



June 2016

Dear Friends

In the three months since the last Tukongote newsletter, we have seen lots of developments and progress in our projects. Here is the latest update of happenings in the educational projects supported by Waterberry Lodge and made possible by your support and generous donations.

Teacher Training

As reported in the last newsletter, we have decided to sponsor thirteen of our teachers to attend teacher training college during school holidays. Over three years this will allow them to become certified and qualified teachers. Currently all sixteen teachers paid by Waterberry are untrained, they all come from the villages and work with dedication and passion to educate the younger generation. Now we want to empower them, giving them the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised qualification. The programme began in April with the teachers spending one month in Livingstone at the Musi O Tunya College of Education. It was a great experience for everyone and they have come away with lots of assignments to complete before August when they will spend the next month at the college.



For the teachers it is a once in a lifetime opportunity. Not many people from the rural villages ever manage to attend college. Daniel, one of the teachers at Siandunda Primary School, called it a “miracle” when told he would be attending the course. And Jack, his colleague, said, “I would like to thank you all for your kindness, encouragements and everything you are doing for us concerning education.” They are all extremely happy, enthusiastic and determined to do well. Edward, a preschool teacher, told us, “This is great for me because I am able to learn new ways of teaching and methods of attending to my learners.” We will keep you up to date on their progress.



Building Projects

During the school holidays when the teachers were all in Livingstone, quite a bit of construction work took place at the schools. The preschools were 're-mudded' by the communities. They use the soil collected from termite mounds and it is astonishing how the colour of the 'mud' can vary from one village to the next. Of our three preschools, one is brown, one is grey and one is terracotta!



At Tukongote Preschool we are rebuilding the riverside class. Instead of mud walls we've used blocks and cement, which means it is a much more permanent structure.

The roof, however, we are keeping as the traditional wood and thatch, which as well as being in keeping with the setting, also keeps the classroom warm in the cold season and ensures it is cool inside when it's boiling outside.



At Siandunda Primary School there are 254 pupils in six grades, but last term they only had two classrooms to use and an unfinished third one. With the growing number of students and classes we decided to help them get the third classroom ready for teaching at the beginning of the new term in May. It needed the walls to be finished, a roof, a floor, windows and doors and to be painted. In just two weeks the project was completed and the pupils are now busy learning in their new classroom. At least now with three rooms, three grades can learn in the morning and three in the afternoon.

Feeding Program

At the three preschools we have introduced small scale feeding programs, giving the children traditional porridge at midmorning break. Many of the children come to school hungry, and offering something to eat encourages attendance and increases their concentration in class. Waterberry is providing the food and the community has to provide the cooks and the firewood. This kind of collaboration, where the community has the responsibility to provide something that is within their means, is a great way of working together, and means our projects are assisting the communities to help themselves.



Books, books, books

To allow the pupils at the three preschools we support to get hands on experience of books, we are aiming to collect sets of relevant and interesting picture story books. Having sets of 6 or more of the same title means the children can discover the books in small groups, exploring, learning to follow the pages and to handle them with care. The most important thing is the visuals. Sometimes we use the books without reading the actual text, but rather use the pictures to tell the stories in our own words. Books are taken for granted in the western world. Here no children have access to books at home. We want to give them that opportunity at school because we know that books open up a world of imagination, creativity and knowledge.



With this in mind we created a “wish list” of suitable titles in March, which we give to interested guests and have in our room folders. We are already receiving and using some of the books in classes.

And thanks to a very generous donation from Books Abroad we have received over thirty boxes of mixed books, which we will be distributing amongst the pre and primary schools to be used for teaching but also on a library basis, which is a natural extension to the successful Happy Readers Literacy Scheme we sponsor at Siandunda.

Thank you

As always a big thank you goes to all the people who make these things happen - Those who bring resources, send books and supplies, those who donate financially, as well as those who visit the village and those who spread the word. Without you, the Tukongote Community Projects could not keep increasing the educational opportunities, assisting and empowering the communities. Thank you! Please keep assisting us to grow our projects, enabling us to bring smiles to the faces of the children of the Tukongote villages.

Once again, thank you for your support and interest in Tukongote Community Projects!

Sent with very best wishes from the banks of the mighty Zambezi.

The Waterberry Community Team

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PS: Remember to follow us on Facebook for regular news on our projects on:

<https://www.facebook.com/waterberrycommunityprojects/>



Patrick, aged 6, Tukongote