

Uganda:

Do you know what a rhino looks like?

Yes: No: Not sure:

Sarah Bazley
Education Division
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Rhinos have been extinct in Uganda since the early 1980s; however Rhino Fund Uganda is bringing them back. There are currently four white rhinos at Ziwa Rhino Sanctuary (approximately four hours' drive north west from Kampala), and two white rhinos at Uganda Wildlife Education Centre (UWEC), Entebbe. That's six rhinos in the whole of Uganda (we have eight black rhinos at Chester Zoo!)

At the end of 2005 I spent a week with the Education Team at Ziwa, David Bakeine and Juliet Nakanjako, whose salaries are paid for by Save the Rhino International. They have developed an education programme for the public (especially children) to create awareness about the plight of the rhino in Uganda, and the importance of rhino conservation. This involves them visiting schools in the area and, where possible, schools visiting the Sanctuary to have lessons on site.

For the past five years, I have been working in Zoo Education in the UK, so was thrilled when Chester Zoo's Keeper for a Day Fund allowed me the opportunity to apply my skills "in the field". This was my first trip to Africa, so I knew it would be memorable, whatever happened!

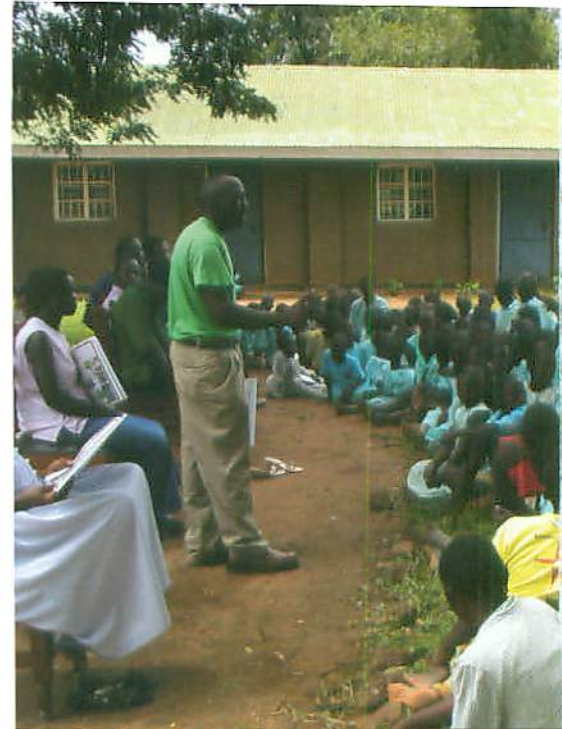
“You are telling me that 80% of school children don't know what a rhino looks like?**”**



ALL IMAGES: SARAH BAZLEY

Above:
Sarah seeing her first animal in the wild

Above left:
Inside the visitors centre at the Sanctuary



What level of understanding do they have already?

In pre-assessment of 1,300 students, only 20% could definitely state that they knew what a rhino looks like. This took me a while to get my head round - you are telling me that 80% of school children don't know what a rhino looks like?

After touring the site and its layout, (which included seeing "my first animal in the wild" - a rhino, and there was no fence between me and it!) we got down to the job in hand. It was after asking my first questions when the reality of Conservation Education hit home.

Who are you aiming your education at?

There are approx. 423 schools (primary and secondary) within driving distance of the Sanctuary, and when David or Juliet arrive to deliver a lesson, normally the whole school attends (that threw my "Key Stage 1, 2, 3 & 4" out the window!). There are also a number of languages spoken in this area (luckily they can speak a number of these!); transporting David and Juliet to the schools is another challenge.

When you look at the situation in more detail, it's fairly obvious. The surrounding area is rural. Each morning the children walk to collect water, they go to school, and back at home they have to help the family (looking after the goats and chickens etc.). The schools cover basic education, but after covering the curriculum there is little time or expertise for extra information.

The children in this area do not have regular access to books, computers or television to learn about the world around them. As rhinos have not been present in Uganda in their lifetime, it is hardly surprising that the majority don't know what they look like.

Left:
Education Team, David
Bakeine visiting schools in
Ziwa

Far right:
Sarah Bazley and Juliet
Nakanjako swap notes

Right and below right
Ziwa's two educators



Ziwa's two educators emphasise that these are magnificent creatures that belong in their country; and explain where and how they live, and the reasons why we should all protect them.



At the Sanctuary there is a visitor centre, and in the future school groups will come and visit, have lessons and see a real rhino in the flesh. The centre is kitted out with a projector, so it is easier for them to show pictures to large numbers of people, and I was able to take some posters and books to improve the experience (courtesy of the Education Department of Chester Zoo).

I had a wonderful time at Ziwa. All the staff made me extremely welcome, and it was a huge eye opener to learn how conservation education actually works at the grass roots level. Thank you to Chester Zoo and Save the Rhino for this opportunity.

David and Juliet's lessons are an exciting treat for the children, and generally start with the children having to use their imagination to picture what a big, grey four-legged creature that has two horns on its head, thick skin and not very good eyesight actually looks like. When they are shown a card with a picture of rhino for the first time, the responses are amazing and they get very excited!

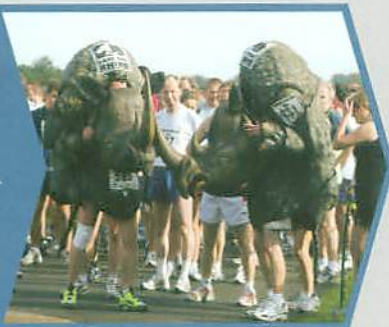
There are challenges in how to transport schools there... but that is another story!

Woburn Rhino Run

The Woburn Rhino Run took place at Woburn Safari Park Sunday 9 October 2005.

Zoe Savage
Events Manager

On this sunny but cold Sunday morning, over 650 rhino and running enthusiasts navigated through 10 kilometres of beautiful private lanes and roads of the Woburn Estate. Several runners made their debut in Save the Rhino's famous rhino costumes which received enormous cheers from supporters.



ALL IMAGES: RENAUD FULCONIS

The scenery and sunshine were certainly a highlight of the day and of course to see Woburn's four white rhinos peacefully browsing in a field was a reminder of the worthwhile cause for which we were fundraising.



An excellent autumn day out for a fantastic cause!



After the runners cooled down, they along with their supporters then made the most of Woburn's superb facilities and varied wildlife.



Mike Gratton, former London marathon winner, announced the prizes which were given to the fastest runners in each age category. A few weeks later when sponsorship money had been collected Save the Rhino gave prizes to the top fundraisers.