



Director's Report August 2022

Whilst I was in Zimbabwe in July/August, I visited almost all our projects and am pleased to give you this report.

1. The Birth Certificate Project

The importance of a birth certificate is still often unrecognized, with some rural communities referring to it as just a “piece of paper”. I went out with our teams into rural areas far from tarred roads, where they had organized to meet local residents. Significant numbers of children under the age of 17 years still do not have birth certificates in Zimbabwe. I was impressed how our team emphasized the importance of this document, and explained how it can be obtained. Where families had difficulties, especially with orphans they could explain how the hurdles could be overcome, and how the registration could be made simple. Importantly, the registrars are now happy to venture into the rural areas (as was their custom) because they realized that the people would come with the right papers and their visit would not be in vain. Sethule has thus partnered with the Registrar's office to keep this momentum going. Over 500 children have now been assisted by Sethule Trust to acquire their birth certificates as from March 2021 to date.





2. Scholarship fund

I met all the achievers supported by Sethule to access good education, healthcare and nutrition,



and had individual interviews with each. I was positively impressed by these students' attitude, enthusiasm and gratitude. A total of 51 students are currently benefiting through finance for tuition fees, school uniforms, stationery hampers and boarding school groceries. Of the 51, 17 are boarding scholars, 29 are day scholars and 5 are university students. Without Sethule's

intervention, none of these students would have the opportunities they currently have.

3. Ride for Education Bicycle Project

The schools being closed a week after I arrived, I had no opportunity to evaluate the whole of this project, though I saw several children using bicycles. All were very happy that the toll of walking long distances had been taken from them. We have 32 bicycles in use; unfortunately some substandard ones were purchased in a "special offer", and have needed serious maintenance repairs. Most of the bicycles were at the Skills Centre when I visited, undergoing checks.





4. Pre-schools (Early learning centres)

I visited our original Emarika Pre-school in Matopos. Incidentally we have an orphan scholarship student who started there when it opened, and who is now being supported for a

University LLB Law Programme!

The Emarika Pre-school

has been in operation

for more than 16 years.

I believe we are very

fortunate to have our

teacher there. She is

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children's faces. Reports

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Whitewater, Induna, Halale, and Mbuyazwe, but I did not have the opportunity to visit these.

With a fellow supporter we hope to expand our work at the pre-schools next year.

5. Skills centre

The Skills centre is our newest project; I supervised practical lessons and interviewed all the students. I supervised their preparation of a barbecue for c. 40 people. It was impressive how



much they appreciated and absorbed the lessons on personal hygiene, etiquette,

communication skills, finance & home management, cooking, and gardening

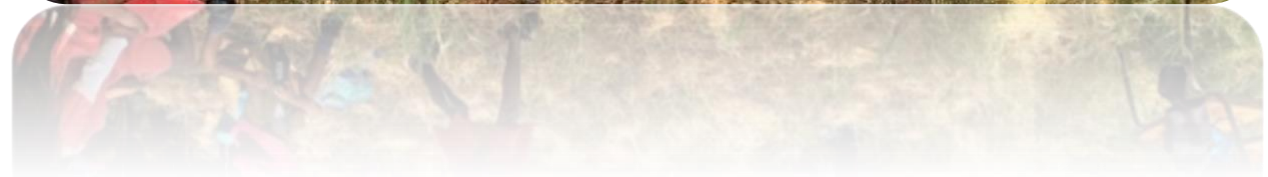
among other skills. We believe our students leave holding their heads high,

no longer embarrassed by a lack of knowledge of everyday life in town.



6. Mental & Psychological Support

Not only does Sethule support children with physical and life skills, some children are troubled because of their background and history (particularly if orphans) and need psychosocial support. I joined in with this at ATTIC, and followed counselling for particularly needy children, especially the orphans. I could witness how when a child has a platform to express fears, feelings and pains, they realize their innate worth and that people around them are bound to treat them with respect. Our this programme has reached out to over 1500 children since its inception.





7. Food distribution programme

I could not visit the 20 most desperately afflicted families in Umguza and Matobo district who are currently being given food hampers every month.



8. REACT

I had no opportunity to visit *REACT*, (an acronym for *Reject and Expose All Child Trauma*), which is our programme to expose and reject any form of sexual abuse. This year the programme has conducted sessions with 453 students in 3 different schools. I am happy to say this important programme has restarted after the pandemic lockdown.





9. Dare to Be Different

The 'Dare to be Different' (DTBD) has now reached out to 1290 students from 3 different schools. In August, DTBD was integrated into our ATTIC camp. I steered one of a number of peer education teaching sessions, called, "Be the Change". Thereby, in 7 days, I was able to speak to all the more than 100 children attending. A drama presentation afterwards showed how much these sessions meant to the children, and their impact was really profound. Several children mentioned these sessions were the best part of ATTIC !

This year's ATTIC Camp (13 to 18 year olds) was the first we could hold for 3 years; it was combined with a WAGES camp for the older youth, (19 to 24). We had c. 120 teenagers gathering to compete in sports, athletics, song, drama, poetry and bible competition, at St James' School in Nyamandlovu. Despite certain fears that there would be organizational hitches, I am proud to say that this camp was the best ever! There were absolutely no problems and everything went smoothly. We introduced group teaching sessions instead of evening talks, and this was hugely appreciated. Again, after a week's strenuous activity, all went home rejoicing, and looking forward to a repeat in 2023 !



Written by: Thabbeth Cotton: September 2022.