



The Zim's

Issue 4 - November 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.

Puppets at Mavambo

Tafara, Mabvuku and Bbobho are three disadvantaged townships east of central Harare – the capital of Zimbabwe. In these townships, there are about ten thousand orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). The term covers children of whom one or both parents have died, or children suffering from various inhuman circumstances due to the impending death of parents. Most parental deaths are due to Aids.

Mavambo organises psychosocial support for these children. The Volens network member organisation assists children with acquiring birth certificates, school uniforms, school fees, shelter, foster care and regular meals. Yearly they identify a number of children that have never been to school. In order to help them integrate in local schools in classes with children of their own age, Mavambo is running a small learning centre. About 50 children receive accelerated literacy and numeracy classes at primary school level.

Due to stress and trauma, OVC suffer from anxiety, loss of self-esteem and confidence, stigma, discrimination and depression. Mavambo aims to alleviate these problems through offering individual as well as group counselling facilities, and opportunities for after-school recreation (sports, dance and arts). Management, counsellors and social workers of Mavambo would like to see group counselling enhanced through involving means for playful artistic self-expression.

In conjunction with 6 students from the Theory X theatre school in Harare, Veerle Lens (Volens) is assisting Mavambo in developing ways to involve puppetry in group counselling. In order to give OVC a general idea of what a puppet show is and can be, the Theory X students first performed a full-length puppet show at Mavambo's learning centre. The show was a huge success with the children.

Counsellors and social workers then set preliminary topics on which they would like to counsel children at the learning centre. For each topic, Theory X students developed introductory puppet show scenes in which characters and a problematic situation are set. At the moment group counselling sessions are being conducted whereby the students play the introductory part and various small groups of children complete the stories using the puppets. Mavambo counsellors conduct group-counselling sessions straight after, drawing on what the children have shown and acted out through the puppets.

The children prove to be much more open than usually in offering information – both during the puppet plays and in the group counselling sessions. Counsellors and social workers also appreciate the fact that the puppet plays bring out various underlying issues for parties involved in the various depicted conflicts. It also allows them to better identify children that need individual counselling. Various problematic situations have already been addressed as a result of the sessions – either by the counsellor and social workers, or by the children themselves. When asked whether they like to continue with the puppet plays project, the children enthusiastically respond in the affirmative: 'It is fun and it helps us solve our problems'.

SAVE THE DATE!

27 December 2008

Testimonies and pictures

"ZimbaTalks"

2 pm - 5 pm, Vilvoorde, details will follow



Top: OVC of Mavambo Learning Centre watching the puppet show
Bottom: Theory X students (Dereck, Philani, Precious, Everson, Leroy, Musa)

Numbers that count:

In the agriculture programme, the 8 organisations in the network produce together 14 different crops, which are currently processed into only 28 products (ex. peanuts are processed into peanut butter).

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 presents Stabile, an OVC at Chiedza, a volens partner organisation.

Dream of yours?

To become a nurse, as first one of my family
Achievement you're most proud of?

On Christmas 2007, the basketball team I played in won a tournament, and I got some shoes as a prize

What change would you like to see in Zimbabwe?

I would want different changes: for the schools to have more teachers, for the hospitals to have doctors and nurses and for all people to have food.



Food Fairs

Zimbabwe's situation at the food security level is purely catastrophic. More than 50% of the population will soon have nothing to eat anymore. But solutions exist, and probably the first thing to do would be to change mentalities.

This article is about food fairs that aim to promote diversity and traditional dishes other than the eternal sadza nenyama (maize porridge and meat).

A food fair is like any other fair, a place where 2 types of people gather: exhibitors and visitors. In this case, the exhibitors are farmers (mostly women) who showcase their specialities. They gather in the morning to cook and prepare all the dishes they wish to present to others, the visitors.

Food fairs have significantly gained in importance in Zimbabwe. Over the years, people seem to have lost knowledge about the diversity of available foods. And to recover and spread this knowledge is exactly the objective of food fairs.

Food fairs are thus platforms where farmers, especially women, can share their recipes and food traditions with others. It is the perfect place to promote the consumption of traditional (and often forgotten) foods, to promote the idea of variety and diversity of dishes, to improve knowledge on nutritional value (also important for people affected by HIV/AIDS) and to give substance to the fact that food can be found readily available all year long.

The Marowe Food Fair has been created along those lines by CADS in 2005. The Food Fair has greatly evolved since then. Whereas it first focused on small grains and vegetables, it now also puts seeds, meat, woodcraft and processing techniques on display.

The fair is very successful and is, for its next edition, looking at ways to keep the dishes warm (by importing techniques from Kenya) and to distribute recipe books.

Some numbers:

- 300 visitors coming from a 200 km radius
- 60 food exhibitors (45 women, 3 men, 12 children)
- 10 seed exhibitors
- 1 woodcraft exhibitor



Entertainment provided by local children and music groups.



Proud participants in the food fair, ready to explain their recipes.



Traditional meat dishes have been introduced in the food fair: majuru.



Traditional dish: hacha pulp.



Zvambwa, made of rapoko grains and hacha sirup. Very sweet, without adding sugar.

Did you know...

- in Shona, there are 21 ways to use verbs, depending on the class of the nouns?
- Bruno's cat already brought in 4 rats (in various states, ranging from alive and barely kicking to left overs)?
- the 11 development workers in Zimbabwe and Zambia are doing the work of 15 posts?
- cinema ticket in Harare costs as much as a bus ticket, which is usually about 30 eurocent?



Win a 1 quadrillion cheque!

Which animal did some cooperants almost bump into during a cooperants meeting?

- a. a hippo b. an elephant c. a rhino d. a black mamba

Send your answer to thezimsnews@gmail.com and win a 100 billion!

Answer to last month's quiz:

The total budget for Volens activities in Zimbabwe, was (b.) 100 000 Euro.

The winner will receive his note in the mail and is Yves Bartholomé!



The Zam's

Supplement 3 - November

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.

New president

According to the observations by the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA), the October 30th elections in Zambia were free, fair and transparent. About 47,5% of the nation's possible voters casted their choice. Apathy, low confidence in the electoral process and loss of ID cards are to blame for this low turnout.

The winner of this presidential election, organized after President L. P. Mwanasa passed away in August, is former vice-president R. B. Banda, of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy. He was a Minister in the 70s and served in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an ambassador. He has promised to continue the former president' policies and try to improve lives of Zambians via uphold democracy and human rights.

The opposition refused to accept the result and concede defeat, citing irregularities such as votes cast on Friday and Saturday in the Western province of Zambia. Also one presiding officer was found with marked ballot papers in Lusaka. Despite these accusations, a lot of foreign dignitaries attended the inauguration ceremony on 2 November. Among them were president Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, president Bingu Wamutarika of Malawi and president Kgalema Motlanthe of South Africa.

People's Action Forum wins UNESCO

People's Action Forum (PAF), one of the member organisations of the Zambian programme, received on the 8th of September the "UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize 2008".

The recognition was well deserved, after eight years of hard work in literacy in rural and vulnerable communities. The prize comes with 20,000 USD.

The news was received with great joy at the PAF Lusaka offices via a phone call of UNESCO's director general Koichiro Matsuura.

Since the prize was awarded mainly for the efforts of the PAF branch in Mazabuka, it was Janet Nyoni, Area Coordinator for Mazabuka, who travelled to Paris to receive the prize and bring it back to the Nega Nega community in Mazabuka District.

Jennifer Chiwela, PAF Executive Director, and the UNESCO representative handed over the prize to Jane Chisanga, Mazabuka Chairperson, during a remarkable ceremony at the Nega Nega Capacity Building Learning Activity Center on the 3rd of October.

Kristien Van Camp (Volens' Regional Coordinator) and Evelyn Moreno (Volens Development worker at PAF) attended the ceremony.

Quoting PAF's Executive Director, Jennifer Chiwela: "In PAF literacy programs we look at empowering people with knowledge beyond reading and writing. PAF also provides them with education about discrimination and stigmatisation and aims at breaking some misplaced myths about HIV/Aids".



Picture of the month

Since pictures say as much as words, if not more, we've decided to add this new item. This month's pix were taken at a Seed Fair and offer a tiny glimpse of the diversity of seeds (in this case: peas) that Zimbabwe has to offer.

