



**ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT
HEARX GROUP & FOUNDATION**

MARCH 2019 – FEBRUARY 2020

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LETTER FROM THE CEO

DEAR READER,

Not too long ago, the hearX Group embarked on this journey with the ambitious goal of positively impacting a million people through our digital hearing health solutions by 2020. It proved to be harder than we thought and at this point last year we were still uncertain whether it would be achievable. In the words of Amin Maglic:

“Often, we are impatient about impact - because we want change to happen faster”

However, time and perseverance allow refinement and maturation that results in exponential growth. It is thus with great joy, gratitude and humility that I can report that our innovations have benefitted 1,000,000 people across the globe.

hearX has set the standard for innovation, reimagined hearing health and pushed the limits of what's possible. This significant progress - doubling our reach for the second year in a row - would not have been possible without the relentless commitment and dedication of our incredible team.

“A small team, committed to a cause bigger than themselves, can achieve absolutely anything” Simon Sinek

I would also like to thank our board, our committed partners and of course – our funders, we are eternally grateful for your support.



This report will provide you with an oversight of our journey and showcases some of our highlights of the past year. Evident from the various projects shared herein, we attach a high value to collaboration and are passionate about sharing our technology and solutions with those who need it most.

We see massive opportunities for our innovations, expertise and projects to play a role in impacting the 466 million people suffering disabling hearing loss. It takes shape in a variety of ways, including partnering with governments, redefining service delivery models, advocating for access and affordability and empowering the next-generation workforce.

As we look ahead, we are excited to continue pushing boundaries and to develop sustainable solutions with lasting impact.

- Nic Klopper
CEO, hearX Group

1

OVERVIEW

The hearX Group is an award-winning scale up with the mission of providing affordable access to hearing healthcare using digital solutions that anyone can use, anywhere.

1.1 | Our global reach

hearX products are used in **39 countries globally**

MORE THAN

1 MILLION TESTS

CONDUCTED WITH OUR TECHNOLOGY

140 217

hearing screenings

49 577

hearing tests

65 971

vision screenings

2 039

hearScope users

192 016

patients created on mHealth

75 172

hearing screenings at hearKiosks

279 712

online hearing screenings via hearDigits

205 936

hearing screenings done via free smartphone consumer apps



2

2019-2020 ACHIEVEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS

2.1 | hearX managed projects - overview of 2019-2020 results



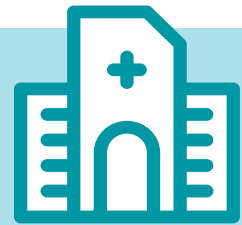
21 468
SCREENINGS

50.4%
Hearing
Screening

49.6%
Vision
Screening



10 734
CHILDREN REACHED



328
FACILITIES REACHED

Schools and Early Childhood
Development Centres (ECDs)



11 Jobs Created

756

PEOPLE REACHED
THROUGH TRAINING

ECD staff members
Teachers
Principals



SECTORS REACHED

- Health
- Education
- Early childhood development



2.2 | 3rd party projects supported by hearX

Chile | London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)

Philippines | Children's Hospital Colorado & LSHTM

Cambodia | London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Gambia | London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

Australia | Deadly Ears

Kenya | Vanderbilt University & Hear the World Foundation

Haiti | Vanderbilt University; HTWF; Partners in Health

America | Harvard Medical School

Lesotho | Partners in Health

Peru | Partners in Health

Kazakhstan | Partners in Health

Ethiopia | Partners in Health





WORLDWIDE GENOMICS RESEARCH

250 000

ONLINE HEARING TEST
CONDUCTED TO DATE

WORLD HEARING DAY 2019

On World Hearing Day (3 March 2019), the World Health Organisation (WHO) released the hearWHO app. hearX proudly developed the app for the WHO. The WHO aims to raise awareness about the importance of hearing health by encouraging people to check their hearing regularly and to practice safe listening habits.



Read more about the [hearWHO](#) app



142 259

HEARING CHECKS

HAVE BEEN COMPLETED

IN OVER **190 COUNTRIES**

HEARING ACROSS THE GLOBE

WITH THE HEARWHO APP



2.3 | Employee community impact participation

Creating a positive impact in communities is integral to hearX's culture and our commitment to benefiting people. To foster this culture we encourage employee community impact participation in the forms of advocating, volunteering or donating

42 EMPLOYEES
over 140 hours
volunteered

This year employees participated in community impact events for World Hearing Day, Mandela Day, an initiative in collaboration with the National Council of and for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD) as well as various radio broadcasts and training sessions.



2.4 | Awards

ASME ISHOW Top 8 Finalist



[Read more about our ISHOW experience](#)

The ASME Innovation Showcase is a global competition for hardware-led social innovation, focussing on the design and engineering journey of taking physical products to market. hearScope, hearX's smartphone video otoscope with integrated AI image classification, was chosen as one of the top eight finalists selected from 160 applications.



Mail & Guardian 200 Young South Africans

hearX Group CEO, Nic Klopper, was selected as one of the 200 Young South Africans in the Business & Entrepreneurship category.

Forbes Africa Top 10 Startups to watch

Forbes listed hearX as one of Africa's top 10 startups to watch out of a pool of 300 applicants. The listing recognises startups that have proven solutions that are adding considerable value.



3

PROJECTS

3.1 | Local impact project

In 2019-2020, we had three active projects in South Africa - in Tembisa, Cape Town (Khayelitsha & Mitchell's Plain) and Paarl Valley (Mbekweni) respectively. Our community-based projects are referred to as '3E' - Ears and Eyes for Education - and primarily focuses on providing preschoolers with access to hearing and vision screening services. Our goal is to identify potential difficulties and link them to care in order to address barriers to learning prior to school entry. We strive to scale our projects in a sustainable and locally-responsive manner and customise it according to the unique context of the community.



WE IMPLEMENT OUR PROJECTS THROUGH

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

This year,
our projects reached
10 734 children,
provided **21 468**
screenings and
ensured **11 jobs**



Photo credit: Inceba Trust



ACHIEVED

3E TEMBISA (GAUTENG)

Project goal:

This project aimed to screen the hearing and vision of 5000 children aged 4 - 7 years in local early childhood development (ECD) centres and primary schools in Tembisa. The project spanned a 24 month period from August 2017 - August 2019. If children were identified with possible hearing or vision impairment, they were referred to the appropriate project referral partners for further assessment and intervention, if necessary. The screening team also created awareness regarding the importance of healthy hearing and vision for healthy learning amongst teachers and parents.

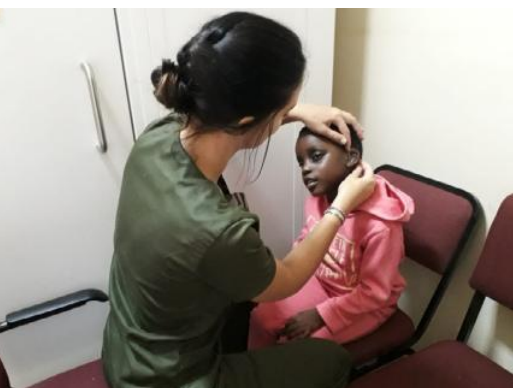
Final overall project results (1 Aug 2017-31 Aug 2019)

6608 children reached
(hearing & vision screening)

- 141 ECDs/schools
- 3 people employed
- 2.8% referral rate - hearing
- 4.6% referral rate - vision
- 29 confirmed with educationally significant hearing loss
- 3 children fitted with hearing aids
- 59 children fitted with spectacles

**2019-2020 results
(1 Mar 2019-31 Aug 2019)**

- 1299 children reached**
(hearing & vision screening)
- 32 ECDs/schools
 - 3 people employed



Thato was identified with unilateral hearing loss and was fitted with a hearing aid.

THATO, 6

Overview of results:

The project enjoyed considerable success, with a total of 6608 children screened throughout the project duration. This exceeded the overall project goal by 32%. The project hosted two community awareness initiatives and reached the staff of 141 ECDs/schools. Long term impact has been achieved in not only the affected children but in the larger community. The greatest challenge that the project faced was related to non-attendance of diagnostic follow-up appointments due to various factors (i.e. poverty, work commitments). The team implemented creative strategies to mitigate the effects of this challenge and managed to achieve exceptional outcomes.



"If there is a problem at school, us as parents need to listen. We need to stand up for our kids so they may also have the right to see, the right to hear, the right to go to school and to be happy - like any other child."

Keneilwe Mahlangu, Ofentse's mother



Project partners: Diageo Empowerment Trust SA (funding partner), PHEME Group Consulting (implementation partner), Gauteng Department of Health – local clinics and hospital (referral partner), SpecSavers The Boulders (referral partner), University of Pretoria (research partner)



EVOLVING

3E CAPE TOWN

(KHAYELITSHA & MITCHELL'S PLAIN)

2019-2020 results
(1 Mar 2019-29 Feb 2020)

- 8 035 children reached**
(hearing & vision screening)
- 260 ECDs/schools
 - 6 people employed

Project goal:

Phase 1 of 3E Cape Town aimed to provide 10000 preschool children (5-6 yrs) with access to joint sensory screening (hearing and vision) over a period of 24 months. Phase 1 was concluded at the end of June 2019 and in July 2019 the programme transitioned into Phase 2. Raising the bar, the goal of the second phase is to reach 17000 children by June 2021. Apart from screening, staff members at the ECDs/schools are equipped with information regarding the importance of healthy hearing and vision; signs and symptoms of hearing and vision impairment and relevant referral paths. Children requiring diagnostic and intervention services are referred to existing governmental services in the area.

Final overall PHASE 1 results (1 Aug 2017-31 Aug 2019)

10 390 children reached
(hearing & vision screening)

- 141 ECDs/schools
- 4 people employed
- 5.5% referral rate - hearing
- 2.8% referral rate - vision
- 78 confirmed with educationally significant hearing loss
- 2 children fitted with hearing aids
- 94 children fitted with spectacles

Photo credit*



"This research showcases the potential of mobile health innovation to transform the lives of children with hearing and vision problems, especially those from disadvantaged communities"

Prof D Swanepoel

[Read more about this project in the WHO Bulletin article](#)





“As a school, we want to say ‘thank you 3E’. In our school we had one child who had a vision problem... They also checked the ears and eyes of all our children.”

ECD Principal testimonial

Overview of results:

At the end of Phase 1, the programme reached the target by providing 10390 children with access to hearing and vision services. The success of Phase 1 has also secured ongoing support from the Hear the World Foundation as well as the Google Social Impact Award. To date, 6689 children have been screened since the inception of phase 2 in July 2019.

“It’s a privilege for me to be part of this (3E) team, for me it has changed my life a lot. Where I come from I didn’t know a child can live with a hearing aid and spectacles. So we change the lives of people in Khayelitsha and Mitchell’s Plain.”

- Lundi Mdokwana, 3E Cape Town Screener



Project partners: Carel du Toit Centre & Trust (implementation partner), Hear the World Foundation (funding partner), Google.org (funding partner), University of Pretoria (research partner), Western Cape Department of Health – local clinics and hospitals (referral partner)



NEW

3E PAARL VALLEY (MBEKWENI)

2019-2020 results
(1 Jul 2019-29 Feb 2020)

- 1 400 children reached**
(hearing & vision screening)
- 36 ECDs/schools
 - 2 people employed

Project goal:

This new 3E extension in the Paarl Valley (Western Cape) was initiated in July 2019. The pilot phase aimed to provide a 1000 children (4-7 years old) in Mbekweni with a combined hearing and vision screening over a 6-month period. Hearing and vision healthcare awareness training for learners and ECD/primary school staff members formed part of the goals.



hearX Foundation is one of the best NGO's that I've worked with. Working with us at Inceba has been so phenomenal in terms of them assisting us to screen kids for hearing and vision loss"

Partner testimonial
Anele Ngxata, Centre Manager, Inceba Trust

Final overall PHASE 1 results (1 Jul 2019-31 Dec 2019)

1 137 children reached
(hearing & vision screening)

- 33 ECDs/schools
- 2 people employed
- 3.7% referral rate - hearing
- 4.1% referral rate - vision
- 1 child fitted with a hearing aid
- 7 children fitted with spectacles & 2 awaiting spectacles

*Many follow-up appointments still due or in process



Overview of results:

The pilot was successfully concluded and reached 1137 children, exceeding the target with 13.7%. Importantly, referral pathways were established with various governmental and NGO stakeholders and children requiring follow-up care were supported throughout the process. During January and February 2020 the team screened a total of 263 grade 3 to 7 learners (9-13 yrs) who have been identified as 'at risk' by their teachers. Many of these children required referrals and are awaiting diagnostic appointments. 1 March 2020 will mark the start of the new phase of the programme and plans are in place to scale the services to more underserved communities within Paarl Valley in the future



"I am very grateful and happy about the help my child received and for how 3E guided us to the audiologist."

- Parent testimonial, *Lutho's mother
*Pseudonym used



Project partners: Valcare (funding partner), Vivat Bacchus (funding partner), Inceba Trust (implementation partner), Western Cape Department of Health – local clinics and hospital (referral partner), Vision Box (referral partner), University of Pretoria (research partner)

3.2 | Innovative models to increase awareness and access to hearing healthcare

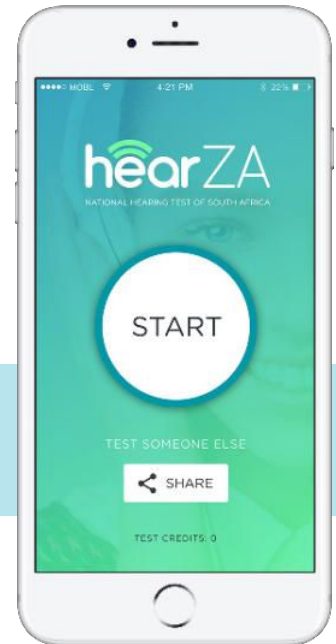
In addition to our community-based projects, we continue driving innovative models focused on increasing public awareness as well as increasing access to hearing healthcare.



NATIONAL HEARING TEST OF SOUTH AFRICA

- FREE application on iOS & Android platforms
- Accurate detection of hearing loss
- Linking to hearing health providers
- Personalised hearing health tracking

59 550 tests to date



A SELF-TEST KIOSK TO SCREEN FOR HEARING LOSS

- Creates access and awareness in new alternative settings (i.e. pharmacies, waiting rooms, etc.)
- Accurate identification of potential hearing loss
- Linking to hearing health providers

hearX's South African **shared kiosk project** is done in partnership with a pharmacy group, hearing aid manufacturer and local audiologists. Members of the public can conduct a FREE hearing screening whilst visiting the pharmacy and are then linked to professional care in their area. To date, **8583** tests have been completed in this South African based hearing awareness project.

4

FINANCIALS

Financial Overview

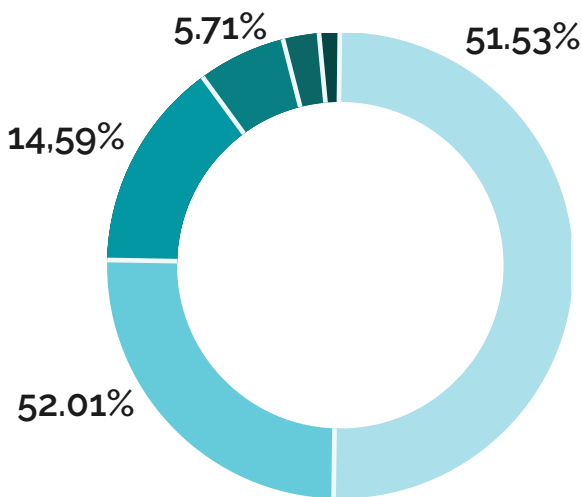
The March 2019-February 2020 financial year resulted in revenue growth of 48.2% for funded projects. Importantly, we managed to diversify our funder base to include international and local grants as well as private donors. Four additional jobs (11 in total) could be created through the grant funded projects and priority could be assigned to developments that will enable us to scale our impact.

Revenue is used against pre-approved project budgets and covers technology, development, human resources as well as implementation costs.

48.2%

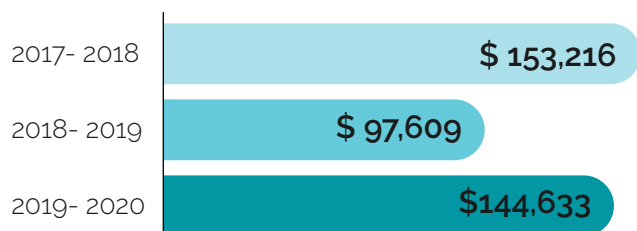
Projects' Revenue growth

Breakdown of project revenue per funder 2019-2020



	\$
Tides foundation/ Google.org	74,529.00
Hear the World Foundation	36,168.00
Diageo SA Empowerment Trust	21,100.00
Valcare	8,254.00
Seckford Agencies/ Vivat Bacchus	3,790.00
Private donors	792.00
Total Revenue	144,633.00

Year on year project revenue



5

LOOKING AHEAD

True to our value of quality innovation, plans for the year ahead include many exciting new developments. With our eyes firmly fixed on our vision of 'healthy hearing for everyone, everywhere', we will continue to challenge the status quo and harness the benefits that technology brings.

In order to increase access to and affordability of hearing health services, we are prioritising developments that will have a catalytic effect on future scaling and impact... watch this space!

ONLINE TRAINING



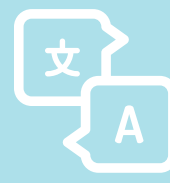
Equipping and supporting individuals who act as screeners in community-based services

IMPROVED TRACKING



Creative solutions to ease tracking of patients throughout the hearing healthcare journey

TRANSLATION



Translation of our solution to aid localisation and implementation in other low and middle income countries

SUSTAINABLE CHANGE



Innovative models that close the gap and allow sustainable hearing health

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The hearX Group would like to acknowledge and sincerely thank the following individuals and organisations:

OUR BOARD AND ADVISORS

OUR FUNDERS Hear the World Foundation, Diageo South Africa Development Trust, Google.org, Valcare, Vivat Bacchus, Havenga family.

OUR IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS Carel du Toit Centre & Trust, PHEME Consulting Group, Inceba Trust

OUR COMMUNITY-BASED PARTNERS The various NPO/NGO's that support and guide our projects

OUR VISION INTERVENTION PARTNERS Sterkinekor Vision Mission, Vision Box

OUR RESEARCH PARTNERS University of Pretoria, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine; Manchester University, Manchester university and Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center

OUR NATIONAL, PROVINCIAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS INVOLVED IN OUR PROJECTS

OUR ENTIRE HEARX TEAM Especially our project managers and administrators that were responsible for the projects reported here

To learn more about us, please visit www.hearXgroup.com or contact us at info@hearxgroup.com