

IN PARTNERSHIP

December 2022



One Step Closer to a Life Free From Poverty

Laxmi and her daughters, (Renuka far left)

Laxmi is the mother of three children, aged seven, five and 10 months. She was married at age 14 and never received an education. We spoke to Laxmi in 2019, while she was living in the Prakash Tekadi Slums in Mumbai. Her two daughters had started attending Emmanuel Education Centre, a project run by GMP relief and development partner Hosanna Ministries. Laxmi was hopeful not only about her future but the future of her daughters. "I'm happy that my daughters will get some education; it makes us feel very proud," Laxmi said.

With your support, Laxmi's daughters received three years of education at the Emmanuel Education Centre.

However, living in Prakash Tekadi Slums was dangerous for her family. Laxmi, now in her mid-twenties, was worried about the safety of her young children. The community experiences daily cases of abuse and domestic violence and many people use bad language. So, Laxmi and her husband decided to move to another community where their family would be safer. Laxmi

said it was a big decision to leave. "We said, 'We have to do this for our daughters'."

Education gave her children new opportunities. According to Laxmi, the education that her daughters received at the Emmanuel Education Centre enabled her eldest daughter, Renuka, to be admitted into a new school in the community "very quickly". Renuka knows English rhymes and poems because of the activities she participated in at the centre. Both Laxmi and her husband are very happy that their daughters can also write their parents' names in English! This is very encouraging for Laxmi. All of this would not have been possible without the Emmanuel Education Centre.

With Renuka's education continuing, Laxmi is hopeful for her children's futures. "I don't want my daughters to marry so young. I want them to go to college and learn what they want. I want them to grow and leave this poverty."

Thanks to your support of the Emmanuel Education Centre, Laxmi and her daughters are again

one step closer to leaving "this poverty". The literacy skills that Laxmi's daughters learnt while at Emmanuel Education Centre will help pave the way for future education opportunities in their new community. This means they have had more opportunities than Laxmi ever had.

When you give to the COCOA Christmas Offering, you're empowering people to break the generational cycle of poverty. Giving education to children gives them the ability to break that cycle. They will have access to further education and work, and set higher goals for their future!



Imagine her future free from poverty

COCOA
Churches of Christ Overseas Aid
Christmas Offering

Give now at
www.gmp.org.au/free
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Australian Churches of Christ Global Mission Partners Ltd.

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News & Events

Christmas and New Year GMP Office Closures

The GMP Office is closed from midday on Friday 23 December and reopens on Tuesday 3 January 2023.

embody Mission Communities

embody Mission Communities are a year-long leadership development opportunity for young leaders. It is one way to support young people in mission and justice work in your local church. You can register your interest for 2023 now. For more information, please email Mitch at mitch@embody.org.au.

Great Gifts for Christmas!

When you purchase a Great Gift for Christmas this includes a printed card for the gift recipient. To receive printed cards in time for Christmas, all orders must be into the GMP office by Friday 9 December. Alternatively, you can print your own cards at home! For this option, all orders must be into the GMP office by Thursday 22 December. Purchase your Great Gifts today online at www.greatgifts.org.au or Freecall 1800 467 222.

COCOA Christmas Offering

Your gift this Christmas will help our Relief and Development partners around the world work to end poverty in their communities. Give now to help children like Renuka to break the generational cycle of poverty. Visit www.gmp.org.au/christmasoffering

Annual Report 2021-22

GMP's Annual Report for 2021-22 is out now. Read about your impact this past year, and get a further insight into our shared mission. Look out for the Impact Report in your inbox, or view the reports online at www.gmp.org.au/annualreport. To request a printed copy call our office on 1800 467 222.

For more news and updates, follow us on Facebook or Instagram @gmpaustralia



At the Centre of Christmas

In the GMP world, this past month has featured official and personal farewells to both John Gilmore and Val Zerna, names that have been synonymous with the work of GMP for many years. It has also featured the resumption of the normalcy of our international and domestic travel, the launch of Great Gifts and the COCOA Christmas Offering and the usual 'busyness' that accompanies the close of the calendar year.

The 'external' world, too, feels like it is spinning ever faster. The intermittent COVID-19 waves, the ongoing, destructive war in the Ukraine and the threat of climate change can rob us of peace and our sense of understanding the world we live in. That doesn't even touch on the vagaries of our internal life.

It is easy to be distracted.

It is also important to stop for a moment as we approach the Christmas season, with its celebrations, meals and paradoxical invitations to hecticness and leisure. To take a moment to centre ourselves.

At the centre of Christmas – and of our theology and practice as Churches of Christ – is Jesus.

The Prince of Peace.
Emmanuel – God with us.
Messiah.
Lamb of God.
King of Kings.
Redeemer.

I don't know what you need to call Jesus as we approach the celebration of his birth – but can I encourage you to take the time to slow, to deliberately be aware of what is going on for you and to reflect on how attuning ourselves to the presence of Jesus can help and empower us to reflect him in a way that outstrips tinsel.

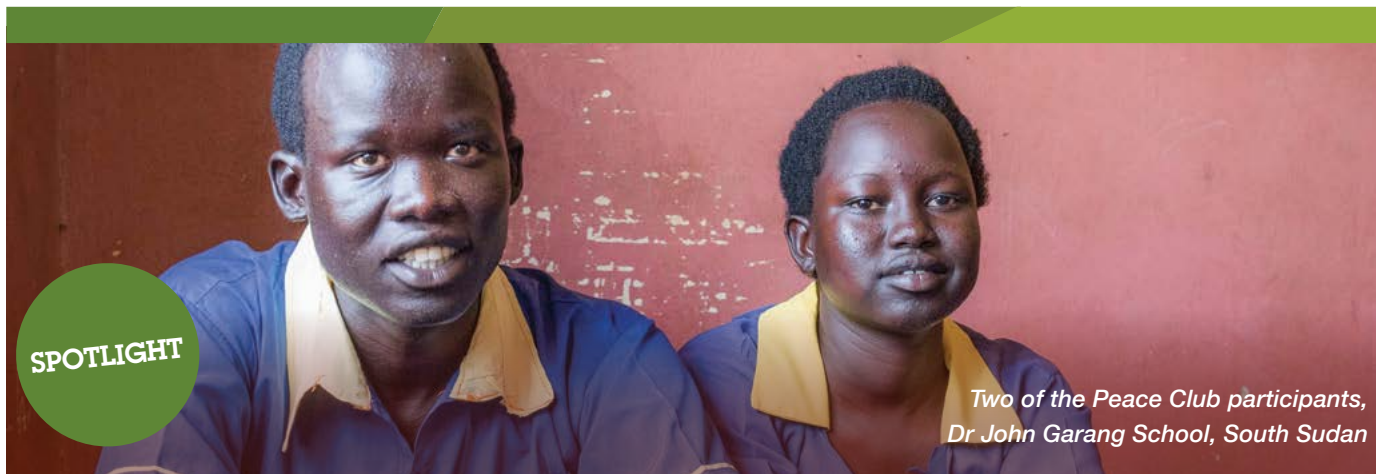
From all of us at GMP, have a wonderful Christmas with those whom you love.

Craig Brown
GMP Deputy Executive Officer and ICP Director



Wishing you a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us at GMP!

In Partnership News will be back in February 2023.



Two of the Peace Club participants, Dr John Garang School, South Sudan

The Gift of a Peace Club

Hostility can become a habit when people live in conflict. Impacted by inter-tribe and tribal conflict for over 25 years, people living in South Sudan are still experiencing unrest today. War has left enmity in the hearts of the people. Opportunities for peacebuilding and conflict resolution are desperately needed.

Young people in South Sudan have only ever experienced conflict and division in their country - throughout their whole lives! To help them see that there are better ways to relate to others, particularly those from other tribes, safe spaces for meaningful discussions are critical.

GMP relief and development partner, the LAID Foundation of South Sudan (LAFOSS), are creating these spaces. They run peacebuilding workshops that aim to foster peace within individuals and communities. They help bridge cultural divides between community leaders and young people, promote healing, reconciliation and practice forgiveness.

The workshops empower local leaders from churches, schools, and women's organisations to resolve differences without violence. Providing an opportunity for women to share their perspectives helps to increase their participation in community leadership. Workshops in schools help young people to learn a culture of peace from an early age. The strategies are simple, and participants can apply their knowledge straight away in their community.

After completing the peacebuilding workshop, Mary used the conflict resolution techniques she learned to conduct peace meetings for women in her community. This helped to reduce the conflict occurring between women at various water points (or boreholes) in her community. Peter, the chief of his village, said, "I mediated some community youth who had been involved in a conflict." He shared stress relief techniques and encouraged a "heart of forgiveness" among them.

Teachers and community leaders have said peace-building activities are an effective way to engage and teach young people about peace. 'Peace Clubs' held in local schools provide peace-building skills to children and youth. Peace Clubs teach conflict resolution skills and identify non-violent options for youth to resolve problems and challenges peacefully.

Mary observed that the training provided by LAFOSS paves the way for providing a variety of interactions, not just for youth, but for everyone in the community. "Social activities like wrestling, sport and dances that bring them [the community] together... these activities are for peace."

Regular engagement, by trained community leaders, is needed to achieve ongoing, sustainable peace. LAFOSS aims to provide a 'bottom-up' approach to conflict resolution, meaning "Community leaders can stop [any] conflict before it gets out of hand." This is the most critical outcome that

can come from the peacebuilding and conflict resolution training. LAFOSS believe this will complement the South Sudanese Government's peace initiatives, which are decreasing violence in conflict-affected areas.

A participant said, "The communities have experienced the importance of living peacefully [because] it brings full security around them."

Your Great Gift of a Peace Club will equip youth and local leaders in South Sudan with the skills needed to help stop conflict, build ongoing peace and lasting change in their communities. Make this Christmas even more meaningful by giving people, like Mary and Peter, access to a LAFOSS peacebuilding workshop.

Buy a Great Gift this Christmas!

Shop online now at www.greatgifts.org.au



Order before Friday 9th December to ensure your posted cards arrive for Christmas. Or order a Print Your Own card until the 22nd



The GMP Adelaide Team at Val Zerna and John Gilmore's farewell in Adelaide. From left – Belinda Burt, Katrina Davidson, Lisa Szepessy, John Gilmore, Val Zerna, Melinda van Vuuren, Sheree Crouch

Val Zerna Retires from GMP

We had a wonderful opportunity in Adelaide on November 26 where the Board, staff, volunteers and supporters gathered to farewell Val Zerna before her role with GMP concludes on December 23. Val has worked with GMP for almost two decades!

Over the past 19 years, Val has been involved with GMP in an executive assistant role, communications, being a Partnership Coordinator in South Australia where she was well known and appreciated throughout the churches and, most recently, as our Church Engagement Coordinator.

Val's contribution goes beyond her job title and descriptions, and she has for many years organised

volunteers for mailouts and assisted the finance team with processing payment requests. For many supporters, hers is the voice that is synonymous with GMP. She has also been active in engaging with GMP's international partners, particularly on the ground in Vanuatu, as well as being a trusted person for our global partners to communicate with.

Val is the kind of employee every organisation needs: focused on people, generous with her time, a passionate believer in what GMP does, competent, adaptable and resilient. Above all that, however, is Val's ability to value the people she works with and to love them. It's not just that the roles Val does will be missed – it is Val herself that will be



Val Zerna and Craig Brown

missed, with her positivity, care and faithfulness.

GMP wouldn't be what it is today without you, Val, and we wish you all the best for your retirement.

John Gilmore Concludes as Executive Officer

During November, GMP staff hosted various farewell gatherings throughout Australia to honour the work and retirement of John Gilmore. You can view photos on GMP Facebook and Instagram. John concluded his role as Executive Officer on November 30. We wish John all the very best as he transitions into retirement.

From December 1 to January 30 please re-direct your correspondence to executiveofficer@gmp.org.au



The farewell for John Gilmore held in Melbourne



New Executive Officer Commencement

John Lamerton commences as GMP Executive Officer from 30 January 2023. Join us as we welcome him to the team!



The Bunbury Church with their new ceiling

Partnership in Action: Bunbury Ceiling Project

The completion of the ceiling project at the Bunbury Aboriginal Christian Fellowship in Western Australia has been an example of real partnership in action. The process has shown the members of the church and the local community that through God anything is possible.

Many Aboriginal Fellowships do not have the blessing of owning their own church or even worshipping in one. Groups meet in houses or gather in shared spaces like community halls and schools. "Our Fellowship started off the same way," Pastor Greg Little, of Bunbury Aboriginal Christian Fellowship, reflected. "To have a church of our own is a true blessing to our community."

The church building was purchased in 2005 with the support of Churches of Christ and Australian

Churches of Christ Indigenous Ministries (ACCIM). Today ACCIM is now Indigenous Ministries Australia (IMA), a program area of GMP. Over the past years, the building has required various maintenance projects, and most recently the entire ceiling was replaced. The Bunbury Fellowship are now again meeting for morning and evening services in their own building. With a new ceiling!

A local Noongar man in the community was approached by the church to paint the ceiling. He painted the ceiling over a weekend with two co-workers. Now, his two daughters and their children attend the Bunbury church services every Sunday! "We praise the Lord every time we see his family and are reminded how amazing our God is," Greg said.

Since the ceiling repairs have been completed, the congregation continues to be motivated to improve the facilities. "It has led us to fundraise for new carpets and an industrial oven," said Greg.

The renovations of the ceiling taught Greg a valuable lesson in patience and faith. "Sometimes we try to do things in our own strength and time, and we know that God's timing is the key."

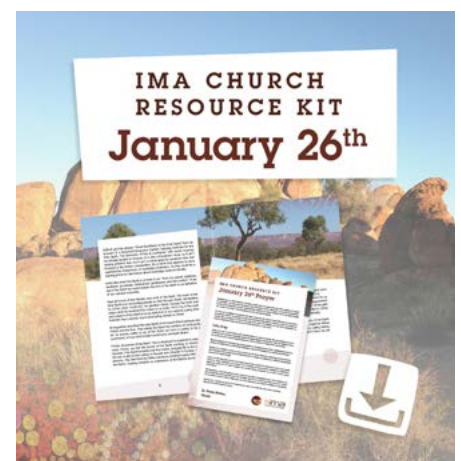
Bunbury Fellowship is thankful for your support. "We praise the Lord for generous offerings and funding; support that has enabled the completion of all repairs," Greg said with gratitude. The church members also have appreciated all the support and prayers in working towards the renovations.

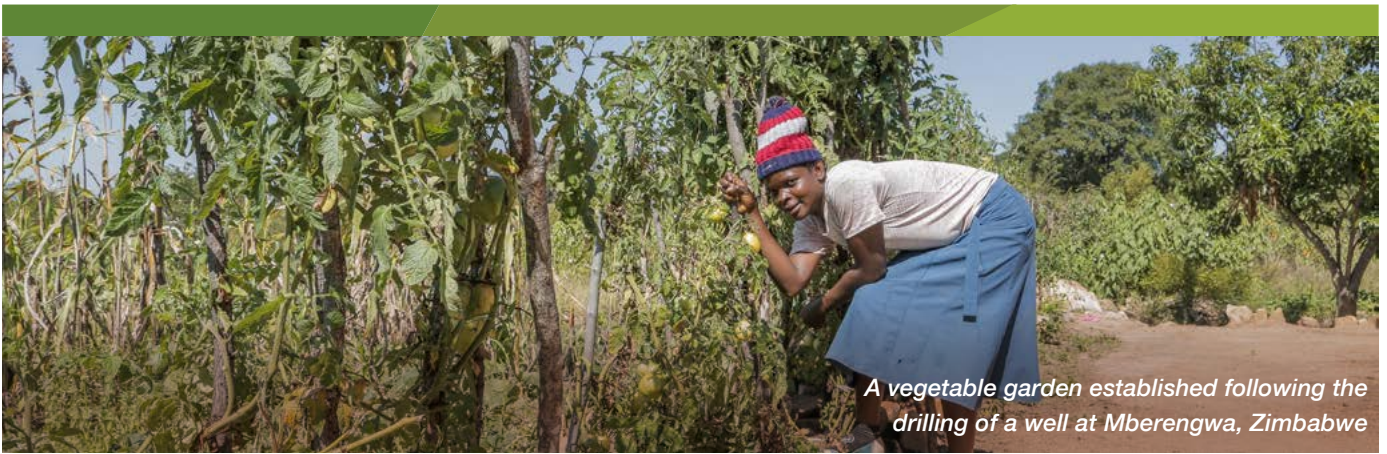
IMA Church Resource Kit for January 26

This January 26, we want to invite all followers of Christ to open our hearts to a greater understanding, a deeper compassion and an acknowledgment of what this day represents for Indigenous Australians. This Church Service Resource Kit has been developed especially for Churches of Christ

congregations to use during a service on or near January 26th.

Download the kit from the GMP website at
www.gmp.org.au/IMAKits





A vegetable garden established following the drilling of a well at Mberengwa, Zimbabwe

Water Revitalises Livelihoods in Zimbabwe

Women and children in rural Zimbabwe wake up daily to the difficult task of collecting water. Without safe water nearby they must walk, often long distances, to collect water from unprotected sources such as wells, rivers, dams or sand-dug pits in riverbeds. This is a long, and exhausting task.

Because so much time and energy is spent on this task, finding time to earn an income is a challenge.

GMP Relief and Development partner Showers of Blessing, help give access to safe water by installing boreholes in rural communities. A borehole nearby gives more time and energy to community members to change their lives for the better. They can now use the time they'd spend fetching water to grow food, or generate income.

Mavis is a mother of four children. When water was too far away to fetch, she had to stop running her chicken farming business.

Mavis says, "As I am a woman, it was also scary to fetch water by myself because there were criminals around." She could not take the risk of fetching water late in the evening for fear of being attacked.

With the installation of a borehole nearby, Mavis' access to her livelihood has improved.

"I can now start my chicken farm again, as the water is close," says Mavis.

Another woman speaks about the challenge of keeping goats when water was not safely available.

"We used to take them to the dam but they would end up being eaten [by] the crocodiles...most of the houses here don't have goats because of that," she says.

But with your generosity, she has now been able to begin expanding her livestock!

"We thank the Showers of Blessing for giving us the borehole, now we are able to do projects that we weren't able to do before. We have lots of projects going, including [keeping] turkeys, goats and we are planning chickens."

When a borehole is installed, women have more time for income generating projects. Projects like veggie gardens, small goat and chicken farms spring up within communities!

Showers of Blessing Director, Boniface Mpofu, speaks more about how safe access to water has such a positive impact. "The proceeds derived from these income generating activities enable communities to afford basic needs." This could include bread, sugar and salt, which in turn attracts a business venture from other community members to open a small shop to provide these items. "It is also correct to say the bore installation provides employment in the community as it can provide all in the community with an income



Mavis

generating activity every day," Boniface says.

Your support can help make even more income generating activities possible. Easy access to safe water gives opportunities for people to earn an income. This positive impact also has a flow on effect for those who are most vulnerable in the community.

Mavis says, "Thank you so much for this blessing you have given us; may God bless you."



Showers of Blessing Trust's (OSBT) project is supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).



Suzanne Hayes, COCOA Project Officer, Nalini Gaikwad and Kiron Gaikwad, founders of Hosanna Ministries, and Colin Scott, COCOA Director, meet in Sydney

Founders of Hosanna Ministries Visit Australia

Kiron and Nalini Gaikwad have played a crucial role in GMP's work in India. That is why Colin Scott and Suzanne Hayes of COCOA felt it such a privilege to meet with them during their recent visit to Australia.

Conversation included stories told by Kiron's grandfather of early missionaries from Australia. "The early pioneer missionaries suffered a lot but now we see the fruit," Kiron said. India is a Hindu nation and the Gaikwads have witnessed an openness to Christ in recent years. "Once there were two churches in Yavatmal, but now there are altogether 12 churches," Kiron reported.

Kiron and Nalini, long-term partners of GMP, founded relief and development partner Hosanna Ministries. Ankoor Home was founded in the year 2000. As a residential home, Ankoor helped children from poor families access education. Children from areas with limited or no school access could stay and attend a local school. Ankoor then started their own school in English, which later expanded and became Gnyan Sampada Residential School. This was so that both residents and children outside the residential home could attend.

Kiron and Nalini were like second parents to the children. Kiron would

sit on a bench in the corner of the play area after school so that any child who wanted to, could talk to him one to one. The bench was always full. Nalini, meanwhile, was a whizz in the garden and cultivated a huge variety of fruit and vegetables in the back yard. She assigned each child responsibility for looking after their little part of the garden.

The stories of the children who lived and were educated there are a source of encouragement for Kiron and Nalini. They shared with Colin and Suzanne stories of children who attended university. "One girl completed a Bachelor of Theology and is working as a Bible College lecturer in Gujarat State." They shared, "Another boy is working as a computer engineer in Pune."

The work that Kiron and Nalini started is continued now by their son Daniel and his wife Smita. Danny and Glory, as they would rather be called, currently lead Hosanna Ministries in the Prakash Tekadi Slum in Mumbai. They're making education and health more accessible to some of the poorest people in India.

Hosanna Ministry also reaches out to unemployed people in their community and provides vocational courses in tailoring, computer skills and beauty services. As women

and transgender people often find themselves second in line for jobs, Hosanna offers courses to help them. Many people find new hope for a secure livelihood and a sense of independence and worth through Hosanna's programs.

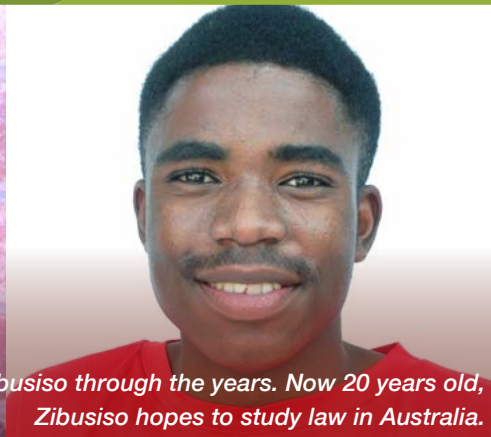
Hosanna Ministries' Vocational Training Project is now supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

"You did a lot," says Kiron of GMP's work in India.

Your support is an integral part of fostering these long-term relationships. It can give confidence to partners like Kiron and Nalini that the work they began will continue. With your ongoing help, Hosanna Ministries will continue to reach people in need.

All these things warm the hearts of Nalini and Kiron, but they don't want to take any of the credit. "We are just instruments in God's hands," said Kiron.

Thank you for helping to make these things possible.



Zibusiso through the years. Now 20 years old, Zibusiso hopes to study law in Australia.

Adventures Continue for Zibusiso

Zibusiso was abandoned by his mother when he was two years old. Efforts to trace her were fruitless. Without knowledge of relatives or who he was, Zibusiso faced homelessness, and a life without a family. Left alone, he wouldn't have essentials like food and health care. Without financial, emotional, or spiritual support, he wouldn't have attended school and probably would have been vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

But you wouldn't know that looking at Zibusiso's big smile. He is bright, curious, and loves to engage with the world around him.

When he was abandoned, the Department of Social Welfare referred him to GMP relief and development partner, Khayelihle Children's Village (KCV). This residential village in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, provides a loving and supportive home for children like Zibusiso who don't have parents or relatives to care for them. It is their goal to reunite children with their relatives and place them in safe homes. The village is also a supportive home for children for whom no relatives can be found, family members have passed away, or they require removal from an abusive situation.

KCV has been a safe and happy home for Zibusiso for the past 18 years. Zibu, as he is fondly called by his KCV family, says, "KCV is home, and my life in Khayelihle has been wonderful." Despite initial challenges and the loss of his biological family, memories of his childhood at KCV are filled with joy. According to KCV Director, Vimbai Vuma, he was known as "a joyous and a very

friendly boy." KCV has provided a family unit for Zibusiso. There are various houses in the village where the children live. Zibusiso enjoys the interaction with his friends and the support of the house mother. "The lounge is where we sit as a family and discuss many issues." Zibusiso describes how they can open up and share with others. "Everyone can share their day." He also describes his experiences living at KCV as "adventurous."

Furthermore, KCV has supported Zibusiso in both extracurricular and academic activities. During 2015, Zibusiso expressed his desire to pass his primary school exams to begin high school. One day he hoped to become a teacher. "I want to teach children what they don't know. And to see how life is when they grow up," Zibusiso said. During high school he was a member of the debate and public speaking club. "I was also a representative under the junior ministry of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage. I was advocating for preservation of our culture whilst embracing the changes brought by technology." This experience made him very happy. "I got to encounter and share ideas with other child representatives at national level." Having gained this variety of experience, Zibusiso was able to explore other ideas for his future, leaving behind childhood thoughts of teaching. "It was at high school when he developed a passion to be a lawyer. He was focused and determined to work hard to achieve his dreams," Mrs Vuma said.

Now 20 years of age, Zibusiso looks forward to even more adventures ahead of him.

He plans to study abroad and is currently applying to Australian universities to study law. "My hope is to gain broad experience with young aspiring leaders from different corners of the world. I wish to further my degree and specialise in intellectual property law." Zibusiso believes the knowledge from abroad will be of great use to his country, Zimbabwe. "It will be a great pleasure to contribute immensely to the growth of our country, especially the judiciary sector," he says.

There are about 42 children living at KCV, varying in age from infants to young adults. These are children like Zibusiso who, despite being separated from their biological families, see bright futures for themselves because of their family at KCV.

Zibusiso wants to be a role model and "show that history does not determine your future, but through determination and faith in God, you can set your path." Zibusiso says confidently, "I can stand as an individual and say I am happy with who I am."

Your support of Khayelihle Children's Village provides children like Zibusiso with a safe place to call home. The holistic support offered enables children to grow and develop into young adults with the self-confidence needed for their future.

Sponsor a child like Zibusiso, and help KCV give them a safe home and holistic support. You can be a part of a child's adventure. See what life is like through their eyes! Sponsor a child online at gmp.org.au/child-sponsorship or call 1800 467 222.