



LESEDI SCHOOLS & CLINIC

Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe

www.lesedizim.org



Lesedi Schools and Clinic (Lesedi) is a donor-funded, community-driven school and clinic that is elevating the life prospects of Zimbabwean children. Our mission is the relief of poverty in Zimbabwe by providing the education, training and healthcare that will enable Zimbabwean children to generate a sustainable income, and to be contributing members of their community.

Background - Lesedi is located in a rural area 15 minutes' drive from Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe. The local communities mostly survive by cattle raising and subsistence farming on the dry, infertile Kalahari soils. Poverty has persisted for generations, with poor education, low aspiration levels and limited role models.

When Benson Siyawareva, a professional safari guide, built a homestead in the area, he noticed that many children weren't going to school. Having grown up in similar circumstances, he pledged to make a difference. He began the Lesedi project in 2014 with a simple hut, a handful of youngsters and one trainee teacher.

In 2015, Fiona and Graeme Thompson and Benson established a UK registered charity, Ngoko Charitable Trust (NCT), to fund the project. Fiona and Graeme are UK-based, and both trained as chartered accountants. Benson and Fiona ran a successful safari company together for 17 years. Graeme had a diverse corporate career, including two CFO roles in multi-billion pound companies.

Present Day Lesedi - Lesedi has a strong local team responsible for ongoing operations. Our staff is comprised of 25 teachers, 2 nurses, 2 nurse aides and 18 support staff. We employ a doctor for a weekly clinic. School Development Committees, elected by and comprised of parents, are actively involved with running the schools.

All support staff are from the local community. The ongoing construction over 10 years has also provided vital local employment.

The Lesedi student body is comprised of:

- + Pre-School - 49 students
- + Primary School - 232 students
- + Secondary School - 175 students

for a total of 456 students.

Lesedi students are taught traditional roles at home from a young age, with the boys herding goats and the girls being taught to cook and clean. These stereotypes are challenged at Lesedi. We now have boys enrolled in Food Tech and girls choosing to learn Metal and Wood Tech.





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We prepare each student to graduate from Lesedi Secondary with either sufficient academic qualifications to take them to the next stage of learning, or with a vocational skill that will serve them in the future. All Secondary students learn at least one subject from Agriculture, Food Tech, Metal Tech, or Wood Tech. We intend to introduce Textile Technology, funds permitting, enabling the school to make uniforms in-house for sale to parents.

Information and Communication Technology
ICT skills are taught from Pre-School onwards. Our teachers embrace technology in the classroom and encourage students to learn STEM subjects.

We have ICT labs at both schools and fast internet. The Pre-school and Primary students use Amazon Fire Tablets and basic Lenovo Ideapads. The Secondary lab is equipped with 35 HP desktop computers.



Our **Science Block** has just been completed, with two labs (chemistry and biology) and a prep room. Lesedi is the only rural school in the District with a science lab, and only the second of any schools in the Victoria Falls area. We expect to offer A levels at Lesedi. As such, the labs are essential.



All Lesedi students receive free school meals twice daily, ensuring they aren't learning on an empty stomach. All meals – over 150,000 a year - are funded by NCT.



We avoid any issues of period poverty by providing free sanitary products to the older girls as needed. Most have also been supplied with re-useable [Days for Girls](#) hygiene kits.

Lesedi has been committed to environmental stewardship from its founding. There has been extensive planting of vegetation, providing shade throughout the campus and an inspiring learning environment. Each school has an Eco-Club and the students regularly collect litter within the community. There are school trips to local wildlife projects. We are developing a deep respect for nature in our students.



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Agriculture Projects - The multi-faceted Agriculture Department at Lesedi Secondary comprises:

- ✚ Vegetable garden with drip irrigation;
- ✚ Broiler chicken project;
- ✚ Piggery project;
- ✚ Chicken layers project and a mushroom project are just starting.

The Agriculture Projects provide food for our free meals programme. Any surplus is sold to the local community at an affordable price to improve nutritional standards. They are also a great learning opportunity for our students.



Once we have fully established working crop and animal production, the Agriculture Projects will be utilised for training within the local communities, improving food security and climate resilience.

Lesedi Clinic - Lesedi Clinic provides quality and affordable healthcare for both the school and the local communities.

All Lesedi students receive medical care as needed. For some this involves long-term ongoing treatment. Through a partnership with the [Eye Institute](#), all students and teachers have annual eye tests. NCT funds spectacles as needed.

Lesedi Clinic is also part of the UNICEF funded Expanded Programme for Immunisation providing vaccinations to under-5s.



The Amalima Loko USAID-funded program visits Lesedi Clinic monthly to distribute porridge mix and cooking oil to pregnant ladies and new mothers. Population Services Zimbabwe offer free family planning clinics from Lesedi twice yearly. Lesedi Clinic was also part of the nationwide Polio Vaccination Campaign earlier this year, and was a COVID vaccination centre.

Funding Issues – For over ten years The Ngoko Trust has managed to fund the development of Lesedi through the generosity of individual donors, many of whom visited Lesedi whilst on safari. Virtually all our students are sponsored through the Lesedi Sponsorship Program, lesedizim.org/sponsor-child/. The program helps maintain personal connections between donors and students. To date, we have not received any funding from foundations. We are not allocated any government teachers, nor do we receive any government funding.

The addition of Lesedi Secondary School makes it imperative that we continue to grow our base of dedicated individual donors. For example, we need to offer A levels from 2026 but cannot commit to this given our current funding base. We have begun to reach out to foundations for funding, but this is a lengthy and uncertain process. We are also circulating this Profile as a way to tell our story to prospective individual donors with whom we share common goals. With new contributions added to our robust individual donor base we can continue to provide an exceptional education, healthcare and employment training to Zimbabwean youth.