



# 2023

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# ANNUAL REPORT

# OUR PROGRESS



**The school grew and flourished throughout 2023, despite the continued drop in global charitable donations due to the economic, social & emotional effects of Brexit, covid and war.**

## High-quality education

We provided high-quality education to the children and young people living with the most disadvantages in the northern zones of Chilanga district.

Teams from Chilanga Council, the District Education Board, the Zambian Revenue Authority and the Examinations Council of Zambia visited the school five times during 2023 to conduct formal inspections. They all found everything in excellent order and gave positive and complimentary feedback.

The 2023 national exam results underlined our high standards. Our learners' average mark was far higher than the average achieved across all other schools – including all the selective, STEM and boarding schools.

**95%**

of our Grade 7s qualified for secondary education, compared to 54% nationally;

**96%**

of our Grade 9s gained a 'national certificate', compared to 53% elsewhere; and

**87%**

of our Grade 12 learners achieved a 'school certificate' – compared to 67% across all other schools.

## Charitably-supported education

Thanks to the generosity of 39 overseas supporters, we provided a completely free education to 55 children who were orphans or from very low-income homes and 25 'half-price' places to those with low family incomes.

Other overseas donors helped us keep weekly fees at the lowest possible level (90p for primary learners; £1.35 for secondary learners). This ensured our fees were affordable within the community and the lowest in the region.

*Cover photo: staff celebrate the school's success on a thundery day by the Kafue River*



## Free school-meals

In addition, using the produce grown in our market garden, we provided every learner with a free, nutritional, freshly-cooked meal at lunchtime every day. No other school did this.

## Low-cost school transport

Overseas donations also funded our subsidised bus service along the dangerous Mumbwa Road to keep our learners safe and dry on their journeys to and from school.

Our two, reconditioned, 30-seater buses were used every day by 265 children. This was free for learners with a bursary place, and, at 90p per week for everyone else, was less than half the price of all other school bus services.

## Open to all

We focused on welcoming children in the community who had been rejected by selective schools, and those who were starting school late or had missed several years of schooling due to family adversity.

We provided them with two 'Catch Up' classes staffed by a team of literacy and numeracy teachers. During the year, they helped 50 'late-starting' children to 'catch up' with their learning and return to normal school classes.

In 2023, our staff also designed and launched a new 'Extra Class' service for 35 children in Grades 5-7 who were seeking to be stretched academically. This proved to be a popular and successful innovation.

## School numbers

2023 was a year of growth. Our early years' unit educated 41 children aged 3 – 4; our primary section educated 365 aged 4 – 17; and our secondary section educated 175 aged 13 – 20.

This strong growth in numbers is testament to the vision, creativity and hard work of the school's senior management team and to the ability, ambition and dedication of all the staff.

## Local management

As part of our determination that Mukwashi should be locally managed, our senior staff received further intensive training and mentoring in advanced excel and every aspect of school leadership & management.

We also managed to equip the school office with solar power, a small new printer and two large new laptops – which helped them operate efficiently, economically and professionally.



*our catch up classes have a lasting impact on learners*



*a free, nutritional, freshly-cooked meal at lunchtime every day*



*the learners' enthusiastic response to these small 'home-produced' books makes the hard work worthwhile.*



## Afro-centric reading

Our two OUP 'afro-centric' reading schemes ('Aweh!' and 'We are Growing') continued to help our teachers transform primary reading levels. These excellent South African schemes show learners make better progress when they have books, resources, teachers and pedagogy which reflect their own homes, challenges and culture.

During the year, following a generous overseas gift, we started 'class reading' in the secondary section. Staff trialed this in Grade 8 with 30 copies of 'Journey to Jo'burg' and were delighted by the impact and results. They then selected another four sets of 'whole class' books by African authors and will develop this approach in 2024 in all secondary grades.

Staff continued to select, download, print and bind hundreds of traditional African folk stories from the magnificent, EU-funded African Storybook website. This is a slow process with little electricity and no wi-fi, but the learners' enthusiastic response to these small 'home-produced' books makes the hard work worthwhile.

In October, we rejoiced when five of our Grade 10 learners won first prize in an international competition. A video of their poem, 'Education Colonised', which they had written and performed, was played at the opening ceremony of a London exhibition. The school used the prize money to buy another two sets of class readers and to produce 200 'African Storybooks'.

## Physical education

2023 was our second year of formal PE lessons with specialist teachers. Their expert tuition resulted in a pleasingly large number of learners being selected for the zonal, district and provincial netball, athletics and football teams.

During the year, we hosted the district ball-sports competition for the first time, our girl's U17 netball team went undefeated all season, and one of our Grade 10 girls was selected to play for the Zambian national U17 women's football team.





## Agricultural education

We made strong progress towards our goals of becoming self-sufficient in food and providing learners with a superb 'agricultural pathway' to future local employment.

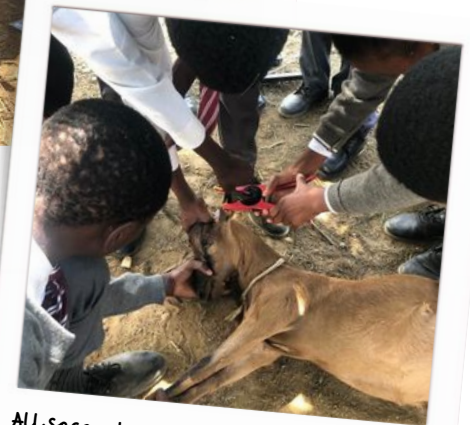
By year end, we had finally filled our banana plantation and fruit orchard with trees. We hope these 400 banana plants & 200 fruit trees will provide future learners with daily fresh fruit for the next fifty years.

During 2023, our livestock compound became home to 50 free-range hybrid hens and 16 pure-bred goats which provided our learners with animal husbandry skills. All secondary learners learnt to ear-tag, disbud and castrate goats – and, in 2024, they will learn to milk too.

As part of our agricultural science curriculum, every secondary learner had weekly 'skills-based', 'hands-on' learning in our 'Agricultural Laboratory'. This is where, in pairs, they devise and conduct their own agricultural experiments on dedicated small plots of land (there are now 100 'learner plots').



*Learning in our 'Agricultural Laboratory'*



*All secondary learners learnt to ear-tag, disbud and castrate goats*

*During 2023, our livestock compound became home to 50 free-range hybrid hens and 16 pure-bred goats.*

## Business education

In 2023, following the success of the 'ag lab', we started to develop something similar for our Accounts, Commerce and Business Studies lessons.

A UK logistics company sourced an old shipping container in Zimbabwe and delivered it to us. Staff and learners then converted it into a 'Business Lab' – where secondary learners are now supported to develop and manage their own 'low-cost' community shop to gain 'hands-on' commercial skills and knowledge. The 'business lab' is now a place where learners experiment, make mistakes and gain skills.



*An old shipping container was converted*



*Secondary learners are now supported to develop and manage their own 'low-cost' community shop*



## Low-cost resources

Every member of staff has worked hard to help us become a shining 'beacon of excellence' in land-locked sub-Saharan Africa which shows other 'low-resource' schools how they can achieve much more with the little they have.

We have sought to be resourceful, enterprising and creative, and to make what we can from whatever we can find. In 2023, for example, we created four large, 'zero-cost', outdoor tables from waste tyres and old wooden cable reels. These have been so popular at school lunches we plan to make another ten in 2024 – with a learner competition to design and build 'zero-cost' seating for them from waste material.

# OUR CHALLENGES

**Although Covid did not impact us directly in 2023, we still needed to conduct extra classes every Saturday for the three exam grades to help them make up their missed learning.**

## Little power

Although there was more grid power than in 2022, we were still regularly without power – and this effected every aspect of life. No power meant no light, no water (as no pump works without power) and no communications (as no phone can be charged). Solar is the best way forward, but it is horribly expensive to install.

## Low water

In 2023, the district water table fell considerably due to climate change, and our bore hole is now almost redundant. Like everyone else in the community, we need to invest in a much deeper 80-metre borehole to ‘future-proof’ our water supply (and in an expensive solar water pump & panels too).

Despite this, our teachers continued to conduct lessons without complaint or electricity, and our kitchen staff cooked 500 lunches every day on small charcoal braziers made from recycled bus wheels.

## Large numbers

Having grown so fast, we had to invest substantially in extra desks, text books, equipment and resources. The larger numbers meant more wear and tear – so more maintenance too. Finances were challenging all year!

The growth also meant a new challenge of waiting lists and disappointed parents. Churches, charities and carers constantly asked us to provide extra free places for deserving children – while a queue of ‘affluent’ parents pleaded to be allowed to transfer their offspring to Mukwashi. The challenges of managing this increased demand whilst maintaining a healthy ‘social mix’ of learners will inevitably persist for many years.

## Local bureaucracy

Although we function as a ‘charity’ school, we are registered as a ‘private’ school – to prevent us from being ‘taken over’ by the state. This means many in authority wrongly assume we are ‘wealthy’, and make frequent, ‘last-minute’ demands for spurious, inflated ‘fees’ and ‘charges’.

It is challenging to work efficiently when many in authority lack expertise, impose unrealistic bureaucratic demands and do not accept responsibility for errors.

The daft insistence that all official administration is now transacted online has created impossible difficulties for communities without power, wi-fi and IT skills. It means, for example, many parents now cannot access their children’s examination results and statements (which they need to enrol for the next stage) – leading to daily frustration in school offices round the country.

Also, twelve months after the 2022 Grade 12 results were announced, one of our ‘special needs’ learners (with muscular dystrophy) has still not received his results. His examination papers must have been lost in the system by someone, but nobody will accept responsibility, apologise, offer a solution or seek to make amends. It is a heart-breaking challenge.



Teaching basic numeracy to a group of late-starters



Our Grade 7s had to design and make a skirt for a school-based assessment

# OUR THANKS

A huge 'thank you' to the **47 supporters**, in **11 overseas countries**, who donated funds during 2023 via our website towards our improvement projects, and, to the **39 friends** in **9 different countries** whose committed regular giving funded **55 free places** and **25 half-price places**.

Without their support, our work would not be possible.

## We also thank:

- the local people in **Chilanga district** who donated funds at our Independence Day event to buy some kit for our football & netball teams;
  - those who gave through **Bridges of Peace and Hope** – our Section 501(c)(3) partner in the US;
  - the team at **Essence Design** in the UK – who provided vast amounts of time, advice and professional skills for free;
  - the directors at **Greenleaves Logistics** in the UK – who generously sourced and delivered a 20 ft shipping container for the business lab;
  - the staff at **Daydream Education** in Wales – who generously produced and provided large numbers of high-quality, afro-centric class room resources;
  - the teachers at schools in **Austria, Luxembourg, Singapore, the US & the UK** who (yet again) encouraged and organised their students to raise funds for Mukwashi.
- We also record our gratitude to the many local businesses in Zambia which supported the school in so many different ways. In particular, we thank:
- **Simba Milling Ltd** – for donating ten bags of maize-meal every month towards school lunches;
  - **Tradesgate Motors** – for looking after our two buses with care and diligence;
  - **Gadsden Books** – for continuing to help transform our library and literacy work;
  - **Musa Dudhia & Co** – for providing free legal advice and support whenever it was needed;

*Above all, we thank the school's head teacher, deputy head and staff team for their dedication, expertise, enthusiasm and sheer hard work.*



# OUR FINANCES

## INCOME 2023

School fees	£23,909	39%
Bus fares	£7,982	13%
Donations for free places	£11,706	19%
Other donations	£17,381	29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£60,968</b>	

## EXPENDITURE 2023

School operating costs	£20,804	35%
Staff costs (for 22 staff)	£23,522	40%
New equipment, tools, books, etc	£14,499	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>£58,825</b>	

Please note: the balance of £2,143 was for resource purchases which were not completed by year end. This was carried forward to be used for those resources in 2024.



# OUR BURSARY PLACES

During 2023, we provided a free 'bursary place' to **55** local children and young people (**31 male; 24 female**). Each place covered all costs of the child's tuition, books, materials, resources, trips, meals, activities, transport and examinations.

39 overseas donors paid all the costs of these free places through their regular donations. Their generosity & commitment also enabled the school to provide a further 25 'half price' places.

<b>Early Years</b>			Abraham Zulu	14	M	Shepard Chiyopa	17	M
Afeziwe Namayanga	3	M	Felix Mwachilenga	13	M	Harrison Miller	16	M
<b>Reception</b>			Mary Kahinga	13	F	Patience Dowati	14	F
Beauty Mwila	5	F	Effort Simakwama	11	M	Prosper Sinyinza	16	M
<b>Grade 1</b>			<b>Grade 6</b>			Rabecca Hambache	14	F
Abedenigo Kamizhi	6	M	Sean Mwanamulando	12	M	Mildred Kasongo	14	F
Lucent Phiri	10	M	Mary Likela	12	M	<b>Grade 10</b>		
<b>Grade 2</b>			Chisomo Mvula	10	F	Karen Bwalya	15	F
Clement Kasoleka	8	M	<b>Grade 7</b>			Simushi Mukelabai	18	M
Daniel Mwanamulando	7	M	Andrew Mbewe	13	M	Thomas Tembo	18	M
Luwando Malambo	7	F	Chipengo Siankwebo	13	M	Banji Shawa	16	F
<b>Grade 3</b>			Philip Shawa	13	M	Maliwa Kutempa	14	M
Brenda Kandesha	11	F	<b>Grade 8</b>			Treazer Libongani	14	F
Miguel Mwanamulando	9	M	Melody Mwachilenga	16	M	<b>Grade 11</b>		
Muhau Siyambangu	8	M	Dingile Tembo	13	F	Christine Mwanza	18	F
<b>Grade 4</b>			Mathews Kasoleka	17	M	Lydia Mulundika	16	F
Suwilanji Chinkubala	9	F	Emmanuel Libuku	14	M	Emmanuel Libongani	19	M
Victoria Sakenga	11	F	Universe Phiri	14	F	<b>Grade 12</b>		
Chanda Mumba	9	M	Mathews Banda	13	M	Albert Chibwe	17	M
Lyando Siankwebo	10	F	Nyikuvu Sakuwaha	13	M	Stella Bwalya	17	F
<b>Grade 5</b>			<b>Grade 9</b>			Warren Mpawa	18	M
Nelly Phiri	12	F	Lauren Ilishebo	14	F			
William Chiseya	14	M	Evalyn Nachalwe	17	F			
Tricia Mbwe	10	F	Virginia Mwanza	14	F			



