



hearX[®]group

IMPACT REPORT

**HEARX GROUP & FOUNDATION
A THREE YEAR REVIEW**

June 2023

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MESSAGE FROM HEARX

Message from the CEO

Dear friends and stakeholders,

As I reflect on the remarkable journey of hearX over the past three years, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude. These formative years, marked by challenges and triumphs, have defined us as a social impact start-up and forged our commitment to reshaping the world of hearing healthcare for the 466 million people across the world that suffer from hearing loss.

With unwavering dedication to our mission, we embarked on a journey in 2016 to democratize and decentralize hearing healthcare, and backed by a team of innovative, determined and good-hearted employees, we have been able to triumph over challenges as they arose. During the COVID-19 pandemic, a crisis that reshaped our lives and communities, hearX rose to the occasion in the face of adversity, demonstrating resilience and determination that has come to define us. Today, I am thrilled to share with you the incredible milestones and achievements we have reached in this transformative period.

One of our most significant accomplishments has been our global reach. hearX has brought hearing healthcare to over 191 countries, touching the lives of over 2.4 million individuals who were previously underserved or overlooked.

We have shattered geographic barriers and made quality hearing care accessible to all, regardless of where they reside. Our cutting-edge hearing health technology has been instrumental in this journey. By harnessing the power of innovation, we have developed solutions that empower individuals to take charge of their hearing health. Through our technology, we have not only detected hearing issues but also provided the necessary support and resources for people to thrive with our industry-leading OTC Hearing Aids in the USA.

But hearX is not just about technology; it's about people and the communities we serve. Our Corporate Social Investment (CSI) initiatives have made a profound impact on society. We have supported education, healthcare, and awareness programs, ensuring that the benefits of our success are shared with those who need it most. We believe that true progress is not just about profit but also about purpose.

As the CEO of hearX, leading a team that has achieved such growth, sustainability, and impact is the honor of a lifetime. It's a testament to the dedication and passion of our employees, partners, and supporters who have rallied behind our vision. Together, we have shown that social impact and business success can go hand in hand.

Looking ahead, we are more determined than ever to continue our mission of transforming hearing healthcare worldwide. Our commitment to innovation, accessibility, and social responsibility will remain at the core of everything we do. We envision a world where everyone has the opportunity to hear, connect, and thrive.



In closing, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of you who have been a part of our journey. Your belief in hearX has been the driving force behind our achievements. Together, we will continue to make a positive impact on the lives of individuals and communities around the globe.

Thank you for joining us on this remarkable journey of empowerment and transformation.

With gratitude and determination,

Nic Klopper

CEO, hearX Group

Message from the Board

Born from a dream of universal hearing health access, hearX is more than an organization – it has become a movement for societal impact. With each passing year, hearX continues to chase this vision, expanding its global footprint through innovative, user-friendly digital solutions. Crafted with passion and precision, **our technologies are transforming the way hearing loss is detected, diagnosed, and treated, to democratize access to hearing care.** Our innovative technologies are making it possible, not only for health workers to facilitate hearing services, but for consumers to access hearing care directly.

De Wet Swanepoel

Chairperson of the Board

Message from hearX Foundation

In a world where more than 5% of the global population live with disabling hearing loss, and the vast majority not having access to the care they need, the heart of our work at the hearX Foundation is to bridge this gap. Through collaboration, innovation, and compassion, we are committed to shedding light on the vital importance of hearing health across the lifespan. **To date, we have reached more than 60,500 people with hearing care at grassroots level.** The past three years, though challenging (both globally and locally), have been profoundly rewarding.

Tersia de Kock

Director, hearX Foundation

The hearX foundation, in partnership with the hearX Group, is shining a light for hearing care in the world's most challenging communities, exemplifying our commitment to breaking barriers to access. The strides hearX has collectively taken over the past three years are more than milestones – they're testaments to the power of innovation that puts people-first. As you delve into this impact report, witness how we're inching closer to our vision of healthy hearing, for everyone, everywhere.



It fostered growth and acted as a catalyst for innovation thinking. We have witnessed the transformative power of access to hearing care in the lives of individuals and communities. Through this report, we hope that you too will experience a glimpse of this! Our deep appreciation goes to our team, partners and funders whose dedication, support and shared vision propels us forward. Together, we've bridged gaps, shared stories, and created new pathways to better hearing that will have a lasting impact. Thank you for joining us on this journey!



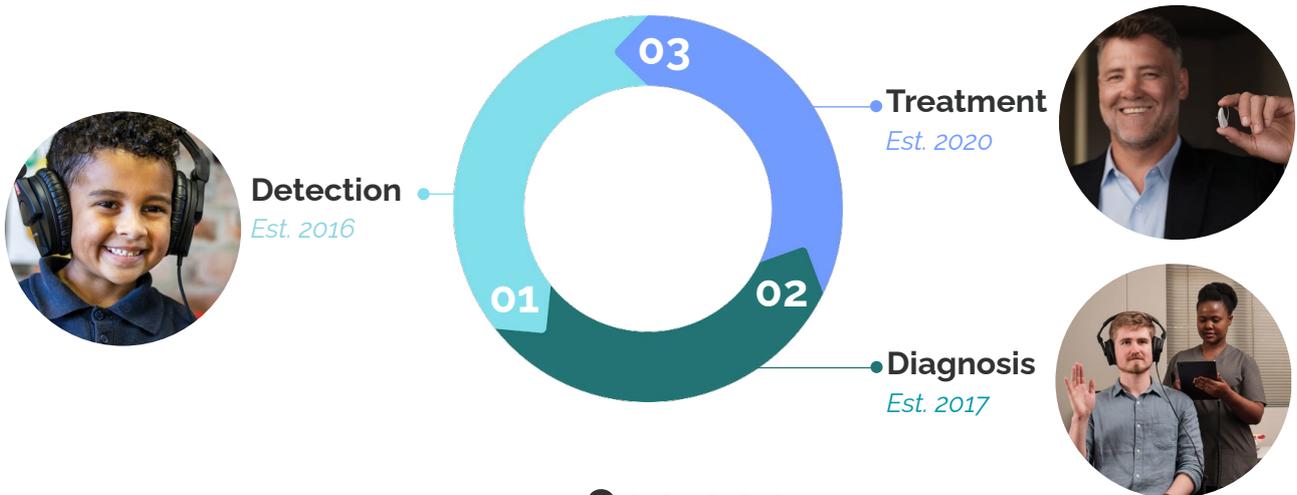
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OVERVIEW: OUR GLOBAL REACH

hearX Group is an impact-driven digital health company passionate about access to healthy hearing for everyone, everywhere. Its smart, evidence-based digital solutions detect, diagnose and treat hearing loss. hearX has pioneered digital hearing care solutions used around the globe.

More than **2,400,000 tests** have been conducted with hearX technology in **191 countries** around the world

hearX has come full circle



> 1,800,000
consumer hearing tests

> 40
research articles validating hearX technologies

SUPPORTED SOLUTIONS IN



English



Dutch



Mandarin



Russian



Spanish

2

HEARX IMPACT



2.1 | Impact during Covid-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic catapulted the need for digital technologies in hearing healthcare. Traditional appointment setups, involving close proximity and extended duration, put both audiologists and patients at a high risk of contracting the virus, necessitating safer alternatives.

To address this crisis, hearX Group produced the award-winning hearX Self Test Kit, a remote solution that uses telehealth to keep healthcare providers at the forefront of providing advanced, hearing care to their patients. The hearX Self Test Kit equipped healthcare professionals during these unprecedented times, to not only ensure a continuous income stream, but to drive social impact when the world needed it most.



hearX STK
self test kit

The comprehensive Self Test Kit solution allows healthcare providers to conduct the following tests for successful hearing aid fitting, without having to see patients in person:

hearTest

Pure tone audiometry

hearScope

Digital AI otoscopy

hearSpeech

Speech-in-noise testing for speech recognition threshold

hearRisk

Ear risk assessment for detecting conductive hearing loss & CEDRA questionnaire

Best COVID-19 Software Solution to Support Virtual Clinics hearX Self Test Kit received the Best COVID-19 Software Solution to Support Virtual Clinics award at the Health Tech Digital Awards.



Watch our webinar on audiology solutions for Covid-19 to learn more.



“ I love that the hearX Self Test Kit is so accurate and reliable. Hearing care is more accessible and less intimidating now and that just helps more people which is very satisfying for me as an Audiologist. ”

Stefanie Wolf
Audiologist

2.2 | Impact through OTC hearing aids

In 2020, hearX achieved a milestone in our mission for healthy hearing for all, by expanding our innovative solutions to not only detect and diagnose hearing loss but also to provide hearing aids. Our pioneering efforts culminated in the launch of Lexie Hearing, a direct-to-consumer hearing aid solution.

In October 2022, a pivotal moment occurred when the FDA's over-the-counter (OTC) hearing aid regulations went live. Our high-quality OTC hearing aids were perfectly positioned to embrace this change, quickly taking the market by storm.

This landmark event not only aligned with our commitment to innovation but also allowed us to extend our reach, bringing the gift of accessible, affordable, and quality hearing care to an even broader audience.

WHAT IS LEXIE HEARING?

The Lexie Hearing solution empowers customers to take control of their hearing experience using smart, cutting-edge technology. The self-fitting FDA hearing aid technology includes three ranges, Lexie Lumen, Lexie B1 and B2 Powered by Bose devices with premium features including rechargeable batteries and Bluetooth streaming. Our premium Lexie Hearing solution in the United States allows consumers to purchase affordable high-quality hearing aids online, program them at home, access expert support on-demand and use the world's first behavioral change program called Lexie Rewards™ for greatest benefit and satisfaction.

LEXIE HEARING IMPACT

> **13,000** Retail outlets
available to the public across all
50 states in the US



The Lexie aid has made a huge difference in my ability to carry on conversations.”

- P Sangster

They have made a giant difference in my life. I can experience interaction with my family that I had lost. Once again enjoying time with my grandchildren. I'm no longer "HUH-PA."

- W Conte

I bought this for my dad and he was happy with it he can hear clearly and it is easy to adjust the volume, highly recommend it.”

- Verified Lexie Hearing Customer

Overall, I found the Lexie B1 to be pretty useful for my needs. I feel like I fit the profile of the type of person that would need something like this because I can't easily get hearing aids through insurance. I found them comfortable and easy to set up and configure. The carrying case is nice, and the devices are barely noticeable on your head when in use (I was self-conscious of this to start).”

- Verified Lexie Hearing Customer

WOW I could not be happier with these hearing aids ... these are a life changer for me.”

- Verified Lexie Hearing Customer

PROUD BOSE PARTNER

Lexie Hearing is proud to have partnered with Bose to bring you reliable, digital, self-fitting OTC hearing aids, outstanding customer support, and a quality hearing experience. The Powered by Bose technology is available in the Lexie B1 and Lexie B2 hearing aids.



GO HEARING AIDS

To complement our premium Lexie Hearing offering, we introduced a range of preset hearing aids under the Go Hearing brand. Designed with value in mind, these accessible devices provide essential hearing support at more affordable price points. This launch reflects our commitment to ensuring that quality hearing care is within reach for everyone, regardless of budget.



OUR HEARING SOLUTIONS ARE AVAILABLE THROUGH LEADING RETAIL PARTNERS NATIONALLY - one more step to healthy hearing for everyone, everywhere



LEXIE HEARING RESEARCH FEATURE

First paper to show self-fitting OTC hearing aids with remote support yield outcomes comparable to audiologist best-practices.

JAMA Otolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery



RESEARCH IMPACT:

- #1 Journal - JAMA
- 134 News outlets
- Top 5% of all research shared
- 1024 Online engagements

LEXIE CARES

Lexie Cares is our heartfelt commitment to bringing “healthy hearing for everyone, everywhere.” We believe in bringing the joy of hearing back to those who need it, as well as giving independence back to those who have lost it. Lexie Cares is our way of sharing the gift of sound, connecting people, and making a real difference in the world.



Through Lexie Cares, we have supported the following organizations and initiatives that work toward making ear and hearing care accessible to people in the communities they serve:



Haiti Deaf Academy



Help America Hear & USA Veterans



hearX Foundation

2.3 | Impact through partnerships

The hearWHO app, proudly developed by hearX Group, is a hearing awareness initiative of the World Health Organisation (WHO). Available on both Android and iOS, the application gives the general public access to a hearing screener to check and monitor their hearing status.



On World Hearing Day 2020, the hearWHOpro application was released. This 'pro' version enables health workers to check the hearing of people in community and primary health care settings. The application securely stores the data of each check, allowing health workers to compare hearing check results of individuals over a period of time.

Read more about the **hearWHO app**:

[READ MORE](#)



Used across the globe in **172 countries**



448,870 Hearing checks conducted



(Up to July 2023)

Available in **5 languages**



English



Dutch



Mandarin



Russian



Spanish

RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS

hearX partners for research impact:



The Assistive Technology Impact Fund (ATIF) was launched out of the UK Aid-funded AT2030 program, led by the Global Disability Innovation Hub (GDI Hub) and was established to offer support to innovators to get Assistive Technology solutions for low- and middle-income populations on a path to scale.

ASSISTIVE TECH IMPACT FUND

hearX Group was honored to be announced as part of the ATIF's first cohort. The ATIF supported hearX over a period of 18 months to test an end-to-end model for hearing aid provision in Africa. The project aimed to test the feasibility of a variety of affordability and distribution models for decentralized service delivery in low-income communities in Kenya.

hearX's innovative solution included an end-to-end hearing care model delivered in communities by lay health workers. It combined hearX's low-cost, mobile audiometry and hearing aid fitting technology with affordable high quality hearing aids to provide services for adults with hearing difficulties. In addition, the model included a hearing aid demonstration as part of the process in the field, for end users to better understand its potential benefits, as well as a mHealth support program to improve use and benefit. The inclusion of innovative financing models and opportunities for micro- entrepreneurship further enhance cost-effectiveness and sustainability of the service delivery model at scale.

Read more about the **ATIF project**:

[READ MORE](#)

8 research publications/presentations

496 users reached via feasibility studies

401 persons reached via hearing tests, Lexie hearing aids & training

1 App developed for Kenya pilot



This (hearing aid) is going to change my life! ”

- Lexie user testimonial



2.4 | Impact by employees

At hearX Group, we firmly believe that creating a lasting impact goes beyond the products and services we offer. Our commitment to driving positive change extends deep into the heart of our organization through our dedicated and passionate employees. We take pride in fostering a culture of impact, encouraging and empowering our team members to make a difference in the lives of individuals and communities alike. As part of our core values, we actively provide opportunities for our employees to get involved in various meaningful initiatives, such as advocating, volunteering and donating.

Throughout the reporting period, hearX employees actively engaged in multiple impact initiatives centered around significant events such as World Hearing Day, Mandela Day, and the 947 Ride Joburg cycle tour. Their efforts resulted in an impressive fundraising total of \$9,052, which directly supported hearX Foundation's mission and initiatives such as providing nourishing meals for children during the Covid-19 pandemic and distributing blankets to elderly community members during the colder months. In addition, employees volunteered at hearing screening events, assisted with hearing awareness and prevention campaigns, and cycled more than 1,902 kms for SOUND!



2.5 | Impact awarded

Over the past three years, hearX Group and Lexie Hearing's innovative solutions, impact, and dedication to create affordable access to hearing health have gained worldwide acclaim with **36 prestigious awards across various categories**.



A significant moment in TIME was celebrated when Lexie Hearing was named as one of TIME Magazine's **100 Most Influential Companies of 2023** in the Leaders category.

The prestigious list showcases companies making an extraordinary impact around the world. Lexie Hearing received this esteemed accolade for its remarkable efforts in broadening access to affordable hearing care.

To commemorate this landmark milestone, **the company gifted 100 sets of Lexie hearing aids as a gesture of gratitude to its customers** and to further extend the positive influence they are making in the world of hearing health.

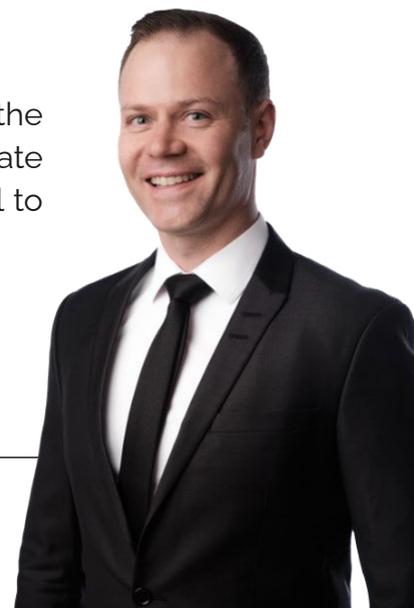
READ MORE



It's an incredible honor to be recognized by TIME, next to some of the world's most iconic brands. At Lexie, we work every day to create accessible hearing care for everyone, everywhere, and we're thankful to TIME for the recognition of our positive global impact."

Nic Klopper

Lexie Hearing Founder and CEO



AWARD HIGHLIGHTS

2020 >>> 2021 >>> 13 awards

2021 HEARING TECHNOLOGY INNOVATOR AWARD

hearX Self Test Kit was awarded the Hearing Technology Award in the Mobile Testing category.



2021 MEDTECH BREAKTHROUGH AWARDS

Winner for the Best IoT Healthcare Wearable Device.



11 awards <<< 2022 <<<



2022 E&T INNOVATION AWARDS

hearScope is a bronze winner in the Most Innovative Solution in Digital Health and Social Care category.



2022 REVIEWED AND USA TODAY Best of Year: Best Featured Product for Accessibility

Lexie B2 Powered by Bose was awarded the Best Featured product for Accessibility by Reviewed and US Today.

>>> 2023 >>> 12 awards (half year)

2023 THE SILICON REVIEW - 5 BEST HEALTHCARE COMPANIES TO WATCH

hearX Group has been named as a top healthcare company by The Silicon Review.



2023 GLOBEE® DISRUPTOR COMPANY | HEALTHCARE, WELLNESS, AND MHEALTH PRODUCTS & SERVICES

Lexie Hearing is the Globee Gold winner for Disruptor Company of the year.





IMPACT-DRIVEN LEADERS

Our leadership's tireless efforts in enhancing affordable access to hearing care and their unwavering commitment to using business for social good have garnered international recognition.

hearX® CEO, Nic Klopper, has been awarded:

2021 AFRICA'S BUSINESS HEROES TOP 50

Africa's Business Heroes is the Jack Ma Foundation's flagship philanthropic program in Africa to support entrepreneurs by showcasing and growing the local talent of those entrepreneurs that are creating a positive impact in their communities and beyond, and inspire a movement of African entrepreneurship.



The 2022
MEANINGFUL
BUSINESS 100

2022 MEANINGFUL BUSINESS 100

The Meaningful Business 100 award recognises business leaders globally combining profit and purpose to help achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



Seline van der Wat, hearX® COO, has been awarded:



2021 THE STEVIE® AWARDS - THE INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS AWARDS®

Gold Stevie Award winner for the Female Executive of the Year in Europe, the Middle East & Africa and a Silver Stevie Award winner for the Most Innovative Woman of the Year - Technology



2022 STANDARD BANK TOP WOMEN AWARDS

Standard Bank Top Woman Leader in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) award.

3

HEARX FOUNDATION IMPACT

3.1 | Impact overview

1 in 5 people have hearing loss globally and in most of the world less than 10% can get help (WHO, 2021), The hearX Foundation is dedicated to raising awareness about hearing health and making ear and hearing care accessible at the community level. By partnering with local organizations, we work to address hearing issues across all age groups. The Foundation's goal is to make a positive difference on an individual, community, and global level through sustainable digitally-enabled solutions. We tailor our proven programs to match the specific needs of each community, ensuring that they are both relevant and effective.



hearX Foundation has provided more than **60,423** children & adults with access to hearing care services and/or hearing awareness training





Core Sustainable Development Goals targeted



Hearing and vision tests conducted: **97,876**

Beneficiaries reached: **60,423**

Facilities reached: **1,685**

- Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDs)
- Senior Facilities

People reached through training: **3,338**

- Teachers
- Primary healthcare staff
- Community Health Workers

Research publications contributed to: **9**

Sectors reached:

- Health
- Education
- Social development

HOW WE IMPLEMENT PROGRAMS:

- Innovative service delivery models
 - Strong local partnerships
- Affordable and easy-to-use mHealth technology
 - Empowerment of community members



3.2 | Impact during the Covid-19 pandemic

The Covid-19 pandemic greatly impacted the early childhood development, education as well as health sectors in South Africa, with pronounced effects in low income communities. From the beginning, hearX Foundation was adamant to continue making an impact despite the challenges faced. Our teams were unable to provide screening services in the communities and all audiological diagnostic follow-up services at the hospitals were canceled indefinitely. By looking at the assets we had in hand, an innovative idea originated to pivot our service offering through the development of a low-tech teacher training program that can be facilitated via WhatsApp.

The 'EARS Teacher Training Programme', is a mHealth training intervention program that aims to improve ECD practitioners and teachers' knowledge and perceptions of hearing health in young children.

- E** EARLY
- A** ACADEMICS
- R** RED FLAGS
- S** SUPPORT

The EARS Teacher Training Programme was developed in partnership with the University of Pretoria and the Carel du Toit Centre & Trust. It is facilitated by the screening team members over a period of five days, using WhatsApp messages that include voice notes and infographics. Pre- and post training questionnaires are completed and the teachers/practitioners receive a certificate of completion. The training program had great impact during the Covid-19 period and continues to be a powerful tool to shed light on childhood hearing health beyond the constraints of geographical reach.

EXCITING OUTCOMES



2,129

ECD practitioners & teachers trained

across

33 communities

Improved knowledge

Teacher's knowledge about hearing health in children improved significantly

Improved knowledge was

maintained 6 months post training



AN EFFECTIVE LOW-COST INTERVENTION

ECD practitioners' knowledge and perceptions regarding hearing and hearing-related problems in children were surveyed pre-training, directly post training, and six months post training. The mHealth training program supports improved knowledge and perceptions of ECD practitioners regarding hearing health for young children. With improved knowledge scores maintained six months post training, **mHealth hearing health training is an effective intervention.**

“*An mHealth training program for ECD practitioners provides a scalable, low-cost intervention for primary and secondary prevention in childhood hearing loss, especially in low- and middle income countries.*”

Du Plessis, et al., 2022

Six months post training, ECD practitioners' reported applying the training information in the following ways:

- Improved awareness
- Practical application
- Better assistance for hearing problems
- Widespread advocacy

Read more about the research findings:

[READ MORE](#)

TEACHER TESTIMONIALS



“I gained lots of knowledge about hearing problems in children and shared it with the parents and the community. We must know what signs to look out for, what to do if there is a hearing problem and where to go.”

“I have applied the knowledge I have learned from the EARS training to our ECD centre and found that there are indeed a child with a hearing problem and the child is receiving professional help today.”



“I am now taking note when a child could not hear or does not respond. I used to say they are ignorant or playful, but now I know that they might have a hearing problem.”

3.3 | Impact through community programs

3E CAPE TOWN PROGRAMME (KHAYELITSHA & MITCHELL'S PLAIN)

The hearX Foundation and the Carel du Toit Centre & Trust jointly implemented the Ears & Eyes for Education (3E) program - a community-based screening program for pre-schoolers in Early Childhood Development Centres (ECD's) in Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain using mHealth technology. The program consisted of two phases that stretched over a four year period (2017-2021) and provided a total of **20,265** pre-school children with access to hearing and vision care.



Hear the World Foundation, photographer: Christoph Höhmann, Camerabuddy



Programme goals:

Phase 2 of 3E Cape Town initially set out to provide 17,000 preschool children with access to joint sensory screening (hearing and vision) over a period of 24 months. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the goal had to be adjusted to 10,000. In addition, a new goal was added in year 2 - to train 1,025 ECD/primary school teachers over a 12-month period using the new WhatsApp-based EARS Teacher Training Programme.

Overview of results:

The second year of phase 2 was particularly challenging due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting closures of ECDs, schools and audiological services at hospitals. Admirably, the team reached 98% of the overall phase 2 target by providing 9,875 children with access to hearing and vision screenings. The EARS Teacher Training program yielded excellent results (see section 3.2) and the team trained 1,596 teachers, exceeding the goal with 50%. A highlight of the period was the Hear the World volunteer visit during which 829 children were reached in a week. The greatest challenge related to the closure of governmental audiology services during the pandemic resulting in extended waiting periods for follow-up appointments and a high rate of loss to follow-up. To mitigate, high priority cases were seen at the Carel du Toit Centre's audiology department for diagnostic and intervention services.

Final PHASE 2 results (1 Jul 2019-30 Jun 2021)

9,875 children reached

- (hearing & vision screening)
- 212 ECDs/schools
 - 6 people employed
 - 6.1% referral rate - hearing,
 - 4.9% referral rate - vision

614 children connected to care (hearing & vision)

- 10 children fitted with hearing aids
- 105 children fitted with spectacles

1,596 teachers trained (EARS program)



SUPPORTED BY



ADULT HEARING CARE - KHAYELITSHA

After focusing predominantly on children, hearX Foundation became increasingly aware of the need for community-based hearing care for adults. The inability that seniors experience to access services, augmented by the lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, calls for innovative service delivery models to address ear and hearing care needs in the community.

2021

2022

Project goals:

A project was launched to pilot a new innovative model using a range of digital technologies to deliver end-to-end hearing healthcare services to adults in low- and middle income countries. The five-step model included detection, testing, demonstration of hearing aid benefit, fitting and support.

Overview of results:

The pilot was an overwhelming success with participants reporting positive outcomes. Lay health workers identified community members with self-reported hearing difficulties through 'self-referral' and 'community-referral' (via community forums and stakeholders) methods. Home-based hearing testing and hearing aid demonstrations (where applicable) were provided to 157 adults/seniors. Audiologists and lay health workers fitted 19 adults with binaural hearing aids during home visits and trained them (along with family members/significant others) in basic hearing aid care and maintenance. Hearing aid recipients were guided through a six-week mHealth support program, follow-up calls as well as home-visits. The project formed part of the larger Assistive Technology Impact Fund project working towards bringing hearing care to communities.

2021-2022 results

157 seniors reached with home-based hearing care

- 2 members of Khayelitsha employed
- 19 seniors fitted with binaural hearing aids



Testimonial

“

It is as if I am able to see for the first time. Everything is clear.”

- Lexie hearing aid recipient, Ms. N.T (101)



Project goals:

Following the successful pilot and huge need raised by community stakeholders, a project was launched in partnership with Ikamva Labantu, to provide senior citizens with home- and community-based hearing care. In addition, the project aims to raise awareness among seniors, their families and carers regarding the importance of hearing health, communication strategies as well as strategies to support those with hearing difficulties.

Overview of results:

During the period, 191 seniors were provided with access to ear and hearing checks within their home or daily community care point environment. Hearing awareness and prevention training, wax removals, referrals, hearing aid demonstrations, fittings and ongoing support form part of the services offered.

2022-2023 results

191 seniors reached, community-based hearing care

- 1 member of Khayelitsha employed
- 10 seniors fitted with binaural hearing aids



Testimonial

“ Now I will have a long life!
I can participate in my community again. ”

- Go Prime hearing aid recipient, Mr. M.S. (87)



SUPPORTED BY



Lexie Cares

PAARL VALLEY PROGRAMME

The Paarl Valley (Western Cape, South Africa) program was established in July 2019 and started out with providing combined hearing and vision screening of preschoolers in the community of Mbekweni. Over the past three years, despite the Covid-19 pandemic, the program has grown in both scope and scale - now serving beneficiaries of all ages in the communities of Mbekweni, Paarl East, Wellington and surrounds. Since inception the program has created access to hearing and vision care as well as hearing awareness and prevention training for more than **7,817** children, adults and teachers at grassroots level.



2020

2021

Programme goals:

Following the successful completion of the Paarl Valley Ears & Eyes for Education (3E) pilot, March 2020 marked the start of the first full implementation year of the program. The program aimed to screen the hearing and vision of 1,500 children in Mbekweni and to provide support throughout the follow-up care process. Hearing awareness and prevention training for learners and ECD practitioners/teachers remained part of the goals.

Overview of results:

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, ECD- and school-based services had to be paused indefinitely. The team adjusted and pivoted the service offering to commence 'no-touch' vision screening campaigns for community members for as long as access to schools was not possible. The team implemented the EARS Teacher Training Programme (see section 3.2) to remotely train teachers on the importance of ear and hearing health in young children via WhatsApp. In addition, the team initiated and assisted with Covid-related food distribution efforts in Mbekweni.

2020-2021 results (Mar 2020-Feb 2021)

*Community-based services halted for most of the year due to Covid-19 pandemic

185 children reached

(hearing & vision screening)

- 3 ECDs/schools
- 2 members of the Paarl Valley employed
- 4% referral rate - hearing
- 9% referral rate - vision (high risk screening)

250 community members screened - centralized Covid-19 vision screening campaign

- 10 children fitted with hearing aids
- 105 children fitted with spectacles

200 beneficiaries connected to care

(*some from previous period)

- 80 adults fitted with spectacles
- 25 children fitted with specs
- 2 hearing aids fitted

173 teachers trained (EARS program)



*Buiswe's (13) hearing was screened at her primary school in Mbekweni. She was subsequently diagnosed with bilateral hearing loss and was fitted with hearing aids.



Beneficiary Testimonial



Before I got screened and got my hearing aids, it was difficult for me and my grandmother. She was shouting at me and she thought that I was cheeky. ”

- *Buiswe (13)

“*Buisiwe is very faithful at wearing her hearing aids and we can see that she is less isolated and more sociable since receiving them. She also responds promptly when called by someone. ”

- *Buiswe's grandmother

2021

2022

Programme goals:

During this period, the Covid-19 situation remained volatile and the Paarl Valley program goals were diversified in order to achieve maximum impact. The program aimed to screen the hearing and vision of 1,000 individuals in Mbekweni. The scope was broadened to include adults and elderly persons in need of hearing and vision services in the community. In addition, the team aimed to train 150 teachers regarding the importance of healthy hearing in young children using the new EARS Teacher Training Programme via WhatsApp.

Overview of results:

Despite the challenges posed by Covid-19 (i.e. limited access to schools), the team remained agile and reached 1,220 individuals, exceeding the target with 22%. Returning to the Mbekweni ECDs and primary schools for a second screening cycle was a highlight and significant building block in working towards sustainable interventions. Programme reach was expanded through partnering with various NGOs for screening campaigns (i.e. The Kusasa Project, EAT OUT Food School and Franschoek Hospitality Academy) and a collaboration with the Western Cape Department of Education to train teachers with the EARS Teachers Training Programme. Further highlights included research collaborations with the team contributing to the community implementation components of both the PEDS Developmental Research and Community-based Adult Hearing Care Projects. the services offered.

2021-2022 results (Mar 2021-Feb 2022)

1,152 children reached

(hearing & vision screening)

68 adults/elderly persons reached

(45 hearing & vision screening, 23 vision screening only)

- 47 facilities reached
- 2 members of the Paarl Valley community employed
- 6% referral rate - hearing
- 7% referral rate - vision

145 beneficiaries connected to care

(*some from previous period)

- 42 individuals fitted with spectacles
- 4 children fitted with hearing aids
- 7 adults fitted with hearing aids

181 teachers trained (EARS program)



Teacher Testimonial

“She is a shy and sweet little girl who has now been given the gift of improved sight. We are sure that she will grow in confidence and reach her full potential.”

- *Liqhamile's teacher

*Liqhamile, 10, who was identified with a severe visual impairment (2022) and received a specialized prescription from our referral partner, VisionBox, to accommodate her needs.



Testimonial

“It is really good for me to work for hearX Foundation, because we as a team are there to make a difference in the lives of others. I personally have so much joy inside me, whether it is one learner receiving glasses, or a child's parents sending a thank you note to say that their child's ears are healing or that they have received help from us. I really enjoy my work at hearX Foundation because it benefits many. My prayer is that it will grow more and more and expand into many areas.”

- Porchia Martin,
Screeener



Programme goals:

A main aim of the program during this year was to expand services to the Paarl East community. The overall program goal was to screen the hearing and vision of 3,000 children and 150 elderly persons across Mbekweni and Paarl East and to support referred individuals through the follow-up care pathway. The program also set out to provide hearing awareness and prevention training to 200 ECD practitioners and teachers.

Overview of results:

As a result of the expansion, an additional screener (from the Paarl East community) was recruited and a relationship manager was added to the team. Not only did this extend the reach and increase capacity, it also assisted in relationship building and collaborative efforts. The introduction of services in the Paarl East region was facilitated by existing community partners (Khula Development Group & Inceba Trust). Services also continued in Mbekweni, building trust by returning to the ECDs and schools on an annual basis. Overall, the program reached 95% of both the screening and training targets for the period. Highlights included: (1) seeing teachers growing in knowledge and confidence to refer children with potential hearing difficulties as cases arise; and (2) providing home- and community-based services and care visits to the elderly. Challenges experienced related to social issues in Paarl East (gang activity, poverty, drug, and alcohol abuse), leading to low follow-up attendance by children due to parents being absent or unable to cooperate. Backlog at Department of Health facilities post Covid-19 also resulted in extended waiting periods which hampered outcomes. This was worked into the planning and strategy for the following year to compensate for the shortfalls.

2022-2023 results (Mar 2022-Feb 2023)

2,861 children reached

(hearing & vision screening)

130 adults/elderly persons reached

(hearing & vision screening)

- 70 facilities reached
- 4 members of the Paarl Valley community employed
- 7.8% referral rate - hearing (Contributing factor: Paarl East social environment)
- 5.8% referral rate - vision

139 beneficiaries connected to care (*some from previous period)

- 54 individuals fitted with spectacles
- 1 child fitted with hearing aids & 4 fittings pending

189 teachers trained (145 EARS program, 44 in-person)





Testimonial

“ I have been struggling with my ears for a long time. HearX Foundation came to my School in Matric and managed to get me medical care. Even though it was not an easy journey, they stood by my side, even when I wanted to give up. After the operation I can see the difference. I will forever be grateful. I don't know what else to say except thank you so much hearX Foundation, keep on helping out people like me.”

- *Zinzi (19)



Partner Testimonial

“ hearX Foundation is currently on the forefront of hearing and visual health for our children in our communities. Working with hearX Foundation has given us the opportunity to not only be able to address primary hearing and visual health issues with our children, but also allowed us to work in a collaborative approach to help our children overcome hurdles that they are facing in our current education and health system. Their approach is innovative, applicable, relative and collaborative. It makes my work easier working with hearX Foundation.”

- Linda Zietsman,
Programme Coordinator and Occupational Therapist, Khula Development Group

SUPPORTED BY



Various individual donors

3.4 | Impact through research

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

Supporting ear and hearing care research is a key focus area of the hearX Foundation in order to contribute to the advancement of access to these services for all groups.

As a community-based research partner, we collaborate with various esteemed research institutions on projects that focus on:

- **Innovative service delivery models**
- **Underserved communities**
- **mHealth technologies**
- **Community health workers**

Over the past three years we have supported various hearing care feasibility-, intervention- and user studies with an emphasis on contextual and implementation research. Through these research collaborations we strive to create impact by contributing to the body of knowledge relating to community-based ear and hearing care; to benefit our current and future beneficiaries through the development of evidence-based care; and to inform public health policies and programs.



Community-based adult hearing care provided by community healthcare workers using mHealth technologies



mHealth-supported hearing health training for early childhood development practitioners: An intervention study.



mHealth hearing aid acclimatization and support program in low-income communities: A feasibility study.

Contributed to **6 research publications** in leading journals

RESEARCH PARTNERS



3.5 | Impact awarded

ASAIPA National Medical Awards

The ASAIPA National Medical Awards (NMA) recognises organizations, groups or individuals dedicating their time, skill and expertise to assist community advancement by making a positive impact in the communities they serve.

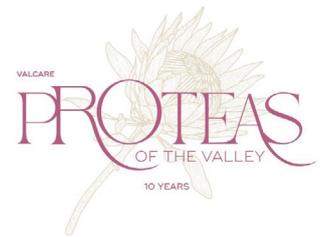
hearX Foundation and Carel du Toit Centre & Trust were awarded the **NMA 2021 Community Service Award** for the impact achieved through the 3E community-based screening program they jointly implemented in Khayelitsha and Mitchell's Plain. The program has provided more than 20,000 pre-school children with access to hearing care.



[READ MORE](#)

Valcare 'Proteas of the Valley' Awards

Proteas of the Valley is a women's empowerment initiative. Through the annual awards that take place during National Women's Month, Valcare honors remarkable women who are positively transforming the Cape Winelands region. Two of hearX Foundation's team members have been recognised with this award for their dedication to creating access to hearing care in the Paarl Valley communities and impacting the lives of those they serve.



2021
Nicol Truscott

hearX Foundation Relationship Manager



2022
Alison Wilson

hearX Foundation Programme Manager:
Paarl Valley

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- Our implementation partners: Carel du Toit Centre & Trust, Inceba Trust & Ikamva Labantu
- Our community-based partners: The various NPO/NGOs that support and guide our projects
- Our vision intervention partners: Vision Box, Sterkinekor Vision Mission
- Our research partner: University of Pretoria
- Our national, provincial & local government departments involved in our projects
- Our entire hearX team who makes the magic happen!



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