INSPIRE ZAMBIA

NEWSLETTER

Help Us Bring More Libraries To More Communities

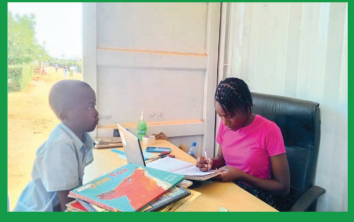














We are now ready to send our next shipping container of books to Zambia. Over the past year, we have been focusing on improving and strengthening the facilities we had in Zambia, but now it is time to expand again.

Recent refurbishment works on our small satellite libraries have included the construction of a new perimeter wall around our Habitat, Chipulukusu Library, helping to improve security and create a safer environment for our readers. We have also installed new lino flooring and carried out painting works in all of our shipping container libraries. All libraries, no matter how small, are now a part of our digital library management system. These developments are having a positive impact, with increasing numbers of members joining and making use of the facilities.

As our existing libraries continue to flourish, we have to reach out further than before. There are still many areas around Ndola and the Copperbelt of Zambia that have no access to books, and could greatly benefit from one of our libraries.

This year, we wish to establish new shipping container libraries in two further areas where local communities are eager to embrace and support them. We are currently exploring several potential locations and partnerships that could help make this vision a reality.

We are currently seeking funding, support and partnerships to expand our library network, and while it is expensive to send a shipping container full of books all the way from Ireland to Zambia, we know that we can do it again. We have come a long way, with the support of a solid base of supporters in Ireland and hard work from many friends in Zambia. With that support and help continuing, together, we can make it happen.

SCAN HERE TO DONATE AND HELP THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA

IN THIS EDITION



1. A review of the Volunteer trips in 2025



2. Microfinance project: A Success Story



3. Take a look at our financial literacy programme from a student's perspective

Looking back at our Volunteer Trips 2025- Building as we climb!

Our August 2025 volunteer trip to Zambia proved to be another great success. Six volunteers traveled to Zambia to work on our projects.

Over 90 local teachers completed our computer training workshops, which were delivered at both beginner and advanced computer skills levels. Those teachers gained the skills to pass digital literacy on to their students and to make full use of our growing educational resources.





The beginner computer classes left a lasting impression on students and our volunteers alike. For the first time, we additionally provided advanced computer classes to those who already had basic IT skills. These advanced computer workshops represent a further significant milestone for us.

All of this work with computers has only been made possible by the generous support of CAMARA Education, an Irish Charity which donated 26 networked desktop computers as well as all our other donors, who have enabled us to install solar power and satellite-based broadband in our library, as well as the kind support of many donors who have provided us with laptop computers.







We also conducted another of our business and financial skills courses with great success with many students, particularly from the Entrepreneur College of Ndola. You will read later in this edition of our newsletter a success story from this course which highlights the transformative impact of this work.






We were back in Zambia again in December 2025, where we focused on upgrading our computer lab, and introducing a digital library management system. We also had the opportunity to spend time with our local staff (who now number 14 at the time of this newsletter) developing greater skills and systems for the efficient running of our expanding services.

In addition to all of the above, our visits to Zambia in August and December 2025 allowed us to engage with local partners such as the Zambian Ministry of Education and Ndola City Council with both of whom we are planning exciting new initiatives. There will be more news of this in our next newsletter, after our August 2026 visit to Zambia.






Microfinance Loans: A Success Story

Many people in Zambia have strong business ideas but do not have the money needed to start a business. Our microfinance project offers small loans to those who want to set up a small business. Most of the people we support are widows who are responsible for feeding their children and grandchildren.



Catherine Mwango selling groundnuts, beans and rice at a stall in her local market

With a loan of about the equivalent of €300 or €400, a widow can buy a sewing machine to begin dressmaking, or purchase feed, medicine and equipment to raise chickens. Some borrowers have made cement blocks or have opened small stalls in their local markets. Meet Catherine Mwango, a hardworking widow who used her loan to grow her small trading business selling groundnuts, beans, rice and vegetables. This loan helped to increase her stock and so increase her income, allowing her to pay school fees and improve life at home for herself and her family.

By saving small amounts daily, Catherine managed her repayments with ease. Catherine now advises others to borrow with a clear plan, as these loans can make a real difference when used responsibly.

The loans which we provide are not gifts or grants. They must be repaid. The people who avail of our small loans must themselves put in the effort to improve their situation and move out of poverty. This approach has proven effective.

We have helped to start and grow more than 60 small businesses in the area around Chipulukusu and sometimes much further afield. Most of these businesses have done well, and nearly all the loans have been repaid. There have been a few exceptions, but overall these small loans have been very successful in helping people to move out of poverty for good. As loans are repaid and the original funds are returned, the same money can then be lent out again to others, allowing more people to begin the same process of moving out of poverty.

Our microfinance project gives people a chance to build a stable financial future for themselves within about six months. **It works.**

A brief interview with Catherine Mwango

Micro Finance Borrower Name:
Catherine Mwango

What did you buy from the loaned money?
Chikanda, groundnuts, beans, rice and veggies.

How did the loan help with your business and life?
It has improved my stock, cash flow, business equity and my capital has increased. I bought a TV from the profits, managed to pay school fees for my children. Being a widow, this has offered me financial stability and freedom.

What challenges did you face in repaying the loan? I had a mobile money account where I used to save money on daily basis. This made my repayments easy.

What advice would you give to the community and your peers?
Borrow when you have clear investment plans, these loans have potential to change lives if a collective responsibility is fostered.

Recent exciting upgrades to our Habitat, Chipulukusu shipping container library

Our **Habitat Chipulukusu shipping container library** has had another small upgrade.

We have installed a wall around the shipping container library to secure the area and make a safe place of recreation for our little library members.

Our next step is to construct an awning over the shipping container and the garden area so as to create shade and reduce the heat inside the shipping container and also to provide a platform to install solar panels.







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Financial Literacy programme past pupil, Abraham, speaks about his experience



Meet Abraham, a past pupil of Inspire Zambia's Financial Literacy programme. Through his studies, he has applied his learning to build strong financial habits and support his business 'Maskam General Dealers,' and his local community.



Can you introduce yourself?
My name is Abraham Kamanga Chizaso. I run a business registered with **PACRA** called **Maskam General Dealers**. I joined the course to gain financial skills and ensure my business meets statutory requirements.

What was the most valuable thing you learned?
The most valuable lesson for me was learning to separate business and personal finances, and the importance of keeping proper financial records.

How have you applied what you learned?
I have applied what I learned at home and in church, especially in budgeting and record keeping.

Has your mindset changed since the course?
Yes, particularly around paying myself, identifying needs versus wants, and prioritising.

Do you now plan for your business?
Yes, I set SMART goals and follow short, medium and long-term plans.

What challenges do you face in business?
Competition, many statutory regulations and levies, and an unstable exchange rate.

How do you deal with these challenges?
By joining clubs and cooperatives, buying local raw materials, and focusing on the local market.

Has this knowledge helped others?
Yes, it has helped my household and my friends.

Why is financial literacy important?
It helps people manage both their businesses and their homes.

What is an essential skill you learned?
Record keeping.

What advice would you give for business success?
Have a strategic plan with SMART goals, and a strong marketing and sales plan.
What would you say to someone considering the course?
Start now, it has many benefits.

What is one key lesson you will take forward?
The importance of saving and spending within your means.

1 Volunteer with us?

Would you volunteer with us in Ireland to help with teaching, library management, fundraising or computer skills or would you consider travelling with us to Zambia for a two-week volunteer mission? Volunteers with a wide range of skills are always needed. Volunteers to Zambia must fundraise and cover their own costs, and they must work hard, but they will also have an unforgettable experience in Zambia.



2 Sponsor a shipping container or a librarian

To expand our libraries in Zambia, we purchase second hand shipping containers which we then pack with books and educational materials and send them to Zambia. The books are shared out among many schools as well as our libraries, and the shipping containers themselves are converted to form a new branch library.



Each shipping container costs about €5,000
Why not sponsor a share in the next shipping container?

Sending a shipping container to Zambia costs about €15,000 and we have a shipping container now full of books and ready to ship, as soon as we get the finance. Would you sponsor part of the cost of sending our next container?





"Travelling to Zambia for the first time in 2022 didn't just change my surroundings; it completely changed my outlook on life, and I've carried that perspective with me ever since. I highly recommend that you volunteer with inspire Zambia and take this Once-in-a-lifetime trip."
Ciara Brenner,
Volunteer 2022, 2023 & 2024

3 How to donate

Why not set up a monthly standing order any donation, no matter how large or small, will help.

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