

Soweto February 2021

Good Morning and Greetings from Soweto, South Africa

I hope you are all well and healthy and the Corona related restrictions are not affecting your life too much. This Pandemic is definitely a challenge for all of us and in South Africa we are now at the point, that everybody knows someone, a family member or a friend who had died with Corona. Sadly, many of the people who died in the last 11 months, are not „counted“ as a Covid-19 related death, as testing is very limited, especially in rural communities. We miss traveling to our villages, we miss meeting people, we miss supporting persons with disabilities and we miss supporting our people in our villages of Macubeni through our Inclusive Poultry and Vegetable Farm.

You can imagine, we also miss seeing the beautiful country side during our travels and we often look at our photos of „the good old days“, the times before the Pandemic.



It's unbelievable but January 2020 is already gone and the whole world community is waiting and, most of the people, looking forward to the Vaccines. Covid-19 and all the Corona news are also affecting us in Southern Africa. New variants of the viruses, very high death rates of our rural population and clinics and hospitals full to capacity are some of the worrying factors in our life in South Africa.

We as Utho Ngathi, we struggle with the fact, that we can't implement our very important Home Based Care Program for persons with disabilities and we are not able to travel to our village area of Macubeni, as the number of infections is very high in rural South Africa. The risk of infections is too high and a high risk for us and for the people we work with and visit during a field trip to Macubeni.

We are in constant phone contact with our staff members of the Inclusive Poultry and Vegetable Farm Macubeni and sending Masks and Sanitizers on a monthly basis. The situation in our villages isn't easy and we can only try to show our support through these calls.

Our last batch of Chicken were sold , but now, 2 months later, people still didn't pay up for the chicken they bought in December. It is difficult to deal with that "culture" of buying "on credit" which is a situation very typical to South Africans even in rural areas. It is also sad and heart breaking to see, that through this Pandemic the poverty levels are rising in Southern Africa. We saw challenges the time we were in Macubeni in October and we see it every day in Soweto. We hear from the struggle of food security in many families and driving through the streets of Soweto every day, we can see those struggles. In a country where recycling is still not known to most of the people it is always exciting to see people picking all the plastics they find in rubbish bins and even just on the streets. More and more people trying to survive with any business they can come up with. Even raring goats in urban areas is becoming a common side now. Below you can see a few photos of these life struggles.



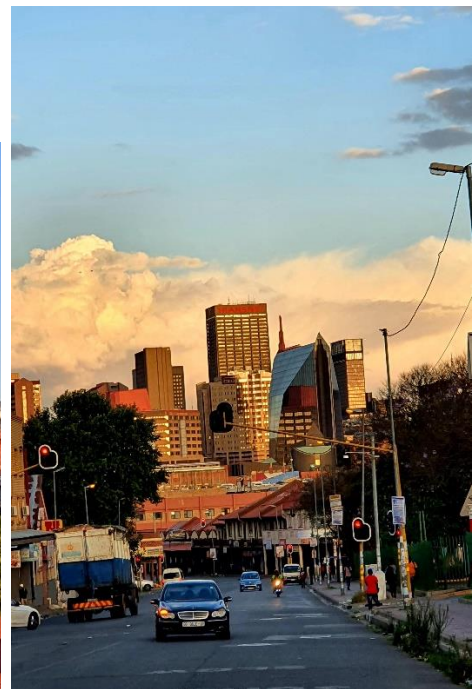
We are spending much more time in our Office in Soweto. We are excited to announce that Evonik Africa gave us the opportunity to take on an Intern on a learner ship, sponsored by Evonik Africa. After a few interviews we have taken Viwe Pakati, a young Lady who is partially Sighted. It's a new challenge and experience to work with somebody with that disability, but it is a good experience for all of us. Our volunteer Hloni Nkutha gives her "an Eye" where needed and assist her with some of her business studies in her Lerner ship.



Spending more time in the office in Soweto is a challenge on its own, we often have no electricity up to 4 hours at times and other days we don't have access to internet, but it is interesting to travel between Soweto and the different areas of Johannesburg. Traffic is still less as we are still on a Level 3 Lockdown and Government schools are still closed. Below you see a few photos of the streets of Johannesburg.



The Famous Soweto Towers



Johannesburg City Center, with the usual Sunlight and Clouds building up in the afternoon



FNB Stadium, World Cup Stadium 2010

We can't wait to overcome this Pandemic. The new NORMAL LIFE has begun and we have to get used to a different life, a different world. The biggest problem for us is the restriction of the traveling. We can only hope that the world wide vaccinations will be done and finalized this year so we all can travel again, for the benefit of many more people with disabilities in Southern Africa. We are planning our Fundraising Tour to Germany for August 2021, sadly we had to cancel this important Fundraising Tour in 2020.

Greetings from the Utho Ngathi Team