

As seen Through the Lens

Witnessing the transformation of two schools in Muzarabani District, Mashonaland Central, Zimbabwe

As a photographer for No Barriers Education Foundation, I have the privilege of documenting a wonderful journey of transformation at Muzarabani High and Hwata Secondary School over four years. Through my camera lens, I witnessed not only physical changes in infrastructure but also the impact these changes have had on learners, teachers as well as the broader community.

My first encounter with Muzarabani was during a maize delivery for daily school meals to the schools in March 2021. At that time, the conditions were dire: schools lacked proper infrastructure, access to clean water was a challenge, and ablution facilities were in a very bad state. The communities and their children were suffering from prolonged lock-downs due to the pandemic with no money around to purchase food. I could see the immediate relief the school meal program brought to learners who came to the school hungry.

On my second visit a couple of months later, I captured a memorable moment during the distribution of menstrual and toiletry supplies to the girls. The excitement and joy on their faces were uplifting. For many, it was the first time they had access to such essential items. Shortly after, I attended the workshop conducted by NoBarriers implementation partner, Sanitary Aid Zimbabwe, where all students, girls & boys, were taught about good menstrual health. What struck me most was the change in their confidence: Girls who were once too shy to speak in class began to engage in discussions freely, breaking the stigma surrounding menstruation.

The other significant changes I documented is the installation of a water system at both schools, which had a huge impact on teachers' morale, as this improved their living conditions on campus and on learners, who now can quickly access water from a tap between classes. The availability of clean water has not only improved hygiene but also instilled a sense of pride and dignity among the students.

I have seen first-hand how the programmes of No Barriers Education Foundation have changed lives. I remember a particular girl at Hwata Secondary who was in Form 1 when I first visited. She was extremely shy, avoided the camera and very hesitant to speak. Over the years, as she benefited from the Foundation's programmes, including receiving a bicycle to ease her long walk to school, I watched her transform into a confident young woman, who now aspires to become a nurse.

The Foundation's programmes are addressing the broad range of needs of the learners. The school meals ensures that no child learns on an empty stomach. The bicycles make it easier for learners who live far away to attend school. The provision of sanitary and toiletry kits not only improves health and hygiene but also boosts learners' self-esteem. The provision of textbooks, laptops combined with solar

systems and other online learning equipment (funded through a Direct Aid Grant of the Australian Embassy in Zimbabwe) improved the quality of teaching and learning – in a healthy school environment due to improved water and sanitation infrastructure.

As a photographer, my role has been to capture these moments of change; moments that tell a story of progress. Through my lens, I have seen the transformative impact of these interventions: The smiles on the learners' faces and the confidence in their voices are testaments of NoBarriers' work being a catalyst for positive change.

Clayton Kanda, Photographer

Mobile Images

1 March 2025

