

Transforming the Lives of the Most Vulnerable Children: A Summary of Findings from Africa Bridge’s Kisondele Ward Endline Survey

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Executive summary

Key Findings

The results of the Kisondele Wellbeing Survey demonstrate that the Africa Bridge (AB) model¹ has the capacity to transform the lives of Tanzania’s most vulnerable and impoverished children and significantly alleviate extreme poverty. This study found that Africa Bridge’s focus on supporting Most Vulnerable Children (MVC) via a pass-on model is uncommon, and potentially unique, in Tanzania, where AB works with a population that is more deeply impoverished than the rural population of Tanzania in general².

This endline survey builds on previous evaluations of each of the AB interventions across multiple Wards over the past 20 years. The endline survey follows the same questions as the baseline,³ referred to as the Well-being Survey (WBS), and as such explores household nutrition, income, and assets, as well as child well-being. This evaluation measures improvements across these indicators compared to the baseline in 2016/17 and provides AB with an instrument to measure and track progress over time.

To expand on the WBS, further questions were added from the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) created by Oxford Human Poverty Development Initiative which seeks to provide a “multidimensional” picture of people living in hardship. The MPI assesses a range of critical factors or “deprivations” at the household level: from education over health outcomes to assets and services. The additional MPI questions included in the WBS at the endline provides a fuller portrait of acute poverty than simple income measures.

¹ Africa Bridge (AB) works to improve the lives of vulnerable children and works toward this goal via a multi-pronged approach that includes the establishment of Most Vulnerable Children (MVC) Committees designed to provide a range of services for some of Tanzania’s most impoverished children. A key component of AB’s approach is the creation of livestock and agriculture cooperatives that help to ensure that those families caring for MVCs are able to earn a stable income

² This was verified using the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) which is described in more detail on p.28.

³ The baseline WBS, carried out in Kisondele Ward in 2016-17, was completed as cooperatives were being formed and included a sample of 355 households.

The results from the endline, which includes the MPI analysis, shows that AB's interventions have improved results for the vast majority of measured indicators over baseline:

- Extreme poverty has been reduced from 74% to 46% and families reported that food shortages have dropped from 95% to 33%.
- The number of MVC households who eat three meals per day has dramatically risen from 16% at baseline to 52% in 2021.
- Household assets have increased from 456 items to 849 items; a twofold increase.
- The quality of homes improved dramatically. In 2021, no new structures used grass for roofing while the use of cement bricks rose from 4 homes to 85.
- Furthermore, families who saved a portion of their income increased from 4 to 104 families and those who borrowed more than doubled over the baseline. This could be an indicator of confidence in the future.
- The use of cooking oil is up from 8% to 50% of households which is a sign of a household's ability to afford basic necessities.
- Lighting is up from 7% to 45% which is an important factor in a child's ability to study.
- There has been a threefold increase in the number of homes owning livestock.
- Lastly, AB has inspired entrepreneurial reinvestment. The study found that beneficiaries reinvested their money in a variety of enterprises (goat, chicken, and pig farming; avocado production; a small store and sewing business). This suggests that the Africa Bridge approach encourages a mindset of entrepreneurialism and growth.

This WBS is the fourth time Africa Bridge has assessed program impacts upon graduation in a Ward, and to a great extent, the results of the KWS mirror the findings from those assessments. For example, the increase in household assets, the quality of home construction, and the prevalence of personal savings all were observed in the data collected in previous Wards and in Kisondele. It is important to note that the AB program has evolved over time as well, and new components have been added (i.e., support for obtaining birth certificates and clinic cards for MVC), making some of the impacts observed in Kisondele not comparable to those of the previous programs.

The Uniqueness of the Africa Bridge Model

MSA's findings suggest that Africa Bridge's model is relatively unique within Tanzania. Other models we identified did not combine the agricultural pass-on model (which provides assets with the expectation of repayment rather than without obligation) with a focus on benefiting MVCs. Many models include either one or the other, but the research conducted to date suggests this may be a unique aspect of the model. Although no models had all the exact same characteristics as the Africa Bridge model, there are nonetheless other relevant models that AB should be aware of: graduation models and producer collective-driven models.