



# Newsletter June 24

**NO BARRIERS EDUCATION FOUNDATION:** We assist children and youth in rural Zimbabwe to overcome barriers to education, encourage their learning and create opportunities for them to thrive



**Ride for Bikes – 2024:** 50km cycled, 22 riders, 150+ financial supporters, funds raised for 90 bikes

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**SCHOOL YEAR 2024****Severe drought in Zimbabwe threatens food security**

Zimbabwe, like much of southern Africa, started 2024 with a severe drought, one of the worst in recent years. This has greatly affected food security in the country. With very low rainfall, crop yields have dropped significantly. The two main local food crops, maize and sorghum, have been especially hit, leading to hunger in many rural communities. Their granaries are empty, and they cannot earn money by selling any extra harvest, as they usually do in non-drought years.

As a result, rural communities face a serious threat: they can't produce enough food for their families and don't have the money to buy expensive imported grain. The cost for NoBarriers to supply maize to schools has gone up by 33% in five months, from USD 360 per tonne in September 2023 to USD 480 in January 2024.

**Zimbabwe's President declares a national disaster over drought.**

In early April, President Mnangagwa declared a national disaster to deal with the long drought. He said the country needs \$2 billion to help about 2.7 million Zimbabweans avoid hunger. [See BBC Article, 4/4/23.](#)

**Situation at our partner schools in Mashonaland Central**

The effects of the drought on schools became clear at the start of 2024. Schools had to extend the enrollment period for Form 1 students (usually 13 years old) until the end of Term 1. These students needed extra time because they had to find temporary jobs to earn money for school fees.

In contrast, already enrolled students attended school at very high levels (99%) because the cooked meals served at lunchtime are attracting them. These meals, made with maize, beans, and cooking oil provided by NoBarriers, are often the only meal children get all day.

See "Stories from the Schools" by M. Maweto, Hwata Secondary Agriculture Teacher, on page 2.

Recognising how serious the situation is, we are supplying more maize and beans to the schools this year.

[See our video on the drought and our response here.](#)

**NoBarriers' response to food crisis at partner schools**

- We increased the amount of food we supply:
  - Maize: now 8 tonnes per term (before it was 6 tonnes)
  - Beans: now 600kg per term (before it was 500kg)
- We make sure the food is delivered to schools within 2 days of the term starting. This helps keep kids well-fed while at school and gives them energy for their long walks home.
- Our End of Financial Year Appeal 2024 is focused on *"Feeding Growing Bodies & Minds with School Meals in drought-stricken Zimbabwe"*.

**If you can assist, please do it now.**

[DONATE HERE](#)

**To feed growing minds and bodies.**



9 May 2023, loading of food supplies in Harare, unloading at schools and stacked store in room at Hwata Secondary.

**STORIES FROM THE SCHOOLS: Matinyanya Maweto, Hwata Secondary Agriculture Teacher, Hwata Secondary Nourishing Hope: A Teacher-Farmer's Perspective on Drought, Muzarabani District, and School Meals**



*Ms Maweto in class, bringing her daughter "to work" while her nanny has a day off.*

Greetings, dear readers! As a teacher and a farmer rooted in Muzarabani District, Hwata secondary school, I find myself at the crossroads of two worlds—education and agriculture. Today, I bring you a tale that weaves together the narrative of drought, its profound impact on our community, and the vital role that school meals play in nurturing hope amidst adversity.

Muzarabani District, once adorned with lush greenery and thriving farmlands, now bears the burden of a relentless drought. The scorching sun has become an unwelcome guest, withering crops and drying up our once-fertile soils. Livestock, the lifeblood of many families, suffer, and water sources dwindle. We find ourselves grappling with a formidable challenge, one that threatens our very existence. The situation is worse in Muzarabani district. People are relying on selling livestock to buy mealie meal from shops. To those without livestock it's a disaster. Some are now surviving on gold panning for barter trade to those bringing pockets of mealie meal. This is a very dangerous exercise to humans and it also leads to land degradation. Musengezi river which used to be a perennial river for the past years, is almost dry at this time of the year. That is a life threatening issue to both humans and livestock. In the past years it was experienced in some parts of the country, but this year it's said to be the whole of Southern Africa Muzarabani area being one of the most affected.

As a farmer, I witness the hardships inflicted upon our community firsthand. The drought has taught us invaluable lessons of resilience and adaptation. We have explored water conservation techniques, embracing innovative farming practices to minimize the impact of these arid times. It is an ongoing battle, demanding constant vigilance and unwavering determination.

In the face of such adversity, our children's education becomes a beacon of hope.

Schools in Muzarabani District, Hwata Secondary in particular, are not mere institutions of learning; they are sanctuaries that provide solace and nourishment to young minds. Education equips them with the tools to transcend the harsh realities of drought, empowering them to build a better future.



**Failed maize crop in Muzarabani District**

Amidst the drought's turmoil, school meals emerge as a lifeline for our children. They not only satisfy their hunger but also serve as a catalyst for their education. Proper nutrition enhances cognitive abilities, enabling students to concentrate, learn, and thrive. It is through school meals that we nourish both body and mind, ensuring that our children have the strength to face the challenges that lie ahead. If it wasn't for the school meals provided at Hwata Secondary through No Barriers to Education Foundation, we would have a lot of school dropouts. But they are coming in their numbers since they are saying, "It's much better we have a solid meal at lunch, even if there is little or nothing for supper at home, we survive."



As a teacher-farmer, I stand at the intersection of education and agriculture, witnessing the profound impact of drought on my district. Yet, amidst the arid landscapes, we find solace in the nourishment provided by school meals. These meals not only satiate hunger but also fuel a brighter future for our children. Let us continue to nurture hope, for it is

through unity, education, and sustenance that we shall prevail against the challenges of drought, one meal at a time.

*Ms Maweto in her sorghum field. The failed crop deprives her family of a much-needed food staple. It also leaves her out of pocket as funds spent on fertilizer did not generate any income.*

**OUR WORK AT THE SCHOOLS: 1<sup>ST</sup> HALF OF THE SCHOOL YEAR 2024**

**Menstrual & sexual health:** In February, we helped 105 new Form 1 girls with good menstrual health by giving them starter kits with sustainable pads and underwear. After workshops on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, run by our partner Sanitary Aid Zimbabwe, all girls and boys received toiletry kits.



*Menstrual Health starter kit – Form 1 girls*

**School fee support:** Term 1 school fees were paid for 92 students from vulnerable families (54 girls and 38 boys). This helps the kids attend school and take exams. It also gives the schools some income security, allowing them to pay for important services like internet and maintenance work.



*Newly built bike shelter, Hwata Secondary*

**Bicycles:** The schools checked how far all new students lived from school. They found 100 students who lived 6km or more away. In Australia, we held our **Ride for Bikes-2024** cycling event in May to raise money to buy bikes for these students. *See page 5, Ride for Bikes-2024.*

**School meals:** At the start of Term 1 in January and Term 2 in May, we delivered our food supplies. Over these two terms, we supplied 14 tonnes of maize, 1.1 tonnes of beans, and 300 liters of cooking oil.

**NUMBERS SPEAK**

<b>125,000</b>		<b>273</b>
<b>Cooked school meals p.a.</b>		<b>Bikes given to long-distance students</b>
<b>64</b>		<b>92</b>
<b>Tonnes of maize delivered</b>		<b>Students from vulnerable families supported with school &amp; examination fees</b>
<b>430</b>		<b>235</b>
<b>Textbooks delivered</b>		<b>Girls trained to take care of lifelong period needs</b>
<b>\$ 120,000</b>		<b>24%</b>
<b>Investment in school infrastructure facilitated</b>		<b>Increase in enrolments of girls</b>



*Lunchtime meals, Muzarabani High, May 2024*

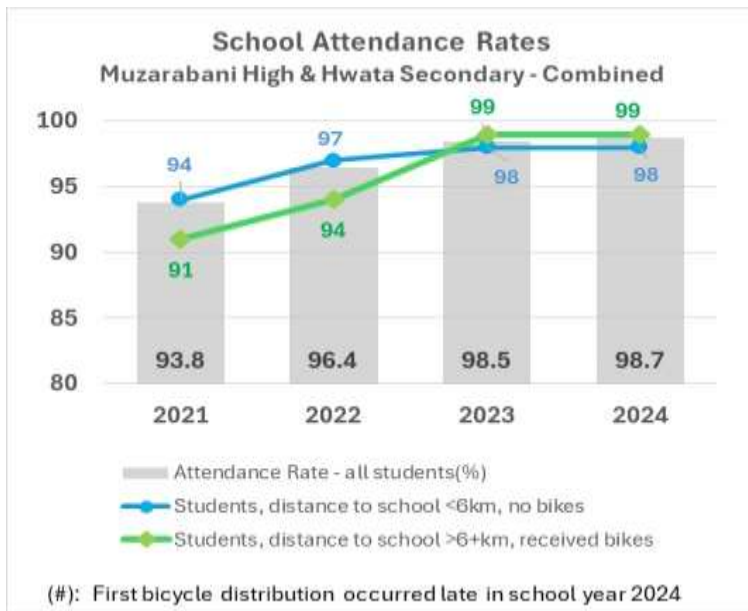
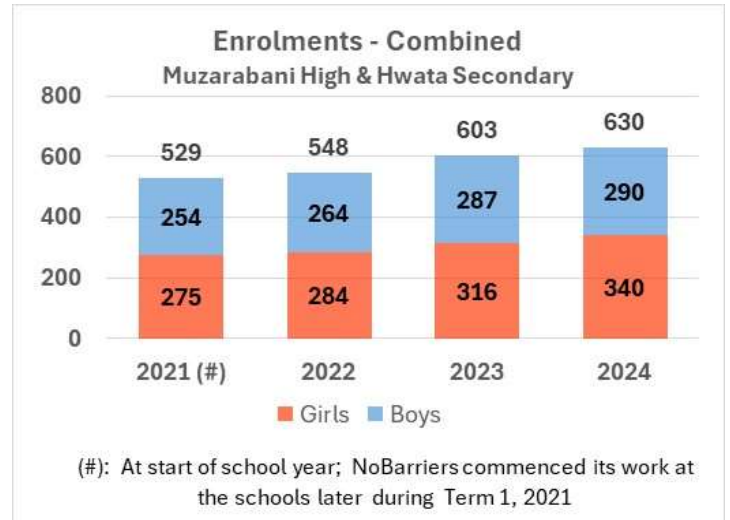
# WHAT WE ACHIEVE

To fully understand the impact of NoBarriers' initiatives, we would need long-term studies that follow students into adulthood. This is beyond what our Foundation can do. However, we believe in using evidence to guide our work. So, we focus on collecting school data, such as student enrollments, attendance and an annual student survey, to measure the outcomes of our efforts.

## STUDENT ENROLMENTS

Enrollment in both schools has increased by 19% since NoBarriers started its work three years ago. It went from 529 students in March 2021 to 630 by the end of Term 1, 2024.

During this time, girls' enrollment went up by 24%, and now girls make up 54% of all students in both schools.



## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

School attendance rates have also improved over time, going from 94% in the first term of 2021 to 99% three years later.

While attendance rates have improved for both schools and genders, they have especially increased for students who live far from school. Now, students who travel more than 6km to school have slightly higher attendance than those who live closer. In 2021 and most of 2022, their attendance was lower than that of "nearby" students. This improvement is directly related to them receiving bikes, which we started distributing at the end of the 2022 school year.

## RETENTION OF FEMALE STUDENTS

In 2021, more than ten girls were thought to have dropped out of school because of early marriage, elopement, or pregnancy. In the 2023 school year, schools reported that only two girls stopped attending for these reasons.



**RIDE FOR BIKES – 2024**

On May 19, 22 cyclists rode 50km in our Ride for Bikes event to raise funds for bikes for newly enrolled students at NoBarriers partner schools who live far from school.

They raised about \$17,000, allowing us to buy 68 bikes from [World Bicycle Relief \(WBR\)](#), our partner in Zimbabwe. [WBR](#) will donate another 22 bikes. We plan to deliver these 90 bikes before the end of Term 2 to help Form 1 students with long distances to school.

A BIG THANK YOU to the 22 riders/fundraisers and the 150 donors who supported them so generously.

**EDDIE'S STORY**

Last year, I became a Director of NoBarriers. I made this decision after cycling in NoBarriers' initial 2022 cycling fundraiser and supporting the bicycle initiative for several years with an End-of-Financial-Year donation. I did so, because as a keen cyclist

myself, I know the sense of freedom, joy and empowerment a bike can provide. During these years, NoBarriers shared with me case studies of kids, who did receive a bike to overcome the drudgery of having to walk long distances from home to school. In some cases the distance is more than 10km one way.

**EDDIE'S STORY (continued)**

I learned that a bike not only reduces commuting time by 70%, it also improves school attendance and academic performance.

But it achieves more than this: It brings back confidence to disenchanting kids: Children who without bikes have to walk long distances to school are fatigued and can't focus on their lessons while in class. They don't have time to do their homework as they spend too many hours walking. And their parents and teachers are unhappy with them because of their poor grades. As grades improve so too the student's relationships with parents and teachers.

A bike however, changes everything: kids learn better, they perform better in examinations and parents become proud of their children's achievements. A bike can turn a child weary of school into a motivated and ambitious student. Bikes are catalysts for change.

Having understood this, I decided to join NoBarriers as a Director and volunteer. In this capacity, I want to make sure that children at NoBarriers' partner schools in rural Zimbabwe, make the most of their secondary education by attending schools and by graduating from school ready to reach their full potential in life.

The 19th May Ride for Bikes-2024, which I participated in and helped organise, showed me that other people share my feelings: 22 people registered as riders for this community cycling event. They reached out to their networks asking them to support their ride with a donation. Over 150 people responded positively and helped us to raise around \$17,000. These funds will allow us to deliver bikes to 90 long-distance students, in their first year at secondary school. We are supported in this by [World Bicycle Relief](#), who donate 1 bike for every 3 bikes we purchase.

Should you too have a desire to support kids from disadvantaged communities to reach their full potential in life, then please contact NoBarriers on [admin@nobarriers.org.au](mailto:admin@nobarriers.org.au). We believe everybody has something to offer, and we are always looking for people willing to give some time and their skills to help kids to access their right to education.

And hopefully, you will join us next year in our Ride for Bikes-2025 or even consider joining our team of volunteers or express interest in joining our board.

**Eddie Sandrini, 3 June 2024**

**RIDE FOR BIKES – 2024: THE RIDERS, THE HELPERS & A GOOD FEED**



*Early start at Market Square, Old Noarlunga; 7-year-old Oscar riding the full 50km.*



*Some of the helpers, Mike & Stella.*



*Ella Sandrini and her bike-themed cup-cakes.*



*A good feed and lots of good spirit, knowing that the results were worth all the effort.*



# HOW YOU CAN HELP

## DONATING

You can help make a difference in the lives and education of 630 children at our partner schools in rural Zimbabwe.

Please support our EOFY appeal to ensure that during this prolonged drought, kids get a healthy meal at lunchtime to nourish their growing bodies and minds.

**If you can assist, please do so now.**

[DONATE HERE](#)

Or use Electronic Fund Transfer:

- Account: No Barriers Education Foundation
- BSB: 065-115
- Account: 1048 8995

*Please inform us of the transfer by emailing [admin@nobarriers.org.au](mailto:admin@nobarriers.org.au). Donations >\$2 are tax-deductible*

## FUNDRAISING

**BY CELEBRATING SPECIAL OCCASIONS:** You and your family/friends can celebrate a special occasion (like birthdays, Christmas, or major milestones) while supporting our work. Instead of receiving presents that might end up being regifted, you can ask your guests to donate the value of their intended gift.

Please contact us to create a special donation page with your occasion's name and images (like a photo of the birthday child). You can send this page to your guests with your invitation. We will keep you informed about how much your event raised.

**BY BRINGING FRIENDS TOGETHER:** Many of us host friends and colleagues to celebrate special events or watch major sporting events like the Melbourne Cup or Grand Finals. Why not ask your guests to donate a small amount in recognition of the hospitality you shared?

We will support your efforts with promotional materials (flyers) and a "donation page" with links to electronic payment options, tailored to your event. Please email us at [admin@nobarriers.org.au](mailto:admin@nobarriers.org.au).

**PARTNERSHIP WITH BUSINESSES:** NoBarriers builds partnerships with private sector businesses that share our values, both large and small. Businesses can show their social responsibility by working with NoBarriers to make education accessible for all. Partnering can happen through:

- Sponsorships
- Corporate grants for specific purposes
- Employee engagement via payroll giving or corporate volunteering
- Pro bono services and gifts in kind.

Please contact us to explore how we can work together. Email us at [admin@nobarriers.org.au](mailto:admin@nobarriers.org.au).

## VOLUNTEERING

NoBarriers is run by volunteers in Australia and Zimbabwe. They give their time, energy, money, and connections to help overcome barriers to education, encourage learning, and create opportunities.

We believe everyone has something to offer, and we are always looking for people to help with communication, research, and event management. Please contact us at [admin@nobarriers.org.au](mailto:admin@nobarriers.org.au) to discuss how you can help.





# HOW YOU CAN HELP

## FUNDRAISING - BY CHALLENGING YOURSELF LIKE MICHAEL

In May, Michael Dine was cycling 50km in the **Ride for Bikes** and raised \$1,250 to fund 4 bicycles for long-distance students

### Michael's story

*"I've always been a bike rider --- my first ride to primary school as a 10-year old kid was a 12km return trip on an unsealed track. Being lucky enough to have a sturdy bike to survive the trip and allow me to get to school safely was a must.*

*Fast forward 6 years (now 16-years old) and I continued to ride to secondary school a round-trip of 66km!*

*35-years later I still have the same bike and will be riding it on Sunday for this ride to raise money for kids to allow THEM to ride to school :)."*



**NOBARRIERS**

**Big Quiz Night Charity**

**Trivia – Games - Prizes**

**When:** Friday, 2 August 2024, 7:00pm  
**Where:** Fullarton Park Community Centre, 181 Fullarton Rd, Fullarton  
**Tickets:** \$30 p.p. available from: by scanning 

All funds raised will support No Barriers Education Foundation's work at its partner schools in Zimbabwe; for further information contact [admin@nobarriers.org.au](mailto:admin@nobarriers.org.au) or call 0418 814513.

## BY COMING TO OUR QUIZ NIGHT

- Please reserve the date: Friday, 2 Aug, 7:00pm
- Mobilise your friends to get a team together
- Buy your tickets [here](#)
- Email [admin@nobarriers.org.au](mailto:admin@nobarriers.org.au)–
  - if you want to be matched up with others to form a team
  - if you have items you would like to donate as raffle prizes or for a silent auction.

**A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS:** There are many and we owe gratitude to each one of them. For now, we are sending a special thank you to:

