Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!
From Zimbabwe

It may be snowing in your part of the world but in Mozambique, where I am working this week away from the YA HUB in Zimbabwe, it is 40°C and there is a tropical rain shower in the air. Nevertheless, there is a great buzz at the Young Africa training centres. Tomorrow it is graduation day at both schools. Over 500 students will receive certificates for passing their exams in professional skills. For many it will be the day of their lives. The whitest shirts, the funkiest hairstyles, the highest heels. Never before has their success been celebrated so seriously. Their self-confidence is greater than ever before; the future smiles at them. Graduation day is also a highlight for me personally. Although I have already attended a good number of them, I still choke with emotion. The joy of our students generates all the energy for the coming year.

The success of our students, even after their training, is an important result for Young Africa. That is why the young people, who graduate tomorrow, will receive an extra gift: a mobile app that has been especially developed for YA, with which they have access to job vacancies, internships, scholarships, micro credits, refresher courses, festivals, etc. The same app facilitates our graduates to evaluate the impact on their lives. Are they working? Has their income improved? Do they feel more resilient? What do they know about health? So, this new cool instrument serves two purposes.

In addition to educating young people, we have succeeded in professionalising the whole YA organisation in the last year and have trained management teams from all YA centres at the YA HUB in Zimbabwe. We have received worldwide recognition from UNESCO-UNEVOC as a promising practice in vocational education. A model house in green technology has been opened in Namibia. We started training young people in Zambia. YA Botswana has organized successful festivals at various locations. Young Africa in Mozambique has managed to overcome a major challenge: the agricultural skills centre in Dondo had been temporarily closed for reasons beyond our control nor understanding, but the lessons continued in Beira and eventually we managed to solve all problems. What a struggle and concern that was. In Zimbabwe we have had to deal with an ugly case of fraud and mismanagement. Fortunately the programmes carried on as usual, but it was a painful and a hard lesson. We had to tighten the administrative systems and internal controls considerably. Expansion of YA to South Africa is in the pipeline. In Malawi we entered into promising partnerships with SOS Children’s Villages and Children’s Fund Malawi; in 2018 you will hear more about that. Our fundraising and support team in the Netherlands has achieved some great successes.

We are proud of all our YA colleagues and students! On the following pages our country directors and young people share their experiences and you can find out how you too can be part of YA. Enjoy the read!

We wish you an inspiring holiday and a fulfilling 2018.

On behalf of Raj A. Joseph,

Dorien Beurskens
Executive Director Young Africa
From the Netherlands

The period before Christmas and New Year’s Eve invites us to reflect on 2017 and to look forward to 2018. 2017 was a special year for Young Africa. In the Netherlands, we built further upon the foundations laid in 2016: a close team that works very hard, with renewed communication and a solid financial system in order to support the Young Africa branches in their work with young people who live in difficult circumstances. We have succeeded to create more exposure about our unique approach, offering vocational skills training in collaboration with local entrepreneurs. Early in 2017, our method gained recognition by UNESCO-UNEVOC as one of world’s most promising practices in TVET. In May, Young Africa in the Netherlands received its recognition by the Central Bureau on Fundraising, which monitors fundraising charities. In October, I was appointed as one of the 100 most influential people in the Dutch philanthropic sector. And in November, we won the ‘Best Charity Awards’ from the AFAS Foundation.

These are beautiful developments which we like to continue. We are supported by a renewed Board, which took office in the course of 2017: Chairman Jamy Gaewie took over from Heimen van Andel. We also welcomed Stefan van der Swaluw, Yolanda Jansen and Nathan Stukker and said goodbye to Mathieu Beurskens and Ger Aafjes. Ger Aafjes had been a member of the board since the foundation of Young Africa and we wish to thank him for his commitment. A special thanks to Mathieu Beurskens: he is one of the Founding Fathers of Young Africa. He has been the chairman and treasurer of Young Africa for years. In September he ‘retired’ from Young Africa.

Besides our new board, we also entered new partnerships which we are going to continue and extend in 2018. Our long-term partnership with Wild Geese has been renewed: they multiply our donations and we share our expertise about youth empowerment in financial self-reliant training centres with the private initiatives which are supported by Wild Geese. We entered a partnership with The Children’s Fund in the Netherlands to build their capacity in areas like fundraising. So that they can support their training centre in Malawi to become self-reliant. We entered in a third partnership with the Dutch company Transitiepartners, with whom we have a shared mission of youth empowerment. Together with them, we will create a network of companies which will support Young Africa to give us more acting power and exposure in the Netherlands.

Finally, I want to thank you for your involvement with Young Africa. Together with you, we make the world a better place.

I hope you enjoy reading this digital magazine.

I wish you a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year!

Gonneke Campen, Director Young Africa International – the Netherlands

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Colophon

This magazine is developed by Annelies Penterman. Thanks to the whole YA Family for their contribution to this beautiful magazine. Some of the pictures, like the one on the front page, have been made by Julia Gunther (free of charge). Visit www.juliagunther.com for more information. Any compliments or feedback? Please let us know via the following contact details.

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Young Africa's road to WORK

The number of young refugees that want to go from Africa to Europe is increasing. A third of the young people in Africa want to move to another country and that’s not without a reason. In many places in Africa, they lack perspective: there is a serious shortage of jobs and (vocational) training. Young people have no idea how to start their own businesses. Tens of millions of young Africans are without jobs and this number is growing. Read what Young Africa is doing about this:

High youth unemployment

Iran tells: “My name is Iran Williams and I live in Namibia. The youth unemployment rate in my country is enormous. A lot of young people do not further their education after high school, because they do not see the point or there is not an institute nearby offering (vocational) training. Finding a job is therefore very difficult. I recently graduated from Young Africa in Solar Technology and want to say to my peers: ‘there is nothing that you can’t do! Now is the chance to work on your future. Make sure you are ready. The time for us, young people, has come. The time to start your own business is here. The boat is almost leaving, so come on board and together we will build a better future.’”

Lidia tells: ”My life was very different before I started studying at Young Africa in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe. I lived far away from the capital and there were no schools offering vocational training nearby. At that time, I wouldn’t even have finished a course if it was offered, since I had no feeling of taking responsibility at all. But a few years ago, I came into contact with Young Africa via-via. They offered me the possibility to follow the hostel programme. That sounded like a good thing to me, because I could follow a course while following the hostel programme that takes two years and live on campus. I have learned so much! I take responsibility now, know how to take care of myself and know which steps to take when I want to achieve something. For instance, I did find a job immediately after receiving my diploma in Office Management, because I work at Young Africa as a clerk now! The money I make, I use to build an independent life. I rent a room where I live by myself and I am saving to study further. I can even support some of my family members in their education.”

Lack of training opportunities

The Young Africa method

Young Africa: a high-impact, market-driven solution leading to (self-) employability!
2017 in an overview

Our directors would like to tell you what has inspired them in 2017.

The lessons in Life Skills give young people hope and the believe that they have the power within to make a positive change in their lives. Helping them to set goals, to stand up for themselves and to build their self-confidence. That is so inspiring. I always tell them that their luck depends on the choices they make. Now they know that change is within their reach and that everything they wish for is possible. In 2017, 241 young people graduated in the Makoni District through our mobile outreach training unit which makes it possible for young people in remote areas to get educated: 40 of these graduates were nursing mothers. A crèche travels with the training unit and young people can leave their children in good hands while studying. It was such a beautiful moment to see them receiving their diploma!

Although we do not work directly with the youth in southern Africa, we worked with two interns in 2017. It was very nice to work together with them and see them changing. In the beginning, they walked into the office wondering what to expect, having no idea what Young Africa did and what the lives of their peers looked like in southern Africa. They have organised a beautiful event. After a while, you could see that they gained more insight into the situation of their peers on the other side of the world. Another energetic moment in 2017 was winning the Best Charity Awards of the AFAS Foundation. It was quite a challenge to convince the public, other NGO’s, that we had the best project and that we have made the most impact. That we, by the end of the evening, could go home with this award gave us the best feeling. We received recognition of the work we do as well as a wonderful amount of money with which we can set up the fourth training department in Botswana!

Last year was an exciting one for Young Africa in Zimbabwe. In 2017, we worked very hard to develop and carry out a Plan of Action to tackle the problems caused in executing our contract with the European Union. We had to fire some staff members, including the Director, because the conditions of the contract weren’t executed correctly. Subsequent- ly, I was appointed as Acting Director of Young Africa Zim- babwe. Also the political situation was tense with the resign- ation of President Mugabe, who had been in office for 37 years. The transition went very peacefully and we hope that this leads to a stable democracy.

Susan Madodo | Acting Director Young Africa Zimbabwe

Gonneke Campen | Director Young Africa International - The Netherlands
Young people start their training with us with a low level of self-confidence. They literally think they cannot even complete their training. Through the lessons in Life Skills you see them changing! Early in December, two classes graduated at Young Africa Namibia. During the graduation ceremony, one graduate came to me and said: “I can’t express how much this training means to me and how much it has brought”. I am so grateful that Young Africa can bring about this change with young people! Another great moment in 2017 was the opening of the Demonstration House, built by volunteers and students with natural and recycled materials. The Demonstration House serves as an inspiration for everyone visiting us, and of course for students in Sustainable Building Techniques. It is so inspiring to see that they are using this inspiration in their practical assignments. During these assignments, the students have to design and make creative applications with the use of sustainable building techniques.

The celebration of the 10th anniversary of our training centre in Beira on August 18th was the highlight of the year. I started working at Young Africa as an administrator and now as a Director. In this period, we have educated a staggering 13,000 young people! I do this work with my whole heart, again and again it is amazing to see how young people flourish. Together with Light for the World we have worked on making our training centres and courses accessible to young people with a disability. We gained international recognition for this joined project with a feature in a leading paper The Guardian. 2017 also brought some challenges, particularly at our agricultural training centre in Dondo that, due to political pressure, had been
closed for a while. The authorities decided that we did not have the right permits, but they couldn’t say which ones were needed. Fortunately, these issues are solved now and I can proudly say that recent graduates from YA Dondo earn 17 times more than before they had a YA diploma! These amazing results are certainly due to our new centre manager Dalte Soberano, who joined us last April.

For us it is so inspiring to see that young people who have studied at Young Africa are doing so well. Happily, we bump into them regularly, like Tavengwa who graduated in 2004 as a Car Mechanic. He now owns two garages! And lately, a women came to us and said that her daughter had studied at Young Africa and that she is doing well. Our colleagues inspire us as well, particularly with regard to the challenges we faced in 2017. They have plodded through. We have done well guys. Which has really given us the energy to carry on.

In 2017, we have worked with a group of interns to build up Young Africa in Botswana, since we could not yet start giving vocational training. It’s so good to see that the interns are specialising within the organisation on the basis of their interests and skills. One keeps up our social media accounts, the other takes pictures and yet another does the financial administration. All this hard work came together during the three SHINE Festivals which we organised in different parts of Botswana. The last one in Mabule, in the south of Botswana, was a big success. When we arrived, 200 young people were already there, ready to party! These successes show us that Young Africa is very, very needed in Botswana. This inspires us to continue our work.

What a year it has been! In September 2016, Mark and I left for Zambia to set up Young Africa. It has been an intensive and exciting period. Looking for a place to work, finding your way in a new country, while working to set up a Young Africa training location. Barely a year later, the first ICT class graduated. That was truly a wonderful moment, because only then you really see the result of hard work. The young people who came to us did not have any idea how a computer works. We can barely imagine that. Then they leave with their diploma capable of finding job opportunities on the internet and making their C.V. in Microsoft Office. So cool!
We want to thank all our partners for working with us making the world a better place for our young people.
For young and old, a fundraising activity is a nice way to support a non-profit. It’s informative, sociable and easy! There have been some Young Africa supporters who, instead of asking for gifts for their birthdays, asked for donations for Young Africa. Or do you prefer a sports challenge? Get yourself sponsored! Create your own FUNdraising page on www.pifworld.com for example. FUNdraising has never been so easy!

Enough ideas for your fundraising activity. Contact us, if you want us to think along with you. For schools, fundraising activities are an ideal way of connecting students with their African peers. Students can transform their involvement into action through awareness raising, combined with a fundraising activity.

Since 2016, Ans and Antoon van de Griendt have been organising a Wine Fundraiser. The wines (red, white and rosé) supplied by the ‘Waterdrager’ from Heusden in The Netherlands, cost €6 per bottle. For every bottle, €1.25 is donated to the projects of YA Namibia. The total amount raised will be multiplied by Wild Geese. Last November, the 2000th bottle was sold.
Our Students

Our students and recent graduates would like to tell you what Young Africa has meant to them.

Province

My name is Province and I currently am enrolled in the course Beautician at Young Africa in Zimbabwe. I choose to do this course, because I enjoy the work and I foresee a future in it. I would like to start my own business after graduating. This way I can hire other young people and help them. Hopefully, I will earn enough so I can also support my parents who suffer each day.

Exam of the Beautician course. The customer is happy!

Timothy

A few months ago, I started as an intern at Young Africa Botswana. I have learned so much already! For example about working together in a team and the importance of giving back to the community. Young Africa is an organisation which enables people to make a positive contribution to their own societies. And that is exactly what I find so revolutionary about the method of Young Africa. In Botswana, there is a huge gap between having a diploma and finding a job. That means that young people who go to school, can’t find decent jobs since their training does not prepare them for the labour market. Through the market-related TVET given by Young Africa and the lessons in Life Skills and entrepreneurship, that gap is closed. I am so happy to contribute to this.

Halwoodi

A few years ago, I had just finished High School, I started a summer job with Dezman Solar Energy in Namibia. I decided to stay there and not further my education because I was so happy with this job. I immediately knew that solar energy was my passion. Last year, I decided to deepen my knowledge and started my study at Young Africa Namibia in Solar technology. I chose for YA because I could study and work at the same time. Through the practice-oriented training, my skills are 100% sharp. Thanks to this course, I made a promotion at Dezman Solar Energy and hold three positions: PV System Designer, Site Manager and Sales Employee. To other young people I want to say: do not ever give up, when you really want something.

Halwoodi during one of the practical workshops for the course Solar Technology.

Timothy Mweemba.
The YA Family

A few members of the YA family tell why they are involved in Young Africa.

Moleboge Lekwane

When Cynthia approached me and asked if I wanted to help set up Young Africa in South Africa, I didn’t hesitate for a moment. A lot of NGO’s are working in South Africa, but there is a great need for the unique approach of Young Africa which leads to (self-) employability for young people.

Moleboge Lekwane, co-director Young Africa SA since 2017.

I am a lawyer by profession and a blogger. I mainly blog about social issues, most of which affected me particularly as a person living with albinism. With my background, I can really contribute to putting Young Africa on the map, establishing partnerships with other organisations, giving strategic advice and working with the other directors establishing an accountable organisation. Both for the societies we want to serve, as well as for our donors.

Yolanda Jansen

I was introduced to Young Africa through Gonneke Campen, with whom I was impressed immediately. Particularly through her enthusiasm and by the way Young Africa works. Besides my supervisory role, I support the Directors with strategic and tactical advice in the areas of fundraising and communication. In daily life, I support non-profits and social enterprises in various capacities. I am also a Member of the Board of the Giving Circle in Amsterdam.

Stefan van der Swaluw

I have been active in international development since 1991 when I started in Botswana. Since then I have been living and working in various African countries and the Netherlands. I have been working at SOS Children’s Villages in the Netherlands since 2011. SOS Children’s Villages works, just like Young Africa, with young people who have no or limited access to the labour market. Qualitative and market-driven education, focusing on individuality of every student can help breaking the intergenerational circle of poverty and dependency. It was unavoidable that our paths would cross. I am looking forward to the coming years supporting the enthusiastic team in their ambitious expansion plans.

Nkuruma Chama Kalaluka

I joined Young Africa Zambia as a board member because I would like to contribute to the development of young people in Zambia. The past years, I was involved with several non-profits which promote youth participation in civic affairs. I am convinced that countries can’t have a future if their youths don’t have one. A lot of young people in Zambia can’t find decent work, because they lack the skills or received education that lacks the connection to the local labour market. I hope to be able to contribute to the future of the youth by helping YA impart critical skills to Zambian youth.

Nkuruma Chama Kalaluka, Member of the Board YA Zambia since 2016.
New in 2017

Cynthia van der Hoeven | Director YA South Africa

I first came into contact with Young Africa through Dirk Bellens from YA Namibia by the end of last year. He educated young people in solar energy. That’s what I wanted to do as well! In February 2017 I visited, together with my son Daan (15 years), Young Africa in Zimbabwe and everything just felt right. I have been thinking for quite some years about how we could improve the bad living conditions in the slums of Johannesburg. With a staggering youth unemployment rate of 56% in South Africa, the urgency is sky-high.

So: ready for action! Together with the help of four amazing co-directors Moleboge, Pearl, Kevin and Senate (all volunteers), Young Africa SA was founded. Together we will work on developing close partnerships with South African companies and the government, so that we can educate young people in future-proof skills: green technologies, a Girl Power Programme and a business school new-style. We are ready! Read about Young Africa in South Africa on www.youngafrica.org/youngafrica-sa.

Start of 4th training location in Zimbabwe

Besides our current training locations in Chitungwiza, Epworth and our mobile training unit in the rural areas of Zimbabwe, we opened a fourth training location in September 2017 with the support of Red Chairity Foundation. The Nyanga District is a rural area where people mainly live from subsistence farming, while the soil is suitable for intensive farming. There is a lot of poverty and there are limited options for employability and entrepreneurship in the district.

That is why Young Africa decided to work together with a local NGO, Herbert Chitepo Trust. The Herbert Chitepo Trust works with local stakeholders who provided the land where workshops were set up for training. Three training departments will be set-up in the coming two years: auto mechanics, welding and carpentry. Two existing training departments, food processing and horticulture, are facilitated by a local jam manufacturer. Students who come from afar can stay on campus. In 2017, 41 young people enrolled and 35 of them graduated in December. In the coming three months they will do their compulsory internship. The women enrolment stayed behind, so it was decided to start with two female-oriented courses in 2018: beautician and dressmaking.
Your support in 2017

With your support Young Africa invests in setting-up training departments. A part of the donations not intended for a specific project were used for setting up training departments in Botswana and Zambia. Besides our regular and one-time donors, 15 foundations – large and small – collaborated with us. We received about €250,000 from these foundations and through regular and one-time donors €75,000. The €250,000 includes the amount multiplied by Wild Geese. We have renewed our partnership with them and each year they will support 1 till 3 Young Africa training locations. In 2017 these were Namibia and Botswana.

Hard work during the welding classes.

Young Africa Botswana can make a flying start with this money in 2018 through starting training in Catering and ICT. In the course of the year Traditional Arts and Crafts and a fourth training department will be added. By that time they can educate 200 young people a year! Money is reserved for Young Africa Zambia as well, so that we can continue with the ICT course. Next year we will have to work hard making sure that the number of training departments will be expanded, just like we did in Botswana.

The more training departments are set up the better! After a training department has been set up, a local entrepreneur will hire the workshop. He/she will pay rent to the training location. Students pay a motivational fee, a greatly reduced school fee, to the local entrepreneur. Through this construction (our franchise method) the investments are only needed once. The exploitation costs of a training location are covered through the rents. So the more training departments, the higher the income from rent, the higher the financial self-reliance!

Your support in 2018

In 2018 we will support Young Africa in Zambia and in South Africa to set up new training locations and we will expand the number of training departments. Besides that we will work together with the Children’s Fund Malawi (Dutch support foundation) to help their training location (Green Malata) in Malawi grow towards financial self-reliance.

Cynthia van der Hoeven will set up a new training location in South Africa. Read more about her plans on page 12. In Malawi we will start a new partnership with SOS Children’s Villages and other partners. We will help three existing training centres to become financially self-reliant with the support of the European Union. 400 Young people will be educated in this project in the coming three years.

Our existing training locations take care of their own fundraising, however in Zimbabwe we will help replacing machinery. When we started in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe, in 2001, the training location had running water and a stable electricity network. A lot of smaller business were located in and around our compound. Over the past 20 years, the Zimbabwean economy fluctuated. This resulted in a serious lack of cash and the value of the Dollar changed every day. Over the last years, the training location suffered from a serious lack in running water and electricity. The resignation of Mugabe has started a major change and gives hope to better economic development. By the end of the year, the local team in Zimbabwe had already raised a donation from Australian Aid in order to build a water pump and to install solar panels. We will work together with the local team to improve the quality of the training departments. The first step is making sure that the machinery will be replaced.

The highest priority for Young Africa Namibia is setting up more training departments so more young people can be educated. Collaboration with Wild Geese will be continued in 2018. All the donations in 2018 that are earmarked for YA Namibia, will be multiplied!

We also need money to support the teams at the HUB in Zimbabwe and the team in The Netherlands. A part of all donations that is not intended for a specific project will be used for this support. As the financial numbers from 2017 shown, your donor money ensures that through these investments we are able to raise more money from other organisations. Money well spent!
Anesca Smith, from the Wittenborg University in The Netherlands, has started her own hand-made clothing line ‘We Be Sisters’. Anesca wants to introduce the rest of the world to African-inspired clothing with a modern twist and make these clothes available in a wider range of sizes than what is currently the norm. Because she is so impressed with the work Young Africa does, she decided that she will donate 10% of her profit to Young Africa.

For more information go to www.webesisters.org.

Dario

Hi there, I am Dario and I joined YA Botswana two months ago as a volunteer. I finished my Master in International Management with a focus on Entrepreneurship. I founded my own successful hostel in Brazil and have been working with young entrepreneurs in Uganda, Angola and Botswana. Before I joined Young Africa in Botswana, I was the Academic Manager and Deputy Dean at the newly founded College of Hospitality Management in Angola. I have a passion to work with young people supporting them generating their business ideas and starting their businesses.

I will supervise the entrepreneurial skills training and develop the hospitality sector of the youth centre of YA Botswana. In addition, I will run weekly stop-in-sessions for young entrepreneurs from the community.

Harriet Truscott

I am Harriet Truscott, an education programme manager from the UK. For the last 15 years I have been working to set up new programmes and projects for the University of Cambridge. I have spent three months in Botswana in 2017. When I heard that Young Africa was setting up a brand new

The Dutch company Transitiepartners is a consultancy firm that helps local governments to work fulfilling their missions: strengthening and improving the social domain. They do this with passion for youth empowerment. Young Africa entered a partnership with Transitiepartners in 2017. They will, voluntarily, support Young Africa in strengthening the organisation and lowering organisational costs. A network of companies will be established; all of them will contribute with their own expertise.
programme in a whole new country, I was delighted to join the team and to contribute. The fact that this is both TVET education and has a strong arts / cultural focus made it all the more attractive to me. I supported and advised Young Africa Botswana as the team transitions from the pioneer phase to opening the full Skills Training Centre. I’m passionate about giving young people the best possible education, so they can empower themselves and fulfil their dreams. I have had a great time at YA Botswana, learning so much from the team here, and sharing my skills in turn. I am also a novelist and published my first novel in 2014. Perhaps Botswana will give me the inspiration for my next novel.

SERVE Volunteer Trip

The Irish organisation SERVE (www.serve.ie) organises annual group volunteer trips to YA Mozambique. This year, the group consisted of seven young people. The group has helped with several building and renovation tasks which were needed at our training centre in Beira in the six week they were staying with us. During these weeks, the volunteers wrote a blog and below you can read two of their quotes:

Anne and Charèl

Hi there, we are Charèl (26) and Anne (21) and from February till June 2017 we have done volunteer work for Young Africa Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe, as part of our training. We have helped set up a student parliament, developed a leadership manual and gave training to the student parliament in leadership. We are so proud that, together with the team and students, we could help! We also learned how one can survive with five buckets of water a week and do everything with it: cooking, doing the dishes, washing and showering. We enjoyed our time so much. The beautiful nature, the people (always friendly), the YA staff who always wanted to help, the students, living outdoors and of course the beautiful weather. We are so thankful for this experience and would recommend Young Africa Zimbabwe to everyone who is self-reliant, knows what he/she wants and is eager to see and learn how people live on the other side of the world.

We have been here in Mozambique for the past two weeks. In this time we have got a lot of work done and have experienced a lot so far. The language barrier has been difficult. We have learned, however, a number of Portuguese phrases with the patience of the local people. This has helped us to develop relationships with the locals and to learn about their lives and culture. So far, we have painted the crèche. We have also been tiling the bathroom for the crèche, which we will be completing any day now. I’m extremely proud to have worked so hard on this as it is a necessity and it will be put to practical use. I have witnessed an immense amount of poverty and this was, at times, overw-
Visit to Zimbabwe and Mozambique

By colleague Erik Boerrigter, Financial Officer at our office in The Netherlands:

After a long flight with stopovers in Rome, Addis Abeba and Lusaka, I arrived in Zimbabwe. Leaving the airplane, I saw a young man and I thought: ‘He looks familiar’. You see, I only knew him from pictures and I couldn’t see his whole face and I left the plane. I went through security and everything went very smoothly. And there, I see the same man! This time, I decided to draw his attention and asked: ‘Are you Mark?’ He looked at me, hesitated for a second and answered: ‘You must be Erik!’. Administrators Week has started. Mark, from YA Zambia, and I were the first to arrive, but in the course of the weekend the other administrators from all YA training locations arrived as well. From Monday onwards we were submerged in financial and administrative processes and procedures. A bit boring subjects, but if you want to grow, like Young Africa wants, it’s very important. These things have to be right. So in the course of the week subjects like asset management, human resources, internal controls and office procedures were discussed. Guidance was offered by Getrude Sibanda, the auditor who has helped Young Africa Zimbabwe with the troubles they experienced in executing the EU-contract. The Zimbabwean way is one with a lot of signatures and stamps. Too many if you would ask me. I am eager to know how fast the ICT-developments will go if these processes will be digitalised. The lack of cash in the past few months has ignited a fast development in online banking. Everyone wanted to pay with cash seven months earlier, but there wasn’t any. That’s no issue anymore nowadays. We came together in the evenings and talked about the challenges a growing organisation like Young Africa deals with. It’s not easy. Sometimes, we had heated discussions. Too bad that the Zimbabwean colleagues were sleeping at their homes and were not present during these conversations. It’s these conversations that created solid relations. Since then, using Skype and WhatsApp, communication has been much easier. And actually.. that was the biggest gain the Administrators Week has brought me. Pictures in a classroom setting do not say that much, so the picture I have chosen to place with my story the one that was taken during the second week of my stay. You see, in that week I was visiting our training locations in Mozambique together with colleagues Memory and Raj.