

VUSUMNOTFO - Parenting for a Sustainable Future™

Our Aim - To build human capacity, by strengthening skills at family and community level, in practices that support the development and learning of young children, as the roots for a sustainable future

Our Motto - Do what you can, with what you have, now

Our background - Vusumnotfo¹ is a Swazi Not-for-Profit organization whose formation was authorized by community leaders in northern Eswatini² following the 1991/92 drought. These leaders identified “dependency”³ as the underlying factor limiting sustainable development⁴ at community level. They attributed the deep roots of “dependency” to be interwoven issues specific to Eswatini and the region. To reverse this negative cycle of “dependency” in ways relevant to their communities, they formed Vusumnotfo⁵. Accordingly our strategy reflects Eswatini’s many proverbs that **the betterment of the future is through the child - “Umntfwana ngumliba loya embili”**.

Our rationale is based on a large body of international research, also reflected in this traditional wisdom. During the period between prenatal through the first nine years, a child develops the physical, emotional, language, communication, cognitive, social, and value structures that lay the foundation for their lifetime. Thus children naturally depend on adults to nurture their development and learning needs (dependency). If adults are not able to do so, a child’s development and learning falls behind. Consequently, this child will have limitations to overcome, some of which are insurmountable. Conversely, a child who achieves early developmental milestones and learning standards has the fundamentals for attaining the skills to meet their own needs as adults (independency) and, thereafter, to nurture the needs of the next generation (inter-dependency).

Our goal is to strengthen skills at family and community level in practices that support the development and learning of young children. Advancing the development and learning of young children in turn builds human capacity. Overtime, building human capacity results in communities that are able and willing to improve the environmental, social and economic challenges of their generation. By so doing “parenting” contributes to the wellbeing of this generation, and nurtures the next generation; hence - **Parenting for a Sustainable Future.™**

Our objectives focus on four inter-related problems restricting children from developing and learning at family and community level in Eswatini. These are: 1) insufficient understanding of how young children develop and learn, and factors that influence this, 2) limited financial management practices, 3) poor nutrition practices, and 4) inadequate infrastructure and management practices.

Our activities and methods teach participants to use simple, effective, self-reliant and ecological practices to tackle these four inter-related problems at family and community level. As “giving things” can inadvertently further “dependency”, our activity methods are 1) training, 2) structured technical and material support⁶ and 3) mentoring; hence our motto - **Do what you can, with what you have, now.**

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¹The literal translation of Vusumnotfo is “to revive the economy”, however in siSwati “umnotfo” refers to anything that brings value to the greater good (children, relationships, natural resources, health, surplus....) so “economy” is understood to be broader and deeper than just financial. Thus within the Swazi context “Vusumnotfo” is understood as “reviving all that is needed for the betterment of the future”.

² In 2018, the Kingdom of Swaziland’s name was officially changed to the Kingdom of Eswatini (legal notice #80 of 2018).

³ “Dependency” or “dependency syndrome” is a mindset that encompasses 1) on the one hand adults relying on external means to meet their needs, solve their problems, and on the other hand 2) organizations providing support through strategies not rooted in local realities and timeframes. While all children are born dependent on others to meet their needs, “dependency” refers to when this mindset continues past the normal dependency “ages and stages” of human development.

⁴Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The 3P’s of sustainable development are: 1) Planet - *do no harm to the natural systems*; 2) People - *holistic development of human capital*; 3) Profit - *generate a surplus, to reinvest in the people and planet.* (Our Common Future 1987)

⁵ **The 17 communities in northern Eswatini that formed Vusumnotfo (Eswatini Not-for-Profit #RT/7979) - Entfonjeni Inkhundla - Hhelehele, Lomshiyo, Hhohho (west), Mvembili (west), Ndwandwe, Mshingishingini and Vusweni; Etimphisini Inkhundla - Mvembili (east), Mashobeni, Madelezini, and Ludzibini; Mayiwane Inkhundla - Mkhweni, Mavula, Emfasini, Mkhuzweni and Herefords; and Ndzingeni Inkhundla - Nkamanzi. Area of operation:** Population 47,463 people related to 5,932 homesteads (based on the average extended family unit), equals 5% of national population; 30 x 40 Km, equals 7% of land area; 17 Chiefdoms, equals 5% of the Chiefdoms; and 4 Tinkhundla, equals 7% of the 55 national constituents.

⁶ Technical and material support, structured to each activity and situation (integrated within a community’s time-plan to complete practical tasks).

Vision	Communities, able and willing to improve environmental, social and economic conditions ⁷		
Mission	To build human capacity, by advancing the development and learning of young children ⁸		
Goal	To strengthen skills at family and community level, in practices that support the development and learning of young children		
Objectives	<p>1. Early Childhood Training - tackling insufficient understanding of how young children develop and learn, and factors that influence this.</p> <p>Programme Objective - to advance sustainable practices that support inclusive, early development and learning of children at family and community level.</p> <p>Specific Objective - to increase participants' knowledge of early childhood development and learning, including factors that influence this; and to strengthen skills in practices that improve early learning.</p>	<p>2. Livelihood Training - tackling limited financial management and poor nutrition practices.</p> <p>Programme Objective - to advance sustainable improvements in financial and health indicators at family level.</p> <p>Specific Objective - to improve participants' financial and nutritional security practices, through self-reliant and ecological methods.</p>	<p>3. Infrastructure and Management Support - tackling inadequate infrastructure and management practices.</p> <p>Programme Objective - to advance sustainable infrastructure and management practices at community level.</p> <p>Specific Objective - to improve community infrastructure and management of preschools, water & sanitation systems, and hygiene & conservation practices, through integrating a community's time-plan to complete practical tasks.</p>
Activities⁹	<p>1.1. Parenting -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train - to increase knowledge of early childhood development and learning, including factors that influence this. • Conduct a veterinary clinic annually - to use animal care to demonstrate responsibility and empathy to children. • Provide structured technical and material support to children with special needs at family level - to link families to technical services and material support; to train in the care and stimulation of children with special needs; to provide technical and material support for relevant home improvements; to mentor accordingly. <p>1.2. Community Preschool Teaching -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train (in-service) - to strengthen skills of community preschool teachers to effectively engage in practices aligned with early developmental milestones and learning standards; including the inclusion of children with special needs. • Mentor - to observe teaching; to use experienced preschool teachers to assist with training of new teachers; to advise on issues arising. <p>1.3. Manage a library for community preschool teachers, to motivate bilingual reading.</p>	<p>2.1. Entrepreneurship -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train - to increase knowledge of basic financial literacy. • Train - to form savings & lending groups and to strengthen members' skills to effectively engage in savings & lending practices, resulting in reliable access to business loans for individual members. • Mentor - to train nominated, potential new members; to verify groups' quarterly and financial year-end records; to supply record books; to train in follow-on topics; to advise on issues arising. <p>2.2. Perma-Gardening for Nutrition -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train - to increase knowledge and to strengthen skills in perma-gardening practices for healthy eating habits. • Provide structured technical and material support - to provide information and plant "start-up" material. <p>2.3. Demonstrate the use of permaculture practices throughout Vusumnotfo operations, to motivate sustainable living.</p>	<p>3.1. Community Preschools -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train - to increase knowledge of sustainable infrastructure and management practices for community preschools. • Provide structured technical and material support (integrated within a community's time-plan to complete practical tasks) - for improving the infrastructure of preschools. • Mentor - to supply record books; to compare performance against management standards; to advise on issues arising. <p>3.2. Community WASH¹⁰ -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train - to increase knowledge of sustainable infrastructure and management practices for water and sanitation systems, and hygiene and conservation practices related to these. • Provide structured technical and material support (integrated within a community's time-plan to complete practical tasks) - for improving the infrastructure of WASH. • Mentor - to supply record books; to compare performance against management standards; to advise on issues arising. <p>3.3. Demonstrate the use of data throughout Vusumnotfo operations, to motivate sustainable infrastructure and management practices.</p>
Problem Statement	To tackle four inter-related problems restricting children from developing and learning at family and community level in the 17 communities that formed Vusumnotfo. These are: 1) insufficient understanding of how young children develop and learn, and factors that influence this, 2) limited financial management practices, 3) poor nutrition practices, and 4) inadequate infrastructure and management practices.		

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⁸ Every child achieves early developmental milestones and learning standards, to each child's full potential.

⁹ Collaboration - our influence extends beyond the seventeen Swazi communities that formed us: 1) through service contracts, our training is available to participants from outside our area of operation, 2) strategically, we partner with national and international projects that complement our nine core activities.

¹⁰ WASH - Water, Sanitation and Hygiene - *domestic water and sanitation systems, and hygiene and conservation practices related to these.*

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Our Motto - Do what you can, with what you have, now

Vision - Communities, able and willing to improve environmental, social and economic conditions¹¹

Mission - To build human capacity, by advancing the development and learning of young children¹²

Goal - To strengthen skills at family and community level, in practices that support the development and learning of young children.

Programme Objectives and Activities¹³ -

1. Early Childhood Training Programme - to advance sustainable practices that support inclusive, early development and learning of children at family and community level:

- 1.1. **Parenting** - i) train in early childhood development and learning, including factors that influence this, ii) conduct a veterinary clinic (use animal care to demonstrate responsibility and empathy in children), iii) provide support to children with special needs at family level.
- 1.2. **Community preschool teaching** - train (in-service) and mentor in practices aligned with inclusive early learning.
- 1.3. **Manage** - a library for community preschool teachers, to motivate bilingual reading.

2. Livelihood Training Programme - to advance sustainable improvements in financial and health indicators at family level:

- 2.1. **Entrepreneurship** - i) train in basic financial literacy, ii) train, form, and mentor savings & lending groups.
- 2.2. **Perma-gardening for nutrition** - i) train in perma-gardening practices for nutrition, ii) provide information and plant “start-up” material.
- 2.3. **Demonstrate** - the use of permaculture practices throughout Vusumnotfo operations, to motivate sustainable living.

3. Infrastructure and Management Support Programme - to advance sustainable infrastructure and management practices at community level:

- 3.1. **Community Preschools** - i) train and mentor in sustainable infrastructure and management practices, ii) provide structured technical and material support for infrastructure improvements (integrated within a community’s time-plan to complete practical tasks)
- 3.2. **Community WASH¹⁴** - i) train and mentor in sustainable infrastructure and management practices. ii) provide structured technical and material support for infrastructure improvements (integrated within a community’s time-plan to complete practical tasks)
- 3.3. **Demonstrate** - the use of data throughout Vusumnotfo operations, to motivate sustainable infrastructure and management practices.

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