"To see hope on the faces of vulnerable children is my passion. My vision is one of hopeful communities, hopeful futures."

Overview

“I've lost family to HIV/AIDS. The situation in Africa is either that you’re infected or affected,” said Lintle Letsika, Founder and Director, Footprints of Hope. “I've seen children who think they have no future. We can’t afford to ignore them; we need to give them every chance. They deserve to be given all the support as when they have parents.”

Training and skills development

Lintle started Footprints of Hope in her home community of Maseru, Lesotho, in 2013. The faith-based organization has provided training to 70 community volunteer caregivers in 14 villages who are helping 1,000 orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Some of the caregivers have gone on to receive additional training in order to become village paraprofessional social service or health workers. Among the support these caregivers receive is counselling and psychosocial support training to address the mental health needs of children affected or infected by HIV/AIDS. The organization advocates to the national government for the needs of vulnerable children.

Experience in addressing HIV/AIDS

Trained in HIV/AIDS counselling, HIV/AIDS response and sociology, Lintle has applied all of these skills her various roles to help vulnerable children. Prior to launching Footprints of Hope, she worked for the Lesotho Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship HIV/AIDS Unit and World Vision’s country office. She has been strengthening the capacity of community-level workers helping OVC impacted by HIV since 2001.
In June 2015, Lintle joined a team of 11 individuals from throughout Lesotho who attended the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) Biennial Conference in Cape Town, South Africa. The group met with representatives from NACCW to learn how they might replicate the Isibindi program in their home country. Over five years, the Isibindi program aims to train 10,000 child and youth care workers to help children and families from their local communities.

A key component of the program is development of Safe Parks, a safe place where children can play and be children, at least for that moment, away from stigma, danger or the worry they face outside the parks in their daily lives.

She also learned more about the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance during this conference and joined as a member.

“To see hope on the faces of these vulnerable children is my passion. My vision is one of hopeful communities, hopeful futures,” she said.