



LIFT4LIFE

COVID-19 RELIEF FUND REPORT



IMPACT REPORT

MARCH - OCTOBER 2020



LIFT & UPLIFT

INTRODUCTION

Lift4Life Worldwide strives to create a world where strength is accessible to all. We envision a world where everyone has the opportunity to feel both mentally and physically strong by experiencing the benefits of sport. Our mission is to use the sport of powerlifting and strength training as a vehicle to empower communities regardless of gender, race, religion, age, ability, socio-economic status, and differences. Strength sports are proven to be a powerful tool to build community and connect individuals around the world. Our work is evidence based to address drug and substance abuse, promote positive health, reduce crime, foster the empowerment of women, provide employment opportunities, and more.

As the unprecedented challenges from COVID-19 continue, communities and economies must come together to combat the unfolding pandemic. Lift4Life quickly adapted to the evolving circumstances, working with communities to employ creative solutions and find new innovative approaches to our projects and programs to address community needs in Zimbabwe.

In early March, uncertainty overwhelmed Zimbabweans as the pandemic added new challenges to the country already facing a plethora of humanitarian concerns, including recurring droughts, food insecurity and economic hardships. In response to the global pandemic, Lift4Life launched a COVID-19 Relief Project with a goal of raising \$5000 USD to support local initiatives in order to help address needs and build sustainable livelihoods in Zimbabwe during the difficult times. The outpouring of kindness, support, and global solidarity by this shared challenge was phenomenal.

Lift4Life would like to thank all our donors and supporters for your generous contributions to our cause of providing relief to our local communities in Zimbabwe. In particular, Calgary Barbell and The Strength Guys were monumental in their support towards this campaign. Together, we are ensuring that strength training is uplifting communities when needed most.

OUR IMPACT

\$5000 USD

DONATED TO LOCAL COMMUNITY PROJECTS IN ZIMBABWE

5

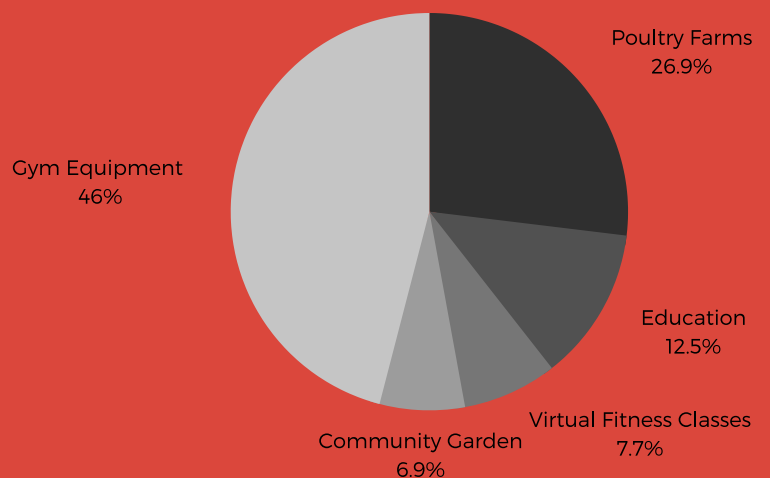
ESTABLISHED PROJECTS INCLUDE: VIRTUAL FITNESS CLASSES, EDUCATION, A COMMUNITY GARDEN, 2 POULTRY FARMS, EQUIPMENT AND LIFTER DEVELOPMENT & OPPORTUNITIES

150+

PEOPLE DIRECTLY IMPACTED IN THE COMMUNITY

OUR PROJECTS

Through generous donations from our supporters, Lift4Life raised over \$5000 USD to go towards local communities in Zimbabwe. Using a holistic community approach, Lift4Life is addressing issues including unemployment, education, as well as food insecurity and nutrition. As lockdown restrictions ease, Lift4Life will also use these funds to open the first post-COVID powerlifting space complete with a squat rack, bench, barbells, and plates, as well as facilitate programming while taking extensive safety precautions to keep participants healthy.



VIRTUAL FITNESS CLASSES

During COVID-19 lockdowns, Lift4Life began offering virtual fitness classes hosted by our Ambassador Team.

17

STUDENTS

attended virtual fitness classes regularly

3-17

YEAR OLD

students attended the virtual fitness classes

10

WEEKS OF VIRTUAL FITNESS CLASSES

3 classes per week

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Through the use of the internet, Lift4Life Ambassadors in North America facilitated virtual fitness lessons to children and youth in Zimbabwe. The virtual classes were run on a laptop, with the children and youth in Zimbabwe attending socially distanced on a field. The idea of working with people in different counties, time zones, and from different backgrounds meant that there had to be preliminary preparation to ensure their initial interactions went well. With the help of a local Zimbabwean who facilitated the project on the ground, Ambassadors were taught common phrases in Shona, the official language of Zimbabwe to overcome the language barrier and foster connection. These fitness classes not only helped the students with their physical and mental wellness, but also exposed them (and the Ambassadors!) to a world beyond their own as well as diverse learning opportunities.

As a result of current economic challenges in Zimbabwe and the lack of employment opportunities for many households, many students in focus would often have to skip meals due to the limited amount of food available at home. Lift4Life was able to incorporate the provision of a meal and a healthy snack prior to each virtual fitness session to combat hunger and malnutrition. The program started as a simple way to keep the children occupied and build connections, however, it has grown to enrich their mental and physical wellness.

There were a number of challenges in project implementation beyond Lift4Life's control as a result of the nature of the pandemic. In multiple instances, there were suspected cases of COVID-19 within the community in focus, in which precautionary measures were taken and the virtual fitness activities were put on hold for two weeks. Additionally, regular power cuts in Zimbabwe provided a barrier to project delivery. In the month of August, the power cuts increased to daily, making it difficult to coordinate a time to host virtual fitness lessons. Despite challenges, inspiring stories have emerged of how youth participants have gone on to share their physical activity learnings with their families, peers, and larger community, continuing to spread and share the enjoyment and benefits of movement even outside these virtual classes.

“

Having the opportunity to connect with the kids from Zimbabwe was truly inspiring. The COVID-19 outbreak changed all my summer plans, but these kids gave me a purpose. They motivated me and provided me with new perspectives that I had not seen before. Seeing the smiles on their faces and their positive attitudes were truly the highlights of my days. I look forward to being able to connect with these communities in other ways in the future!

- Nikita Pasricha, Lift4Life Ambassador

”



“

I love the exercises that Steph, Nikita, and Miranda ran for us. My most enjoyable exercise is known as "Superman"! I have started exercising at home now!

- 14-year old girl participating in the virtual fitness classes

”

EDUCATION

Lift4Life successfully provided daily education lessons on weekdays from May to July, to seventeen students. The lessons were delivered through a local educator, and \$700 USD was provided to purchase resources including textbooks, Wi-Fi, stationery, food, and support to local teachers.

17

STUDENTS

14 students attended lessons daily on weekdays from May to July, with three students joining at a later stage.

3-17

YEAR OLD STUDENTS

Additionally, there were two young moms that benefited from the classes who also took up sewing

76

TEXTBOOKS PURCHASED

For primary and secondary school students

PROJECT OVERVIEW

COVID-19 took a huge toll on Zimbabwean children. Due to the lockdown, many students were not able to attend school and do not have access to the necessary educational resources at home. In many Zimbabwe communities children and youth do not have access to textbooks, phones / laptops due to financial troubles, and the internet is very expensive and out of reach for much of the population.

In order to provide immediate assistance, Lift4Life was able to partner and support a local Zimbabwean who began running small socially-distanced classes out of her backyard. Lift4Life was able to provide funds to support the lesson delivery, purchase textbooks, and fund wifi to enable continuous learning for children that could not attend school and did not have resources to learn from home.

Through this project, Lift4Life has been able to provide 56 primary school textbooks and 20 secondary school textbooks to students, along with other essential resources such as stationery items, 8 months of wifi, food supplies, and fees for a class assistant. Within the classes, 2 young mothers, one 19 year-old and the other in her early twenties, also became engaged and involved, and were taught to sew so they can develop a sustainable revenue stream for their families through their sewing projects. These young mothers had to drop out of school early, and these education sessions provided them an opportunity for further learning and development.

The legacy of this project has expanded to include 4 local teachers / tutors that have been inspired to begin teaching locally free of charge in an informal distanced manner in multiple communities in Harare.

“

The parents are very happy. They say that when the kids get back home, instead of playing, now they take out their books and say 'tomorrow we have a lesson on this, so I want to prepare.' So they sit down and their parents tell them they need to do the dishes, and they say no Mom, I need to do my work.'

- Rutendo Makumbe

”



“

At first I thought, this is just for a few weeks, it might end, but up to now, they [the parents and the community] keep pressuring me and telling me that it's a good idea for the kids to continue these programs after school, so they continue to have this positivity around them. So it's been a really good thing.

- Rutendo Makumbe

”

POULTRY FARMS

Lift4Life has established two chicken farms in the Zimbabwean communities of Makusha and Glen Norah. Between both communities \$1400USD was provided to start the farms, including to fund the initial investment of cages, purchase 100 baby chicks, as well as supporting program supplies including feed. The chicken farms created a multitude of opportunities, including economic improvement, valuable skills acquired such as finance and farming, as well as overall community wellbeing. After the initial 100 chicks, both communities have gone on to purchase another 100 chickens each as the project expanded and took on a life of its own.

400

CHICKENS
PURCHASED

Established two chicken farms
in the Zimbabwean
communities of Makusha and
Glen Norah

15+

YOUTH

Provided with employment
opportunities through the
chicken farms

100+

PEOPLE IN THE
COMMUNITY
IMPACTED

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Lift4Life's poultry farms are an important contributor to the economic and community health of both the Zimbabwe communities of Makusha and Glen Norah.

In the community of Glen Norah, the youth involved with the project ranged from 18-23 years of age, and gained valuable marketing and finance skills, as well as essential agricultural skills. The first batch of 100 chicks was an incredible success, and they gained over \$450 USD in revenue to reinvest in the farm and support their families.

Beyond economic benefit the wider community benefited as well. Stories emerged of how there used to be somewhat of a disconnect in the community between some of the youth and the elders, however, the poultry farm has helped transform that and build positive relationships. Additionally, the parents of Mike and Nigel, two of the youth leaders of the project, spoke about how the project provided the kids with something to do and keep them off the streets and away from criminal activities that others their age were indulging in.

In Makusha, the chickens were free range which decreased maintenance but took longer for the chicks to mature. Nonetheless, the children and youth in the community took ownership of the project visiting the chickens and feeding them on a regular basis. Stories have emerged on how the project is keeping community members engaged and excited, and sales are expected in November. In a time where employment opportunities are uncertain, these farms have uplifted communities to come together in the midst of a global pandemic.

“

The people who live close to the project are amazed... they have offered advice on how to raise the chickens, moral support, and provided resources for us to do the projects without expecting anything in return. They have told us to take the project seriously and try to change our lives from it.

- *Tinotenda, a youth leader from Glen Norah*

”



“

Even when there is not much to do, the chicken farms are still finding ways to bring the community together, and give the children some valuable lessons in farming

- *Rutendo Makumbe*

”

COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Community Garden project aims to empower, educate, and promote organic suburban agriculture to improve the well-being of the community of Epworth. The 25 square metre garden built directly outside the Epworth Lift4Life community gym helps families facing food insecurity, improves nutrition, and strengthens community relationships.

10+

VEGETABLES

planted in the community gard, including: carrots, tomatoes, onions, lettuce, sugar loaf, cabbage, spinach, ginat rape, tsunga, potatoes

25

SQUARE-METRE

garden established, with goals of expanding in the future

15+

FAMILIES

served in the community of Epworth.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The garden that Lift4Life funded in Epworth has helped community members work collectively to manage a garden for shared benefit. It has created the opportunity to identify community assets and to build networks. With \$360 USD spent to set up the garden, they were able to hire someone to prepare the space, as well as purchase a variety of plants, pesticide sprays, and soil. Additionally, leftover funds went to purchasing food hampers for underprivileged families in immediate need. To date they have been able to sell vegetable seedlings, including spinach, rape, onions, tsunga, sugar loaf, lettuce, and tomatoes.

Gardening requires careful planning for effective food production. Through vigilant planning, the community has been able to minimize the challenges faced. Some obstacles the community had to overcome include actively involving the youth to contribute and determining which plants were appropriate to grow in particular seasons. Water supply has also been a key challenge, as they currently have to manually draw water by hand from the local well.

The benefits of community-based gardening extend beyond food security, as community gardens provide fresh vegetables, and the process of gardening allows for individuals to be physically active. Family and social relationships are strengthened through community gardening, since it provides opportunities for community members to provide advice and support to help overcome challenges.

The funds from the vegetable sales have gone to purchasing sanitary pads for hampers that have been given to underprivileged girls, purchasing masks to be distributed to two schools in need, as well as saving towards drilling a borehole for a sustainable water supply. The community has also assisted in school fees for 7 students prior schools closing due to COVID-19. With the remainder of funds, they are seeking to pay fees for some students again, as the exam season will be starting again in October 2020.

“

It was a few weeks since the COVID-19 pandemic halted the world, forcing us to retreat into our homes and I started my garden in March soon after the coronavirus lockdown in Zimbabwe.

- Juliet

”



“

The assistance has made a change in my community. Through the garden we have been able to raise a few dollars to purchase sanitary pads, face masks, and some groceries.

- Leslie

”

EQUIPMENT AND LIFTER DEVELOPMENT & OPPORTUNITIES

3

PIECES OF EQUIPMENT

purchased including 1 squat rack, 1 bench press and 1 bar

2

LOCAL MEETS HOSTED

To showcase athletes hard work. The first meet was even showcased on Zimbabwe National Television.

17

ATHELETES

competing in international opportunities

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Lastly, Lift4Life was able to expand on our sport program delivery by raising funds to sponsor a new squat rack, bench press, and bar for community donation. The increase in equipment will allow for safer gym spaces, and accessibility for local lifters during these unprecedented times. The powerlifting equipment will be built by local welders using local materials, providing employment opportunities and local economic growth.

At the core of Lift4Life, we believe strength training and powerlifting is a sport for all. An important part of sport is community, and powerlifting meets foster connection, as well as encourage discipline and dedication by training for a common goal. Thanks to Calgary Barbell and The Strength Guy's dedication to the sport and hosting virtual meets, Lift4Life has been able to sponsor 17 Zimbabwe athletes to compete in these international opportunities. As the annual Lift4Life Outreach Trip to Zimbabwe was postponed this year due to COVID-19, this will also allow our Ambassador team, Leadership team and friends in Zimbabwe to unite through the sport even though we are half way around the world.

“

I love powerlifting and the chance to compete with other strength trainers outside of Zimbabwe.

- *Maude Mashonganyika*

”



“

It makes me extremely happy to have the opportunity to make history and make some records in powerlifting competitions

- *Tintenda Masaita*

”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & CONTRIBUTORS

Thank you to our Zimbabwe friends on the ground for their leadership and contributions. A special thanks to the Molife family in Epworth, Audrey Svonga, Nigel, Tinotenda, Manix, Michael, Clinton and Rutendo Makumbe.

From our Lift4Life Ambassador Team, thank you to Stephanie Martin, George Sdregas, Sam Murray, and Nikita Pasricha for their work in data collection for report development. And from our Leadership Team, Junior Financial Analyst Shankari Sivanathan for coordinating the creation of this report and graphics, as well as Lift4Life Executive Director Nicola Paviglianiti and Canadian Director Shannon Fernandes for providing overall oversight.

A special thanks to Calgary Barbell and Bryce Krawczyk, who ran an 8-hour live stream fundraiser for our cause, as well as The Strength Guys for their continuous partnership through Coaching for a Cause.

Most important of all, we thank you for your support and generosity. Just like kg's on the bar, every donation, share, and gesture of support for this project led to a big impact.



@lift4life_worldwide



/lift4lifeworldwide

CONTACT US

VISIT WWW.LIFT4LIFE-WORLDWIDE.ORG

For more information please contact:

team@lift4life-worldwide.com



[@lift4life_worldwide](https://www.instagram.com/lift4life_worldwide)



[/lift4lifeworldwide](https://www.facebook.com/lift4lifeworldwide)