

# HANDS AT WORK IN AFRICA

## MWAISENI COMMUNITY

### ZAMBIA | KITWE REGION

In 2007, Blessings Sambo, Zambia Regional Support Team Leader, identified Mwaiseni as one of the poorest of the poor communities in the Kitwe area. Blessings and other leaders began walking in the community, connecting with church leaders and asking questions about their community. Frequently, they heard about a woman named Esmart, and how she had previously started a local community school that had unfortunately ended up closing. They knew they needed to meet her.

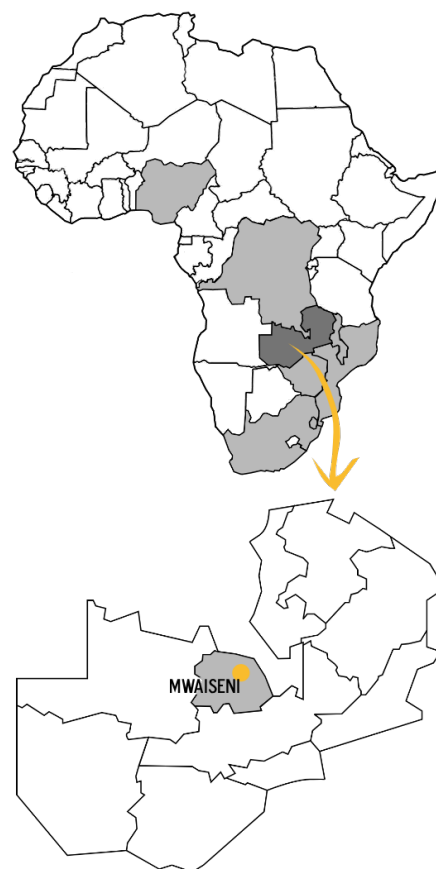
Blessings started building a relationship with Esmart, meeting with her weekly and doing home visits in the community. As they walked together, he shared the vision of Hands at Work to see the local churches unite as Christ's body to care for the most vulnerable children. Esmart, hearing the vision, was inspired. She mobilised compassionate and loving volunteer Care Workers in Mwaiseni to join her in caring for the children.

Eventually, Esmart was asked by her fellow Care Workers to start the school again. Not only did she agree to do this, but she opened up her own home as a classroom for the children. Starting out, the Care Workers were educating and feeding 14 of the most vulnerable children in their community. Today, the community school has grown to 98 children aged from 2 to 16 years.

In 2013, the Mapalo Community Based Organisation (CBO) was born, and through their partnership with Hands at Work, began providing the three essential services of a hot, nutritious meal daily and support with education and basic health care to 50 of the most vulnerable children. Since then, the number of children being cared for has increased from 50 to 150 children. Since Hands at Work began partnering with the Mapalo CBO, the local Hands at Work team in Kitwe, with support from the Zambian Regional Support Team (RST), have been helping the Mapalo CBO transition from not just being a school and place where children can eat but instead a Life Centre.

In 2017, Hands at Work and Esmart came to the agreement that they were pursuing different visions and agreed to part ways. In the absence of Esmart, Care Worker Annie and Isabel became the coordinators of the Mapalo CBO and have continued to grow in this role over the past few years.

Although there is a small clinic in Mwaiseni, it does not have enough medicine to meet the needs of the community. Often, people are referred to the general hospital or given prescriptions for medication, however, both of these are unaffordable. Thankfully, the Mapalo CBO supports the children and others by providing clinic visits, relieving some of the health issues and burdens that their families face.



Children Currently Supported **150**

Number of Care Workers **14**

Coordinator Name **Anna+Isabel**

Distance from Local Office **8km**

Basic Services Started In **2013**