

A proposal to the Davis Projects for Peace
‘A HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SIX CHILDREN’

*Proposal by Fallon Chipidza '10, **Hamilton College**, 198 College Hill Road, Clinton NY 13323.*

“A hundred and fifty-six children” - Summary and Goals:

My ‘Project for Peace’ is to initiate a self-sustainable chicken project at St. Theresa in Zimbabwe. St. Theresa is a catholic-based pre-school run by four women and is home to a hundred and fifty-six orphans. The survival of the school depends entirely on donations from members of St. Theresa’s church. More than three-quarters of the children at St. Theresa come from the Social Welfare Organization, and the rest come from various child-headed families in Chitungwiza. Some of the children are old in enough to be in their third grade, but have no education past the pre-school level. In the summer of 2008, I intend to initiate the building of a chicken run and buy the first batch of chicks. Income from the sale of the eggs from this and other batches that will be bought will be used to pay for the orphans’ school fees. More than thirty children will start their first grade in January 2009 while the rest of the children will now have hope to attend school when they graduate from pre-school.

Without the chicken project, none of the one hundred and fifty-six children will attend school. Sending these children to school will guarantee a better future for them. By empowering these children with education, tomorrow’s future leaders will be made and peace in Zimbabwe and the whole world will increase as these leaders gain more knowledge. They will be able to make better decisions that will establish peace in the world. If the *Heifer Project* (www.heifer.org) has managed to sustain millions of families all over the world for over sixty years through livestock donations, then ‘A Hundred and Fifty-Six Children’ will definitely go to school, wear their first pairs of shoes and manage a better diet through the St. Theresa Chicken project.

Project Rationale:

Zimbabwe is one of the countries with the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rate in the world. Twenty-five percent of the seven million adult population is affected by the disease. Because of such a substantial percentage, a lot of children have been orphaned and the number of child-headed families has rapidly increased over the past two decades. As of January 2008, Zimbabwe’s annual inflation rate was twenty-six thousand percent (26,000%), the highest in the world. Such an overwhelming economic crisis, tied with the HIV pandemic, has made it increasingly difficult for members of the extended family to look after orphaned children. As a result, the majority of orphaned children in Zimbabwe cannot afford a decent meal, clothes and a basic education.

St. Theresa Parish, led by Father Makusha¹ (contact details attached) is one of the many organizations that have been providing solace to these children without parents. In 1998, St. Theresa church, through the support of its members, opened up a pre-school to cater for the disadvantaged children in the town of Chitungwiza. Over the years, as the number of orphans increased, St. Theresa pre-school became a home for orphaned children. Most children come to the school through the local Social Welfare office while some come from surrounding neighborhoods. Since the economic crisis has been worsening and the financial burdens have become worse for almost everyone in this low-income society, church members have been finding it increasingly harder to financially support the pre-school which now holds a hundred and fifty-six children. Conditions at the pre-school-cum-orphanage have deteriorated exponentially. Although the four women who work at the orphanage have been growing vegetables to sell, the profit they get is only enough to buy food not to send the children to school. A lot of the children are already of the school-going age but have remained in pre-school because of the unavailability of money. For many years now, St. Theresa pre-school has been hoping to start a poultry

project which will enable them to raise chickens and sell eggs but they haven't been able to do so because of the inadequacy of funds.

The Project:

Between the months of May and August this year, I will help build a chicken run which will hold at least seven hundred chickens. Ms Ellen Mutake² (contact details attached) who is the head of St. Theresa pre-school, has agreed to mobilize a team of eight volunteers from the church; six women and two men, who will assist with the project. Once the construction of the chicken run is completed, four hundred day-old chicks will be procured to start off the project. The chickens should start laying eggs between their fifteenth and eighteenth weeks. Mrs. Mutake has already contacted Nyatsime College administrators on the prospects of them buying eggs from the pre-school once the project is fully underway. Nyatsime College is a boarding school located in Chitungiza and they are willing commit to buying eggs from St. Theresa once the objective of this project has been reached. The eggs will also be sold to the local retail grocery stores if an agreement similar to the one made with Nyatsime College is successfully pursued and implemented. Individual households from the local community will also be able to buy the eggs. Once a second breed of chicks has reached the egg-laying stage, the first breed of the chickens will begin to be sold.

Project Timeline: (Tentative)

May 26, 2008- Construction of the chicken run begins.

June 9, 2008- First batch of 400 day-old chicks is procured.

Week of August 25- the chickens should start laying eggs

September 15, 2008- Final Project Report due at UWC Scholars Office.

Ensuring Success and Sustainability:

- In order to ensure that the necessary skills for raising poultry are acquired I will undergo training with Sharon Rippey³ (contact details attached) during my spring break (March 15 – March 30). Sharon Rippey is the director of Alumni Relations at Hamilton College and she owns a farm nearby the college. She has agreed to teach me, during the two-week break, the basic skills needed to rear poultry. When I travel to Zimbabwe in May, I will impart the knowledge that I would have gained to Mrs. Mutake² and her team.
- Since St. Theresa is located in a low-income high-density suburb, the chances of theft are very high. An extra security guard will be employed to ensure security of the chickens. Currently, there is only one security officer at the pre-school.
- Every time a new breed of chickens reaches the egg-laying stage, a new batch will be procured to ensure continuation of the project.
- Once every month, the team will meet to monitor and evaluate the progress of the project. This time shall also be used to make changes, when necessary, that will reinforce the goals of this project.
- I will continuously follow-up on the project and will look for more opportunities that will renovate the structures at St. Theresa.

The Applicant:

Fallon Chipidza is a sophomore at Hamilton College and intends on majoring in Economics and Biochemistry. Her goal is to study for an MD/MPH degree after she graduates from Hamilton and to advocate for better public health in underprivileged communities in the future. Fallon grew up in Chitungwiza and her family still lives there. Fallon will work on this project when she returns home to Zimbabwe this summer.