



LINDA – LIBUYU FOOTBRIDGE SURVEY

LIVINGSTONE



Report written by
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Linda-Libuyu Suspension Bridge is a foot bridge connecting the local communities of Linda and Libuyu. On learning of the existence of a suspension bridge in the Linda area, Rosie Mercer, Business Development Manager of Destination Livingstone, considered that it could make another attraction on the **“Getting to Know Linda”** tourist activity that she was developing. In October 2024 she made a visit to the bridge to see it for herself and called people **“very brave”** to even consider using the bridge. Anecdotally we were told that this was a very busy thoroughfare between Linda and Libuyu and the alternatives made a wide detour around the city.

Shortly after her visit she saw a Facebook video, compiled by a local Zambia tabloid @Muvity, which made a report in relation to the said bridge. This brought with it a large number of angry comments from local individuals citing the local authority's neglect to maintain and improve the bridge.

Some notable comments are highlighted below:

Davie Shamainda

“This is a death trap to the people around these areas, it's a pity that we have a member of parliament who has failed to deliver his campaign promise”

Solomon Kabize Choombe

“In other countries, this can be a tourist attraction, Let the Tourism Board take it up and fix it’

Grey Shandwa

“Hope crocodiles are not in that river”

Kasongo Musela

“Ask the councilors why they did not apply for CDF?”

Thompson Kantu

“Even ba Mayor promised something”

Martyrs Mudenda Siamakala

“Its high time we turn into serious politicians”

Philip Manda

“Authority does not care”

Lameck Mtonga

“They want to build a taxi Rank instead of working on the bridge.. Hundreds of pupils use this bridge daily to and from”

Gomani Masiye

“With this ‘huge’ CDF allocation, how can the local leaders really fail to maintain that simple bridge”

Kashman Cerf Kenny

“I passed on this ka bridge going to Libuyu and I didn't want to have a second experience”

Follow the link for the above.

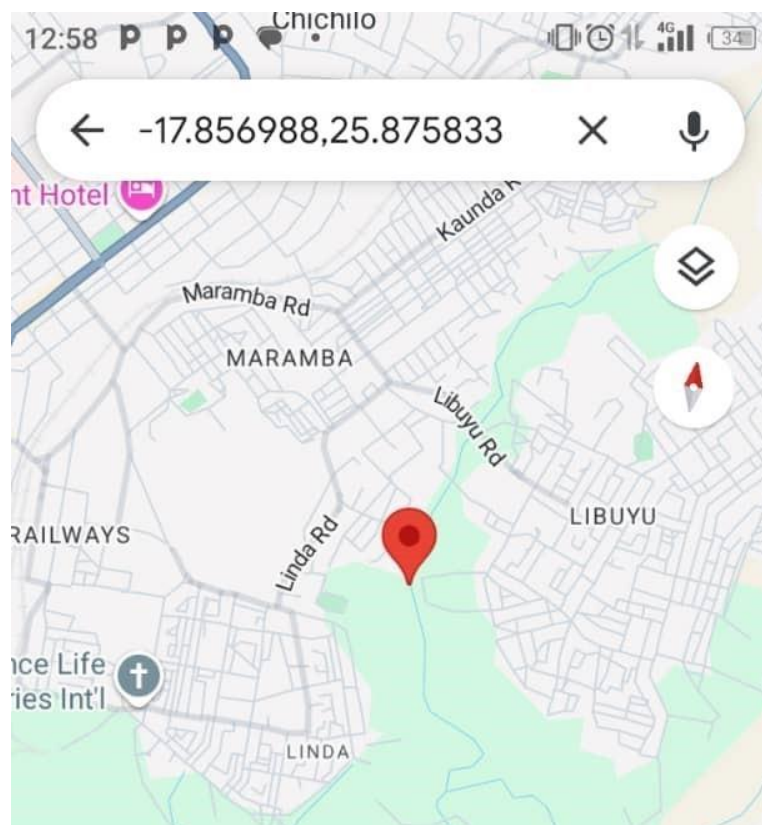
<https://www.facebook.com/askmuvi/videos/1027204309216366/?mibextid=rS40aB7S9Ucbxw6v>

We set out to find more information about the history of the bridge but this proved to be difficult as neither the local government departments nor the Livingstone Museum could provide us with details. However, according to a local resident, whose property is right next to the bridge, he told us that the bridge was first constructed in 2010. Some rehabilitation works were done on the bridge in 2013 when the then suspension cables lost strength, hence compromising on safety. He said the works primarily focused on changing the size and dimension of the suspension cables and its surface. He said he remembers all this because some of the materials that were used in its rehabilitation are still on his property as they were kept there during the said works.

The photos below are of the 2 plaques on the bridge. Despite making requests to both US organizations for information, we do not know if they supported the building of the bridge or its later maintenance or both.



Location of the footbridge



2. CURRENT SITUATION

The bridge is currently in a very bad state, and daily use of the bridge is a continuous hazard to all users including school going children. It is a considerably shorter route for pupils who go to schools on either side of the bridge than any alternative route. These schools include Linda Secondary School, Nansanzu Secondary School, Linda West, Linda East, Libuyu Secondary School and St Mary's Secondary School.

The bridge is also a preferred options by traders from Linda community whose source of supply is the Libuyu market situated in Libuyu community. It is also a short route for daily commuters who work on either side of the bridge.

During the rainy season, it is understood that the Maramba River, which the bridge crosses, gets infested by crocodiles that travel up stream when the water levels are high. During past rainy seasons the bridge has at given times, been submerged by water when the water levels are extremely high, making schools, farms and markets, and other services inaccessible.

Due to the passing of time, the structural integrity of the bridge has been compromised due to the nature of the materials that were used in its construction. The planks on the base are rotten, loose or totally missing; wire screens on each side are broken or missing. Even as people walk along the bridge, planks shift and the bridge sways considerably when there are a number of people together on the bridge. It is acknowledged that some of these items have been stolen by junkies who find it easy to vandalize the bridge, making it even more unsafe to use during the night.





3. SURVEY

Based on these observations and the anecdotal information, we decided to undertake a quick survey as a means to verifying the level of traffic across the bridge.

We also set out to outline the challenges faced by local communities in Linda and Libuyu in accessing social services, goods and products. Providing a comprehensive review on the state of the bridge and its impact on the daily lives of the surrounding communities was the main purpose of the activity. Problems in using the bridge were added through interviews with some of the pedestrians.

The survey was conducted on three days in January 2025 – Mon, Wed and Fri – in the week beginning 13th January. The exercise was conducted by young interns working with Destination Livingstone and local youths involved in the Creative Conversation programme. They devised the rota in order to share the task and were paid a small stipend for every day they took part in the survey.

Interns –

Munalula Imbula (Coordinator)
Yvonne Siandula
Mikko Mudenda
Kwanda Muyamwa
Claudous Hunt (Photographer)

Local youths –

Boyd Maliti	Jessica Nosiku
Mubiana Pumula	Ruth Munsanje
Moses Chiyaze	Martha Sikanda
Lyambai Mbaita	Josephine Kwala
Kelvin Biemba	Dorothy Mbaita Lyambai

The survey was designed to record three different categories of pedestrian – commercial, school children and other pedestrians. We counted the pedestrians on an hourly basis from 06.00 to 18.00 each day.



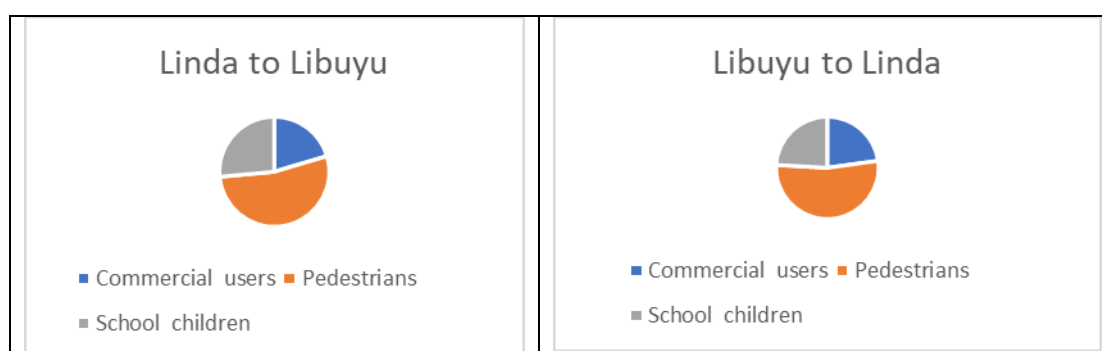
3.1 Bridge usage results

In the following tables we present the:

- Total numbers of pedestrians and categories
- Use of the bridge during daylight hours

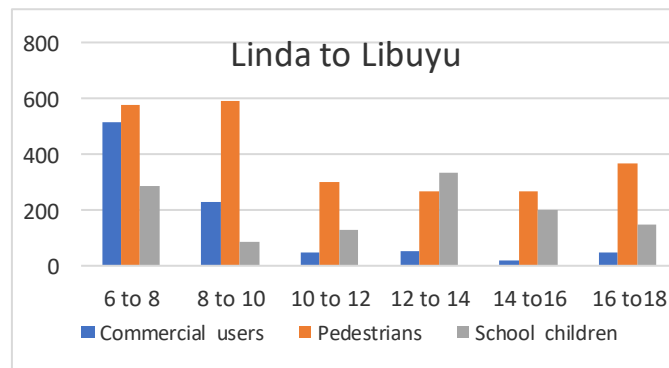
a) Total number of pedestrians and categories over 3 days

	Commercial users	Pedestrians	School children	Total
Linda-Libuyu	913	2,375	1,183	4,471
Libuyu-Linda	1,108	2,584	1,170	4,862
Totals by group	2,021	4,959	2,353	9,333



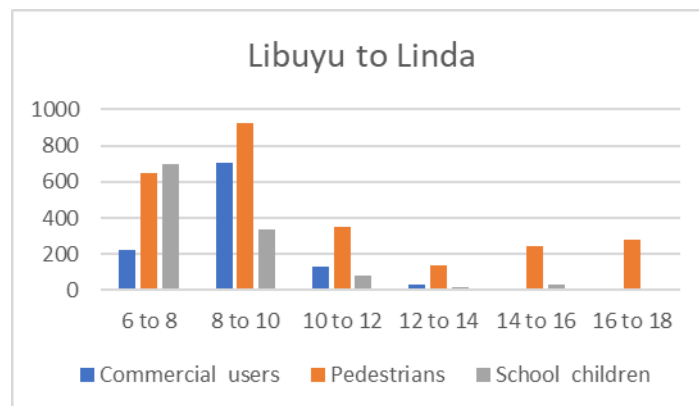
b) Total footbridge usage by time of day Linda – Libuyu

Time 2hr rota	Commercial users	Pedestrians	School children	Total
6 to 8	515	580	285	1380
8 to 10	228	591	85	904
10 to 12	48	303	129	480
12 to 14	54	267	337	658
14 to16	21	268	200	489
16 to18	47	366	147	560
Total	913	2,375	1,183	4,471



Libuyu-Linda

Time 2hr rota	Commercial users	Pedestrians	School children	Total
6 to 8	223	645	695	1563
8 to 10	702	924	338	1964
10 to 12	130	351	80	561
12 to 14	32	139	19	190
14 to 16	8	245	30	283
16 to 18	13	280	8	301
Total	1,108	2,584	1,170	4,862



3.2 Resident's views and comments

Apart from the collection of data we also held short interviews with a number of individuals each day. Below are the notable views of the locals and commuters who were interviewed on site:

- The bridge is a danger as planks keep rotting as days go by.
- It is a shorter route to the market and schools in the two communities of Linda and Libuyu, the other three bridges are far spread out along the Maramba river.
- When the river gets filled up, we experience crocodiles in the river, making it more dangerous to use.
- There have been accidents on the bridge, and with the rotting of the planks, we expect the accidents to rise because the other alternative routes are far.

- A lot of people use the bridge including traders, school children, people commuting for work and various activities.
- Our Members of Parliaments have failed to fulfil their campaign promises with regards to the bridge and other services
- This bridge can be a tourist attraction.
- If only the bridge can be done like the Maloni Bridge that was made of steel
- There is urgent need to work on the bridge because the amount of traffic in each day is very high.
- It is not suitable for old and young people; it needs physically fit people.
- The bridge should be expanded to accommodate cyclists, transporters with wheelbarrows and vehicles if possible.

With media consent forms completed, a number of people were interviewed and these form part of a short video relating to the survey. This can be found on the Destination Livingstone YouTube site.

4 ASSESSMENT

The idea of undertaking this short survey was welcomed by the Destination Livingstone team. They worked, and some lived, in Linda and as this bridge was a major feature in the lives of the local residents, they saw this as an opportunity to assist the community. The interns were keen to take part and Munalula Imbula took on the planning. Ten of the youth involved in our skills development programme, were willing to take part. Payments for their time, transport and refreshments were covered by Destination Livingstone. It became an excellent team-building exercise and our visibility on the bridge was much talked about by locals.

Key information:

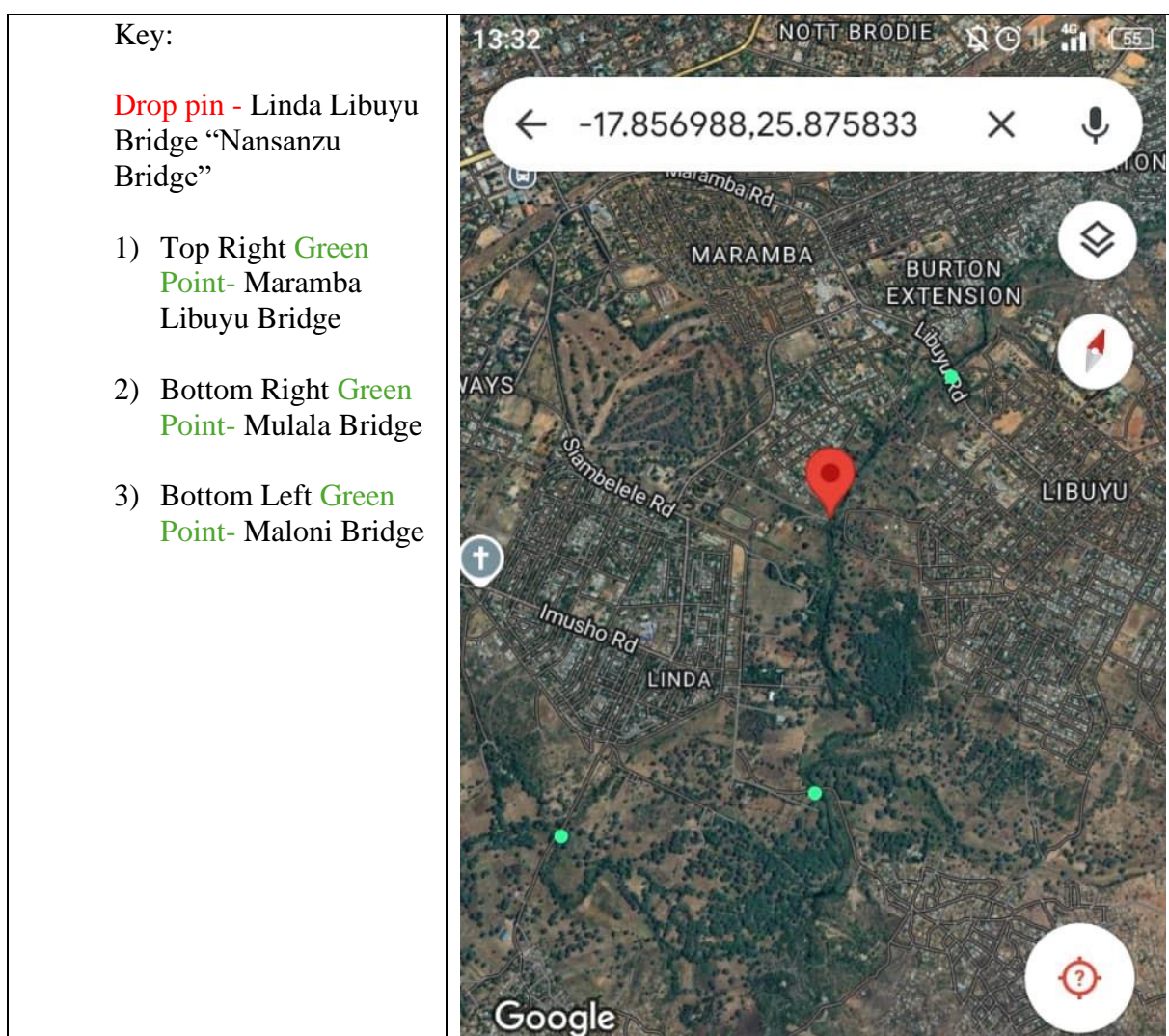
- The average daily figure on Monday, Wednesday and Friday was 3,000+ and there is no reason to assume that this would be substantially different on other days of the week except on Saturday and Sunday when schools are closed and on Sunday when people tend to go to church. We can safely say that on weekdays, over 15,000 people use the footbridge and anywhere up to 20,000 for the full week.
- The figures show a very similar pattern regardless of which direction they use the bridge.
- The figures show the high commercial use attached to the bridge with 700 people using the bridge on a daily basis amounting to approximately 25%. To reach the local markets, this traffic is predominantly between 6 and 10am. This was compiled on the basis of people carrying bulk fruit and vegetables, chickens and bicycle raiders from Zimbabwe carrying groceries.
- School children comprise 25% of the total individuals making use of the bridge - only children wearing a school uniform were included in this category. This is particularly obvious for the early hours of the morning from Libuyu to Linda and in the afternoon Linda to Libuyu when schools finish.
- The largest group of pedestrians (50%) did not fall into either of the other categories. It was in conversation with people from this group that it became evident that many were commuters going to and from their jobs. It is also likely that this group increased in the afternoons as those using the bridge in the mornings for commercial use, were not so recognizable having sold their produce.
- During discussions and interviews we gained valuable insight into the challenges which these communities face. These have been summarized in the text.

By reviewing the statistics of the traffic at the bridge, it can be concluded that the bridge plays a very important economic, social, and educational role in the lives of local people in the




surrounding areas, a foresight that was had when it was first constructed. The bridge stands as an important means of access between the two communities and Livingstone at large. The alternative means of access to fulfill social, economic and educational needs of the local communities are highlighted on the map below.

- 1) The Maramba-Libuyu bridge provides access for locals between Linda and Libuyu. The bridge is in Maramba community 3.6 km north of Linda community according to google maps.
- 2) The Mulala Bridge is located southeast of Linda in Mulala community, and this route is longer than the Maramba-Libuyu route.
- 3) The Maloni Bridge located in Maloni community is south of Linda and is the longest option available.

Below is a satellite map pinpointing the access points between the two communities.



The survey has revealed the busy nature of the bridge and the urgent need to have the bridge worked on. The amount of traffic on the bridge calls for a more sustainable structure erected in the place of the current bridge. Its current state poses a threat to life.

1) Maramba-Libuyu Bridge	
	Construction date not known
2) Mulala Bridge	
	Constructed by Zambia National Service (ZNS) between 2023-24
3) Maloni Bridge	
	Constructed 2024-25 using Constituency Development Funds (CDF)