

ACET Zimbabwe

A Community Care Programme caring for almost 3,000 orphaned children since 2001. Situated near Matopos (Zimbabwe), and home to approximately 12,000 people, with 45% under the age of 15. Five percent of the local population is known to be HIV positive.

The Community Care Programme provides school fees and food packages to child-headed households where children are “double orphans” (have lost both parents). About 200 community volunteers provide monthly “Home Based Care” and support to people living with HIV. They have a youth skills centre where they train unemployed young people. They do practical courses such as cut and design, carpentry, and cooking. This enables them to earn an income and reduce the vulnerability of their families, who have no other income or means to pay for further education.



Several children are not able to attend both primary and secondary school due to parents being unemployed and, as a result, they have a lot of children “dropping out” of school. ACET has taken 70 children in both primary and secondary schools and are paying their school and exam fees, but there are still several of them in need of assistance.

Some of the main initiatives that GTO has supported ACET with include:

- The GTO has funded the construction of a Secondary School along with teachers' accommodation and a borehole to supply water to the school.
- ACET, with assistance from the GTO, has managed to construct an ECD school where these children can now get their education which is a breakthrough to our community too.
- The GTO, along with ACET, has established an income-generating poultry project which will provide profits to fund the ECD school and other ACET initiatives
- The GTO collaborated with World Bicycle Relief who empower people and communities through life changing bicycles. Over 200 bicycles were purchased for ACET volunteers
- The GTO has purchased the equipment and helped set up a peanut butter production operation.
- The GTO has funded the Installation of a satellite dish for internet access.

1.5 SELF SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS

The project has lots of challenges as the economy is not stable, prices and feed do not tally and it is difficult at the moment to register good profit.

1.6 ECD SCHOOL

Children aged 3-5 years old were walking 4-5km one way for early childhood development education, a distance that most of them could not afford to go on daily. As a result, most children could not attend such important foundation education in their life.

Some Notable Achievements

As ACET, we have managed to change and improve our communities. We have children that we have taken up to colleges and some are now teachers from our educational assistance programmes. The HIV/AIDS infection has reduced in the community; this is evidenced by the statistics from our local clinic. Awareness and education programmes play a vital role to our communities. The crime rate is far less due to the youth skills courses available – we keep the boys and girls busy all day to avoid them spending most of their time at business centres where there is alcohol and drug abuse.

We have promoted the life of children living positive by HIV by giving them food supplements, and they are growing up healthy like other children. The GTO has sometimes assisted us with giving them blankets too.

Now we have constructed a secondary school that started this year 2022, with 42 first-year students in secondary school. This is a dream come true for children who were walking 15-20km one way to the nearest secondary school. Children were exposed to risks such as being sexual abused on their way from school, as they reach home late and most often in the dark.

Challenges

Our main challenge is to improve on the business side. We need to have more projects that can sustain us beyond donor funds. Our poultry project needs to have its own plant to manufacture chicken feed, which is the biggest threat to our project. Once we get the plant, we are assured to make profit that can sustain our programmes.

There are the issues of transport. We need a vehicle that can transport our produce and feed from the city to our premises. The hiring of transport is very expensive, and a lot of money is spent on transport hire to carry feed and products to market.

