



Hope Through Action is a charity, registered both in the UK and South Africa, specifically created to bring about an imaginative and life changing initiative for the young people in South Africa. The projects use sport as a medium not only to develop physical ability but also to communicate positive life skills to assist in coping with difficult realities.



By working together we will see;

- An increase in awareness of HIV/AIDs and its prevention
- A growing self belief in individuals and the community
- A significant increase in individuals' health and self esteem
- An increase in community pride and participation
- An opportunity for different communities and racial groups to work and play together in harmony
- A reduction in crime, unacceptable behaviours and substance abuse

Mbekweni is a township in the Western Cape area of South Africa about 60km North of Cape Town near the City of Paarl. It has a history which can be traced back to the apartheid period and now has a growing population officially of 24,000, with the gradual urbanisation and trend of rural communities moving to population centres for both employment and services, against a backdrop of decreasing life expectancy. The actual population is estimated to be 50,000 +.

The general health of the residents is of concern. TB increased in the area by 17% from 2001 to 2002, more than 20% of the residents live with HIV/AIDS and there is an incident rate of four times that in the USA for epilepsy. Poverty is also resulting in a number of other health related challenges (48% of the population live below the South African poverty line) – high teenage pregnancy rates, abused and abandoned children, and growing incidence of alcohol and drug addiction. There was a 54% increase in HIV/AIDS amongst pregnant women from year 2000 to 2001. In 2006 there were 20 murders, 57 reported rapes and 582 serious assaults. In the last six years drug related crimes have escalated by 270%.



In 2005 The Nompumelelo Centre was funded and built in the township by Philip and Judy Green. This centre now cares for up to 350 children from 6 months to 6 years old and has provided much of the inspiration for the current initiative. It is widely recognised that for the situation in Mbekweni to change, young adults, and in particular males, must increase their self esteem, improve their physical fitness, become more aware of health issues and develop positive life skills. Research from many academic institutions concludes that sport is a unique and proven catalyst for change.

Mr F W De Klerk, Nobel Peace Prize winner said;

"I am delighted to support Hope Through Action as it develops sports and community based projects in South Africa. Both Hope Through Action and I recognise the need to mobilise resources to address social, health, educational and developmental problems. I wish them success as they bring resources from communities and organisations around the world to help the young people of our nation develop their potential"

In order to enable this change to occur, **Hope Through Action** has built a sustainable and inclusive sports centre specifically designed to meet the needs of the community and vulnerable children. There is an indoor pitch, to provide year round facilities and a secure environment to work with the young people, as well as outdoor pitches. The centre offers, for girls and boys, football, netball, cricket, futsal, kick boxing and rugby. There are also offices, training facilities, spectator areas and provision for local-based education and health organisations. With seating for 380 the facility provides a venue for community activities. The centre was opened on June 12th 2010, to coincide with the South Africa Soccer World Cup, by Lord Mawhinney, Honorary President of the English Football League and in the presence of Mr G Thompson, Vice President of FIFA. In parallel with the provision of the buildings, six core life skills programmes covering sports development, health (HIV/AIDs), welfare, education, business development and leadership have been initiated and closely integrated with the facility. The project capital cost is £1.25M. Further phases are planned which will see the construction of outdoor football, cricket nets and netball facilities.



Lord Mawhinney, Chairman of The Football League, said:

"Undoubtedly football has the power to improve lives across the globe. I am delighted that The Football League is helping to achieve that with the 'Hope Through Action' charity in Mbekweni, South Africa. "Throughout the world, the provision of quality football facilities has a huge impact on health, community pride and crime reduction. I have no doubt that the building of this new sports centre for the young people of the township will have a similarly positive impact locally."

Phil Bland, Lord Mawhinney, Philip Green, Geoff Thompson and Pete Thompson with some of the young players at the opening of the centre

A partnership with SCORE has been established to help us deliver the Development Programmes



SCORE has worked in South Africa since 1991 and is a pioneer in the use of sport to change lives.



Eight specific change outcomes from the initiative have been defined as ;

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| Change 1: Sport participation | Change 2: Leadership |
| Change 3: Health | Change 4: Welfare |
| Change 5: Education | Change 6: Social Cohesion |
| Change 7: Individuals' safety and crime | Change 8: Improved employability |

Following the opening, the centre has been in near constant use. The young people now participate in football, futsal, cricket, netball rugby and kick boxing. Each week approximately 500 young people come to the centre for structured activities, including futsal and netball leagues. At the end of the school day up to 250 young people are in the centre and four days each week the centre staff visit the outlying schools and provide sport and life skills coaching to 800 young people. In association with Boland Cricket the Mbekweni Cricket School has been established and cricket coaching days attract up to 600 young people. Both girls and boys are encouraged to take part in all sports and there are an increasing number of girls participating. Funding has been secured for the building of all weather, floodlit netball and volley ball court along with four outdoor cricket practice nets and three indoor nets. The centre has also had extensive use as a community facility with several conferences, meetings etc being held there, e.g. the local municipality held a conference day with 1,000 attendees. Professional counselling, health advice and HIV testing are available at no charge to the young people.



A grant has been received from Comic Relief to fund three specific programmes over the next twelve months;

- Working with disabled young people
- Girls in leadership roles
- Young people suffering the effects of poverty.

These are the comments from some of the young people

Sizwe Jack

"...I feel great that the sports centre was built here in Mbekweni because some of the youth that are using drugs are not using them regularly anymore. More people are now taking part in sport and when people play sport they are safe. They don't do drugs and also don't have time to do wrong things that they usually do, e.g. house breaking and stealing etc. We need to teach youth about drug awareness and also about things that are happening outside so that we can be great leaders for the next generation"

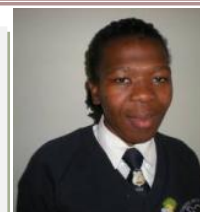


Zanele Tvantsi

".....I think the Centre is a good place for the people of my community, because it will groom champions for Mbekweni. It will also help to decrease the crime rate. I also think the centre is a safe place for the small children of my community. I even learned many things about HIV/AIDS because we don't know many things about HIV/AIDS. I even learned the way to communicate with other people outside South Africa."

Nozuko Malunda

".....people come to the centre everyday to play sports and have fun and also it has kept them away from doing wrong things, such as smoking drugs and drinking alcohol. The nice thing is that we can go to the centre with any kind of problems we have, there are people who can help and comfort us."



The Hope Through Action team is now exploring further projects in the Western Cape. The intention is to replicate the Mbekweni facility and development programmes at a number of townships. Each project would be tailored to the specific needs of local communities but would include a safe indoor sports and community facility and tightly integrated development programmes. The team which designed, constructed and manage the Mbekweni centre have all confirmed their commitment to working together on further projects

Note; Hope Through Action is registered with the UK Charity Commission, registration number 1125698. The Hope Through Action Foundation (SA) is a Section 21 company registered in South Africa, registration number 2009/016163/08. Philip Green is Patron of both organisations and both organisations are chaired by Phil Bland. The website is www.hopethroughaction.com