



Joining a Community for Humanity Ikamva Labantu--Cape Town, South Africa

Project Goals

- ◆ To help redress the devastating economic consequences of apartheid for the poor black communities of Cape Town
- ◆ To be part of South Africa's transition to democracy and its citizens' transition towards economic independence
- ◆ To gain experience working with a non-governmental organization (NGO)

Personal Goals

- ◆ To be involved in grassroots coexistence work at an exciting and critical time for South Africa
- ◆ To meet people different from me in every conceivable way, and to experience the culture, politics, and history of an area of the world I knew nothing about

Activities

- ◆ Assisted in the establishment of a take-out restaurant at a homeless shelter, Ikhaya Labantu, in order to create jobs for shelter residents and generate profit to help with shelter running costs
- ◆ Gave English lessons to Angolan refugees
- ◆ Assisted shelter residents with resumes, job searches, job references, and enrollment in educational institutions

Key Dilemmas

- ◆ The overwhelming unemployment, lack of financial opportunities, and lack of educational/employment histories for poor black South Africans
- ◆ The xenophobia that exists between South Africans and the refugees that are pouring into the country, largely due to the perception that refugees are taking already-scarce jobs and resources, as well as a lack of mutual cultural awareness
- ◆ The difficulties of running an NGO (lack of funding, inefficient structure and allocation of resources, intraorganizational personal and political struggles)



Lessons Learned

- ◆ South Africa has tremendous difficulties to overcome, such as its unemployment, poverty, crime, AIDS epidemic, and xenophobia.
- ◆ Efforts like that of Ikamva Labantu, which provides solutions to immediate problems at an interpersonal, individual, grassroots level, are important to accompany the maddeningly incremental actions of government.
- ◆ Progress in coexistence work can be frustratingly slow, but it is important to remain focused and motivated.



Page 6, left: Zach knew this friend only as "Bhuti" which is Xhosa for "brother." Right: A simple beaded pin with a ribbon motif signifying AIDS awareness; South Africa is gripped by an AIDS crisis. Page 7, above: Zach's internship involved plenty of office work including phone calls, typing and planning. He is shown here with one of his office friends. Right: Outside the homeless shelter with Aidah, a Kenyan refugee. Below: An animal pin made by a township resident is attached to a greeting card; making these cards brings in a few rands a week to the artists.

