

Oasis South Africa

The Vision

We work in partnership with our community and others to make a difference in some of the key problem areas we – and many other communities in our country - face. In Johannesburg we focus on Cosmo City and its surrounding informal settlements – doing all we can to ensure the success of this exciting new integrated housing development, while working to improve the lives of all who live in our

General information on South Africa

community.

The Union of South Africa was established in 1910. In 1948 elections the Afrikaner-dominated ultra-right National Party took over power. Under their power apartheid (racist legislation restricting black rights) flourished. Under apartheid, every individual was classified by race, and race determined where you could live, work, pray and learn. Blacks were divided into one of 10 tribal groups, forcibly dispossessed and dumped in rural backwaters called 'Homelands'. These lands had virtually no infrastructure and no industry, and were therefore incapable of producing sufficient food for the black population. There was intense, widespread suffering and many families returned to squalid squatter camps in the cities.

Black resistance developed in the form of strikes, acts of public disobedience and protest marches. This was supported by international opinion from the early 1960s after African National Congress (ANC) leaders, including Nelson Mandela, were jailed. The government reacted violently to black protests, and the United Nations decided to impose economic and political sanctions on South Africa. In the mid-1980s, black-on-black violence in the townships exploded. By 1989 economic sanctions began to bite and the Rand collapsed. FW De Klerk came to power. Virtually all apartheid regulations were repealed, political prisoners were released and negotiations began on forming a multiracial government. Free elections in 1994 resulted in a decisive victory for the ANC and Nelson Mandela became president.

Despite the scars of the past and the enormous problems ahead, South Africa today is immeasurably more optimistic and relaxed than it was a few years ago. The international community has embraced the new South Africa and the ANC's apparently sincere desire to create a truly non-racial nation, although economic inequality remains an overwhelming problem. In 1999, Thabo Mbeki, who took over the ANC leadership from Nelson Mandela, became president. He proved to be a generally competent president, but his standing both at home and abroad has not been helped by his refusal to condemn outright the inflammatory politics of Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe and his ill-informed comments on

Pre-School Programme

AIDS. This health crisis, affecting 4.2 million South Africans, seriously threatens to eclipse all of South Africa's other domestic problems.

A good pre-school education can make a world of difference in the lives of children. Our Pre-school Programme, following the Play-with-a-Purpose curriculum, gives pre-school teachers from poor crèches, mostly based in shacks, access to an accredited year long training course. The course helps teachers to improve the education they offer by using resources available in the community and also assist them in improving the management of their school. All suc-



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Bridge the Gap programme

Our Bridge the Gap programme offers a six-month bridging course to school leavers - providing opportunities and hope to talented young people.

We provide training in key life skills, IT training using the Net2Work programme, career guidance, volunteer opportunities at local schools as well as part-time work opportunities. While also building self-confidence and fostering personal growth through the help of a volunteer mentors and counsellors - preparing the students for life after school.



At the heart of Oasis is a belief in inclusion which is why we have chosen to make our home in a community on the north western outskirts of the City of Johannesburg. This area is a showcase of both the best and the worst of South Africa.

Community Development

The massive Diepsloot township was deliberately built on the margins of the city to exclude individuals, while living conditions in the surrounding informal settlements are even worse. South Africa is a mix of first and third world, with unbelievable levels of inequality. Extreme poverty exists within kilometers of luxury golf estates, shopping malls and corporate head quarters.

The new Cosmo City development aims to reach out and work together to bring about transformation – in all our communities. It is one of the first new neighbourhood developments since 1994 and is a community with mixed income housing, bringing together very different people in one, new and exciting community. We promote social and economic inclusion in our communities through networking, resource sharing, advocacy, community events and being a catalyst for innovation.

The Gauteng Department of Health recently selected Oasis South Africa as one of twelve organisations

Community Wellness & Health Worker Training

in the province to join the department's community health worker training accreditation programme. A consultant employed by the department, Maputle Industrial Relations, will guide the organisations through a nine month process, leading to Oasis becoming a SETA accredited training organisation.

At Oasis we believe that health and wellbeing is about more than just absence from disease. We're about promoting healthy lifestyles, making positive choices and living life in all its fullness. A dedicated team of community health workers is at the core of our innovative Community Wellness programme. They provide home based care to those most in need, but also run Healthy Living Clubs to help healthy individuals stay healthy.

All club members are assessed twice a year, helped to set personal life-style goals and then supported in implementing it. We also offer fun activities – like information sessions, support and exercise groups – to provide access to health education and an opportunity to put theory into practice.

The Oasis training course will result in students becoming accredited community health workers, enabling them to access stipends for their work while also linking the community health work Oasis does with the government's primary health care system.



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Accommodation

Oasis teams to Johannesburg share a house in Cosmo City, the new housing development where the majority of our projects are based. You will have electricity and running water in your accommodation, so don't worry!

Living together in close proximity can be quite an intense situation and will need patience at times, with the lack of personal space and with everything being so different. But teams tend to agree that overall it's a great experience, for the relationships that are formed.

Johannesburg's reputation for crime and violence is well-known. However, consequently the vast majority of houses have robust security measures, such as electric fencing, security guards, intercom entry and intruder alarms which ring directly through to private security firms. You will be living in secure housing arranged for you by Oasis SA, and will have the use of a car to drive to and from your projects.

Fast Facts

Capital:	Pretoria
Currency:	South African Rand (ZAR)
Population:	42.7 million
Language:	Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, Zulu.
Religion:	Christian 68%, Muslim 2%, Hindu 1.5%, indigenous beliefs and animist 28.5%.
Climate:	Summer: November to March Winter: June to August.

Generally the climate is hot and dry, showers occur in the summer in the eastern plateau and in the winter in the western cape. During the day temperatures generally range between 15-26 °C.

Life Expectancy:	Male: 44.39 years Female: 43.98 years
Under-5 infant mortality:	62.18 per 1,000
Living with AIDS:	5.3 million (21% of population)
Literacy:	Male: 87%, female: 85.7% groups



For more information

- <http://www.oasisza.org>