



UPLIFTMENT PROJECT IN ADDO SUNDAYS RIVER VALLEY

Back in 1994, Muffy Miller, wife of well-known local citrus farmer Charlie Miller, decided she had to try to help the people living in Langbos, an informal settlement close to their farm. Approximately 500 people live there in dire poverty – no water or electricity and no work.

Muffy initiated the building of the Langbos Crèche and Care Centre – a safe haven in the midst of poverty. This project has now grown to include a community centre, playground, perma-culture garden, solar panels and a wind turbine to power the centre. So far 8 jobs have been created and approximately 40 children attend the crèche daily. A soup kitchen is also hosted twice a week. The Langbos Crèche and Care Centre is a registered NPO and falls under the auspices of the Mayibuye Ndlovu Development Trust.

This project was chosen by the Citrus Growers Association during their CGA Citrus Summit held in Port Elizabeth in March 2017 to be one of the two charities in the region that was deemed to be deserving of financial assistance. R50 000 was donated to Muffy and the Centre to assist towards their next project – the construction of the Superadobe style Langbos Children’s Home. This project

is under the very capable direction of Christopher and Nick Grava, who hail from Nashville, Tennessee

The construction project uses low cost, environmentally friendly, earth based building materials and is simple in structure but quite labour intensive as about 30 men and women from the settlement have been trained as labourers, and have been quick to learn and are very proud to have been involved in the construction.

Essentially long sandbags, locally manufactured fertiliser bags, are filled with moistened earth and arranged in layers. The bags are tamped down and strands of barbed wire are placed between each layer to act as mortar and reinforcement. These bags, once layered are then plastered over, and then painted. The flat roofs in some of the sections allows for the harvesting of runoff rain water which is then used for the vegetable garden.

The impact of this project on residents in this settlement has been



astonishing. The workers who range from teenagers to pensioners were trained with collaboration from Eco Domes Africa. Some of the builders have managed to save enough from their earnings to purchase their own vehicles and equipment to work on constructing Superadobe homes as their own businesses.

This has not been easy – there have been about 50 people involved in the execution of the project, from donors, filmmakers, architects, engineers, teachers and the amateur community building team!

GLORIA WEARE

The full story is available from christophergrava@gmail.com
Extracts were taken from www.earthworksmagazine.co.za

NOTE FROM CHRIS GRAVA:

“Our efforts at Intsikelelo are led by my brother (Nick) and I, as well as my brother’s wife, Nokwanda, who is a South African from Durban.”

Photographs supplied by Chris Grava with GoPro sponsorship.

