

Jenny Featherstone, Mission Partner, Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation (MEF), Zambia, May 2007

It seems extraordinary that after only a few weeks I should feel so at home at Mindolo. That is mostly due to the generosity (and curiosity) of the Zambian people, an example of which I had minutes after touching down at Lusaka airport. The lady in front of me in the queue gave me 40,000 kwacha, (about £5) to buy breakfast whilst I waited for the next plane, a 40-minute hop to Ndola. Little did she know it, but not only she, but God was looking after me, as she had given me enough to pay the airport tax for my next flight as foreign currency was not acceptable.

On the little twin engine 18-seater plane, I craned my neck to see the country I had come to. Some farmland near Lusaka, lakes and rivers, quite a lot of trees and bushes, but mostly scrubland. There was the occasional settlement, but nothing approaching a town and I did not see a tarred road in the 300+ kilometres until the descent into Ndola. Mr Livingstone had put down his roots in Zambia, but Mr McAdam apparently had not!

Philip, one of the drivers, met me at the airport and we were soon at Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation, on the Northern outskirts of Kitwe. The complex is deceptively spacious, and even now I am coming across "new bits". Exotic trees and butterflies abound, and there is a small lake (called a dam) with a notice which reads "No fishing – beware of the crocodile"!

Mindolo Dam

the end falling off, but my daughter always used to joke that my house was held together with blue tac, so I am sure I can find a solution.

Compared to my time in Sri Lanka the bungalow is surprisingly bug free. Apart from a few moths my only "unofficial visitor" has been a small lizard who is definitely more friend than foe.

Bungalows near pre-school

Despite its beauty, Mindolo has, through no fault of its own, seen better days. Zambia is a desperately poor country, and most of its facilities have the air of Africa in the late 1970s, Zambia's hey day.

My bungalow (see picture on right) is quite close to the pre-school. It has two bedrooms a lounge / kitchen and a shower. The mosquito screen on the window was suffering from a bit of wear and tear - malaria is a real problem here - and I have yet to get the hang of turning on the tap without

There are people from all over Africa, and beyond on campus. The students follow ½ a dozen different courses ranging from the care of orphans to journalism. For the most part, they are sponsored by their church or some other agency, as very few can afford the fees themselves.

Student sponsorship is the financial bread and butter of Mindolo, and is becoming harder to find as HIV/AIDS takes its toll on agency resources.

On my first weekend here, we celebrated Labour Day with speeches food and dancing. The dance group Murenge also entertained us in their colourful costumes decorated with aids ribbon print.

With every good wish to you all

Mutenge



A prayer request

Two weeks in and I already have my own office, but as yet little to put in it! The bulk of my things, (including some office equipment) is to be shipped over by sea, and then overland through Tanzania. – a journey that takes between 6-12 weeks depending on how long the lorry has to wait at the border. Unfortunately, despite packing in early March, my crate has not even left Birmingham yet, as the container needs to be full before they will send it to the port. I would very much appreciate it if you could include this as an item of prayer.

And finally, thank you for your continued interest in world mission. I hope I can give you a flavour of the aspirations and needs faced by many in our Christian family in Zambia.

Your interest, prayers and giving are a sign of your commitment to the body of Christ.