Newsletter June 2025

Kufambatose Foundation
Progressing together

Dear readers,

Like every year, we bring you up to date on the developments of the past year.
This time we want to take you to the activities of the Foundation here in the Netherlands, and to the impressions we gained during our last project visit last May.

Activities of the Dutch Foundation

As a Foundation, we here in the Netherlands are primarily concerned with **supporting the local Trust Kufamba Tose in Zimbabwe.**
This first of all means that the project coordinator of our Foundation, Willemijn Simons, maintains weekly contact with the local project management of the Trust in Zimbabwe. Willemijn currently lives with her family in Kenya. She and her husband work there for three years for the Swiss NGO Comundo at the North Coast Medical Training College in Kilifi to raise the organization and structure of some of the courses there to the next level. The experiences she gains there are a great addition to our work in Zimbabwe.
Willemijn guides the Trust towards independence with making its own annual plans, its own financial administration, independently searching for and applying for (local) donations, etc. Willemijn does this with the support of the other board members, who have knowledge in the field of recruitment & sponsorship, IT, physiotherapy, and there even is s extensive experience in addition to Willemijn through years of development cooperation on the ground in Zimbabwe. In this way we try to bring the local Trust to more independence, to more 'ownership'. Contact is mainly via WhatsApp and e-mail, and depending on the availability of an internet connection, there are also online conversations.

Here in the Netherlands, we are busy recruiting donations. We would like the local project in Zimbabwe to be able to continue until there is more independence. This currently requires € 40,000 - € 50,000 annually. We would like to thank some large funds and donors, and all small donors. All donations matter!

We would like to draw attention to two actions from the past year. We participated in the Wild Week action of Wilde Ganzen in April, as you may already know.
For this, the physiotherapy team of the Isala Hospital in Zwolle, among others, participated in the Ekiden relay marathon. That yielded a few thousand euros. The crowdfunding campaign we held also raised a few thousand euros. Wilde Ganzen doubled those amounts!!

The Isala fysiotherapie team at the estafette marathon Ekiden

In addition, we participated in the National Vastenactie Eigen Doel in 7 churches in Eindhoven. The National Lent Action increased that amount by half!

VASTENACTIE
steunt ons project

Talk about the project in a church during the National Vastenactie.

Project trip May 2025

General impressions of the situation in Zimbabwe

By being in Zimbabwe itself for another period, we have been able to feel and experience again the difficulties that people here must deal with daily. Prices have risen in many places, supermarkets so expensive that it is no longer affordable for the 'normal' people. We also bought our groceries at local markets or along the side of the road. Because the government is unable to pay teachers and medical staff normally and on time, a shadow system has emerged, as it were. Teachers ask for extra money in addition to the regular school fees to be able to teach children. Doctors, nurses and physiotherapists ask patients for extra money for their treatments. Patients must pay for the materials used, such as bandages, and for the medicines anyway. Everyone tries to survive in their own way. Many people are becoming increasingly impoverished and have fewer opportunities for good education and health.

In addition, the government really controls everything that happens in the country. While this was not so visible in the past, we have now experienced first-hand that it happens openly. In everything we did in Zaka and wherever we went, we were accompanied by someone from the local President Office. This was supposedly for our safety, but it was clear that we are being watched by the government. Our local project staff are used to this by now and say that this also has something positive. This way the local government can see what the project does for their people, and that there is nothing to hide. The project is not concerned with politics. The project is already working with healthcare organized by the government, and this will become even stronger in the future.

We will discuss some highlights from the project visit.

The team in Zimbabwe equipped with promotion materials from the Wilde Week organized by Wilde Ganzen.

Team building with the Trust's board

On our first days we met in Harare in a beautiful Buddhist conference centre. Willemijn and Anne-Miek worked together with the entire board of the Trust to draw up a 5-Year Strategic Plan for the Trust. We noticed that the board had become more of a team last year. And each also wanted to continue working out of passion for children with disabilities and their families.

Everyone expressed their own vision, their own challenges encountered in their own tasks, and they looked for possible solutions together. The new Strategic Plan is a nice stepping stone to move forward with. This is also a development for Wilde Ganzen that may lead to a follow-up for support from their side.

Teambuilding & Development of a 5-Year Strategic Plan

Of course, in the end it is about providing good care to the children with a primary motor disability and their families through a rehabilitation program in the broad sense, or Community-Based Rehabilitation (CBR). But a well-functioning management team with good qualities in Zimbabwe is a prerequisite for this aid to be sustainable.

Support group in Jerera

Mother Mai Faith, who is a member of the board, had called her support group together: 12 mothers with their children. She rented an extra room at her house for these days. Everyone could just get in, sitting on the floor with child on their lap. She had each mother tell what diagnosis her child had and what it entailed. In this way, mothers are given words to talk about their child's disability at home in their own environment. One of the mothers was alone without a child. She proudly told me that her starting adolescent with Spina Bifida (open back) had now been accepted at school and was therefore at school that day. It was heartwarming how she received applause from the other mothers as a compliment that she had managed to do this. This is how mothers strengthen each other.

In the meantime, there was sadza (a thick corn porridge) and chicken prepared outside on a wood fire.

After dinner, doing the dishes together.

After dinner, the group divided into two and therapy was given by the local therapists. We found that the quality of the treatment had improved again.

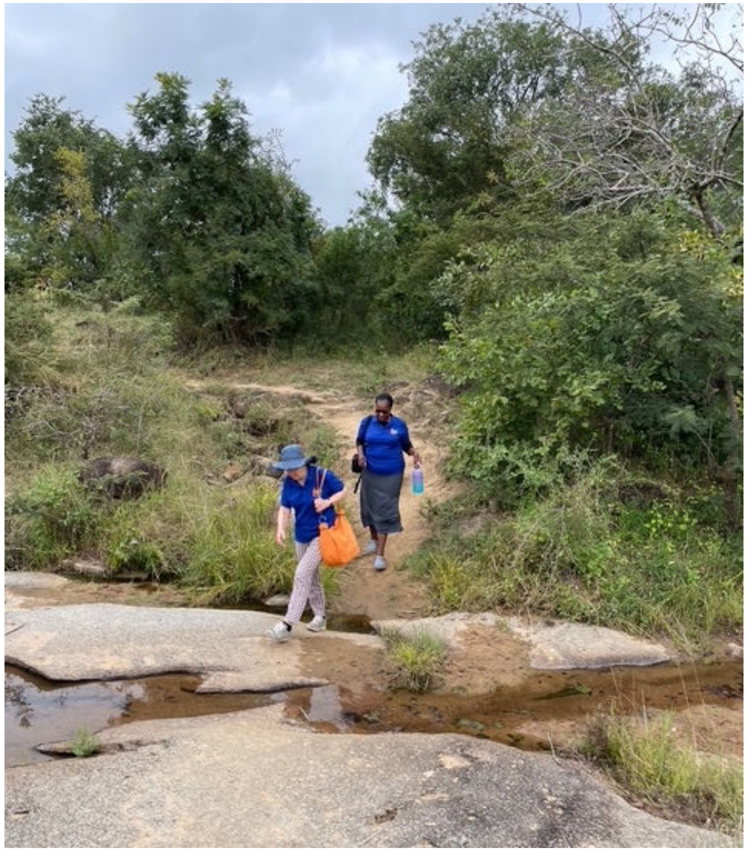
Group 1 outside, near the entrance.

Group 2 inside, in the small room.

Mission, a 12-year-old boy with spasticity, said that he is making good progress at school. Willemijn had brought some simple English booklets that explained the type of disability per subject. Mission read such a booklet flawlessly! He is now in grade 4, which is comparable to group 6 in the Netherlands.

Mission, age 12, does well at school - he is able to read simple English out loud.

Home visit



On our way to the home visit.

After 1.5 hours of driving through the bush, and 10 minutes of walking, we arrived at an isolated family. We visited a boy of 17 years old, living with his grandmother, parents being away. There were still a few children walking around, they did not respond to our greeting 'how are you?'. Children learn to answer with 'I am fine' as early as kindergarten. Probably there was no money to send these children to school.

The boy had gone to work in an illegal gold mine after primary school to earn money for his family. He had an accident last year. A corridor had collapsed, leaving him with a low spinal cord injury, paralyzed in both lower legs. He was in the hospital for months, because parents had no money to pay for the hospital and the transport home. Social work and our local project coordinator managed to collect donations to get this boy home. Now a house was needed as a place to sleep where he could get in and out with his wheelchair and take care of himself. Through social work, the possibilities for vocational training, for example sewing / making shoes, are sought. This way he could start earning money from home.

Making follow-up plans with the boy and his family.

Visit Cure Hospital

We were invited by the management of Cure Hospital in Bulawayo for a visit. This orthopaedic children's hospital is sponsored by a large American church organization. The treatments for the children are free of charge. The local Trust has been working with them for some time on children with orthopaedic problems, also as a follow-up treatment for clubfeet.

Group photo in front of Cure Hospital.

After about 4 to 5 hours of driving we arrived in Bulawayo. We were warmly welcomed and given an extensive tour. The hospital looked well equipped. Foreign specialists were used to support the local doctors and therapists, especially with more extensive operations and follow-up treatments.

Agreements were made with the Trust's therapists for better cooperation. In the future, there will now be a possibility to treat children postoperatively at home.

Unexpected encounters

We also had some unexpected encounters, which the Trust may be able to help further. Such as the Rotary Club Avondale in Harare, and people with land in Zaka district for the possible construction of a Rehab Village, or a small multifunctional rehabilitation centre. It's nice that we can make contacts with each other in this way. Willemijn and Samson gave an online presentation for the Rotary Club on May 13.

KUFAMBATOSE'S IMPACT IN COMMUNITIES

TOPIC: WALKING HAND IN HAND FOR IMPROVEMENT IN ZAKA

GUEST SPEAKER: MAI ANNA WILLEMIJIN SIMONS

- A Physiotherapist specialized in children with Disabilities.
- Lived and worked in Musiso Mission Hospital, Zaka from 2014-2016.
- Co-founder and Project Manager of the Kufambatose program.
- Currently working in Kenya in the area Rehabiliation and disability inclusion.
- Originally from the Netherlands, but also lived and worked in Switzerland for more than 15 years.

ONLINE MEETING

Details to be provided.

JOIN US ON TUESDAY
13 MAY 2025
1800HRS -1900HRS

RSVP : +263735849230

Flyer voor onze presentatie bij de Rotary Club in Harare.

Finally

We hope you appreciate that this time we have told you a little more about the activities of our Kufambatose Foundation in the Netherlands. But above all, that you enjoyed reading about our experiences in Zimbabwe itself. The local Trust Kufamba Tose has continued to grow in their organization and their path to more independence in the past year. The work 'on the ground', i.e. the care of the children with disabilities and their families, continues unabated. We have once again tasted the passion with which the local aid workers do their work. And that among so many major challenges to survive in a country like Zimbabwe, also for them. We have a lot of respect for that. We were able to inspire each other back and forth to continue!

If you want to know more about us or our project in Zimbabwe, please visit our website: www.kufambatose.eu. Maybe you would like to contribute to the work of the foundation after reading this newsletter? We are happy with all support, financial or otherwise. The Kufambatose Foundation is registered with the tax authorities as an ANBI (Public Benefit Institution). Donations are therefore eligible as a deduction for income tax. For more information, see our website or the site of the tax authorities.

Yes, I will donate!

Stichting Kufambatose

NL14 TRIO 0379 2082 88

Triodos Bank, Netherlands Swift: TRIONL2U

Your financial support will fully benefit the project.

Sincerely,

Board of the Kufambatose Foundation – Progressing Together