

HIGH FIVE CLUB

changing lives in Africa, £5 at a time

Football Tournament, Zambia

This year the High Five Club, in response to requests from community leaders residing in the Game Management Area bordering South Luangwa National Park in Zambia, launched the Luangwa Valley's first ever staged Football Tournament – suitably named the *High Five Club Conservation Tournament*.



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Football is a universal language in Africa and is a vehicle used increasingly by community development organisations to raise awareness of issues such as HIV/AIDS transmission in local communities.

Earlier this year the High Five Club partnered with our long-term community partner in Zambia, Mnkhangya Community Resource Board, to launch the High Five Club Conservation Football Tournament in the wildlife-rich Luangwa Valley, bringing together 16 youth football teams across 3 different Chiefdoms bordering South Luangwa National Park – Nsefu Chiefdom (4 teams), Mnkhangya Chiefdom (6 teams) and Kakumbi Chiefdom (6 teams).

A local committee was set up and tasked to design and put in place the rules of engagement for the tournament and to supervise all the games to ensure that each participating team was treated fairly according to these rules. They were also tasked with delivering conservation and key health messages through the vehicle provided by this tournament.



The tournament ran smoothly with the top 2 teams in each of 4 round robin groups qualifying for the quarter finals, 4 teams for the semi-finals and finally as per tradition after a play off two teams reached the finals. 32 matches were played in total over a period of 3 months.

To cement the wildlife conservation focus each of the 4 round robin groups was named after wildlife, and each team taking part added the name of a wildlife species found in the Luangwa into their team's existing name.

High Five funds were used to award the referees and linemen a small stipend for each match officiated, along with funding monetary prizes for the top 4 winning teams, the player of the tournament, top scorer and best goalkeeper. We also paid for regular slots on the local radio station "Feel Free Radio" throughout the tournament to update the local community on match results, along with conducting interviews on important conservation and development issues. The latter covered prevention of HIV/AIDS and STDs, and the risks of using marijuana, alcohol and other drugs as this a growing problem in the community especially amongst the male youth. Both

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Zambia Wildlife Authority (ZAWA) and the Health sector were engaged to give talks on the radio and also before each match to sensitise the whole community on both wildlife conservation and health issues.

During the final match played at Chiutika Basic School stadium, spectators came from all 6 Chiefdoms in South Luangwa (Jumbe, Msoro, Malama, Kakumbi, Nsefu and Mnkhangya respectively) due to the final being highly advertised by Feel Free Radio. Many important stakeholders attended the finals including the Hon. Chief Mnkhangya and Senior Chief Nsefu, the ZAWA Senior Area Wildlife Warden and the District Commissioner of Mambwe who was the guest of honour.

The winning team was Mfuwe Elephant United from Kakumbi with the runner up Dushambe Hippo FC from Nsefu.



As a result of the stunning success of this football tournament in engaging with the Valley's youth and wider community in terms of raising awareness of both conservation and important health issues we are looking to expand this tournament in 2016 to include all 6 Chiefdoms in South Luangwa in an inter-Chiefdom tournament with the winning team playing the top team in North Luangwa. We are also looking at adding a Netball Conservation Tournament to engage the girls.

High Five Club Support:

Our collective support of £668.14 funded this football tournament in its entirety with community leaders providing 'in kind' support by serving on the football tournament steering committee, and giving their time to conduct radio interviews and speak to the youth on conservation and health issues prior to each match.

Africa On The Ball also supported this initiative by providing football kit for three prominent teams in South Luangwa.

We will keep you updated on the expansion of this initiative in 2016. For more information contact Cheryl@highfiveclub.co.uk