



**WILDERNESS COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
NEWSLETTER**

FIRST QUARTER 2017

INTRODUCTION

The first quarter of 2017 was full of activities related to Children in the Wilderness and community development, including annual CITW camps, Eco-Club activities, Adult Eco-Club Activities, Tour de Tuli preparations, development projects and training. With the focus of the CITW programme being on environmental education we try and partner with other organisations to enhance and support our programme in numerous areas. Some of our partners, amongst many others, include Mother Bear Project, Pack for a Purpose, Ducere Foundation, Southern African Wildlife College and Qhubeka. The next issue of our CITW Eco-Stars magazine, which is due out in May, will also include information on some of our partners, Eco-Mentors, Eco-Club members, the CITW Team, information on our main fundraising event - the Nedbank Tour de Tuli, and many other exciting stories.

Our website has had a revamp this quarter, and is looking beautiful. If you haven't already, you can watch the Children in the Wilderness video on our new website here: <http://www.childreninthewilderness.com/>



Thank you to all our donors, staff, partners and volunteers who ensure that our programme continues to grow reaching more children, more often and more positively. Please don't forget to like Children in the Wilderness on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Childreninthewilderness?fref=ts> for regular updates and heart-warming stories.

COUNTRY NEWS

ZAMBEZI REGION: Zambia and Zimbabwe

Sinde village residents in Zambia receive wonderful gifts: Luci Solar Lights

A visitor to Zambia, Regina Cholnoky, took time out to visit Twabuka Primary and Sinde Village as part of a cultural activity offered by CITW and Toka Leya Camp. Her heart went out to this poor rural community when she learned that once the sun went down, all activity stopped in the village as the majority of people had no access to electricity, or any efficient lighting in their homes. This not only affected the household chores, but children attending school were unable to complete homework or study.

On returning home, Regina had an idea to brighten up the lives of the residents of Sinde – she researched solar lighting and came up with a plan to supply the user friendly, blow up, waterproof, Luci Lights (<https://mpowerd.com/>) to each family in the village. Luci®, an inflatable solar light, created in 2012 with the goal of making an affordable clean energy product that people could use in any situation — from outdoor camping adventures, to backyard parties, to everyday living for people in developing countries without electricity. Luci taps into a source of light that's limitless and readily available to everyone on our planet — the sun.

Here is what a few residents of Sinde Village think of their Luci Solar Lights:

Ruth Situmbeko - *"We have been using firewood for light all of my life, now, thank you to Luci and Regina for the Solar Light, we will cut down on the wood we use, there will be no smoke damaging our eyes, our lives are now safe from household fires and we can read and sew at night after completing the chores. "*

Kelvin Malambo - *"the provision of solar light has reduced my cost of living, the sunlight is free and am now saved from buying batteries for light."*

Mary Sekute - *"I am 89 years, before this I had never seen or used solar before. I had no means of getting a cost effective light in all that time and my eyes grow dim. Thank you, you have saved the light and eyes for me the old woman."*

Precious Mungo - *"I am a volunteer teacher and this light will help me to mark all the school books in the night after school. It takes me long and I don't always finish so now there will be happy children."*

Charity Hamala – *"I am at Simoonga Secondary school writing my Grade 10 this year and there is plenty work – I will be able to study at night now and get better marks, this light makes it easier for me to pass my exams."*



CITW Zambezi region celebrates World Wildlife Day 2017

On the 20th December 2013, at its 68th session, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared 3rd March as the official date for World Wildlife Day, a day specifically set aside to raise awareness for the plight of wildlife around the globe. Considering that almost one quarter of the world's population is aged between 10 and 24yrs, the theme for

the 2017's World Wildlife Day was "Listen to the Young Voices". As the future leaders and decision makers of the world, vigorous efforts need to be made to encourage young people to act on both local and universal levels to protect both flora and fauna in and around our societies.

CITW Zambezi Region worked closely with fifteen schools associated with the CITW Programme in both Zimbabwe and Zambia to celebrate World Wildlife Day in March this year. With support from the African Wildlife Foundation and local Forestry Departments, this year's World Wildlife Day showcased conservation and environmental management practices in rural communities. Each Schools' Eco-Club was responsible for organizing events for the day's celebrations which included design and presentation of educational posters and informative song, dance and drama shows each aimed at promoting the importance of conservation in their community. Attending guests included parents, members of the local communities including Community Heads and representatives from the Forestry Department and African Wildlife Foundation.

CITW and local Forestry Departments donated indigenous seedlings such as *Mopani* and *Acacia nilotica* to each Schools Eco-Club Programme; it was an honour to be able to participate in the planting of over one hundred and fifty new trees in Zimbabwe and Zambian Schools on World Wildlife Day and pleasing to see the commitment of both school-goers and community members alike.



Clean water for rural schools and communities in Matabeleland North, Zimbabwe

Most of us take for granted that we have a regular supply of clean water. We turn on our taps and have clean drinking water available to us. For the remote, drought-ridden rural communities of Matabeleland North in Zimbabwe, access to clean water is considered a luxury. An average day for women and young girls in these communities involves four to five trips, on foot, with a 25-litre bucket carried on their head, to a communal borehole situated up to five kilometres from the homestead. Not only is this a time consuming and exhausting task, but it often means children, particularly girls, are unable to attend school regularly.

With this in mind, when partnering with a school and community, CITW's first priority is the supply of a clean, central, sustainable water source. Although rivers and waterholes are dry for most of the year in this area, there is a rich supply of water deep underground in artesian wells. To access this precious, clean water, is an expensive exercise, requiring drilling through thick gusu sand approximately 120 metres below. Thanks to generous donations from Grand Circle Foundation, the PGA Golf Tour (both of the USA) and a number of Wilderness Safaris' guests, the CITW Zambezi Region have recently been able to facilitate the drilling of three new boreholes, and the installation of solar pumps and 5000litre holding tanks at six schools / communities under their umbrella.

Ngamo Primary and Secondary Schools in Tsholotsho, St Mary's Primary School in Dete, and Jabulani Primary School outside Victoria Falls have struggled for many years to pump their boreholes because of an infrequent supply of electricity from the National Grid. Add to this a severe drought, and this makes water a scarcity for these schools. These school had to resort to using generator power to keep water in the tanks. With limited funding, the fuel needed to run these generators puts massive strain on the already struggling schools' finances, so the installation of solar powered pumps has brought financial and drought relief to these schools and surrounding communities.



Thanks to donations from a long-standing patron of Emfundweni Primary School near Victoria Falls, the Taylor Smith Family, the school also has a new borehole with a solar pump and holding tanks. Both students and teachers are now gratefully benefiting from a good supply of clean water from their borehole and plans are underway to rehabilitate the school garden.

Zimbabwean rural schools receive exercise books and teaching aids

As rural schools opened for the first term of 2017, supplies of exercise books and basic teacher aids (such as blackboard chalk and dusters) were sadly lacking. The majority of parents in the rural communities are unable to afford exercise books for their children and the government no longer supplies them to the schools. Chalk is also quite an expensive commodity, not always readily available in Zimbabwe, and funds at these schools are already stretched to their limits.

With thanks to donor funding, Children in the Wilderness were able to assist seven rural primary schools in Tsholotsho, Lukosi and Victoria Falls with the procurement and delivery of these much needed items. Each school received Mathematics and English exercise books, as well as both coloured and white blackboard chalk and blackboard erasers. Teachers and students alike were full of smiles and gratitude as they expressed their excitement and thanks for these donations. One student even asked the teachers what a blackboard eraser was, as it was the first time she had ever seen one! This goes to show how rare these important tools are at these schools. The exercise books will be used for the children to complete their schoolwork in and provides three books per child, per subject for the year. Having books to work in impacts hugely on a teacher's ability to monitor and measure the impact of their teaching and written work. It is excellent reinforcement for lessons taught. As all lessons and instructions are carried out on blackboards in the classrooms, chalk is an important part of a teacher's equipment and stationery, so a good supply is a necessity. These donations will affect a combined total of 2180 students at these seven schools.



Best Eco-Gardening prize for 2016 awarded to Ziga Primary School, Zimbabwe

In 2012, Children in the Wilderness Zimbabwe supplied heavy duty gardening tools, fruit trees and vegetable seed to assist with start-up vegetable gardens and orchard projects at certain schools participating in CITW Eco-Clubs in the Tsholotsho District. Since then, the schools have been competing year after year for the Best Eco-Gardening Prize. These gardens and orchards play an important part in the schools farming and agricultural syllabus, as well as assisting in supplementing their nutrition programmes.

CITW visits regularly to conduct training in conservation farming techniques at eight schools in the Tsholotsho and Hwange districts. Education in Eco-Gardening places emphasis on training students and community members in the development of environmentally-friendly practices that have turned previously unproductive soils into lucrative, well-managed and high-yielding vegetable gardens and orchards. To encourage active participation by the schools, a floating trophy and prize tour to Victoria Falls is presented to the school with the “*Best Vegetable Garden and Orchard*” at the end of each school year. The areas in which these rural communities live are characterised by Kalahari sands and erratic rainfall, so much time and effort has been put into these gardens. As a result, the schools have beautiful organic gardens that provide a wonderful source of healthy green vegetables to both students and community members.

We are pleased to announce the winners for 2016’s Best Vegetable Garden Award as Ziga Primary School of Tsholotsho District. Presentation of the floating trophy was made by CITW representatives at the end of term three and the Eco-Club is scheduled to visit Victoria Falls and Hwange Hydro Power station as their prize in Term 2 this year.

The vermiculture programme has had a major impact on the gardens. Without water, proper training in vermiculture and proper gardening tools, gardening would be an impossible task for Ziga Primary School that lies in Agro region 5 which is characterised by deep Kalahari sands and very little rainfall. Training, and the provision of water, turned a once dusty landscape into a productive garden haven. The school managed their gardens and took the prize by: maintaining mulch cover; maintaining the soil structure and preserving the micro-organisms; planting according to precise spacings and specifications; using 100% compost, and no harmful fertilizers; weeding was done regularly and inter-cropping was used as a pest control measure. The school has used a portion of their prize money to purchase 60 citrus fruit trees to expand their orchard.



The garden’s success has also had a positive impact on the school’s administration by enabling them to purchase a much-needed safe for the safe-keeping of their National exam papers, as well as assisting with many other administrative expenses with which the school has previously struggled.

Camp Hwange Children’s Camp 2017, Zimbabwe

At the beginning of each year, CITW lead a children’s camp hosted at Camp Hwange in the Sinamatella area of Hwange National Park in Zimbabwe. This year’s Camp Hwange CITW Camp hosted twenty four excited children aged between 10 and 13 from a number of Primary Schools in the Matabeleland area of Zimbabwe. Each child received a Chitenge tog bag, equipped with a water bottle, notebook, coloured pencils and other useful stationery items, as well as the iconic CITW branded T-shirts and cap.

Film night is always excitedly received by all the children, many of whom have never been exposed to television or movies in their lives. The films screened are carefully selected and always have conservation or life-skill messages. This year’s film was an old favourite - The Lion King, which clearly depicts the circle of life.

The final night of camp saw a hotly contested quiz between the children, where they answer questions based on their learnings at camp. On the final morning of camp, children receive a hand-knitted teddy bear from The Mother Bear Project (www.motherbearproject.org) – giving them comfort, and a wonderful memento from camp.

A highlight of this camp was the discovery of a brightly coloured and interesting looking spider on an 'insect walk'. After careful inspection of the creature and many photographs, the spider was then returned to the bush and Julian, the baffled guide, pulled out his book to investigate, only to discover this particular specimen, a type of crab spider called the "*platythomisus insignis*" had never been recorded in Zimbabwe before! Quite an exciting find for both the guide and our young environmentalists.



Grateful thanks are extended to the staff of Camp Hwange, CITW Mentors and participating school teachers, each of whom played a vital role in contributing toward the success of yet another exciting and educational children's camp.



Soccer in the Wilderness, Zambia

CITW works with former South African Premier Soccer League and Kaizer Chiefs soccer player Gordon Gilbert as our soccer ambassador, to promote conservation programmes through soccer. The former soccer player uses his spare time to promote conservation programmes. With the help of CITW Gordon dedicates his time to uplifting communities through soccer clinics surrounding game reserves and lodges in southern Africa. Gordon has a strong passion for wildlife, and by inspiring and educating those around these reserves through the language of football, Gordon helps protect our heritage which often we all take for granted.

Elijah Simukonda from Nalituwe School had this to say about Soccer in the Wilderness: *"Let us extend our passion for football to preserving our environment because if we do not preserve our environment we will have no environment to play football from."*

Gordon says: *"As an ambassador for Children in the Wilderness, I feel passionate about making a difference where it matters most. There is no measure as to how big or small the impact may be, as this will differ every time. The moral of the story and mission is clear - make it count and do your best to leave a footprint or legacy that you will be proud of. I love to feel I am influencing people in a positive way, if we all strive to be better and do better this world will be a better place. I feel that we as humans need to change the mindset of expecting someone else to make it happen. We have the right and responsibility to stand up and do the right thing. To protect and conserve our heritage and leave it in a way we will be proud of for the future generations needs to become second nature. Together we can make a difference, even if it means standing alone to make that first step."*

Look out for a full report back on this exciting initiative in the Second Quarter newsletter.

