

Zimele

Community Based Self Employment Project



Zimele women gather to make dolls to be sold on the US market

Zimele has spearheaded social development and women's empowerment projects in remote, impoverished areas of KwaZulu-Natal since its inception in early 2007. They have proven to be effective in breaking the cycle of 'hand-out dependency' through empowering and nurturing the women they work with to find ways to help themselves.

We love this program for their gentle nurturing approach through facilitation that leads the women to believe in their own ability to work their way out of poverty. Their focus is on skills development and consciousness shifting from lack to abundance. The core focus of the Zimele model is on strengths, assets, capabilities, empowerment, collaboration and sound business practices.

Women are invited to join savings groups which also provide emotional, spiritual and physical support to its members. They believe that skills development is not just about training people for employment; it must also empower people to create opportunities to make a living for themselves. The model provides loans (from within the savings groups or externally) for purchasing of raw materials or equipment. Participating women are mentored in developing their chosen skill in the following areas:

Craft development; Beading, Cooking, Sewing as well as Agriculture, Early Child Hood Development and Business and Marketing. The **Jewel in the Crown** for Zimele lies in their commitment to seeking out and providing markets for the qualifying goods through their Fairtrade membership.

Their membership base is growing rapidly and currently Zimele operate in 4 districts within Kwa Zulu Natal and nurture over 4000 rural women.



Bead work made by the Winterton Zimele women's group