

3 June 2010

## **Mbekweni scores with new UK-funded indoor sports facility**

The Mbekweni community, on the outskirts of Paarl in the Western Cape, will benefit from a state-of-the-art multi-purpose indoor sports facility to be officially opened on 12 June 2010, by UK based **Hope Through Action** together with its implementing partner, **SCORE** – a South African based Sports and Development NGO working to change lives through sport..

Hundreds of youth and children will join community leaders and the sporting community of Mbekweni to celebrate this landmark occasion, the beginning of new era in sport for the community. Hope Through Action and SCORE will host a number of invited dignitaries and guests at the official opening, which will include a football festival, a traditional ceremony, a match between Mbekweni's first high school volleyball teams (started just three months ago through this program) and a host of other activities for the youth and visitors. The 5-a-side football festival is the main highlight, being the first football competition played by mixed-gender teams.

The opening itself will be done by the Chairman of the England Football League, Lord Mawhinney, together with the Mayor of the Drakenstein Municipality. A community church service will be held in the venue to complete the launch on Sunday.

Funded by Hope Through Action, this exciting new venue is built to the latest specifications. It has changing rooms, an astro turf pitch, seating for 450 spectators, as well as rooms for counselling, meetings and workshops. It is designed specifically to provide members of the community, and especially children and youth, with a safe, controlled environment in which to play and learn.. SCORE, the implementation partner of Hope Through Action, will initially manage the day to day running of the centre. SCORE will offer a range of sporting and training activities that are aimed at youth development, fostering social cohesion, and using sport as a tool to achieve social impact beyond the sports field.

Hope Through Action Trustee, Phillip Green explains, "The centre is for use by the Mbekweni community, and will be a place of safety, fun, education and sport for all. Our aim is to offer focused and free of charge sport, welfare, health and education programmes to children and youth in the vicinity."

Extensive community involvement and consultation in the design and running of the centre and its programmes has ensured that community stakeholders, local community-based organisations, other non-profit organisations and Government departments are all involved in the initiative. These partnerships are crucial to long term sustainability; the centre has a business plan to generate income to cover running costs, and SCORE will train community sports leaders to manage and maintain the centre and its programs.

Kwezi Shumi, Project Coordinator, said, "The centre will be a community hub where SCORE will facilitate daily sports and recreational activities for children and youth. We will introduce "new" sports to children and, most importantly, strengthen existing sports leagues whilst promoting the growth and establishment of new leagues and structures. Our role will be to mentor and train peer coaches, facilitate life and leadership skills training and implement fun and educational programmes. We want to increase the well-being and performance of the children and youth in our community in all aspects of their lives."

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#### **NOTE TO EDITORS**

**SCORE – Changing Lives and Building Stronger, Healthier Communities through Sport**  
High resolution jpegs of the centre are available on request.

#### **About SCORE**

SCORE is an African-based Sport for Development organisation that uses sport to empower individuals and build stronger, healthier communities. Having grown from a pioneering volunteer project in Khayelitsha, Cape Town, in 1991, the organisation is now an internationally recognised leader in the Sport and Development sector in southern Africa.

Sports administration and coaching courses include life-skills and leadership components that extend beyond the sports field to strengthen community structures and meet broader community development needs. In addition, sport exchange projects highlight the effectiveness of sport as a global language that cuts across social and cultural barriers to strengthen communities and build new partnerships.

SCORE's Sport for Development programmes are implemented by autonomous national entities in South Africa, Namibia, Zambia and the Netherlands. These entities are supported and co-ordinated by the SCORE International head office in Cape Town which also extends SCORE's reach to other countries and regions through implementing projects for partners and clients.

For further information on SCORE visit [www.score.org.za](http://www.score.org.za)

#### **Mission:**

*SCORE uses sport to provide children and youth with valuable skills and opportunities that they need to succeed in life and contribute to their communities.*

#### **ABOUT THE HOPE THROUGH ACTION FOUNDATION**

Hope Through Action is a charity specifically created to bring about an imaginative and life changing initiative for the young people of South Africa, using sport as a medium not only to develop physical ability but also to communicate positive life skills to assist in coping with difficult realities.

The organisation plans to provide sports facilities, beginning in Mbekweni, which address some of the urgent needs of the community. The objectives of the initiative are:

1. To enable young people to break out of the cycle of poverty, ill health, crime, drug abuse and marginalisation, and
2. To work together to achieve this by providing a means for them to increase their physical fitness, improve their self-esteem, increase their awareness of health issues, develop positive life skills and improve their employability

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