

## 5000 Volunteers Care for 5000 Orphans

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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On December 7, the first male Tzu Cheng from South Africa received his certificate from Master Cheng Yen. He was among 1,200 overseas volunteers from 23 countries attending the 2010 Overseas Commissioner and Tzu Cheng Training Seminar in Hualien.

Zakhele Dumisa, a Zulu, received his badge together with five Zulu ladies who were certified as commissioners. Before the Seminar, they went to visit patients at Tzu Chi Medical Center in the city. Over the last 15 years in South Africa, it has been introduced by volunteers from Taiwan who settled in Durban and have attracted more than 5,000 Zulu members. They care for AIDS patients and provide lunches every day to more than 5,000 AIDS orphans, their only full meal of the day. South Africa is the country in the world worst hit by AIDS, with KwaZulu-Natal one of the worst affected provinces; Durban is the largest city of the province. The average salary in Durban is NT\$3,000 a month, with prices double those in Taiwan. Many Zulus live on the edge of poverty; but, despite this, they are ready to step forward and help their fellow countrymen and women.



The 12 Zulu volunteers were attending the seminar which ran from December 4-8; they were accompanied by three Taiwanese volunteers -- Michael Pan Ming-shui, Huang Chun-kai and his mother Liao Mei-ling. Hualien is their spiritual home. On the morning of December 6, Chun-kai, Dumisa and two lady colleagues, Tolakele Mhkize and Brenda Matebula, gave a presentation on their work in looking after the AIDS orphans; then they sang 'Ukitatala', a song in the Zulu language. Chun-kai is 29 and has an M.A. in mathematics from Cambridge University; he emigrated with his family to South Africa when he was 11 and started volunteer work with his mother among the Zulus. In the presentation, he said that South Africa was two worlds in one country. In June this year, it hosted the World Cup and was the object of everybody's attention. At the same time, many Zulus live in dilapidated homes of corrugated iron – but still are willing to stand up and help their fellow humans. Master Cheng Yen said that they had pulled themselves up from the nadir of life and risen to the heights of becoming Bodhisattvas.



In Durban, the volunteers have established more than 120 'love' vegetable gardens which they cultivate themselves; they use the produce at 120 food stations for the lunches for the 5,000 AIDS orphans. They also provide rice, cornflour and other foods to supplement the vegetables. The example of the Zulu women, to work in such difficult conditions, inspired the volunteers at the seminar.

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[Zulu volunteers in Hualien](#)