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JUMPING FROM RURAL TO RHODES

Motivating and inspirational, for this edition we decided to profile one of the five Jump Start programme participants. Quiet and with an insatiable desire to learn, Lungisa Gobinamba or 'Mr Encyclopedia' as some friends call him, shows that even out of a background of great adversity, strong determination, extremely hard work and NGO teamwork can bring hope for a bright future.

JRHF: Lungisa, thanks for meeting up with us. Please tell us a bit about your background.

Lungisa: Well I was actually born right here in Zithulele Hospital, in 1993, though my home is in Hole in the Wall, near the MTN mast. I have only one younger brother. Since before I was born my mother has had an illness which meant she needs to be cared for and my father has had some jobs now and then but nothing permanent. Sometimes my father couldn't afford to pay for school fees or to buy me a school uniform. I used to go after school and look after our neighbour's sheep, and in return they bought me a uniform. When it came time to go to Senior Secondary School [grade 10-12], I went to Dudumayo, the best school, a few hours walk away. I was lucky that I lived with a relative near Dudumayo who also helped pay for school fees – in return I did chores like collecting water and working in the garden. At school I had to study very hard. Us students would often stay until 10pm to study. I was also lucky to get involved in the Axiom Education programme for those three years. They were very helpful! I applied to study Pharmacy and Medicine but my June and Trials exam results were not good enough for me to get in for 2014, though my Final exam marks were better. Axiom suggested that I apply for the Jump Start programme for this year, and I was accepted.

JRHF: Can you give us an 'insider's' perspective on the Jump Start Programme?

Lungisa: It has been so good. It has given to each of us the basic skills in life that you might take for granted – like leadership, public speaking, or even first aid, changing a car tyre – things which maybe you learn in the city but not in rural areas. It was inspiring and empowering; I have moved forward! Also the opportunity to get work experience has been great. I have been in the Hospital Pharmacy and so when I go to University I will already have a head start.

JRHF: Speaking of University, tell us a bit about your plans and dreams from here onwards?



Lungisa experiencing new things on Jump Start

Lungisa: Well, I applied again for University for 2015 on my Final Exam results, and on October 1st I found out that I had been accepted to study Pharmacy at Rhodes University! Of course I had no money to go, but Axiom helped me to get a bursary from Umthombo Youth Development, which is going to cover tuition and living costs, so now I can go. I am feeling very happy because I know it is one of the best universities in South Africa. And of course I'm also nervous! I have not been there or even to another big city apart from Mthatha before. During my holidays I will come back and work at Zithulele Hospital, and when I'm finished studying I want to come and work here. I'm happy to come back to our rural area. Coming back to the area where I am from will inspire other learners to see that it is possible. And my dream? I want to build a home next to my parents, and then do whatever I can to encourage people from rural areas to pursue their goals and study further.

What lies ahead for Lungisa is a real testament to his hard work and determination. Instead of what could have been a very bleak future, he has ended up in the position where he was able to turn down a position on the Cuban Medical exchange programme for the option of staying in South Africa to study Pharmacy. We extend to him our heartfelt congratulations and look forward to having him back in Zithulele in the future!

WITH A VIEW TO IMPROVE

One of the central tenets of Jabulani's work is to partner with the community in their development and growth and one of the things we enjoy most is when we are approached to draw alongside others in what they are doing and give support. We have recently been inspired by what we see happening at one of our local schools, Sea View Senior Secondary School which is right on Zithulele's doorstep, and have embarked on a fledgling partnership to support their vision for some much-needed improvements. The school staff has identified a number of challenges and have developed their own plan to tackle them, asking Jabulani for support where possible.

Infrastructure, furniture and maintenance are serious issues due to historical bad management and insufficient funding. Students stay in the same classroom all day while teachers move from class to class and so the poor upkeep of classrooms is often a result of no ownership being taken by teachers. By rather assigning a teacher to each classroom in the future, the school hopes to improve the sense of responsibility and ownership and encourage teachers to create an environment conducive to learning. In order to get this started, the school has an immediate need for two existing structures to be renovated and re-furnished from their current state of dilapidation. Sea View has initiated a plan in which two teams (lead by the two future class teachers) will conceptualise, fundraise and renovate the rundown classrooms in competition with each other. This will take place in the week before school reopens in 2015 and Jabulani will help through providing an avenue for funding and publicity, through building and maintenance advice and expertise, and through coordinating the volunteers who will do the work.

Another avenue through which Jabulani hopes to support the school is through providing volunteers. The school has scheduled an extra 30 minutes of English practice each day, focussed on basic language skills as many learners arrive at school barely being able to speak a word of English and teachers are struggling to motivate learners to engage with the language while keeping up with the syllabus. Volunteers would be invaluable in assisting with these periods, as well as with chess and games clubs, helping with maintenance, tending the grounds and reviving the school's vegetable garden.

Lastly, music programmes are sorely lacking at Sea View. Mr Hutchinson, a young maths teacher at the school,



Sea View Senior Secondary School

started a choir and has been overwhelmed by the quality of the voices and the enthusiasm of the learners for music. He has decided to expand this by teaching guitar, saxophone and running a marimba band in 2015, and will be doing a drive to raise R40 000 to acquire the necessary instruments.

Despite the many challenges faced by rural education, we are encouraged to see the school taking the initiative to overcome some of these and are excited to be able to partner with them to make things happen. If you would like to get involved in any of the above areas through volunteering or providing donations, and help us to support them in achieving their vision, please get in touch.

THE ABILITY TO BRING HOPE

"I was waiting for God to come and take my child because I was told there is no hope for her", says Nofezile, mother of Andisiwe, a 17 year old girl with Cerebral Palsy. Andisiwe's mother had given up hope for her daughter after a clinic nurse told her early on that she should take her child home and love her because she will never be able to do anything. When Buzeka Nkanunu, the Community Disability Worker (CDW) visited their home she found that Andisiwe spent most of her time in bed and that her mother was feeling unsupported and overwhelmed. Andisiwe had had no rehabilitation intervention in the last five years and although she did have a wheelchair, the family didn't use it because it didn't fit her body.

Since being part of the Rural Ability Programme, there has been a really positive change in Andisiwe and her family's life. Andisiwe's wheelchair has been fitted to her body and she can now enjoy a meal while sitting up and can even go for a 'walk' outside. The family interacts more with Andisiwe and they have noticed that she claps her hands and smiles broadly now when people enter the room! Nofezile's words of hopelessness have been replaced with "I am proud of this. I didn't know before that she was going to learn more. I feel I have a light for that which I didn't know before. I thank Buzeka and the Rural Ability Programme."

THE ABILITY TO BRING HOPE... continued

The Rural Ability programme encompasses more than access to rehabilitation services. The CDWs work with various stakeholders and with the person with a disability for inclusion in their family, community and broader society. An example of this is another young girl with a congenital disability of her legs, who struggles to walk across the hills from her village to school every day. She has resorted to only attending school every second day as she finds this more manageable. She enjoys school and wants to complete her schooling but struggles as she misses a lot of work. The hills will always be a problem in her getting to school but her CDW and the Rural Ability Project Coordinator will be working with her school and trying to find ways to support her education and help her to realise her dream of completing matric.

Through having CDWs working in their communities and in people's homes, we will be identifying children with disabilities earlier and work to give the family and the child the hope and means of achieving their potential. The programme continues to grow and gain visibility in the communities and while there is still a lot to learn and understand about the needs of the communities and people with disabilities, we are slowly but surely building



Andisiwe with mom and CDW Buzeka

meaningful relationships with families and learning from them about how this programme can best support them. The power of the programme lies in bringing services closer to communities and bringing hope into people's homes!

AT A GLANCE

PROVING IT'S VALUE

On the 25th November, we ended our 2014 Jump Start Pilot programme with a Graduation Ceremony for the five participants, Sandi, Melikaya, Inga, Ntlahla and Lungisa. The ceremony was attended by the participants' family members and Zithulele community members who had given input into the programme. In addition to a slide show, singing and a stick-fight display, the evening included speeches from each of the participants and the opportunity for them to receive feedback and encouragement from their various instructors. There was a real buzz; an atmosphere of hope as participants and instructors alike expressed positivity about the programme's success and potential for future impact. As one of the participants said, "in scientific terms, if Jump Start was a hypothesis, I think it is safe to say that it is now a proposed theory!" Funding dependent, we hope to expand the programme next year both in terms of duration and number of participants.



Jump Start graduates and facilitators

OUR VILLAGE, YOUR VILLAGE

Our membership of MySchool MyVillage MyPlanet fundraising initiative has started to gain real momentum with more than 70 members enrolling and raising funds for Jabulani as they go about their day-to-day shopping. Thank you to everyone who has signed up! If you haven't already signed up, be sure to do so before embarking on any Christmas shopping! Go to <https://www.myschool.co.za/supporter/apply/> to apply online for a card, making sure that you select "Jabulani Foundation" as the beneficiary as there are a few different Jabulani's registered. This process is simple (literally takes a minute) and you'll get your card number immediately. There are lots of shops that accept this card, so there are plenty of places in which to spend money that will translate into financial support of Jabulani at no extra cost to you!

FUNDS INVEST IN THE FUTURE OF ZITHULELE

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the Anglo American Chairman's Fund and the Discovery Fund, both of whom have once again invested in the future and development of Zithulele. AACF's recent donation will allow for the building of further accommodation to house our ever-growing professional team; and Discovery's investment has enabled our work on the ARV programme to continue from strength to strength. Our sincere thanks to both organisations!