



Our Children Your Children In Zimbabwe

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Special Points of Interest

• IT WAS HEARING THE SWEET MUSIC FROM ZIMBABWE that first captivated us in 1990. We continue with Shona music study, classes and performances. We also continue to reach into our depths to bridge the cultural diversity amongst us all, making building community “the priority and final frontier”.

• SIX VILLAGES create the Nhimbe for Progress core since 2000.

INSIDE

2021-2022 Library Expansion Plans	2, 3
Heart of the Nhimbe Preschool	4
MMC IS VITAL	5
W.A.T.E.R! Wells and Toilets Everyone’s Right!	6
Food Shortage	6
Oregon Bottle Drop	6
Listen In! Mwoyochena CDs	6
RECURRING DONATIONS!	6
How Else Can You Help?	6

MORE VIDEOS on Pages 3,4,5!



October 2021 found the family gratefully holding Cosmas Magaya’s *kurova guva* ceremony in Zimbabwe after a Covid-19 imposed hiatus.

The ceremony was videoed, and then shared recently online. The long-awaited opportunity to gather was finally complete for many of us around the world.

We had a chance to see more about these traditions, the Shona family fabric, and the cultural arts school, Humwe, that Cosmas’ daughter, Tsitsi, had started, something of which everyone is so proud!

Cosmas often talked about Nhimbe for Progress, the first born, and Humwe, the younger, both being key components for his aspirations to live on. Getting to know Cosmas for me was all about the humanitarian work, and that aspect of his beingness. It was a treasure, like *baba* and *amai*, reaching out to help “*kubatsira*” the community.

Musicians, particularly mbira players, understand the importance of Humwe’s mission. All of these efforts are delightfully interwoven in such a singular way. Everyone is grateful that all is now established with such a good foundation!

2021 was predicted to be another challenging year, but because of your help, we were ready! We had our plans in place to reach out with more soap and masks for the villagers, monthly care wear for our teens, as well as keeping the school safely in operation. We also expected to build a few wells.

We always start with our imagination and Large Love, answering the kaleidoscope questions: How much funding is there? and What will actually work?

The blog online detailed a delicate unraveling of those very plans:

- In a nutshell, we were in lock down until March after regulations required we buy rubber boots and gowns for all those working at the Center...[\(more online\)](#)
- While residents were staying home Cyclone Eloise ripped through the region...[\(more online\)](#)
- Reconvening school in March after repairs and realizing that 22 wells had collapsed also needing attention... [\(more online...\)](#)
- In July, a wildfire moved across the bush to the playground and Magaya homestead ... [\(more online ...\)](#)
- Making lemonade with that lemon, blessed us with over an acre donated, and that parcel needed a fence ... [\(more online...\)](#). And, you gratefully came through for us to be able to purchase it!...[\(more online...\)](#)
- School then resumes in September, as well as the hut buildings which was paused since June ...[\(more online...\)](#)
- October brings the toughest month

of the year and this year is no exception due to the inclement weather, our volunteers cry out for help with maize until March ... [\(more online...\)](#) and again you come through...manna from heaven descended, and we have everyone covered right up to June! ... [\(more online...\)](#)

- Lets just say its been a more than eventful year.

One of the largest concerns was of course Covid-19. We purchased over \$2,600 worth of soap to distribute to the residents for their winter months, and another \$200 for the MMC girls. All of a sudden there was another complete lock-down. We had the soap but couldn’t get to it, nor distribute it. The plan now is distribution on December 15th to coincide with preschool graduation.

The oddest part of supporting their protocol with Covid is that their government rules are totally different. We say 6’ and they say a meter, which is closer to 3’. You can be arrested for not wearing a mask outside, but inside it isn’t an issue! [This contrast is highlighted in the video of our MMC girl giving a speech \(following their rules, but not ours\).](#) It makes my head spin. Our job is to support not enforce, so soap it is!

Go with the flow in 2022!

WE SURVIVED 2021 with many thanks to YOU!

And, also importantly, we look forward to the flourishing of preschool children, MMC girls, the W.A.T.E.R! program, and Nhimbe families in 2022!

One of Cosmas' and my big first steps when we began in 2000, was sponsoring 21 children at six nearby schools.

Going to those schools on every Zimbabwe trip was bluntly, rather painful ... broken windows, papers in disarray, and no books. Five children still share one book. These are government schools in the impoverished regions, and they are doing the best they can with the resources allocated (no one's getting rich).

Sparkling children's eyes were not enough by themselves—the contrast of sadness and hardship-born stress was also peering out at me. Through it all, we learned so much more about what children need to stimulate their wellbeing. We work with that from many angles, creating more opportunities to enhance learning.



The Nhimbe for Progress Library was one of our first ways to reach in deeper, on the September 2001 visit when we purchased our first Shona novels.

Books have been added ever since, both by suitcase carrying volunteers, and special shipping donations at \$100 a box. These lovely selections have been housed in the smallest hut at the Community Center.

All of this was conceived in the early years, when every cent

was spread so thin, you didn't know that there was anything on the bread!

The local carpenters were contracted to build shelves. They used what they thought would work, but the shelves were 6" wide and some 16" high. So, that has been a challenge. Another is that the schools use stacks on a table instead of books standing on their sides. Combine those two together and we got tall stacks of books.

We implemented a labeling system so that at least the books could be organized. Not Dewey decimal but just simply age group appropriate categories. As far as I know, that is helping the librarian when she needs to put books away, and helping the children find their reading level. We placed the smallest children's books low and the adult genre on the top. That was part of the strategy to make this tiny and very full hut more user friendly.

~ 2021-2022 LIBRARY EXPANSION! ~

In May, after a couple of months of lock-down, we realized that there were extra funds in the bank due to the reduced operational costs. After a few co-creative discussions, we decided on two improvements to the Community Center we would normally not dare to imagine due to funding.

First, was to build a hut where the marimbas can be housed and lessons taken with hopefully a bit more room available. Besides wanting to have a better place to play, just having more space to breathe seemed like a real good idea! The second suggestion was to also build a larger library hut.

One of my hopes with that is to: 1) build more appropriate shelves, and 2) not have the shelves just line a round room, but potentially have

them able to come out into the room. Hopefully, the books can be better housed and above all, found!

The question of appropriate shelves is really about the size, more than anything. I'm actually thinking that the current shelves could be cut into boards, and then used with cinder blocks or bricks to create whatever sizes are needed. Bricks are far less expensive and more available than wood ever is. This is a good starting place, reminding me of college days when funds were

sparse and we got creative with apartment furniture. Haven't we all used brick and boards to make shelves?

So, we're building a new library! And then, the lock-down stopped everything for three months. Plus, the long narrow windows we used for all our huts were not available, so they had them custom made locally in Mhondoro. Great idea... keep money in the community...but the fellow had little electricity to run his



welder. I had heard that Muda picked them up this last week so we can start building again.

Oh! The pleasure in the simplest things also seems really complicated. ;*)

Muda's advisor forgot to tell him how much the hut would cost with a roof on it, so we over shot our budget right away. I guess this seems obvious, and it doesn't seem like a question I should have to ask, so there is a learning curve going on

here, and I doubt if that particular mistake will ever, ever, be made again.

Please, do take an interest in helping to upgrade our library—we welcome your support!

Right now, our number one focus is improving the shelving, and adding more space for those precious books that are coming in

the future, and if needed, maybe build another table. Besides obviously getting the roof on!

If you know anyone interested in reading, libraries, educational empowerment, etc. do send them our story. We would love to develop this place to not only help the children, since libraries are fairly non-existent, but also their parents, who are there at home to assist with homework, but may not know English, and so they can also gratefully learn.

~ MORE OF THE LIBRARY EXPANSION PLAN! ~

A non-profit called Goodera contacted us this year to see if they could help us. A lot of times I get emails and people usually are soliciting. In this case, they actually wanted to volunteer!

Goodera works with large corporations who want to encourage the many people in their work force, to volunteer. The company sponsors the time that the employees work virtually with Goodera.

They started by making a video to share our vision, mission and values. It is really fascinating because they applied it to a worldwide cross-cultural ideal, which is precisely the idea, although we are primarily known for working with Zimbabwe, Peru and playing music here. It was really amazing! Just 2 minutes long but quite eye-opening and moving!

Another thing that percolated up out of this, was their volunteers reading audio books for the children in the villages. Well, after a few hurdles I think we have a plan to imple-

ment. We'll buy an mp3 player that we can charge with the solar panels. The librarian can play the audio of a preschool book we have available. The children and parents can follow along as she guides them through the book.

This would not be for the preschoolers. It would most likely be 2nd and 3rd graders for instance, whose exams in 4th grade are in English, and so really must learn the language.

This is an innovative and progressive idea to be working with in a region that is still without electricity, running water, etc., although, most everyone has cell phones.

In any case, we are hoping that this



experiment will help our youth of all ages with their English! And, we will of course, learn so much in the process.

Our library is unique and this opportunity is rare. **Do see this very short video online!**

Please consider donating to the Library Expansion! **Thank you so much. Tatenda Chaizvo!**

The children in the future also thank you!



Its still the daily routine for all ages to take temperatures before entering the grounds, then wash hands with the chigubhu, by stepping on the stick tied to a string and jug of water with a touch of soap.



VIDEOS #1 ONLINE HERE!

VIDEOS #2 ONLINE HERE!



Mealtime! And lovely MMC-made dolls!



You can see from the look on their faces they are satisfied. These children likely do not have toys as we think of them at home...no books, balls or dolls. Life is definitely simpler, and nothing wrong with that. It is wonderful to see the delight in their eyes receiving these from MMC!



~ HEART OF THE NHIMBE PRESCHOOL ~



The Nhimbe Preschool, or creche as they call it, has been the very Nhimbe heart since the start. Born out of our partnerships and deep desire to see the best outcome for our village children, it shines above others schools in the area!

On my second trip in 2000 we visited local preschools and were disturbed by what we saw. A school's poverty clearly determines opportunity. Very few resources were seen. The atmosphere was disheartening, cloaked with a lack of sunlight and fresh air. Dis-ease was palpable in the dank room, riddled

with cracks. When available, they have *sadza* for their mid-morning meal. When a building is condemned, they meet under a tree, with good-hearted women supporting them, but who often are untrained in early childhood development.

We have changed all of that in our neck of the woods! And, I am so grateful! Those memories are just that ... the past ... and they no longer apply to any of these children or their futures. We continue to sustain the vision and feel very blessed by your kindness and assistance!

All of you being involved are the key ingredients of this very powerful, inspiring, collaborative soup!

We have managed to keep the costs at \$195 per child per year, covering teachers, cooks, guards, grounds/house keeping, district requirements plus supplies and various fresh foods! It doesn't



cover the upkeep of buildings, anything new (like tables), or the unexpected. ***Please opt-in to support this miracle however you can. We graduate 40 of the preschoolers Dec 15th!***

We all appreciate whatever you can do!

Tatenda Chaizvo!





These girls are learning to sew, and proud of the dolls they made by hand to give to the preschool!



is a salve on a wound, is a superior healing agent for all ages, and a blessing to those living with hardship, whether refugee status, war, or economic chaos.



Playing marimba is also a superb therapy! These girls are learning a variety of songs from Kenny, a talented musician, who has been teaching Nhimbe children for years. Girls choose how they focus their free-time outside of MMC health/hygiene meetings.

“MMC provides teen guidance at a time when maturing is at its peak. It’s a tender age...”



New MMC girls receive a Start-up kit of 3 pair of underwear, reusable washable supplies and a soaking bucket. Everyone receives a bar of soap each month. All ages of girls can attend meetings, sports, sewing lessons, etc.



See the joy, the happiness!



The underpinnings of MMC have their roots prior to 2010 when we were holding Youth Well Being Camps for girls and boys. Some of the girls shared that they didn’t have underwear. We began Underwear for Over There. In another camp, we found they also didn’t have monthly care supplies, so we began manufacturing them not long after.

This is just basic!

We continue to be grateful for your continued support in providing these supplies. The parents are elated. Due to poverty they can not provide many things they know their children need. The local officials also believe in MMC as foundational for the community. The girls themselves now do not have to miss school, soccer play, or otherwise be socially isolated. Once a girl begins her menses, she is often hijacked by the situation. The goal is to keep the girls in school, playing and socially involved thereby avoiding depression and suicide, plus direct her towards her absolute best life, rich in cultural heritage.

Education is the real hope that everyone has for these girls. Parents not knowing English, nor having enough funds for school fees, or lacking money for food, aren’t something we can tackle, but we can give these maturing girls a catalyst into a new frame of reference about their bodies, their responsibilities to themselves and the community, and a great engaging way to peer bond, vital at this life stage. MMC provides teen guidance at a time when maturing is at its peak. It’s a tender age and requires much support.

MMC Start-up kits are \$18 and last about 3 years with normal washing. Soap is \$2 for the year. Holding the meetings and providing a safe space to learn and share one’s feelings is priceless! ***Do help us with MMC!***

Song Rhythm Links (#1) (#2) (#3) (#4)

WE WELCOME your support and ideas!

W.A.T.E.R! WELLS AND TOILETS EVERYONE'S RIGHT!

CENTER GARDEN

for the preschool & elderly



Cyclone Eloise did plenty of damage to the Community Center, which we gratefully repaired. Additionally, 22 families in the Nhimbe villages lost their well. Because of your enormous help we were successful in rebuilding! This effort is so impactful.

We can't begin to explain the vital role that a good well plays. The obvious is being able to reach down and get a bucket of water that comes out clear. Having clean water to cook, clean and wash clothing is basic. Also, plenty of water to grow a garden is directly linked to prosperity for the entire community. Not only can the family grow more nutrient dense

THANK YOU SO MUCH for supporting the building of wells! Win-win-win!

FOOD SHORTAGE!

October is always a tough month. In 2005, someone shared a saying, "even the rats want to commit suicide in October". Its the end of the agrarian year and everything is so dry! Thanks to your generosity, we have managed to provide maize to last our 13 Nhimbe volunteer families until June! It has been such a challenging year and we all are so grateful!

~ OREGON BOTTLE DROP ~

Can BottleDrop be an easy way for you to donate? One bag of returnables buys Three, (yes, three) girls monthly soap for 1 year! Check out how this works—CHOOSE Ancient Ways as your charity...thank you! BOTTLEDROPCENTER.com

LISTEN IN!



Our Online Shop helps you listen to the clips on the incredible MWOYOCHENA kuZimbabwe CDs, all donated by the best musicians. If you don't have a copy, you should! The song selections are exquisite.

RECURRING DONATIONS!

Please consider a recurring donation with a bank draft or credit card! We have a new link on the website. You can set it up without our assistance. CHECK THIS OUT! Set for monthly, quarterly, or annually for any amount! Thanks for considering!

HOW ELSE CAN YOU HELP?

Several ideas here: Go to SMILE.AMAZON.com to let Amazon donate a % of your purchases to Ancient Ways! Become an Ancient Ways member! Share our story! Donate your time... any gesture of time you offer is greatly appreciated! *Tatenda Chaizvo!*

Thank you for being part of the solution!

We all deserve the basics!

