

Mikael (Michael) Village

Chief Kakumbi, Mfuwe, Zambia

Sponsors – Schulprojekte Sambia. Completed drilling – November 2019

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 20,000 people live in the villages of Kakumbi Chieftdom 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.



Permission letter for Mikael Village



Young Mikael residents showing us the deep river bed well

Mikael Village is not too far from Lubeba where we drilled earlier in the year, also nearby is the smaller settlement of Smart Village. The new borehole at Lubeba went a long way to relieving the stress of lack of access to clean, safe water in the wider community but more provision was still urgently needed. Until this year, there was only one borehole serving all three villages plus a handful of wells the use of which was contributing to water borne illnesses, particularly in children causing concern at the local health centre.

There is overcrowding particularly in the dry season when long queues mean that the women have to walk over a kilometre to the nearest water source which is at the old Kapani staff compound.



Extremely overcrowded borehole in nearby village



Baldwin Chulu of Makolekole inspecting the well

Mikael Village is quite large – about 400 residents are under the care of Headman Mikael (Michael). Rather than queue for hours at the Lubeba borehole or walk more than 2km to the Kapani borehole, Mikael residents have dug a huge well in the bed of the Matezye River. It is the deepest river bed well we have seen at about 5 - 6m deep. The water is quite good quality but extremely hard and dangerous to access, and there's not much of it so it is difficult to collect enough for all household uses. The risk of the well collapsing is very high.



Mikael resident collecting water from riverbed well – a dangerous daily task

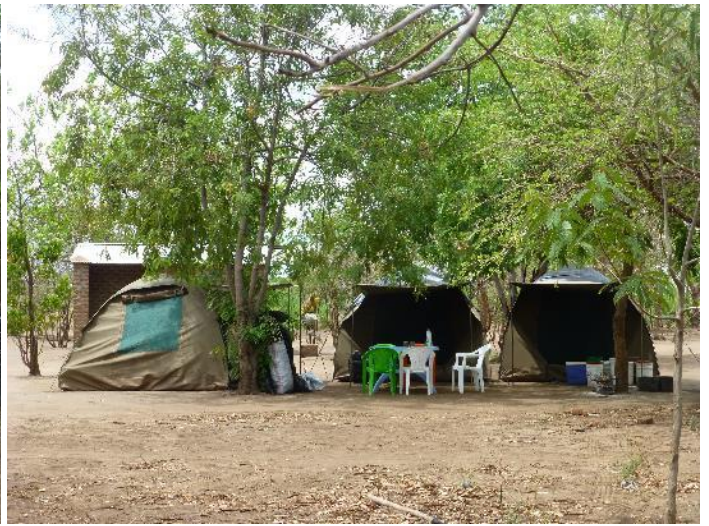
The water level steadily drops until by October and November residents have to climb down in to the 6m deep hole to collect water. Once the rains come, the hole first collapses and then – when the Matezye River starts to flow – the well fills in – it has to be dug again after the rains. At a certain level, during the rainy season, crocodiles come up from the main Luangwa River in to which the Matezye flows approximately 4km downstream from Mikael. Tragically there have been quite a number of human fatalities from crocodile attack so once the Matezye is flowing, residents stay well clear and cannot collect water safely.



Drilling underway at Mikael Village



Some of the UPVC borehole casings 'under guard'



Mokolekole drilling camp



Everyone enjoys the thrill of the first water during the pump test – especially in the extreme heat of the late dry season



😊 Extremely happy first users of the new borehole saying a big Thank You 😊



Nearby completed boreholes, many with productive vegetable gardens.

Not only will the dangers of water borne diseases now be 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.

'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.'

"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 (father of Adrian Carr, Mokolekole) 1958 Luangwa Valley.