



NONDUMISO PHAAHLA

One woman can change a nation

Nondumiso Phaahla is on a mission to change the lives of young people in South Africa, she runs the organisation 'Siyaphile', which means 'we are well'. She was born in Pietermaritzburg where her father pastored a church. After completing matric she studied nursing and met her husband in 1984. They have a son of 24 and a daughter of 18, and they live in Pretoria.

Due to her husband's work in government they spent some years in Limpopo where Nondumiso worked at a place of safety. This is where her heart broke for the many hopeless young people and she felt a call to youth ministry. A few years later they moved to Pretoria and Nondumiso worked in the Skinner city clinic, here she saw huge numbers of young people with sexually transmitted diseases. She saw that giving tablets alone made no difference to their lives and she started counselling them too. Soon young people would stand in long queues to listen to her and 'Siyaphila' was born in the form of a youth club. At this time she heard a soft but very clear message to "do the Father's work". A particular Sunday sermon in 2002 challenged her to increase her territory.

In 2003 Nondumiso left the clinic to work on a behaviour model and lifestyle programme with the aim of developing a comprehensive community development programme. It was a challenge as the decision to leave formal employment would put the family under financial strain, but she also had the full support of her husband and children. Now, 7 years later Siyaphila has its own office with 10 permanent young people working in leadership roles. The organisation trains the youth to be community health workers with a socio-economic approach. They work in different areas such as agriculture, social challenges, HIV management, education and tourism.

Siyaphila has grown into 3 branches – in Limpopo, Kwa-Zulu Natal and NW Province. They partner with organisations such as the James 1:27 Trust (a church based ministry), the Transnet foundation which trains young people in science and maths, and the Sammy Marx clinic in Tshwane. God is now opening the doors for Siyaphila's Community Economic Development Programme to be implemented by some municipalities, and there is also now commitment from provincial government to the programme.

This is a tiny glance at the work being accomplished by Siyaphila. See their website for more information on their work and how you can be involved. www.siyaphila.org.za.

We can be in awe of our Lord who can do great things, and bring hope to the youth of our nation through one woman who is fully committed to the cause of our King. Nondumiso has made many sacrifices and faced great challenges, yet her tireless work is being rewarded and her cup of joy is overflowing!