

# Education, Education, Education

No, not a party political broadcast, but the three fantastic environmental education programmes we work with, in Laikipia (Kenya), Mkomazi (Tanzania), and North Luangwa (Zambia). Whereas the phrase "Back to school" used to provoke fear and loathing - in my heart anyway - it now prompts me to think of one of the aspects of my work that gives me most satisfaction.

**Cathy Dean**  
Director

Environmental education programmes are often still seen as an add-on, as a "nice-to-do" adjunct to the overall conservation programme. Attendees at the African Rhino Specialist Group meeting held in June 2008 in Lake Manyara, Tanzania, rated environmental education programmes as the lowest of all the Key Components and subcomponents, when considering African rhino conservation priorities for the next 10 years.

In many cases, we believe that the environmental education programmes, targeted at schools, being carried out have not been properly thought through. There is a tendency for them to fall into several traps:

- Thinking in terms of what can be offered, rather than whether the programme meets the overall conservation goals of the NGO
- Replacing the work of school teachers, rather than adding value to it
- Programmes trying to be all things to all people
- Lack of preparatory work and follow through means that trips are regarded as a fun day out and quickly forgotten
- Inadequate monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of the programme (typically, reports consist of numbers of people who have been through the programme, or of trips made, rather than any data on the difference the programme has made)
- Local schools are often so woefully under-resourced, that anything offered is a bonus; teachers are therefore reluctant to provide honest feedback and critique programmes

These pitfalls are understandable, given that rhino programme managers are not education experts. However, with the help of Maggie Esson, Education Programmes Manager at Chester Zoo in the UK, we are tackling these problems head-on. Our contention is that environmental education programmes can, when focused and targeted correctly, play a vital role in delivering each field programmes' overall conservation goals and objectives. They are a "must-do".



Conservation Education Days in North Luangwa are very lively affairs

We've written about the individual programmes in previous issues of *The Horn*, but here's a brief update on what's happening at each one.

### The Environmental Education programme at the Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF) in Kenya

In April, I took part in a workshop, together with Maggie from Chester and a facilitator, Ray Wells. This brought together key stakeholders in education and conservation in Laikipia District: senior people, with some LWF Board representation, representatives from conservancies regularly used by the bus, those representing government education at a district level and other groups active in the delivery of environmental education in the district, including the Kenyan Wildlife Service (KWS). The workshop format was designed to be cyclical, allowing small groups to work together on specific tasks and then to bring all participants together for feedback in plenary sessions. In this way everyone had an opportunity to contribute, progress could be evidenced and consensus achieved. It was very heartening that within the group as a whole, there was a commitment to make things happen and the workshop

NORTH LUANGWA CONSERVATION PROGRAMME



One of the Zambian school children shows off his rhino colouring in book

atmosphere was dynamic and enthusiastic throughout.

There were a number of recurring themes in answers to many of the questions addressed by the groups and responses to questions often coalesced across the groups. On scanning the transcript from the workshop, the principle tasks that emerged were:

- An acknowledgement of the benefits of working in partnership
- The need for LWF to review its activities and address how the EEP fits into the bigger picture
- Achieving a balance within the EEP: schools / communities / events
- Identifying the EE Programme as a catalyst for environmental action
- Identifying the focus of the schools' programme
- Recognising the importance of having success indicators in place
- Deciding upon the composition and structure of an EEP Sub-committee

Over the next few months, Anthony King and Ephantus Mugo will develop the ideas that came out of the workshop (including better coordination of the EEP with the Community Conservation Programme and public events such as World Water Day), and we'll report on progress in the next issue.

### Rafiki wa Faru at the Mkomazi Rhino Sanctuary, Tanzania

Rafiki has now been running for just over a year. All 14 schools around the perimeter of Mkomazi National Park have taken part in the programme, many of them more than twice. Rafiki has been incredibly popular - not just with the school children and their teachers - but also with community groups, TANAPA officials, and local press.



Semu Pallangyo works with Saria on delivering Rafiki wa Faru in Mkomazi

GEORGE ADAMSON WILDLIFE PRESERVATION TRUST



Ephantus demonstrates an open air lesson to workshop attendees

Ephantus' usual constituency

IMAGES: SAVE THE RHINO

It's now time to evaluate the impact of the programme, and Maggie will be visiting Mkomazi in November, together with her colleague Mark Pilgrim, Conservation and Education Director at Chester Zoo, to interview teachers and head teachers, and to conduct some practical research with the children to assess the effect of Rafiki on their conservation awareness. We'll be looking for signs of changes in attitude and behaviour. Typically, these take three generations to work through (think of the changing attitudes to smoking in the decades since the Second World War), but analysing which messages have taken hold in the children's minds since their visit to Mkomazi will help us to refine the programme, and decide if and how it needs to be changed for the coming year.

Meanwhile, Elisaria and Semu, who share the job of teaching between them on a part-time basis (the rest of the time they still work in the Sanctuary itself), and Dixon, the bus driver, are enjoying their new roles.

### The Conservation Education Programme at the North Luangwa Conservation Programme (NCLP), Zambia

Of all the field programmes we support, there are only two that I haven't yet visited, and NCLP is one of them. I will be putting that right in October!

I shall spend a week with Ed and Claire, who run the project, and with Sylvester Kampamba, the Conservation Education Officer. They have lined up a busy few days for me:

- Sat 10** Arrive and get to North Luangwa National Park
- Sun 11** Meet with Sylvester talking / planning
- Mon 12** School visits to Chama (east of Luangwa). Sylvester says the schools are new to the programme and very enthusiastic about it
- Tue 13** Conservation Celebration Day planning. Two teachers and 25 students from seven schools need to be brought to Mukungule village and then billeted and fed for the night
- Wed 14** Conservation Celebration Day
- Thu 15** The schools that participated the day before return to their villages. Time in the morning to meet with all the conservation teachers and head teachers before they go back to their villages
- Fri 16** Wrap up and depart

My husband Kenneth is coming with me (paying his own way and taking leave) to help with taking notes, analysing feedback forms, and to pass on any spreadsheet skills that might be useful. We'll also need to talk about the local school for the game scouts' children, that is in danger of losing government funding unless its intake can increase to 200 pupils, which means fundraising in order to build dormitory accommodation. And of course we will also see what needs to be put in place before the final translocation of five more black rhinos (*D.b. minor*) can take place in May 2010. It'll be a busy week...

## Grants & thanks

We have several people we need to thank. Firstly, a huge thank you to Maggie Esson and Chester Zoo, for all the financial and technical support for the programmes in Laikipia and Mkomazi. Secondly, our thanks to USFWS, which has just awarded \$55,587 towards the three programmes. This is the first time we had applied to USFWS for environmental education work, and we are delighted that our proposal was accepted. Thirdly, thank you to Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund, which awarded US \$18,000 to North Luangwa's CEP. Again, this was the first time we had applied to DWCF, and we are so pleased to have their support. Next, thank you to the family of Giles Thornton, who published a book in memory of their son. Proceeds from this came to Save the Rhino, for Laikipia and Mkomazi's education programmes, raising nearly £7,000. And finally, thank you to all the BBC Radio 4 listeners, who donated just over £3,000 as a result of the appeal, read by Clive Anderson, and broadcast in May.