



PRIDE IN THE COMMUNITY

My Project Trust community report

ABSTRACT

A brief insight into how I experienced life and perceived a rural community in the eastern province of Zambia.

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This is my attempt to describe an experience that I will never forget.

The impact this community has had will undoubtedly change many aspects of my life but most importantly I will always remember to always expect the unexpected, have patience and be proud of who I am.



BOARDING THE PLANE, I PREPARED MYSELF FOR A NEW LIFE FULL OF EXCITEMENT AND ADVENTURE.

I had envisioned how my eight months ahead would be, how I would feel by the end and the type of things I would learn. These shiny bubbles of dreams and hopes formed in my mind were naive to what lied ahead. The first month popped these bubbles and instead solid challenges and exciting opportunities were formed. My time in Zambia soon become my day to day life but that is not to say the day to day cannot be sensational.

Initial impressions of my community was that it was a peaceful but colourful place. It was very small but contained all the essentials, a museum which was being established and schools which meant that

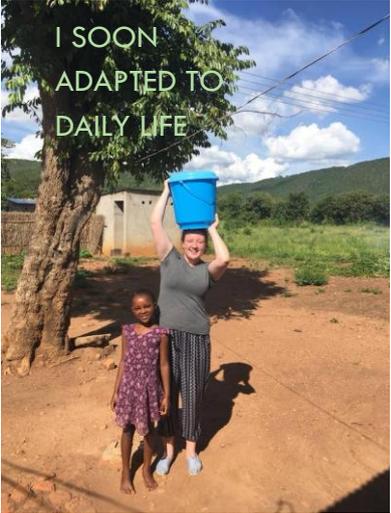
a large number of the community were youth. Everyone was warm and friendly and opened themselves to the strangers joining their community. They were very curious and somewhat abrupt about this inquisitiveness. The way of life was slow and relaxed but most individuals still worked extremely hard.

Something that struck me immediately as I settled into life was the sense of pride that filled people of all walks of life in the community. Everything was finished with a flourish, all generations always looked their best and each home was squeaky clean despite the difficulties caused by a dusty hot environment. It was this pride that I saw as permanently present that inspired me to write my community report, focusing on such a vital part of the way people live. This is something I have admired greatly about Feni, an eastern community of Zambia.



EVERYONE WAS FASCINATED BY US, THE ONLY WHITE PEOPLE IN THE COMMUNITY.

Feni is situated in the eastern province of Zambia in between the Malawian border and the small, new city of Chipata. Something that is utterly unavoidable when settling down is such a place I the amount of attention received. As a white person everyone was either scared to approach me or was shouting down the



I SOON ADAPTED TO DAILY LIFE

street. Almost everyone I met was immensely friendly and helpful, although this is partly because I was clearly a visitor to the country it is also a proud part of the culture to greet everyone. Due to this it was easy to quickly learn the basic phrases of the local language, Cinyanja.

Regularly I was faced with questions and conservation openers from strangers on the street such as “someday you’ll find me in your country”, “take me back with you”, “will you marry me?”, “can you help me study where you live?” or statements to similar effect. This is the very first impression of people that I mostly saw. From this it was easy to assume that people weren’t satisfied with where they live and wanted to go to the western world, nowhere in particular just away from the community they are familiar with.

Despite this, once I took the time to get to know individuals, immerse myself in the community and embrace the culture I found that initial impressions are not at all accurate.

Observing the way of life I found that families are extremely tight, people often express their enjoyment of life, it is of utmost importance to the community to maintain traditions and preserve culture and everyone put in their best efforts to make life as smooth running as possible. I thought this attitude to life was wonderful and showed a real pride of who the community is and where they have originated from. After living in his type of community it was a struggle to believe the legitimacy of the questions I was asked so I decided to interview people at my project to research further.

The questions I asked to theme of pride in the community were as follows:

prompt responses along the

What do you like about where you live?



Pupils of class 10c before lessons

If you could change something about where you live what would it be?



Why is it important to keep yourself and your home looking nice?



of many wonderful sunsets

Women's Day

If you could change your nationality would you?

If you had the opportunity, would you leave this community and move somewhere else? Why or why not?

Have you any other comments about your community?



Riding to the sub-centre

Are you proud to be Zambian?

Emmanuel Sakala, a 21 year old student in my grade 10A biology class who only restarted in the second term. He's a very intelligent pupil, scoring full marks in both biology tests but has struggled to finish school due to financial situations.



"I love where I stay because that's where I was born and where my family stays. I would like to be able to help the needy in the community and mobilise them so that we can work together for a common goal. Working together will allow for development in the community. I think keeping things clean and nice is mostly important to prevent disease but also it shows that you stand next to god. If I could change my nationality I wouldn't, I like being Zambian. However, if I could move to a different community I would as here there is very difficult circumstances here but there would have to be reason to move away from family. Within the community I wish to bring development. There is already unity so all measures should be put in place to develop. I am a proud Zambian."

Rabson Tembo is a 17 year old student who has a very positive attitude to work and is a keen learner. He is very intrigued by the world and I spent many times after school talking with him at great length about many things.



“I love this place, it is favourable to my needs and provides a good environment for education. I like that it is a bit boring as it means I can’t get involved in groups or activities that would spoil my life. I have only recently moved to Feni so I’m not sure as to what I would change but I would say that it is a bit too small. I think hygiene is very important and so keeping yourself well is vital for health. Kitchens, bedrooms etc. should always be kept clean and respectable. I do admire the UK so if I could change my nationality it would be to British. I am only in this community for education so once it is completed I will go where I am required. I want to make my living by making the most of opportunities. This community is very poor but it is nice that you can be so close to friends. Of course I am proud to be Zambian.”

Elizabeth Chinonda, a grade 11 student at only 16 years old. I didn’t teach her but have spent much time with her. She is a very academic and ambitious girl who will likely go on to become head girl in the next year.



“This community is peaceful, a free environment and a good place for studying. If I could, I would put up recreational facilities because that’s what the community lacks. It is important to keep the place I stay and myself look nice to prevent disease. Also, as a girl, you need to look nice because it is important to bring out beauty. If I could change my nationality I would because although I love Zambia it is a very corrupt nation and success depends on background only. I would like to stay in this community in order to be able to see its development. It is a very nice place to stay but I find that people’s mentality is still backwards. Yes, I am a proud Zambian.”

Psalms Zulu, a cheeky 19 year old grade 10 who is a very hard worker and a good laugh, very easy to chat with. Like most students his family are not from the community so he doesn't stay with them during term time.



"I like the place I stay, it is peaceful, the weather is good and I stay in a nice house. I would not change anything I like it as it is. It is important to keep everything nice to stop diseases entering you or your house but I also find it important as I like to look smart and respectable. I would like to be American. If I was to move, South Africa would be good to move to as it is a good place to become wealthy. I don't have other comments about the community as I like it. Yes, most of the time I'm proud to be Zambian."

Juliet Musonda, a wonderful student and friend who was living next door with her brother's family during our stay. She is very ambitious and hard working with an excellent sense of humour. She recalls countless stories, whether they are true or untrue she is an entertaining character!



"In this community I find the head teacher courageous and motivational. The culture is also motivational, the people are very cooperative and they don't care who you are or where you come from. If I could change something about the community it would be to assist girls who are pregnant or married to become someone in life through some government program or education. It is important to be clean otherwise people will run away from you! You want people to think highly of you and that you are not mad or something. I would always choose to be a Zambian but I wish that I can share my

or something. I would always choose to be a Zambian but I wish that I can share my culture with other countries. I would choose to stay here to bring development to my community. I am very proud of being Zambian and who we are as people.”

Madam Chilese, a food and nutrition teacher at the school who seems to take on many other responsibilities in the community. She was one of the first teachers to welcome us in to our house and the Feni community.



“This is a very friendly community who welcomes any newcomers, particularly when we have come to offer the community a service. I would like to see more children advancing in education so they can change the place for the better. It is important to stay clean for health reasons and as a sense of pride about how you look. I wouldn’t change my nationality as I am proud to be Zambian. I am only in this community for a purpose so if I am no longer needed or I am required in a different community then I would move. This is a lovely community and learners are very willing however there is a lack of communication in the community meaning that learners suffer due to a lack of support at home. I am proud to live in and be from Zambia.”

Looking at all of the interviews I carried out I feel I have learnt much more about the community I stayed in. Feni seems like the sort of community people often drop in and out of but many people still live here who were born and raised. Everyone I observed and spoke to recognise that it is not an easy place to live, hard work has to be put in and the community does suffer from poverty. However, this does not take away from how much people enjoy living within the community, despite boredom and difficulties.



I found it interesting that the majority of the reason people make such an effort to have houses respectable is to prevent disease. It makes perfect sense but I also think that the extreme efforts put in is also a culture of making sure yourself and your family look good, look like you have a comfortable life and to show that you are a good Christian. I often felt very scruffy in comparison to even people from villages who have nearly nothing

but you would never tell as they look wonderful and are very proud of looking such a way.

Another interesting point is how aware of issues people are, everyone I spoke to and have met have a very positive attitude to working as a community to provide development and see the community blossom. It is recognised that the way of life is difficult and so there is a real sense of unity regardless of social class on building it up together and much of the community's focus is towards the school. People don't want to give up on the community or the place they live, instead they wish to help others and join together to create something wonderful and something that they can continually be proud of.

The culture is vital to the community and being a proud Zambian I think is a big part of the culture. Everyone is lovely and will greet you. They are eager to share their colourful life with you. As soon as I had entered the town people were attempting to teach me the language, feed me local food and dress me as a native. The language spoken in Feni is



EDUCATION IS PARAMOUNT



NSHIMA IS THE STAPLE FOOD

mainly Cinyanja but having people from across the country working I did meet others who spoke other Zambian languages such as Bemba or Tonga. The food eaten was mainly nshima as the staple with meat and vegetables I had not tried before such as pumpkin leaves and impwa. Finally clothing wise, men are usually in a simple shirt and trousers and most women for work will wear a smart top and skirt. Women must cover their shoulders and knees which is another aspect of what people feel looks respectable and fit to leave the house.

Outside the workplace women mainly wear chitenges which is the traditional material that comes in hundreds of different bold and bright patterns. This is worn as a wrap at the waist and is good for housework as it means you don't dirty the trousers or smarter skirt worn underneath. These chitenges are also worn for celebrations, funerals and weddings and so it is a very versatile piece of traditional dress. They are worn for the practicality but from asking some women in the community they are also worn because they love to maintain the culture and they enjoy the vibrancy of the African material feeling that it

brings colour to the street to see many patterns when simply making a trip to the shop. This is another example of the effort put into keeping the community a place to be proud of.

I know that the majority of people are proud of where they come from or where they live. I for one am proud to be Scottish. However, there is something about the way people carry themselves and present themselves in this community that stole my attention. There is 17.61 million people in the country of Zambia, 72 tribes and 6.8% of the people are Ngoni. This is the tribe of the people in my community which is celebrated every year. They are very happy with the fact it is the home of the chief Mpezeni and



54.4% of the population live below the poverty line but for the majority you wouldn't be able to tell. Yes they may live in a mud hut and eat very basic foods but the way in which they carry themselves, dress and keep their home shows a sense of pride and care. The pride in themselves and

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHETHER THEY ARE FROM THE VILLAGE OR TOWN THEY ARE AS MUCH A PART OF THIS WONDERFUL COMMUNITY AS EVERYONE ELSE

the community can be seen before talking to people and this pride is carried through generations.

I am privileged to have had the experience of being part of this community for 8 short months.





Stand and sing of Zambia, proud and free,
Land of work and joy in unity,
Victors in the struggle for the right,
We've won freedom's fight.
All one, strong and free.

Africa is our own motherland,
Fashioned with and blessed by God's good hand,
Let us all hear people join as one,
Brothers under the sun.
All one, strong and free.

One land and one nation is our cry,
Dignity and peace 'neath Zambia's sky,
Like our noble eagle in its flight,
Zambia, praise to thee.
All one, strong and free.



