

A very long connection with Mission boarding schools, coupled with the study of village conditions in various Reserves brought out the need for a very different form of training.

Several points emerged clearly

1. There was a complete break between the institutionalism of the ordinary boarding school and the home village
2. The training given in boarding schools reached only the young folk and too often resulted in them looking down on the uneducated and being dissatisfied with home conditions
3. The greatest need of the Reserves was true homemakers with simple practical knowledge
4. Most African women suffered from a serious inferiority complex
5. The cure or prevention of much of the ill health, malnutrition and lack of hygiene in the villages lay in the hands of the women if they could be given the necessary training

The establishment of the Homecraft Village M'Sonneddi S. Rhodesia is an attempt to meet these points

From the first it was clear that it must consist of a group of homes or families, never in anyway an institution.

The women's natural inferiority complex had to be overcome, and they persuaded that they were capable of great things as homemakers. To do this it was evident that they must be made to feel that this new project was really African, and that the building up and guidance of the Village lay in their own hands. Therefore from the beginning Leaders were elected by the Villagers and all discipline placed in their hands. Plans for the work, difficulties, future extension, etc are all discussed with the leaders and by them passed on to the Villagers. When the feeling of the Village has been reached, the leaders return to discuss it with the Principal who merely acts as advisor and friend.

As in the Reserves the villages consist of all sorts and kinds together, so in the Homecraft Village there are those of no education up through Sub Std A to Standard 6. From the moment they enter the Village all educational standards are forgotten and they become one big family, all endeavouring to master the many homecrafts that will make it possible for them to return to their Reserves as true homemakers, able to pass on simple knowledge to others.

To get the home atmosphere it was clear that the women ought to bring their children with them, and husbands be free to visit, when they found the time. Having the children in the Village makes possible a lot of very simple child welfare teaching by the African nurse and others of the staff.

The Village is open to those of any religious denomination. While everyone's principles are respected, they are shown that it is possible and happy to meet together as a family for daily prayer. The women take turns at leading these, and some of the girls run a Sunday school for the tinies.

#### BUILDING THE VILLAGE

Twenty girls and women were in residence in pole and mud huts before the Village was built. They gave very gladly of their time, cutting and carrying grass for thatching, clearing ground, carrying bricks, making mortar etc. Bit by bit their ideas as to training came out and so a tentative scheme was drawn up and has been amended and added to as new relays of Villagers have voiced their needs.

The work is arranged to keep as far as possible to home ways. We rise with the sun, houses and Village are swept, water fetched and porridge put on. Family prayers are taken. Then comes the washing and feeding of babies. Breakfast of porridge for all. Games follow for the healthy, while those needing attention go to Nurse at the little dispensary. Here the Villagers take turns as orderlies in outpatient department, sick ward and maternity room.

A time of general work follows when all the necessary village tasks are done, housewifery, laundry, preparing vegetables stamping or grinding food, cutting and carrying grass, water or bricks, road mending or making as required. Vegetable gardening and work in the lands.

Everybody gets a turn at all duties.

A hygiene squad works everyday during this time, emptying bath tanks, seeing to latrines, keeping drains clean, picking up all rubbish about the village, keeping the water sites clear of weeds and grass.

After this a half hours break comes for washing, resting, feeding infants etc.

From 10 to 12.30 different classes are busy these are not divided by academic standards but according to capabilities and needs. Sewing cutting out, machining, basket and fibre work, soft toy making, patch work and cooking are taken during this time.

12.0 to 2.15 is free for dinner and rest. The food is cooked by the girls and women who take turns at this under the eye of a leader.

2.15 to 3.0 p.m. theory lessons are taken Home Nursing, Home and Health talks, Hygiene, Child welfare, Maternity etc. These are all taken in the form of village discussions and every bit of the teaching is applied to home life in the Reserves. 3.0 to 4.30. knitting, cutting of patterns, and any special classes are taken.

From the beginning the villagers have knitted for the european troops and done many hundreds of excellent garments

The rest of the day is free except for the cooks and hospital orderlies. Evening ~~are~~ taken at six oclock and supper directly after

After this much visiting between the cottages takes place and a bell is rung at nine oclock to warn villagers to settle for the night

### THE COTTAGES

These are simple three roomed buildings of sundried bricks, plastered with ant heap and sand and under thatch. All within the capabilities of any intelligent African

### THE STAFF

The present African Staff of the Village are none of them trained Teachers indeed their standards vary from Std 2 to 4 but their work is of a very high standard. One and all have a real desire to help their fellows. Having been trained by the Principal they concur with her view of the great possibilities of the average African woman and go all out to help both in work time and out.

The head Teacher, Paulina Kawonza, daughter of a Methodist Minister arranges all the work lists for the general work of the term, besides running the senior sewing, toymaking classes, and all the army ~~knitt~~ knitting. At any time of the Principals absence she takes over full charge of the industrial work and Village and has proved herself capable of taking full responsibility though she is only a young girl

### THE LEADERS

At the beginning of each year the Villagers choose three women and three girl Leaders. With a little teaching these very quickly shoulder responsibility and are eager to help, willingly giving up some of their free time for the sake of the village as a whole.

They arrange their own work, taking it in turns for two to be on duty at a time. In times of difficulty or when voicing the needs of the Village, they come as a body to the Principal and discuss the position freely with her, giving their opinion of what should be done. This, if at all possible is always accepted and carried out.

The Principal does not plan new, or alter existing ~~plans~~ schemes or make rules without consulting the Leaders and getting from them the feeling of the village on these matters so that nothing at the Homecraft village can be felt to be a european imposition or divorced from their own village life.

The African girl teachers co-operate very happily with the Leaders.

### THE COURSE

The course is for two years but those who cannot manage so long are taken for one year.

This term (1945) there are 42 women with 49 children and 58 girls in the village and the entries for 1946 are already more than can be accomodated.

C. Langham  
Principal

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