

**Challenges & Opportunities during the COVID pandemic**  
(as shared by delegates during 24 August 2022 interactive session)

**NOTE : The below points do not designate any priority of content**

### **Challenges**

1. Needed to increase security / cameras / intervention teams
2. Transportation : public transport unavailable
3. Low staff numbers on site - increased workload : need to implement flexible working hours and divide into teams
4. Animal movement reduced : airlines closed / initial legislation
5. Training of new non-animal staff to assist teams as well as existing staff to work with multi-species
6. No visitors meant less interaction for the animals
7. Communication issues between teams - lack of / missing information on handovers
8. Confined working places not compliant with Covid regulations (snake rooms etc.)
9. Veterinary interventions / assessments difficult without a full team / critical skills on site due to isolation (Covid +ve)
10. Cats & Primates - install Covid anti-contamination measures
11. Financial issues - no visitor income - reduced employment - overtime budget depleted
12. Eskom power issues
13. Virtual world meant online meetings were scheduled at any hour of the day, often back-to-back and also at short notice
14. Remote (out of town) / small facilities battled to get donations

### **Opportunities**

1. Build powerful leadership - review Health & Safety protocols and implement revised Biosecurity methods
2. Teamwork - cooperation between team members - form lift clubs - more passion in the job
3. Cohesion between animal & non-animal staff
4. Showcase resiliency of zoo employees, ability to handle emergencies
5. Lots of overtime - benefit for staff able to work

6. Less people at work meant less exposure (Covid) and less staff footprint
7. New flexible working hours for education / conservation staff - working from home
8. Collaboration between facilities on operational processes to best cope with situations - guidelines / protocols developed by PAAZA ('Workplace Ready')
9. Public support through donations (food / first necessity items)
10. Increased animal food donations - collaboration between facilities by sharing
11. Open-mindedness : power of social media & implementing live feed from the zoo (Facebook Friday live feed)
12. Harnessing social capital through the power of social media
13. New online booking systems : cooperation between facilities to set up the best system
14. New income streams : online educational programs, workshops, live feeds from the zoo - increased outreach (various mediums), different audience, international volunteer program online
15. Restructured entrance fee when visitors allowed (e.g. half price for special visits - nighttime / late afternoon / keeper tour)
16. More connection with the media (eager for good stories) - newspapers / news feeds
17. Improvements / construction during lockdown easier without visitors
18. Staff could / needed to really focus on the animals instead of visitors (could judge the impact of visitors on animals)
19. Keepers had to adapt and become 'multi-animal / species' specialists : get experience / evolution of opportunities / new learning opportunities
20. Vaccination campaigns run by the facility (for staff and animals)
21. Online meetings : possibility to attend meetings / webinars / conferences from all over the world with no travel cost
22. Opportunity to attend global conferences at minimal or no registration cost (e.g. WAZA Conference 2020 saw the highest attendance in the history of WAZA)
23. Fast tracking of learning multiple virtual systems
24. Advent of 'virtual world' meant increased global sharing of information
- 25.

## **PAAZA Strategic Planning Session**

**(as shared by delegates during 24 & 25 August 2022 interactive sessions)**

**NOTE : the numbering and sequence below does NOT designate any priority**

### **1. About PAAZA's name :**

- a. Is PAAZA still a 'zoo association' ? Or is it becoming something else ?
- b. There is a negative connotation to the word 'zoo' - Is it an issue ? We need to own the word Zoo. It is more about uplifting a place rather than changing its name.
- c. Should we change PAAZA's name ? There will be resistance to a name change. Instead we could keep PAAZA and add a statement underneath (about conservation and welfare)
- d. Proposed names: Pan-African Association of Animal Care Facilities (PAAACF)  
Pan-African Association of Ex-situ Wildlife Facilities (PAAWEF)
- e. What does the PAAZA Mission and Vision say, and do we fill that role ? If not, consolidate this against what already exists.
- f. UWEC : changed from a zoo to an education center because there was a need for education at that time. The term 'wildlife center' is more marketable than 'zoo' for tourists. However, in Uganda, the original name 'Entebbe Zoo' is what the population remember and identify with. Other facilities in Uganda are running away from the word zoo - a lot of zoos are opening in Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya but they don't call themselves zoos.

### **2. About other types of facilities :**

- a. In the true sense of the definition, a sanctuary is not a zoo - it is not supposed to breed and to receive public : sanctuary animals should have as little contact with humans as possible
- b. Sanctuary legislation is different depending on the province / country - Ask for a standardization of the legislation over all provinces in South Africa
- c. Pet shops ? Where do they stand ?
- d. No one is regulating rehabilitation facilities : some animals stay there for years on end (i.e. permanent residents on display to the public). However, there are new

regulations that allow government to seize these animals and give them to a captive facility of their choice

**3. At Government level,**

- a. Definite lack of knowledge in the department at government level : they rely on zoos themselves to assist them, because they don't have the capacity or the knowledge to do so
- b. Need to help the department : can PAAZA fill that role ? Instead of the NSPCA that doesn't have experience with wildlife in human care.
- c. Develop guidelines on breeding of species / keeping of species, so PAAZA can become the reference when it comes to husbandry and welfare (will present husbandry manuals meet this need ?)

**4. About NSPCA :**

- a. NSPCA / SPCA is not an implementer of welfare (as per APA and SPCA Acts)
- b. They are anti-cruelty, not welfare
- c. There is an amendment to APA in process to include cosmetic animal testing

**5. Getting funding for PAAZA through the AZA type model :**

- a. AZA model : each facility gives 2-3% to conservation each year - Can we do the same for PAAZA ? It could help pull people into PAAZA : conservation gives better reputation to the facilities who do it : 'We contribute to Conservation' is a selling point
- b. With the AZA type model, PAAZA could open sanctuaries / rehab centers thanks to the conservation income and show the way for proper sanctuary management (i.e. no public allowed - no breeding)
- c. But is that possible ? Not enough income or facilities within PAAZA to use the AZA type model
- d. PAAZA needs a new financial and business model : add a commercial component
- e. PAAZA needs to evolve just like the sub-sector it services. In its present format, PAAZA will cease to exist

## 6. Getting new members for PAAZA :

- a. By using the competitors in Africa : Who are they ? Can we work with them ?  
Form coalitions such as what the activists / detractors are doing
- b. Are there facilities that are not represented in Africa that could join PAAZA ? A lot of facilities do not have a voice
- c. PAAZA needs to do a study of the African facilities which might be interested to join PAAZA
- d. Be Careful : some facilities in the sub-sector are critical of zoos
- e. Need to be more desirable to have more facilities willing to integrate into PAAZA : use what we offer, the help PAAZA can provide
- f. Which benefits can they get from PAAZA ? Improving welfare costs money. PAAZA is actually asking them to spend more in the name of conservation and welfare : need to prove that the investment improves sustainability and by extension, income
- g. Engage zoos, entities, facilities, see if PAAZA can be more relevant to them. If not : why is PAAZA not relevant to your facility ? Is this a financial problem only ? What we don't know is why people are not members of PAAZA / why they left
- h. What benefits do people perceive in belonging to PAAZA - or do they not see benefits ? Do people perceive any negative aspects of belonging to PAAZA e.g. being associated with Zoos. Q for facilities - is there anything about PAAZA why you don't want to belong? (PAAZA to send out survey to sub-sector for g. & h.)
- i. Find a bridge to get the smaller facilities in : need to redefine what is PAAZA, what it stands for and what it can offer
- j. Introductory partners : need to have a lower category (maybe for a year or 2), sponsor someone in that category (ask the bigger facilities to sponsor). After a year, the new member can choose to stay and improve or move on
- k. Creation of an Introductory membership category
- l. PAAZA is a Zoo association - many facilities are not zoos, but conservancies / parks and others. Should we give them the option to join ? Need to determine target audience
- m. We need to target small zoos first (little predator parks, bird parks...) - which type of facilities do we want to belong to PAAZA ?

**7. About concepts/wording :**

- a. Do we adopt the word 'ex-situ' or 'conservation' ?
- b. Consumptive or non-consumptive aspect of sustainable use for zoos or both ?
- c. PAAZA should be associated to a conservation statement
- d. What is the definition of conservation for us ? Do we see "Conservation" when we talk about it in the PAAZA context as direct conservation (i.e. direct impact on in-situ populations) or does Indirect Conservation also count when reporting to PAAZA (i.e. General conservation education etc) ?

**8. CITES species,**

- a. They are not regulated inside South Africa
- b. CITES only concerns international movement of animals, it does not apply if the animal remains inside the same country. Within South Africa, TOPS applies
- c. About endangered species, could we use more facilities to house pygmy hippos for example ? Could we include lodges ? It could help conservation (more housing / breeding opportunities for endangered wildlife), but it is not possible because government / conservation programs and financial interests all go in different directions
- d. For TOPS species, there is a need to specify the activity done with the animal on the permit itself (if the activities listed are not the correct one, the facility is actually breaching the law) - need for an ethics clearance and research proposal to work with TOPS species

**9. About international help for PAAZA and zoos in Africa :**

- a. At the moment, PAAZA can not sustain itself without the help of funding from international facilities
- b. PAAZA could use mentoring from bigger zoos for smaller facilities (improving welfare, training, education, husbandry practices etc.)
- c. International zoos can help raise the standards of smaller African zoos through engagement with PAAZA to help implement improved welfare standards
- d. Create a concept / plan : how do we help small zoos to conform to the standards of PAAZA ? Re-initiate WOZA Africa ?
- e. Present this revised plan (WOZA Africa) through WAZA
- f. Contact Africa Wildlife Foundation ?

#### **10. About animal activists / detractors,**

- a. Zoos are only defending against activists. PAAZA needs to be proactive instead
- b. Become the go-to for government for all questions regarding zoos and animals in captivity : at the moment it is other organizations without the expertise
- c. We don't tell the public what we are doing : a lot is done by zoos, but nothing gets published. We need to publish all the good work done by zoos
- d. We need to own the word Zoo / Zoological - we need to own the narrative, not the non-captive organisations

#### **11. About the SEAZA model,**

- a. SEAZA : relies heavily on its larger institutions to carry the majority of the financials, training, etc.
- b. Try and consolidate the original membership, bring everybody (African facilities 'lost' after the end of previous twinning programme) back into the PAAZA fold. Look at the member countries' zoos and try to help them as much as possible

#### **12. About conservation projects,**

- a. Approach international institutions to pass conservation/education / research projects through PAAZA
- b. At the moment, most conservation projects that run from outside of Africa do not go through PAAZA or its members
- c. Create a conservation database for Africa - get researchers and sponsors to list their projects : this would create a more collaborative environment between ex-situ and in-situ and raise conservation awareness

#### **13. About the PAAZA accreditation,**

- a. It is a useful management tool for running a facility with good welfare on a daily basis - promote as such and explain the benefits
- b. Do we need more auditors ? Exec office function
- c. Make members support new members to go through the accreditation process
- d. 2023 : all WAZA members have to comply with the accreditation, but very slow uptake
- e. Develop guidelines for smaller members instead of standards (there is already a simplified version of the welfare assessment available)

#### **14. About what PAAZA can give its members,**

- a. A framework for people that want to start a zoo : the basic 'how to run a zoo'
- b. Offer Online sessions with experts - webinars
- c. Invite entities that add value to the process (bring scientists, manufacturers, students...)
- d. Skills development training - reignite Keeper Corner which was created especially for keepers based on their feedback (includes a closed FB page)
- e. Investigate wildlife certification scheme in Uganda for non-academic keepers with view to adopting and expanding
- f. Embrace technology - in addition to the mobile app (still the first globally), create podcasts and webinars
- g. Be aware of the multiple language challenges in Africa. French is prominent in many African countries. Also, use translators at keeper level
- h. A WAZA 'Flash News' type information platform for public - reignite the PAAZA 'Notice Board' but this would require commitment from members to supply news items : the Exec office cannot create news

#### **15. About the PAAZA Exec Office**

- a. Should there be a 3rd person in the PAAZA office ? (Membership officer ? Marketing ?)
- b. Expanding the office is important to extend the reach of PAAZA and offer more benefits
- c. Train more auditors for Operational Accreditation and Welfare assessments

*All discussions will form part of the new strategic plan for PAAZA*

*Please let us know if we missed anything important !*

#### **Background information as presented prior to the discussion sessions**

*(please click on the links below to access the pdfs)*

SWOT analysis :

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/15GkUx3\\_tMvwib\\_PuRWfHKKRuVA0h9vfY/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/15GkUx3_tMvwib_PuRWfHKKRuVA0h9vfY/view?usp=sharing)

WAZA Welfare Goals 2023 :

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/10gfe6kcLFCblgDZUgYzqiiRfAd1SOlta/view?usp=sharing>

Legislative changes affecting the captive wildlife sub-sector :

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s3-BZ4kj3DQWbb8A4AhNiUh0Fyl3JK1s/view?usp=sharing>

Biodiversity Legislation : Recent developments (DFFE)

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s8VpluB9IXhO6885eEUJHmM6bMJzFCMs/view?usp=sharing>