



COME ALIVE!

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Issue I
Contact**

**Aid For Africa Down Under
(AFADU)**

PO Box 3032 Redfern NSW
2016 Australia

E: info@afadu.com

www.afadu.com

**Come Alive! Articles
Rachel Neilson**

**Come Alive! Editor
Lissanne Jones**

For more information about articles featured in this issue or to tell us how YOU have made a difference, send us an email, attention Rachel, at:

comealiveafadu@yahoo.com.au

**"Amazing! Fantastic!
Terrific!" say the AFADU
Adventurers**

These are just some of the words used to describe the AFADU team's recent journey to Africa. The team, made up of both veterans and first timers, continued AFADU's commitment to resource and teach self sufficiency to the resilient people of Zimbabwe.



aid-for-africa-down-under

ACN: 107 632 904

All funds go to support children, their carers and the communities in which they live.

All Premises, printing, media, legal, transport etc is done for free by sponsors so that there are no administrative costs and all the goods and funds received go directly to the children and community development projects that AFADU supports.

GIVE A HAND UP, NOT A HAND OUT TO CONGOLESE WOMEN

Lucy Hobgood Brown, a director of AFADU, returned to her childhood home in the Democratic Republic of Congo for an 800 kilometre Congo canoe challenge!

In April, Lucy -- along with a handful of international volunteers -- braved three mighty river tributaries that link the villages of Mbandaka and Lotumbe, located about 400 kilometres apart in the Equatorial Province of Congo.

Lotumbe is a village of about 80,000 people and sits on the banks of the Momboyo River. There is no written record of how long this village has existed, but since 1910 -- after the arrival of the American church, Disciples of Christ, made it one of their principal settlement stations and located several missionaries there -- a church, a school and a hospital have been founded and opened. Lucy's father was born there in 1928.

Lucy and her group travelled in a dugout canoe carved from a giant tree. Canoes are the only method of transport used by people living along the riverbanks of this Central African country.

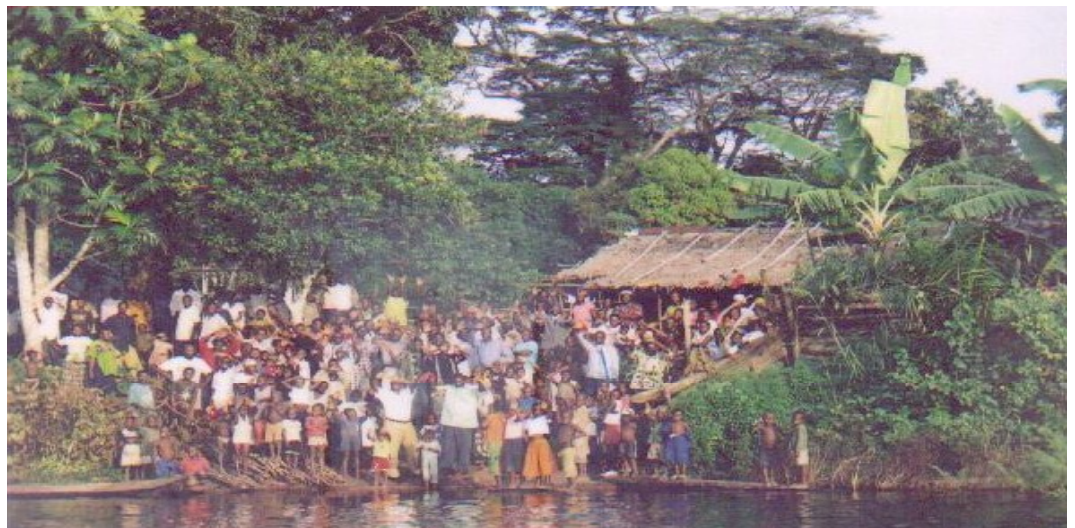
Villagers from surrounding settlements bring their fish, fresh or smoked game, manioc and other products to sell at the Lotumbe Market. Many Lotumbe residents not employed by the church, school or hospital make their living by gathering palm nuts, thatch roofing, logs, etc, which are then taken down river to larger markets.

The 800 kilometre Congo Canoe Challenge was a self-financed endeavour and the group documented each step of their journey and the efforts of the women with whom they are working.

A photo essay of their canoe challenge is available on the AFADU website, as well as a link to Lucy's adventure-filled report.

To get involved in AFADU's Congo projects, contact Lucy on hobgood-brown@msn.com.au. Or to give a donation that will send small businesses and training programs in the Equatorial please send your cheque payable to:

Aid For Africa Down Under (AFADU), PO Box 3023, Redfern NSW 2016 and include the form on page 5 to ensure that you receive proper thanks and documentation OR you may make a direct bank deposit to AFADU, Westpac Lindfield branch, BSB 032086, Account No. 176715 (indicate Congo).



AFADUs Annual Field Trip – Tales of a First Timer

Each year, AFADU and a team of volunteers travel to the Zimbabwean village community of Chikombedzi, where Ezelle Schimper and her family run an orphanage of some 40+ children on land once used for commercial farming. AFADU has committed its support in seeing to a number of ongoing projects to help create a future for the kids and community of Chikombedzi.

Ezelle told the team about the hardships faced by Zimbabweans on a daily basis. These range from food shortages to fuel.

"But these hardships are balanced by the kids," says Pam. One of my favourite memories was the preschool welcoming committee, who surrounded our vehicle when we arrived. I loved the merriment, kisses and cuddles."

After hearing firsthand accounts from a seasoned AFADU field tripper, experienced nurse, Pam Harrison, was energised, inspired and ready to go on the 2005 field trip. "I believed I would find the country and the medical facilities at least similar to what we have here in Australia," says the Sydney resident. "I soon realised that nothing could have prepared me for what lay ahead."

Accompanying Pam for this "life-changing experience" were naturopath Brenda Rogers and marketing professional Patricia Cuciti, both of whom are Australian residents.

Stay tuned for Pam's 2006 adventures in our next issue of Come Alive! Pam returns to Zimbabwe in June 2006.



2005 Field Trip

'Sewing' seeds for a school

As one of AFADU's first time field trippers to Lihranzo Children's Village in Zimbabwe, Patricia Cuciti (otherwise known as Trixie) arrived there with a vision to create a sustainable sewing project that would eventually result in money being brought into the community.

Armed with about six or seven hand-operated sewing machines and patterns –donated by TAFE NSW – and rolls of fabric that AFADU ships each year, Trixie taught the women and older girls how to sew school uniforms and baby slings.

The classes began with teaching the girls basic pattern making skills, using pre-cut patterns. As the girls' sewing technique went from woeful to hopeful to brilliant, under Trixie's ever-encouraging eye, the women were able to realise their true potential as successful seamstresses!

Just as Trixie began to wonder how the sewing project would survive after she'd gone back to Australia, she was told that the local hospital administrator's wife – Mrs Mukumbe

– was not only a qualified seamstress herself and runs her own sewing business in town, but had also been wanting to get involved with a local community project and was happy to take up the role as sewing instructor every Saturday after Trixie's departure. Serendipity!

Now known as the Lihranzo Children's Village Sewing Workshop, their new teacher, Lina Makumbe, set a 12 month curriculum – complete with sewing and pattern making exercises – to create school uniforms and other garments to be sold in local markets.

"I guess that the biggest learning curve for me making a difference starts with helping an individual realise their potential, and that they can actually achieve something for themselves in whatever form that may be," said Trixie.

Today, this project is providing funds for food and clothing for the children! This is just one example of how little it takes to help a village reach its potential, and all of us here at AFADU are so proud of the women and girls whose determination to learn has made this project the success it is.



Lihranzo Children's Village Sewing Workshop

Making a Difference



Tandeka with Brenda Rogers

Brenda Rogers, a naturopath and director of Phoenix Coaching, in the Australia Capital Territory, decided to sponsor a young girl, Tandeka.

"Tandeka's mother is a guardian mother at the Lihranzo Children's Village and she also helps out at the preschool on the farm. The pay is minimal so I thought her daughter needed a chance to get educated, fed, clothed and looked after too!" says Brenda.

Working with a Witch Doctor

Brenda also found a kindred spirit with the local witch doctor in Zimbabwe. "She realised her calling when she fell ill and visited a witch doctor herself... her 'payment' system is a little different from ours here in Australia," says Brenda, "she charges a cow or a bull for helping someone fall pregnant (she is paid a bull if it is a boy) and is very involved in village rituals and ceremonies as well.

"Many of her remedies struck a chord with me as we both used natural herbs and plants for the benefit of our clients," Brenda says.

Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you sew

Robert Louis Stevenson

Love in a Box

Each year, AFADU coordinates a project called Love in a Box, where Australians can donate a gift or a number of gifts to children of all ages. Toys, shoes, books and the like are packed into decorative shoebox sized boxes, which are then loaded into the container that is shipped to Chikombedzi's Lihranzo Children's Village in Zimbabwe.

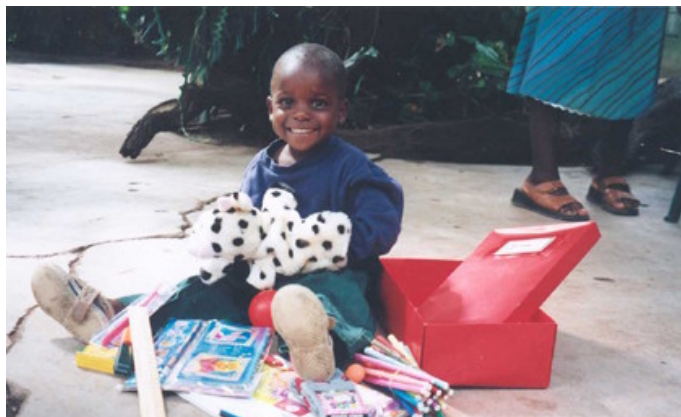
One of our corporate sponsors, Middletons Lawyers, a Melbourne-based law firm with offices in Sydney, took on AFADU's Love in a Box project. Thanks to the enthusiasm of the HR team at Middletons, employees from both offices filled boxes with abandon. "All I could think about was imagining the look on the face of the young girl when she opened the box," said Amanda Millichamp, Middletons'

Administrative Manager in Melbourne. Rachel Neilson, a word processing operator at Middletons in Sydney, said, "I put in something functional, something educational and something creative. I want to do another one!"

Colourful printouts of the Love in a Box flyers were placed around Middletons' office, offering suggestions for box content, drop-off points and contact information. Below is a picture of Amos opening his Love in a Box that he received last year.

A candle loses nothing by fighting another candle

-Erin Majors



Amos opens his Love in a Box! -2004

Creating Value – Jenny's Story

In 2004, Jenny Reading, an ex-primary school teacher from Sydney, went off to the Lihranzo Children's Village orphanage for the very first time. She felt somewhat nervous, as this group was a bit younger than the age group she taught at home. Not knowing anything about the children personally added to her butterflies but she was excited all the same. Jenny was met with attentive young faces expressing unconditional love from the very start. The children knew that they were cared about and that was all the reason they needed to put their hearts and souls into their learning at the little school.

"As the days followed each other, I saw the children light up when I arrived for school – waiting to see what I would pull out of my bag of tricks for that day. It didn't matter that they had no shoes or that it was cold at 7:30 in the morning. The yellow finger puppet was a reminder of the English word for 'duck' and the songs sung by them to and from school brought a smile to everyone's lips. Would I say that I received more than I gave? Yes! I loved every minute I spent with the children and they loved us unquestioningly in return," says Jenny.



Jenny with two local school teachers

St Bridget's Primary Spreads the Love

Julie Routledge, one of AFADU's directors, visited the St Bridget's Primary School in Victoria to talk to the kids about the children in Africa that AFADU is supporting and to collect the 200 Love in a Boxes that the children there had made. When Julie told them that there are 800 children in the local primary school in Zimbabwe, Lucy, a Year 3 St Bridget's student, stood up and asked, "What's going to happen to the other 600 children? How are they going to get a box?"

Watch this space for our next Love in a Box campaign!

DID YOU KNOW ?

Africa is roughly three times the size of North America?

The local children of Chikombedzi like to snack on the mompani worm!



The Sydney team's drop-off point



The Melbourne team has a Love in a Box luncheon!

Afadu On The Radio

ABC's Life Matters radio program did a live interview with Julie Routledge (a Director for AFADU) and some of the kids from St Bridget's Primary School in Gisborne, Victoria, who participated in AFADU's recent Love in a Box project.

As a result of that interview, other schools contacted AFADU and asked how they could become involved!

It is exactly these kinds of connections among children from other parts of the world that can have a positive impact on kids and their communities...



Ezelle snacks on a mompani worm

I Wish ... Pamela's Story

After returning to Sydney from her Zimbabwean field trip, Pamela Harrison put together a wish list of items needed at the Lihranzo Children's Village orphanage. She set her sights on friends and organisations willing to help with contributions of money, and with goods that would otherwise be gathering dust in their cupboards.

Among some of the items on the list were: bicycles, two of which were donated immediately; a radio; men's and women's clothing; shoes; cooking pots; T-shirts and video equipment. Crucial materials needed in the Chikombedzi area were medical books – basic books that even a healthcare worker with very little training could be able to make a difference by utilising.

OPAL (Overseas Pharmaceutical Aid for Life), an Adelaide-based company, promised several thousand dollars worth of pharmaceuticals and dressings for the next container set to leave port if AFADU covered the administration costs. That promise was fulfilled when Pamela's friends Jan and Geoff from Noonamah stepped up and donated not only worming doses for all the goats in the village but also raised enough money to cover OPAL's administration costs!

Pamela really hit the jackpot with the lost property office attached to the Darwin Police Department. After getting official permission from the Commissioner of the Northern Territory, 10 bicycles, heaps of linens and tools – the proceeds of which came from robberies where the owners either could not be located or where insurance claims had been paid – were donated. The Darwin Police Department is now keen to have an ongoing connection with AFADU. How great is that?

Medical textbooks and enough money to buy at least 3 more books were donated, as well as a transfer pump, courtesy of Linda and Kevin from Smartyard. A VCR, among other things, have also been contributed. On top of that, more people have expressed interest in sponsoring kids and/or going on the next scheduled field trip to Zimbabwe!

"Thanks to everyone who has donated or given me the confidence to continue with this incredible endeavour," Pamela said. "The best news is that orphanage founder Ezelle Schimper has been given permission from the Deputy Prime Minister of Zimbabwe to restart the School of Nursing, which is an amazing feat considering the political climate. We are truly being looked upon from up above!"

Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things

In Turramurra, a leafy suburb on the north shore of Sydney, there is a group of women who have formed a knitting group. Jacqui Shrimski, Anne Ineson, Jill Knoblauch and her mother Molly Irwin (who is a fabulous 97 years old) have decided to include in their craftwork knitting for those in need. They knit colourful striped teddies and have been teaching elderly women in local nursing homes to help knit the squares used to make the teddies. A completed batch of the HUG-A-TEDDIES have already travelled to Zimbabwe with the team of AFADU field trippers.



Our thanks go to these fabulous ladies who embody the spirit of AFADU!



Dr. Mashisha receives donations from OPAL

POETRY

An Orphan By Ludwig

At home I was all alone in the dark
with a bleak future!
There was no warm laughter to greet me
No welcoming smiles!
None of Father's love to mend my broken
heart
None of mother's tenderness to heal my
wounds!
My eyes were tired of crying
My heart shattered by difficulties!
But know I have a new vigour, a new hope!
You have given me new life, love and support
You will always be locked safely away
in my heart!
I now have a bright and sunny future

Ludwig Schimper is Ezelle's son and was 14 years old when he wrote this poem. Ludwig lives at the Lihranzo Children's Village on Edenvale Ranch on the Mwenzi River.

AFADU Takes a Break

After a very busy year, and seeing the successes of its projects up and running, AFADU took a well-deserved break over the Christmas holidays. To thank everyone for their commitment and support, AFADU threw its first big social event. It turned out to be a fantastic night!

Photographs and a slideshow of AFADU's last field trip played out on the walls of The Rocks' Glover Cottages as people mingled, noshed and elbow rubbed.

Guests enjoyed soulful drumming from The King of the Talking Drums, Malik Diop. At first, nothing could persuade a few shy guests to join the other less inhibited folk who moved, shook and swayed their bodies to the rhythms of drums as they did their talking. Soon enough, those same 'shy' folks couldn't help but jump up and show their appreciation of the music by answering back with some serious moves!

After a very successful year, AFADU had much to celebrate that evening!



Malik and Julie



Debra and Rod –Project Team Leaders

I want to make a difference!



Start imagining the difference YOU can make!

- Buy a T-Shirt @ \$30.00
- Buy a "Friendship" Card @ \$1.00
- Buy a Bookmark @ \$1.00
- Sponsor a Child
- Donate or Participate in a project

OR CONTACT US IF YOU HAVE:

- Used eyeglasses;
- Sewing items/fabric
- Leather (for orthopaedic braces)
- TESOL books (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages)
- School or art supplies (Kindergarten – year 12)
- Manual or electric typewriters, ribbons
- Manual (not electric) sewing machines

YES! I will support AFADU's Congo Projects!

NAME _____ DATE _____

TELEPHONE NO. _____ MOBILE _____

EMAIL _____

POSTAL ADDRESS _____ SUBURB _____

For all enquiries email us at info@afadu.com