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**Welcome to the new Oasis Zimbabwe newsletter!**

Dear Friends,

It has been a while without newsletters from Oasis Zimbabwe, so we hope you enjoy reading about all the developments of the past few months. Our Tanaka, Skills Training and Reproductive Health & Recreation projects have re-started since March, with new sources of funding, while our PsP and Church Mobilisation projects have continued to be busy all year. We have said some farewells, had new faces join the team, and some familiar faces return to us! And we have gained two chickens and a rooster at our new office premises...

We would like to say a big thank-you to all our friends and supporters who have given, prayed for and encouraged us through a tough few months—we really appreciate you.

With best wishes,

The Oasis Zimbabwe Team



*Some of our staff members and volunteers with Tanaka Girls at the Harare International Festival of Arts, April 11*

**Pre-School Project (PsP) Update**

PsP continues to support 34 pre-schools across Harare, in partnership with local churches, impacting over 1500 children every year. We have had donations of toys and blankets which the pre-schools are making good use of, and a new funding arrangement with Children First is also allowing the team to purchase much-needed extra resources for the schools.



*Children with their new blankets*

September sees the start of 12-weeks full-time training for 18 new students on PsP's ninth intake. Twelve students are from new partner churches this year, and the team are looking forward to the new term. Last week they learned about making simple teaching resources such as beanbags and had fun designing learning games in the office garden.



### Editorial: Getting our just deserts?

One of Bono's famous lines in a U2 song is: "Where you are born should not decide / whether you live or whether you die". A statement in the simplest terms of the unfairness, or injustice, in the world today. Lately I have been challenged that my current senior work position, and even more, my financial situation, are more down to the opportunities I have had than any skill, hard work or other ability of mine. Opportunities we take for granted such as social class, supportive family or country of birth play a significant role. But the contrary is also true. At Oasis we have witnessed the skill, hard work and courage of many people who have had not the benefits of these opportunities. I remember one student on an Oasis carpentry course who regularly pushed his 'scotch' cart six miles from his house to the course facilities and back again, carrying his materials and finished furniture. Survival here is seriously hard work, with a lot of innovation and risk taking involved. That life is unfair is a gross understatement.

Like many people today, Oasis strongly upholds the belief that everyone is of value, and more importantly, everyone is of equal value. Yet I believe that we make value choices every day based on the celebrity "because I'm worth it" principle. That somehow you've made it through hard work, talent, good looks or skill. So you DESERVE a new car, a nice holiday, fine meals or some retail therapy. I've nothing against all those, but don't kid yourself that you deserve it. And let's not start hoping we get what we deserve, since I for one will be in serious trouble.

Over the past couple of months we have started fundraising for the Oasis Zimbabwe Centre. At the heart of the centre we hope to re-establish the Tanaka project, a residential, rehabilitation and reunification programme for former street girls. Being residential it is an expensive project to run, however that is the investment needed for these girls, who have run away from poverty or abuse or orphanhood; usually a combination of all three. They survived life on the streets, but lost education, childhood, trust and self-worth. Since May 2004 the Oasis Tanaka project has cared for 70 such girls, trying in some way to replace their lost opportunities. We are starting to see the fruits of this investment, with girls getting good grades at school, finding employment, and two this year gaining admission into University.

We are eager to get the residential centre up and running again, and would be grateful if you gave towards the Centre and re-establishing the Tanaka project. This is a way to help those less fortunate have some of the same opportunities you had, regardless of whether they (or you or I) deserve them.

Thank you for your support,

Kevin Brits—CEO, Oasis Zimbabwe



Skills Training girls going to visit a bead-making project

## Skills Training Update

15 girls graduated from the Oasis Skills Training Tailoring Course last July, and were given sewing machines from Hope HIV. However the girls did not have capital to buy fabrics to start their own sewing businesses, so we have run a 6-month consolidation programme to help them establish themselves.



The girls have had small grants of money to purchase fabrics, thread and supplies to make jewellery, and have been trained in budgeting, networking, assertiveness and communication skills, as well as having the opportunity to sell at stalls rented for them at local markets and craft fairs. Two coffee shops and one shopping centre in Harare are now stocking products made by the girls, and we say farewell to them this month as they launch out as independent businesswomen! Six of the girls have also secured employment in local sewing factories in Harare



which is a real success, and evidence of the increase in their self-esteem and confidence.

We are currently applying for funding for a new intake of girls from the Epworth community, who will hopefully begin the re-formatted 20-week course in the New Year.

*"I would like to complete my education so I can become a lawyer and help other girls like me."*

One of our current Tanaka girls

## Tanaka Update

Since Tanaka was required to re-register with Social Welfare last year, we have continued to support 11 of our previous girls. Some are at boarding school, some are at a government home, and others are being fostered by families from partner churches. We have had generous gifts of clothes, toiletries and blankets for the girls, and with support from our partner Oasis Academies in the UK, we have been able to arrange extra holiday tuition for girls who are struggling in some school subjects, as well as being able to contribute towards tuition fees and living costs for two of our girls who have secured places at university. We are very proud of their achievements and look forward to seeing more change in their lives in the coming year.



We are investigating funding to renovate one of the buildings at our new Hatfield property in order to re-register Tanaka as a shelter home, following a report by the team earlier this year which found safe accommodation to be the primary need of children living and working on the streets in Harare.



## Reproductive Health & Recreation Update

RHR has worked with groups of young people around Harare to run sports activities and peer-led training on sexual health, lifeskills and home-based care. A UK-based trust gave RHR funding in May to run income-generating activities with two of these groups for nine months.

12 youth were selected in Goromonzi, one of our focus communities, and the initial project is the breeding of chickens. The chickens reached maturity in August,

ending the first income generating cycle.

We are pleased with the progress made so far, as the team have been working tirelessly to make the project succeed. Below is an extract from a letter written to Oasis by one of the beneficiaries.

*“Despite the challenges such as lack of electricity to provide warmth for our day old chicks we managed to press on until it happened. One thing we were not worried about is*

*that we already have a start, we already have capacities, talents and direction as members of our group. We have managed to maximize the opportunity that had knocked at our door. And one thing that put the drive in us is that we have a vision and a legacy that need to be left in our community. We have gone through certain challenges such as discouragement, frustration and being despised, but we have endured and followed through until it happens.”*



**Day-old chicks for the income-generating poultry project**

## Church Mobilisation Update

The Church Mobilisation team are in the final year of their three-year project, training and working alongside churches to reach out to their communities in sustainable ways.

Church Mobilisation supports volunteers from each of their partner churches who implement the training. These volunteers receive a small monthly stipend.

The team have held a number of vision conferences and follow-up meetings with church pastors, and run training sessions on resource mobilization, project management and small grants distribution.



**Presentation to church partners at the Oasis offices**

## Beneficiary Profile—Skills Training

Emma Chikati (20) has an older brother and younger sister, and lives in Epworth. Emma's father was unemployed, so she was only able to complete her education to Form 2 (age 14). Emma's aunt was a tailoring instructor at Oasis Zimbabwe, so Emma moved to Kambazuma to stay with her and join the tailoring course. Emma's aunt died two years ago, so Emma had to move back to Epworth and travel for 2 hours each way to continue the course. She worked hard and enjoyed learning to sew many different items, such as curtains, clothes and bags.

After graduating from Oasis in 2010, Emma was only able to use her sewing machine when her family had money for fuel for their generator, as there is no municipal electricity in her area of Epworth. She secured employment at a clothing factory in downtown Harare in January 2011, and works six days a week sewing seat covers and curtains. Emma enjoys her job and has visibly grown in confidence since beginning work. Her salary helps to provide food for her family.

Emma says she has enjoyed the 6-month consolidation programme, and has learned how to manage a business, how to talk to customers and how to be patient in her work. She says *“I know everything I need to know now, to do this on my own. I hope to save money to return to school and take my O'Level exams.”*



**Emma Chikadi, one of our Skills Training graduates**

## Oasis Zimbabwe

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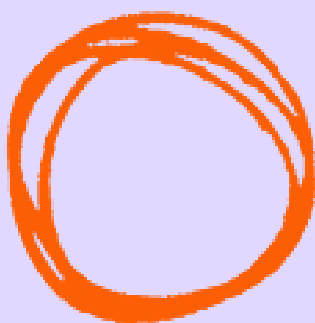
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### Urgent appeal for Oasis Zimbabwe

*Fadzai\* was abused by relatives and ran away from home at the age of 13.*

*She moved around various towns in Zimbabwe before arriving in Harare and reporting the abuse to city police.*



*The police referred Fadzai to the Oasis Tanaka shelter home*

*for girls whilst they investigated her case, but her relatives ran*

*away and the police were unable to prosecute them. Fadzai remained at Tanaka for 2 years and was able to go to school for the first time in years. She is now being fostered by a church pastor and his family, and hopes to complete her education and become a lawyer.*

**Tanaka, meaning “we are now whole”, is one of Oasis Zimbabwe’s community projects, reaching out to vulnerable children and young people and helping them to transform their lives. Tanaka specifically reaches out to girls aged 14-18 who were living and/or working on the street.**

**Oasis Zimbabwe moved to the Hatfield area of Harare in 2010, and we urgently need to raise \$40,000 / £25,000 by the end of 2011, to finish buying our property, so that we can re-open our Tanaka home and continue to run our other projects.**

**Please support Oasis Zimbabwe by:**

- going to the Oasis UK website : [www.oasisuk.org/give/donateonline](http://www.oasisuk.org/give/donateonline) and selecting ‘Oasis Zimbabwe’
- contacting our Harare-based team using the details above, for donations of toys, clothes, household items and non-perishable food items