



School Update: USAP Class of 2021 Graduation

As we approach the end of 2021, we have so much to be thankful for. We opened the doors of USAP Community School in January 2020 just a few months before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This launched two years of periods of on campus learning punctuated by long government lockdowns when remote learning was the only option and lesson delivery was via WhatsApp with the support of phone data, solar panels linked to rechargeable batteries. Despite all these challenges, our faculty and students remained resolute in ensuring continued quality learning and keeping our community and culture intact. This determination was rewarded in the very impressive first Cambridge AS Level results for the Class of 2021, with 27 students receiving all A's in their subjects. Since then, our inaugural class of 45 has completed their final A Level exams while the second cohort of 24 students have sat for their first AS Level exams in November. We are looking forward to our third cohort of 41 students selected from 600 applicants starting in the new year.

On a historic day, our inaugural class of 45 students graduated from USAP Community School on December 4, 2021. We congratulate our pioneer class on this great achievement having spent half of their two academic years learning remotely yet molding a strong school culture. In their time on campus, the class of 2021 has built a culture of community based on our school's values of integrity, service, equality and curiosity. We wish them all the best as they continue with their college applications and launch their gap period activities.

CLASS OF 2023 DEMOGRAPHICS

We have officially finished selections for the incoming class of 2023. 41 students, representing all 10 provinces of Zimbabwe, and 7 native languages, will be joining us on campus in January 2022.



Capstone - Relating Education to Community Change

At USAP Community School, three core Cambridge science A level subjects are rounded out by intensive Humanities and Reasoning classes as well as research methods culminating in a capstone research project and paper during their final year. At the end of November, we held a public Capstone Showcase of year-long projects conducted by 44 students in the graduating class.

The showcase topics ranged from high rates of teenage pregnancy and child marriage to recycling and waste management, from the design of low cost water filters for low income communities, to inclusion of the arts in national curriculum. The Showcase included pitches, prototypes, proposals and academic posters. Thanks to a generous donation from one of our supporters, 12 graduating students have received six month fellowships to implement their project solutions in their communities in the gap period prior to departing for university. We look forward to seeing our students making impactful contributions in their local communities.





A Milestone Crossed

Lucy Y. Steinitz

It's not easy to describe USAP Community School's (USAPCS) first-ever Upper 6 /Grade 12 graduation in a short essay. Even twice as many words would not sufficiently describe my awe of the scholars or admiration of the faculty who overcame great odds to reach this day – the fulfillment of a dream that started taking shape almost 20 years ago.

I pinched myself that morning: It was December 4, 2021 and Graduation Day had finally arrived at USAPCS's current temporary campus in Ruwa, Zimbabwe. Never mind that it was so hot that everyone practically melted outdoors, especially the students in their black gowns and caps. Never mind that many family members had traveled hours by bus to get to the campus and were visibly exhausted. Never mind that we had to observe COVID protocols that limited physical contact and penetrating hugs. Never mind that the electricity gave out, just as the ceremony began, so it couldn't be live-streamed.

The event was fabulous, nevertheless. A student committee had planned the program and entertained us with a Capella singing, traditional dances, and a gorgeous praise-poem worthy of Amanda Gorman. Three students gave short addresses, as did founder "Mai-Mano" (Rebecca Ziegler Mano), headmaster James Linville, and faculty member Alex Niswander. The speakers reminisced about the repeated lockdowns, the academic rigor and the personal challenges that this graduating class faced over the past two years. Equally, they recalled moments of triumph and joy, and each offered advice for the future. In the end, all 45 members of the Class of 2021 graduated, having bonded together to create a supportive community that truly lived by the school's four values of equality, service, curiosity, and integrity.

Before the graduates walked to the podium to receive their diploma, the student's faculty advisor offered a personal reflection – most often about each student's extra-curricular activities, special talents, or unique character. Everyone at USAP believes that these traits, equivalent to academics, will help the students achieve their long-term goals.

As the guest who traveled farthest (from the USA), I was given the honor of handing out the diplomas. As I performed this role, family members ululated and several students had tears in their eyes. After the ceremony, the students gathered for photographs, including the celebratory show of simultaneously throwing their caps high in the sky. We ended with a generous feast that USAPCS's tireless (and very good) cooks prepared for the crowd.

Although these students are now leaving USAPCS, I'm convinced that USAP will always remain a central part of their lives. If I ever feel discouraged about the way things are

going in the world, I will just think back to USAPCS, to these students, and to the historic moment of this graduation. The best is yet to come.



Launch of the TWEENS Youth Center at the Tongogara Refugee Camp

TWEENS Youth Centre was officially launched on the 23rd of November 2021. We were honoured to have representatives of major organisations attend the launch. These included representatives from the Government of Zimbabwe (Department of Social Development), UNHCR, Child line and TDH. Their presence brought so much joy as it was proof that TWEENS is not alone but have people rallying behind us willing and ready to offer a helping hand when need be. The proceedings went well, with entertainment from the TWEENS choir as well as speeches and poems from a few of the students. Mai Mano took center stage and delivered words of encouragement, urging every young person to come together to take the center forward.

After the speeches, everyone helped themselves to refreshments and were escorted on a tour of the center. The Center is now officially opened and we are excited to have a place where students can come to spend their time learning, studying and researching, after which they can refresh their minds with a game of chess, darts or table tennis!

We are grateful to every person and organisation who took their time and contributed to making this center a reality. Thank you!



**2 USAP COMMUNITY SCHOOL
STUDENTS SELECTED AS
RISE WINNERS.**

Tegra Ilunga (USAPCS '22) and Nyasha Makaya (USAPCS '21) were selected as winners and will join the inaugural cohort of Rise winners set to receive a lifetime of benefits through Rise, including scholarships, mentoring and career services, and other programming.





Note to USAP Alumni

Are you passionate about finding and managing data? Are you passionate about media/communications? We have two open volunteer positions, both exciting and project-specific on the **USAP Alumni Engagement Team** - fit for passionate alumni looking to make an impact with specific projects. We are looking for an **Alumni Newsletter Coordinator** and an **Alumni Outreach Analyst**. For USAP alumni in school or in early careers, these are good projects for your resume, to build strong connections with our powerful and influential alumni, and will each require up to ~5 hrs/week time investment.

1. **Alumni Newsletter Coordinator:** For this project, you will: establish an alumni newsletter, lead the sourcing and development of content for a newsletter to be published 2-3 times a year and to be sent to >400 of USAP alumni around the globe. Tenure of volunteer position: 12 months with 2-3 touch points a month collaborating with an existing team of 3-4 alumni coordinators.
2. **Alumni Outreach Analyst:** For this project you will: conduct data extraction, analysis, and maintenance of Alumni database and other data on annual alumni activities. Ensure quality of data and execute regular outreach activities to contact and update alumni. Tenure of volunteer position: 6-9 months with 2-3 touch points a month collaborating with existing team of 3-4 alumni coordinators.

Interested? Reach out to Tich Mangono at tichmangono@gmail.com to express your interest for one of the roles.



As we look into 2022, we are grateful for your support. We hope you will continue to support us in making a difference in the lives of determined young Zimbabweans by donating below.

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