

## MSP IMPACT – CHANGING LIVES: A SCHOOL-BASED APPROACH TO CARE AND SUPPORT OF ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN



Look at us now: the children of Hombe J.S.S. in their new school uniforms

“Caring Together”:  
New school uniforms for orphans in Eastern Cape

Eastern Cape Province has the second highest number of orphans in South Africa and the number of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) needing care is set to increase over the next 15 years. The MSP-funded “Caring Together” project has developed a school-based care and support programme for OVC in 100 schools throughout the province, scaling up to 200 schools from August 2008.

The children of Hombe J.S.S. recently received new school uniforms through the Caring Together project. This letter to the MSP from a local caregiver, Ms Tenjiswa Mathe, demonstrates how the Caring Together project's success in improving the quality of life of OVC, by both reducing the impact of stigma and breaking down the links between poverty and HIV.

“On the last day of the HAC (Health Advisory Committee) Training at Hombe J.S.S, I decided to meet all the orphans to have a talk with them and know their needs and problems. I was first surprised about the number they gave me: this year at Hombe J.S.S, they have 92 orphans out of 1180 schoolchildren.

I only met 39 of them because it was too late. During my individual talk with them they mentioned so many issues and challenges.

“If I can have school uniform I can be happy”

(Mthethwa Esihle)

There was one little boy Mthethwa Esihle, who is in grade 5, he mentioned the issue of not having school uniform. He suddenly said: "If I can have School Uniform I can be happy because all my classmates are always laughing at me and my younger sister"

### Gathering support from the local community

I asked the boy to bring his sister to me. I saw those poor angels wearing dirty clothes; they didn't even have School Shoes on their feet. It was a bad and sad thing to me.

I then appealed to the HAC Committee, saying that they must ask for donations if there was any chance to make these children happy, especially in School. After a week the Chairperson of the HAC called me to come to their school to have a short meeting with them. I came to the School, they told me that they had already started organising some donations from community members who own businesses: Mr. Quma the director of Quma Funerals and Mr. Ndlamla the director of Sasol Garage at Lusikisiki. The HAC needed my assistance in part of these negotiations.

"Let us achieve excellence against all odds"

(Ms Tenjiswa Mathe)

We then went to those business partners to create a partnership between them and the School in helping the orphans of their community. They were very happy about the task they had been given: donating School Uniform. They bought full School Uniform for 12 children: two from Malangeni, two from Siwali J.S.S and 8 from Hombe J.S.S, The HAC Committee decided to include the two other schools from the OVC project so as to form a partnership between these schools, and to help each other.

### A different kind of Valentine's Day gift

We then, with the help of Mrs. Somacala, decided to have a specific day for the hand over of these Uniforms. It was a Valentine's Day 2008.

It was an amazing occasion with the presence of the Department of Education (DOE), Department of Social Development, Department of Health, Anita the Provincial Coordinator from LCD Pretoria, Mbuyi Mtata the LCD Project Manager, Lusikisiki the LCD Senior Trainer, community members, foster parents, caregivers, and the Principals of other OVC Schools.

We thank the above for making the day successful and for the motivation they gave us. We also give thanks to DOE for the presents they gave on that day – they really made the poor boys and girls see that they are loved. The messages and Support they share with the orphans, foster parents, and community members can create better lives for the orphans. We really appreciate it: let us achieve excellence against all odds. ”

#### THE MSP: AN OVERVIEW

The DFID-funded South Africa Multi-Sector HIV and AIDS Programme (MSP), is a multi-year initiative to reduce the number of new HIV infections and mitigate the impact of HIV and AIDS.

HLSP manages the MSP. [www.hlsp.org](http://www.hlsp.org)