

OWN YOUR DESTINY

Girls' football league of Sinazongwe



FUNDED BY COMIC RELIEF, THE SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT, OHNE, KIT AID AND INDIVIDUAL DONORS

Impact Report: March 2022

"Own your destiny" is a 3 year project designed to return 750 girls back into the education system in rural Zambia. The project combines literacy and numeracy catch-up lessons, with entrepreneurship training, start-up business grants, sexual reproductive health education and confidence building exercises, which we have combined the much loved sport of football with as the delivery tool. Play it Forward and School Club Zambia are two Zambian NGOs who together have over 15 years of experience in addressing some of the key barriers that girls in Zambia face when trying to return to school. This project draws upon both organisations' skills and passion to see real change occur for the girls, so that they can benefit from the wider financial, health and social benefits that education can bring to their lives.

In 2021, it was announced on the Zambian national news that Sinazongwe District now has the highest rates of child marriage in the country. Across the 7 clinics that we have been collecting data from we recorded 178 pregnancies in girls under the age of 18 just in 2021. In 2020 we recorded 140 pregnancies which is a 27% increase since the pandemic began. Almost all of the girls recorded in these statistics are not in school and only two of SCZ's partner schools recorded teenage pregnancies during 2021, suggesting a strong correlation between a girl becoming pregnant at a young age and her not being in education.



27%

rise in teenage pregnancies in
our communities since the
pandemic began

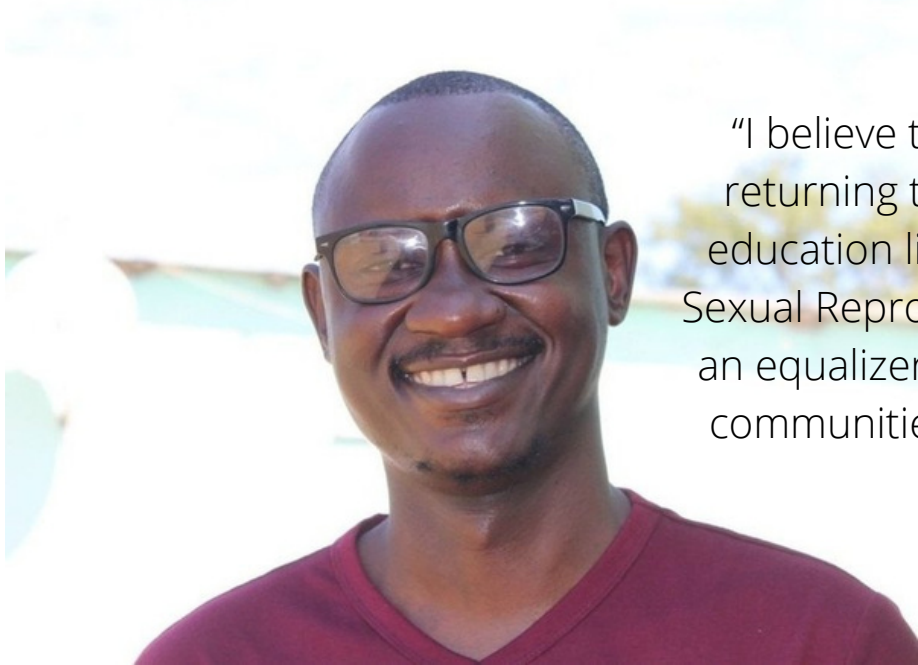


Since May 2021...

A third wave of covid19 and restrictions on gatherings prevented the project from being launched in May 2021 as planned. However, by August when infection rates had dropped and once Zambia had held its elections we were able to begin our work.

- 110 football training sessions
- 155 literacy lessons
- 148 numeracy lessons
- 10 schools
- 20 teachers enrolled into the project
- 20 peer coaches trained
- 248 football shirts and shorts distributed
- 4 community football pitches built
- 6 community football pitches rehabilitated
- 235 girls out of education who would like to return to school
- 91 single mothers participating on the project
- 33 girls already returned to full-time school, many more returned to adult learning
- Starting English functional literacy rates of between 24% - 49% which will be measured again in May 2022
- Starting numeracy rates of between 21% - 41% which will be measured again in May 2022

Collins Simugwenkwe, Project Officer: Literacy and Numeracy



“I believe that this project is going to bring positive change for a lot of girls in Sinazongwe who may have lost hope of ever returning to school. This project uses a holistic approach, tackling not only education but also other issues that effect girl's education like a lack of finances to pay for school requirements, finding a livelihood to sustain themselves and learning their Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights. Having dropped out of university myself at some point, I fully understand how much of an equalizer education is. I am passionate about access to quality education and a decent life, especially for the marginalised communities in Zambia's rural areas. I am proud to be working on this project as it gives me an opportunity to contribute in helping rural girls in Sinzaongwe return to school and increase their chances of having a decent life.”

Own your destiny

IMPACT STORIES

Betty (15) Chisyabulungu Primary School

Betty lives at home with her single mother, her two older siblings and a younger brother who is in Grade 6. Betty dropped out of school in 2019 after writing her Grade 7 exams (end of primary examinations). Betty was so proud when she made it to grade 8 but her mother could not afford to pay for the school requirements and fees, so she ended up staying at home rather than progressing onto secondary school. Both of Betty's older siblings left school at the same grade (end of primary) because her mother could not afford to pay for their fees.

Betty heard about the "Own Your Destiny" project from community members as word was going round the village and she became interested in joining when she learnt that taking part could lead to returning to school. Thankfully, Betty was selected as one of the 25 girls who joined the project under Chisyabulungu School. Since the project began, Betty has been attending all of the literacy and numeracy lessons as well as the football sessions that take place every week. She is particularly happy with the knowledge gained from the various Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) topics that are covered in the football drills, as she has learnt how she can protect herself from diseases and unwanted pregnancies. In the past months she has been attending the lessons, she has improved on her reading in both Chitonga and English and because of this, she has been growing in confidence.

Betty was trained in entrepreneurship and received a small start-up grant at the inception of the project in October 2021. With the skills that she learnt, she decided to utilise them by partnering with her mother who is a fish trader and subsistence farmer. Betty's mother, who never finished school herself, has been supporting her family from the fish business for a long time now. Her mother ordered fish costing K250 from the K300 capital she received and from this they were able to generate K500. Betty has always wanted to return to school, so with the money that they made from this first sale, they bought all of her school requirements and in February she returned to school at Chisyabulungu Primary School in grade 8.



Ruth (15), Sinakoba Primary School

Ruth is from Sinakoba Village, where she lives with both her parents and 4 other family members consisting of 2 sisters and nieces. Her parents are subsistence farmers but also run a fish business to provide for the family. Ruth dropped out of school in grade 4 in 2019 because she had to care for a young sibling who is epileptic, her elder siblings had just left home and there was no one old enough to remain with the young sibling who regularly has attacks. Ruth had to be the one to take up the role of remaining with the young sister and she ended up dropping out of school.

Since Ruth dropped out of school in grade 4, she did not know how to read or write at all and this was her main reason for applying to join the Own your Destiny project. Ruth has been consistent with participation in the activities, especially the Literacy and Numeracy lessons where she has now learnt how to read and do basic math. The happy readers books have particularly helped and she has been practicing her reading at home and she is enjoying it. Her father said that “Ruth is always inquisitive to know what she doesn't know, she's always asking questions of things she doesn't know.” Ruth's father also mentioned that Ruth has always been a loner, she used to be found alone most of the time, but from the interactions she's been having with the friends during football sessions and lessons, she's beginning to open-up and it able to interact freely with others, she's growing in confidence.

After learning how to read with the help of the Literacy Instructor and Happy Readers materials, Ruth has been developing more interest in school, she started pestering her father to buy her school requisites so that she could go back to school. Ruth's father decided to support her to do what she wanted to do and he bought her the school uniform and school shoes so that she could return to school in Grade 5 at Sinakoba Primary School. Now that she has returned to school and her father has understood how important it is to her, he remains with Ruth's young sister at home when she's at school. This has moreover been made possible, as since receiving the start-up business grant through the project, Ruth and her mother have expanded their fish business, making more money for the family.

Ruth's father said he would personally recommend the project to other community members and family members with children who have dropped out of school, having seen the impact it's having on his daughter.

There are now 26 months left of our Own your Destiny project with a new cohort of 250 girls to be selected for the second year of activities in June. A huge thank you to everyone that has so kindly supported this project in its first 10 months.



Own your Destiny League Update

The first league which finished just before the Christmas holidays ended with Sinakoba winning the trophy, after an exciting penalty shootout round in the final against Siamucaala!

This current league started in February and is due to finish by the first week of May! Currently Chisyabulungu is in the lead now but anything could happen with Muchekwa not far behind.



OWN YOUR DESTINY FOOTBALL WINTER LEAGUE													
Position	Team	Home					Away					GD	Pts
		P	W	L	D	F	A	W	L	D	F	A	
1	Chisyabulungu	4	1	0	1	3	1	2	0	0	6	2	10
2	Muchekwa	3	2	0	0	4	0	0	0	1	1	1	7
3	Kariba South	4	2	0	0	10	1	0	2	0	0	3	6
4	Matambo	3	2	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	0	7	6
5	Chimonsele	3	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	1	1	5
6	Siansowa	3	0	0	2	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	3
7	Mweemba	4	1	1	0	4	5	0	2	0	0	5	3
8	Namafulu	3	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	1
9	Sinakoba	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0
10	Siamucaala	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	5	0



Period poverty affects 100% of the girls that are participating on this project. Thanks to our long-term supporters at OHNE, we have been able to give every single girl taking part on this year's project 2 re-usable sanitary pads, to ensure that they do not miss school or practice due to not having access to any sanitary products.

A huge thank you to everyone that has made this project possible!