

www.chipembele.org

When you think of wildlife in Zambia, rhinos don't exactly spring to mind. The conservation education organisation - Chipembele Wildlife Education Trust (CWET) is named after the black rhinoceros in the local language of Chinyanja: "Chipembele." The Luangwa Valley once held the highest density of black rhinos in Africa, until they were poached to local extinction by the late 1980s. Chipembele is a reminder to protect and conserve our wildlife and ecosystems so that we prevent further losses of our incredible animals.

Chipembele was founded in 1998 by passionate Africa lovers, Anna and Steve Tolan, whose life dream was to give back to a special place in Africa by establishing a conservation education centre and programme for local children. Twenty years later, CWET has grown into a robust non-profit organisation based in Mfuwe and is a leader in environmental education in Zambia. This rapidly growing rural settlement on the edge of South Luangwa National Park is experiencing ever-increasing rates of deforestation, habitat loss, poaching, littering, over-fishing, bush fire destruction and human-wildlife conflict as the population expands. The work is therefore critical for upholding CWET's vision that people and wildlife can live together in harmony.

Today the Chipembele Conservation Centre hosts Anna's all-day dynamic and incentive-based educational programme for Conservation Club members from 7 local schools. The Centre is also home to an animal sanctuary, where Anna and Steve rehabilitate orphaned and injured animals back to the wild. CWET's energetic education team runs 31 Conservation Clubs across 18 different schools in the greater Mfuwe area at both primary and secondary levels. At their headquarters office, CWET established a Botanic Garden and a Community Nature Conservancy to provide on-site opportunities for inquiry-based learning and exploring.

Throughout the year students participate in a range of activities including a

student-driven environmental campaign, field trips into South Luangwa National Park, a Chipembele Ranger Programme, 'Nature Nights' camping trips, a week-long outdoor education excursion, an annual celebration of conservation event known as 'Chikondewelero', computer courses and more!

Gender awareness, leadership, communication, team-building and other important life skills are infused into their core programmes, with opportunistic seminars and workshops on offer during the innovative 'Skill-Up!' programmes.

The weekly Zambian Carnivore Programme (ZCP) Club is unique in that it provides students the opportunity to work directly with scientific researchers and educators from ZCP Mfuwe. ZCP is a non-governmental organisation working in three regions of Zambia, including Mfuwe/South Luangwa, to conserve large carnivores and their ecosystems through science, action and local leadership. Former Chipembele students, who are employed as wildlife ecologists for ZCP, run this club. They teach the scientific process in a hands-on manner and provide support conducting wildlife surveys, using research tools such as hand-held GPS units and camera traps, using data to help answer relevant resource and management questions, and more. The ZCP Club develops students' skills in computer literacy, technology, critical thinking, writing and public speaking skills essential for pursuing further studies in a conservation or natural resource management career. Few secondary students in the world have this direct insight into what it takes to become a field biologist!

In 2018 and 2019, Chipembele's top Conservation Club students participate in 'Tisamale Global Exchange' with Australian conservation students and "Mentors at the Zoo" (MATZ) from Adelaide. Tisamale means 'we conserve' in our local language, and enables Zambian and Australian students to teach each other about their different wildlife, ecosystems and conservation challenges while sharing each other's cultures and favourite activities. Thanks to Zoos South Australia (ZOOSA), this life-changing experience fosters inspiration and action for our next generation of globally-minded conservationists. In July 2018 Chipembele hosted the Australian MATZ and the best 14 students Chipembele students will travel to Adelaide to complete the exchange in April 2019.

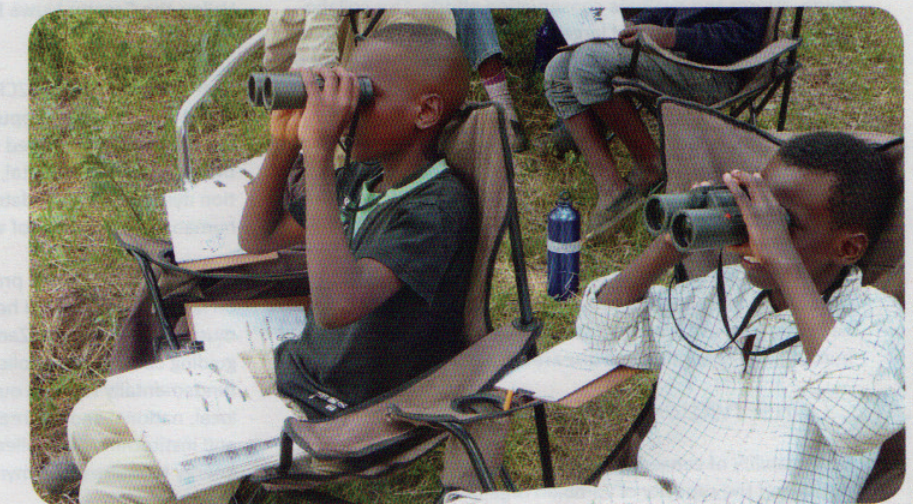
In 2016, Chipembele expanded their work to adult community groups within four geographic zones of the greater Mfuwe area which are led by four field-based Community Conservation Educators. A Mobile Education Unit (MEU) was added in 2017 to support remote schools and communities throughout Mambwe District, an area of

over 5,000 km². Through the colourful MEU Outreach Programme, the Education Team trains distant teachers how to set up their own conservation clubs and provides them with the educational tools and resources to run them independently. The MEU includes a conservation library and puts on evening movie nights to showcase wildlife documentary films to members of these remote villages.

In addition, Chipembele facilitates student sponsorships to enable deserving students to attend school. An average of 60 orphaned or otherwise vulnerable students are sponsored

each year to secondary school and 12 at tertiary level.

Chipembele helps youth to appreciate and protect the wildlife from learning and understanding, and grow to become the next generation of responsible stewards of the natural world we all depend on.*



Photography by: Chipembele