

THE LIMAPELA FOUNDATION

Quality, self-sustaining Christian education for Zambia

PROGRESS REPORT

from Rob Bellingham, Limapela Foundation trustee currently visiting Zambia

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Five years ago after registering Limapela in New Zealand, sharing their vision, and recruiting some co-workers, Matthew and Alison Raymond returned to Zambia to buy Cedric's Primary School and start the work of improving basic primary education for Zambian children in rural areas. They bought a 7-roomed school with very basic facilities and a very uncertain future. The interim years have required much prayer, patience and fundraising, but now there are 11 classrooms including a new library and computer room, a playground, a henhouse with over 1000 layers and 1600 productive bananas plants. There's a new toilet block, electricity and water for drinking and irrigation, and a full complement of paid teachers. It's a huge change and the envy of the other school managed by Limapela — Luyando Community School.

Schools

56% of the grade 9 students at Limapela Cedric's passed their exams last year, and nearly all took their places in Grade 10 at other schools. Currently 237 of the 365 children are sponsored and the monthly sponsorship contributions cover all their school costs. Ideally all the children could be sponsored. 60% of the teachers salaries are now being met from farm (bananas and eggs) income.

Luyando Community School is more isolated, being on a dirt road 12 km off the highway. It goes up to grade 7 and 100% of last year's students passed the state exams. But only half of them have continued to grade 8 at other schools because of cost and logistics of getting there. Luyando is funded by the UK charity Give Hope International, and is at the stage Cedric's was when Limapela

assumed management. Head Teacher Frankie Mumba was trained at FCE, a Christian Teachers' College in Zambia, and carries well the vision and philosophy of quality primary education based on Christian values. Luyando student sponsorship comes from the UK, and to cover student costs many more sponsors are needed

The Farm

The last 2 years has seen Limapela Farm produce the best bananas in the market, and there is a ready sale for the eggs with modest attrition in the number of layers. Future plans are to double production of both, and to investigate other income generating business activities. At Luyando the teachers have home gardens and at Limapela Baluba, where the Raymonds live, there is a one-hectare garden that produces different vegetables for sale locally and in town.

New Buildings

After two years of intermittent building, the library and computer block is nearly complete. However the stored computers are now outdated and the modest number of library books will not fill many shelves. The Rotary funded toilet-ablution block has been breaking construction records with a skilled contractor and his team. It provides for boys, girls and teachers, and includes showers and ample hand washing areas to encourage maximum hygiene.



Education in Zambia

The government has this year introduced an apparently mandatory policy that Grades 1-4 be taught in the vernacular rather than English. But there are 72 tribal groups in the country! It is UNESCO policy that "every child has the right to begin their education in their mother tongue" Limapela and Luyando schools seek a balance of local language and English, with a two-year transition into full English in the classroom.

When God created humans he exclaimed "very good". We believe, looking at five years of Limapela involvement at Cedric's and two years at Luyando, he might say the same. Thank you for sharing and supporting the vision and implementation of quality primary education in Zambia.