

# Disability Africa Newsletter

## December 2023

Here is a quick update and roundup of the year and how - with your support - we are using playschemes as a force for inclusion of disabled children in Kenya, Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Zambia.

### Gunjur Inclusion Centre is open in The Gambia

Essential works to the centre's roof were completed allowing the team to deliver a full programme of play, medical, parent and community support. Lamin – project Director - described the centre as a wonderful resource and a positive force for inclusion for the disabled children in Kombo South region.

In November a grand opening celebrated and to look forward to 2024 when the centre will be full of disabled children all taking advantage of these incredible facilities.

The team are obviously really excited about the project now it is back in its home and the plans for 2024 include basing a community physiotherapy team in the centre. We know that play is a great way to deliver physio – whether it's children playing on the soft play with Yaya (Play Leader) and his play team or in the physio's room at the centre. Once a routine has been established for the children at the playcentre, the physio service can be offered to the wider community – which will mean the Gunjur Inclusion Centre becomes a real hub in the community where disabled children are seen, heard, safe, and part of everyday life in Gunjur.

### Kawama Inclusion Project uses *The Fourth* in Zambia...

The team in Zambia have been busy in 2023 - **increasing delivery by adding a fourth day to the playscheme and recruited Abigail as their first Medical Support Officer**. This all meant that by July they had delivered more visits for disabled children than in all of 2022. The team finished the year with a team training day to reflect on the year and plan for 2024 when they will add a fifth day to the playscheme - so we can expect even more from the team in 2024. (May the force be with us!) Here's an example of Abigail and medical support in action...

***Abigail and play staff discovered 3 children with undiagnosed epilepsy. So, Abigail – a trained nurse from Ndola – set up appointments for the children and their parents and a range of tests including scans. Abigail also supported parents with practical information and - crucially - reassurance about the management of the condition and connected the families with a local NGO who supplies free epilepsy medication.***

#### This year you helped us provide...

- 7 playschemes across Kenya, Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Zambia.
- More than 18,600 child-visits.
- 25,000 meals for disabled children.
- 1,600 medical support and physio sessions.
- 1,000 parent meetings and home visits.
- Support to 561 disabled children.
- Employment for more than 60 staff in African countries.





## **There was lots (and lots!) of play in 2023...**

**here are just a few examples of how you helped make a positive impact in the lives of disabled children...**

### **Buba – the Medical Support Officer (MSO) in The Gambia – coordinated the orthopaedic surgery for four children.**

But critically Buba makes sure the after-care is in place – making sure dressings are replaced and that wounds are kept clean. Then, of course, making sure that the children return to the playscheme when they are able. Buba reports that one child, having recovered from a leg injury, is already cycling to the playscheme.

### **At each project there are regular home visits to children and their families.**

In Zambia this is done by the whole play team who travel throughout Kawama visiting the homes of children who may be unwell or haven't been to playscheme for a while or just saying hello to see how things are going. Its wonderful to think about the play workers taking the trouble to do a home visit to a child they normally see at playscheme. Brilliant!

### **In Kenya 'C' had been absent from the playscheme so Japhet visited their home and found C alone and unattended...**

This is worrying because C does not use spoken language and their home is quite far out in the bush – her parents had left to farm their land. Japhet - Project Director - met with the grandmother and has asked the Play Leader to visit (as they live close to C) as well as supporting her to the playscheme where she can be better supervised and associate with friends. Following up on absenteeism for such a vulnerable group of children is an essential part of the playteam fulfilling their everyday safeguarding duties.

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