



# COMBINED CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES TO THE POOR

ISAIAH 58

BUILDING BRIDGES, MEETING NEEDS & RESTORING LIVES – SIMPLY GETTING ON WITH THE JOB!

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## Update Report – January – March 2010

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### A few words . . .

Firstly . . . an apology for producing this report so late! Funding for administration costs is one of our greatest needs & as a consequence, & although we are very thorough, our admin tends to lag far behind! I cannot believe how busy we have been or how quickly the time has seemed to go by this year & I think it is safe to say that the first three months of 2010 were the busiest we have ever had!

After the summer school holidays, we were able to quickly pick up on the great momentum we had built up during 2009 to see growth, increased participation, a greater reach & a deeper impact across all the areas of our work.

Our first international volunteers arrived on the 4<sup>th</sup> of January (a little shocked to find a country still in the middle of its summer holiday season!) & by the time schools opened on the 13<sup>th</sup>, everyone else was back from the holidays & we were able to get our activities & programs off the ground very quickly. Meeting school needs of high risk OVC's was prioritised & through donations



we were able to bless just over a third of the 153 highest risk vulnerable children we work with, with many of the school supplies they needed. This is an on-going effort though.

It was also a very good quarter for the participation of foreign volunteers – 17 in total! We have a fairly steady flow of Europeans who come to us through Be More (a Dutch volunteer placement agency) & we were still enjoying the presence of a young married couple, who had come to work with us for 6 months, from Cornerstone Church in Canada who are now longstanding supporters of our work. Near the end of March, they were joined by a further 7 members of the church for a few weeks. It would be great to mention all these people, & what they've done, here but for the sake of space let me just say that the contribution these people have made, and not just through the resources some of them have been able to give, but the wealth that they have brought from their own education, experiences & skills, has been incredible! To all of you . . . a sincerely gracious, "Thank you!"

An increase of donations received in this quarter enabled us to again begin distributing donated food & clothing to 5 other CBO's during this quarter. Meeting some of the most basic needs of the people these community projects work with helps these projects to focus more on developmental programs instead of being "hand-out" organisations working only meet the needs of their beneficiaries "today". Thank you to those stores & businesses who faithfully support us with food & other regular donations & thank you also to those who regularly give clothing & other basic needs.

This first quarter of 2010 was also a very unsettling one for many South Africans. We were in the final stretch leading up to hosting the Soccer World Cup & there were a lot of eyebrows raised & heads shaking at careless words & actions being made by some of our leaders. What struck me during this time though were comments made by many of our foreign volunteers that, unlike in their home countries, we South Africans celebrate our differences openly . . . & that in spite of all our differences, they experienced more unity among South Africans than in their home countries!

I am convinced that, in spite of what some of our "high profile" countrymen might get up to, the majority of South Africans are level headed enough & embrace all the diversity God has blessed us with, while retaining our individuality, that we will never let things get completely "out of hand"! In our country we have inherited great problems & almost indescribable inequality from our past . . . but we are an intriguing people living in a wonderful part of the world at a remarkable period of time! And I am so grateful that by the grace of God, we are able to overcome our problems, embrace our differences & pull together.

Thank you to all who have joined & supported our work during this time, your actions have become God's answers to the many, many desperate prayers from those in need.



Blessings

- Mark

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# Ubomi Obutsha Centre



DEVELOPING THE POOREST OF THE POOR IN OUR COMMUNITY, THROUGH THE LOVE OF CHRIST, TO LIVE PRODUCTIVE LIVES.

The "New Life" Centre is a Community Development Project of Combined Christian Ministries to the Poor

## Update Report – January – March 2010

### Highlights



1. Building improvements. With so many people using one building, the air in the Centre can get stuffy, especially when it is cold & the doors are kept closed. As part of their social upliftment commitment to our project, MC Design installed a ventilation system that keeps the air fresh & our heads clear! MC Design also carried out extensive repairs to our leaking roof. And thanks to donations from past Be More volunteers, we were able to give the front of the Centre a facelift. Now it looks more like the vibrant place it really is.

2. Home support visits by our community volunteers have settled into a good routine & having that regular contact at home with children at risk & their families is proving to be very successful in providing stability & motivation in their lives.



3. We were very glad to receive another visit from 7 members of Cornerstone Foursquare Church in Calgary, Canada, which has supported our work for a number of years now. They joined a married couple also from their congregation who were coming to the end of a 6 month stay with us. For some it was great to see old friends & the growth & changes that have happened at the Centre, & for others it was great to actually be a part of this project that they have been supporting all this time. Most of their time was spent working with & encouraging our community volunteers & also building a new playground at Mzomtsha Primary School (a community partner) just behind the Centre. This playground is used daily by the kids at the school & the OVC toddlers in our Educare program. What a wonderful gift it has been!

4. A number of outings were arranged during this time, from walks in Happy Valley to trips to the beach. The highlight for the teenagers was a bush camp organised by the Belgian volunteers & our youth leaders. It was a great way to end their stay & for us to begin the Easter school holidays . . . which leads to our next highlight . . .



5. During the Easter holidays, the teenagers arranged & ran a great holiday club for the junior school kids. What was really incredible about this was that these same teenagers have been part of holiday clubs at the Centre in the past & now they are the ones passing on what they have learnt to the next generation. We see in them the next group of community youth volunteers at the Centre – which will be 3 times larger than the current group - & that gives us a good indication of the impact of our work over the past few years. It is very encouraging to us who have spent the time building from the love of God into the lives of these orphaned & vulnerable children, now living with hope, a vision for their lives & the personal skills that can keep them from being dependants their whole lives!

6. Lastly, thanks to funding given by one individual, our Educare assistant has also been able to begin a three year course in Foundation Phase Education that will qualify her to teach up to grade 3 in a formal schooling environment. And to think that both our Educare leaders first came to the Ubomi Obutsha Centre looking for help & started by working in our food garden!

### Sampled Stories

1. Concerned community members brought the situation of their neighbours, Mbulelo (4) & Noluthando (7), to our attention. Their father is dying from AIDS & their mother is sickly (HIV/AIDS also suspected) & as a result, they were being badly neglected. The only income in the home is R440 a month from government child-support grants. Our volunteers acted quickly & enrolled Mbulelo into the Educare group &, with the help of teachers, were able to place Noluthando in a local primary school. Their mother was encouraged to join other community members working in the Food Garden & join the support group. It is good to see her busy & stronger & taking better care of her children. They also receive regular food parcels from the Centre & their neighbours are working with our High Risk OVC Interventions Team to help take care of the kids.

2. Phumzile & Nomaxabiso are teenage siblings who regularly attend our teen club lifeskills program. They were not able to continue with school this year unless they could get books, stationery & uniforms. From the many donations we received, we were able to give them most of what they needed so that they could carry on with their schooling. Shortly afterwards we received a letter from the principal of the school to thank us for helping so many of the learners in his school with the things they need & the other benefits they receive from the Centre's practical & lifeskills programs noting the better attitude that he sees these children tend to have regarding their schooling.



### OVC Impact Stats Summary

- 931 orphaned or vulnerable children were directly reached.
- 5422 meals were served.
- 1036 home support visits were conducted for 324 High Risk OVC's
- 103 OVC's received school support & 86 of them made use of the Enrichment Library at the Centre.
- 870 OVC's received afterschool care & attended lifeskills programs.
- 146 OVC caregivers were given direct assistance to help meet the needs of their families.
- 35 volunteers worked a total of 1395 days.

Please visit <http://ccmppesa.spaces.live.com/> for more regular updates & pictures.