



Report on visit to South Africa, March 2014

On this visit to South Africa we attended the training programme we had organised with our friends at UVIWE in Port Elizabeth; this was for trainers from across the whole of South Africa for them to learn about implementing the Caring for Crèches programme in their province. Every province is primed and ready to roll out this really impactful programme in all parts of South Africa.

Some of the crèche teachers, who do such good work for hundreds of children in their area, came to talk to the trainers about their experiences and how the Caring for Crèches course had helped them.

One of the crèche leaders, Elvin, told his story and why he was committed to making the lives of children better. He was raised in an abusive household, left school at the age of 12, joined a gang, terrorised his community, and by the age of 19 was in jail for murder. Then he found God. He's now 39, educated, married with children and training to be a Pastor. He runs two businesses while being closely scrutinised by the church, the parole board, police and the probationary service. His life has been turned around.

To date we have raised funds to train more than 2,000 crèche teachers; at a conservative estimate these teachers have improved the lives of more than 100,000 children.

It will cost money going national and we eagerly await the outcome of our joint bid to major funders in South Africa.

Our trip to South Africa included a day with our friends at Ekupholeni. Here we were invited to sit in with a group of teenagers, all HIV+, talking about their experiences, their fears and their worries. These youngsters have mostly been HIV+ since birth, although a few have been abused and infected that way.

Most are angry. They are all life-limited, and know it. Some act tough and macho but they understand the situation. It was a very moving afternoon with some extraordinarily articulate and some inarticulate youngsters trying to deal with what we can't begin to imagine.

They asked us who we were and, knowing we were nurses, asked some perceptive questions. The thing that struck them most was the fact that everyone who is HIV+, whether in the developing or developed world, goes through the same physical and psychological stuff as them.

And so another trip came to an end with harrowing stories, but also great optimism about how lives can be improved.

Lesley Rudd
Chief Executive