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MSELENI CHILDREN'S HOME



Mseleni Children's Home
SIM Project No: 87730

At last!!! After nearly six years of prayer and effort following the closure of the Home after the devastating fire in June 2015, Mseleni Children's Home has been re-registered and has re-opened.

The work undertaken was extensive with the rebuilding of the unit which burnt, and its conversion into a play therapy unit, social worker's office, and meeting/dining room. All units were also renovated, with the addition of fire exits, and upgrading of fire protection – more fire extinguishers, fire hose reels, fire sirens, and smoke detectors. All the mattresses were replaced with new ones with fire resistant covers. An alternative water supply was installed, with a bore hole, and also some huge storage tanks. A bio-metric access control unit was installed, improving access and exit control. A large standby generator has also been installed. Privacy and personal storage space for the children has been improved with lockable fitted cupboards for each child. The care workers were all trained through the National Association of Child Care Workers, gaining the Qualification in Child and Youth Care. Anticipating an improvement in the child care, and the necessity to plan and record the group work, what had been staff living quarters were converted into a child care workers' office, as well as a new office for the Director. A new stove was installed in the kitchen.

Previously Lulisandla Kumntwana had been operating as a project of Mseleni Children's Home. In 2017 a new umbrella organization, called Mseleni Care and Compassion Ministries, was created, under which operate the three projects, Mseleni Children's Home, Lulisandla Kumntwana, and Ebenezer Early Childhood Development Centre. Rachel Fredlund had already handed over responsibility as Manager of Mseleni Children's Home to Mrs Nosihle Mabika, and in September 2020, Mrs Mabika was appointed as Director of Mseleni Care and Compassion Ministries



Bedrooms ready
for occupation





Mrs Nosihe Mabika



Back up generator & new fire exits & fire hose reels.



Water tanks giving back up supply of water, & Care Workers' Office



New stove

Nosihe in play therapy unit



MCH was re-registered by the Department of Social Development for the care of 20 children on March 11th 2021. We had been informed that there were more than 20 children from the district placed in other CYCCs outside of our district, so they would be moved back to Mseleni during the first two weeks of April. Mrs Nosihle Mabika was already in place as Director of MCCM, in which role she also manages MCH. Mr Thabo Nakedi started as social worker for Mseleni Children’s Home, moving over from his post with Lulisandla Kumntwana. Advertisements were put out, and shortlisting and interviews done, and 1 Senior Child Care Worker, 8 child Care Workers, and 2 cooks were appointed. All these staff have appropriate training but once they had been appointed a refresher training course was run along with orientation.



Staff Training in April

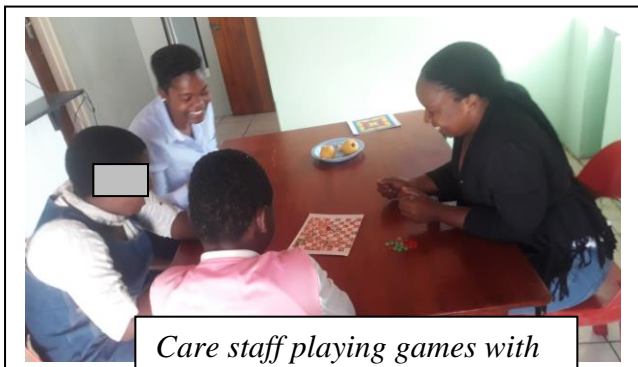


Thabo, the social worker, with some of the care staff

However, the placing of children in fact took much longer than we had been led to believe, with the first two only coming in at the beginning of May. Since then they came in gradually, with the full 20 only being reached in September.

We were aware that with registration limited to 20 we would face financial challenges as the overheads are much the same, but the subsidy is linked to the number of children being cared for. This, of course, was exacerbated by the slow admission. However, there were also benefits from this, as all of these children have been through a lot of trauma and the gradual admissions did give the staff time to build up relationships and get them settled.

We thank the Lord for the great relationships we have with local schools which were willing to accept these children even in the middle of the school year. They are all registered in schools but in the current COVID situation, they are, like all the other children, only attending part time. Even in the short time these children have been with us, it has been wonderful to see how the school performance of some has improved as they have responded to the care they are given. It has been great to see the commitment of the staff – the social worker, the child care workers, and even the cooks, their hard work and care for the children, their interaction with them, and all the caring. All the children have Care Plans which indicate what the longer-



Care staff playing games with the first two children



Learning some cooking skills

term plan is for them, and Individual Development Plans which map out what areas of their lives they need some help with, or where they might develop some more. Then the staff run therapeutic and developmental programmes based on these plans. These might involve individual sessions, and/or group work.



The July holidays gave opportunities for games at home and at the beach



Developing skills on the computers



and in the kitchen!





Playing games and having help with homework on a Saturday



Time for gardening!



One of our girls received a medal for good shooting in netball.

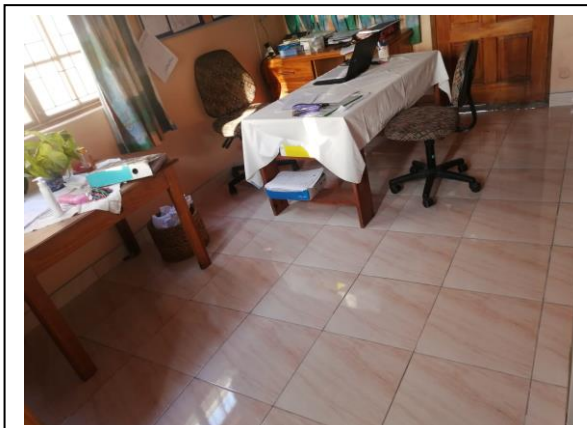
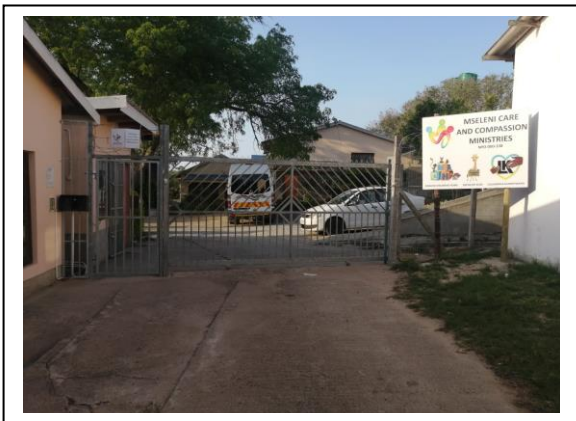


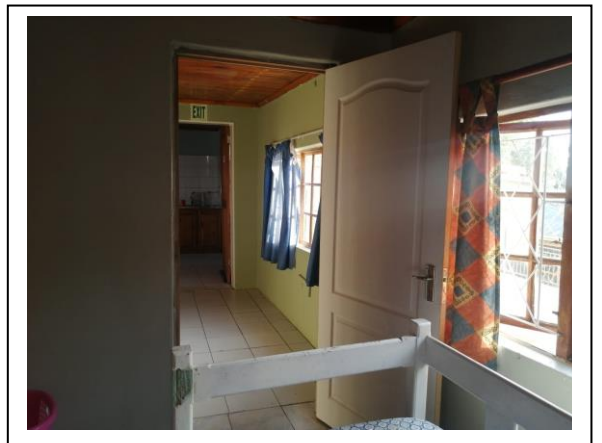
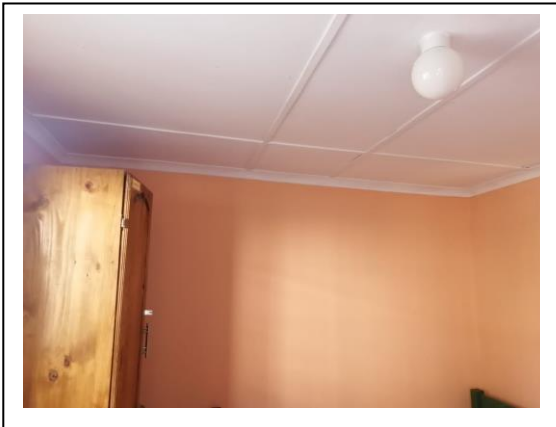
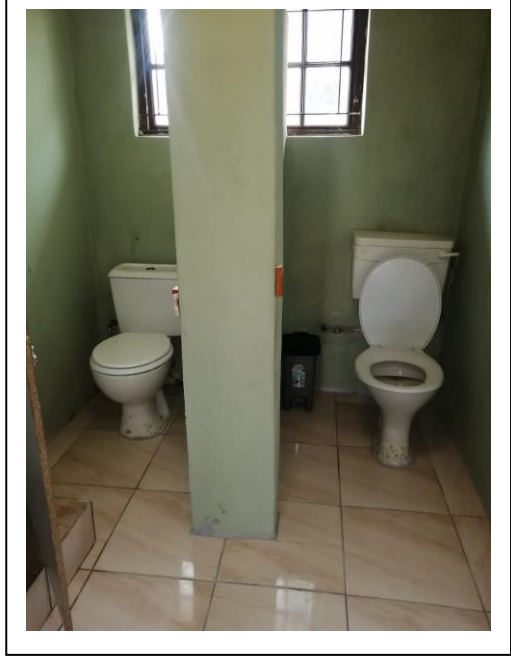
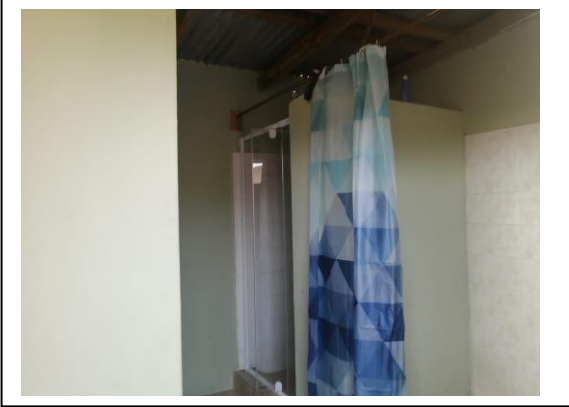
In August the local Municipality came and gave our staff training in responding to a fire an in the use of the fire equipment

In September MCH had a visit from Miss South Africa Plus. She is in fact a Mrs – Mrs Mhlongo, a local teacher. She has founded Little Miss Plus. She came and spent time with the children, encouraged them and gave them toiletries and food.



The Department of Social Development, in addition to the monthly subsidy, also granted us R393 000 as a once off grant. There was some confusion about the use of these funds as we were given to understand that this could be used as start up funds, particularly as the number of children was low, and the subsidy is paid retrospectively. However, this has now been clarified, and the grant has been used for upgrading some of the facilities. This included new signage, refencing, tiling the offices & one of the children's units, partitioning toilets and showers, reroofing and a new ceiling in another of the children's units, opening up internal access to one bedroom in another unit, purchasing new dining room tables and chairs, and sorting out the computers for the children.



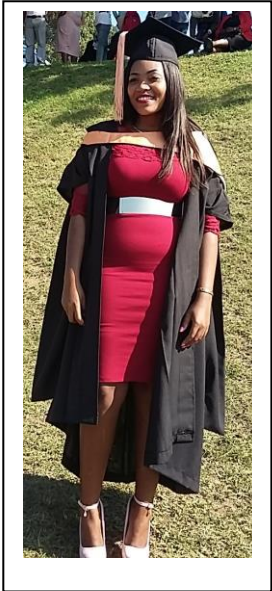


In the meantime we have continued to care for a number of young people who grew up in Mseleni Children’s Home, and are still moving on to independent living. Nokwanda and Eric are living in Johannesburg looking for work. It is very hard to find a job in S Africa! Nontobeko has now relocated to near Empangeni, and her cake business is going well there. She has a good market in the students of the University of Zululand there. Zamo has resumed her nursing course in Johannesburg. She is progressing well but will be facing a challenge in finding funding for her fees to continue next year. In April, S’li graduated obtaining her BA in Motion Picture Medium at AFDA in Cape Town. We were only able to attend virtually because of COVID restrictions. She is continuing with her Honours degree, having been awarded a bursary from AFDA. It is possible to see some of her work which she has uploaded on You Tube by following this link to Nkanyezi Short Zulu Film (it has sub titles) <https://youtu.be/qIKZDQd1AYk>. Tholakele, who graduated with a BA in Development Studies and then did an Honours in Development Studies, has completed an internship with the Department of Cooperative Government and Traditional Affairs, but is continuing with her Honours in Spatial Planning.



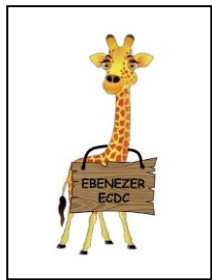
S’li filming at AFDA

Tholakele graduation



In 2017 we were visited by a team from the USA who made a film about Khanyisile, who also grew up IN MCH. Khanyisile graduated as a social worker in 2014, and also got married in that year. The film can be viewed by following this link: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/6047145/video/341585948>

Ebenezer Early Childhood Development Centre



There had been a plan for sometime to build and open an Early Childhood Development Centre which would provide good quality care for pre-schoolers in MCH and also be opened up for children in the community. Funding was secured for the building and equipment and training, and the Ebenezer ECDC opened in January 2017. It is fulfilling its objective in not only providing really good early childhood

development, but also in assisting other RCDCs in the area to develop. It is great now to see also some children from MCH enrolled in the centre.

There were, of course challenges because of the pandemic, and the ECDC was closed for some months in 2020. 2021 has seen the ECDC operating well as, while it has been necessary to follow COVID precautions, and there have been a couple of times when it was necessary to close as some staff had COVID contacts, and some had COVID, we are thankful that everyone recovered well, and that for the most part the ECDC has been able to function. There are now 32 children in the ECDC.

The staff (the Manager, four ECD workers, and a cook/cleaner) are doing a great job, and the children are happy and developing well. We have been able to extend help to 4 children from families who would not have been able to pay the fees.

In August a team came from Africa Ignite and ran some training with ECDC staff, from Ebenezer and also from some of the other ECDCs in the forum which we have set up. The training centred around using reading stories with children as a way of helping their development.

Some of the occupational therapists and physiotherapists from Mseleni Hospital continue to visit the ECDC regularly to check on progress and assist staff with children who have special needs.

Here is a selection of photos of the ECDC since its opening:



Every week there is a theme on which the children's learning is based



Making buses for the Transport theme



The Wild Animals theme

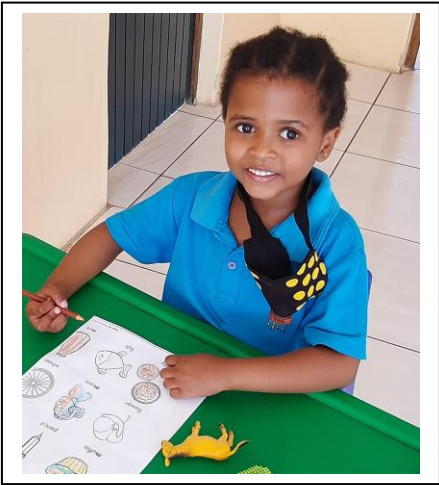




Learning about Zulu culture in Heritage month



Science work – with help from Christoph Meyer Maths & Science Foundation



LULISANDLA KUMNTWANA



Lulisandla Kumntwana
SIM Project No: ZA 97398

Since Lulisandla Kumntwana is a community based organization, most of the activities were heavily restricted by the effect of the Covid pandemic. During 2020 many programmes had to be halted, but the staff did continue to try to keep contact with and support clients through cell phones, and made home visits when it was necessary. It was important to keep going with the delivery of relief parcels as many

were suffering hardship with loss of jobs, particularly those who relied on selling in the informal sector. Our donors were generous, and we were able to increase the number of food parcels distributed, and also some months to add a few extras like toiletries, and some children's activities, along with a booklet of encouraging Bible verses and a gospel tract.

In December 2020 it was possible to run a three day Ngiyazazi Camp for 35 boys. Ngiyazazi means "I know myself" and the aim was to get the boys to look at their behaviour, and help them to make decisions which would lead to healthy relationships. Two holiday clubs had been planned for January 2021, which were to have used the #Smartmove materials working towards prevention and alleviation of drug and alcohol abuse. However, restrictions were increased again and the camps had to be postponed.

As 2021 progressed, restrictions were eased and although there were still limitations it was possible to resume a lot of our activities. What follows now is a summary of what has happened since April 2021.

OVC Support Since its inception, Lulisandla Kumntwana's core function has been the support of orphans and vulnerable children, and our coordinators have carried on with this regular work. Saziso Nhleko, working mainly in the South was joined from 1st April by Mpume Tembe in the North, as Thabo has moved back to being Mseleni Children's Home social worker following the re-opening of the Home. Over this six months they have made 738 home visits, and investigated the home circumstances of 553 families. Despite restricted access to Home Affairs, they were able to assist 25 families with applying for birth certificates, and 9 families with death certificates, and 38 with IDs. They were busy helping families resolve problems, with 195 families being given advice, and 424 OVCs being given individual counselling. Our data base reflects that by the end of September 2021 there were 3274 OVCs who had received some kind of help from LK.

Although many schools were still restricting access for pupils in that they were only able to attend on certain days, the coordinators were able to monitor the progress of 496 children in school.

Our 4 **After Schools Clubs** were able to care for children, especially the OVCs, during this period, working in four schools. The clubs continued with the new way of working which was started in January, with the facilitators being in the schools during schools hours, rather than after school, each day, and as one school had requested and following discussion with the others, children who had been identified as vulnerable and needing extra help, even though they might not have been "OVCs" were also added to the clubs. The target was to reach 300 children through the clubs, but in fact there are 440 in attendance. (KwaNhlamvu 180, Tshongwe 72, Mdinwa 78 & Ekuseni 110) The school staff are very appreciative and comment that the clubs make a great impact.

From 1st April the facilitators who had originally been part of the YES programme which operated in 2020, returned to work, this time supported through the National Development Agency (NDA). They implemented the #Smartmove programme in schools.

This programme focusses on prevention and alleviation of drug and alcohol abuse. The premise is that drug and alcohol abuse are heavily associated with gender-based violence, both by perpetrator and victim. The programme includes awareness about Gender Based Violence, will address problems of underlying attitudes in relationships which feed into GBV, and strategies for avoiding and responding.

The programme is being implemented in schools, with care taken to observe COVID regulations. It has not been possible to implement to the same level as was originally envisaged as schools are also endeavouring to catch up after the disruption of 2020, and are still dealing with learners not attending schools every day.

In the north of our area, the # Smartmove Programme was run at Mzila Primary School, focussing on Grade 7 learners. There were 133 learners involved. Facilitators and the coordinator have also made 23 home visits to follow up on issues raised during the programme.

Then the programme has also been completed at Nsalamanga High School, for 226 Grade 8 and Grade 9 learners. This was very helpful for many learners who are living with family members who are abusing alcohol.

At Endlondlweni Primary School 107 learners have attended the programme, 62 at Mqhiyama Primary School, and 39 at Mseleni Primary School.

At each of these schools the facilitators have had great opportunities working with groups of young people in interactive sessions. The young people have been appreciative and interested, and at each school the programme has been completed with a presentation session where the young people have shared what they have learnt with other pupils, staff and some community members.

In the South of the area #Smartmove was first implemented in Mduku High School, starting before the first lockdown in 2020. This is a very big school and was having big problems of violence between learners from different *izigodi* (local area under a headman) The Department of Education circuit manager requested that LK start with this school because of the problems. It was interrupted because of school closures, but this year has continued. All Grades have been involved with 1200 learners. The teachers are very happy about the impact and have extended the hours available for the facilitators to implement. This year there has been no problem of violence at the school.

We had to appoint a new facilitator as one of the two working in the south found a permanent job. So at the beginning of this period she was working also at Mduku School as she learnt how to do the programme. Then she went on to implement the programme at Mdudla Primary School, with 500 learners from Grades 3 to 7. The coordinator has been implementing the programme at Malabela High School with about 150 learners. He has completed Grades 8, 9 & 11.

The plan was originally to run 2 x 5 day holiday activity clubs for young people using the #Smartmove materials, one in north and one in south of the area, in July but this has again had to be put on hold because of the COVID situation and the plan is now to run these clubs in October.

Our data base reflects that, combining the north and the south, 5688 young people have taken part in the #Smartmove programme in this 6 months.



Doing the #Smartmove programme in schools



Another programme under LK is the **Ngizazazi Camps** (I know myself.) running over 3 days. The focus of this camp is to help young people to make good life decisions, especially in the area of relationships, and there was an emphasis too on dealing with gender based violence. Last year in December a camp was run for boys and the plan was to run one for girls during this period. Again, this was delayed as Covid restrictions were increased and it will now take place in October.

From April, with the return to work of the facilitators, and the easing of Covid restrictions, we were able to start implementing the **Tournament Programme** again with sports clubs. The materials are aimed at developing healthy relationships and attitudes in young men and women so that eventually they establish strong healthy families. This programme focusses especially on countering the attitudes which underly GBV. We have been able to get funding to set up a tournament in the North and in the South. Sports Clubs enrol in the programme making a commitment to attend regular life coaching sessions, and then at the end of the period, sometime in November, will play a tournament for the prize of full kits for the winning teams. In the South, the programme has been introduced and accepted at the traditional council. They have a league there which has three sections, for under 15s, under 17s and open. The council requested that LK focus on the under 17s, which has 9 teams, each having about 19 players. The coordinator has enrolled the teams in the tournament and life coaching sessions are on-going, though they were put on hold for a while when restrictions increased. Around June he attended another tournament run for these teams and in meeting with them met a lot of requests that we extend the programme, so that the decision was made to also include the “open” group, who are older young men. This was agreed, and there are 10 teams enrolled in this group. In the north, it was a process trying to recruit the teams, as many had stopped practising during the COVID disruption. But Thabo, who was coordinator, now MCH social worker, met with the municipal sports coordinator for Umhlabuyalingana

Ward5 and the teams have been recruited, and enrolled and the programme is being implemented. There are 7 teams enrolled in the programme.



Life Coaching sessions in the Tournament programme



Real Life, the support group for teens living with HIV, has met 4 times during this period. In May, 23 young people met and the topics covered were drawn from our #Smartmove programme about the prevention and alleviation of drug and alcohol abuse. Then in June there were 28 young people. This meeting was facilitated by the occupational therapists from Mseleni Hospital, who used games and activities to teach problem solving skills. In September 20 met and the topic was Gender Based Violence and drugs and sex. In October the group met for a more recreational relationship building occasion with a beach trip and braai.

Lulisandla Kumntwana is still in the process of trying to establish a **Crisis Care Centre**. At the moment we have facilities within the premises which can be used for care and counselling of those who have experienced abuse and trauma, and we also can use the play therapy unit. We have a social worker who has been placed with us by Umhlabuyalingana Municipality under the Municipality Internship Programme. She is working with Nosihle on this programme, offering counselling to those who are referred. Her internship was completed in August, but we have been able to extend it. The programme focusses on response to and care of adults and children who have experienced abuse and trauma, offering a place where they can be examined, meet with police, and given care and counselling/therapy in a private and confidential setting, and the case will be followed through. It is anticipated that many of the cases will involve GBV. The Crisis Care team also undertake GBV awareness activities in the community. We have a signed MOU with the police, but we are still working on getting it signed with the hospital.

From April to September the team attended to 6 cases of sexual abuse, 4 of which they had already been working with and 2 were new referrals. There were 3 cases of physical abuse, and 3 of emotional abuse. There were 10 cases of financial abuse, most of which were alcohol abuse related. Then under the category of domestic violence, 4 families with a total of 29 members were assisted.

Starting at the end of June, Nosihle, the Director, did a series of 8 programmes on the local radio station, talking about Gender Based Violence, and advertising our Crisis Cell phone number which people can call, or leave a please call me message. Many people phoned in to the programmes, and immediately after there were also many calls on the line. These cases were dealt with telephonically by the social workers. Quite a few were outside of our area of operation, so were then referred on to service providers closer to them.

The social worker has also been implementing a **Parenting Programme** targeting teenage parents. There have been 5 groups meeting. Three of them were based at Zenzeleni High School with 10 in each group. The topics dealt with were How to be a good mother; The challenge of being a parent; How to discipline a child; Vision and goal setting; Budgeting; Self control and self esteem; and Healing of the past. These groups have now been concluded. Then there is a another group of 24 based at Justice Nxumalo High School where the same topics were dealt with but Drugs and Alcohol was added because of the high rate of substance abuse which was picked up. This group has not yet concluded but is currently on hold because of exams. Another group of 29 is based at Sukasambe High School, also not yet concluded because of exams.

The comments from the groups are that the groups have a positive impact in terms of helping them in understanding of how to be good mother to their kids, in integrating being a parent ad a learner, and learning how to overcome problems as teenage parent. The group members share their challenges, including that they do not have enough time study as they have to care of child as well, that they are always late for school as they have to drop their child at creche before going to school, and financial problems, as there are dads who do not want to support their kids. They are also aware that their mothers find it difficult as they often take care of their grandchildren while the teenage mothers at school. This means they cannot care for their fields and gardens. In addition many have problems in that they are underage and do not yet have IDs, which has meant that they cannot get birth certificates for the babies, and so also cannot get the Child Support Grant.

In addition to the groups, there were six teenage parents who received individual counselling sessions. During this period we received help from one of our local stores, Jock Morrison, who donated baby food and disposable nappies which we were able to pass on to some of the girls in the parenting groups.



One of the Parenting Groups and a grandmother of one of the babies of a parent in the group happily receiving the donation.

Like in so many countries South Africa's economy has been hit by the Covid 19 pandemic. Currently S Africa holds the distinction of being the country with the highest unemployment rate in the world. In these tough times, it has been good that donors have enabled up to alleviate the problem a little for some families, and during this period LK has been able to distribute 241 food parcels to needy families.



Some of the families receiving relief food parcels



Tertiary education has also been disrupted, but as the situation eased in April a further 127 and in September 20 more, were assisted to register at TVET colleges, and to apply for student loans. There are a 15 students who are sponsored as they continue their education or try to set up in business, and MCCM channels this sponsorship, as well as giving advice and guidance.

Our coordinator in the south was asked if he could assist with an organisation who intended to enrol young people who had completed school in an internship programme. He therefore gathered a group of 50 young people in Mduku and 50 in Mnqobokazi. As yet the programme has not been implemented, but he saw the opportunity and has been having sessions with these young people, about 5 with each group, using topics selected from the Tournament Programme, and also from #Smartmove.

During October 2020 Nosihle Mabika and some of the LK staff joined up with Dr Maud Mthembu and others from the Department of Social Work at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Their combined efforts produced a book, called "Uhambo Lwami Ngesikhathi seKhovithi." (My Journey During Covid 19) which is based on a true

story of a family of orphans who are cared for under LK programmes who then lost their grandmother to Covid. This year the book has been used with the After Schools Clubs, in the paediatric ward at Mseleni Hospital, and by social workers with children who have been bereaved. It has been shared with the family on whom it has been based, and social workers from DSD are also using it.



Here are two stories of some of the impact through LK programmes:

- 1) M is 18 years old and currently doing matric. She says that Lulisandla Kumntwana has been of great help to her and her family. Their father died when they were very young and her mother died in 2017. Lulisandla assisted them to get the necessary documents and then M was placed in the foster care of her older sister who is 7 years older than her. (Currently 25) M is in her matric year at Malabela High School. The older sister is in her 4th and final year of a degree in Development Studies at University of Zululand. She has an NSFAS loan. The sister has 2 children, aged 7 and 2, for whom M cares. When she goes to school, she leaves the little one with a neighbour and the 7 year old goes to school. M appreciates the help she received through attending PSS workshops run by LK, and the support of the home visits by the coordinator. As she is now 18 the foster care grant has lapsed. The coordinator is currently in the process of following up on this with DSD, since it ought to be extended as she is still studying. In the meantime, LK is supporting the family with relief food parcels. M comments that the family is only able to survive because of this help. M goes to a Faith Mission church. She says she is aiming for a Bachelor's pass in her matric as her dream is to qualify as a teacher.
- 2) As one of our facilitators was implementing the #Smartmove programme in a primary school the teachers pointed out to her a 13 year old girl in Grade 6 about whom they were concerned as her school performance had dropped a lot. The facilitator referred the child to our coordinator (who is a qualified social worker). As she started sessions with the girl, the girl shared that she had been raped by her biological father. The coordinator then also involved the Director (also an experienced social worker) and investigation revealed that the case had many problems and incorrect procedures had been followed, to the extent that the perpetrator's lawyer had even phoned the child and made arrangements to take her to the court. The LK staff were able to work with the National Prosecuting Authority and get the case postponed, and ensure that the child would be properly prepared for testifying at court and that she would be transported separately from the perpetrator and his lawyer. In the meantime, the social worker has continued sessions with the child and already there has been an improvement in the school performance.

Prayer requests

- Pray for the staff, that they will be really effective in helping families and individuals and be able to share the love of Christ
- Pray that the programmes will be really effective in helping young people to build good relationships, and that many will respond as they hear the gospel explained too.
- Please continue to pray for all the young people now in further education or job seeking. Pray for us as we try to help and guide them. It is VERY difficult to find a job in S Africa.
- Give thanks for the re-registration of MCH and pray much for the staff team as they care for these children who have been through abuse and trauma. Pray the children will feel really loved and cared for and will come to be rooted and grounded in Christ.
- Pray that the staff of the ECDC will be able to maintain the high standard of care for the children and also lay a good spiritual foundation in their lives.
- Pray for Nosihle in her role as Director that she will give good spiritual leadership to the team. She has many many tasks. Pray that she will stay focused and be able to get what needs to be done, done

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