

# Why build Maori Primary School in Chiweshe, Zimbabwe?



The buildings have structural problems and the lighting is very poor. There are no proper windows – and in some cases holes have been made in the wall to let in light. The buildings have tin roofs, which makes it very difficult for teachers and students during the rainy season, as the sound of rain is amplified and the noise is deafening. They also leak. None of the buildings are properly secured nor do they have safe storage.

Most of the families in the area are small scale tobacco farmers who are also growing their own food. The community is united in its desire to have their children attend school in an adequate facility.

The school development committee has secured land from the government to build their school and have an approved site plan. But they have been told there is no government money for the school's construction. The community has already drilled a bore hole on the new school site, so there is now water available.

ZimArt-in-Trust's goal for 2011 is to find donors and raise funds to build a classroom block with two classrooms and two storage rooms, and separate Blair toilets for the boys and girls. The total cost for construction is \$48,465 U.S.

The community will be supplying the 80,000 bricks (worth \$4,000 U.S.) needed to construct the classroom block.

The double classroom block would provide proper instructional space and safe storage of school supplies for 200 primary students. Two classes of fifty children each would use the school for a morning shift. Two classes of fifty children each would use the school for the afternoon shift.

The remaining 150 students would use the best of the existing buildings at the current site until another classroom block is built. Staff would remain living in their current quarters in the original farm house by the tobacco barns, about 1.5 kilometres from the new school site.

ZimArt-in-Trust will have a written commitment from the school development committee that all orphans in the school's catchment area will be able to attend the new school without paying fees. The community will be responsible for funding any operational shortfall created by this policy.

To see some images from the existing school site and meet the community visit [www.tinyurl.com/maoriprimaryschool](http://www.tinyurl.com/maoriprimaryschool).

*(top) The 250 primary students attend school in disused farm buildings with structural problems.*

*(bottom) The whole community, led by Manara (back row second from right), is united in their goal to have a school built.*

**G**od Knows Orphanage in Kartu village, was founded in 2004 by Manyara Mutekani, a community activist and tobacco farmer, when she brought home a one-week-old orphaned boy who she called God Knows. Today, the orphanage provides support to 80 + orphans aged 2 – 18.

God Knows already has Canadian well wishers. In 2008 Carol McKey, owner of Millkweed Preschool in Peterborough, Ontario initiated a Children Helping Children project. God Knows has been the beneficiary of all funds raised by Millkweed, and the children communicate regularly with each other.

Educating the children and providing skill development for youth, so that they can start income generating projects, are key objectives for God Knows Orphanage.

Manyara is also chair of the local school development committee, representing 134 families and 350 primary school children. All these children currently attend school in old, disused farm buildings.

