

**Muzenje Village, Chief Kakumbi, Mfuwe, Zambia**  
**S13°7'13.19" E31°48'49.7" Sponsors – Schulprojekt Sambia April 2021.**

**The Challenge – to bring clean, safe water to the villages and schools of the Luangwa Valley in a way that enables them to avoid human/wildlife conflict and ensures that the communities benefit from and engage with wildlife conservation as well as improving health, school attendance, productivity, all round well-being and quality of life.**

Around 25,000 people live in the villages of Kakumbi Chiefdom and the population is rapidly growing. It has doubled in the last 20 years and continues to grow year on year. It is one of the most mixed communities in the Eastern Province. There are many long-term residents who live in villages that have been established for at least two hundred years still relying on traditional methods of subsistence farming. But with the success of the safari industry there has been quite an influx of new residents.

Muzenje Village is a large and busy village in the centre of the more populated Mfuwe area. It is situated not far from Mfuwe Secondary School. The villagers use the secondary school borehole which is already over-utilised. At times residents are compelled to collect water from the Matesye River which is over 2km away. This is a seasonal river, dangerous in the rainy season as there are a lot of crocodiles and unsafe and unsanitary in the dry season as the water is dirty and the ever-deepening wells can collapse.

Headwoman Catherine Banda is responsible for more than 70 households in Muzenje Village with approaching 300 residents.



**Addressing Gender Issues in Water and Sanitation:**

***'In order for children and families to benefit from clean water and sanitation, water points and sanitation facilities must be accessible. Distance is critical because the shorter the distance to clean water, the more consistently it will be utilised. Furthermore, as fetching water is a task most commonly assigned to girls and women, shortening the distance between households and water supply is essential to reduce the time girls spend in fetching water, which in turn will provide them with more time to attend school.'*** **UNICEF millennium development goal**





Discussions about the problems with water supply



Drilling in action

Even at the best of times collecting water for Muzenje residents can be arduous and time consuming. Women and children queue sometimes for hours to get a turn at the handpump. During a pandemic when people are supposed to be 'social distancing' and maintaining strict hygiene with regular handwashing, it is simply impossible to avoid crowds and to get enough water to ensure the whole family can stay safe from the spread of Covid.

Women and children in rural villages far from boreholes still collect water from rivers or shallow wells. Collecting water from rivers is potentially dangerous not only because the water is not clean but the risk of injury and death from crocodiles, elephants and other wild animals is only too real. Hand dug wells are normally only 5- 8 or so metres deep and are utilising water from the top of the water table. Not only is this usually contaminated but they often dry up towards the end of the dry season.

One of the most important Millennium Development Goals is access to clean, safe drinking water – for good reason, and the importance of this fundamental concept cannot be over-stated. **Luckily, the solution here in the Luangwa Valley is simple – communal boreholes equipped with sturdy, 'low tech' hand pumps.**



Local children watching the drilling with interest.



The rig set up.





Studying the soil samples and flushing

Everyone enjoys the pump testing when the first clean, fresh water arrives!

We consult local communities, the council and health providers who help us prioritise where to drill. The list of needs is a long one but we focus on areas where health and safety, particularly of children is of immediate concern.



New village borehole



Productive veggie garden at village borehole

Not only will the dangers of water borne diseases now things of the past, but now the women and children have more time for education, sports, farming and other pastimes. The communities in which we install our boreholes create productive vegetable gardens which produce more than enough for their own needs and dramatically improve nutrition. The excess is sold locally providing a useful cash income and adding to food security. **Each borehole means that a community of at least 200 men, women and children, instead of travelling miles to dangerous rivers or scooping dirty water from shallow wells, can access to clean, safe water - for life.**

*UNICEF millennium development goal.*

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**“One of the most important aspects of wildlife conservation is to get the co-operation of the local community. It has been shown that this is not possible unless they can receive material benefit from their wildlife.”**

**Norman Carr 1958 Luangwa Valley.**