

Trip to Mfuleni and Strand from 4th until 11th of march 2024

We (Felix and I) visited the Township Boyz and Galz Matter project. It was a full and intensive few days with lots of encounters and impressions. We had the opportunity to get to know the people involved in the project and the environment in which it all takes place much better. This allowed us to develop a feeling for what is possible there and the enormous challenges involved. And we were able to see the children and young people in action, feel their energy and realise that the events and the house have become an important part of their lives.

But first things first:

Day 1

When we drove to the **township of Mfuleni** on the first morning (approx. 25 km away from our flat in the very beautiful Gardens district directly on Table Mountain), it quickly became clear that Google Maps could not display this township in its current form, so that we kept coming to dead ends and finally, after a few unsuccessful attempts, met Fano, the manager of the centre, at a motorway slip road so that he could navigate us to the centre.

Once there, we were in for quite a **surprise** (because it's Africa..) - but more on that later. (see day 4) Just this much: the house had changed considerably and looked somehow different from the pictures we know. An extension had been added on both sides.

before



now



But first we were warmly welcomed and Fano introduced us to Gift and Primrose, who accompany the activities in Strand. The two are very nice and committed and come from Zimbabwe. Fano, who is 55 years old, quickly made it clear that he sees Gift as his potential successor and is currently very happy to be working with them. Conversely, Gift and Primrose also said that they were very happy to work with Fano. The three then talked about their tasks and activities. It became clear that they do this with full conviction and wholeheartedly.



Fano



Primrose and Gift

Fano then showed us around the house and the surrounding area. Downstairs there is a large room that is suitable for events with up to 40 people, a smaller room where a maximum of around 15 people can sit together and a kitchen. There are 4 rooms on the upper floor, but they are not yet in a condition that allows them to be used. However, one of the rooms is used by Fano as a bedroom, which he does for security reasons so that the house is never empty. Another room will soon be refurbished so that it can be used by social workers for meetings. There is also a half-finished extension, in which toilets and showers are to be built on the ground floor and another larger room on the upper floor.

We then had lunch and further talks about the topics we wanted to discuss and do over the next few days. For example, we planned to visit another project and take a trip to the Cape of Good Hope.

Later in the afternoon, the centre became lively because the children were now coming out of school and it had something of a large living room where everyone gathered. Later, football and netball were to be played on the field next door and we were greeted with a dance performance.





Jumps in the air with the girls of Netball-Team

Day 2

Together with Fano, Gift and Primrose, we set off for Masiphumelele, one of the poorest townships in the south of Cape Town. There we have an appointment with Dr Lutz van Dijk, who wants to show us his project HOKISA (www.hokisa.co.za). He started this project in 2001 to provide children and young people with medication against HIV and AIDS and also to take these children in as their parents had died of AIDS. To this day, children and young people live in this home and are well looked after. Lutz has a German-Dutch background and, as a journalist and author, is very well

connected and able to provide a significant proportion of the project's funding. The rest comes from a number of organisations from Germany, the Netherlands, Ireland, England and the USA. We could feel how much love and hard work is done here and how much attention is paid to the needs of the children and young people. It is important that the surroundings and the buildings themselves are kept in very good condition and that the residents are motivated to take matters into their own hands. It was very inspiring to get to know such an outstanding project and its charismatic founder.

Lutz advised us to set up some kind of advisory board or advisory group at some point with people who know the situation in townships in particular and also in South Africa in general. For example: a lawyer, doctor, social worker or similar. And he suggested that Fano, Gift and Primrose get in touch with schools and counselling centres in the local area in order to network. Lutz also offered to continue to be available as a counsellor if needed.

It was a very valuable visit with important impulses and ideas.



Dr. Lutz van Dijk left

Day 3

We had decided that it would be good to simply spend some time together. That's why we went on a trip to the Cape of Good Hope. The journey from the township took about 2 hours. The area at the Cape is a national park and is very scenic.



Fano, Hans, Primrose, Felix, Gift

Day 4

Firstly, we had a meeting with Phindi, who is creating the website for TBGM. The design already looked very promising and the site should be ready by the end of March. We also got to know a group of young ladies who call themselves Babes got bytes and offer programming seminars. They haven't been around very long, but want to use the centre's premises regularly.



We then spoke to Fano in depth about TBGM's financial situation and the surprising structural changes.

Fano explained to us that at the end of last year, the development of a future residential area right next to the centre led to some very threatening situations. During the construction work, large bulldozers were used to spread a considerable amount of sand, which destroyed the centre's front garden and also led to permanent dust pollution inside the centre.



In the background on the left is the future residential area

Fano then decided to have a wall built around the house to protect it.

And he also decided to have two additional rooms added, a future computer room and another meeting room upstairs and toilets and showers on the ground floor. All this with a view to protecting the building and also because of the increasing demand for rooms to be rented by other organisations. All very understandable.

However, the extension is not yet finished. Further funding is needed for this.

According to current cost estimates, we initially need **€4,000** for the extension with toilets, showers and an additional meeting room. This should be completed before the winter, i.e. by the beginning of June.

After the winter, i.e. from November, a further **€2,000** would be needed for the additional computer training room.

Day 5

Sports day in the township beach! Up to 200 children and young people are expected. It started with the journey from Mfuleni to Strand:



Many people were already waiting in Strand and there was a great reception. We were welcomed as "top partners" and I was asked to say a few words after the German national anthem had been played (I felt a bit like Rudi Völler for a moment :-)

Then it was kick-off.

It was unbelievable how much energy and enthusiasm everyone showed on Saturday. Football and netball were played and Primrose was the referee (she used to play football for the national women's team in Zimbabwe).



Felix and the Netball-Team





At the end there was something to eat



Day 6

We didn't have any meetings on Sunday and had a rest.

7th and last day

A final meeting with Fano, Gift and Primrose.

We came to a very good understanding how we envisage communication in the future.

