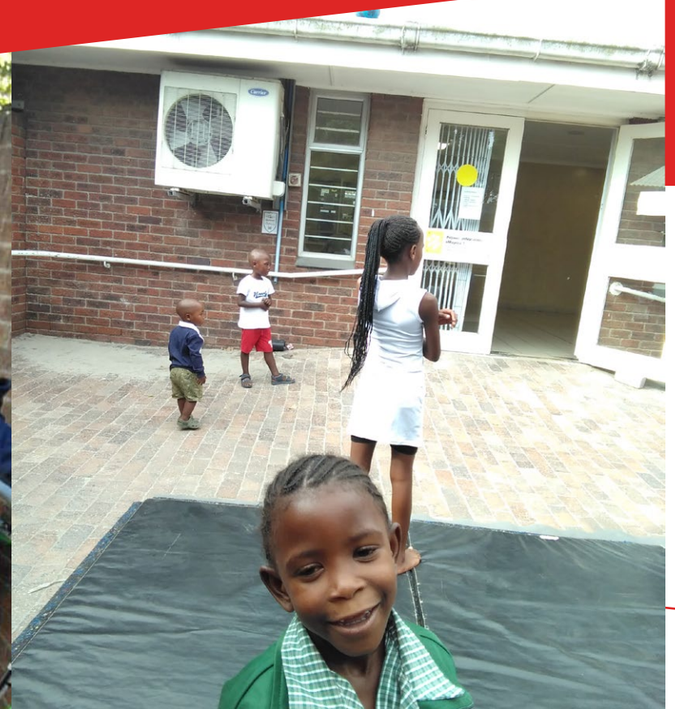
Engage youth aged 7 to 25 years, from all walks of life. Each programme is tailored to meet the needs of participants who are interested in developing their existing talent, learning a new skill, or pursuing a career in circus arts

Ubuntu

About

Our Ubuntu Programme was established in 2012. It is a continuation of the Ibhongolwethu programme, which was established in 2005 in partnership with Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) and the Khayelitsha Site B Community Health Clinic.

It is an innovative patient support programme for children and youth living with HIV. Ubuntu is focused on improving adherence to antiretroviral treatment by facilitating joyful play, social connection, and offering a nutritious snack, during clinic visits, which helps to reduce stress and build resilience.



Programme Objective

- To instil a positive association with treatment and clinic visits through circus arts at Site B Community Health Clinic in Khayelitsha.
- To use Circus Arts as a tool to give participants the opportunity to experience recreation and social interaction outside of their normal environments.

Programme Impact

The programme was well-received by participants and clinic staff alike at the Community Health Clinic, Site B Khayelitsha. The children were engaged with fun activities and games, which encouraged physical activity and fitness assisting to maintain overall health and well-being. The children welcomed the healthy distractions while they waited to attend their appointments. Through the programme, the children were encouraged to visit the clinic regularly and continue with their treatment plans and showed it through their excitement and enthusiasm for the programme.

The children also really appreciated the snacks and fruit provided by Zip Zap, which remains a very effective and practical way of reinforcing the value of good nutrition. Sitting together and sharing a meal is central to the concept of "ubuntu", and this helps to create a sense of community among participants.

"We have noticed that the number of our children remaining in care has improved, which was always our headache, and we have few children that do not come on their appointment dates. The viral load suppression rate has also improved, which shows that there is now a good adherence and compliance to these cohorts, thanks to Zip Zap."

Medical staff member

Impact

32	299	2
Number of Sessions	Beneficiaries	Instructors

Sponsors

BNP PARIBAS FOUNDATION

FONDATION GROUPE EDF

Khula Nathi

About

Our Khula Nathi programme was launched in 2018, in partnership with the Engelhorn family. Khula Nathi is Zip Zap's school readiness support programme for Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres. The programme aims to enhance early childhood readiness for primary school, through a structured social circus programme for improving physical, social, and cognitive skills.

The programme is run in collaboration with six ECD centres (three from Imizamo Yethu and three from Hangberg, both informal settlements in Hout Bay). Children are bussed in by sponsored transport to and from the Zip Zap Academy venue in Salt River, Cape Town.

Programme Objective

- To support ECD centres by providing alternative quality early learning experiences for participants to reach the required stage of school readiness.
- To contribute to the body of knowledge and practice on early childhood development.

Programme Impact

The programme helped children learn balance, dexterity, movement and dance, which complements activities offered at their respective ECD centres. Children learned through observation, listening and mimicking as they were challenged to complete tasks. All the participants thoroughly enjoyed the workshops and teachers reported that they displayed greater confidence, appear to engage better with their peers and are more inclined to participate in physical activities. Most of the children (97%) displayed improved language and communication skills, which positively influenced their ability to follow instructions and execute tasks. We received consistently positive feedback from teachers that the programme contributed to increased levels of confidence and creativity among the children, as well as improvements in physicality.

Khula Nathi has been so successful that we extended to six new ECD centres in Bonteheuwel and Khayelitsha in 2025. This is to support the development of a new cohort of little learners. The selected ECD centres have committed to a 2-year programme with the same group of 35 children per centre, in the age-groups 3-4 years in the first year and progressing to 4-5 years in the second.

"Children express how they feel by showing the other learners what they do at Zip Zap."

Teacher

Impact

30	189	3	14
Number of Sessions	Beneficiaries	Instructors	Coaching Support

Sponsors

BNP PARIBAS FOUNDATION
HCI foundation
La Guilde
NUCLEUS
DG MT
Fondation Agir sa Vie
STONEHAGE FLEMING
FONDATION GROUPE EDF

2nd Chance

About

2nd Chance aims to provide an engaging and educational social circus experience that introduces children and youth to the world of circus and raises awareness of potential career opportunities in the performing arts. The programme was established in 2009 in partnership with The City of Cape Town, and now proudly continues in partnership with the HCI Foundation and the Western Cape Education Department (WCED).

Beneficiaries come from primary schools, high schools, NGOs, orphanages, and children's homes in the most underserved areas across Cape Town. They are transported to our training Academy and exposed to hands-on workshops comprising games, circus techniques and fun activities, which teach teamwork and discipline in a safe, fun, and exciting environment.

Programme Objective

- To give disadvantaged children in South Africa the opportunity to learn about the Circus Arts.
- To expose these children to Circus Arts as an art form, as an extra mural activity and the job opportunities it creates.

Programme Impact

During 2024, the 2nd Chance programme engaged 1 629 participants from Western Cape Education Department (WCED) schools across the Cape Town metropole through 35 workshops. Most schools were situated in under-resourced areas in Cape Town where access to extra-mural activities and excursions is often very limited. The children were excited to experience the Zip Zap Academy and were enthralled by D2D students delivering exhibition performances. This opened their minds to the demands and possibilities within this art form.

The workshops contain a "Q&A" section, which allowed the participants to ask questions and gain deeper insight into the Circus Arts, Zip Zap Circus and the possible career opportunities within the art form.

96% of the participants reported feeling safe during the programme, 94% reported having learned something new about circus and 97% reported having fun at Zip Zap, while 91% reported feeling inspired after the workshop. Teachers reported an increase in learners' self-confidence and self-esteem and that the exercise was excellent especially for those struggling with physical activities.

"Adding to our PE curriculum. Physical interaction and training. Encourages group participations. Gives them confidence. Shows them there are other career opportunities."

"Exposing learners to new activities. Catering for everyone – inclusive. There is more out there than just to do good academically. More career options."

Teachers/chaperones

Impact

1629 Learners Reached

35 Facilitated Sessions

33 Schools

4 Instructors

14 Coaching Support

Sponsors

BNP PARIBAS FOUNDATION

RSN

SOL

ERIC & SHEILA SAMSON FOUNDATION

FONDATION GROUPE EDF

Vuka

About

Vuka ("Arise") was piloted in 2023, following the principles of Ubuntu. The Vuka programme, hosted at St. Joseph's School, Cape Town, helps children embrace and manage their conditions, bringing joy through circus arts.

Vuka engages participants with special needs, providing a fun, safe space where children can develop socially, physically, and emotionally through engaging circus activities tailored to their needs. Facilitated on-site at the school, the programme aims to help the beneficiaries cope with the realities of their physical and medical conditions so that the children can embrace acceptance of their individual circumstances and celebrate their innate capabilities.

Programme Objective

- To improve social cohesion through fun and physical activities in a safe physical, emotional and psychological space for the children.
- To help reduce loneliness and bring joy to children during their journey of recovery, and acceptance, while having a positive association with St Joseph's School.

Programme Impact

The Vuka programme's standout moments were the Show & Tell events held at the end of each semester - on 22 June and 22 November 2024. These events provided a vibrant platform for participants to showcase the skills they had developed throughout the programme. The entire school community, joined by Zip Zap staff, filled the audience with enthusiasm, cheering on the performers as they took the stage.

The school's principal and staff are deeply committed to the Vuka programme and eager to see its continuation. The first year of implementation has received overwhelmingly positive feedback, highlighting its meaningful impact on the children. We are excited to keep making a difference in the lives of vulnerable youth through this initiative.

"The learners who were very withdrawn and self-conscious have become more confident since participating in the programme."

Teacher

Impact

30	28	2
Learners Reached	Facilitated Sessions	Instructors

Sponsors

AEDES ASBL

FONDATION GROUPE EDF

The Hood

About

Launched in 2018, The Hood is aimed at children and youth within a 2km radius of the Zip Zap Academy in Salt River, Cape Town. Its mission is to foster the physical, social, and emotional well-being of young people by offering positive childhood experiences within their own neighbourhood. Through the art of circus, The Hood provides a safe space for participants to learn new skills, build confidence, and feel supported.

Through this programme we engage with children, aged 6 to 17 years, on a weekly basis, teaching various circus disciplines in a novel, safe and fun environment – at the Zip Zap Academy, which is right on their doorstep. The programme aims to develop physical skills, improved self-esteem and self-confidence, and to teach the value of teamwork.

Programme Objective

- The Hood fosters a healthier community by providing children with positive experiences in their neighbourhood.
- The goal is to prevent risky behaviour and expose these children to opportunities in the circus world.

Programme Impact

In 2024, the programme engaged 30 children in 30 workshops where the children played, learned and developed, both physically and creatively. All the children enjoyed the training – 92% felt loved, while 88% felt comfortable to talk to someone at Zip Zap. Physical assessments, completed three times during the programme year, helped instructors to assess the capabilities and progress of the participants, with 54% of participants feeling stronger and fitter since joining the programme. Another important focus of the programme is creating positive associations regarding gender roles. There was a marked positive change among the participants in viewing genders as equal. This was further displayed in the positive representation of female participants within the programme, at 52%. Despite the demands of school, extra-mural activities and family responsibilities the programme still had an attendance rate of 69%, which displays the participants' resilience and perseverance.

Impact	30	30	4	4
	Beneficiaries	Sessions	Instructors	Coaching Support

Sponsors

BNP PARIBAS FOUNDATION · THIS DAY · Joan St. Ledger Charitable Trust · FONDATION GROUPE EDF

Isiseko Foundation (Formerly Beginners)

About

Isiseko was founded in 2009. It is Zip Zap's recreational entry-level programme, introducing children from 7 to 10 years old to the world of circus through foundational skills and activities across all circus disciplines.

Participants meet once a week, on Saturday mornings for 2 hours, during which time they attempt a variety of circus skills, play and learn together. The primary aims are for children to develop a basic level of circus skills and experience the value of diversity and teamwork. Through their weekly engagement, the participants develop a sense of belonging, a willingness to learn new skills and enjoy the rewards of positive social interactions. Isiseko is a feeder programme to the more advanced Zappers programme.

Programme Objective

- For children and youth to develop a basic level of circus skills and enable them to experience the value of diversity and teamwork.

Programme Impact

Isiseko welcomed 66 participants during the 2024 programme year. The children were very excited to work towards their goals of learning circus skills across various disciplines. Most participants reported learning what they had hoped to during the training sessions. The programme encouraged physical activity in a creative environment, and the children were able to develop, grow and learn through play.

Physical assessments helped instructors to monitor the progress and capabilities of the participants. The Isiseko programme instils greater confidence in many of the participants, which created a huge amount of excitement as the children prepared to showcase all they had learned during the programme year at the annual year-end Programmes Show & Tell event.

Impact

66 Beneficiaries

26 Sessions

4 Instructors

14 Coaching Support

7 Accepted into Zappers

Sponsors

Sanlam Foundation

FONDATION GROUPE EDF

A Shining Star:
Ikho Dyakalashe

In his first year in the Isiseko programme, Ikho is already making waves at Zip Zap. A learner at Harry Gwala High School in Khayelitsha, he joined the programme in 2024 and has shown incredible progress in a short time.

Although naturally shy, Ikho is highly motivated and gives his all to every challenge he takes on. His willingness to step out of his comfort zone has been inspiring, and his passion for dance and creative movement shines through - not just at Zip Zap but also at liturgical events at his church. Through the programme, he has combined his love for movement with newfound flexibility and strength, gaining confidence along the way.

In November 2024, Ikho took to the stage as part of a 4-person adagio act at the Zip Zap Programmes Show & Tell event, delivering a strong and memorable performance. His commitment to teamwork is just as impressive - he is always ready to support his fellow participants, and his warm smile reassures and uplifts those around him.

Ikho's dedication and embodiment of Zip Zap's values earned him the prestigious 2024 Alan & Tracy Winde Fellowship Award, generously sponsored by Zip Zap patron Anita Mendiratta. His hard work was further recognised with an invitation to join the Zappers student performing troupe in 2025 - an opportunity he eagerly embraced.

He loves being at Zip Zap. He is very modest about his achievements, and he is excited at the opportunities that await!

With his humility, determination, and growing confidence, Ikho is set for an exciting journey ahead. Watch this space - his story is only just beginning.

Simunye (Now Ukwanda)

About

Formed in 1992, Ukwanda (formerly Simunye), means "grow". This is Zip Zap's recreational entry-level programme, introducing children from 10 to 18 years old to the world of circus through basic skills and activities across all circus disciplines.

The programme encourages social cohesion, discipline and teamwork, and build confidence and creativity. With a more focused approach to learning and developing circus skills, and increased physical demands, participants reap the benefits from investing more time and training. Ukwanda is a feeder programme to the more advanced Zappers programme.

This programme also provides opportunities for budding leaders to emerge and act as role models for less experienced members within the group.

Programme Objective

- For children and youth to develop a basic level of circus skills.
- Enable children and young people to experience the value of diversity and teamwork.

Programme Impact

Isiseko welcomed 66 participants during the 2024 programme year. The children were very excited to work towards their goals of learning circus skills across various disciplines. Most participants reported learning what they had hoped to during the training sessions. The programme encouraged physical activity in a creative environment, and the children were able to develop, grow and learn through play.

Physical assessments helped instructors to monitor the progress and capabilities of the participants. The Isiseko programme instils greater confidence in many of the participants, which created a huge amount of excitement as the children prepared to showcase all they had learned during the programme year at the annual year-end Programmes Show & Tell event.

Impact

36 Beneficiaries

55 Sessions

4 Instructors

14 Coaching Support

2 Accepted into Zappers

Sponsors

Sanlam Foundation

FONDATION GROUPE EDF

A Shining Star:
Liyema Sivundla

Liyema is a 15-year-old Grade 9 learner at Iqhayiya High School in Khayelitsha. His Zip Zap journey began in 2020 when his aunt introduced him to **Isiseko**. Since then, he has embraced every challenge, steadily building his skills across various circus disciplines.

Naturally outgoing, Liyema thrives in the Zip Zap community, drawing motivation from his peers and the unwavering support of his instructors. Their patience and guidance have helped him push past obstacles and grow in confidence.

His love for **mini-trampolining** allows him to soar - literally! Liyema isn't afraid to venture beyond his comfort zone. At the Show & Tell in November 2024, he delivered a **breathtaking duo aerial straps performance**, showcasing his strength and agility.

With big dreams of traveling the world and performing with Zip Zap, Liyema's dedication has already earned him recognition. He was awarded the **2024 Ukwanda Shining Star Award**, celebrating his remarkable progress, and commitment.

Taking his passion to the next level, Liyema was invited to join **Zappers**, Zip Zap's students performing troupe, in 2025! This exciting step means more intensive training and new opportunities to refine his craft - bringing him closer to turning his dreams into reality.

Zappers

About

The Zappers programme is aimed at identifying and nurturing talent within existing Zip Zap programmes, closing the "access to opportunity" gap for all beneficiaries. The goal is to develop a high-performing group of youth with advanced circus skills and to enhance their chances for success through technical mastery and personal growth.

The programme focuses on imparting high-level circus expertise to youth with potential to create new acts and shows, using Zip Zap expertise, and a pool of international visiting artists. The programme targets youth between the ages of 10 and 18 years old. Zappers offers this small group, who have been identified as committed, the opportunity of intensive training and performance opportunities. We encourage Zappers students to apply for the Dare2Dream vocational programme , with our focus being on preparing them to join Zip Zap's professional group should they wish to.

Programme Objective

- To identify and nurture talent.
- To form a performing troupe that will feed into the vocational and professional arms of the organisation.

Programme Impact

The Zappers programme provided a supportive space for 28 young performers to train intensively in their chosen circus disciplines. With three training sessions per week, they work hard to improve their skills, fitness, and artistry. More than 82% of Zappers showed significant improvement in their physical abilities, proving their dedication and determination. Balancing school, extra activities, and family life is no easy task, yet they commit fully to their training, growing both as performers and individuals.

As they gained new skills, their confidence and enthusiasm soared, especially when preparing for performances. Zappers showcase their talents at Zip Zap's events, where they inspire younger performers who look up to them as role models. To maximise their stage experience, each Zapper is encouraged to perform in at least 10 Zip Zap performances per year, helping them develop their stage presence and confidence.

Impact

28 Beneficiaries

96 Sessions

8 Instructors

14 Coaching Support

1 Advanced to Dare2Dream

Sponsors

City of Cape Town Isixeko Sasekapa Stad Kaapstad · Sanlam Foundation · MAID · Zip Zap Circus · Fondation Groupe EDF

A Shining Star:
Sihle Madlingozi

Abongile Siphesihle Madlingozi, affectionately known as Sihle, is a 15-year-old powerhouse of charisma. Since joining Zip Zap in 2017 through the Isiseko programme, she has demonstrated unwavering dedication, progressing to Simunye in 2021 and earning her place in the Zappers programme in 2024.

Sihle has truly found her element on the trapeze, where she blends strength, grace, and artistry. Sihle doesn't stop there - her natural flair for comedy brings a unique and entertaining twist to her performances. Outgoing and fearless, she eagerly embraces every opportunity to grow, pushing beyond her comfort zone with determination.

Her hard work and passion were recognised in 2024 when she received the Shining Star Award in the Zappers programme, celebrating her progress, and overall development.

With a love for circus and a hunger to keep learning, Sihle is excited for what lies ahead. She thrives on stage, and every performance brings her one step closer to mastering her craft. Watch this space—Sihle is just getting started!

Dare2Dream

About

Dare2Dream (D2D) is our full-time vocational programme for participants interested in pursuing a career in circus. It creates alternative pathways to employment, providing youth with technical circus and essential life skills, while fostering self-confidence, resilience, and a sense of belonging.

The objective of the D2D programme is to alleviate poverty and reduce unemployment in our country. By using the Circus Arts as a practical medium, participants learn soft skills, social skills, technical skills, artistic development, circus techniques, and teaching skills. With the guidance and support of dedicated Zip Zap instructors, D2D students create and manage their own performances, and work as a team in collaborating to create shows for corporates, public performances and special events. All these skills help prepare the D2D students to teach and coach the younger children, which is an integral part of the curriculum. A 'professional insertion' year, as the final year of the programme, aids in bridging the gap between learning and working.

Programme Objective

- To empower young people to achieve their dreams of pursuing a career in the circus arts.
- Provide an alternative pathway to employment for youth who do not wish to pursue mainstream tertiary education.
- Equip participants for future employment through practical work experience.
- Support the professional development of participants through our circus, technical and teaching modules.
- Support the personal development of participants through our self-development module.
- Meet the human capital needs of Zip Zap by creating a pool of fully trained youth.

Programme Impact

During the 2024 programme year, D2D hosted 14 participants. The programme delivered a total of 1715 hours across 4 modules: Circus and Performing (1 122 hours), Technical (26,5 hours), Teaching (400,5 hours) and Self-development (166 hours). An attendance rate of 93% provided evidence of the students' dedication. One participant from 2023 Zappers programme successfully applied to D2D commencing in 2024.

All students displayed improvements in the physical aspect of the programme. This was complemented by improvements in artistic assessments for 100 % of students. Overall discipline and self-discipline (which includes time management, accountability, responsibility, conflict resolution) is an important aspect of the programme, and 91% of students displayed improvement in this regard. Pro-social behaviours, which contribute to a sense of belonging for the students (including teamwork, acceptance, helping, sharing, communication), were also very visible within the cohort.

During the year, five students were invited to train and perform with Zip Zap's professional performing troupe on tours to USA (September – October 2024), France (November – December 2024) and Reunion Island (February 2025)

Six students delivered impressive performances at their year-end artistic evaluations to a panel of external adjudicators representing funders and professionals in the performing industry: Adele Blank from Free Flight Dance Company, Sifiso Kweyama from Jazzart Dance Theatre, Raymond Dreyers from the Department of Cultural Affairs and Sport and Zip Zap co-founders Laurence and Brent Van Rensburg.

Six students who remained in training benefited from intensive training under the tutelage of the Circus Specialist. They performed in Zip Zap's family show, Kaleidoscope (17, 18, 24 and 25 August 2024) and in a contemporary rock circus show, A Piece of Us (12-22 December 2024), which was conceptualised and produced in just three months. The students performed a total of 20 performances.

Impact

14 Beneficiaries	6 Instructors	1122 Circus hours	26½ Technical Training Hours
400½ Hours spent Teaching	166 Hours spent on Self-Development		

Sponsors

HCI foundation · The TK Foundation · Laureus Sport for Good · Advancing Olympism 365 · France AFD · Play International · Fondation Groupe EDF

On-site Residence (O.B.S) Our Beautiful Shell

About

O.B.S is our on-site residence, a shared and safe accommodation space for Zip Zap students who face difficult circumstances or challenges commuting to attend training.

Residents are provided with all the essentials for a comfortable and secure environment, including bedding, appliances, laundry facilities, Wi-Fi, and more. Nutritious meals are supplied through in-kind donations from our retail partner, Woolworths.

O.B.S. plays an essential role in preparing Zip Zap beneficiaries for independent living. The residence promotes a cosmopolitan atmosphere where residents actively participate in household chores, organisation, and maintenance, fostering a sense of responsibility and community.

In 2024, the OBS residence was home to 7 D2D students and welcomed 10 international interns from Germany, Canada, Finland, and Belgium, alongside 3 coaches from Portugal, Canada, and France. This initiative fosters cultural exchange and helps young residents develop key life skills, adaptability, and independence. Thanks to the unwavering support of our sponsors, the residents enjoy a safe, secure, and comfortable living space that allows them to focus on their personal growth and development.

Programme Objective

- Remove the challenges of access to training and accommodation so that young people can participate in the Dare2Dream programme and build careers in circus and the performing arts.

Programme Impact

Residents share living space with people from varied socio-economic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Responsibilities are shared and residents are held accountable to each other to ensure a safe, clean, and harmonious existence. Developing good inter-personal and social skills, and fostering good self-discipline, are critical to successful cohabitation and maintaining mature relationships.

Open, honest channels of communication, consideration for others and managing conflict are also vital to ensuring social cohesion within the residence. Good self-management and understanding the demands of independent living enables residents to set achievable goals and improve decision-making.

Impact

7
Beneficiaries

13
International interns and coaches

Funders

WOOLWORTHS

BNP PARIBAS FOUNDATION

05

Shows

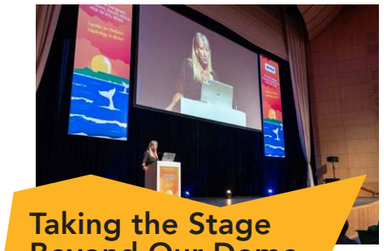
We experienced an unforgettable year from March 2024 till February 2025, filled with energy, excitement, and growth. Across 131 performances, we reached a total audience of 68,132 people - more than double the previous year! Our Shows & Events department also saw a remarkable 103% increase in revenue.

Highlights at the Zip Zap Dome

We were proud to host a wide range of events at our home base, including:

- **Suidoosterfees:**
  Over 1,000 people joined us over 10 days to celebrate vibrant local entertainment.
- **DHL African Cup:**
  A five-day event with dinners, performances, and networking, welcoming over 300 guests.
- **French Bastille Day:**
  A joyful celebration with more than 1,000 attendees marking this festive occasion.

In November, we welcomed Premier Alan Winde and the First Lady Tracy Winde to our Show and Tell to hand over the Fellowships trophies to the young aspiring performers - a special platform where our students showcase their talents and push their creative boundaries. Over 400 guests came to support and cheer on the performers. Thank you to Anita Mendiratta for initiating the concept.



Taking the Stage Beyond Our Dome

Our performers brought the Zip Zap magic to prestigious platforms throughout the year.

- **Mining Indaba 2024 at the CTICC**
  Over 800 delegates enjoyed our vibrant acts.
- **Belgium's Embracing Openness Parade**
  A lively Cape Town event with 15,000 participants.
- **IPNA & FiSC conferences at the CTICC in early 2025**
  Performances for over 1,000 attendees.

Kaleidoscope

Kaleidoscope was our flagship production and made possible by the support of the City of Cape Town, the Western Cape Government and BASA Business Arts South Africa.

In August 2024, our much-loved production Kaleidoscope drew a crowd of over 4,000 people. In the spirit of giving back, we partnered with schools like the German International School, Llandudno Primary, and Stellenbosch Waldorf to help them fundraise by offering discounted tickets for resale.

Community Outreach

Our newly launched Road Shows took circus directly to schools like **Dryden Street Primary, Cecil Road Primary, and Athlone High School** — sometimes hosting them at the Dome, or performing at their schools to spark curiosity and connection.

For Mandela Day, our team also performed a heartwarming show at Monte Rosa Old Age Home.

Dare2Dream: 'A Piece of Us'

Our Dare2Dream trainees created and performed their own production, A Piece of Us, in an intimate lounge setting. This 11-show run in December gave them invaluable hands-on experience in producing a show from start to finish.

MOYA Goes Global

Our professional company toured internationally with MOYA, sharing South African circus with the world:

Mauritius:
4 shows at Caudan Theatre
— 860 audience members

Minneapolis, USA:
51 shows at the Children's Theatre
— 20,182 audience members thank you to DSAC for getting us there!

France:
42 shows across 7 cities, including:

— Cergy (4 shows)
— Annecy (4)
— Chambéry (5)
— Caluire (2)
— Mérignac (2)
— Mulhouse (6)

A major run of 19 shows at La Villette in Paris.
Total French audience: 31,882 people
Institut Francais - MOYA costumes recreation

To everyone who came to experience the magic, we thank you. Your support, applause, and presence are what keep our circus alive. You are a vital part of the Zip Zap journey.

06

Partnerships & Collaborations

At Zip Zap, we believe that meaningful partnerships create shared impact. By collaborating with like-minded individuals, organisations, and global networks, we expand opportunities for our students, deepen our expertise, and contribute to a stronger, more connected circus and social development ecosystem.

Demain's Volunteers Project DSV

This ongoing collaboration with Pascal Pierron and the Festival Mondial du Cirque de Demain connects professional circus artists with Zip Zap's D2D students. First piloted in 2019, the initiative provides students with personalised technical training to bridge the gap between social circus and professional careers. In 2024, one student received online clowning mentorship from Zip Zap alumnus José Do Rego, now co-director of Circus Harlekin in Germany. Although training was sporadic due to scheduling challenges and the student eventually exited the programme, the project demonstrated the value of international mentorship. We plan to scale this in 2025 with more in-person masterclasses to inspire and upskill the next generation of performers.

Palestinian Circus Exchange

In May 2024, Zip Zap welcomed artists from the Palestinian Circus under difficult travel conditions. The exchange offered mutual learning, with D2D students and visiting performers training together and collaborating on cultural fusion performances. The week-long visit included shared workshops and community-building experiences that reflected both South African and Palestinian traditions. This powerful collaboration deepened our students' global awareness and reminded us of circus as a universal language of hope and resilience.

Masterclasses with Circus unARTiq

Andreas Bartl, from Circus unARTiq, and Lisa Rinne, an award-winning aerialist, provided masterclasses to D2D students both virtually and in-person. Their sessions focused on handstands, Chinese pole, physical conditioning, and flexibility. These sessions directly contributed to technical development for international touring performances. Their February 2025 visit engaged the full D2D cohort and raised the standard of training through mentorship and structured skill-building. The exchange also reinforced Zip Zap's commitment to exposing students to global standards and expertise.

Sports Science Physiotherapy Partnership

Launched in late 2024 this new partnership provided D2D students with weekly physiotherapy sessions and health education. Sessions took place in a dedicated space at the Zip Zap Academy and focused on injury prevention, rehabilitation, and general well-being. The initiative ensures our students receive professional care that supports sustainable physical development, bridging the gap between high-performance demands and long-term health outcomes.

Global Alliance of Circus Schools (GACS)

In 2020, Zip Zap became a member of GACS, a network of elite circus schools across six continents, operating under the Fédération Mondiale du Cirque and the European Circus Association. This inclusion connects Zip Zap to an international pool of expertise, exchanges, and collaborations. Through GACS, Zip Zap has access to workshops, forums, and professional development opportunities—building capacity and visibility within the global circus community.

IN-SA Impact Network

As a founding member of the IN-SA Impact Network, Zip Zap collaborates with other South African social impact organisations to share resources, advocate for systemic change, and enhance community impact. The group, including Bridges for Music, Waves 4 Change and Viva con Agua SA, met regularly in 2024–2025 and is now working to co-create a shared mission and vision. The network's goal is to strengthen each member's reach through collaboration, cross-sector learning, and advocacy.

Circodata Platform Access

Through its partnership with the French Centre National des Arts du Cirque (CNAC), Zip Zap's D2D students gained access to CIRCODATA, an extensive online database of circus videos, historical archives, and academic resources. This tool enriches student learning, providing inspiration and deeper understanding of circus history, dramaturgy, and technical styles. It supports independent research and encourages students to broaden their artistic horizons.

Caravan Circus Network

Zip Zap is a "Friend of Caravan," an international network of 36 youth and social circus schools dedicated to promoting circus as an educational tool. In 2024, Zip Zap participated in Caravan's two online Annual General Meetings. Though not a full member, Zip Zap benefits from access to knowledge-sharing events, community exchanges, and advocacy efforts aligned with our social mission.

We would like to also thank the following organisations for partnering with us:

In addition we also acknowledge and appreciate the following organisations of which we are members:

07

Fundraising

In 2024, Zip Zap pursued a strategic and relationship-based fundraising approach to ensure both immediate support for our programmes and long-term financial sustainability. This dual-focus strategy balanced operational fundraising. It supported our nine free youth development programmes and enabled the advancement of our capital campaigns for the Zip Zap Arena and Academy.

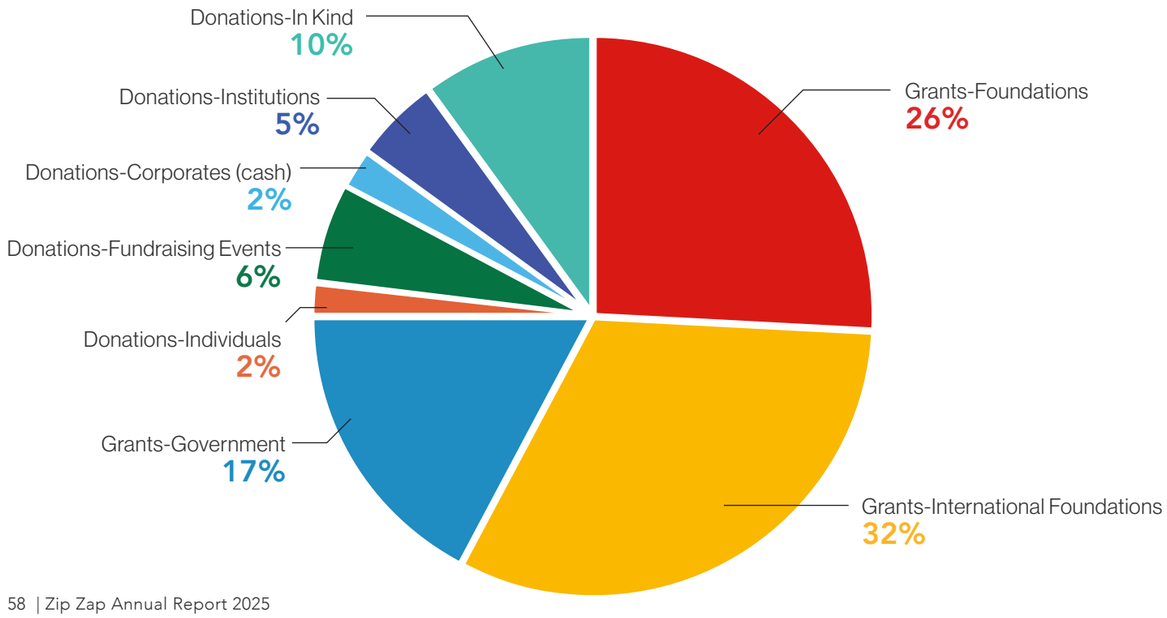
We secured several three-year funding commitments from international trusts and foundations, which provided much-needed stability for key programmes and organisational development. These multi-year grants are a testament to the trust Zip Zap continues to build through consistent impact and transparent reporting.

Fundraising events remained a vibrant part of our strategy, creating both income and engagement. Highlights included a successful Golf Day, Zip Zap's enthusiastic team in the Cape Town Cycle Tour, and a high-energy auction. These events not only generated essential unrestricted funds but also fostered deeper relationships with new and existing supporters.

To manage donor engagement and fundraising processes more effectively, we continued to strengthen our use of Salesforce, enabling more strategic donor communication, grant tracking, and reporting. Additionally, our registered partner charities in the UK, USA, and France played an important role in unlocking international donations and providing tax-efficient giving options for global supporters.

We also took a significant step in donor stewardship by creating a new Relationship Manager role, dedicated to nurturing donor relationships and securing new partnerships for the future.

Grants & Donations for the period ending 28 February 2025



Appreciation

We would like to thank our funders, donors and partners for walking this journey with us. Your support allows us to keep our programmes free and accessible, and your trust keeps us accountable.

01 RING MASTER

mariaMarina FOUNDATION

02 WIRE WALKERS

03 ACROBATS

Joan St. Ledger Charitable Trust

McLean Anderson Family

04 DARE DEVILS

- Nucleus Integrated Financial Development Services
- The Eric and Sheila Samson Foundation
- Zip Zap France

05 JUGGLERS

- AEDES
- Ann Kreitzer Will Trust
- Business and Arts South Africa
- DG Murray Trust
- Fondation Agir sa Vie
- Institut Français
- Stonehage Fleming Financial Services

06 CLOWNS

- Angel Ebeling
- Beryl Kerr
- Carl & Emily Fuchs Foundation
- Charles Bradshaw
- Fiona Herrmann
- Francie Buhrmann
- Graham McIntosh
- Gregor Rohrig
- HOKISA Home for Kids SA
- Irene Howard
- Jesslyn Booth
- Kevin Stoloff
- Lori Lake
- MySchool
- Polo Moji
- Rupert Maskell
- Susan Rabinowitz
- Wendell Roelf
- Dominique Bentejac
- Elizabeth Bishop
- Elma de Vries
- Linda Waner
- Ofer Lapid
- Thomas de Mallmann
- Vanessa Belz

DONATIONS TO OPERATIONS

- Gupta Family Foundation
- Global Kinetic
- Gilbarco

Fundraising Events

We would like to thank our funders, donors and partners for walking this journey with us. Your support allows us to keep our programmes free and accessible, and your trust keeps us accountable.

CYCLE TOUR

10 March 2024

GOLF DAY

11 April 2024

AUCTION

23 February 2025

08

Marketing & Communications

Zip Zap's marketing efforts this year focused on showcasing our impact through storytelling, community building, engagement, and strategic public visibility. The initiatives below reflect a year of vibrant growth and solid foundations for future campaigns.

This year, our focus was on building the backbone of future communication success by:

- Developing reusable, high-quality visual and video content for marketing campaigns.
- Strengthening alignment between programming, digital content, and fundraising objectives.
- Enhancing email and social campaigns to keep audiences engaged and informed.

Digital Presence & Audience Growth

By December 2024, our social media platforms achieved consistent growth, thanks to authentic storytelling and purpose-driven content:

8,489 Instagram

11,514 Facebook

897 YouTube

490 TikTok

666 LinkedIn

Our Instagram reels and behind-the-scenes clips drove strong engagement, especially with younger followers. Facebook and Instagram remained a key channel to connect with families and the broader community.

Key Campaigns & Community Engagement

Winter Tots Camp

July 2024

We launched our Winter programme aimed at younger children, drawing strong participation and media interest. The campaign boosted enrolment and visibility across holiday season activities.

'Swing into Fun': Clovelly Golf Extravaganza

April 2024

Our fundraising golf event at Clovelly Golf Club blended sport and circus energy, attracting diverse audiences and raising vital funds.

Cape Town Cycle Tour Participation

Zip Zap's 'Fund Racers' team rallied behind us at the city's flagship cycling event. The campaign was documented in a video recap that highlighted community support and charitable giving.

'I Can Fly' Children's Book Launch

This original publication was promoted through social channels and local media, reinforcing Zip Zap's commitment to youth creativity

Kaleidoscope Promotion

August 2024

We promoted and marketed this show with main acts from our Dare2Dream and Zappers performers as they showcase their talent – a courageous cast of ordinary kids doing extraordinary things

Media Coverage & Public Relations

Zip Zap earned notable media visibility in 2024 through:

- Positive local press features and online articles profiling our social circus work
- New international exposure with the return of "MOYA", described as a mesmerizing blend of acrobatics and emotion by critics in Minneapolis
- The rebranding of our digital platforms (domain update and email), which was featured in institutional announcements, enhancing our professional digital identity

Zip Zap's media reach (circulation) increased from 10 020 302 to 109 591 552. While there was a decrease in print coverage, broadcast and online increased indicating the worldwide media trend to online and broadcast.

Total value of media increased by 57% from R2 286 248 to R3 598 599, although the media clip count decreased by 22% to 144 from 184 over the past year.

Medium	Print	Broadcast	Online
Mar '24	3 712 391	2 920 606	3 387 305
Feb '25	900 477	9 619 283	99 07 792
% Change	**-76**	**229**	**2 825**

Newsletter

The monthly average newsletter subscriber base increased by 1% from 8 039 to 8 142 with an average open rate of 17,9%. During 2024 it was decided to distribute the newsletter twice monthly, but given the engagement rate, we have reverted to one newsletter a month from March 2025.

Website

The website remains the "one stop shop" for all information about Zip Zap. The new users increased from a monthly average of 1 584 to 2 964, showing significant increase over the months that MOYA was on tour. This year, MOYA and our social media platforms played a pivotal role in driving traffic to our website, amplifying awareness and engagement across audiences. Our deeper understanding of each channel grew and we combined this with strategic guidance from Alkemi, our digital and media consultants. All this enabled us to optimise content, grow our reach, and deliver more targeted communications. We are excited to build on this foundation.

09

Financial Summary

Financial Review

We are pleased to share the highlights from Zip Zap's audited Annual Financial Statements for the year ending in February 2025. We extend our heartfelt thanks to every donor, funder, partner, and supporter, your trust keeps our wheels turning.

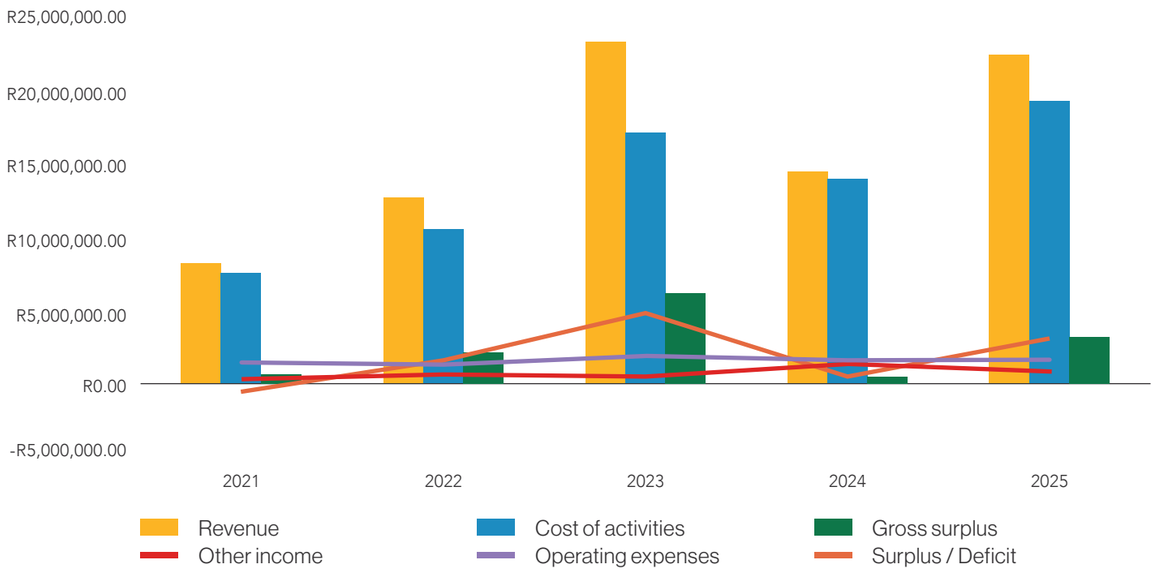
Despite economic challenges, Zip Zap has continued to manage its finances with care and transparency. The independent audit, conducted by CAE Consulting, confirmed that the financial statements are fairly presented in all material respects.

Quick overview

Revenue	R22.89 m
Gross surplus	R3.92 m

Financial statements for the last 5 years

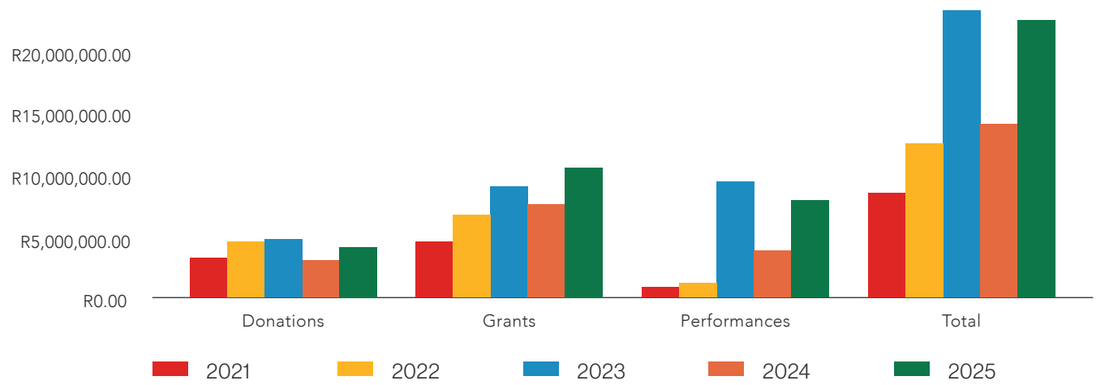
Zip Zap Financial Performance



Key highlights from FY2025:

- Zip Zap maintained a **strong financial position**, with sound internal controls and sustainable cash reserves.
- The **auditor expressed an unqualified opinion**, confirming that the financial statements are a true reflection of the organisation's financial status.
- Our **income sources remained diverse**, including donations, grants, performance revenue, and investment income — each playing a vital role in supporting our free youth programmes and operational growth.
- We continued to invest in our long-term vision while maintaining stability in our operational expenses.

Sources of income



These results reflect both financial discipline and unwavering support from our community. As we look ahead to the next chapter — with new performances, outreach growth, and capital development — we are grateful to every individual and institution who walks this journey with us.

Thank you for believing in Zip Zap and helping us inspire through circus.

10

Looking Ahead

Future Plans (2026 and Beyond)

As Zip Zap moves beyond 2025, we do so with confidence, clarity, and ambition. Rooted in over three decades of impact, our next chapter is about deepening our legacy, expanding our reach, and securing a sustainable future for generations of young South Africans.

A new space, a new home

By 2027, Zip Zap aims to establish a permanent, purpose-built performance and training venue. Securing our current training venue is a key step in this direction.

This space will serve as a cultural hub, a place where community and creativity intersect, where children and youth can develop circus skills, confidence, and a sense of belonging.

Over the longer term, we are still committed to achieving our goal of a world-class performing venue where audiences can experience the magic of world-class South African circus productions, as well as international shows and festivals. Securing our current Academy space will play a vital role in preserving the moment we have.

Expanding Social Impact

We will continue to harness the power of circus arts to uplift, empower, and transform lives. Plans include:

- Extending our reach to under-resourced communities across South Africa.
- Developing a standardised circus arts curriculum that can be integrated into schools and community learning centres.
- Creating internships and employment pathways for Social Circus graduates.
- Partnering with education and social development organisations to increase the depth and reach of our youth development work.
- Embedding psychosocial support and advanced impact measurement into every programme.

Professional Circus on a Global Stage

Zip Zap will elevate its position as a uniquely South African voice in the global circus arena. We plan to:

- Launch a second international touring show.
- Invest in performer training and production technology to meet international benchmarks.
- Build new international partnerships and participate in more global festivals.
- Develop an alumni network to sustain professional development, mentorship, and creative collaboration.

Innovation and Internal Strength

We understand that strong foundations are key to growth. Our operational roadmap includes:

- Upgrading IT and administrative systems for seamless, digitised performance monitoring and reporting.
- Strengthening cross-departmental communication, collaboration, and governance.
- Creating a leadership pipeline to ensure succession and long-term organisational resilience.
- Adapting to current trends, such as digital storytelling, remote engagement, and hybrid productions.

Financial Sustainability

Our vision is bold and so is our plan to fund it. By 2027 and beyond, we will:

- Diversify funding sources, including international donors, corporate partners, peer-to-peer campaigns, and debit order giving.
- Develop high-profile revenue-generating performances and events, while keeping core programmes free to beneficiaries.
- Build reserves to weather financial instability and ensure continuity.
- Explore social enterprise models, including tourism-linked programming and digital content monetisation.

Our commitment remains steadfast:
To ignite the potential in every child, to champion South African creativity, and to build a future where art, community, and opportunity thrive together. With strategic vision, dynamic leadership, and the continued support of our partners, Zip Zap is poised for a future of even greater impact at home and on the world stage.

ZipZap CIRCUS

Zip Zap is a non-profit organisation that uses circus arts for social change in Cape Town, South Africa.

Zip Zap is a registered Trust IT3447/98.

Non-profit Organisation 037-198-NPO.

Public Benefit Organisation 930 028 436 with Section 18A status

B-BBEE Level 1 Contributor.

Donation & Registration Information

Tax-deductible donations

Donate FRANCE, UK, USA, AND SOUTH AFRICA

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USA

SOUTH AFRICA

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