



Extending God's Kingdom and economically empowering the under-resourced

In this March 2008 edition:

*Find out more about who Living Way is. *The relationship between Living Way and Living Hope.
*Our Savings Club launch on 23rd January *How you can be involved.

Who is Living Way?

Living Way is a non-profit organization working to reduce poverty through economically empowering people from under-resourced communities. South Africa faces an immense challenge with poverty and unemployment. There are about 20 million people of working age and of this, 7.6 million of us are officially unemployed. In Masiphumelele, the unemployment rate is estimated at 50%. Of the 50% that are working, over 65% earn less than R2500 per month, with an average of 2.8 people depending on that breadwinner. That is the norm in South Africa. But what do we do? How do we respond to these frightening statistics?

We believe that poverty and the poor are on God's heart. Psalm 140:12 says "I know that the LORD secures justice for the poor and upholds the cause of the needy". We believe, too, that it is the church that acts out God's heart. I believe we have the responsibility, as well as the honour, of being part of what God is already doing in the lives of the poor. God has placed the church in South Africa in an incredible place at this point in history – to respond, to bring His light and his hope.

Living Way is an organization that was started to join in God's heart for the poor. It is not about seeking money as the solution. It is about upholding justice. It is about dignity. It is about empowerment. It is about hope. It is about walking a journey with people, providing opportunity to get out of poverty.

How Living Way and Living Hope are connected

Living Way was birthed out of Living Hope Community Centre. Living Hope's focus is on medical needs of HIV/Aids, chronic illnesses and preventative strategies and have expanded greatly because of the successes they have achieved.

After eight years, it became evident that more was needed to stop HIV and Aids. At the root of the pandemic is poverty, as it is the poor who are overwhelmingly affected by the virus. In order to truly reach people to prevent HIV, there needs to be a proactive, sustainable strategy to equip people to get themselves out of poverty. Living Way, hand in hand with Living Hope, work together to truly transform communities in the areas of spreading the gospel, meeting health needs and economic empowerment.

Living Way's heart

Our vision statement is:

Extending God's Kingdom, economically empowering the under-resourced. We believe that God's heart breaks for the poor and that as individuals and churches, we need to develop an appropriate response for the communities and people that we interact with.

How we see ourselves accomplishing the above vision is:

- * To spread the good news of Jesus Christ in a life-changing way and to encourage people to follow him
- * To equip people to provide for daily necessities through the development and support of businesses and the unemployed
- * To empower people to live in a new way, breaking their cycle of poverty and living productive lives.

Savings Club launch

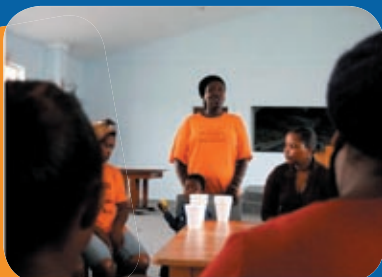
We have officially started our first savings club! The 23rd January saw the Federation of the Urban Poor presenting the concepts of savings clubs to a group of Masiphumelele residents. Two ladies, who are involved in savings clubs in Khayelitsha, told their experiences of starting and running savings groups. All in all, it was very well received, with 25 men and women signing up! They have named their group Masikhule, meaning Let Us Grow. What an apt name!

These clubs are very much run by the members. This allows for the empowerment of its members as they decide on how to manage the group. Another step is that of a community exchange, where savings group members in other communities will host Masiphumelele savings group members. The exchange facilitates much learning and development as newcomers to the savings model can observe first hand what it is like to save, what other people have done with their savings, the difficulties and the strengths of the different groups.

As this first group settles into its routine, so we will launch more groups in Masiphumelele, Red Hill, Capricorn and Ocean View. We are excited to see how the members of Masikhule will take up the torch – sharing their experiences and being empowered to teach others to save.



Masi Baptist saw 25 people exploring the clubs



Eunice presenting information about the Savings Clubs

Our Programme

Breaking the poverty cycle one family at a time will take an integrated, holistic approach. Living Way wants to develop sustainable ways of reaching people. For the economic empowerment to happen, we see the following four programmes being critical:

Savings clubs: Community based savings clubs will promote fiscal discipline and minimize the vulnerability to financial crisis. The groups will have a focus on biblical principles of managing finances. Future plans for this includes a variety of training in life skills from a Christian perspective.

Job creation projects: Many people are doing good work in creating jobs for the unemployed. Living Way is looking to partner with existing ministries or projects to add value so that more people can be employed.

Finding employment: There are many semi-skilled unemployed people in the South Peninsula. Finding a sustainable way of securing temporary and permanent employment is being explored.

Entrepreneurial and small business development: In order to effectively create new businesses, entrepreneurs need to be trained and equipped with tools to create and develop their businesses. Similarly, existing small businesses are a focus in that they can be equipped to add more value, expand and employ more people.

How you can be part of this

Volunteer. Building into people's lives, mentoring entrepreneurs, running Christian finance training in the savings clubs, sharing some of your unique skills, running segments of training for business owners are among the things that you can be part of.

Subscribe to the newsletter. Send a mail to Richard Lundie – richard@livingway.co.za requesting to be put on the Living Way mailing list for monthly newsletters regarding the programmes.

Pray. We believe that Living Way is nothing without God. Prayer is the way that you can have impact from the other side of the world.

Donate. We are grateful for those who have already committed to supporting Living Way financially. You may feel moved to share some of your resources with us. Please email Richard about the best way of doing this.