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## From the Director's Desk



Look at these beautiful children!

All of them were visited during our last round of home visits to the North and have been confirmed as perfectly suitable candidates for the Early Intervention Centre, provided their families manage to find accommodation for them in Windhoek.

CLaSH started this combination of parents meetings and follow-up home visits to individual children under 5 in 2014 as part of the project "Empowerment through Education", then co-funded by the EU. You can watch an excellent video about our home visit programme in the North on YouTube, produced by the late Simon Wilkie and titled "Joelma's story" (<https://youtu.be/tqKajQ1c1B8>).

We were able to continue with these valuable, highly rewarding and indeed humbling visits to the villages and homesteads of families with young deaf children ever since, deeply grateful for the financial support from the Pupkewitz Foundation and most recently from UNICEF through their UNPRPD programme.

We are proud to say that none of the children that we met during the past 7 years was left unattended or without a referral. Older children and children, who could not come to Windhoek were referred to the Schools for the Deaf (and we always ensured that they were really admitted). Children with additional or different needs were referred to Occupational Therapy, social workers, the Down Syndrome Association of Namibia, Autism Namibia or appropriate early intervention facilities and specialised schools. We completed 133 home visits over the years and saw some children twice or even three times monitoring their development and assisting parents with guidance on communication and applications for grants and schools.

To date 13 families from the North were able to allow their children to attend the CLaSH Pre-School Unit, i.e. the NISE Early Intervention Centre to be stimulated and enriched during those crucial early years. We trust that the 4 pictured above will be added in 2022 but it does make us sad to think that this service will not carry on...

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## Grateful Feed-Back from Zimbabwe



Do you remember the visit of Corinna Ruhl earlier this year? A highly qualified hearing aid acoustician from Germany, she had come to assist CLaSH in sorting through our wealth of donated hearing aids. Looking at the various heaps of functioning analog hearing aids, we decided to share our resources with Nzeve Deaf Centre in Mutare, Zimbabwe ([www.nzeve.org.zw](http://www.nzeve.org.zw)).

Here is the feed-back from outgoing Director Libby Foster:

“Leona has a moderate, binaural partial loss. Now 10 years old, she had been recommended to have a hearing aid when she was 6 but they could not afford it. She has now been fitted with one of the donated hearing aids in her better ear. Her brother came with her and was happy to see her react better to sound, but her speech is not clear. Hopefully, the hearing aid will help her to improve her speech, as she hears more sound (top left). Shelton is pictured with his delighted mother! He has a partial loss and is struggling in a rural school. We are hopeful that the hearing aid will give him a better chance to keep up with the school work (top centre). Talent Matsuku (top right) has been through many donated hearing aids through all her school years! Her mother is very persistent and follows up every opportunity for her daughter! Talent has now left school, got married and has her own baby. She had been without a hearing aid for over a year. They were very grateful. Melodeck, a young lady (not photographed) was delighted with the hearing aid. Peter is another young man. He and his brother both have moderate losses. The brother was given a new hearing aid by a donor, so Peter came to see if he could get one too. He was pleased with the Namibian donated second hand aid.

We do appreciate this donation and will continue to gradually find people who can benefit.”

## Parents’ Meeting at the Early Intervention Centre



Our last parents’ meeting at the Early Intervention Centre took place last Saturday. It was well attended by at least one family member per child. The main topic for discussion was the year 2022 and the children moving on to the “big” school. 8 of the 10 children, who attend currently will leave us to go to pre-primary or grade 1. Teacher Olga (top right), acting Head of Department for NISE’s lower primary department, teacher Linea from the EIC and Heide from the CLaSH office explained the details and answered many questions.

It was good to have the parents of our youngest girl Olivia in the audience. Both Deaf, they shared the heart-warming story of their last big family dinner when Olivia, who is not yet 3 told everyone to stop eating until they had prayed. Then she went on to sign “Lord, bless our food, Amen.” Miller’s mother described clearly how Miller developed from a very angry little girl to a confident and competent young lady, who knows what she wants and can clearly express herself. Not least due to the mother’s diligent attendance of our sign classes, Miller’s communication skills are excellent and she is now absolutely ready and very keen to start school. Success stories like these make our work tremendously rewarding!

## A new video

Thanks to UNICEF and the UNPRPD project, a short new video was produced in September to mark Deaf Awareness Month. Shot at the Early Intervention Centre, it mainly features interviews with the Deaf teachers Adelheid, Stephanie and Kristofina but also allows for glimpses of the children and our classroom. The latter made many people exclaim: "It is SO clean!"

Under the heading "We sign for human rights" the clip was also broadcast on NBC at the night of the International Day of Sign Languages. Here is the link once again:

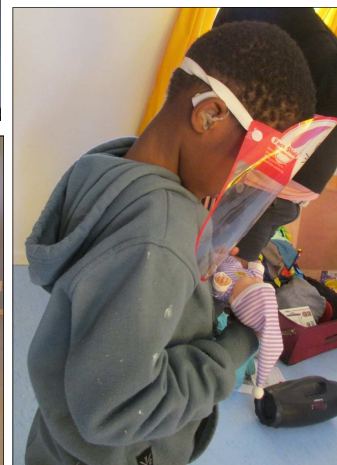
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2q2Djgfk53Q>

## More from Wiggle & Jam

It is no exaggeration to say that every second week the visits of Ute Kendzia create a highlight for children and teachers alike. Ute arrives with a big suitcase, a CD player (and sometimes a huge bag on top of it) that is always full of surprises. Different themes, different songs, different stories, different instruments... but Wiggle and Jam, the two soft animals are always first to get out of the suitcase to greet the children. And at the end there is always the same wonderful song to conclude the session. It is called "I am special" and the children just love it. Maybe they do not completely understand every single word but they most definitely get the deeper meaning. And what a powerful affirmation to look in the small mirror and say to yourself: I am special!

We don't have words to express our gratitude towards Ute, who so generously offered to visit the EIC every two weeks, allowing our children to experience the joy of sound and music, the pleasure of rhythm and movement.

THANK YOU, Ute!



# Donors, supporters and friends - thank you!



# Thank you for all the individual donations!

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