



## News from Zimbabwe: Teacher-to-Teacher Project 2007/08

### Matopo Primary School

As I sit down to write this update, I have in front of me a 10cm stack of letters, stories, poems and essays sent by Patson Mpfu, the Deputy Headmaster of Matopo Primary School. The letters are from teachers and pupils and every one of them expresses sincere gratitude for the textbooks, uniforms and groceries ETAS has provided this year.

Here is just one example from Precious Sibanda, grade 4:

*"Thank for your love, care, concern and kindness towards our school. You donated text books for our school, a consignment of 3 boxes of reading materials. We use it for reading. It help us to improve English."*

I love this story about the sky, by Borman Tshuma, grade 7, so much that I simply had to include it in its entirety:

*"A long time ago the sky was very close so that the people were cutting a piece and eat. And after that the left overs on the rubbish pit. And the sky began to be angry and said if you do this for the second time I will fly away to the far place. After that the people began to be quite. And after a few weeks a greedy woman cut an enormous piece of sky. And she didn't finished it and put in the pit. And the sky went to afar place. So that's why the sky is very far away from us."*

And these poems, by Cristabel Mpfu, show real promise from a budding poet, in my opinion:

#### **Former love**

*My former love  
brought duck-feet  
and made mock-marks  
of her judgement  
of my work  
flounded on the surface  
blinded by the depth  
she meant to say,  
"I knew you better."*

#### **Who**

*who is it now  
that has the right  
to drive people away  
from the sunny haunt?*

Some of the essays, in a heart-breaking matter-of-fact tone, give eye-witness accounts of the episodes of violence which played out

in the aftermath of the farcical June 27th election. At the time of writing, Zimbabwe's ruling party and the opposition seem ready to negotiate. But does Robert Mugabe have any intention of giving up power? Perhaps by the time you are reading this, progress will have been made, but for now much remains uncertain.

If you have read my previous reports of our project, you may recall that in October 2007 I led a very successful teacher-training event at Matopo Primary School. The feedback was so overwhelming that I have resolved to give another workshop this year. The challenges are enormous; with an official inflation rate of 2.2m% (which in reality is at least four times higher) it will be extremely difficult to organize such an event, even more so than it was last year, when we thought things couldn't possibly get any worse. But when I see the courage and determination of the teachers at Matopo, I feel I cannot let them down, so I am going to do my best to make sure the next ETAS-sponsored Teachers' Workshop takes place. More about that in my next update.

Several donors have asked, "Why not send materials, instead of or in addition to money?" We took action on that idea and collected pens, pencils, paper and books to be sent directly to the school. In the end we had 160 kilos of materials! (See my blog, [www.matopoprimarieschool.blogspot.com](http://www.matopoprimarieschool.blogspot.com) for details of the project). The problem is that it is so expensive to send things - this shipment cost SFr. 1,200.-. In order for such an initiative to 'pay off', the materials must be of new or nearly-new quality, as well as being appropriate to the conditions at the school, which has next to no infrastructure. I am looking forward to seeing the joy on the faces of the teachers and pupils when they receive these goodies!

A big thank you to all of you who have been supporting this project, from everybody at Matopo Primary School! I am pleased to announce that the ETAS Committee has agreed to prolong the project for another year; a grateful "thank you!" to all.

### **What is the Teacher-to-Teacher Project?**

Not just a charity, the ETAS Teacher-to-Teacher Project is aimed at helping teachers around the world, both financially and

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professionally, who lack the opportunities we enjoy in Switzerland. The emphasis is on promoting a rich exchange of ideas, leading to mutual personal and professional development. The project also enhances ETAS's image nationally and internationally.

### **Criteria**

A Committee member (presently Cindy Hauer) takes on the role of liaison between the Committee and the Project Coordinator.

Proposed projects will be considered on a case-by-case basis, but should fulfil as many of the criteria below as possible:

- The target of the project is an educational institution located in a developing country.
- The project must be proposed and coordinated by an ETAS member.
- Proposals must be in writing and include detailed information about the project such as facts and figures, objectives and means of achieving them.
- Decisions about proposed projects will be taken by the entire Committee following recommendations from the responsible Committee member.
- The Project Coordinator undertakes the responsibility for running the project with support from the Committee member and provides regular reports on the project status (i.e. articles for the ETAS Journal, presentations at national events, and updates at national Committee meetings.)
- Funds for the T-2-T Project: SFr. 1,100.- per year is budgeted, plus donations from individual members and fund raising at National Events (raffles). The Project Coordinator is welcome to assist in fundraising through organising raffle prizes, etc.

CINDY HAUERT

