

Fiona Dixon - Thompson

Mwandi, Zambia

Partner Church - United Church of Zambia

About Mwandi

The standard of living in Mwandi is below average for Zambia, one of the poorest nations in Africa. HIV/AIDS has devastated the village and the rate of infection stands at 35%. This has resulted in an estimated 1,300 orphans and vulnerable children. These children are usually left to the care of elderly grandparents who do not have the means to provide for them.

About Fiona

Fiona is a UnitingWorld assisted volunteer from Port Lincoln, South Australia. She has been working with our partner, the United Church of Zambia, since September 2004. Fiona's passion for the people of Mwandi developed after she first visited the area in her early 20's. Since that time she has been compelled to help the community. On Australia Day 2009 Fiona received an Australian Member to the Order of Australia for starting and co-ordinating the Orphans and Vulnerable Children project in Zambia.

Fiona's Work

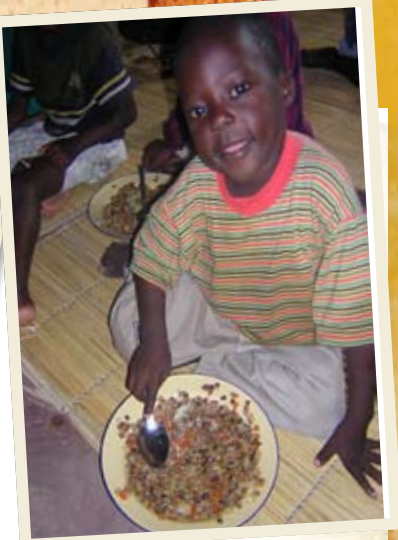
Fiona works with orphans and vulnerable children who have been affected by HIV/AIDS in Mwandi, Zambia. As the full time Project Coordinator, she manages a drop in centre where more than 231 orphans aged from six months to 15 years are provided with one nourishing meal every day.

The greatest thing for Fiona is seeing the children laugh and smile, putting on weight and getting healthier, having clothes to wear and being warm when its cold.

The Project

The Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Centre provides the Mwandi village's orphans with holistic care through nutritional, educational, social and spiritual support. The drop-in centre provides children with nourishing meals each day. Care includes the provision of multi-vitamins, oral care, monthly health checks, recreation and educational activities, as well as the costs for school attendance for the children. Children are supplied with clothes twice a year. The project oversees 1,400 children from the village in an effort to ensure that the needs of all children are met. The project also works to build HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention through meetings, home visits and education activities.





Achievements

The successful feeding program currently cares for 235 children. A vegetable garden and bakery have been established to support this program. Three child counsellors, trained by the project, help children with emotional, psychosocial, social and behavioural problems associated with the loss of their parents. A sewing centre has also been established to teach vocational skills and the first students have graduated from this program. There are over 700 OVC sponsored children in primary education at Mwandi Basic School, more than 100 at secondary school in Sesheke and over 70 at college.

Our Partner Church - The United Church of Zambia

The United Church of Zambia's aim is to preach the gospel and to nurture Christians through Christian education. Christian nurture takes place through several groups such as Men's Christian Fellowship, Women's Christian Fellowship, Youth Fellowships, Sunday Schools and Choirs.

In addition to preaching the Gospel, Mwandi consistory oversees the work of the Orphans and Vulnerable Children project which provides educational, social and nutritional support to the children of Mwandi. The church oversees the agricultural projects which keep poultry, pigs, dairy cows and a vegetable garden. It runs a pre-school, sewing centre and library. In addition, the church works with the Mwandi Mission Hospital and Mwandi Basic School.

The United Church of Zambia is involved in a holistic mission that aims at supporting, equipping, enabling, empowering and healing the community for community building and development.

Contact UnitingWorld

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 Sydney South NSW 1235
 Phone: +61 2 8267 4265
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