



*Cross International  
Catholic Outreach*

2700 N. Military Trail, Suite 240  
PO Box 273908  
Boca Raton, Florida 33427-3908  
**1-800-391-8545**

**PROJECT 0579**

# **Itimpi Home-Based Care**

**Food and medicine for HIV/AIDS-affected families**

— Itimpi, Zambia —



“Heal the sick who are there and tell them, ‘The kingdom of God is near you.’”

Luke 10:9

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## Project Synopsis

### Description

Provide food, baby formula, medications, and health costs for families affected by HIV/AIDS or other chronic illnesses.

### Purpose

Home-based care for HIV/AIDS-affected families protects children from contracting the virus while improving the health of infected parents so they can provide for their families.

### Location

The slums of Itimpi, a poor suburb of Kitwe, Zambia, in the Copperbelt Province.

### Cost

**\$39,600** will provide food, medicine, health care, and baby formula, for the care of 125 households (about 750 people). That is approximately **\$52** per beneficiary for a full year.

### Highlights

- The HIV/AIDS pandemic has virtually gutted the social infrastructure of Zambia's poorest slums, producing more orphans than can be handled by extended family members, and putting many young children at risk of contracting the virus themselves.
- The Catholic Diocese of Ndola is reaching out to the chronically ill and their families by sending groups of volunteers to their homes to provide counseling, prayer, medical help, and nutritional support.
- Cross International Catholic Outreach helps the sick get tested for HIV/AIDS and covers the costs of essential medications including antiretroviral drugs, treatments for opportunistic infections connected with AIDS, drugs to fight various cancers, anti-fungal drugs, and others.
- Because antiretroviral drugs only work if the patient is eating right, and because HIV/AIDS-infected parents have difficulty providing for their children while fighting their disease, Cross Catholic supports the families with monthly rations of maize meal until the patients are strong enough to fend for themselves.
- Baby formula is provided through funds from Cross Catholic, so that HIV-infected mothers have a safe alternative to breast-feeding, which can transmit the disease to the child.





## The Need

### Coping with chronic illness

After giving birth to her fifth child, a woman learns that her sick husband is in the advanced stages of AIDS and will not live to see his baby's first birthday. The bed-ridden husband can no longer work to support his large family, and it is no use seeking financial help from the grandparents, who have already taken in another set of grandchildren who recently became AIDS orphans.

The mother worries she may have contracted HIV from her husband, and so she has stopped breastfeeding, because she knows it can spread the infection. But she cannot afford enough baby formula to replace the breast milk, and her newborn is losing weight. If the mother is able to get tested and she does have HIV, she can apply to receive free antiretroviral drugs from the government, but the drugs are not always available, as the need exceeds the supply. As a result, the family will sell what few possessions they own to buy medicine and food, while bearing a devastating social stigma that isolates them from their neighbors, who fear being infected.

This tragic situation is far too common in the shantytowns of Zambia's Copperbelt Province, where the HIV/AIDS pandemic has produced more orphans and single-parent households than can possibly be supported by extended family. In some cases, a child as young as 12 or 13 becomes head-of-household, because there is no one else to care for them.

Even without the threat of AIDS, life in Zambia is hard. Severe food shortages force poor families to eat only one meal a day, or even every other day, while trying to survive below the poverty line without a steady income. Many of the men have lost jobs in the mines as a result of a decline in the value of copper. Access to education is limited, and basic health services, water, and sanitation are inadequate to meet the needs of these desperately poor families.



## Ministry Description

### Visiting the sick and destitute

Concerned by the overwhelming number of AIDS-affected families and the lack of good medical care, the Catholic Diocese of Ndola has organized groups of volunteers to visit the homes of the chronically ill in Itimpi, a semi-urban area near the city of Kitwe. Of a population of 29,000, more than 2,000 are known to be HIV-positive, but the real number is likely much higher, as the majority has not been tested.



*An Itimpi Home Health Nurse looks in on a young mother and her child.*

The trained volunteers provide care and support to chronically ill patients, orphans, and the families of the sick. Most of the families are living with HIV/AIDS, and many of the people who have AIDS also suffer from tuberculosis. The home-care program takes a holistic approach, offering medical and nursing care, nutrition, counseling, pastoral support, educational activities, and even helping AIDS victims to form their own community support groups. The goal is not

only to help the affected families, but also to prevent the further spread of HIV/AIDS, which is accomplished by curbing risky behaviors such as alcohol abuse and sexual promiscuity.

The diocese relies on Cross International Catholic Outreach to provide for the medical needs of the chronically ill. In addition to covering the costs of laboratory tests, Cross Catholic provides antiretroviral drugs, medications to treat opportunistic infections connected with AIDS, drugs to fight various cancers, and anti-fungal drugs, among others.

Without a nutritious diet, the sick lack the energy their bodies require to get any benefit from the antiretroviral medications. And without a healthy head-of-household capable of working and earning an income, families go hungry. For these reasons, Cross Catholic gives monthly rations of maize meal to those who need it, while also providing baby formula for families where an HIV-infected mother cannot breastfeed her infant.

The end result of all this support is that chronically-ill parents live long enough to raise their families, and the children have a chance to grow up healthy and strong without the threat of HIV/AIDS.



## Help Now!

### Love the fatherless and the widow

The HIV/AIDS pandemic has exacerbated the already poor economic situation in Zambia, and is a threat to the safety and well-being of the most innocent victims—children. Every effort must be made to rebuild the lives of children and families devastated by AIDS and other chronic illnesses, while also educating the public on how to protect themselves from infection. The Itimpi Home-Based Care program is one part of the solution, but it cannot be successful without the help of compassionate Catholics like you.

Our response to the needs of orphans and widows is a measure of our faith. We are saved by grace, but that grace is given to us so that we might share God's boundless grace with the world. As the Bible says, "Faith without works is dead." By partnering with Cross International Catholic Outreach in support of the Home-Based Care program, you can be a part of an important ministry that demonstrates



the heart of the biblical message as found in James 1:27 ~ "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress..."

Right now, countless orphans and HIV/AIDS affected families are desperately waiting for a helping hand of mercy to reach into their world. Will you give it to them by joining with Cross Catholic today?

### Our Promise to You!

100 percent of the proceeds of this appeal will be used for this project. In the rare event that we receive more than needed to fund this project, additional gifts will be used for other urgent needs for the poor.