

WILDERNESS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

QUARTER ONE



2015 has got off to a fantastic start with the Children in the Wilderness Eco-Clubs getting going again and all the coordinators making follow-up visits to the schools to provide the Eco-Clubs with materials and support.

The Scholarship Programme also keeps everyone busy at the beginning of the year with uniforms and stationery to be bought and school fees to be paid. In 2014 we had a total of 287 students on our Scholarship Programme. For more information on the Scholarship Programme and how you can contribute, please go to: <http://www.childreninthewilderness.com/our-programmes/scholarships.html>.

Thank you to all our individual and corporate donors who ensure that our programmes are able to run effectively and efficiently.

COUNTRY NEWS

BOTSWANA

Wonderbag Foundation Donates 500 Wonderbags to Children in the Wilderness Botswana

Children in the Wilderness (CITW) is thrilled to announce a new partnership with the Wonderbag Foundation, which saw 500 Wonderbags allocated to CITW's Adult Eco-Club Project in Botswana.

The Wonderbag has been developed to ease some of the social, economic and environmental impacts of living in poverty. It is a portable, non-electric slow-cooker that allows food, which has been brought to boil on a fire, to continue cooking for up to 12 hours after it has been removed from the fuel source. Not only does this make cooking more efficient, but it also reduces the amount of time women in areas of poverty have to cook, thus providing time for more entrepreneurial, productive and healthier activities. This makes it the ideal fit for CITW's Adult Eco-Clubs, which assist rural community groups with start-up capital and guidance so that they are able to set up their own businesses.



Of the 500 Wonderbags, 100 went to the Shashe Adult Eco-Club, while the remaining 400 will be distributed to the various other CITW Adult Eco-Clubs in Botswana. The Wonderbags are sold to the Eco-Club for a nominal amount, and they are then able to sell the bags on for enough to pay back this amount, and earn a profit which then goes into supporting the Eco-Club and buying stock for future projects.

"The Wonderbag Foundation firmly believes in doing rather than giving, in trade rather than aid, and empowering women in communities of need. We are confident that the Wonderbag will be a positive catalyst for change in these communities and we are very grateful for partnerships like this that bear fruit in getting local solutions off the ground to make a real, sustainable and long-term difference", says Nicky Kidgell, Executive Director of the Wonderbag Foundation.

Kwedi Sables win soccer tournament and donate prize to Children in the Wilderness

The soccer team from Wilderness Safari's camps Vumbura Plains and Little Vumbura, called the Kwedi Sables, left on the 27th Feb for a three day tournament in Seronga Village. Every year it's held at a different one of the Okavango Community Trust villages, who are our landlords for Vumbura Plains and Little Vumbura camps.

This tournament has been running since 2000. For the first time in history (after 15 years) the trophy finally came home, back to the Kwedi concession where the camps are situated. Wilderness has been one of the sponsors for this tournament and it is joy that the Wilderness team has finally bought the trophy home. The team worked hard with CITW Ambassador, Gordon Gilbert, who made sure that they were fit and ready. The team brought back a trophy and sum of BWP2000, which they have donated to Children in the Wilderness.



In February, Botswana started a knitting project with the Sankoyo Adult Eco- Club. Ongoing projects include: bead work by Shashe Adult Eco-Club; vegetable garden at Shashe Primary School and Habu Primary School; and weaving of baskets by Shashe Adult Eco-Club and Tubu Adult Eco-Club. The Adult Eco-Club based at Sankoyo Primary School also completed building a cultural house.

In March, Botswana CITW was involved in the following projects: Gunotsoga Primary Eco-Club cleared plots and planted legumes and an Adult Eco-Club was established in the village. Other projects included: poultry at Habu, garden plot clearing, worm farming at Beetsha, crop farming at Gudigwa, vegetable farming at Sankoyo and Gunotsoga completed their crop production even though the harvest was not good as they expected as a result of late planting.

Botswana community development was also involved in the following community projects:

- African hand-made paper-making project for Habu, Shashe and Sankoyo Adult Eco-Clubs
- Habu, Shashe, and Sankoyo Adult Eco-Clubs selling Wonderbags.
- Habu Adult Eco-Club patchwork and leather work projects
- Shashe Adult Eco-Club beadwork and weaving projects
- Sankoyo Adult Eco-Club knitting project ongoing.

Mike’s Bikes Foundation Donates Bicycles and Cycling Gear to CITW Eco-Clubs in Botswana

Children in the Wilderness Botswana has received 24 bicycles as well an assortment of cycling equipment from The Bike Shop, as part of an exciting new partnership. The donation, which was facilitated through Mike’s Bikes Foundation in the United States, will enable CITW to run competitions in its Eco-Clubs, with winners each receiving a bicycle, along with a helmet, riding gear, and various other accessories. Two bicycles have been allocated to each of the Eco-Clubs, while four bicycles will go to CITW’s Adult Eco-Clubs, which will also run a competition. The Bike Shop has already donated 24 bicycles and various cycling equipment to CITW in Botswana.



“We are very excited and proud to be associated with CITW, based on its excellent track record, reach, governance, sustainability and credibility – all of which are very important to the Mike’s Bikes Foundation”, says Paul Mazurkiewicz of Mike’s Bikes Foundation.

“We believe in the power of the bicycle. The most efficient mode of transport ever created, the bicycle is an ecologically and financially sustainable vehicle that can provide freedom, mobility and positive change in the lives of people who need it most. From our side, we wanted to consolidate our efforts and align ourselves with a partner with a similar vision so that we can collectively make a greater, more meaningful contribution to the communities that we serve”, concludes Mazurkiewicz.

MALAWI

CITW Malawi gets more donations from the Germany Embassy

CITW and the Germany Embassy held a partnership meeting at the Germany Embassy office in Lilongwe on 27th of February 2015. The meeting covered a number of topics relating to continuing partnership between the Embassy and CITW. CITW also took the chance of the meeting and briefly talked about pre-final report on the Nanthomba Tree and reforestation project – 2014. The final report was to be presented to the Embassy on 4th of March the following week.



The donor was so impressed by the great job done to-date: managed to raise over 30 000 seedlings and managed to distribute over 22 000 seedlings to the rural communities.

The Embassy expressed their understanding and appreciation of the CITW programme and all its projects which are carried out with children and the rural communities, by giving a donation of 10 German-made footballs and a pump.

CITW decided to give the balls to the schools and youth clubs which will register above 50% survival rate of their planted trees in April 2014.

Successful SSS project at Chihame Primary School

In 2013 Chihame Eco-Club initiated and launched a Stop, Sink and Shed (SSS) project with the core purpose of combating soil erosion which was negatively affecting their schoolgrounds. CITW sponsored the project, the local school invited a local Permaculture expert, Mr. Katanga Isaac, from nearby Chithowe Primary School in the area, to train and lead the children and teachers in running the project. By January 2015 the whole school was celebrating the success of the project.

Project Outcomes:

- They have managed to reduce soil erosion at the school
- They have managed to reduce dust around the school
- The soil has been enriched and became very fertile – many fruit trees have been planted
- They have made the school ground beautiful – many more flowers have been planted
- Eco-Club members and all other children are happy and would like to do more similar projects
- They have protected one of the school blocks which had a huge gully underneath its foundation due to heavy soil erosion. The erosion had been there for a long time until the Eco-Club identified it as an environmental issue at their school and launched the right project.



Chihame Eco-Club has 50 active members. The club is one of the CITW Eco-Clubs which are affiliated to Root to Fruit NGO in Chintheche community. This year (2015) the club received 200 seedlings from Root to Fruit. The trees were planted as woodlot # 2 at the school. Chihame Eco-Club has been very aggressive in making sure that their school is surrounded by thick woodlots.

CITW Alumni Eco-Clubs – 2015 planning meetings Nanthomba cluster center CITW Alumni:

The above center has over 30 active alumni. They date from 2004 to 2009 CITW camp participants. Most of the members who meet on a regular basis are those who are still staying, working or schooling within their local communities. While those who are in distant working places and those in higher education institutions form alumni group “B” to that which they belong at home. The two groups come together once in a while when most of them happen to be in their home community. They then hold general meetings and plan together.



Much of what they discussed and planned included:

- They would like to start winter irrigation farming of different food and cash crops.
- They would like to expand their micro finance revolving fund. A success on the small scale which they had last year have pushed them to expand it so that it can help them even more.
- Together with the Adobe media club, they would like to jointly organize and lead all Eco-Clubs in manning the 2015 CITW Open Day in their local cluster Center – Nanthomba.
- They would like to support those fellow members who did not finish their Secondary School education to go back to school.
- They would to call for support from CITW so that they can hold more environmental and entrepreneurship trainings
- They had identified a piece of bare/deforested land in their local community. The village headman Kwenje has given them a go ahead to reforest it. They agreed to replace Mopane Trees which were there before. The

woodlot would be secured with total support from the local village policies and the power of the Traditional Authority Nandumbo who is their chief patron.

Chihame cluster center Alumni:

Chihame center has over 40 active alumni. They are from 2005 to 2010 CITW camp participants. Most of the members who meet on a regular basis were still staying, schooling or working within their local communities. While some who were learning and working far from their local community formed alumni group “B” to the local one. The two groups usually come together when most of those from far come back to the community. They then hold general meetings and plan together.

CITW YES Chihame club celebrates 90% survival rate of trees/woodlot planted

The Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) programme is for those former CITW Campers and Eco-Club members who joined and have stayed within CITW Eco-Clubs for more than 5 years. These youth are indeed CITW products who live by demonstrating what they had learnt from the program. CITW Chihame - Alumni (YES) club in March, celebrated 90% survival rate of trees/woodlot which they have been planting since 2012.



The Rosemary Pencil Foundation gets its annual shower of smiles of thanks

The Rosemary Pencil Foundation got showered with smiles of thanks from the students it has/is sponsoring since 2006. The RPF has sponsored over 100 needy children through Secondary and Tertiary Education. Every year one or two top officials from the RPF-USA come and visit students in their respective Secondary Schools and Universities. This year in March, Gillian Rose who is also the Founder of the Foundation was in the country visiting the students.



Second e-Readers (Kindles) Project launched

The Rosemary Pencil Foundation in conjunction with CITW donated 50 e-readers to Bandawe Girls Secondary in Nkhatabay-Bay District (Northern Region of Malawi). This second project was the result of the success of the first project at Namalomba Secondary School in Balaka District – Southern Malawi.



With help from the World Reader USA, the e-readers were loaded with Malawi Secondary School Syllabus Students’ text books, Teachers’ Guide book and other related reading books and novels. One e-readers has a capacity of 1400

books. The machines have a Wi-Fi facility which allows the schools to remove, or download more books which they may need from e-book libraries and shops online.

CITW Annual Camps 2014

Since 2003, CITW has so far hosted a total of 1076 first comers' campers and 126 repeaters campers. 2014 Camps took place at Mvuu Camp inside Liwonde National Park, southern region of Malawi.



The photos show mentors on the camps: Mercy Mapiko (Camper 2005), now a Medical Technician (dentist); Patuma Banda (camper 2005), now a Qualified Primary School Teacher; Andrew Viyano (Camper 2006), now a student at Poly' (UNIMA); Mercy Chitete (Camper 2006), now - Hospitality - Works at Mvuu Lodge

Camp daily themes and objectives:

	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4
Themes	Theme	Theme	Theme
Awareness/Focus	Creativity/Integrity	Perseverance	Service
Main Topics	Main Topics	Main Topics	Main Topics
Camp site orientation Introduction to Natural Resources and Wildlife Swimming test Camp Fire	Basic inter-dependences among wildlife Permaculture Photography Art and craft workshops	Life skills My life and threats HIV/AIDS and common diseases prevention Meeting my role model Future planning art/craft workshop Celebrating cultural diversity Graduation Night	Being of service Go and be of service Camp in review – Quiz Departure

Every activity and lesson was based on the annual theme of “I am a seed, give me time and care” and those themes of the day. The whole teaching and learning process was objective. **Day 1**

Some of the major activities from the camp curriculum included:

1. Introduction to Natural resources and Wildlife:
2. Waste management and recycling projects
3. Shooting with cameras – not with guns



4. My life and its threats (Meeting my role model and future planning)

Along with the above topics, children learned a lot about life and threats like common diseases and how to prevent them; skills in basic first aid; peer pressures; child's rights versus responsibilities and how to protect their rights. Another topic was to meet and chat with those people/professionals considered as role models. Related to this they also learned about drafting one's life plan and how to follow it.



Peter Mawanga (a famous musician in Malawi) was one of the role models who was invited to inspire and share their life course with children. Within his first 4 hours with children in camp, they managed to compose a song. Apart from looking at specific talents, he managed to organize all the children to take part in the song composition and singing towards recording of it. The song was recorded and edited right there in Camp using his mini studio. By the next morning, the song was out and the children loved dancing and singing to their own song. The song was burnt on CDs and each child got a CD home. The message in the song “We come from Liwonde” was:

“We are young conservationists and were born and brought up from Liwonde. As lovers of nature, we would like to travel wide and long. This time we will go north of Malawi and we will use MV Ilala to take us to Likoma Is on the middle of Lake Malawi. We will be traveling while telling people that our moto is Conservation. We will be inviting more and more people to join us in what we have come to believe in, as we make our way through CITW program.”

During the exercise of “Meeting my Role models”, a number of issues which affect children on their way to their desired future were discussed. Children were helped on how to aim for their future; they were also equipped with the right skills to be able to know their challenges and use the right set of life skills to go through the challenges until they could catch their desired goals.



5. Art and Craft workshops

6. Recreation: Sports/swimming and day evaluation:

Community involvement in the annual camps

Day one (campers’ arrival day) is usually coloured with cultural/traditional themes. This is intentionally done so that the children have a smooth transition between life at home and that of camp. It helps the children settle and get into camp culture and environment.



CITW invited some local village leaders for them to bless the camp and be updated about developments within the program. This has been a very important tradition in keeping their ownership of the program fresh at all times. During their hours in camp, they participated in a number of planning and discussion meetings. They also played a number of games to have a feel of camp teaching and learning methodologies. CITW had also hired a traditional dancing troop to welcome the campers in a traditional way.

A short report on awards given to schools and women groups at the end of Nanthomba reforestation project 2014/2015 circle

The project was sponsored by the Germany Embassy in Malawi and CITW General. The project site was at Nanthomba Primary School which is one of the CITW cluster centers. The center brings together three primary schools, one secondary school and several village based conservation groups.



Between June and December 2014, over 30 000 seedlings of different tree and fruit species were raised. The groups had agreed one thing: which was to raise thousands of seedlings and donate them to organized local schools; churches; mosques; village groups and families. The core objective was that these trees could be planted in areas which were deforested, or bare and needed to have green cover.

The Eco-Club members received the awards and then later they donated them to their respective local schools. Nanthomba, Kavunguti and Kafulafula Primary School were the top three and got thousands of exercise books, thousands of writing pens and pencils. Six women managed a full participation in the project and got a she-goat and 5 meters long rope each.



News from our partner, H.E.L.P. Malawi

One more teacher's house built

Working in partnership is essential to the work H.E.L.P. does and this year we are proud to continue enjoying the lasting partnerships we developed with Press Trust and Machinga Teacher Training College (TTC). We have managed to build one three-bedroomed teacher trainee house with funding from Press Trust and Machinga TTC has provided six more teacher trainees to Nanthomba Primary School.



Making strides in after school classes

Over 120 learners participate in afterschool activities at Nanthomba School every day. Such activities include afterschool English classes, computer classes, music band, bead making and tailoring. Learners in computer class recently focused on hands-on composition of a word document and saving of files regardless of their typing speed. The class has 15 learners.

International Volunteers

Katey McCabe from Village Volunteers was the first international volunteer to join H.E.L.P. Malawi this year. She is expected to volunteer as an English teacher at Nanthomba School alongside Jessa Herron, International Volunteer Coordinator, and two other Nanthomba teachers, namely, Jailos Masikini and Peggy Mwanguku for three months.

In the quest to provide quality education in Nandumbo area, H.E.L.P. procures international volunteers from all over the world to help teach English as a third language (after Chiyao and Chichewa) and life skills at Nanthomba School. The program aims at improving pass and selection rates in national examinations as well as reducing dropout rates among girls.

Wound Care Clinic

The wound care clinic was established in order to treat minor wounds and injuries at the school. It got diversified into treating other minor illnesses such as headaches, fever and malaria after testing.

Teacher Training Programme

The arrival of the 6 male teacher trainees now brings the total number of teacher trainees at Nanthomba to 12 and a total number of government teachers to 25. This development has consequently affected the teacher/pupil ratio positively from 1:59 to 1:43. This group of 6 male teachers has been relocated to Nanthomba Primary School as a result of poor and unsafe accommodation experienced at Chinduzi Full Primary School where they were originally posted in September 2014. 50% of the trainees come from within Balaka District where H.E.L.P. Malawi is currently operating.



Afterschool English Classes

English classes continue to be so exciting that learners find them useful even in their normal curricula. The classes focus a lot on tenses (present, past and progressive tenses). Jessa, Katey, Peggy, Jailosi and Katrina as instructors have been very essential to the success of afterschool English classes.

Running water back at Nanthomba

Nanthomba School has stayed for over three months without running water following the breaking-down of the solar water pump that fills 20,000 litre water tanks for both domestic consumption by teachers, learners and community members and construction projects at the school. The good news is that now a new pump has been installed after the old one was condemned as unserviceable after it had worked for about 7 years.



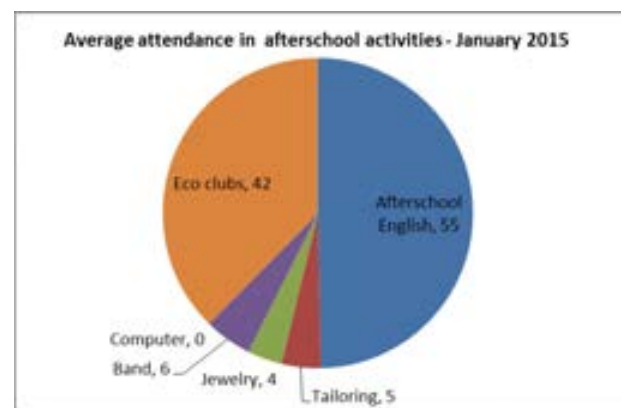
Student scholarships

Second term of 2014/2015 school session opened on 5 January, 2015 and all scholarship students are now back in school. 65% of all scholarship students go to Namalomba Community Day secondary School. 2014 secondary school graduates are busy trying their luck into the public tertiary institutions of higher learning where the competition to secure a place is very stiff. H.E.L.P. Malawi is currently sponsoring 107 students in various secondary schools with funding from people of America and Netherlands

Afterschool activities

Afterschool activities started very late this month due to persistent stormy-related rains in the area and in the country as a whole. Afterschool activities were supposed to take off in the second week of the term but instead they started in the third week, on 19th January 2015. Student turnout for the afterschool activities that are conducted in the afternoon had been low due to fears of heavy rains in the afternoon and overflowing rivers. Every child wanted to get home as soon as they could before the rains started.

For instance the chart above records an average attendance of 55 learners in English class instead of 70, and 4 learners in jewellery instead of 10, while computer class never took place due to preoccupation of the instructor with other official duties. Tailoring has a new instructor, Hudson Kaliba, after the former got a job with Mvuu Camp.



NAMIBIA

Round Table donates 65 mattresses to CITW Namibia

Round Table recently donated 65 mattresses to CITW Namibia to choose which school to give them to. All mattresses were then donated to Elias Amxab combined school in Sesfontein. The school which hosts about 300 learners in its hostel was in a dire need of about 250 mattresses. Round Table has a good history with WS Namibia and CITW, through Medic Rush where a team of qualified doctors in different fields visit some conservancies where WS operates and lends different medical services to community members for free. The Medic Rush is done every year in collaboration with WS Namibia. Round Table also donated a bulk of blankets late last year which were then given to Waramquelle Primary School. Elias Amxab Combined School is one of the four schools which CITW Namibia is working with in terms of Eco-Clubs, camps and Secondary School Sponsorship.



Successful CITW Namibia 2014 Camps

This year the camps took place from December 1st–12th and came with a new approach:

To focus on specific areas where Wilderness Safaris operates, for the following reasons:

- To combine Wilderness and CITW community efforts for greater impact;
- To avoid long distances when transporting campers, to cut costs and to be on time for camp activities;
- To thoroughly keep track of children involved in the programme; and
- To effectively implement Eco-Clubs.



This year Stefanus decided to focus on communities neighbouring Wilderness Safaris camps. These included Doro !Nawas Conservancy, Torra Conservancy, Palmwag Concession and Sesfontein Conservancy, and three schools, namely Jacob Basson Combined School, Warmquelle Primary School and Elias Amxab Combined School.

Two successive camps were held at Damaraland Camp, hosting 24 campers each. The first group of 24 children came from Jacob Basson in Bergsig and the second group comprised 12 campers from Warmquelle Primary School in Warmquelle and 12 from Elias Amxab Combined School in Sesfontein. Each group was accompanied by one teacher, three ex-CITW campers, three sponsored learners, three volunteers and five Wilderness Safaris employees who had volunteered for the camps. Four Damaraland Camp employees also volunteered to be tent leaders. The camp programme covered activities including teamwork, a scavenger hunt, a game drive, sports, crafts and life skills.



Wilderness Safaris helps with eye care program for needy people in Damaraland

During the last quarter of 2014 Wilderness Safaris was involved with a programme to assist needy people from Damaraland who had problems with their vision.

Approximately 100 people, young and old, from the Doro !Nawas and Torra conservancies had their eyes tested by a small team of Namibian optometrists under the leadership of Etienne Bingham, chairman of the Namibian Optometric Association. The team was flown to Damaraland, and after testing the patients, some 60 were diagnosed as needing eye glasses. The glasses were custom made for each individual, courtesy of the Optometric Association, and subsequently given to the patients.

A number of people, particularly elderly ones, needed cataract surgery. These were transported to Swakopmund where they were operated on in a private clinic by a Namibian registered ophthalmic surgeon. The Damaraland activity was part of a Namibian eye care program initiated and sponsored by a non-executive director of Wilderness Safaris in his personal capacity.



Wilderness Safaris was responsible for getting the word out to the rural community, arranged for the patients to be brought to Bergsig where the clinic was held and arranged with the local school to make a classroom available for the examinations. Wilderness also arranged for the eye glasses to be delivered to the patients.

The optometrists and the ophthalmic surgeon provided their services free of charge whilst the sponsor funded the costs of air and ground transport, materials for the operations, hospital costs and costs of accommodating the patients in Swakopmund. A similar outreach activity for the Twyfelfontein conservancy is planned for May 2015.

Collection box in the Windhoek office

Louis Nortje, a Wilderness Safaris staff member in Windhoek, initiated an idea to start a “donation box” that he placed next to his office to get Wilderness Namibia staff members to donate their unwanted clothing for a good cause during the Christmas season. The donated clothes went to one of the many needy communities that Wilderness operates in. The response was overwhelming and the box had to be emptied a few times and the donation period was extended to the end of January 2015.



SOUTH AFRICA

CITW General welcomes a new staff member, Bongani Baloyi

Please join us in welcoming Bongani Baloyi to the CITW General team in Johannesburg. Bongani is going to be the Regional Programme Coordinator: assisting Dr. Sue Snyman with various regional projects, including the CITW magazine, standardising materials, newsletters, etc. as well as playing a big role in terms of assisting with developing a standardised curriculum for the Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) programme and assisting with Mentor/Teacher trainings in the regions. Below is a short profile of Bongani:



Bongani is a graduate in Administration and Management from Tshwane University of Technology. He has extensive experience in stakeholder relationships and working with communities, CBOs and NGOs. A stint with Statistics South Africa also gained him invaluable administrative experience.

He previously worked as the CITW Eco-Club Community Liaison in his home village, Makuleke in Limpopo Province. As the Implementation Officer in the Makuleke Communal Property Association, he was involved in the implementation and stakeholder liaison of various community projects at grassroots level. More recently he worked as a Trainer/Lecturer at the South African Wildlife College, attached to the Community Based Natural Resource Management Unit. He is delighted to back in the CITW family.

Meet Portia Phokela CITW Eco-Club mentor from Simson

CITW SA has partnered with Mogalakwena Research Centre to bring Eco-Clubs to the Modikwa Primary School, Simson, Limpopo as part of giving back to the community where Tour de Tuli traverses. Local lady, Portia Phokela will be the CITW Eco-Mentor hosting the new CITW Eco-Clubs. She is from Simson and attended the Modikwa Primary School. She is delighted to be giving something back to her old school and to the children of her village and Mr Chipu, the principal of Modikwa Primary School, is delighted to have the CITW programme at his school. Portia works at the nearby Mogalakwena Eco Centre and is looking forward to sharing her love for the environment through the CITW Eco-Clubs.



Eco-Mentor training at Rocktail Beach Camp, KwaZulu-Natal

Rocktail Eco-Club mentors have upped their training programme. The recent workshop saw mentors learning how to effectively use cameras during Eco-Clubs and soon the fruits of their learnings will be seen on CITW social media pages. Wilderness Safaris’ Caroline Culbert, the in-house photography pro, shared plenty of tips and ideas with them. There was plenty of excitement and experimenting with cameras.

Inspiring Africa's next conservationists

See Safari Talk - Inspiring Africa's next conservationists - for an interview with CITW's Regional Programme Director, Dr. Sue Snyman as well as an interview with John Hanks and Clive Walker from Lapalala Wilderness School. Download here: <http://ow.ly/GJCOK>

Wilderness Safaris’ External Sales Manager completes her 10th Two Oceans marathon and continues to raise funds for CITW

Congratulations to Wilderness Safaris' External Sales Manager Tracy Bamber on this, her 10th consecutive Two Oceans Marathon finish. To achieve her personal best time on this year's much more difficult route is no mean feat and we are very proud. Not to mention humbled by your incredible fundraising and generosity - thank you!



By way of a little background, Tracy has already raised R56,000 so far this year for CITW, the Wilderness Trust and Starfish (Amabheadi). And in total our intrepid ultra-marathon runner has raised some R921 000 for her favourite charities - what a star!

ZIMBABWE

Ziga Primary School Library receives solar electrification

Ziga Primary School's remote position means that it does not have access to the national electrification grid so investigations were made into the installation of solar power, specifically for the Library building, which would provide lighting and power points for the schools four donated computers and projector machine.

Thanks to the generosity of Grand Circle Foundation travellers in the USA, solar electrification valued at US\$22,964.00 was successfully installed under the direction of Children in the Wilderness Zimbabwe in February 2015.

As this is now the only electrified room on the school premises, this project ensures maximum use of the new library and computer room as the facility can now also offer evening access to students, teachers and community members. The provision of solar powered electricity also offers research opportunities for teachers as well as providing the means necessary to host adult literacy or computer classes, sewing classes, a general business centre and many other income generating projects for the school.



CITW Children's Camp held at Camp Hwange, Sinamatella

Camp Hwange is situated in the Shumba area of Hwange National Park and is run by David Carson, a well-known Zimbabwe Professional Guide. Children in the Wilderness have worked with the owners to successfully host a CITW Eco-Club Camp for children from rural schools in the area each year for the past three years. This year's Camp included 24 children and two accompanying teachers from St Mary's Primary School in Lukosi and Sinamatella National Park Primary School.



"I enjoyed playing netball, learning and seeing animals that I didn't know, my lasting memory during the camp is the dessert I ate (apple crumble), visiting the National Park, seeing Vultures, sparrows, and baking bread"- Linda Sibanda, St Mary's Primary

"I enjoyed the game drive, I will always remember animals like giraffe, impala, and elephants, and baking bread in the camp"- Curly Mpala, St Mary's Primary

Jabulani School children and teachers receive Sight Screening Tests

Many children worldwide suffer from undetected eye sight disorders yet awareness of the status of a child's vision is vital and not only helps them at school, but is important for their future professional prospects. In Sept 2014, Grand Circle Foundation traveller, Ellyn Grant, visited Jabulani Primary School as part of her groups' community visit experience. She noticed a particular student had problems with her eyes so pledged to assist with funding to allow her to see an Optician for evaluation. With the help of Children in the Wilderness Zimbabwe she was able to see Mr Alistair Heyes of Sanders Opticians in Victoria Falls last year however as it turned out, although she has a congenital squint, she has 20/20 vision in both eyes so there was no need for any further treatment.



Considering there were still funds available, the donor graciously agreed that it should be used to carry out additional screening tests or treatment for other children and teachers who were experiencing problems with their eyesight at Jabulani Primary and Secondary School. Mr Heyes and his team have been absolutely fantastic with their support of this project and generously offered their time and expertise completely free of charge to carry out on-sight screening tests at the school on the 3rd March 2015. Amazingly all students screened had a normal standard of vision and ocular health; however of the 9 teachers examined, 4 are experiencing ocular health problems including generally poor eye sight, glaucoma and stigmatism so they have been referred to Sanders Optometry practice in Victoria Falls town for a full examination and appropriate care. Children in the Wilderness are working with Mr Saunders to arrange the necessary appointments for his next visit in April 2015. Mr Heyes has also expressed a keen interest to assist with similar screening programmes at the Tsholotsho schools affiliated to Children in the Wilderness Zimbabwe, and we look forward to working with him again in the months ahead.

"I would be very glad to repeat this important exercise with larger numbers of children in future so that we can detect any ocular or sight problems at an early stage." Mr Alastair Heyes – Optometrist

School shoes and scholarships for Ziga Primary students

On a recent trip to Hwange, CITW hosted Empowers Africa (<http://www.empowersafrica.org/>) Advisory Committee member Gabriella Gentil, Trustee Lisa Gentil and Richard Schenzele Sachse on a visit to Ziga Primary School in Tsholotsho.

The Schools' Headmaster, Moses Chilufia, welcomed our guests by giving them a tour and introducing them to the teaching staff and students. Lisa, Gabriella and Richard spent valuable time interacting with the children and were touched by their experiences. They were however disheartened to learn that many of the students who travelled up to 5km each way to and from school every day did not have shoes. The most effective way to support these children is through the CITW Scholarship Fund. Students are carefully selected in collaboration with the Schools Headmaster, who provides CITW with a list of the most promising candidates so as to ensure that donations are allocated effectively. Scholarship students' progress is carefully monitored and regular feedback is provided the sponsor.



After their visit to Ziga, the Gentils and Empowers Africa were pleased to be able to donate US\$3,000.00 to the CITW Scholarship Fund, a portion of which will be used to purchase school shoes which will be delivered to the students during the third term of 2014. The remainder of their funding will be used to sponsor the annual educational costs of six primary students at the School.

St. Mary's Computer Project

NComputing is a desktop virtualization company that manufactures hardware and software to create virtual desktops which enable multiple users to simultaneously share a single operating system. CITW, with help from funding provided by USA Donors, Grand Circle Foundation, supplied St Mary's Primary School in Lukosi with this innovative technology in February 2015. This exciting project allows students to benefit from computer training and solutions that deliver an uncompromising end-user experience.



Imported through 'FeatureIT' in South Africa, technicians successfully installed the NComputing Lab which consisted of three "Host computers" with 10 "users" connected to each machine, as well as an interactive white board solution. Initial training included maintenance, basic troubleshooting, operation and best PC lab practices, with further training scheduled for March 2015. The advantages are that this system is not only one of the most cost effective classroom computing solutions, but it only uses 5% of the power that a standard PC would use, and is very simple for a teacher to manage.

This project brings first world technology and computer literacy to the school and community, allowing first time access to computer education, online information and resources for both students and teachers. In time the school will also be able to host Adult Computer Classes for community members, which will assist in raising additional income for the school. St Mary's Primary School is possibly the first rural Government School in Zimbabwe to benefit from the system and CITW looks forward to watching their progress as they embrace first world technology.

St. Mary's Primary School develops their own vegetable gardens

The land where St. Mary's Primary School is located is extremely rocky and farming is difficult; there is a section of the village approximately 3km from the school that has an irrigation garden and orchard which was established many years back but due to its distance, this garden was a little too far away for it to be beneficial to the school for their agricultural curriculum and Eco-Club programme. St Mary's Primary desperately wanted to implement their own vegetable garden on the school premises but lacked the funding to do so.



Thanks to funding generously provided by Grand Circle Foundation travellers, the Schools wishes were made a reality, and in September 2014 with assistance provided by CITW, they received the tools necessary to start their own gardens. Supplies included shovels, forks, rakes, wheel barrows, watering cans, shade cloth and vermiculture worms which would be used to start up an Eco-Composting facility with training provided by CITW. As a conservation effort that focuses on poverty alleviation, the Eco-Composting Project teaches conservation-based and cost-effective food production practices at household level, with the potential to expand these activities to earn extra income. Students and community members are actively involved in the project helping with implementation and ongoing maintenance. Regular training on improved farming methods and the utilization of manure and natural fertilizers has a major impact on the school's ability to produce a better harvest and therefore added income opportunities.

Chickens for Ziga Primary School

In February CITW was able to successfully deliver 24 'point of lay' hens to Ziga Primary School as part of the ongoing Grand Circle Foundation (GCF) Poultry Project. They are due one more vaccine on the 1st April, so the delivery included the vaccine as well as start-up food for the hens – the vaccine needs to be kept cold until administration so although the school does not have its' own refrigerator, they were able to make a plan to store them at nearby tuck-shops or stores in the village.



The CITW Field Coordinator was required to travel from Hwange to Bulawayo to collect the orders from our Supplier, and then back to Tsholotsho on the overnight train where he was met by school and community members who offloaded the goods onto ox and donkey carts for the remainder of the journey by road to the School. The hens were 19 weeks old, so are laying eggs now, which is fantastic as the school will be able to start enjoying the benefits of supplementing their nutrition programme as well as income generation for the school from sales virtually immediately.

Ziga Knitting Ladies receive reading glasses and measuring tapes

Ziga Ladies Knitting Group in Tsholotsho received reading glasses and measuring tapes from CITW in February. The group consists of approximately 20 women who received training on pattern reading and lessons on fine tuning and perfecting their knitting skill set in November 2014. Many of these women struggle with bad eye sight so have found pattern reading to be quite challenging; the new reading glasses will help them with this and the measuring tapes ensure accuracy with their knitting projects. Currently the ladies are working on a project that will enable each woman to knit 6 jerseys, giving them a total of 120 jerseys for sale purposes. Proceeds from their sales will be split with two thirds going back into the project for the purchase of more materials in the future, and a third contribution to a sustainable income for the ladies.



CITW's partnership with Zambezi Schoolbook Project

CITW have been working closely with an organisation called "Zambezi Schoolbook Project", who in turn are affiliated to "Books For Africa." Zambezi Schoolbook Project have graciously included CITW Zimbabwe in their book donation programme and to-date, we have received two container loads of incredible books for the schools we're associated with. With thanks to funding provided by Grand Circle Foundation, Ziga and Ngamo Primary Schools in Tsholotsho have benefitted from the construction and furnishing of dedicated libraries at their respective schools and it made sense that they were the first two schools on our programme to benefit from the books donated.



Guests assist with the Wordworks project at Jabulani Primary School

CITW Zimbabwe Project Coordinator, Sue Goatley, hosted Howard & Steph Sherwood, Travel Sommelier guests from the USA, at Jabulani Primary School. CITW have been working with Jabulani for a little over three years now and recent teacher training programmes have included the implementation of the highly productive Wordworks Early Literacy Programme. The Programme provides structured support for people who want to give their time to support young children as they learn to read and write.



Volunteers are given an easy to follow lesson plan, reading books, games and the relevant equipment to carry out 40 minute lessons with two children at a time. These sessions greatly assist the teaching staff who tend to have a hard time keeping up with the one-on-one teaching required to improve literacy levels.

The Wordworks Early Literacy Programme provides targeted support to children in Grades 0-2 to strengthen their language and early reading and writing skills. Each session provides children with individual attention and support tailored to their learning needs, as well as a chance to hear and use rich language in a fun and stimulating learning environment. CITW has found that the children's language and literacy skills improve with each session which increases their self-esteem and confidence as they experience success. Volunteers benefit too in that they have the knowledge and skills to play a meaningful role in supporting literacy in these rural communities whilst building relationships with these young children and having the chance to 'give back.'

New CITW staff members in the Zambezi region:

Zambia: James Mwanza: CITW Programme Coordinator

James Mwanza comes from South Luangwa Area in the Lupande Game Management Area in Zambia. He joined Wilderness Safaris as CITW Programme Coordinator/ Development Liaison. James has 12 years work experience in NGO project management. He holds an Advanced Diploma in Business Management, Advanced Diploma in Nature Conservation and Transfrontier Conservation Management and Diploma in Social Work. James previously worked for World Wild Fund for Nature in the Land Use Planning Project and was the Programme Coordinator for Livingstone Tourism Association.



Zimbabwe: Shuvanayi Taruvinga: CITW Administrative Assistant

Shuvanayi Taruvinga comes from a humble pastoral family and has travelled around Zimbabwe since a young age. She is passionate about nature and the diversity of the country and has worked in the tourism industry for twelve years. She firmly believes that humankind should have a vested interest in the environment in which we live and believes that the heritage we enjoy today is borrowed from future generations, so feels it is imperative that we are actively involved in the way in which we live our lives for continued sustainability. Shuvanayi has worked with Wilderness Safaris for the past five years and now joins the CITW Zimbabwe team, where she looks forward to getting involved with school and community projects in her supporting role as Administrative Assistant.

