

From Learning under a tree to a classroom: The Phillips Family gifts Chitongo Community a New School and Health Post



11-year-old Chester from Chitongo area in Namwala district of Zambia has the desire to get educated. It is for this reason that he enrolled at Chitongo Community School.

But going to school was not as easy as it sounds. Chester and the other children were learning under a tree. They sat on stones and used their laps to lean on when writing. There were also all kinds of distractions

from people and animals passing by and from nature.

Things have changed for Chester and the children of Chitongo, for they now have a brand-new school to call their own, thanks to World Vision and the family of Clint and Jade Philips of the United States of America.

The Phillips family in partnership with World Vision Zambia, implements the Mbeza Community Transformation Project, in Namwala district of Southern Province.

One of the projects is the construction of Chitongo Primary School, which has since been completed and handed over to the government of the Republic of Zambia, much to the delight of Chester.

"We used to suffer when we were learning under the tree. When it rained, we would get soaked, as would our books. We thank World Vision for giving us this school. We now learn in a good environment. They have brought us development that will benefit generations. We also thank them for giving us desks. We used to write from our laps. Sometimes our books would be blown off by the winds. Other times we would be distracted by what was happening outside, but now we sit in a classroom without being disturbed. We also have boards in our classrooms, and if there is noise outside, we close the doors and windows and hear everything that the teacher is saying," he says.

For 11-year-old Michael, he is grateful for the clean water provided at the school and the new ablution block.

"We used to go home to answer the call of nature and then come back to school, but now World Vision has given us water and flushable toilets. We thank them for that," he said.

280 people around the school benefit from the water system, bringing the total number of beneficiaries to 574, including the 294 learners at Chibote Community School.

On 3rd August 2023, the Phillips family was in Mbeza to hand over Chitongo Primary School. At the event, Clint Phillips explained why his family, based in the United States of America, chose to support communities in Mbeza, Zambia.

“The first reason is that my wife, Jade, and I are African. We were both born in Johannesburg, South Africa. Our parents and grandparents were born in Africa. The second reason is that God has been very good to us. We know that Jesus of the Bible really cared about people and cared about children. I did not do very well at school, but a single mother raised me, and she taught us that to whom much is given, much is required. The third



reason we are excited to support Mbeza is because we believe Mbeza is the future of Zambia, and Zambia is the future of Africa,” said Clint.

“We believe that we will see good doctors, lawyers, farmers, and political leaders come from Mbeza. We believe that the future President of Zambia can come from Mbeza,” he added.

World Vision Zambia National Director, John Hasse, said, in a speech read on his behalf by Integrated Programmes Director Wezi Kaira, that World Vision’s focus is on helping the most vulnerable children overcome poverty and experience the fullness of life.

“And this work that we do is not possible without partners. As an organisation, one of our core values is that we are partners. We want to partner with the government, we want to partner with the community and with investors, whom we call friends, and these are our partners, like the Philips family, that walk with us, that make it possible for us to have our hands and feet on the ground to do our work,” he said.

And Southern Province Minister, Cornelius Mweetwa, said the government is delighted to receive Chibote Primary School, which comes with 2x3 classroom blocks, a 1x2 teachers’ house, an ablution block plus a mechanized water system, 150 two-seater desks, six tables, ten chairs, and a play park for the learners at the school.

The minister said this in a speech read on his behalf by Southern Province Permanent Secretary Dr. Namani Monze.

“This is commendable and will surely go a long way in providing quality education for these learners, which is the government’s desire for every Zambian child. This is why, upon gaining power, the new dawn government introduced free education. The government also

abolished parent-teacher associations (PTA), examinations, and tuition fees in all government schools so that as these infrastructures are being put up, they are not hindered by unnecessary fees. Government is making sure that even if children come from poor families, they can proceed to good secondary schools by ensuring that bursaries for secondary schools are made available to them," he said.



The Philips family also handed over a maternity annex, mothers' shelter, and 1x2 staff house at Makaba Rural Health Centre to the Zambian government.

The Mbeza Community Transformation Project, also known as the Philips Project, is an ambitious initiative for four years from 2021 to 2025. Its primary objective is to uplift 3600 households from poverty and

create a lasting impact by improving health, literacy and guiding children and families towards a transformative relationship with Jesus Christ in Mbeza Area Programme. It's a holistic project covering education, health, Economic empowerment, water and sanitation, and Christian witness.