

NENIWO/LAMIFUTHI EDUCATION TRUST

Interim Disbursement Report 2009

Introduction

The disbursement process for 2009 was and continues to be stressful and uncertain as it is still in progress at the time of writing this report.

Situation in the country

January 2009 the country suspended its currency and adopted the United States Dollar (USD) and the South African Rand (R) as legal tender. All fees have to be paid in either of these currencies. Some schools asked for both as the fees would be paid in one currency and the Levy would be paid in another. The exchange rates between the Rand and the US Dollar fluctuated from school to school. The fees charged also varied from school to school. This caused an upset on our budget since monies were lost through during conversion and our budget is based on all government schools charging the same amount for fees for Primary and for Secondary School.

Decision made

It was decided to pay the fees per term rather than for the whole year. This trebled the transport photocopying and postage fees as each school had to be visited three times instead of once per year.

Statistics

Number of children: 40

As at January 1 2009 we had 40 children at different levels of education.

Level	No. Of Children	Comments
Waiting for A level results to go to University	2	These children have enrolled with Universities but will not be taken in until their A level results are known.
A level	1	The two who completed A levels last year are still waiting for their results
O level (Awaiting results)	2	One has been taken into A level without his results, based on his performance during the four years of secondary school
Form 4		Writing O levels October and November 2009
Form 1 to 3	17	
Primary (grade 1 to 7)	17	
Special school	1	

Since 4 children went into the job market last year, no new ones were recruited into the programme. It was considered prudent to continue with those already on the programme until the situation is more conducive to enrolling more children.

Children's well being

We lost one child to cross border activities end of last year. She has since been found in a prostitution camp. All attempts to get her back have been unsuccessful.

Sponsors

The objective of the Trust remained the same this year - to make sure that the children we started with get supported through their school before adding more children. Thus the money received from sponsors whose children are now working was used to pay for children whose sponsors did not pay for this year.

Number of sponsors	New sponsors	No. Of children sponsored by each	Total no. of children
1	1	4	4
4		2	8
25		1	25
10	Did not respond to reminders		*10

*The Trust paid for these children

Contributions

We had sponsors who contributed money not only for their children but also some which they gave a mandate to be used for other useful purposes. Some of this money we used to pay for those children whose sponsors did not pay. As a result all children have their fees paid up to the second term for this year.

Sponsors not available this year

Ten sponsors did not respond to the reminders and did not send any word whether they will continue or not. Most people felt discouraged by the political situation in the country. The Trust had to find other ways of paying for these children as stated in the previous paragraph. We are very grateful to these sponsors for having brought their children this far. We will continue to do our best to ensure none of the children drops out of the programme.

The School fees

It is considered not helpful to give a financial breakdown at this point while the disbursement process is still in progress. This will be furnished to you as soon as we have received all the receipts.

Once the examination fees are announced, the money will be sent by Western Union to the Filed Officer and he pays for the fees. Three children are in this category. The children were informed.

Transport/Fuel

Before we left for Zimbabwe we bought fuel coupons through a UK based website so that by the time we got home we already had 180 litres of fuel worth of coupons. This was a tremendous help as we were able to hire a car for the disbursement process. We did not have to spend time in fuel queues and actually there were days when the average fuel stations did not even have fuel for people to queue for while the ones who were using the coupons had some. We only had to buy fuel directly when the special stations using coupons did not have any.

Support

Once more one of the trustees offered us his car to do the children who are furthest away. This was possible because we had fuel coupons. This offer saved us a lot of money.

Lessons learnt

It is getting progressively difficult to send children to school in Zimbabwe. The School fees are continually on the increase, every three months and very soon the school fees will become unaffordable. Although the school fees continue to increase, the school system does not benefit as all the money is mostly for recurrent expenditure and not for capital expenses. This kind of trend has inevitably affected the quality of the education being given. We noticed in some schools that so many teachers have left that the children's school results are getting progressively worse. This was particularly acute in those children in the first and second year of secondary school.

Solution

We tried to strengthen the temporary measure which was put in place last year when a private teacher was identified for those children where the results were VERY bad. This year subject teachers were identified to assist the secondary school children with crucial subjects like English and Mathematics. We hope this will have as positive a result as did the primary school arrangement.

The four children from last year

Last year we had four children receiving private tuition from a private teacher – the retired school teacher. We made time to speak to these children to hear how they are doing. The children are so happy that now they can read and write and are now enjoying school.

Once the other parents learnt that some children were receiving private lessons, they also started sending their children to the private teacher. By the time we got there she was having lessons with ten children! She says she enjoys it. The children are improving and we asked her to continue. Chances are this year she will have a full class!

Looking at the teachers records, it is impressive. She schemes and plans for each child individually. She knows all the children and the strengths and weaknesses of each and uses different strategies for each child. I do not think these children had ever had such personalized attention. We made copies of the one page of her records just for you all to see and we will put it on the website.

Last year I had expressed fears that the trust might not be able to show appreciation for this teacher. I am happy to report that the Trust was able to give her a gratuity using some of the administration money and money given by the sponsors of one of the children receiving private tuition.