



# JEDIDIAH

Empowering Lives And  
Building Broken Dreams

Volume 1 Issue 6



**Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today and children of incarcerated parents are no exception!**

# Our Aim

Empowering and promoting the success of children and their caregivers who have been negatively impacted by parental incarceration.

## EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT

By Jedidiah Trust Staff Member

We would like to thank all our individual donors, corporates, embassies, international donors for partnering with us to sponsor school fees for children as well as for those who have sponsored ex-inmates such that they can write their exams and finish school as well.

We would like to give special mention to Marcus and his family from Germany this month who sponsored 3 children of the same family with school fees support as well as stationery and school uniforms. Your support goes a long way in empowering the children who have been affected by parental incarceration.

We witnessed jubilation from the children as they had been out of school for nearly 2 years and are now going back to school. Partner with us and make a difference in someone else's life.



## HOW CHILDREN WITH INCARCERATED PARENTS LIVE AND THE PROBLEMS THEY FACE WHILST GOING TO SCHOOL.

I have seen so many victims, whose lives have scattered.

Each day is a nightmare filled with loneliness. "When are my parents coming home?" An everyday question that a child asks himself. Each day they go to school. It's no longer for education but for just escaping the reality. Reality of having to lose parents to jail.

Some lives are so void. Dreams and hopes destroyed. As it is said, 'Destroy the child and you have destroyed the future.' Children are the leaders of tomorrow. Why leave them with so much burden and shame. Having to see other kids being picked up from school by their parents while yours sleep in a cold cell with dark walls that only represent nothing but pain.

'The future lies in the hands of the young people', they say. What happens if these young people are struggling and fighting battles that cannot be won. I see the pain in their eyes. I feel the burden they carry every single day. I hear the screams that are never heard by anyone. So next time you think of committing a crime, think of the children.



Sharon Kudakwashe Chitsinde  
Child Councillor



# HIDDEN CONSEQUENCES: THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL INCARCERATION ON EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT. A TEACHER'S PERSPECTIVE (PART 1 OF A 3 PART SERIES)

The impact of parental incarceration on children can be profound, affecting their physical, social, emotional and academic development in ways that can last for a lifetime. Unfortunately, society gives more attention to the plight of the incarcerated parent than that of the children. Children remain the hidden victims with minimal support from the state, schools and caregivers. This is wrong and unfair. These innocent souls deserve support for them to lead good lives and realize their dreams. They deserve a fair chance at a bright future regardless of their family's circumstances.

School communities should be mobilized and educated on the prevalence of the problem and the range of challenges that can impact the social, emotional and academic development of children with incarcerated parents. It is important that school participants acknowledge the scope of the problem, its impact and their role in alleviating the problem.

**In this series, I will highlight the challenges children with incarcerated parents face particularly at school and will be continued in the next issue!**

## **Stigma and isolation:**

Children with incarcerated parents in most cases experience shame, embarrassment or be stigmatized because of their incarcerated parents. They are often labelled by their peers as criminals or delinquents just like their incarcerated parents. They may be asked to answer difficult questions regarding their parent's crime and sentence. In some cases, media publicity dramatizes the crime in ways that embarrasses the child of the parent involved. In most cases, this embarrassment destroys their self-esteem which plays an important role in one's ability to pursue goals, develop healthy relationships and to feel good about oneself. This often leads to poor academic achievements and social isolation.



AnnaMercy Madhuku is a renowned teacher who has been in the educational sector for over 20 years.

# LIFE OF A CHILD WITH AN INCARCERATED PARENT

Patricia is 15 years old and lives with her grandmother and younger brother. Her mother is serving a 16-year sentence and has been in prison since Patricia was 11. She and her brother were at home when the police came to arrest their mother, and they watched as she was handcuffed and taken away.

Ashamed and afraid of stigmatization, Patricia's grandmother told her children not to talk to anyone about what had happened and, above all, they were not to mention it at school. Traumatized from witnessing the arrest, and full of anxiety about what would happen to her mother, she changed from being a girl who performed well and was happy at school, to someone who was either withdrawn and quiet, or on occasion prone to angry outbursts.

Over time her grades slipped, she rarely completed homework and her attendance became patchy. A concerned teacher tried to engage Patricia about this change in behavior, but she was reluctant to open up. When she moved to secondary school the bullying started; whispers at first, followed by blatant comments: **“Stay away from her, her mother’s in prison.”**

The day that one of her teachers announced across the classroom, **“You’re going to end up just like your mother”** was the last time Patricia attended school. She has a deep mistrust of authority and has disengaged from any formal system of support, putting her at high risk of harmful behavior patterns, and ultimately of entering the criminal justice system herself.

## Overview

Children like Patricia require psycho-social support inclusive of counseling by trained providers. They require support groups, one on one counseling sessions and behavior change communication. The situation they face at such a young age is traumatizing to say the least. They face stigma and discrimination from within society, the communities they live in, and also from the educational system. There is a dire need to assist these children by continuing to sensitize communities, stakeholders on the challenges faced by children like Patricia.

At Jedidiah, we are always looking for volunteers to assist us to mentor children in the same situation like Patricia. Contact us if you can offer help!



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### How do we know we can improve the lives of children with an incarcerated parent?

Research clearly shows that children who receive support experience better life outcomes than those that don't. By creating a protective environment for children, communities can help provide benefits not just during childhood but will help those children enjoy improved lives as adults, with lower instances of justice system involvement, better health, improved work opportunities and employment stability, and greater housing stability.



We want to thank you all for the feedback we have been receiving. All feedback is positive to us as it makes us grow and improve in conducting the work we are doing.

If you would like to comment about something that appears in this or any other issue of Jedidiah Newsletter, or advertise with us, please do so!

Address your comments to: The Editor  
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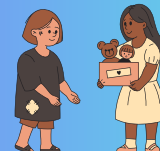
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DONATE

Help us to help them!

We accept donations in cash or kind! Get in touch with us with your donation!

Donations can be in the form of new or used clothes for all age groups; groceries (perishables or non-perishables); even just a bar of soap, a packet of pads or packet of sugar can help change someones life!



Remember, no gift is too small!!!



#### GET IN TOUCH WITH US TO SPONSOR A CHILD!

We have a wide database of children in need of support through school fees payment, purchase of stationery and uniforms.

##### SPONSOR A CHILD

- Pay school fees for a child
- Purchase stationery
- Buy uniforms

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