

STILL A LONG WAY TO GO FOR ZIMBABWE

The United States has recently lifted its travel warning for Zimbabwe, stating that conditions were improving in this troubled African nation. The political and economic situation is still unpredictable but restrictions have been lifted because there is a return of basic medical, food and fuel services. The long running cholera epidemic has been losing momentum, although there are still deaths in some regions. Over 4,000 people have died of cholera to date.



Lizeni and her mother recovering from Cholera



A cheerful nurse

The artists have been very quiet for the past month because many have again been forced to sell their mobiles to help pay rent and buy basic food. However food can only be bought with US dollars and our friends would have no access to foreign currency without our help. Their hardship continues unabated. Fortuitously, proceeds from the Henry Olunga concert together with sales and a few donations from the congregation will arrive soon, today in fact as this Newsletter is published.

The number of beneficiaries continues to widen. Artpeace, our co-operative of stone carvers, has four new young apprentices so it will be interesting to see their work. Senzeni, the young disabled lady, continues to make necklaces for us as do Viola, Edina and David from the Skills department at Silveira House.



Senzeni, modelling her own jewellery and showing that you can look wonderful despite being wheelchair-bound

We are currently the sole source of income for the Harare base of L'Arche, who look after people aged over 18 with learning difficulties. David Harold-Barry has a special interest in this charitable organisation which does not benefit from government funds. Chaka Mukanda, a gifted young artist, creates stunning designs for batiks and the easy parts are painted by the residents of their home. Some batiks were on display and greatly admired at the Olonga concert.



Colourful batiks make the perfect backdrop for Henry Olonga

A few will be displayed at the forthcoming exhibition by Emmanuel URC, Cambridge, who recently visited 'Harvest' and removed most of the remaining sculptures from the shed. Their Exhibition runs from 12 to 29 May, and is open Tuesdays to Fridays 10.30am to 3pm. A Zimbabwean evening with Anna Mudeka and Jackson Nazombe takes place on Friday May 22 at 7.30pm – tickets £10 each. All proceeds to Silveira House. Please contact me if interested.

Many children are unable to go to school (many of which are still closed) so they help their families by gathering water and firewood.



At the well

An article touching on children's thoughts and the effect on their lives due to the Zimbabwe tragedy and an account from one young man we support who suffered dreadfully at a torture camp last year will be published in the June edition of Reform.

I hope that these photos, taken by the artists in their environment, bring home the problems these poor people face day in, day out. Our support undoubtedly keeps many alive and gives them hope. Sometimes, a picture is worth a thousand words.



*These three little girls shared one plateful of food.
It was their only meal in two days*

Johnston Simpson