



equinox trust

horses changing lives



Annual  
Report  
2017

**equin**



**x**

**trauma**

**abuse**

**grief**

**depression**

**vulnerability**



**suppp**



**rt**

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## message from the Trustees

The Equinox Trust experienced the past year as a challenging one that has created a more determined outlook of how to overcome challenges and make the most of what is provided. We have developed our organisation in many aspects, but we have faced financial difficulties that have impacted the number of programmes we could run. We are very proud to have overcome this experience and we are excited to show how we are taking what we have learnt to new horizons within our organisation.

We are continually working at improving our knowledge and skills so that we can raise further funds for our programmes and offer a caring and professional service. It has been rewarding to be a part of the change that our beneficiaries have experienced and to expand our reach in our communities.

We are forever grateful to our wonderful venues and horses that enable us to work with our beneficiaries and reach communities in need. Thanks go to Nicola and her horses in Noordhoek, to Colleen and her crew and horses at The White House Stables, and to Kendre and his horses and team at The Oude Molen Stables.

We are looking forward to what the next year may hold for us. We are eternally grateful and appreciative of everyone that has helped us and who continue to help us. None of our achievements so far would have been possible without the support and guidance of our friends, families, donors and other interested parties. Thank you for helping us to learn and grow. We would also like to thank the organisations that we have worked with, and those that are keen to get involved with us. Without your support and involvement, we would not be where we are today.

SARAH GARLAND  
NICOLA MICHL  
FIONA BROMFIELD



## Vision and Mission

### Welcome to The Equinox Trust



#### VISION

We envision a world where individuals are emotionally empowered, self-aware, caring and connected to others, and are responsible in their decision making, reaching their fullest potential, thriving in a peaceful world.

#### MISSION

The Equinox Trust's mission is to foster the social and emotional development and enhance the overall well-being of members of society through enriching, equine assisted experiential programmes. By partnering with horses, participants will engage in experiential ground-based activities that do not involve horseback riding. These activities enable them to become self-aware by learning to recognise and identify their needs and be empowered to make positive choices to support and achieve their goals and manage their challenges.

## Our Team

### Sarah Garland

Trustee; Public Relations & Programme Manager; Chairperson



Sarah has had a lifelong passion for and relationship with horses and is constantly inspired by their way of being and their power of presence. Sarah has always had a passion for people and enjoyed being around people and helping those in need. Being able to pair her two passions in life to create a place of healing and harmony has been a dream. Sarah studied at The University of Cape Town and specialised in Clinical Social Work and after completing her Honours she wanted to explore her passion for working with children so she studied a P.G.C.E. (Post Graduate Certificate in Education). Sarah was then introduced to a modality of therapy that engages both horses and people and immediately trained through Eagala (Equine Assisted Growth & Learning Association). Sarah decided to further her knowledge and skills of working with people through completing her Masters in Clinical Social Work. Sarah has started her Advanced Certification in Eagala, which furthers her skills in equine therapy. Sarah is excited to share her passion and knowledge of horses helping people.



## Nicola Michl

Trustee; Marketing & Noordhoek Programme Manager; Secretary



Nicola's deep connection with horses began in early childhood and she has worked with them extensively over the past 20 years, from stable yard management, teaching riding, training horses and running horse trails. Through this experience she began to notice the great healing qualities that these animals have to offer.

Her interest in an holistic approach to healing began at university where she engaged with subjects of Psychology and Philosophy (Quantum Physics). She studied to become a certified Natural Healer and Counsellor and is a registered Ethnic Health Care Practitioner with the Natural Healers Association South Africa (NHA). She has a BA Honours Degree in Fine Art from UCT and has also has her Part 2 certification of the EAGALA (Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association) model and attended the advanced certification which she is currently completing. With 9 years of working as an Equine Assisted Therapist she believes that horses are offering us the opportunity to expand our awareness and make changes to create better more meaningful lives for ourselves.

## Fiona Bromfield

Trustee; Financial & Operations Manager; Treasurer



Fiona has a BSocSc degree from UCT and a BA Honours degree in Psychology from Stellenbosch, as well as a Post-graduate Certificate in Education (P.G.C.E.) from the University of Cape Town. She is also a qualified Counsellor (S.A. College of Applied Psychology) and is registered as a Specialist Wellness Counsellor with the Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners (ASCHP). Through her studies, she discovered a passion for helping both adults and children, and in 2006 she travelled to the United States of America to complete her certification in the Equine Assisted Therapy and Learning (E.A.T./E.A.L.) model offered by EAGALA (Equine Assisted Growth and Learning Association). She then spent 6 months working in America gaining experience in the facilitation of equine therapy sessions as well as in the management of an equine therapy business. Fiona has since completed her Part 2 EAGALA Certification and has extensive experience in equine therapy through her work in South Africa. She also has many years of administrative experience. She has been involved with horses since an early age, and has a strong belief in the ability of horses to heal people. She enjoys being able to work with people in conjunction with horses, enabling a powerful learning process.

## Equinox News

### Fundraising events

Equinox held two successful fundraising events in the past year. The first was in partnership with SARDA, the SA Riding for the Disabled Association. We held a Country Fun Day at the SARDA premises in Constantia, which was a fun-filled day out for the whole family. Events included amazing horse performances from Monte Cavallo Stud, dog dancing displays and face painting.



Our second event this year was a Yoga in the Paddock mini-retreat, which was a beautiful day spent at our Noordhoek venue where participants explored the transformative power of yoga whilst surrounded by our beautiful herd of horses. This was followed by a delicious vegetarian lunch under the trees. Feedback received from participants was extremely positive and we are in the planning stages of our next event for later this year as we hope for this event to become a regular feature in our fundraising efforts.



7 ORGANISATIONS



R478 k

GENEROUS  
DONATIONS



78 PEOPLE  
SERVED  
THIS YEAR

68 FEMALES  
(87%)

10 MALES  
(13%)

### American Adventures

We were invited to present at the Eagala (Equine Assisted Growth & Learning Association) Annual Conference this year, which was held in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. This was an incredible experience for the Equinox team and our presentation ("An African perspective on working with varying populations from forensic psychiatric patients to abused women and youth at risk") was extremely well received. The conference was attended by 475 delegates from around the world and we spent a lot of time networking and connecting with others who do this work, as well as visiting other equine assisted therapy facilities in North Carolina and Virginia. Some feedback from those who attended our workshop:

- o Wonderful presenters full of knowledge, stories, and suggestions!
- o They were excellent presenters!
- o Well done and fascinating to see international use of EAGALA model
- o This was one of my favorite workshops and exceeded my expectations.
- o The presentation was well done with good detail

### The Saartjie Baartman Centre "give back" session

At the end of 2017, we again had a giving back session. This year we sponsored a group of six social workers and auxiliary social workers from The Saartjie Baartman Centre to come and enjoy a session for themselves. These ladies give so much of their time and energy to the women that they help on the road to healing, and it was a wonderful "time-out" for them from the stresses of their daily lives as well as a great team-building session for them to use their support networks and get supervision and support from those around them.



### New ideas on the horizon

As this new financial year gets underway, we are excited to be exploring some new ideas in terms of what we offer. We are busy developing short courses for the youth and for women, focusing on areas such as self-esteem, bullying, resilience and assertiveness. These will form part of our income generation strategy for the Trust and through this we hope to become more sustainable and less dependent on donor funding in the future.

## Programmes

Providing emotional support to those who need it most

Our empowerment programmes focus on outcomes such as improving communication skills, development of assertiveness, improving problem solving and teamwork skills, and improving self-esteem. We have seen wonderful results from all of our programmes and continue to receive positive feedback from the organisations we work with.

## Funded Programmes

### *Youth at Risk Programme*

Many youths that have been exposed to high risk environments struggle to express themselves appropriately, but through working with horses they are able to learn how to express such emotions and learn to develop a bond with another living being in a non-judgmental and unconditionally accepting environment. This unique bond can help a youth develop respect, empathy, patience, confidence, responsibility and assertiveness. Such attributes can help the youth to develop mutually respectful relationship in their lives and help them to overcome their past trauma where relationships with others have

been damaging.

Our youth programmes now offer an 8-week programme with a 4-week follow up programme that happens a couple of months later to ensure a more sustainable impact for our beneficiaries. Some of our youth programmes in 2017 worked with children from Home from Home and the Imhoff Waldorf School in Kommetjie with children who are on scholarships. Both the children and care takers had positive feedback from the experience the children had and due to the new programme set-up there were more lasting changes that were observed.



## Funded Programmes

### Women's Programmes

This programme helps women to overcome past trauma and promote emotional growth and reparation in an emotionally supportive environment. The programmes empower women to become self-reliant in order to make informed decisions about their choices, evaluate their choices, and take responsibility for their choices. Some of the objectives that the programmes focus on are to help improve problem-solving skills, increase assertiveness and boundary set

ting, improve self-esteem and to develop their self-worth.

Some of our programmes in 2017 worked with ladies from The Saartjie Baartman Centre, Sisters Incorporated and Ilitha Labantu. We have developed collaborative working relationships with these organisations and the results of the ladies attending our programmes and the support from these organisations has enabled positive change in the lives of these women.



### Caring for Carers Programme

This programme offers a short-term, stress-management and coping support system for caregivers and mental health professionals (e.g. social workers, counsellors, psychologists, nurses). It assists them to become more effective in their work by allowing them an emotionally safe space to identify feelings and thoughts related to their work and to help them to develop

a peer support network. We were able to offer HOKISA a carers programme in 2017, which provided an opportunity for most of the carers to attend sessions with us and to strengthen their capacity as individuals and as a work place.

## Funded Programmes

### Valkenberg Programmes

The programme with the Forensic Mental Health Unit at Valkenberg Psychiatric Hospital seeks to improve the participants' ability to work and function in a group, decrease irritability and aggressive behaviours, while improving interpersonal and social skills. It also helps to improve ability of patients to

provide spontaneous reflection as opposed to probed reflection, as well as improving levels of assertiveness. We saw an improvement in all of these areas through this programme and had positive feedback from the patients involved in the programme as well as the staff from the hospital.



### Individual Funded Clients

Over the past few years we have had several requests for us to work with individuals/couples/families who would benefit hugely from equine assisted therapy but who cannot afford the therapy. We have in the past turned these referrals down as it is not a part of what we fund. However, we have recently decided that we would like to build this into what we offer as the demand continues to grow.

We have modified our budget and funding

allocation to begin to incorporate this as something that we can offer. At this stage, we can only afford to fund one individual at a time, but this gives us the opportunity to provide a full therapeutic intervention for one individual. As and hopefully when further funding becomes available we would like to grow this part of our services and be able to offer more individuals/couples/families this therapeutic intervention.

## Private Programmes



### *Individuals, Families, Couples, Groups*

Horses are herd and prey animals and as such are highly attuned to changes in non-verbal communication in order to maintain the safety of the herd. They are therefore able to accurately assess the state of being of other animals and humans and communicate it non-verbally. As a result they become experts in mirroring our attitudes, feelings and behaviours when we interact with them.

It is here where we can learn to:

- improve communication and social skills
- develop healthy relationships
- enhance problem solving skills
- increase our self-esteem and confidence
- build trust within ourselves and others

### *Teambuilding*

Horses are our diagnostic wizards, reflecting where an individual or group is aligned and working effectively and where the gaps or lack of clarity and communication are impeding one's success.

Using horses in Team Building is a powerful method for developing strengths and recognizing and addressing weaknesses.

Challenging and innovative group activities in partnership with the horses test cooperation, collaboration and creativity.



## Testimonials

Nurturing self-esteem and confidence



Teacher's testimonial of a child from a youth programme – February 2018

To Equinox Trust

Feedback on M... (name removed for confidentiality purposes)

There are small and subtle changes that I have seen in M... with regards to his ability to interact with both children and adults. He is more willing to speak about when he has made mistakes or infringed upon a school rule. He has also shown that his level of trust within those people around him has strengthened, this became very clear when he finally started talking a little bit about his past and his biological family, something that he has not done in the 2 years he has been at the school.

It is my belief that the sessions M... attended have been invaluable to him and have helped his ability to focus on tasks, trust more in the outer world around him and interact on a more socially acceptable level with his peers.

Thank you for the incredible gifts your workshops have given him.

Best Regards  
B. Webb

Women's programme – August 2017

THIS EXPERIENCE WAS MORE HEALING  
THAN WHAT ANY HUMAN BEING  
COULD EVER DO FOR ME  
HORSES...  
OPENING UP THE WINDOWS OF MY  
SHATTERED SOUL TO LET IN HEALING BREEZE  
OF RENEWAL HEARTHALF THANKS  
TO EQUINOX TRUST AND SPECIAL THANKS

~  
care  
passion  
integrity  
~

## HOKISA Carers programme – March 2017

*At Equinox Trust I learn a lot, First it was not easy, I was scared of the horses but at the end I get to know them, and I learn that in life you need to listen and share idea with others. If person are not in the good mood try to speak to him/her to find out what you can do to help.*

*To me yes I work with horse but I change it to people that I see or I work with everyday. I learn a lot. I wish you all the wings to help people like me who need help to build relationships with people.*

*Thank you.*



### **Testimonial from some of the patients of Valkenberg Programme:**

"I feel good (about animals now). I learnt how to treat them (well). I learned (during the program) to be part of a team, and learned not to think about bad things when I solve a problem".  
 "I think that I learned that the way horses listen to you can be the same for friends in the ward. I learned to take my time with problems. I learned to understand nature, spiritual life and animals."

"From watching the horses I got thinking about how to solve problems".

### **Testimonial from the staff of Valkenberg:**

'The Equinox Trust has done three equine therapy programs with forensic mental-health users at Valkenberg Hospital's forensic unit since 2015. They have worked with various members of the forensic therapeutic team, including psychiatrists, occupational therapists and nursing staff. The Trust's facilitators have impressed with their professionalism and expertise, in working with people who have serious mental illnesses, and the results of the programs have included increased teamwork and sociability, and reduced levels of agitation and frustration, in the mental-health users.'

(All names have been changed due to confidentiality.)

# The Equinox Times

HORSES CHANGING LIVES



**Oliver** has successfully completed the 8 week Equinox Youth Empowerment Programme. Well done Oliver.



## Oliver Radebe

### Favourite Horse?

“This white horse is cute and listens to me. She also follows me. She is my best



friend and it makes me feel good.

I'd like to call her 'Marshal', “ said Oliver.

### Favourite thing at Equinox?

It was very good for Oliver to be taught to be calm and to listen and how to concentrate.

### What did the horses teach you

### at Equinox?

Oliver said that he learnt how to be calm when playing with the horses. It helps when he plays with friends and at school to be calm too.

*Thank you Oliver for taking part in the Equinox Youth Empowerment Programme.*

*Reporters  
Nicola Michl  
Sarah Garland*



# IMHOFF WALDORF SCHOOL

Bringing Learning to Life

To whom it may concern,

At 9 years old myself I was introduced to the wonder of horse riding. During our school holidays my sister and I would spend time on the Farm with the horses – not riding, but grooming, washing them, cleaning out their water and feed bins and tending to their needs in the stable. As I got older I realised that the bond a person shares with a horse is truly magical. There is almost a type therapy about them in the way they smell, move, breathe and mostly accept. The rhythmic way in which they move and breathe brings about a melodious calmness especially when a rider/handler moves in synch with such a creature. Which is why, when I was approached by Equinox last year to select a few children for their programme I eagerly accepted because I know what my time with the horses did for me growing up and I knew it could only better the way these children relate to the outside world.

I chose 3 girls who live in Masiphumelele. Their home lives are not ideal as there is little support for them in the home or regarding their school work. They kept very much to themselves. Always sitting together at break chatting to each other in isiXhosa not really opening up to allow others in. when they began their sessions with Sarah and Nicola the children assumed the same roles as I saw in the class room. One taking charge, one following and one very reluctant. But with careful facilitation Sarah and Nicola worked with this dynamic and things slowly started to shift. It was in the middle of their first 8 week sessions when I asked one of my girls, “How was the horses?” to which she replied, “I think he is sick because he wasn’t listening.” Of course I said nothing as I think it is wonderful to use the horse as a metaphor for how one relates to the outside world. All I replied was, “Oh dear, I hope he is better next week.” The next week came and I asked the same question but this time the answer was different. She replied, “He wasn’t sick...I just wasn’t asking him right.” How wonderful it is for to come up with that answer on her own.

The children went for their follow up session this year. It was only 2 of them as one of the girls moved schools. This year I have seen the biggest shift. The girls have widened their friendship circle and have welcomed the whole class to be with them. They can interact with clearer thought and can articulate better how they feel without feeling vulnerable. There is definitely a softening to both of them and more of a kindness. There is more of a want to do things rather than the reluctance I used to experience before. It was truly a privilege for my girls to be given tools for the rest of their lives through nature and animals.

Best regards,

Candice

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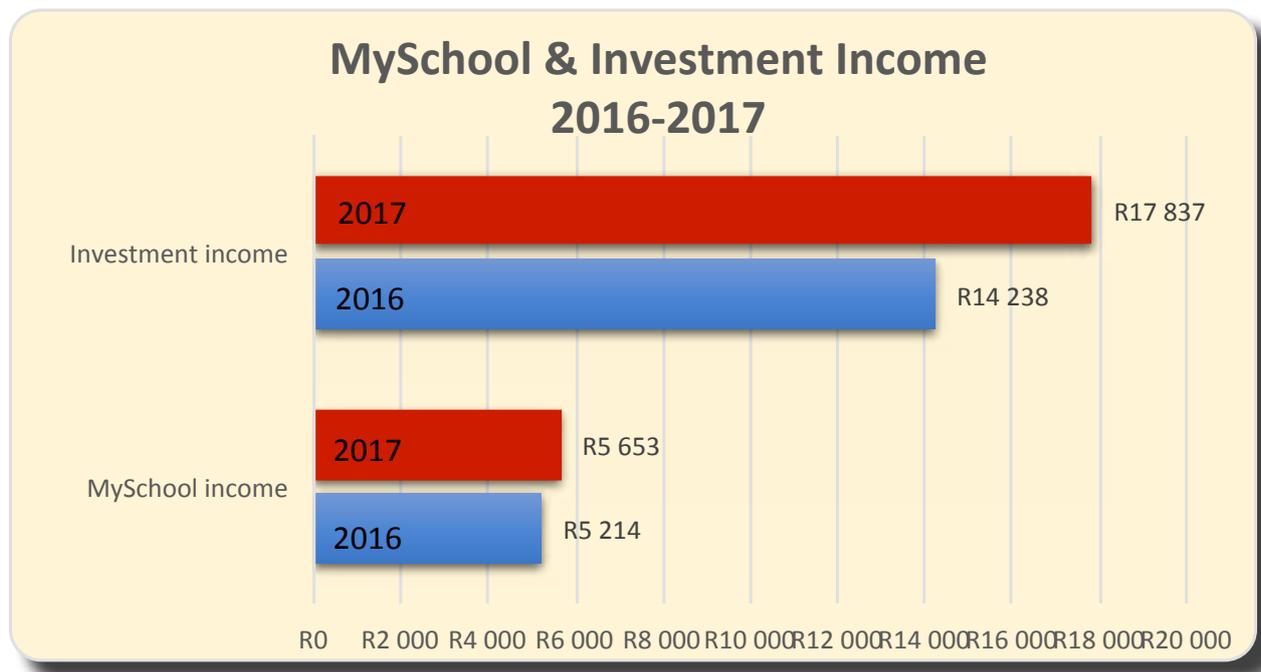
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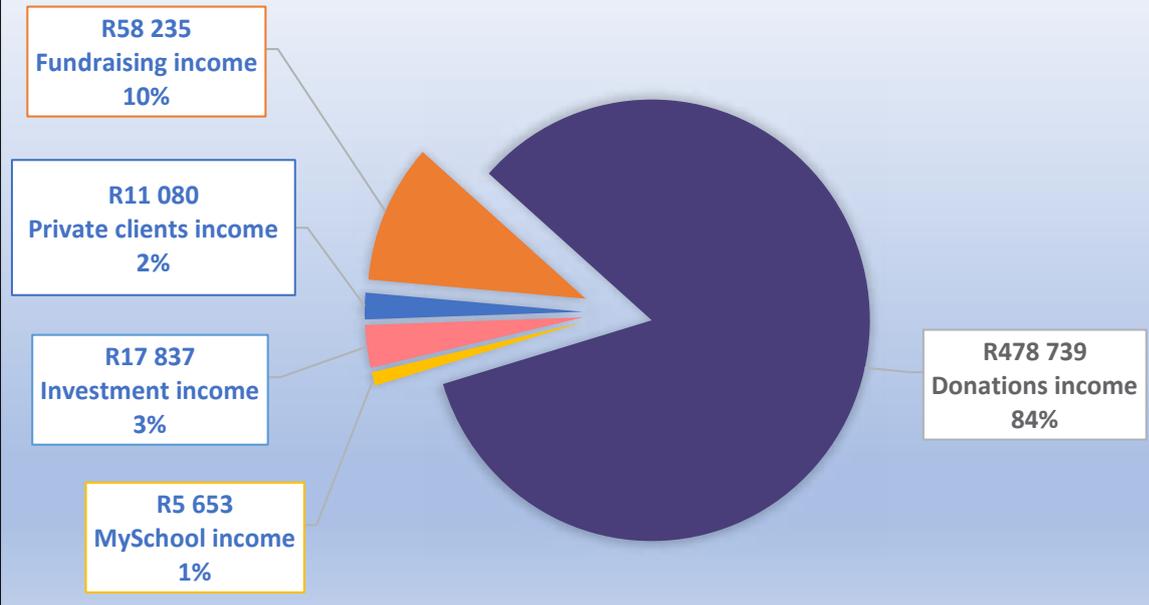
## Financial Report

2017 was a challenging year financially for the Trust. Our total income dropped from R919 718 in 2016 to R571 544 in 2017. This was mainly due to a drop in the amount we received from our repeat donors, as well as more funding proposals being declined due to a changing NGO landscape and challenging economic times in our country. Our MySchool income, however, increased, as did the interest we received from our investments.

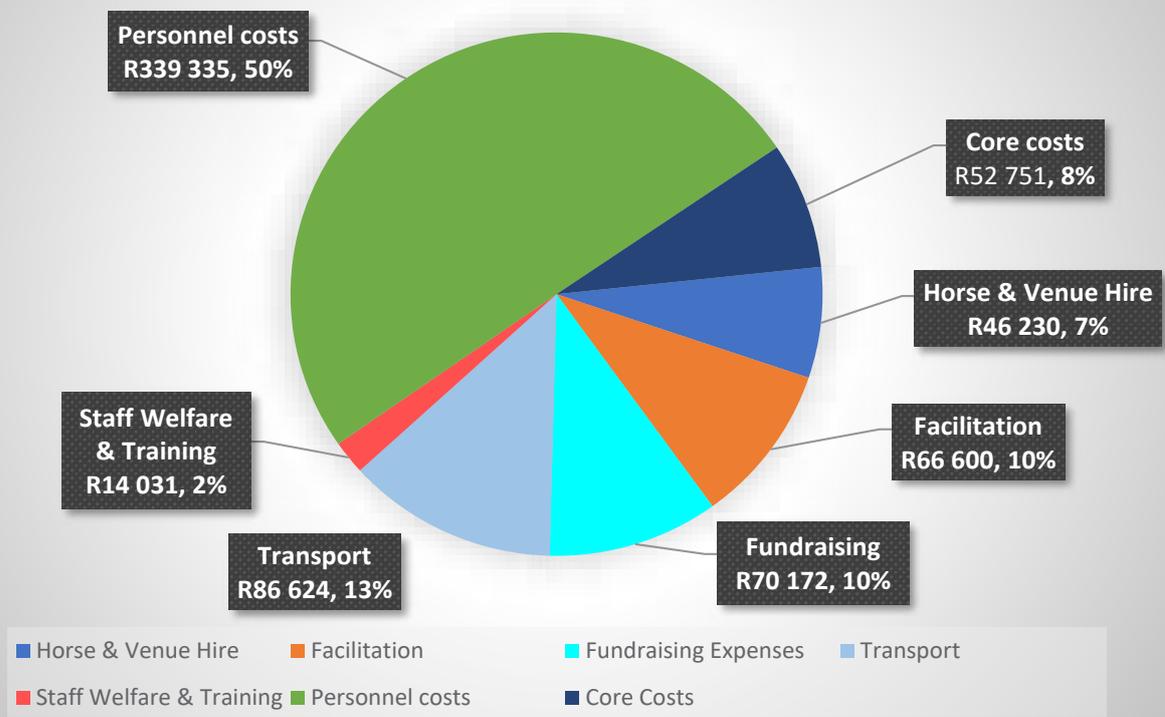


We are very grateful that we have recently secured R100 000 in funding from one of our donors which covers the 2018/19 and 2019/20 financial years. This funding will be used to run abused women programmes in 2019 and 2020. We have also secured another R52 500 from a repeat donor, which is an annual amount, and which increases on an annual basis as well. This funding is unrestricted so will be used for a combination of programme and administration costs of the Trust. As mentioned above in our Equinox News, plans are also in the pipeline to ensure that the Trust becomes more sustainable in the future and less dependent solely on donor funding. Should you wish to see our full audited financial statements please contact us.

### SOURCES OF INCOME 2017 FINANCIAL YEAR



### Expenditure 2017 Financial Year



# THANK YOU

for making **miracles** happen

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude and thanks to everyone who has supported us in our journey so far. From donors who have funded full programmes and who have repeated their funding towards our cause, we are hugely grateful that you see the benefit in what we do. We also owe a big thank you to those who have helped us in a variety of ways either through donations of time, skills and knowledge, guidance or donations of equipment for our sessions. Last but definitely not least, a big thank you to the horses without whom we would not be able to do the work that we do.

## *Donors and supporters*

**Valkenberg Hospital (Schonberg Trust)**  
**Rolf-Stephan Nussbaum Foundation**  
**The Rice Foundation Trust**  
**Afrikaburn Spark Grant**  
**The L&S Chiappini Trust**  
**The FC Carter Trust**  
**Kuda Insurance**  
**Lewis Group**  
**Allister Rogan**  
**Rainbow of Hope**  
**Skybound Capital**  
**The GCG Werdemuller Trust**  
**The National Lotteries Commission**



## Contact Details

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Trustees: Sarah Garland, Nicola Michl,  
Fiona Bromfield

Board Members: Charline Miles, Annie Cohen



### *Get Involved!*

Donation options:

- Directly via our GivenGain account (<https://www.givengain.com/cause/5495/>)
- Electronic Funds Transfer (see bank details below)
- Donating into our Thandi Warden reserve fund (please contact us for bank details)

**The Equinox Trust**

**FNB Claremont**

**Account number: 62470298706**

**Branch code: 204209**



TRUST REGISTRATION NUMBER: IT1049/2014    NPO NUMBER: 137-940 NPO    PBO NUMBER: 930047278