

PROJECT PROFILE



International Youth Day

Ms Geraldine Erasmus, 24 years' old
After school alumni, NDA beneficiary and Beauty School Master Trainer at Sozo Foundation

Today marks International Youth Day, a day that is dedicated to highlighting young matters, milestones and challenges. South Africa has a huge youth population, according to Stats SA of the 40 million working age population in quarter 2 of 2022, more than half (51, 6%) are youth (15-34 years). According to the Quarterly Labour Force Survey (QLFS) for the first quarter of 2022, the unemployment rate was 63, 9% for those aged 15-24 and 42, 1% for those aged 25-34 years.

The recent unemployment statistics pertaining to young people is cause for concern for the country's economic prosperity. To help draw young people into the economy, government has under the Presidential Youth Employment Intervention initiated various youth development and empowerment initiatives to support young people. The National Development Agency (NDA) therefore also prioritises youth civil society organisations (CSOs) in its poverty eradication efforts. Interventions include formalisation of CSOs, training and mostly support for youth entrepreneurship.

NDA initiatives provide the necessary support for young people to take on their challenges, start a business that will create jobs and a sustainable income.

One of the CSOs funded by NDA to realise this mission, is Sozo Foundation that is based in the Cape Flats of Vrygrond in Cape Town. The CSO runs projects that work to promote Education, Skills Development and Enterprise in Vrygrond.

Sozo Foundation's current projects are Educentre, GED General Education Diploma, Youth Café Skills Schools, The Wild Goose Bakery, Dancing Goat Roastery and Kingdom Builders.

Geraldine is a former student at Sozo Foundation who is now a Beauty School Master Trainer, now training incoming youth. She is one of the five of the 5 youth beneficiaries who will receive a start-up kit to start her own beauty business with NDA granted funds to Sozo Foundation.

A bit of background on Geraldine

Q: Where were you born and what was your upbringing like?

A: I was born and raised in Lavender Hill where I lived with my mom, dad and 2 siblings - I was the middle child. Unfortunately, my mom passed on when I was 9 years old. My siblings and I were then put under the system where we used to see social workers weekly, until finally my aunt took the 3 of us in as her foster children.

I attended Levana Primary School where I was an excellent learner. I passed Grade 7 and went to Crestway High School where I finished my Matric.

Q: What did you aspire to be when growing up?

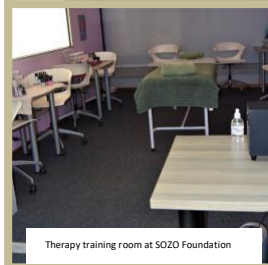
Growing up, I always wanted to become a professional dancer and actress.

Q: How did you hear of Sozo Foundation?

I was part of the Bay Community Church, where the founders of the Sozo Foundation announced that they will be starting an education centre where they will do after-school tutoring programmes. I was then in grade 9 when the Educentre started and I signed up, it started with only 12 students.



Geraldine SOZO Staff Member



Therapy training room at SOZO Foundation



SOZO Foundation Structure

Q: How has Sozo foundation assisted you?

Since 2011, when I started, the Sozo foundation has helped me with the resources that I did not receive at school such as free quality tutoring, access to computers to do my assignments and focus on my well-being. In 2012, I was chosen to do a photography course for 2 weeks that I completed. And our work was showcased in a café in London.

In 2013, I signed up for a workshop called Toastmasters that focused on how to do public speaking and to build confidence. I also completed a web designing course/workshop in the same year.

In 2014, I finished my last year at school with the help and support of the Sozo Foundation and passed really well.

Q: What are your future career plans?

A: My future career plans is to open my own hair and beauty salon, and to employ the students that come through the Sozo Foundation Hair and Beauty Programme as interns, giving each class a chance to succeed as entrepreneurs in their own right. I strongly believe that the partnership that Sozo Foundation has with the NDA will make my dream a reality!

Q: What advice would you give to other youth?

My advice to youth is not to let their circumstances determine their future. I know it sounds cliché but this is the advice that I still stick to, that was given to me by one motivational speaker, hold on to something that you believe in.