

AFRICAN AIDS FOUNDATION

An Australian NGO providing a better future for African children and their communities.



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Snapshot of the problem

- Sub-Saharan Africa has 10 % of worlds population and 66% of the worlds HIV infections.
- HIV is a viral infection that first became known about in the early 1980's. It is thought to have originated in monkeys in West Africa and has spread right around the world. It is typically spread in Africa through sexual intercourse. However, as it is blood born, it can also be spread by unclean needles and blood transfusions.
- At present there are 26 million people on earth living with the infection. In 2005, 3.2 million were newly infected and 2.4 million died. People are mostly infected from the age 15 to 25 and typically die about 10 years later, although the time frame often varies.
- Although anti retro viral drugs (ARV), which can prevent deaths and give people a much longer life, are becoming more readily available, the infrastructure to prescribe, administer and follow up on patients is severely lacking.
- Life expectancy has dropped to as low as 33 in some African countries.
- 12 Million Orphans live in Sub-Saharan Africa. These numbers overwhelm traditional networks leaving many of these orphans deprived of shelter, food, clothing, education and health care.
- Stigma attached to HIV/AIDS causes many of those effected to avoid testing, which inevitably leads to them becoming sick and often being abandoned by family. These people die alone and without care.
- Those abandoned are no less human and when we get to know them it is clear that they suffer from the very emotions we would suffer in the same situation. Pain. Grief. Terror. Loneliness. They are humans that were simply born into this situation.

12 MILLION ORPHANS LIVE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA, MOST WITHOUT BASIC HUMAN NEEDS.

Africa is the most impoverished continent on the planet. Life expectancy is 20 years less than the world average.

Basic human needs such as health services, education, drinking water, plumbing, electricity and employment are simply unavailable to the vast majority of the population.

On the flip side is Australia. The least impoverished continent on the planet. Life expectancy is the second highest in the world (after Japan) and we have arguably the most comfortable lifestyle and material resources in the world.

It makes sense that those who are better off, should care for those who are far worse off.

THINKING ABOUT A NEW LAPTOP? DONATE YOUR OLD ONE TO AAF.

AAF WELCOMES ALL OLD LAPTOPS.

EACH COMPUTER IS REFURBISHED THEN SENT ON.

THIS IS A WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY TO BLESS SOMEONE'S LIFE.

WHAT IS THE AFRICAN AIDS FOUNDATION AND WHAT DO THEY DO TO HELP?

AAF is an attempt by a relatively small group of people caring for those in Africa who are in need in the most cost effective way.

We are based in the Macarthur area of NSW, about an hour South West of Sydney.

Having worked for nine years as a doctor in a Mission hospital for Zulus (1975 - 1984) and then becoming involved with fighting the HIV/AIDS problem since 1999, Dr John Schwarz, together with his wife Rosalie and a group of dedicated local people have been raising awareness and funds to fight the pandemic of HIV/AIDS.

Due to the network built from Dr John Schwarz and Rosalie living in South Africa and AAF's regular visits, we are able to work with local people who are struggling to care for orphans and others deeply affected by HIV.

These local people have meagre resources and we assist them with money, advice and sometimes volunteers.

We work with a number of organisations in South Africa and Kenya and have been thrilled at the cost effectiveness of this approach and the wonderful effects on the lives of many vulnerable individuals.

A word from volunteer Eddie Ozols:

Needing a long break from work I volunteered to spend three months in South Africa and Kenya as a volunteer with African AIDS Foundation.

I spent my time in Bergville working at Philakahle Wellbeing Centre which operates a number of projects supported by AAF.

My main project in Africa was to prepare the application for tax deductible status through AUSAid and the tax Office. I was able to complete this within the first few weeks and then I worked alongside the Zulu staff doing a variety of tasks. I conducted training for staff and home based carers, visited other projects at Gods Golden Acre, Tabitha and assisted St. Peters Anglican Primary School establish the relationship with Intumbane Primary School.

TO READ MORE ABOUT EDDIE'S TRIP VISIT HIS BLOG:
THE PURPOSE DRIVEN HOLIDAY.
<http://www.eddieozols.blogspot.com/>

I was totally immersed in Zulu culture during my time and gained an understanding of the challenges faced in South Africa in reducing the impact of HIV/AIDS.

Staff at Philakahle were generous in their time and allowed me to visit the homes of families affected by AIDS, see gardens established to supplement medical treatment and attend meetings with partner agencies and government departments.

I attended three funerals in my first two weeks. Walking through Ladysmith Cemetery on a hot Saturday and witnessing hundreds of graves of those in their twenties and thirties was akin to visiting a war cemetery. Graves of people over forty were a rare. Each day it seemed someone knew or was related to someone who died of AIDS. It brought home the devastation and social dislocation HIV is causing.

A highlight of my time was to witness the election campaign and to be in the country on Election Day. We take democracy for granted in Australia. South Africans are

still learning what it means and I have never seen so much passion and excitement about people campaigning for their candidates. Given the poverty even those employed live in, it was humbling to experience their trust in God.

I also spent a week in Kenya with Bernard Kabaru, discussing possible projects and assisting him in developing a proposal to be considered by the AAF board. Bernard was extremely generous and accommodated me in his home and allowed me to experience a Kenyan lifestyle with his wife Mary and niece Judy.

I was able to visit Nyeri at the base of Mt. Kenya and see the work being done in the slums to support children and their parents impacted by AIDS and poverty. The Care for AIDS

program operated by Bernard's church was Christian love in action. It was humbling to visit with church volunteers the homes of those living with AIDS.

The Zulus could not understand that for me this was a holiday. The things I assisted them in each day were not difficult, yet for me some of the most satisfying work in my life was done at Africa, in skills development and training.

While the problem in South Africa, with a HIV rate of 18% of the population, seems impossible to overcome, it was encouraging to witness the work being done especially with children to educate them before puberty about making good choices.

My abiding memory is of the thousands of children I met in South Africa and Kenya with bright smiles, immaculately dressed and happy with life despite the circumstances in which they lived. These kids have much to teach us about what is important in life.

I am looking forward to having another African Safari with AAF.

IN JULY 2009 AAF MEMBERS TRAVELLED TO

LINDA OZOLS

Although I was able to visit Bergville and see where Eddie had been working for three months, I was very keen to visit Intumbane Primary School and meet Bongi. (Bongi is a teacher at Intumbane and is also a board member of Philakahle.)

I was overwhelmed to be greeted upon my arrival at the school with flowers and singing and smiling faces belonging to very well-mannered children who were spotlessly clean.

I observed the very limited resources, or in most cases, no resources for classroom teachers in the school. The children know no better and the teachers manage with what they have! In fact, many of the teachers at the school are untrained because they just can't get enough trained staff.

St. Peter's had sent small gifts for every one of the 804 children and there were concerns by St. Peter's families as they wondered if the goods would be released to Intumbane School. I can report that the prayers of many people were answered and the goods did get to the school.

I observed the water pump and the vegetable garden at the school and was made aware of the need to provide many children with a meal or three, during the school week as could be the only meal the children have during a week.

I had the opportunity to visit a home of one of the school

girls. The simple way this family lived and the spotless house the woman kept was amazing and she was very house-proud of what she had. Death had hit this family, just like most and there was sadness, but in all this life continued and the children were able to get to school and be educated.

In Australia we would not even contemplate walking distances to get somewhere but this is what these children have to do each day to get to school. And I might add that their attendance record is very good indeed!

Bongi is an amazing woman. She is totally committed to teaching but also to being the liaison officer with the school and the school families. Bongi's work ethic is beyond approach; she has a heart for all the children. She has self-taught IT skills and competently uses the computer and its software. The challenge now is for the other staff to become familiar and competent with the laptops sent by St. Peter's so that resources available on the net can enhance the teaching and learning at Intumbane School.

Sharing my observations and thoughts with the St. Peter's School staff I was able to further enthuse them to encourage the students with their letters back and forth to Intumbane; something I am told the students love doing. This has not only touched the hearts of the children but also of the St. Peter's school families.

AUSTRALIAN PRIMARY SCHOOL PARTNERS WITH SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOL

ST. PETERS ANGLICAN PRIMARY SCHOOL IN CAMPBELLTOWN HAS ESTABLISHED A RELATIONSHIP WITH INTUMBANE PRIMARY SENDING THE STUDENTS GIFTS AS WELL AS PROVIDING SEVERAL LAPTOP COMPUTERS, TEACHING RESOURCES, AND A WATER PUMP.

RELATIONSHIPS HAVE BEEN ENCOURAGED BETWEEN THE STUDENTS WITH LETTERS EXCHANGED AND AS A RESULT STUDENTS OF ST. PETERS HAVE BECOME VERY ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT HELPING, EVEN FUND-RAISING ON THEIR OWN, ONE STUDENT HAS WRITTEN TO PM KEVIN RUDD TO SEEK HIS HELP! THE TEACHERS CAN NOT HELP BUT FEEL MOVED AND ONE TEACHER HAS VOLUNTEERED 2 WEEKS OF TEACHING TIME AT INTUMBANE. THIS IS A VERY HAPPY ARRANGEMENT FOR ALL OF THOSE INVOLVED.

SOUTH AFRICA, THESE ARE THEIR REFLECTIONS:

SHARON PASCOE-THOMAS

(pictured right)

My trip to South Africa proved confronting, challenging and at the same time rewarding.

I thought I understood the magnitude of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

The situations and people I came in contact with on a daily basis made me question life and to a greater extent, my purpose.

Some days I questioned the impact or lack of impact we were having on this problem. Each day however, I was touched by the sheer commitment and love of the Zulu people for the sick and dying. People living in poverty and surrounded by death and disease themselves still had the will to care for their people.

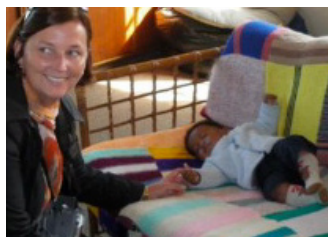
I thought if they spent their days looking after their people for no pay, the least we could do was support them financially. Their passion and desire to change the situation they find themselves in was amazing, be it through education or care for their people.

One of my last days in South Africa I met a girl called Mahle*. She was a young girl 14 years old, very sick with AIDS, Tuberculosis and shingles. She was sitting in the sun looking sad and with no pain relief, no ARV drugs and no hope.

We had the opportunity to initiate the commencement of medical treatment for her. The little money we had made such an impact on this young girl's life. I left Mahle's house privileged to think that I could have had an impact on her life. This meeting made me realise that every little bit AAF can do has a huge impact on these people in South Africa. The amazing thing is that there are thousands of others like Mahle that we can hopefully help through our work and the donations from our supporters.

I learnt a lot about compassion and humility during my time in South Africa.

*Names have been changed



MARGARET AND BRUCE HARDING

Our recent trip to Africa with John, Rosalie and some board members of the Foundation proved to be a very enlightening and moving experience. The trip had been very well thought out and planned by Rosalie. Some of the scenes we met were confronting, the poverty, the hardships, malnutrition and those effected by disease, both the sufferers and their extended families. However Rosalie had realised this and by way of contrast and relief had arranged visits and stays among some marvellous scenery. She had included some game parks and smart shopping areas.

Since we have been home we have thought often about the plight of the underprivileged we saw. Change can only come about through the children. We were heartened to see the schooling that is being provided, even in the remote areas and the lengths that the children and their families would make to attend. English is widely used and taught. Education is the way forward. We were particularly impressed by the work of Bernard and his wife Mary at the Happy Day Academy in Kenya (pictured below with Margaret).

We became aware of the importance of improving the nutrition of those being treated for AIDS in the hope of altering their long term survival and allowing them to care for their children and thus lessen the burden of them becoming orphaned at a young age.



EXAMPLES OF CHANGES TO INDIVIDUAL LIVES*

*NAMES HAVE BEEN CHANGED FOR PRIVACY

MAHLE

Mahle (pictured right) is a 14 year old Zulu girl, orphaned and raped at nine years of age, she has been diagnosed with both HIV and TB.

When we first met her in July we found her sitting on stool in abject despair. Her face was covered in shingles as a result of her condition (pictured below right). (Shingles are very painful meaning Mahle couldn't eat and the TB kept her coughing all night without any sleep.)

Although lovingly cared for by her foster mother, Zanele (pictured above right) she was unable to access treatment due to a doctors strike. With our visiting group we were able to provide money to treat her problems and she is already doing much better and able to look forward to a good life.

Tabitha Ministries continue to care for her now as her medication needs a lot of supervision and she has not been educated.



ZANELE

As well as caring for Mahle, Zanele cares for her own four children and 17 other foster children in association with Tabitha Ministries.

Zanele's house is very small and the 22 children sleep mostly on the floor. There is a huge need to protect and take in young girls who live on their own because some Zulu men believe to rape a virgin cures their AIDS.



SANE

Two years ago we visited Sane (pictured left) with a home based carer - a woman from the community who without pay volunteers to visit the sick and vulnerable.

She was in great pain from a Kaposi Sarcoma (a HIV related cancer) and had no hope.

With our encouragement she was transported down the mountain by donkey and taken to hospital. When we saw her in July this year she was excited to see us. Her cancer was in remission and her HIV controlled with ARVs. She was able to live again. We continue to support the people who care for her.



BEAUTY

Previously near death she had no hope until Philakahle arranged treatment for her HIV. They helped with small business training and garden instruction.

She now has a great garden, chickens and a creche and is active in the community, saying to us that since she acknowledged her infection she was "free". It had allowed her to get treatment and training and that things were now "great".



SOUTH AFRICA TRIP REFLECTIONS CONTINUED:

YVONNE AND DAVID COOPER

In our trip to SA we were jarred by the contrasts between wealth and poverty: one day we were in a crumbling mud hut where a family struggled to exist from day to day, and the next in an upmarket hotel in a fabulous resort with more food than we could possibly eat. Before we boarded our flight home we were walking the back-alley of a slum in Soweto and in a few hours we were back in the comfort of our home with every convenience at our fingertips. We live in a world of contradictions and opposites.

Yvonne and I felt we would find it difficult to live in SA where the gulf between wealth and poverty exists in such close proximity. In Australia it is possible to be cocooned from these realities but in SA we would be confronted each day by the injustice of inequality. How could we continue with our lifestyle while others around us lived in squalor? Yet, despite the difficulty of daily life for many in South Africa we were amazed at the hopefulness of people and their sense of community and family which enables them to cope in situations we would find intolerable.



AAF DIRECTORS TRIP TO SOUTH AFRICA.



Pictured left to right front row: David Cooper, Yvonne Cooper, Zanele, Rosalie Schwarz, Sharon Pascoe-Thomas
Back row: Bruce Willmann, Margaret Harding, Bruce Harding and Isobel from Tabitha

It is easy to feel discouraged by the enormity of the problems in South Africa – especially the children and their families that are being dealt such devastating blows by the spread of AIDS. We have been astounded at how John and Rosalie can keep going back and forth between Australia and South Africa and still remain so positive about what they are doing. They take great comfort in their view that you help one person at a time and were enthusiastic about taking us to see people who had been helped to recover from life threatening illnesses. This is a great lesson for us as it would be easy to dismiss the problems of our world as just too great for any progress to be made, to feel overwhelmed and to sit back and do nothing. But the lots of little things that AAF accomplishes add up and we were able to see people who had benefited from the work of AAF and others whose lives were improving.

We were often asked why we were in South Africa. People were continually amazed that a group of Australians had travelled to SA to help with AIDS affected people and their communities BUT we were continually amazed at how local people and their communities worked together to help each other out.

South Africa possesses great natural beauty and alongside the difficulties so many are facing there is also great affluence and material progress for some of its population. Hopefully our journey with AAF to Africa enables us to tell a story of love, hope, compassion and the joy of people working together to tackle the problems its people face.

ZAMIMPILO UPDATE

There are 10,000 orphans out of a population of 150,000 in the Philakahle area. We have been instrumental in giving these children life skills camps. Many live by themselves and have little hope of productive lives.

We have been instrumental in giving these children access to a live-in program which so far has helped over six hundred children gain life skills and direction in their lives.

These young teenagers are living on their own in what is called "child headed households".

We are always thrilled to visit with these children.



THE AFRICAN AIDS FOUNDATION, WITH THE HELP OF DONATIONS AND WORKING WITH LOCAL PEOPLE, HAS BEEN ABLE TO MAKE A WONDERFUL DIFFERENCE TO THOUSANDS OF PEOPLES LIVES.

WE ABSORB THE ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES AND ALL THAT YOU GIVE IS USED IN AFRICA FOR THESE SUFFERING, YET RESILIENT PEOPLE.

PLEASE HELP US. MANY FINE PEOPLE, WHO THEMSELVES GIVE SACRIFICIALLY, RELY ON OUR SUPPORT TO HELP OTHERS.