

South Africa: Thembasila & Raul's Story



As part of the family's individually tailored support package, we arranged for Thembasila and Raul to be enrolled in one of our Community Hubs.

Thembasila, aged four, and her five year old brother, Raul, attend a Community Hub close to their home in Moretele. Together with six other brothers and sisters, they were cared for by their grandmother, Elizabeth.

When Elizabeth died in June 2007, their eldest sister, Ibi, who is just 16 years old, became the head of the household. Community members alerted us to the family's situation and we immediately gave them food parcels, and assessed their long term needs.

Previously, Thembasila and Raul had stayed at home with their grandmother while their brothers and sisters went to school, but, with no one to care for them after she died, they would either have had to be left at home alone or Ibi would have had to give up school to care for them.

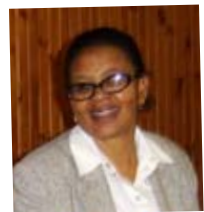
As part of the family's individually tailored support package, we arranged for Thembasila and Raul to be enrolled in one of our Community Hubs. With the two youngest children cared for during the day, the rest of the family are now able to continue with their education.

One of our specially trained community volunteers also visits the family regularly. She helps with practical things like cooking and homework, while providing emotional support at this difficult time.



Left: Community Hubs are particularly important in rural areas

Below: Catherine Makhubedu, Field Worker and Community Volunteer Co-ordinator in Moretele



Spotlight on: Community Hubs

In South Africa, many of the families we support live in rural areas. The infrastructure is often poor and travel can be difficult so it is important that our assistance is accessible to those who need it the most. With this in mind, we developed our Community Hubs, to empower entire communities and help them care for their vulnerable children.

At the Hubs, pre-school children enjoy activities that help develop their social and co-ordination skills. They also have a cooked meal, which for some is there only food for the day. The Hubs are regularly visited by a nurse who monitors the children's health, giving them basic medication and referring them to a local hospital if required. Older children, most of whom are heads of their household, visit the Hubs after school. Here they are also fed and there are always volunteers and social workers on hand to help with homework, give life skills training and to provide emotional support. For many, this assistance and guidance is the only adult help they get.

Catherine Makhubedu (pictured), Field Worker and Community Volunteer Co-ordinator in Moretele, said, "Through the Community Hubs we are able to take our services right to the heart of the community, at a grass roots level. The community has really embraced these Hubs and works with us to identify children in need of our help. Social workers, nurses and volunteers work together as a real team and this ensures that we can reach out to as many children as possible."