



Report from the Egmont Trust for Exotix Partners

Project: Shelter, health and educational support for 275 street children in Maputo, Mozambique

Delivery partner: Meninos de Moçambique

Delivery period: December 2016 – May 2017

Introduction

With generous support of £10,000 from Exotix Partners, received in December 2016, Egmont partner Meninos de Moçambique has been implementing a project to provide shelter, nutritional packages and medical support to 315 children living on the streets of Maputo (well exceeding their initial project target of 275 children). Meninos works with the street children to locate family members with the hope of reintegration, enabling them to end their time on the streets. Where this is not possible, Meninos provides vocational training and support to help street children to provide for themselves as they reach adulthood. This report covers project activities they have undertaken towards these aims for the period December 2016 – May 2017.

Project Activities and Achievements

Medical Assistance for Street Children

Meninos has partnered with the nearby Caminhos de Ferro de Moçambique Health Centre to provide medical assistance to the children that they work with. During the period under review, an increase in disputes over street areas by criminal gangs resulted in several injuries amongst the children, and there were also numerous cases of scabies, ringworm, diarrhoea, malaria and respiratory infections which needed treatment. Meninos reports that respiratory infections are common during this period, linked to the small fires children make from scraps of cardboard to keep warm during the cold season.

In total, 77 children (56 male and 21 female), were referred 102 times to the Health Centre over the 6 month period. Meninos staff procured prescriptions from public pharmacies, or, when there were medication shortages, from private drugs companies.

32 of the children that Meninos assisted during the period under review are HIV+. Meninos is ensuring these children adhere to their treatment and minimizing travel costs by arranging their anti-retroviral (ARV) medicine to be collected from clinics near to where the children are staying. Taking these drugs regularly is essential in suppressing the HIV virus and preventing its progression to AIDS. Many patients have adverse reactions to their ARV medication, so Meninos arranged regular catch up sessions with the homeless young people to identify where there problems and help them change drugs if necessary.

Nutritional Support

During the 6 month period, Meninos provided food packages (containing rice, flour, oil, sugar and milk) to 13 children in an advanced stage of HIV/AIDS to help them adhere to their ARV treatment. For those young people whose health improved, Meninos provided start up capital, to help them undertake vocational training or establish small money-making ventures.

Health Education for street children and school children

During the period under review, Meninos staff – accompanied by trained nurses – conducted 47 Health Education workshops in their shelters, in the community and at schools, reaching 988 children and young adults (621 male and 367 female). Topics covered at the workshops included personal hygiene, sexual health, HIV & AIDS, malaria and cholera, with the aim of teaching the young people how to avoid infectious and sexually transmitted diseases and to

promote behavior change in those currently engaging in practices likely to lead to infection. For young adults who indicated that they were already sexually active, condoms were distributed and informational materials such as flyers and posters were available for attendees to distribute to the wider community.

Meninos also organized a health fair at a local school to increase awareness of HIV & AIDS and other infectious diseases amongst the local community. Over 450 children were reached and advised on general health and local amenities where they could access support, such as health clinics.

In addition to these workshops, Meninos staff carried out informal counseling sessions during their regular contact with the children on the street. During the period under review 192 (126 male and 66 female) children received information during these sessions. As a result, 57 children volunteered to go for an HIV test.



Meninos Health Fair

Reproductive Health Sessions and Vocational Training for Girls

Girls who live on the streets of Maputo are particularly vulnerable to infection by HIV as many turn to prostitution to survive. Meninos works to prevent those who are currently engaged in transactional sex from contracting diseases by raising awareness of birth control methods. They also aim to help young women move away from transactional sex by providing them with skills to generate an alternative source of income. During the period under review a trained nurse provided 29 sessions on condom use and reproductive health at Meninos' Centre. Girls who attended the sessions were also taught jewellery craftwork by Meninos staff – Meninos cite this popular course as a way of encouraging girls into the centre, enabling them to meet some of their basic needs with the resulting income.

During the period under review, no new pregnancies amongst the girls that Meninos works with were recorded. Two girls who were pregnant at the start of the project were registered at local health clinics. This enabled them to receive vaccinations for Hepatitis A and measles, as part of a national campaign organized by the Mozambique Health Ministry.

Reintegration of Street Children

Under the direction of Meninos' child psychologist and educators, children who expressed a desire to leave the streets were enrolled in group therapy sessions. Former street children that Meninos had successfully integrated back to their families led the therapy sessions, talking about their experiences living on the street and how their current situation at home compared to life on the street. Meninos reports that these therapy sessions were critical in persuading children to return to their family members or allow Meninos to search for relatives with the aim of placing them in different homes to the ones they had left. As a result, 6 children elected to begin the reintegration process and at the end of the period under review, 5 had been successfully reintegrated with family members.



Psychologist and educator facilitating the reintegration process

Meninos staff also carried out 188 visits to the homes of previously reintegrated street children to monitor their current status and ensure their wellbeing. A further 50 children from low income and vulnerable families were supported with the provision of school fees, enabling them to stay in the classroom and continue their education.

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We hope that this report illustrates the tangible impact that Exotix's generous support for the Meninos project – through the Egmont Trust - has had. Without Meninos' generosity these children would have had no one to turn to at a time when they were most vulnerable and their health was most at risk. The generous support of Exotix Partners has been crucial in enabling Meninos' work to take place over the past 6 months, giving children and young adults a safe place to come and receive shelter, medical care and begin their journey away from their life on the street.

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