

After relocating from Edinburgh in Scotland, Don and Christine MacDonald were shocked to see the number of abandoned boys living and begging on the streets of Lusaka. After getting to know the children and trying various projects to help them out, Don and Christine realised that the only way to help the boys was to become fully involved in their lives. The only practical solution was to take the youngsters into their home and give them a secure family environment in which they could feel safe, have their physical needs met, and begin to experience love and care after a lifetime of abuse and rejection. The household consists of the MacDonalds, their 2 daughters and 29 young folk ranging in age from 9 to 21 living on a small farm outside Lusaka.

In addition to the Farm, the MacDonalds have set up a project aimed at supplementing incomes for poor families to keep them together and prevent the children going to the street in the first place. The project, known as 'Super Grans', aims to provide food, clothing and education to children within their existing family.



SUPER GRANS PROJECT

This grass-roots project was developed after an encounter with a truly inspiring Zambian grandmother who was left caring for 12 of her grandchildren after 4 of her 5 own children had succumbed to HIV AIDS. This devastating disease left 17 children without parental care and created a huge level of responsibility for an ageing, arthritic grandmother to bear on her own.

Don and Christine fostered the two youngest children, Memory and Lucky, from one of the orphaned families and first met 'Granny' when they began sending these two children to school. This grandmother was the legal guardian of 12 grandchildren ranging from 10 months of age to 16 years of age. She had no education, no training, cannot read, write or speak English and suffered from severe arthritic hips, yet still managed to keep 12 children fed and clothed by running a little roadside business selling foodstuffs.

It was clear to Don and Christine that this family, under the care of a loving yet elderly grandmother, had a precarious grasp on existence. But instead of splitting up the orphans into separate care facilities, it was more important to keep the family unit together and make Granny's life a little easier by lightening the heavy load of responsibility. Don explains,

"I looked at the old lady, and tried to imagine the sadness of losing your own children, the stress of having to care for their children, and the overwhelming odds against trying to feed everyone from a little roadside business. The sheer magnitude of the task left me feeling hopeless and depressed, but Granny is made of stronger stuff, and is determined to fight, against all odds, to do what she can. Her refusal to indulge in self-pity, or even a little understandable complaining, and her devotion to her grand children made us realise we were meeting a very special woman."

Don and Christine soon realised that Granny represents a huge number of elderly carers forced to look after their grandchildren while they watch their own children succumb to HIV/AIDS. Whole generations are being wiped out and there is little provision to care and support the grieving grandparents as they step up to become mothers again to their newly orphaned grandchildren.

Rather than split up these families, the Super Grans Project is reaching out to these remarkable carers and providing much needed support like funding for school fees, food voucher support or medical care to the orphaned grandchildren. This truly grass-roots project is committed to keeping family units together while lightening the burden of these 'Super Grans' as they struggle to meet the needs of their grandchildren.



Sample Itinerary *

Old MacDonald's Farm, Zambia



Friday Day 1	Depart Australia for Johannesburg, South Africa. Arrive Johannesburg. Depart for Livingstone, Zambia. Arrive Livingstone. Customs and immigration. Stay in Livingstone.
Saturday Day 2	Orientation in Livingstone. Travel to the majestic Victoria Falls. Rest and acclimatize from jet lag.
Sunday Day 3	Visit the nearby Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park on north bank of the Zambeze River. Begin to unpack some of Africa's turbulent history and the early beginning's of the town of Livingstone. Explore the impact of colonialism on Zambian culture and outline the challenges many locals still face today.
Monday Day 4	Travel to Lusaka - capital of Zambia - to meet Don and Christine MacDonald at their property Old MacDonald's Farm.
Tues - Thursday Day 5 - 7	Begin to build relationships with key personnel who will facilitate the three day exploration of the Super Grans project. Take time to visit a number of sites and see how the program empowers these Super Grans to act for themselves. Spend a day with a Super Gran, develop a relationship with her and involve yourself in some practical 'hands-on' activities to make life easier for her and her family.
Friday Day 8	Final celebratory event with members of the MacDonald's team and Super Grans.
Saturday Day 9	Depart Lusaka, Zambia for Johannesburg, South Africa. Arrive Johannesburg. Depart for Australia. Arrive Australia.



Location	Distance (km)	Travel
Perth, Australia	0	
Johannesburg, South Africa	8325	Plane
Livingstone, Zambia	1328	Plane
Lusaka	483	Drive
Johannesburg, South Africa	1194	Plane
Perth, Australia	8325	Plane

*The information in this itinerary is to be used only as a sample guide. Each company participating in a Leadership Journey can tailor their itinerary to suit their needs.