

# **NENIWO/LAMIFUTHI CHILDREN'S EDUCATION TRUST**

## **DISBURSEMENT REPORT 2010**

### **Introduction**

Paying school fees in Zimbabwe for the school year 2010 was largely much simpler and straightforward than in the past years. In January 2010 we paid school fees for the children in either US dollars or South African Rand.

Since most of the children are in government primary and secondary schools, school fees could be paid for using either currencies, except for one school, Mpopoma which wanted the fees paid in US dollars.

The money for the school fees was changed from Euro into US Dollars and Rand. Two days before leaving for Zimbabwe, we received word that most of the schools in Bulawayo (in which the bulk of the children are) accept school fees in Rand; we further changed the US Dollars into Rand. Doing this meant that we lost money during the exchange process.

When in Zimbabwe we paid school development levies (SDC levies) in Rand. The SDC are parent run committees which use the levies for the upkeep and development of the schools and to help the schools in their day to day running of their budgets. The money paid in Rand in Bulawayo can easily be used for purchases of items and payment of services in Bulawayo which favoured the use of Rand because of their proximity to the South African markets.

Even though we paid in Rand, some schools had the school receipts written in US Dollars. The exchange rate was 1 USD to 10 Rand for all government institutions. This meant that a payment of 100 Rand was receipted as 10 US Dollars. Other traders where we had to purchase stationary or uniform accessories, their exchange rate were 1 USD to 7.50 Rand.

The school tuition for term one ranged from US \$5.00 to US \$135.00. The school levies ranged from R15 (US \$1.50) to R600 (US \$60) a term per child.

Most children had money owing for school tuition and levies from last year 2009 term three. The payments for term three school tuition ranged from US \$5.00 to US \$225.00. While the levy ranged from US \$10.00 to US \$45.00 (R450).

School fees payments were for term one only and this was preferred by most schools since their expenditures are on a term basis. For the Trust this means the use of more money travelling to the schools outside Bulawayo and also money is lost during exchanging process from Euro to US Dollars and then Rand.

## Statistics

Number of children: 33

As at January 1, 2010: 33 children at different levels of education were sponsored and supported by the Trust.

LEVEL	NUMBER OF CHILDREN	COMMENTS
A-Level	1	
O-Level (awaiting results)	1	Child failed: Repeating O-Level
Form 1- 3	17	One child is opting out: Uncle cannot afford transport and purchase school uniforms
Primary (Grade 1-7)	11	
Special School	1	Out of School: School fees too high for Trust to pay plus transport to school set at US \$300.00 per term.
College	1	
Private Study at University Level (UNISA)	1	
Total	33	

Charles Mukonoweshuro was withdrawn because he was no longer attending school regularly and his sponsor had stopped the sponsorship for the past two years.

Tanatswa Chikambure and Tutsirai Munashe Chikambure have withdrawn because they had another organization sponsoring them.

Lina Muganda (Ncube) obtained a diploma in hairdressing. She wants to run her own hair salon. Her former sponsor is still willing to support her in her venture. It is essential, though, that Lina goes through a basic course in book keeping first before embarking on a hair salon enterprise so that she will be able to manage her business finances reasonably. Ronald Chikwata is in Harare where he got a job and was working for a few months. Unfortunately he lost the job due to the economic system which is still struggling. He is now looking for another one.

## Sponsors

The objective of the Trust is to make sure that the children we started with get supported through their school before adding more children. Money therefore received from new sponsors and any donated for general use by the Trust is used to pay for children whose sponsors would not have paid for that year. As a result children without sponsors and those whose sponsors respond late all had their school fees paid.

Number of Sponsors per number of children they sponsor.	New Sponsor	Number of Children Sponsored by each	Total Number of Children
	1	1	1
17		1	17
2		2	4
1		3	3
1		2	2#
	Children have no sponsors	3	3*
3	Sponsors did not respond to reminders	1	3*
	Total		33

\*The Trust paid for these children.

## Sponsors not available 2010

Two sponsors informed the Trust that their responsibilities had increased and as such are no longer able to continue supporting the children. We are very grateful to these sponsors for having put the children on the way out of poverty.

Another sponsor informed the Trust that he has now a different view of how children can be supported in their education. He felt that every child should have an equal opportunity whether in Africa, Asia, Europe and America. Governments should thus come in and provide the needed infrastructure and funding. The Trust felt that they had no way of implementing such a change and can only hope that the powers that be will implement the suggested changes. We thank the sponsor for the support he gave to the two children over the years.

## New Sponsors 2010

We are excited to welcome one new sponsor who offered to sponsor 4 children. Welcome to the Neniwo/Lamifuthi family of sponsors. We are very grateful for your generosity. The children who will benefit will be notified in August 2010. As you noted from the statistics above, there are 6 children without sponsors. This is a great relief to the Trust which does not have any residual funds for this purpose.

## The School fees (Tuition and levies)

Now that school fees are paid either in US Dollars or South African Rand, the money that used to pay for the whole year is now only able to pay for one term. The Trust is appealing to all our sponsors who are able and willing, to substantially increase their

sponsorship since due to this change, the Trust was unable to buy school uniforms for the children. The Trust used money given by some sponsors for administrative use to buy school accessories for children who were in dire need of such items as school shoes, pair of stockings, necktie and stationary (exercise books, pencils and ballpoints).

### **Public Examinations**

Five children (Form 4 and one child in Form 6) will write public examinations at the end of the year. These examinations must be paid for by May in US Dollars. The amounts for the examination fees were announced and the money was sent by Western Union money transfer to the Field Officer in Zimbabwe. To save money in bank transfers, money for the payment of second term school fees for children outside Bulawayo and travel allowance for the Field Officer was sent at the same time.

### **Transport**

During the disbursement exercise, we used three modes of transport. We hired a private car; the owner charged the Trust US \$20.00 a day. This was for the use of the car and fuel. This was the cheapest option compared to public transport for which the cost \$5.00 for any distance travelled. When the car wasn't available and two people needed to visit the schools, we had to use public transport was used which was so expensive that we opted to use the public transport to one central school and then walk to the rest of the schools around that area. This was quite a challenge and great thanks go to the Field Officer who does this on a regular basis for the benefit of the children.

The third mode of transport was the bicycle. When there was need to visit the schools again because at some schools we would find the bursar (the person who receives the school fees payments) unavailable for the day, then the Field Officer would cycle to such schools on another day. The bicycle although bought new, is over used and is now having frequent breakdowns needing constant and costly maintenance.

### **Lessons Learnt**

It is becoming progressively difficult to send children to school in Zimbabwe. The school fees are in two parts; Tuition and School Development Committee levy (SDC Levy).

The Tuition fees are controlled by the government and these range from US \$5.00 to US \$20.00 per term per Child. In addition schools charge levy for Laboratory chemicals, Food and Nutrition cooking ingredients, Fashion and Fabrics cloth and sewing thread and accessories, Woodwork and Metalwork items, Book levy and Teachers Incentives. This ends up increasing the fees in some Secondary schools to US \$30.00.

The school levies which are charged by the SDC range from US \$15.00 to US \$60.00 and these have to be paid first before a child is given the opportunity to pay the tuition fees. By law a child is excluded from school for not paying tuition fees but not the SDC levies. But in reality the schools have made it difficult for a child to pay only the tuition fees and not the SDC levies. The procedures in each school is first to pay the SDC Levies and then take the receipt and show the school bursar who will then allow the child to pay the tuition fees. A child can therefore be expected to pay US \$80.00 to US \$90.00 a term,

which is Euro 152 to Euro 170 a year. This is well above what our sponsors have been paying to date for children in secondary school.

### **Current challenges**

#### ***Increase in fees due to change of currency***

The change of currency from Zimbabwe Dollars to US dollars and Rand has created a problem. The funds which used to suffice for a year's fees are now only able to cover one term. This means we will be requesting our sponsors to pay three times as much they have been paying to date.

#### ***Possible solution***

Attempts have been made at fund raising to complement the sponsorships. The website was updated to attract more sponsors. We are awaiting results from our other attempts. We appeal to any or our sponsors who may have ideas for fund raising to share those with us.

#### ***Delay in payment***

Schools request additional funds as SDC levies after the Trust has paid fees. It takes time to make adequate safe arrangements to transfer money to Zimbabwe. When tuition fees and SDC levies are not paid in time, the schools do not hesitate to send the bill to the Debt Collectors. This adds a further burden to the parents and in time to the Trust. The Trust has been having difficulty in getting the money to Zimbabwe for the payment of second and third term school fees.

#### ***Possible solution:***

We are exploring the possibility of making direct payments to the schools through their Foreign Currency Accounts. This would cut down on exchange rates, minimize travel costs and make payment of the school fees to be in time. Payment will only be done physically in the beginning of the year in order to check on the children and what the schools have planned for the year.

#### ***Transport for Field Officer***

Transport for the Field Officer is becoming more and more difficult because the bicycle is breaking down often.

#### **Possible Solution:**

An attempt was made to repair the bicycle. If it continues breaking down it might be cheaper to replace it with a new one.