



**Letter from the Executive Director
Elizabeth Bara**

In Zimbabwe ASAP continues to grow and expand our work to help people in their efforts to improve their own lives. We take pride in our achievements and maintain our high standards, continuing to work diligently despite harsh economic conditions and 1,000% inflation.

Currently we are negotiating new project partnerships with Catholic Relief Services, on a project to address the needs of out of school adolescents, with Plan International to help rural families better care for and educate their children, as well as new village savings and lending projects, both rural and urban, with our partner since 2001, CARE Zimbabwe. It is truly an honor to be affiliated with each of these world renowned organizations.

Here in the US, we continued to be inspired by the interest and support we are receiving. The active support of the three Rotary Clubs in Fayette County Georgia through a book drive and literacy project has served to increase awareness of ASAP Africa overall. The active involvement of school children, entirely through their own initiatives, has been both surprising and motivational for us all. The enthusiasm and creative ideas of school pupils to help children in-need in Africa is truly inspirational

The holidays are the time of year we stop and give thanks for all of our blessings. As we grow to realize that it is the greatest privilege to be in a position to help those less fortunate, we wish this for each of you throughout your life.

At ASAP Africa we remain committed to working together with the people of Zimbabwe, bringing hope for a better future in a place where it continues to be needed most. We hope you will join us in our efforts. In the Shona language we would say "Mushandiripamwe" - We do it together !

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What's New at ASAP Africa

There have been some exciting new developments at ASAP Africa.

- Over 6,000 educational and children's books have been donated, sorted and boxed and are now ready to be shipped to Zimbabwe. Our sincere thanks go to the Rotary Clubs of Peachtree City, Fayetteville and Fayette Day-break, Hands On Atlanta and Youth Engaged Services.
- New funding has been received for 1) ASAP's the Health and Nutrition Development Initiative project from an anonymous Foundation. Over 6,000 families will benefit from agriculture skills training, permaculture techniques and nutrition gardening and medicinal herbs. 2) the Kufusa Mari Junior Project, to help children in 20 primary schools generate funds to attend secondary school through Savings Club activities. 3) Kufusa Mari Nyanga West project supplemental grant of \$11,700 from The West Foundation to help the project meet escalating costs during hyper-inflation.
- ASAP embarked on an 18 month Joint Initiative project in September, as an implementing partner of CARE Zimbabwe. To address urban vulnerability, ASAP will adapt the success of the rural savings club model to an urban setting.

Insights from ASAP Africa Staff

What follows is a compilation of stories submitted by ASAP's staff in Zimbabwe to help us better understand what 1,000% inflation actually means.

Morris Matseketsa shares... It's almost 2007, and we are about to look in retrospect at 2006 - and what a year it was! The year began on a negative note with the increasing prices of basic commodities, increasing school fees and bus fares beyond the reach of many. As we progressed into the year most people were optimistic that maybe on a stroke of luck things will stabilize, however as events turned out most people's hopes were dashed and went up in smoke as prices of basic commodities continued to gallop beyond the reach of many. As we are approaching the festive season people are optimistic that 2007 will bring hope to us. Goodbye 2006!!

Memory Musabayana, as a mother, has a different perspective. The high inflation rates being experienced is having a negative impact on daily life and the people of Zimbabwe are finding it difficult to survive in their mother country. Prices of both basic commodities and assets are sky rocketing by each passing day. Raised hope has been viciously crushed as the children of Zimbabwe helplessly watch the inflation rates steeply climb to unlimited heights.

Most of the Zimbabweans are now resorting to one or two meals a day instead of three. Sending a child to school is now becoming a luxury not a child's right. A parent with a child going on to grade 1 is mourning as they are finding it difficult to buy the school uniforms. School shoes are ranging from \$25 000 to \$50 000. A shirt and a pair of shorts up to \$100 000. Secondary schools fees are being revised upward two to three times a term.



Rural Primary School children
Many schools now have feeding programs

Kenneth Bariri, an ASAP Bridge the Gap cluster coordinator, works on the border area of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Kenneth explains the entire community within the Chimusasa area survive on gold panning and cross border trading by illegal border jumping between the countries. The funny part of it is that school going children of grade one up to seven even abscond school to do the panning of gold on Gairezi and Rwenya rivers. The Head went on to say that Chimusasa primary school pupils are brilliant in class, but they don't attend school in order to survive these challenging times in Zimbabwe today.

Paul Mundete, ASAP Kufusa Mari Field officer, shares a story that reminds us that the elderly find it particularly challenging to cope with record inflation:

Zimbabwe Now



Back Row: Causemore Samanga, Farai Pegara, Morris Matseketsa, Beauty Kadzu, Junior Gwirwa, Rose Makhamsadze, Lovemore Marjoro, Willie Dhlamshira, Francis Zengeni, Alfred Jagada
Middle: Michel Nemaunga, Diana Takundwa, David Nyakatawa, Paul Mundete, Mary Mutsogoro
Front: Kenneth Bariri, Daniel Fombe, Memory Musabayana, Collins Mutsvairo, Joseph Miti

Granny Judith boarded a Murera Bus for her usual monthly shopping. When the bus conductor asked for her bus fare, she fumbled into her purse and gave him Z\$1000. "That's not enough", said the conductor. "What!" said an astonished Granny. "Give me Z\$1000 more, the fares have gone up".

Infuriated by what the conductor had said Granny pleaded with other passengers to help her. A Good Samaritan came to her rescue and offered her Z\$1000 which she promised to pay back after her withdrawals at the bank. On reaching Nyanga, she went straight to People's Own Savings Bank (POSB). She was shocked when the bank teller informed her that the maximum withdrawal was Z\$5000. "Why?" she asked. "We are running out of cash", said the bank teller.

She was offered Z\$5000. "Now, what can I buy with this little money? She was convinced that a loaf of bread, a packet of sugar and a packet of salt will suffice. On reaching the store, she discov-

ered that the price of basic commodities had gone up and that the money she had could not buy any of the items she wanted. When she asked the storekeeper why the prices had gone up, he just said, "That's Zimbabwe now."

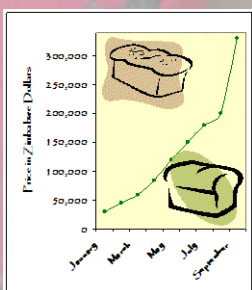
Savings Club Update

ASAP's Kufusa Mari project continues to grow throughout Nyanga district, and will expand to neighboring Mutasa district in 2007, with funding from CARE, CRS and Plan International.

The Kufusa Mari Project in Nyanga East Area, which began in April 2006, already has over 3,300 active members engaged in savings club activities. The target of the two year project, funded by The McKnight Foundation, is to teach 5,680 women to mobilize savings and manage internal lending schemes. The McKnight Foundation funded ASAP Africa's first saving club pilot project, from 2001-2003, in this same area. The first activity of this new project was to conduct a sustainability survey of the area, which determined that 72.8% of the groups were still carrying out savings club activities two years after the previous project ended. This is a testimony to the sustainability of this excellent project. To [read the full report](#) click the link appearing at the bottom of this page.

The Nyanga West project is now in the third year. Over 9,800 members were already active in savings club by the end of 2005. In 2006 nearly 1,600 of these clients qualified to attend advanced training in Selection, Planning and Management in 2006. The SPM training helps women gain confidence to diversify and expand business activities. The popularity and enthusiasm for the project is contagious, and 1,700 new members formed savings clubs in the area.

The Joint Initiative project got underway in September, with a goal to train 613 new members in savings club activities in an urban setting over 18 months. To date 187 members have joined, and Causemore Samanga, the Senior Field Officer on this Kufusa Mari Urban pilot project does not foresee any difficulties meeting the target. In densely populated areas people quickly see the benefits and "organic" project growth is impossible to curtail.



Give us this day our daily bread

The local price of bread has sky rocketed off of the charts as of Dec.22. What used to cost \$295 is now \$825. It is likely that the prices will shoot up again in January or early February to at least \$1,200 to \$1,500.

According to Willie Dhlandhlara, ASAP's Country Director, for a good number of the rural folk Christmas was one special time they would eat bread, but now there is no bread to eat. They may as well remove it from their shopping list!!

Child reciting a poem she wrote for her class in Zimbabwe



AIDS, AIDS, what do you want?

You kill people

You have taken my father and now my mother

What shall I do in the world without parents?

I don't have food to eat

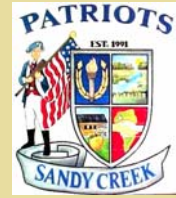
I don't have clothes to wear

AIDS, AIDS, what do you want?

You are finishing us all.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) says Zimbabwe now has the highest number of orphans in the world due to a severe AIDS pandemic hitting the southern African country. "Almost one in four children in Zimbabwe . . . are now orphaned, having lost at least one parent, and this number is growing," said Dr. Kavishe, UNICEF Representative in Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe is among the hardest hit countries in sub-Saharan Africa with official figures putting AIDS deaths at 3,000 people every week. The good news is Zimbabwe is leading Africa with a major drop in new AIDS infections, so the interventions are working. But we still need to assist those children that are already affected. Since 2001 ASAP Africa has been working to address the needs of the ever increasing number of orphans in Zimbabwe, working in partnership with SIDA to achieve the goals set out by the Zimbabwe National Action Plan for orphans and vulnerable children. ASAP is planning to scale up operations during 2007.

TAKE THE CHALLENGE: Meet or Beat!



Sandy Creek High School challenges schools, corporations, and individuals to meet or beat our efforts in raising money for **ASAP Africa** (www.asapafrica.org) in support of their mission to cultivate self-reliance in Southern Africa. Last year our students raised \$933.22 towards eliminating poverty in Africa and now would like to increase the total funds with your help. There is no better time than the holiday season to work together to make long lasting, life changing improvements in the lives of those less fortunate living in rural Africa.

Targeting ASAP because we appreciated the concept of this small committed NGO with very defined goals, high school juniors and seniors (with only two weeks left in the school year) began to make plans. Starting with thirty-six brainstormed ideas, students discussed options then settled on six. Groups of students then expanded these six ideas into a formal proposal to present to their principal.



Will Pesante presenting \$933.22 - the amount Sandy Creek High School challenges others to "Meet or Beat" to Elizabeth Bara and Tom Arsenault of ASAP Africa.

Six students, one representing each plan, made the "pitch" in Mr. Rabold's office. He evaluated each in terms of legalities and practicality. Five of the six were approved. From that point students self-evaluated their remaining school time and implemented three during the last eight days of school. Each was relatively simple but achieved results! Students held a Sunday car wash at their local Wal-Mart, did a several day "coffee can collection" from the student body, manning doors as students entered school, and held a "Paid Jeans Week" where teachers paid a fee in order to wear jeans the final week of classes. From their brief efforts senior Will Pesante, the day before his graduation, presented a check from his class to ASAP for \$933.22.

Sandy Creek High School and **ASAP Africa** have realized the importance of working together, sharing knowledge, and most importantly creating sustainable change in the lives of those battling poverty. We ask that you take this opportunity to join with us and create positive change that will continue long after the work of **ASAP** ends. Join the worldwide crusade to eliminate poverty and take the challenge to **'Meet or Beat Sandy Creek!'** Contact **ASAP** at 770-632-7451 or e-

Words of Wisdom

By: Diana Takundwa

A Churchgoer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday. I've gone and done it for 30 long years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time and the preachers are wasting theirs too by giving lengthy sermons at all." This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher:

I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But, for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this... They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!" When you are DOWN to nothing...God is UP to something! Faith sees the invisible, believes the incredible and receives the impossible! Thank God for our physical and our spiritual nourishment! When Satan is knocking at your door, simply say, "Jesus, could you get that for me?"

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Mission
To cultivate self-reliance
in Southern Africa

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