



# Newsletter Dec 2023

NO BARRIERS EDUCATION FOUNDATION: We assist children & young people in rural Zimbabwe to overcome barriers to education, encourage their learning and create opportunities for them to thrive.



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## REPORTING BACK: OBSERVATION FROM RECENT VISIT 25 September – 10 October 2023

During the October 2023 visit to both Muzarabani High School and Hwata Secondary School the students and teachers met with the new Australian Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Ms Minoli Perera.

### Key developments / observations:

1. Zimbabwe's national election was held in August and returned President Emmerson Mnangagwa for a second and final five-year term. The outcome continues to be challenged. The election, however, did not delay the Ambassador's visit to either school.

### 2. Redesign of Menstrual & Sexual Health Initiative

For many girls in disadvantaged communities, menstruation is a barrier to education and equal development. This being the case, NoBarriers believes, menstruation can be made to act as a catalyst for change and continues to advocate and propose holistic menstrual health initiatives.

The redesign of the NoBarriers' initiative goes beyond menstrual health promotion and the supply of appropriate menstrual products and materials. It provides girls with pathways to other educational opportunities and to the development of life skills – this includes access to a livelihood through small income generating projects. The initiative is designed to empower girls while at school and well after they graduate.

Since 2021, NoBarriers has focused on empowering 350 girls attending secondary school in Muzarabani District, the remote rural district in Zimbabwe that we support. This includes the distribution of sanitary kits (with reusable pads, underwear and toiletries).

Hygiene, sexual and reproductive health & rights workshops are designed to destigmatise menstruation. Already, attendance rates have increased and more girls are able to complete their schooling. Sewing workshops are provided too. Girls focus on making reusable pads, which they have started to sell to women in their community. The direct skills transfer of this initiative has already proven that it can be expanded.

During the recent visit, the incorporation of vocational and skills development as part of the "From Period to Prosperity" program was positively discussed with the NoBarriers' local implementation partner Sanitary Aid Zimbabwe.

3. **Teacher motivation:** Teachers reported that they feel empowered by the availability of the new IT equipment that's been made possible through the **Sustainable Teaching, Learning & Communication Hubs**. They are able to provide simulations and show teaching resources such as online text books, presentations and videos to enhance the classroom experience. As reported earlier, in May 2023 installation of the large battery based solar system and satellite internet connection was completed. Teachers demonstrated how the recently delivered IT equipment, that includes a printer, laptop, projector and screen to each school, has led to learning improvement across all subjects. The teachers showed how much they benefit too when using these resources in lesson planning and the delivery of all subjects.



4. **Water & Sanitation System:** Almost eight months after the water & sanitation systems were officially opened, the positive impact can be seen. Access to safe drinking water for students and teachers residing on school campus has led to more focused time on learning. Everyone communicated how the safe toilets have provided not only privacy and dignity, but supported the menstrual health initiatives.



**Note:** The Water & Sanitation System was provided with the help of a US\$65,000 Rotary Foundation Global Grant.

## STORIES FROM THE SCHOOLS

### Perspectives on the new Sustainable Teaching, Learning & Communication Hub

#### Elizabeth Tsangu, History Teacher, Hwata Secondary

My name is Elizabeth Vimbai Tsangu and I teach history at Hwata Secondary School. I joined the school in September last year. NoBarriers Education Foundation is an organisation that has not only brought development and benefits to the school children, but even to us as teachers. I have gained so much experience and skills through NoBarriers.

I have gained skills in using technological equipment such as the projector and laptop.

I also had the honour to deliver a lesson on the impacts of slavery and slave trade in Africa in the presence of Australia's Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Ambassador Minoli Perera. This was an interesting experience.

I used the IT equipment, which includes a movable battery, projector, projecting screen and a laptop. The learners paid full attention during this lesson as compared to other lessons without the use of IT equipment, as they could watch a video on slavery and the slavery trade.



Learners participated actively, identifying possible broader impacts of slavery and slave trade. This was one of my best lessons at Hwata.

Prior to receiving the IT equipment, interaction in the classroom can be minimal, due to the very high temperatures. Learners often fail to concentrate on warmer days, especially if they are up early to travel long distances to get to school. The IT equipment has proved to be very useful during lessons to capture the students' attention in the hot classroom environment.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to NoBarriers because teaching has been made easy at Hwata Secondary School. NoBarriers has created a more conducive learning environment for teaching at our school.

#### Simulated Science Experiments

At Muzarabani High School, science teacher Dr Paul Dakudzwa is now able to demonstrate science experiments via video thanks to the new IT equipment.

The school is not equipped with experiment kits or a science lab. Now, through the use of the projector and internet access, experiments can be shown.

The teaching syllabus requires the school to conduct science experiments in class and students are tested on this learning in the end-of-year examinations.



With access to the online videos, Dr Dakudzwa is able to provide the students with more opportunities to learn about the experiments.

As a science teacher, it also gives Dr Dakudzwa the opportunity to teach through guided simulation. The students are then more attentive and better prepared for important final examinations.

#### Muzarabani High Outdoor Cinema

At Muzarabani High School a group of approximately 20 girls stay at the school during term time at the school's informal dormitory. Most of these girls are from remote communities, are without family or from difficult family situations. The dormitory is supervised and has a live-in female senior teacher (see *June 2023 Newsletter* for student story on being a boarder).

During the weekend, with limited spare funds or ways to use pocket money, the school's new IT equipment and Sustainable Hub facilities are used to create an outdoor cinema under a major tree in the school grounds.

**Note:** The Sustainable Teaching, Learning & Communication Hub was implemented by NoBarriers and funded by the Australian Embassy to Zimbabwe's Direct Aid Program (DAP). The DAP is a small grants program that funds projects to advance the development and/or human rights objectives. The project Acquittal Report was submitted on August 2023.

## Ambassador's Visit to Muzarabani District – 2 October 2023

Australian Ambassador to Zimbabwe, Minoli Perera, joined NoBarriers Executive Director, Ms Sigrid Pfaffle and Board Director Pamela Upton for an inspection of the solar system that's been installed as part of the Embassy's Direct Aid Program-funded **Sustainable Teaching, Learning & Communication Hub** in Muzarabani District. Ambassador Perera was then invited to meet students and staff at Muzarabani High School and Hwata Secondary School to see how the Sustainable Hub is benefitting teachers, students, and their wider communities at both schools.

Images: (right) Ambassador Perera in Computer Lab with newly appointed ICT teacher Ms Nelly at Muzarabani High School



Images: (left) Ambassador Perera with Senior Teacher Tafadzwa, Muzarabani High School. (right) Ambassador Perera speaking with students in history class on slavery and its impact on contemporary Africa at Hwata Secondary School. (below) Students at Muzarabani High School perform a Thank you to Australia song during the Ambassador's visit.



## NOBARRIERS' INITIATIVES

NoBarriers continues to deliver on the four key initiatives that were developed and launched in 2021 to impact the lives of over 600 students at Muzarabani High School and Hwata Secondary School in northern Zimbabwe.

Both schools are in Muzarabani District, which is on the border of Mozambique in the Zambezi Valley. Travelling the distance from the capital to the District by car, however, can take up to six hours.

In three years we never imagined we would have such an impact. When asked, "Why these schools? Why Zimbabwe?" we consistently mention the local, personal connections and because there is a local need.

In the Muzarabani District, 92% of the population live in remote, often isolated communities. This is in contrast to the national average of 67%.

### 1. School Meals

At the start of each term (January & May) NoBarriers delivers maize, beans and cooking oil to both schools for the preparation of daily hot meals for students and staff.

### 2. Menstrual & Sexual Health

In March each year newly enrolled girls in Form 1 receive a "Sanitary Starter Kit" (re-usable pads & underwear) plus a set of toiletries. Toiletry kits are also distributed to girls in the older grades and all boys.

The distribution is accompanied by a workshop on Sexual and Reproductive Health & Rights conducted by Sanitary Aid Zimbabwe and nurses from the local clinic.

### 3. School Fees

NoBarriers continues to pay school fees for 92 students from vulnerable families. From these students, 20% sit examinations. NoBarriers pays those examination fees.

### 4. Bicycles

NoBarriers partners with World Bicycle Relief (WBR) to provide bicycles for students who travel 6+ kilometers to school each day to overcome the barrier of distance. Many students travel 10+kms.

In 2023 Form 1 enrollments increased by 42%. Many were encouraged by the opportunity of potential access to a bicycle. This increased the need for additional bicycles.

To address the need, NoBarriers aims to raise \$12,000 in 2024 to purchase an additional 40 bicycles through the life-changing not-for-profit WBR.

**THANK YOU EVERYONE FOR YOUR  
GENEROUS COOPERATION & CONTRIBUTIONS**

## CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2023

Give the gift of giving this Christmas. Every gift to NoBarriers enables the Foundation to deliver on its mission—to assist children & young people in rural Zimbabwe to overcome barriers to education. To ensure we deliver the School Meals, Menstrual & Sexual Health and School Fees initiatives next year, we must raise \$48,000 by June 2024. No gift is too small to make this possible. Additionally, imagine the gift of a bicycle for a student who walks 10+kms to arrive at school each morning and another 10+kms to return home each day? A gift of \$300 would provide a bicycle for that student. There are two ways to give through NoBarriers:

1. **Overcoming Barriers appeal:** Help us support more students to access education and donate via the website link below. Every amount makes a difference. All donations are tax deductible.

**<https://drct-nobarriers.prod.supporterhub.net/donations/eofy-appeal-2023-combined>**

2. **Electronic Fund Transfer:**

Name: No Barriers Education Foundation

BSB: 065-115

Account: 1048-8995

*For all EFTs, please email notice of transfer to [admin@nobarriers.org.au](mailto:admin@nobarriers.org.au) to receive a tax receipt*

***Thank you and happy holidays***

All our work and the impact it delivers at Muzarabani High School and Hwata Secondary School, is made possible through generosity, kindness and goodwill. Each year we now receive generous support from financial donors, individuals, businesses, other foundations and volunteers.

In 2023 we received support from organisations based in Zimbabwe and Australia. They include:

- Sanitary Aid Zimbabwe
- Solar Energy Plus; Infomax
- World Bicycle Relief
- Australian Embassy in Harare, Zimbabwe
- Lang Family Foundation
- Rotary Club Norwood & Rotary E-Club D9210, Harare
- Cuong's Birthday

## No Barriers Education Foundation invited to Government House

Her Excellency, the Honourable Frances Adamson AC, Governor of South Australia hosted a garden reception on the grounds of Government House in Adelaide on 14 November 2023 for supporters of the many not-for-profit and charitable organisations, for which she is Patron. The Governor of South Australia has been the Patron of NoBarriers since 2022.



Governor Adamson (c) with Col Eardley (l) and Pamela Upton (r)

Representatives from the NoBarriers Board invited to the reception included the recently retired Chair, Mr Russell Caird, Director Ms Pamela Upton and volunteer Ms Col Eardley. Ms Eardley attended on behalf of Executive Director Ms Sigrid Pfaffe, who was unable to attend.

Images: top right & down

Ambassador Perera with Principal Huruva Mukucha, Hwata Secondary School administration building. Nyaradzo Chingono, DAP Officer, Australian Embassy Harare. Mr Shepard, Geography teacher Muzarabani High School. Senior Teacher Tafadzwa showcasing the School Meal program to Ambassador Perera at Muzarabani High School.

