

SOA trip to Zambia – 1 July to 20 July 2014

A group of 17 students and staff from Collège du Léman have now returned from their 3-week visit to Zambia. During their 13 days at the SOCH orphanage ('Serenje Orphans Childrens Home'), the group built relationships with the 44 children being cared for at the orphanage and also engaged in various projects for which they had fund-raised. Details of the various activities carried out by the students are evident in the following photos and details.



EDUCATION SUPPORT

The group was able to gauge the success of the **2013/14 ECIS Outreach Grant** which provided sufficient tables and chairs so that all 44 children can do their homework and private study comfortably and productively instead of being crammed together on old benches or sitting on dusty floors.

Here are some photos showing the new furniture located in the library and canteen, as well as it being used during our visit when the CdL students worked closely with the children on their reading and other concerns.



The younger children usually do their homework in the canteen, whereas the older teenagers work in the library.

The new furniture was purchased during the last quarter of the 2013 academic year when we were also able to support the children with provision of extra help each day through the employment of 2 part-time teachers, an initiative from the visit by St George's Sue McClaren and Lauren Hales in July 2013.



This combination of additional support and appropriate furniture has helped all 13 of the older children to pass their entrance examinations to secondary school – this is a significant feat when the national pass-rate is about 30%. Education is one of SOA's main concerns and our students and staff also visited the various local Primary Schools attended by the orphanage children. School reports were also examined closely.

The poor resources in the orphanage library received some attention in the form of the purchase in Lusaka of a selection of new reading books, which are culturally appropriate. Further books should be arriving shortly from Ireland, courtesy of St George's Noreen Johnson.

TB RESOURCES SUPPORT



Here is a photo showing the handover of a cheque for US\$1000 to local Serenje District Health officials. These funds were raised at Collège du Léman in May 2014 during the Grand Prix running event which focused on TB Awareness. They are to be used to support the training and provide resources (i.e. bicycles) to local volunteers who will identify and support TB victims in outlying areas of the Serenje District. The local officials will provide photos and feedback after the donation has been spent. It is hoped that this support can be on-going in an area where TB is a huge issue.

FOOTWEAR AND CLOTHING

Our students had raised funds for their individual projects for this visit. How pleased they were to be able to purchase new school shoes for each of the 44 children!



There was also an opportunity to go clothes shopping with the children in local shops and market – this approach is much more dignified for the children than bringing piles of donated second-hand clothing from Europe. Furthermore, the new superseded warm fleeces from the Collège du Léman school shop were very gratefully received by the children during these cold winter months.



IMPROVING PLAY FACILITIES

A basketball hoop with backboard was installed, and a netball court constructed. Existing playground equipment was repaired. The children enjoyed leaving their colourful handprints on the basketball support!



GETTING TO KNOW THE CHILDREN

Besides playing with children or helping them with their reading and homework, the visiting students also got to know them better through writing activities. One of these focused on support for Dorcas, another orphan with a severe leg disability. Dorcas left Zambia in early July with an Australian team to travel to Melbourne where the 'Children First' organization have organized leg surgery and post-operative support for her. Dorcas was able to meet Joshua, an orphan

from the HMP orphanage at Chibobo – Joshua had similar surgery in Australia through ‘Children First’ last year.

The final days of the trip were based in Livingstone where the group viewed the famous Victoria Falls and enjoyed a day and night in Chobe National Park.