



A Summary of  
the Evaluation of

**THANDANANI**  
**CHILDRENS FOUNDATION**

# Family Strengthening Project



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Dr Alexandra Plowright

Released: 2017



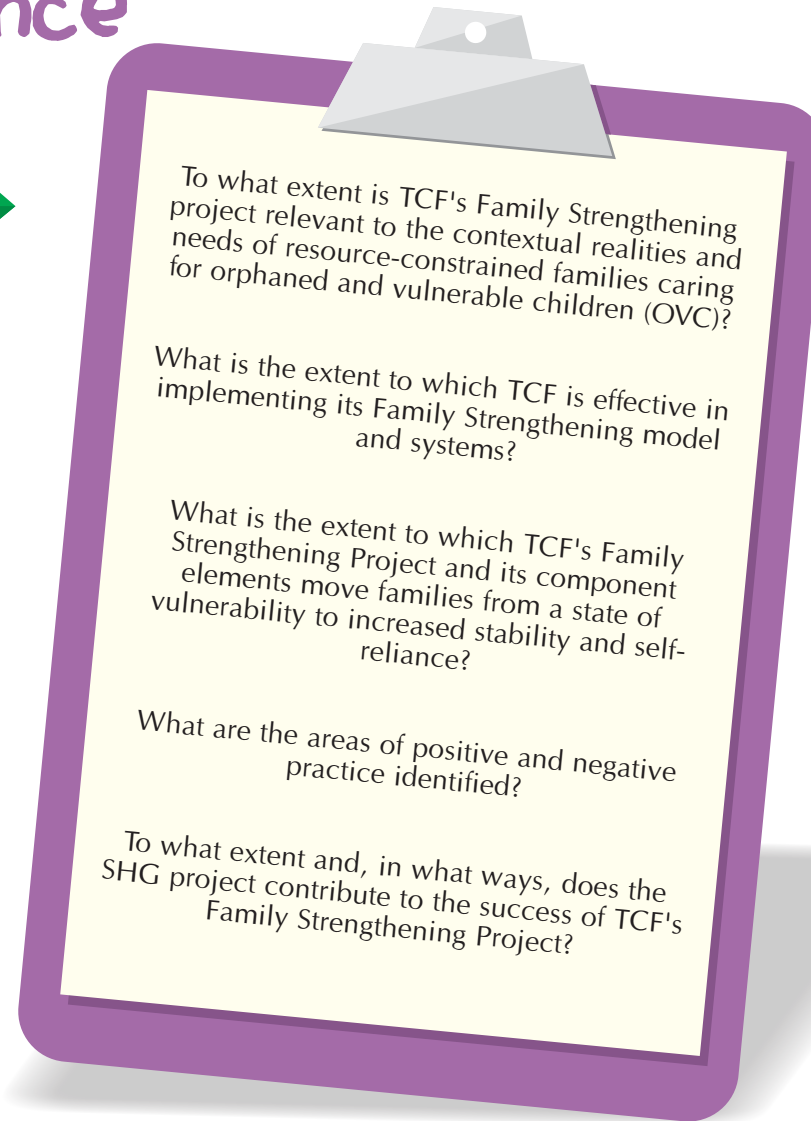
# Terms of Reference

THE EVALUATION WAS CONDUCTED WITH THE AIM OF ANSWERING THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:



This evaluation took place during the period of August - October 2016, focusing on the work that TCF completed and was scheduled to do in the period from April 2014 to June 2016 (27 months).

The evaluation was completed using a collaborative approach incorporating a mixed methods study design. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used, as this helped to facilitate an understanding of the complexities and nuances of the situation at the community, family/household, and the individual level, and allowed comparison of this with understanding at the organisational level and with outsider perspectives.

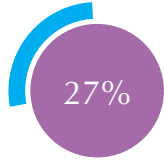


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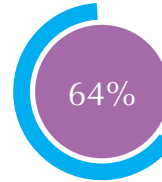
# Introduction

IN KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA,



27%

OF CHILDREN HAVE BEEN ORPHANED AND



64%

LIVE IN POVERTY

Thandanani Children's Foundation (TCF) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) working in six communities in Pietermaritzburg: the capital of KwaZulu-Natal Province.

TCF delivers services focused on the improved well-being of orphaned children within the parameters of their Family Strengthening Project (FSP).



“ I did not believe the kindness... We were struggling and I didn't know where to get the next meal and along comes this fieldworker with a voucher for me. It was a gift from God. ”

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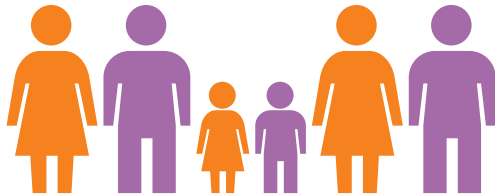


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# Family Strengthening Project

The Family Strengthening Project focuses on improving the physical, cognitive, material, and emotional well-being of families with the overall aim of promoting improved care for OVCs at household and community level.



Thandanani's model recognises and adopts a concept central to the Zulu culture: that an orphaned or vulnerable child is not an orphan in the Western sense of the term, rather there is a collective obligation at both community and the extended household level to care for the affected child.

Thandanani's Family Strengthening Project involves the mobilisation of community-based teams that respond to the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children by focusing on the provision of support to the family units or households in which these children reside.



Running simultaneously to the Family Strengthening Project is a complementary Self-Help Group (SHG) project.

The Self-help programme groups women into supportive SHGs, facilitating access to finance and economic empowerment with the aim of improving women's abilities to withstand shocks to their households, and their ability to care for any children for whom they are responsible.

Together, TCF's Family Strengthening Project and Self-Help Groups provide opportunities for the empowerment and development of vulnerable households with a focus on the well-being of disadvantaged children.

“Before the TCF fieldworker found us, we had no hope. We had my sister's children and our children all living here in the house... TCF helped us with food vouchers and other things, blankets and uniforms... They gave us hope that we could survive”



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## Findings: Relevance

The reality of life experienced by households in the communities in which Thandanani works is a complex landscape of hardship, struggle, and difficulty to meet daily needs.

For many, everyday life involves a daily struggle to meet basic needs, poor physical living conditions, poor quality of health, an absence of opportunity & jobs, and the often complex processes involved in accessing state support systems and structures.

For the people who live in these communities, HIV and AIDS is an endemic component of everyday life. Health is also a primary concern for most people, and sickness and death have affected most.

The absence of employment opportunities is a further key and common issue affecting most people in the communities.

“ Many days we were without food... Sometimes we went a week with such little food we had to borrow from the neighbours when they had ”

This evaluation found that Thandanani's Family Strengthening model is relevant to both the contextual realities and needs of resource-constrained families caring for orphaned and vulnerable children.



“ I love my garden; I feed my family with it ”

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# Findings: Operational Effectiveness & Impact

After enrolment onto the programme, households, OVCs and caregivers are offered the opportunity to participate in various interventions that are focused on improving their material, emotional, physical and cognitive well-being with the overall aim of improving the quality of life for the OVC.

The interventions are delivered to beneficiaries using a phased approach.

- Phase 1 focuses on the provision of material support and physical well-being.
- Phase 2, further strengthens the material, physical and emotional well-being of beneficiaries.
- Phase 3 involves the gradual withdrawal of direct support and the monitoring of the family's ability to meet their basic needs independently of this support.

One of the strengths of TCF's model, is that it promotes not only the provision of support for the individual OVC, but also the provision of support to their caregiver and other individual household members.

TCF's model and style of operation also emphasises the importance of placing children in families and households in communities where they are able to enjoy and experience their own culture.

Overall, this evaluation found that Thandanani's Family Strengthening Project and its component elements do move families from a state of vulnerability to increased stability and self-reliance; the package of services offered does make a meaningful and sustainable difference; and children, their caregivers and the family as a whole do benefit significantly from participation in the programme.



“ We are proud of the school uniform that TCF gave us and we always keep it clean and neat. ”



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# Findings: Self-Help Groups

The Self-help programme groups women into supportive SHGs, facilitating access to finance and economic empowerment with the aim of improving women's abilities to withstand shocks to their households, and their ability to care for any children for whom they are responsible.

Groups comprise twenty women from a community meeting on a weekly basis to save usually between R2 & R5 per person per week. As the group savings grow, so do the opportunities for borrowing.



In the early stages of the group formation, the focus is on the provision of group-managed micro-loans with low interest rates for purchase of items such as building material, food, school supplies, and sometimes equipment for small businesses or trading.

As the groups' progress and increase in capability and saving power, they are able to access information and capacity building on initiating and managing small business and community development initiatives. This usually takes place when groups have matured and been grouped into community-level associations (CLA's).

“ The group is not just about loaning, it is about discussing personal problems and coming up with solutions as a group ”

Involvement in the groups has increased participating women's social capital, thus extending their support networks and providing valuable access to credit and therefore opportunities for empowerment and income generation.



“ The group helps us with everything, from making our houses better to sending our children to school ”

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# Conclusions

## THIS EVALUATION FOUND THAT:

01

TCF's model is an excellent example of OVC care at community level.

02

TCF's Family Strengthening Project equips households, individual OVCs and caregivers to negotiate barriers and develop agency and resilience.

03

The package of services offered through the delivery of the model is key to the survival and well-being of OVCs, caregivers and their associated households.

04

The programme is appropriate and addresses the majority of household and individual needs associated with OVC care.

05

The quality and efficiency of intervention delivery associated with the programme model is strong.



“ Now that we have the grant money, there is never a time when the children in this house go hungry. I know that we have enough money to feed all the children so I am never feeling guilty anymore. ”

“ I never felt alone when I knew that the fieldworker was here ”



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# Recommendations

Retain the quality and efficiency of the delivery of services associated with, and the implementation of phases 1 and 2 of the Family Strengthening Model. In particular, TCF should retain the quality of delivery at individual and household level of all activities associated with the emotional, material, and cognitive well-being of beneficiaries. These services are currently being provided in an exemplary manner.

Improve Phase 3 service delivery by closer adherence to the model's existing phased approach to withdrawal.

Strengthen the delivery of health services, as outlined in the model, across all three phases.

Review TCF data monitoring system and database to ensure quality and completeness.

Enhance the projects overall relevance, impact and sustainability by further strengthening impact at community level. One way this could be achieved is by expanding the existing Self-Help Group activities and more intentionally linking FSP beneficiaries into these groups.

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# Discover More

## FULL EVALUATION REPORT:

[www.thandanani.org.za/get-more-info](http://www.thandanani.org.za/get-more-info)

## MORE ABOUT THANDANANI & 4KIDS:

[www.thandanani.org.za](http://www.thandanani.org.za) | [www.4kids.org.za](http://www.4kids.org.za)

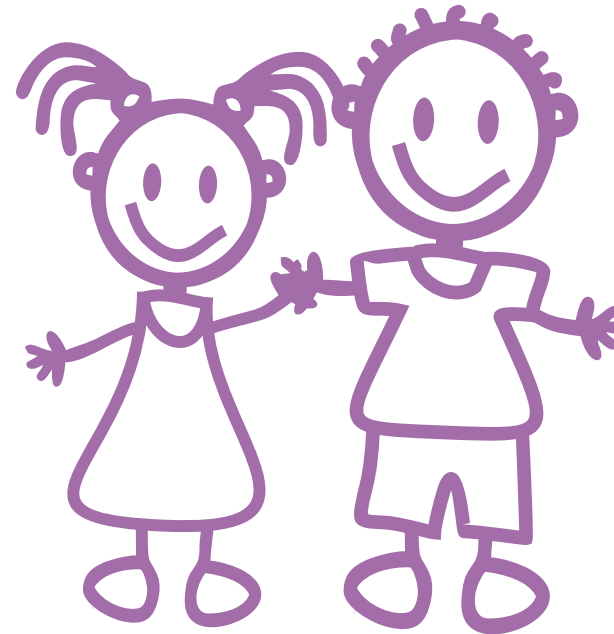
## SUPPORT THANDANANI 4KIDS:

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## EVALUATOR

**Dr Alex Plowright**

+27 (0)788836056 | [a.s.plowright@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:a.s.plowright@warwick.ac.uk)



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