Makhathini

The Makhathini is located in an isolated area in northern Kwazulu-Natal, bordered by Mozambique, Swaziland, the Lebombo Mountains and the Indian Ocean.

The 631, 000-hectare area consists of beautiful, subtropical woodlands. Approximately 500 000 Zulu-speaking people live on the Makhathini flats, the majority being children and youth – 60% of the population is still at school and younger. It is one of the poorest areas in South Africa.

Makhathini statistics:

- the area has an unemployment rate of at least 70%;
- about 25% of high school girls fall pregnant;
- the youth has a 50% chance of becoming infected with HIV and AIDS during their lifetime (25.8% between 15 and 49 years in KZN are HIV positive);
- 50% or more of the population older than 20 years has not received schooling (68% of those who have received schooling, have only primary education);
- According to research a basic household in Makhathini consists of six persons of whom on average four are female and at least one is already HIV-infected (three to four are usually of school-going age or younger, of whom two are probably already orphaned).

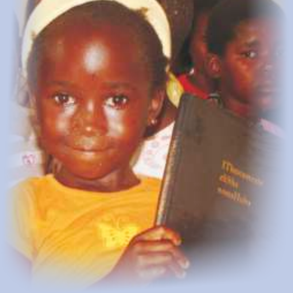
Overwhelming ministering challenges

About 40% of the people here are members of Christian churches. Of these 80% belong to African-initiated churches and 10 to 20% to Mission-initiated churches.

The planting of the URC church in the Makhathini

Rev. Joshua Joubert came from Mozambique to Makhathini in 1928. Here he preached the gospel on the banks of the Usuthu river Sunday after Sunday to large numbers of Zulus who came to listen eagerly.

In 1935, Rev. Joubert and his successors' health deteriorated (due to malaria) to such an extent, that the Nkonjane mission station unfortunately had to be closed down. Despite this, the



"failed mission work" from 1928 to 1935 yielded a ripe harvest years later!

In 1971 the students from the Theological Seminary at Stellenbosch played a significant role in the establishment of a DRC in Africa congregation in the Makhathini (later known as the URC of Makhathini).

The congregation currently consists of about 650 members and 220 Sunday school pupils with 22 visitation points. The pastors and evangelists who currently work in this area are Revv. Dalisu Kunene and Louwrens van der Westhuizen, Ev. Joseph Gumede, child evangelist, Themba Mahlangu, spiritual workers Zaheus Ngwenya and Bonginkosi Mthembu, and Lungani Mandlakazi who renders social services.

The Makhathini congregation

... evangelises with passion

Evangelism campaigns are still very effective in Makhathini. During such a campaign, the entire community receives not only the Word, but also food and clothing (according to their needs).

... equips believers for their ministry

It is necessary for members to take full responsibility for preaching and pastoral care at the ministry points. There is a large, well-equipped church centre at Mapaya (near Jozini) where hundreds of members can be accommodated during conferences. Various training programmes are offered, such as the NBI (Nehemiah Bible Institute) course. Other training opportunities, such as day-conferences and retreats on relevant topics, are also offered regularly.

... focuses on the needs of the youth

Thanks to the wonderful work of Themba Mahlangu, there has been a significant revival among the youth. The young people take strong leadership in evangelism campaigns and are also involved with an outreach campaign (*Transformers*) in schools. Children's and youth camps are held regularly, and every ministry point has a catechism ministry which is offered by well-trained personnel.

... initiates several community projects

The congregation is involved in the development of the entire community. The following projects are already integrated and in place in various areas:

Nursery School Education

The six nursery schools that are managed by the congregation play an important role in shaping children's spiritual, emotional and intellectual foundations. Staff training and the establishment of adequate resources for schools enjoy high priority. Guided by UCO (Universal College Outcomes), Ntombencane Mlambo is strongly involved with the training of nursery staff across the whole Makhathini plain.

Nutrition Project

Orphans throughout the Makhathini area who do not receive

grants, are continually identified and served with food parcels made up from what the Lord provides. (Children's scholastic performance increases with up to 20% with a healthy daily diet.)

Care workers

Volunteers are trained to care for sick people in their homes and in doing so, also educate the community in basic health care, trauma counselling and counselling for the dying.

Life Skills Development

Various life skills programs are presented in collaboration with organisations such as ACAT (Africa Cooperation Action Trust), for example ABED (adult literacy classes), entrepreneurship and business skills, agricultural skills, etc. The sewing centres which were initiated by the congregation, are also still going strong.

Food Security

The ideal is that the three community gardens (under church supervision) will serve as training centres in the future. The challenge is to empower people with agricultural skills and to improve their quality of life with low-cost food production. ACAT (30 years' experience in rural areas) confirms that "communities are much more liable, motivated and successful in any development program if they are well fed."

Blue Gum Plantation

The congregation has a 10-hectare blue gum plantation near KwaNgwanase. Congregation members take responsibility for the maintenance and management of this project, with the prospect that it will generate a good income in future.

Become a co-worker – in partnership!

Supporting congregations, individuals and institutions can, in cooperation with each other, focus on strengthening the ministry in the Makhathini congregation. Come, join hands and serve Christ's church in Makhathini with your resources and abilities – become part of this special partnership.

Contact us at:

The Commission for Witness / Makhathini Partnership
Private Bag X8, BELLVILLE, 7535

Tel 021 9577 204
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E-mail kga1@kaapkerk.co.za
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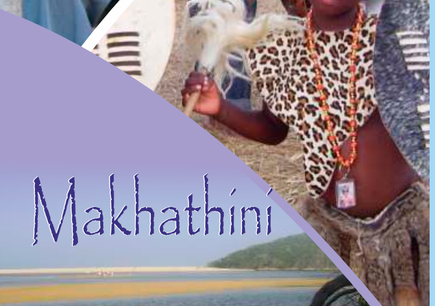

Makhathini

Makhathini

Die Makhathini is geleë in 'n geïsoleerde area in Noord-Kwazulu-Natal en grens aan Mosambiek, Swaziland, die Lebomboberge en die Indiese Oseaan.

Die vlakte van 631 000 hektaar bestaan uit 'n pragtige, subtropiese boswêreld. Sowat 500 000 Zoeloe-sprekendes woon in die Makhathinivlakte waarvan die meerderheid kinders en jeugdiges is – 60% van die bevolking is skoolgaande en jonger. Dit is een van die heel armste gebiede in Suid-Afrika.

Makhathini-statistieke:

- die area het 'n werkloosheidsyfer van minstens 70%;
- sowat 25% van hoërskoolmeisies word swanger;
- die jeug het 'n 50% kans om tydens hulle leeftyd met MIV/vigs geïnfekteer te word (25,8% tussen 15 en 49 jaar in KZN is MIV-positief);
- 50% plus van die bevolking bo die ouderdom 20 jaar het geen skoolopleiding ondergaan nie (68% van dié wat wel skool-opleiding ontvang het, het slegs primêre opleiding);
- Volgens navorsing bestaan **'n basiese gesin in Makhathini** uit ses persone waarvan gemiddeld vier vroulik en ten minste een reeds MIV-geïnfekteer is (drie tot vier is gewoonlik skoolgaande of jonger, waarvan twee heel moontlik reeds wees is).

Oorweldigende bedieningsuitdagings

Sowat 40% van die mense hier is lidmate van Christelike kerke. Daarvan behoort 80% aan Afrika-geïnisieerde kerke en 10 tot 20% aan Sending-geïnisieerde kerke.

Die planting van die VGK kerk in die Makhathini

In 1928 het eerw. Josua Joubert vanaf Mosambiek na Makhathini gekom. Hier het hy die evangelie gebring aan groot getalle Zoeloes wat Sondag na Sondag op die walle van die Usuthurivier gretig na hom kom luister het.

In 1935 het eerw. Joubert en sy opvolgers se gesondheid egter vanweë malaria sodanig verswak dat die Nkonjane-sendingstasie ongelukkig gesluit moes word. Ten spyte hiervan het die sogenaamde 'mislukte sending-poging' van 1928 tot 1935 jare later wel 'n rype oes opgelewer!

In 1971 het die kweekskoolstudente van die Universiteit Stellenbosch 'n beduidende rol gespeel in die stigting van 'n NG Kerk in Afrika-gemeente in die Makhathini (later die VGK Makhathini).

Die gemeente bestaan tans uit sowat 650 lidmate en 220 Sondagskoolleerlinge met 22 bedieningspunte. Die predikante en evangeliste wat huidig in hierdie gebied werk, is di. Dalisu Kunene en Louwrens van der Westhuizen, ev. Joseph Gumede,

kinderevangelis Themba Mahlangu, geestelike werkers Zaheus Ngwenya en Bonginkosi Mtembu, en Lungani Mandlakazi wat maatskaplike dienste lewer.

Die Makhathini-gemeente

... woel en werk met evangelisasie

Evangelisasie-veldtogte is steeds besonder effektief in die Makhathini. Tydens so 'n veldtog word die totale gemeenskap nie alleen met die Woord bedien nie, maar ook met kos en klere (volgens behoefte).

... rus die gelowiges toe vir hulle dienswerk

Lidmate word genoodsaak om volle verantwoordelikheid vir die Woordverkondiging en pastorale sorg by bedieningspunte te neem. By Mapaya (naby Jozini) is 'n groot, goed toegeruste gemeentesentrum wat honderde lidmate tydens gemeente-konferensies kan huisves. Verskeie toerustingsprogramme word aangebied, soos die kursus van die NBI (Nehemia Bybel-Instituut). Ander toerustingsgeleenthede soos dagkonferensies en *retraites* oor toepaslike onderwerpe word ook gereeld aangebied.

... fokus op die jeug se behoeftes

Danksy die wonderlike werk van Themba Mahlangu is daar 'n besondere oplewing onder die jeug. Die jongmense neem sterk leiding tydens evangelisasie-veldtogte en is ook ingeskakel met 'n uitreikaksie (*Transformers*) by skole. Kinder- en jeugkampe word gereeld gehou en elke bedieningspunt het 'n kategese-bediening wat deur goed toegeruste personeel hanteer word.

... inisieer verskeie gemeenskapsprojekte

Die gemeente is betrokke by die ontwikkeling van die totale gemeenskap. Die volgende projekte word reeds geïntegreerd in verskeie areas hanteer:

Kleuterskoolonderrig

Die ses kleuterskole onder gemeentelike beheer, vervul 'n belangrike rol in die vorming van kinders se geestelike, emosionele en verstandelike grondslag. Die personeel-opleiding en die daarstelling van voldoende hulpmiddels vir die skole geniet baie hoë prioriteit. Ntombencane Mlambo is onder mentorskap van UCO (*Universal College Outcomes*) baie sterk betrokke met die opleiding van kleuterskoolpersoneel regoor die hele vlakte.

Voedingsprojek

Weeskinders oor die hele Makhathini-gebied wat geen toelaes ontvang nie, word deurlopend geïdentifiseer en bedien met kospakkies wat saamgestel word uit dit wat die Here voorsien. (Kinders se skolastiese prestasie styg tot met 20% met gesonde daaglikse voeding.)

Sorg-werkers

Vrywilligers word opgelei om siek mense in hulle huise te versorg en sodoende ook die gemeenskap op te voed in basiese gesondheidsorg, trauma-berading, sterwensbegeleiding, ens.

Ontwikkeling van lewensvaardighede

Verskeie lewensvaardigheidsprogramme word in samewerking met organisasies soos ACAT (*Africa Cooperation Action Trust*) aan-gebied, bv. ABED (volwasse geletterdheidsklasse), entrepreneur-skap- en besigheidsvaardighede, landboukundige vaardighede, ens. Die naaldwerksentrums wat deur die gemeente begin is, gaan ook nog sterk voort.

Voedselsekerheid

Die ideaal is dat die drie gemeenskapstuine (onder kerklike toesig) in die toekoms sal dien as opleidingsentrums. Die uit-daging is om mense te bemagtig met landboukundige vaardighede en om hulle lewenskwaliteit te verhoog met laekoste voedsel-produksie. ACAT (30 jaar ondervinding in landelike areas) bevestig dat "communities are much more liable, motivated and successful in any development program if they are fed well."

Bloekomboomplantasie

Die gemeente beskik oor 'n 10 hektaar bloekomboomplantasie naby KwaNgwanase. Gemeentelede neem self verantwoorde-likheid vir die instandhouding en bestuur van hierdie projek, met die vooruitsig dat dit 'n goeie inkomste in die toekoms behoort te genereer.

Kom word 'n medewerker – in vennootskap!

Ondersteunende gemeentes, indiwidue en instansies kan, in noue samewerking met mekaar, daarop fokus om die bediening in die Makhathini-gemeente te versterk. Kom, vat hande en stel jou gawes beskikbaar in diens van Christus se gemeente in Makhathini – word deel van hierdie besondere vennootskap.

Kontak ons gerus by:

Die Kommissie vir Getuienisaksie / Makhathini-vennootskap
Privaatsak X8, BELLVILLE, 7535

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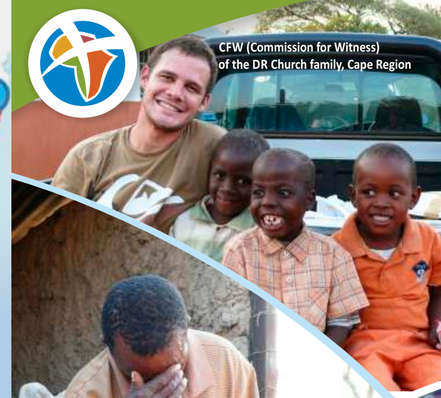

Makhathini