

13 February 2023

## **Future of SOCH ('Serenje Orphans Childrens Home')**

### **SOCH must change to continue to help disadvantaged children**

Fortunately, there is now no longer the desperate need for orphanages in Zambia and recent government policy changes means that our SOCH orphanage must close by the end of 2024. However, SOCH management have come up with a plan to keep SOCH alive in its support for disadvantaged children in Serenje, with a refocusing particularly on those children suffering from physical disabilities for whom there is no supporting facility in the region.

### **The future for SOCH**

This plan will ensure that all the 20 children currently at the orphanage will continue to be cared for at SOCH until the last two leave primary school in December 2029. We will achieve this by accommodating them at SOCH in the form of a 'foster home' (or boarding hostel) whilst they attend the local private primary school where we will continue to pay their fees. Meantime, every year over the next 8 years, SOCH will accept up to 3 new disadvantaged children so that by 2030, there will be 24 such children living in the foster home during school term time. Moreover, to fully cover the education costs of these 24 children, they will be subsidized by their fee-paying classmates in our own SOCH private primary school (to be known as 'SOCH Charity School') which we plan to establish on the site gradually over the next 8 years. Local demographics and the large class sizes of all other local primary schools suggest that this school will rapidly become fully self-sustainable, and, together with ongoing profits from our self-sustainability projects (SOCH Inn and SOCH Maize Mill), it is expected that the entire SOCH project will become fully self-sustainable by 2030.

### **Where will we find the funds to construct the primary school?**

Two years ago, we received a generous legacy with funds earmarked for the education of Zambian children. This legacy now contains just enough funds to construct the buildings for our proposed SOCH Charity School. Clearly, using these funds now to build our own SOCH school, which will create indefinite ongoing sustainable educational support for disadvantaged children, is a far better option than spending the funds each year (as we do now) in once-off payments for the education of our SOCH children attending Jemamu private school – this would otherwise have exhausted these legacy funds within another 7-8 years.

However, with fluctuating exchange rates and inflation, we may struggle to meet construction costs, so we are seeking an additional amount of £20,000 to ensure we succeed in this project. **Please assist us if you can, every donation will be gratefully received.**



Kevin Gilbert

(Founder of SOCH and former teacher at St Georges 2005-2009 and Collège du Léman 2009-2019)