

Impact Report:

Zimbabwe

Empowering Mothers of Differently Abled Children



Project Update

Mothers and carers of children with disabilities in Zimbabwe are often marginalised and excluded from society. Through Bible Society's 2020 World Day of Prayer Project, these carers were empowered as they were educated, supported and equipped to better care for their families. This project also worked to reduce the stigma and isolation surrounding the carers of disabled children and to highlight the reality and prevalence of disability in the community.

In 2022, training workshops, for mothers of differently abled children, in collaboration with organisations working with disabled children and their mothers, were conducted in 4 areas in Zimbabwe, namely Cross Dete, Kamativi, Hatcliffe, and Beitbridge (Zezane and Drihoek). In early 2023, these workshops were conducted in Kadoma, Kariba, Checheche, Chisumbanje, and Gweru. Part of this training included dishwasher-making workshops as an income-generating project for the mothers. Each mother came home with 20 litres of dishwashing liquids for domestic and commercial purposes. 111 mothers participated in these workshops in 2022, and in 2023 another 98 participated, which also included the making of Vaseline products. These workshops along with Bible-based support groups and counselling sessions serve to boost the mothers' social confidence as it exposes them to face-to-face interactions with other mothers in the same situations.

Assistive devices such as 3-wheeler wheelchairs, sitting units, walkers, and elbow crutches, were distributed for the children in Tsholotsho, Cross Dete and Kamativi in 2022 and Hatcliffe, Kadoma, and St Giles villages in early 2023. These differently abled children also received children's Bibles and storybooks. In 2022, 35 Ndebele Bibles were distributed to mothers that desired a Bible in this language. In early 2023, 42 Shona Bibles were distributed in Harare and Hatcliffe.

With the aim of positively integrating these mothers and their children into church communities, ramps have been constructed at the entrance and exit points of partnered churches, offices and ablution facilities. Partnered pastors and community leaders also helped communicate a better understanding in the Church of the difficult lives of these women and children. WhatsApp groups were also created to keep in touch with the mothers for record keeping and feedback.

There is an ongoing need for more engagement with churches and communities for tolerance and fighting the stigmatisation of differently abled children. There were reports of a number of mothers who were in isolation and were shy to disclose the status of their children; however, in some areas like Cross Dete, mothers came into the open after seeing some beneficiaries in wheelchairs.

7%

(approximately 90,000 people) of Zimbabwe's total population have a form of disability.

111

mothers participated in dishwasher-making workshops in 2022; and a further 98 participated in 2023

28

3-wheeler wheelchairs, 8 walkers, 5 elbow crutches 5 walking sticks, 2 sitting units, and 1 club foot shoe were distributed to disabled children in 2022-early 2023.



Impact

- Mothers and carers were made aware of the causes and types of disabilities in children, as well as learned social, and economic development through group counselling sessions and training workshops.
- Differently, abled children and their mothers were spiritually inspired and encouraged by receiving appropriate Scriptures and Bible resources in their language. Kids in special schools were able to recite memory verses.
- Due to the inclusion of pastors and church members in all the training and counselling sessions, churches now understand the struggles that the children and their caregivers go through and have adopted a more inclusive approach.
- Parents are now able to help their children exercise while at home. Some of the parents were not able to take their children for physiotherapy due to high costs, but the children are now able to do basic physiotherapy at no cost.
- Due to the help in the children's mobility with the use of assistive devices, there's a greater exposure for them as parents are able to take their children to special schools in their locations, and these children are now able to attend church, get involved in activities and play with other children.

Project Testimony

"I would like to thank Bible Society of Zimbabwe and their friends for recognising the challenges we face as mothers caring for disabled children. The assistance which have been extended to my family is overwhelming.

"I pray that let it not end on me but go and touch other families in the same situation as us. To those who have extended their hand to us, may God be with them."

- Mrs. E. Musiyambiri, a mother of a child with disability.

Expenditures

2022:

Bibles for mothers: \$3,350

Staff costs: \$900

Workshops, Training groups and Bible Studies for mothers: \$10,693

Assistive devices for children: \$9,950

Physiotherapy: \$275

Indirect costs (office expenses etc): \$2,517

TOTAL: USD \$27,685

2023: (Jan-Mar)

Bibles for mothers: \$420

Staff costs: \$900

Workshops, Training groups and Bible Studies for mothers: \$8,226

Assistive devices for children: \$1,980

Indirect costs (office expenses etc) \$919

TOTAL: USD \$12,445