

# ZANONCEDO

## EMPOWERMENT CENTRE



Tsholomnqa (Chalumna) is a rural village 37km from East London and 20.4 km from Kayser's Beach which falls under the Buffalo City municipality in the Eastern Cape. Tsholomnqa (Chalumna) village lies on both sides of the R72 and Census 2011 divides it into Chalumna A which has 526 residents (98 % who identify as Black African and 96% who speak isiXhosa).<sup>1</sup> and Chalumna B consisting of 158 people, 100 % who identify as Black African, 97% of whom speak isiXhosa<sup>2</sup>. The village is named after the Tsholomnqa River which is approximately 78km long, forming at the confluence of two small rivers, the Qugwala in the West and the Mtyolo in the East. It empties into the Indian Ocean through an estuary near Kayser's Beach. The Tsholomnqa River formed the northern border of the former Ciskei shoreline until 27 April 1994 when all the apartheid era political regions were reincorporated into South Africa.<sup>3</sup>

The Zanoncedo Empowerment Centre is 39.8km from East London in the Mpongo location, Tsholomnqa just off the R72. The organisation currently provides HIV and other chronic diseases awareness and home-based care programmes, food gardening projects, after school programmes, bead work, youth sexual reproductive health and life skills projects, gender-based violence sensitisation workshops and a Youth Bank programme.

Zanoncedo started with only five volunteers in 2012 who selflessly dedicated their time, walking long distances to serve the community. In 2014 the numbers of volunteers grew to twenty-five and the first funding was received from SCAT in 2015 for administration which opened more doors. Teen pregnancies have been reduced as the number of young people accessing family planning and condoms increased. Zanoncedo's home based care and health campaigns also led to a decline in treatment default rates.

1. Frith, A. (2019). Census 2011: Main Place: Chalumna A. Retrieved October 12, 2019, from census2011.adrianfrith.com website: <https://census2011.adrianfrith.com/place/260155>
2. Frith, A. (2019). Census 2011: Sub Place: Chalumna B SP. Retrieved October 12, 2019, from census website: <https://census2011.adrianfrith.com/place/260168001>
3. Chalumna River | Revolv. (n.d.). Retrieved October 12, 2019, from <https://www.revolv.com/page/Chalumna-River>

## FAST FACTS

**NAME:** Zanoncedo Empowerment Centre

**LED BY:** Mandisa Dukashe

**MAIN CHALLENGES FACED BY THE COMMUNITY:** high alcohol and drug abuse, theft, teenage pregnancy, neglected/abused children, unemployed youth, chronic disease treatment default and poverty.

**MAIN ACTIVITIES:** home-based care; after care; youth homework and computer skills assistance; food gardening and YouthBank.

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## I ALMOST LOST HOPE UNTIL I FOUND ZANONCEDO



Vuyo Msizi hands over a computer donated by SCAT to Mandisa Dukashe, the director of Zanoncedo Empowerment Centre.



Zanoncedo Empowerment Centre.



Administrator Khanya Ngenge sorting pieces of craft.



WINDISA JIMANA

**WINDISA JIMANA COULD NOT FIND WORK AND ALMOST LOST HOPE UNTIL SHE RECONNECTED WITH A HIGH SCHOOL FRIEND ON FACEBOOK. THIS FRIEND WAS THE DIRECTOR OF ZANONCEDO EMPOWERMENT CENTRE, MANDISE DUKASHE, WHO INSPIRED WINDISA TO MAKE USE OF HER SKILLS AND PASSION IN SERVICE OF YOUNG PEOPLE.**

I am a 44-year-old single mother of three. I was born and raised in Ciqala Village, Chalumna. Growing up was not easy. My mother was a single parent and had to leave us every week since she was working in East London town. For five years, I had to walk to Tshlomnqa High School, which was more than 5km away from home. I passed my matric in 1995 but I never had a chance to continue my studies since there was no money. I had always wanted to become a nurse but as I grew up that changed. I always looked up to my Standard 2 (Grade 4) teacher, Ms Ntoni, and my cousin Sis Phumla. They both played a very important role in making me become the person I am today. Ms Ntoni formed social groups in school, where she introduced extra mural activities such as dance (both modern dance and African dance), drama, music, modelling, and sports. After school and on the weekend, Sis Phumla would take over from Ms Ntoni teaching and showing us more about dance and other things she thought would help us as young people. I was inspired by these two, now older ladies, who love beautiful things in life. I always reflect back on their teaching whenever there is something good or bad that is happening around me. They have free spirits and a willingness to grow young minds. After matric, even when life became difficult for me, I continued to do the extra mural activities I had learnt as a child with Ms Ntoni and Sis Phumla despite there being no sponsors.

Twenty years after passing my matric, I registered at Buffalo City TVET College and I obtained my National Diploma in Human Resources in 2011. I thought the Diploma would open doors for me and land me into a good paying job but unfortunately for me, I was not even called for a simple interview. I lost hope somehow. I was ready to give up when I met the Director of Zanoncedo Empowerment Centre, Mandise Dukashe, my high school classmate through a Facebook page in 2017. She called and invited me into the offices of Zanoncedo Empowerment Centre at Mpongo Village in Chalumna. She thoroughly explained to me about the organisation and its programme. She never promised me big money but encouraged me to give back to society through my passion for people and knowledge. She somehow opened my eyes. I could see God working through her at that moment. I saw lives that need to be rescued and I agreed to volunteer.

Later I was appointed as a Youth Care Coordinator. It pains me to see the way our young people conduct themselves in my community. It feels as if they have lost the purpose of their lives. The high rate of unemployment, teenage pregnancy, school dropouts, girls throwing themselves at older men and drug and alcohol abuse are killing us. I know that our community needs more people like me who have the heart to give to kids they didn't give birth to. My love for young children keeps me awake at night, trying to figure out the way to assist them.

Sometimes people look down on us, especially school teachers who always force us to do their prescribed syllabus even though we have our own modules as Peer Educators. They sometimes tell us that no one can rescue these kids' lives but fortunately God always proves them wrong. Most of the school kids always bring their problems to me and I am happy that I always manage to help them where and when necessary. We work very closely with the departments of Education, Social Development and Health, the SAPS, traditional leaders, local councillors and other NGOs around East London to fight against social issues like crime and teenage pregnancies in our villages. The number of taverns and shebeens in our area also bothers me a lot. Fortunately, the liquor board is slowly intervening with this. I work with a group of Peer Educators and Homework Assistants, as we assist the children with homework at some of our schools. We also assist girls who are doing matric from Tshlomnqa High, with basic computer skills. For me there is no stipulated timeframe for when I start and end my job. I listen, assist where and when I can, I refer to relevant people. I love what I do, I like to see happy, strong people.

Since 2017, Zanoncedo managed to employ 80 people. Since the matric pass rate has increased. Teen pregnancies have been reduced. We have really made a difference to young people's lives. I am now doing what I love. I am now able to inspire young people just as I was inspired by Ms Ntoni and Sis Phumla. My big dream now is to help build a Skills and Development Centre at Chalumna. Our young people really need this.

