

Empower families and communities to provide care and support for Lesotho's most vulnerable and disadvantaged children

CARE FOR VULNERABLE CHILDREN PROGRAMME

Through this programme, Sentebale provides community childcare projects with capacity-building financial and technical support to enable families and communities to provide appropriate care, health and education to Lesotho's most vulnerable children and young people.

Key statistics

- There are more than 363,000 orphans in Lesotho (one-third of all children).¹³
- Only 5% of children with disabilities are accessing primary education.¹⁴
- Disabled young people between 11 and 20 years old are seven times less likely to access education than those without disabilities.¹⁵
- It is believed that there are many more orphaned children and children living with disabilities who are not counted in country statistics.

Programme activities

- Around 300 parents, guardians, caregivers, teachers, social workers and graduates were trained on various childcare skills, which included basic physiotherapy and occupational therapy, guardian-child communication such as braille, vegetable production, children's rights within the context of Lesotho's Child Protection Act, legal protection and project management.
- Two lesson-sharing workshops were conducted for 10 of the 11 partners.
- Five partner organisations were trained on good governance and leadership to improve delivery of care and management of centres.
- Child Health and Safety Policies of the 11 partner organisations have been formulated and consolidated into one general Child Health and Safety Policy.
- Support for our 11 partners delivering care to vulnerable children has been delivered based on their specific needs. This has included providing specialist learning equipment, working with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to improve children's nutrition, and establishing children's committees to address issues of their care and mentoring.
- Head of the Social Development Programme was appointed in January 2015.

Achievements

- Delivering childcare skills training which encouraged families and communities to support children rather than relying solely on the children's homes.
- Working to ensure that more children above 16 years of age, as per the legal requirement in Lesotho, have legal identity documents.

Challenges to be addressed

- Based on the child status index assessments, education is highlighted as the least performing domain. This is due to the lack of specialists in Lesotho delivering education to children with disabilities. Children living with disabilities account for over two-thirds of the children supported by our 11 partners.

Tsikinyane's story

Tsikinyane is 14 years old and lives at Thuso Children's Centre for children with multiple disabilities. Her grandmother and aunt were unable to care for her properly at home because of her physical and mental disabilities.

“ Before I moved to Thuso, I was helpless and sad. I could not bath or feed myself and I often got teased by the other children. Since I have been at Thuso, I have learned how to bath myself, play with the other children and even grow vegetables in my own garden! I can even help my aunt and grandmother with the gardening when I go back home for the school holiday.”

TSIKINYANE