



Quality Care GCMF OVC program 2012

Guidelines for a fair application procedure



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Author: Erwin Hage
Client: Give the Children of Mpongwe a Future
Sittard: Zuyd University; Social Studies

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Preface

During my internship, I was working for GCMF. GCMF stands for: Give the Children of Mpongwe a Future. The organization is a NGO that aims to work for a better future for the people in Mpongwe through a number of healthcare and education projects (<http://www.mpongwe.nl>).

I did my internship for the OVC (Orphans and Vulnerable Children) program. This program aims to provide the necessarily financial means, so that OVC are able to go to school. The financial support contains:

- The providing for school fees; project fees and PTA fees.
- Payment for boarding fees if applicable;
- Payment of examination fees in grade 7, 9 and 12 (some of the examination fees has recently been abandoned);
- School uniforms and shoes;
- Books, pens, pencils, and other school requirements (GCMF, 2010).

Children are sponsored from grade 1 until grade 12. Once a pupil has become part of the program, he or she will be sponsored all the way up to grade 12. In grade 7, 9 and 12, pupils have to write examinations. These examinations are central organized throughout the whole nation. The examinations take place on the same time. Pupils who are part of the OVC program of GCMF have to pass for these exams. If they are not able to pass, they drop out of the program.

GCMF is doing a great job. At this time, more than 100 pupils are supported to go to school. Among these 100 pupils are basic school pupils; upper basic school pupils; high school pupils and high school boarding pupils. There are also a few pupils at college who are supported by GCMF.

The program aims to support the Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC). There are three ways to become sponsored by the GCMF OVC program:

1. Most of the schools have records of pupils who are orphan. The schools are responsible to recommend pupils for GCMF support;
2. Children, parents or guardians can come to ask for support themselves. They have to handout an acceptance letter from school; a list of their school results and an application letter in which they write why they need the help of GCMF. After handing out these papers, they are invited for an interview. After this interview their case will be presented to the executive committee, who are responsible to take decisions and to choose which applicants will be granted.
3. Social Welfare department can apply for support for children (GCMF, 2010).

It is obvious if somebody is orphan. Somebody who lost one parent is called 'single orphan', somebody who lost both parents is called 'double orphan'. The problem is to know whether a child is really vulnerable or not.

I want to work on this point, because we as OVC team want to support those children who really need support. The problem on this moment is that we don't always know whether a child is really vulnerable or not. At this moment there are examples of children we are sponsoring, who are not really vulnerable. One of these children is Jane Mapenzi, who is going to Kanyenda Basic School. She has 3 brothers and 1 sister. 2 brothers of her are studying at university, another brother is a boarding student at Mpongwe High; her sister is going to Kafulafuta basic school. She told us that her two brothers are supported by some organizations, but still, it's quite remarkable.

When there are 100 pupils in the program, there is no space for more, because of the budget. Therefore we want to be sure that those who are sponsored really need and deserve our help.

Chapter 1: Description of the current situation (PLAN)

1.1 Description of the problem

It's not always obvious if somebody is really vulnerable; this makes it very hard to judge righteously about all the support applications of children.

In the preface I described three ways for OVC to enter the program. Through a recommendation of the school, through a personal application or through an application of the Social welfare department. Two ways are delivering problems.

1: Recommendation through the school: The deputy head keeps a record of orphans and vulnerable children in the school. Sometimes we ask schools for vulnerable children. They are not orphan, but they are not able to go to school without help. Some deputies take this as an opportunity to favor their family or friends. After a while we discovered that some of the pupils who are 'vulnerable' are related to the deputy and it is sometimes doubtful if they are really vulnerable.

2: When people come on own initiative to apply for help, we interview them. At this moment we don't have a checklist or something, to judge everyone on the same measures. If somebody asks for help, we interview him, but there are no guidelines/checklists or protocols how to decide who has to be sponsored.

1.2 Aim of the project

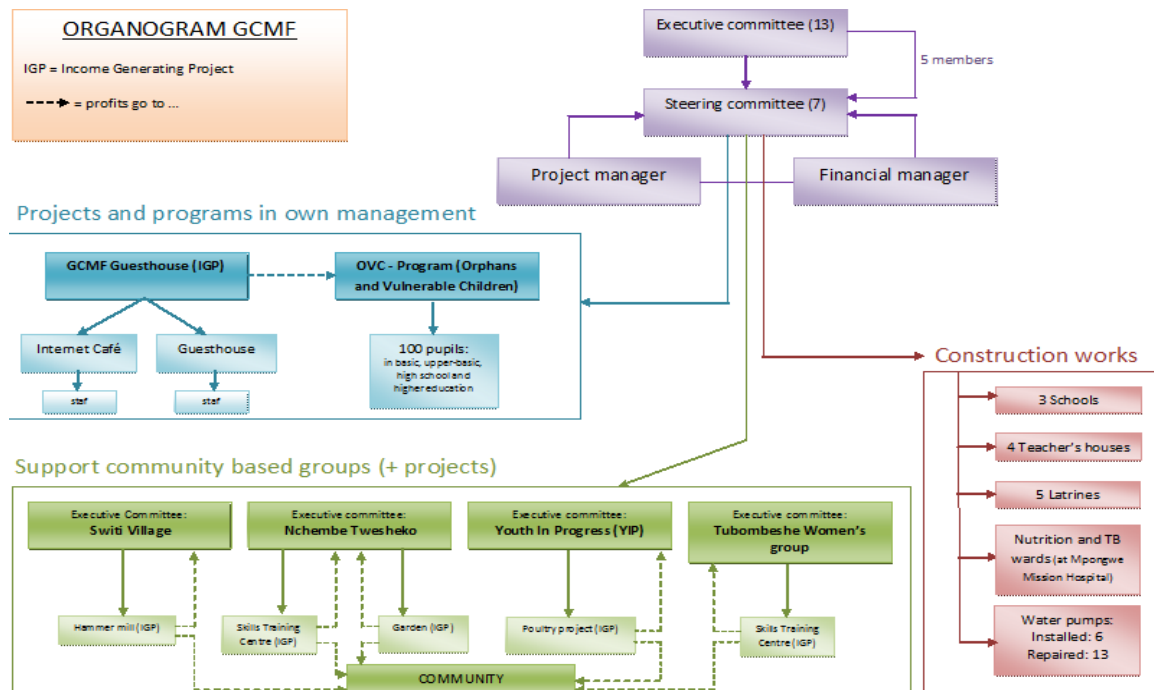
The aim of this project is defined as follows:

To make sure that all applications of children who come to ask for support; or of children who are recommended for support by schools or Social welfare department, will be judged on equal guidelines

Equal: this means that all the applications will be measured on the same eligibility criteria.

1.3 Current situation

To be able to understand the background of the problem, we first have to take a look to the GCMF organizational structure. The organizational structure of GCMF is displayed in the figure below (GCMF, 2010).



The OVC coordinator receives support applications from children who come to GCMF to apply for support, or from recommendations of teachers/Social welfare department. The coordinator interviews the pupils. A file of the applicants will be made. The village or school of the applicant will be visited to interview parents/guardians. The OVC coordinator will present his or her findings to the executive committee. The executive committee is in charge to judge which applications should be granted and which applications should be declined.

On this moment there are some criteria whether or not to take a new student (Give the Children of Mpongwe a Future, 2010):

- Girl/Boy;
- Single/Double orphan or vulnerable;
- Results (for grade 10, a full certificate must be obtained);
- School;
- Age/Grade;
- Shown Commitment;
- People or instances vouching for him/her;
- Knowledge of English;
- Amount involved.

Some of these criteria are there in order to have the right statistics in the Netherlands. Statistics are essential for fundraising. Per example, according to the GCMF goals, the percentage of sponsored boys, have to be equal to the percentage of sponsored girls.

Other criteria are there in order to make sure that only committed, promising students are sponsored.

There have to be certain percentages of vulnerable children and single or double orphans. However, the term 'vulnerable' is not specified. There are no guidelines to judge whether someone is vulnerable or not.

1.4 Background of the problem

The OVC program is doing a great job. More than 100 pupils are sponsored. For a small organization like GCMF is this a big achievement. Though, there are always possibilities to improve. One of those abilities has been described above. In this paragraph I want to write about the background of the problem.

1.4.1 Administrative burden

GCMF is supporting and organizing several projects. The foundation relies on funds from the Netherlands and Belgium. This requires very good income and expense planning and administration. The organization depends on Dutch and Belgium volunteers who are willing to go to Mpongwe to work there for 1 or 2 years. They are responsible for the management and coordination of all the projects the foundation is supporting. They also have to do administrative work and financial accountancy.

At this moment there are two volunteers working at the guesthouse. Peter is the project manager and the VTC coordinator (building of a vocational training center). Thecla is responsible for the coordination of the OVC program; the financial management and the guesthouse management. In a conversation she told me that she had to do a lot of administrative work. The administrative work takes her a lot of time. She told me that she has to share the administrative work with Peter, because the administrative work is just too much for one person. Thecla is also the coordinator for the OVC program. She just has not enough time to do the necessarily work for the OVC program. The OVC program requires time and attention. One of the strengths of the OVC program of GCMF is the monitoring of the pupils. Other foundations with similar programs like CHAZ (Churches Health Association Zambia), don't monitor their sponsored pupils like GCMF. Though, on this moment, this strength of GCMF is under pressure because of the huge administrative burden. Thecla (the current OVC coordinator) is struggling to find time to visit schools and pupils. Even former OVC coordinator, Tine was complaining about the heavy administrative burden. She wrote in a personal letter: "GCMF had an incredible growth during the last two years. 2 years ago was Sophie (*former OVC coordinator*) responsible for the OVC program and a bit for the guesthouse management. Simon was responsible for the financial administration and a few construction projects. Thecla (and me before), are practically doing the work of Sophie and Simon combined." (Tine Buysens, personal announcement, 2012, 11 June).

1.4.2 Nepotism by deputy heads

In paragraph 1.1, I described about the problem of nepotism. Deputy heads are responsible for the recommendation of (OVC) pupils for the OVC program. Here culture may be one of the backgrounds of the problem. Zambia is an African country. Geert Hofstede identified and validated five independent dimensions of national culture differences (International Business Center, 2012):

- Power distance
- Individualism vs Collectivism
- Masculinity vs femininity
- Uncertainty avoidance
- Long-term versus short-term orientation:

For the problem of GCMF, the dimension of Individualism versus collectivism matters most for the origin of this problem. Zambia is a collectivistic country according to the culture dimensions of Hofstede. Sharing and caring is very important. Not the individual but the community is important. The one who earns a living, is responsible for the rest of

the family. I spoke to a girl who is working as cooking assistant in our GCMF restaurant. She told me that she is responsible to care for her mother and sister. From the money she earns, she pays the school fees of her younger sister. This example illustrates how Zambian people are used to share.

I interviewed several pupils who are sponsored by GCMF. One of the questions I asked, was about the opinion of parents towards schooling. Many times they answered something like this: "I have to work hard, to make sure that I pass for the exams, so that I can care for the family in future" (Luckson Kalinda, personal announcement, 2012, 22 May).

As deputy head, it can be very tempting to recommend children of family members or friends to be sponsored by GCMF, when GCMF asks you to recommend children for GCMF sponsorship. This is a common problem for GCMF.

It may be helpful to have clear criteria for 'vulnerability'.

1.4.3 Uncertain definition of 'Vulnerable'

The third problem I want to describe is the problem with defining vulnerability. As mentioned, the term 'orphan' is obvious and easily to check. The term 'vulnerable', is way more difficult and vague. How do you know that someone is really vulnerable? What are the criteria to examine support applications of vulnerable children?

These questions are not clear yet. Clear eligibility criteria for vulnerable children, will make it more easy for schools to recommend pupils to GCMF and easy for GCMF to judge which applications should be granted. To be able to examine every application on an equal standard, we first have to know what vulnerability implies. This is necessarily to be able to define eligibility criteria's, to examine all applications on a fair and equal way.

1.5 How do these problems interact?

I wrote about time pressure, nepotism and uncertainty about the definition of Vulnerable. These problems are related to each other. In this paragraph I want to describe how they are related and how they interact.

The uncertain definition of Vulnerable makes it possible for deputy heads, to recommend those children they like to be sponsored. The OVC coordinator should be able to check if vulnerable children are really vulnerable indeed. Therefore, he or she has to visit applying children to be able to know if someone is really vulnerable, but there is not enough time to visit them, because of the heavy administrative burden.

Conclusion:

- The meaning or definition of 'vulnerability' is not clear;
- Schools can recommend pupils as vulnerable, but on which guidelines?
- The GCMF coordinator is able to visit schools to interview pupils and parents, but by which guidelines/facts does he or she know that the applicant is vulnerable indeed?
- Because of lack of time, the OVC coordinator is not able to visit all the applicants at home. Although, this is very important. Everyone can tell a story, but when you see where someone lives, you can check if the story is true.

1.6 Importance of clear guidelines for vulnerability.

Why is it important to define criteria or guidelines for 'vulnerability'?

There are several reasons for this, which I want to mention below.

1. Donors from the Netherlands and Belgium are willing to assist and support vulnerable children. They want to give a chance to pupils to go to school, who will otherwise not have a chance to go to school. They are not paying for pupils who are also able to go to school without support.
2. As a NGO, GCMF wants to treat people equal. This is though, without clear eligibility criteria for vulnerability. Because how can you judge without clear guidelines?

3. It's important to be able to explain and justify towards individuals and organizations why sponsorship applications are granted or declined.

1.7 Plan of actions

The problem of Nepotism can be easily solved by a list of clear eligibility criteria for 'vulnerable children'. This list must be handed out to schools, OVC coordinator, Social welfare department, executive committee in Mpongwe and the Foundation Board in the Netherlands.

The problem of time pressure seems to be solved in the coming months. The Foundation Board decided to employ a Guesthouse manager. So the management of the guesthouse will no longer be the task of the volunteers, but from a specific employed manager. This will decrease the administrative work a lot and it generates more time for coordination of the OVC program.

The aim of the project is *"To make sure that all applications of children who come to ask for support; or of children who are recommended for support by schools or Social welfare department, will be judged on equal guidelines."*

The action plan will be as follows:

1. Defining definition for 'vulnerable';
2. Translating this definition into a checklist;
3. Developing an interview format, that has to be used for the interviews with the pupils;
4. Developing an interview format, that has to be used for the interviews with the parents;
5. Handing out the 'vulnerability' checklist to the schools, the executive committee, the OVC coordinator and to the foundation board in the Netherlands;

Chapter 2: Actions (DO)

2.1 Defining 'vulnerability'

Vulnerability is a complicated concept. There are many ways to define this concept. It's important to define the concept in a way the society defines the concept. Vulnerability in the Netherlands is completely different from vulnerability in Zambia. There are vulnerable children in the Netherlands and there are vulnerable children in Zambia. Both are vulnerable, but you will find totally different definitions.

First we want to take a look on how vulnerability is defined in the literature. We want to specify it towards the local definition of vulnerability. After that some conclusions found in interviews with already sponsored children will be included in defining vulnerability.

2.1.1 Vulnerability as defined in literature

Vulnerability: "implies susceptibility to the impact of risky events as a result of particular weakness or lack of defenses, and resulting in a worsened situation for sufferers" (MCDSS, 2005). Not every vulnerable child is also orphan; there are non-orphan children, who are vulnerable. In general vulnerable children can be divided into two main groups: Street children (both, orphan and non-orphan) and children living in low capacity households (both, orphan and non-orphan). Street children are vulnerable because of a total lack of parental guidance, care and support.

Low capacity households are vulnerable because they are not able to support themselves. They have very marginal livelihoods and are very tenuous in coping with risks. They have low capacity in dealing with shocks ((WFP, p.22, 2006).

Household composition		Remarks
Non-orphans household		Can both be vulnerable or non-vulnerable
Hosting orphans		Burden is higher, emotionally, financially and physically
Male headed		Mostly male headed households are less vulnerable than female headed households. Though, male headed households are more vulnerable, in case of hosting orphans,
Female headed		Mostly more vulnerable than male headed households, but in case of hosting orphans they get more (emotionally) support from the community
Single headed	Single Widowed Divorced	Even more vulnerable than female headed households Being divorced is a social taboo in the Zambian society, so this puts an extra burden on their shoulders
Chronically ill member (CI)	- CI was not the main income earner	
	- CI member was main income earner	This makes the family more vulnerable, because they loosed their main income.
Disabled member		This puts a higher burden on the family, especially if the disabled member was the main income earner and head of the family

Smart (2003), looked at the definitions of vulnerability in different African countries. For Zambia she found the following:

- Children not at school;
- Children from female-headed households;
- Children whose parents are ill;
- Children from families where there is insufficient food;
- Children who live in poor housing (Smart, 2003).

Skinner, D., Tsheko, N., Mtero-Munyati, S., Segwabe, M., Chibatamoto, P., Mfecane, S., Chandiwana, B., Nkomo, N., Tlou, S. & Chitiyo, G. (2004) have done a research to find guidelines for defining vulnerability. They found that there are three core areas of dependence where the definition has to be centered around:

- Material problems: access to money; food; clothing; shelter; health care and education.
 - Emotional problems: experience of caring; love; support; space to grieve and containment of emotions.
 - Social problems: lack of a supportive peer group; role models; guidance in difficult situations, risks in the immediate environment.
- (Skinner, D. et al, p. 16, 2004).

Material problems are easy to define, though emotional and social problems are difficult to define. It's not easy to examine if someone lacks emotional or social support. Therefore, I want to focus in this study on the material aspect of vulnerability to describe a definition of vulnerability.

2.1.2 Practical defined vulnerability

I've done a research to the influence of environmental factors on school drop outs from pupils, supported by the GCMF OVC program. I've interviewed 18 pupils, 2 drop outs, 12 teachers and 3 girls who were pregnant. During these interviews I gained some valuable information about the life situation of the pupils.

I've made some questionnaires for pupils, teacher, pregnant girls and drop outs. It were structured interviews. After every interview, I reported the results in a format. After collecting and reporting data, I analyzed the results by using a template analysis.

I want to write some of these findings in this paragraph, in order to paint a picture of local vulnerability.

Housing:

Most of the interviewed pupils don't have electricity at the place where they live. They use candles at night, but there is often no money to buy those candles.

"We don't have electricity, so we use candles when it is dark. Sometimes we don't have the money for buying candles." (Juliet Mulenga, personal announcement, 2012, 11 May).

Many pupils don't have a bed to sleep. They often sleep just on the ground on empty bags. This causes pain on the ribs and tiredness. *"I don't sleep well, I wake up with a lot of pain (...) it develops headaches. Every day I suffer from headaches."* (Juliet Chipoya, personal announcement, 2012, 23 May).

Livelihood:

Parents/guardians of the interviewed children are raising their incomes often by farming or by doing piece works. These kinds of work are very "susceptible to external events/factors". Income is not guaranteed or structural. It's often just enough to be able to support the own family in their basic needs. There is often just not enough money to pay the school fees.

"My uncle is the one who is responsible for the family. (...) There are many days that there is totally no food or money. It's around 7 times per month." (Friday Siwale, personal announcement, 2012, 22 May).

"Before I was sponsored by GCMF, I had to stay away from school for a week sometimes, to work for money for the school fees. From the time that I was sponsored by GCMF, I didn't have to stay away from school anymore to do piece works." (Yvonne Namfukwe, personal announcement, 2012, 30 May).

Most of the children are working during weekends and holidays to find work to buy clothes or groceries. Others have to do a lot of work even during the week:

"I asked my guardians if they could rent a house for me near school, but they refused. They responded: 'Who is going to do the work at home?'" (Luckson Kalindi, personal announcement, 2012, 22 May).

A student who is living on his own, with no relatives to support him:

"I earn money by doing piece works. I work around the compound in the garden. Sometimes there are no piece works. I totally rely on the piece works. No piece work means no money. If I raise more money, I buy charcoal and sell it for a better prize." (Charles Mutoka, personal announcement, 2012, 24 May).

Food:

Food security is very low. Many of the interviewed pupils told me about times that there was almost nothing, or totally nothing to eat. Most pupils are only able to eat 2 meals per day: lunch and supper. Especially the rainy season is very hard. Sometimes there is even nothing to eat. Most common eaten food is Nshima with vegetables. Meat and fish are not or very uncommon meals. Meat and fish is something for 1 time per month. Some pupils didn't eat meat for maybe two years. Many pupils didn't eat breakfast because of a lack of money.

"I eat two meals per day: lunch and supper. I don't eat breakfast, because we don't have the money for breakfast. If we had the money, I would eat breakfast. Usually we eat Nshima and vegetables. The last time we ate meat, was maybe two years ago. Sometimes I feel hungry at school, because I haven't eaten anything from the morning until the afternoon." (Paul Nasilele, personal announcement, 2012, 17 April).

One of the most vulnerable children I have interviewed, Juliet Chipoya (personal announcement, 2012, 23 May), answered as follows:

"I eat only 1 meal per day, supper after school. (...) There is almost never enough food. It causes headaches and stomach pains. Many times I feel hungry."

Teachers defined vulnerability mostly somehow like this: (personal announcements).

"Some families are financially unstable. Rodney comes from a big family, so the attention of his family may not be as much as he needs. Lack of materials and lack of electricity/light are big problems."

"(...) No electricity; no textbooks; too much work at home (...)."
"(...) There is a lack of food, lack of guidance and parental support."

2.2 Definition 'Vulnerable Child'

Considering definitions found in literature and the descriptions of vulnerability found in the interviews, I now can come to define vulnerability.

Though, defining vulnerability is not easy and has some risks. The definition forms the fundament for the checklist. A too wide definition, will cause unnecessary sponsorship, while a too tight definition will exclude pupils who really need support, but who don't meet with the eligibility criteria. Besides this, OVC are a group with many problems. Group members can become objectified or become targets for stigma (Skinner, D. et al., p. 4, 2004). Caution and accuracy are very important by defining a definition for vulnerability.

Besides this, it has to be mentioned that the definition below is not *the* definition of vulnerability, but a (*hopefully*) *useful* definition of vulnerability for GCMF.

Another remark towards defining vulnerability is that we will focus on material vulnerability, because that is measurable and can be more easily explored during interviews or visitation.

Definition:

A vulnerable child has a parent/guardian who:

- is disabled;
- is elderly;
- is divorced;
- is single;
- is an alcoholic;
- is chronically ill.

He or she lives in a house where no electricity is and where is no money or just few money to buy candles. Mostly the house is just very small, made from clay or termite bricks, with one or two rooms. The OVC has to do a lot of household chores, like sweeping the surroundings, washing, looking after cattle, and working on the land. This makes him or her tired.

Money is raised by farming, charcoal burning, fishery, selling vegetables on the market, or by doing piece works. Money can be raised by parent(s)/guardian(s) or by the pupil himself. There is often not enough money to buy groceries like cooking oil, salt, soap and clothes. Some children have to work themselves to be able to buy clothes. Clothes are often dirty and broken.

They eat two or less meals per day. There is mostly not enough money to buy food for breakfast. Food is usually Nshima and vegetables. There is only enough money to buy fish or meat for 1 time per month. Or there is even no money at all to buy fish or meat. Pupils can complain about a hunger that is affecting their achievements.

2.3 Vulnerability checklist

Theme	Description	
<i>Household composition:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Households with chronic ill parents;• Disabled breadwinners: E.g. father who misses a leg.• Divorced parents;• Elderly headed households;• Female headed;• Single headed;• Too big households;• Alcoholic parents/caregivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• At least 1 of mentioned descriptions

<i>Housing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No electricity; • No bed or mattress to sleep; • House with only one room; • Children have to do excessive household chores 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 2 of mentioned descriptions
<i>Livelihood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed breadwinner; • Livelihood by small scale farming; charcoal burning; piece works; fishery; or selling vegetables on the market; • Economically active children; • No money to buy groceries like soap; clothes; salt; cooking oil • Children who have to work for their own clothes; • Applying child/pupil is breadwinner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 1 of mentioned description; • <u>Or</u>, at least 2 of mentioned descriptions, if the only mentioned description was 'Economically active children'. <p>(Many children are working for money sometimes and are thus technically spoken 'economically active').</p>
<i>Food:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or less meals per day; • Food shortage; • Struggle for food; • Nshima and vegetables as only meal; very few (<1 time per month) or no fish or meat; • Hunger which is affecting someone's achievements; • Weakness because of a lack of food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 1 of mentioned descriptions
<i>Clothing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No money to buy clothes; • Children who have to raise their own money in order to buy clothes; • Dirty/broken clothes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has not necessarily to be mentioned
<i>Health</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled child; • Weak children; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has not necessarily to be mentioned

By using this checklist, it is important to know that this is not a complete and perfect checklist. It is more a guideline by judging whether someone is really vulnerable or not. More and precise research is needed to be able to develop a definitive and valid checklist. Visiting pupil's home situations remains very important. Seeing home situations makes judging more accurate and fair.

The checklist that is to be handed out to the schools can be found in attachment 1. Teachers have to fill in why a child is vulnerable and needs to be sponsored, in order to reduce at random choices and nepotism.

2.4 Interview format

The pupil or family has to be interviewed before the checklist can be used. I've developed two questionnaires in order to be able to gain all the necessary information to use the checklist. All the descriptions of vulnerability, mentioned in the checklist are reproduced into questions. The answers on the questions can lead to the required information to use the checklist. The interview formats can be found in attachment 2 and 3.

Chapter 3: Implementation of the improvement plan (Check)

3.1 Reaction of parties

The schools reacted positive on the new procedure and the checklist. They were willing to fill in the checklist for every new recommended pupil. The steering committee was very positive and content about the quality improvement plan. They responded that GCMF only wants to support those pupils who are really vulnerable and not those pupils who are not really vulnerable. Mr. Kalima, who is former headmaster of several schools in the Mpongwe district, told that CHAZ also handed out formats to schools, in order to recommend pupils for support.

Mr. Patrice responded that the presented plan was very good and helpful to GCMF, but we have to stay alert. It can happen that schools cheat by using the checklist. To counteract this, we decided to interview every new/recommended pupil by using the questionnaires, before deciding about granting or denying support applications.

Besides this, the executive committee has to have the opportunity to stop sponsorship, when they get to know that someone is not really vulnerable.

The current OVC coordinator was also very positive about the improvement plan. She reacted that this is very helpful for (beginning/inexperienced) OVC coordinators. It provides guidelines and something to fall back on. Especially for starting and inexperienced OVC coordinators is this very helpful.

3.2 Fruits of the improvement plan

New places in the GCMF OVC program will be available from January 2013. That's the time the program will open her doors again for new applicants. The improved procedure will start in January. Thus, evaluating about the fruits of the plan is not possible yet. It's only possible to describe what the change will be and which strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats the program could possibly meet.

Strengths: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear guidelines for (starting/inexperienced) OVC coordinators;• Judging on equal standards;• Cheating can be recognized;• Better understanding/knowledge of the pupils;	Weaknesses: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is easy to cheat with the checklist for schools;• This procedure is a bit time-consuming;
Opportunities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The program can become more fair and more focused;• Better knowledge of the pupils can lead to improved support in future	Threats: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time shortage;• Remote and rural villages, hard to reach by car;

3.3 What could possibly happen?

The most desirable situation would be as follows:

The checklists to the schools are handed out. Every school knows how many pupils they are expected to recommend. They fill in with truth the list for every pupil they want to recommend for support. The OVC coordinator visits the schools together with Mr. Kalima. There they interview the pupils or parent(s)/guardian(s). The interviews will be reported, a file will be made and the pupil will receive GCMF support.

Other pupils come on their own to ask for support. They will be interviewed by the OVC coordinator at the Guesthouse. The applicant delivers a list of results, an application letter and an acceptance letter from school. The interview will be reported and checked by using the vulnerability checklist. The case will be submitted to the executive committee, in case of a vulnerable applicant. The executive committee decides which applicants will be granted. Applicants will be informed about the decision of the committee. The foundation board will be informed about the new students. A file will be made about the new supported OVC's.

This was the most desirable situation. Now I want to describe another possible situation. The checklists to the school are handed out. Every school knows how many pupils they are expected to recommend. They fill in the list, but they cheat while filling in the format. They chose at random, or they chose children from family/friends (nepotism). The OVC coordinator and Mr. Kalima are going to visit the schools. There they interview the recommend pupils. They discover that the school cheated the format. In this case the school will no longer be asked to recommend pupils. Pupils will now be selected by OVC coordinator and executive committee themselves.

It can also happen that there is a lack of time. The OVC coordinator is not able to interview the pupils properly, because of this lack of time. In this case, the whole improvement plan has not worked and thus is useless. Time is required. It is very important to take care that there is enough time for this selecting procedure. Otherwise, this improvement plan can just be thrown away.

A last situation can be described as follows:

The selecting procedure is done properly. The OVC coordinator decides to visit some pupils he or she wants to know more about. This can be because of bad/good results, or just because he or she wants to know more about the pupil(s). The OVC coordinator goes together with Mr. Kalima to visit the chosen pupils. While visiting them, they discover that the pupil in question is not vulnerable at all. In this case, the OVC coordinator will report about the situation. The report will be submitted to the executive/steering committee. They can decide to stop sponsoring this pupil.

Chapter 4: Effects of the improvement plan (Act)

4.1 Effects of the improvement plan

The effects of the improvement plan will be as follows:

GCMF Micro:

- Every application will be judged on the same eligibility criteria;
- More knowledge about the sponsored pupils;
- Only the really vulnerable children are supported, not the ones who are able to go to school without GCMF support.

GCMF Meso:

- Clear guidelines for (starting/inexperienced) OVC coordinators;
- Clear eligibility criteria to be able to judge on an equal basis.

GCMF Macro:

- Goodwill/respect of community;

4.2 Evaluating the improvement plan

The purpose of this improvement plan is to make sure that only vulnerable children will be sponsored by GCMF. It's important to evaluate after a while if the improvement plan is working and if not, what has to be changed.

The best moment to evaluate is after each application period. The application period starts at the beginning of January and stops in March.

Below I want to describe the steps to evaluate the improvement plan.

Check	How	Who	When
Client			
1: Has every applicant been interviewed by use of the questionnaires?	N/A	OVC coordinator	After application period: March/April
2: Did the schools fill in the checklist?	Checking checklists of schools	OVC coordinator	
3: Did those checklists, filled in by schools, correspond with the reality?	Checking checklists with interview reports	OVC coordinator	
4: Visiting new pupils at home: are the life situations you have seen, corresponding with the stories the pupils told you during the interviews?	Visiting pupils at home	OVC coordinator And Mr. Kalima	After the applications period: March/April

Process

Efficiency:

1: How useful are the developed instruments: - Checklist schools/vulnerability guidelines: - Questionnaire pupils: - Questionnaire parents/guardians:	Personal experience with using the instruments	OVC coordinator and Mr. Kalima	After using the instruments: March/April
2: Was there enough time for the whole process? If not: what caused this lack of time?	Personal experience with following the process as described in the 'stroomdiagram'.	OVC coordinator	After application period: March/April

Effectiveness:

1: What went well, what went wrong?	Personal experience and feedback of executive/steering committee	Executive committee and steering committee	After application period: March/April
2: Were there unforeseen problems?	Personal experience	OVC coordinator	After application period: March/ April
3: After interviewing and visiting the new pupils: are all the new GCMF OVC members really OVC? (Orphans and Vulnerable Children)	Visiting all new pupils; checking home situations, speaking to the parents/guardians	OVC coordinator and Mr. Kalima	During the months after the application period: March-June

4.3 Follow up

The evaluation of the process will lead to new insights: what went well, what went wrong, what has to be changed, etc. Parts of the process that didn't work well, have to be analyzed: why it went wrong? Where did it go wrong? This leads to renewed improvements.

If the improvement plan went well, then the followed procedure has to be registered and standardized as standard application procedure.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

During the past weeks that I worked on the improvement plan, I had a lot to do. Not only this improvement plan, but also a research to OVC drop-outs, demanded full concentration.

During the five months I've worked with/for GCMF, I've seen how pupils are sponsored, where they live and how they live. I've visited pupils at home and I even spent the night in the house of a former GCMF sponsored pupil.

I've worked together with two OVC coordinators. When I started, I was the one who didn't understand anything from the Zambian culture, way of living, procedures of the OVC program. Then, when the new OVC coordinator came, I already knew a lot more about the Zambian way of living, the Zambian culture, the Zambian school system and the procedures of the GCMF OVC program.

During those five months, I've gained a broad experience and knowledge about everything that is related to the OVC program and the OVC's and schools in general. This was the input for this improvement plan. Through this, this plan is not just theoretical but especially practical and based on experiences of my own and other people: OVC coordinators, pupils, (former) teachers, people from the community.

This forms a good basis for a successful improvement plan.

This improvement plan will contribute on goodwill and respect from organizations like schools, DDCC (District Development Coordinating Committee) and community members. They will be able to see how GCMF is becoming more and more experienced and professional.

It's also important towards the donors from the Netherlands and Belgium. They are able to see and to check how GCMF is working, how they are improving and which processes are used to support pupils.

Writing this improvement plan was not always easy to me. The English language is not my native language, this made it a bit harder to me to write a proper improvement plan. Besides, I also worked on a research. There was a lot to do and as always, if there is a lot to do, there is always a lack of time.

My sincere hope is, that this improvement plan may lead to the support of the really vulnerable, but motivated pupils and that it will provide clear guidelines for OVC coordinators and executive committee to make right decisions.

Erwin Hage
27-06-2012

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Attachment 1: Checklist schools

Dear sir/madam,

Thank you for supporting us in recommending pupils for GCMF support!
We want to ask you to describe briefly why this pupil needs support from GCMF.
You can write this in the list below.

We sincerely thank you for your effort.

The OVC coordinator of GCMF

	Name of pupil:	
Theme	Description	Brief description of the child (Which of the mentioned descriptions are fitting to the child?)
<i>Household composition:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Households with chronic ill parents;• Disabled breadwinners: E.g. father who misses a leg.• Divorced parents;• Elderly headed households;• Female headed;• Single headed;• Too big households;• Alcoholic parents/caregivers• Other	
<i>Housing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No electricity;• No bed or mattress to sleep;• House with only one room;• Children have to do excessive household chores• Other	
<i>Livelihood:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unemployed breadwinner;• Livelihood by small scale farming; charcoal burning; piece works; fishery; or selling vegetables on the market;• Economically active children;	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No money to buy groceries like soap; clothes; salt; cooking oil • Children who have to work for their own clothes; • Applying child/pupil is breadwinner • Other 	
<i>Food:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or less meals per day; • Food shortage; • Struggle for food; • Nshima and vegetables as only meal; very few (<1 time per month) or no fish or meat; • Hunger which is affecting someone's achievements; • Weakness because of a lack of food • Other 	
<i>Clothing:</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No money to buy clothes; • Children who have to raise their own money in order to buy clothes; • Dirty/broken clothes 	
<i>Health</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled child; • Weak children; • Other 	

Attachment 2: Questionnaire Pupils

General interview questions: Circumstances, living hood etc.	
General questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your full name? 2. What is your age? 3. When have you been born 4. Where do you live? 5. To which school do you go? 6. In which grade are you now?
Family composition and size	General questions about family composition and size <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are your parents still alive? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If not: when did they die? 2. Who is/are your guardian(s)? 3. Since when has he/she been your guardian? 4. Do you have any brothers or sisters? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Do they live with you? 5. Are there other people who are also living with you and your guardians?
	Support from parents/guardians <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are your parents/guardians able to write and read? 2. Did your parent(s)/guardian(s) go to school? 3. What is your parents/guardians opinion towards schooling? 4. Do your parents provides food and clothes for you? 5. Do your parents/guardians cook for you? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If not: who does? 6. Do they provide a room for you to sleep?
Housing	General questions about housing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Are you living in a village or city/town? 2. Do you have light to study when it is dark? 3. Is there room to study?
	Help with household work <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you have to help with household work? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If yes: what kind of household work do you have to do? b. How do you feel after working? c. Does this affect your study? 2. Can you describe how a day looks like for you? (when do you get up, what do you after that, etc.?)
	Place to sleep <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you have a bed to sleep? 2. Can you sleep well? 3. How many hours do you sleep? 4. Does this affect your attention at school?
	Distance to school <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How long do you have to travel from home to school? 2. How do you travel? (By foot, bus, bicycle, other) 3. Does this affect your attention at school?
Livelihood	General questions livelihood <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who is the main income earner (who provides for relish)? 2. How does he/she earn money? 3. Are there other people who have to work for income for the family?

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Are there sometimes hard times so that there is no money to buy food or other supplies? 5. Are you able to go to the hospital when you are sick? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. How far do you have to travel?
	<p>Economically active children and piecework</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Do you have to work sometimes? (like piece works?) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If yes: what kind of work do you have to do? b. What do you work for? c. How long do you work per day? d. How do you feel after working? e. Do you sometimes have to stay at home to work? <p>Per example during the harvest season?</p>
Food	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many meals do you eat per day? 2. Do you eat breakfast? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If yes: what do you eat as breakfast? b. If not: why do you not eat breakfast? 3. What do you eat? 4. Are there times that there is not enough food? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If yes: does this affect you at school? 5. Are you sometimes feeling hungry?

Attachment 3: Questionnaire parents/guardians

General questions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your name? 2. What is your age? 3. What is your relation to ... ? 4. Since when have you been his/her guardian?
GCMF OVC member	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you the describe the character of ...? 2. What are his/her strong characteristics? 3. What are his/her weaker characteristics? 4. Do you know what he/she wants to become?
Household/housing	<p>General questions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many people are living in your family? 2. Are you able to read and write? 3. Is there light to study when it is dark? 4. Is there room to study? <p>Help with household work</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does ... have to help with household work? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If yes: what kind of household work does he/she have to do? <p>Sleeping</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there a bed to sleep for... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If not: where does he/she sleep?
Livelihood	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who is the main income earner/breadwinner? 2. How are you making a living? 3. Does ... sometimes also have to do some work to gain some income? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If yes: how many hours in a week does he/she have to work? - What kind of work has to be done in order to gain income? - Are there time that ... has to stay at home to do work 4. Are there sometimes hard times, so that it is hard to get enough income? 5. What do you do in hard times? 6. Can you describe how a day looks for you? (what time do you wake-up, what do you do afterwards, etc.).
Food	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is there always enough to eat? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. If no: how many times is there no enough? (per week/month). 2. Do you eat breakfast? 3. Can you describe what kind of foods you eat during the week?