

Newsletter
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Changing Lives in Chongwe
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Dear Friends of CLinC,

This time of the year in Zambia is the end of the four month rainy season. Most of Zambia is



sparse populated and the land becomes green with grasses up to two meters tall. Boots need to be worn to protect against snakes although Zambians usually go barefoot!

This is a typical house with mud walls and roof thatched with the long dried grasses. Houses are usually found in small groups, called villages, and surrounded by banana trees and areas planted with maize. Some of the cobs will be eaten as sweet corn but the majority will be dried and ground into maize meal to make their nshima throughout the year.

Life is very different in the compounds (townships) where our schools are situated. There is little spare land to grow food. All food has to be bought from the local street markets.



This is a street market on the main road through Chipata compound where St Anne's school is situated.

Covid-19 in Zambia.

Cases of Covid-19 remained low until mid-January this year when there was a spike of around 1,600 cases in a day. The good news is that there have only been around 75,000 cases and 1,000 deaths since last May when it first occurred.

The spike in January may have been due to Christmas celebrations and crowded church services or to the new S African variant coming in with food and other supplies.

Schools in Zambia

Schools closed early in December and grade 7 & 9 examinations then took place. The results came out in mid-February.

Schools normally go back in the first week of January to start the new school year. This year the start date was delayed until Jan 18th to enable teachers to cope with marking examinations. However, following the Covid-19 spike, schools did not return until Feb 1st.

Term 1 2021

Feeding programme

Money has been sent to provide all 400 children with two hot nutritious meals each week this term. Cooking is done outside over a charcoal fire and the meal consists of a maize porridge with a relish made from onions, tomatoes, cabbage and soya pieces.



In recent years, the rains have been less and the water level in Kariba Lake has dropped. Much of Zambia's power comes from the HEP station at Kariba Dam. This lack of electricity has resulted in even more power cuts and has affected small businesses. Consequently food prices have risen. In the last twelve months, the pandemic has caused a massive increase in Zambia's debt to other countries. The cost of living has risen dramatically and, as always, it is the poorest people who are hit hardest!

As a result of the rise in the cost of living and the failure of many small businesses, parents have been unable to pay the usual contributions for their children's education. These contributions have always been voluntary to ensure that the poorest children are able to attend school.

The running of the schools

The plan was that the teachers monthly pay would come from these contributions and this happened for five years. We were pleased to think that the schools were slowly becoming self-sufficient. However, for the last year CLinC has had to revert to paying the teachers, carers and guard each month. Any money received by the school has been used for their other running costs; hand sanitizer, chlorine for their water supply, electricity and basic school equipment.



The value of the kwacha has fallen over the last year. This time last year there were K18 to the pound and now it is over K30. This has, however, enabled us to help the schools more.

At current exchange rates, the teachers' pay costs CLinC around £1,380 per 13 week term. The sum they each receive is very small and this term we have sent an extra bonus payment of around £7 for all teachers, and £3.50 for carers and guard. This small amount will help with the purchase of basic food such as mealie meal.

We also discovered that during school holidays the teachers were unpaid. We now pay them for all months as house rent, food bills etc do not stop in school holidays.

St Anne's toilet block, built by CLinC in 2010 has a septic tank that needs emptying at intervals.

Their photocopier is also in need of servicing. This is an invaluable piece of equipment as worksheets can be produced at less cost than purchasing textbooks. We do try to send a sum of money to buy textbooks each year, usually the profits from the Annual get-together. However, this year we are unable to have a meeting and will look at adding a sum for this when we send term 2 money.

St Mark's school require a thermometer to comply with Covid-19 rules.

We have sent money to cover all of these essential items.

Teacher training.



At the beginning of 2020 six of our teachers were in training.

Martha, teacher at St Mark's, graduated with a degree in Primary Education in December 2020. Due to Covid, the usual big ceremony and celebrations were cancelled and graduations took place on-line. However the students were still able to hire gowns and take photos to record the event.

Kelvin, Charity and Wendy are now in their final year and Alice and Mary have two years to do. Aaron has been teaching at St Mark's for two years now and is asking if he can be sponsored for teacher training. We are waiting for the papers from the college.

Grade 8 & 9 sponsorship at secondary school.

All of the 47 grade 7 pupils passed their exams and are now studying at Chipata School. This large school will be a big and exciting experience for them.

In addition 46 grade 8 pupils have moved into grade 9.

We are pleased to say that Zebra Trust have once again sent £1,500 to help with their school fees and CLinC has paid the school fees for the remaining pupils.



Success from St Mark's Community school

These five pupils left St Mark's school two years ago and have called in to announce that they have gained their grade 9 certificate and are now going into grade 10. The boy in the white t-shirt gained the highest mark in the whole year! The teachers at St Mark's are delighted as it is proof of success for their teaching.

Income

Thank you to everyone who has a monthly, quarterly or annual standing order for CLinC as this does enable us to plan ahead.

Also thank you to those of you who give annually to enable us to sponsor our teachers at college and pupils through grades 8 & 9 at Chipata School.

A big thank you also to everyone who gift aids their donations. This makes a tremendous difference to our income. If you pay tax and would be willing to gift aid your donations, please let me know and I will get a form to you.

Easter Chicks & bunnies

From Monday March 1st, little Easter chicks and bunnies will be on sale in Cromhall Village Shop. Ideal small gifts for family, friends or neighbours.

These are not toys for young children due to beady eyes and button feet!



Thank you all once again for your continued interest and support over the years.

Trustees of CLinC:- Ann Greenhalgh, Doug Collett, Peggy Collett, Fe Gray
Nic Fleming, Colin Nash, Penny Kells

For more information visit - www.cromhall.com/clinc