



Overview of the Kindernothilfe (KNH) Project

Integrated Response to Orphans and Vulnerable
Children Phase II in Binga District

WHAT'S AHEAD



**News from the
field**



**Kindernothilfe
visit**



Impact Stories



Dear friends,

Welcome to the first edition of the Ntengwe for Community Development/Kindernothilfe (KNH) newsletter August to October 2018, our new quarterly newsletter designed especially for people interested in community-led development and child protection. Specifically, this edition is for readers who want to know more about Ntengwe for Community Development (Ntengwe) and the “Integrated Response to Orphans and Vulnerable Children Phase II” project in Binga district.

Inside you will find a mixture of news, and a range of topics and reflections on what Ntengwe has been able to achieve, particularly in relation to child protection. We want it to be entertaining on how since the inception of this project, strategies were developed for all participants, and opportunities that have collectively worked towards our movement for community-led development, working at every level to protect children from harm.

We developed mechanisms to share ideas, experiences and practices through community-led development initiatives, creating networks of participants to foster a community of leaders to keeping children safe. Thus, our work is more focused on building the capacity of the community as a system so as to achieve locally owned visions and goals. These are our core principles in which the journey of self-reliance begins in our communities where aid strategies are designed from the community upwards. We hope that you will enjoy this first issue and do let us know if there are any topics you’d like to see covered in the future. Also, we invite you to check our website:

www.ntengwe-dev.org or our Facebook page

(https://www.facebook.com/NtengweMainstreamingthemarginalized/posts/1750972911631859?comment_id=1905024796226669¬if_id=1534143647122387¬if_t=feed_comment) for more information. We love to get your feedback!

Elisabeth Markham
Executive Director

REFLECTIONS & NEWS FROM THE FIELD



All across Binga district, many children are affected by poverty, missing out on education, suffering from gender disparities, violence, exploitation or neglect and are vulnerable. These children need a strong voice to stand up for themselves and for this reason Ntengwe is on the ground, working to reach children, and their families through Child Protection programs. Children living in households and communities impacted by poor health or caring for children with disabilities are often at increased risk of abuse, violence and exploitation. This is why we focus our attention on prioritizing these children and families and work with them and their communities to highlight protection so that we can help create safe environments for children.

To achieve these goals for children, their families and communities, we have since 2013 worked in partnership with the Kindernothilfe (KNH) and with key stakeholders and existing community structures to prevent violence and respond by ensuring children receive the support they need to recover and return to a supportive and protective environment.

We do this by using alternative approaches of community-driven, bottom-up work that enables non-formal to formal collaboration and alignment with greater use of formal services, internally driven social change, and high levels of community ownership. Working with government departments through strengthening families and communities to protect children and implement protective policies. We involve children in their own protection and support duty bearers to effectively implement appropriate services, especially for children with disabilities and their families.

During the "Integrated Response to Orphans and Vulnerable Children Phase I" (2013-2015), we used efforts to strengthen child protection systems taking more of a top-down approach to provide comprehensive child protection supports to prevent problems of abuse, violence, exploitation, and neglect regarding children. This was not as effective as the current systemic approach – it failed to listen deeply to children, families and communities and their contributions to child protection.

Our more comprehensive approach during Phase II of the “Integrated Response to Orphans and Vulnerable Children” uses an intermix of bottom-up, middle-out and top-down approach to ensure that from the top-down, governments have the laws, policies, and capacities that are essential in protecting vulnerable children. Bottom-up approaches work from grassroots level upward through community action, building on existing community strengths, and stimulate community-government collaboration. Middle-out approaches, which emanate from actors such as traditional leaders are situated between the district and grassroots levels. These three approaches are complementary.

With this approach we have since 2016 achieved increased community ownership, effectiveness, and sustainability of the system. It enabled us to link children with disabilities to critical services such as corrective surgeries, rehabilitation outreach, psychosocial support, integration of children with disabilities into the school system, created inclusive environments, worked with children to lead child protection initiatives, created referral and case management systems, strengthened families with positive parenting skills and economic opportunities. This work is implemented in the five wards of Lubanda, Lubu, Manjolo, Muchesu and Tinde.

More voices from the Field and the Community Action Planning Processes

The Integrated Response to Orphans and Vulnerable Children is implemented in five wards in Binga district though the cross-cutting nature of the problems we solve together with children, the communities and our key stakeholders. Our teams used the integration of social facilitation in the projects’ implementation to provide opportunities for child and community participation to ensure that there are linkages among children-stakeholders and communities.

We applied a bottom-up participatory community action planning process, in line with Zimbabwe’s social protection systems that promotes a safe, secure and supportive environment for all children. This was done through the use of community participatory safety and risk assessments instruments and community action planning where people no longer were beneficiaries but became active planners and owners of their own project.



Community Action Planning workshops were conducted, children were trained as Community Action Advisory Teams (CAAT), micro-projects were implemented by the communities and participatory monitoring and evaluation was conducted. All of these activities were backbone for effective social work in child protection practice. It synthesized appropriate service decisions which increased the social mobilization of the communities to respond to child abuse and it created community-based sustainability processes, as well as increased stakeholders’ attendance and motivation.

Women Support Groups

The cornerstone to child protection was the practice of strengths-based community action, with women support groups leading the process toward community-based child protection mechanisms. Most of the women in these groups are mothers of children with disabilities and are also part of saving and lending groups. These women face higher costs, more demands on their time and more insecurity than women not caring for a child with a disability. The saving and lending scheme don't solve all the problems these women face, but it reduces their struggles and helps provide the care their children may need. The support groups are also very helpful with the support the women receive from their groups. But what is most encouraging is that the groups are high in cohesion, expressiveness, task oriented, and self-discovery. A sense of control and agency has been developed with the support groups, meaning that these women have a sense of belonging to a community and they are central to addressing issues of discrimination against disabilities, plus most of these women are in the forefront of the development agenda, bold, focused and coordinated to accelerate progress on child protection.



Women Support Groups supporting Inclusive Movements

The women support groups as leading advocates, together with the communities, key stakeholders and traditional leaders came together and agreed that much more needs to be done to include children with disabilities in schools. These groups of concerned stakeholders acted to increase opportunities in Binga for successful inclusion of children with disabilities in regular education classrooms. Educational workshops were held with schools and parents to advocate for improvements in our education system.

The women and stakeholders went out of their way to support children with disabilities and their families in the pursuit of inclusion within the general education setting. This was achieved through peer support, advocacy and the use of research-based practices and implemented by the Ministry of Education.

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The group began with hand-full of mothers and traditional leaders who were concerned about the lack of inclusive educational opportunities in Binga. Although each mother with their child had her own unique circumstance, but there were stark parallels about the roadblocks these mothers encountered when attempting to include their child. It was then that the women, together with the traditional stakeholders began to organize awareness-raising sessions in their own communities. Berita, who is part of the women support group in Muchesu says: "We did not work to solve our personal problems surrounding inclusion. Instead, we began looking at long-term goals and issues that needed to be addressed so that future parents of children with disabilities did not need to face the same struggles as we had".

The groups have progressed to reaching out to parents of children with various challenges and hosted support sessions related to inclusion. The good news is that 159 children with disabilities are now attending school and more systems are being developed with teachers and stakeholders from the Brighter Future programme which compliments the KNH efforts to enrol more children with disabilities into school and establish disability-friendly infrastructure and school environments. There is so much more that needs to be done from high-level policy to decisions at the grassroots level and work with schools, parents and communities, but the durable networks of women support groups and the linkages they have created with local authorities will bring out increased positive results, hopefully all across Binga district. In the meantime, it shows how collective planning and action on behalf of vulnerable children create high levels of community ownership and effective, sustainable supports for children. More teachers have also agreed that inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricular, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies and partnerships with the communities.

Economic strengthening for Care Givers

Apart from the saving and lending schemes within the the women support groups, Household Economic strengthening activities are adding on to the portfolio of interventions to reduce the economic vulnerability of families and empower them to provide for the essential needs of the children they care for, rather than relying on external assistance.

As a social facilitator, Ntengwe has played a significant role in building women's capacity to participate more actively in development planning, relating to issues affecting their community as a whole and their individual livelihoods. Thus, strengthening the economic role of women to reducing poverty and improving the well-fare of orphans and vulnerable children has been implemented in partnership with the support of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Small to Medium Enterprises through training and the creation of market linkages. The economic empowerment activities benefited 670 women with skills, mentoring, access to networks and markets. The economic strengthening (saving clubs, agricultural interventions, brick moulding) activities focus on improving the children's welfare and has shown many positive benefits for children in areas of improvements of health and education. This resulted in better outcomes for children because more women



gained greater capacity to make important decisions that affect well-being and strategic interests both in the home, resulting in more child centred resources. Also, a change in local norms was observed with increased effects for women and children because women are generating their own income, hence the status of women and level of empowerment and family's economic situation has improved.

Children Advocates



The participation of children in schools, local action and policy advocacy has gained growing support within the KNH program. We encourage children to participate and involve them in all aspects of society. This includes recognising and supporting their contribution to their communities, involving them and giving them a say in decisions that affect them. Our genuine participation happens when the women support groups, teachers, stakeholders and communities share decision-making with children and children feel that they "own" the particular policy or program. Children, including children with disabilities from all our target areas were involved in the development of Ntengwe's Child Protection Policy in which various principles of children's participation were included, such as: giving children a say in decisions that affect them and it was suitable for the children who were involved. We made sure that the children found the experience of sharing enjoyable and rewarding through the use of play and drama. The methodology for children's participation was done through consultations so that they could understand the process and their opinions were taken seriously. Children were asked to say what they think about an issue and other events were used such as singing, dancing and drama. It was very encouraging for the children that they were listened to. They were supported in expressing their views and it was important for them that their views were considered in the development of the child protection policy. Finally, the children were able to share power and responsibility for decision-making.

Children Advocates

One girl, who is also part of the girls/boy's education movement made it clear that she had the desire to have a voice and being involved in the Ntengwe policy processes she felt motivated. She said: "I learned from other children to be honest and upfront about limits and boundaries and I felt that it was a good way to discuss issues that affect my community in my area and I took it as an opportunity for my voice to be heard, to represent children and young people and help make a change. It made me feel like an important citizen and that I now finally have a role in my community".

Also, it needs to be mentioned that through mainstreaming the Ntengwe's Child Protection policy, the development of a child-friendly policy and the participation of children, more rural communities in Binga have a better understanding of children's rights and there has been an up-take in reporting abuse cases of 47 cases of abuse that were reported and brought to justice.



Youth Clubs address Societal Issues including Child Marriage



"I joined GEM/BEM because I knew it would help me develop my leadership skills. In the 12 months since I've joined I have already learned how to communicate better with my peers and other members of our community people and how to encourage them to open up about their problems." - Tubone

Worldwide, as many as 650 million women alive today married before they turned 18. Child marriage sets them up for a life of hardship — they are less likely than their peers to stay in school and more likely to become victims of domestic violence. Child marriage deprives a child of her fundamental rights. Section 81 of the Zimbabwean constitution outlines children's rights and one of the basic rights is that every boy or girl under the age of 18 has a right to family or parental care. Section 81 (1 e) further states that the children have a right to be protection from economic and sexual exploitation, child labour and maltreatment, neglect or any form of abuse, hence to protect the girl child from child marriage.

Youth Clubs address Societal Issues including Child Marriage

Matabeleland North has a child marriage prevalence rate at 27 percent. Youths' from the Girls and Boys Education Movement – simply known as GEM/BEM felt a sense of despair as they looked around their community where some of their peers were falling pregnant and substance abuse was turning into a common occurrence, but then they discovered a community of their peers that felt passionate about driving social change. They finally found a circle of friends that they could trust, a group of young people that shared their passion to make lasting difference to the community.

The GEM/BEM has become a powerful platform for social change among young people in Manjolo. This school-based club offers learners an opportunity to be the leaders and agents of change by discussing societal issues, receiving training and strategizing around solutions to challenges they face in their lives and communities. Ultimately, the GEM/BEM club provides girls and boys with an avenue to discover their potential and shape them as potential leaders for Binga's future.

The club members themselves steer the course of the discussions and activities as they focus on issues affecting their communities. They do not shy away from serious matters. On the agenda is HIV prevention, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, poverty, child marriage domestic violence and how to plan for a brighter future with confidence. They did not shy away when they were confronted with teenage pregnancy, child abuse and child marriage. The club members introduced these issues through theatre plays as a tool to mobilize bigger numbers of their peers, where they all benefited from the information.

Children's Speak Up



The community-based Child Action Advisory Teams (CAAT) are peer leaders have learned news skills and help other children learn new skills too. These children receive training in peer leadership, participate in leadership activities, share ideas and listen to other ideas and help other children learn about self-advocacy. These children are very active to spread information about inclusivity, helping communities understand child protection and they plan for events for children and communities to attend.

Children's Speak Up

The peer learning approach has formed many relationships among children with disabilities and this approach had an enormous influence on the lives of the peers and the children in the communities. Most of the children in our target areas begin their lives in the social world of their families, however, as they mature they are introduced to the social world of peers and spend increasing amounts of time with kids their own age. The types of relationships they form differ from those they have with parents and siblings. However, peer relationships are more balanced.

Some of the skills children learn through their peer relationships include assertiveness, conflict management, how to earn respect and control aggression. Play and drama with peers has provided children with important opportunities to discuss feelings, expand thought processes and knowledge, and experiment with language and social roles.

Through the use of drama children practice their social skills. The children play on child protection that are being presented inside the communities by a group of children added a lot of value and became a vehicle to teach others on child protection and brought out positive social change with more people integrating children with disabilities into community activities and more children are now responding to violations against children and work together as teams to prevent risks.

A Happy Ending and a new Beginning for Children with Disabilities

Many children with disabilities endure unnecessary pain and disability. It was only when Rosemary Mudenda, a therapist from the rehabilitation department organized referrals to hospitals twice a year for corrective surgery. Because of people like Rosemary Mudenda who cares about the welfare of these children, many children were helped turned their hopes of a disability free life into reality. Through her efforts and with the support from KNH, children with disabilities and their families were assisted to travel to Mpilo Paediatric Hospital in Bulawayo for specialist treatment and several children were operated on successfully and children with disabilities attended the Paralympics Games in Bindura.



Further to this Mrs Mudenda focuses on the rehabilitation of children through different kinds of therapies. She works with mothers and caregivers of children with disabilities to promote the health and nutrition status, ensures that mothers have adequate skills to cope with their child's disability. As a result of Mrs Mudenda's and the rehabilitation departments activities more families with disabled children are in a better position to care for their children. They are investing more time and they feel more enriched by their experience despite challenging situations. The standards of these families have increased and more families are demonstrating positive and morel attitudes which has earned these families more respect in their communities.

Kindernothilfe visited Binga



A delegation of 4 visitors, Dr. Karl Pfahler, Gudrun Steiner, Katharina Baumgarten from the Kindernothilfe (KNH) in Germany and Eunice Velepini, the Zimbabwe Country Coordinator visited Binga on the 27th of April 2018. The purpose of their visit was to learn of the progress of the “Integrated Approach to Orphans and Vulnerable Children Phase II in Binga district project”. Present were children, adult caregivers and local authorities. At the welcome session, Elisabeth Markham, the Executive Director, introduced the KNH delegation, to the participants, in particular, it was a great honour to welcome the presence of Dr. Karl Pfahler who last visited Binga several years ago.

The purpose of the visit was to share challenges, strategies, opportunities, success stories and achievements of the project. During their visit the children performed various drama sessions on child protection issues. Discussions between the children and the visitors aimed at encouraging the children to further develop strategies to deal with appropriate and inappropriate varieties of social settings. It also enabled the adult participants to discuss the sensitive issues of child abuse and it was evident that the interventions of bottom-up approach were effective for communicating the issues surrounding child protection. The KNH visitors observed the the community-led activities, including the medium of drama resulted in an increase in the children’s knowledge and skills about appropriate/inappropriate touch in a variety of contexts. Follow-up work discussions with the children indicated that children had retained many of the main messages from the drama and were able to model strategies in playground situations. Areas for further development included embedding the project further within personal, family-centred approaches, social and health education programs for teachers and communities in the field of child protection.

Impact Stories

The Child Advisory Action Team's Story

In recent months, child participation has taken an increasingly active role in the 5 target areas in Binga district in the reporting process. More children are engaged in child rights activities and in meaningful and effective ways in presenting many challenges. The community members from the 5 target areas have told us that since the programme was decentralised from ward to village level, the Child Advisory Action Team members are reporting child abuse cases directly to the Child Protection Committees, School Authorities, their Community mobilizers and are very aware of the District Referral Pathway for case management.



“At the beginning of the programme we felt helpless to tell anybody about what was happening”

When we were introduced to the Child Advisory Action Team group we made new friends and met many members from Ntengwe and we learned a lot about child protection during training workshops. As we got more involved in our group activities in our village we developed a drama on child abuse. We enjoyed each other's company and we felt we were really looking out for each other and for other children in our villages. After we became aware of child abuse and the reporting system that was introduced to us we started telling each other of abuse cases that we heard of in our villages. We also heard about many cases of early marriages and many of the girls in our villages were afraid that they were going to be married to an older person. During one workshop we also learned about sexual abuse and we learned more about our bodies through body mapping.

Sometimes we heard about strange stories but it was not big enough to react to at the time also we felt at times helpless to tell anyone about what we heard in the communities. Often, we were confused but we knew that what we heard was wrong and we wanted to stop it but part of us were afraid to speak out. But over the last year we gained more strength and confidence as a group because we understood the protection system better when the Victim Friendly Unit Police explained the reporting system to us police and through our programmes with Ntengwe we were able to share the abuse cases we heard of in our villages with the Community Mobilizers and members of the Child Protection Committees.



We are now able to report abuse cases, including sexual abuse and we are able to talk about it because we now know that some children are trapped, but as a Child Advisory Action Team we stand strong and we are here to help those children in need.

Impact Stories

Tukale's Story

For ten years Tukale endured unnecessary pain and disability. Tukale grew up in small village in Binga district and his parents had many hopes and dreams for their son's future. They worked hard to give him the best life possible, but when he was 4 years old, little Tukale played with his friends and touched a boiling pot. His fingers lost their elasticity and they could no longer bend. After some time, the burns healed, but soon he developed contractures. Tukale was no longer able to bath or eat alone. By the time his friends went to school he couldn't go to school. His parents watched helplessly as their son's childhood and future slipped away before their eyes.

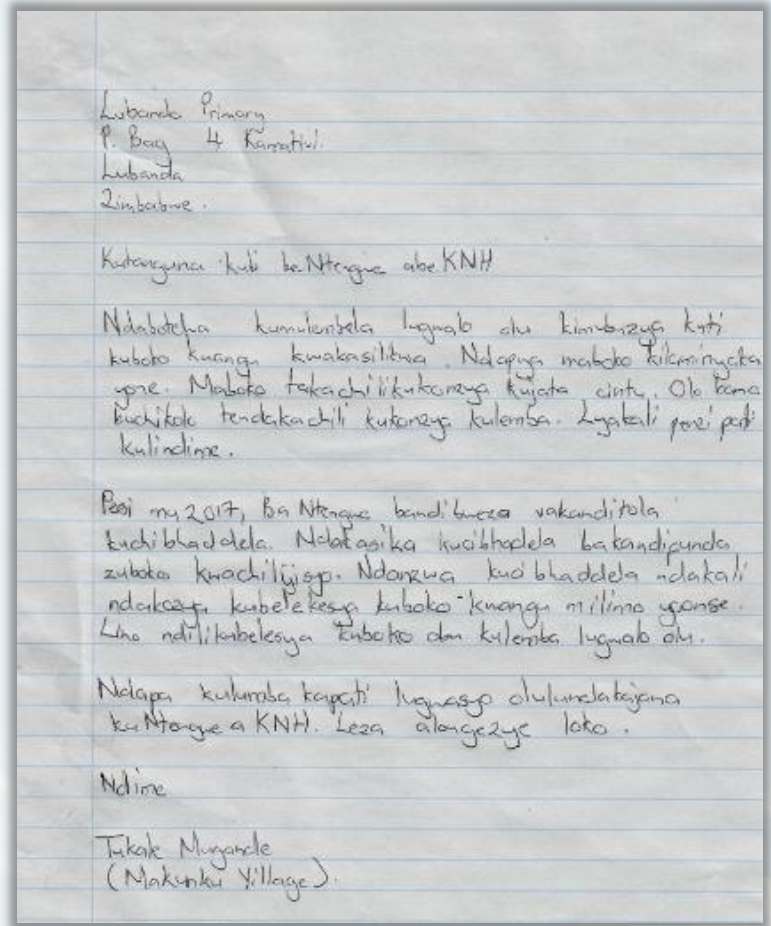


The mother told us "I felt pain in my heart every time my son attempted to do anything. We managed to enrol him in school after some time but it was hard for him to write". Tukale's parents had no idea that their little boy's condition was treatable. Even if they had known they would never have been able to afford to pay for surgery. It was only when Ntengwe, together with Mrs Mudenda from the Rehabilitation Department visited us that we were told about the treatment that Ntengwe and the rehabilitation department could sponsor the operation that the parents dared to have hope.

"Tukale had surgery"

On June 12, 2017 Tukale was admitted to Mpilo hospital for corrective surgery where his fingers were separated so that the normal function of his hands was restored. He was in hospital for one month and after his discharge he was immediately referred to Binga Hospital, Rehabilitation Department for exercises. The wounds healed very well and Tukale has a new lease on life. The surgery for Tukale from Lubanda is one of many cases of success.

“Tukale’s hand-written letter to Ntengwe and KNH”



Dear Ntengwe and KNH

I am very happy to write this letter to you telling you that my hands are healed. I touched a pot with very hot water when I was four years old and the pot slipped and my hands were burnt. My hands could no longer hold anything because my fingers were now joined together. It was a big problem to me and my family.

In 2017, Ntengwe for Community Development took me to Mpilo Hospital for an operation. My hands were operated. After healing the joined fingers had separated and I regained the ability to hold things, including the pen that I am today writing this letter with.

I want to thank Ntengwe and KNH for your assistance. I am so lucky and with your support you made my future possible.

God bless you all.

Tukale Mugande
(Makunku Village)



“We encourage community-led development in support of economic and social justice to end poverty”.

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