

Dikeledi Chakana



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Keys to Success: Dikeledi Chakana

Participant: Family Outreach Programme – Xola Naledi

Dikeledi Chakana is dressed in a long, pink satin dress with black high-heel shoes. Her eyes stare down at the floor and one can just make out her words when she greets us at the entrance of her home.

A myriad of personalities, the room we walk into serves as a kitchen, bedroom and lounge: its paper-thin walls let through the hustle and bustle of Xola Naledi – an informal settlement in Grabouw.

Children's laughter seeps through them as they play soccer in the dusty street, as does the sound of a soccer ball being kicked and the chatter of men and women as they walk past.

The tinny sound of African jazz wafts in from an old battery-operated radio in the adjoining room.

This is home not only for Dikeledi, but also for her two sisters, brother and mother.

We sit on crates near the window. Dikeledi's two sisters sit next to her leaning into her every now and again, giggling.

"My first born climbs up and down the walls, he is very energetic," says the fresh-faced 18-year old, single mother of four-year old Victor.

Victor is running circles in the room.

"He's naughty this one. As you can see he's very strong," says Dikeledi's sister, laughing.

Dikeledi enrolled into CECD's Family Outreach Programme in 2009 and practises what she has learnt daily.

"I wake up at 8, clean, cook and wash up, and then I sit with Victor and teach him his ABCs and his numbers because I wish for Victor to go to school. I want him to be a lawyer."

"Sometimes he likes to play. His favourite game is *upuca*," says Dikeledi.

Traditionally enjoyed in the townships, *upuca* involves each player throwing stones in the air and catching them with one hand – an ideal game for developing hand-eye co-ordination in young children.

Victor is bending his knees and moving his arms in time to the mixed beats on the radio.

"He loves it when I sing to him. When I use a shaker he turns his head to the sound," says Dikeledi who loves House and R&B music. She has a passion for writing her own lyrics, having recently written her own piece *Love takes time when you are hurt*. Singing, she says reflects what's she's feeling. It's like poetry to her. She dreams of being a musician one day.

"She's good," enthuses her sister.

She elbows Dikeledi and encourages her to sing.

Dikeledi shakes her head – tightlipped.

Dikeledi shoots a forlorn stare out the doorway into the dusty street.

"When I didn't have a child I used to be with Victor's father and now things have changed," she says. "The first year, when Victor was born, was quite an adjustment for me. In the first few months my mother was there to help, but she's back at work. She works as a packer. She's a strong woman, she takes care of us."

When asked what her biggest wish is, Dikeledi rolls her shoulders back and sits upright in her chair.

"I'd like to go back to school. Because of CECD I have learnt that education and learning are important," she says.

"They are the keys to success."

"Because of CECD I have learnt that education and learning are important. I want Victor to be a lawyer."

