

Chairman's Statement
ZOA UK AGM
9 October 2009

For me, there have been four major highlights this year. The first was a copy of a DVD of the ZOAZ meeting at which a number of the past and future beneficiaries came and set out the problems they face, how they have used the money given them by ZOAZ, what they have achieved and what more they could do with further resources. It was very simply made but very powerful in its effect.

There was no trace of the Zambian government, no donor community, no international NGO's. No-one came in Landcruisers. No complaining or blaming, no spin. Real people, humble people, facing their difficulties with courage, being frank about what they are doing

The second highlight was the visit Diane and I made in September to see five of the projects ZOAZ is supporting in Southern Province. We are very grateful for the generous help we received from Andrew and Danae Sardanis in getting us from place to place. We met at first hand the leaders of the communities, saw what they were doing, and saw - indeed touched - the benefits that ZOAZ help has brought - the hammer mill grinding away as we spoke, the bicycles and blankets we had bought, the uniforms the children were wearing, and the maize stored for food supplies and the exercise books piled high for the start of term. But above all meeting the children whose futures we are changing.

The immediacy of it all was very powerful. We could also see clearly how narrow is the margin between getting by and abject poverty, how a small amount of help, whether a batch of chickens, a sewing machine or paying school fees, can significantly widen the margin of safety for those living from day to day. We were warmly welcomed everywhere. We were most touched when a man, who spoke no English, silently joined one of our meetings with two children of his deceased siblings. He came because he had heard someone from ZOAZ had come and he wanted to say thank you for the help he had received to send the children to school.

We came away from Southern province more confident that the money we raise gets through to those that need it. Everywhere we found carefully kept cash books and meeting records more thorough than those of the British Cabinet. We also identified a number of opportunities where ZOA can make a difference. We frequently asked people how many orphans and vulnerable children they were looking after. The answer could be 30, 50, 100 or more. But each time it was clear that this was only a fraction of those in the neighbourhood who needed help.

The third highlight was the opportunity to meet two of our distinguished Patrons, the First President of Zambia, HE Dr Kenneth Kaunda, and Professor Father Michael Kelly. Dr Kaunda is a true champion of the fight against HIV/AIDS in a region where many other political leaders are indifferent, obstructive or set a poor example. Father Kelly has an unmatched understanding of the epidemic and has tirelessly argued for more

attention to be paid to the plight of children who are its principal victims. His book, *Education: For an Africa Without AIDS*, sets out the role education must play in tackling the epidemic.

It was a great pleasure to meet the Board of ZOAZ and their new Chair Gertrude Zulu. Our thanks go to Bob Liebenthal who has just stood down as Chair. We also attended a tea party for ZOAZ's growing network of friends and supporters. We are grateful too for the support ZOAZ receives from other organisations such as HODI and Kasama Christian Care Centre who keep a watchful eye over some of our more remote communities.

At the national level there are signs that the prevalence rates of HIV infection are beginning to fall. But children are frequently orphaned by the deaths of parents who may have acquired the infection a decade or more ago when the epidemic was even stronger. So it is likely that the number of orphans, already around one million, will continue to rise. So the work of the ZOA family will need to continue for some time to come.

At home in the UK we have had a difficult year. In the 15 months to December 2007 we raised £50,000, followed by £60,000 in 2008. We hoped we could exceed that figure in 2009 but the total looks like being somewhat less. It would be easy to blame this on the recession, but more significant was the contraction in our Trustee group, as some members had to stand down through other commitments and others were hampered by illness, temporarily we hope. As a result the workload is falling on too few shoulders. We were also unfortunate that our efforts to recruit a fundraiser were unsuccessful when the very promising candidate we had identified was unable for personal reasons to take up the post. Steps are in hand to rerun the search process, so we hope by the turn of the year to have someone in place.

Despite these problems, we still expect to raise about £50,000 this year. We have to date made follow up grants to five projects and three grants to new projects totalling £16,000, and expect to commit a further £30,000 before the end of the year. We are confident that we will have sufficient funds to cover educational costs in 2010 of the children to whom we are already committed. I am very grateful to all those who have helped us, whether as friends making regular donations, or as generous periodic donors, or in that quintessential British way of getting sponsored for doing crazy things. Special thanks go to Sally Marlow whose Blues for Zambia concert raised nearly £4,000, to Hill House School whose mufti day raised around £2,000. It is ironic that British children will pay for the privilege not to wear their uniform in order that children who have no uniform may have one. Finally special thanks to our Treasurer Jim Potter for his energy and commitment.

My visit to Zambia demonstrates that the contribution we can make is limited only by the funds we raise. I very much hope that in 2010, with the help of our supporters, we will be able to expand the help we give to the orphans of Zambia and the families and communities that care for them.

Andrew Turnbull