



Photo: Matthew Willman/OxfamAUS.

YOUR POSTCARD FROM SOUTH AFRICA

OUR PARTNER UMZI WETHU WORKS WITH SOME OF SOUTH AFRICA'S MOST VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE TO PROVIDE JOB TRAINING, MENTORING AND HOPE FOR A BRIGHTER FUTURE.

"Before Umzi Wethu there was no hope at all. I knew [something] better was out there, but I had no idea where it was going to come from.

"I lost my mum at a very young age. At the time I lost my mum, my dad also decided he was also going to disappear. My grandma came ... and she rescued me.

"She looked after me until I was 13. And then she passed away. I had to stay with relatives, with uncles and aunts, for a short while.

"I had to finish my matric year and work for several weeks to get the money to pay for my school fees. When I got my results ... I worked for four months. [Then] I was introduced to this program.

"The meaning of Umzi Wethu is 'our home'. And the meaning of that statement is not just in words, but it's actually ... the environment they've created for the students. It is, actually, a home.

"What makes [Umzi Wethu] different is the fact that they equip you to such an extent that when you walk out of that environment that they've created for you ... you can survive on your own. You can make the best of your life when you leave the program.

"[After graduating] I started off as a food and beverage supervisor [at a five star hotel]. After three years I started doing reservations. After eight months I've started doing operations. Now I am operations coordinator. And apart from working full time I am also studying management.

"A lot of things have happened for me. I support my family financially. I am a role model for my family.

"My life has been changed and impacted by people that have seen the potential within me and they have been willing to invest in me.

"It has been such an amazing experience and it continues ... I can't stop here. I have not even achieved half the things I want in my life.

"In the future, my wife and I plan to own several businesses, creating jobs for the under-privileged. There are people waiting to benefit from our courageous steps. That's what drives us. We know it's not about us, it's about a better future for others."

DANNY SAULS,
Hospitality graduate, Port Elizabeth.

Text based on interviews by Umzi Wethu.



FAST FACTS

- Capital: Pretoria (administrative)
- Population: 51.8 million (Census 2011)
- Area: 1.22 million sq km (total)
- Currency: South African Rand (ZAR)
- Languages: IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, Afrikaans, Sepedi, English, Setswana, Sesotho, Xitsonga, siSwati, Tshivenda, isiNdebele
- Population living below USD \$1.25 per day: 13.8% (UN)
- Life expectancy: 59.6 years (StatsSA 2013)
- Adult literacy rate: 88.7% (UN)
- Youth unemployment rate: 48.2% (South African Government)
- Children enrolled in school: 91% (Basic Education Department Republic of South Africa)
- Number of people living with HIV: 5.6 million (WHO)
- Maternal orphans from AIDS: 1.35 million (AIDS Committee of Actuarial Society of South Africa)
- Under five mortality rate: 57 deaths per 1,000 live births (UN)
- Carbon emissions per person: 8.9 tonnes (UN)
- Oxfam's areas of work: Health, HIV and AIDS prevention, care and support, livelihoods, food security, social protection, children, gender equality, water, sanitation and hygiene

