



The Tribal Drum



April 2016

The rainy season is drawing to an end here in Mfuwe, with the temperature dropping and just a few late showers clouding the skies. We were delighted to welcome our production team back to work a few weeks ago and they've wasted no time in getting stuck in to making beautiful textiles!



A recent visit from Director and Founder **Gillie Lightfoot** has seen us embracing our 'Blue Period' with shades of indigo aplenty in the workshop! With new designs and products being developed, expect to see our Blue range released any day now. It's really exciting to be able to take a new design concept, develop it, produce the fabric and turn it into a product within a short time to test an idea!



This month we have had a consultant from Pum with us: **Joop Martens** has over 30 years' experience in the textiles industry working for Dutch textiles giant Vlisco. He has endless relevant knowledge about producing textiles in Africa, and has come to help us develop our screen print ranges. While Joop worked with Priya and Moses on techniques, fabrics, screens, paint and fixatives, Gillie was working with the painting team to develop some new screen-print colourways. Once a particular colourway is decided on, the paint mixers Richard and Benjamin will keep that swatch safely in their file and then recreate the colours **by eye** every time we need them! It's astonishing to watch them work and always an area of the workshop where visitors congregate!!



Continuing with our theme of staff stories, we'd like to share **Nelly Mphasi's** story this month!

If any of the Tribal Textiles staff has an infectious giggle, it's Nelly! Nelly is 36 years old and is a senior member of the Starching department having been with the company for 12 years. She is also a very popular member of the team thanks to her wonderful sense of humor and very hard work. Nelly's favourite designs to starch are Traditional Block and Bubble; in fact she is one of only two artists who can draw this last design.

Nelly is married to another member of our staff, Christopher, who is one of our top sewers. They live about 400 metres from the workshop in a small house with their 3 children. Nelly often catches a lift to work on the back of Christopher's bicycle. Like many of our staff, Nelly makes an additional income through her entrepreneurial skills. Every time she travels to visit family in the nearest large town Chipata, she brings back parcels of sugar, fish and oil which she sells locally for a small profit. Christopher also offers a tailoring service from home, so between them they are able to send all three children to our local community school, Malimba, which Tribal Textiles helps to sponsor. When asked what her dreams are for the future, Nelly says that she wants her children to all go to college, so they can have successful careers. Nelly herself is saving up to go back to school as she didn't finish and would love to pass the exams that she missed!



Last, but certainly not least, we would like to introduce **Raphaëlle Gasse**, from Paris, who has come to work with us on marketing, brand development and building Tribal's business among interior designers and fabric houses. She brings many years of marketing skills and a healthy understanding of French wine.... and the lack of it in Mfuwe!

Don't forget to follow us on **Facebook**, **Instagram** and **Pinterest** for more regular updates and news from the Bush. Until next time, all the best from The Tribal Team!