

Report of the visit of Elske van Zanden and Wim Reimert in July 2025 to Senanga

Friday 18 July, 4.15 p.m.

After a drive of more than two hours on the sometimes very bad road from Mongu to Senanga (about 100 km) we arrived at our regular guest address: Senanga Safaris. Still beautifully situated on the Zambezi River, but now a place with a lot of overdue maintenance.

In the morning we had received a sad message from Mike Mutti, the chairman of the local board of Zambridge Senanga, that a teacher from the Maxanaedi school had died in Lewanika hospital in Mongu. And the treasurer of Zambridge in the Netherlands informed us that the last instalment payment to the local board had not arrived. Not a good start of our visit.



Saturday 19 July.



A little after nine o'clock, Mike Mutti arrived, together with treasurer Steven Nasilibane. Later, Patrick Siyauya (HBC coordinator), Annie Sakala (SODC coordinator) and Theresa Sikwatiketo (deputy secretary) of the local board also came to greet us. We agreed to meet the next day at 3 p.m. to determine the programme.

A tour of the city brought back many memories. There were now many more cars on the road and there was a lot of activity. The name of the prison turned out to be changed to the optimistic Senanga Correctional Facility. We saw the prisoners dressed in bright orange overalls busy correcting themselves in the vegetable gardens across the road.

Sunday 20 July.

After breakfast we visited our good friend Patrick Kozi, secretary of the local board, and his daughter Limpo. Patrick is recovering from surgery and therefore less mobile. It was a very warm reunion. For Limpo we had brought Wim's painting *Kubetter Senanga* in which she is depicted with her son Kopano on her arm. Patrick was still staying at the old address and Limpo now lives with him. A new, much larger, house was under construction on the same plot. After lunch back to Safaris for the programme meeting.



15.00 hrs. Together with Mike Mutti, Annie Sakala, Steven Nasilibane and Sibeso Mwandamena (vice-chairman) we have drawn up the programme for the coming days. Mike asked Annie to lead in prayer and then read a warm welcome speech.

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| Monday morning 10 am | visit to the DEBS (District Educational Board Secretary) and the office of the DC (District Commissioner) |
| Monday afternoon 2 pm | to HBC (Home Based Care) and YFC (Youth Friendly Corner) |
| Tuesday all day | off, because it's Elske's birthday |
| Wednesday morning 10 am | to SODC (Senanga Orphan Day Care Centre) |
| Wednesday afternoon 2 pm | to Maxanaedi Community School |
| Thursday morning 10 a.m. | joint board meeting |

After the meeting, Sibeso went with us to our room at Safaris. To literally take our measurements, as it turned out.



At the end of the afternoon we drove to Litambya to make an appointment to visit Esther Tabo, now 83 years old. In Litambya there is still the hospital where Elske worked from 1980 to 1983 and where we met Esther. Esther was at home in her new (not yet finished) house and we agreed to come for a 'proper' visit on Tuesday morning.

On the way back we drove some distance on the road to Sesheke and we could see that Senanga has expanded a lot with many new and also large houses.

Monday 21 July.

Together with Annie Sakala we visited Mrs. Nakwebwa, the DEBS. She had only just taken office and to our surprise apparently didn't know that both SODC and Maxanaedi had received permission to expand with a secondary school. Annie promised to come by to show her the official document. The former district of Senanga was now divided into four districts, so we heard: Nalolo, Shangombo, Sioma and Senanga. We exchanged views on the new education programme that has been launched in Zambia. The 'normal' secondary school now ends with form 4. Form 5 and form 6 will be offered at only one school in the district. In Senanga that will probably be Senanga Secondary School, Wim's former school.

Next to the DC (Mrs. Zitah Sipolo) but she turned out to be absent. In her place we had a conversation with the DAO (District Administrative Officer), Mr. Morrishen Mweetwa. Monologue of the DAO is perhaps a better description of the meeting.

The morning ended with a visit to the market for some shopping.

At 2.40 pm we drove to HBC together with Patrick Siyauya and picked up Sibeso Mwandamena on the way. It was already after three when we took a seat in the main hall of the HBC building. Theresa Sikwatiketo led us all in prayer and then there was a round of introductions. In addition to the people already mentioned, there was also a representative of the YFC as well as four caregivers, volunteers from HBC who visit patients at home. Patrick explains what HBC does. There are a total of 15 caregivers who get help from 5 care supporters, nurses from the hospital. They have 45 patients under their care. The lady from the YFC, a teacher from SODC, also talks about her work. 11 students participate, 7 boys and 4 girls, who meet every Friday to talk about issues concerning the youth. Two of the boys later joined the meeting. To our understanding they should become a kind of peer educators. Both the YFC lady and earlier Patrick gave a summary of what is needed. We had brought a volleyball which was accepted with gratitude.



After the meeting, we had a look at the offices whose occupation was no longer as it used to be. HBC, YFC and the local board now share an office, the headmistress of the new secondary school at SODC occupies another office and the third is used by Ron Liswaniso, former member of the board of Zambridge and someone who often lends a helping hand as a consultant. Finally, together with two caregivers, we visited one of the patients at home in Limoneno compound in town. This gentleman has to go to the hospital in

Mongu three times a week for dialysis and he receives guidance from the caregivers at home. Fortunately, Elske had remembered to buy him something for him in a shop before the visit: bread, eggs, sugar and oil. Finally, I took Patrick to the hospital and looked at his dental office. With some trickery, he was still able to perform some simple treatments. In the evening on the Safaris we actually ate pizza. A small miracle because the power had gone out again and no water came out of the tap.

Tuesday 22 July.

The festoon secretly brought from home hung in the room when Elske came out of the bathroom. Happy birthday! After breakfast we went to Esther in Litambya where we also met four of her children and a number of grandchildren. Together we took a walk along the river to see the extensive vegetable garden



that is supplied with water by means of a foot pump. We also checked out our old house near the hospital, i.e. the foundation because that was the only thing that was left of it. Elske was given a tour of the old hospital by one of the nurses, which surprisingly turned out to offer even more than we expected. Of course we couldn't leave without first having lunch at Esther's. Delicious.

At the end of the afternoon we were expected at the bar next to our accommodation at the Safaris. A long table had been placed there with a whole row of pans of food. A true feast organized by Limpo. And a huge chocolate cake: *"Happy Birthday ELSKE"*.

Wednesday 23 July.

We had agreed with Annie Sakala that we would pick her up at a quarter to ten to go to SODC together. To our surprise, Mike Mutti arrived in her place and told us that Annie was already at SODC to prepare for our visit. With Mike we drove to SODC in the car and there we were welcomed by a large group of pupils with enthusiastic singing and dancing. Great to see.



Besides Mike and Annie from the local board, we also met Ron Liswaniso there. In one of the classrooms, in the presence of many student teachers (the school has 22!) there were speeches by the acting head mistress of the primary school and of the head mistress of the new secondary school. The latter turned out to be a former student of Wim. During the tour afterwards we saw that the secondary school was housed in the new classrooms that had been built with financial support from Zambridge and the *Wilde Ganzen* foundation. A new building with three classrooms was also under construction on the site, financed by the local community and by the CDF (Constituency Development Fund). We also took a look at the well-equipped library and the room where the inverter and batteries of the solar energy installation were located. Unfortunately, the inverter had been damaged by lightning and the money needed for repair was only partly there. We had already decided - when we heard about this - to contribute the difference out of our own pocket.

Of course we were offered an extensive lunch and then we were introduced to six retired cooks. They had previously worked as volunteers in the kitchen of the school but were now too old to work. It was soon clear what was expected of us and fortunately we were able to meet that expectation.

Then we were taken to a room where about 50 small children were sitting on the floor for ECE (Early Childhood Education). "We urgently need tables and chairs". Well, that much was obvious.



With a new dress for Elske and a new blouse for Wim, we left for Maxanaedi together with Mike via a short refreshment stop at Senanga Safaris. Again, a warm welcome from a large group of singing children. The meeting in a classroom started with the request of the MC (*master of ceremony*) to stand up and observe a moment of silence. This was to commemorate a teacher who had died unexpectedly on July 17 in the hospital of Mongu to which she had been referred. After the introduction round there were several speeches, followed by a tour of the site. The new water tower with two storage tanks and an electric pump



in the borehole was a remarkable sight. Four taps were connected to it around the school compound. All this was built with a substantial contribution from Zambridge. SODC will also have such an installation. The equipment for this is already there, but because a rocky layer was encountered during drilling, no further drilling could be done. The school is waiting for a bigger and stronger drill.

As with SODC, a 1 x 3 school building (a block with three classrooms) is used as a secondary school. Both schools received two volleyballs and a pump from us.

We had already had an extensive lunch at SODC, but that was impressively redone at Maxanaedi. After dinner a long speech by Monde Mututwa, daughter of the late Maxwell Mututwa, the Silele village traditional leader who in December 2002 had given permission to the founders of Maxanaedi to start a school on his land. There is some "hassle" with other relatives of Maxwell Mututwa about the allocation of the land, but Monde was very clear about that: the school is very important to the community and let no one dare to doubt it.



With a traditional *musisi* (skirt + top in one) for Elske and a *siziba* (waistcoat + skirt) for Wim, we left together with Mike Mutti and Steven Nasilbane and his wife to their respective homes in Senanga. As if we hadn't eaten enough that day, there was a joint meal with representatives of the local board in restaurant New Horizon in the evening. Present were Mike Mutti, Annie Sakala, Patrick Siyauya, Ron Liswaniso, Limpo Kozi and the two of us. It was a very pleasant get-together.

Thursday 24 July.

Our last day in Senanga. At 10 o'clock we were ready in the garden of Safaris for a joint board meeting. The local board was represented by Mike Mutti, Annie Sakala, Theresa Sikwatiketo and Sibeso Mwandamena. Patrick Siyauya was absent due to the death of a friend, Patrick Kozi had to stay at home because of his health and Charles Samulaba (deputy treasurer) was still busy fishing. Why Steven Nasilbane was not there was not clear to us. We had brought new T-shirts for all board members with the Zambridge logo on it and (that had been recommended to us from various sides) a packet of *stroopwafels* for everyone. There was also so much left of Elske's birthday cake that we could offer everyone a large piece of cake. It did not have to be a long meeting because a lot had already been discussed during the visits to the three projects. Mike suggested that Elske should preside, but she bounced the ball back to Mike. Because secretary Patrick could not be there, Wim offered to do the minutes.



After the meeting, a last visit to Patrick and Limpo Kozi. A visit with an emotional parting. At Sibeso's request, we also visited her house. The dress she had made for Elske (see Sunday) was ready to be collected. She also gave us beautiful pieces of fabric for our three daughters.

With our new wardrobe we left early afternoon to visit our friends in Mongu.