



# BY LIFE CONNECTED



**PEOPLE**



**NATURE**



**ANIMALS**

## Annual Report 2023

Stichting By Life Connected

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This report gives an overview of all the projects implemented in 2023.

By Life Connected is operating in three locations. The main location is based in Mulendema Chiefdom, Mumbwa district in a community next to Kafue National Park. The other locations are in the South of Zambia, Livingstone area. Focus of the activities implemented by the NGO are landscape restoration through inclusive community development projects and community based natural resource management.

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## 2023 IN A NUTSHELL

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2023 was a year of stability. This gave us the chance to really focus on and strengthen the running projects. In Livingstone the Mukuni project could focus on growing the business side of the farm. And the ABCD core group in Simonga/Sinde village started their planning phase. In Mulendema we could start replicating the pilots that were successfully started in 2022.

This stability also allowed us to introduce new management at both locations, and unfortunately say goodbye to two of the previous managers: Tiza Zyambo - Livingstone Area Manager, and Samuel Amando – Mulendema Project Manager.

In Mulendema Chiefdom we welcomed the new Area Manager Chomba Chitunga to the team. And the Livingstone team expanded from one, to three new members! With Natasha Bule as the new Area Manager, and Monica Kayafa as the ABCD project manager, the projects are covered.

Gonty Waiyatsa started as the accountant for the Livingstone projects and showed a lot of potential to move to a bigger role as the BLC accountant. Sadly, Gonty passed away on Christmas Eve 2023. We were grateful for the time spent with him and wish his family all the strength to help in this loss.

On a more positive note, we want to emphasize our partnership with the Green Safaris Conservation Foundation. As our main funders from the beginning, we can say with great certainty that we would not be where we are today without their commitment to community development, and their ability to give us free reign (with good arguments) to create these projects. We are very fortunate and grateful for their continued support.

### Looking Ahead

We are heading into a year with fresh partnerships. One of these partnerships is with Commonland, started in 2022, and developed into an exciting new project, together with a new partner, The Nature Conservancy. This project will focus on starting a Collaborative Management Partnership in Mumbwa GMA, as a pilot for future approaches towards the other GMAs surrounding Kafue NP.

Another new partnership, focused on our community development model, is formed with WWF Zambia, under the Voices for Climate Action program. A partnership that will hopefully expand into a longer-term commitment between the two parties in the foreseeable future.

ARI BOCXE

*Chairman*

LARS VERMEER

*Treasurer - Founder & CEO*

KELLIE BOCXE

*Secretary – Founder & CEO*

VINCENT KOUWENHOVEN

*Board member*

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY

### Stichting By Life Connected

#### Netherlands

| <i>Income</i>                         |                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Donations and gifts                   | €23,416           |
| Commonland                            | €10,000           |
| Green Safaris Conservation Foundation | € 24,033.92       |
| <b>Total Income</b>                   | <b>€57,449.92</b> |

| <i>Expenses</i>                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Commonland                     | €1,680            |
| To By Life Connected Zambia    | €20,000           |
| Allowance Lars and Kellie GSCF | €24,072           |
| Office supplies                | €1149.77          |
| Subscriptions                  | €78               |
| Marketing                      | €95               |
| Networking                     | €155.54           |
| BLC Website                    | €191.90           |
| BLC camp Zambia                | €79.65            |
| Administration                 | €466.02           |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>          | <b>€47,967.88</b> |

### By Life Connected Ltd.

#### Zambia

| <i>Income</i>                         |                     |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------|
| By Life Connected - Netherlands       | \$21,277.06         |
| Green Safaris Conservation Foundation | \$142,546.00        |
| <b>Total Income</b>                   | <b>\$163,823.06</b> |

| <i>Expenses</i>                           |                     |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Overhead (incl salaries, transport, etc.) | \$57,712.84         |
| ABCD                                      | \$29,087.97         |
| GSCF & BLC camp                           | \$3,230.19          |
| Food Security                             | \$41,698.09         |
| Conservation Education                    | \$5,554.22          |
| Waste to Wealth                           | \$9,382.12          |
| Zambia Untold                             | \$1,127.04          |
| Other                                     | \$14,632.39         |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                     | <b>\$162,424.86</b> |



## WHAT WE DO

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By Life Connected is a Zambian not-for-profit organization that aims to empower communities to lead their own sustainable development, thereby safeguarding natural areas in the process.

### The Challenge

Over the last few centuries, large areas of wild habitats have been turned into agricultural land. This type of land-use change is the driver of a wide variety of sustainability problems. 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. These people are part of a system that doesn't allow them to work on sustainable natural resource management.

To counteract this trend, **By Life Connected** – in partnership with **Green Safaris Conservation Foundation** – aims to empower communities towards inclusive conservation. The first step in this process, is to facilitate the design of sustainable food systems with the use of nature-based solutions.

### The Model

To create an inclusive system, 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, which were prioritized and determined by the community themselves.

#### 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 Chieftdom.

#### 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. **You can't protect what you don't know!** 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. This enables children to become future conservationists.

#### ***4. Sustainable Energy from Biomass***

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.***



## WHERE WE OPERATE

By Life Connected operates in three different communities throughout Zambia.

### Mulendema Chiefdom

The first location is in Mulendema Chiefdom, located next to Kafue National Park and a part of the Mumbwa Game Management Area (GMA). A GMA is a zone for wildlife conservation and regulated human activities like hunting and tourism. In this chiefdom we work with the Mponda Seniority in an area of about 44 km<sup>2</sup> with a population of around 2500 people. The goal of applying our model in this area is to reach and impact the entire community.

### Mukuni Chiefdom

The second location is in Mukuni Chiefdom. This chiefdom is located next to Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park and the Victoria Falls in Livingstone. In this chiefdom we work directly with twenty community members on a communally owned organic farm. The goal of the farm is to not only teach these twenty members, but to also be a training centre for the entire community of Mukuni.

### Simonga & Sinde Communities

The third location are the Simonga and Sinde villages. A semi-rural area next to Livingstone and located directly on an elephant corridor. The goal of applying our model in this area is to reach and impact the entire community, which consists of around 5000 people.



## Asset Based Community Development



**Objective:** To mobilize community members in taking the lead over their own development through facilitation and capacity building.

The bottom-up community-led method of development we use, is called the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach. Based on lessons learned, 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.

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. For gender equality, the group is striving a 50/50 male and female ratio. These core group meetings are every Monday. 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.



## KAFUE NATIONAL PARK

Project implementation around the Kafue National Park is within Mulendema Chiefdom. Chief Mulendema is one of the three patrons of Mumba Game Management Area (GMA). The ABCD approach in this area has led to the successful identification of four projects, with implementation started in 2022 in the Mponda Seniority within Mulendema chiefdom: check dams, communal organic gardens, bamboo plantations and conservation education clubs.

| PROJECT<br>PROGRESS<br>OVERVIEW<br><br>AS PER END 2023 | 1 - concept development | 2 - implementation | 3 - hiring and training | 4 - evaluation and monitoring | 5 - adjustment | 6 - possible 2nd development | 7 - results | 8 - transfer of ownership | 9 - scaling | 10 - conclusion of project |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| <b>KAFUE NATIONAL PARK</b>                             |                         |                    |                         |                               |                |                              |             |                           |             |                            |
| Mulendema<br>Demonstration Farm                        |                         |                    |                         |                               |                |                              |             |                           |             |                            |
| Check Dams                                             |                         |                    |                         |                               |                |                              |             |                           |             |                            |
| Communal Gardens                                       |                         |                    |                         |                               |                |                              |             |                           |             |                            |
| Conservation Education<br>Clubs                        |                         |                    |                         |                               |                |                              |             |                           |             |                            |
| Bamboo Project                                         |                         |                    |                         |                               |                |                              |             |                           |             |                            |
| Waste to Wealth                                        |                         |                    |                         |                               |                |                              |             |                           |             |                            |

### Mulendema Demonstration Farm



**Pillar:** Food Security

**Objective:** To educate and train community members in small-scale regenerative farming through interactive workshops.

**Phase:** 7. Results

To actively oversee and support all the projects in Mulendema Chiefdom, BLC has set up a basecamp in the area as part of the Mulendema Demonstration Farm. 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.

The Mulendema Demonstration Farm, located near the chief Mulendema's new palace, started producing by the end of 2022. Since then, there has been one main challenge: a nutrient shortage. The land allocated to us by the chief, and thus the organic demonstration farm, started on a completely depraved and degraded soil caused by long-term, unsustainable agriculture. It takes time and a lot of organic composting to heal the soil.

Even though the quality of the vegetables wasn't up to standard, the staff was still able to collect and store seeds from most of the vegetables, thereby turning a challenge into an opportunity. These seeds have been and will be used for distribution among community members who are part of the communal dam gardens. As of now, the soil has improved enough for the organic vegetable garden to start doing well.

During 2023 several trainings in organic farming have been held at the farm. The participants learned about composting, creating natural pesticides and how to use intercropping to produce vegetables organically. With the start of the rainy season, we can now also start workshops about how to grow dryland crops organically. With a lesson from the previous year, showing very low yield results, it was clear the soil was too depraved to go completely organic. Therefore, we are now applying a measure called conservation farming, where over the years we will decrease the amount of fertilizer applied.

A part of the farmland is allocated to regular crops that are grown by everyone like maize, soya and casava. But because of climate change, we also want to showcase people how to grow more drought resilient crops like sorghum, millet, sunflowers and amaranth.



## Check Dams



**Pillar:** Water Security

**Objective:** To provide a sustainable, year-round water supply to the community through nature-based solutions.

**Phase:** 9. Scaling

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 is a nature-based solution that mimics the effects of tree cover. These areas were originally covered in trees, but due to agricultural land-use change, the natural sponge that tree cover provides has disappeared. Through the check dams, the water is slowed down enough to allow it to replenish the water table levels.

This first check dam was built with the help of government engineers in 2022 in Mponda village. Most of the work was done by the community themselves, with BLC only facilitating materials, transport of rocks, knowledge, and a lunch allowance.

In 2023, another three dams have been added to the list with community members in three different villages under the guidance of the government engineer and a few very motivated headmen (Shompa, Lukoshi and Shamabobo). All these dams are made available through Green Safaris Conservation Foundation funding. After the first pilot dam in Mponda village, a few improvements have been made in the design of the new dams. The thickness of the wire force used to create the wire cages, was increased. This also enabled us to increase the sizes of the cages. Overall, the quality of the structure, and the improved design are expected to increase the endurance and sustainability of the new dams.



Mponda Dam



Lukoshi Dam



Shamabobo Dam



Shompa dam

## Communal gardens



**Pillar:** Food Security

**Objective:** To provide nutritious, organically grown vegetables for consumption year-round, with a potential of scaling and providing a livelihood income.

**Phase:** 6. Possible second development

In 2023 two women-led communal gardens have been created with funding from Green Safaris Conservation Foundation. These gardens have been built on each side of the Mponda dam. The gardens are built on communal land. The gardens provide fresh vegetables throughout the year for 30 different families. Most of the produce in 2023 was used for their own family, or for sales within the community. The goal of these gardens is to also start producing for sales to the tourism market.

Both gardens have a 6-meter deep well. They have a foot pump that is used to pump up the groundwater from the wells into a tank, or directly for irrigation of the beds. Through the GSCF funding BLC also provided the fencing to keep livestock out, and the seeds to start production. To ensure the sustainability of the soil use, the women working in the gardens received a workshop on organic farming. The organic farmer from Mulendema demonstration farm also regularly visits the communal garden for guidance.





## Conservation Education Program



**Pillar:** Education

**Objective:** To create a mind-shift change in children and youth towards the unsustainable use of natural resources.

**Phase:** 6. Possible second development

GSCF has continued supporting the Conservation Education clubs at both Lusekelo and Nalusanga Primary school. With private donations from the Netherlands, we have expanded to two other schools in 2023, Mapoko Primary School and Lutale Primary School. Except for Lusekelo, the other schools are outside our main operating area of Mponda seniority, as we see the importance of reaching as many pupils as possible. The club days are from Tuesday to Friday, depending on the school. The children in the club are from grade 5 and 6.

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!

In 2023 a total of 120 students have been able to visit a lodge in the park and learn more about animals and tourism. Half of them were hosted by Ila Safari lodge, and the other half visited Mukambi Safari lodge. One of the groups was lucky enough to see EVERYTHING interesting on their safari, including cheetah, elephants, lions and a leopard!



## Bamboo plantations



**Pillar:** Sustainable Energy

**Objective:** To provide an alternative for wood used as fuel for cooking and construction, thereby decreasing deforestation.

**Phase:** 5. Adjustment

To reduce deforestation for cooking fuel and construction, we started a bamboo pilot. 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. In the planting season of 2022, we partnered with fourteen community members to plant 1800 bamboos.

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.

On the By Life Connected plot, 435 bamboos were planted. With a 90% survival rate, this was a very important learning achievement. This high survival rate was possible because they were well protected from fire, due to firebreaks and 24/7 security. The bamboo plantations from some of the core group members weren't so lucky. Several members were struggling with the bushfires, with one very bad, late fire destroying all but 5 of the 200 bamboo plants this member planted. Other reasons were trampling (people/cattle) or bad soil in combination with late rains. A few had a 100% survival rate due to proper management. Overall, 48% of the bamboos planted last season, survived.



## Waste to Wealth



**Pillar:** Livelihood Creation

**Objective:** To provide a sustainable livelihood for women by upcycling waste into art products and to create waste awareness in the process.

**Phase:** 2. Implementation

In 2023 the Waste to Wealth Initiative has lifted off. With initial funding from INNO Fund – WWF, a site has been located and land has been purchased along the M9 from Lusaka to Mongu, within the Mponda Seniority. An existing borehole nearby that originally only had a handpump, was provided with a tank stand and solar pump. Pipelines from this borehole have been installed all the way to the Waste to Wealth site.

The goal of this initiative is to provide a sustainable livelihood for women in the area through the upcycling of waste. This is based of a successful program in Malawi, called Katundu, where they focus on mostly upcycling recycled glass and turning them into chandeliers. There are many ways waste can be used, and this program will explore the different possibilities and use them to create livelihoods from waste.

After installation of water, building started towards the end of 2023. Two buildings: one waste storage and cleaning facility, the other being a workshop area and office. In the first building, five large compartments are available to store paper, glass, tins/cans and two different types of plastic. The workshop and office building has a roofed, open space, where the women part of the program, can work on the upcycled (art) products.



## LIVINGSTONE

Project implementation in two semi-urban communities around Livingstone town: Mukuni Chiefdom and village, and Simonga & Sinde village.

| PROJECT PROGRESS OVERVIEW<br>AS PER END 2023 | 1 - concept development | 2 - implementation | 3 - hiring and training | 4 - evaluation and monitoring | 5 - adjustment | 6 - possible 2nd development | 7 - results | 8 - transfer of ownership | 9 - Scaling | 10 - conclusion of project |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|------------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|----------------------------|
| <b>LIVINGSTONE</b>                           |                         |                    |                         |                               |                |                              |             |                           |             |                            |
| Mukuni Regenerative Community Farm           |                         |                    |                         |                               |                |                              |             |                           |             |                            |
| Mukuni Farm Learning Centre                  |                         |                    |                         |                               |                |                              |             |                           |             |                            |
| Poultry Production                           |                         |                    |                         |                               |                |                              |             |                           |             |                            |
| Human-Elephant Co-existence                  |                         |                    |                         |                               |                |                              |             |                           |             |                            |

### The Mukuni Regenerative Community Farm



**Pillar:** Food Security

**Objective:** To provide a sustainable livelihood for twenty local community members through regenerative farming.

**Phase:** 5. adjustment

The organic garden at Mukuni Community Farm has been producing over 25 different crops and vegetables. Nearly six hectares of land are allocated to indigenous seed variety dryland crops including maize, millet, sorghum, sunflower, casava and groundnuts. Within the dryland crops, there's companion planting with legumes like beans. And all the fields are inter-cropped to deter potential pests.

Due to a shortage in water, production in the vegetable garden was limited by the end of the dry season. To resolve this issue, an extra borehole has been drilled. Currently, the old irrigation system

is undergoing major maintenance and a new irrigation system for another 1 hectare of organic garden is being placed, thereby doubling the production of the organic vegetables.

As part of the food forest project, a variety of tree species have been planted, including nitrogen fixing trees to regenerate the soil (*Glyricidia sepium*, *Leucaena leucocephala*, *Sesbania sesban*, *Faidherbia albida*), Moringa trees and a variety of fruits to establish a sustainable food chain. Both plant species pigeon peas and sun hemp have been planted for nitrogen fixation. With the extra borehole available and thus the option of a continuous supply of water, the food forest will get a boost. The already planted (fruit) trees will start growing more quickly.

Market access is critical to sustainable development in the agriculture value chain. The farm has been able to supply quality and nutritious vegetables to Livingstone Island, with the intention to expand the supplies to also provide Tongabezi with fresh organic vegetables. This has enabled the farm to create status on the market, with now expressive interest from other buyers like Kubu café and Zest.

The Mukuni organic Farm has also experienced increased visits by tourists. The Visitor Center/Workshop building has received an upgrade at the start of 2023 to be more welcoming to guests. A marketing strategy was created in collaboration with management at Tongabezi and Livingstone Island. Part of this strategy is to supply visitors with more information in the form of flyers, banners and posters. All of this marketing material is available at different locations, including Mukuni farm, Livingstone Airport, Livingstone Island (on the island and the docking) and the activity center at Tongabezi.



## The Mukuni Farm Learning Centre



**Pillar:** Food Security

**Objective:** To educate and train community members in small-scale regenerative farming through interactive workshops.

**Phase:** 2. Implementation

The purpose of the Mukuni Regenerative Community Farm is two ways, to provide a livelihood but also to teach other community members with their own farms how to farm regeneratively and get the most out of their land and their soil.

During 2023 one workshop was held at the farm, with about 80 participants. The participants learned about composting, creating natural pesticides and how to use intercropping to produce vegetables organically.

## Poultry production



**Pillar:** Livelihood Creation

**Objective:** To provide a sustainable livelihood for local community members.

**Phase:** 5. Adjustment

The chicken coop created in 2020 at Tongabezi is currently not in use. Similar challenges to the poultry production at Mukuni were also faced here. The Heartland partnership turned out to be a scheme in creating debts of local people with them, without any chance of profits.

Even though we ended our partnership previously, Heartland still controls the same part of the market that we, as local small/medium-scale farmers, have access to. So even though we found a solution, were we got our chicks and feed from National Milling and found an abattoir and cold room in town, we still couldn't access the market because Heartland sold their chickens too cheap.

We were able to sell chickens to Tongabezi and Livingstone Island staff. But because of the market pressure, the cold room and abattoir we were using, closed their doors and no other options were remaining. All large-scale poultry production businesses like Zambezi Nkuku, have their own abattoirs which they can't share with local, small-scale farmers, due to bio-security reasons.

### *Mukuni*

At the Mukuni farm it was decided that for now, there won't be a focus on the tourist market but to keep things simple. No more slaughtering and freezing of chickens, we are only going to supply the market with live chickens. The farm now supplies the people of Mukuni and the staff of Tongabezi and Livingstone Island with fresh, live chickens.

### *Simoonga & Sinde area*

The chicken coop built at Tongabezi is now a part of the ABCD core group project in Simonga & Sinde. Once they have become a Community Service Society (see next paragraph), they can apply for extra CDF funding from the government. The goal is to use this money to build a communal abattoir that will give access to the tourism market for local, small-scale poultry businesses.



## Human-Elephant Co-existence



**Pillar:** Food Security

**Objective:** To provide a pilot communal farm that will guide which elephant mitigation measures work in this area, so that the local community members can start up agricultural initiatives as a livelihood (again).

**Phase:** 2. Implementation

Like in Mulendema, BLC also started the ABCD approach in Simoonga & Sinde area. In 2022 a core group was created, and an asset mapping workshop and livelihood baseline survey (295 households) were held. The workshop and information from the survey supported the decision-making of the core group.

The direction of the first communal project is with a focus on Human - Elephant co-existence. The area receives so much pressure from elephants, that they are unable to farm. To find a way for local people to start farming, a pilot vegetable farm will be started with soft mitigations to deter elephants. No expensive electrical fencing, but natural deterrents like beehives, chilli and other strong-smelling plants will be used in combination with other measures like an early-warning system and non-electrical fencing.

These mitigation measures are based on research and experiments already implemented in other areas in Africa with Human- Elephant conflicts, with some measures showing more success than others depending on the circumstances (Houtman, 2014<sup>1</sup>). It is important to create a pilot plot and see which measures are successful specifically for this area.

**Status of the project.** The core group is in the process of being registered as a Community Service Society. Once registered, the piece of land allocated to the project can also officially be registered under this society and title deeds can be requested. Thus far, a borehole has been drilled and tank stand has been built. A temporary security guard structure is being put up, so that an eye can be kept on any further developments.

Through the ABCD process, the community decided one of the measures should be beehives, because it works both as an Elephant deterrent and provides an income through the honey. Therefore, the core group has received training on how to build beehives. Planks for 50 beehives is procured, and in the next couple of weeks the core group members will start building the hives. Once the beehives are ready, they will also receive training on beekeeping.

<sup>1</sup> Houtman, N., (2014). Review of Management Measures for Human-Elephant Conflict Minimization: Advantages, Disadvantages and Conditions. WWF & WUR report.

## ZAMBIA UNTOLD



**Pillar:** Education

**Objective:** To create national and international awareness about the diversity and variety of experiences of the people living in Zambia.

**Phase:** 10. Conclusion of Project

Supported by the Green Safaris Conservation Foundation and initiated by Lars Vermeer (BLC Founder) and Morwenna Heemstra (BLC intern), the Zambia Untold project began in 2022 and concluded in April 2023. The project, led by journalism graduate Mukwiza, aims to amplify the voices of Zambians by sharing their diverse and inspiring stories. To achieve this, Mukwiza interviewed a wide range of people across Zambia, sharing their narratives on Instagram and Facebook to foster public interaction.

Zambia Untold started in the Nalusanga and Mulendema communities and expanded to Livingstone and South Luangwa, covering topics from wildlife conflict to cultural events and personal stories. On November 25<sup>th</sup>, Mukwiza was featured on the Lusaka Star Magazine show on UNZA Radio and later even had the chance to interview the Minister of Tourism.



## GOING INTO 2024

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### *General*

To improve teamwork, in 2024 we would like to introduce spot bonuses (financial team rewards) and team building exercises (e.g., a camping trip to Saba Safaris campsite). However, we are still searching for funding for these specific types of costs, as they don't fall under project activities or even core funding right now.

### **Kafue National Park**

#### *Mulendema Demonstration Farm*

There will be a continuation of workshops held at the farm next year. However, we want to increase the diversification by including a layer's chicken coop. A fence around the layer coop can enable the chickens to become free range. There is already the start of a storage building, which is much needed, 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 increase the number of beehives.

Furthermore, looking at the occupation of the tents, a framework will be made to divide the tents into two rooms. And the final tent we have available will be repaired and a platform and framework will be built, to increase the number of people we can host.

#### *Check dams*

The aim is to build another 16 dams in 2024 as part of the long-term cascading dam system project. 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>

However, we currently only have funding for one dam. There are several partners approached to increase this funding, including the government (Ministry of Water Development and Sanitation), WWF VCA program and TNC. We are also hoping to find larger private donors in the Netherlands to help cover this goal.



### *Communal Gardens*

The Mponda check dam has two already established communal gardens, this year another nine gardens will be added at Lukoshi (2), Shompa (3) and Shamabobo (3) dam sites, and one near the dambo at the BLC site.

These gardens will grow vegetables for local supply and subsistence use, but also for selling to lodges as extra income. All the people in these gardens will be trained at the Mulendema Demonstration Farm in organic and sustainable gardening.

### *Conservation Education Program*

Next year we want to expand our curriculum at the two new participating schools, that are not covered by GSCF funding. 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.

Musekese Conservation has pledged a small amount to cover some of the costs for these two extra schools. However, we need more funding to cover all the above-described activities. Finally, we are looking into doing a WESZC training, under the Chongololo curriculum, where the teachers are trained in how to bring the conservation program across. The goal is to apply the same standards in the Conservation Education Clubs across the entire landscape. GRI has been using the above-described approach for years and have been very successful. In Mumbwa GMA we'd like to partner with AP to do this training, as they have also pledged to start CE in six schools that fall under the Mumbwa GMA.

### *Bamboo project & Sustainable Resource Use*

After evaluation and learning what the best approach is for the bamboo growing, this year the aim is to start a bamboo plantation in one location with 10,000 seedlings. These seedlings will be grown from the seed at our own farm, cutting the costs of getting seedlings.

We also want to expand the sustainable stove project. In 2023 there was a small pilot with the core group members, where 50 were built. An evaluation and monitoring are yet to be finalised. After this evaluation, we want to use the feedback and create a strategy to increase the number of sustainable stoves in Mponda Seniority to 300 total. As part of this program, there will be a sensitization exercise first.

### *Waste to Wealth*

With the buildings for the Waste to Wealth initiative almost finished, it is expected we can start collecting waste around March 2024. We are in the process of finding an expat intern with product design as a background to help start up the designing process for the products that can be made with waste. A Zambian counterpart will be there to complement the expat intern.

As part of the Waste to Wealth initiative, we aim to provide waste sorting systems in public areas in Mponda seniority. We want to set up a sensitization program for the impact of waste and sorting waste, including for it to become a part of the CE Program. Finally, we want to organize a half-yearly clean-up day in the community.

With all the collected and sorted waste, it will be reused/upcycled to high-quality products. The goal is to start a brand and sell these products to tourists and internationally, with the profits going towards community development and community based natural resource management.

## Livingstone

### *The Mukuni Regenerative Community Farm*

Some final investments in the business side of Mukuni Community Farm are the 1 ha extension of the vegetable garden, and the introduction of quails and rabbits. The enclosures for the rabbits and quails are ready. An extra borehole was drilled in 2023, providing the water security to increase the vegetable farm. With access to more irrigation, the food forest productivity will also increase.

An important goal in 2024 will be the handover process to the community. They have all the tools to become self-sustaining: knowledge, water access, seeds, and a market. To increase the sense of ownership and help the transfer period, there is going to be a systemic approach in handing over responsibilities. A cooperative will be registered. And allowances going through GSCF/BLC will decrease parallel to the responsibilities and thus earnings, being hand over.

The farm will still retain its status as a demonstration farm for the whole of Mukuni community. Therefore, the final focus point will be to increase the workshops being held and create a dedicated curriculum that will be applied both in Mukuni and Mulendema.

### *Simoonga & Sinde ABCD*

In Simonga/Sinde the focus is to have a proof of concept with regards to the project development. Therefore, the one-acre demo farm needs to be developed. The ABCD coregroup, under guidance of the ABCD project manager, is in the process of coming up with an Elephant Co-existence strategy.

Besides the demo farm, they also want to improve water security. This is much more challenging in the area because of the lay of the land and the climate. Boreholes tend to dry up quickly. So, another goal for 2024 is to come up with a strategy and project proposal to create water security. For this, we need to involve engineers and other governmental institutions. The ABCD core group will also do some Inspiration trips to learn from others. Overall, this will be a large-scale project, for which we first need the involvement of every stakeholder in the planning and development.

Once that process has happened, and a project proposal is ready, large funding partners will be approached.

