

# Annual Report 2016



Ubumi Prisons Initiative  
Hovedgaden 8, 2B  
3460 Birkerød  
Denmark  
Mwalule Road, Lusaka,  
Zambia  
Tel (DK) +4553310136  
Tel (ZM) +260977893906  
Email: [ubumi@ubumi.dk](mailto:ubumi@ubumi.dk)  
[www.ubumi.dk](http://www.ubumi.dk)

## Summary

Prisoners and their children in African prisons have been severely neglected for years, causing suffering and thousands of deaths.

Ubumi Prisons Initiative has over the past 10 years worked to improve conditions in Zambia's prisons for particularly vulnerable groups, especially the circumstantial children aged 0-4 years of age, and the seriously ill. The projects for the children and their mothers improve children's welfare and promote healthy development. The projects for the seriously ill improve health in prisons and save lives. The projects build skills within the areas of health, farming and education. Our work empowers inmates to improve their own and others' lives, and our work prepares them for the future after release from prison.

2016 proved a turning point for Ubumi with the major funding from the Obel Family Foundation, which has meant a significant expansion of our work over the next couple of years, and with – for Ubumi internally – the vital achievement of no longer relying solely on volunteers. We now have an office in Denmark and in Zambia, which means a much stronger consolidation and expansion of activities. On behalf of the Ubumi Team we wish to sincerely thank the Obel Family Foundation. Bistrup Church deserves a big thank you as well, as well as CISU (Danida), and every one of our individual members and other supporters. None of this would be possible without your support.

I wish to thank Zambia Correctional Services at HQ level and in the individual prisons for their commitment and unrelenting support. I also wish to thank our partner organisations for their commitment and excellent collaboration. Again, none of this would be possible without your support.

On the following pages, you can read more about our activities in 2016. Thank you for your interest.



Chairperson and Managing Director

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## **African prisons**

Prisoners are victims of stigma and severe discrimination, and this leads both the public and government to ignore the gruesome atrocities they are subdued to. Prisoners are typically convicted of poverty-related petty crime, but risk a life inside prisons for years. The justice system is faulty, inefficient and corrupt, and detainees risk waiting years for a judgment – and they may in principle be acquitted, when the case finally reaches the court. Human rights violations are common. Police torture to bring about confessions is well documented. Further, sentences are often erratic and harsh.

Conditions in African prisons are physically destructive, psychologically traumatizing, economically highly challenging and socially isolating. Prisoners attempt to survive the desperate conditions, which fundamentally affects their health. Conditions of poor hygiene and lack of food causes major health problems. Overcrowding of 500% in some Zambian prisons means that prisoners must sleep sitting or cramped up beside each other head to foot. This results in physical ailments and high stress levels. A cell of 40 m<sup>2</sup> has 145 or more inmates locked from 4-5 pm to 7-8 am. The prevalence of HIV / AIDS, tuberculosis and malnutrition is alarming. The need for basic food aid is acute, but especially for the sick. HIV/AIDS prevalence rates are at 27%, where the population average is 12%. A simple prison sentence may well end up in a death sentence due to the extreme conditions imposed.

Life in prison is socially and economically destructive, because inmates often spend a long time in prison. Often families abandon them. It is expensive to provide food, medicine and clothing for their imprisoned family member, who cannot contribute to the family's upkeep. Many prisoners' marriages also break down.

Psychological traumatization occurs initially by the torture and inhumane treatment encountered in police custody. The prison conditions, the stigma of imprisonment, the lack of justice, the forced removal from family and loved ones, coupled with concern for the family left outside prison together with the meaninglessness characterizing prison life, makes imprisonment hard to cope with. Psychological vulnerability and serious mental health issues in various forms are common in prisons.

The so-called circumstantial children are aged 0-4 years, and they are in prison with their mothers, who are either convicted or awaiting trial. The children are victims of serious neglect. We estimate that there are about 100 children in the prisons right now. The children do not get enough, nor nutritious food. The food is inadequate for healthy development. There is a lack of care and stimulation preventing them from developing like normal children on the outside. The situation of the children is critical. Further, we regularly see juveniles, who are as young as 9-10 years old.

Zambia Correctional Service is recognized as one of the most progressive and ambitious prison authorities in Africa. Ubumi works with their full support and collaboration in the prisons to alleviate the problems.

## About Ubumi Prisons Initiative

Ubumi Prisons Initiative has since 2006 worked to improve the health of particularly vulnerable groups in Zambian prisons. Ubumi means *'life - caring for everyone's life'*. The name reflects our fundamental values, which are rooted in universal human rights, where the individual's right to life, health and dignity is at the center of our efforts. Ubumi Prisons Initiative works to support children and seriously/terminally ill in Zambian prisons, as well as education and skills-building.

We have a unique access to and familiarity with prisons, which means we can navigate with integrity and professionalism in a challenging environment. Prison management both at HQ level and locally in the individual prisons supports our work.

Ubumi works to empower the inmates to contribute positively to their own and others' lives to the extent possible under the very real restrictions imprisonment poses. Our work is not a prestige project. Ubumi seeks to promote the values of dignity, respect and care for all human beings.

Read more on [www.ubumi.dk](http://www.ubumi.dk) (Danish and English)



The team of caregivers in Mukobeko Maximum Prison with Managing Director Anne Egelund (top right), and head of Zambia Country Office, Lena Kresojevic (left) and Carol Chomba, project officer (right).

## Why prisoners?

### Because inmates are human beings

Serious and sustainable projects designed to help and/or empower inmates in Africa are rare. The stigma and the stereotype of prisoners being inherently violent and anti-social, or dangerous – and beyond reach is very common. A common perception is ‘once a criminal, always a criminal’.

This perception is in fact far from the truth. Prisoners are as different as people in general society. Only they are typically poor and from resource poor settings. Many lack education and have had few opportunities in life. It is general public knowledge that individuals, who find themselves at the wrong place at the wrong time may be convicted.

This does not mean that all inmates are innocent, but few inmates live up to the violent and deviant stereotype. Most are ordinary people, who have made mistakes for a variety of reasons. A few have done truly terrible things, and they especially need help to make a positive change in their lives.

Helping prisoners and former convicts is of great importance for society, because developing inmates’ potential not only aids the individual inmate, but reduces crime and poverty. Inmates are often traumatized by imprisonment and many leave prisons psychologically damaged. Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is common amongst ex-prisoners as well as depression, stress and anxiety. An obvious stressor in the prison environment is the lack of food and medical treatment, which causes constant stress and insecurity about basic survival. Ubumi can alleviate some of this stress, leading to hope of less damaged prisoners. Ubumi does not claim to alleviate all prison pain. This is simply not possible under the given terms, but we do make a significant difference.



Ubumi works from the principle that all people are equal and that everyone deserves dignity in life, regardless of the crime committed. The penalty by the state consists of imprisonment, not degrading and humiliating treatment - and not sickness or death.

### **Because ill-health is important to address – for society as a whole**

To prevent and treat health-related problems, including mental health in prisons is of major importance. Prisoners often come from areas designated as 'hard-to-reach' in relation to prevention and treatment programmes for serious diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, TB and sexually transmitted diseases.

When individuals are in prison, they are often in a stage of their lives where they are searching for meaning and purpose to their lives and many have a great motivation for change. Therefore, they pose a window of opportunity to reach the poorest of the poor, and those in dire need of HIV/AIDS/STD/TB prevention, treatment and care programmes. For example, individuals, who are sufficiently informed to manage a chronic disease such as HIV/AIDS, possess a significantly lower risk of spreading the disease to others inside and outside of prison. Individuals suffering from health problems, refugees and others are also obvious targets for intervention.

### **Because empowering the most vulnerable reduces crime**

In an environment where inmates are consistently disempowered, neglected, exploited and hated, it is our experience that there are still many resources waiting to be explored constructively and meaningfully. Supporting prisoners to make choices and build skills provides a chance of a better future in prisons and after release, which will reduce the risk of former prisoners having to resort to crime for survival.



## The Ubumi Model

The Ubumi Model is a unique approach to prisons work. Rather than seeing inmates as passive receivers of aid or persons incapable of positive change or development, we focus on empowering inmates to improve their own and others' lives and to prepare them for life after release. The main features of the model are outlined below:

### The Ubumi model

- **Volunteerism**
- **Inmate empowerment** through project management (volunteer inmates manage the project, supported by professional health staff, partner NGO's, Ubumi and Prisons Management)
  - Management of vegetable projects for the benefit of the ill and vulnerable
  - Management and coordination of volunteer caregiver teams
- **Inmate skills building** – all volunteers receive basic education/skills development training within farming, nursing, cooking or similar
- **Staff support and commitment** for health through collaboration and capacity building

### Benefits of the Ubumi Model

- **Improved health** and conditions for the ill, the children and other vulnerable groups specifically, but also for the general prison population
- **Skills-building and education**
- A sense of **meaning and purpose** for the inmates (in contrast to the profoundly meaningless existence in prison)
- **A sense of contributing to other people's lives**
- **An opportunity for expiation** for some inmates' wrongful deeds in the past (this is not something Ubumi promotes as such, but for many inmates this is one of the reasons they wish to work for Ubumi)

## Promoting child health and welfare: The children's project

### Background

There are children aged 0-4 (and sometimes older), who are of course innocent of any crime, but are incarcerated with their mothers, who are either awaiting trial or are convicted. Some children spend only a few days, others spend years in prison.

The prison environment is stressful, and there is next to no focus on children's well-being and development. The children are the victims of a neglect in terms of lack of nutrition and stimulation for healthy development.

The number of children vary, but nationally they average about 100. We support an average of 20-45 children per month in three of Zambia's biggest prisons (Mukobeko Maximum and Medium, Lusaka Central Prison and Kamfinsa State Prison). During periods of large refugee flows, we see doubling or tripling of the number of children (refugees are imprisoned if they do not have legal residence).

### The children's project

Ubumi aims to create a more child friendly environment in the prisons. We ensure that the children get food supplements in monthly food packages so their nutrition is improved. They also receive soap, clothing and other necessities.

In 2016 we continued our support of play areas, and the construction for a house for the children in Mukobeko Maximum and Medium Prison (female section) was initiated. We currently support play areas for children in Lusaka, Mukobeko and Kamfinsa State Prison.

In 2016, we started our nutrition and cooking courses, where we teach mothers with children in prison about basic facts on child nutrition and we offer cooking classes to equip the mothers with specific skills. The courses are very popular, and approximately 45 women were trained in late 2016. We expect to reach another 100 in 2017.



Ubumi Head of Office, Lena Kresojevic with some of the children



Ubumi's staff member, Carol Chomba in the red apron, teaching



Some of the children in Kamfinsa State Prison



A selection of the food

## Promoting health and empowerment for adult prisoners: The project for the seriously ill

### Background

Diseases ravage the prisons, which includes outbreaks of diarrheal diseases, TB and HIV/AIDS and skin diseases. A major issue is malnutrition causing many deaths as AIDS patients cannot take their medication unless they receive a minimum level of nutritious food. At times, serious epidemics ravage the prisons, such as dysentery.

### The project

The project for the seriously ill entails a team of approximately 10-15 volunteer caretakers, 2-4 volunteer chlorine dispensers and 2-5 volunteer gardeners. The caretakers are trained in hygiene, nursing, nutrition and the main diseases found in prison. The group is managed by an inmate with the title 'Ubumi Inmate Coordinator', who works closely with the prison health staff to deliver quality services.

The project caters specifically for the seriously ill patients in Mukobeko Maximum Security Prison where we support on average 90+ persons per month. In September 2016, we expanded the project to Kamfinsa State Prison, where we take care of 50+ patients per month in collaboration with the local organization In But Free. The volunteer inmate caretakers provide nursing services, incl. support to adherence to medication, washing, cleaning and feeding of patients. Ubumi delivers protein, disinfectant, soap etc.



The vegetable garden in Mukobeko Maximum Security Prison

Through commissions of emergency treatment/medicine to the sick, as well as disinfectants and other hygiene measures Ubumi in collaboration with Correctional Management have managed to stop several serious diarrheal outbreaks. We now have a system in place to prevent these outbreaks in the future or stop them efficiently before lives are lost. The hygiene measures reach approximately 4000 inmates.



**A patient admitted into our program**

Vegetable projects ensures regular provision of vegetables and fruits specifically for the ill, but also for the general inmate population. The produce includes tomatoes, carrots, onions, beans, cabbage, bananas and much more. The project has a cook, who cooks nutritious meals for the patients every day.

In 2017, we will expand to two more prisons, reaching another 3000 inmates.

On the following pages you will find photos of some of our vegetables gardens.



**The above patient 6 months later (left) with another recovered patient.**



One of the vegetable projects – this one is connected to Mukobeko Maximum and Medium Prisons



Tomatoes on the way



An inmate with carrots from the garden

## **Supporting national coordination and collaboration**

Ubumi participates in the Prisons Health Advisory Committee, a national level coordinating body, chaired by prisons. Here we are developing a booklet to support information sharing, collaboration and coordination between organisations and between organisations and the Zambia Correctional Services. Additionally, we collaborate closely with several Zambian-based organisations to deliver direct services as well.

## **Supporting education and skills-building**

Apart from the health trainings of inmate caretakers on the seriously ill projects, and the nutrition and cooking training of mothers, Ubumi also supports IT-education in Mukobeko Maximum Security Prison. The prison has a well-functioning primary (and to some extent secondary) school, where inmates can take classes and get their Grade 9 exams. IT is part of the national curriculum, and with the IT-lab we support primary and secondary education activities, as well as separate IT-classes for inmates. The IT classes take place in the prison library to which Ubumi has donated second hand computers. IT-competent inmates and staff teach the students.

## **Supporting juveniles**

Juveniles are a particularly vulnerable group in prison. Many spend extended time in the adult prisons, where they may or may not have a separate section. In principle, they are supposed to go to juvenile detention centers, but some wait in the adult prisons for months, and not rarely a year or even more. Juveniles can be down to 10 years old, and many are street children, or children vulnerable in other ways. When possible, we support them with clothes and school materials with a particular focus on those who do not have support from their families.

## **Mental Health Mapping**

In 2016, we took the first step in preparing a collaboration with In But Free and local mental health experts to prepare a nationwide mapping of mental health in prisons. Mental health problems are a major feature of prison life worldwide. Many prisoners were mentally ill before they entered prison and many develop mental health problems once in prison. Preliminary figures suggest 29-63% prevalence of one or more mental disorders in Zambian prisons (prevalence differs depending on the type of prison).

We will continue to contribute to the field of mental health by developing a solid baseline and research on prevalence of mental health, services available and needed, as well as policy recommendations.

## **Plans for 2017**

### **The work continues**

Ubumi works from the principle of staying as long as we need to, whilst as much as possible supporting sustainable solutions. The work continues in Mukobeko prisons, Kamfinsa State Prison and Lusaka Central Female.

### **Expansion to new prisons**

We will expand our work with the most vulnerable in 2017. Specifically, we will expand to Chipata Correctional Facility, which houses more than 1000 inmates, including women and children. The prison conditions are extremely poor, and the facility does not have a kitchen for instance. Ubumi will build a new kitchen, as well as implement the Ubumi Model for the circumstantial children, women, including pregnant women, as well as the seriously ill. We will also improve general nutrition and hygiene in the facility.

We will also expand to Lusaka Central Prison Male section. We have worked in the female section for more than 10 years, but we have left the department for the adult prisoners to other NGO's as Lusaka is the capital, and therefore this particular prison is often a so-called 'donor darling'. However, even with heavy NGO presence and focus on HIV/AIDS/TB, inmates were still dying, because they did not receive sufficient food. In recognition of this, and because we were asked for help, we have decided to expand.

We have also expanded to Chainama East, which holds inmates, who are seriously mentally ill. Some also suffer from poor nutrition as well as serious illness. We have therefore decided to expand to provide nutritional services to this facility as well.

### **Juveniles**

If funding permits, we look towards improving conditions for juveniles in Chipata Correctional Facility. Here, juveniles down to the age of 10 years old are mixed with the adult population. This is a recipe for abuse in various forms, and it is urgent that they are separated. Currently, there is no separate building for them. We will work to construct one, and to initiative contacts with legal aid organisations, and to improve their opportunities for improved nutrition, education and recreation, whilst they await transfer to juvenile detention centres or release.

### **Coordination and support to Prisons Health Advisory Committees**

We will continue to support coordination and collaboration between NGOs, authorities and other partners. This year, we will start working towards increased coordination in specific prisons.

## Overall objectives

- ✓ **Improved general health and quality of life** for inmates and their children in prison
- ✓ Research to obtain **increased knowledge** to address health care issues in prisons
- ✓ **Improved opportunities for child development** with focus on play and joy for the benefit of children's healthy and normal development.
- ✓ **Increased capacity among mothers** to take care of their children and to support themselves and children after release (specific skills and overall increased knowledge about nutrition, hygiene and children's rights, most of the actual circumstances and maternal role under difficult conditions).
- ✓ **Improved nutrition, health and survival** among the children and adults, particularly the seriously ill.
- ✓ **Empowerment and capacity building of inmates and staff**
- ✓ **Education and skills building** amongst inmates in preparation for release
- ✓ **Increased capacity among inmates and staff** in relation to nursing, ethics and health, including mental health and nutrition.
- ✓ **Increased capacity in Zambia Correctional Service** to address health in general and health emergencies
- ✓ **Increased capacity by prison NGO's** to address the health, development and welfare issues prisons face.

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