



# 2016 Annual Report

PO Box 72  
Mokhotlong, 500  
Lesotho



T: +266 22 920 454  
E: [admin@touchingtinylives.org](mailto:admin@touchingtinylives.org)  
[www.touchingtinylives.org](http://www.touchingtinylives.org)

## 2016: An Overview

The past year was full of new projects facilitated at TTL and throughout the greater Mokhotlong region, continuation of older projects, as well as internal programming rearrangements.

Based on the success of the Happy Beaks phase one trial run, Gummersbach donors continued to fund two more phases in 2016. Improvisations were made to better prepare families on receiving the chickens and proper maintenance of shelters. **70** total households received a chicken set: four chicks, one rooster, and chicken feed for 2 months.

In addition to carrying out phase two and three of Happy Beaks, the Outreach team began implementing Nutrition Corners at five village health centers. The project, funded by The Ivory Foundation, aims to teach caregivers alternative, healthier ways of cooking meals they are already accustomed to for themselves and their children. For example, boiling carrots to mash, rather than dressing with mayonnaise, and eating with papa (a maize meal staple) and cooked spinach. The funding also included equipment and training for our staff and **20** of our most in-need families to build home permaculture gardens.

Several staff members were given many capacity building opportunities. They attended workshops on trauma and counseling, trainings on leadership and working in local communities, and represented TTL at an international symposium in Maseru on child development. Most notably was the completion of an eight-week long course on Community-Based Work with Children for two staff members. For both women, it was their first introduction into higher-level education and certificate they will forever be proud of.

The TTL campus expanded with the completed construction of the Caregivers on Campus building – the final phase to a project over a year in the making. In addition to campus expansion, the entire Safe House was completely refurbished! Every office, the two bedrooms, the hallway, and the playroom were repainted with different colors and decorative wall pictures.

TTL also had to make the difficult decision to close its outreach program in neighboring district Thaba Tseka in April of 2016. Due to continued financial constraints and without a way to effectively support staff serving in Thaba Tseka, it seemed appropriate in order to better serve the Mokhotlong district. TTL is still committed to maintaining a relationship with the clinics it previously served in Thaba Tseka to provide rehabilitation services to children in critical condition.



Overall, it was a very healthy year for growth and development at TTL and the environment. The drought experienced in previous years was absent because of this year's heavy winter snowfall and frequent summer rains. With the soil for the planting season well-nourished, we look forward to a plentiful harvest for families in 2017. As our Outreach and Safe Home programs head into the new year, the dedication of our staff to our mission of helping vulnerable children in Mokhotlong from the ravages of HIV/AIDS and malnutrition is still unwavering.

## TTL's 2016 Impact Data

- 1235** Visits made to children's homes through the Outreach Program to provide nutritional and medical support, as well as training to caregivers
- 82** Clinic and hospital visits made possible through TTL financial support
- 1976** Children assessed at site visits made by Outreach
- 287** Caregivers supported by TTL in their position as caregivers
- 172** New child clients identified and served by TTL
- 142** Child clients who reached health and stability and successfully graduated from the Outreach Program
- 26** Children rehabilitated in the Safe-home
- 249** Total number of child clients supported in 2016

**2,119** Total number of TTL child clients served since 2004

### TTL Campus Expands!

After five long months of construction, TTL's campus expanded with a newly built building to house caregivers before their children are reunited home. The expansion was made possible thanks to funding from Alluvial Ventures, Gummersbach, and donations from local companies!

In April 2016, building construction began and finished in August. The building is made up of two bedrooms, a fully functional kitchen, and a playroom. All bedrooms are equipped with beds, shelving units, and bathing equipment. A new latrine was also built for caregivers' use while on campus.

We look forward to housing more caregivers, and potentially other visitors to TTL campus!



## TTL Programming

### Outreach

This year the TTL Outreach team served **249** clients in the Thaba Tseka and Mokhotlong districts. Even with the close of Thaba Tseka site, Outreach helped bring in **25** clients suffering severe acute malnutrition to the safe home.

New to Outreach programs was the Nutrition Corners project. The project began in August and will run for one year. A different recipe will be demonstrated to caregivers and their children each month at five local clinics. Each clinic will also be equipped with a garden and be given spinach, pumpkin and carrot seeds to grow. So far they have demonstrated recipes for **400+** children and caregivers; **over 50** children have gained weight since!

In September a two-day workshop facilitated by the Ministry of Agriculture was held to teach all Outreach staff about permaculture gardening. Permaculture gardens are accessible for even the poorest families, can last indefinitely if kept up properly, and are more adaptable to weather extremes. The latter being particularly important due to Lesotho's extreme weather conditions recently. As a trial, the team helped build TTL it's first permaculture garden. Gardening tools were also given to **20** of our most in-need families.



In 2016, Happy Beaks project continued for **70** families in Mokhotlong. Each family received a set of chickens and 10kg chicken feed for two months. All 20 families in Phase 2 saw egg production and have started generating income from selling the eggs in the local village. One family from Phase 2 has been able to successfully reproduce 19 chicks! It is still too early for the remaining 50 households from Phase 3 to see any egg production, but the recent evaluation shows a lot of potential. A successful income-generating project indeed!

Beginning April this year and ending in June, TTL organized three week-long site visits in Ha Semenenyane, Ha Moeketsane, and Liseleng. The team went to more than 70 villages and assessed over 1,000 children! They were on a roll. Out of 1,000 children, only 29 children were enrolled in TTL's program. Site visits continue to be one very effective way to find potential clients, and to continue working with the local community and its institutions. It always helps to strengthen our relationships with stakeholders in order for people to know who we are and what we do.



Our Outreach Team goes to great lengths to ensure vulnerable children received needed services. Due to the remoteness of some villages, the team often travels on nonexistent roads to reach households.

## Safe Home



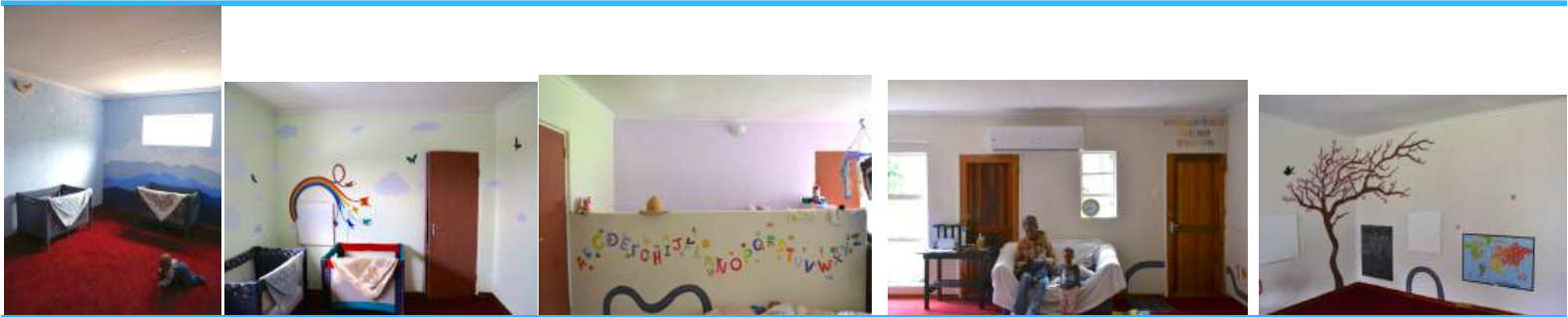
The Safe Home continues to provide nutritional, developmental, and medical support to severely malnourished and ill children.

In 2016, the TTL Safe Home provided support for **26** infants and children. **22** children in were successfully reunified with their families and caregivers in their home villages.

In March, TTL welcomed its first group of caregivers as part of the Caregivers on Campus project. As an addition to the normal reunification process, the project serves as a way to ease the transition process for children from the Safe Home to village home. The guardians (caregivers) are brought to TTL a week before reunification to begin rekindling the bond with their child after being apart; sometimes up to six months. Caregivers are also trained on nutrition, ART adherence, hygiene practices, and family planning. Throughout the week caregivers are responsible for caring out daily activities such as cooking food, washing clothes, cleaning the rooms, prompt feeding, and most importantly spending quality time with the children. **10** caregivers have been brought to campus and trained since.



Thanks to Sentebale, TTL was able to fulfill its long-awaited wish to refurbish the Safe House. The painting project began in September and was completed in December. Every room, including staff offices, was cleaned and painted. TTL commissioned a local volunteer to paint designs in the playroom and both baby bedrooms. Refurbishing the Safe House has given the entire building a refreshing, new look. The wall décor and painted designs created a more stimulating and interactive environment for the children.



The TTL Safe Home Bo'Me are a huge asset to the rehabilitation of the children. They provide developmental support to each child, encouraging the children to reach milestones of development, while entertaining them throughout the day.

## Kabelo's Success Story

In February we met Kabelo\*. When he left the Safe Home he was 6.2kg (13.2lbs) and 5 months old. Plump, happy and healthy. Though he didn't start out that way...

He is not our typical Safe Home baby because he is under formal supervision of the Child Gender and Protection Unit (CGPU). Before coming to TTL, Kabelo was part of a "transaction" between his mother, who was unemployed, and a fellow female friend. Crazy as it seems, he was sold to this friend who resides in Mokhotlong with her significant other. Local police got word that the biological mother sold her child and tracked down the child's new caretaker.



Upon realizing that he was severely malnourished, CGPU brought him to TTL having known we take care of malnourished children. He was 3 months old at the time and 2.7kg (5.9lbs), far below the average for this weight and height. We advised them to take him to the hospital first. After two weeks, Kabelo entered the Safe Home and has, as you can see, made huge strides!



The two women involved are currently serving jail time pending bail. As for Kabelo, a social worker came to pick him up once he was rehabilitated. She informed us that he will be taken to Beautiful Gate- an orphanage located in the capital Maseru.

Before TTL, Kabelo was on a tragic path. We are so thankful that he has been given another chance to start over. This boy is just one of many children we have seen arrive at the Safe Home with severe acute malnutrition. We love all of our tiny ones, but those whose stories begin with extreme desperation and evolve into stories of survival are remarkable. Despite their ugliness at times, it is these stories that remind us why we continue to do the work we do; that we are in fact making a difference one child at a time.

\*Name changed

### Our Mission:

TTL seeks to mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS on the most vulnerable infant children under five years of age by supporting their health, nutrition, development and emotional needs while empowering extended families and others who care for them to provide a better future for these children.

## 2016 Programmatic Improvements

---

Making sure to emphasize assessment of our programming and projects ensures we are working to make the greatest impact possible. Our monitoring and evaluating tools as well as data collection continued to improve in 2016.

This year, new surveys were developed to assess impact of the Happy Beaks and Caregivers on Campus projects. These surveys have helped us be more attentive to how to best meet the need of the families participating. For example, data on households generating income from selling eggs can now be collected and recorded.

A spreadsheet to track impact numbers generated from each program's monthly report was also developed.

## Staff Development

---

Several staff members were given opportunities to represent TTL in various capacities and develop themselves as professionals. Investing in our staff is an inherent investment in TTL's future.

In February three of our administrative staff attended a workshop on self-help initiatives hosted by Sinamandla - a nonprofit organization based out of South Africa that works with local organizations to promote self-reliance to develop local communities. The workshop gave our TTL staff the knowledge and motivation to review our existing programs in order to absorb these new initiatives as we look into the future of our sustainability practices.

Our safe home supervisor and social worker joined in on a workshop in May focused on childhood development and trauma for orphans and vulnerable children hosted by our partner Sentebale. Other attendees included Phelisanong School for Disabled Children, Trust for Africa, St. Paul's School for the Deaf, and various representatives from CGPU and Ministry of Social Development. The goal of the workshop was to equip attendees with the knowledge and skills to recognize a traumatized child and how to understand their situation in order for them to thrive.



After completing eight-week course of lecture and field projects through the University of KwaZulu Natal's College of Humanities two of our staff members received certificates in Community- Based Work with Children and Youth. The Lesotho-based course was sponsored by Sentebale and REPSSI, a NPO that partners with governmental and non-governmental stakeholders to improve access to psychosocial support for children. REPSSI provided program mentors and financial assistance to those enrolled.

More recently, two staff members from our Outreach program were invited to present on TTL's work at the Early Childhood and Development (ECD) symposium hosted in Maseru by Catholic Relief Services and the Ministry of Education and Training. The symposium featured presentations from governmental and non-governmental organizations alike that work in areas related to improving ECD in Lesotho's children. The theme centered around methods and research showing that by investing in children, especially during the first 1000 days of life, we are directly investing into the future of the country



## Special Visitors

TTL hosted a number of notable ministry officials, donor representatives, and local and international visitors to the district in 2016. As always we are so grateful for the continued support and care from everyone for our mission to mitigate the impact of HIV/AIDS on the children of Mokhotlong.

From February to April four 4<sup>th</sup> year medical students from Georgetown University and the University of Buffalo came to TTL as part of their schools' study abroad opportunities. They volunteered at the local hospital, Baylor clinic, and demonstrated important first aid to the safe home caregivers.

For the first time, Roses and Rosemary sent the Lehman family, long-time donors of R&R, over to southern Africa to visit and observe the work of currently funded projects. As a partner of R&R, TTL was fortunate enough to host the family in the midst of one of Lesotho's coldest winters!



In October, representatives from Gummersbach traveled to Lesotho for their annual visit. This year, their visit went a little differently. With their financial support and in partnership with the Ministry of Education, TTL hosted its first netball tournament.



Throughout the year, officials from the Ministry of Agriculture, Social Development, as well as staff from Alluvial Ventures, Alliance Insurance, and Thaba Bosiu Risk Solutions showed their support through generous donations of food and clothing for our clients.

## Challenges

The drought in 2015 carried over into the beginning half of 2016. Without rain, many of our families were unable to produce a harvest for the winter. TTL had to provide more maize meal to our clients' food packages. During the winter months, there was a high influx of clients enrolled because of malnutrition. At one point, the Safe Home had 17 kids! Fortunately, the second half of the year has brought enough rain to ensure a plentiful harvest in 2017.

2016 proved very difficult for TTL to fundraise enough money to contribute toward the overall program budget. Many large end of the year expenses put a financial strain on us that we are worried will carry over into 2017. This being the case, we are working hard to find more creative ways to fundraise next year, and will look into potential local funding partners willing to support our programs.



*Together we can continue to mitigate the effects of HIV/AIDS in 2017!*



## New Events Celebrated in 2016

### *Independence Day Netball Tournament*



During Lesotho's Independence Week in October, TTL had the pleasure of hosting donors Klaus and Daniel Bech from Gummersbach, Germany. Their visit to Lesotho is taken annually, but this year was an extraordinary one. As part of World Children's Day in Germany, their group fundraised money for TTL to not only distribute netballs and footballs to primary schools, but to hold a netball tournament between schools in the Mokhotlong town area.

Sports competitions at the district and national levels are usually held as part of the Ministry of Education's extracurricular activity requirements. But competitions just for pleasure are too few, especially for netball and the girls who love to play. Held during the Independence break, this tournament not only kept kids active while schools were closed, but it encouraged the students and community to come out and support a sport that is often forgotten about.

And support they did! TTL staff and many others from the area came together to watch and cheer on the fourteen schools participating in the tournament over a two-day period. Smaller and smaller the bracket got until the final match between St. Peter's Primary and Mokhotlong LEC Primary schools. With a final score of 9-3, St. Peter's came in first place with Mokhotlong LEC in second and Ha Letjama in third. The top three teams received a netball kit complete with uniforms and official game equipment, and a specially made trophy brought from Germany. Fortunately, all schools that participated were able to go home with a new netball and football.

Needless to say this tournament was an overwhelming success. The Ministry of Education enjoyed it so much that they plan to make this an annual event! A huge thank you to the people of Gummersbach, the Ministry of Education, TTL staff, the teachers, and especially the players for coming together and making this happen.

### *TTL & Baylor Celebrate World Aids Day*

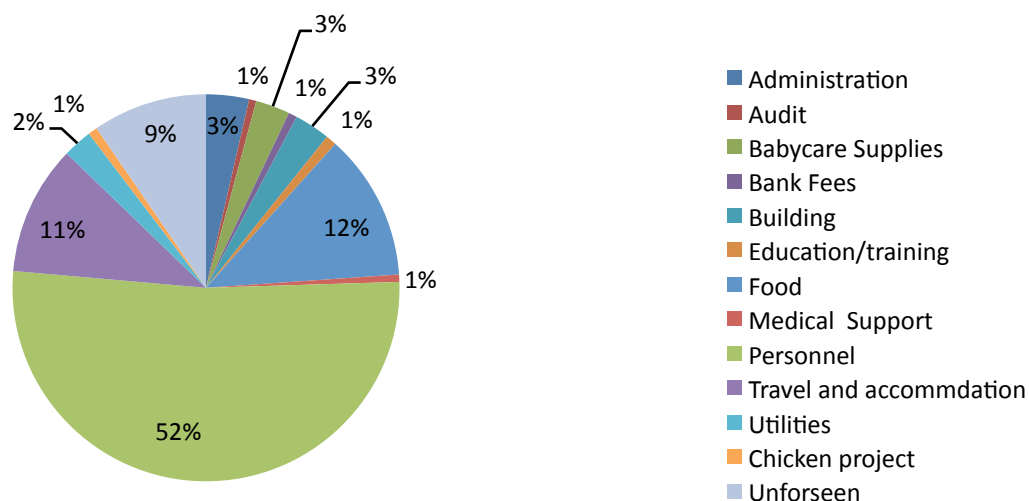
World Aids Day (WAD) is celebrated globally on December 1st each year. You may recognize the iconic red ribbon people wear to support those who have been impacted by HIV/AIDS. WAD holds special value in Lesotho being that 24% of its population is HIV positive. 1 in 4. That's a heavy statistic. TTL is special in that it works specifically with a population of children under 5 years that have been impacted by HIV: losing a parent, malnourishment, poverty, exposure, or are positive themselves. These children are the most vulnerable.



For WAD 2016, thanks to the support of donors Gummersbach and Sentebale, TTL, in partnership with the Mokhotlong Baylor Clinic, hosted quite the WAD event. Baylor Clinic runs a youth club program twice a month specifically for area youth who are also affected by the disease. The club's coordinators and 40 youth joined TTL staff for the day's events. The theme for our event was about living a healthy lifestyle with HIV. We all started the day with a brisk 45 minute walk outside of town. When we returned, Baylor staff facilitated informational games and activities once we were split into two different teams. There were quizzes on HIV/AIDS knowledge, a don't-break-the-egg challenge, soda can stacking, and a dance competition. Afterwards we all ate a delicious lunch prepared by TTL staff. Each youth club member went home with a hygiene kit including: a toothbrush and toothpaste, wash cloth, shoe polish, bath soap, laundry detergent, vaseline, and juice (the kids love it!).

## Financial Details 1 January 2016 – 31 December 2016

| <u>Budget Line Item</u> | <u>Expenditure</u>  |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Administration          | <b>105,668.14</b>   |
| Audit                   | <b>17,750.00</b>    |
| Babycare Supplies       | <b>84,407.73</b>    |
| Bank Fees               | <b>21,173.14</b>    |
| Building                | <b>87,796.07</b>    |
| Education/training      | <b>26,648.90</b>    |
| Food                    | <b>361,044.97</b>   |
| Medical Support         | <b>18,027.60</b>    |
| Personnel               | <b>1,528,759.17</b> |
| Travel and accommdation | <b>319,016.91</b>   |
| Utilities               | <b>71,998.19</b>    |
| Chicken project         | <b>22,860.00</b>    |
| Unforseen               | <b>282,093.24</b>   |



## Our 2016 Funding Partners

---

Touching Tiny Lives Foundation

ELMA Foundation

Sentebale

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (Government of Lesotho)

Aktionsgruppe Gummersbach für die Welthungerhilfe/Initiative für Kinder in Lesotho

Roses and Rosemary

Thank you to all the volunteers and friends of TTL, both near and far, who have supported us during 2016!

