



BY LIFE CONNECTED



PEOPLE



NATURE



ANIMALS

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

Stichting By Life Connected

Email: info@bylifeconnected.com

Website: www.bylifeconnected.com

This report gives an overview of all the projects implemented in 2022. By Life Connected is operating in two locations. The main location is based in Mulendema, Mumbwa district in a community next to Kafue National Park. The second location is in the South of Zambia, Livingstone area. Focus of the activities implemented by the NGO are landscape restoration and conservation through inclusive community development projects and community based natural resource management.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

What We Do	1
A Summary of 2022.....	3
Financial Summary	4
Kafue Connected	5
Zambia Untold	6
Kafue National Park.....	7
Asset Based Community Development	7
Check Dams	8
Bamboo plantations.....	8
Mulendema Community Farm.....	9
Mulendema Base Camp	9
Conservation Education Clubs.....	10
Livingstone.....	11
The Mukuni Organic Farm	11
Communal Holistic Rotational Grazing.....	12
Chicken Coop.....	13
ABCD approach in Simoonga & Sinde area	13
Going into 2023	14

WHAT WE DO

By Life Connected is a Zambian Non-Profit organization that contributes to empowering and facilitating communities next to nature areas to take lead in their own development.

The Challenge

Over the last few centuries, large areas of wild habitats have been turned into agricultural land. What are the root causes of this sustainability challenge? And how can we resolve it?

In rural Zambia, the majority of the people are subsistence farmers. People openly admit to unsustainable use of the natural resources when they are struggling to feed their families. To counteract this trend, By Life Connected – in partnership with Green Safaris – is facilitating the design of sustainable food systems.

The Model

We use a bottom-up community-led method of development that organizes and mobilizes the community. It incorporates the values “unity” and “*if we take care of nature, nature will take care of us*” in the decision-making process, providing direction towards sustainable projects.

We enable a communally driven system change leading to sustainable food systems, in which By Life Connected only supports and facilitates. The model of these sustainable food systems consists of four pillars:

1. Water Security

By creating access to water year-around, a community can be greatly uplifted. A way of creating this water security is through the creation of a cascade of check dams along small rivers. The goal is to form a perennial river that people can use for gardening, fishing and feeding their livestock throughout the year. A pilot project is done in Mulendema Chiefdom.

2. Food Security

What better way, in a country full of farmers, to realize this value through regenerative farming. Regenerative farming focuses on improving the soil health without the use of chemicals and soil tillage. At the demonstration farm in Mponda Village, local farmers are invited to learn these regenerative methods.

3. Conservation Education

A large part of the mindset change towards a more sustainable future, are our children. And what is more magical than giving children the opportunity to see elephants for the first time?

In the Conservation Education clubs students learn about nature conservation from guest lecturers such as wildlife scientists, rangers, and organic farmers. They get to experience the joy of seeing wild animals in their natural habitats on safari with the lodges. These are the children who will become our future conservationists.

4. Sustainable Energy

To prevent deforestation, By Life Connected has started a pilot with bamboo plantations on degraded farmland in Mulendema chiefdom. A solid species that can replace the current timber and charcoal used for cooking. We have also distributed over 21,000 clean cooking stoves in the communities around the Kafue National Park.

To regenerate the forest, we work together with farmers to follow the Farmers Managed Natural Regeneration method.

Our mission is to contribute to preserving African wildlife areas in active partnership and collaboration with the communities next to the nature areas. We try to achieve this through inclusive development projects that focus on improving sustainable livelihoods, conservation and education.



A SUMMARY OF 2022

The year started off with exciting news for executive directors, Lars and me (Kellie). We were expecting a baby girl! Kiki Acacia Bocxe was born in the Netherlands during a hot Dutch summer's day. With both of us working from the Netherlands during this time, the teams in both Mulendema and Livingstone showed their independence and kept operations rolling smoothly.

Also at the start of 2022, a new partnership was kicked off with an organization called Commonland. For this Kafue Connected Project, Getrude Mwiba and I travelled around the Kafue National Park to visit chiefs, community members, government employees, lodge owners, outfitters and NGOs.

In June 2022, operations and head 'office' of By Life Connected officially moved from Nalusanga to Mulendema Chiefdom. With four tents, a kitchen and office building, and a shared ablution block, the camp now provides a home for five staff members and the base of the NGOs projects in the area.

July welcomed two German volunteers in camp who helped our newest staff member Barad, the organic farmer, to turn the land into a new organic community farm and learning centre. By the end of 2022, there is an organic vegetable garden and 3 hectares of crops growing. Three local women are permanently employed to help in camp and the garden. The garden is ready to educate local people on organic gardening and farming during workshops in 2023.

Another exciting development for By Life Connected in 2022 was the rebranding of the logo. With the help of a professional designer and friend, the By Life Connected brand got a new boost with a logo representing People, Animals and Nature.

Finally, our most important partnership with the Green Safaris Conservation Foundation, was strengthened by an increased budget available from the Foundation for the community development projects. Our NGO would look very different without the partnership with Green Safaris, and we are very grateful for their presence and support.

Looking Ahead

The new year will bring us more exciting developments within the existing projects. Our teams keep growing every year and the model we've developed is ready to start scaling up in other communities. In short, we are going very positively into the new year.

ARI BOCXE

Chairman

LARS VERMEER

Treasurer

KELLIE BOCXE

Secretary

VINCENT KOUWENHOVEN

Board member

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Stichting By Life Connected Netherlands

<i>Income</i>	
Donations and gifts	€ 14,889
WWF INNO	-
Commonland	€ 15,000
Green Safaris Conservation Foundation	€ 25,575
UWV ouderschapsverlof	€ 5,738
Total Income	€ 61,202

<i>Expenses</i>	
Commonland	€ 14,250
WWF INNO	€ 1,200
Other expenditures on BLC objectives	€ 15,758
Salary Lars and Kellie GSCF	€ 22,915
Green Safaris Conservation Foundation	€ 2,661
Loonbelasting	€ 3,988
Marketing	€ 350
BLC Website	€ 92
Administration	€ 547
Total Expenses	€ 61,760

By Life Connected Ltd. Zambia

<i>Income</i>	
By Life Connected Netherlands	\$18,212
Green Safaris Conservation Foundation	\$117,444
Total Income	\$135,656

<i>Expenses</i>	
Overhead	\$45,760
ABCD	\$13,140
GSCF & BLC camp	\$18,141
Food Security	\$45,583
Conservation Education	\$516
Waste to Wealth	\$1,200
Zambia Untold	\$3,809
Commonland	\$1,049
Other	\$ 2,945
Total Expenses	\$132,143

KAFUE CONNECTED

Funded by Commonland, a sensing exercise of the Greater Kafue Ecosystem (GKE) was implemented over a six-month period in 2022. This sensing exercise aimed to determine current relationships, stakeholder roles and connections and to find the willingness of stakeholders to collaborate towards landscape restoration. The current problem of the GKE is that a large and internationally important conservation landscape (KNP) is surrounded by a degraded economic and combined buffer zone (GMA), which is exponentially getting more and more degraded.

For this exercise, individual stakeholders from the following groups were interviewed: community, NGOs, government, operators, outfitters and businesses. The results showed that everyone was willing to increase collaboration. It also showed that all the stakeholders share the vision of creating a landscape with a thriving wildlife population that supports sustainable community development.

However, trust is one of the major thresholds to conquer. These trust issues are caused by other fundamental challenges within the landscape. Firstly, a lack of resources, in combination with poor road and network infrastructure, means that communication – especially with communities – is limited. Secondly, there are no General Management Plans and a lack of up-to-date data and figures. This makes it challenging to make informed governance decisions, resulting in seemingly random actions by a variety of stakeholders. Finally, communal leaders allow tragedy of the commons to happen. This is aggravated by a lack of clarity on GMA rights, responsibilities, and boundaries.

This sensing exercise shows the potential for collaborative efforts in this landscape. But it also shows the challenges to overcome. Because of these challenges, and the size and nature of the landscape, stakeholders are struggling to collaborate. This is where By Life Connected – with the expertise from Commonland and with support from other large stakeholders – is keen to step in and create so-called 4-return landscape labs. A landscape lab is a platform that includes all the key stakeholders from a certain area. Labs take a systemic approach: they focus on disrupting the underlying patterns that contribute to the socioecological problems through the facilitation of landscape level collaboration.

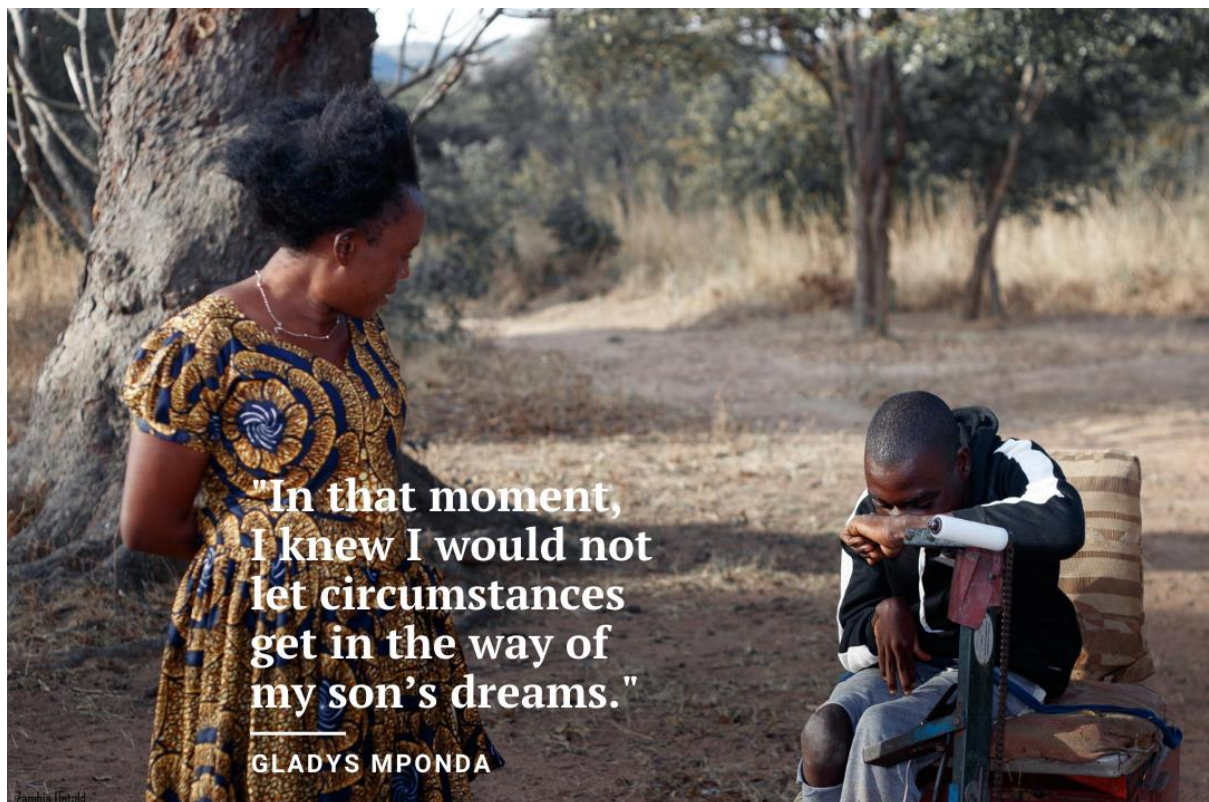


ZAMBIA UNTOLD

Another project supported by the Green Safaris Conservation Foundation and initiated by Lars Vermeer (BLC Founder) and Morwenna Heemstra (BLC intern), was started in 2022.

The Zambia Untold project aims to give a voice to the Zambian people by telling their different yet motivating stories. A recently graduated journalism student called Mukwiza, applied and was guided by Morwenna in how to approach this project. To create a diversity of stories, the journalist aims to interview a wide variety of people in different parts of Zambia. The project mainly uses Instagram and Facebook to publish the stories and further interact with the public.

Zambia Untold commenced in Nalusanga and Mulendema communities, followed by Livingstone and South Luangwa. It produced a wide range of stories from wildlife conflict, historical or cultural events, but also just personal and unique stories of the average Zambian person. Excitingly, on the 25th of November, Mukwiza Mubuyaeta, on behalf of the project was featured as a guest on the Lusaka Star Magazine show aired on UNZA Radio. Mukwiza and at that time, her colleague photographer, also had the opportunity to ask a few questions to the Minister of Tourism.



KAFUE NATIONAL PARK

In 2022 we shifted our efforts by and large from the Kabulwebulwe Chiefdom to the adjoining Mulendema Chiefdom. A chiefdom neighbouring Kafue National Park, where the chief is one of the patrons of Mumba GMA.

Asset Based Community Development



Commenced in 2021, but fully applied in 2022, we applied the so-called Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach. Based on the lessons learned in previous years, the team experienced that a top-down approach *without* active buy-in from both the local Chief and his community members too often had the risk of becoming less successful nor sustainable.

The essence of the ABCD approach is that communities can drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilizing existing, but often unrecognized assets, setting the goals themselves and commit to these. This has led to the successful identification of four new projects, all implemented in 2022 in the Mponda area, an area of about 40 km² within Mulendema chiefdom, close to the Kafue National Park.

These developmental projects are led by a core group of members representing all community stakeholders, varying from youth to elderly, and from teachers to farmers. The group is 50/50 male and female and they meet every week on Mondays. Their decision-making process is led by knowledge through a baseline survey facilitated by the NGO. Whenever they need more inspiration or knowledge, this is also facilitated by By Life Connected.



Check Dams



The focus area for the ABCD approach in Mulendema has seen the members of the community identify water scarcity, food security and deforestation as the most pressing needs. To tackle one of these needs, the leaders of the community decided to build check dams in the area to cushion water scarcity, especially during the dry season. This first check dam was built with the help of government engineers. Most of the work was done by the community themselves, with BLC and GSCF only facilitating materials, transport of rocks, knowledge and a lunch allowance.



Bamboo plantations



Another sustainability challenge we want to tackle, is to reduce deforestation for cooking fuel and construction. During this planting season we partnered with fourteen community members to plant 1900 bamboos. In five years, these bamboos can be harvested to replace trees for fuel, while at the same time they reshoot themselves creating a continuous cycle. Already Mumbwa District Commissioner and the Minister of Green Economy and Environment have shown their interest. With a successful pilot, this can become an example for other regions in Zambia.



Mulendema Community Farm



With the previous experience of the Ila Community farm and the success of the Mukuni Community farm that started in 2020 in Livingstone, a similar organic learning farm in Mulendema chiefdom has been created at the same location as the basecamp. This is also neighbouring the chief Mulendema's new palace.

From the baseline survey done in this chiefdom we concluded that 98% of the people are subsistence farmers. This means there is always a need for people to learn how to farm more sustainably and efficiently. Therefore, the new organic garden will serve many purposes. Amongst them training local people on how to farm sustainably, supply both the local market and lodges nearby and lastly to entice community members to take up organic gardening.



Mulendema Base Camp



To actively oversee and support all these projects BLC has set up a new basecamp in the area. A borehole was drilled in 2021 and in 2022 the office, kitchen building and ablution block were finished with a vermi-composting toilet. Four tents have been erected, for the staff and potential volunteers and guests. The whole camp is powered by solar and completely sustainable.

Conservation Education Clubs



The team has been running Conservation Education clubs at both Lusekelo and Nalusanga Primary school. The club, which is held every Wednesday afternoon after classes, helps to shape the mindset the children have towards their natural resources.

Besides a weekly lesson from our own Education Coordinator, Getrude Mwiba, the students were also treated to guest lecturers like Mr. Sydney Wishkoti - the Park Ranger at Nalusanga Gate. He has interacted with the students on various topics, like human-wildlife conflict and poaching.

Other topics covered during the club are littering, climate change, trees and why they're important, and much more! During this year's club, 32 students had the opportunity to visit Ila safari lodge and learn more about animals and tourism. In January 2023 the remaining club students will have this same opportunity.



LIVINGSTONE

The Mukuni Organic Farm



In 2022, the community members at Mukuni Community Farm have been producing over 25 different types of crops. Nearly four hectares of land are allocated to indigenous seed variety dryland crops. This year, an extra solar pump has been installed as backup and support for further expansion of the garden. And as part of the food forest project, a variety of tree species have been planted, including nitrogen fixing trees to regenerate the soil and a variety of fruits to establish a sustainable food chain.



Market access is critical to sustainable development in the agriculture value chain. As such BLC and GSCF team have been working towards providing market linkages between local communities and lodges/hotels in Livingstone. The farm has been able to supply quality and nutritious vegetables to both Livingstone Island and Tongabezi Lodge and this has enabled the farm to have great status in the market. We now have expression of interest of regular supply of vegetables from 5-star hotels such as Avani, Royal Livingstone and the Fairmount Hotel.

The Mukuni organic Farm has also experienced increased visits by tourists, which has led to the establishment of a visitor center that also serves as a teaching area. In 2022 training and capacity building workshops on sustainable organic agriculture were organised, with 150 people in attendance.

With a population of close to 10,000 people in Mukuni village, the importance of sharing knowledge on organic farming for sustainable community development cannot be overemphasized. The training

program is designed to empower local community members by providing lessons in organic agriculture cultural practices and biological processes such as composting organic procedures, soil management, crop rotation and cover crops. The training sessions also cover natural and organic pest management, weed management and disease management.



Communal Holistic Rotational Grazing



At the start of the year, a small team of BLC and local cattle owners, attended a three-day workshop on a farm where they implemented a communal, holistic rotational grazing approach.

In 2022, BLC and Grassroots Trust conducted two successful workshops on such a communal rotational grazing scheme. This initiative aims at mobilizing communities and working together to create a large-scale communal herd and implement a holistic grazing plan. The trained participants have demonstrated keen interest in

practicing rotational grazing and are mobilizing themselves to create a communal group for rotational grazing.

Chicken Coop



The chicken coop created in 2020 at Tongabezi, is now being run by 4 motivated members. They are in the process of becoming an official cooperative that will secure in the livelihood for a total of ten people. We have expanded the project with a new setup. Next to Tongabezi lodge as one of the prime buyers, the team is determined and working on establishing diversified market options for further expansion.



ABCD approach in Simoonga & Sinda area



Like in Mulendema, BLC also started the ABCD approach in Simoonga area, where in 2022 a core group was created. There have been several activities to support the core group in their decision making, starting with an asset mapping workshop and livelihood baseline survey (295 households). By the end of 2022, the baseline survey report has been published which will give way for deliberations by the core group members in project concept formation for 2023 onwards.



GOING INTO 2023

General

To improve teamwork, in 2023 we would like to introduce spot bonuses (financial team rewards) and team building exercises (e.g., a camping trip to Konkamoya campsite).

Kafue National Park – Chiefdom Mulendema

GSCF/BLC camp and Organic Farm

There will be workshops held at the farm next year. Before this can happen, there is a need to expand and diversify the farm. This includes a layer's chicken coop, two worm farms and a tree nursery. A fence around the layer coop can enable the chickens to become free range. There is a need to build a storage building, as one of the tents is currently used for storage. Besides a storage area, the construction of a cold room/seedbank would aid local farmers to join the supply chain to lodges in the park. We would also like to add some beehives.

Furthermore, to finish the camp, the three staff/guest tents and managers tent need a grass roof. Looking at the occupation of the tents, a framework will be made to divide the tents into two rooms so that we can host more people.

First Communal Organic Garden

At the first check dam site a simple communally run organic garden can be established. This farm can grow vegetables for local supply and subsistence use, but also for selling to lodges as extra income.

Bamboo project & Sustainable Resource Use

Part of the bamboo project is to evaluate with the current pilot members of the bamboo plantations. We also want to start a sustainable stove project, installing at least 100 sustainable stoves. Installing the whole of Mponda Seniority (800 stoves) would compensate 3 times the amount of CO₂ all the Green Safaris lodges are emitting. As part of this program, there will be a sensitization exercise first.

Check dams

One dam has been built. Together with the community and water engineers from the government, five more locations for dams have been identified. By building multiple dams in one river, we'll increase water infiltration in the whole catchment area. Over time this will develop in a rise of water table levels. Such a cascading check dam system will be a first for Zambia according to the engineer from the government. For more information on the advantages, watch this video:

<https://youtu.be/QQP5KPeBGDA>

Waste to Wealth

With the Waste to Wealth initiative, we can provide waste sorting systems in public areas, setting up a sensitization program for the impact of waste and sorting waste, organizing a half-yearly clean-up day, picking litter along the M9, collecting all the sorted waste, and storing it, reusing, and upcycling waste to high-quality products of which more than 50% of the profits go to the community.

Conservation Education Program in collaboration with ZCP

Next year we want to expand our curriculum at the two participating schools. We want to establish tree nurseries at the schools for tree planting exercises. All the 60 students should be able to visit the park. We also want to bring the students to the organic farm, to teach them about sustainable gardening and tree planting. Finally, we need to facilitate guest lecturers and teacher trips to the park.

The Conservation Coordinator needs to travel a lot and quickly in between schools. Taxis are sometimes not available in this rural part of Zambia and the project vehicles are not always available. Therefore, a simple motorbike would be very useful.

Livingstone

Mukuni Community Farm

The Mukuni Community farm is pretty much complete. Some investments we would still like to do in 2023 are an extension of the irrigation system for the community members allocated plots, extra seeds, seed trays and manure. Also, the planting of 1 ha of bamboo, extension of the chicken coops, the organic garden, and the nursery.

Mukuni Communal Grazing Plan

This plan is optional, depending on progress of the other projects in Livingstone. But if there's room, then we'd like to focus on forming a holistic, communal grazing plan. By forming a communal grazing plan, we mimic buffalo herds which vastly improves the impact on grasslands in Mukuni. Instead of having an eroding influence on the land by overgrazing, livestock can have a regenerative impact on the soil and vegetation with proper planning. For that to happen the herders first need to be trained and a movable electric fence needs to be purchased.

