



March Newsletter
17 March 2026



Vocational Training - a Must To Secure Futures for School Leavers in Rural Zimbabwe

Dear ,

NoBarriers' vision is simple: *"We want children and young people in the communities we support in Zimbabwe to access their right to education and to reach their full potential in life."*

Over the past five years, working in partnership with two schools in Muzarabani Rural District, NoBarriers has made significant progress in supporting children to access their right to education. Today we are seeing encouraging results:

- More children are attending secondary school than before COVID.
- Students are learning better and achieving higher grades.
- Improved nutrition, menstrual health support, mobility assistance, and access to learning materials (textbooks, laptops, and online access) are helping students succeed.

However, an important question remains: Are we truly helping young people reach their full potential after they leave school? A survey conducted among school leavers in late 2025 revealed that around 80% did not progress to further

education or find paid employment within one to two years after graduating. The main reasons identified were:

1. Families cannot afford college fees and the costs of living away from home.
2. Many school leavers lack practical skills that would allow them to secure employment or start small income-generating projects.

Following extensive consultations with students, parents, teachers, the local Department of Education, and the wider community, NoBarriers concluded that vocational training must become a key part of our future programming. Hence, in February, we launched our first vocational training initiative: a 12-month computing training scholarship for four female school leavers from Muzarabani.



This scholarship is provided in partnership with Uncommon, a Zimbabwean NGO specialising in IT training for youth from disadvantaged communities. We are excited about the opportunities this program will create and look forward to sharing the participants' progress over the coming months.

Future Plans: Vocational Training Workshops

We are also exploring the redevelopment of two unused classroom blocks at Muzarabani High School into dedicated Vocational Training Workshops. These workshops would provide hands-on training in practical trades such as:

- Construction
- Metalwork and welding
- Carpentry
- Fabrics and sewing
- Baking
- Possibly mechanics

Discussions with provincial government authorities have already indicated strong "in principle" support for this initiative, recognising the urgent need for vocational skills training in the district. However, redeveloping the buildings and equipping the workshops with the necessary machinery and tools will require substantial funding. We are currently exploring funding options. If you would like to support this initiative, either by donating directly or by introducing this program to a potential funder, we would be delighted to hear from you. For now, I am pleased to share the news of the joint Uncommon & NoBarriers IT Training Scholarship.

Joint Scholarship: Uncommon & NoBarriers Four Young Women Coding their Future



In late January 2026, four remarkable young women from Muzarabani District were selected through a competitive interview process for full scholarships in the Uncommon IT-Bootcamp program, a 12-month intensive, full-time training in Systems Design, Coding, Digital Marketing and professional soft skills. In early February, Edna, Pretty, Claretta and Chiedza relocated to Harare and began their studies at Uncommon's Mufakose Innovation Hub, joining Zimbabwe's brightest aspiring technologists.

This scholarship is made possible through a generous donation from [Eminent Homes](#), which funds the scholars' accommodation and living expenses. [Uncommon](#) provides the training places, welfare support and introduction to future employers via internships, while NoBarriers manages the selection process and ongoing monitoring of the scholars' wellbeing and learning.



[Uncommon](#) is a Zimbabwean NGO with the ambitious mission to make Zimbabwe the most tech-literate country in Africa. Its highly sought-after bootcamp gives scholars hands-on training across three modules, including Systems Design, Coding, and Digital Marketing.

Beyond their own studies, scholars also volunteer weekly to teach basic computing to primary school children giving back to their community from day one.

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their studies at Uncommon's Mufakose Innovation Hub, joining Zimbabwe's brightest aspiring technologists.

The four scholars are living together in a shared house within walking distance of the training hub. A monitoring visit by NoBarriers found they have settled in well, shop and cook together, and are managing comfortably on their monthly stipend.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to [Eminent Homes](#) for the generous donation that has brought this scholarship to life, and to Uncommon for opening four places in their sought-after program to young women from one of Zimbabwe's most remote rural districts.

Meet our Four Scholars

Edna, 19 years, completed secondary school in Muzarabani in 2024, supported by NoBarriers' school fee program. Keen to continue her education but unable to afford it, she had been searching for work while saving for future studies. When she heard about the scholarship, she immediately lobbied to be included on the interview list and was accepted. She has promised herself she will give everything to make the most of this opportunity.



Pretty, 20 years, was looking to work as a house helper since finishing school in 2024. She had given up hope of further studies, as she is the eldest of four children, whose parents needed to focus resources on her younger siblings. The IT-bootcamp is a dream come true as Pretty had always wanted to work in the tech field. She loves the program and is brimming with optimism about what the future holds.



Claretta, 19 years, struggled after not passing her O-levels and losing confidence in her own abilities. It was a former teacher who encouraged her to apply for the scholarship. When she was accepted, she felt she had been given a second chance in life, a chance she is determined to seize with both hands. She describes her acceptance into the program as a personal testimony to her resilience



Chiedza, 18 years, grew up with her grandparents, who struggled financially and were unable to pay her school fees. Home life was very difficult and she had been searching for a pathway to a better life without being able to find one. She believes this scholarship will be her breakthrough; the opportunity she needed to build a future on her own terms.



Ride for Bikes-2026: Sunday, 19 April

Opportunity through Mobility



Ride for Bikes 2026 is fast approaching! Sunday 19 April sees the return of NoBarriers' beloved annual cycling fundraiser around the picturesque McLaren Vale wine region, now in its third year. Last year's event raised enough to purchase 90 Buffalo S1 single-speed bikes for students at our partner schools in northern rural Zimbabwe. This year, we are aiming higher. A Better Bike for Challenging Terrain: [Buffalo Utility S2-2 Chain](#)

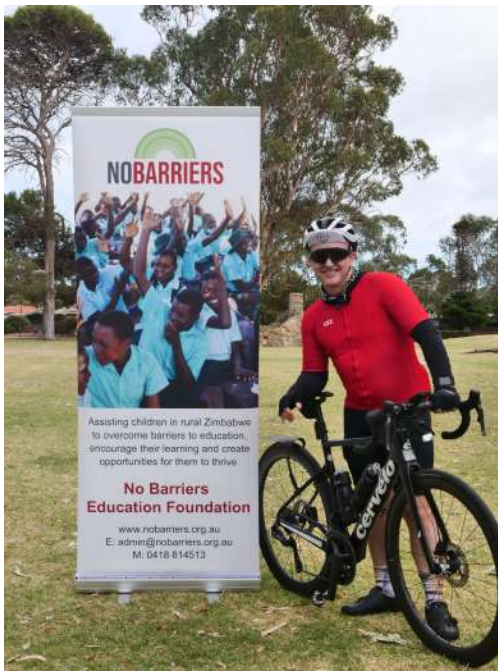


For 2026, we have set a target of 100 bikes and we are upgrading to the newer Buffalo S2 two-speed model. The S2 costs AUD \$375, including assembly and transport to the schools around

25% more than the previous model, but it is a worthwhile investment. Its two-chain drivetrain (operated with a simple back-pedal gear shift) handles heavy loads and challenging terrain with greater ease, making the daily ride to and from school quicker and less exhausting. It also benefits from better spare parts availability and long-term maintenance support.

Eddie, our "Bicycle Ambassador" has personally ridden the new S2 model, can confirm: students who ride these bikes arrive at school less fatigued and better able to focus on their lessons. A simple bicycle truly can change a child's life trajectory.

Sunday, 19 April, 9:00 - till about midday; 50km Ride
Market Square Reserve, Old Noarlunga, SA



🚴 Ride with us - solo or in a team; E-bikes welcome

🚴 Sponsor a rider or donate

🚴 If not in South Australia or unavailable on 19 Apr, organise your own ride with friends during April: two or three riders can raise funds for one or more bikes

🚴 Join our Strava Challenge and ride from anywhere [here](#)

🚴 **Remember:** for every 3 bikes we purchase Buffalo Bicycles Zimbabwe donates a 4th bike 🙏🙏🙏

REGISTER or DONATE NOW

For more info, contact Eddie on bikes@nobarriers.org.au.

Water Security: A Well for Muzarabani High

Muzarabani High School's existing borehole and two 5,000-litre tanks have historically been sufficient for its 310 students and 14 staff. However, drought conditions in recent years have made water security increasingly difficult in the second half of the school year. The school has also long sought to grow vegetables in its school garden to supplement meals, but the water supply did not allow for irrigation. To address both needs, Muzarabani High decided to dig a well on the school grounds in the opposite corner of the borehole.

NoBarriers agreed to fund the project given its critical importance for health, safety and food security. Country Director Langton, a builder with experience in rolling out water systems, is managing the project and has engaged a local crew experienced in well-digging, generating much-needed income for the local community in the process.



Work commenced in late December but had to pause several times due to heavy rains in January and February. In early March, water was struck at a depth of 28 metres; target depth is 30 metres. Once digging is completed the well will be reinforced with concrete casings, sealed with a concrete lid, and a pump powered by a small stand-alone solar system will begin filling the school's depleted water tanks.

This will provide students, staff and the wider school community with a safe, independent water supply, supporting both health and the school's vegetable garden year-round. Thank you to all supporters whose generosity is making this infrastructure investment possible.



What else is happening?

- ✓ NoBarriers received in February **another most generous donation** from our loyal, long-term supporter, the [Lang Family Foundation](#). Thank you 🙏🙏🙏. We could not do our work without your generosity.
- ✓ Another big delivery of maize, sugar beans and cooking oil, shortly after the start of Term 1 2026 made sure cooked meals will be served every school day.
- ✓ We conducted our 1st Menstrual & Sexual Health visit for this school year with the help of our partner, Sanitary Aid Zimbabwe, just a few days ago. We'll report on it in our next newsletter.
- ✓ We are planning for another **BIG CHARITY QUIZ NIGHT** in early August. We're waiting for the AFL fixtures for later in the year to be published, to avoid our event clashing when your favorite team is playing.

Thank you for your interest in our work and for all you've made already possible through your financial, in-kind, volunteering or lobbying support. If you want to do more, please use the button below.

[Donate](#)

We look forward seeing many of you on [Sunday, 19 April at the Market Square Reserve in Old Noarlunga for this year's Ride-for-Bikes](#). BTW, did I mention, there will be a BBQ for riders, supporters and helpers?

Warm regards,

Sigrid Pfaffle

Managing Director, No Barriers Education Foundation

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**No Barriers Education
Foundation Inc**

4 Loma Linda Grove, Wattle Park SA
5066, Australia



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