

Contents ✦ Caritas Internationalis General Assembly ✦ From the Field ✦ Success Story from the Peace Building programme, Balfour 2010 ✦ Contacts ✦ Our Current Donors ✦ How to support us ✦



Caritas Internationalis General Assembly
22-27 May 2011, Rome
Celebrating 60 years



Siyabhabha Trust –Caritas South Africa (ST-Caritas SA) was represented at the Caritas Internationalis General Assembly by Ann Mc Collum and Sr Aine Hughes. This event also

marked the 60th Anniversary of the establishment of the confederation of 167 organizations in 200 countries.

The theme of the General Assembly was “ONE HUMAN FAMILY – ZERO POVERTY”. There was plenty of evidence of the ‘one human family’ as more than 300 people from every nation, race, culture and language congregated in Rome and reflected together; but the aspect of ‘zero poverty’ caused considerable provocation as each one grappled with the possibility in their own context. It was concluded, however, that this is God’s dream and desire for the world and the ideal towards which all Caritas Member Organizations are striving towards.

Inputs during the General Assembly were given by high profile Vatican Officials including the Secretary of State, Cardinal Bertone, the President of Justice and Peace, Cardinal Turkson and Cor Unum’s Cardinal Sara. All of them reiterated Pope Benedict XVI’s message in Deus Caritas Est, “that Caritas is at the heart of the Church’s mission, a sign of the love of God for all humanity in Jesus Christ. The name Caritas Internationalis means ‘love between nations’ and is an expression of the mission of the Church, gives witness to the presence of God’s love for all people and, above all for the poor: Solidarity with the poor implies both being personally close to them and, at the same time, being attentive to the human causes of poverty in the world.”

With this message still ringing in our ears and embedded in our hearts, we return with renewed energy and commitment to make it a reality in the context of South Africa.



Women from Vusamavila’s project

From the Field: Siyabhabha supports women in rural areas.

ST’s Food security programme seeks to improve food security for beneficiary communities’ and households’ by increasing their access to vegetables, fruit, and other crops. Communities are engaged on best practices in sustainable systems for small-scale organic food production. These are some of our results:

Mariannhill and Mzimkhulu Dioceses met at the Zakhe Training Institute, Baynesfield Farm outside Pietermaritzburg for Food Security (11 -16 April 2011): Twenty-six women and men representing five community gardening groups from the Mariannhill and Mzimkhulu Dioceses came together for training in organic food production. The following groups participated: Zaminthuthuko, Jabulani, Khulani, and Bambanani.

Organic Farming Training goes to Centocow (23 – 27 May 2011): Thirty-five people (including two men) participated in a 5-day training on organic farming. They were mostly members of the Vusamavila Project. Eight of them were elderly people between 60 and 77 years of age. The training was carried out by Dovehouse Organics Farm from Pietermaritzburg

St. Joseph’s Community Care Centre – Doornspruit Deanery, Polokwane Diocese, 23 to 28 May, 2011: St. Joseph’s is 30Km west of the City of Polokwane. The workshop was facilitated by the Johannesburg-based Food and Trees for Africa. It was attended by 21 participants from the St Bernard Home Based Care Centre, Mamabolo Development Project, Rekukeng Drop-in Centre, Fatima Day Care Centre, SACBC Justice and Peace, and the Polokwane Diocese Development Agency.



Saint Theresa Group in Gingindlovu

Integrated strategies to generate income.

38 women from UThungulu District in the Diocese of Eshowe participated in a Needs Assessment conducted by ST through its **Economic Strengthening Programme** whose aim is to increase the participation of disadvantaged women in income generation activities. During the 6 days spent by the team in Eshowe, Gingindlovu and Empageni, the women identified 3 critical issues which hinder their success; (i) limited basic entrepreneurship and business skills (ii) a need to improve product development; i.e. designing products in response to market needs and ensuring quality control (iii) the need for solutions to current transport constraints, limited selling points and access to markets. Based on the information gathered during the visit, the recommendations made by potential beneficiaries and stakeholders and the team’s

broader research and experience, a multi dimensional approach has been designed. The Economic Strengthening Programme will integrate: **(1) Women’s business skills development (2) Participatory action research to identify solutions to transport constraints and enhance the participation of local producers and women crafters in local markets (3) Development and strengthening of a support network and database for local women crafters with engagement of local community leaders and business actors.**

Success Story from the Peace Building Programme. Balfour, Mpumalanga, 2010.

➤ Background

For a number of years members of The Ethiopian Community have been living and doing business in the Balfour community. They developed a system which they had practiced in Ethiopia of 'putting their money together' and buying in bulk from wholesalers in Johannesburg, thus they could sell their goods cheaper than local shop keepers. However their successful business practices caused resentment among the local shop owners who lost a considerable portion of their trade because their prices were higher. Balfour is a very poor rural community with very limited services, so the local people decided to stage a Service Delivery protest in October 2009. During the march on the local municipal offices, slogans were chanted and insinuations made that the 'foreigners' were to blame for the lack of adequate services in the township. This was the trigger that sparked the attack on the Ethiopian shops. All the shops were gutted by fire, looted and the owners chased out. But they had nowhere to go and now no livelihood either.

➤ The initial Peace Building intervention

The Ethiopian community, given refuge in the local municipal hall, asked ST Caritas SA and its partner Damietta, to be present at a series of meetings held between them and stakeholders in government and civil society. We explained our Peace Building approach and were immediately tasked with engaging the two communities in this 'new process' of dialogue and community engagement. We arranged a workshop and invited all those interested in building a different kind of society to attend. 30 people came from the Ethiopian Community and the local community, including some members of the ANC Youth League. The ANC Youth initially refused to participate in the exercises and were sceptical of us and the process. However, as the weekend progressed, they made tentative steps and with each step they made, they were welcomed and accepted – much to their surprise. By the end of the workshop they were declaring their 'brotherhood' with the Ethiopian community members and guaranteeing not only their support and protection but their assistance in re-building the shops that had been burned down.

➤ Initial outcomes

In the succeeding weeks the ANC Youth League were faithful to their promise and helped in the rebuilding of most of the shops destroyed. The Ethiopian Community accepted this gesture of good will and renewed trading. Our Peace Building fieldworker remained in close contact and supported and monitored the progress in the broader community.

➤ Several months later

When another Service Delivery protest was planned the ANC Youth League gave advance warning of the dangers posed to the Ethiopian Community and encouraged them to close their shops and secure their stock. Again some protesters used the opportunity to attack the 'foreigners' and, while some damage was done to property, it was minimal compared to before. This second incident left the Ethiopian Community feeling very vulnerable. Another meeting was called and the ANC Youth League apologised to the Ethiopians, acknowledging that they lacked the leadership to control their own members, and asked us to train them in Leadership skills. The Ethiopian Community reflected on the township's situation and recognised that most of the ANC Youth League members had few skills and were therefore unemployable. They decided to offer to train them in business skills. Some 30 or more turned up for the training and, after a number of sessions, they gained the skills to be able to run a business. The Ethiopian Community encouraged the youth to select 6 youth who would be good business people and provided them with enough stock to start their own small business in the community and supported them with on-going training and mentoring until they were established. The Ethiopians clubbed together, bought supplies in bulk from Johannesburg and stocked the shops for the youth enabling them to become entrepreneurs in their own community.

➤ Lessons

Building good relationships in the community and between the shop owners of different nationalities is a challenge. The Ethiopians evaluated their behaviour in the community and worked towards a good working relationship and cooperation with local businesses. The local businesses had to learn that 'going it alone' and charging inflated prices in order to make high profits did not make good business sense and they needed to learn from the 'foreigners'. The ANC Youth League recognized that 'foreigners' had some valuable skills to offer and that they need to be open to learning from different sources. *"We never thought that we would make the saying of Gandhi 'I need to be the change I want to see in the world' a reality when we heard it in the workshop. We never imagined that by sharing our skills and business knowledge that so many others would benefit and that we would benefit too."* (Workshop participant) In the past 18 months since the initiation of this process by the Ethiopian Community, there has been no violence in Balfour.

Our Current Donors:



You can contact us :

Siyabhabha Trust Caritas South Africa,
Khanya House 399 Paul Kruger Street, Pretoria
0001 PO Box 941, South Africa.
Tel: 27(0)12 323 7010/Fax: 27 (0) 12 323 7617
Ann McCollum Director, Drmccollum@sacbc.org.za;
Dineo Matseembi Administrator
Dmatseembi@sacbc.org.za

You can support our programme by Bank Transfer/ wire

Name of Bank: **Nedbank**
Name of Branch: **Pretoria**
Branch Code: **160445**
Account Number: **1604 754 087**
Beneficiary: **Siyabhabha Trust –National**
Type of Account: **Current**
Swift Code: **NEDSZAJJ 160445**