

South Africa

South Africa is one of the most developed countries in Africa, yet has the highest percentage (18%) of people living with HIV in the world. HIV prevalence in South Africa increased among adults aged 15 to 49 from 2005 to 2013. This tragedy, combined with the continued struggles of the country due to over 40 years of Apartheid has created an extremely dysfunctional and

vulnerable society for the poorest people.

The social poverty in South Africa is often greater than the physical poverty. The separation of fathers from their families during Apartheid began a cycle that continues today. Children are growing up without male role models and in broken families. This reality has contributed to an alarming rate of violent crime among young men and sexual vulnerability among young women.

Many people in South Africa face the injustice of living without services such as water and electricity. As the gap between rich and poor increases throughout the country, those living in poverty are denied basic rights. The education system is often regarded as dismal, with a shortage of public schools and teachers and many students being taught in a language that is not their first. Only 45% of the students who were enrolled in grade one in 2002 started grade 12 in 2013. Researchers have found that students are pushed through the system until grade 10 when schools realise that those students who will not pass grade 12 need to be removed as a high failure rate reflects badly on the school.

South Africa is the home of the Hands at Work Hub where many international volunteers and African leaders live together



Areas in South Africa being impacted by Hands at Work at Work

Snapshot OF THE EPIDEMIC

Population: **52,776,000**

Orphaned children (age 0-17): **3,600,000**

Children orphaned by HIV/AIDS: **2,400,000**

Under 5 mortality rating (per 1000 live births): **Female – 39 | Male - 48**

People living with HIV: **6,300,000**

Life expectancy at birth:

Female – 54 | Male – 53

Lifetime risk of maternal death:

1 in 300

Country rating (out of 187) on the Human Development Index: **118**

Sources: UNAIDS, UNDESA 2014, UNICEF 2014

in a multi-cultural Christian community. The Hub also serves as the centre for financial and administrative operations. Hands at Work was birthed in South Africa when George and Carolyn Snyman started working in Masoyi and other rural villages in the province of Mpumalanga. Success inspired expansion, and today Hands at Work is active in approximately 40 communities across eight African countries.



Long Term Dedication

“Tswanelo is 14 years old and lives with his older sister Melody, 19, and his younger sister who is 12. Years ago, Tswanelo’s parents abandoned him and his siblings to live and work on a farm two hours away. Their father struggled with alcoholism, but he visited the children about once a month. Their mother also had occasional visits to the children but they have now diminished. She no longer has any contact with her children.

Melody began carrying the full responsibility for raising her two younger siblings. The children would often beg for food from their neighbours. Despite many challenges, Melody knew education was essential and she ensured her brother and sister continued in school, setting

an example by continuing with her own studies. Frequently malnourished, each child struggled to concentrate in class.

One day, Thembi, a Care Worker in South Africa, found this family. Thembi is one of many local volunteers from the church who is committed to continually seeking out the most vulnerable children. Her understanding of God’s call to care for the needy led her to begin caring for Tswanelo and his sisters as though they were her own children. Today, Thembi is building a deep relationship with the children. Thembi has become like a mother to Tswanelo, guiding him as she listens to his struggles and dreams, and helping him to become a man. At 14, that means being respectful and supportive of his sisters and working hard at school.

With the daily provision of food at the local Life Centre, Tswanelo is no longer consumed with finding enough food to survive. His emotional and physical state has improved significantly. Because of the long-term dedication of Thembi and the other Care Workers, Tswanelo’s community is being transformed.