

**After years of general disasters which we all shared, in 2025 it felt we were specifically being targeted: first, the illegal xenophobic protests at the hospitals and clinics, and now unprecedented levels of violence towards homeless people. There are many reasons to be pessimistic about Durban, but engagement with our new Mayor, Hon Cyril Xaba, gives us hope that change is possible.**

**Usizo Lwethu, the DHC Clinic** operated throughout the year in four different ways:

- primary healthcare to refugees and the urban poor at the Sibaya Clinic in the DHC
- outreach healthcare from a mobile clinic to homeless people around Durban
- outreach healthcare from a converted container in the grounds of Dalton Beer Hall
- provision of a pre-school for 15 children at Dalton.

In total, we had 34,381 patient interactions or almost 140 per working day. 11,311 medical consultations were provided at the Sibaya Clinic plus another 1,010 via outreach. 70% of patients were men; around 50% showed signs of addiction to whoonga.

48% of patients were refugees - much higher than in the past. The number of refugee patients was 2.5 times higher per month after the illegal xenophobic blockade started at Government facilities. The protesters have been blocking undocumented migrants and also legal migrants, naturalised citizens, people born in South Africa, and South Africans who are not carrying their IDs. The lack of action by both police and hospital authorities continues even after a High Court ruling ordered them to take active measures to prevent the blockade. We fear that silence and complicity by police and some hospital staff are enabling this illegal action to continue, resulting in great harm to patients and in some cases deaths – as well as setting the seeds for a wider public health crisis.

Voluntary Counselling and Testing for HIV (VCTs) was given to 1,977 people. As is usual, reactivity rates for women (25.1% of those tested are HIV+) were higher than for men (16.1%, which is 5% points lower than in recent years). We continue to provide ARVs (Anti-Retrovirals) and saw 5,796 patients in the ARV room (up 6% on 2024) with a patient base of about 1,000 whom we are actively keeping adherent. In addition, higher-risk patients (on ARVs, on TB medication or both) are seen for Directly Observed Treatment. This totalled over 14,000 sessions across the year. The DOTS programme enabled us to help about 70 patients successfully come clear of TB who had not succeeded in the past, including some on an intense 9-month programme to be clear of multi-drug-resistant TB.

As part of a wider review, at the end of the year we terminated our services at Dalton – clinic patients will be served by the mobile clinic and the creche has been transferred to a new and much better Montessori site nearby.

We received R277,000 of medicines from Government, plus HIV tests, ARVs and TB meds. However, at the moment there has been a break in our supplies of all Government medicines and it is proving frustrating to resolve this. Our own purchases of medicines totalled R240,000, a massive 67% increase on 2024. This is a direct result of the extra chronic medication we have had to supply to refugee patients whose access to Government medicines has been blocked.

Despite the extra work, financial pressures meant we had to reduce staffing levels (by 3 FTE). Thobile Mthembu consolidated her position as Clinic Co-Ordinator assisted now by one more registered nurse, four community health workers, a social worker, a driver and a security guard. The clinic has benefited from interns in chiropractice, homeopathy, social work, OT and community healthcare from DUT, UKZN, UNISA, Brooklyn Academy and Abafundi; plus the Satya Sai organisation ran a pop-up dental and optical clinic. Through the year we have benefited from regular volunteering by four doctors who between them cover most mornings.

**Nkosinathi** is dedicated to welfare for the homeless and comprises:

- providing nutritious food, regular access to ablutions and laundry service
- opportunity to speak to a counsellor or social worker, family reunification
- education on addiction, and preparation for attending rehabilitation for substance abuse

In 2025, we operated on 261 days (5 days a week) and served 63,187 breakfasts, 64,972 freshly-cooked lunches and 47,483 sandwich packs (some prepared by us and some by church networks). That means an average of 677 meals per day and 176,847 meals in the year: more than double our pre-COVID numbers. 8,099 showers were provided for women and men (31 per day). 458 people had their laundry washed and over 1,000 received wonderful clothes at our Street Store in June (in partnership with Grace Family Church). We continue to have a good working relationship with Newlands Park DSD drug rehabilitation centre and the Napier Centre 4 Healing – referring clients and then following up after release.

The Project Co-ordinator Sr Cathy Murugan HF left during the year and was replaced by Nonhlanhla Nhlangulela – who started with the DHC as an intern 7 years ago! She is assisted by a team of cooks, a social worker, as well as interns and dozens of volunteers. In total, volunteers provided 2,285 sessions of work (25% higher than the 2019 number); about 1/3 delivered by Homeless people plus consistent support from loyal volunteers, schools, colleges, parishes and corporates. At minimum wage, volunteering is worth R263,000 of labour.

Through 2025, we chaired the National Homeless Network and organised three successful best-practice webinars before handing over the Chair to CPT. Our key role in helping develop a Green Paper for a **National Homeless Policy**, after years of lobbying, has not yet led to any concrete actions by the Department of Social Development.

After a few years of indifference and hostility from City Hall, we are more hopeful of a return to the high levels of co-operation with the Municipality enjoyed during COVID. An urgent issue to address is the Municipality-funded raids on the homeless – they result in no sustained improvement and often cause harm to people and to their meagre belongings. Recent video evidence of extreme violence being used on the homeless by Ensure Security has been aired on Facebook and is being investigated.

**Empowerment** is led by Stuart Talbot. A key part of his focus remains securing IDs for the homeless, though frustrated by the stop-start practices of Home Affairs (and sometimes the lack of follow through by homeless people themselves). He managed to secure 222 ID's, having started a process for over 400. We continued empowering homeless through access to a computer room, registering for SSD grants, and legal advice via UKZN Street Law; we helped 39 people clear their criminal records. We have started preparing for the Municipal Elections (likely end 2026) as part of a national drive to get homeless people exercising their democratic rights.

**Street Lit** continues under the co-ordination of Illa Thompson (who has also been our *pro bono* publicist since we began). Our 23 vendors between them sold over 17,500 books generating an income of over R850,000 (up 4%)! As well as established leisure destinations, we have now secured 10 venues in malls (thanks to the generosity of the landlords). With so many vendors, the need to collect books keeps increasing. We are grateful for donations from individuals and also benefited from substantial gifts of new books from Bargain Books and Tape Aids for the Blind. The booksellers were also involved in several community literacy projects around the region.

We have still not found a partner to make our training café viable again but are open to suggestions. **Refugee Pastoral Care**, though based at the DHC, is not part of our Trust but instead reports to the Archdiocese of Durban.

In addition, we had a number of **community events** in 2025, often in partnership with others:

- The world premiere of a film **God's Work** inspired by the DHC and featuring a number of our homeless men
- An **Evensong** of Psalms of Suffering, and partnering with UKZN for the annual **Moot Competition**, both marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Paddy's detention in prison
- An interfaith **iftar** outside so we could hear the *adhan* from the Jumma Masjid next door
- **Lectures** around the city about +Hurley and Paddy Kearney
- **Memorial lectures** honouring Paddy (with Gandhi Development Trust and DUT) and +Hurley & +Gabuza (with AoD J&P)
- Arts events with the **Centre for Creative Arts** (film screenings, slam poetry, writers' workshop), and community classes and performances (courtesy of UKZN's **UKUSA** project)
- Talks at faith schools in **Birmingham UK** about the work of the DHC
- Supporting the **National Homeless Conversation** in CPT
- Highly enjoyable **fundraising events** with a jazz concert, Indian dinner and sing-along *Sound of Music*
- Our annual **Meal of Reconciliation** attended by over 400 people, homeless and housed

The Denis Hurley Centre **Administration** consists of a Director (Raymond Perrier), Finance Manager (Thembeke Mchunu) and COO (Leanne Banks). The building is managed by Rob Wolhuter supported by a Caretaker and an assistant, plus volunteer reception staff. We had to spend R260,000 on repairs and maintenance which indicates that the building, after 11 years, is beginning to show wear and tear; we remain committed to keeping it in a good condition.

Regular activities to support our staff continued with birthday celebrations, monthly training sessions and quarterly inspirational activities. The R1,000 per person yearly 'Paddy Grant' was used by staff for a wide range of personal development activities.

In 2025, total **funds raised** were R5.6M (a 9% increase on 2024) and our **expenses** were R6.1M (6% below budget). Nevertheless, we did not raise sufficient funds *in the year* and had to draw down R0.5M from our reserves. A thorough review of expenses was carried out and some retrenchments made. Our budgeted expenses for 2026 are thus 5% lower at R5.77M but this still requires us to raise R15,800 every single day.

We benefit from a wide range of **donors**. In 2025, we received 25% of our funds from overseas and 75% from SA (which is commendable). Of this, 26% came from individuals (including the Centenary Club), 16% from renting out space in the DHC, 13% from SA grant-making trusts, 8% from interest (thanks in part to legacy bequests), 4% from fundraising events, 4% from corporates, and only 3% from faith-based organisations. Like many organisations, we were very disappointed by the complete withdrawal of US Government funding from SA. Many thanks to all who give so generously.

Alongside the cost of running the building, the Clinic is our single largest area of expenses (39% of what we spend) – but it is hugely efficient given that we saw 34,000 patients at an average cost pp of R70! The cash spend on Nkosinathi is minimised by the great amount of volunteering. We had to spend R103k on ingredients which is more than in previous years – but still only 60c per meal. Overall, salaries were our single largest cost: they accounted for 64%—though with 21 full-time-equivalent staff these are still very modest average salaries. After this, our largest areas of spend in descending order are medicines, utilities, cleaning, repairs and IT. **Audited Financial Statements** are available on our website; the 2025 audited statement will be posted by mid-2026. One of our 12 Trustees departed mid year: we extend our thanks to Fanie Nothnagel, and also to the 11 Trustees who remain and are very generous with their time and expertise to ensure we have excellent governance.

We are grateful to all those who have helped us, in small and large ways, by donating funds, goods and time to enable us to serve the literally thousands of people whose lives we touch every month. We commend our staff and volunteers for their hard work and commitment to helping those most in need, despite the scale of the task.