



From Harare to Ewloe- The Story So Far...

The adventure began with a visit from Alan and Dorothy Graham, Missionaries to Zimbabwe. They came to share the story of their work in establishing Jabulani, an orphanage for children in Harare.



Alan & Dorothy

During their visit we heard of the harrowing circumstances many of the children are born into and the desperate response of extremely young mothers, unable to care or provide for their children and then abandoning them at birth.



We also learned that Alan and Dorothy reach out to many children in the rural areas of Harare and beyond, by visiting schools, leading collective worship and providing food for the children, most of whom live in poverty.

One such school was the Herbert Chitepo Primary School. This school catered for over 1200 children. The children were housed inside an abandoned Tobacco Warehouse for their lessons.



Sign on road outside school

Inspired by their work, our children decided that they wanted to raise some money to buy basic tables and chairs for the children to use, as they had seen from the photographs that they sit on the dirt floor for lessons.



Children with 'new' desks

Our children held a cake sale and raised £70 which was given to Alan to purchase some furniture on his arrival back in Harare. Alan sent a film clip of the children receiving the furniture...a few benches with leaning desks attached...the African children were overcome with happiness at what our shocked children could only describe as an 'old tatty bench'.

Appalled at the thought of their new Zimbabwean friends contentment with so little, our children through the Schools Council decided to address this situation head on and make sure that their new friends had some lovely equipment just like they have every day!

Mrs Dyas met with the Senior Management Team to discuss a way forward which would enable the children both in Wales and Zimbabwe to learn about the respective cultures and traditions and also support the educational needs of the Herbert Chitepo School. A 5 year plan was drawn up which could be presented to the authorities in Zimbabwe in the hope that they would agree to the partnership.



Senior Management meeting to discuss five year strategy



Two EG teachers with orphans at Jabulani

An opportunity was given to two of our teachers, Miss Davies and Mr Griffiths to take a 10 day visit to Jabulani Orphanage with a brief to gain permission from the Director of the Zvimba District to partner with the Herbert Chitepo Primary School. Nothing like this had been attempted before and due to political tensions, it was very uncertain that the authorities would agree.



Armed with prayer and a God- inspired plan, a meeting was convened with Mr Nizira, the Director of Education. He agreed immediately that this was indeed a 'splendid plan for a worthwhile partnership between our schools'. The scene was now set!



With the Head Mistress after receiving the great news

A visit to the Herbert Chitepo School was arranged and Mr Griffiths and Miss Davies spent the rest of their stay in Harare at the school, learning about their education system and seeing at first hand the obstacles the children and staff face daily.



Children were taught in a very humid, cramped and dilapidated warehouse, several classes taking place simultaneously. Children shared pencils, many knelt, leaning on wood or pieces of cardboard to write. Resources were negligible. Furniture was negligible. Teachers

wrote on pieces of wooden planks used as a makeshift blackboard. An unfinished and unusable classroom block had been constructed but it had no roof, windows or doors and a dirt floor which rendered it unfit for any purpose.



A roofless classroom



Walking 10km along very busy highways

Many children walked 10km to school each day carrying their shoes as they could not be ruined...they were so treasured.

Most children could not afford the \$25 dollars per year to send their children to



school...but this school taught the children regardless of whether they could pay.

Most children had one meal a day (evening) and nothing before school or during the day.



Furniture outside Ewloe Green

Although some resources were donated to the school, taken by Mr Griffiths and Miss Davies, the biggest surprise awaited them back home!

During their visit, Mrs Dyas had contacted Flintshire LA and as they were closing their furniture stores, asked for

any donations of furniture for the Herbert Chitepo School. Flintshire were delighted to oblige and delivered so much classroom furniture that a 40 ft

shipping container was ordered, filled and sent to Harare. Our children and families loaded lots of other resources onto the container to help with the teaching and learning at Herbert Chitepo.



Just enough room...



Doors locked, let the journey begin

Our children had also been busy fundraising holding a Sponsored 'Welly Walk' of 10km in reflection of the 10km that the children at Herbert Chitepo have to walk to school every day.

We tracked the journey of the container from Liverpool, through the port at Le Havre, on through the Suez Canal, onwards to Port Elizabeth in South Africa, then by road through South Africa and Mozambique and on to Zimbabwe.



We applied for funding from The British Council to support our partnership and we were granted funding to support exchange visits for staff.

Children began to learn about the similarities and differences in home and school life and to celebrate diversity as they developed relationships between the children. Pupils began to reflect on global issues.

Mrs Kadye, Mr Tatta and Miss Denga were invited to come over to Wales in October 2014 to learn about our education system and took back with them lots of information and resources for the children in Zimbabwe.



Pupils trying to learn like our African friends have to



90 pupils read to start the 15mile Bikeathon

In the meantime, the children at Ewloe Green School were busy raising funds to provide much needed resources for their partner school. They took part in cake sales, a Zumbathon, a Bikeathon, a Musical production and many other activities to raise money to construct the roof onto the unfinished classroom block.



Excited pupils; the container arrives

The day came when the container arrived at Herbert Chitepo Primary School. The joy and excitement from the 1200 children and staff was unimaginable!



A rather excited Head Mistress



Prompted by the gift of such valuable and necessary resources, the District Education Office constructed a roof on the unfinished classroom block at Herbert Chitepo. Our fund raising project now could be diverted to address other issues.

In order to address the important matter of children communicating with each other and also staff sharing good practice, we needed to have a reliable method of exchanging work. Parcels which we had sent in earlier months had been lost with little exchange taking place. The Internet was to be the best solution. But the problem we faced was that although Herbert Chitepo Primary School had a source of electricity, it was switched off for most of the day and therefore extremely limited.



Classrooms with a roof



Solar panels fitted on site in Zimbabwe

Although limited in resources, Zimbabwe is rich in sunshine and so solar power was the order of the day. This would ensure that the school had access to electricity throughout the day. Our fund raising efforts paid for solar panels and battery back up to be installed at the school.

The next step was to identify and provide IT equipment including a training package for the staff.

Our fund raising purchased: 7 x HP 255 G2 laptop w/ Windows 8.1, 1 x HP 1102

Printer, 7 x Microsoft Office Home and Student, 1 x APC 650 VA



Our friend Mr Gopito with equipment and electricity





UPS, 7 x Norton Antivirus, 1 x Training package in school, 1 x Networking/ Project management system and set up.

In October 2014 Mrs Kadye, Mr Tattu and Miss Denga arrived in the UK for a 10 day visit to Ewloe Green School. Upon arrival we held a welcome buffet where they had the opportunity to meet Mr Budd, Director of Education for Flintshire, the Chair of the County Council, MPs, Governors and

Meeting with Director of Education



Staff receiving training

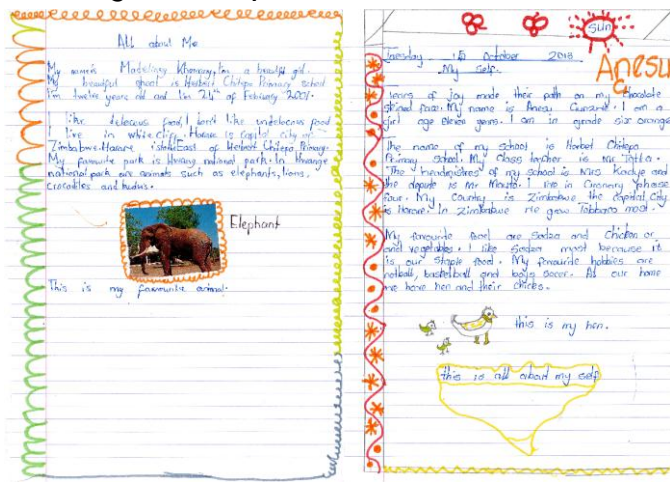
other dignitaries and staff.

During their stay resources were donated to Herbert Chitepo school including, 2 Tablets, a Phonics scheme of work, Numeracy books, Recorders, Football Kits, Footballs, Sports vests and some children's novels.

A presentation of the project was made at Hawarden High School to support the Welsh Bacculaureate studies for 6th Form students and also update our past pupils with developments of the partnership. Support was also given to Sandycroft Primary Schools in applying for British Council funding and sharing our experiences to date.



HC pupils proudly wearing their new football kits



A meeting was held with FCC Director of Education regarding update from the visit and full support of the LA was given to engage in the project at Local Authority level and partner with Zimba to share good practice etc.



An exchange of work took place in December 2014 and frequent communication between Zimbabwe and Ewloe Green, sharing events, activities etc between schools took place throughout the year.

The installation of the internet took place at Herbert Chitepo Primary School.

Beautiful work sent from Zimbabwe

On the last day of the visit, we learned that parents had requested a new school be established on the opposite side of the Bulawayo Road as children from villages and communities further into the rural landscape were being injured crossing it.



Parents had brought planks of wood and nails to erect a makeshift classroom. We were shown photographs of their new school, Mbuya Bona Primary School, the satellite school to Herbert Chitepo. Through our western eyes we saw a dilapidated make shift shed with a dirt floor and a large single table, which was constructed from cardboard. Something needed to be done!

More fundraising was in the 'Tough Mudder'

rides covering hundreds of miles, more concerts, a Sponsored Safari Walk etc and together with anonymous donations funded the building of a lovely new classroom to house the Early Years children at Mbuya Bona Primary School.

Staff before a 12-mile assault course

needed and so teachers took part assault course, Sponsored Bike



300 miles in 3days from North to South Wales



Classrooms being built in MB

This proved to be a catalyst for an additional seven classrooms being built for the rest of the school. All of this effort was attracting more and more attention from the Education Authorities in Zimbabwe, winning the schools several awards for school improvements...and Zimbabweans know how to celebrate!

Mrs Dyas received a phone call from Flintshire Council to say that they had a huge amount of classroom and office furniture that needed a new home and they offered to



More furniture going spare...

donate it to our school partnership. This was an offer that couldn't be refused and so another 40 ft container was ordered!

This time we managed to engage a local reprographics company, who learning about our ongoing work and the needs of our partner schools in Harare, donated 2 photocopiers. Christleton High School had completely renewed their curriculum and so 200 bags of text books arrived as a donation. Football kits, shoes, clothes, library books, games, paper and education resources were donated by our children and families plus 5 huge Gazebos which could be used for lessons, providing some much needed shelter from the hot sun.



7 units in MB

In September 2015 Mr Tatta, Mr Gopito and Mr Nizira arrived from Zimbabwe on a 7 day visit to Wales. During their visit we shared practice and information regarding



supporting pupils with additional learning needs and a full curriculum for pupils aged 3 – 18.

Mr Nizira spent time shadowing Mr Budd as part of the Local Authority links during which he gave a presentation to Council members and to our Secondary Headteachers where he shared about the benefits of the partnership and the education system in Zimbabwe. He also attended a slate laying ceremony to begin the building of a new college facility in Deeside.

During their visit we learned of the significant economic downturn in Zimbabwe and the issues that they were facing on a daily basis. Even so, we had no real idea of what would transpire after their visit.

Time passed very quickly and messages came and went between our schools but once the second container of resources arrived, problems began to be more evident.



Finally...the container arrived

The authorities opened the container to inspect the content and to decide if they were fit for their educational purposes. During this delay in securing the relevant documentation for duty free passage to the school, time lapsed and the companies involved in holding the container began to rack up astronomical charges!

Eventually, the authorities relented and issued the documentation but the invoices for storage were so large that they could not be afforded.



Piles and piles of donated textbooks arrive



The parents from the schools petitioned the companies and complained to the authorities (a very brave thing to do) and the costs were reduced by 95%. This was fabulous news but the schools still had to find the \$200 to get the container released. Between both schools, the money was found and the container released.



Office equipment being used in MB

However, despite the gratitude of the schools, we felt that there was something wrong. We were concerned that we had received very little electronic communication and the resonance of the communications was somewhat muted.

We decided to identify the next project in our partnership and wondered if they needed more IT equipment, had a problem with their internet link or whether Mbuya Bona School needed to have electricity provision and to set them up with an IT Suite. However, careful questioning uncovered a huge humanitarian issue impacting the country and as our partner schools were not in affluent areas but served remote, rural Zimbabwe, the situation was getting critical. We learned that there was now 90% unemployment across the country.



Happy faces at Herbert Chitepo

Teachers and Government workers were not being paid. Parents could not afford their children's school fees (\$25). There was a drought and crops that were grown at the school to supplement the very poor diet had failed.



Pupils at their new desks

The bore hole at Mbuya Bona school was not deep enough to reach the water source and so children had to bring their own water to school. The well at Herbert Chitepo School was running very low and there were not enough access points for the 1200 children.

The internet could not be afforded at \$185 per month and the costs for the container had wiped out their school funds.

Banks were in disarray and the national currency was going to be changed to Bonds. People could withdraw minimal amounts from the banks and many were camping outside to the banks unable to afford the bus fare home.

We immediately arranged to transfer funds to reimburse the schools for the cost of releasing the container and to pay for 12 months of internet costs to enable the educational aspect of the partnership to continue.

We managed to investigate further and discovered that the Government had a feeding programme available for the children to ensure that they were provided with one meal per day. We asked if this was happening at the partner schools but sadly discovered that this was not the case. Any 'meal' provided was for Grade 2 children only and was a tiny amount of maize. This was prepared and cooked over a wood fire outside as there were no real cooking facilities at either school. The rest of the children had no food.



But God is good...and as we were learning of the situation in Zimbabwe, a financial donation was made via a bequest from a church to support the work we are involved in at the schools.



Infant pupils at Herbert Chitepo

The needs were identified and quotes were secured to construct 2 buildings, one at each school, to be

Kitchen/Dining

rooms with sinks, full water plumbing and industrial gas stoves and tanks.

An electricity supply would be installed at Mbuya Bona School to power, in the first instance, a water pump and a deeper water bore hole would be drilled to provide much needed water for the children and staff. Four additional water points at Herbert Chitepo Primary School would be installed and each school would have a sustainable feeding programme made up of nutritional gardens and poultry.

Quotes were obtained for all of the necessary works and once all of the relevant safeguarding checks were made \$17,841 (£14,104) was transferred to Herbert Chitepo Primary School.



One of many big smiles at Herbert Chitepo Primary School

Pupils in their Ewloe Green football kits



Work began very quickly!



At Herbert Chitepo Primary School, trenches were dug by hand to make way for the water pipes to provide additional water taps and therefore access for the children.

Digging also began to lay the foundations for the kitchens.

Trenches being dug in preparation



Fresh, flowing, clean water

around the school facilities for the drinking/washing teachers cottages teachers and their



Foundations for the kitchens

Water taps were installed at strategic points

to provide access for the children after class, hand-washing children to use following visits to the toilets and for the kitchens. Water facilities were also installed to the on site. (These are 2 roomed buildings used as homes for the families on site).

Ironically, but also providentially, work was hindered due to heavy rains but resumed a few weeks later than scheduled once the floods had subsided.



Kitchens reaching completion



Meanwhile, the children were busy in school enjoying their new books and equipment.

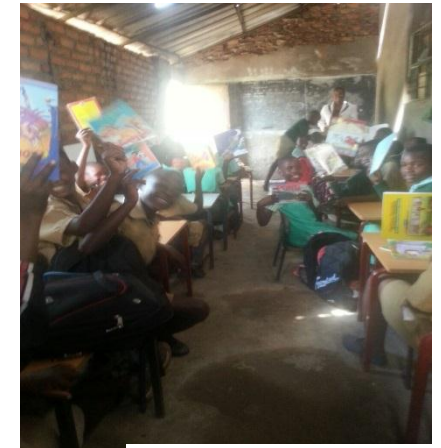
Children using books in class



The foundations were laid for the kitchens but the threat of a cyclone hindered progress a little!

The walls began to take shape and door and window frames were fitted.

At Mbuya Bona Primary School the bore hole was dug and the electricity trenches made ready to connect the supply to the school. The internal wiring to the new school buildings was installed and the power lines connected.



Happy children= lots of learning

Impacting the curriculum as well as the practical needs of the children has been a very high priority for us. We believe that education is the best way of empowering future generations to prosper and so we are delighted that following the visit to us in September 2015, when we shared practice and information regarding supporting pupils with Additional Learning Needs and shared a full curriculum for pupils aged 3 – 18, Mr Tata,



Electrical units fitted



Bore hole installation



Mr Gopito and strategically, Mr Nizira have been instrumental in effecting curriculum change in Zimbabwe.

A recent message from Mr Nizira read:

'On our part we have started implementing the new curriculum on a phased basis. In 2017 we are targeting ECD A, Grade 1, Grade 3, Form 1, Form 3, and Form 5. Emphases is on the acquisition of practical skills by learners with a bias towards Science, Mathematics and ICT.'

This is sharing good practice and influencing nations in real terms!



Completed kitchen

Finally, during the summer, after months of hard work and setbacks through poor weather we received the great news that the kitchens were complete. This allowed pupils, that were walking miles each day on empty stomachs, to be fed whilst at school. The school is aiming to become self sufficient using chickens and growing their own crops. The feeding program in the school is targeted at the younger children, giving them the best possible start to their school day.



Energy efficient light bulbs in classrooms



The kitchens are also a place where lessons and learning take place. Teaching children about the importance of hygiene and how to prepare meals. The pupils, staff and community are very thankful to have been given this opportunity.

The annual Bikeathon and Safari Day took place, with great success. Over seventy (...yes seventy) pupils took part this year completing the 16 mile course. The course represents the length of journey some pupils walk each day in Zimbabwe. A significant amount of money was raised to help with communications between the two schools.

Following the success of the Bikeathon and the safari walk, the school was in a position to advance with communications between the two countries. The Education Authority in Zimbabwe recognised the potential of the partnership and hired an ICT technician for Herbert Chitepo to develop communication links with Wales, through training of staff and pupils. Teachers have linked/partnered up with their corresponding classes with emails being exchanged weekly. Information about the school and the curriculum being passed between both sides. More recently, pupils work has been shared as good practice and questions also being asked and answered to create a constant dialogue.



Pupils being fed 9 (do you recognise the tables?)



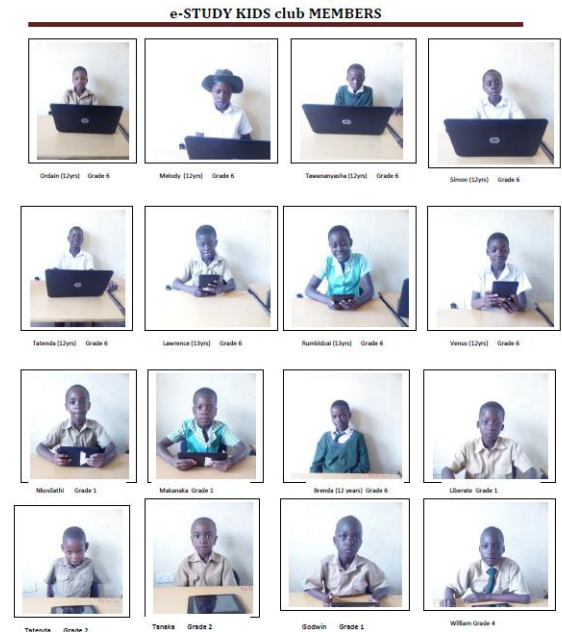
Ewloe Green I.C.E members



From this initial communication a child has been selected from each class to be a representative on behalf of their peers. They have joined the I.C.E (International Communications for Ewloe) group which collates and sends information specifically asked for from their peers. The same type of group has been set up in Zimbabwe to facilitate the partnership. This has already seen a massive impact as pupils are learning directly about the wider world and about pupils of a similar age in very different circumstances. Emails are sent fortnightly with questions and information about each class, with pictures and language included. The long term goals are to maintain and improve this dialogue between pupils and even use video conferencing to share experiences.

Again, following the establishment of a new Government in Zimbabwe and despite high hopes of positive change, matters both economical and humanitarian have proved challenging. Communication between our partner schools began to be more sporadic. A broken modem at Herbert Chitepo School which needed simple replacement became a major stumbling block. Suppliers could not provide the replacement.

Zimbabweans are stoic and resilient and the ICT teacher has been travelling into Harare to use an internet café to send e mails from the children. These however, have been very limited in quantity, information and frequency.



Herbert Chitepo e-Study members



WhatsApp communication trailed off a little and we again had to try to 'read between the lines'. A phone call to Alan filled in the gaps for us. The country is in a far worse state than ever. There is no food in the shop, there are long queues for fuel, there is no electricity and corruption is beyond anything seen before, at all levels.



Sending and receiving images from Zimbabwe

It was such a wonderful moment when we received the following message from Blessing Tatta, Headteacher at Mbuya Bona School.

Blessing: 'Let me take this opportunity to thank you for the support you gave us with your partners. I'm glad to inform you that we had a remarkable improvement in our pass rate to 56.8%. This was due to the support you gave us during the past years. May Almighty God bless you, your family and all those who helped you in improving our learning conditions. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.'

'In Grade Seven National Examination'

Response: 'Wow!!!! That's fabulous news!!! Huge congratulations to everyone!!!!'

Blessing: 'Thank you'



'We started at 0% in 2014; then 16% 2015, 27% 2016, 33% 2017 and now 56.8%'

Response: 'It's extraordinary. Carry on like this and your grades will be comparable with any of the top schools in Zim. In terms of progress and school improvement, it is very impressive! Keep up the excellent work! '

We all agree that this is an amazing end to 2018 and a cause to celebrate with our partner schools.



Never stop smiling...