



BASKETRY TRAINING 2012

Documentation and evaluation by Ane Lyngsgaard and Eva Seidenfaden



Basketry Training 2012

This book covers what went on during 3 2- week basketry courses held at Mutanda Lodge in Northern Province, Zambia in April, May and September 2012.

20 women from the local communities have taken part in the training.

BASKETRY TRAINING 2012

Luwaka Enterprises LTD Zambia

in conjunction with

Baskets4life Denmark.

Funded by Lumwana Barrick Mining Company



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Presentation

Baskets4life Zambia is a project designed by Josephine Makondo from Luwaka Enterprises, and Eva Seidenfaden & Ane Lyngsgaard from Baskets4life, Denmark. The project is funded by The Lumwana Barrick Mining Company.

The aim is to empower women from local communities within Northern Province with weaving skills.

The objective is to:

Introduce new techniques and functions using local materials developing a new line of contemporary design within basketry.

Create African craft with a touch of contemporary design,

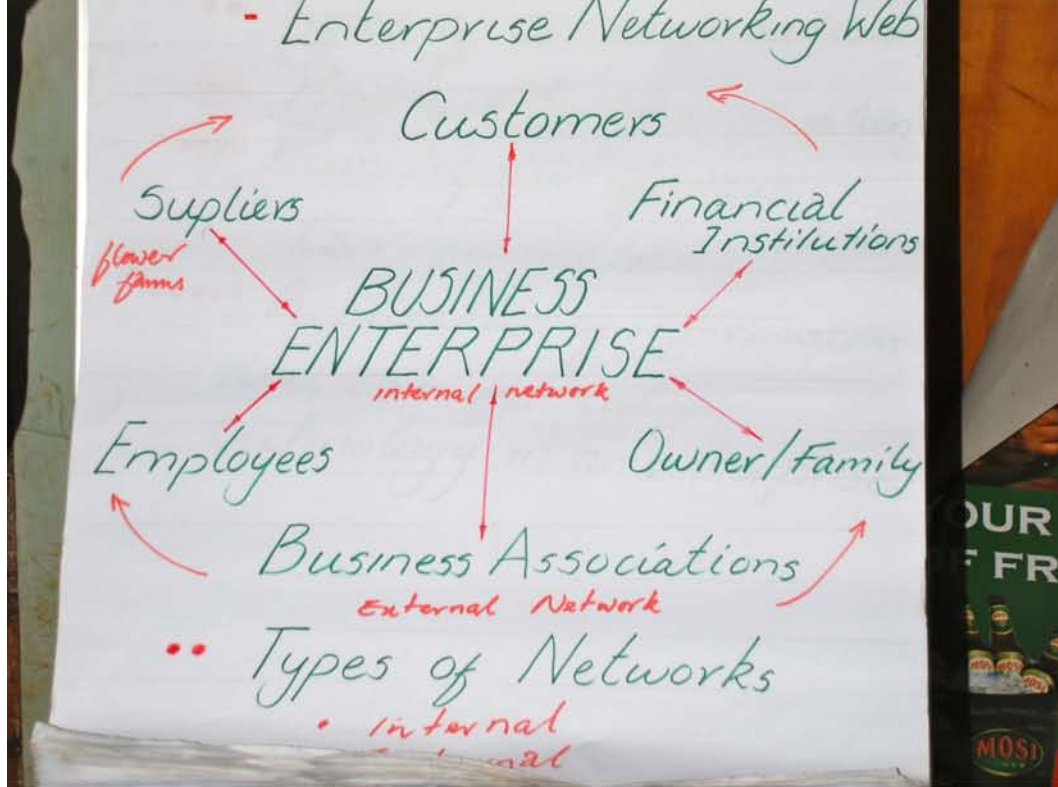
Produce baskets that is special for its originality and

Perform craft of high standards.

The results of the project should become exquisite basketry, fine enough to meet the global market in due time.

The project is designed for 3 years starting up with 3 courses in 2012.

In the large perspective the goal in Zambia in a few years time could be to have a local North, North-Western Zambian organization and centre containing several different crafts working on the same principles.



Speech for the participants beginning of the 1. course

ANE AND I HAVE A DREAM:

We have a dream! - Just like Obama
We want to share this dream with you:

We love baskets, we love to make them, to feel them, to use them, to enjoy them.
We want to share these qualities with you
We want you to be proud of being a basket maker and to be ambitious about the quality of each and every basket, you make.

We want you to feel strong as a group.

As a group you can provide much more quality because you have 20 sets of eyes to catch a mistake, when you sit together. You have much more help, when you are a group working together.
In due time, when you start selling baskets labelled BASKETS4LIFE - ZAMBIA every basket you will sell must be your very best.
If just one bad basket is sold, this will ruin the reputation of the whole group.
So to keep the group together with solidarity and love for baskets is essential.

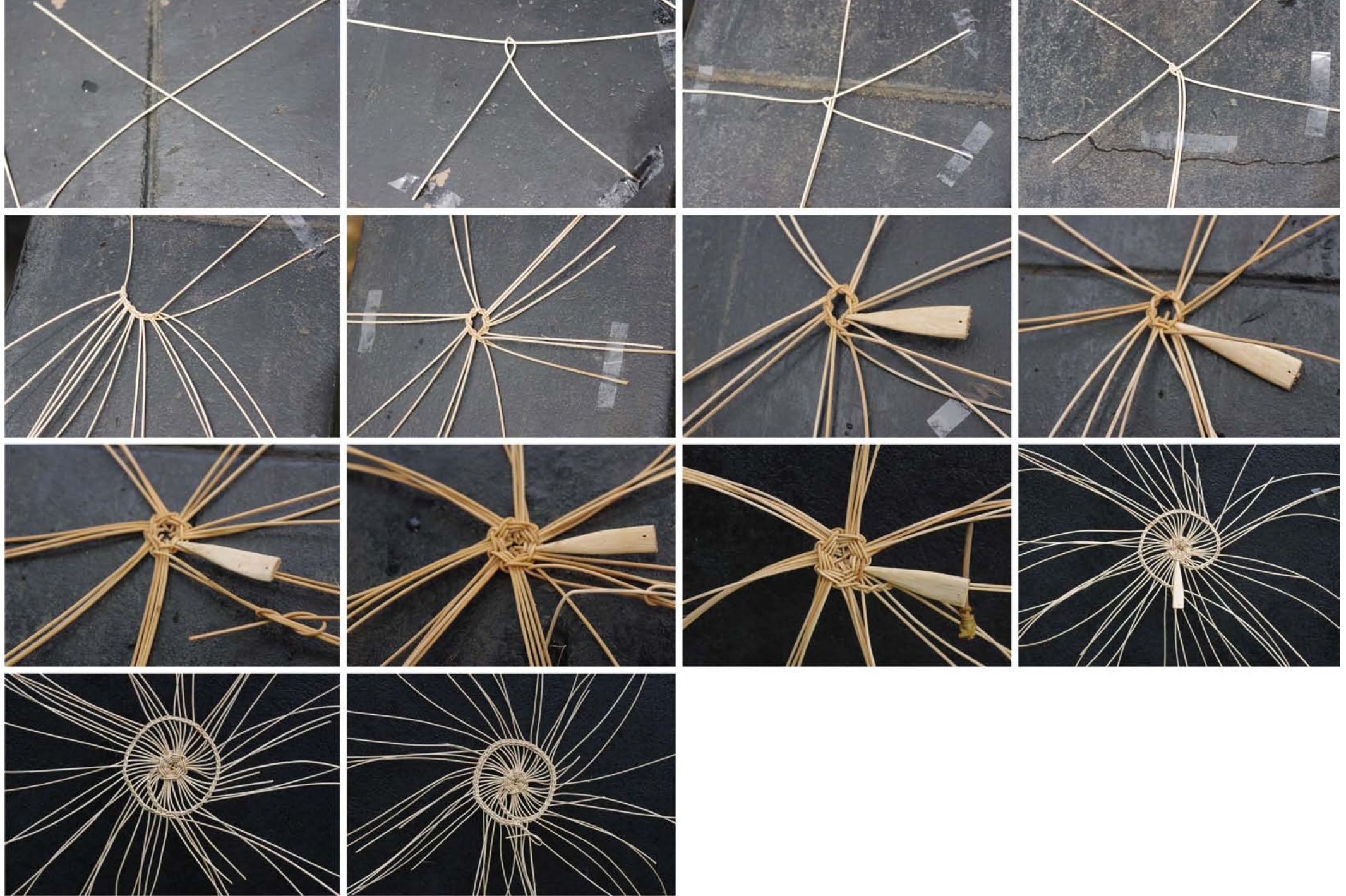
When new members come: Greet them and help them and teach them with the same spirit - work as a team to share your skills make the newcomers feel welcome in your midst.
This attitude will make you grow and succeed.

We all have hands and eyes
You all have very good hands - we saw that in your baskets yesterday. You have such beautiful shapes, they are truly feminine in their shape. You have such good hands.
We want to teach you to use your eyes.
You could imagine that you all had had several pairs of glasses: one to look for mistakes, one to watch out for weak places, one for beauty, one pair of glasses pretending to be the critical customer.

Please share this quality control within your group!



We introduced 2 different techniques. The Burkina weave and the random weave.



The Burkina weave a spiral technique originating from Burkina Faso in West Africa.



Burkina weave



Teaching hoops and random weave.



Reflections and evaluation after course no 1.

We believe we have achieved a lot during this first course and we have been able to focus on 3 models, that we think have a potential.

The students have been very dedicated and attentive.

We realize that none of the women have any basketry skills, so we have had to start from scratch. The women turned up at different times, which meant we had to start over and over again several times, which was time consuming.

It takes a long, long time to become a good basket maker. These women have to be trained in techniques and quality control. And they have to practice, practice, practice.

By the end of the course we had to decide, who amongst the women might have a future as a basket maker. We looked at their skills, their dedication and their role in the group.

We also looked at their willingness to help and teach others.

In the end we sent 5 women out of the project, 3 had left before.

This leaves us with the fact that we must start up a new group in May to meet the numbers we decided on.

We visited several galleries and import/export businesses in Johannesburg before coming to Solwezi in order to create contacts for coming sales. Likewise we have contacts in Copenhagen, Stockholm and London who are eager to follow the project and comment on the products as they evolve.

In due time they will then be offered to buy the baskets.

We know from our experience with a similar project in Burkina Faso that creating quality takes years. We do not expect to start the marketing within this year and maybe not even next year.

We stress the fact that we see this weaving project as a 3- year project and also stress the fact that we cannot label the products Baskets4life Zambia before we have approved the quality of the products. Products for International trade must be of exquisite quality - that cannot be achieved over 3 courses. It takes longer, but we are convinced it can be achieved under the existing conditions within 3 years.

We stress the need of translation throughout the course. Too much communication gets lost, if we have to struggle with only body language

We are trying to find local materials that are available. We need help from the Forest Department in Solwezi to find suitable materials. We have passed on a book to Josephine with possible ideas for gathering different species.

We have to get the women involved in this process, so they can become independent of having to get materials from elsewhere.

We look forward to a new course in May



Course no 2

On this second course of basket weaving we continued with 10 students from the previous course and started up with another 6 women.

The newcomers very quickly picked up the techniques and were well integrated in the course. We emphasized the necessity of helping and teaching newcomers, so the teaching part becomes a natural part of the project.

The Burkina technique and the random weave technique were repeated and brought further in size, volume and beauty. There is still a long way to go.

We spent a fair amount of time teaching and doing rings for the random weave baskets. The joining part demands precision and practice.

How to make handles to the baskets was introduced.

We experimented with Burkina weave and straw, which turned out to have a potential.

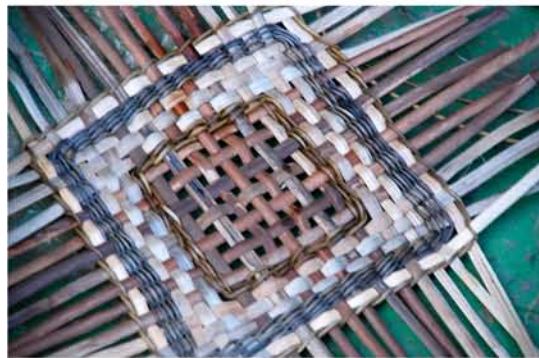
We introduced small flat trays, another object that with experience can become a potential tourist basket.

We tried to dye the materials, and hope the women will gather more information of local dyeing traditions, so we can get a wider range of colors.





Focus on finish and precision.
Next time we must look into different borders.
Lots of progress but still a long way.



Introducing trays using latin skeins, rattan, palm leaves and waxed linnen.



Random weave. Evaluation session





Dyeing and soaking material - we shall have to go more into that issue, finding the suitable bark and wood.



Hopes for the future

Until the next course in September 2012 we expect the women to investigate local materials. We have tried to encourage the weavers to try out new materials available near to them, in order to minimize the need of buying materials from far away and to make the weavers as independent as possible of external suppliers.

On the next course we look forward to see a wide range of ideas performed in the weaving techniques, they should be comfortable with by now.

During the course we have emphasized the importance of clear and correct information. To get started at home they have all been provided with tools and materials

We hope the women have shown and shared their knowledge to others in their respective communities and such expanded the amount of local potential weavers.

On the next course in September we look forward to go more into shape and finish of the basketry.

As we are aiming high, there is a huge challenge in learning how to check out the quality of each basket and make sure, that the level of beauty and craftsmanship reaches the standards of our intentions.

We still do not believe, we can reach that within a year and look forward to perfection and to proceed the coming years.

We sincerely hope the project will continue in 2013.

Goal for Course no 3

What the women should be able to provide at the end of the course:

Sets of baskets consisting of 3 baskets in random weave fitting into each other in equal shapes.

Baskets with handle in random weave.

Burkina weave dishes using rattan and latin.

All these baskets should be of a high quality matching standards for future selling.

First set up a checklist that every basket must undergo in order to pass quality control

Looking at: Shape, weave, loose ends, border, handle, beauty and final finish.

The baskets made since last course will be examined in plenum looking at these issues.

Every morning the baskets made the previous day will be cross checked by the maker, the colleagues and the trainers in plenum. We want every person to be able to identify weaknesses and be able to correct them and also learn to share critics.

We will work particularly with making hoops and handles.

We will focus on materials and try out new materials, and find out how material needs can be met in the future. This is done by walking with the women in the bush, pointing out the different species available, talking about how and when to harvest, how to stock, how to prepare.

Encourage the women to try out their possibilities back in the communities.

We want to investigate ways of dyeing material.

We want to hand out the booklet from last course to each of the students and go through, how this booklet can be of use in their working at home.



Burkina weave in new shapes and materials made by students.



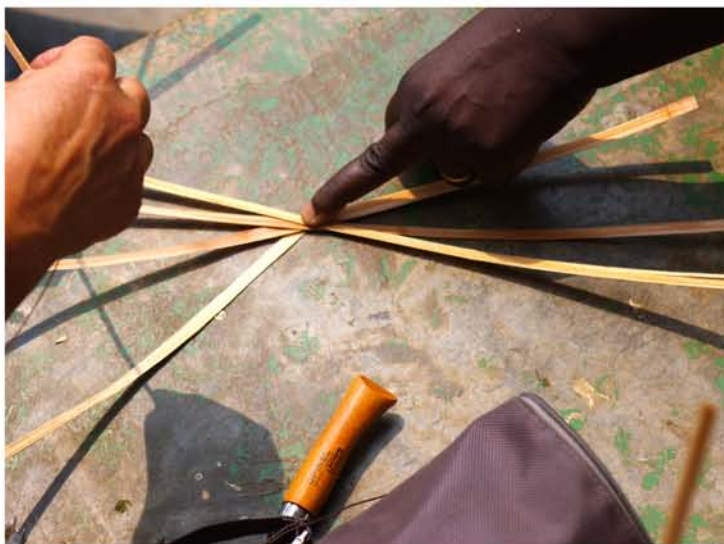
Random weave with a specific demand on size and shape.



Identifying new materials on site.



Working on different kinds of handles and borders.



Introduction to pen-holders and vases.



Reflections and Evaluation course 3

Ane and I find that many of the women have done enormous progress during these 3 courses. Some of the women definitely have a potential for making a living and expanding their skills.

Yet the women still need to be pushed and guided in getting more experience and knowhow. All of them need to feel and take responsibility for a team spirit, that is so important for this project to survive. The fact that a committee was formed during this last course, the visit from a local bank willing to give micro credits, the further daily teaching in entrepreneurship and the success selling the first baskets at the Lumwana Barrick mine Saturday Market - all these initiatives added to the enthusiasm of the women and to the team spirit.

Finding materials is a big issue. It is important to structure the harvest and stocking of indigenous materials. The women will need guidance.

But Ane and I do not find the quality of the baskets good enough. You cannot educate an unskilled person in such a short span of time. We need more time to perfection and exercise the techniques and the shapes and the quality. The women had a lot more understanding and success doing the baskets on this last course, because they were beginning to understand. We need to take them further to make a solid grounding. We believe that if we try to promote the baskets already now to critical customers, we will fail the market in short time. The women might experience a good first sales due to good heart, family and friends, but if the quality is not consistent and excellent they shoot themselves in the feet. The customer will not return. We strongly advice not to put the baskets on an export scene and be very critical eventually choosing baskets for sale at the airport outlet in Solwezi.

We want to see the potential grow. In Mongu, Western Province there are more than 3500 households involved in a basketry organization . The quality of their basketry is exquisite and known worldwide. Their organization is a brilliant model.



Market experience at Lumwana Barrick mine during the 3rd course. High spirits, good sales and very encouraging!

Identifying materials

Malawi rattan,
Makenge roots,
Latin roots,
palmleaves
straw
creepers

were available on the 1. course

The malawi rattan is imported stuff. Using rattan demands funds for buying the material.

Makenge roots were imported from Western Province. They are available in the area, but difficult to pull in clay soil. The pulling must be tried out in different seasons.

Latin roots are available from Munilunga, but needs preparation.

Palm leaves are available from further south but not on site.

Creepers are available on site.





Identifying Materials

malawi rattan

makenge

latin

rush

cattail

grass

creepers

banana leaves

were tested on course 2 and 3.

Rush and cat tail were very promising and available in wet areas.





Tools

Every member of the group is provided with a set of 1. class tools consisting of japanese cutters, an Opinel folding knife, a bodkin and one or two handdrills.

A box containing additional tools such as big secateurs, saws, sandpaper, wire, whetstone, lopping shears etc was available during the training and is now within the charge of the committee.

The trainers provided a drilling machine during the courses. It is now in the charge of the Committee.

The committee is supposed to find ways of using and sharing the contents of the box within the whole group.

A beautiful set of international basketry books was laid out for inspiration during the courses. Now they are in the charge of Lumwana Barrick.

By the end of course no. 3 all the women were provided with a box containing extra waxed linen, wire, sandpaper, sponge for wiping off bark and pegs.





Students' work.



Students' work.



Students' work.



Students' work.



Prototypes and models made by the trainers.



Prototypes and models made by the trainers.



Participants: Marvellous Kaselapeo, Agnes, Nelly Nbwita, John Mulosa, Hanson Makondo, Joyce Chilema and Gift Mbada, Violet. These participants left after the 1. course. Rachel, Rhodia Kyembe, Fanny Kyesha, Mary Malichi and Cherry, Elisabeth, Christina Potashi, Mervicce Ilunga and Rachel.



Gladys Ngambo (left after 2 courses), Mary Kipona, Rhedia Kanjoba, Gloria Lukalaga, Elisabeth from Luwaka. Florence, Magritte Kawanga , Hilda, Alice, Gladys , Readness Chikone and Daphine Kapepala



The committee . Chair woman: Gladys , Treasurer Alice, Secretary Rhedia, Member Christina, Member Mary Kipona.

Lokal members: Mervice, Elisabeth, Rhodia, Magritte and Daphine.



The leader team: Elisabeth and Josephine Makondo from Luwaka Enterprises.
Brenda Liswaniso, and Harrington Kanema from Barrick.
Eva Seidenfaden and Ane Lyngsgaard from basket4life.



Good luck with the baskets in the outlet at the airport!



Important visits and customers during the 3 courses:

Visit from government, Cetzam bank, The daily news, The MD from Barrick, The catering business from Barrick. Her Royal Highness Queen Mumena, The local television.





Final Remarks.

We must not let go now, the standard needs more perfection. We see a necessity of coming back twice next year 2013 and maybe once in 2014.

The majority of the products, we have seen here by the end of the third course, are far from what we can accept quality wise. We need again and again to go through the checklists and principles for quality in each and every basket.

It takes time and practice to be able to judge your own work, and it takes a group spirit to help, advise and criticize your fellow's work. During the sessions we have gone through all these issues together again and again every day with different perspectives, and we can see this has a growing positive impact.

The role of the trainer is important as is the role of the local entrepreneur. Together we stress all the vital issues from technical as well as cultural angles.

We started up with completely unskilled students, and in each course we were presented with new students. A fact that slowed down our process in the weaving and in creating the group spirit.

We propose another 2 sessions with the same group of women in order to create an even level of quality based on a mutual understanding of the quality issues amongst the women.

Now that the women have implemented the different basketry techniques, we want to widen the range of baskets within these techniques in size, shape and functionality. It is important for the customer's view, that different types of baskets are presented on display.

We want to reach a state, where we can advise and inspire the individual basket maker in a personal direction matching her capacity to create outstanding craft.

We found the first market day in Lumwana Barrick Mine a success, but the quality of the baskets had not yet reached the level of quality, we had expected and hoped for. The baskets were sold cheaply and the spirits were high, but to keep customers coming back you need more solid and exquisite baskets.

Our opinion is, that baskets been made on this last course are not yet ready to be put for sale in the outlet at the airport. The quality has not yet been acquired. We might just create a bad reputation.

The women must learn to collect, stock and prepare their own materials. Time must be set for that in future planning by the organizers. An issue that cannot be left alone and must be guided. Our local partner Luwaka and the committee will insure, that the women will collect the local materials as part of their training

We need to have supplies in the same quantities as in former trainings available on the trainings 2013. We cannot rely on the women's findings for the trainings, as we want to move on and create new objects.

On the 3rd course a committee has been formed for consistency of the project. The aim of this committee is to get people work together in a good working culture and to check the quality of baskets, before they are sent to market.

We expect the women to be full and active members of the committee structure, and that all the participants are able to work actively within these frames.

We want the women to take responsibility and ownership for the project – it should no longer be necessary to convince the participants further about the qualities and potentials of the project. Until now we have seen the project as a social commitment from all partners. We have spent 3 courses finding the right understanding, commitment and communication. It would be nice if we could proceed to a proper "basketry school" in the next phase, where we are enabled to concentrate more directly on training the individual maker. We expect the women to be able to work on their own and be able to receive training and teaching directly and to move forward towards perfection with our guidance.

Courses in 2013 are important!

Especially if we want the basketry production to expand and reach higher levels of quality due for export marketing in the long term perspective, this being the original goal pointed out by Lumwana Barrick, Luwaka enterprises and the trainers.

October 2012

Ane Lyngsggaard and Eva Seidenfaden



The Trainers

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Mutanda Lodge