



Day of the African Child – June 16, 2014

Celebrating the Day of the African Child every June 16 across Africa and around the world is “an opportune moment to take stock of the progress made and the outstanding challenges towards the full realization of the rights of children in the regions” emphasizes the African Union. The theme for 2014, “A child-friendly, quality, free and compulsory education for all children in Africa” highlights the innovative approaches underway to ensure that African children can access a quality education.

Help Lesotho, an Ottawa-based charity working in the AIDS-ravaged country of Lesotho (southern Africa) honours the Day of the African Child by drawing attention the plight of so many orphaned and vulnerable children in Africa who are denied their right to education.

Canadians believe so strongly in the value of education – we understand that an education opens doors for children and youth to succeed as adults. We must ward against a tendency to take education for granted with free access to primary and high school an intrinsic right in our society.

In developing countries, such as Lesotho, education is the single most effective strategy for social change. Knowledge empowers people to make the best decisions for themselves and their families, communities and countries. The benefits of education are life-long and substantial, contributing to reduced malnutrition, reduced transmission of HIV/AIDS, and lower maternal and infant mortality rates. Education mitigates poverty and improves the social-economic fabric of a community as more people are able to participate in the workforce. Education makes social justice possible.

Of the 10,000 vulnerable children, girls, youth, and grandmothers who benefit from Help Lesotho’s programs each year, 10,000 of them receive education, whether formal and/or informal. Canadians have made these programs possible. We each have a role to play as we strive for ‘a child-friendly, quality, free and compulsory education for all children in Africa’ – by working collectively, we can make a difference.

- 30 -

For further information:

Kate Lambert, Senior Project Officer

kate@helplesotho.org

Direct: 613-369-5864

