



The Friendship Bench Trust
4 Weale Road
Milton Park
Harare
Zimbabwe

Constance Nyamukapa and Simon Gregson
c/o Manicaland Centre for Public Health Research
Mutasa District
Manicaland
Zimbabwe

March 1st, 2020

Dear Constance and Simon

Cyclone Idai Recovery Appeal – Mutsvangwa, Chimanimani

Thank you for the kind invitation to work with you on a project to support the local communities in Mutsvangwa in recovering from Cyclone Idai. The cyclone had a devastating and deeply traumatising effect on the population of Chimanimani and we will be delighted to do whatever we can to help.

The Friendship Bench® programme (<https://www.friendshipbenchzimbabwe.org/>) is an evidence-based intervention developed in Zimbabwe to bridge the mental health treatment gap. The programme aims to create safe spaces and a sense of belonging in communities so as to enhance mental well-being and improve quality of life through the use of problem solving therapy delivered by trained lay health workers. The focus is on people suffering from common mental disorders, such as anxiety and depression, known locally as *kufungisisa*; translated to 'thinking too much'.

We believe this approach will work really well with the other small self-help projects you are developing to assist local families in rebuilding their homesteads and livelihoods. In Mutsvangwa, the Friendship Bench team will work with the local Hope for Kids NGO and other community leaders to provide training, materials and ongoing support to grandmothers and other volunteers living in the



villages to act as counsellors for people with mental health problems. For individuals with more complex disorders, referrals will be made to the Ministry of Health's nearest clinical services at Ngorima. The Friendship Bench will also be happy to assist with fundraising for this activity which might be extended to surrounding villages depending on the resources available.

Yours sincerely

Professor Dixon Chibanda

Director

