

The Beatrice Project: Zimbabwe

restoring dignity and opportunity

August 2019

It's that time of year when the Beatrice Project team heads for Zimbabwe to support and work with the Ntombi Nto team. But not this year! For a variety of reasons (there have been highlights for both our families in the shape of summer weddings!) we took the decision not to make a visit to Zimbabwe this year, but to work towards a trip in the Spring of 2020. So this will be a rather different newsletter.

It has been a year of consolidation and continued, steady progress. Although it is very difficult to get an accurate picture of the situation in Zimbabwe, we know that there is continued instability and economic turmoil. Suffice to say life is extremely challenging and, as is often the case, it is those who have the least who suffer the most: power cuts, for those who are fortunate enough to have electricity, last for 18 hours a day, every day; fuel is very expensive and sometimes scarce; basic commodities such as bread, oil or maize meal have become prohibitively costly and, at times, impossible to find. People are suffering....

BUT.....

... Zimbabweans are an amazing people: they are resourceful, hard working and cheerful and, despite circumstances, they persist in their hope of a better future.



Delighted Girls Receiving Their Menstrual Cups



Peer Educators

Building on last August's camp and the teaching and introduction of the menstrual cups, work has continued in Zimbabwe, with training visits from Nobuhle from The



The Indomitable Nobuhle!

Butterfly Company. We have been encouraged to see a gradual acceptance of this form of sanitary protection by the girls. Most of the girls using them now love them, and they have been increasingly accepted by the older people in their communities. Some groups of girls are preferring, for now, to continue to use the disposables or to make re-usables if we are able to fund a sewing machine and start up materials.



Ready to Sew

One of the most exciting pieces of news for us this year came when Joy was able to tell us what the Headteachers of the schools where most of our girls attend were reporting. Their registers show that the work of the project has had a staggering effect on both the attendance and the performance of girls when they are having their periods. How great is that? We, and you, are making a real difference in girls' lives!

Here in UK, we have continued our fundraising efforts and are able regularly to add names of interested people to our mailing list. Just before Christmas we held an event at which the Trustees presented The Beatrice Project Annual Report. The evening was well attended and everyone enjoyed the mulled wine, mince pies, cakes and other goodies, a raffle and the sale of items from Zimbabwe and other places. Over £1000 was raised!

In March we were very fortunate to have Jackie Fox LRAM ARAM and accompanist Cherith Kingsley-Smith lead our first 'Come and Sing' day. We were almost overwhelmed with people wanting to register but, in the end, over 50 people enjoyed a wonderful and unforgettable day of music making. It was a terrific way to raise funds for the project (just over £1000) and we look forward to another such event in the future. Right now, planning is underway for a different sort of 'Come and Sing', this time using music from around the world, particularly Africa, and led by the hugely talented and experienced Penny Hastings. The day, which is to be held in Southampton on Sept 21st this year includes a chance to try out some hand drumming under the expert tuition of Tom Gregory. Please look out for a second email with the flier attached and do get your registration in soon!

Finally, we have received one or two substantial gifts this year for which we are very grateful and the number of those giving on a monthly basis is creeping up. A first for us was the submission of an application for a grant from St James Place, Wealth Management and we were delighted to be successful and to be given £1000 to continue our work with the project. Because of soaring inflation in Zimbabwe, our project costs have increased so we are particularly grateful for every donation we receive, however small.

If you would like to give, please visit www.give.net/20237532 or, if you prefer, you may give a cheque or cash to me, Sue Hutchinson, or either of the other trustees, Karen Trewinnard or Adrian Thomas.

