

HANDS AT WORK IN AFRICA

STHOBELA B COMMUNITY

SOUTH AFRICA | OSHOEK REGION

The community of Sthobela is nestled in the hills of the Oshoek area, situated alongside the border of South Africa and Eswatini. It is made up of people from Eswatini who often do not have documentation and also people from a nearby province, KwaZulu-Natal, who come looking for opportunities to provide for their families through farming. Within these beautiful, grassy, rolling hills, it is frequently cold and windy, which creates unique practical challenges for the community.

Due to the lack of employment in Sthobela B, many people survive by ploughing their own fields for food, but this makes them very dependent on the weather for provision for their families. There is also limited access to clean water within the community.

In 2014, Hands at Work recognised that Sthobela was a vulnerable community and there was a need to expand our care to this area. After walking in the community, Hands at Work mobilised volunteers from the local church to help identify the most vulnerable children in their community. That was when the Sthobela A Community Based Organisation started.

Over the years, Hands at Work saw that some of the children being cared for at the nearby Oshoek Care Point were not able to attend during the school holidays as they relied on the school bus to bring them. Sthobela B CBO was established in response to this challenge, providing a Care Point that the children can walk to.

Care Workers began walking in the Sthobela B community and visiting the homes of children and their families, assessing their needs to identify the most vulnerable children to invite to come under the care of the CBO. In March 2018, including the children who had moved across from the Oshoek Care Point, the most vulnerable children started receiving a nutritious meal daily and support with their education and health care.

Though there are just four Care Workers currently, many of the children come from a small number of families. When Care Workers visit their homes, they are able to assess and check in on the well-being of multiple children from one family. In time, it is hoped that more Care Workers will be added to which will increase the number of families being reached by Sthobela B.

An exciting step for the Sthobela B CBO was the construction of new toilets in 2020. Having these toilets ensures the health and hygiene of the children that they are committed to serving. Following this, in 2021 and 2022, a new kitchen and children's shelter were built so that the children continue to be safe and protected as they play and eat at the Care Point.



Number of Care Workers **3**
 Coordinator Name **Nelly**
 Distance from Local Office **11km**
 Basic Services Started In **2018**