

LIFE SAVING MENTOR MOTHERS

An immersive experience of the day-to-day life and work of One to One Africa's Mentor Mothers, beyond the tar roads of the deep rural Eastern Cape.

A Photographic Exhibition at the Bernard Jacobson Gallery

Magnum Photographer Lindokuhle Sobekwa

1-5 November 2022

LIFE SAVING MENTOR MOTHERS

Every day, in the remote, impoverished rural communities of the Eastern Cape of South Africa, One to One's 35 Mentor Mothers set off to cover part of the 100 square km of their 'patch'. Living amongst the people of their communities gives them an innate understanding of the women and children living there. This allows the opportunity to ensure that health care services are provided at a moment's notice and allows them to build strong relationships with our clients. Mentor Mothers also provide basic healthcare and wellbeing guidance, and ensure, for example, that people stick to their treatment regimens – essential for the effective treatment of HIV.

This exhibition is a visual exploration, through the lens of acclaimed Magnum photographer Lindokuhle Sobekwa, of the work of the Mentor Mothers and the communities they serve.

If you would like to give a donation to support this work, please use the QR code, or visit onetoonechildrensfund.org/donate. You can also support the charity by buying a print, a third of which Lindokuhle is generously donating to One to One.



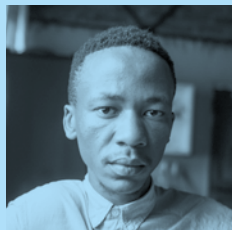
Lindokuhle Sobekwa, Magnum Photographer

Lindokuhle Sobekwa is an acclaimed South African photographer and Magnum Member, born and based in Thokoza. He uses visual storytelling as a way to share personal stories and of those in his environment.

"My education in photography was not only based in school, where they teach you, but in the people I photograph."

Lindokuhle's early projects dealt with poverty and unemployment in the townships of South Africa, as well as the growing nyaope drug crisis within them. His ongoing works, as well as revisiting those early themes, also deal with his own life – for example his relationship with his sister, Ziyanda, who died after becoming estranged from her family.

In 2021, Lindokuhle chose to visit the Eastern Cape and focus his lens on the work of the One to One Children's Fund Mentor Mothers. This exhibition features a selection of his photographs, which illustrate the vital community health role played by these unique women, who guide thousands of mothers and children through issues such as family planning, HIV and treatment adherence.



Portrait photographed by Refilwe Mrwebi

Gqibelo Dandala, Executive Director, One to One Africa

As the new Executive Director of One to One Africa, Gqibelo Dandala brings a passionate and practical approach to our work, informed by the unusual balance of her background in investment banking and her enthusiasm for development work.

Co-founder of the Future of the African Daughter (FOTAD), a development organisation that helps girls become impactful leaders, her work was recognised by Michelle Obama at the Young African Women Leaders Forum.

A respected business and motivational speaker, Gqibelo is also a member of the UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group and sits on the board of Rural African Youth Initiative NPC.

"I am Gqibelo Dandala, a descendant of rural people who studied their way out of poverty. There is an incredible sense of purpose in being able to bring dignity to women and children from the most remote villages – to be able to provide them with the skills and resources they need to sustainably increase their health, and their happiness."



Portrait photographed by Rob Piper; Camera: Canon 7D MKII with 50mm f1.4 lens

Vuyokazi Gwadiso, Mentor Mother

In South Africa, half of child deaths occur within the first month of life and 24% of pregnant mothers are HIV positive. Through One to One's Enable project, our Mentor Mothers work with the most vulnerable – expectant mothers and children up to the age of five – through door-to-door visits. They arrange regular visits to monitor their health, provide support and advice and, if further medical care or drugs are required, refer them on to a clinic. The stand-out achievement of so far has been an almost 0% mother-to-child transmission of HIV rate, after more than 500 births.

One of our Mentor Mothers is Vuyokazi Gwadiso, from Ntshilini, a single mother of 2 children.

She was one of the first cohort of Mentor Mothers, joining in 2016. She is HIV+ and says,

"I learnt that you have to adhere to treatment, eat a certain way, live a certain way.

Now, as a Mentor Mother, I can teach other people, using myself as an example."

"I am prepared to offer the best to all people who I am of service to. In detrimental and discouraging situations I never lose sight of my goals to benefit others. I always learn from my mistakes, and corrections from other people are most highly regarded and accepted."



Portrait photographed by Lindokuhle Sobekwa



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All exhibition sales will be managed by Magnum Photos

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The prints are available in an edition of 7 (+2APs) each,
at the cost of £1,800/\$2,000 + VAT and shipping, unframed.

PRINT FOR AUCTION #1



Fine art print [#1 of edition of 7 only], framed for auction, with certificate of authenticity signed by the artist, accompanied by a personal note from Lindokuhle Sobekwa.

Image 500x700mm and print 600x800mm.
Framed 662mm x 833mm. Printed on Hahnemule Fine Art Baryta 325gsm. 100% Cotton-white-barium sulphate coating.

© Lindokuhle Sobekwa/Magnum Photos

PRINT FOR AUCTION #2



Fine art print [#1 of edition of 7 only], framed for auction, with certificate of authenticity signed by the artist, accompanied by a personal note from Lindokuhle Sobekwa.

Image 500x700mm and print 600x800mm.
Framed 662mm x 833mm. Printed on Hahnemule Fine Art Baryta 325gsm. 100% Cotton-white-barium sulphate coating.



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SHARPENING OUR IMAGE

On Lindokuhle's visit to the Eastern Cape in 2021, he conducted a workshop with the Mentor Mothers to teach them how to use their mobile phones to take moving and atmospheric shots of their work. This workshop has provided us with an innovative and sustainable way to receive regular updates directly from the field, and has empowered the Mentor Mothers to tell their story from their unique and personal perspective.

Two Mentor Mothers reflect on what this meant to them in letters to Lindokuhle below.



Ndingu Nopasika Mkhundlu ndingumama Mentor Mother
e One to One from 2016 ndiphangela emankosi
kwi area yase Luqolweni
Mama ndingomama wobantu abakhule ngapha
ndle kwabazali ebomini boni ndandibiza ukuba
ndizoba yicesi kodwa ke zizigajezeki imfuno nge
nxa yokuba ndingena mntu kodwa ke nako ntoni
wabile apha e One to One. ndingumama woban-
tuwane abasomnyeni onga phangela liyo mna ke
ndine thebe lokuba uthixo wondigcina mna
ndibe khulise abom abantu. Cukosi

My name is Nopasika Mkhundlu. I am a Mentor Mother for One to One Africa since 2016 working in the Luqolweni, Mankosi area.

I am one of many who grew up orphaned. My childhood dream was to study and become a nurse but because I did not have anyone this was not achieved. This is why I am very happy working for One to One

I am also married with 5 children. My husband is unemployed so my wish is that God continues to keep me so I can continue to raise my children.



Into endinike umala ngam
-Ifuni bidingayikualalaye bidingakajaye
ukufetse bidingimise ifuni naba kanjani
ndingakuthuli naba kuvele ntoni
-Ndifumane ukuba undinike umala
kakuwu ngalendlela ngoku ndifunde ngayo.

I am someone who does not like taking pictures. I never really cared how to hold a phone, position it in a way the phone captures good pictures. The way you taught us gave me great interest.



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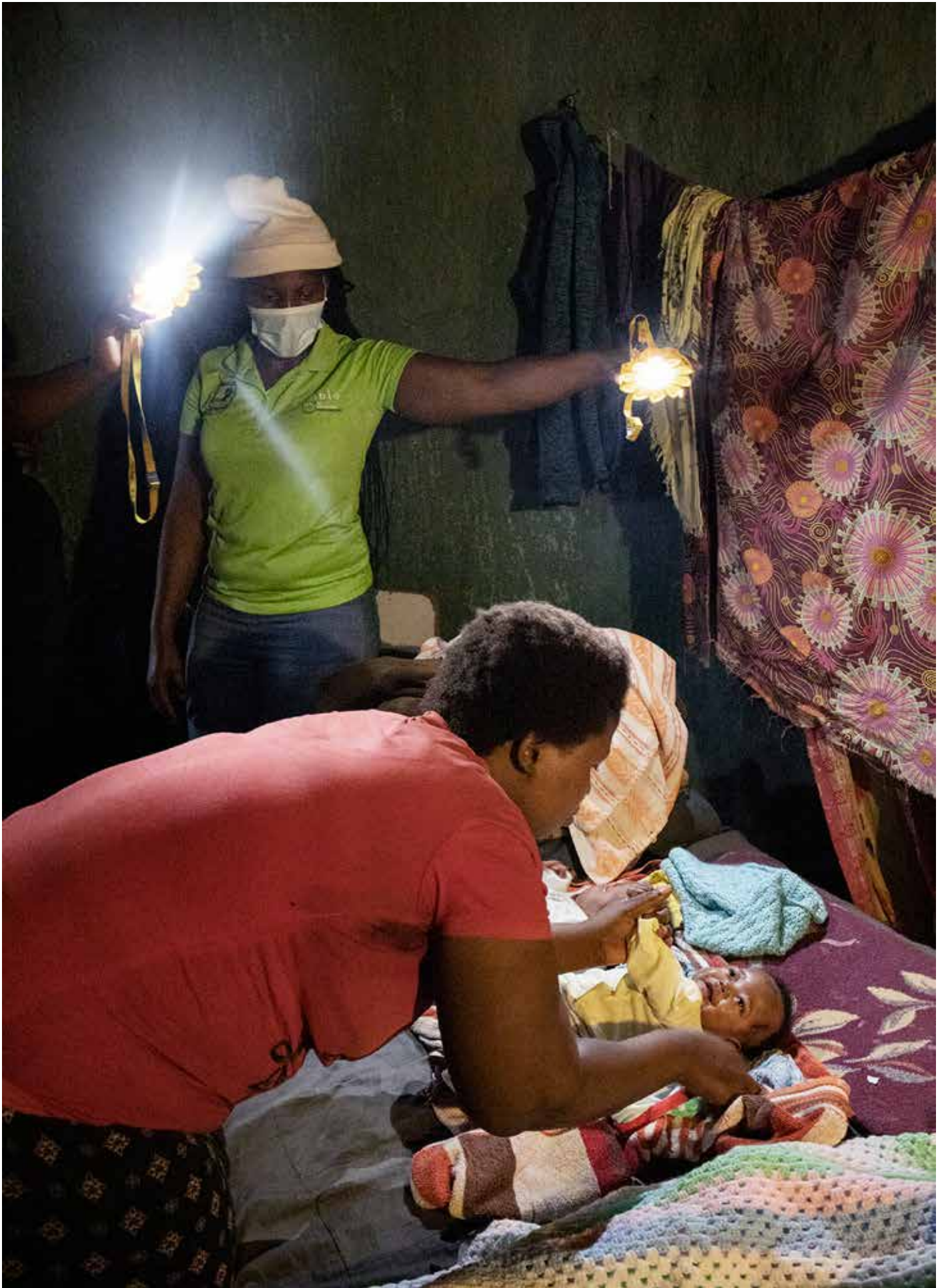
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IMPROVING LIVES ON THE LAST MILE

by Hazel Friedman

The road to Tshani Village along the Eastern Cape's breathtakingly beautiful Wild Coast is not for the easy rider. As one veers off the main route from Coffee Bay, along the coastline, tar turns to gravel, then rock and, depending on the time of the year, a grinding, dust-drenched or mud-soaked obstacle course.

Safe navigation entails swerving to avoid dongas or herds of cattle, donkeys and goats jaywalking nonchalantly across the path. Traditional Pondo rondavels dot the surrounding hills; below swirls the Indian Ocean, framed by gargantuan cliffs overhanging the pristine, secluded Mdumbi Beach with its Milkwoods forests, feeding into and off abundant mangrove estuaries.

This is about as wild and pristine as any Edenic landscape can be. But the surface seduction of its natural beauty and unique biodiversity belies the harsh daily realities of the rural communities living in Tshani and 34 neighbouring villages. Part of the Eastern Cape's OR Tambo Municipality, these villages were formerly incorporated into the Apartheid Bantustan or quasi-independent 'homeland' of Transkei.

To date, they – like much of the Wild Coast – have been sheltered from the effects of rampant development, thereby maintaining their unique wilderness. But they have also been left behind, their paradisaical vistas pockmarked by poverty and their development carbuncled by the scars of neglect. They are called 'Last Mile' communities because they inhabit the furthest villages from the main tar roads. Beyond their frontiers, there is nothing but wilderness.

"Tar roads are a linkage to urbanization, and by default resources, development and all that that represents," observes Gqibelo Dandala, South Africa's Director of One to One Africa.

"The greater the distance between a community and a tar road, the more severe the impoverishment. These last mile communities have been left without resources or services. These are the communities we support and serve."

These 'Last Mile' communities form the fulcrum of this ground-breaking photographic exhibition and installation. It has been conceptualised by David Altschuler, who heads the United Kingdom-based One to One Children's Fund – a global NGO established in 2001. One to One's pioneering accomplishments include spearheading the distribution of anti-retroviral treatment to children during a time when South Africa was in the throes of Aids denialism, despite being ravaged by the pandemic.

Today, One to One's methodology of distribution has become a replicated model for government, with HIV transmission rates from mother to child reduced to 0.03%. But in a post-Covid context, the challenges of prevention and treatment have increased, particularly in remote rural communities.

As explained by Dandala, the objectives of this exhibition are twofold: firstly, to showcase the valuable work undertaken by One to One Africa, as a fully-fledged, autonomous entity, and as part of its three-year journey towards sustainability. The second objective is to provide overseas-based stakeholders and supporters with the tactile experience of the challenging environment and resilient communities where One to One Africa operates and serves. Under curator Susan Ansley-Johnson's sensitive eye, a sanitised white art cube has been transformed into an immersive installation, in which the viewer is transported from the gallery space into a vast, remote and intractable landscape.

Internationally acclaimed South African photographer Lindokuhle Sobekwa, who is a member of the prestigious Magnum Photo Agency, was commissioned to shoot the images that comprise the wallpaper, video and individual photographs on display. Born in the Gauteng township of Katlehong, Sobekwa's personal and professional trajectories are inextricably entwined, whether in search of answers and healing to family wounds, to document urban despair and the ravages wrought by drug abuse or simply, *"to tell my own stories, stories that concern me and the people I live with."*

For the One to One show, Sobekwa has undertaken a physical, visual and emotional pilgrimage through Tshani Village and surrounds to tell the stories and document the challenges, struggles and triumphs of these last mile communities.

Women bear the biggest burden of underdevelopment. They sustain the subsistence rural economy and head many of the households. In an environment where there is up to 90% unemployment, most of the elderly in the 35 villages – indeed along the entire Wild Coast – are dependent on social grants to sustain their children and grandchildren. Still steeped in ancient customary law, many members of these ageing communities remain unversed in the rights to which they are entitled in a contemporary constitutional republic. But bolstered by the advent of democracy, they believed that, with government support, this would become the promised land. Yet it is now a place of empty promises, where the ongoing intimacy with hardship has yielded an acceptance of poverty and neglect as a way of life.

Ironically, these rural villages are surrounded by water yet with not a drop to drink, save for the communal short taps, designed, and installed to accommodate a mere 20 litre bucket of water per household. Healthcare and education are inadequate, bulk infrastructure non-existent. The roads are inaccessible and reaching neighbouring villages entails an arduous trek through the hills. Consequently, many of the youth raised in these remote villages have migrated from this seemingly idyllic landscape to the cities, often into impoverished informal settlements on the urban periphery in search of food security, jobs, and a brighter future.

But while the remaining members of the community are bereft of basic resources, they are rich in resilience and hope. Nowhere is this more evident than in the work undertaken by the One to One Mentor Mothers. They constitute the maternal anchors of Tshani Village, where the One to One office is located, as well as in the 34 surrounding villages where the elderly and infirm are often the guardians of the young and vulnerable. One Mentor Mother is selected per village to pay monthly visits to each household, as facilitator, monitor and nurturer. To qualify for this role, she must have a matric level of literacy. Subsequently, she is put through an intensive training course, equipping her to perform multiple roles that would send a seasoned healthcare specialist scurrying into retirement.

In accordance with the mandate and history of One to One's pioneering HIV prevention and treatment roll-out, the focus of the Mentor Mothers is predominantly on the education and care of pregnant women with children under six years old. Their work complements the role played by the recently established team of One to One Educational Mothers who train parents and caregivers in a range of skills essential to early childhood development. The One to One Mentor Mothers also target malnutrition, acute and chronic diseases, facilitating access to treatment, as well as assisting with vital personal information like ID documents. Implementing these duties entails household census-taking and clinic referrals, walking vast distances to each household in the village to screen and follow-up the general status, numbers, education, nutrition and health requirements of each family. In short, the One to One Mentor Mothers fulfil the crucial role of rural community healthcare workers, sustaining lives along the last mile, where even a Panado tablet is in scant supply.

These heroic One to One Mentor Mothers form the principal focus of Sobekwa's lens.

They are photographed tilling fields and sowing crops, trudging miles from household to household and engaging with their clients in the dim, diffused light and intimacy of rudimentary thatch-and-mud homesteads. The images do not evoke the prettification of poverty. They are paradoxical pictures of immense struggle set against a vast, intractable, yet alluring backdrop. Indeed poverty presents several faces: puckered by hardship and weathered by life's stress-fractures. But the eyes of the One to One Mentor Mothers exude hope, resilience and dreams of a better life, especially for the children they mentor and lightening the load for future generations. They are portraits of passion, purpose and the unfailing commitment to go the extra mile, transforming the last mile into another step along the path to self and community empowerment.

Hazel Friedman is an award-winning investigative journalist, documentarian, author, art critic and writer on contemporary culture.



www.onetoonechildrensfund.org

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Exhibition photographed by Lindokuhle Sobekwa
Camera: Fujifilm GFX 50R with 45mm lens and Canon EOS R with 24-105mm lens

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