

Project Luangwa

Pupil sponsorship



Thank you for choosing to give a child the chance of an education by sponsoring a pupil through Project Luangwa.

Child sponsorship is one of the most effective and rewarding ways to make a life-long difference to someone's life. The benefits do not stop once the child has left school but gives them a better chance of gaining employment or starting their own business. The ability to read opens up a whole new world through books and the advantages of receiving health education speak for themselves, especially in a country so affected by HIV/Aids.

Why sponsor a child through Project Luangwa?

The children who are accepted onto our sponsorship scheme are orphans, or classed as vulnerable with both parents unable to work or grow crops due to an illness such as HIV/AIDS. By living and working in Mfuwe we have regular personal contact with the children and give you first hand reports of their progress. 100% of your sponsorship money directly benefits the child and does not disappear into the wrong pockets or is used on administration.

Your **support** is not just about money; an **orphan** who is sponsored knows that **someone, somewhere** in the world, **cares.**

www.projectluangwa.org/sponsorship

All About Education in Zambia



In Zambia Primary or Basic education starts when children are seven years old; that's late compared to children in the western world. Often a child may start school even later and miss the a year or more due to the simple fact that their family cannot spare the money for books or uniform. This can lead to an enormous range of ages in a single grade of up to six years or more.

Education prior to grade 8 is called primary or basic education and is free. At the end of this time pupils sit for their Certificate of Primary Education Exam.

From the end of grade 7 pupils must pay school fees and at this stage may choose a school which school they attend in Grade 8. However they will only be offered a place if their if their results are good enough.

The trouble with this method is that many of the better equipped schools - *and usually the ones the kids choose* - are far from Mfuwe and this means that the pupils would have to board. This is beyond the means of most families and the alternative is to stay at their local school until the end of grade 9.

At the end of Grade 9 pupils take their Certificate of Junior Secondary Education and it is the results of these exams that decide which school they may attend in Grade 10. This time there is no choice – the better schools pick the kids with better results even if the school is many miles away and the family cannot afford the boarding fees and transport costs. Each school has its 'cut off' point and the more rural or under-developed the school the lower their standard of acceptance.

Pupils who have achieved good marks but whose families cannot afford the expense of boarding school can attend their local secondary school - if there is one.

Some pupils are fortunate and live close enough to a secondary school to travel there daily. But for a Secondary School pupil who does not there is no choice; if their family cannot find the money for boarding their education comes to an end.

The Mfuwe area has just two secondary schools; Matula High School which is close to the airport and, about 25 km closer to the park, Mfuwe Day Secondary School.



When do we start sponsorship?

Sponsorship runs in line with the Zambian school year - January to December. Applicants start arriving at the Project Luangwa office from December onwards and by the second week of January the daily queues can consist of fifty or more hopeful students.

In early January they are mostly pupils who have completed their Grade 7 exams and have just received their Certificate of Primary Education exam results as well as acceptance letters from the various secondary schools. Most are looking for help to attend a distant boarding school but Project Luangwa has recently taken the decision to encourage Grade 8 and 9 kids to stay at their local schools.

Around the end of January the results of the Grade 9 or Certificate of Junior Secondary Education exam results are published and the pupils will receive letters telling them to which school they have been allocated. And, once again, there will be long queues of hopeful students outside the Project Luangwa office.

How do we decide who's sponsored?

Our sponsorship program is based on academic potential and financial need. Pupils must visit our office and write an application letter and complete a form detailing their circumstances. They must also bring at least two end of term reports or their Grade 7 or 9 exam certificates. Pupils must show good grades or aptitude and sound financial reasons for their application.

We interview the child, research their circumstances, and occasionally consult with their teacher before a decision is made about accepting them for sponsorship. Pupils also need to show that they have a good grasp of written and spoken English. This is because all school lessons are in English.

By balancing their academic potential and their home and family circumstances we must make a decision about whom we should try to help.



January 2012 - Grade 7 pupils queue to apply for sponsorship at the Project Luangwa office

How do we spend your donation?

To ensure that all your money is used for its intended purpose we do not simply hand out cash.

We issue a cheque to cover everything paid via the school: tuition fees, boarding fees and examination fees.

At the start of the school year we issue every child with:

- a tailor's chit - exchangeable at a local tailor for 2 shirts or blouses, 2 pairs trousers or skirt and a school tie,
- a pair of good quality leather shoes,
- 3 pairs of school socks
- a school bag,
- enough hardback exercise books,
- a pencil case, pens and pencils
- ruler and eraser
- maths set (for grade 8)
- scientific calculator (grade 10)

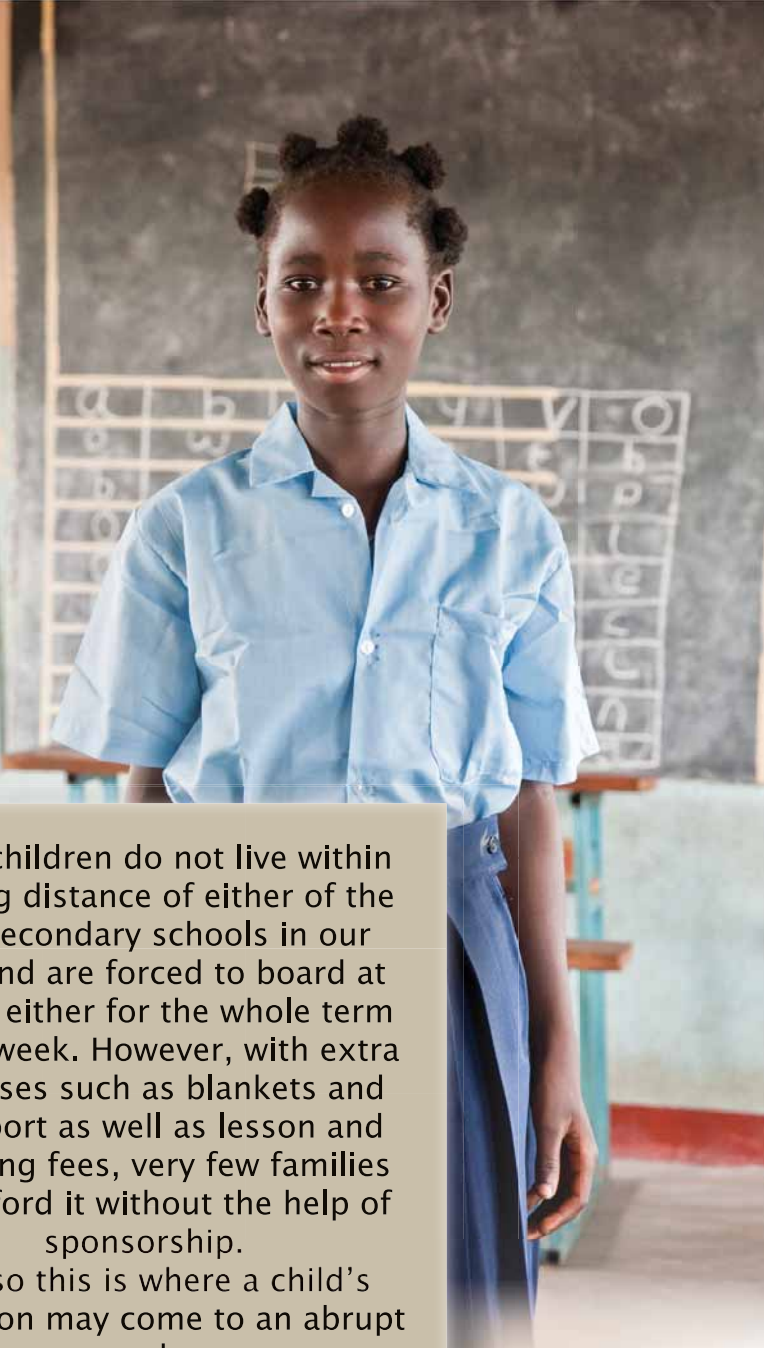
Kids who attend boarding school also receive:

- a blanket
- a mosquito net
- a lockable steel trunk for storage at school or, if preferred, a travel bag
- a small amount of cash for toiletries
- bus fares to and from the school.

If a pupil is doing a subject requiring specialised equipment such as technical drawing kits we will try to provide this wherever possible.

We buy most of the items we hand out in bulk to gain the best possible prices. at the start of terms 2 and 3 we issue further supplies and exercise books, pens and pencils.

At the end of each year we send the sponsor an itemised breakdown of our expenditure on their child.



Many children do not live within walking distance of either of the two secondary schools in our area and are forced to board at school either for the whole term or the week. However, with extra expenses such as blankets and transport as well as lesson and boarding fees, very few families can afford it without the help of sponsorship.

And so this is where a child's education may come to an abrupt end.





So what does the sponsor RECEIVE?

Shortly after choosing a child to sponsor you will be sent a sponsorship letter telling you about the child and their circumstances, a photo and a sponsors handbook.

At this stage you may also receive a letter from the pupil.

Pupils will next visit the office just before the start of term 2 (about 2 weeks after Easter) and most choose to write again to their sponsor. Unfortunately some teachers in Zambia do not send the end of term reports and exam results out as quickly as we would like but as soon as we receive them we send you these too.

This is repeated in September just before the start of term 3 - so you can expect another letter around this time.

The children's last visit of the year is in December, at the end of term 3, when they come for their end of year assessment. Once again most kids will write but we rarely have the term 3 report to send until mid to late January.

Many children choose to write more than the usual four letters a year, although not all. Remember that they are writing in their second language and sometimes it can be quite a struggle. It's a bit pot luck whether the child you choose is a prolific letter writer. Their letters are enlightening and often enable a glimpse of life here in Africa that would be hard to find elsewhere.



Can I write to my pupil?

Your sponsored child is as interested in your life and culture as you may be about theirs and, if you wish, you may write letters in return. All kids love to get letters from their sponsors; it can make them feel special and that someone, somewhere cares. Exchanging letters with a rural African kid can be quite a cultural learning curve on both sides. Some things you may write about will be unknown to them and you will find yourself describing all sorts of things that you have taken for granted since a child.

The kids love to get pictures too, especially of you and where you live. Remember few kids see television or have access to books and these pictures help them understand your world.

To protect your privacy we do not give out your home or email address. We can post the pupil's original letters to you (but do ask for a contribution for postage) or scan them and attach to an email.

With our unreliable and often rather slow incoming postal system we advise that you write your letters in Word and email them to us as an attachment. You can also send photos electronically but please reduce the size first. About 1000 px maximum on the longest side is about right. We will print your letters and photos and pass them onto the child.

Can I visit?

If you are visiting the area we may be able to arrange for you to visit your sponsored pupil but much depends on the time of your visit and which school the child is attending. If your pupil is at a distant boarding school and your visit is during term time we will not be able to arrange for you to meet. However if you are here during the school holidays we can arrange to visit their home. If you sponsor a child attending a local school then it doesn't matter when you come.



Do I have to get involved?

No, we understand that not everyone has the time to get involved and if you prefer to remain anonymous and not receive any information about your child you can donate to our general sponsorship fund. We use these funds to support children who have not been chosen by a sponsor or who have come later in the year to seek support perhaps after the recent death of the relative who supported them.

When sponsoring a child through Project Luangwa you can decide how much you wish to become involved.

To donate to the general sponsorship fund go to the donate page on our website and use whichever method most suits you to send your donation. PayPal is popular and allows us to track your donation easily. Then all you need to do is send an email to sponsorship@projectluangwa.org telling us the method, amount and that your donation is for our general sponsorship fund.

How much does sponsorship cost?

Sponsorship costs depend on a child's grade and school. Schools vary in their standards and costs as do bus fares for boarders. Instead of asking for a fixed donation we feel that it is fairer to ask for a donation equalling the cost. 100% of your donation is used to support the child although we do request an extra 2% for fund transfer fees however this is optional.

The costs of sponsoring in 2012 are:

Day School Pupils

Grade 8 to 9 at a local Basic School - \$150 to \$170

Grade 8 to 12 at Mfuwe Day Secondary - \$260

Boarding School Pupils

Grade 8 to 12 at Mfuwe Day School - \$550

Grade 8 to 12 at other boarding schools - \$600 to \$775

From January 2012 we are no longer offering new sponsorships to Primary age pupils. However in exceptional circumstances we will need sponsors for very bright grade 7 pupils or kids with special circumstances. The cost of sponsoring one of these children is \$80.

We are occasionally approached for support from parents or guardians who have disabled children and if you would like to help a deaf or blind child attend a special school costs are in the region of \$670 per year.

How do I become a sponsor?

Your first step to becoming a sponsor is to go to www.projectluangwa.org/kidswhoneedsponsorship and choose a child. Then it's easy - just follow the instructions.

Sponsorship lasts for one year and in the following December we will write and ask you if you wish to re-sponsor your child for another year.

When you choose to sponsor a pupil please bear in mind that there is an expectation for you to support your child for more than just one year. Of course, we quite understand that your circumstances may change and you may have no choice but to withdraw support. If this happens we only ask that you let us know in plenty of time to look for another sponsor.

www.projectluangwa.org/sponsorship



Do PL kids get anything extra?

Newsletter

Each term we produce a full colour newsletter which we send to the kids whilst at school. We feel that this reminds them that we have not just packed them off to school but are thinking of them year round. It's full of news and competitions as well as important information.

Kids in the Wild

In December 2011 we took a party of 24 pupils for a four day safari at Kafunta Lodge. The participants were the 24 winners of an essay competition. They stayed in Kafunta's comfortable chalets, tried all sorts of International food and had morning and evening game drives, but the swimming pool was everyone's favourite. We hope to make this an annual event.

You can find out more about it at www.projectluangwa.org/kidsinthewild

Extra English

In a country who's national language is English we feel that it is important for children to well in this subject. However it is often the subject in which they struggle the most.

In January 2012 we introduced a pilot scheme of extra curricula English lessons for our pupils. This has proved popular and, so far, our students are telling us that it is helping with their comprehension and grammar. We will be expanding these lessons over the coming year.

Medical fund

We run a small medical fund which is used to help kids and a guardian to attend hospital. Most treatment is free but few can afford the bus fares, overnight stay or the necessary food.