



Disbursement process January 2007

To our valued sponsors

We have finally put together the information for the disbursement process for this year. As usual we would like to express our appreciation for your support for the children of Zimbabwe. On behalf of the children we thank you very much.

After last 2006's experience when we tried to pay fees in December and the fees were not yet determined, we started off a little later – January 7th 2007 – hoping that by then the fees had been set by the Ministry of Education. But just like last year, the head masters did not know how much was expected for fees for this year. So we had to go by best guestmates based on last year's fees and the rate of increase of prices in everything needed for school. Some of you will notice from your receipts that we did not buy much of the school wear for your kids because all the money was used up for the fees

Statistics

We have 42 children. 26 in primary school and 12 in secondary school. Four children had written their O level exams and their results were not yet known. We have just received the results of one of the children. He did very well and has started "A" Level (pre-university). We are very excited as we see this as an achievement for the Trust. It looks like we will have one child out of the poverty cycle in another two years!!

Of the 26 children in primary school , Neniwo/Lamifuthi had to pay for 2 because the sponsors did not pay.

Of the 12 children in secondary school the trust had to pay for 3 because the sponsors did not pay.

The fees

Because the economic situation continues to get worse each month, the fees more than doubled in most schools and in others it trebled. This meant that even though with fifty Euros we got a lot of Zimbabwean dollars, the fees used up all of them before we could buy any school wear.

Stationary

Exercise books were costing on average 1500 dollars each (about 6 euros), a pen 1200 dollars (close to five euros) and pencil 800 dollars. Primary school children need an average, 30 exercise books per year for all subjects. In some cases we were not able to



buy the children enough books because we had run out of money after paying the fees and levies.

Transport

The old car which broke down last year and used up so much money for repairs was sold. For the first week, one of the trustees offered his car for transport to reach the five children who are furthest away. With fuel cost ranging from 2 – 5 Euros a litre, and the price changing at any time of the day both in the same fuel stations and from fuel station to fuel station, once those children had been seen, we resorted to public transport. This was costing between one Euro fifty and three Euros a trip (whatever the distance) one way, this was still expensive but much better than using a car. This explains the very high transport costs.

Finances

We received **3690**Euros from our sponsors. 5 sponsors did not pay for their children. The trust paid for them. Fifty Euros translated to 100 000 Zimbabwe dollars. Primary school fees were ranging between 35 000 and 65 000 and school levies were ranging between 20 000 and 30 000 Zimbabwe dollars per year. The schools which had higher fees were also the same once with higher levies. In some schools they did not even know how much the government was going to charge. As a result we had to go by estimates received from the headmasters, the bursars of the schools and comparisons with schools in similar administrative groups.

We used **2601,25 Euro** for fees, **730, 32 Euro** for transport, photocopying and postage. **258 Euro** was reserved for some children who might be starting A level after the results are out and examination fees for those who will be writing Form Four this year.

Sponsors

We had sponsors who contributed money not only for their children but also some which they gave a mandate that it could be used for other useful purposes. This is the money we used to pay for those children whose sponsors did not pay. This was greatly appreciated.

Sponsors not available this year

We could not trace one sponsor again this year. By some stroke of fate this is the same sponsor whose child we have received results of. He did very well in his O level results and has started A levels. Fortunately for him we have found someone who is willing to pay for him. We are very grateful to both the first sponsor (for giving the child a chance to start, with for the past three years) and the new one for coming to the child's aid at the nick of time.



Lessons learnt

It is getting progressively difficult to send children to school in Zimbabwe. The fees are unaffordable. The staffing in the schools is skeletal. The resources are at the barest minimum. The results of the children are poor. Only those who are going to school in private schools are hoping for some acceptable results as those schools are still a little better staffed and equipped. But Neniwo/Lamifuthi cannot afford to send children to these schools as it would place a very heavy strain on the sponsors and families as most of these schools are off in the city where children would need to take two buses to get to the school. The price for those trips is unaffordable for these families.

Solution

One temporary measure which was put in place during this last trip was of identifying a private teacher for those children where the results were VERY bad. For example, there are children between 8 and 10 years who could not write their names and they could not read. It was felt that there is no benefit in counting that the child has been in school for three or four years unless that child is getting the relevant literacy and innumeracy skills. One woman, a retired infant school teacher, 75 years old, and the grandmother of one of the children sponsored by Neneiwo/Lamifuthi was asked to take four of these children and try and teach them in her house during the weekends. She happily accepted and started lessons the last week of January. We have asked for feed back from the care givers of the children who are being taught this way and the results are promising. One of the little girls can now write her name after a few weeks of personalized attention.

The issue which comes up with this approach is that, it would be fair to pay this lady for her services. I am not certain that the Trust will be able to do this without assistance. The sponsors of the children involved will be informed but the Trust will also try to find some other way of rewarding this lady for her work.

Way Forward.

I am happy to report that the process of trying to have the trust registered in The Hague as a Dutch Stichting are progressing well. We will keep you all informed of the progress. Should we manage to be registered, that will mean that it will be possible to raise funds in Holland to support the administrative processes and to cater for those children where we lose contact with their sponsors. In the first week of May I will write the usual individual reports so that you will all know how your children are doing

Written by N.T. Moyo
For Neniwo/Lamifuthi Education Trust