



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.



Background to the Mbekweni Community Sports Centre

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 project to build the centre was conceived in 2007. The initial idea came following the successful building of the Nompumelelo Educare Centre by Philip and Judy Green. The educare centre project was managed by Dale Fobian and opened in 2005. It has been a significant part of the community since then with upto 350 children being cared for daily. The centre provides care, welfare and education and is rapidly becoming self sustaining with the opening of a community laundry on site to provide regular income.

In 2007 Philip and Judy Green and Dale and Noleen Fobian were considering a number of questions:
What happens to these children when they "graduate" from Nompumelelo ?
What would significantly change this community in both the short and long term ?
What could be provided for the young people of Mbekweni in order to develop their life skills ?

In consultation with the local community, and having seen elsewhere the impact of sport on the lives of young people, the concept of a community sports centre integrated with development programmes was created. Around the same time Phil Bland, who had worked with Philip Green, "retired" and took up the challenge to bring the concept into reality. Construction started on site on Dec 1st 2009 and the centre opened on time and on budget on June 12th 2010.

The two facilities together are now able to provide continuous care, guidance and development for children from the age of 6 months through to them becoming young adults.

The Sports Centre provides a high quality physical asset closely integrated with life skills training. The combination of qualified sports coaches who have also been trained to work with young people to help them grow to their potential is proving a powerful vehicle for change in the community.

The sports currently provided are :

Football, Futsal, Netball, Cricket, Tag Rugby and Kick Boxing

There is also a growing arts movement with dance, music, singing and craft becoming part of the daily activities.

From the outset the centre, and the activities carried out there, have been inclusive with both girls and boys taking part in all sports and a particular focus on disabled and vulnerable young people. The centre is committed to developing the "whole" person, i.e. physically, intellectually and spiritually.



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

Change 1: Sport participation
 Change 3: Health
 Change 5: Education
 Change 7: Individuals' safety and crime

Change 2: Leadership
 Change 4: Welfare
 Change 6: Social Cohesion
 Change 8: Improved employability