

SSAAP Quarterly Newsletter

Edition XVIII; Fall 2016

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This quarterly newsletter is dedicated to Helen. Happy Birthday. We love you. Always.



Greetings from Zambia!

The project is growing and prospering; thanks deeply to all who have shared in the work and the fun.

Maanzi

Water: the basic resource of life on the planet, SSAAP works with various partners to bring water to remote areas of Simwatachela and Siapatunya Chiefdoms, Southern Province, Zambia.



Previous water sources for various communities, prior to assistance with machine-drilled water wells ('boreholes').



SSAAP works with its partner, Engineers Without Borders, Mississippi State University Chapter (EWB-MSU) to bring water wells to communities in the chiefdom.



SSAAP has been working with SRR Drilling & Exploration Company, from Hyderabad, India, since 2014 - on wells drilled with EWB-MSU partnership as well as SSAAP wells funded only through SSAAP.

Before drilling a well, the community must apply through SSAAP via CAT (Community Assessment Tool, available via SSAAP's website) and when received, CAT's are marked with a date stamp. Together with Dr. Dennis Truax, Lead for EWB-MSU, Gibson Sinan'gombe, SSAAP's Lead Zambian counterpart, and myself, we determine which sites are in deepest need for a clean water source. We also consider the community dynamics (number served, presence of a school, cooperation of the community). We then visit the site for further research on its conditions.



At-present, SSAAP has 80+ applicants for clean water wells.



Our Teams sign contracts with villages with whom we agree to drill wells.



And then the drilling process begins!



Every year, Dr. Truax brings students to assist in the drilling process. The students come to Zambia, learn the process of assessing new sites for potential well-drilling, drilling wells, and monitoring and evaluating water in wells drilled from years past.



Visiting communities of wells drilled in past years (2014, 2015) is part of our signed contract with communities in order to ensure that their community is functioning with a borehole committee, the borehole committee has a fund for repairing/maintaining the well (part of the 25% community contribution towards the well), and that the well is still functioning properly – with a protective barrier (fence made of trees, bricks, etc.) around the water well to ensure no cattle, goats, pigs can enter and contaminate the water. Pictured below, Dr. Truax at Siloonda Village, teaching the community to listen for the sound of water to flow back into the casing from the aquafer. In areas where the water table is significantly low, during the dry season (typically July – September) – such as in Siloonda Village – the communities have difficulty accessing enough water, even with the well, thus Dr. Truax is teaching them to listen for the sound of the water filling from the ground so that they know when they can begin to pump the hand pump again to access the water. On right, Dr. Truax’s Team tests water samples from the wells.





Besides assessing, drilling, monitoring wells, and working as hard as possible every single day, we also had a lot of fun! (Above)

(Below) In spare time, various meetings were sandwiched in between community members, EWB-MSU Team and SSAAP, specifically for special-case, atypical situations that needed attention.



SSAAP considers itself incredibly lucky to have a partnership as successful as the relationship EWB-MSU and SSAAP share; our contract began in 2013 and will end in 2017. SSAAP is hoping for an extension!



The combination of finding a team that works as hard as EWB-MSU blended with the love, concern, appreciation and open heart they have for the African people is rare; SSAAP feels tremendously lucky for having the opportunity to have shared this experience together with them – not to mention the *hundreds of thousands* of people who have been serviced by their water wells. (Below) The four completed wells drilled in August 2016 through the EWB-MSU and SSAAP partnership.





So, in short, there isn't really a way SSAAP can thank you enough, EWB-MSU, for what you have done for Simwatachela Chiefdom. You have touched the lives of people you might not ever even meet; you have given them the foundation to begin new projects, schools, provided healthier lifestyles for their great-great-grandchildren; all through the gift of *water*. The work you have done here – and continue to do – affects the Zambian people on a daily, very tangible and real basis. Dennis, know that I thank you from the depths of my being for everything you and your Teams, their families and your university, have done for the people of Simwatachela and for SSAAP. *Thank you!*

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N'gombe

Cattle: Source of livelihood, income, and prosperity for the Tonga tribe, as well a means of planting their crops. Many thanks to the second EWB Team SSAAP has had the pleasure of working with throughout the last year: the Boston University (BU) Chapter. SSAAP's Team, consisting of five Zambian members + Heather, have monitored, on a monthly basis, EWB-BU's sanitation and hygiene project in Naluja, Southern Province, Zambia in exchange for two cattle as well as their maintenance (housing structure, antibiotics, vitamins, vaccinations).



(Above) Lucy, SSAAP's first cow purchased through the EWB-BU project. She is standing outside her shelter (house), which is located behind SSAAP's Headquarters, Zambia. One cow was to be purchased every six months. So, for the year's worth of work, SSAAP was given two cattle through EWB-BU. (Below) Giving payment for the second cow to SSAAP Team Representatives. Please note the vaccinations/medication, are also a part of the cattle-rearing program.



A year's worth of very hard work has finally paid off - in the form of two cattle and everything needed to maintain them. Thank you wholeheartedly, EWB-BU, for providing this opportunity for SSAAP Representatives and their families.



Vaccinating Lucy. It typically takes 3-4 grown men to hold the large animal down long enough to inject her with vaccines.

Petros Tambo (below, left) and Royd Simusanga (below, right) – two members of SSAAP’s Team for the EWB-BU project. Team members arrive in meetings wearing their EWB-BU uniform and are enthusiastic, to say the very least, about the project. Thank you, EWB-BU, for providing this for them!



The second cow, Naluja, was given money to be purchased in July 2016. It typically takes a few months to purchase cattle in the village set-up. Both Lucy and Naluja, female, will provide milk, offspring, and farming abilities to SSAAP Representatives, their families, and indirectly the assistance will filter into the communities, providing a ripple effect of internal development within the region.



To all animal-rights activists: know that our animals in the village have a very free, very comfortable life – probably more so than the people living in the village! They graze naturally throughout the chiefdom, and unless infected with disease, are generally quite healthy. Animals in the village are rarely raised for their meat; typically, they are reared either for labor, or as a form of currency.

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Cikolo:

School. Education, therefore opportunity and expansion of one’s mind – in many ways, the most sustainable gift that SSAAP can provide the children of the regions where it serves.

SSAAP provides one-year sponsorships to orphans and vulnerable children (*bamucaale a bapengele*) in rural Simwatachela, grades 1-7, as well as year-long sponsorships to primary-aged students in Sierra Leone (grades 1-6) and teenage mothers desiring an opportunity to finish their education (secondary-school grades).



SSAAP has sponsored fourteen students to school in 2016 in Zambia (school year in Zambia is January - December), ten students to school in 2017 (payments already made in August 2016), and will sponsor at least ten more in 2018. As well, SSAAP will be providing sponsorships for school in Sierra Leone (rural Moyamba and Port Loko) for thirty primary-aged students and ten to twenty secondary school girls to re-enter school after giving birth (Sierra Leone school year is September - August).

Many, many thanks to the donors who continue to fund and sponsor this program. It means the world to the children - as well as their guardians - who receive it as a lifelong gift, as well as the most sustainable offering one can give someone else. Thank you tremendously for providing our most vulnerable members of the society with such an impacting endowment.

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Cikoloto:

SSAAP's small loan program in the rural areas is designed to provide a small source of set-up income for small businesses for women's clubs, farmers' associations, as well as individuals. SSAAP's small loan program runs on cycles of 6 months, 9 months, or one year and provides initial loans of 200 Zambian Kwacha (approximately \$20 USD) to participants. Recipients of the loan must provide three reports per cycle to inform SSAAP's donors of the progress of their loan and how the loan has helped to sustain them, their families, or their group. As well, the loan must be paid back on time. If these criteria are met, a loan is given again (second cycle) for \$40, or 400 Kwacha. For cycle three, the amount increases to \$80 or 800 Kwacha. All SSAAP loans have 0% interest rate. The reasoning behind the cycle process is to see which groups are serious and honest before SSAAP decides to invest in them. This cycling process has weeded out many individuals and groups who were not serious about returning the loan on time, nor had they provided reports. The cycling processes ensure that groups or individuals granted larger amounts of loan money are truly serious not only about the requirements of SSAAP's Loan Project, but also invested in empowering themselves and/or their respective groups.



Two recipients of the SSAAP-Zambia loan program. Loans were given in August 2016 and are due back to SSAAP by 1 July 2017. (Above, left) Matthews Siakabe has been unable to walk since he was a young boy. He was born with polio, and as a result, has immense difficulty farming and thus maintaining food for his family. The loan from SSAAP, he has indicated, will be use to open a small shop in the village where items such as buns, candles, washing paste and cooking oil are sold. The loan will provide some of the set-up money for the shop. Matthews is on Cycle One of his loan process, versus Mate Sibooli (above, right) is on Cycle Two of his loan process. He and his wife, Betty, use loan money to buy fish from the Zambezi River and sell it within the village. Mate's only son, a lieutenant in the Zambian army, age 26, died unexpectedly in Lusaka three weeks ago in a car accident on his way to fly out to Saudi Arabia. Mate, grieving considerably, informs me that the loan will also support some of the burial and funeral expenses associated with his son's death.

SSAAP has given out ten loans for the August 2016 - July 2017 cycle and hopes to give our fourteen more from July 2017 to 2018.

Thank you so much to all the donors who have invested in this project under SSAAP. The people come in numbers to apply for and receive loans through SSAAP. Thank you for providing this resource to them.

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KugwashaCikuj:

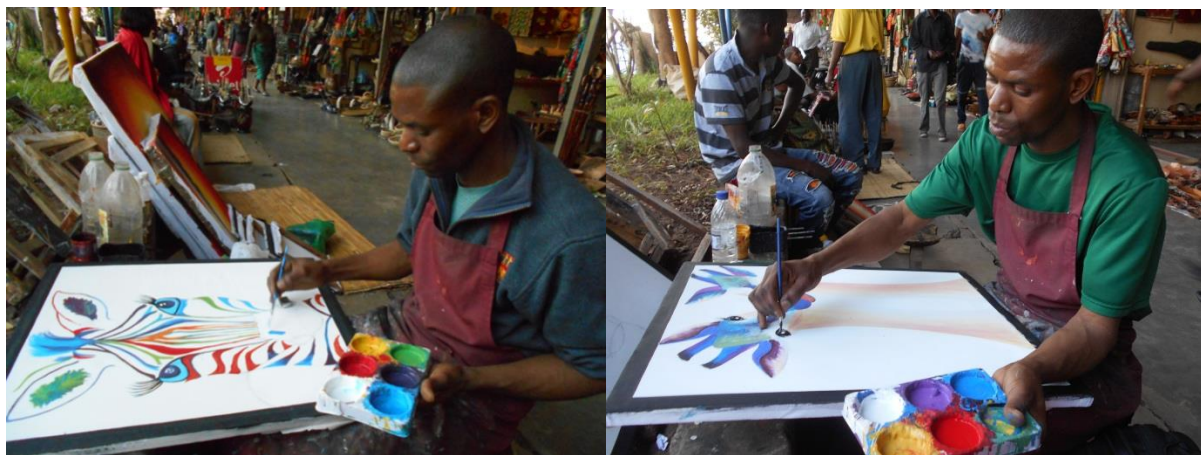
SSAAP recently opened a well-repair program for wells drilled previous to SSAAP's presence in Simwatachela (before 2004), wells which serve communities whereby the donor who gifted the well to the village did no follow-up/monitoring and evaluation [M&E] on the well, and did not stress the importance of each well having its own well committee ('*cikuj committee*'). SSAAP is working with Dr. Dennis Truax (EWB-MSU) on the possibility of such a project with his Team, as well the importance of the community helping to fund its own maintenance on the well to ensure its sustainability. So SSAAP hopes to work with EWB-MSU on such a project in the future, but in the meantime, SSAAP has its own water fund. Included in the fund is money for shipping water filters to Africa, repairing existing wells, and for other water-related projects in Zambia and Sierra Leone.



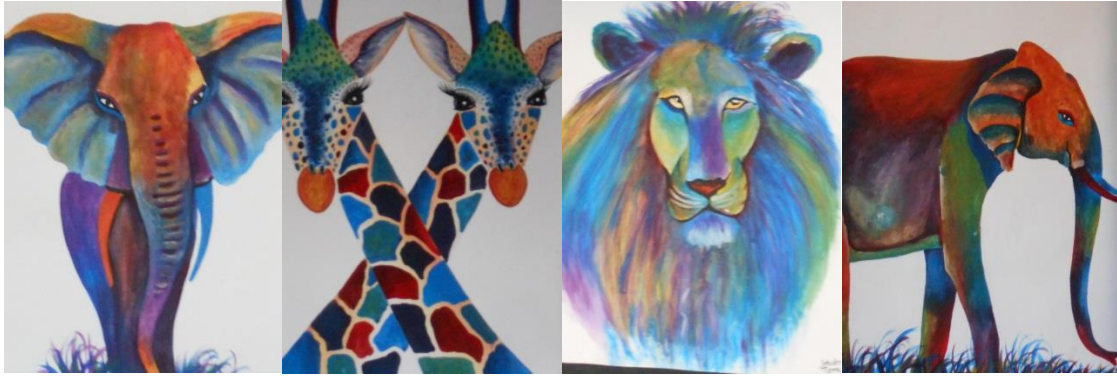
Bruce Mukalanga and his brother-in-law, Simon, from Silokomela Village, are the contacts for their village's water well that was never maintained properly. The cost of hiring a worker to fix the broken well, buy two new pipes for the well (pipes have holes in them as they are 12+ years old), and lubricant to keep the chains in the well oiled costs 900 Kwacha (~ \$90 USD). Silokomela Village has raised 500 Kwacha (~ \$50 USD) towards this, and has asked SSAAP for 400 Kwacha (~ \$40 USD) for the remaining repair costs. SSAAP approved this request on 18 August 2016.

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Kubeza / Ku painta / Ku drawing / Ma Art:



SSAAP is proud to introduce a new artisan in Zambia (Mukuni Chiefdom) to work with: Shadreck Siamate. Shadreck is a talented craftsman in his use of explosive color to bring his animals to life on canvas.



All art courtesy of Shadreck Siamate.

SSAAP thanks Mr. Siamate for its recent contract with him and looks forward to commissioning him to paint more small canvases in the future. Many thanks, as well, to all who have helped cart SSAAP art from Africa to America. We could not host SSAAP fundraisers in the States without your assistance. Thank you graciously!

SSAAP continues to work with artisans from Mosi-oa-Tunya, Zambia via Clifftone Sitali ('Cliffy', as he is affectionately referred as by my daughter and me) on wood-carving projects, organizing women's clubs in Mukuni Village, Zambia, as well finding new artisans to work with SSAAP. Clifftone meets with SSAAP partners on behalf of SSAAP when Heather is out of the country as well; he is SSAAP's Art Representative in Zambia. Thanks, Cliffy, not only for your hard work with SSAAP but also your oceanic friendship. Zambia would never be the same without you.

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SSAAP will continue in its art endeavors in Sierra Leone (November 2016 - April 2017). In the past, Sierra Leone has been an artist's heaven: beads, paintings, carvings, fabrics, musical instruments. SSAAP hopes to find artisans willing to work together, via contract, in the months to come.

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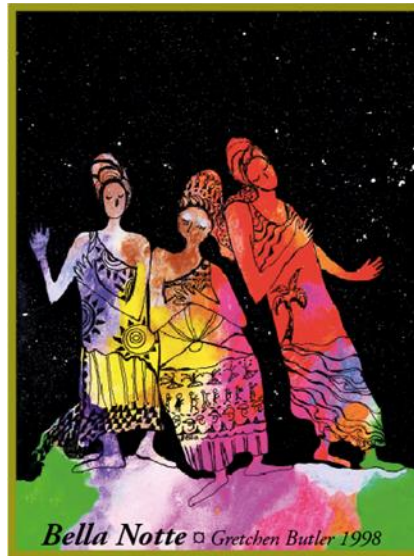
KubelekaAntoomweBakaintu:

SSAAP's work with women continues to be one of the most inspiring parts of its program - both in Zambia and in Sierra Leone. We have been fortunate not only to work with a passionate and energetic group of women's advocates, spiritualists and artisans from Oregon, U.S.A., but also with a very driven seamstress from Pennsylvania, U.S.A. in encouraging women to sew and make their own feminine hygiene products by hand. Thanks, ladies: Barb and the We'Moon staff! The impact you have made here is profound. I am also inspired, and so very grateful to be a woman and share in this movement with you, here in Africa!

We'Moon

"If Mother Earth needed a calendar, She'd use We'Moon."

We'Moon 2017 Dedication: SSAAP



Every year, we donate a portion of our proceeds to an organization bringing positive change to the world and the lives of women. We dedicate this edition of We'Moon to **Simwatachela Sustainable Agricultural and Arts Program**. SSAAP is a humanitarian rights, grassroots-based organization dedicated to equalizing the resources of the world, servicing in the most rural and remote areas of Zambia and Sierra Leone, where the need for education, clean water, health care and women's empowerment are most needed. Our donation will be directed toward ending Female Genital Mutilation in Sierra Leone. According to UNICEF, about 9 out of 10 girls and women in the country have been "circumcised," and SSAAP is working hard to educate young mothers about the dangers of this "initiation." Funds will support health-education workshops for the mothers of young girls who have not yet been cut. Additionally, with its arts initiative, SSAAP works to commission artisans in Zambia and Sierra Leone to paint, bead, sew, batik, carve and draw. We are excited to offer the work of individual artisan women in our Solstice package deals this year. Stay tuned for the opportunity to make your holiday gift giving even more meaning-full! Learn more at [ssaap.org](https://www.wemoon.org/pages/dedication). (<https://www.wemoon.org/pages/dedication>)

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Women's Sewing Workshop, August 17, 2016

25% Community Contribution from the Community required, which aids in the following aspects of the program:

- Providing lunch/food for the meeting

- Providing the venue
- Provide 50 Kwacha (~\$5) towards replenishing materials (thread, chitenge fabrics)
 - Scraps of old cloth for practicing

SSAAP Provides the following to the Community:

- Knowledge of design
- Education on uses for design to be sewed
- Scissors, needles, thread, chitenges, pins
 - Patterns

Sustainability Factor for Project:

- Women trained in late June/early July 2016 will teach more women in future!
 - SSAAP will take training to Sierra Leone, West Africa
- Creates enjoyment in women's lives that helps them in sustaining their work successfully
 - Helps them to save money on buying menstrual pads for their families in future



The women were so happy and enjoyed the workshop thoroughly; as you can see, there were too many women crammed into one venue, so in the future we are going to invite more women and spread out more – into a government school structure.



Thank you, Carrie, and everyone who supported you, to provide knowledge, resource, materials, patterns, pins, fabric, thread, scissors, needles, etc. to SSAAP for this program. All of us involved truly appreciate it!

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Nkuku Project:

Chicken-rearing project in Simwatachela: Women's empowerment has also taken place in Sikalele Community, whereby a women's club (Sikalele Women's Club) was given five chickens, vitamins, vaccinations, and antibiotics (in case of disease outbreak) in October 2014. Through their own hard work, initiative and incentive, the chickens have multiplied to 93. Ninety-three chickens for the chicken-rearing program! Congratulations to the women for being so inventive and resourceful. There is nothing more pleasing to us than people who have a desire to help themselves and are using SSAAP only as a means to start-off on their own sustainable development.

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Balima Association, Simwatachela:

Simwatachela Co-operative Farmers' Association: SSAAP has been working with this group of farmers since 2011. Lead by Nelson Kanembe, pictured below, the group works with SSAAP in order to obtain discounted fertilizer for their crops annually. The government offers a service to clubs and co-operatives working with projects registered under the government's Ministry of Home Affairs by giving discounted costs on fertilizer for their fields. In return for this benefit from SSAAP, Nelson and his co-operative pay for SSAAP's annual renewal of its registration certificate with the Zambian government (cost: 100 Zambian Kwacha annually ~ \$10). SSAAP is registered under the Zambian government as a charity organization, under the sect of Societies. By receiving fertilizer at a discounted rate, this has proven to be a benefit to many, many farmers in Simwatachala, and has also helped SSAAP to keep its registration with the government up-to-date at the local level. Once again, this gives Simwatachelans the opportunity to take initiative and incentive in the project.



Nelson Kanembe, President of the Simwatachela Co-operative Farmers' Association. The day I took this picture of him he was mortified that he had come to visit me wearing his wife's shoes. I told him the dress code in the village (or lack thereof) is one of the best parts of the village and that everyone in America would be happy to see the simplicity and absence of competitive dress in our community.

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Balla:

The ball project in Zambia was started in 2013 by the EWB-MSU Team. They bring 3 to 5 new soccer balls every time they come to Simwatachela. Since then, I have had children and youth from all ages and both genders in all parts of Simwatachela Chiefdom at my doorstep: sometimes at 5:00 in the morning, sometimes at 8:00 at night.

Interested parties must fill out applications for a ball. As well, if interested in a ball they must produce a thank you note to the donor, as well as invite SSAAP to one of its games to photograph.



Thank you, Duane, for the additional donation of the Sports Illustrated magazines. With each ball SSAAP distributes, the children also get two or three magazines. It makes their day! – thank you!



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Ma Glassa:

Glasses Program, which began in Ft. Collins, Colorado when a local company, *The Glasses Guys*, decided to donate all their eyewear to SSAAP's cause to assist those with impaired vision with eyewear. As well, the donation extends to Sierra Leone for Ebola survivors, suffering from *Uveitis*: an eye condition from inflammation of the uvea . As Uveitis can have many causes, Ebola being a disease

which decreases the effective functioning of the immune system, this can result in impaired vision or even death for Ebola survivors.

Sunglasses have been shown to help with Uveitis patients: one of the prescribed treatments for the condition is dark glasses. If you have old sunglasses you wish to discard, please contact SSAAP. Ebola survivors SSAAP works with would be elated to receive them!



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SSAAP will be in Sierra Leone for at least 6-9 months.

Serra da Leoa:

Portuguese for 'Lioness Mountains', Sierra Leone was thus named in 1462 when Portuguese explorer Pedro de Sintra revered the mountains surrounding Freetown Bay, assimilating it to lions roaring as

the waves from the sea crashed against the harbor. Later the name was changed by the British in 1787 by its British equivocal: *Sierra Leone*.

SSAAP has left Zambia until June 2017 (hence the very formal “Closed Office” sign on the door to our Headquarters in Zambia), and is revisiting its projects in Sierra Leone. Please note SSAAP-Sierra Leone works in the rural regions of two areas: Moyamba (Southern Province, Sierra Leone) and Port Loko (Northern Province, Sierra Leone) Programs are as follows, but are not limited to:

- Women’s Reproductive Health Workshops / Discussion on Health Risks Associated with FGM, many thanks again to the We’Moon for sponsoring this educational project (rural Moyamba and rural Port Loko)
- Solar light program, many thanks to Nokero Solar Light Co. for its donations to SSAAP (rural Moyamba and rural Port Loko)
 - Chicken-rearing project (rural Port Loko)
 - Pig-rearing project (rural Moyamba)
- Sponsorship of Primary-aged school children (rural Moyamba and rural Port Loko)
 - Water wells - five scheduled to be hand-dug in December 2016 (rural Moyamba)
- Sponsorship of Secondary-aged single teenage mothers to revisit their academic careers (Njagbahun, rural Moyamba)
 - School garden project (rural Port Loko)
- Women’s Empowerment Projects through sewing and soap-making (rural Port Loko and rural Moyamba)
 - Beaded jewelry, painting, batik and textiles art (Freetown, Port Loko, Moyamba)
- Musical Instruments made of indigenous materials (rural Moyamba and rural Port Loko)
 - Eyewear Program for Ebola Survivors (rural Port Loko and rural Moyamba)
- Post-Ebola Projects: workshops on stigmatization of Ebola survivors, cultural ramifications of Ebola, way forward with health care in Sierra Leone to prevent another Ebola scenario from erupting in future (rural Port Loko, rural Moyamba)

Please note that SSAAP works in partnership in both rural Port Loko as well as rural Moyamba with Grace Children’s Foundation, a local organization fighting for the rights of innocent children not to partake in the civil, and often violent issues, of their nation.



SSAAP is truly looking forward to returning to Sierra Leone to drill the five wells, specifically, which were promised and their contract signed in April 2014. Due to the Ebola outbreak, we were forced to leave Sierra Leone on August 1, 2014 and could not drill the five wells. They are first on our priority list when we return to Sierra Leone in 2016.

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Tunsiya-nsiya:



Culture. Without its culture, the sacred purpose of any society has dissolved. Culture plays a vital role in every portion of SSAAP's programs, be it art, livestock-rearing, education, water, working with women. Learning about another society's culture is synonymous with respecting that culture; this is the centerpiece of all field-based work in Africa; it is the foundation of the Federal U.S. Peace Corps, as well, and is usually the piece that goes missing when an international organization moves into an area of the developing world to work. Where many of our Western project models fail: we cannot simply cut and paste developed, western society into Africa; Africa has its own systems, and while they might not work as quickly and efficiently as ours in the USA, we must also remember that their civilization has been functioning for thousands of years whereas ours: hundreds, at most. Time is different in Africa, family is different in America, conditions are different in Africa, and relativity of all things is vastly different than in America.



SSAAP's advantage has always been the blessing of being able to live in the rural areas where it works. Thanks again, U.S. Peace Corps, for my training to live healthily and happily in an African village. My daughter and I both speak ciTonga fluently (although hers is much better than mine), and she speaks Krio in Sierra Leone, her tribal root (she is a Krio-American). The best part of our life in Africa, without hesitation, as well as the most successful element in our work, has always been our location: living in the rural village, living with the people SSAAP serves. I wouldn't have it any other way! Life in the village is special to us in a way nothing else is.



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Kuzundana:

Politics. Recent Presidential Voting/Elections. Although SSAAP is a non-political entity, awareness of political situations in both African nations SSAAP serves (Zambia and Sierra Leone) is necessary to ensure both project success as well as our family's safety and security.



It is currently being disputed whether or not our former president, Edgar C. Lungu, will be the president of our nation for the next five years. While the BBC claims: *'MrLungu scraped to victory with 50.35% of the vote'*, the win was marginal, and the Lusaka Times reports: *'UPND President Hakainde Hichilema has accused the country's election managers, the Electoral Commission of Zambia, of deliberately not providing the G12 in Lusaka so as to live room for manipulation of results.'* H.H., as the Zambians call Hakainde Hichilema, representing the UPND (opposing party to Edgar C. Lungu's party: PF, or Patriotic Front) took the case to the Electoral Commission of Zambia.

It is rumored that the Zambian elections were rigged. It is rumored that the Lusaka Air Force filled the ballot box; i.e. there were more ballots for Lusaka than there was Lusaka population. It was rumored that a Presiding Officer was hung, then the incident framed as "suicide" after being forced to assist in rigging the elections and refusing to keep quiet about doing so. Living in a village, I am unable to discern rumor from fact. We are told Zambia is currently acting without a president. I cannot confirm that any of this is fact or fiction, as I cannot find much of anything credible about the elections in Zambia on the web. So I am just reporting on rumors I have heard, not affirming them as true or false.

Through the dense moss of rumor and cobweb of grapevine lies the only thing I am sure of is that the end of President Obama's service as President of the U.S.A. is a greater loss to Africa than it is to America, perhaps. The Africans revere him as their president, and appreciate him more than America does. In many ways, Barack Obama has been a leader to the African people - and an inspiration, quite similar to Nelson Mandela - throughout his eight years of service to the world. The Africans adulate Obama; they claim his as theirs, as Obama's father was Kenyan. Africa looks to America for its sense of justice, democracy and liberty.

I have heard more people talk about 'The American President Obama' in the last two weeks, and that they felt better knowing they could call on him for help if things got too bad here, post-elections in Zambia, than I have in years. They are relying on him for help and guidance with what has happened in our nation. And they look to America in order to define what democracy is. They honor America as the archetypal democracy in which their African republics striving for democracy should emulate.

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My best female friend from college, Melissa, is an advocate of the work we are doing in Africa. She always reads SSAAP's newsletters to her children. Her daughter decided for her school project, to construct an African house, with clay livestock, complete with a snake and the door to the hut – as well as the people's clothing – made from authentic African *chitenge* fabric she bought at a SSAAP fundraiser.

Melissa, tell your beautiful little girl thank you for inspiring us! It is things like this, the blending of cultures (America with Africa) and the trading of information and resources between them that keeps SSAAP thriving. Thank you!

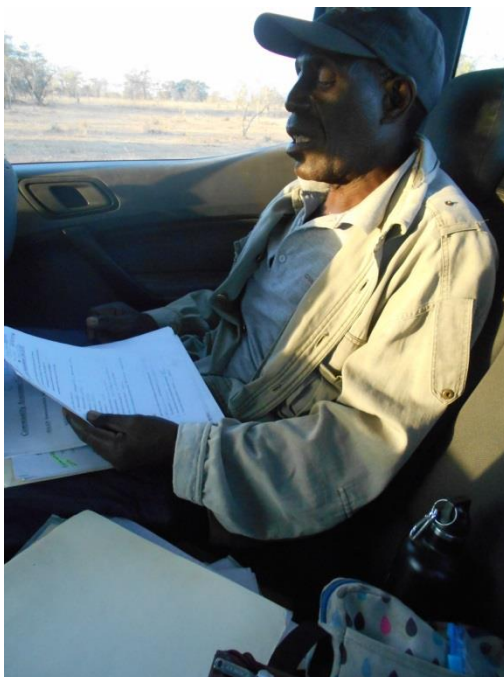
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Best moment for SSAAP in 2016: Occurred when Tom (white shirt), Vera (his wife, purple shirt) and their community (Sikalele) got a *cikuju*, a water well, after patiently waiting for the last year and visiting SSAAP's Headquarters two to three times every week to verify that they were still receiving

the water well. Tom was relieved beyond words when EWB-MSU drilled his well on 2 August 2016. He couldn't, in fact, even contain his joy.

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My African father, as well, SSAAP's lead counterpart for the agricultural sect of SSAAP-Zambia. On the entirety of the African continent, there isn't a person who knows as much about wells as Gibson does. After living on his land for the last 12 years, there isn't much I can get past him. My daughter is named after his second-born daughter, Radiance. In the above photo, we scramble to read through as many of SSAAP's CAT's (*Community Assessment Tool*) as we can before the sun sets, in order to find the next site assessment for a well.

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The nucleus of our lives is always focused on its accessible heart: the natural, simple beauty in everyday living. And this is the best part of Africa!



The vividness of a bright yellow bouquet of flowers in the middle of the barren African bush, the joy of children sharing food together, the blood mysteries within an African bushfire. Africa, the longer it settles into the marrow of ones bones, the more it becomes the best part of who he is.

So, in Africa, you learn to take the good with the bad – here, there is truly so much of both; Africa is all the raw beauty but the incredible darkness of humanity, of Mother Earth, and the paradox that in the end: *less is more.*

I am convinced that once Africa gets inside of you it never leaves you. If you have ever had malaria, even once in your life, the blood banks in the U.S. don't want your blood. There are traces of the merozoites in your body forever; you can never get rid of it fully. This is a perfect analogy of Africa itself.

If you have ever visited Africa, then perhaps you know what I am referencing. It holds an intangible potency unlike anywhere else on earth.

The obscene poverty of Africa, contrasted with assorted abysmal leaders of republics who have no intention of ever creating a society in which the village is respected, a healthy middle class exists, and everyone has enough food and clean water, might seem like a plethora of reasons to give up.

But I believe the obstacles are a motivation to keep working harder. I am thankful for SSAAP; this project has provided a vessel in which I can channel my love, passion, and energy.

Development doesn't discriminate, nor is it for privileged individuals; it is for the masses. And it is their right. 'Development' in African nations has traditionally meant that the presidents and his cabinet of ministers 'develop' whereas those in abject, arresting poverty are ignored. As this is not a sustainable development model, nor is this archaic model applicable to the modern era of equality we are living in – regardless of where in the world we might exist. Universally-speaking, we cannot evolve on a grander scale until we recognize the inherent equality all humanity bears, and our differences in culture as an experience, a gift for learning and growing.

The village is the soul of any nation, and until it is uplifted, the nation will remain weak. When the most destitute members of a society are given the resources to improve their lives, it uplifts the entire society. This is grassroots value system, as well as U.S. Peace Corps philosophy.

And, for those of you who know me personally, it just wouldn't be me unless Gandhi found his way into one of my newsletters:

*"It's my firm belief that it is Love that sustains the earth.
There only is life where there is Love.
Life without Love is death.
Love is the reverse of the coin in which the obverse is Truth.
Hatred ever kills; Love never dies. Such is the vast difference between the two.
What is obtained by Love is retained for all time...
The duty of a human being is to diminish hatred and to promote Love."*

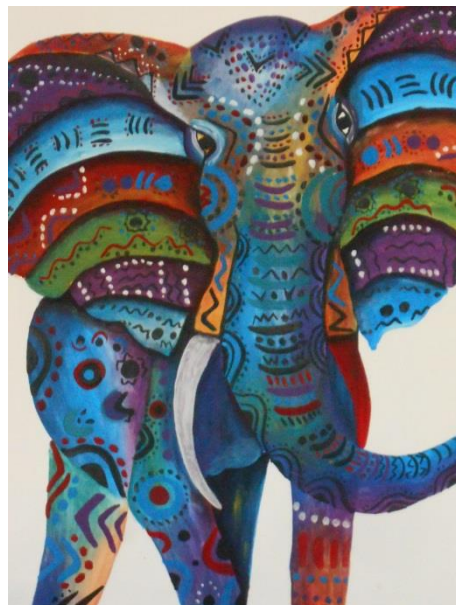
*~ M.K. Gandhi, "Universal Love [Ahimsa]";
Ahmedabad, India*



The sustainability of my life's work in Africa: *my daughter's happiness*. Her cat gave birth to 4 more kittens in July 2016. She was so happy to share them with our visitors in August 2016.



SSAAP is a small, simple project working consciously to provide resources to people in very basic, yet life-altering ways: through water, nutrition skills, education, and other projects the people present that are needed. We are open to all ideas. We strive to work in partnership with Africans so as to better share the abundant resources of the world, rather than the typical NGO structure of “us” giving to “them”. I often tell the African people that Westerners also need assistance. And we may, one day, call on them for their help with our communities. I ask them: “How can you help us? Will it be through your powers of resilience and survival, your ability to live in harmony with Mother Earth, or your ability to deal with the extreme losses in your life with humility and strength? There is much that we can learn, and need, from you.”



Painting by Shadreck Siamate

SSAAP is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, registered with the IRS. Please contact us if you would like to learn more about any of our programs, wish to donate your time, talent, or treasure, or come to visit us in the field sometime.

*

"There is no passion to be found playing small - in settling for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living."

~ Nelson Mandela



Thank you for reading! Thank you for your valued time.