

Annual Report 2023

Zimbabwe

Elections were held in Zimbabwe in the summer of 2023. The incumbent president was declared victorious. Unfortunately, there were reports of violence and a lack of transparency. It is feared that this will affect the country's foreign relations and further reduce much-needed investments. The economy continues to fare badly. Only 25% of the working population has a formal job and the informal sector is dominant. Inflation is high.

Sethule Orphans' Trust

Due to the elections, Sethule staff were unable to travel to the villages and maintain contact with families and parents as usual for several months. The birth certificate project had to be temporarily suspended. Fortunately, we were still able to contact the schools and ensure that the programmes were carried out as planned.

The annual report written by our Director, Thabbeth Cotton, provides an insight into the work of Sethule in 2023. The education and training programmes for children and young people remain central. It is also important for Sethule to work on the mental health of those children. Special emphasis was placed on workshops for parents, staff and volunteers and a conference was held for teachers on child protection.

Swiss friends of Sethule Orphans' Trust

Travelling to Zimbabwe

Some members of the board of the Swiss Friends of Sethule Orphans' Trust travelled to Zimbabwe at their own expense in the spring of 2003 and were able to visit Sethule's programmes for a fortnight. We met a small, mostly young, very motivated, and competent team of locals and had a meeting with the Board of Trustees of Sethule Orphans' Trust. Sethule's work is very much in tune with rural African life, as it is the local people who determine its goals and their implementation. The team is also very flexible and capable of responding to ever-changing circumstances, which was very convincing to the board members.

Almost simultaneously, after a long break due to the coronavirus, students from **Leysin American School** took part in another trip led by board member Alex Flynn-Padick. The participants were introduced to the charity and the students at Sethule, and actively helped with maintenance work. New classrooms were completed at a very poor rural school thanks to their fundraising efforts in Switzerland.

Events and Information in Switzerland

On 25 February, an **African Lunch** was held for friends and interested parties at the All Saints Anglican Church in Vevey. In addition to a delicious meal, a cheerful atmosphere and many conversations, funds were raised for Sethule.

On 13 May, our **Members' Meeting** was held in Berne, followed by an **information session** for all patrons and supporting foundations. A generous aperitif and a sales table with beautiful gifts from Zimbabwe rounded off the event. A small but interested group was present and the bilateral meetings and discussions were motivating.

Our summer **newsletter** reported on the weekly school workshops that Sethule organises in primary and secondary schools. The young people deal with problems and challenges in their daily lives. They learn to defend themselves against abuse, deal with stress and conflict, and reflect on questions such as: Who am I? What is important to me?

The autumn newsletter was dedicated to the Sethule team, who always hold an important meeting at the end of August to evaluate the programmes and develop strategies.

The **Christmas letter**, which is sent by old-fashioned post, once again brought in numerous donations. The latter also applies to the birthday party of a board member.

We send out newsletters in German, French and English. All this information can also be found on our trilingual **website** (www.sethule.ch).

Finances

In 2023 we received 74,233 CHF from 110 individuals and 71,246 CHF from twelve foundations and four churches. Cash donations totalling 4'728 CHF were raised at the events. That's a total of 150,206 CHF. I would like to thank everyone for their wonderful and generous support!

We **sent 191,484 CHF to Zimbabwe** for the various tasks of Sethule. As our income is lower in 2023, our reserves have shrunk. At the end of the year our assets totalled 86,241 CHF, most of which is allocated to specific projects. Administration and fundraising costs amounted to 1.4%, taking into account donations in kind of less than 1%.

When the Raiffeisen bank closed our account in the spring, we had to find a new bank partner. We succeeded at first attempt with the **Banque Cantonale Vaudoise**. However, we struggled a lot with the many international forms that have to be filled out in banking these days. As a result, the newly opened account was blocked in July, for which we apologise.

We are still using **Western Union Business Solution** (acquired by Convera) to send money to Zimbabwe. This works well, but it does cost us quite a lot in fees. Towards the end of the year, as the banks in Zimbabwe started to work better again, we tried to see if a "normal" bank transfer would be possible again. Unfortunately, this did not work. Transfers to Zimbabwe are currently automatically blocked.

Laws

As our organisation transfers more than CHF 100,000 a year to Zimbabwe, it had to be registered in accordance with the new **money laundering law**. After some paperwork, we were able to do this towards the end of the year and are now proud to have a company identification number!

The revised **Data Protection Act** also requires us to pay more attention to the use of data. Our privacy policy can be found on our website.

Board of Directors

Our committee held four digital meetings. Zoé Guillermin, who does all our translations, is a new member. All members of the board work for our association on a voluntary basis, sometimes for many hours. I would like to thank my colleagues for everything!



Anne-Marie Saxer-Steinlin, President



Lunch at the Early Child Development Centre

Committee members (Status at the end of 2023)

Madeleine Bichsel, 3113 Rubigen

Esther Blake, 1854 Leysin

Christopher Blake, 1854 Leysin

Michael Cotton, 1854 Leysin

Alex Flynn-Padick, 1854 Leysin

Zoé Guillermin, 1854 Leysin

Anne-Marie Saxer-Steinlin, 3073 Gümligen

Manuela Schläfli, 3006 Bern

Lis Seeley, 1814 La Tour de Peilz

Carol Seymour, 1854 Leysin

LeighAnn Shafiq, 1854 Leysin

Accounting, Adress list

Mailings

Translations

President

Website, Instagram

Secretary, Fundraising

Director of Sethule Orphans' Trust

Thabbeth Cotton, 1854 Leysin

Auditor

Bernhard Kobel, 3065 Bolligen

Websites

www.sethule.ch (Swiss Friends of Sethule Orphans' Trust)

www.sethuletrust.org (Sethule Orphans' Trust in Zimbabwe)

Account Information

CH62 0076 7000 E560 9363 3

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