



# The Zim's

Issue 3 - August 2008

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Please note this is not an official Volens newsletter and thus does not in any way reflect the NGO's opinions.

*The Zim's is a regular newsletter about what's going on with the Volens Development Workers in Zimbabwe. Bruno, Caroline, Gabriel, Kristien, Luk, Thomas, Veerle and Vital share their working and living experiences with you to understand a bit more what's going on in Zimbabwe.*

## Our properties of appropriate training

Volens has two main themes for the 3 year plan 2008-2010: **solidaire economy and appropriate training.** Bruno will here explain how appropriate training is seen in his programme.

'Training' is in itself a means, not an objective. If you want for instance that people pollute less, you can achieve this by training and sensitisation. But it is an objective in itself to have a population that has skills and training, that has a critical outlook and behave as respectful and responsible citizens, to be able to find a job or to create employment.

The "appropriate" aspect of this training means that it has to be adapted to the people that you give it to. In Latin America, this often revolves around 'educacion popular', as an alternative to the official school system perceived as just repeat as a parrot. In Africa it has more to do with the filling of a gap, due to a lack of official or formal institutions to provide education and training.

These differences raised a lot of internal debates within Volens but let's have a look in this article to what is happening on the ground, now that the dust has settled? Out network, community support to orphans and vulnerable children in Zimbabwe, is part of this theme 'appropriate training'.

For us in Southern Africa, the human factor in the projects is essential. That is why we define ourselves as a capacity building organisation. That is why we sent development workers here and not just money. Cause we know local staff

often knows better how to deal with their problems and issues in their society, and will have to continue doing so after the development worker has left. But often, a development worker offers another perspective, sees things through different eyes, and that is what makes them such a

useful tool to demonstrate our solidarity with the south. Through the exchange, the sharing, some tools can be adapted to be used in Zimbabwe.

Here in Zimbabwe, there are over one and a half million orphans because of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, resulting in a life expectancy of 35 year, and 20 to 30% of the population HIV+. These children need care and have to face many material but also psychological needs. And since it has become such a widespread problem, the entire society has to invent and adapt therapeutic tools to deal with these issues, the loss, the grief, the abandonment. We are

trying to create and adapt around fifteen of these tools to be used in the two main cities of Zimbabwe. Two of these instruments are explained here in the boxes, simple and not very costly techniques but that with training and adapting can be transformed to appropriate and

powerful therapeutic tools.

### Imagine...

That you are carrying a secret. Something that makes you feel angry, or ashamed, but at the same time it feels too big for your small body. You got beaten up yesterday, your dad yelled coming home drunk, you saw your mother wither away of some unnamed disease... How can you get something so big and painful out? But now imagine that you can have a secret identity, another face to hide behind? Then you can make that mask talk and tell, say it all...

That is what you can do with puppets. Something so simple, and so appealing to children. But also to let them talk, let them develop their own character, their own story, to express their feelings. And afterwards, why not invite the parents, show them in an indirect way what their children feel, what hurts them, what they see...

And should they see anything inappropriate...



### Imagine...

That you are a tree without roots. That you never or barely knew your parents. No stories about their childhood, no love or confirmation of your creators, no clue as to whether they would have been proud of you, what they would have liked to see you do with your life. Orphans have always aroused pity, but do we really grasp the impact of something like that on children, on their view of the world?

That is the goal of the memory boxes. Hearing the voices of your parents. A box is composed by parents who know they are ill, possibly dying. A person from an NGO helps them, asks them questions, helps them put items in the box, pictures, a wedding ring, a toy, things with a history, a meaning. And then they tape these stories, audio or video, during an hour, sometimes two. It might not seem long...

But when the children are old enough, and the parents long gone and memories vague, it makes a world of difference. Often, discovering the contents of these boxes is done during a youth camp, with other children in the same situation. Sharing these strong moments with others, not alone. For a generation without parents, but looking for hope and guidance.

## Putting a face on...



Since our work is as much about people as it is about numbers, in this section, we will always present somebody involved in our projects.

This issue it is Sonah, a staff member of Oasis Zimbabwe, who works setting up pre-school programmes in churches around Harare.



### Dream of yours?

To be an international trainer of Early Childhood Development, working with poor and marginalised.

### Achievement you're most proud of?

Working for a faith based organisation, fulfilling my social responsibility towards society and God.

### What change would you like to see in Zimbabwe?

I would like to see every orphan child get the opportunity to get a quality pre-school education. Seeing them emotionally, spiritually, physically and intellectual flourishing.

### When do you feel happy?

Going on holiday, which leaves me with special memories with my family.

<http://www.oasiszw.org>



## The Zam's

Supplement 2 - August 2008

The Zam's is a regular supplement of The Zim's, about what's going on with the Volens Development Workers in Zambia. Kristien, Nina, Bert and Evelyn share their working and living experiences with you to understand a bit more what's going on in Zambia.

## Evelyn Moreno

Evelyn is Volens' very first south-south intercontinental development worker. South-south means she comes from a developing country herself, intercontinental means she crossed the Atlantic ocean from Central America to work in Africa. She shares her first impressions with us.



"Arriving from Central America to a new town, a new country and a new continent does not necessarily mean having problems adapting or handling relationships with new people. Evidently this is a completely different "planet". Planet Africa is an unknown world for our undeveloped countries in Latin America.

The difficulties, the big differences, the misunderstandings, the generalised poverty and the uncountable orphans, become new learning processes for me, full of surprises, some sad and some happy - but definitely all of them are, in their own way, peaceful.

Being a Latin American woman working as a cooperant in Zambia, for three months now, and breathing peace is an unexplained joy. Peace is an invaluable condition that we long for in Central America.

Starting the work with PAF at the Mazabuka branch in the Nega Nega Community School has been a slow and amusing process. Discovering the reality of the educational

system in the villages in Mazabuka has given me a sad and intense worrying feeling.

Like we all know, there is always a lot of work to do at the villages! With the children, the efficiency and readiness of this work is specially urgent.

### Some interesting points:

- **One limitation that made me sad:** to be unable to communicate with the children at the village, since they can hardly speak English.
- **One reality that makes me annoyed:** that the children in grade 5 or 6 cannot read.
- **One unfair fact:** The children in the village do not play at the school.
- **One thing that surprised me in the streets:** to see men holding hands, though never a man and a woman doing so."

## The time for the children is now

Many things that we need can wait for, but the children cannot wait any longer. Their moment it is right now. Their senses are developing, their bodies are growing, their souls are expecting care, and we cannot answer: "tomorrow".

Their names are today and now.

(Adaptation of the poem by G. Mistral)

## Did you know...

- the central bank cut 10 zeros, so that a trillion is now revalued to 100 Z\$?
- 1 US\$ is worth 900 times more if you exchange it to Zim\$ on a bank account rather than cash in your hand?
- 3 million Zimbabweans (out of 13 million) live outside of the country?
- "zvakanaka" is the Shona word for "OK"?



## Win a 100 billion!

What is the total budget for Volens' activities in Zimbabwe?

A. 50 000€    B. 100 000€    C. 500 000 €    D. 1 000 000 €

Send your answer to [thezimsnews@gmail.com](mailto:thezimsnews@gmail.com) and win a 100 billion!

### Answer to last month's quiz:

Applying for a residence permit costs 500 US\$ (answer C). But that is without the little extras that are supposed to speed things up...

And the winners are: Rob Thys, Damien Lesca and Yves Bartholomé