

# HOPE TRIUMPHANT: THE CONQUEST FOR LIFE STORY

Westbury in Gauteng is a township wracked by gangsterism, drug running and crime. Unemployment rates among the youth in Westbury are up to 80%. It is in this environment of hopelessness and high teen suicide rates that Conquest for Life fights to keep hope alive, and counter the easy attractions of gang life for the youth.

Started in 1995, Conquest for Life (CFL), under its director Glen Steyn, runs a wide variety of programmes, all with a focus on the youth. Their projects range from the Youth Enrichment project - which focuses on after-school care including providing food, homework supervision and life skills, and teaches peace games to children in about 30 schools - to the Youth at Risk programme for school leavers which provides self-affirmation and life skills through voluntary community work. Other projects include Restorative Justice which brings victims of crime and the perpetrators together, and the Youth Service projects, run in conjunction with Technikon SA, which focus on early childhood development, community development and youth development. Conquest for Life has branches active in Soweto, Ennerdale and the Northern Cape as well.

With strong community goodwill and support, Conquest for Life sought SSACI's support for a job-creation project to provide 100 youths with technical, entrepreneurial and life skills. The aim is to provide disadvantaged young people with skills which could help them find jobs and to provide young entrepreneurs with the skills to start up their own small businesses. More specifically, the project teaches skills such as electrical appliance repair and house wiring, upholstery, detergent production and small business development in general.



At the nerve centre of Conquest

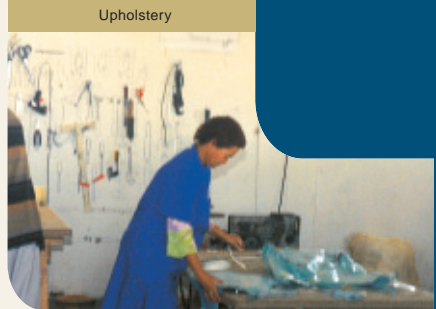
## Conquest for Life brings hope to the young amidst poverty and despair.

For those wanting to enter the job market, there is a post-training and mentoring programme. For example, the detergents production course includes establishing a year-long cottage industry for trainees at the CFL centre. For entrepreneurs, the aim is the establishment of micro-enterprises. Training includes skills such as marketing, customer relations, bookkeeping, record keeping and documentation, and so on. Successful graduates receive basic tools to get their businesses going and post-training mentorship and support, plus a small loan; or assistance with job-hunting and accessing learnerships in companies.

With SSACI's backing, the two-year project is already under way, and is training 20 youths in detergent production, 40 youths in upholstery repair and 40 youths in electrical repair and house wiring. The programme overall is showing signs of success and one-third of the 2002 graduates found jobs or opened up their own businesses within the first three months of completing the programme.

But perhaps the greatest achievement of all is that Conquest for Life brings hope to the young amidst poverty and despair. SSACI is right behind them.

Upholstery



Furniture making



Project Planning

