

Newsletter June 2023

Dear readers,

I would like to fill you in on the developments of Kufambatose - Progressing Together. The Kufambatose Foundation in Europe cooperates with the local Trust Kufamba Tose in Zimbabwe, children with a disability, their parents, local professionals, volunteers, and financial supporters.

We have just arrived back from a project visit. While here in Europe the spring was wet and cold, we enjoyed a warm sunny and friendly Zimbabwe. It is always a kind of home coming in Zimbabwe: meeting the local workers, the mothers, fathers and children, the therapists, friends and acquaintances, and immersing in the smells and colours.



In this newsletter we will inform you about our activities on the spot.

This time we planned home visits and attending a 3-day workshop in

Musiso Hospital. Care for the target group is a central theme.

Furthermore, we would like to tell you a bit more about the developments of Trust Kufambatose, about the networks that the Trust is building in Zimbabwe itself, and we would like to share a success story with you.

Home visits

18 April in Zimbabwe. It was a special day: Independence Day. On 18 April 1980, Rhodesia became independent and received the name Zimbabwe. On our way we saw several groups of people celebrating this day.



We were treated on a delicious meal of *sadza* (thick maize porridge) and pieces of grilled beef, just by the side of the road, it was a great!

That day we were able to do two house calls. We rode in a 4x4 all-terrain vehicle, that we had been able to buy for the Trust last year, fat into the bush, tagging on dirt roads with quite a few potholes as well.

The first home visit was to a 10-year-old girl. Her father and sister were pleasantly surprised with our visit. House visits are always unannounced, so that every-day life can be found, and no elaborate preparations can be done in advance, like cleaning, etc.

We met with a proud father. The story of this family can be found below, as a success story.



The second home visit was a drive further down and a short walk to reach the huts. We found a proud little ten-year-old boy, with spasm in the legs. He moved across the ground, hopping, crawling, rolling at a considerable speed. Independently, he climbed in and out of his wheelchair, and he could ride a bit himself. He could also almost get up on his own.

The wheelchair appeared to be broken, but we could repair it on location. In cooperation with our local therapists, we will see whether the child can be integrated in the local school.



3-day workshop at Musiso Hospital

A workshop was organized on April 19-20-21. That is to say that parents and children who still need a lot of support can come to the hospital and sleep there for 2 nights. Food is bought and provided by the hospital.



On the first day, mothers, some fathers and their children slowly started coming in from the areas far away, in local vans. We met with some children known to us, but also many new children. Remarkable this time were 5 children with hydrocephalus. They had all been operated on, but with varying degrees of success. Money for

check-ups in Harare, typically a day's ride, is not always available. We

saw that peer support was very useful, here as well. Faces brightened. It was great to see that a child with tethered joints (arthrogryposis) was moving across the ground rolling, sat down again, and made contact with the other children.



Her grandmother had taught her to eat independently, despite of her disability. Two years ago, we had seen her sitting silently and inactive, close to her mum. She is almost 4 now. She is one of the children who are now under the control of Cure hospital, a paediatric orthopaedic hospital in Bulawayo.



abuse by his peers when he came from school. His lower leg stood in such a weird angle that he wasn't able to walk. He should have had an operation years ago, but his parents could not afford that and so the boy was home-bound, without any education. The therapist had an Xray taken, he got crutches and exercises to help him walk with them, anti-biotics for the chronic inflammation of the leg, and he was put on a list to be seen at Cure Hospital, the paediatric orthopaedic hospital in Bulawayo. This way we could offer support from this boy and his grateful mother.

Many children have some form of spastic / cerebral palsy. They are examined, and their mothers receive exercises for home practice. This time they were, in turns, given the opportunity to share their knowledge of this among them. This also served to see what the mothers had meanwhile learned about this affliction and about its consequences. Thus, it has also become easier for them to explain this to an outsider and so get more receive more understanding for their situation. Not unimportant, as you will agree!

What was very special this time as well, was the presence of three fathers. Most of the times fathers will leave their wives when they have a child with a disability, as they believe it to be witchcraft. These fathers said that they did not believe in witchcraft anymore, but that



Another special case. A 17-year-old boy arrived, carried on his mother's back. His upper leg was broken and twisted due to physical

they now understood the cause of the disability. And one father saw it as an assignment from God to look after their disabled child.

On Wednesday a team of orthopaedic instrument makers came to visit. That team is in the service of the Ministry of Public Services and Social Welfare. They visit adults and children with a disability in the communities to see who is eligible for a free tool. Several of our children were examined and put on a list. They must wait and see whether and when a wheelchair for example will be available for them. At this moment, the government is strongly committed to people with



a disability. If that is still the case after the elections in July/August remains to be seen.

On Thursday 36 children came to the workshop, far too many to pay attention to everybody. They had heard that we and the team of orthopaedic instrument makers were there. A group of 20 children is about the maximum amount. The new children were registered and received an invitation for the next workshop. This is how the number of children that are seen by the team is growing. At this moment more than 400 children are taken care of! The organization is growing.





On Friday it was practising in groups. After lunch they tidied and cleaned, under the supervision of a mother. Everybody went home satisfied. Later we heard that one of the children, 18 months old, had died the next day. She had already been very vulnerable during the workshop. And so we share joy and sorrow.

Trust Kufamba Tose

And where are we with the development of Trust Kufamba Tose in Zimbabwe and their networks there? In the intercessional meetings we were briefed on the general management course in general that our local project leader is following, the course that he and our administrative employee have followed on financial management, and their plans of shaping their plans together.



We exchanged experiences, discussed the challenges that are confronting us, both in Zimbabwe and here in Europe. The tasks within the board are more or less established.

There is a plan to expand the support groups. There are more than 20 small clinics in Zaka District to which a Village Health Worker is affiliated. Many of them have been trained now in recognizing, supporting, and referring children with a disability in their working area. The support groups could be organized around these clinics. Added to this there should be a plan for an income generating project for every individual support group, and a responsible mother. That could also be a step towards asking for a small contribution from the

support group for the functioning of the Trust. Quite a challenge indeed!

As far as the networks are concerned, contact has been established with an organization in Harare, Miracle Mission, who can support children with hydrocephalus towards an operation. And they can offer a trauma course, with information for co-workers of the Trust, on how to support people who suffered mental trauma.

Furthermore, contact has been made with *Young Africa*, an organization that can train young adults with few opportunities to become small, independent entrepreneurs. They also offer the

opportunity to follow a training course to people with a physical disability. Apart from that, Young Africa offers support to building local organizations and might also offer support with the further development of the Trust.



We also visited the Australian embassy, which made a donation to acquire tools. They actively stay in contact with the administrative worker of the local Trust Kufamba Tose.

A visit has been made to a Rehabilitation Village in Chinhoyi. The local Trust has the

wish to realize a multifunctional training centre in Jerera, possibly similar to the Rehabilitation Village in Chinhoyi. Workshops for the disabled children and their parents could be held there, the Trust could have an office facility, training courses to other health workers could be given and possibly a bigger Income Generating Project could be

started. The purpose of the visit was to get an impression of how this can be set up and what challenges are involved.

Next to this, our local administrative worker is engaged in reaching out to several local and international organizations.

A success story

The following success story is a good example of how the approach of our therapists could work. The approach: gain confidence in little chats, support the families in their means of existence, by means of an





income generating project, and then offer support for the handicap of the child.

At our home visit we ended up at a 10-year-old girl with brain damage. Her father immediately proudly showed us his chickens and property. Samson, our therapist, had come across this family by chance. In fact, he had been looking for another child, but lost his way. When asking



for directions he was referred to this child. This family is part of an apostolic church community, that would normally decline all medical help, especially medicine.

When Samson explained that we don't offer medicine but assistance to the family and the child through information, exercises and support in their daily lives, the father was willing to accept the offer. The domestic situation improved with a chicken project that the father carries out very well. Meanwhile he even bought a deep freezer from the proceeds to be able to preserve the meat longer before selling, and he also bought some goats.

But beside his new work he has also observed that his daughter is doing much better if she regularly does her exercises. He has understood what caused his daughter's disability and what they can do to support her. He made a nice walker for her in which she can stand and make her first steps. His wife also comes to the workshops at the hospital; now. He is very proud of his daughter!





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The girl is now taken to their church in a wheelchair, and the family is now well-accepted. That is what integration is about!

And so, this family is a very good example for mother families, too.

In conclusion

We have come across beautiful stories, but also sad stories. It remains a challenge to transform the dreams of Trust Kufambatose into a realistic and sustainable plan. It still involves navigating between written and unwritten rules and laws and cultural differences. But then again, concrete steps have been taken, by which the motivation for cooperation has been strengthened even further.

It was an intensive, but special trip!

The children, their parents, the local professionals, and we as volunteers in Europe thank everybody supports or has supported us in this work. Together we can take a step forward again!

Should you want to know more about us or our project in Zimbabwe, visit our website: www.kufambatose.eu. After reading this newsletter, you might want to contribute to the work of our foundation. We would be pleased with your support, financially or otherwise.



Yes, I like to donate.

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Your entire financial support shall be for the benefit of the project only.

With kind regards,

Board Kufambatose Foundation – Progressing together