

# LAS ZIMBABWE TRIP 2024







# ABOUT THE TRIP

At LAS, we teach our students to become innovative, compassionate, and responsible citizens of the world. Wherever possible, we encourage a spirit of philanthropy in our community and teach the importance of giving. Every year, staff and students organize a trip with the Sethule Orphans' Trust in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. This partnership between LAS and Sethule has been strong for over a decade and has allowed students year after year to serve others, make friendships, and learn about different cultures.



When speaking about Global Family at LAS, we usually refer to our worldwide alumni community. But partners like Sethule remind us that we have more connections than we realize. Over the past few years, our students have played a significant role in the organizing and fundraising element of the program. Leading up to the trip, students helped with the auction and raffle, which raised a record-breaking CHF 33,000, 80% of which went towards Sethule projects. Being involved in the run-up to the trip and learning more about Sethule allowed the whole LAS community to be involved in this project, not just the group traveling.





# SERVICE

The students were in Zimbabwe for two weeks, and the first week was dedicated to service. The group visited the Hope Secondary School, where they were part of the official opening of the classrooms that last year's LAS Zimbabwe group fundraised for. The group then got to work helping to build two science classrooms. This involved mixing cement to pour for the foundation of the classrooms, and painting murals. LAS students reflected on the importance of the money raised during the auction to support these initiatives! Our LAS students worked alongside local Zimbabweans who worked for Sethule and were guided by their skills and craftsmanship. Our students were definitely put to work and had a fantastic time!







# CULTURAL EXCHANGE



Before the trip, students also planned and developed the cultural exchange element for their meeting with the community. A cultural exchange is an event where people from different backgrounds trade ideas, feelings, stories, or customs. Song and dance are significant elements of Zimbabwean culture, and our students danced with them for hours and had an amazing afternoon! On another day, our students also taught the community how to make a piñata and they had a great time playing with it! Our students learned a lot about Zimbabwean customs and cultures and enjoyed getting to know the community better. This cultural immersion from both sides broke down barriers and allowed them to connect on a deeper level and develop friendships.





# ACTIVITIES



For the second half of the trip, our students enjoyed exploring Zimbabwe and participating in a range of culturally immersive activities. The group took part in hikes, rafting, a drum show, slept in treehouses overlooking an elephant watering hole, and saw the incredible Victoria Falls. They witnessed the country's beautiful landscape, and it was a privilege to see such famous places in real life! Students also went on safari game drives in Hwange National Park and went to an ethical elephant sanctuary, where they enjoyed interactions with the animals and learned about the threats that they experience due to climate change and poaching. On their game drives, they saw giraffes, zebras, elephants, impalas, crocodiles, and so much more! The students had an incredible time learning about the beautiful, diverse, and culturally rich country they had the privilege of visiting.





# THE PARTNERSHIP

This decade-long partnership between LAS and the Sethule Orphans' Trust goes both ways. Our students and staff embark on the trip with a willingness to help the local community and offer their time and enthusiasm, and they return to Leysin with so much new knowledge and many new friendships. This year our students really grew by stepping out of their comfort zones, trying new things, and adjusting to a new way of life for the two weeks they were there. Thank you to the staff members and students that attended this trip, as well as everyone who made it possible by participating in the auction and raffle—it has made a really big difference in the lives of people in the Bulawayo community.

