

Introducing... Family Profile

Sponsored child name:	Anele Sibanda	Sponsored child number:	0112 - 012717
Sponsored child date of birth:	08/08/1996		
Sex of sponsored child :	Male	Community name:	Nhlangano
Religion of sponsored child:	Christian	Community code:	NHL

I am happy to greet you and would like to welcome you to Plan Zimbabwe on behalf of your new sponsored child, Anele Sibanda. My name is Otilia and I work as a community volunteer in Nhlangano, where Anele and his family have lived for as long as they can remember. Together with other community volunteers I help with communications between sponsors and the families in Anele's community. I'm sure that you have already glanced at the attached photos. Don't worry about the serious expressions on their faces. A photo is a very serious thing here - on the very few occasions their photos are taken, the villagers make a real effort to express their dignity. I recently visited the family and talked with Emma, Anele's grandmother. Now I would like to introduce all the family members to you.

Introducing Anele

First of all, let us talk about Anele. He is a friendly little boy whose favourite games include football, dancing and singing. His grandmother tells me that Anele always says that when he is older he would like to be a policeman. In this part of the world children grow up fast and all must play a part in the family's progress and survival. Although they still have time to play they must also help with the daily chores. Anele helps to look after domestic animals and to fetch water for the house.

Anele is now in the third grade of the primary school. His grandmother says that his performance in school is average. Lots of encouragement continues to help. The day starts early for Anele as he heads for school. He travels by foot and it takes him less than 30 minutes. Every day Anele meets his friends Prince and Bernard and like children everywhere they chatter about all kinds of different things so the time passes quickly. Anele is glad to reach school and to start the day with his friends. He always looks forward to the mathematics and local language lessons that are his favourite subjects.

Anele is not able to write to you himself yet, however, his sister, Sinikiwe is eager to write to you on his behalf. Although children in this community are very shy about writing to someone in a different country we will encourage them to communicate with you in their own personal way, perhaps through a small drawing. It is also very exciting for them to receive a letter or a photograph from a friend abroad and so I hope you will be able to find the time to send Anele and his family a message occasionally. I have seen the wide smiles which this can bring to a child's face!

Introducing Anele's family

There are 3 family members living together with Anele. I would like to introduce them to you.

Emma (75), who is Anele's grandmother. At the moment she is working as a peasant farmer.

Sinikiwe (11), who is Anele's sister.

David (14), who is Anele's brother.

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Anele does not live with his parents since his parents have separated. It is his grandmother, Emma who looks after him. At home the family speaks their local language, Ndebelle.

Anele and his family's health

Emma told me that Anele has been in good health during the past six months. This means that he was one of the fortunate ones as still, many children suffer from diseases that could be prevented. If Anele or any of his family is sick, they can go to the traditional birth attendant, a journey of about fifteen minutes. If there were an emergency case, the family would have to travel about thirty minutes to get to the nearest hospital.

Where Anele and his family live

Anele's family lives in a small house made of mud and sticks with a thatched roof. The house is owned by the family with a legal title. Whilst showing me their home, Emma told me that the house is in a fair condition. Anele's family does not have their own latrine and have to use an open field or public area for their needs. This creates a lower level of hygiene and increases the incidence of disease, particularly amongst the children.

In many areas of Plan's work a lack of access to clean safe drinking water all year round is a real problem and can cause an increase in common water-borne diseases such as diarrhoea and cholera. Throughout the year Anele's family get their water from a borehole with a hand pump that is less than 1km away. There is sufficient water during both rainy and dry seasons. The water is safe for the family to drink at all times.

Anele's family uses an open fire to cook their daily meals and their main fuel is wood. Collecting firewood is usually the work of women and children and a very time consuming task. For lighting the house the family uses kerosene lamps. Emma says this ends the day early as the lack of light makes it difficult to work or do household chores in the evening. Anele's family, like their friends and neighbours have a very small income and it is a struggle to be able to meet their basic needs. However, the families in the Nhlngano community have a rich social life. During their spare time, Anele's family loves playing music and telling and listening to stories.

My message to you

I hope you have enjoyed reading about Anele and his family. The following pages will give you more information about their community and the way of life there. Hopefully this will give you a better idea of the problems they face, their expectations and their positive attitude. Life is not easy and the economic situation can make it even harder. However Plan will be working with Anele's family and all families within Nhlngano to identify their most basic needs which may be in health, education, housing or income. Each individual will play a role and contribute what they can in terms of manual labour, local materials, technical expertise or financial contributions to ensure a brighter future for Anele and other children like him.

We hope that your friendship with Anele will be an unforgettable experience and that it will give you the opportunity to learn more about another culture far away. Your contributions will allow our team here to create opportunities for the family and their village community to help them solve some of their serious problems. Next year you will receive an Annual Progress Report, and we hope that we will then be able to show you some of the first proud achievements which Anele's family have made. Until then, thank you for giving Anele a chance!

Otilia Ndlovu
community volunteer

Sponsored child Number : 0112 - 012717

COMMUNITY PROFILE TSHOLOTSHO

Your sponsored child's community:

Your sponsored child and family live in Tsholotsho Rural District in Matabeleland North Province. The area is situated 120km to the northwest of the provincial capital, Bulawayo, has a population of about 112 000 people and covers an area of about 4 000 square kilometres. The district is surrounded by Hwange National Park (north-west), Plumtree District (south-west), Umguza District (east) and Lupane District (north-east). The area is characterised by erratic rainfall (mean annual 500mm), seasonal dry spells, periodic droughts and temperatures that range from 15 degrees Celsius in winter to as high as 38 degrees Celsius in summer. The soils are primarily Kalahari sands covered by savannah woodlands of mainly Zimbabwe teak and Mahogany in the north and mainly Mopane in the south.

A narrow tarmac road links the Tsholotsho District Service Centre with the city of Bulawayo whilst gravel roads service the rest of the area.

When travelling it is familiar to see wild animals like warthog, bushbuck and birds like guinea fowls. Hunting of these animals is illegal unless this is done on privately owned farms.

A modern 140 – bed government hospital serves the area and is supplemented by other scattered health centres within the area. Only a small number of families have access to ventilated pits (Blair toilets). Water is not easily available to the majority and most people in summer get their supplies from unprotected sources whilst in winter (dry season) they travel long distances to get water from boreholes.



Children at a borehole

Primary and secondary schools are found within the communities. Most of these schools tend to be overcrowded, hence some classes are held in the open. Electricity is found at the Tsholotsho District Centre, in some schools and shops along the main roads. The majority of the population uses wood for cooking whilst paraffin lamps and candles are used to lighting at night.

The Family and Home:

The majority of the inhabitants in your sponsored child's area are Ndebele people. They are patriarchal and have strong extended family ties, with families averaging six in size. They organise themselves into villages that comprise about 100 households. Six villages form a

ward. The area is divided into 20 wards from which representatives are chosen to form the Tsholotsho Rural District Council. The Council runs the area with the help of a few employed professionals. The inhabitants of the area are Christian though some still maintain their traditional beliefs. They believe in one God (Umlimu) whom they can reach through their ancestors, through family spirit mediums. Most homes consist of two or three mud-walled and grass thatched huts of which one will be a kitchen and the rest sleeping quarters. The rooms are minimally furnished with basic furniture being stools, a table, chairs and reed mats. Very few homes are built of bricks and have asbestos roofs.

Daily life:

Activities differ according to two main seasons, summer and winter. Summer, the rainy season (November to March), is characterised by work in the fields where families grow mainly millet and herd cattle and goats. The low rainfall and the harsh climatic conditions make them harvest little and thus they rarely have much to sell. Winter, the dry season (April to October), is characterised by work at the homes where women will be engaged in crocheting and basket making whilst men will be doing craft (wood) work.



Children playing a traditional dance

Children attend school the whole year with one-month holidays interspaced between the three terms. Their staple food is isitshwala (thick porridge) prepared with millet meal and is consumed with dry vegetables or occasionally with meat. Saturdays and Sundays are days of worship depending on one's denomination. Besides going to church the days are used for relaxing, visiting friends and doing household chores.

In Tsholotsho, most of the men cross into South Africa to find general work. The majority of the men cross into South Africa illegally. They are away from home for periods ranging from one year to three years before visiting their families. They normally come home during the Christmas season. In most of the activities carried out in the area, there is normally a higher involvement of women compared to men. Women in this area do most of the work, from cultivating the land to cooking for the children. Most of the boys tend to drop out of school before completing their Secondary level studies and cross into South Africa in search of jobs. This problem can be alleviated with the assistance in income generating projects for the Community with a focus on the youth.

The area has not been spared from the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This disease takes away mostly the parents leaving many orphans in the area. As an effort to increase community awareness on HIV/AIDS, schools are involved in drama and Arts Festivals and Youth Education through Sports, which have annual festivals and are attended by the whole community.

Your sponsored child, his/her family and the community would like to invite you to visit them some day if possible. They will be very happy to show you how they live and learn more about you, your family, friends and your lovely country.

Compiled by:

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