

AKASUBA AKALAMA

the big sun

October is called *Suicide Month* for good reason in Zambia. With little breeze and rain not due until the middle of November, the hot sun scorches the dirt roads as people walk to their destinations at a painfully slow pace. Last week our thermometers hit 48° Celsius (118°Fahrenheit) in the sun. However, the bush makes up for it. It has now put on its spring show with the beautiful colors competing with each other for attention. The ground is covered in purple thistles and bright pink vines. The lush new grass is peeping out of the burnt-black soil. The trees' new foliage ranges from pinks and maroons to yellows and rusts, lime and emerald greens and all shades



in between with the bright red flowers of the coral tree screaming for a show-in. The purple-blue jacarandas are all in bloom contrasting with the cerise of the bougainvillea.

So who cares if it is HOT?

Winnie and Rita, our VLH volunteers, go each and every Friday to work with the children at VLH – An excerpt from



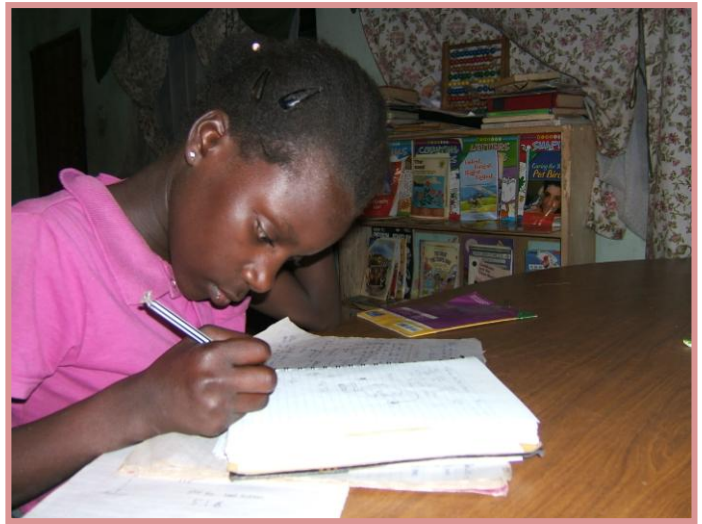
Winnie's report:

Rita is an Angel with Mwape. On Friday Mwape again managed to tuck around a piece of appliqué. Every stitch she manages is an achievement for her. We had such fun on Friday. Everyone was in a good and jovial mood and Rita was teasing the children and I tried to put on my teacher's voice, but they kept chatting away while they were working. Mwape wanted to join the girls in sewing, so Rita was teaching her -She has the patience of a saint with Mwape. On Rita's birthday I took along some balloons just to make the occasion a bit festive and special. Now Mwape begs for a balloon

every Friday - and so do all the children of the neighborhood. They crowd around as we arrive and all ask for balloons. Shadrick, Mwape and George were drilling holes in shells with small battery operated hand drills for the bead curtain that they are making. They thought they were engineers - they were so pleased with themselves. Alick, George, Shadrick and Mwape were making beads with paper maché. The older girls are still getting on with their embroidery and doing well. The children are such a pleasure to teach - Rita and I really look forward to going on Fridays.



Surprisingly, the heat doesn't seem to slow the pace at the Vima Lupwa Home. Exams are around the corner for the older children and there is a buzz of anticipation and nervousness as their speed of studying picks up. Children in Zambia, on a British academic schedule, are tested in seventh, ninth, and twelfth grades, and, if they do not pass they have to repeat the same grade.



Loveness Nawale, 13 now, wakes up with the sun near 5 am and studies until it's time to get ready for school. "I hope I do as well as I did during the mock exam. The exam is just around the corner, and I am getting excited. I tell my friends not to come looking for me until after two weeks when I am finished, then I will play." This determination and focus will get her far in her goals!

Loveness is a joy to have around and has adjusted to her new home easier than the other children. "Loveness is a joy to teach. She is eager to learn and can hardly retain her excitement when she shows me jewelry or sewing she has completed between my teaching sessions" reflects Winnie. Loveness has an inspiring positive attitude and determination to learn new skills. She is quick to laugh and it seems that even her eyes shine with happiness. She mimics the house mother's every move and is always the first to lend a helping hand. Loveness is attending grade 6 at Twatemwa Government School, which is about 5 blocks from the home. Expressing herself and her past through art has helped her heal. She would like to be a doctor when she grows up to help children like herself.



Creative thinking is something that comes naturally to Loveness. Last week she was given some scrap material and within minutes she knew exactly what she was going to do with it. An hour later she had designed and sewed a shirt for her younger Lupwa brother Alick. As seen in the photo, Alick was overjoyed. It's amazing how thoughtful and caring these children are towards each other.

Some of the beadwork that Loveness has created under Winnie's guidance.



...and in her spare time, after school, household chores, helping her Lupwa brothers and sisters, she also enjoys drawing.





Alick and Shad show their beadwork; the 'three musketeers' making paper maché beads; our girls sewing and beading;



George drilling holes in shells for the hanging curtain; Melody's complete crocheted outfit; rings the girls created, shown here on one of the quilts they made themselves.



Meal preparation and laundry are also part of the daily chores for the children; here Mwaba prepares the food and the younger boys enjoy a snack after school.



But it's not ALL work.... There is always time for a soccer game in the back yard!

AND....

thanks to Malama's bicycle ingenuity, we introduce the "skipper" especially created for Malerie and Marlena! As well as being the most beautiful bike in Mikomfwa, it is also the fastest.

Although easy to laugh at, this is one way to cut down on taxi costs to and from town for business.

Thank you Malama for such a beauty!

