

ARTPEACE AND FRIENDS

Ecstatic: On learning of President Robert Mugabe's resignation last November thus ending a 37-year reign of tyranny, it wasn't only the tens of thousands of Zimbabweans including ArtPeace who celebrated at one giant street party dancing and singing in the streets of Harare -



Zimbabwean expats the world over were also ecstatic. A great weight had fallen from this beleaguered nation's shoulders.

Ashleigh Callow (below) joined in the celebrations in London - her face says it all! Over the years, Ashleigh has proved a tremendous support to me and ArtPeace in many ways. Like all Zimbabweans she and her family and friends pray for better times ahead for their beloved country as it embarks on a new era but there is a long way to go with a huge mess to sort out to rebuild the nation and restore it to a proud, prosperous country. Many anticipated President Emmerson Mnangagwa would build bridges in politically polarised Zimbabwe after years of crisis and uncertainty under Mugabe's rule. There were hopes that he would include members from opposition parties in his new government but sadly that was not to be. So far, there appears to be few new ideas to breathe life into a failed economy.

However, it is still early days and if the government



starts prioritising the livelihoods of ordinary poor Zimbabweans and aggressively deals with violence, lawlessness and corruption, this would be huge progress. The new president has indicated that the forthcoming election will be free and fair and that if defeated, he would accept the will of the people – only time will tell.



Meanwhile, life continues as before. Artist Lovemore James said: [This lady called Dorcas, lives in the wet lands between Tafara and Mabvuku suburbs. Her family were evicted from a farm in Bindura by a government minister after their employer was removed from the farm. They now live in poverty. Her husband ran away leaving her with 2 children and she is 6 months pregnant. I was touched by her story. She said since they were evicted to this wet area, they were promised cement and bricks to build a better foundation for their cabin house but without success. They, including Grandma Ruth sleep on a plastic sheet on top of a mud floor to prevent blankets from getting wet – hence the need to lift their cabin off the wet ground.'](#)

Crops: After a good start, the maize seed we funded soon burst through the ground aided by fertilizer but erratic rains and high temperatures being experienced countrywide have resulted in



crops wilting causing much concern amongst our friends. The Meteorological Services Dept. has forecast little and isolated rainfall activity over the country, with the dry and hot conditions likely to continue. Photo left shows artist Lizeni giving us a little wave.

Concern: Some ArtPeace children cannot attend school due to school fee arrears. Lovemore is very distraught as his daughter Enviolata is a casualty.



Life in Zimbabwe: Artist Christine Ndoro recently attended a relation's funeral in Murewa. Her photos (below left) show the council of village elders discussing their bereavement and how the resultant orphaned children should be raised. Bottom - a village home. Right: a splendid carving by ArtPeace and friends who are becoming increasing reliant on sales. **Johnston Simpson**

