



GR@ILVINE

GRAIL PROGRAMMES NEWSLETTER

Kleinmond, South Africa, December 2017



This Christmas, give the gift of education for children in Kleinmond! Mthimkhulu Smartkids.

Nontuthuko Xaba, a young woman with a passion for gender and the environment

Ntu, could you please tell us a little bit about the work that you do.

I work for Women's Leadership and Training Programme (WLTP), in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. We work with girls between the ages of 8 and 21 years in rural communities and some townships on issues of gender and the environment. I have been a facilitator and area coordinator and have been doing this work for five years.

On the topic of gender we look at issues like beliefs and cultural customs that oppress girls. Two relatively common issues are *Ukuthwala* and *Umhayizo*. *Ukuthwala* is a form of abduction that involves the kidnapping a girl or a young woman by a man and his peers with the intention of compelling the girl or young woman into marriage, sometimes with the parents' consent. *Umhayizo* is where a girl becomes restless and agitated, crying and screaming and wanting to run away. She does all this without being aware of what she is doing. Although this is a complex phenomenon, basically it is believed that a boy has put a spell on the girl to make her love him. Our organization has worked on these two issues and has run successful campaigns that stopped both of those practices.

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We worked with traditional healers for the *Umhayizo* campaign and generally work with the traditional authority which gives us "a bigger voice" in the community.

We encourage girls to fight for their rights and to not be afraid to speak their minds and hearts on issues that affect them. Part of enabling this "speaking out" is encouraging girls to ask questions to critique things that are happening around them, especially those things that promote the exploitation of girls and women.

We want them to be Feminists or Womanists who will fight for equality amongst all beings on earth and for justice for all creatures on earth. The environment has been our core focus point recently and girls are very involved in our community-based environmental projects. They do awareness raising on issues like waste and water management. Our agro-ecology gardening project which responds to the problem and of GMOs, that are being introduced as poverty alleviation methods but are ripping off rural people of their resources, leaving them with nothing.

We have also done awareness-raising on issues of Biodiversity. We focus on birds, trying to conserve them and working with communities on getting indigenous knowledge from old people. This was quite exciting for us as youth because we got to know

what our great grandmothers and our forefathers use to believe in before industrialization. We worked on an endangered species - the Ground Hornbill (Thunder bird). The response from people from that little work we did was amazing because we ended up looking at the biodiversity of the area and how are we losing it. It was great because the impetus came from them and they wanted to restore what was originally in the area and start a nature conservation that they will run as the community members.

What are some of your memories of Tft?

A memory that stands out for me from the Certificate course was when we were doing the topic of political economy. It made me realise how we do things and how we want change (and “development” and “progress”), but we do not look at the effects of the change we support. I was able to relate this to my community where sometimes leaders do not look out for the people that they lead (or serve) and do not look after God’s creation, destroying it in the name of “bringing development”.

Another memory that I have is when we were doing the topic of “deep democracy”. For me that was more of a healing session. I had so much anger that I was sitting with and didn’t want to talk about until that day when I was challenged to look at that emotion and to deal with it.

In what other ways has Tft impacted you personally or professionally?

Since Tft, I do not just “do things” that I think are right for people. I listen, observe, question and then act from what I have received from people. That makes a huge impact because you are responding to what people have told you is affecting them, not what you think is affecting them. Being at Tft gave me confidence and helped me to be more assertive, to read more, to do more planning.

Tft may not yet be officially recognised by the South African Department of Education at the higher education level, but it is what all development workers need to bring change about in the communities.

My hope is that one day I will attend the Diploma course and then do a Masters degrees because I believe in Change.

Interview by Jude Clark



26 years old Nontuthuko Xaba, South Africa.
Tft Certificate graduate 2012.

Kimmage DSC Distance Learning

By Deirdre Healy

Kimmage DSC, Tft partners, in Ireland offers the opportunity of International Development by Distance Learning. This Masters programme addresses many of the challenges facing development workers in an ever more complex and changing world. Distance learning offers participants the opportunity to combine work and study while still connecting online with a diverse and vibrant learning community. Full information is available on the Kimmage DSC website (www.kimmagedsc.ie). This MA Programme has two intakes per year in March and October, so do apply now!

The gift of education for children in Kleinmond

By Lindia Trout

Mthimkhulu Smartkids was started in 2014 in response to the need for a quality, safe, Early Childhood Development centre for children from households with low or no income. Currently, Smartkids provides care, early learning activities and 2 daily meals for 41 children between 2 and 5 years old.

We offer you the opportunity to sponsor a child on behalf of someone you love – give them a gift that will last a child a lifetime!

You can do so in many different ways:

A monthly sponsorship of R100/R 200/or more!
A once-off donation of R100/R 200/or more!

Visit our Given Gain site or do an eft into our bank account. Personalise your gift: add a message. We will send a ‘gift certificate’ to the person of your choice – or we will send it to you to wrap and hand over, personally!

Bank Account Name

Overcoming Poverty, ABSA, 4051919252, 632005.

Please call 028-2715213 or e-mail
debbie@grailprogrammes.org.za with payment
details and details of sponsor.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Kleinmond at Christmastime

A blessed Christmastime and a Happy New year to
all our guests in Kleinmond and friends around the
world. Book now for our new year special running
for February & March 2017! Send an email to
Leverne at grailadm@mweb.co.za or
call +27 (0)28 271 3410



Hartlaub's Gull on the Kleinmond's beach.
Picture by William Scrooby

ABOUT US**THE GRAIL CENTRE TRUST**

The Grail Centre Trust is based in Kleinmond,
Western Cape. This Not-for-Profit Organisation
delivers two programmes, namely Training for
Transformation and Mthimkhulu Community
Development Programme. In addition, the
Grail Centre Conference and Retreat Centre can
accommodate groups of up to 50 people.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**Mthimkhulu Community Development Programme**

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Our work is not possible without the support from funders and donors.

You too could help us today to expand our work. Please contact

Eunice on eunice@grailprogrammes.org.za



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