



Stevenage – Kadoma Link Association

SUMMER/AUTUMN/WINTER 2006 Newsletter

www.skla.org

Welcome to a bumper issue of the newsletter! Apologies for not providing a Summer or Autumn edition, as we waited so we could include pictures & reports of the visit to Kadoma in June. I hope that you find it of interest to have up-to-date information from Kadoma.

On behalf of the SKLA, may I take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The Link visit to Kadoma in June 2006



Much of the narrative in this section is from the Chairman's report at the AGM held on 2nd October. Video clips were also shown at the AGM of the visit.

Five people from the Link went to Kadoma this year, the first visit for five years. Our group consisted of Rose Hamilton, Jan Addison, Phil Gibb, Louise Holmes and Andy Hills, seen in Kadoma in the photo.



We stayed in a Bed & Breakfast "inn" rather than with the Kadoma people, for the first time EVER in this Link's history. We have always enjoyed the opportunity of getting to know people by staying in their homes, but at the moment the very high inflation rate in Zimbabwe, rising by the day, makes it hard for people to afford food for themselves. The inflation rate was around 1000% at the time and continuing to rise.

We did not want to impose on Zimbabwean's well-known generous hospitality by being a house guest. Nonetheless, we were overwhelmed by invitations to visit and share a meal.

Schools Visits



The Kadoma school teachers are so dedicated! They want to teach, even with little resources and lack of materials - and the quality of teaching is still high. We saw that children were progressing through a tough system with high expectations, from primary to secondary level, achieving results that lead to staying-on to do "A" levels.

We were very impressed with how teachers and parents are working together to take responsibility for their local school and their children's education. There are projects such as growing and selling vegetables, making peanut butter for sale and refurbishing classrooms.



Partnership Schools

These schools regard their partnership with a school in Stevenage very highly. It isn't that they get financial help from that partnership – in fact it is a part of the partnership ground rules that financial gain is NOT part of the relationship – but that they have a whole school - teachers, pupils and parents, who know about them, and communicate with them. It's actually hard to keep communication going because of the cost of postage from Zimbabwe to Britain, but the feeling of being distinguished as a school that's partnered by another school in Stevenage, is enough to give that boost and a knowledge that someone cares.



School Fees

As reported in the Spring edition of the newsletter, the Link school fees schemes, with the help of individuals and schools who help us with fund-raising, currently support 300 primary and 70 secondary pupils.

Most recipients are chosen because they are orphans, or one parent has died and the other is out of work. What would have become of these children if there were no scheme operating between the twin towns?

Here is some information on a few Secondary school pupils that have benefited from the school fees scheme:

- ❖ Tsitsi took her 'O' levels in 2001 and is now a qualified State Registered Nurse
- ❖ Heather passed her 'A' levels and is now in her 3rd year of University
- ❖ Chipo passed her 'O' levels and is now doing her 'A' levels and is Head Girl
- ❖ Zodia achieved 7 'O' levels in 1998, passed her 'A' levels and is now a teacher.

Here are some snippets from letters sent by Primary school pupils:

- ❖ Precious writes – 'I would like to thank you very much for the school fees. I am a girl in Grade 7. I promise to do my best in the examination this year'.
- ❖ Malcolm writes – 'God bless Stevenage for paying my school fees. I live with my mother as my father died in 2002. I am ten years old now and came 12th out of 47 in my class'.

There is however a growing problem with school fees – they are getting ever higher. Inflation and the lack of secure work are making it harder for many ordinary people to see their children through school. The money for school fees that Stevenage people supply is needed now more than ever.

Voice of the Disabled

Among the new friends we made during this recent visit is a group of men, women and children with a range of mental and physical special needs.



In African society generally, there is a growing awareness of the needs of people needing special help to live their lives normally. Apart from schools like Rubatsiro – a school for children with varying kinds of relatively mild disabilities, and Jairos Jiri – a school for children with visual impairment (both schools ahead of their time in Zimbabwe) there is little or no state provision for anyone. Children with special needs, be they physical or emotional, are generally hidden away from view, many fathers leaving their wives to cope alone if a child is born who is obviously disabled in some way, making an already disadvantaged child even more vulnerable.

In Kadoma, our new friends have called themselves “Voice of the Disabled”. The group’s aim is to both encourage anyone with a special need to join with them to get support and help, encouraging everyone to learn a trade or a craft and give them a sense of self respect and dignity, but also to campaign peacefully to make the general public and the local authorities aware of their plight – they need help with housing, with jobs, with access to municipal buildings, with medical treatment and so on.

Aromatherapy AIDS Clinic

We often wondered what had happened to the Aromatherapy/AIDS Clinic. We had been unable to send any more funding or essential oils, as we had had no reply to our request for updates and reports. When we visited the clinic, we found that it had expanded!



Rather than using oils alone, they had begun to use plants to provide herbal remedies for symptoms of the ailments and illnesses associated with AIDS. The practitioners had found it hard to encourage AIDS sufferers to come along regularly, and were also treating those with muscular pains, coughs and colds, and also those with more chronic conditions, like diabetes and arthritis. It had removed the stigma of AIDS for those who were HIV positive, as no-one knew who was an AIDS sufferer and who was coming for help with other ailments.

The clinic has started a Nutritional and Herbal garden in Rimuka Maternity Home. The garden is still in its infancy but the plan is to make it a flowering herbal and nutritional garden so that the client’s conditions that come as a result of HIV infection can be controlled.

Old People's Home

The destitute old people in Kadoma have a new Old People's Home. It was finally completed in May, just before we arrived, so we were able to go to meet the residents.

What a change it was! Properly made-up, clean beds, a real kitchen, proper washing and toilet facilities, staff to come in to clean and to cook food. The municipality



was providing a night-watchman, and would do so until perimeter fencing had been supplied and put up, and KABA was providing daily food – although not always quite enough for their needs, but it was better than leaving them to cook sadza over a tiny wood fire in the cold.



The photos show the Old People's Home and one of the new bedrooms.

Vocational Training Centre



An old beer hall has been closed and given to a group of young adults to use. It is used as a Vocational Training Centre for young people who had had little or no schooling, training them in carpentry, metalwork, and textiles/design and dress-making.

It is here that the tools from Andy's Toolbox are being used. Andy's Toolbox

is a practical memorial project for Andrew Simm who sadly died in 2003. These photos show an example of the tools that have been sent to Kadoma so far and where they are being used.



Dates for your diary



Thursday 18th January 2007 Link Committee Meeting: Will be held at 7.30pm in the Ingelheim Lounge at Daneshill House, Stevenage. All welcome.

Tuesday 27th February 2007 Link Committee Meeting: Will be held at 7.30pm in Daneshill House, Stevenage. All welcome.

Friends Group Meeting: We are planning to hold a Friends Group meeting in February. Watch out for invitational flyers and emails.

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