

INTERNATIONAL PROJECT PROPOSAL

PROJECT 0231



Cross International

Delivering Food, Shelter and Hope in the Name of Jesus

Grace Ministries

Care for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children

— Lusaka, Zambia —



Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.

Psalm 82:3



We are a ministry

that mobilizes the global Church to transform the poor and their communities materially and spiritually for the glory of Jesus Christ.

Rather than create new institutions to distribute aid, we support existing ministries and churches already serving the poor. In addition to being the most cost-effective way of helping the poor, empowering these ministries allows us to support the Church's spiritual mission and its important position of leadership in poor communities.

We consider every gift we receive as a precious resource from God. We direct every donation to its intended project, provide honest and accurate reports to our donors, and keep overhead costs to an industry low. We handle funds with utmost integrity and hold our ministry partners in the field to the same high standards by asking them to document costs and the impact of their outreach.

We invite you to join with us as we seek to transform the lives of the poor materially and spiritually — ways that please the Father and glorify Him in Heaven and on earth.





Project Synopsis

Description

This project will provide school fees, books, uniforms and school supplies, hygienic supplies, health care and spiritual development for orphaned and vulnerable children — and distribute food staples to the most destitute participants.

Purpose

To help children break free of the shackles of poverty and set them on a course toward a more prosperous future.

Location

Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia in Southern Africa.

Cost

\$59,400 provides for all children for 18 months.

Highlights

- According to a 2015 United Nations report, 750,000 children have lost one or both parents to AIDS in Zambia.
- The grandparents and neighbors who take in orphans are often too poor to adequately provide for themselves. As a result, the orphaned children don't get an education, medical care or enough food to eat.
- Christian volunteers with local evangelical Grace Ministries Church congregations saw this urgent need as their opportunity to serve orphans and vulnerable children in their communities.
- Grace Ministries covers the children's school expenses and enrolls them in the national health insurance to cover check-ups and doctor visits. The children most at risk of malnutrition receive quarterly food staples.
- The Christian volunteers who look after their welfare give them spiritual guidance and encourage them to participate in church youth activities. These relationships pave the way for children and their caregivers to know Jesus.



Zambia Fast Facts

Population: **15.5 million**
Literacy rate: **63.4%**
Unemployment rate: **15%**
People living with HIV/AIDS: **1.2 million**
Number of orphans: **1.4 million**

Sources: CIA World Factbook, UNAIDS, AVERT



Zambia: A Nation in Need

When Harrison Tembo's father died of an AIDS-related illness last year, so did the 13-year-old's dream of becoming a lawyer. Barely able to feed the family on her income, Harrison's mother was forced to make a difficult decision — her son would have to wait indefinitely to enter the eighth grade. She simply couldn't afford the school fees, uniforms and supplies.

Already struggling through inconsolable grief over his father's death, Harrison was now facing another loss. The future he dreamt of — going to college, becoming an attorney and helping people in need — was also dying before his eyes.

Stories like Harrison's are common in Zambia, where more than 750,000 children have lost one or both parents to the AIDS epidemic. Nationwide, 1.2 million Zambians live with HIV, with higher concentrations of the virus in Lusaka, where an estimated one in five people is infected.

As American Christians, it can be hard for us to imagine the terrible hardships Zambia's orphans face. In addition to the trauma of losing one or both parents, many are left without any adults to raise them. Some are taken in by neighbors or extended relatives such as grandparents, but even those who are genuinely concerned about their welfare are too poor to adequately provide many basic needs. Harrison, for example, was sent to live with his grandmother to ease his mother's financial burden, and while she was able to provide regular meals, she still could not afford his school fees.

The fate of other orphans is even more troubling. Less compassionate adults take some orphans in for the purpose of exploiting them for labor or worse. Regardless of their fate at home, these children rarely get the opportunity to go to school, because they cannot afford the books, uniforms, supplies or enrollment fees required to attend. As a result, many never receive the education that could help lift them out of material poverty. Worse yet, they may never meet Jesus Christ, who could lift them out of spiritual poverty. Instead, they remain illiterate, impoverished and hopeless.



Our Partner: Grace Ministries

Grace Ministries' project director, Esther Sichula, is the epitome of a multitasking leader. On a recent Friday afternoon, she calmly navigated her car through a crowd of market shoppers during Lusaka's heavy rush hour traffic, got directions for a shorter route, took a few phone calls, and chatted enthusiastically about the church's outreach ministry to orphans and vulnerable children. Nothing stops Esther from the work God has set before her, and she bubbles with excitement about the way the Lord has been blessing the work of her busy hands.

"We have seen tremendous change in their lives. Children who were hopeless have found hope, and their faith is growing," said Sichula. "You hear it from the children. They testify. Apart from getting help for school, it was their faith that got them going. But there is still so much more to do."

Esther Sichula and her team of dedicated volunteer coordinators are the backbone of Compassion Ministries, an outreach project of Grace Ministries Church, which has 90 congregations throughout Zambia. In Lusaka, 13 congregations work to minister to the poor and needy in their local communities. Through the Compassion Ministries program, the church identifies children in the congregation and in nearby communities who cannot afford tuition, books, uniforms and other basic school-related supplies.

Each child is paired with a coordinator, who serves as a "big brother" or "big sister." These coordinators re-enroll the children in school, take them shopping for books and supplies, and mentor the children all the way through the program. The goals are to ensure participants do well in school, stay away from negative peer pressure and come to know the Lord.

Sichula began as a volunteer coordinator after giving her life to the Lord. She was so deeply affected by the plight of the country's orphans, she retired early from her bank job, took social work courses and has dedicated her life to the project.

Coordinator Florence Nampungwe says if she had the means, she would provide for all of the orphans in her neighborhood. Despite having five children of her own, she finds time to mentor 10 children.

"It is a challenge, but if God can help me, I can help others," she said. "I have a heart for these children. Sometimes, they complain about the kind of environment they are living in or about not having enough food or clothes. Many of them were even coming to my business to ask about school fees because their parents cannot afford it. Some were dismissed from school because of financials. You know, when you want to do something, you shouldn't have to wait for people to come and say, do this or do that. You have to decide to do it on your own when you hear the voice of God. When you are blessed, you should bless others."

Meeting the needs of the sick, the orphaned and the needy opens up opportunities for Grace Ministries volunteers to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ — which is the motivation behind everything they do. Only Jesus can profoundly change lives and give lasting freedom and hope.



Grace Ministries Project Director Esther Sichula retired early to dedicate her life to helping Zambia's orphans.



The Project: Caring for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children

Thanks to the compassionate outreaches of Grace Ministries, orphans don't have to drop out of school. They don't easily fall prey to preventable illnesses. And they don't have to live in spiritual darkness. These children aren't left to fend for themselves. They live with a caring family — often a grandmother, but sometimes an aunt or close neighbor — and they have caring Christian volunteers monitoring their welfare.

Education

Grace Ministries gives children school uniforms, shoes, books and school bags, and pays their school fees, so they can attend school. For poor families who struggle to support the orphans they've taken in, these expenses are colossal barriers preventing the children from completing their education. This practical assistance means children can graduate from high school and qualify to go to college or technical school, or they can enter the workforce right after graduation. Either way, with a diploma these kids are empowered to improve their economic condition.

Health care

Zambia offers universal health insurance, which provides for annual checkups and doctor visits. But the minimal cost for this coverage is prohibitive to the very poor. Poor children are vulnerable to suffering from debilitating but preventable illnesses that keep them home from school and lead to chronic malnutrition, or worse. But Grace Ministries pays for the orphans' health insurance and makes sure each child gets his or her annual checkup. The ministry also has a relationship with a local clinic the children may visit should they need a doctor's attention.



The children most at risk of malnutrition receive quarterly food staples.

Food staples

Of the orphans Grace Ministries serves, children who fall under one or more of the following circumstances are more likely than others to become malnourished: They live with an elderly grandmother; they live in a household with a large number of children; their caretaker is ill or has HIV/AIDS; or the child is ill or has HIV/AIDS. To ensure these high-risk children don't go hungry, Grace Ministries provides food staples including flour, cooking oil, sugar, salt, peanuts, beans and dried fish or another high-protein supplement..

Spiritual support

The program's main goal is to win for Christ those who are lost. Participants who already belong to a Grace Ministries congregation eagerly participate in Bible studies and youth activities. For the unchurched children, their relationships with the volunteers who look after their welfare are crucial. These Christians give the children spiritual counsel, help them deal with their grief, and introduce them to Jesus. They invite the children to church, and many accept. In this way, children and their caregivers are coming to know the Lord.



Give Now to Empower This Mission of Mercy!

Throughout Scripture, God emphasizes the importance of caring for orphans — those children who have the least power to help themselves and the greatest reason to lose hope.

By supporting Grace Ministries, you can be God's instrument of mercy and instill the hope that is found in Christ Jesus — a hope actively communicated through gifts of education, medical care, food and spiritual guidance.

Your Zambian brothers and sisters in Christ have identified the neediest, most vulnerable orphans in their communities, and their desire is to be the hands and feet of Jesus, meeting these children's needs so they can live happy, productive lives. But they require our partnership to succeed. Please join us in responding to this important and urgent need!

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this:
to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself
from being polluted by the world.

James 1:27

Our Promise to You!

Proceeds from this campaign will be used to cover any expenditures for this project incurred through June 30, 2018, the close of our ministry's new fiscal year. In the event that more funds are raised than needed to fully fund the project, the excess funds, if any, will be used to meet the most urgent needs of the ministry.