

## Tukongote School & Waterberry Community Projects

# NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2 2025

## THE RESULTS ONE!!

At long last the rains have come to break the longest drought we have had for a while, and it's a great relief. Crops are planted for next year - a promising start to 2025.

Another promising start to 2025 is the results of our first ever Grade 7 exam programme.

It's been an exciting time since the last newsletter. We finally received and reviewed the November exam results for our Grade 7 'graduates'. It's not a straightforward system. The Zambian education authorities examine the results to determine whether and where children should/could go on to for their next educational adventure.

While waiting for the results the Graduation Party was an end-of-term, end-of-school celebration for the entire village.





**The whole school and community turned out for graduation - mortar boards and gowns and culture and certificates for everyone.**

Those with the best results are put forward for 5 years extra schooling up to Grade 12, in anticipation of their being the most likely to achieve academic results that will take them on to university and a professional qualification.

The next level of Grade 7 passes are allocated high school for the next 3-5 years to take them to Grade 9 and possibly beyond depending on their ability. With a Grade 9 pass young people can attend LIBES technical college in Livingstone to learn a huge range of skills such as building and plumbing - really useful skills in a growing economy. Also if they succeed well to Grade 9 they can also choose to continue learning up to Grade 12.

When we started Tukongote it was because we had seen the disadvantage for villagers who were unable to read or write, and we were determined to offer their children the chance to thrive better in their environment. Times change – it's not just reading and writing, it's computer studies too. And the additional learning doesn't just improve life in the village, it opens opportunities for what would have been the wildest ambitions only a few years ago. Above all it's the children's fervent enthusiasm for learning that is absolutely rewarding.



**Angela likes to inspire by demonstration. For Careers Day she asked the children to dress up in the uniform of the job they would love to work towards .... here we have nurses, customs & immigration officers, police officers, a lawyer, a soldier, pilots and an engineer**

**Class of 2024 - how did we do?**



points to move on to higher education, and the rest will be allocated high school places, hopefully mostly in Livingstone.

We had always expected that this would be the end of our involvement with the children, as they moved on to the next stage in their lives. But 10 years later we find ourselves wanting to stay in touch to help the children realise their abilities, potential and dreams.

### Where are they now?

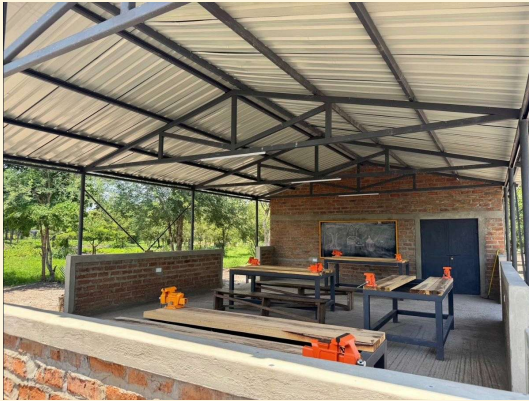
Before we built the school we taught our preschool babies until they were old enough to go to the nearest primary. Similarly, we helped older children from the district who had achieved Grade 7 results but had no opportunity to go further – several of these children were sponsored by generous guests through their five years of further education. Once they had completed Grade 12 we lost touch with several of them who live outside our direct community area and made their own plans. We've been asked what these children are doing now and this is what we know.

- 2021 Grade 12 – 2 pupils. One is reading medicine (sponsored by his family) and the other has returned home.
- 2022 Grade 12 – 22 pupils. 11 are studying at university or college (4 technology, 6 medical, 1 electrician), of these 6 are being funded by sponsors and 5 by their families; 1 is working in Lusaka; 2 are waiting to start college courses; 6 are back with their families (two with babies of their own). We have lost contact with 2 former pupils.
- 2023 Grade 12 – 6 pupils. One has started nursing school funded by a sponsor, 5 are waiting for university or college places.

Because we only met these children as they started at Kazungula we were not part of any system to help them identify opportunities, so some simply returned to village life – albeit armed with the real advantage of education up to high school standard. There's no official grant system and little guidance into higher education or further opportunities for those tackling it for the first time. It's a huge leap in the dark for a village family to get a child to university and into a profession. Generous sponsors and church groups have been invaluable. And we never forget that in the rural areas it's important that some children will remain to help with family and farm.

### The Tukongote System .....

For our own graduates it can be different if they choose. After discussion with the parents, working together through the complicated system, we will give bursaries to those accepting the further education places offered by the government system. We will pay the school boarding fees at Kazungula and a flat fee for parents of high school children to be spent to help the children make the transition to high school in town. Five have qualified to attend Kazungula boarding school, 14 high school in Livingstone. The three who did not reach the pass mark will repeat Year 7 at Tukongote.



### The new Skills Centre showing the Woodworking area and Home Economics kitchen

In the last newsletter we wrote of our Skills Centre – set up to help children who do not make the grade and also offering classes to members of the community who didn't have the opportunity of any particular training above what they have learned from the family and in the village.

We have two courses – Home Economics and Arts & Crafts. Run by the excellent Angela Ikabongo and Webby Maninga these courses will offer 4 hourly sessions per week for three months, with the option to extend the learning to a more advanced level for those who both want it and are showing aptitude. They will 'graduate' with a certificate of competence that we hope will help with job seeking locally.

At the start of the 2025 school year we asked the community to register interest in the skills courses. We have had a very good sign up and woodwork classes have started already to a group of mostly young men in their 20s. Twenty two have signed for the Home Economics course of which twenty one are ladies. Go girls!!! We will do what we can to help you.





The classes will also be available to our three Grade 7 second timers, in case they find themselves better attuned to the practical rather than the academic.

Once we have formalised our lessons and assessed progress we will refine the programmes and report back. In May two enthusiastic volunteers are coming from the UK to work with us for three months – it's a hugely exciting opportunity for our teachers and our skills centre as they introduce new angles on learning and teamwork.

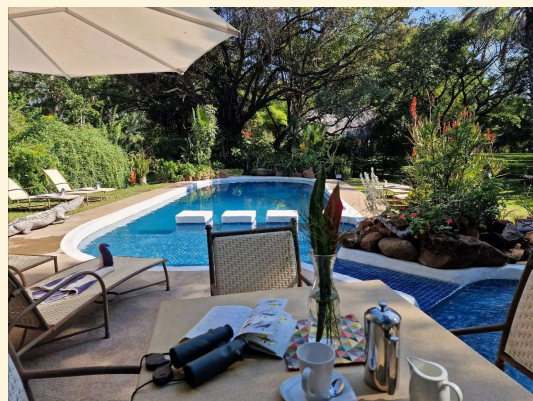
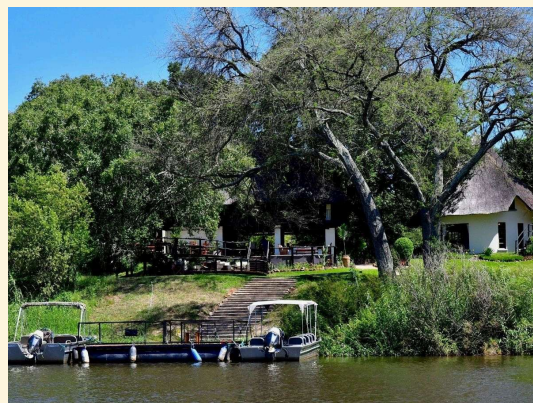
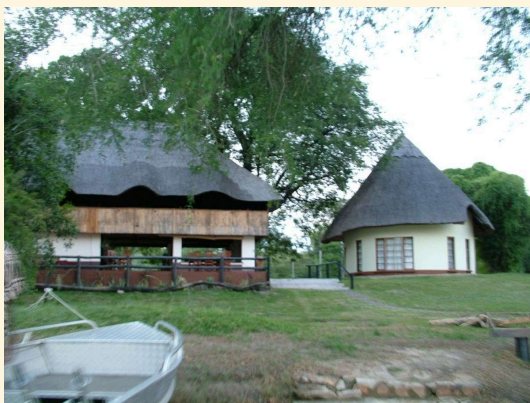
### Thank you!

The Grade 7 outcome takes us to a new phase in our community projects which started so small and have become so important. It's been an amazing collaboration between so many generous guests who've donated money and materials through workshops, parties and standing orders; who have inspired and mentored our children, all the way from reading to them in class to advising and sponsoring them into higher education and professions, extraordinary achievements for children from the 'back of beyond'.

We'd like to name a roll of honour but it would be too long and heaven forbid we would omit a name in error – you know who you are, we know too, and you know we could not do this without you. Other major charity groups have dug boreholes, built classrooms, installed electricity, provided irrigation, dug fish ponds and bought vehicles. Thank you ALL from the bottom of our hearts.

### 20 Years On.....

It's Waterberry's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary this month. I thought a few photos would be a bit of a walk down memory lane for us and show us how far we have come. A lovely Trip Advisor the other day reports that Waterberry is preferable to the Paris Ritz and Dubai Burj Al Arab – how we absolutely love your report Barry H. Come back any time!! Paris Ritz - be afraid, be very afraid!!







Then and now .....

### And meanwhile ..... about Victoria Falls!

We can't resist making a contribution to the annual Vic Falls debate. It's been raining hard a long way west in Zambia and Angola, the river is about 1 metre higher at Waterberry than it was as I wrote the November newsletter, and the Falls is rising rapidly. We can forget about the bizarre seasonal reports that the Victoria Falls has dried up. It hasn't, it doesn't, it rises and falls by several meters annually, the precise flow depending entirely on rainfall levels. What does happen is that during low water the Livingstone hydro power station draws huge quantities of water to guarantee electricity for the local area – it's done that ever since the power station was built in 1936.



**Here is Victoria Falls at high water. Falls on the left, Victoria Falls Bridge in the middle. On the right hand side at the bottom of the cliff you can see the power station build in 1936 - water to run the huge turbines is channelled off on the Zambian side well above the Falls.**

We think that most people reading this already know about the varying water levels at the Falls (that's what makes the breathtaking Devils Pool and Angel's Chair Livingstone Island

your timing and choose your view - everyone definitely needs more than one visit!!

The next newsletter will tell all about the Skills Centre courses and how they are going - and, of course, football!

With love and gratitude always,  
Tessa, Rob, Michael, Bridget, Angela, Webby M and all the Tukongote Team and Waterberry Teams!

*February 2025*



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