



October 2019

Newsletter



Change is hard. Especially when it involves something close to one's heart, and Project Luangwa's heart for the last ten years has been Karen Beattie and Dave Hopson. Karen and Dave's vision has made Project Luangwa what it is today – a thriving non-profit organisation that does tremendous work in the community with school sponsorship, gender support programs, training opportunities and much more, helping the people of the Luangwa Valley reach their potential.

We are sad to announce that Karen and Dave will be leaving Project Luangwa and returning to the United Kingdom this month. Ten years after they began as directors of Project Luangwa, they can look back with pride on everything that has been accomplished.



At the beginning when the board brought them on, Project Luangwa consisted of a handful of different ongoing community initiatives. Dave got to work building and improving school infrastructure and setting up a website and IT, while Karen was finding sponsors for vulnerable students seeking education. Soon they were training local women in crafts and sewing to help them have a chance of a sustainable income. They outfitted the local boys football club, and helped medically compromised people receive needed support and equipment to give them a better chance to thrive.



They started a gender support program in the community with girls (and boys) clubs, and a successful menstrual hygiene program with the women making reusable sanitary pads for local girls. Four years ago they hired Fwilane Banda as gender support manager, leading seminars about women and girls reproductive health, and distributing the pads to girls in the area through the clubs and schools. Recently they brought on Stu Wambulawae as the sponsorship manager, and Sherri Thompson as communications and fundraising manager.





They also created the crafts shop and café, sales from which help support the ongoing mission of Project Luangwa. Karen taught the women how to create high quality bags, home goods and clothing and employed local men in the artisan's workshop making metal sculpture, woven items, and woodcarvings. Dave oversaw the rehab and building of the shop in Mfuwe, turning it into a tourist destination and gathering spot for coffee and lunches. And many, many other projects in the meantime, too numerous to mention. They have been dynamic part of the Luangwa Valley community for the last ten years as it has changed and grown.

Project Luangwa will carry on with the effective team in place, guided by the board. It will continue evolving like any organization, but always with the aim of helping the community improve their long term economic prospects whilst avoiding a negative impact on the environment and wildlife. The lodges continue their generous funding so Project Luangwa is able to do all it can to support the community and maintain the work Karen and Dave started. We will all miss them

terribly, but we are determined to carry on their vision. Thank you to everyone for your support and donations – and helping us go forward into whatever the future may bring!



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