

# ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS (ZIMBABWE)

**HOW TO CHANGE LIVES!** I recently warned Artpeace that the next month or so in terms of support looked grim. Every penny from sales of their work and donations had been sent to Zimbabwe to give them some sort of Christmas but now the kitty was empty! January and February sales are often as cheerless as our weather. The artists sounded despondent as the



prolonged drought and obtaining clean water are a big problem. Photo below right: shows artist Ignatius's friend Jacob splattered with mud laboriously digging out a well as all the local boreholes are dry. Jacob still manages to smile for the camera despite his awful existence living in a primitive wigwam made of branches and plastic – reference a previous article. However, out of the blue, I received an email from Martin Beck - **Marlow URC's** secretary vis: 'Dear John. We have been

discussing at our Elders and with our congregation which of our further-away efforts we want to concentrate on in the next eighteen

months and you will be pleased to hear that Artpeace came on top by a huge margin. So you and I need to think about this opportunity and see how we can best channel our desire to help. We have set aside some money for this and we are keen to support the artists and families in some way'. The artists' prayers had been



answered and they were elated on learning of their Marlow friends'

generosity! After much discussion it was decided that the funds should be used to purchase sorely needed fertilisers to improve the soil in their impoverished fields, giving better yields of



maize. Within a few days Marlow's substantial donation was winging its way to our friends to cover 3 x 40kg sacks of fertiliser – a year's

supply for each family! Photos top left: show Artpeace loading fertiliser onto a truck and above: Teddy and Lizeni plus Lovemore's wife and daughter sprinkling fertiliser around maize roots.

**Tools:** The other priority was tools as Artpeace's means of scratching a living were old and blunt: new quality tools were urgently needed to improve the quality of their work. There was more than enough left from Marlow's donation to equip them all with good branded European



tools instead of poor quality Chinese versions. The expressions on their faces above say it all!

**Speed:** Literally a week after Marlow contacted me, both major requests had been met thanks to Marlow's tremendous gesture; that's how quickly two churches can move without any tedious bureaucracy! The little money left over was used to buy two good used mobiles with spare batteries and a torch so every penny was put to good use. A few days later yet more good news arrived in the form of a useful cheque from our good friends up at **Toller URC**, Kettering whose gift from coffee morning proceeds including a donation put more smiles on faces enabling the artists to buy much needed food and a few school uniforms! What a great start to the year!

**The Southwark Cathedral/CAFOD** link is working well: some crosses delivered a week ago virtually sold out the following day so the rush is on to get more over before Easter! More young



poor talented artists are keen to be involved with our project so here is a sample of their stunning work in the pipeline! Don't all rush at once!  
**Johnston Simpson**

