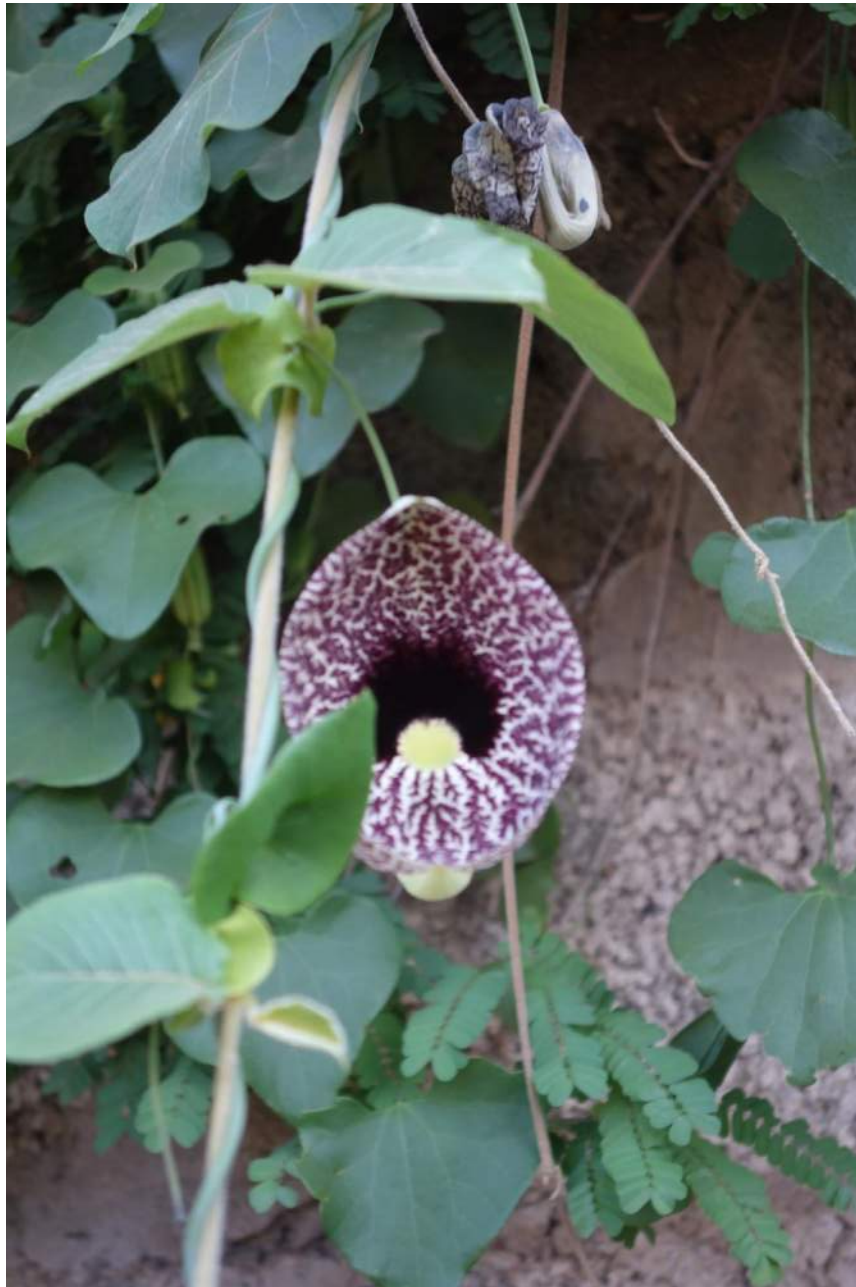
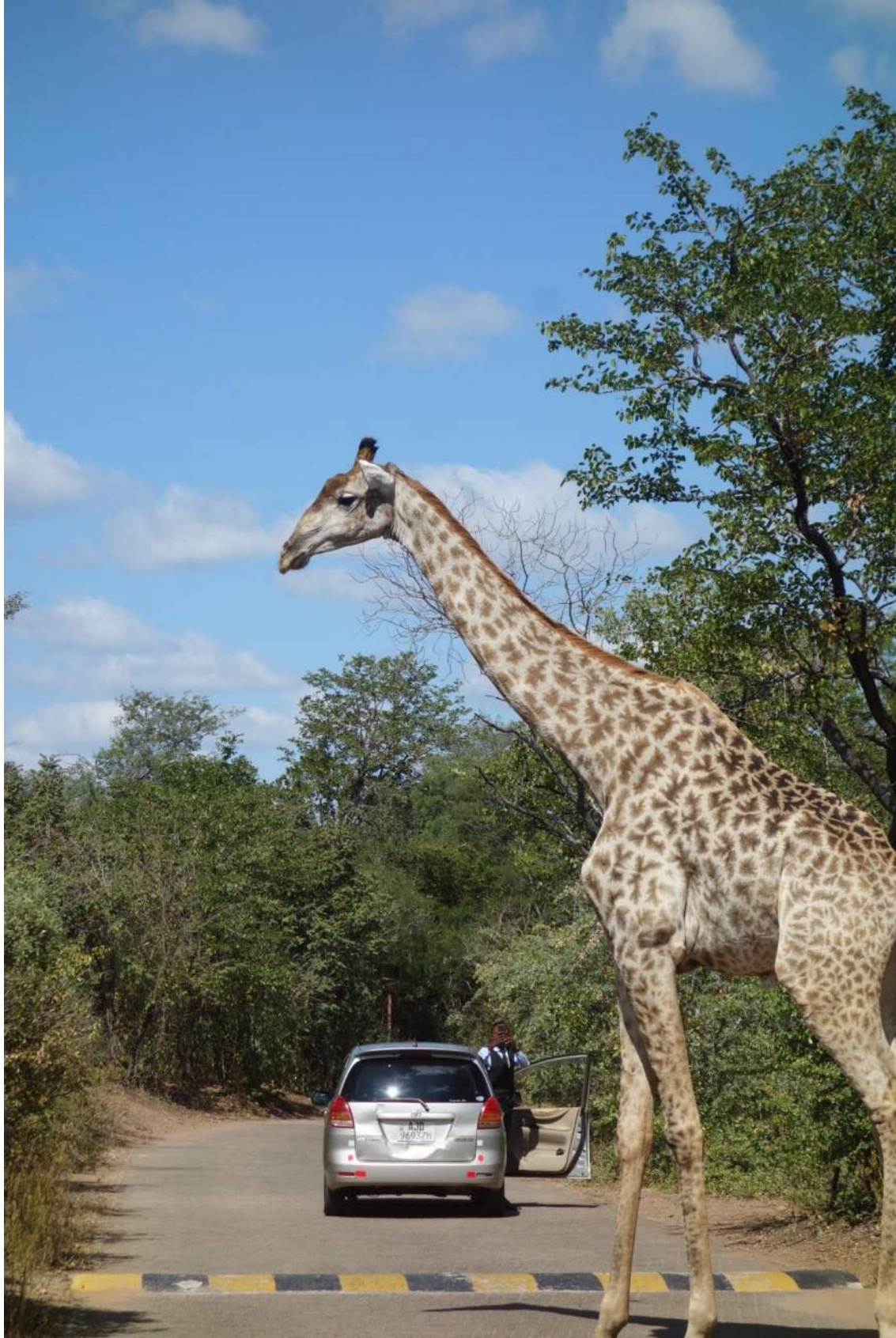


*SSAAP Quarterly Newsletter*

*Edition XXXIII: Summer 2021; Zambia*



*To Jim and Lyn, SSAAP Board members Divine. Should we all be so lucky to work with professionally the same people we Love so dearly. The merging of business with Love equals family. Thank you oceanically.*



## *Art: Creativity + Action*



SSAAP Quarterly Newsletters are typically saturated with information regarding our agricultural projects: water and seed-harvesting, animals and micro-loans. For a change, this newsletter will draw attention to the second ‘A’ in SSAAP: Simwatachela Sustainable Agricultural and Arts Program.

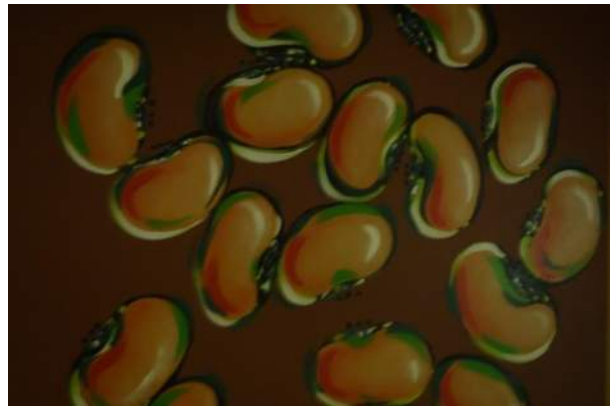


I tend to focus so much on water and agriculture-related issues (animal-rearing/nutrition/seed cultivation) that I leave such a large part of our project muted: this is Art.

My 11-year old daughter, Radiance, and I were lucky enough to indulge in the *Art* sect of SSAAP in March and April 2021. We spent this time working with the artisans on crafting opportunities, and are prepared for future SSAAP fundraisers when we come back to the U.S.A. in 2023! The crafts we have to present are nothing short of divine, and bring deep joy whenever we look at them. We work primarily on the Art sect of SSAAP in Mukuni Chiefdom and are very fortunate to be lodged, free of cost, by the chiefdom itself, as we have worked with Mukuni Chiefdom for over a decade. Our lodging in town has been Mukuni Chiefdom’s (courtesy of his secretary) 25% community contribution to SSAAP. In March, we stayed in a luxury Chinese hotel; in April, we camped out in a safari tent! We are grateful to report that our lodging cost us, for two months, \$0, and we made progressive strides towards the improvement of our Art Program for SSAAP (it’s second ‘A’), which is often neglected by SSAAP as we have such a heavy focus on the Agricultural Program for SSAAP (its first ‘A’); hence, it feels mighty refreshing to have given more attention to the Art sect of SSAAP ~ for a fresh change! Art is one of the centerpieces of SSAAP.



African art is largely Nature-based and Nature-inspired. What I have found in Zambia is that most of the very impressive art is inspired by Victoria Falls, thus many of the artisans have grown up around the Falls itself as well the gorges surrounding it.



## *Fine Arts: Curios, Baskets, Crafting*

My daughter and I spend a large chunk of time in Livingstone in March and April 2021 working on the art sect of SSAAP ~ this entailed a lot of time at Victoria Falls with the artisans, even visiting the villages where the trees are cut to create these fabulous art pieces.



What SSAAP intends to do is, year after year, provide a sustainable market for these artisans as well for their unique and creative crafts. We purchase the art from the craftsmen/craftswomen, and take it to the U.S.A. for our fundraisers for SSAAP. Proceeds from the fundraisers go back into the project, so that in the

future we can continue to purchase crafts as often as possible whenever we are in Zambia, or Sierra Leone, or our third project country site (to be announced).



The constant sale of art produces a ‘recycling’ effect back into the project. It guarantees sustainability for the artisans, as every time they see me, they know I will purchase art from them. My visitors for the project help the art sect of SSAAP by helping to lug goods overseas so that we can sell art at SSAAP fundraisers. As well, a few overweight bags for my daughter and I to bring the art home never hurt anyone. 😊

The Art Mission of SSAAP is four-pronged:

1. To deliver those living overseas a taste of Africa through art; sensory overload from colors, smells, and the materials used to make African art provide a fleshy education of how Africans feel about their tactile environment, as the art-concepts are generally very warm and cheerful using bright and attractive colors and patterns;
2. To provide local African artisans with a sustainable craft market overseas; to ensure constant business for local artisans despite world-tragedies such as COVID or even through economic crisis that they should have a market for their exceptional goods;
3. To recycle funds generated through sale of art back into the project so that SSAAP can provide a sustainable market to local artisans (both male and female, individual and groups);
4. To preserve the indigenous culture, represented in its finest light, through art.



SSAAP has two beLoved partners (*We’Moon* of Wolf Creek, Oregon, *Project Hartwork* of Denver, Colorado) who work beside us to sustain the livelihood of not only the precious crafts but also the gifted artisans who create them.



On April 9, 2021, we visited Sichilobe Village in Mukuni Chiefdom, where the trees are cut down to create the crafts themselves.



Many local trees decorate Sichilobe Village whereby most of the crafts are made from these trees: *mukwa*, *mopani*, *teak*, *zebrawood* to specify only a few.







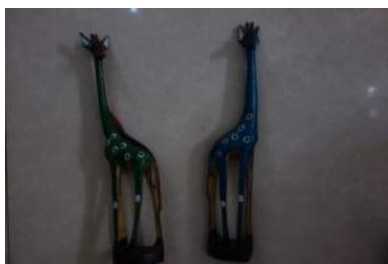


Sichilobe Village is very close to the Zambezi Gorge, where the mighty Zambezi flows.



During our meeting on April 9, 2021 at Sichilobe Village, the local people were expressing to me what a difficulty they have farming; maize is an especially difficult crop for them (our staple food in Zambia is maize-meal, or ‘*nshima*’) but – unlike in Simwatachela Chiefdom – the root of the problem cannot be traced back to difficulties with rainfall. In Sichilobe Village, the problem is with monkeys (‘*sokwe*’) who live in the Zambezi Gorge and come up in the early morning to ravage their crops. The people are growing mostly sorghum (you can see the sorghum crop in the backdrop of the above photo, dry as it is now harvest-time in April) as, to my understanding, it is more difficult for the monkeys to steal the sorghum than the maize, so they have specifically planted sorghum for this reason.

They shared with me that as agriculture is a problem for them, and has been for centuries due to their location alongside the Zambezi Gorge, they depend solely on the sale of crafted art products (‘*curios*’) for their livelihood.



When I was young, I wanted to be an artist. I was never any good at drawing, and I failed miserably in Art School when I tried to be a Fashion Designer when I was 19-20 years old at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio, U.S.A. Over the last twenty years, I have come to see that the art I was seeking to create was not a textile, or a canvas; the piece of Art is me.

I am the Art that I seek.

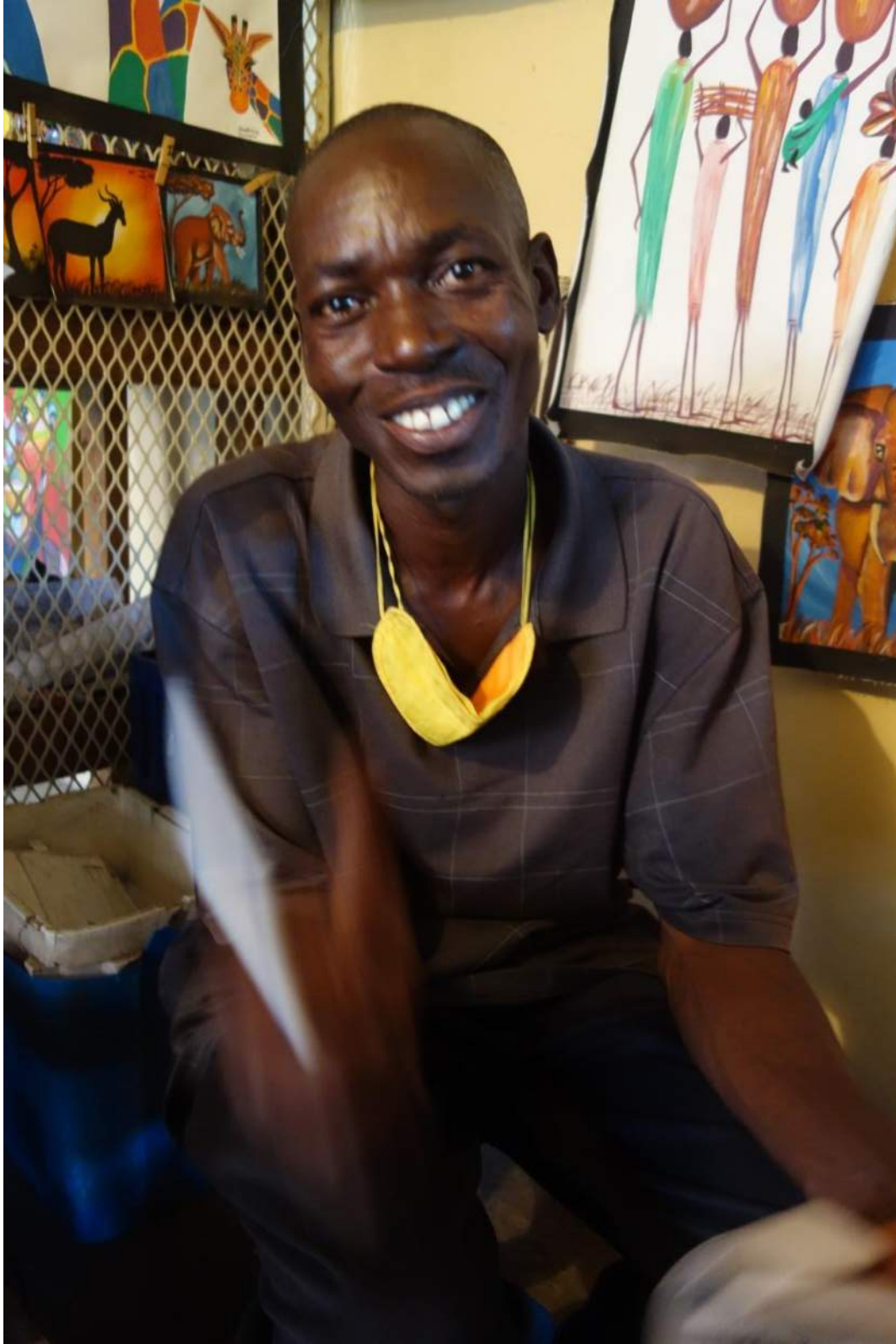
With this realization, the world of Art has come alive and I think I see more colors than I used to. The cones in my eyes have changed and there is a myriad of colors available to me that I never saw before – soft gradations in purples, blues, yellows, reds. There are colors that don't even have a name, all of them found in Nature.



Since I cannot create my own [external, material] art, let me empower and enable others who are skilled in doing so to share their skills and talent with the world ~ through SSAAP.







I want our work here to have profound impact; therefore, I must do it with profound meaning.





### *Musical Arts: Spirit Release*

It is my intention to link some of my musician friends in Lusaka, Zambia to some of my musician friends in Freetown, Sierra Leone. I believe project is partnership, and linking people, and bridging ties and talents for the good of the greater scope ~ not just on an individual basis. Again, I hunger to return to Sierra Leone so that I may meet with SSAAP's musician friends and partners there to see how best they might collaborate with my musician friends in Lusaka. Nothing would bring SSAAP greater joy than to spread good music to our ears from multiple geographical locations in Africa, various cultures and perspectives, and see how the differences could come together to bring the very edge to music which is what lifts us.

## *News from the Animal Lady*

*“... the way that animals are depended upon in the village, and the way they are treated in the village, presents a huge discrepancy. They are abused, yet relied upon so deeply. This is one of the controversies of Africa: the way rural village folk treat their animals: a myriad of abuses ranging from not feeding them or giving them water, to beating them with sticks and whips. The holistic being of the animal is lost, and it has become a slave to the rural farmer. This needs to change if Africa is ever to get out of its poverty. Or, it can continue treating animals as lesser beings, and remain in a state of eternal and infinite poverty.”*

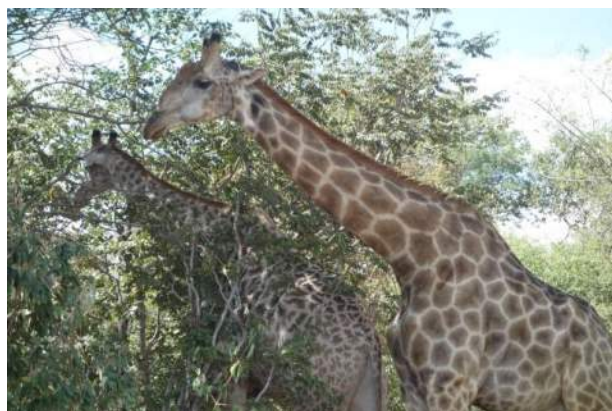
*~Radiance Gaia Amara Cumming, who dreams to be an animal doctor/healer when she ‘grows up’*



Radiance's dream is to work with animals in Africa (cows, goats, sheep, chickens, camels, donkeys, cats, dogs) if they are suffering or sick: to nourish them and provide a home for them, and food. If they are not sick, but likely being abused by their owners, to sensitize local people regarding the inherent rights animals – like human beings – have, simply through their pure existence. And that ownership of an animal yields responsibility to take care of it ~ not to enslave, abuse, and take advantage of it.



It is incredible, the link between human beings and animals, and how they learn to live together – or they simply cannot co-exist together in the same space. There is much we can learn from them, when our eyes, minds and hearts are alert to the necessity of their existence, in the same devout space as we regard our own.





At *Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park*, on the outskirts of Livingstone town, we have such a luxury here of seeing so many animals in their raw, base environments – their natural, unaltered habitats.



We have learned from the local people different things about all the animals: not to get too close to zebras, as they kick. Giraffes kick as well, but it takes much more to irritate a giraffe than a zebra.

Elephants are a different story altogether. They regard many human beings as a threat, as predators, and for this reason every year, around the Zambezi Gorge and other areas where the Zambezi River runs, thus too elephant roam, many people are mangled to death by elephants. Their tusks rip apart the human being's intestines while their trunks – strong and heavy – hold him down. Animal/human co-existence is precious, and the more we learn about animals the deeper our respect for them grows, as well our understanding of their boundaries, limitations, and comfort zones when found in their natural habitats.





*Ours is a world here whereby animal lives beside man, and for the most part: man respects animal.*







Radiance is beginning her 'Radiant Street Beasts' Program now! She is stitching little pillows with ciTonga and English words embroidered on them that she intends to sell at our next SSAAP fundraiser for \$1 < x < \$4 – or whatever the buyer wants to pay. People can even have them for free, she says, but what she intends to do is start a small collection, a fund under the umbrella of SSAAP, for her program. Proceeds from the small pillow sales will go towards: food for the animals, paying someone to take care of them in our absence (when we are in U.S.A. or in Sierra Leone), paying someone to catch animals from off the streets in various Zambian towns, and medicine for their vaccinations. We deworm them ourselves via injections every 3 months – deworming (using *Ivermectin*) and giving them vitamins. Every year we pay a veterinary officer from Kalomo town to come to our home to vaccinate the cats with a preventative dosage of Rabies vaccine; the vaccination requires refrigeration which we do not have here in the village. Please note that none of our animals are spayed or neutered and we have no intention of doing either. Nature takes care of population control here in the village ~ without any need for human intervention.





I use my life as a school ~ and encourage my daughter: age 11 going on age 80 (she is an old, African grandmother to me with a fire temper but a heart equally as warm) an education in humanity, an education in culture, an education in animals, an education in science, an education in Art, an education in Nature ~ every experience, every opportunity, has the innate power to give me life experience, to grow my wisdom. Therefore my school, and shall I say my daughter's school, has no walls, no boundaries, no country. Everyone she meets is her teacher. That's the best we can all be for each other: teachers, students.



This historical time, as it will be remembered deeply into the future: 'The Era of COVID-19', has taught me to be Loving to everyone which includes that each person is entitled to his/her own Truth. There is no 'right' or 'wrong' in the Universe and this truth is being painfully shown to those who cannot accept that this is a time without a compass; no one has the answers now. Not the doctor, not the virologist, not the politician, not the scientist, not the farmer, not the economist, maybe not even the monk - there is no 'expert'. Or, we are all experts in our own experience. No one is wrong or right - we all just differ. We differ *because we are meant to*, not because there is a problem. The problem arises from a lack of compassion. This is a time to listen to others, not judge them.

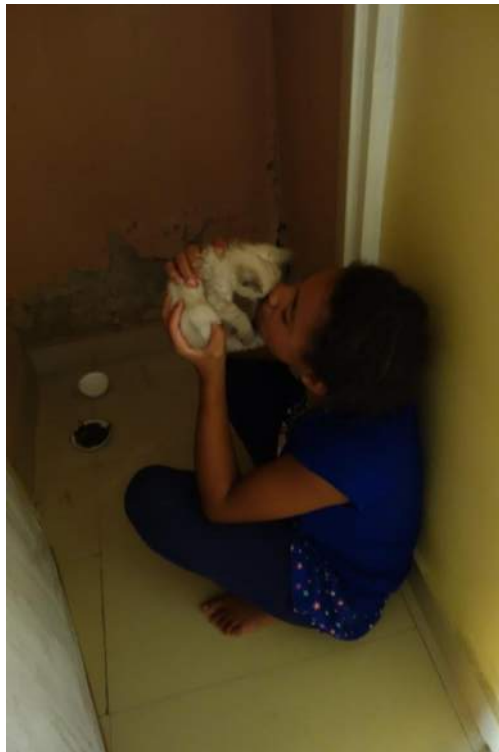
I learn most about myself by listening to others. And recently I have discovered that the more I open myself to others, the less it matters to me if they open themselves to me or not. In other words, my freedom and the emancipation of my spirit comes through honoring myself – even if no one else does or will. The more we listen to others, the more we gain perspective that our own experience and situation gives us our perceptions, and that we cannot judge another simply because his or hers do not mirror our own.



If I ever taught my daughter anything, let it be how to treat someone who has nothing to offer her equally to someone else who could offer her the world. Mystics come in unusual wrappings. Let her treat an illiterate man equally to a literate one; let her Love a cat as much as a human being as much as a leaf as much as a blade of river grass as much as a lethal snake; everything has something to give back. Even a disease or an illness or a death has great powers of illumination within its tragedy – if the instruments of transcendence are used to activate this rebirth.



One of Radiance’s no-cost SSAAP projects is taking in animals from off the streets of Lusaka and Livingstone and bringing them to the village. She wants to do this in every SSAAP-Africa country, and hire someone to look after the animals when we are not residing in that country at that time: to feed them and make sure they have water. She named her program: “*Radiant Street Beasts*”, as she and I always Lovingly refer to our cats as: *beasts*. We figure that there are no tougher cats in Africa than those that have scrounged around the streets, being beaten and kicked as so many Africans despise cats (we figure this has cultural implications with witchcraft, locally termed: ‘*bulozi*’). And there is no better home to give any cat than the village. The village provides an exponentially-better life for an animal, as it is free to roam as it wishes through the bush, rather than surviving off scraps on the streets and being beaten by those living in towns. We do not neuter or spay the animals as there is no need here; Nature takes care of population control in the village. When we left the village in March 2021 to go to town, we had 11 cats. When we returned the first week of May 2021, we found only 6 had survived. Three had been killed, and three had been chased away by the alpha-male (Tiger) who we had brought up here at our home, and over time has chased away every mature male cat from our cat family, which is 100% lion behavior. I have a theory that all animals living in the bush revert back to Nature in its rawest form, without human intervention and domestication – no matter how hard we try. Nature always wins.



An Indonesian lady we studied with on our course in Nonviolence in India (2017/2018) was a vegetarian; she told me that everyone in her family was an avid meat-eater, but she herself could not eat meat. When I asked her why, she said: *“Because I don’t want to fear animals. If I eat animals, which means I harm them and kill them, then I have a reason to fear them. But if I don’t harm them, they would have no reason to harm me – so that is why I cannot eat them. I want to live peacefully with animals.”*



When we were back in the village in May 2021, I was putting things away in one of our guest houses: the circle guest house, where we keep a lot of our storage things when we don't have visitors. As I walked to the door of the guest house, surrounded by exquisite African bush, a grey snake slithered away from me. It moved quietly into the bush, swaying long grasses as it disappeared away from me. It left with such peace, that I was not afraid. I believe I called out to my daughter, but she didn't hear me. It was just me, and the snake.



I have not forgotten the words of my Indonesian friend. Although I do not have the willpower to refuse meat, though in many ways I believe eating animals is against our human nature, it is a part of my diet I grew up on. What I remembered, in the wisdom of her words, was our interaction with animals. They are not here for our purpose; rather, we live separately and should do so with purity of intention. Had I called for an African to come and help me hack the snake to death, as I have done in the past, what would come to my child and I in the future? Snakes do not like human beings, and in fact leave them undisturbed if not first



disturbed by them. And so the snake went its way, and I went mine. A strange peace filled me throughout the day; I cannot describe what this was, only that I felt safer in leaving the snake alone than I would have having killed it ~ as is the way Africans in the bush live with snakes: they kill them. Perhaps I will have more luck with snakes if I honor them rather than attack them. They have just as much right to the African bush as I do. I have changed the way I think of protection. I don't think protection exists on the material plane as we know it, but rather, in a higher space where our intentions protect us more than anything else.



When we say we Love animals, what does this mean? Do we Love the animals most convenient to Love ~ those which will not harm us? Those that sleep in our beds with us at night, or that we can cuddle? How unconditional is Animal Love? These are the questions I ask my daughter on a regular basis. She claims to Love all animals.

*“What about the crocodile?”* I challenge her. I always like to do this ~ keep her on her toes, as she does me.

She smiles. *“I am not scared of animals like you are, Mom. Animals... they are like people. Some are easier to Love than others, but all deserve to be respected and Loved.”*





*Simwatachela, Zambia:* The road that leads us home...

Some of the communities SSAAP serves use the potholes on this road, during the rainy season, to fetch water. Then when the rains end, they walk anywhere from 2 to 20 km for a water well (*'cikuju'* in our local language). Just the other day, someone came to me and said that SSAAP was the only project that could help people in this chieftom with a water well. *"If you want a water well, find SSAAP,"* was what he said: *"No one Loves us like SSAAP does."*



## *Adult Education & Literacy Program: Zambia-2021*

We are alive as a dot in the rhythm of time, and in its circular (non-linear) state: we have a part to play. It is a heavy part ~ a role that nothing else and no one else could fill but us. We matter; what we do on this planet – it matters. How we treat one another – which in many ways is all we have on this planet – matters.



A Zambian friend of mine said to me the other day: “*Our schools in Zambia train us to remember – but not how to think.*” That concept, profound to me, made me realize two things: (1.) It is the role of every school to encourage a student how to think, to teach him to do so, and to provide a safe space for him to have freedom of thought, and (2.) our schools in Sierra Leone seem much more advanced than that of Zambia. For years I have been trying to contemplate *why*.

\*

## *Adult Education Program*



The women begin to crowd, awaiting their turn for enrollment for the Adult Education & Literacy Program. SSAAP is serving 423 women to return to school: mothers, grandmothers, and great-grandmothers. The program is running at four schools in Simwatachela Chiefdom, Zambia.

## **Mukamba Basic School Adult Education Program Enrollment**

Each student pictured is wearing her *chitenge* (African fabric) school uniform provided by SSAAP. One pattern for all! You will also note that there are some students < age 35. The program is for students above age 35, but a few of these women were 32 or 33 or 34 and so I made some exceptions to my own rule. Here is a sampling of some of the women sponsored for our SSAAP-Adult Education Program.



*Alice Kaanza, age 68*



*Angela Sotoka, age 42*



*Elizabeth Kabanga, age 73*



*Judith Chiimika, age 40*



*Emelda Chiyeema, age 35*



*Lovinah Mateyo, age 52*



*Eunice Mateyo, age 43*



*Dorica Kabanga, age 50*



*Efinah Kabanga, age 38*



*Shelly Mugomba, age 57*



*Ruth Magomba, age 42*



*Sabina Simabula, age 45*



*Ronica Siakoobe, age 53*



*Jane Siankope, age 56*



*Beatrice Kabanga, age 50*



*Marg Folokwe, age 57*



*Mary Mangwanda, age 50*



*Rosah Siesamu, age 62*



*Nancy Muuluka, age 35*



*Makesy Muleya, age 33*



*Mary Sibwaaya, age 52*



*Mentor Kasusuli, age 38*



*Gineva Zalu, age 51*



*Eshery Kabanga, age 39*



*Gineva Chali, age 46*



*Fanely Kanjolo, age 37*



*Racheal Kanjolo, age 33*



*Vaines Chyluka, age 62*



*Eucred Manchisi, age 33*



*Alice Mweembe, age 39*



*Jane Mateyo, age 58*



*Memory Sianamalembe, age 32*



*Beatric Chikumba, age 50*



*Cathren Sibajane, age 44*



*Felisy Selebeka, age 36*



*Jane Musaango, age 71*



*Moline Syansise, age 44*



*Etinala Ngaaya, age 58*



*Phanety Kasembe, age 39*



Memory Sianamalembe was burned, by accident, in a fire on her family's compound when she was age 3. She never remembers walking, as her whole life she has had a false leg. For this reason, because she is handicapped, she has never entered school and does not know how to read and write.





Memory is very much looking forward to this opportunity to learn to read and write!



The people in the rural areas, specifically the women, receive so little opportunities that something like the Adult Literacy Program is of such magnitude to them that some women were even dancing and singing. In short, SSAAP has provided for them an opportunity to make profound change in their lives: introduction to the world of reading and writing. Above, Ruth Magomba dances her joy at the abundant opportunity this project has provided.

*Jokwe Basic School Adult Education Program Enrollment*



*Jester Nsumo, age 52*



*Jane Sialamo, age 52*



*Christine M. Mujuku, age 57*



*Mary Siatontola, age 55*



*Lydia Sibooli, age 52*



*Edina Nkomponi, age 54*



*Given M. Siavuwa, age 45*



*Chyrsanthia Dumbe, age 41*



*Queen Nsumo, age 57*



*Mildren Mweemba, age 24*



*Gredes Mweemba, age 32*



*Jessie Makowa, age 63*

*\*Mildren Mweemba is underage for the program by over a decade. A few of the other women, as you will see, SSAAP made exceptions to the "age 35 and over" rule for the program: those who are in their early '30s. Mildren, however, is a great exception as she is so young. However, her story is exceptional. She is a personal friend of mine, and carries herself with dignity and self-respect. She is an uncommon beauty in our village: inside and out. She can not read nor write, as she only finished grade 5; her father died when she was 10 years old. She has been active in a number of SSAAP's other programs, is always willing to help out at the SSAAP Headquarters, and therefore we wanted to help her despite her young age. The program is truly for older, mature women; however, given her background, Mildren was forced to grow up too soon and is very old for her years. \**



*Aidah Mujuku, age 55*



*Edina Sioni, age 50*



*Lenma Sikaale, age 53*



*Catherina Ndawana, age 41*



*Gertrude Chapa, age 38*



*Belindah Pukeni, age 45*



*Dorica Muzungu, age 59*



*Junita Balla, age 52*



*Mercy Dolopo, age 33*



*Jelita Simasiku, age 41*



*Mutinta Jalabani, age 38*



*Cynthia Siana, age 31*



*Brendah Sinan'gombe, age 43*



*Lister Nkembo, age 35*



*Leya Sikaale, age 60*



*Ronivers Sianjina, age 56*



*Brenda Njenene, age 44*



*Emoelda Makoba, age 43*



*Esinati Siyesamu, age 62*



*Rachael Siyesamu, age 76*



*Harriety Sianchapa, age 56*



*Kester Simukabe, age 42*



*Medis Munanku, age 43*



*Jane Sialano, age 52*



*Patrisya Muchayu, age 56*



*Roster Simanyengwe, age 57*



*Florence Namafuka, age 56*



*Petronella Taulu, age 38*



*Eunice Mudenda, age 43*



*Olivia Makowa, age 39*



*Patience Makowa, age 34*



*Hildah Makowa, age 47*



*Anita Siamafumba, age 44*



*Edina Meleki, age 34*



*Christina Sianzele, age 53*



*Ireen Sikwelukuba, age 46*



*Lockner Njebe, age 53*



*Rosa Sianjina, age 53*



*Mainesy Siasulwe, age 36*



*Gilenda Sinaankwe, age 31*



Each woman is given a small cardboard card with her day to bring water for SSAAP on it. This 25% system is also what SSAAP uses for its Microloan Program, and so some women who participate in both programs have two cardboard cards!

Some of the women take the program so seriously that they bring their NRC cards, or *National Registration Cards*, with them to SSAAP's Office to register for school!

### *Sibooli Community School Adult Education Program Enrollment*



*Peggy Milando, age 43*



*Virginia Mudenda, age 43*



*Cathren Siakeengo, age 40*



*Eva Mulapani, age 52*



*Lineti Mukalanga, age 36*



*Selina Chaambwa, age 54*



*Wesco Mudenda, age 41*



*Belvine Mudenda, age 43*



*Glenna Sinan'gombe, age 34*



*Dougas Mudenda, age 48*



*Mercy Mudenda, age 43*



*Alice Kanyumbwe, age 61*





*Seria Folokwe, age 64*



*Betty Kalefula, age 48*



*Suzeeni Sikalele, age 49*



*Grace Lungu, age 32*



*Eunice Sialukala, age 63*



*Radiancance Sinan'gombe, age 39*



*Loveness Matantilo, age 45*



*Hezah Kalulu, age 48*



*Phijety Muleya, age 36*

*Kabanga Basic School Adult Education Program Enrollment*



*Justina Makuni, age 43*



*Shelly Similindi, age 46*



*Beauty Siampazanga, age 61*



*Dreena Ndolwa, age 61*



*Monica Mweene, age 63*



*Lweendo Mangimela, age 32*



*Belitha Mangimela, age 81*



*Jesca Dwili, age 36*



## *Adult Literacy Program: 'Educate Yourself' Library Project*

I am convinced that a human being's mind cannot learn until the mind is emotionally ready. For this reason, I believe, many adults make better students than children, because they have understood what life is like without education.

All human beings deserve *exposure*, which to me is the deepest root of education: one's exposure to other concepts, ideas, traditions, or ways of living/lifestyle. In this regard, our greatest teachers are sometimes those we disagree with, have conflict with, or fail to understand, as they pierce our hearts and force us to have *exposure* out of our comfort zones. Books are another form of exposure, even for those who cannot read; pictures can teach us so much.

The depth of the poverty in the rural pockets of Simwatachela is its *lack of exposure* to anything other than the village itself, and this system is so very, very hard to break for the local people.

What SSAAP strives to do is in the future, even if this happens in the next decade (!), is to use some of SSAAP's Headquarters compound and convert it into a library ~ perhaps even our own house, at some stage, could become a library. I am aware of two libraries in the whole of Zambia (one in Livingstone, one in Lusaka) and truly believe that if this country could expose itself to new ideas and new approaches to lifestyle, it could eradicate some of its poverty. Of all the countries I have ever spent time in (Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Egypt, India), Zambia is the most devoid of literacy I have experienced. It is very difficult to find quality reading in this country, save for a few towns which sell books (Livingstone town, for example) most of the country is devoid of reading materials.

SSAAP would be so grateful to create a rural library here in Simwatachela, with the theme of 'Educate Yourself', for those who truly want to learn, let them find a library in the middle of the African bush. Let them have opportunities to learn here, even if it is not formal education through a school structure.

Therefore, if you have old books, start collecting them! If you were planning to donate them to *Goodwill* or *Salvation Army*, perhaps instead you might consider an in-kind donation to SSAAP instead? I can carry them over to Zambia, or we can figure out how to get them here. We have time! But it would be incredible to convert even our [large] home into a library, and have Library Hours, and allow people to come and peruse the books.

Just another dream I have. ☺ Our education is our enlightenment, and everyone deserves to learn.



*“To attach our happiness to the attainment of certain goals or desires, and not to also be open to what the flow of life’s changes brings, is to be happy during very limited periods of time. Unless our happiness is in the process of growth, the experience of unfolding awareness, all the changes of the spiral, and not just in attainment of specific material or ego-bolstering goals, we deny ourselves happiness throughout about 350 degrees of each revolution.”*

*~ Iona Marsaa Teeguarden, from Acupressure Way of Health: Jin Shin Do*



## *“Plant a Tree”: Nature’s Request*

### *Tree Seedling Project, SSAAP-Zambia 2021*



Radiance and I have been planting trees all around our SSAAP Headquarters compound for years now, in hopes that they will provide shelter and in the future-future, more rain! Our entire village lacks trees, and so we are trying to do our part in the preservation of clean oxygen and a greener environment for our community, and for ourselves.



The truly incredible thing I have observed, in Africa, is how quickly things grow. Some of these trees we planted only last year (in 2020) and already, note their size!

We are also growing small mango seedlings (below left) around our yard in the small ‘fenced’ beds (below right) that we water every day; we intend to transplant them when they grow a bit larger to our Plantation Project Site on SSAAP’s land.



The little upright sticks serve as small fenced areas on our compound where 2-3 mango trees are growing in each seed bed. There are about 13 of these small fenced stick areas on our compound in total.



This is a small plumaria tree (above).



Many of the trees are new trees that have recently been planted around our compound, which will take time to grow.



Our friend, Shantiwell, who lives in the village, brings us cuttings from some of his trees in hopes of rejuvenation on our compound, so that we can multiply the trees in the village exponentially! Shantiwell shares SSAAP's vision of bringing more rainfall and cleaner air to the village through reproduction of trees, as well, he has a green thumb ~ always handy in tree projects!







Some of the trees seed themselves, so it makes the work even less – Nature does it alone! Here, one of our trees releasing seeds all over the ground, in hopes of new germinations.



The seed pods and the seeds themselves are quite beautiful, and there are so many of them...





More trees:

= more birds

= cleaner oxygen

= more rain fall (eventually)

\*

The trees we planted here years ago are growing up tall now; more birds are coming and we can hear their songs late into the night, then at sunrise – even mid-day. All different colors and variations and sizes of birds come around our yard now. It is incredible.



## *Tree Nursery Project, SSAAP-Zambia 2021*



SSAAP has a Tree Nursery behind its house: a Secret Garden with a yellow door!



We are cultivating a variety of local trees, as shown above and on the following page.

This project is almost entirely free, save a few Kwacha here or there to pay people for clippings. But most local people in the village would never dream of charging money for a tree clipping, so this wonderful environmentally-focused endeavor costs only human energy, not cash.



The third image (far right) is a seedling for a blackberry tree!



We spend a lot of time hand-watering the nursery as the nearest water well ('*cikuju*' in our local language) is about a ten-fifteen minute walk away, in one direction. Many community members help us water the nursery on a daily basis, so they are much of the muscle behind this operation!



## *Microloans in Simwatachela, Zambia*



From January 2021 to June 2021, SSAAP gave 174 people loans, the Loan Pool totaling approximately \$7,800 USD.

Elick Chuungwe (above) used his loan of K200 to begin a fishing business on the Zambezi River, selling the fish inland to local village people in Simwatachela, whereby fish is rather hard to come by.



And the ever-faithful Mate and Betty (above), with the largest loan in the community (K6400) ~ \$305; typically they return their loans before the deadline. They continue with their large-scale fishing business and have told me that their loan has helped them to buy 3 cows with the proceeds from their fishing business.



Here are 80 of the 174 SSAAP Microloan recipients, and their respective projects:

1. Lennah Sikaale / Sunflower Project
2. Ginevah Zalu / Chicken-rearing Project
3. Belindah Pukeni / Bun-making Project
4. Rosemary Kanunka / Fritter-making Project
5. Junita Bboola / Knitting Project
6. Betric Cikumba / Bun-making Project
7. Loveness Malantilo / Sunflower Project
8. Markson Nsumo / Goat-rearing Project
9. Fellow Mujuku / Goat-rearing Project
10. Eunice Mudenda / Gardening Project
11. Rosemerry Shantiwell / Sewing Project
12. Pretex Muzyamba / Goat-selling Project
13. Marvel Sikoonje / Chicken-rearing Project
14. Mainesy Siasulwe / Knitting and selling Project
15. Veronica Mate Nyemba / Gardening Project
16. Steven Mweembe / Grocery Project
17. Elick Chuungwe / Chicken-rearing Project
18. Petronella Taulu / Tomato-growing Project
19. Ephelly Manijika / Goat-rearing Project
20. Aswell Sibooli / Goat-rearing Project

21. Alice Kanyumbwe / Chicken-rearing Project
22. Marg Folokwe / Cibwantu-selling Project
23. Ben Mwanawina / Cow-rearing Project
24. Mathews Siamuzale / Chicken-rearing Project
25. Cynthia Siana / Knitting-selling Project
26. Jelita Siamasika / Gardening Project
27. Paul Kabanga / Cement Business Project
28. Mojoh Sibooli / Cement Business Project
29. Mate+Betty Sichibeya / Fishing Business
30. Wilson Simweenda / Goat-rearing Project
31. Edina Meleki / Tomato-selling Project
32. Moline Syansinse / Bun-making Project
33. Greness Sinan'gombe / Fritter-making Project
34. Edina Nkomponi / Knitting and selling Project
35. Suzeni Sikalele / Knitting and selling Project
36. Finola Ngaaya / Chicken-rearing Project
37. Nyuma Mwale / Goat-rearing Project
38. Charity Nsonde / Gardening Project
39. Tangu Mwale / Sunflower Project
40. Selina Semani / Sunflower Project
41. Cathren Siakeengo / Sewing Project
42. Alice Mwiya / Knitting and selling Project
43. Monica Mweene / Sunflower Project
44. Etinala Ngaaya / Goat-rearing Project
45. Hariety Sianchapa / Sewing Project
46. Kester Simukabe / Sewing Project
47. Mabbo Nsonde / Bicycle-repair Project
48. Vein Bbeneya / Cement-repair Project
49. Smart Falls Siachaampa / Grocery Business
50. Maxwell Sianzeela / Gardening Project
51. Bornwell Sibooli / Goat-rearing Project
52. Nelson Kanembe / Chicken-rearing Project
53. Reginah Lutangu / Chicken-rearing Project
54. Raphael Sibooli / Goat-rearing Project
55. Felix Taulu / Goat-rearing Project
56. Isiah Jalabani / Guinea-fowl Project
57. Pumulo Mwiya / Goat-rearing Project
58. Edson Sinan'gombe / Cow-milk Project
59. Peter Nkomponi / Goat-rearing Project
60. Mike Mapulanga / Goat-rearing Project
61. Jane Siankope / Guinea-fowl Project
62. Mutinta Jalabani / Tomato Project
63. Adrian Sikalele / Grocery Business
64. Alice Kanza / Sewing Project



65. Emmanuel Mudenda / Carpentry Project
66. Obino Siakanga / Bee-keeping Project
67. Edina Sioni / Sewing Project
68. Grace Lungu / Fritter-making Project
69. Olivia Makowa / Tomato Project
70. Dumah Zalu / Cement-fixing Business
71. Moono Oster / Milk-selling Project
72. Shelley Similindi / Sewing Project
73. Enock Siamalonda / Cattle Project
74. Obiya Siavuwa / Turkey-rearing Project
75. Kingdom Muntanga / Chicken-rearing Project
76. Ginny Sibooli / Goat-rearing Project
77. Emelda Makoba / Sewing Project
78. John Mulenga / Grocery Business
79. Douglass Siyakacinta / Guinea-fowl Project
80. Tryson Siavuwa / Goat-rearing Project























Vein Bbeneya (above) used his microloan of K200 to begin a gardening endeavor (cabbage and tomato-growing business), and the very day he returned his loan I bought some cabbage and tomatoes from him! There is nothing quite as great as eating the fruits of great labour.



Tenson Sikaale (above) has his own sweet potato business that he started from his microloan. It's incredible to really see this project come to life and the profound everyday impact it has on people: empowering them to begin their own projects and businesses based upon their skill set[s].



SSAAP's Committee *significantly* assisted in the return of all the loans given out, meaning our return rate was 100%: every Zambian Kwacha SSAAP loaned out to the community was returned. The Microloan Project is a success story!



This is what \$7,800-worth of Zambian Kwacha (our Microloan Pool amount) looks like in increments of \$0.10, \$0.25, \$0.50, \$1.00, \$2.50, and \$5.00, approximately – the highest note being our 100 Kwacha note, which is essentially now about \$5 USD.



Radiance and I work long into the night, with our headlamps on, sorting the money into piles and organising it, counting it, etc. This is part of her Mathematics subject in home-school.

Truly, in a nutshell, what the SSAAP Microloan Project has done is empowered 174 people in the village, and forced them to take ownership of their resources and utilize their unique and precious talents.

SSAAP has challenged the limits of our comfort zone, sometimes on a routine basis. All the things I never wanted in my life SSAAP has forced me to confront: being the center of attention, going through a pile of 170+ Microloan applications while hundreds of people stare at me, to public speaking on a routine basis. I have been forced out of my comfort zone here. This has been humbling, humiliating, and illuminating: a wide array of human potential through the experiences from a myriad of emotions.



The recipients of one microloan, a husband and wife pictured above, named their newborn baby after me: *Hezah* (what I am called in ciTonga as in their local language, the ‘th’ sound in English is not found, so everyone here calls me ‘Hezah’). The baby was named after me as a sentiment for their gratitude in having given them a microloan such that they could begin their own business which could, in turn, afford to pay for their baby’s new clothing and blankets, hats, etc.





## *Sources of Poverty and Violence in Africa*

In my experience in the parts of Africa where SSAAP has operated, as well my opinion, the trauma of Africa's incessant poverty and violence are rooted in four main causes:

- (1.) **Dishonesty. Lying.** Looking at someone, eyeball-to-eyeball, and telling lies. Promising without purpose. Signing documents and contracts without intention to follow them. No respect for signed contracts. Disobedience to Truth. Breaking one's word. What is the connection between honesty and poverty? Can an honest man ever be a poor man? Is honesty not, within itself, true abundance?
- (2.) **Tribalism.** A man will stand up for his fellow tribesman whether or not the tribesman is wrong or right – simply due to blood, and tribal connection. Democracy culture has more loyalty to law than blood; tribalism culture has more loyalty to blood than to law, to integrity or to honesty.
- (3.) **Lack of exposure/travel/education.** Education alone cannot make a man wise, nor can travel alone. The key is *exposure*. Education + travel + wisdom = exposure. The contrast of varying world cultures, environments, lifestyles, food, languages, temperatures, ability to be resourceful, attachment to material things, connection to electricity and internet humble us when we are without the very things we think we could never live without. How far we are pushed out of our comfort zones is directly proportional to our level of growth. Provincialism, lack of movement, lack of organized resources to finance travel, and fear of the unknown are all hindrances to Africa's growth, or what I call 'Obstacles to Flight'.
- (4.) **Polygamy.** A twenty year-old man marries one wife; after two years, a second. After a few more years, a third, then maybe even a fourth. Each wife bears him four to eight children, on average. As an average, say he marries three wives and each wife gives him six children. He is the father of eighteen children. Maybe when he is young, the prospect of having four women to do the housework, the field work, and look after the children is tempting... but as he ages, he finds he has more dependents than he can look after – not to mention grandchildren. Polygamy

has put Africa into the depths of its poverty, as this situation causes the children, the women, and ultimately the polygamist to suffer. Not to mention the tension that this causes between women, severing womanly bonds to one another and instead, causing jealousy and rivalry.



What never ceases to haunt me, through travels as well our life here in Africa, is seeing the westernization of the world: through technology, clothing, lifestyle, use of cell phones and internet, etc. but that Democracy: the most essential essence of western culture, is the fundamental layer that has been eliminated. The world wants the West, but our Democratic culture (the deepest sect of the West) is either eliminated, or is the piece slowest for the rest of the world to adopt.

I have never seen Democracy as anything short of a spiritual practice: the dissolution of absolute power: rights for all, human beings treated as equals. Democracy is an ideal that we are all working to live up to, but it is a complex ideology. As I have said, in Africa, it is either entirely misunderstood or unabsorbed altogether.



The past few months have been a harsh reality check for my daughter and me regarding the true meaning of “peace”. In parts of the world where people live in a chronic state of hunger, of suffering for their basic survival, peace – like Democracy – sounds fashionable, but more and more I see it as being unrealistic. You cannot force a Democratic society; you cannot force a peaceful society. Peace can never be the mere absence of war but is, rather, an inner state of compassion: for oneself, thus blending onto another. External peace is the child of inner peace; thus inner peace is a necessary state prior to achieving external peace. I am hopeful! But a whole nation cannot be peaceful just because it declares itself to be or wants to be – it takes a lot of determination and hard work to achieve the illuminated state of inner peace, and living in a state of toxic poverty will always be a setback for these precious people, for any people, for the human race. Peace is as sacred as Love, and – like Love – it can never be forced. Peace is a spiritual concept, not a

political one. If politics is concerned with peace, it is so only because peace came first through purity of intention.

*i have come to the conclusion  
that only a  
woman,  
a man,  
infused by  
the cleanse  
of something  
far more powerful than himself,  
purified by  
the divinity  
of his own  
Spirit  
is a  
nonviolent human being.*

*The rest of us are  
suppressing anger,  
hoping we are good enough actors  
actresses  
to pretend  
it's all okay,  
living violently through  
passive-aggressive tendencies  
pretention  
falsity  
and varying degrees of inner  
chaos.*

*i used to think  
and tell others  
that Zambia was a peaceful nation  
and it is peaceful  
in only the regard that there has never been war here  
but it is a forced peace  
it is a façade of peace  
masked with  
a passive-aggressive undertow.*

*In this way, my daughter and i agree  
that Sierra Leone  
is more peaceful  
than Zambia  
due to its bloodshed,  
its 11-year civil war,  
its domestic abuse,  
its raging violence,  
because it is honest ~ at the very least,  
and honesty is past passive-aggressiveness.  
True nonviolence  
has aged  
past conflict,  
then war,  
then disharmony  
and found the balance point  
where all  
thrive  
in a state of  
pure  
honesty.*

*There is no such thing  
as a nonviolent nation  
unless the nation  
contains no  
human beings.*

*Human being  
must overcome his ego  
if ever he is to  
find  
his  
Soul.*

*In the Soul there is only peace, because there is only silence ~  
in the ego there is only violence, because there is always chatter.*

*A purified man*



*a purified woman  
is a nonviolent man  
is a nonviolent woman  
when he has overcome the  
anger  
and the violence  
that is part of our  
collective  
human condition  
and a necessary obstacle  
in the path  
to  
human  
liberation,  
and finally:  
Love.*



\*

## *Interview with Denver Rotarian and SSAAP*

In February 2021, SSAAP was awarded a grant from Denver Rotary's World Community Service Club!



The grant from the World Community Service Club (*WCS*) is for five water wells in Sierra Leone! Denver's *WCS* has been assisting *SSAAP* since Radiance was wearing diapers, so for the last decade, off-and-on, through direct grants from their club. The President of Denver Rotary Club asked to interview *SSAAP*. The link to the YouTube video is:

<https://youtu.be/TRI5chTtAvA>

When we are discussing development work, we are not referring to throwing money into issues that are deep, complex human problems. The problems are complex because there was a lot that went into making them, thus there will be an equal and opposite amount that comes in getting out of them. But they are not simple problems; hence, they are not meant to be solved simply.

If someone wants to change the world, his/her motivation to do so has to be more than just about money; money itself, without intention, will not fix these widespread human issues. Money, greed, power, control: these things are what have caused the problems ~ so money will not be the way out of them. The solution will have to be different than the way the problem began initially. The flowers will be different than their seeds. Intentional funds for a well-organized project, that show local support and an ability to thrive even without the funds: this is a separate issue altogether. But large-scale funding, from one wealthy country to another less-wealthy country will only cause more suffering for the less-wealthy country. I have seen no exception to this rule. The funds go directly from the wealthy country into the hands of a very select, elite few in the less-wealthy country, and line their pockets. Corruption is the dis-ease of Africa. The solution to mass poverty has to be something more sustainable than money. Money is simply the base form of currency that exists on the planet. Money has the potential to be darkness or to be Light. It has energy attached to it.

Every project needs funds to sustain itself, but the target of a project should not rest in sourcing funding. Funds alone are empty. Throwing money at poverty only makes the poverty grow, as I have explained in the above paragraph. There is a spiritual element in money that, I have discovered, claims itself when there is no identity associated with it. No ego, no attachment, no identification of oneself ~ but rather that the funds are used very specifically: they have a face. They have a purpose, a project; they have an intention, a desired and designated beneficiary, an exact location of where they should be seeded into the ground. Every penny matters – especially here in Africa, especially in the raw, destitute, rural village of Africa where the children wear rags and their parents go to bed hungry, night after night. This is the Africa I know: my beLoved Africa. And in the village, every penny matters. Every penny is a project; every penny: a potential.

Our investments should be human-based; we ought to invest in one another.



We need to realize one another; we need to open to the inherent and involuntary beauty that is within each of us. We need to realize that human beings are the most valuable resource on the planet; the most valuable thing we have is one another. Our minds, our bodies, our wealth ~ these are transient things in the Universe, but the heart and Soul we each possess ~ this is more eternal. Human relationships: we have forgotten how to engage intimately with one another; our devices and our 'connective technology' have ironically brought us farther apart. A text or an email is not a substitute for a meeting, where one can look into the eyes of another, study his face, see her expressions. We are functioning at our lowest common denominator, the mere 3% our brains used on average, working in our ego spaces: our personal bubbles whereby we are too busy achieving and have forgotten about being; in our bubbles, we have forgotten how to connect. We have forgotten the whole and in doing so, are displaced. We find ourselves dislocated people on Earth orb because our roots have been yanked out of us: through pop-culture, by not listening to our inner voice, by not saving any time or space for ourselves thus we become run-down, tattered, no use to anyone including ourselves. By using technological devices as a way to keep in touch but not to touch.



The ego and the connective universal consciousness do not co-exist; they cannot. In order to tap into the universal wisdom of the universe and its universal consciousness, we have to forego our egos. Why are human beings generally afraid to enter into this realm, of their own depth in consciousness? Because it is the space where we all connect, and that connectivity frightens most of us. Because it asks us to abandon our egos, our vanity, our separate individual ice-olation which is what brings each and every one of us our deepest pain.



The greatest currency we have on the planet is one another. It is the only thing that we will always have, that is sustainable, that is a renewable resource. If you want to develop a village, a community, a society, a family, a nation or a continent, you start with the human element. You engage in it. You become intimate with it. You study it with heart, hands, mind, and Soul. You learn it; it learns you. You touch it; it touches you. The interactive space is where the magic begins. Once you have reached this point, money will then be its spiritual resource, and money will be used as a guide and a light ~ but without the human connection, the money will only pull the darkness and the poverty in further, and will only cause more havoc.

Money will be of no use to humanity, or its development, if you have not established firm, solid foundations of human relationship first. Relationship is the target: the first mode of currency. Love is the second, and finally – last, the material resource which is a bi-product of the relationship, cash, will serve then only as a tool or as an aid: a seed, a water filter, a needle and thread, a carving instrument, a plow, a monetary note, an animal, a water well. The conversion of human intention into a material manifestation, its channel running halfway across the globe, is nothing short of a miracle. The money becomes the spiritual manifestation, in this case, of the initial pure intention. This is the foundation upon which I wish to work.

All business matters begin with the heart, and if they don't, it is highly likely that they will be sustainable. Cold, hard professionalism is exactly that: cold and hard. It is too rigid for growth, because it is inflexible and non-fluid, and growth requires not only flexibility but also fluidity.



Heart feeds the mind. If the heart is closed, the mind cannot remain open. Keeping the heart open is far more of a challenge than keeping the mind open. The mind stays open only because the heart is open. But once the heart begins to close, it is the most difficult work we do as human beings to keep it open. Sometimes it is a daily push. This is the work of the human being on the planet, because every day we are faced with disappointments, obstacles, challenges, difficulties and tragedies which make us want to close our hearts. But the heart must remain open. It is the channel through which all else flows. This is paramount to our survival on the planet.

I Love life because of how many times I have been willing to throw in the towel... and haven't. I Love life because of how many times my heart has been broken... and has rebirthed to Love again, better still the next time around...



My Teachers are everywhere and everyone I meet: the person who ruined my day; the friend who disappointed me; the husband who broke my heart; the person I wronged and must apologize to later. It's the local, everyday people and conflicts and issues that teach us the most. Of course a fundamental background of numbers and how they relate to us: through science, through medicine, through biology – this deepens us. Mastery of any topic – any topic! – requires concentration. And concentration is a local art that all of us are capable of. The anatomy of a word, the language that surrounds it, the art of literacy and its potential – this is invaluable. But so is taking people where they are at, not trying to change them, but Loving them for exactly who they are – in this moment – this is our role as human beings. This is what we have come here for. This is why we were birthed onto the planet.



If we cannot be honest with others, we probably aren't honest with ourselves – and this is fundamental. One does not use the sufferings of others to his own benefit unless one wishes for many less-evolved futures. In other words, what we do here (earth plane/material dimension) matters. It is our test for the higher realms which follow. We are finite bodies with the infinite, readily available, within us. The only thing Divine that exists is the purity within you and the purity within me, so if they can touch - we have found the Divine. Otherwise we are empty shells, the living dead, walking the planet. So if my newsletters are lengthy it is because I have a lot to say; if they are very honest, it is because I cannot lie. If they are offensive it is because I haven't made my point eloquently enough, and then that is my fault. I have \*somewhat radical\* views on many things, but I never wish to offend. Never, ever.



The tattered and torn is the best part of us all, the rugged raw ~ we are not polished, sugar-coated statues; we all bear war-wounds and in the end what you will find is that those wounds are the most cherished parts of ourselves; the parts of ourselves we would never, ever want to be without.

One day, when we were walking down the street in Kalomo town (the town nearest to our village, where our P.O. Box is located) and it was dark, we passed – just pulled off to the side of the road, an open-back truck (we call them ‘*Canters*’ here, named after the brand that produces them) and a bunch of people laying in the back, laughing or sleeping. Radiance said to me: “*That’s Africa for you, exactly Africa. People using each other as beds.*”

And so, I suppose this is a perfect way to summarize how we ultimately feel about Africa: no matter how physically-uncomfortable, emotionally-draining, psychologically-challenging, and the numerous obstacles that any single, random day might present, it is worth it. Africa is worth it. The people are worth it; the land itself is worth it, its rich, raw, and intense energy surging through every part of Nature here in Africa, also is now within me.

At my deepest core, I Love Africa. No matter what, no matter when, no matter why – I Love Africa.

She is the Love of my life.



On Mother’s Day, 2021, my daughter Radiance said to me: “Mom, we make a good team. I am good at cooking, making the *mulilo* (fire), all the African jobs that you still don’t know how to do... sweeping, planting, staying outside in the sun. I do that part of our work here. And you, you know how to work with the people. You are better with people than I am. I just don’t have the patience you have.”

Her sentiments made me smile. She is right: she doesn’t suffer fools lightly, and she hates being lied to. She cannot stomach it. Like her father, she dislikes small-talk and frivolity and has a wonderful sense of humor but also an edginess to her – again, just like her father. He was a shy man, an artist, who craved time alone and in the African context of community and togetherness, he was a black sheep. He was very weary and mistrustful of human beings, after having seen his only sister burned alive by rebels in the Sierra Leonean war (1990-2001). How much of our children is our heredity, our crystalline DNA burned into the blueprints of our bodies through the experiences we have had in our lives?

What I know to be a certainty: our children are our Teachers; sometimes we are their Teachers too, but more often we are their custodians. We take care of their needs, protect them, feed them with water and food and Love and hope they grow flowers one day, and the day after that: fragrance. The fragrance that comes from the flower is its finest essence.

## *Water: The Source*

This is a small sampling of the water that human beings in rural Zambia are drinking...



... and, consequently, sharing with their cattle.



We finished the last of our wells in Simwatachela, Zambia from our 2020 contract with Likumbi, our Zimbabwean water well driller; these were not finished in 2020 because the rains came quickly and vastly, the downpour unpredicted for the year, thus catching us unexpectedly. We finished the water wells in June/July 2021, and went on to work with three more water wells for SSAAP-Zambia for 2021. An explanation of the three new SSAAP-Zambia 2021 water wells to come in our Fall 2021 newsletter.



Here is some footage of our work, finishing the 2020 water wells. We finished two wells that needed cement and handpump-installation completion, and repaired two wells finished in 2020 that had various issues: broken rubber rings on the cylinder pump, pipe with a hole, etc.:

**Namunumbwa Village well:** This well needed a complete hand-pump installation.



***Keele Village well:*** This well needed an apron completion. The ‘apron’ is the circular cement piece and the long drain which the water flows away from the well. Without this cement piece, the water well will quickly be eroded away. A mold is placed around the water well and then filled in with cement.



I dedicated the well, in the wet cement with a writing stick, but had to back-date it as the rains prevented us from finishing the Keele Village well in 2020 as planned.



**Neede Village well:** *No rest for the weary.* We arrived at the third site by dark and knew we would have to pull an all-nighter to finish all five sites. The cold season upon us (*mainza*: rainy season, approximately May to August annually) did not help matters, as staying up through the night in the bitter cold was hard on all of us. Still, a job needed to be done and so we had to do it. The Neede Village well had a double-problem: cylinder pump, at the base of the well, was broken; as well, one of the ten metal pipes feeding the well with water had a hole in it. This required a four-hour process of not only taking out every pipe and inspecting it, but also removing the defective cylinder pump and fixing its broken rubber circular pieces.



Likumbi's incredibly hard working team even endured cold water spraying on them as they removed each and every pipe, and the water trapped inside each pipe – due to pressure – sprayed on them as they removed it.

I do not have words to express the muscle needed and the endurance of strength that these men have for this installation job. Just an example, the mold for the cement is so heavy that I had trouble shifting it in the back of the pickup truck to find my missing water bottle. It is mind-boggling that, in the middle of the night, these men would have the strength to do this heavily laborious job – but they did.



Venos, head of Likumbi's Borehole Installation Operations Team, fixes the [red] cylinder, above, and then checking it in a bucket of water to see if it works. We left the Neede Village site at 12:15 a.m.

**Lubanze Village well:** Our contact for this well, Raphael Chibele, had his wife cook us a meal, so that it was on the table and waiting for us when we arrived at 01:15 in the morning at their site.



*N'sima* (Zambian staple food), village chicken, and cabbage: it really doesn't get any better than this; ask a Zambian in the village or in town or in the capital city of Lusaka and they will tell you the same: that the highest expression of Love in Zambia is this meal: killing a chicken or a goat in anticipation of beLoved visitors is the way that Love is expressed here.



They had prepared a gigantic fire made of maize cobs at the drilling site so that none of us would freeze; after finishing their harvest and removing the individual pieces of maize from the cob (for consumption by their families, as well for sale if they have been fortunate enough to grow a surplus) the leftover maize cobs are wonderful 'firewood'. We call them: *African malasya* or 'African charcoal'.







In our African tradition, we do not shield our children from the everyday harsh realities of life here. Conditions vary, and situations vary – sometimes even from day to day. Children are expected to keep up with and to flow with whatever life brings, as being adaptable and accepting of life’s challenges are the key to being happy in the African bush. The children learn this from a young age, my daughter no exception, as she has not been spared of the same sufferings that we are all immune to here. I have not spared her of any of this, and anticipate that when we are both old women she will thank me for it. Coping up with hardship is a way of life, in the village.



Henceforth, at 02:00 in the morning in the bitter cold, snuggled around a campfire, you find numerous children, as they are part of the village too – not sheltered from its hardships.





***By moonlight and by firelight***: The Lubanze Village well was another long haul, just as the Neede Village well had been: pulling out every pipe to get to the cylinder pipe at the bottom, then fixing the rubber [circular] pieces in the pump that had been defective. After this, the men added two additional metal pipes to the well, to bring water to the surface with more ease.

This task was finished by 04:00 in the morning.





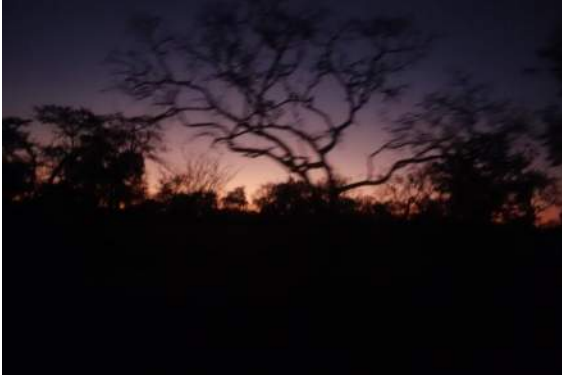


**Sokesi Village well:** We were greeted by cheerful, happy faces when we arrived at Sokesi Village at 04:30 in the morning. The people of Sokesi Village had been waiting up all night for our arrival, and had built a huge bonfire in anticipation of receiving visitors.



My very opinionated and headstrong daughter was *not* happy with me for having lost a night of her sleep; I told her to either sleep on my lap or to bear up the pain, as the sun would rise in only an hour or so, and for weeks into the future she would remember the excited energy of this night: people happy, having their wells finished and/or fixed. The Sokesi Village well needed only an addition of two pipes, so luckily we didn't have to pull out every pipe to fix the cylinder pump deep into the ground; the cylinder was working quite well.





Nothing beats an African sunrise, and we were awake to see it! The Team arrives back at our home (SSAAP Headquarters) by 08:30 in the morning, all six of us having not slept a wink.



And all is well upon finding, after the visitors left, that she was able to grow a large carrot in her garden, herself, all on her own. 😊

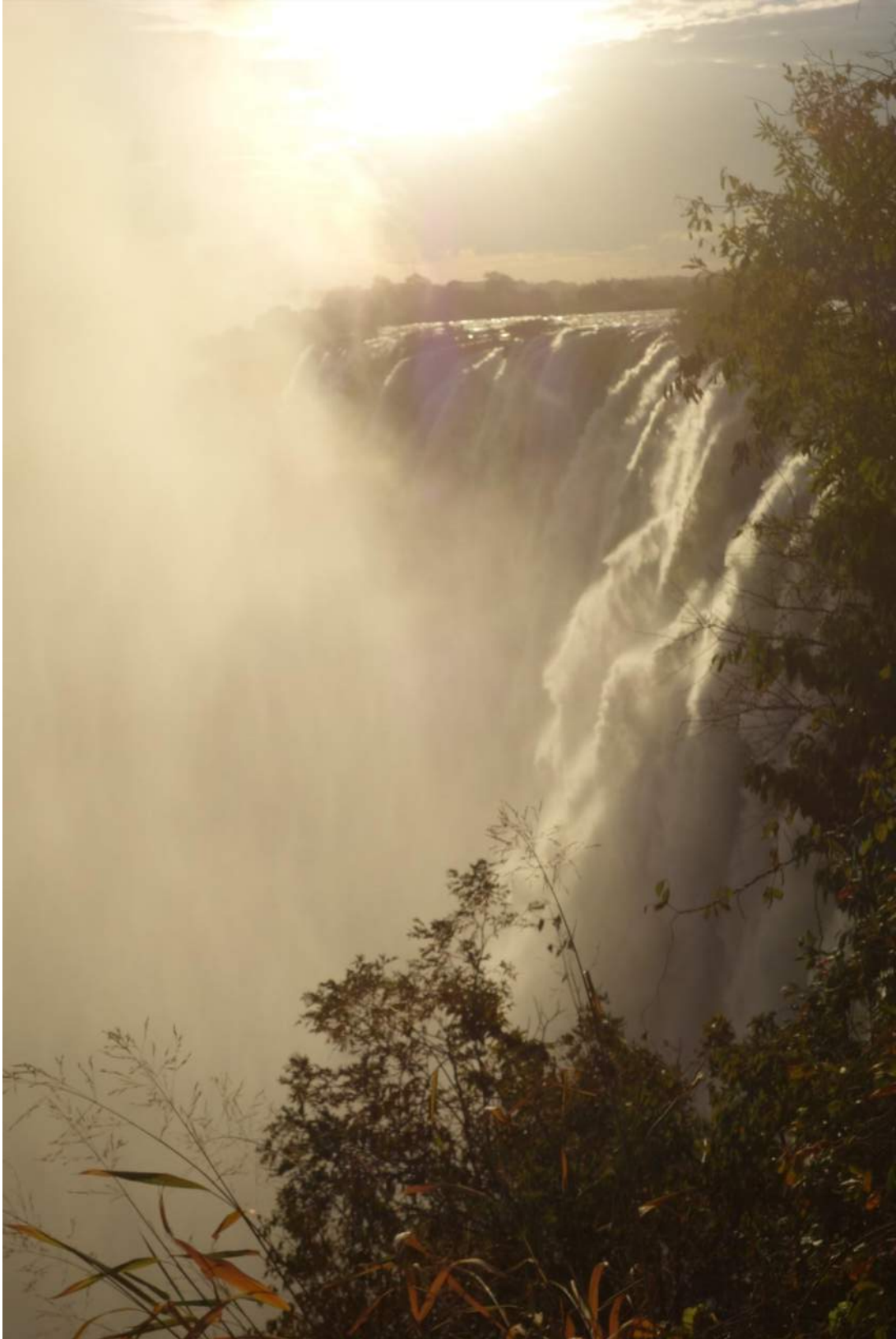




**Zambezi fisherman; Zambezi River, Zambia:** He who knows Nature, he who respects and honors its every fiber: every blade of grass, every water current, every stone, will never be separate from it. Nature will continue to provide for him, and he will live in harmony with Her. This young man is always found around the banks of the Zambezi River, just before the water spills off the edge of the cliff, descends and surrenders, and we call it: *Victoria Falls*. He knows the water, he respects it, he honors it; it cannot hurt him. Whenever Radiance and I visit the Falls, and my eyes meet his, we smile at each other: a long, slow smile. I have a knowing of him.



The stages of procession of the Zambezi as it evolves from gently flowing river to rushing, roaring river to waterfall off the cliff.



We take the spirit of the water, and we are enthralled by it: its mysticism, its purity, its holy cleanse – and we don't realize all the while that the same spirit of the water too is in us. Water has a consciousness; it is alive, and it hungers and thirsts and breathes as we do. It is pulsing with lifeblood, as are we. Holy water: we drink it in our morning tea; we use it to brush our teeth and wash our feet. We are the very water that we seek; we are its essence, and its essence is us, too.



Heather after a shower from the spray off the mighty Victoria Falls. The water is piercingly cold and the sun: just as intelligently hot to warm the body afterwards. In the background: the Zambian-Zimbabwe bridge, connecting the two nations over the Great Zambezi Gorge. John Cecil Rhodes had the bridge built in England at the Darlington Bridge Yard, constructed by the Cleveland Bridge Company. It was completed in 1905 and brought back to Africa. The bridge was shipped here in various pieces, containing two center gliders. On March 31, 1905, as the sun set, the two center gliders overlapped by 1 ½ inches. Exhausted, the workers fell asleep, discouraged. In the morning, on April 1, 1905, after the sun rose, they saw the bridge had contracted 1 ¼ inch, and the two center gliders fell into place perfectly. This is one example of what my old Peace Corps boss used to call: “Zambian magic”.

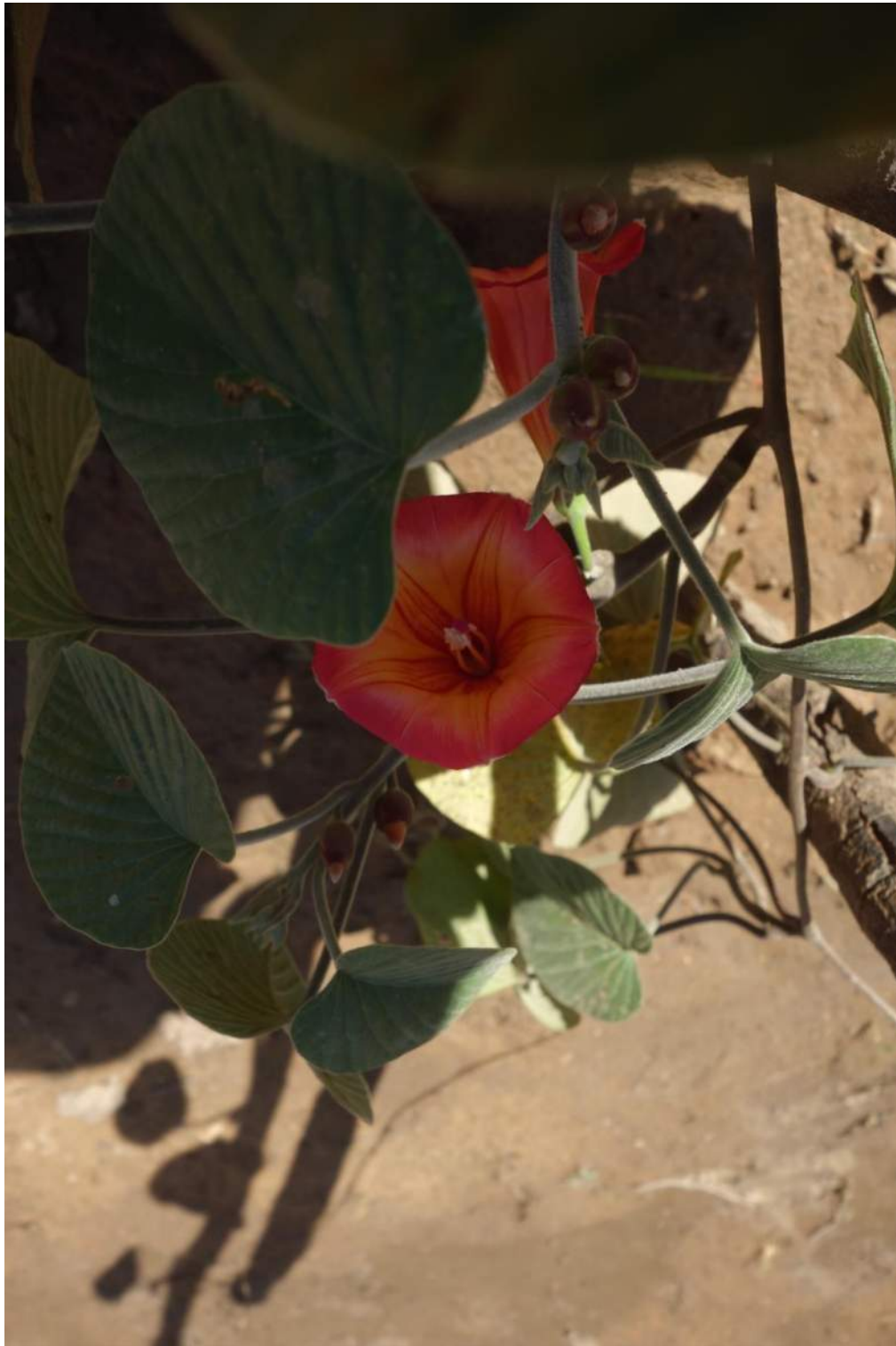






*I die when my material shell tires and its purpose is no longer necessary to the planet ~  
I look forward to becoming water once more.*

*Life is short; Love is long.*



*Thank you for empowering SSAAP to touch the lives of so many, and thank you for touching ours. With Love, the SSAAP Team (Heather, Radiance and Gail)*



