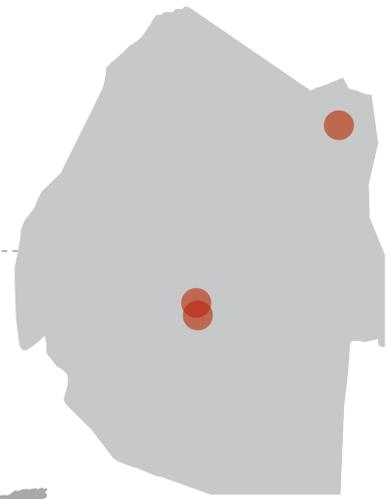


Swaziland



Areas in Swaziland being impacted by Hands at Work

Swaziland is the only remaining absolute monarchy in Africa, and possesses a stunning landscape. However, the surface impression of Swaziland is deceitful, and beneath the faces of people who appear content is a horrific truth. In Swaziland, sexual abuse and incest occurs in the home of many families. Cultural pressure has

driven many Swazi men to take on wives and children they cannot provide or care for. Challenges in policing Swazi borders have contributed to a growing child trafficking crisis.

Many Swazis live in abject poverty and food shortages are widespread. Swazis often cross into neighbouring South Africa (SA), hoping to find employment. However, many quickly realise unemployment is also a crisis across the border. Swazi children are unable to take final exams in SA without SA identification, and many become stuck in an education system where they can never graduate.

Girls are especially at risk in Swaziland, often given up for marriage as early as ages 12-14, causing an extremely high rate of girls who have never been to school or have dropped out at an early age. This reality is not only due to cultural practice, but occurs when families are desperate for income and can give their daughters away for money. Only 50% of adults in Swaziland support learning and education, leading to only 52% of female students attending secondary school. Lack of education and early marriage has resulted in a high rate of young mothers: 22% of adolescent girls give birth by age 18. A shocking 42% of adolescent girls justify being beaten by their husbands.

The HIV/AIDS crisis continues to plague Swaziland: **16% of the population is infected – only 2% lower than SA which has 42 times the population of Swaziland. 66% of orphaned children were orphaned due to HIV/AIDS.**

Hands at Work is committed to speaking up in this silent culture where people with no voice are being oppressed. Hands at Work is currently focused on expanding work throughout Swaziland and has the benefit of a strong base of volunteers and African leaders across the border in South Africa. Swaziland offers little bureaucratic hindrances and therefore many opportunities to help those most in need.

chores and any remaining time is devoted to homework.

Nokuphila's Care Worker has known her family since 2006 when she started visiting patients in their homes in the community. Nokuphila has grown up receiving motherly love, care and encouragement from her Care Worker, and they have built a close relationship.

Every day Nokuphila walks home from school knowing that she will stop at the Life Centre where she receives a hot, nutritious meal. Nokuphila also received a school jersey and shoes at the start of the school year. Most importantly, she receives a listening ear, a patient smile, a comforting hug, and the opportunity to laugh and play with other children.

The Care Workers of Swaziland are servant-hearted women who desire to give love to the children in their community. Because of their willingness to wait every day for the children to reach the Life Centre late in the afternoon, children like Nokuphila know that they are loved like family.

Snapshot OF THE EPIDEMIC

Population: **1,249,500**

Orphaned children (age 0-17): **110,000**

Children orphaned by

HIV/AIDS: **73,000**

Under 5 mortality rating (per 1000 live births): **Female – 75 | Male - 85**

Secondary School Attendance:

Female – 52% | Male – 42%

People living with HIV: **200,000**

Life expectancy at birth:

Female - 49 | Male – 50

Lifetime risk of maternal death: **1 in 94**

Country rating (out of 187) on the

Human Development Index: **148**

Sources: UNAIDS, UNDESA 2014, UNICEF 2014

Hope for a Girl



“ Nokuphila is seven years old and lives in an isolated, rural village in Swaziland. This desperately poor community struggles from a lack of clean, accessible water and, at times, impassable roads. There is also virtually no employment within the community. When Nokuphila was only 20 months old, her father passed away from HIV/AIDS. Her aunt immediately moved into the home to help care for Nokuphila and her disabled mother. With no job and no income, simply surviving was a constant struggle.

Nokuphila attends grade 2 at her local school. The distance from the village to the school makes attendance very challenging. But Nokuphila is determined, walking five kilometres each way to school every day. When she returns home in the evening she must then complete her