

NARRATIVE REPORT

Project # ZA 97398

Date of report: October 2017 – March 2018

Project Name: Lulisandla Kumntwana

Vision of the project

We aim to share the love of Christ with orphans & vulnerable children and their families responding to the Biblical instruction to care for the poor and needy, in particular James 1v27, to visit orphans in their distress. It is our aim also to encourage and to work alongside Christians and local churches to see the need of orphans and vulnerable children, and to support and to facilitate them in their efforts to fulfil the call of the Lord to minister to them.

Project background

Lulisandla Kumntwana (Reach Out to the Child), which is the community based outreach programme of Mseleni Children's Home, started working in June 2002. When the project started there was just one employee, a social worker. Under God's blessing it grew to a peak of 20 staff. During 2011 the funding cycle for a number of funders came to an end, and funding was not renewed. This meant that from October 2011 the number of staff for LK was significantly reduced, which also affected the services provided. By the grace of God, funding has continued, & since then some staff have been re-employed, & there has even been expansion in some areas. The area covered by the project is about 30 kilometres wide and 125 kilometres long, with a population of about 95000. LK currently has about 2500 orphans on its data base.

The foundation of the project was the network of Family Support Teams made up of Christians drawn from local churches. There were 50 teams with about 160 volunteers who each visit one or more orphan families on a regular basis & offer practical, social emotional and spiritual help. There are two coordinators who work with these teams, meeting with them bi-monthly and getting feedback, planning, and praying.

LK was a registered fostering agency, which means that children were assisted to access birth and death documents and IDs, foster parents were screened, home situations investigated, cases taken to the Children's Court, children were placed in foster care, and then assisted to apply for the foster child grant. Foster placements were supervised. LK ran workshops to train foster parents & also foster parent support groups. The fostering agency closed at the end of September 2016 and our cases were transferred to the Department of Social Development.

LK runs three day psycho-social support workshops which help orphans to deal with the emotional trauma of losing their parents, and also give life skills training. (These were monthly, but currently bimonthly.) There are three support groups for HIV+ teens. There was a staff member who does memory box work with the orphans.

LK employed a pastoral coordinator who was available to counsel individuals and families. In addition to this he worked with the Family Support Teams to help them develop their spiritual ministry. He facilitated at the foster parent training workshops and psycho social support workshops, and gave pastoral support to the staff team.

There were five youth clubs running a weekly programme for youth in general. Some of these clubs started income generating projects. There were also inter club competitions, and outings. With the reduced staff, it has not been possible to continue running these clubs. However, in 2012 a new Youth Development Programme was launched, focusing on unemployed young people aged 18 – 35. The programme runs 4 week long life skills courses, aiming to build positive attitudes & motivate the young people to look for volunteering or employment opportunities, or to further their studies.

The coordinators do a lot of work with the schools. LK has been successful in getting each school to appoint one teacher as OVC liaison officer and that teacher becomes the link person with LK. When necessary orphans are assisted to get exemption from school fees, and when funding is available, school uniforms are provided for many who need them (about 200 children a year). Often the schools will call in the LK staff if there is an orphan who is having a problem at school, or if they know of a new orphan family. LK also ran 21 After School Clubs twice weekly, giving orphans in the school concerned help with homework, games and crafts and life skills. Most of these are not running currently because of funding constraints, but one was re-established in January 2013 and in 2014 a further two were added.

Each year LK ran Careers Days in High Schools giving youth in general advice about what courses are available and how to apply to tertiary institutions and for loans and bursaries. Orphans are assisted where possible to go on educational school trips, and also with applications to tertiary institutions transport costs of attending interviews.

While the aim is to assist orphan families to access the foster child grant in the long run, food parcels are given to families in dire need. There are also some children who became orphaned when they were too old to be eligible for the foster child grant, or for whom documents could not be obtained in time, but these young people still need to complete school, so LK supports them with food parcels and school uniforms where necessary.

LK also had a number of vegetable gardens run by the Family Support Teams or based on the After School Clubs. There were two hydroponics projects.

Some orphan families are assisted with repair of houses, or rebuilding of houses

LK had a community developer whose task was to assist groups of women to form self help groups with the aim of encouraging them to save, to help each other, and to start small businesses. These groups are now monitored and encouraged by the Cluster Level Associations formed by the groups in the three areas. There were 43 groups with over 700 group members.

Progress

During these six months the coordinators have continued to work in the community and with families and through the schools to give support and care to orphans and vulnerable children. 118 children have been counselled, and 23 families. They have investigated the home circumstances of 127 children. While the foster agency itself is no longer operating, our coordinators have been involved in resolving problems in 48 foster families. They work very closely also with the schools and have monitored the progress of 84 children in school. Once again, CoCos Foundation has raised money for school uniforms (so often a reason for children dropping out of school, or feeling very embarrassed as they wear old and shabby clothes) The uniforms have been purchased and are ready for distribution after Easter.

Both of our After Schools Clubs (at Mdinwa and Ekuseni) closed the year with a Christmas Party. Then when the new year opened we were delighted to hear that Reach Out To The Child (UK) were ready to sponsor another club. In February we were able to recruit two facilitators. A training day was run, refreshing the skills of the facilitators already working, and training the two new ones. It was a fun day, filled with lots of practical activities. Vusi and S'li are doing a good job in the new club at Nhlamvu Primary School at Mseleni.



Facilitator Training



The new KwaNhlamvu After School



One of the shops near to Mbazwana contacted us towards the end of 2017 offering to give a party for orphans under our programme, so we were able to organise and transport 50 of our orphans. The business gave the children food and presents, and our staff organised lots of fun games.

In October the team ran a Psycho Social Support Workshop at Mnqobokazi, which 185 children attended.



In September 2017 the Youth Development Team ran a Life Skills Course at Mozi. They commented that this was a very remote area with extremely poor infrastructure, and very few services. There were 13 students. We wait to see what the impact has been in their lives. Following that there was another course at Esiphahleni with 15 students. In February and March there were courses at Nhlamvu (34) and Tshongwe (7).

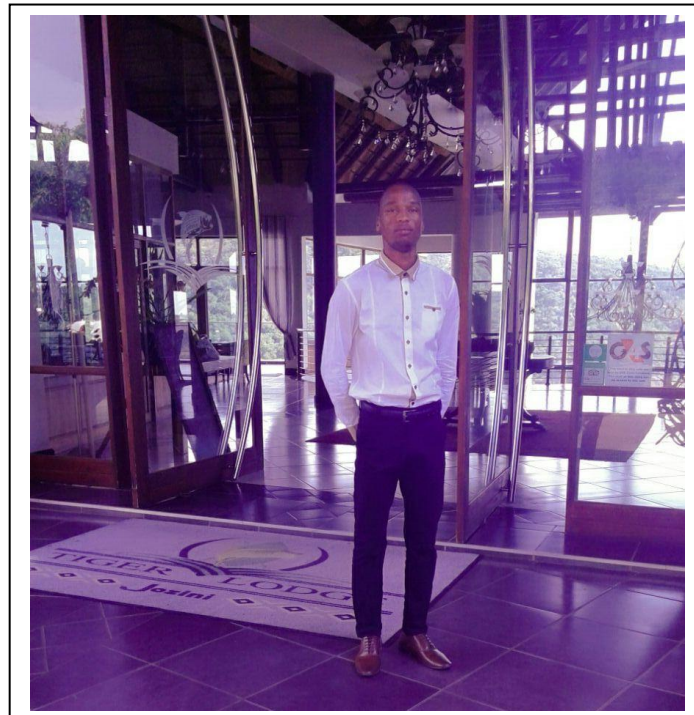
ANALYSIS DECEMBER 2012 - JUNE 2017

Number of courses 43

Number of students 1190

	BEFORE					AFTER					
	nothing	work	study	volunteer	self-employed	nothing	work	study	volunteer	self-employed	coop
No:	1024	23	50	33	60	653	195	185	49	45	63
%	86%	2%	4%	3%	5%	55%	16%	16%	4%	4%	5%

A further 62 students were added to those who have been helped to apply and register at Tertiary & vocational Training Colleges in the first quarter of 2018. There are 10 young people who are receiving extra help for food and accommodation while they are in training. One of these is Phakamani, who was part of various programmes under Lulisandla Kumntwana as he grew up. He has now completed his Diploma in Tourism, and is doing in service training at the prestigious Tiger Lodge at Jozini.



2017 was a very busy year for the CoCos Foundation who continue to send teams to build houses for needy orphan families. It makes such a difference to the lives of these families, and we see them having a more positive attitude and so the improvement spills over into other aspects of their lives. In November two more houses were built, adding to the 6 which were built in April to September.

BEFORE



AFTER



or

The support group for HIV+ teens, which we call Real Life, met in October (when they focused on how to deal with stigma & discrimination), November (which was a fun activity doing lots of crafts), December (a Christmas party), February (when they had a look back at where they had come from, and what they have been doing) and March (which was used for individual assessments and evaluations). It is great to see how this group has matured, with some of the older ones having completed school and gone off to further education or employment and coming back to mentor and encourage the younger ones. One of the aims in forming this group was that the young people would get to the stage of supporting each other, and through the meetings and through their use of social media they are now doing so.

In August we started running a stigma reduction campaign, with 4 Community Mobilisers and 4 Community Ambassadors who work with our coordinators. Under this campaign we now have three support groups for adults living with HIV and another one for children. The mobilisers and ambassadors also do a lot of presentations in clinics, schools, and in community meetings, to raise awareness of stigma and to try to reduce it. We have now also run three successful festivals, which are competitions in music, drama and poetry around the theme of stigma and HIV. The Municipal District were impressed with these festivals and so requested us to organise another which they said they would sponsor, taking those who came in position one

and two in the seven different genres, and pitting them against each other. This will be held in April.

With sponsorship from CoCos Foundation, Reach Out To The Child, and various individuals we have been able to continue helping families with relief parcels.



During his period 61 parcels were distributed.

One of our long time funders, the E3 Initiative, paid a visit in February, partly for the purposes of monitoring, but also bringing other projects so that they could learn from us. We had an action packed day offering training in how we run our teen support group, our psycho-social support workshops and our life skills courses for unemployed young people. It was a lovely day of fellowship together, and there is a possibility that some of our staff may go and spend time with other projects sponsored by E3 in order to help them establish some of these programmes.

Also in February we were visited by CHOC, the Childhood Cancer Foundation of South Africa, who trained our staff in how to identify the early signs of childhood cancer, and how to refer cases if they do spot them.

Another organisation we are working with is the Gender Equality Commission. They requested Lulisandla Kumntwana to organise and host three legal Clinics at which they will present the issues of gender equality. These were planned for February but had to be postponed because of the political instability and uncertainty during that time, so have been rescheduled for April.

Here are some stories highlighting the impact of our programmes:

N & P

These girls are at High School in Grade 9 & 10. They lost the parents last year, but were already known to us from one of our After Schools Club (although they were not orphans, the parents were sick, so they qualified to attend). Now they live by themselves – they are 18 & 16. They cannot yet access the foster grant because the parents did not have any documentation. The coordinator has been to Home Affairs & discussed the problem and has a way forward & the process of sorting this out has started. We have been helping them through the After Schools Club in the past (this club is now closed), through PSS workshops & with food parcels and school uniform

The current problem arose when these girls had a huge argument & fell out to the point that one even tried to poison the other. The school & the church tried to help, but they would not respond. The school contacted Saziso, the coordinator, who was able to counsel them, and by the grace of God they were reconciled, forgave each other, and are now living in harmony again. As we are supporting them with food parcels, with the last food parcel they received, they cooked together and ate together for the first time in two months.

NM

This 14 year old was a foster child under LK. Now her case is under DSD. It was reported to Saziso that she had dropped school and had gone missing. The foster parent found her living with the boyfriend. She had been out of school for three months. The foster parent was intimidated by the boyfriend who is a person who causes chaos in the community. Saziso accompanied her to talk with the child, and was able to persuade her to return home and go back to school. The next challenge was the school who were unwilling to take her back because she had been out for three months. However, Saziso was able to explain the whole situation, and eventually they agreed to take her back. She is now living back with the foster parent, and attending school regularly. DSD have been contacted so that they continue to be involved with the situation

FN

This young lady was helped when growing up with school uniform & food parcels & PSS workshops. She has now completed school and has managed to get a learnership in tourism under the municipality. She is still studying but is also on placement in a hotel near Hluhluwe, getting a stipend of R2500 per month which she is using to help her family.

AN

We picked up this case when the young man was too old for the foster grant. He has been helped through attending our teen support group, & also through careers advice & assistance to apply. He is now registered with UNISA doing a degree in education, but is doing this part time as he has been able to get the learnership in tourism as well, so is supported through the stipend of R2500. He is an orphan living completely by himself with no family at all.

Prayer requests

- Pray that the staff will not grow weary in doing good, but maintain their vision, & passion
- Funding for the future
- That the Stigma Reduction Campaign will have a spiritual impact in the lives of CMs & CAs and through them into the community
- We have a need for a data capturer – pray for funding & for the right person for the job.

Project Manager's Name: Rachel Fredlund

Contact address – LULISANDLA KUMNTWANA
PO BOX 178
SIBHAYI 3967

Tel: 035 574 1075 Fax: 086 589 5883
e-mail: rachel@mseleni.co.za