



PROJECT UPDATE

GA O NOSI (NEVER ALONE) PROJECT
Munsieville, Republic of South Africa
October 2024

A ministry of Root and Branch Change. Reg charity number 1199565

First Steps

South Africa is beginning to wake up to the scale of the crisis across the nation of children as young as 10 years of age becoming pregnant. It is difficult to find accurate figures, but according to the Dept for Social Development, 122,000 school age girls gave birth in the last financial year, 2,716 of whom were between the ages of 10 and 14 years - a rise of 48% over five years.

Nationally, it is estimated that over a third of these children never return to the classroom, and in Munsieville, the numbers dropping out of education is likely to be well over half.

The Ga O Nosi programme in Munsieville is still in its infancy, but it is already attracting attention both inside the township and from health and social development professionals elsewhere in South Africa, due mainly to its integrated, hands on approach,

with Christian faith at its core. We are firmly committed to creating a model of excellence, supported by empirical evidence, so that others throughout South Africa can access a framework that can be replicated in those places where the crisis of child mothers is most evident.

To this end, we are now honoured to be working with Monash University (SA), churches and the Dept of Health, in research and project development.

Progress in first six months

There are four components in the current Ga O Nosi model: 1) Crisis care for those in urgent need of support; 2) Help for young parents to help them be the best possible parents to their babies; 3) Prevention of child and teen pregnancy; and 4) Developing a strong network of those dedicated to aspects of support for vulnerable children.

Whilst everyone would agree that prevention is usually far better than cure, our starting point has needed to be the provision of a loving and professional "rescue" service for young girls who have discovered they are pregnant. For most of the younger people referred to us, this is as a result of rape, coercion or misinformation, and has led to many suicides.

These are some of the steps we have

taken.

URGENT CRISIS SUPPORT

- Set up Ga O Nosi Lounge - comfortable drop-in centre for first level crisis support
- Recruit and train volunteer first-responders to "walk with" pregnant children in crisis
- Prepare details of engagement package for team leader. (We are very close to making an appointment).

ONGOING PARENT SUPPORT

- Work with Monash University and local partners to define educational content for young parent support curriculum
- Pilot "Club Ga O Nosi" gatherings for young parents and their babies.

PREVENTION & HEALTHY LIVES

- Support the construction of new youth centre and integrate Ga O Nosi within it.
- Develop relationship with DoH lead on "Youth-friendly Health Services.
- Partner with leading local church.

Where now?

The next six months are critical for the development of Ga O Nosi. Community awareness of this new service has been intentionally limited to avoid the possibility of it being inundated before the team is adequately trained and equipped. However, we are now ready to launch the **urgent crisis care service** and, following leaders' meetings in mid-October, an all-out campaign will commence, especially in Munsieville schools, to ensure all children, parents, teachers and health professionals know of the service. We will also be working on the early-2025 launch of "Club Ga O Nosi" for young mothers and babies, with an agreed curriculum. We aim to have a **permanent project leader** in place before the end of 2024. We will also work closely with **young Christians to encourage them to share gospel hope** with their peers in crisis.



Training of Ga O Nosi first responders through role play exercise



Oratile leads workshop to demonstrate the challenges of parenthood