

Case Study: Hope for the Blind in Tanzania

Hope for Children are working with HOACHIDT in Tanzania. HOACHIDT is an organisation that works to provide support and education to blind children and mothers.

Why We Help

Tanzania is one of the poorest countries in the world with a GDP per head on only £1000 per annum. The country's infrastructure is poor and consequently the population suffers from poor literacy, high mortality rates and widespread poverty.

The blind are especially deprived in Tanzania and face great discrimination and abuse; blindness is a taboo and is seen as a result of a curse caused by customs such as witchcraft. Discrimination is so deeply rooted in some minds that people do not want even touch a disabled person; the blind are often thrown off buses, for example.

There remains, therefore, no help or respect for the blind or for the mothers who are seen to have caused this disability. In the majority of cases, the father will shun the family after the birth of a blind child and will leave all responsibility to the mother. Therefore, due to cultural attitudes that believe the blind should be kept out of sight, mothers of blind children must stay home to look after their child leaving them unable to work or socialise.

Blind children are marginalised, outcasted and grow up without education, skills or disability aids and with significantly poor health. Schools are not equipped or designed to teach disabled children; they do not have the specialist staff nor the necessary equipment, for example books in braille.

In addition, women living with disability are often targeted by men who believe that they are HIV/AIDS free and are forced into sex. This renders the mother and resulting child highly vulnerable as the disabled mother is not well equipped to bring up her child.



With funding from Hope for Children, HOACHADIT became a registered NGO and was able to recruit 5 blind children and train them in reading and writing braille over a period of 2 years. This amazed the local community and catalysed a surge in interest from mothers with disabled children. Hope has continued to fund the work of HOACHIDT enabling the organisation to grow and increase the number of blind children and women they support.

The vision of HOACHIDT is to raise awareness and understanding towards the difficulties of disabled individuals to urge communities and stakeholders to take responsibility to preserve the dignity and respect for mankind. HOACHIDT seeks to lobby government through international and local organisations for an end to the discrimination of the disabled.



The Project

Hope and HOACHIDT have together implemented a grassroots programme that delivers education to blind children alongside support for mothers of blind children and to blind women. The project provides blind children with an educational support centre that is run by the founder of HOACHIDT as well as two blind teachers, who understand the difficulties of disability. The centre offers a safe haven of shelter, medication, nutrition, education and vocational training to the children keeping them off the streets and away from abuse and danger.

The children receive intensive tuition through the medium of braille in a school that is fully equipped with braille machines and has a braille library. Tuition is designed to assist those who have failed to progress to secondary school. Each child has an individual care plan meaning that the teaching they receive is tailored exactly towards their personal needs. After three months of tuition, children retake exams; those that pass progress to secondary school whilst those that do not move into vocational training, for example in carpentry. Those children who are unable to successfully achieve vocational skills are given further tuition and support until they are able to live independently.

The project also works to provide support for mothers through a supportive community group. This group provides training in how to care for a disabled child as well as helping mothers to gain access to the available services such as health care and transport. It is important to bring mothers of blind children together into this

neglect or rejection and to help mothers realise they are not alone. The mothers are additionally supported through food and medical assistance and income generation and saving schemes; for example, we have opened a bakery in the community which enables women to bake bread and subsequently receive an income.

The project also helps to ensure that children of disabled mothers are able to achieve education; we provide school uniforms as well as the necessary school materials whilst also funding places at boarding school where necessary.



The Impact of our work

Whilst providing essential support for these children, the project also provides the means for these disabled children to catch up on their education, to pass exams and to gain skills. This subsequently lifts the children out of their previous situations of abuse, failure and begging and provides them with a place in society whilst directing them towards success, independence and happiness.

The project currently supports 42 mothers of disabled children. These women now have the means through which to generate their own income and thus no longer rely on hand-outs. The supportive community group ensures that the needs of both blind children and their mothers are met. Of these women, 20 are involved in running the bakery and producing bread for income generating purposes.

The funding secured through Hope means that the project is able to provide food and shelter to those children who need it. In addition, these funds enable the project to provide medical care for those who need it through covering the costs of transport and treatment.

To find out more information or to donate please visit:

www.hope-for-children.org