



# foundation 4 orphans

## EMPOWERS

### 2023 Pivot to F4O-ZOE EMPOWERS PROJECT

“If you give orphaned youth fish, they become dependent. If you teach them skills, they become empowered, feed their family, make an impact on their village, and control their destiny.”

-WAYNE LAVENDER\*

*\*With thanks to Lao Tzu, who wrote  
“If you give a man a fish . . .”*



**The Foundation 4 Orphans** is involved in a 2-pronged pivot to 1) reintegrate orphaned children and vulnerable youth (OVC) living currently in our Homes for Children back into their biological families; and 2) launch an empowerment program for OVC allowing them to take charge of their own lives and enabling us to reach 40 times more young men and women in far more effective ways. This flier helps explain our pivots.

## PIVOT I: REINTEGRATION of OVC Back to Their Families

Twenty years ago, HIV-AIDS was devastating Sub-Saharan Africa. To deal with that crisis, many faith-based organizations constructed orphanages and provided funding to support these children. Research conducted in the ensuing years has shown that living in institutional care is problematic for human development. Based on this research, the United Nations passed a resolution discouraging the construction of more orphanages with a long-term goal towards the elimination of orphanages in the coming years.

Helping Children Worldwide (HCW) was an early adaptor of the UN resolution. Upon discovering most children living in their orphanage had biological families unable to afford their care, HCW developed a successful program reintegrating children back into their families. **This program includes:**

- 1 Family tracing for every child to help determine the best location for the children to live.
- 2 The invitation of family members into the orphanage for meals and programs to help the reintegration process for the children and parents.
- 3 The training of case workers to visit the children and their families quarterly to insure the child is safe, happy, and able to thrive in their new setting. The case workers also visited the children's schools.
- 4 Payments of \$200 per year, or \$50 per quarter, for each child placed in their families, to help cover the cost of having an extra person living in their homes.

F4O will implement the HCW model, with support from HCW. Our goal is the reintegrate all our children back into their families in 2023. F4O will leave behind a small staff to monitor the children's placement and to make the quarterly payments of \$50 for \$200 per year to the families. By 2026 we hope to end this program and turn our current facilities over to the United Methodist Church of Mozambique for use as educational and resource centers for children, women, and adults in need.

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# PIVOT II:

## Pivot to the F4O - ZOE EMPOWERS PROJECT



**Zoe Empowers** was founded in 2004 as a relief organization for orphaned children left in the wake of the HIV-AIDS pandemic in Zimbabwe. In 2007 Zoe leaders were introduced to an African-based program developed by a group of Rwandan social workers frustrated by a cycle of relief and dependencies, without these young people ever being able to stand on their own. Led by Epiphanie Mujawimana, this group began meeting with child and youth-led households in extreme poverty, asking what they would need in order to never require charity again. Over time they developed a three-year, community-based, indigenous-led empowerment program providing a framework for local community leaders to stand behind child and youth-led households, and for these young people to take the lead in their own journey out of extreme poverty.



The program is wholistic in nature with the young people gathered into empowerment groups of 25 child and youth-led, parentless families. These families have an average of 3 – 4 children per family for a total of 70 – 100 per group. These groups elect leadership, nominate a volunteer adult mentor from their community, and then they begin following the program to become safe and healthy, food and housing secure, with access to health and hygiene, and knowledge of their human rights. Further, they develop skills for long-term success with access to education and/or vocational training and learn how to diversify their small businesses with the financial fluency to continue to financial success far beyond the three-year program itself. These young people can live meaningful lives by reintegrating into their families and communities, and the knowledge that they are loved by God.



Zoe Empowers has carefully tracked the success of the over 160,000 orphaned children and vulnerable youth who have been empowered by this program across Africa and India. Not only do these young people consistently experience stunning success during the three-year program, but that success continues to improve many years beyond graduation.

The F4O – Zoe Empowers Project began in October 2022 with 720 individuals in eight empowerment groups. Our goal will be to add ten new groups in October 2023 with another estimated 900 individuals. The Zoe Empowers model allows the program to scale and expand and is 40 times more effective and efficient financially than the orphanage model.

Pictured here: Top, Zoe Staff in Mutare, Zimbabwe. Middle, Samuel in his self-made barber shop. Bottom, Regina in her sewing shop.

## SUMMARY

- The F4O – Zoe Empowers Model is 40 times more cost effective than an Orphanage Model.
- The F4O – Zoe Empowers Model is better for these young people.
- The F4O board of directors has unanimously voted to endorse this model.
- While some of this may seem like a “too good to be true” concept, this past fall I, and several others, visited Mozambique and Zimbabwe, and personally witnessed the work and transformative power of Zoe Empowers. I and our board fully embrace it.
- We believe you will embrace it as well!