



# ZISIZE



## Newsletter - December 2019

Dear Friends, Supporters & others who may be interested!

Zisize Educational Trust has now been in operation for 21 years. During that time it has transformed the lives of literally thousands of children and their families living in the remote impoverished rural area of Ingwavuma.

If you've ever heard of Maslow's Hierarchy of Need, you might be able to identify how Zisize programmes have laid the building blocks addressing the various human needs to enable our under-privileged and vulnerable children to reach their potential in life.

Block 1. Feeding schemes at weekends and during school holidays; emergency food parcels; boreholes; food gardens; clothes & school uniform; houses for child headed households.

Block 2. Skills training leading to income generating opportunities e.g. seedling nurseries, community gardens, free range chicken rearing; health education, HIV and TB testing and counselling; making safe unsafe homes.

Block 3. Children and youth who have benefitted from Zisize's programmes introduce themselves to visitors as 'a child of Zisize' not only do they feel supported by Zisize but support each other as members of the Zisize family; Ekukhanyeni Cluster foster scheme and community foster parents give love and care to children unable to live with their own families; lifeskills club members feel a sense of belonging; Zisize partner schools operate the 'caring schools model' so children feel they are cared for; mentors provide love and support to vulnerable children.

Block 4. All Zisize programmes lead to more confident and well-rounded children who are able to derive maximum benefit from the opportunities afforded them.

Block 5. The end result are those students who complete tertiary education and get jobs to support themselves and their families; those who learned skills which enable them to earn money and be independent; those teachers who derived benefit from Zisize training and operate at a higher professional level which in turn benefits their pupils

Long standing supporters with good memories may recall this family from the 2010 newsletter *Each school has a mentor attached who visits vulnerable children in their homes. The Ekukhanyeni mentor spotted a 9 year old crying at school and eventually persuaded her to allow her to visit her home to find out what the problems were. She discovered three daughters aged 9, 17 and 19 living alone since their mother's death that January. They were all grieving and had no income but relied on the charity of neighbours for survival. They did not have food, or money for school fees or new uniform. Their stick & stone house was in poor state of repair. Zisize's response was holistic - a monthly food parcel was provided; foster care grants were applied for the 2 younger girls; the garden trainer visited and helped them create an organic vegetable garden; the social worker helped with bereavement counselling;*

*Uniforms were provided; applications were successfully submitted for an RDP house; the mentor visited weekly and provided emotional and practical support. The 17 year old was in her final year at school and wanted to go to university but saw no hope of this. The mentor arranged for her to stay with a teacher near the school so that she could attend after school study sessions; she took her to Zisize's career expo; helped her apply for university and she has been accepted at Rhodes University.*

In April this year Hlengiwe and I attended a graduation ceremony at Rhodes University for the then 17 year old! In the intervening years she has completed first her Bachelors Degree, then her Honours Degree and has just been awarded her PGCE. We were such proud parents'. In the photo below she really embodies my dream for children like her - at the pinnacle and ready to soar!.



She is not alone, between 2010 and 2019, 66 out of 70 students from extremely poor homes, who would never have been able to attend tertiary education without monthly support from Zisize, (via funds from Nicky Lewis, JHS, the AALL Foundation and Solon Foundation) completed their courses, obtained their degrees and diplomas and are in employment, supporting their families. Hundreds more have received help with application fees of R245 each which their families cannot afford (an indication of the extreme levels of poverty in the area), one off help with tuition or registration fees, transport, books etc. Thankfully most do receive NSFAS now to cover tuition, which wasn't the case until a couple of years ago, but this does not cover all their needs.

One eligible child who slipped through Zisize's net was the daughter of the cook at our Mgedula feeding scheme. She had commenced her studies before we implemented the programme. While I was in Ingwavuma in August the cook came to thank Zisize for giving her the job. She said:-

*"I have been working for Zisize as a cook since the feeding on non-school days started. It was not that much that I have been earning (R700 or £39 a month) but it made a huge impact in my*

*family. I was able to buy uniforms for my children, buy them food and take them to the clinic when they were sick. Zisize may never know how grateful I am. My first daughter was at the University of Zululand. No one was working at home except me, so my money, added to two child support grants, stretched to support her as well. I did that until she finished her degree. It was not easy at all. I always told my daughter not to become a prostitute because I knew what I could afford to give her was very little. But the good news is that after she got her degree, she got a job in Mpumalanga as a teacher. Things changed at home. I am now living in a house with a tiled roof and tiles on floors that she had built for us. She is the one who is helping her siblings with their education needs. I still don't believe it's me and my children that sleep in that house. This is all because of Zisize, I'm proud of my organization and I tell other cooks that perseverance is the mother of success."*

This made me think about the impact on other staff. We currently have 79 staff members, the majority of whom are low paid. Between them they have more than 700 dependants from their nuclear and extended families, reliant on their wage for survival. Convert that ratio to the 66 graduate students, who received the most support, they are now likely to be supporting 580 family members, multiply that by the additional hundreds who received some level of support and you can see how many have benefitted from being 'under Zisize's umbrella'.

In primary schools Zisize focused on improving reading from grade R upwards in 2019. There has been a great improvement. All schools took part in the Festival of Books competition with many activities emanating from those books that they had read. The competition was attended by the parents for the first time. Activities e.g. poems, book reviews, dramas, storytelling, spelling B, reading aloud, choral verses, debates were presented. The event made us very proud that children had improved so much and gained a lot of vocabulary. Such was the level achieved that one of the children represented the province nationally in storytelling and came first. Quite something for an Ingwavuma child! One of the parents said afterwards:-

*"I would like to thank all the teachers and the principal of the school. This event was amazing. We were told that there is a learner that won nationally but we didn't understand what he was really doing. This event let us see him telling a story, indeed he deserved to win. I will never make a mistake by not thanking Zisize for training our teachers, now we see great things, these children were speaking English like high school learners. We are grateful, reading can do wonders, thank you Zisize, children from this school are far better than children from other non Zisize schools"*

For those unfamiliar with how Zisize works, all the schools we partner with are government schools but they are known as 'Zisize schools' because of all the programmes we implement using these schools as bases in their communities.

Financially 2019 has been very stressful. If it were not for the huge rescue by Victoria Freudenheim we would not have been able to pay the majority of staff in October, November and December, (9 had their salaries covered by specific funders) so while we are grateful to all our funders and individual supporters, I have to make special mention of her - can you imagine the impact on 70 staff members and their families if Zisize could not continue to employ them? That is not counting the cost to the beneficiaries (the most important people) they work with.

Zisize means 'self help' in isiZulu and while this is the ethos we encourage in beneficiaries, it is also adopted by Zisize itself which tries in so many ways to generate income to supplement grants and donations. Currently we have a bed and breakfast, based in the 2 volunteer rondavels funded by Medway Towns Soroptimists, and updated with a grant from the Solon Foundation, an embroidery business, chicken farming, minibus hire with driver for church outings etc, catering for events, letting the hall for meetings and training by government departments. In addition due to the financial crisis, all staff earning more than R3,000 a month volunteered to take a 10% pay cut from October in order to help keep projects running.

Zisize runs 4 crèches (nursery classes) including Manyiseni, built by DTC volunteers in 2004 with the extension funded by the Jephcott Charitable Trust later. It runs training for 14 others but the lack of money from the Department of Social Development has severely affected all but Zisize crèches. One of the Manyiseni crèche committee said:-

*"Our crèche is still operating because of Zisize, we thank you on behalf of these poor souls. It is really bad because children do not know about all the politics, they are innocent; they expect that they will be given food when they are hungry. You see them around guava trees that grow wild looking for guavas to pick one or two to have something for snack time, how much worse it would be if there was no food at the crèche (which is the case now at all non Zisize crèches) because they come here not even having had food at home. Zisize is really saving so many souls. We thank them also for the food garden because the cook sometimes cooks sweet-potatoes, spinach and cabbages from the crèche's food garden, established by Zisize and they always have water to cook and drink because of the borehole given by Zisize again."*

She further appreciated that parents come and help in the garden for their benefit of the children"

Janet Solomon has again funded the building of a home which has enabled a child headed family to be housed after lightning destroyed their home and they were living in tents provided by the army. Janet's recurring generosity is amazing.



In UK I would like to thank Julia Search for organising a curry lunch and bring and buy sale for Zisize while I was there in July, raising £375 which Medway Towns Sorooptimists added to with another Bring & Buy sale. They also have formed a link between Zisize and Byron Road Primary School in Gillingham where the children raised £335.66 from a toy sale to feed children in Ingwavuma. Also when I was in Wales Dave Watkins organised a successful quiz at the Grange Pub which raised £280. I would encourage others to organise fund raisers. I have discovered I am quite good at propagating plants so will be selling my plants in the New Year to any Capetonian reading this!

Sadly we have lost Wickland Westcott's support this year as they were taken over by another firm which had its own charity. This has had a big impact. We are extremely grateful for their previous long standing support.

While in Ingwavuma I visited one of the most recent community gardens at Nonjinjikazi and was very impressed. They have divided the land into strips for each family and the whole family takes responsibility for caring for their patch. Zisize has trained them in organic gardening. One person is responsible for operating the borehole pump and has been trained to carry out simple repairs. Each person who draws water (hundreds from the wider community as well as the gardeners) contributes a small amount to buy fuel for the generator. I was touched by the women who, when Hlengiwe said she wanted to buy some produce, asked who should she buy from and each of them identified the same woman who they knew to be struggling financially the most. There are now 6 community gardens benefitting 1087 people in total.

Below

Women with their water barrels  
Watering their vegetables



Borehole operator



Harvesting produce for Hlengiwe



Zisize The Heaton Lee Memorial Trust in UK would like to thank the French Huguenot Church in London, UNISON branches, Just Trust, the children of Byron Road Primary School, Medway

Towns Soroptimists, members of Highland Place Unitarian Church and more than 100 individuals, you know who you are!

Zisize Educational Trust wishes to thank those above and also Dept of Social Development for social work salaries, DG Murray Trust, ELMA, Gordon McKenzie, Janet Solomon, JHS, John v.d.Linde, Mary Oppenheimer & Daughters Foundation, Nicky Lewis, Ryan Jordan, Solon Foundation, South Coast Foundation, Starfish Greathearts, Tshikululu, Victoria Freudenheim & Zoe Sarojini Trust.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas or Happy Hanukkah on behalf of Zisize in both South Africa and Wales and thank you for making a difference to our children's lives and may 2020 be a good year for all of you and for Zisize.

*Siyabonga, Thank You, Diolch yn fawr*

*Niki*

On behalf of Zisize's Trusts & Children

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