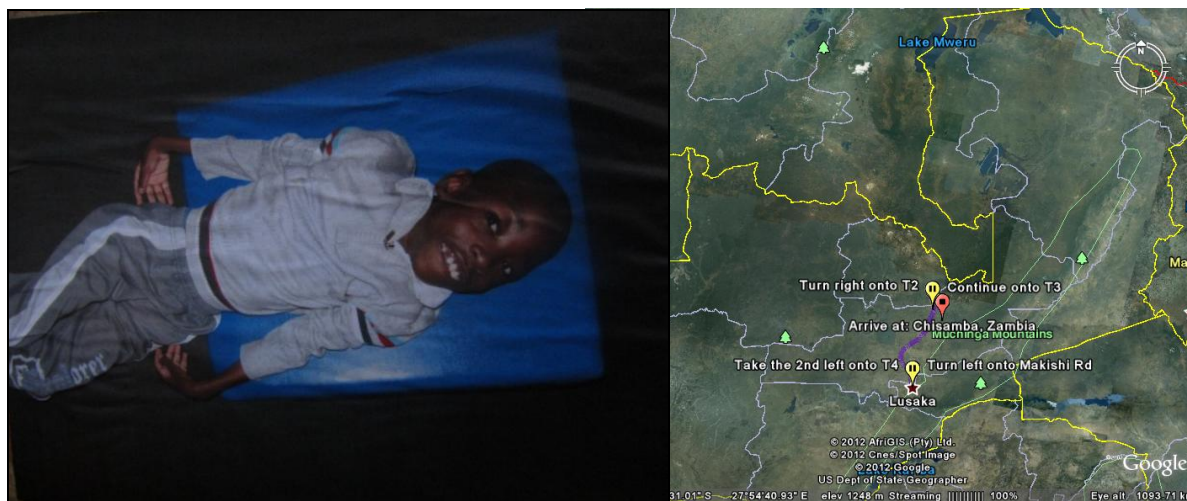


ZAMBIA: DISABLED CHILDREN PROJECT

PROJECT – Mitigation to disabilities, potential improvement and economic empowerment of affected children and poor families in targeted communities through various support and training.



Chisamba is a town in Zambia located in the Central province of Zambia. The population of the town is about 2000. MYCEPA project site is situated about 50km from Lusaka along the Great North Road (GNR) in Chisamba William area near Zambeef Huntley farms and Fringilla Guest Lodge. The plot is by the GNR roadside. It is about 2.5 hectares in size and the land was purchased from Fringilla farms at a cost of USD 6000 in 2007.

In Zambia, some parents and children are not so lucky in terms of something which caused these children not develop as normally as other children. Some children suffer from brain damage. This effect of brain damage becomes obvious as the child reaches the age requirement of standing and walking on his or her own. This condition is called Cerebral palsy. This can occur during pregnancy (about 75%), during childbirth (about 5%) or after birth (about 15%) up to the age of about 3 years. As a result of the brain damage caused, children with Cerebral palsy are usually not able to walk, talk, eat or play like other children. They usually need constant help, attention and support. Others may also have cognitive problems, so that their mental capacity does not develop.

In addition to physical challenges, there remains in Zambia considerable stigma attached to this condition due to ignorance about the causes of this condition. There are still people who believe that it is caused by witchcraft or a malevolent spirit which inhabits the child's body. The mothers are often blamed for ignoring traditional practices, thereby allowing their children to be born malformed.

The combination of increasing numbers of affected children, affected orphaned children, decreasing numbers of caregivers and weakened extended families, together with poverty, means that both affected children and cerebral palsy orphans are more likely to fall through traditional safety nets. The loss of parents effectively removes the primary social structure protecting the children and adolescents, resulting in increased vulnerability to key threats. Major threats faced by these children include lost educational opportunities, lack of social and emotional support for healthy psychological and social development, increased stigma, lack of adequate food, and lack of representation in the larger community to advocate for needs.

"MYCEPA Interventions on CP affected Children in Chisamba"



Photo 1: Two affected children, Mercious on the left and Angela on the right

The photo is showing two Cerebral palsy affected children who are benefitting from MYCEPA support in Chisamba district of Central province.

Mrs. Sharon Pingilwa a 35 year old married mother of six children, William area in Chisamba district stated that the last two of her children are disabled due to Cerebral palsy. Angela - female - is the fifth born and

is 8 years old while Mercious - male - is the sixth born and 5 years old. Both children do not go to school as there are no special schools around the district for such children.

Photo 2: Mrs. Sharon Pingilwa, the mother to the two affected children

"MYCEPA donated one mattress, two blankets, clothes, a carpet, toys, a tricycle, a wedge and a standing frame for my children. I also received 10 cases of washing liquid soap, each case containing 6 containers, which lasted for four months", Mrs Sharon Pingilwa said



Despite this huge task ahead of Mrs. Sharon Pingilwa and her husband, both do not have any formal employment as their stable

source of income. The husband depends on short temporal jobs to look after the family though he can barely meet half of the needs for the family and the CP affected children. The family is facing a variety of challenges.

Mrs. Pingilwa said, "We have big and many problems. My husband rarely has piecework and I do not work. We rarely have enough food and soap for the kids. I cannot do business because it is difficult to leave the two affected kids that need my attention. There is no one else to look after them. It is also a challenge for my two kids to access medical attention except for MYCEPA that took them to Lusaka town. MYCEPA paid all the medical expenses"

"Angela's right arm needs further medical attention as it is weaker. The medical attention required is an operation. The two children need clothes and consistent food as we were advised that they need a good diet that is available consistently"

Despite the above mentioned challenges, the two kids benefitted from some support from MYCEPA. The equipment given to them improved their life potential.

Mrs. Pingilwa said, "The carpet that was given helped the children in cleanliness and preventing dirty. The tricycle has improved their limbs which were weaker before. They are now able to ride it and this has become their social activity. The standing frame also helped them in being able to stand up to some degree."



Photo 3: MYCEPA staff exercising Angela on a Widget



Photo 4: Widget

The Widget is for stretching purposes to improve posture and to help affected children not to develop stiff limbs.



Photos 5: MYCEPA staff helping Angela to get on a Tricycle



Photo 6: Angela riding a Tricycle



Photo 7: Mrs. Esther Mundia on the right with the affected family

The MYCEPA Chairperson, Mrs. Esther Mundia, said that MYCEPA is trying to get assistance for CP disabled children not only in form of money but also in form of specialised equipment. she indicated that the biggest task as MYCEPA is to have a Rehabilitation Centre where children are going to come, be treated by professionals, parents & guardians trained to handle the children

properly so that the children are helped to improve towards their full potential. MYCEPA prefers encouraging parents and guardians of affected children to get involved in Income generating activities like chicken rearing, sewing clothes, gardening because this will impact positively on the women and the affected children at the household level. MYCEPA indicated that there are many more affected families within the catchment area and to reach them is currently a challenge because of inadequate resources. Currently, MYCEPA is handling and caring for children from Lusaka, Kitwe, Ndola and Chisamba towns

Solution

"Improved livelihoods, potential and access to basic needs of 20 CP affected children and 20 mothers/ guardians in the targeted communities through training and various support"

Through MYCEPA organization, GoYeTherefore (GYT) will target 60 CP affected children, disabled children and orphans at Chisamba MYCEPA centre in Central province of Zambia.

The project aims to provide various support to affected children in order to help them reach their full possible potential in life like other normal children.

Munu Ka Yumbwa Cerebral Palsy Association (MYCEPA) is a registered organisation based in Chibombo District, Central Province at Chisamba William. Munu Ka Yumbwa means "A Human Being Cannot be Discarded" or "Every Person Has Value". MYCEPA has pledged to improve facilities available in Zambia for children with Cerebral palsy (CP) condition and other disabilities. MYCEPA was formally registered on 21st February 2007 under the Societies Rules (Section 7 (1) of Societies Act Cap 119). It was officially launched by the then Minister of Community Development and Social Services – Hon. Michael Kaingu on 25th July 2009. MYCEPA is a Zambian initiative by affected parents especially the mothers and young adults with Cerebral Palsy condition and other disabilities, supported by a cross section of dedicated individuals both locally and internationally and those who live near the project site.

The project will support CP affected children, disabled children and orphans and their families through:

- (a) Establishment of high quality and specialized services to CP children in MYCEPA Rehabilitation centre.
- (b) Awareness community meetings concerning the causes of CP and the need for acceptance of affected children into society.
- (c) Advocacy for improved access to basic needs of CP affected children
- (d) Training of mothers and guardians of affected children in handling and caring CP affected children and disabled children. This is to help parents and guardians in the routine management of CP children so that they become better equipped to cope with their challenges and to continue therapy at home.
- (e) Encouraging women having affected children to engage in various income generating activities.
- (f) Provision of specialist equipment like wheelchairs, braces & calipers to affected children.

The project will target 20 CP affected children and disabled Children some of which are orphaned, and 20 mothers/ guardians of the affected children.

