

## **ADOPT-A-SCHOOL Global Teenager Project, Zambia**

Schools: Olympia basic School  
Birdsfield School

Network consultants: Matero Boys Secondary School

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### **ADOPTED SCHOOL PROJECT REPORT**

The adopted school project is a project that ensures that schools in developing countries are all given an equal opportunity to ICT skills and equipment. In Zambia, this project has now incorporated 3 schools: these are Chongwe High School, Olympia Basic School and Birdsfield School. In writing this report, I will concentrate on Olympia Basic School and Birdsfield Schools but later also present an insight into the huge problems faced by Chongwe Secondary School.

#### **1. OLYMPIA SCHOOL.**



Olympia Basic School Lusaka- Zambia

Probably the poorest School on the Global Teenager Project, though located in the heart of the Capital city Lusaka and in a rich suburb, Olympia Basic School is a true reflection of the neglect that has been characteristic of many government schools. Despite the lack of finances and qualified ICT skilled teachers, they have the biggest heart. Olympia School through it P.T.A (Parents Teachers Association) have invested over 10 million kwacha (\$2500) in rehabilitating an old classroom into beautiful computer lab. This investment however comes at a price in that they have little or no resources to use for other projects. Not to be out done, they have gone further and instituted a task force that will seek ways of turning this investment into a long term sustainable project. The project will start by conducting a week long course on running

a small business center. This is still under discussion and funds allowing, we should be able to run the week long orientation when funds do become available.

#### **2. BIRDSFIELD SCHOOL**

This school is also located in Roma Township, an uptown residential area of Lusaka and the school is also a complete contrast to Olympia secondary School. The school clearly has the resources and staff to use IT equipment effectively, however, as indicated above the equally need training in running what I would loosely call a Telecenter.

### 3. TECHNICAL TEAM: Matero Boys Secondary School

You will agree with me that one of the most prohibitive factors in the development of ICTs in Africa is the cost of equipment and subsequently the cost of installations, we have found a fun and affordable solution to this problem. For installations we sought the



Connecting the hub

assistance of 5 energetic boys from Matero Boys Secondary School, who were more than willing to take part in a pilot project of getting school going students to attend short crash course in software installation and networking, and later setup networks in the above schools.

The boys spent 2 Sundays at the 2 schools, food and transport was provided to from their homes, the result is 2 schools networked at a minimal cost and an example of youth empowerment candidly displayed. The following is their report:

On the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2002, three members of the Matero Boys Computer club helped setup a network for the Birdsfield School computer lab.

The project lasted for about 2 hours. Upon arrival we were introduced to a few teachers and later shown the lab, after speculations on how we would organize the cables and deciding which computer was to act as a server, we located our equipment and got the job underway, the tasks required us to cut cables, carefully connect them and clip them. It was difficult at first because we had to show the on lookers that we knew exactly what we were doing bearing in mind that once the cables were connected, there was no re connecting.. Luckily we gained our confidence and kept our cool soon we were cutting, clipping and connecting the cables as if we had been doing it for years, two of us were doing the cutting whilst the third was connecting the cables to the machines.

After 2 long hours of working and telling stories, we finished the job. Not only were we proud of ourselves but also the 2 teachers present. The problem we discovered was that 3 computers were not compatible, so we decided to leave that to Chilufya, we even helped them fix a speaker which was not functional, but now it works fine.

The work was interesting for us and we learnt a whole lot of things, we just hope can have a few more opportunities to gain experience and knowledge in the IT world and that next time we get more refreshments.

**Complied By: Matero Boys Computer Club**

### 4. TECHNICAL REPORT BY: CORDINATOR

The project was indeed a wonderful experience, there are several issues that come up from such projects, most of the schools that are beneficiaries of such noble donations do not have the capacity to maintain the hardware let alone pay the huge license fees. They are several recommendations to these problems.

1. Have students trained in Hardware Maintenance skills
2. Use a Linux platform so as to cut down on licenses fees
3. Have an overseer who will train the students and assist when need arises especially with regards Linux. This can initiative can be experimented in both girls and boys schools so that both gender is exposed to IT beyond the classroom and also provide more avenues for career choices.

Another observation is that the donations will usually take the language of the country of origin, which further adds to the cost of converting to English.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS



Computers being put on Test

This initiative is without doubt one practical solution to bridging the digital divide, in the absence of a national program to fill all schools with computer equipment, the Adopted School Program remains one solution. How do we sustain this investment? How do we incorporate programs that will embrace the rest of the community, programs that will make the community identify with this investment, one they can call their own. GTP should be extended to all these schools and whilst I appreciate

current timetable for GTP, we could have a national GTP that would act as a demonstration and one that would reach out to the community outside the schools.



It was worth it!! Staff and students

The possibilities are endless, the reality however is that we lack exposure and knowledge, I am confident that with proper planning the Adopted school programme can act as

- a platform for training young people in basic hardware, software and networking skills.
- It could further act as a way of introducing Linux into schools
- And lastly serve communities by means of communication centers via internet as well as Training centers.

What we need to do is work toward having a program that is affordable, by empowering students to work and learn at the same time.

Chilufya Musosha  
Project Coordinator