

## The Orphan Program - Are Orphaned Girls Disadvantaged?

The trauma experienced by young children when they lose their parents is one of the worst imaginable. It is no wonder the scriptures have much to say about our responsibility to 'care of the fatherless'.

Today, education is considered to be a fundamental right of every child regardless of gender, social background, academic ability or location, yet there is overwhelming evidence that women in poor economies are less educated than men. Whether this is due to cultural beliefs, or simply because women are seen as mothers and not breadwinners, is a point of debate.

In Zambia, gender inequality is even evident within our Orphan Program. Teenage girls are dropping out of school because they have either been 'sold off' to be married, have become pregnant, or have been forced to stop school to help with increasing domestic chores. There is no space in this Newsletter to give details but suffice to say that it has become a serious issue. For example, almost 20% of the teenage girls on the program have dropped out for one reason or another.

### SUCCESS AND DISAPPOINTMENT

While the program in general is very successful, this article highlights the challenges for teenage girls and gives examples of those who have come through the program from an early age and have either completed their education or have dropped out of school.

#### Nalucha Susiku (success)

Nalucha, pictured right, is an orphan from Nampundwe who has been on the program since November 2005. She is a determined young lady who has worked hard at school. She completed high school and has just entered college to pursue a diploma



Nalucha

in Science Laboratory Technology. She is a young Christian who trusted the Lord in June 2010.

**Miyanda, Mary and Elizabeth (success, but can't afford college fees)** Miyanda from Sichobo, and Mary and Elizabeth from Chawama, have also completed high school but sadly cannot afford their college fees.

The Orphan Program supports children up to high school but unfortunately we don't have the resources to sponsor college fees. This leaves these young women despondent and frustrated feeling that their hard work in achieving the necessary college grades has been in vain. It is a problem we have to acknowledge but for which there is no immediate answer.

Most of the reputable colleges and universities have fees ranging from £400 to £800 per child per term excluding accommodation.

Some unscrupulous business people are cashing in by opening substandard colleges and offering certificates or diplomas. Although these qualifications are of little academic value the students must have some sort of diploma just to get an interview.

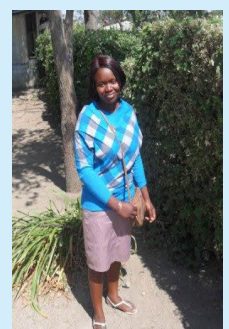
Bursaries are awarded by the Government for top students but these are only available for the University of Zambia and the Copperbelt University. There is no Government assistance for students entering other universities, colleges, or trade institutes.



Miyanda



Mary



Elizabeth

## POVERTY, EARLY MARRIAGES, AND PREGNANCIES.

### Carol Ngosa (disappointment)

Undoubtedly there is a correlation between the drop-out rate and the level of poverty. Many girls see an early marriage as a way out assuming that a husband will take care of them. Such is the case with Carol in Mulilima, pictured right, who should have been in grade 10 but is now married and has stopped school. In some situations pressure often comes from the guardian to force a marriage since it is customary for the boy's family to pay a dowry to the girl's parents (in the case of an orphan, payment would be made to the guardian).



**Tasila and Naomi Lungu (disappointments)** These two sisters are in grade 9 and 8 respectively at Munyeu Basic School. Unfortunately both are pregnant and are about to be married. Sadly the boys are not in a position to provide for them.

When we visited the area we were concerned that the living conditions compromised the girls behaviour. In a small village where teenagers have nothing to do and there is little parental concern over sexual behaviour then temptations are obvious.



### Pretty Mwewa (disappointment.)

Pretty, who lived in Mulilima, should have been in grade 8 this year but when her guardian died in May she had to leave Mulilima and go and stay with a male cousin in Serenje. Unfortunately he is unable to support her and she now works as a casual labourer on a farm.



These examples illustrate the difficulties that young girls face; and we confess there are no easy answers. However, we cannot ignore the issue. Education and Christian care are important solutions. We believe there is a need for more Christian contact, for education in personal well-being, and for spiritual guidance. At this time we do not have the capacity or the qualifications to carry out these activities but we do pray that something can be done in the near future.

If you would like to know more about the SHAREAfrica Orphan Program, or if you wish to sponsor a child, then either contact us, or visit our web site - see back page

## Munyeu - Progress Spiritual and Material

Munyeu should be a familiar name to those who regularly read this newsletter. However considering the relevance of this recent project we feel it is important to provide a further update. It is this model that is considered to be most successful in alleviating poverty in rural areas.

Munyeu is a small village community 40 miles west of the capital, Lusaka. Helping the poor believers in this area has been of special interest in the on-going work of SHAREAfrica. In past newsletters we reported that the Gospel was taken to the area in conjunction with food supplies that met the need of the starving community and as a result there is now a well established assembly with about 40 believers in fellowship. Anyone visiting the assembly would be impressed at the obvious spiritual progress in such a relatively short period of time.

Just one year after the food distribution the number of believers had increased to a point that SHAREAfrica decided to erect a new assembly hall. This greatly encouraged the believers and also induced a sense of order and responsibility. During our last visit we met with a young man and his wife, who because of threats of theft and vandalism, had decided to move into the hall to protect it. He was a young teenager at the time of the food distribution. He was subsequently converted and today he is an active member of the assembly and a capable Gospel preacher.

Like most parts of Zambia the believers in Munyeu are poor and struggle to make ends meet. Most are hard-working subsistence farmers who lack the ability to buy enough seed and fertiliser to sustain them from one year to the next.

Having considered the situation SHAREAfrica sought opportunities to help these believers, not simply by giving them a one off food donation, but by creating a sustainable system of food provision to meet their recurring needs. We consider it vital that believers, as well as others in the community, are not only given assistance but also understand their own responsibility in meeting their personal needs as well as the needs of any children or dependants they may have.

Following a meeting with the believers, it was agreed that a small allocation of money be given to 30 families to purchase seed and fertiliser. It was estimated that should the harvest yield as expected then each family would have enough food for 1 year plus an additional amount to sell in order to repay the money that was given.

It is pleasing to report that the harvest is presently underway. Some have actually picked the maize from the fields and deposited it in barns, while others have shelled the grain and have taken the 50 kilo bags to sell to the local cooperative which acts on behalf of the Government's Food Reserve Agency.

Even in these welcome and successful circumstances there are always those who will seek to exploit the poor. Travelling businessmen visit these areas and offer to buy the maize for cash but at greatly reduced prices, or to offer other basic items such as soap or clothes in exchange. Such offers can be attractive but ultimately undermine the long term viability of the scheme.

At the outset it was uncertain how many of the individuals who received the loan would be successful enough to repay it. Although we were prepared to write off any loss for those in genuine difficulty, we are pleased to report that all the 30 beneficiaries and families involved are likely to be able to repay.

The Lusambos pictured here are in the assembly at Munyeu and are just one of the families that have benefited from the financial help. They are expecting a crop yield of 40 x 50kg bags of maize, of which 25 bags will be put in storage, enough to feed them and their family for about 1 year. 12 bags have been set aside to sell and repay the loan.



Caswell and Juliet Lusambo



Maize buying at Munyeu farmers Cooperative

Brother Wandu Wandu from Lusaka Gospel Hall has overall responsibility for the scheme while local brother Prince Ngoma, a hard working and reliable member of the assembly at Munyea, is responsible for administrating the scheme locally.

With so much famine and tragic poverty being reported in the countries in east of Africa it is a cause for thanksgiving that we see success in a small area such as Munyea.



Weighing the maize

### Prayer Requests

- Please pray for the forthcoming general elections due to be held on 20th September, that they will be conducted peaceably and that Zambia as a nation will continue to uphold Christian values.
- Wisdom to use the resources we receive to greatest effect in helping poor believers and assemblies.

# As one closes another can open

It saddens us to see the decline in the number of assembly believers in the UK and to hear of testimonies closing which for the last 100 years have faithfully declared the Gospel. While some may speculate on the reasons, we must remain positive and continue to 'strive together for the faith of the Gospel', the need for which is greater than ever.

However it is encouraging to see more positive signs elsewhere. We have heard of the tide of blessing sweeping across China and in other parts of Asia. In Nanjing during a recent visit we saw people queuing to get into church before the doors were opened. The power of the Gospel is still an effectual force and we rejoice to see God's purpose unfolding before our eyes.

In Zambia the majority of people claim to be Christian, and although the habits of some may cause us to question their faith, there is nevertheless a reverence for the Word of God and a respect for those who teach it. The faithful witness of earlier missionaries has resulted in a legacy of thousands of believers across the country; many gathering to the name of the Lord in simple obedience to God's Word.

But Zambia is also counted among the world's poorest nations where 80% of the people live below the poverty line. This extreme poverty affects many of our fellow believers who struggle to meet their most basic needs. Many assemblies still gather in makeshift structures, others in half built halls, and some in crumbling mud-brick structures. The believers simply do not have the means to buy the material to erect a secure building.

SHAREAfrica in the past has provided financial assistance for many buildings but the need far outstrips our resources. (The cost of a simple concrete structure can be between £10k and £12k). Although a building is not essential for local witness, it does represent stability, especially in poorer communities where other sects and denominations have reasonable facilities – especially the JW's and Seventh Day Adventists.

We therefore appeal to those in the UK who are responsible for disposing of assembly property that they may feel exercised to donate some of the sale proceeds towards the building of new halls in Zambia. If such donations were received the money would be earmarked so that the entire amount is used for the repair and erection of assembly buildings in areas where the need is greatest.



The assembly at Luombwa. The rains destroyed their structure a few years ago. They currently meet in a small community school.



The assembly at Siavonga. They have been meeting under a makeshift structure for years.



The sisters at George assembly. (The brethren are this side not in the photograph). They have been trying to complete the structure for past 5 years.

These are just a few examples of many assemblies that need help. Some have been meeting in these conditions for over 10 years.

The believers are willing and able to build their own structures but the cost of materials is prohibitive.

Plans exist for small and medium size structures capable of seating 100 to 200 people. They are a simple rectangular shape and are easy to erect.

Contact information:

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or

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Tel: 01423 879280

Information is also available at [www.shareafrica.com](http://www.shareafrica.com)

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