

A Hundred and Fifty-Six Children  
Zimbabwe  
Hamilton College  
Fallon Chipidza, Zimbabwe, Hamilton College

#### Section I:

I spent the summer of 2008 working on “A hundred and fifty-six children” - a self-sustainable project aimed at raising chickens and eggs. Funds raised from selling of the products will be used to send about forty children to school in January of 2009 and for the up-keep of the pre-school.

The project was carried out at St. Theresa Catholic pre-school in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe over a period of eight weeks. The pre-school has more than one hundred orphans with about sixty of them living on site. Before the launch of the Peace Project this summer, the school depended entirely on donations from the local parish, St. Theresa Church and the few funds raised from selling the vegetables grown at the crèche. We procured a total of six hundred chickens with the goal of selling some of them and the laid eggs. Most of the profits will be used to send about forty of the kids who will have reached the school going age by January of next year while some of the money will be used to maintain the smooth running of the pre-school.

Through chickens, so much hope was instilled in many young souls and the impact of this project not only reached these kids’ extended families but everyone in the community and beyond. It is not the big things we achieve in our lives that matter, but the little things we do for others make this world a better place to live.

#### Section II:

Carrying out of the project in Zimbabwe was difficult in the beginning and throughout the summer. The country is in its tenth year battling inflation, a shrinking economy, and a thriving parallel market. Therefore, acquiring all the necessary materials was difficult at times as the materials were not readily available in retail shops but could only be found at exorbitant prices on the parallel market. However, despite these economical challenges, the project was a tremendous success and Mrs. Mutake’s support and advice ensured the success of the project. Other people from the St. Theresa church and the three teachers were also very instrumental in the implementation of this project.

Instead of four hundred chickens, we ended up getting six-hundred three hundred of which were broilers (meat chickens) and the other half layers (egg chickens). We decided to not get all layers because they were extremely expensive and so was the chicken feed. Getting all layers would have left us without enough money for the rest of the project to continue smoothly.

In the first three weeks, when chicks are usually highly sensitive to temperature changes, a lot of the chickens died because we didn’t have electricity during most of the day. So more than fifty of the young chicks died from the cold and a few more died from an unknown avian disease. A veterinary doctor from the chicken supplier assessed the condition and quickly nipped it before it had spread to the rest of the other chickens. We also ended up spending less money on the chicken co-op and then used the extra money to increase the number of chickens from four hundred to six hundred. When I started working on the project, I noticed that the children were not eating lunch so I used some of the extra money from the construction to buy food for the kids (see details in budget).

Overall, we had enough money to carry out the project and I am very confident that this project will be sustainable. To ensure sustainability, Mrs. Mutake and I agreed that the chickens be sold in Rands (South African currency), just like all other basic commodities in Zimbabwe. This way, the effect of the nine million % inflation will not negatively affect the progress of the project. The continuation of this project will ensure that children who reach the school-going age will be enrolled into school and a new cohort will be taken in as soon as one group of kids leave to start first grade.

To me, the project provided a great deal of knowledge on how to manage a small project and it was such a wonderful experience. The biggest lesson was recognizing the importance of teamwork and the satisfaction that comes from helping others.

