

# ALTERNATIVES TO INSTITUTIONAL CARE FOR ORPHANED AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN

*A sequence of case studies*



## PART 2

Community Family Homes and Isibindi Circles  
of Care Model



**Built Environment Support Group**

## **BUILT ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT GROUP**

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**25 years supporting the urban poor**

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### **Alternatives to Institutional Care Models**

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## ***ABBREVIATIONS***

<b>BESG</b>	Built Environment Support Group
<b>CAP</b>	Child Advocacy Project
<b>CMDA</b>	Cato Manor Development Association
<b>CINDI</b>	Children in Distress Network
<b>DCS</b>	Durban Children's Society
<b>DFID</b>	Department for International Development
<b>DoH</b>	Department of Housing
<b>DSD</b>	Department of Social Development
<b>FCG</b>	Foster Care Grant
<b>HIV/ AIDS</b>	Human Immunity Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>OVC</b>	Orphaned and Vulnerable Children
<b>NACCW</b>	National Association of Child Care Workers
<b>CWS</b>	The Child and Family Welfare Society of Pietermaritzburg
<b>SASSA</b>	South African Social Security Agency

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## **The Need for Quality Care**

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A statistical analysis done by The Child and Family Welfare Society of Pietermaritzburg (CWS) confirms poverty, family breakdown, HIV and AIDS and drug abuse to be the main contributing factors to the removal of children from their families. Children are left either in the hospital nursery or with relatives. Extended families, especially grandmothers, are finding it difficult to cope with the added burden of additional children to care for, particularly if the children/babies are sick. Cultural traditions of mothers being solely or largely responsible for child raising and nurturing has contributed to an increase in welfare assistance for those mothers that are struggling to survive. It should be noted that there also appears to be an increase in unmarried fathers seeking welfare assistance. The Society registered 290 new cases in 2006/7. Delays by the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) in processing grants, adds pressure to the already high demands of care for additional children. 'Kinship care, which has been the convention for community-based care of orphaned and vulnerable children, is strained and not coping with the level of demand' (The Child and Family Welfare Society of Pietermaritzburg, 2007).

Becoming an orphan means, in many cases, losing more than parental care. "Appropriate quality care promotes child protection, opportunity for schooling, nutrition, shelter, health

care and the love, affection and guidance required for growth into responsible adulthood” (Loening-Voysey & Wilson, 2001, p6).

The alternative care of children spans a range of sectors, each with different approaches to care. These range from formal



government institutions to unregistered, unsupervised, unclassified forms of child-care. Kinship care, when defined as the process

which includes the assessment and statutory procedures involved when placing orphaned children in the statutory care of their extended family, is the preferred form of care considered in South Africa as the first option on the continuum of care.

However, this preferred form of care, is not coping with the increasing numbers of children requiring alternative care. The damaging effect of institutional care on the psychological and social development of children has been well documented. In South Africa, a decision was taken not to register such institutions, as it was not a solution to the orphan crisis (Durban Children’s Society, 2007). However, children’s homes and other institutions clearly have a role to play in the short-term custody of children while social workers look for families to arrange

alternative care within the community. Informal care is regarded as being impersonal and expensive and is therefore, not considered the preferred placement for children, young children in particular. “Special needs” housing needs to be developed in the context of children’s legislation and nationally and internationally accepted child welfare philosophy. This places the child’s physical and developmental needs at the core of interventions.

***Continuum of approaches to the care of children in need of alternative care:<sup>1</sup>***

- ***Informal family placement*** – Placement of a child with extended family/kinship care.
- ***Foster care*** – Legal placement of a child with a foster parent.
- ***Formal statutory/ legal placement*** – Formal welfare organisations, long established with developed infrastructure, professional staff, and often receive government subsidies to manage statutory childcare facilities.
- ***Informal NGOs and unregistered homes*** – Often unregistered with the Department of Social Development (DSD), less structured, use more indigenous responses to care, no support from state subsidies, difficult to track.

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<sup>1</sup> Loening-Voysey & Wilson, 2001

## **Rationale for the study**

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The Built Environment Support Group (BESG) promotes - through the documentation of various pilot projects - alternatives to institutional care, which support a family orientated environment in which children can experience as-near-normal psycho-social and emotional growth as possible. The projects that are the subject of this series of publications were special needs housing pilot projects, which serve to guide other projects in similar circumstances, and to assist the delivery of much needed social infrastructure for the care of children.

The purpose of this series of case studies is, therefore, to assist non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and caregivers working with children with a practical framework of alternative care models - other than institutional care or unregistered homes.

This document is the second in a series of three documents; each describing a specific kind of alternative to institutional care models:

### ***Part 1: Transitional Care Model***

eKhaya Lethemba Place of Safety: Redevelopment of a half-way house for children awaiting placement in foster care (19

beds), in conjunction with PMB Child and Family Welfare Society.

***Part 2 (this study): Community family homes. Three projects are case studied:***

- Cato Manor community family homes: Development of two extended township houses, each catering for a houseparent and 6 children; supported by Durban Children's Society.
- Nedbank/Unilever roll-out: Supported by Project Preparation Trust – a corporate response to the need for community foster care: Nedbank repossessed homes and Unilever's Thokomala Orphan Initiatives.
- The Isibindi Creating Circles of Care Model: A case study of child-headed families in Umbumbulu, supported by National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) - community-based model for caring for the needs of vulnerable children.

### **Part 3: Home extensions for carers:**

#### Save the Children Fund KZN crèche supervisors' home extensions project:

An “add-a-room” project to relieve overcrowding for 8 crèche workers who have been taking orphaned or abandoned children home. This pilot project will be published in early 2009.

### **Defining community family homes (CFH)**

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#### *General concept of community family homes*

The fundamental guiding principles of the CFH models are:

- Children are placed in an all-family environment to experience and enjoy a ‘normal’ family life, which provides love, warmth, security and a sound education.
- Psychological, social, and emotional needs of children are best met within their family and surrounding community and culture and children should therefore be cared for within their community of origin.
- To encourage, assist, and empower communities to take care of children in a way that best suits their circumstances, culture and resources.
- An external child welfare organisation provides guidance and assists with the management of the CFH.

- Community family homes are in essence foster homes. The community mother is a foster mother with children placed in her statutory care. A foster care grant is received for each child, which is used by the foster mother for the care of the children.

## **CASE STUDY 1**

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### **Cato Manor Community Homes - A community foster care model**

#### ***Concept***

Cato Manor community family homes (CFHs) is a special needs facility initiated and supported by Durban Children's Society (DCS). The project involved the development of two township houses, each catering for a houseparent and six children. The model of CFHs was identified and researched by Mrs. Dorothy Neilson, the Senior Manager of DCS in 1996, in response to the need for a new model of substitute care for children.

Although the concept of this model was derived from the cottage system, the difference lies in that each family lives in a single 'dwelling', integrated into their local community rather than within a closed institutional system. Each family is a separate entity, with children exposed to parental and sibling relationships, family responsibilities, school attendance and community structures and

activities. The house parent, ideally recruited from within the local community, lives with the children, cares for them, and is responsible for all aspects of childcare, nurturing and rearing. The model is cost effective as the costs are less than half of what it costs for institutional childcare. An underlying principle of this model is that the CFH be owned, assisted, supported, and managed by an accredited welfare organisation.

### ***The development of the community family homes in Cato Manor***

It became obvious in 1996 that the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the move away from institutional care would result in too few alternative care facilities for children in the future. The majority of children in need were isiZulu speaking, whereas only 25% of residential care placements were in traditional Zulu areas. Many children had no family or their family could not be traced. As far as possible, preferential placement for these children was to be in a family-type environment similar to their culture and community of origin. The first CFH to be developed by DCS was in Chesterville, Durban. The society has since developed and is supporting nine such homes in the Durban area, namely, Chesterville (1), Newlands East (2), Umlazi (2), Isipingo (2) and Cato Manor (2). Five of the homes managed by DCS are supported financially by the Thokamala Orphan Care Organisation. Thokomala also owns four of the properties.

The Chesterville trial homes worked successfully, and the Director of DCS approached BESG to apply to the Department of Housing to provide funds to pilot the development of two “special needs” houses in Cato Manor. Special attention was given to designing the house in harmony to the style of existing houses in Cato Manor. Tenders were sought from three builders. The DCS Maintenance Manager and Executive Director, together with a project manager from BESG, were responsible for the site and building management. The community was originally consulted about the development of the houses as a precautionary measure to reduce any stigma that may be associated with a child care home. The houses were completed in 2004 and 2005 respectively. The two complete houses were handed over to DCS for occupation by the foster parent(s) and their newly acquired children.

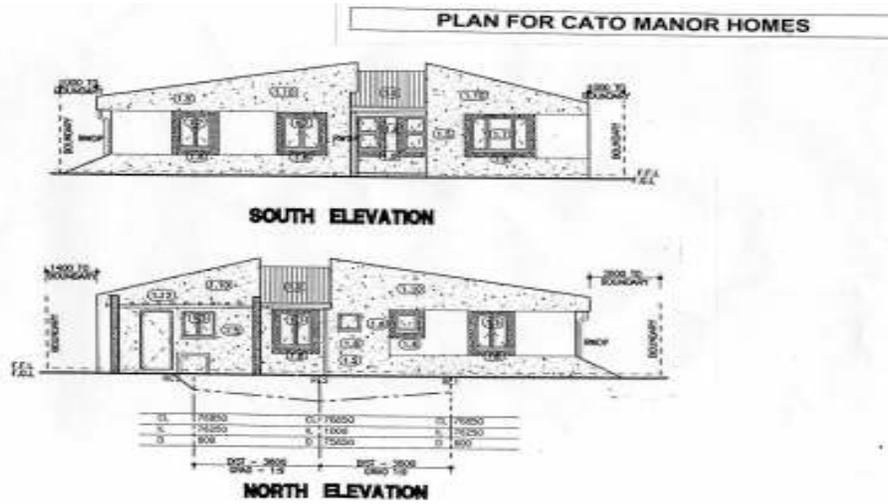
### ***Physical characteristics***

Each of the two houses occupies two separate plots, due to the area being high-density. The houses are within the same section of the township. Both sites were difficult sites to build on, as they were sloped and required extensive retaining structures. The houses are compact, with an open space design that allows the mother to monitor the whole house from the lounge and kitchen area.

The house has three bedrooms and two bathrooms. The housemother uses one bedroom. The other two, with three bunk

beds in each, are for the children. The house is comfortably furnished and equipped with a television, VCR, stove, microwave, fridge, washing machine and necessary linen and crockery.

**PLAN 1: Elevation plans for Cato Manor Homes**



**Plan 2: Cato Manor Homes – Floor plan**



## ***Tenure***

DCS is a registered non-profit organisation (NPO). The KZN Department of Housing (DoH) policy prior to 2004 stipulated the managing organisation should be a registered Section 21 company. DCS formally signed an Offer to Purchase land from the Cato Manor Development Association (CMDA) on the 30<sup>th</sup> December 2002. This offer was formally accepted and signed by CMDA on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2003 and the land was transferred into the name of (DURBAN) Izingane Initiatives Association, incorporated under Section 21 of Companies Act (1973), a wholly owned subsidiary of Durban Children's Society. Registration as a Section 21 Company requires annual audits separate to the Society's audit, which is an added expense. The Association acted as developer for the construction of the homes, with BESG acting as project manager and administrator of the housing capital subsidy.

The DoH has since changed the Section 21 Company registration requirement. NPOs are now entitled to qualify for DoH special needs housing subsidies, without having to establish a dedicated entity.

## ***Capital funding***

The land was acquired and the houses constructed using transitional/ special needs housing subsidy. This is a variant of the “Institutional Subsidy” instrument, which is commonly associated with state-subsidised social/ rental housing. It was created in terms of the KZN Department of Housing “AIDS policy” published in 2001, to apply to persons who did not qualify for a subsidy under the normal rules, in this case being children under the age of majority. This provided for “transitional” housing for people affected by or infected with HIV and AIDS, and was quantified at 70% of the institutional subsidy. The special needs housing subsidy was introduced in 2004, in recognition of the higher costs associated with special needs housing, and provides a subsidy per bed at the same level as the institutional subsidy.

The project was conceptualised over the years 1999-2001, with conditional approval being granted by the Department of Housing in early 2002. The Memorandum of Agreement between the parties was signed on 21 November 2003. The original subsidy amount was R261, 464. However, further motivation and an application, based on the approval in 2004 by the MEC for Local Government, Housing, and Traditional Affairs, that the percentage subsidy amount for special needs accommodation be increased from 70% to 100% of the subsidy quantum, was made and the agreement was amended and signed in October 2004 to include

a total subsidy amount of R480, 672 (100% of predicted cost), which equates to subsidy quantum R30, 042 for 16 beneficiaries.

The costs in Table 1 below reflect costs in 2004 when the subsidy was approved. Housing subsidy is escalated annually on 1<sup>st</sup> April to keep in line with building inflation.

**Table 1: Subsidy Application Budget**

<b>Mile-stone</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost/Unit</b>	<b>Total Budget</b>
<b>M1</b>	Institutional set-up	R 257	R 4 121
<b>M2</b>	Land acquisition	R 2 833	R 45 337
<b>M3</b>	Town planning/survey	R 0	R 0
<b>M4</b>	Professional fees	R 1 159	R 18 547
<b>M5</b>	Infrastructure/servicing	R 0	R 0
<b>M6</b>	Site transfer	R 0	R 0
<b>M7</b>	Top-structure construction	R25 791	R 412 665
<b>Totals</b>		<b>R 30 042</b>	<b>R 480 672</b>

The total completion price for the project was R571, 000 and DCS had to therefore supplement the DoH subsidy with outside funding. The cost of furniture and equipment for the homes was approximately R50, 000 and was funded by Operation Jump Start.

The DoH Memorandum of Agreement has certain conditions attached to selling any of the properties subsidised by them. In

the event of DCS selling the properties to another qualifying beneficiary organisation, the purchase price would be the selling price less the subsidy. Repayment of the subsidy to the DoH is required in full if DCS sells the properties to a non-qualifying beneficiary.

### ***Occupancy***

Community family homes are each designed to accommodate a houseparent and six children. Placement of children is intended to be permanent until the age of 18.



**The housemother at Cato Manor 2 with DCS social worker**

The housemother has a family of her own and sees them during "off-time". A relief mother, screened by the Society - usually someone known to the housemother - is employed to care for the children when the housemother is away.

The following requirements, procedures and criteria are considered during the selection of a housemother:

- Ideally, the housemother should be selected from the community in which the home has been established.
- Assessment of the applicant's health.
- Preferential age group for selection is between 45 and 50 years.
- Skills in disciplining children.
- Must be literate and able to budget.
- Supervise children's homework.
- A good reputation in the community.
- A love and passion for working with children.

Children are selected through a process where the social worker compiles a profile of the children.

Preference for placement in the CFH is given to:

- Abandoned children with no traceable kin.
- Children infected with HIV and/or affected by AIDS.
- Children from families with very sick parent(s)/carer(s).
- Children from homes with no proper accommodation.

- Children between the ages of birth to 12 years. They remain until they reach 18 years of age.
- Siblings of either sex.
- Children without serious behavior problems.
- Children from homes with too many children for any one carer to care for.

The profile is sent to the manager of the CFH and the children are selected in terms of different age groups and gender. Admissions are staggered to allow time for the mother and child to settle. The process of building the family takes approximately three to six months. However, it takes about a year for the family to bond as a unit.

### ***Operational management***

Durban Children's Society manages the Cato Manor community family homes. Management duty is mainly the responsibility of the DCS appointed social worker. The DCS social worker visits the homes on a regular basis in order to evaluate and enquire about any problems associated with the children's well-being. In addition, the social worker guides and supports the houseparent to carry out her responsibilities; teaches her budgeting skills and ensures that the foster care grant is used for the children. She completes an "evaluation of community homes" questionnaire for each visit. The social worker reports to the area manager, who in turn submits a report to the DCS management committee.

DCS is responsible for paying and carrying out maintenance to the house, equipment and furniture. The Society further sees to the payment of all municipal service and telephone costs directly related to the house. Excessive costs and personal calls are recovered from the houseparent. The parent is paid a monthly allowance to supplement her care grant.

### ***Operational funding***

Although the Elton John Foundation funded the Cato Manor homes for a period of two years, funds for maintenance and service cost to the house are usually covered out of DCS's annual budget.

The Society assisted the housemothers in applying for foster-child grants for the children in their care. Foster grants are subject to certain income limitations. The foster-child grant is currently R650 per child. The grant covers the entire living costs of the child, including school fees, medical, travel and personal costs. The money from the state grant is intended solely for the benefit of the children. The housemother receives an allowance from the DCS of R1,000 per month. The relief mother – the stand-in person when the housemother is away - receives an allowance of R80 per day.

The carer is not required to report on finances to DCS, but the Society will assist her with planning her budget if she is not able to cope financially.

**Table 2: Durban Children Society's monthly operating budget for community family home costs**

	<b>Budget 05/06</b>	<b>Actual 05/06</b>	<b>Budget 06/07</b>	<b>Actual 06/07</b>	<b>Budget 07/08</b>
<b>Family Home total</b>	<b>19,731</b>	<b>17,519</b>	<b>24,731</b>	<b>17,678</b>	<b>27,160</b>
Housemother allowance	9,308	9,022	12,267	9,245	12,870
Municipal services	6,000	5,385	6,000	4,517	6,690
Telephone costs	1,220	2,224	1,440	1,585	1,600
Maintenance	3,203	888	5,024	2,331	6,000

The Society is required to submit audited financial statements annually to the DoH. DCS is affiliated to the SA National Council for Child and Family Welfare and is formally recognised by the Department of Social Development (DSD).



### ***Cato Manor Community Family Home 1***

The general impression of Cato Manor 1 CFH is one of a well-run, clean house with a neat front garden. The home does have a vegetable garden, but monkeys are a problem. Although the house blends in with the other houses in the street, the fact that it is on two plots and the high parapet walls do tend to make it stand out from the other houses. The high walls cause a maintenance problem in that they are difficult to paint.

The house is home to one girl, five boys and a very dedicated and passionate housemother, who radiates genuine affection and concern for her foster family. Her motivation for caring for these children stems from a generic love of children and a history of people approaching her to take in children. The ages of the

children range from between 8 months to 11 years. The children have not all been at the house from inception, and some of the original children have left the house as they have turned 18. The children fight and protest to go to bed at times, just like normal siblings. Punishment includes cutting television viewing time and allocating additional chores around the house.

Some of the problems the housemother has experienced whilst running the house have been:

- An older sibling of two brothers, living at the CFH, tried to remove the two boys. This caused concern for the housemother, as she was not sure how to deal with the situation at the time. She now knows to call the police.
- Having just one girl in the house has caused problems and DCS has decided it is in the best interest of the girl to be moved.
- The grant money is often delayed by up to three or four months. The housemother has battled for three years to get a grant for one of the children.
- The children living in the home are often insulted and suffer discrimination. The housemother feels that fencing the site would allow the children to play in a safer environment.



### ***Cato Manor Community Family Home 2***

The Cato Manor 2 CFH is clean, neat, and well run. Both houses have the same design. The housemother, one boy and five girls occupy this house. The children's ages range from 4 to 10 years. The housemother does the washing, cooking, oversees homework and looks after the children when they are sick. The grant money she receives each month totals to R 3,200. Although she receives her grant regularly, she feels it is not sufficient, as costs, particularly food, have increased substantially. The same children have been living in this house since it started in 2005. Love for children motivates the housemother to do this work. She had dreams of opening a crèche but was never able to. She is therefore grateful for the opportunity to work with children.

The mother's adult daughter comes to stay with the children when the mother takes leave. The children never leave the home for long periods.

The children from Cato Manor CFH 2 have also experienced animosity and even physical abuse by other children in the community. The housemother has approached parents in the community to speak to their children to be more understanding. The underlying problems could be that firstly, the housemother is not from the community, and the community feels that a local housemother should have been selected. Secondly, many people in the community do not receive grants, free services and home maintenance, and are therefore not in a position to provide the level of care that the children in the CFHs receive.

### ***Replicability***

Factors supporting this particular model's replicability are:

- The model is unique in that an accredited organisation has a degree of control over the monitoring and sustainability of the house.
- The home belongs to the welfare organisation. This means that, in the event of foster relationships breaking down or the housemother being unable to continue caring for the children, the children remain in their familiar environment, and a new housemother is recruited from within that community. The children therefore remain in one place from the time of placement until they turn 18.

- Up to six children are cared for by one carer. This is not always possible in conventional foster placements.
- Siblings can be placed together.
- Children are placed in as near an area from which they come.
- Community family homes qualify for a “special needs” subsidy from the DoH.
- A written Letter of Support for the homes from the Provincial Department of Social Development is required to underpin the application for housing subsidy.



- The house should look similar to those in the immediate surroundings, and should ideally be situated in a community with a sense of social responsibility.
- The safety and acceptance of the home in the community is a fundamental factor to be considered.
- A routine building maintenance system and the replacement of worn furniture and equipment should be programmed and included in the budget.

- The selection of an appropriate housemother is crucial. They should have the ability to not only care for the children but to contribute to their personal development.
- A comprehensive contract outlining the organisation's expectations of the carers, and vice versa, must be drawn up on confirmation of the housemother.
- Housemothers receive a monthly allowance and are not employees of the Society. They are therefore not entitled to standard employee benefits.
- The houseparent and children should be encouraged to start and maintain a vegetable garden, both as a source of sustenance and an opportunity for bonding.



### ***Challenges***

The following are some of the challenges that have emerged since the implementation of the Cato Manor CFHs:

- Considerable time was spent in developing this institutional model, selecting and purchasing the site, preparing detailed project feasibility, and applying for a housing capital subsidy.

Delays can cause problems with funders' expectations. However, the investment in time and professional input was necessary to ensure the sustainability of the model for future use.

- Removing children from an environment in which they have developed strong attachment bonds with their carer may outweigh the comforts of a secure and comfortable Community family home. Placing children in the CFH at a young age gives the child opportunity to build attachment bonds with their new foster mother.
- Discrimination and physical abuse by other children in the community is disturbing. An investigation by DCS is to be undertaken to establish if other CFHs in other areas experience the same problem.
- A high turnover of social workers may impact on resolving problems that can occur in the CFHs.
- Problems relating to mixed genders within one house can occur.
- Foster grants and, when applicable, place of safety grants can be delayed.
- Only children up to the age of 18 are eligible for foster care grants. This creates a void in the system as these children have no place to go to, often cannot find employment, and are not able to fund further studies.

## ***Conclusion***

The community family homes model seems ideal in that the homes function well, with the focus being on achieving and enhancing the well-being of the children residing in the homes. Precautionary measures should be introduced to lessen stigma and develop community acceptance of the homes.

These two houses were intended as a pilot project. The Society was working with BESS, who made the original application to the Provincial Housing Department. Had the Society made the original application alone, there would no doubt still have been bureaucratic problems with the Provincial Housing Department, particularly as this was the first application made to them for inclusion of community family homes for subsidy purposes.



## CASE STUDY 2

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### **Project Preparation Trust – A corporate response to the need for community foster care: Nedbank repossessed homes and Unilever's Thokomala Orphan Initiatives**

#### ***Introduction***

Project Preparation Trust (PPT) is an independent public-interest organisation. PPT's core function is to prepare projects and mobilise capital and other resources for disadvantaged communities. In many instances, PPT's projects are innovative pilots which test new development solutions and approaches. PPT operates primarily as a management core which assists clients in managing the project preparation process. This includes briefing and managing professional project teams, ensuring broad stakeholder participation, troubleshooting, and submitting and following through on applications for development funds. Through its involvement in a wide range of special needs projects, PPT has assisted in developing practical and replicable models, provided feedback to policy makers, and assisted in building the necessary working relationships between a range of stakeholders including the departments of Housing, Social Development and Health, as well as various municipalities, NGOs and grassroots organisations.

Nedbank and Unilever, as part of their corporate response to the increasing number of children needing care, as a result of the HIV and AIDS pandemic, approached PPT to propose and prepare appropriate alternative care programmes designed to accommodate their involvement.

## **Nedbank programme**

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### ***Concept***

In May 2002, Nedbank and the Nedcor Foundation roll-out commenced and accepted a proposal from PPT in 2004 to establish community foster homes (CFH) on a national scale, catering for children in need of alternative care, by using Nedbank properties in possession (PIPs). The intention was to develop 75 homes in the provinces of Kwazulu-Natal, Eastern Cape, Western Province, and Gauteng.

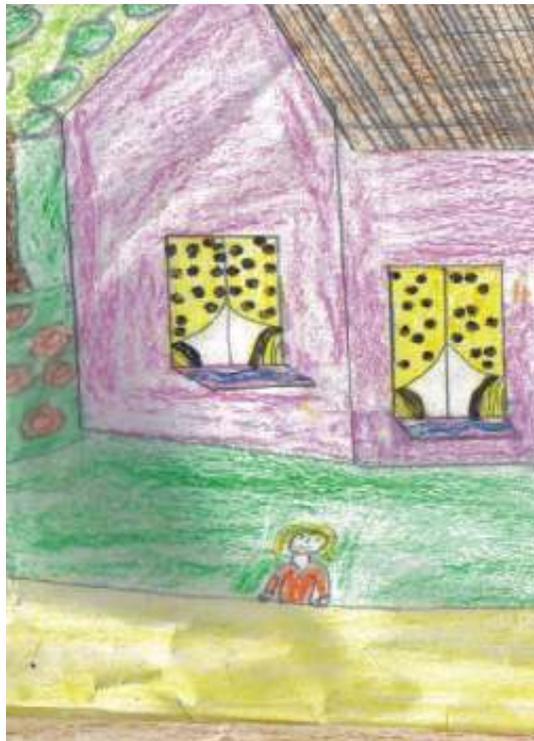
The model for this project emerged from two successful pilot projects prepared and implemented by PPT. These pilot projects provided input to the KZN Department of Housing policy relating to special needs housing

The goal of the project was for Nedbank to sell repossessed homes to an organisation that would oversee the long-term sustainability and management of the CFHs and provide support to the houseparent. A condition of sale was that the organisation applied for special needs housing subsidy from the Department

of Housing (DoH) for the purchase of the property. In this way, the value of the house was to be used by Nedbank to capitalise an endowment fund, the interest from which would cover operational costs. The significance of the model was to ensure sustainability on two levels:

- Operational sustainability could be achieved from a funding perspective in terms of funds from the endowment; and
- To ensure that the institutional capacity of the overseeing organisation was attained.

The key to the pilot projects were that children are



accommodated and cared for in an existing residential environment. The property boom has, however, had an effect on the surplus of Nedbank's repossessed property stock. A national assessment resulted in PPT reconceptualising the project with Nedbank. The programme has since been adapted by PPT, identifying suitable

properties on the open market in areas where PIPs are not available. Application is made to the DoH for special needs housing subsidy in order to purchase the properties. Nedbank currently funds technical assistance in feasibility preparation costs, which is not recovered on approval of subsidy application - although organisations who wish to replicate the model can apply to the DoH for preparation funding. Nedbank further continues to make limited endowments available, and negotiations are in progress with the Nedbank financial board on the future of the endowment policies process.

There are currently six established CFHs, with a further eight approved, and twelve feasibility studies completed.

The DoH in the Eastern Cape has been proactive, and as a direct result of the Nedbank/PPT programme it has adopted a special needs housing policy. In addition, they have entered into a memorandum of agreement with the Department of Social Development. The DoH in the Western Cape has adopted a similar draft framework, which will become operational once a national special needs housing policy is developed.



### ***Operational costs***

The foster mother receives a foster care grant (FCG) for the benefit of children in her care once a foster care order is granted by the court. The organisation that owns the property and provides oversight should be mindful to ensure the foster parent has budgeting skills. Invariably, the support organisation will raise funds to cover maintenance and reasonable household expenses in excess of the FCG, if the foster parent does not have independent means. The model of using PIPs creates a dedicated endowment fund for this purpose.



**A Nedbank Foster Care Home**

## **Challenges**

- Obtaining subsidy approval can take up to two years. This means that properties on the open market are often lost.
- The subsidy amount may be insufficient and may need to be supplemented by donations.

Replication of this model is reliant on the following conditions:

- Availability of repossessed homes in the community.
- The CFH falls under the auspices of an organisation, either an approved welfare society or NPO with the capacity to manage the operations.
- An appropriate identification process of a foster mother and children for placement should be in place.
- It is essential to obtain and formalise the support from stakeholders involved, and clearly define in writing the arrangements between the foster carer and the property owner/ support organisation.
- It is critical to establish a sustainable funding source for maintenance and operating costs.

## Thokomala Orphan Care Programme - Unilever roll-out

### **Overview**

The Thokomala model promotes networking and partnerships between the private and public sectors through sharing of material and technical resources to ensure the sustainability of community foster homes (CFHs) for disadvantaged children.



Thokomala Orphan Care Programme was a joint response by Unilever and Durban Children's Society (DCS) to the increasing need for care for children. Initial negotiations between Unilever and DCS to establish a CFH in the Umlazi area commenced in 2001 and the project was implemented in April 2006. The Thokomala homes are based on the DCS's model of Community Family Homes and operate under the same principle as the Cato Manor CFH.

The concept behind the partnership was:

- DCS was to provide registered social workers for professional supervision, and Unilever employees would actively be involved in the project as volunteers, as part of Unilever's "Social Involvement Programme".
- DCS would oversee the administration and overall management of the CFH.

Suitable homes are identified, purchased and renovated to be used as a CFH for a foster parent and a maximum of six foster children. Several Thokomala homes have since been purchased by Unilever and Unilever still funds the administration and organisational support costs of the project.

The Thokomala model expanded in 2006 to include an “upliftment programme” for children once they reach the age of 18 and have to leave the CFH. The programme provides mentorship for adolescents on making the right choices about further education, professional choices and earning a living.

***Table: 3 Thokomala Orphan Care Organisation***

**Budget for CFH in Umlazi:**

**Administered by Durban Children’s Society**

	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Budget</b>
	<b>05/06</b>	<b>05/06</b>	<b>06/07</b>	<b>06/07</b>	<b>07/08</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>109,655</b>	<b>96,383</b>	<b>111,879</b>	<b>112,746</b>	<b>127,504</b>
Set up Costs		6,558			4,160
Welfare agency costs	13,800	13,800	15,180	11,385	16,800
Social Work services	67,924	58,506	67,868	55,040	79,034
Family home Costs	19,731	17,519	24,731	17,678	27,160
Project Costs	8,200	0	4,100	0	4,510

***Project Preparation Trust's Association with  
Thokomala Orphan Care Organisation***

Unilever was providing funds, through the Thokomala Orphan Organisation, to purchase several suitable homes in South Africa to be utilised as CFHs. Unilever was further providing the operational funding, through an accredited welfare organisation to sustain the CFHs. PPT advised Thokomala through a consultative course of action to apply for Provincial Department of Housing special needs housing subsidies to meet the capital costs of the houses.

Unilever could, in this way, commit funds to revenue costs through an endowment fund instead of paying for the capital costs.

Approval of subsidy application by the DoH is granted on the basis that Unilever provides bridging finance for the building or purchase of the homes and the subsidy refund will enable preparation and implementation of further new homes. The need for bridging finance is inevitable as the subsidy approval process is generally delayed for long periods, which increases the risk of suitable property on the market being lost to other buyers. Upfront purchasing does run a small risk in that the subsidy may not be approved for some reason, and the capital invested is therefore not recoverable.

## ***Replicability***

The Nedbank and Unilever programmes are significant because they use a proven model, which supports a non-institutional form of residential childcare, and is further supported and managed by an accredited welfare organisation.

The main issues that need to be addressed with the feasibility and assessment of this model are:

- Properties should be well located within or close to the community.
- Children should be placed in the community from which they come.
- Properties should not be in high risk, hazardous areas, e.g., close to a railway line or a high traffic area.
- Properties should be within easy access of schools and public transport.

Problems with replicating the Nedbank and Unilever model include:

- The slow process of DoH approving the project.
- The general absence of bridging funds to acquire the property.
- A shortage of welfare organisations with capacity to oversee the homes. The organisation needs to be a well established, accredited organisation, familiar with the foster care process.
- Availability of suitable property stock.
- Cost of the properties – housing subsidy is not always sufficient.

- Absence of preparation funding. Although preparation funding can be sought from the DoH, it adds considerable delay to an already protracted approval process.
- The need for technical support to package the subsidy application – all existing CFHs have been assisted by a professional support organisation familiar with the DoH application process.
- Delays in approval of foster care grants, which results in limited operational funding.
- Sustaining operational funding is a constraint. Endowment fund investments enable organisations to draw interest, which is used as operational funding.

### ***The PPT model process of application***

A standard procedure is followed by PPT when initiating a CFH project and is recommended in the event of replicating the CFH model.

- ***Stage 1: Preliminary assessment: Assessment, by a competent specialist in special needs housing, of an application for preparation funding.***
- ***Stage 2: Pre-feasibility and application for conditional approval: Assessment and elimination of key project risks including project concept, key stakeholder support, site suitability, and sufficient funding available. This can be combined with the feasibility phase where there are no significant risks.***

- **Stage 3: Feasibility and submission of subsidy application:** Finalisation of institutional issues, capacity building, design and capital estimates, detailed estimates / model for operating and maintenance costs demonstrating sustainability.
- **Stage 4: Design and implementation:** Purchase, renovation and possible adaptation of the existing building, housing subsidy administration, handover and furnishing.



The table below is an indication of capital expenditure necessary to equip and furnish a typical CFH.

**Budget for equipment and furnishings**  
**(based on KwaDabeka and Abethu Homes in eThekweni Municipality)**

Items	No	Unit cost	Total (R)
<b>Bedrooms:</b>			
Steel bunk beds	3	600	1,800
Bedroom suite	1	2,000	2,000
Linen	7	200	1,400
Towels	7	60	420
Steel lockers (2-tier)	7	400	2,800
Curtaining	1	4,500	4,500

<b>Kitchen:</b>			
Stove	1	2,000	2,000
Fridge	1	2,000	2,000
Kettle	1	110	110
Crockery (including pots & pans)	1	1,200	1,200
Cutlery	1	200	200
<b>Lounge / dining room:</b>			
Lounge suite	1	3,500	3,500
Dining suite	1	3,500	3,500
TV set	1	2,000	2,000
Video	1	2,000	2,000
Radio	1	1,400	1,400
TV cabinet	1	1,500	1,500
Carpeting	Ave.60m2	R80/m2	4,800
Vinyl (kitchen & bathrooms)	Ave.15m2	R110/m2	1,650
Fencing	1	14,000	14,000
Jungle gym combination	1	3,200	3,200
Burglar bars	1	3,500	3,500
Sub-Total (excl VAT 14%)			59,480
Sub-total (incl VAT 14%)			67,807
Contingency & escalations @ 10%			6,781
<b>Total</b>			<b>74,588</b>

### **Conclusion**

The concept of CFH is good and has proven to be successful. The model needs to be upscaled to meet the growing demand for community-based care of children. This can be achieved to a degree, by the DoH improving the funding process for special needs

subsidies. More effective responses at community level are needed to provide support and financial assistance in caring for children. Although there is scope for many more CFHs, resources to operate and supervise these homes are limited. Two main areas to be addressed in the replication of this model are, firstly, that the capacity of welfare organisations and other NPOs to oversee CFHs is already stretched, and secondly, the difficulty in sourcing operational funds to run these homes.

### **CASE STUDY 3**

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#### **Isibindi Umbumbulu -Creating Circles of Care Model**

##### ***Introduction***

The National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW) - a non-government organisation well known for training and development of adult child & youth care workers - has researched and developed a unique, cost effective, community-based outreach programme that provides for the development, support and care of orphaned children. The model known as Isibindi Creating Circles of Care Model is currently at various stages of operation in eight provinces.

The model is designed to develop the family in order to sustain itself and build a secure home base, by working within the child's life space. The child and youth care worker goes to

where the child is based. The children are, therefore, not removed from their family environment. This model has further significance in that it strives to strengthen and develop communities through training, mentoring and employing previously unemployed community members. The Isibindi model is strongly supported by the National Department of Social Development.

### ***The Isibindi Model of Care***

The objective of this model is to:

- Create safe and caring communities for children and youth at risk through a developmental child and youth care response.
- Preserve the family structure by focusing on children and youth made vulnerable through illness or death of one or both parents, resulting in child-headed households with siblings that remain as an intact family.
- Focus on the care of children in the context of the family, extended family, neighbourhood, and community with a service provider and/or the state acting as a protective mechanism.
- Work in the life space of children and youth with the focus on equipping them with skills to cope competently in their living environment.
- Empower and encourage communities through training and support, to facilitate a strong community-base and

community involvement in caring for children and young people.

### ***Isibindi – Umbumbulu***

The Isibindi Umbumbulu roll-out was a partnership between NACCW, Durban Children's Home, the Umbumbulu District Department of Social Development, and the community, which started in 2000. The project operates in the Imsimbi, Illovu, and Bhekawandle communities of Umbumbulu. The project has a steering committee and includes representatives from the community, including the local magistrate, pastor, teacher, clinic nurse, South African Police Services and traditional leaders.

In 2001, the first volunteers from the community were trained and started visiting child-headed households and households where parents were very ill. Many children were caring for siblings or sick parents. The objective of Isibindi was, firstly to provide child and youth care services in the life space of the children, to assist these children with chores, and then to further guide and develop them and their foster parents, in their daily lives, within their living space, through a consultative problem-solving process.

The children themselves and the extended family are consulted through a discussion process on who will foster them.



The children need to agree on who their foster parent will be. The children do not necessarily have to live with the foster parent, but may remain in their homes where a child and youth care worker will care for them, help with budgeting, and monitor to see that the foster grant is spent on the children. The training that child & youth care workers receive is an accredited FET Certificate in child & youth care and is recognized by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

The child & youth care worker's work programme is structured to suit the needs of the families with whom she works. She assesses which families are in need of intensive care, starts her daily work with these families, and then moves on to those families with lesser needs. A single child-care worker would work with a total of 12 children from various families at a time. All Isibindi child & youth care workers are monitored and evaluated by their nominated Isibindi Mentor.

Child & youth-care workers have their own families, and usually have family support to assist with their children. The child and youth care worker works flexibly. They plan their work to be available to children before and after school and use part of the day when children are in school for their personal needs. As a rule, the child & youth-care worker goes to the homes of the children early in the morning to help the children to get ready for school. Depending on the need, they may spend time assisting with household chores, preparing meals, and when the children return from school, assist with homework. The child head of the household is therefore able to attend school and does not have to stay at home doing domestic chores. The child & youth -care worker is however, not a domestic servant - they work with the children and not for the children - and the children are taught to look after themselves. The child & youth care worker does not stay overnight with the family. At night, the neighbours keep a special eye on the children. No family will be left alone if there is any chance that they are at risk. Children at risk are rather moved to a safe place.

The length of time working with a family depends on the needs of the family. On inception, the child & youth-care worker develops a plan of action for each case, outlining the problems and an intended objective of how to solve the problems.



NACCW runs an adolescent development group programme for teenagers living on their own. The group meets regularly and they are taught behaviour and life skills. During the group sessions the youth are able to communicate their feelings and opinions about various topics of interest relating to behaviour, decision-making and self esteem.

Child & youth-care workers have the opportunity to develop personally and in their careers by becoming supervisors in their area, or other areas replicating the Isibindi model.

### ***Case study – A child-headed household in Umbumbulu***

The following case study is unique, in that NACCW sought funding and sponsorship to build a house for a family with whom they were already working. Building new dwellings for child-headed households or vulnerable families is not a standard feature of the Isibindi model. However, the model

does include an element of networking and referrals with various organisations and companies, as a means to source building materials to help families improve their homes. The child & youth-care worker encourages the family and extended family to apply their building skills and help with the building process, or gathering of materials to build or improve their homes.

The Dlamini (name changed) family lives in Umbumbulu, KwaZulu Natal. The family comprises seven young children, who have been orphaned through AIDS. Their father died in 2002 and their mother in 2005. The youngest child has lived with her aunt since her mother's death, and the other six live together in their home in Umbumbulu. The aunt is their legal guardian and foster parent. The eldest girl, now 16, is considered the head of the family. The second child is a boy and then there are two sets of twins in the family (two boys and two girls). All the children go to school in the vicinity of their home.

After the mother died, the children went to live with another aunt in the neighbourhood, as their family house, a traditional mud dwelling, was derelict and unsafe. When interviewed, the children stated they were unhappy living with their aunt, as she made them do all the household chores, and was not supportive of them doing homework. They had to work continuously, even over weekends.

The child & youth-care worker realised the children's grief was affecting them and, together with the NACCW project manager, designed a counselling programme for the children to help them deal with the emotional trauma of losing their parents. During these sessions it became obvious that the children longed to return to their family home, as this is where they felt they were connected psychologically and emotionally to their parents. NACCW subsequently networked to build the children a new home on their original family homestead site, where they could live and be cared for by a selected caregiver and supervised by an Isibindi child & youth-care worker. The children were therefore allowed to remain within their ancestral home where their grandparents and parents had lived and where both their parents have been buried - an important feature of the isiZulu culture.

When the child & youth-care worker first met the children they would say:

*Extract: "Auntie, come we want to show you our dad", and I would say, "Where is your dad?," and they took me to the grave and they sat at the grave and would say, "this is our dad", and when the mother died they said, "this is our dad and our mother."*

The child & youth-care worker noticed a remarkably positive change in the children's social and academic performance once the children were settled into their home.



***The parents' graves in the yard***

***The role of the child-care worker***

A NACCW trained child & youth-care worker lives in the same community as this family and started visiting and assisting the family when their mother was still alive. The eldest child was taking care of her sick mother and her siblings. The child & youth care worker assisted the mother to draw up a will. The mother nominated the children's aunt to be the foster parent once she died.

The child & youth care worker managed to source a funeral policy from a bank for the mother. The funeral cover was of

great assistance to the family when the mother died, as no-one was prepared to help the family.

The role of the child & youth care worker is to assist the children or their sick parents or grandparents with the following:

- Guide the fostering process.
- Applying for various grants.
- Collecting the grants on behalf of sick beneficiaries or children.
- Budgeting monthly expenditure.
- Buying groceries, collecting medication from the clinic.
- Helping with food preparation.
- Helping the younger children with washing and ironing.
- Assisting with homework supervision.
- Giving emotional support and counselling.
- Building relationships with the extended family and encouraging them to assist child-headed households.

Although the Isibindi representative worked with this particular family for many years, she now only visits them weekly. The children visit the staff at the NACCW offices in Umbumbulu at times and have their contact numbers in case of need. The children expressed that they miss their original child and youth care worker tremendously, and look forward to her visits. They still phone her regularly.

The children have, with the help of their foster parent, employed a full time, live-in housekeeper paid for out of the foster care grant. The housekeeper is very committed to the family and takes care of the family's emotional, physical and spiritual wellbeing.

### ***The role of the foster parent***

The foster parent is nominated as the legal guardian of the children and receives the foster care grant (FCG). The foster mother has a budget, which includes food, clothes, school fees, household consumables, pocket money, and any other items that need to be purchased from time to time. The foster parent saves a portion each month to make provision for the children when they turn 18 and their FCG ends.

The foster mother lives a distance away from the house but visits the children on a regular basis. The Isibindi child & youth care worker and project manager consult with the aunt in the event of any major decision-making and problems.

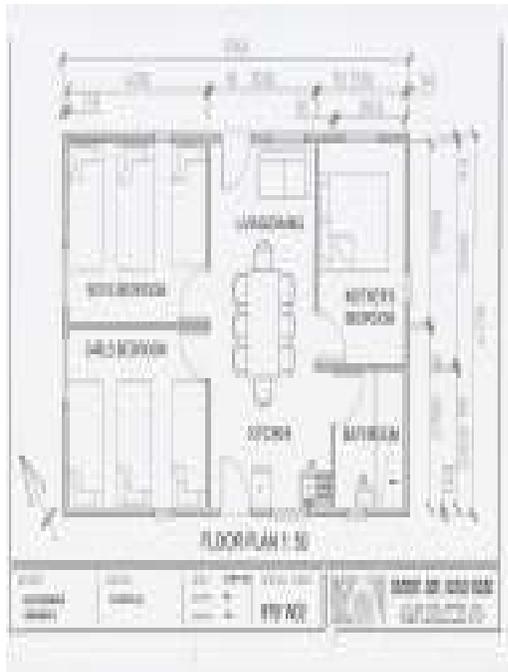
### ***Physical characteristics of the house***

The walls of the house are built from concrete blocks and it has a corrugated iron roof. The house is plastered inside and outside, has rhino ceilings, plumbing, and electricity. The floor plan is an open plan design, with two bedrooms, a living area,

bathroom, and kitchen. The original floor plan shows three bedrooms, with kitchen and lounge combined. The family has adapted the use of space from the original design, and has converted the third bedroom into a kitchen, creating a bigger living space.



***The House in Umbumbulu built through NACCW for a child-headed household***



***Floor plan of the house***

### ***The Capital funding***

NACCW decided to fund the building of the house through private sector sponsorship, rather than applying for a subsidy from the DoH. The DoH housing subsidy process would have delayed the project considerably, and immediate action was required in the case of this family. Motheo Construction (Pty) Ltd offered to build the house for the family at a drastically reduced rate. The estimated building cost of the house was R140,000. Motheo Construction's final cost of the house was R50,000. However, the family was billed a mere R20,000 which was paid for out of a portion of the family's FCG lump sum back pay.



Furniture was budgeted for every month out of the FCG. The financial support received ensured that the family could return to the family home under the guardianship of their foster parent. The house was built in a record time of 3 weeks.

### ***Operational funding***

All monthly expenses are covered by the FCG. The house does not receive any additional income to supplement costs. The Isibindi child & youth care worker, supervisor, and project manager receive monthly remuneration from NACCW, which forms part of NACCW's annual budget.

### ***Tenure***

Ownership of the property in Umbumbulu was originally given to the parents by the local *nkosi* (chief). Proof of occupation was transferred through the *nkosi* to the children when the parents passed away. The mother's will stated that tenure be transferred to all her children in equal portions. The children classify the home as the traditional family home and ownership will therefore be passed on to the next generation.

### ***Replication***

The Isibindi model has structure and form and includes a strong mentoring and supervisory component, which makes replication

easier. Quality training of child-care workers is essential to the success of this model. NACCW is an accredited child & youth-care training organisation and any implementing organisation or agent that wishes to replicate the model needs to develop a partnership with NACCW, with contractual roles and responsibilities being outlined.

*The following is a brief replication guide:*

- A needs assessment is conducted, identifying and incorporating all the relevant community stakeholders.
- A partnership is developed between NACCW and the implementing organisation or agent.
- The model and its components are workshopped by NACCW and contextualised by NACCW and the implementing agent.
- Potential child and youth care workers are identified by the implementing agent.
- Workers are trained by NACCW in child and youth care work.
- Initial funding sources are identified.
- Beneficiary families, children, and youth are identified and specified.
- Child and youth care workers will be supervised and mentored by an identified child & youth care professional qualified to offer supervision.

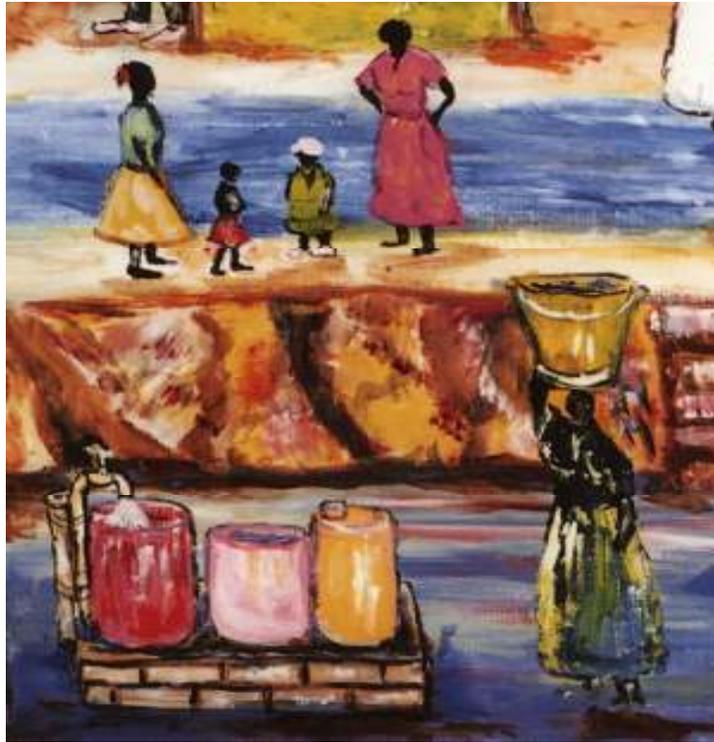
- Mechanisms for project accountability and monitoring of child and youth care workers at the level of service delivery need to be set up.

### **Challenges**

- NACCW is currently in the process of obtaining the recognition of child & youth-care workers as a legitimate professional body. Achieving recognition will give child & youth care workers better authority to deal with certain problems.
- Child & youth care workers often have to deal with investigations of FCG corruption in order to protect the children. This can lead to animosity between them and the foster parent(s).
- Some extended families view the child and youth care worker's involvement as interfering in family affairs. Obtaining FCG is a slow process.
- Families do, however, receive food parcels while waiting for their FCG approval. Isibindi networks with organisations to provide families with food and supplies. No child and youth care worker is allowed to leave a family without food.
- Many homes are overcrowded. Some homes can be classified as unregistered children's homes as parents simply leave their children in the care of a willing caregiver. One child & youth care worker in a particular case traced

all the parents, held a group conference, and managed to convince the parents to take responsibility for their children.

- The FCG stops at 18. Child & youth-care workers encourage families of child-headed households to open a savings account as a precautionary measure.



## Conclusion

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This document has highlighted the positive and negative aspects of three models of care for children at risk, with emphasis on replication of these models.



All three models are similar in that the focus of the model lies in placing children in a family home within a community. The first two models are based on the same principle of placing orphaned and vulnerable children in a community residence,

where a legally appointed foster parent cares for them. In addition, both models rely on the support of and supervision by an accredited welfare organisation to oversee and manage the homes.

The distinction between the Cato Manor homes and the Nedbank and Unilever homes lies in the funding process to purchase or build the intended community family home. With both the Nedbank and Unilever models, homes are acquired on the open market as needed, and this model is not reliant on a Department of Housing subsidy approval, which has proven to be a slow process. The

outright purchase of houses for community family homes is therefore a far quicker process.

The Department of Housing's subsidy facility could, however, be effectively utilised if the application process was streamlined. The Department of Housing will also provide preparation funding to be used for feasibility, design and application. The preparation funding is deducted from the subsidy on approval.

The Isibindi Model, on the other hand, does not focus on providing a dwelling for children in need but rather on assisting these children and their families in the homes they live in. The children may be fostered; living with sick parents or relatives; or living away from the foster parent in a child-headed household. This model is unique to NACCW and replication of this model is dependent on a partnership with them.

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