

SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION THROUGH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Eco*Stars

A publication by Children in the Wilderness

CHILDREN IN THE
WILDERNESS



Annual Issue 04 | 2019

WHAT'S INSIDE Our first cover star: Destiny – where is he now? * Diacore Gaborone Marathon * The Shoe That Grows

INTRODUCTION

Children in the Wilderness, or CITW, is a grassroots initiative of Wilderness Safaris. Originated around a campfire by the late actor Paul Newman when he visited Botswana in 2001, the programme took root during the first CITW Botswana camp in December of the same year. Since then CITW has grown exponentially, and now runs in Wilderness Safaris' areas of operations in seven African countries, with Rwanda being the newest addition to the CITW family.

The CITW programme aims to facilitate sustainable conservation through the development of young leaders from the communities associating and collaborating with Wilderness Safaris and partner camps. To achieve this, CITW hosts more than 3 000 children in 70 Eco-Clubs on a weekly basis. At these clubs children learn about environmental topics while also developing life skills.

Eco-Stars is an annual CITW publication, providing readers with an overview of the programme, and the opportunity to meet some of its Eco-Stars and learn more about their regional successes.

For any comments or queries, please email us on info@childreninthewilderness.com.



FROM JANET'S DESK

In this, our fourth edition of Eco-Stars, we bring you snippets from our programmes across the regions, some updates on where children are now and what they are achieving.

We hope that you take this copy home and enjoying reading about our programmes. Please help us spread the word that collectively we can all make a difference to conservation through sustainable leadership development and the education of inspiring young eco-minds.

We thank all of our supporters and donors across the world, not forgetting those who supported us on another successful Nedbank Tour de Tuli – we look forward to seeing you all on this life-changing annual mountain biking event.

JANET WILKINSON

CITW Regional Programme Manager





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MEET THE **CHILDREN IN THE WILDERNESS** TEAM

Children in the Wilderness achieves its goals thanks to the commitment and dedication of the men and women who passionately carry out their work to ensure that **sustainable conservation through leadership development** is a reality for the next generation.

The people shaping Children in the Wilderness' future are our greatest asset, and their contributions, and the pride they take in what they do, alongside those of our partners, supporters and sponsors, enable us to truly make a difference to Africa and her children.

Working with children requires care, love and passion, and we are privileged to have this amazing team of individuals who see their jobs as not only a career, but a calling.





JANET WILKINSON
Regional Programme
Manager

SOUTH AFRICA



BONGANI BALOYI
Regional Programme
Coordinator



LIZA STEYN
Administration & Bookkeeping



LISA WITHERDEN
Environmental Education
Resource Developer



RICHARD VAN DER WEL
Wilderness Safaris Group
Risk and Sustainability,
CITW Financial Officer



KIRSTY VAN DER WANT
Programme Trainer



TANYA MCKENZIE
Bobirwa Regional
Programme Coordinator

BOTSWANA



ISABEL WOLF-GILLESPIE
Bobirwa Eco-Club Coordinator



LESH MOITEELA
Botswana Programme
Manager, Cultural
Ambassador & Community
Relationship Manager



GABINEELE MODIRAPULA
Programme Assistant



KELEBOGILE BAITSHOKI
Administrative Assistant



FERN BRASEM
Wilderness Safaris
Business Unit Manager
and CITW Gaborone
Eco-Club Coordinator



MALAWI

SYMON CHIBAKA
Regional Programme
Coordinator



DONEX BANDA
Southern Zone Coordinator



NAMIBIA

AGNES TJIRARE
Community Engagement
Manager & Programme
Coordinator



JULIET BINDA
Administrative Assistant



RWANDA

INGRID BAAS
Regional Programme
Coordinator



ALINE UMUTONI
CITW Community Coordinator



ZAMBEZI (Zambia and Zimbabwe)

SUE GOATLEY
Community and Culture
Liaison and CITW Coordinator



SHUVANAYI TARUVINGA
CITW and Community
Administrative Assistant



CYNTHIA NDIWENI
Scholarship Administrative
Assistant



BRENDA FINAUGHTY
Environmental Education
Coordinator



SARAH ADAMS
Community Sustainability
and Education Trainer



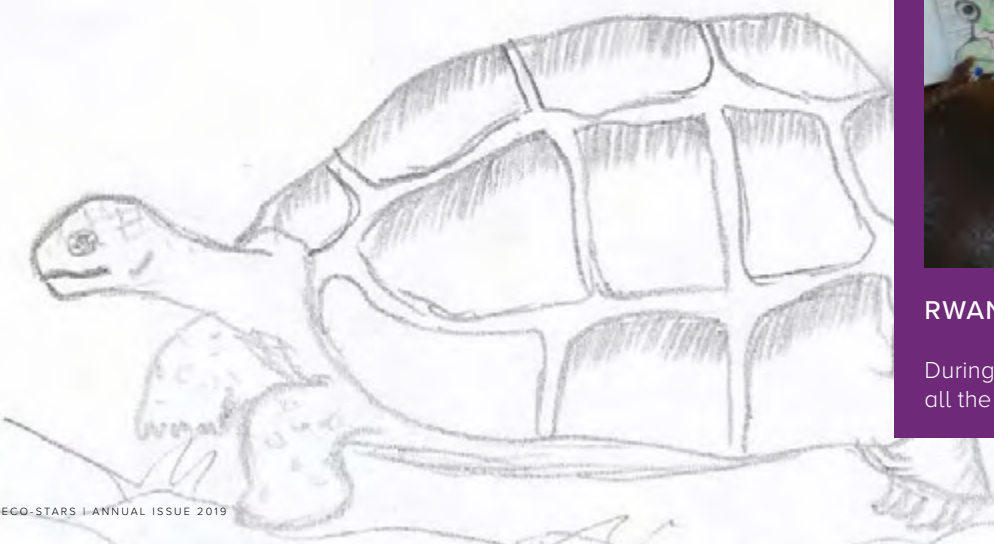
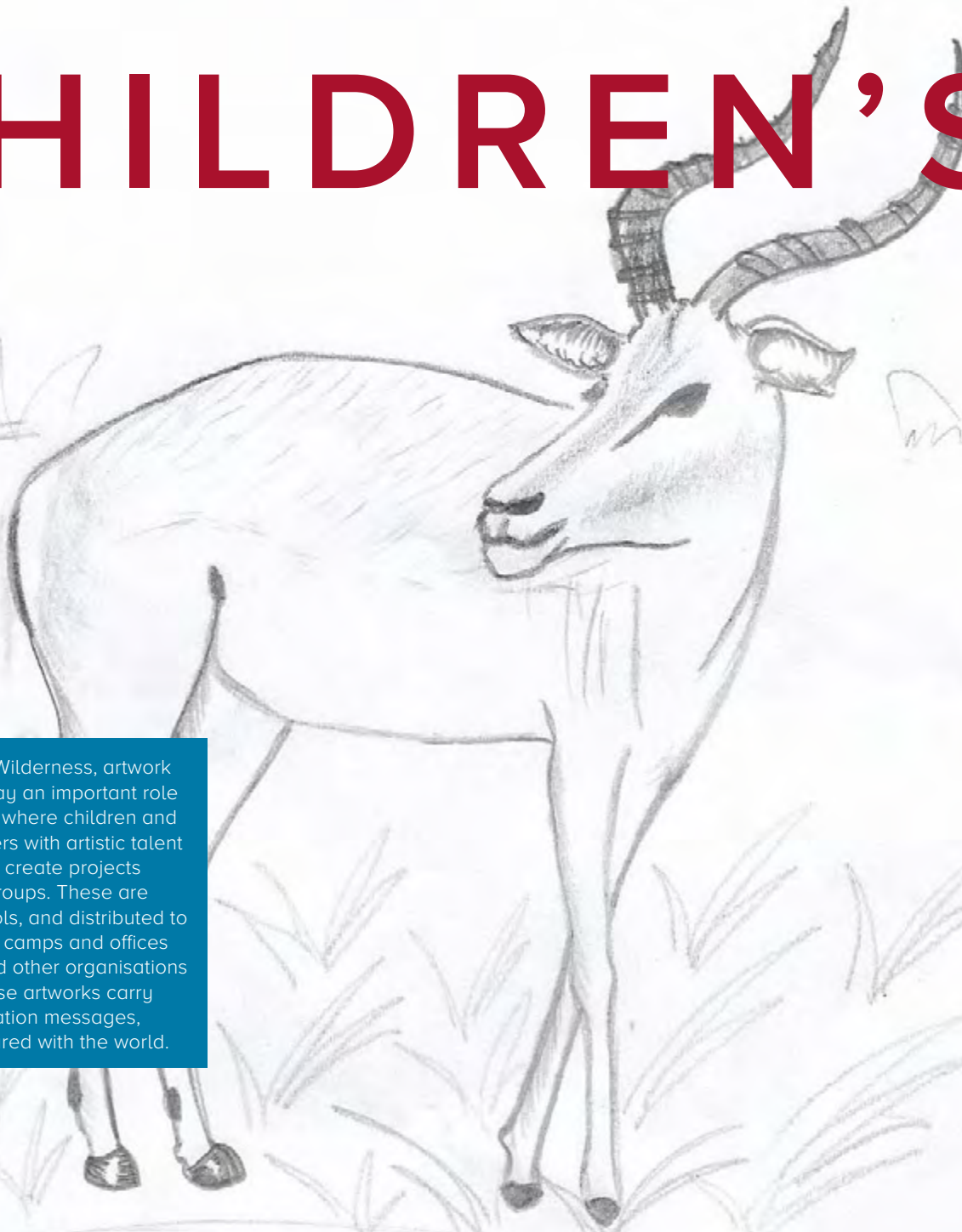
MXOLISI SIBANDA
Community Field Officer



We would like to congratulate Rwanda's Aline on her Unsung Hero category win in the **2019 PURE Life Experiences Awards**. The award recognises the dedication of guides who offer truly transformational experiences to their guests. In her capacity as **Wilderness Safaris Bisate Lodge** community guide, Aline has been a true example of a guide and mentor who always goes the extra mile, and her commitment and enthusiasm are remarkable.

CHILDREN'S

At Children in the Wilderness, artwork and handicrafts play an important role in our programme, where children and community members with artistic talent are encouraged to create projects as individuals or groups. These are displayed at schools, and distributed to Wilderness Safaris camps and offices for staff, guests and other organisations to appreciate. These artworks carry important conservation messages, which are then shared with the world.



RWANDA

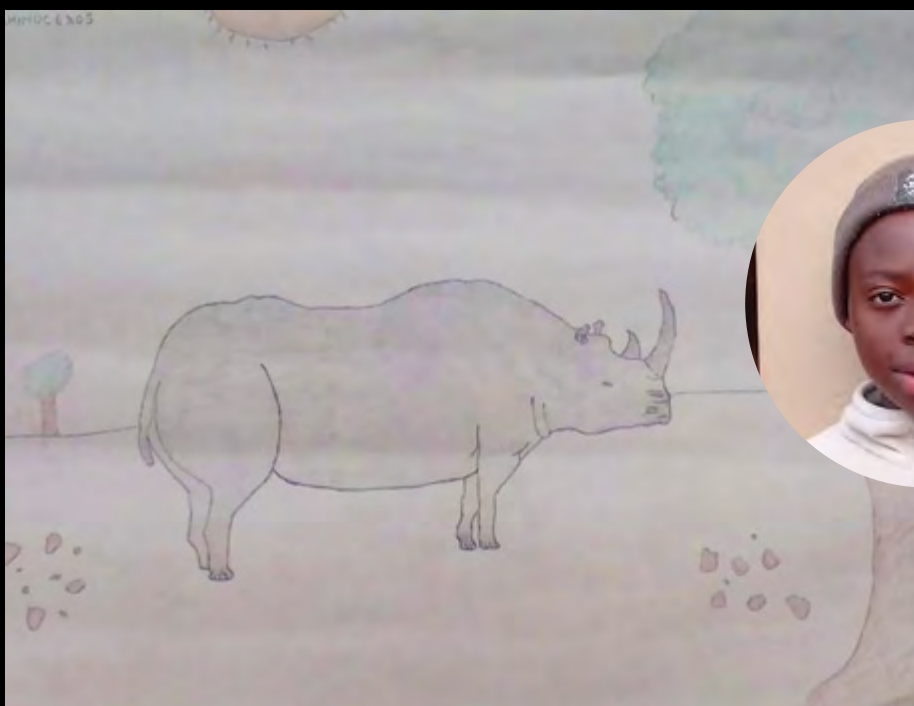
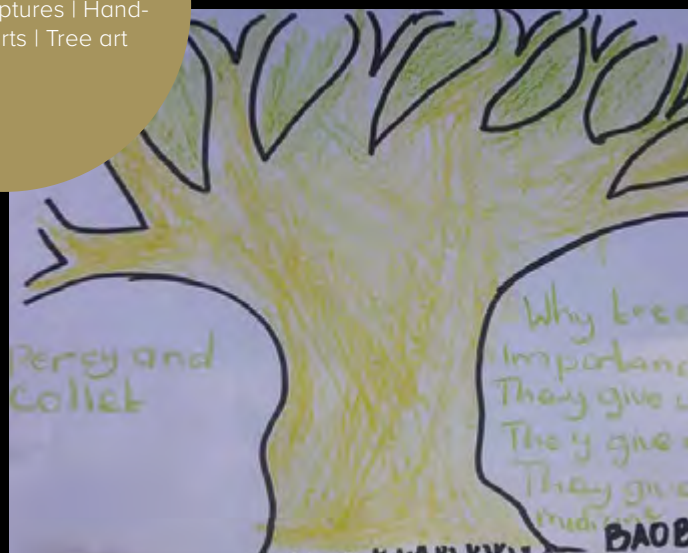
During the 2019 Conservation Camp, all the students made animal masks.

CREATIVITY



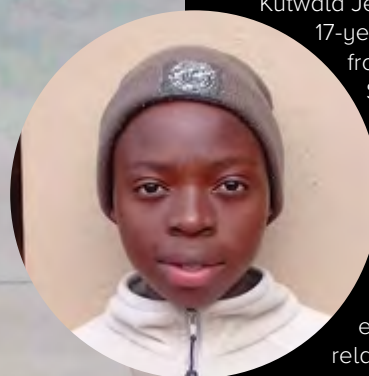
BOBIRWA

Pangolin sculptures | Hand-printed t-shirts | Tree art



SOUTH AFRICA

Kutwala Jennifer Makondo is a 17-year-old Grade 10 learner from N'wanati High School in Makuleke Village who joined CITW in 2004 ... "because I love wild animals, and also to meet new people and share ideas. I am good at drawing, especially environmental-related objects.



"My strength is my confidence, and my ambition is to learn more about nature and be successful in life through achieving my dream of becoming a fashion designer".

Zimbabwe Community PROJECTS

TSHOLOTSHO COMMUNITY WOMEN'S INCOME-GENERATING PROJECT

The income-generating groups established by CITW for rural women in Zimbabwe assist with economic growth and poverty-reduction in remote northern Matabeleland. A lack of consistent and reliable livelihood options has led to high levels of poverty in this area, where communities rely on subsistence farming. However, erratic rainfall and poor Kalahari soils result in low yields and very seasonal operation.

The raising of livestock such as cattle and goats is reasonably successful but can be plagued by disease, making this livelihood unreliable as well. With an average monthly household income of USD 9, and most households having between five and eight members, many families struggle to provide for their basic needs, and many cannot afford to send their children to school.

To diversify livelihood options and reduce poverty in these areas, Wilderness Safaris and CITW have assisted with the creation of income-generating groups in the area. These allow women to utilise their creative skills by making unique products that can be sold.

As part of the establishment of these groups, workshops were held to educate the women on household budgeting and managing a small business.



This ensures that groups like these can be sustainable in the future, with self-management and motivation that should reduce the need to rely on CITW for ongoing support. Innovative ideas have been applied to utilise traditional skills in basketry, instilling pride in the local culture and encouraging women to work together, cultivating a sense of teamwork and community cohesion.

This project also provides a method of responsible recycling and the reduction of waste. Waste that is collected from Wilderness camps and picked up around communities is cleaned and used in the basket-making, enhancing the products with

vibrant colours found on, for example, confectionary wrappers. This leads to products with unique designs that individuals and businesses such as lodges are able to use as part of their interior design.

CITW markets the products to businesses around Victoria Falls and Hwange National Park to increase selling potential, and Wilderness Safaris displays stock in camps for guests to purchase.

Some of the products made by these groups so far include baskets, placemats, coasters, trays, and lampshades.



As these groups become more settled and broaden their product range, the income they will receive for their work will greatly help towards feeding and clothing their families, as well as paying for school fees. This ensures that children can continue with their education and teachers can be retained. Using locally made products not only empowers the communities and assists with economic growth and waste reduction, but also showcases to Wilderness Safaris guests the local talent and the importance placed on community upliftment. ♡

WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN NOW?

While Eco-Clubs are often the first time we meet our children, it is not the last.

Through our annual camps, Eco-Clubs, Youth Environmental Stewardship, as well as scholarship and internship programmes, we keep in constant contact with our children as they grow with us. The regular interaction we have with the children

ensures that we are able to provide ongoing support, so that those members with potential can continue with their schooling and ultimately kick-start successful careers. One of the most gratifying aspects of the programme is how many Eco-Club alumni come back to work as Eco-Mentors and volunteers with the younger children, inspiring big dreams!



BOTSWANA | Mogomotsi “Goms” Ramofi, 19, Motlhabaneng village and Thabiso Tsheole, 20, Lentswe-le-Moriti village

Goms and Thabiso are good friends and their journeys are closely linked. Thabiso Tsheole attended a CITW Camp in December 2012 as a camper, and Mogomotsi attended CITW camps in December 2011 and December 2012 as a camper.

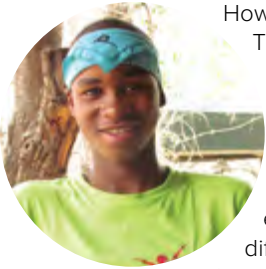


Both young men contacted Tanya McKenzie in 2018 and updated her on what they were doing.

Mogomotsi was at Matsheke Hill Senior Secondary School in Bobonong, and was completing his BGSCCE Examination for Form 5. Thabiso has completed his Form 5 and is studying Physical Education. He is interested in Environmental Conservation and plays volleyball.

He was head prefect at school and captain of his volleyball team. He was also the troop leader for two years at the Botswana National Scouts Camps, with objectives of Environmental Conservation.

Goms and Thabiso then asked to become CITW camp volunteers. They both wanted to help play a role in making the experience for other children as special as it had been for them.



However, Goms and Thabiso had to overcome challenges as neither of them had email addresses or knew how to scan an application form and email it. Despite the difficult circumstances, they found a way to figure it out and were accepted.



Since then both have been an integral part of the CITW family, Goms in particular showing initiative. Being a short-distance runner himself – and an incredibly talented and fast one, may we add – he showed special interest in the Sports in the Wilderness days at the six schools in the region. Both Goms and Thabiso would like to become guides, and have recently started studying from home for their nature guide qualifications. Independently of each other they shared that this is due to their love for wildlife, which was instilled through the CITW programme, and the Eco-Clubs at their schools.



Goms wrote this message for Eco-Stars:

“Eco-Clubs are important to young people because they are taken to game reserves and parks where they are taught about the behaviour of wildlife. CITW makes sure that children from a young age know wildlife and live with it nicely. I like CITW Eco-Clubs even more, because they make young people understand the importance of wild animals and trees for the community, and for tourism”.

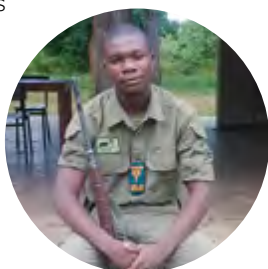
MALAWI

Nelson Chikwewa, Liwonde (joined CITW in 2008)

“Through CITW’s Eco-Club and YES programmes I have learnt so much about wildlife and the natural environment. My special interest is in the global environmental crisis, environmental issues in our local community and National Parks.

After my secondary school education, in 2017 I attended the Southern African Wildlife College for a bridging course programme, where I gained a lot of knowledge in environmental conservation and leadership. After that, I applied for a job with African Parks Liwonde.

“My message to my fellow youth in the YES Programme and Eco-Clubs is that their ambition to become powerful activists for sustainable conservation is achievable. I am still a proud and active member of the YES Programme in Malawi”.



Chifundo Chimulu, Nkhata Bay (joined CITW in 2011)

“Being a member of the CITW programme for over eight years I learnt a lot about natural resources, the environment and the importance of conserving them. I have come to believe that human beings should also treat themselves as part of the local environment in which they live. People should know that in such environments, everything is interdependent. Too much use of one resource causes the breakdown of the network, which is vital for every living thing here on Earth. I worked hard in school and graduated from Lilongwe Technical College as a social worker in Sustainable Rural Community Development.

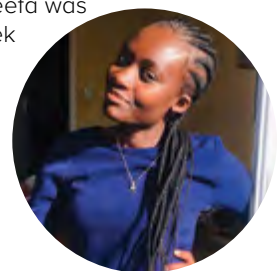
“My message to fellow YES members, and all youth out there, is that they should work hard in school and keep working on how we can win the battle against exploitation of natural resources. I am a proud CITW product, and committed YES programme member”.



NAMIBIA

Melissa Ndapunikwa Nghisheefa, 19, Windhoek

Melissa Nghisheefa was born in Windhoek and raised in the north of Namibia, 30 km outside of Oshakati, in a village called Omungwelumwe.



She joined the programme in 2013 when she was a Grade 7 learner at Okaukuejo Combined School, situated at Etosha National Park’s Andersson Gate. Melissa is currently studying for a Bachelor of Arts in Youth and Community Development at the Namibian College of Open Learning (NAMCOL).

She aspires to be a youth worker or a community development practitioner, and is also very keen on volunteering at CITW annual camps and being a future Eco-Mentor at one of the schools. Melissa desires to help children, touch their hearts and to be able to transform their perspective about life, just as hers was in December 2013.

SOUTH AFRICA

Twenty-two-year-old Nozipho is an intern at Wilderness Safaris...

"I have come a long way to become what I am today – an empowered young woman – and it's thanks to Children in the Wilderness for giving me this life-changing opportunity.

"I joined CITW in 2008 when I was only 11 years old, and a Grade 6 learner at Kwa-Mqobela Primary School in northern KwaZulu-Natal.

"Even at that young age, I had a strong passion for nature, but little did I know that this would get me to where I am today – an environmental ambassador.

"With the new skills I learnt during my Eco-Club days, I have since established my own indigenous tree nursery, where I have planted species such as the Natal mahogany, paperbark, fever trees, wild mango and many others. Eleven years later, this nursery is still flourishing!"



Due to Nozipho's passion for the environment, in 2018 CITW offered her a bursary to attend a six-month bridging course in Nature Conservation and Environmental Leadership at the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC) near Kruger National Park.

Here she completed her studies Cum Laude. After her theoretical sessions at SAWC, she moved to Modjaji Nature Reserve where she completed her workplace assignments.



Nozipho Nomthandazo Mthembu, 22, Kwa-Mqobela



This year has been a double blessing for Nozipho; due to her passion for the environment, she has since received another bursary from CITW to enrol for an Animal Welfare programme at the University of South Africa for the 2019 academic year.

“Words cannot express my gratitude to CITW. This organisation has changed my life by nurturing my love for the environment, and providing me with different platforms to enable me to expand my knowledge as well as help me realise my dreams, which I would not have achieved on my own”.



It was also in 2019 that Nozipho participated in the CITW Tri-Nations camp, involving children and mentors from Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe. Here she played various camp roles, from Tent Leader to Activity Leader.

“Being an ex-camper myself, mentoring other children on the camp programme was a humbling experience for me, and also allowed me to give back to future leaders. I would like to encourage my fellow South African and other youth to join CITW in areas where the programme operates, or any other environmental advocacy organisations in their areas, so we can all join hands to protect our beautiful planet”.

When an internship opportunity arose at Wilderness Safaris’ office in Johannesburg in early 2019, Nozipho was the first South African CITW programme graduate to come to mind. Janet, CITW’s Regional Programme Manager, encouraged her to apply, and after passing all the interviews, Nozipho was selected from 18 other candidates.

Kenneth Makhubele, 27, Makuleke

Twenty-seven-year-old Kenneth is a tracker and backup guide at The Outpost Lodge, situated in the Pafuri Concession in Kruger National Park. “I joined Children in the Wilderness in 2005 as an Eco-Club member at Joas Phahlela Primary School, because I grew up with a passion for nature – and I have not looked back.

“When I went on to N’wanati High School, I became a member of their Eco-Club when CITW was introduced at the school in 2009. “CITW was an eye-opener for me, helping me to set my goals in nature conservation; even now I am focused, and hoping to achieve more.



“My message to the other CITW members, and youth in general, is that ‘with great power comes great responsibility’, so never give up until you are satisfied with your achievements! One of my strengths is being a good team player, and my ambition is to see CITW grow and become better, and positively impact more lives. I will be happy to see CITW grow bigger and better, help people find hope, and know better what they already know, while striving to conserve nature”.

“When I look back over the years I spent with CITW on annual camps, learning about the environment in wilderness areas is what I will cherish forever”.

ZAMBIA

Elina Mawele, 19, currently Grade 11 Learner (joined CITW in 2016)



Elina was very interested in the curriculum of CITW’s Eco-Club at her school, and was lucky enough to have her schooling sponsored, as she

came from a vulnerable home. “The Eco-Club helped me gain confidence to read publically, and gave me the chance to learn more about the environment.

“The programme also sponsored my education up to date, and I am so thankful.

“My message to other members: Remain dedicated to your Eco-Club, and be supportive of the agenda of the club. When I finish school I wish to become a nurse and save lives”.

Maxwell Mutemwa, 16, Twabuka Primary School Grade 8 (joined CITW in 2015)



To learn how to keep the environment clean and take care of wild animals for future generations

inspired Maxwell to join CITW. He

loved the chance to plant trees for shelter and oxygen, “which we need to survive”, he notes. “CITW helped me to focus on the importance of everything around, me and see how we can make things better for everyone”.

Maxwell’s message to Eco-Club members is simple: Nature is a gift from God, let us work together to protect it. He plans to study to become an Accountant, as he loves Mathematics.

Methuli Tshuma grew up in Ngamo village in Tsholotsho outside Hwange National Park, attending both Ngamo Primary and Ngamo Secondary schools. He joined CITW's Eco-Club Programme, which is where his love for nature grew. Having a passion for the environment from a young age, he involved himself in supporting environmental and conservation campaigns.

After leaving school, Methuli noticed a lack of teachers at his secondary school. Hard-working, and with a passion for education, he became a voluntary teacher at Ngamo Secondary School, getting involved with the Eco-Club Programme, and annual camps as an Eco-Mentor. Through the responsibility of teaching children, his confidence and leadership skills grew.

Ambitious and keen to further his qualifications, Methuli received a scholarship from CITW to attend the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC) in South Africa to study nature conservation. After completing his studies at SAWC, Methuli was hired by Wilderness Safaris.



He is now a trainee manager at Kashawe Camp in Hwange National Park. Methuli would like to learn as much as he can in management roles before pursuing guiding in the next few years. He credits CITW for "transforming" his life, as he believes that he will be able to lead by example and bring changes in his community as "education is key to success".

Webster Ndlovu Aspiring to Greatness



Webster Ndlovu, first profiled in our second edition of Eco-Stars in 2017, is the second child of five. He lost his father, the family's sole breadwinner, at a very young age and life was challenging for Webster's mother, who was unable to pay for school fees. His mother sacrificed to send him to Ngamo Primary School and because of his excellent academic record and strong work ethic, he received a scholarship from CITW.

He was then able to complete his Ordinary and Advanced levels education at Tsholotsho and Matopos high schools. These two schools birthed his passion for the field of medicine, and he secured enough points to gain admission to a programme at the prestigious National University of Science and Technology (NUST), where he is currently studying for a degree in Applied Biology and Biochemistry. Now in his second year, Webster can hardly wait to commence his industrial attachment.

He aspires to work in the field of genetics and microbiology. Webster is committed to giving back to his community and especially, being a role model to the children.

Additionally, Webster's biggest wish is to make his family proud.



This is what he had to say:

"CITW has played a very important role in helping me pursue my dreams, and with their help, I have come to realise how rewarding it is to chase my dreams and set my priorities. My mother has also been the stimulus responsible for the self-motivated, responsible and ambitious young man I have become".

Larry Mtenje Eco-Club Member to Aspiring Doctor



Growing up in central Zimbabwe, Larry lived with his mother and older sibling after losing his father at a young age. His mother sews chitenge products (African print), a business that has supported their family over the years.

Through passion and hard work, Larry achieved straight A's in his high school Mathematics, Physics, and Chemistry examinations, giving him many options for further study. In 2017, with the help of

CITW, Larry enrolled at the University of Zimbabwe in the College of Health and Sciences to study towards a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery. After his first year, he undertook his internship at Mutoko Rural District Hospital.

This experience enabled him to participate in a variety of surgical procedures, enhancing his knowledge and exposing him to the day-to-day challenges doctors face. As part of the programme, the interns visited traditional healers in the surrounding areas. This experience broadened Larry's mindset, equipping him with an appreciation of modern medicine as well as an understanding of how it can be integrated with traditional medicine. It was through projects at the district hospital that Larry realised just how many people need medical assistance – something that has inspired in him a passion to dedicate himself wholeheartedly to making a difference in his community.

Larry has also engaged in extra-curricular activities since he began studying. He joined the Zimbabwe Medical Schools Association (ZIMSA) and the Christian Medical Fellowship of Zimbabwe (CMFZ). He also volunteers

at Extreme Trans Orphanage which is located near the University campus, where he tutors children who are about to write their national exams, offering them guidance lessons.

The past two years have provided valuable first-hand experience that will serve Larry well in his future career. He is currently completing his final semester of pre-clinical studies which will culminate in May 2019. After this, Larry is hoping to undertake his clinical studies at the Parirenyatwa group of hospitals – one of the most renowned hospitals in the country. Larry is convinced that this experience has made him a better person and has enabled him to gain knowledge in medicine, as well as life in general.

When asked about the past two years, this is what he had to say:

"The experience would not have been possible without the emotional and financial support I receive from my sponsors through CITW and the Rotary Club of Victoria Falls, and for this I am forever grateful. My prayer is that the organisation continues to prosper and to uplift other children in every way possible".

BOTSWANA



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DIACORE – In early 2019, Children in the Wilderness Botswana, in association with the Diacore Gaborone Marathon, ran an exciting Sports in the Wilderness programme at 15 affiliated Eco-Club schools in the country.

ZIMBABWE



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SHOE THAT GROWS – Many rural Zimbabwean children never dream of owning a new pair of shoes, often living with worn-out hand-me-downs, or simply going barefoot. The concern is the long distances many of these children cover daily to get to school over rough and wild terrain.

NAMIBIA



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MOTHER BEAR PROJECT – Amy Berman, the founder of Mother Bear Project, shares why her amazing organisation has partnered with Children in the Wilderness.

MALAWI



23

PACK FOR A PURPOSE – “Malawi is one of the poorest countries in Africa and we wanted to do something positive whilst visiting”.

RWANDA



24

SCHOLARSHIPS – In almost all of the rural areas where we operate, secondary schooling has a fee attached. Our scholarship programme assists children whose parents cannot afford to further their children’s schooling.



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DESTINY – *The cover star of our very first Eco-Stars annual in 2016 was a shy Grade 7 Makuleke boy named Destiny Wisani Hlungwani, photographed at his first CITW Eco-Camp at nearby Pafuri in the far north of South Africa's Kruger National Park.*



DESTINY

– FROM COVER STAR TO STELLAR AERONAUTICS STUDENT



We might call his initial experiences with CITW an epiphany, or life-changing, but Destiny calls it an "energy day".

Along with the other children on that camp, he wrote down his dream profession and squirreled it into a 'dream catcher' to be handed back at the end of their camp.

The word he had written was 'pilot', and he still has the wrinkled slip of paper he wrote it on. His dream grew however, once he started spending time in his weekly Eco-Clubs, and appreciated the enormity of the environmental responsibility we all have.





Not content with his once-a-week Eco-Club meetings, Destiny joined a group called The Superkids to Save the Environment, who spent their Thursday afternoons spreading the message of environmental awareness throughout his village.

In 2017 Destiny graduated high school with six distinctions, and enrolled at the University of the Witwatersrand to study Aeronautical Engineering.

Now in his second year, after receiving a distinction for Maths in his first year and receiving a full bursary from the Civil Aviation Authority, he is even more passionate about flying.

At the 2019 Nedbank Tour de Tuli route launch in Johannesburg, Destiny spoke to the riders about his life-changing experiences with CITW – in his personal life as well as the difference he and the Superkids were able to make around Makuleke. At the launch he met Mike White, CITW SA board member, avid Tour supporter, CITW benefactor – and private aircraft owner.



At the 2019 Nedbank Tour de Tuli route launch with Brett Wallington, who captured Destiny's now-iconic cover pic at Pafuri

On 18th August 2019, CITW Regional Programme Manager Janet Wilkinson organised a mini-flight with Mike, so that Destiny could have the experience of flying a light aircraft.

Destiny picks up the story. "I got to learn so much – from the pre-flight inspection to all the complexities of flying an aircraft.

"I was very nervous at first, as it was my first private plane flight, but it was really exciting and motivating. After my degree, I will definitely get my Private Pilot's Licence (PPL), to be able to fly, and also give others the experience I had on this unforgettable day.

I'd like to thank Janet and Mike so, so much for the experience... no words can express how grateful I am to them, as they did this at their personal expense. "When we were finally in the air, Mike gave me the controls to his Cessna.

The feeling was super amazing, as I never thought in my life I would get to fly an airplane. I was just a village boy – who got the opportunity of a lifetime".

Destiny, and young CITW people like him, represent the future of Africa's future leaders, and we consider ourselves very lucky to know them. ʘ





DIACORE ASSISTS FUNDING OF SPORTS IN THE WILDERNESS PROGRAMME

In early 2019, Children in the Wilderness Botswana, in association with the Diacore Gaborone Marathon, ran an exciting Sports in the Wilderness programme at 15 affiliated Eco-Club schools in the country. From 11 to 27 February 2019, each school hosted an environmentally-themed track and field Sports Day to inspire and motivate children to care for themselves, and their environment.

“As one of the ongoing beneficiaries of the annual Diacore Gaborone Marathon, Botswana’s largest charity sporting event, we were thrilled to receive this additional sponsorship from Diacore to launch our new Sports in the Wilderness programme. “By introducing these inspirational Sports Days at our partner schools, we are able to increase our children’s physical and mental fitness, whilst inspiring them to work together as a team.

Taking part in fun sports days helps children improve their social, personal and leadership skills, whilst building confidence at the same time”, observes CITW Regional Programme Manager, Janet Wilkinson. Managing Director of Diacore, Kfir Teichman, concurs: “This is a project that is very close to our hearts, and we are excited to see future athletes engaged and supported, even at this age.

“These children are our future stars and investing in them is the best thing that we can do”.

The Sports Days offered all the participants the opportunity to take part in a range of athletics events, including individual running races, and three team events: soccer, netball and volleyball. At the Sports Days the children were treated to healthy snacks and inspiring environmental talks between sporting events.

“Many of them, even those who aren’t part of our Eco-Clubs, said that the events have inspired them to look after their environment, starting from their homes”, adds Lesh Moiteela, CITW Botswana Programme Coordinator. The Sports Days were rolled out in April 2019, with the final event taking place in Gaborone on 3 May 2019. ✓

“We are extremely proud of the success of these Sports Days, and thanks to Diacore, hope to be able to drive this programme into the future as a fun, annual event that enables us to expand our CITW Eco-Club programme to reach more children, more often – inspiring our future leaders to love and care for their natural world”. *Janet Wilkinson*



THE CITW SPORTS DAYS TOOK PLACE AT THE FOLLOWING SCHOOLS:

THE SHOE THAT GROWS

Many rural Zimbabwean children never dream of owning a new pair of shoes, often living with worn-out hand-me-downs, or simply going barefoot. The concern is the long distances many of these children cover daily to get to school over rough and wild terrain.

The Shoe That Grows is a unique brand that offers footwear with the ability to adapt from size 1 to 4, making them the gift that keeps on giving, as they grow with the child and provide stability and protection for years to come.

Thanks to an amazingly generous donation of The Shoe That Grows from a Wilderness Safaris guest, 45 children in the Tsholotsho District received a brand-new pair of shoes at the beginning of winter.



At the handover, the teachers assisted in calling the younger grades together to meet the team, and find the right fit. With so many pairs of these special shoes donated, the delight and anticipation on the students' faces was evident as they realised that they had all been chosen to receive this thoughtful gift.

The joy in their eyes while trying on their own new pair of shoes was very moving, and for this we cannot express our gratitude enough to the kind-hearted donor for their generous gift that has provided these children with a pair of clever and durable shoes for the next few years. ♡



Because

From Because International, creators of The Shoe That Grows

There are children in every country in the world who are in need of resources to improve their daily lives. Millions of children die each year from preventable causes. Hundreds of millions more suffer illnesses that prevent them from being healthy and attending school.

We focus on inventing and developing products for children challenged by poverty. We hope to bring sustainable change that will create a world where families can provide everything their children need. But, until that time, it is a reality that children are struggling, suffering, and sometimes dying from not having key resources for their health, education, and more. We believe our products can change that. Innovative products like The Shoe That Grows can help children attend school more often, and be more confident. We work with individuals and organisations to distribute products to children and their communities. We depend on people like you to get products to those who need them most!

Since 2007, more than 225 000 shoes have been distributed in 100 countries.

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH

Mother Bear PROJECT



Amy Berman, the founder of Mother Bear Project, shares why her amazing organisation has partnered with Children in the Wilderness.

"Mother Bear Project has been providing bears to Children in the Wilderness for some 15 years, and could not be happier about this partnership.

"Sometimes people ask me, Why bears, when there are no bears in Africa? I chose to knit bears because my mother made the same knit bears for my children when they were young, and these bears evoke feelings of comfort and unconditional love that I hope the children receiving them will feel as well.

"I actually had to teach myself to knit to start Mother Bear Project! The beauty of this project is that people of all ages and abilities can participate from all over the world.

"It is a project that is knitting people together to do something positive and loving for children. I have had the opportunity to attend a CITW camp, and had the privilege of seeing their important work first hand.

"To all those who have touched CITW and keep it going, keep up the fabulous work. You are truly making a difference".

Gratitude from a recipient of Mother Bears: "Life is hard for many children in Namibia.

"HIV/AIDS takes their youth when it takes their parents. Prostitution, stigma, and labour replace the safe learning and play that childhood should bring.

"Your gift restores balance to damaged lives. It shows that people can be kind rather than selfish and abusive.

"In so doing, it gives hope and joy by pointing away from what life has become to what it can be. Please thank all of the knitters. The teddy bears make a huge difference!"

Caroline !Gaoses, Youth Programme Officer, Evangelical Lutheran Church AIDS Programme, Namibia



PACK FOR A PURPOSE



"Malawi is one of the poorest countries in Africa and we wanted to do something positive whilst visiting. We asked Central African Wilderness Safaris to include a couple of schools they support in our itinerary", wrote guest Helen Jackson after a visit to this "warm heart of Africa".

"We were there for the month of September, but as the new school term didn't start until the 18th, our first visit was to Taonga Community Based Organisation Orphan Centre. We were greeted by Judith and her husband, Barnabas, who ran the orphanage for up to 15 children, orphaned through HIV.

"In the office, photos charted progress from a thatched hut, to one with bricks and a corrugated iron roof, thanks to a donation from a UK benefactor. Judith proudly showed certificates proving her training and qualifications. Both talked very loudly, but when we realised they shared their home with the children, it was understandable. The 'nursery' for the younger children was a concrete room with a few books. We were shown around their home, where the children share two rooms.

"A young assistant rounded up the children, whose ages ranged from a toddler to young teenagers. Judith handed out our offerings, which, as well as the school supplies, included cuddly toys for the younger ones given to us by a neighbour. Seeing their excitement and pleasure at even a small note pad and one pen brought a lump to the throat.

"Mvuu Lodge supports Nanthomba Full Primary School. Abel, the headmaster, greeted us in his office, with its walls full of immaculately handwritten charts showing exam results and lots of other information. Our visit coincided with that of Jillian Woolstein, an American who established the school, and her elderly mother. The latter had laid the first brick when the school was transformed from the shade of a tree to the modern structure it is today.

"The school caters for 1000+ children from the age of six (Standard 1), and goes up to Standard 8, when an exam determines whether they enter secondary education. Classrooms were full, with up to 50 pupils sharing desks, some bearing a donor's name. They all stood when we arrived and shouted out 'Good Morning', as English is the school language: the noise was deafening.

"We were also shown the well-stocked library, kitchen, and area where after-school meals are served, and the garden where children are taught to grow vegetables which are then sold. Our bag of stationery seemed like a drop in the ocean, given the size of the school, but it was warmly received by Abel, who assured us it would be shared amongst the neediest children".

In addition to donations such as school supplies, CITW Malawi's Regional Coordinator Symon Chibaka reports that the Eco-Clubs and YES Clubs greatly appreciate donations that will assist with their reforestation efforts. These can include gardening tools such as hand forks, hand trowels and pruning shears. ♡

CITW Bobirwa reports that they have received a number of packages via Pack for a Purpose through Mashatu guests.



"We are always so grateful for these amazing contributions to our annual Eco-Club camps. The children love their special goodies which they take home to use", says Bobirwa Regional Coordinator, Tanya McKenzie.

The packages usually contain stationery, toiletries and underwear, but recently a camera was donated by Scottish guests who came to Mashatu to celebrate their 40th wedding anniversary. The camera is a Canon Powershot, and it will be used to teach the children about photography in the camps. They also received a full bag of previously loved clothes from a young donor, as well as a laptop and cell phone, which are being used by our coordinators to assist in running the Eco-Clubs.

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMME



In almost all of the rural areas where we operate, secondary schooling has a fee attached. Our scholarship programme assists children whose parents cannot afford to further their children's schooling.

Through our Eco-Clubs and annual camps the children return to their schools inspired to continue their education, and with a newfound love for, and pride in, their wildlife heritage. With the assistance of kind donors, some of the children in need of financial assistance receive scholarships in order to complete their schooling, or to attend university.

We are able to identify these deserving children who cannot complete their secondary education as a result of lack of funds to pay for tuition fees, buy uniforms, stationery, etc. By providing financial support, children are inspired and have hope for their future.

We are eternally grateful to Wilderness Safaris guests and agents, as well as partner NGOs, and particularly Olympus, the latter having funded 20 scholarships for five years – four each in **Botswana, Namibia, Rwanda, Zimbabwe** and **Zambia**.

Eight Bisate Learners Awarded Full Scholarships

In March 2019 Children in the Wilderness (CITW) Rwanda was thrilled to be able to award scholarships to eight Bisate learners for the full duration of their secondary school education.

The funding was provided by Olympus and Wilderness Safaris Bisate Lodge guests, and covers school fees, books and uniform costs.

"We are very passionate about the CITW Rwanda programme, and excited to extend educational support to these learners.

Without financial support, it is unlikely that any of them would complete secondary school. They all come from rural backgrounds with no electricity, plumbing or even basic water access in their homes. This generous funding from our guests at Bisate and from Olympus, coupled with CITW's strong community programme, will open up opportunities for them to improve their lives and those of



their communities, and contribute to conservation in the area”, notes a delighted Ingrid Baas, Wilderness Safaris Rwanda General Manager. The recipients were chosen on the basis of their academic performance and level of participation in the programme’s Eco-Clubs, and were carefully selected by the CITW Rwanda team, Eco-Club Mentors and the Bisate Primary School Headmistress.

The children are: **Chance Mutuyimana, Aline Kuburimana, Claire Iradukunda, Jeanette Muhawenimana, Jackson Nibishaka, Innocent Ntiringanya, Aime Desire Nshutiyimana** and **Jackson Samu Umuhire**, all of whom attend Bisate Secondary School.

The prerequisites for retaining the scholarship each year include dedication, motivation, good behaviour and maintaining good marks. Providing scholarships forms an integral part of the CITW programme, enabling children from rural backgrounds to complete their schooling education. In 2018, CITW awarded over 600 scholarships across its regions, divided between primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Many of the previously funded learners are now working within the ecotourism industry, in Wilderness Safaris or other lodges and camps.

“Our efforts to develop the next generation of environmental leaders is a vital part of our mission to conserve and restore Africa’s wilderness and wildlife. Bisate Lodge and Magashi, in Akagera National Park, are committed to working with CITW

Rwanda to showcase the importance of sustainable and authentic ecotourism”, adds Ingrid. CITW launched its Eco-Club programme in Rwanda in April 2018 with 60 learners from Bisate Primary School and a group of Eco-Mentors led by Ingrid and Aline Umutoni, a Bisate Lodge guide. The club continues to do well, focusing on its mission to educate children on conservation and environmental issues.

“The opportunity to award the scholarships is, for the Rwandan CITW and Wilderness Safaris team, a sign of what can be achieved in a relatively short time. It is a promise to ourselves to continue with the programme and increase our efforts. This is just the start”, said Ingrid.

Meet a few of the Bisate scholarship recipients



Jackson Sam Umuhire (Olympus)

Jackson is a funny and bright boy of 13 who joined the Eco-Club at Bisate Primary School in 2018. He is now in his first year at Bisate Secondary School. Jackson is so committed to the environmental club that when his parents wanted to move him to his aunt and uncle he resisted, and managed to convince them not to move him from the school as he wanted to remain active in the Eco-Club.



Jeanette Muhawenimana (Bisate guests)

Jeanette is 15 years old and was the highest-scoring student at Bisate Primary School when she joined the Eco-Club in 2018. She is now studying at Bisate Secondary School where she is once again the highest-scoring student. The future looks bright for Jeanette, as she is a very hard-working young girl.



MALAWI

Limbani Mwale, 19 (left), is currently the Secretary of the YES Executive Committee for CITW Malawi's Northern Region, which has more than 100 YES members.

The Rosemary Pencil Foundation sponsored her fees at Bandawe Girls Secondary School, and continues to sponsor her Malawi University of Sciences and Technology degree in Information and Communications Technology.

Limbani is from a financially challenged rural family in Chintheche, and is very thankful to CITW for introducing her to its environmental and leadership programme – and for supporting her to actualise her dreams of achieving higher education.

Fifteen-year-old **Andiuzani Banda** (right) is currently in Form 2 at Chintheche Secondary School.

She is a committed Chihame YES Club member whose secondary school education is being sponsored by Emma Badger, daughter of Central African Wilderness Safaris' Chris Badger.

Andiuzani enjoys the advanced environment and wildlife lessons that come at YES Club level, and she also particularly appreciates going back to the Eco-Clubs where they assist the Eco-Mentors with the running of the Club.

She considers herself very fortunate to have received this scholarship, as her parents could not otherwise manage to pay for her education. Andiuzani's ambition is to become a Forestry Manager in Nkhata Bay.





NAMIBIA

Rowina Springbok is in Grade 9 at Elias Amaxab School where she became an Eco-Club member in 2018.

Her favourite subject is Agriculture; she enjoys dancing and singing, as well as netball, and she would love to become a doctor.

"I want to thank Children in the Wilderness and Olympus for the stationery and school uniform that I have received; they have really helped me a lot. I would really love to be the same for other children when I finish school. Helping people is a good deed and from the deep down of my heart, I am really thankful".



Reflex Mbomboro is a star student currently in Grade 12 at Braunfels Agriculture High School in the Kunene Region. He joined the Elias Amaxab School Eco-Club in Grade 8.

"First and foremost, it is my great honour to extend my thanks and gratitude to CITW for the scholarship support that has been given to me over the last five years. Today, I'm here in Grade 12, because of you.

"Your support has changed me physically and emotionally.

"Thank you very much for making my life so much better, my future brighter. I am a person who is dedicated, self-motivated, and responsible, and I like reading a lot. I'm a person who is curious to know more, and to explore beyond limits. In conclusion,

"I promise to work on my obstacles and get serious with my studies; I will make sure not to disappoint you; I promise that you can count on me and I will make sure you are happy and excited for ever. Thank you for your loving and caring support".



ZAMBEZI REGION

CITW Zambia and Zimbabwe Scholarship and Secondary School Student Hostel Initiative – 2019

During the 2018/19 fiscal year, generous donors provided student scholarships to 51 Zambian and 432 Zimbabwean students studying at primary and secondary schools in our areas of operation. These donors have enabled these students to continue pursuing their education and career dreams.

Because of the limited number of secondary schools in close proximity to rural communities, and the lack of boarding facilities to permit remote students to attend those schools, CITW Zambezi began an initiative to build self-contained hostels in a centrally-located secondary school in each of the countries, in order to support these rural students.

The girls' hostels have been completed, and now house 24 female secondary school students in each, with a capacity to ultimately house 40 girls in each. Currently the boys' hostels are under construction.

When completed, the buildings will have the capacity to house 40 male secondary school students in each. In addition, CITW Zambezi is simultaneously constructing kitchen facilities at the hostels so that the boarding students will have access to nutritious meals while at school.



SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT PROFILES – ZAMBIA

Ethel Chanda is an energetic sixteen-year-old, currently in Grade 9 at Twabuka Secondary School. She has been a part of the CITW family since 2011 when she joined the school's Eco-Club in Grade 5.

Her situation was brought to our attention and she was put forward as a candidate for the sponsorship programme. She is very strong academically and excels in all her

subjects, with a particular talent for languages, speaking Bemba, Tonga and English, all fluently.

She enjoys taking part in extracurricular activities such as drama and the YES club, where she loves to learn about the plants and animals, and spend time in the eco-garden at the school.

Her dream is to be able to spread this knowledge and understanding within her whole community by becoming a secondary school teacher. Ethel's sponsor is Thomas McCarter.

Ian Situmbeko is a cheerful fourteen-year-old student from Twabuka Secondary School, where he is currently in Grade 8. He joined the primary school's Eco-Club in 2016 and has been an active member ever since.

He transferred to the YES programme when he reached secondary school because he enjoys learning about ecosystems and wants to share this newfound love of nature with those who will follow.

He is a well-rounded student, with a vibrant character who loves to participate in drama and traditional dancing.

It is this confident and outgoing nature that has inspired his dream of becoming a pilot so



he can travel and see the world, and learn about other cultures. Ian's sponsor is Sally Pearson.



SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT PROFILES – ZIMBABWE

Melody Ngwenya is in Grade 6 at Mpindo Primary School. She is twelve years old, and has been an Eco-Club member since 2018. She attended an Eco-Camp, and was fascinated by the lessons on insects, especially locusts.

She is very active in her Club and loves to learn about the environment and the many ways to care for it, such as keeping it clean and avoiding cutting down trees.

Melody's mentors tell us that she is a natural-born leader who also follows instructions very well. She dreams of becoming a scientist so that she can continue to learn and progress. Melody's sponsor is Stuart Hunt.

Pride Mlambo is another twelve-year-old from Ziga Primary School where he is completing Grade 7.

He has been a part of the Eco-Club since 2017 and says he has loved the big projects, like planting fruit trees (he planted an orange tree), as well as getting to read all about wild animals.

He enjoyed his time on the Eco-Camp watching animals such as lions (which are his favourite), and learning interesting facts about them (such as the cheetah being the world's fastest runner).

Pride's teachers praise his enthusiasm and leadership qualities, saying he is confident and helpful to everyone.

Pride is an above-average student who performs well in all his subjects – all qualities that should help him reach his goal of becoming a pilot one day. Pride's sponsor is Stuart Hunt.



IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD OF LOVE, PLAY ON

by Nirvani Pillay – Wilderness Safaris Public Relations Manager

The last time I read music or played an instrument was 20 years ago. I jokingly say I discovered boyfriends and it replaced music in my world. It was a childhood dream to play violin, and so last November I went about finding a teacher. I stumbled across a music studio in Linden, and had no idea that things in my world were about to change quite so drastically.

I met my new music teacher, Marena van Hemert, who at 82 is a most impressive musical talent, and who is also the most patient and kindest of teachers. I spoke to her about how, as children, my friends and I would spend hours practicing our recorders and how lost we would get in the instrument.

There was something quite special about all of us playing the same tune in the same key and keeping the same time.

1...2...3...4 in D Major with F-sharp and C-sharp. Allegro!

Within half an hour my brain reactivated the 'read music' setting and I was reading music again as if boyfriends never happened at all. I was learning all about this new instrument which has since evolved into an extension of myself. The power of muscle memory is quite impressive. Marena started violin at the young age of four. Her talent, as well as her ear for music, is clearly a gift. Fast-forward to early September when Marena and I had breakfast together and I learned that she had an unfulfilled dream to teach underprivileged children music.

A lightbulb went off in my mind... Children in the Wilderness! The next Monday I spoke with Bongani Baloyi about what we could possibly do to realise Marena's dream, and to introduce music to children who would otherwise not have the opportunity – and from such an experienced violinist at that. He also had a lightbulb moment, and within days we set up a meeting with the New Jerusalem Children's Home in Midrand, where our Johannesburg staff generously donate non-perishable food items and hand-crafted winter woollies. Management at the home was very excited about the idea. We then set up a meeting with them and Marena, and the first session was set for October 3rd.



When the hour drew to a close these same children had smiles on their faces and were singing along to familiar tunes.

They also remembered new words so easily. The director of the home, Anna Mojapelo, made a special visit and was extremely impressed at the children's reactions. She said she's never seen them so engaged before. They really want to learn music. Two boys came up to me and said they wanted to use my recorder and when I asked who wants to learn to play all 32 children raised up their hands. So far we have 18 new recorders sponsored.

There were moments during that experience when I felt raw emotion and came close to tears. I felt that out in the world we take simple things for granted. These children just need something positive, and there is nothing better than music to make them feel like their sounds (and voices) matter.

They need to create music and feel themselves escape to a special place in their imaginations, despite all the pain and trauma life might have thrown their way. I felt very humbled when, after Marena played a piece on her violin, there were children who admitted they were transported to a different place in their imaginations.

We sometimes underestimate the power of art and the positive impact it can have on a vulnerable child. Marena's orchestra, where I currently play 'second violin', will be performing at a concert at the home soon. You're all invited...

Marena took along some home-made instruments and a few empty glass bottles, which when filled with different levels of water can play an octave (impressive)! The children were very shy at first, and unsure of what to expect from this new experience. They gathered in the lounge one by one.

Soon a group of 32 sat intently on the carpet around Marena, just listening to the music coming out of her Bluetooth speaker. Marena then started engaging with the children and handed a few of them some of the home-made instruments.

They took to them like ducklings to water... going with the beat, shaking the beads, clanging the xylophone. Then Marena and I played *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* on violin and recorder respectively.

Eyes grew wider and voices grew bolder as they started singing along. As Marena ran through a few activities I observed some of the quieter children, who were observers themselves.

**WE WANT TO PERSUADE YOU
THAT IF THERE'S A TALENT
YOU'RE NURTURING, THAT YOU
CONSIDER SHARING IT WITH
THE CHILDREN DURING THEIR
ARTS AND CRAFTS SESSIONS.**

Think drawing, knitting, sculpting with clay, dancing, beadwork... and if you feel you can support this cause through a donation please feel free. The only way to know that you have made a tangible difference to the life of a child is to experience it yourself. Their hugs in the end are well worth the effort. ♡

NEDBANK TOUR DE TULI 2019 CITW EVENTS TEAM



NICOLA HARRIS
Tour Director



JONATHAN FELIX
Operations Manager



SHONA ERASMUS
Hospitality Coordinator



ROBERT SETSHEDI
Operations Coordinator

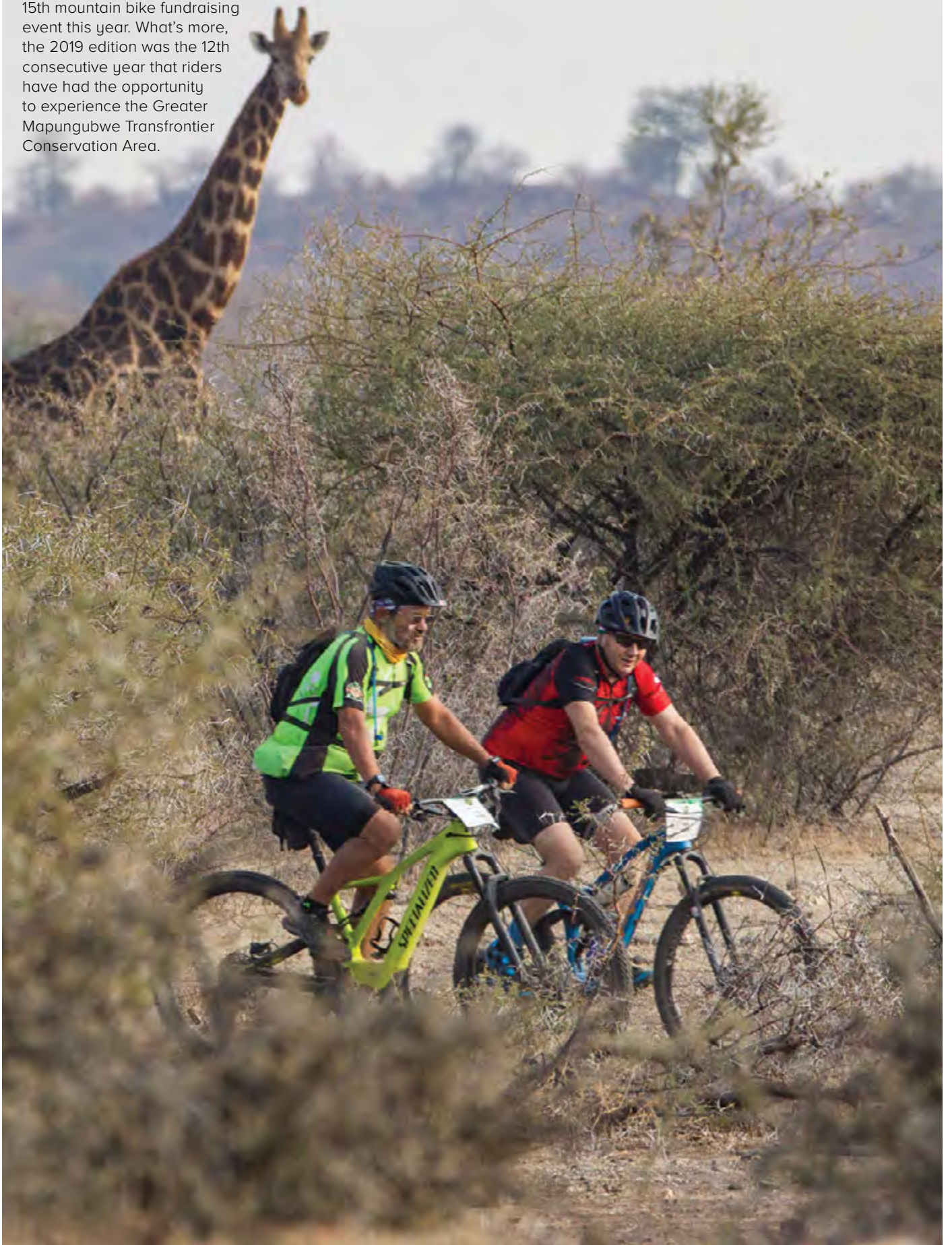


LIZA STEYN
Tour Administration and Bookkeeping



MARI DOS SANTOS
Wilderness Trust Administrator
and Tour Administration

As the organiser and beneficiary of the annual Nedbank Tour de Tuli, Children in the Wilderness marked the successful completion of our 15th mountain bike fundraising event this year. What's more, the 2019 edition was the 12th consecutive year that riders have had the opportunity to experience the Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area.





By way of ringing the changes, this year the traditional route was reversed so that riders spent more time in Botswana, as well as a day each in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

This year's Tour also saw a return to Amphitheatre Bush Camp in Botswana, perhaps the most emblematic of all Tour locations.

The 2019 Tour also turned out to be an even more exciting event for the children of Botswana than usual, as the route incorporated the village of Lentswe-le-Moriti, and a visit from over 200 cyclists to the primary school!

To show the participating cyclists our work in the schools, the Bobirwa regional coordinators arranged for a display table

to be set up with educational flyers and other material highlighting CITW's work.

Five of our six Bobirwa coordinators travelled from their villages to Lentswe to attend the day, interacting and sharing their CITW work and experiences with the cyclists.



In the morning the village was buzzing with activity, with children of all ages gathering in the school grounds from as early as 8 o'clock!

The Tour itinerary suggested that the first riders would be arriving at the school around 10:30am, so the waiting hours were well-spent playing soccer, singing or playing energiser games together.



Each arriving cyclist group was welcomed with loud cheering and singing, and Bobirwa's special CITW rhymes and chants.

The cyclists kindly gifted each child with a backpack containing some stationery and writing paper. Most of the children were eager to ride the bicycles and plenty of fun and laughter was had, with short legs pedalling large bikes.

The day was a great success and the children have already asked whether the cyclists will visit again next year. ✓



ECO * CLUBS

SAVING OUR PLANET | ONE LESSON AT A TIME



During the course of 2018, we were able to continue growing our Eco-Club programme and we now have over 3 000 **future conservation leaders** taking part in Eco-Clubs at partner schools across Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The Eco-Clubs are run at rural schools, follow a structured programme and, depending on the region, take place weekly or monthly. Eco-Clubs offer all learners who are interested in the environment a chance to meet, learn, discuss and expand their knowledge of environmental issues. We are thus able to reach more children in the communities on a more regular basis.

CITW was pleased to host the official launch of its first urban Eco-Club at Tshwaragano Primary School in Gaborone, Botswana, on 3 April 2019. By extending its innovative programme into this city school at the end of 2018, CITW is furthering its drive to teach even more children about the importance of the environment, and encourage them to become future leaders in sustainable conservation.



MEET OUR ECO-CLUB STARS

BOTSWANA

Alenda (11) *Motlhabaneng Primary School*

Alenda is not the first of her family to be an active member of the CITW Bobirwa Eco-Club, which is why she has been a member of the club since 2017, when she was in Standard 3.

Alenda shows highly developed social skills, she always engages with others with kindness and warmth, showing appreciation and respect.

She is practical and creative and loves all the Eco-Club activities conducted in nature. Alenda wants to be a doctor when she grows up, and what she likes most about the Eco-Club camps are the birds.

The one thing that she will always remember about the camp is to be kind to others and to love others, even if they are not kind to you.

Laone Olatotse (13) *Gobojango Primary School*

According to his Eco-Club Coordinator and teacher Rex, Laone is an incredibly enthusiastic, yet disciplined, and very intelligent young boy with the perfect combination of eagerness, understanding and willingness to learn all about nature and wildlife, in theory and during practical activities. Laone is very popular among his fellow learners and shows great leadership skills.

The most important thing that Laone learnt on the Eco-Club camp was how to stop poaching, and he wants to protect animals when he is an adult.

Precious (11) *Mabolwe Primary School*

Two words came to mind when Eco-Club Coordinator Khumo Dingalo was asked to describe his best Eco-Club member to date: intelligence and hard work.

Precious works harder than most to perform well at school and the Eco-Club activities.

She is always present, always engages willingly and by doing so sets a great example to her peers. She loves planting vegetables and was elected Super Leader at the Eco-Club camp in 2018.

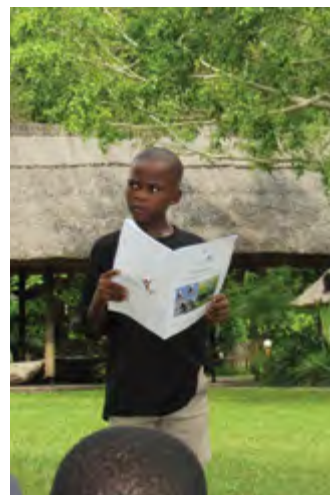
Precious wants to be a chef in a game reserve when she grows up so that she can attract tourists to Botswana and bring income to the country.

Edwin Monduu (12) *Habu Primary School*

Edwin is in Standard 7 and has been a very active member of his school's Eco-Club since he joined in 2013. In 2018 he was selected for the annual camp at Jacana. His passion is for nature.

Edwin displayed his love for the environment on camp as he was always leading the other children to pick up litter.





Pamela Joyce Sedumedi
Seronga Primary School

"My name is Pamela Joyce Sedumedi and am in Standard 7 at Seronga Primary School. I joined the Eco-Club in January 2018, and it was an amazing experience.

"I was privileged to be chosen to go on the annual Eco-Club camp in December at Seba.

At the camp our activities included game drives, lessons and games.

I most enjoyed the lessons and playing games. The games we played taught us about teamwork, participation and concentration.

At the camp I learnt about the importance of the Okavango Delta and its plants, animals and human beings.

As the Eco-Club chairperson, I believe in the Chinese proverb that says, 'Tell me and I will forget, show me and I will remember, involve me and I will understand'.

In our Eco-Club I like leading by example in order to inspire others. When I grow up I want to help protect natural resources through education".

Boikarabelo (11)
Tshwaragano Primary School, Gaborone

Boikarabelo's favourite subjects at school are English and Science.

He enjoys learning about how to take care of the environment from the Eco-Club lessons and would most like to teach others about ways to recycling waste! Boikarabelo loves playing football, and would like to be a scientist one day.

On seeing the movie *Into the Okavango* he said:

"The movie was amazing and I liked the way the Okavango is with all its animals and bird life.

"I was sad to see how the war in Angola has affected the area, and was amazed that people in Angola did not know their country had elephants!"

Precious Seakgonyane (10)
Tshwaragano Primary School, Gaborone

Precious's best subject is Environmental Science; she loves learning about ways to take care of the environment from the Eco-Club lessons, and wants to help others to learn how to do this as well.

She loves singing, and would one day like to be a teacher and continue to share with children on the importance of the environment and how to care for it.

On the seeing the film *Into the Okavango* she says:

"I was excited about seeing water flowing from the mountains in Angola.

"The movie was so exciting because the people were travelling from Angola to Botswana by mokoro! I saw many physical features, I saw happy people with their families together!"

MALAWI

Nelson Kwenje (13)
Chintheche Primary School Standard 8

Nelson joined Children in the Wilderness during the 2016 annual camp held at Central African Wilderness Safaris Chintheche Inn.

Nelson enjoys tree-planting and caring for his trees. His goal is to become an agricultural researcher, and he loves communicating through poems.



Evelin Masina (13)
Chihame Primary School

A member of Chihame's Eco-Club since 2016, Evelin's goal is to become a nurse one day. Her favourite activity at her Eco-Club is learning about recycling.

NAMIBIA

David Johannes (16)
Okaukuejo Combined School

David enjoys spending time in the garden and tending to it. He feels that despite the low rainfall in Namibia, cultivation is very important to prepare for when it does rain.

He is a quiet learner who keeps to himself, but is very smart and enjoys the lesson plans, and excels in much of the work-assignments. He wants to become a scientist one day to save the environment.

Mbatara Kaisuma (16)
Elias Amaxab Combined School

Mbatara is a very expressive boy who speaks his mind, yet loves to keep the peace at the same time. He wants to become a police officer after completing school, as this will be his way of giving back to the communities, and keeping children off the streets, and encouraging them to engage

in school activities such as the Eco-Club. Mbatara enjoys the cleanup and recycling days around the school and in the community areas. He likes to keep the environment clean and safe for his schoolmates.

Veriruijje Tjambiru (16)
Elias Amaxab Combined School

Veriruijje brings laughter to the class, cracking jokes at the oddest times to lighten the mood in the classroom. However, he is quite the class captain when the need arises, and his fellow club members always listen to him. He loves to play soccer and he is a great teammate.

He enjoys Eco-Club lessons, especially the ones about birds and animals. He loves to debate with his fellow club members about the ongoing issue of human-wildlife conflict and poaching in general.

His favourite animal is the elephant, and his favourite subject is Agriculture. Veriruijje aspires to be a tour guide, in order to teach people to protect and save animals.





RWANDA

Pacifique Iradukunda
Bisate Primary School

Pacifique joined the Eco-Club in 2019, having moved to Bisate Primary School in 2018 specifically because he wanted to join the Club.

He lives close to Bisate Lodge, and is very committed and clever.

Before he joined Bisate Primary School he was attending a school with no active environmental club.

During the Conservation Camp that we organised in

July 2019, he was selected to be interviewed for a broadcast on national television!

Giselle Umuhorakeye
Bisate Primary School

Giselle joined the CITW Eco-Club at Bisate Primary School in 2019. She is always cheerful and happy, and she has many friends. Giselle loves to draw, sing and play with friends. She likes the tree nursery at Bisate Lodge.

During one of the presentations at the 2019 Conservation Camp she spoke about the need for the Volcanoes National Park expansion, and buffer zones.

SOUTH AFRICA

Unathi Makhasa (13)
Joas Phahlela Primary School, Makuleke

"I joined CITW In 2017, and my favourite activities in the Eco-Club are learning about the importance of nature and how to conserve it.

I love animals and want to be part of conserving them in future. I would like to see people protecting and loving wild animals the way they do their pets".





Blessing Xilaveko Baloyi (12)

Boxahuku Primary School, Malkuleke

“I joined CITW in 2017 because I wanted to learn more about nature. My favourite Eco-Club activity is learning to draw animals and trees. I also love to learn about animals, environment and conservation in general”.

Ntshembho Chauke (12)

Makahlule Primary School, Makuleke

“I joined CITW in 2018 because I wanted to learn about nature. My favourite activities in the Eco-Club are learning about taking care of nature, playing games and also learning about the different trees.

I wish to learn more about how to take a good care of nature, and my wish is for all people to learn to respect nature and take care of it too”.

Ndhavuko Wisdom (12)

Makuleke Primary School, Makuleke

“I joined CITW in 2019 because I wanted to learn about the environment. My favourite activity in the Eco-Club is to learn about animals, and to respect them; also to socialise with others. I am a good leader and I love nature, and when I finish secondary school, I want to study nature conservation so that I can help conserve all natural things”.

Tshepiso Promise Makhura (12)

Modikwa Primary School, Simson

“I joined the Children in the Wilderness Eco-Club at my school in 2017, so I could learn more about the environment. My favourite animal is the impala. I love impala because they are clever and beautiful animals. Respect is one of my favourite Eco-Club lessons because it is the foundation of the future”.

“I would like to encourage my school mates and my community not to cut down trees as they give us oxygen and to keep our community litter-free. When I finish school, I would like to be a professional chef”.



Tshepiso attended her first annual camp in 2018 at Mapungubwe National Park. When she was on camp she loved interacting with the children from Botswana and Zimbabwe, to learn about nature together and also to learn about different cultures from different countries.



Charity Ngane Mashabela (12)
Modikwa Primary School

Charity loves lions – because they are strong, patient and brave animals.

“In our Eco-Club sessions, I love learning about respect, especially respect for the environment, including all animals. We must stop poaching because all animals deserve to live, and if we kill them, our future generations will have no animals in their natural habitat to see and enjoy. I would like to encourage my school mates to respect the environment by not littering, not wasting water and not killing animals”.

Charity attended her first annual Tri-Nations Camp (involving children and mentors from Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe) in December 2018. On camp she enjoyed the game drives because they afforded her the opportunity to see and learn about interesting wild animals, birds, trees and Mapungubwe’s history.

ZAMBIA

Westwood Sitali (12)
Twabuka Primary School

Westwood is an active and enthusiastic team player who loves learning how to care for the plants in the Club’s eco-gardens. He was lucky enough to attend the annual camp held at nearby Toka



Leya, and thoroughly enjoyed getting out into nature on game drives and boating.

Through stories shared by guides and fellow campers his desire to travel has inspired him to become a pilot and spread his wings.

Mary Mapani
Twabuka Primary School

Mary loves her time in the school’s eco-garden, where she even chooses to spend her free time, to ensure it flourishes. She is currently in Grade 7 and has been an Eco-Club member at Twabuka Primary School since 2015, so was very excited when she was given the chance to go on camp.

The game drives and getting to play fun and educational games with her fellow campers were definitely her highlight of the trip.

Her mentors speak very highly of her and say Mary takes the initiative and is very forward-thinking. She has a caring personality and hopes to use this to become a nurse in the future.

Christabell Muhoma (11)
Lupani Primary School

Christabell Muhoma is a highly intelligent and confident young girl who is currently completing her Grade 7 studies, and has been elected Head Girl for her year.



She is a very active Eco-Club member, having joined the club in 2017 because she loves to learn about the animals in her area, and how to protect them.

She attended the Eco-Camp at Toka Leya and took a special interest in the lesson about crocodiles and how they fit into their ecosystem.

She has a deep love for science and is a natural leader amongst her peers, and hopes to one day become a doctor so that she too can help the people in her community.



“We must stop poaching because all animals deserve to live, and if we kill them, our future generations will have no animals in their natural habitat to see and enjoy”



ZIMBABWE

Morefaith Mumpane (12) St Mary's Primary School

Morefaith is a mature girl who joined the Eco-Club family at her school in early 2018.

She really loves her Eco-Club lessons and projects as they have given her a better understanding of her environment and the need to protect it. Morefaith also loves the fun games she gets to play.

She was thrilled to be given the chance to attend the Eco-Camp and said that the best part was having the opportunity to watch all the wild animals, especially the elephant, as this is her favourite animal.

This opportunity has inspired Morefaith to want to be a part of the conservation efforts in our National Parks and she hopes to work towards becoming a guide.

Morefaith's mentor reports that she is a bright young student in Grade 6 with a love of mathematics and a great enthusiasm for Eco-Club lessons, where she thrives in all the team-based activities.

Nkosinathi Mpofo (12) Kapane Primary School

Nkosinathi is an outgoing and sporty young Grade 7 at Kapane Primary School in Tsholotsho, outside Hwange

National Park. He is still new to the Eco-Club family, having only joined in 2018. Nkosinathi is very active in his club and loves to get involved and do experiments.

He loved learning about the various ways to identify trees as well as the devastating effect of water pollution, and how we can filter water to avoid this issue.

He loved his time at the Eco-Camp, seeing the wildlife and learning valuable lessons about how they all benefit each other including even the small insects.

His teacher and mentor told us how his inquisitive nature and desire to learn have helped him excel in all his subjects, especially English.

He is extremely outgoing and loves to play sport and participate in quizzes. He would like to share his love of learning in the future and become a teacher.

Nontoko Dube (13) Ziga Prima Primary School

Nontoko is a delightful little thirteen-year-old girl who is currently in Grade 7. She has been an Eco-Club member for some three years, having joined in mid-2017. She has enjoyed all her lessons so far, especially the tree-planting project and those that have taught her the value of protecting animals by not killing them unnecessarily, a truth she tries

to share with her parents and friends whenever possible.

Nontoko was thrilled to be given the chance to attend an Eco-Camp, and says her favourite part was learning about all the insects, like how bees give us honey, as well as getting to see all the larger wildlife, especially zebras, her favourite.

Her mentors say that Nontoko performs very well independently, and requires minimum supervision.

This confidence and independent spirit have led her to want to become a soldier or policewoman after school so that she may serve and protect her fellow countrymen.

Nhlanhla Ncube (12) Mpindo Primary School

Nhlanhla Ncube is a highly intelligent Grade 6 boy who has been an Eco-Club member for three years, having joined in 2017.

He enjoys being part of the Club because it has shown him new ways of conserving the land, as well as looking after animals (both wild and domestic).

He was overjoyed to go on the Eco-Camp because he had the chance to see all the wild animals, especially his favourite, the lion. All of Nhlanhla's teachers praise his natural leadership skills and intelligence and enjoy

seeing how actively involved he has become, both in the Eco-Club and his class. They foresee great things in his future, and he hopes to achieve this through his dream of becoming a scientist.



CITW ANNUAL CAMPS

CITW's annual camps, mostly held at Wilderness Safaris properties, are a reward for selected children attending the Eco-Clubs in their schools. While children get to enjoy being guests and experiencing game drives, luxury accommodation and warm hospitality, the camp also focuses on learning.

The camp curriculum is an extension of subjects they have studied during the Eco-Clubs.

BOTSWANA

The 2018 annual Bobirwa Region camps were held at Serolo Lodge and Mashatu Private Game Reserve in the Tuli Wilderness, and run by our very own Aunty Tanya – CITW Bobirwa Programme Coordinator – and her wonderful group of Eco-Mentors.

Comments from the children

Gaone Bale (10)

I will make a difference to the world by building game reserves, and go out with wildlife people to reduce poaching.

Wetsho Tingwane (11)

The most important thing that I learned on camp was how to take care of our environment e.g. not littering.

I will make a difference to the world by making sure that there is no poaching in Botswana so that everyone will see more wild animals.

Junior Moswana (11)

When I grow up I want to be an ecosystem.

The thing that I did for the first time in my life during this camp was to go on a game drive.

Pretty Lesitamang (11)

The most important things that I learnt on camp is that they taught me more about different trees, birds and mammals, and we will always remember about playing games and taking a game drive.

Lea Mmalane (12)

For the first time in my life I have spoken to white people and I ate delicious food and had a shower. I will never forget the care and respect from the Eco-Mentors.

Letso Madziba (11)

Wilderness areas are important because they attract tourists and develop the country. I want to build a game reserve that has different species and beautiful trees, when I finish school.

Obakeng Ngwako (11)

I thought I would see few birds but I saw many and learnt about them and their history. I would like to be an animal guardian when I finish school. I will make a difference to the world because I will tell people to stop poaching and arrest people who I catch poaching.



MALAWI

“What makes a bird a bird?” Campers learn from Chifundo Nyambalo, former CITW camper, now a facilitator of environmental education sessions and Central African Wilderness Safaris guide – on the CITW annual camp held at CAWS Chintheche Inn, on the northern shore of Lake Malawi.



Comments from the children

Tionge Kumwenda (13)

I learnt a lot about the importance of lakeflies, that they come from deep in the mud under the water of Lake Malawi, and not from the stomach of a huge fish, as it is told about in our village.

After camp I am going to educate more friends and relatives about lakeflies, and their amazing life cycle.



Beauty Chirwa (13)

Each year I plant one or two trees at my school (Chihame). I monitor and care for them on a daily basis.

After my university graduation I would like to come back to my primary school and measure how big and tall my trees have grown.

NAMIBIA

Two back-to-back camps took place in Namibia in late 2018. The camps were held at Damaraland Adventure Camp, a simple Wilderness Safaris camp in the heart of the Torra Conservancy.

Agnes Tjirare, CITW Coordinator in Namibia, and her team of Eco-Mentors ran fun, informative and inspiring camps with the two groups of children from the areas surrounding Damaraland.



Salvia Kasaona (13)

I am very glad because when I come here I saw many animals. We were playing many games that we don't know. And we have been given new clothes. Even they are taking us to see the animals etc. Thank you CITW because you make me glad for the things that I see today, and for everything you given to us.

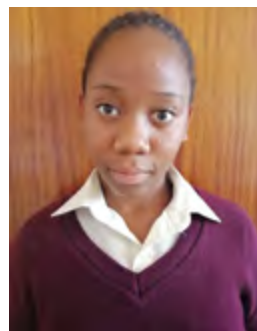


Rihovandu Tjondy (18)

The thing is that the people are giving us t-shirts and water bottles that we did not have, and they also give us toiletries.

They are good people and they are giving us love and not ignoring us. I would like to say thank you to CITW for everything that they give us and may God bless you to complete your plan. I am so lucky to be here and I am so proud to be here.

Heno-Jane Tsamases (13)



They treat us nice and they also show us things we never saw before. And we go for game driving.

They teach us about different plants for example the *Inara* plant and *Welwitschia mirabilis*.

They also teach us to take care of ourselves. They even show us around the elephants, lions and many different animals. Most importantly they sponsor children. They take care of them up to university. I thank you all for giving us the opportunity to introduce ourselves and say what we feel about this wonderful programme.

Thank you very much.

Mency Tjaupeni (12)

I love my body, I want my body to be clean, I want to eat healthy food, and I do not want to wear dirty clothes. I want to say thank you to CITW, thank you for your food that you gave to me and your clothes that you gave to me that we wear.

CITW is a very good camp. When I got to the camp, I was very happy that day. When I finish school I want to be a teacher because I want the learners to know everything.



Prince Namaseb (14)

I like staying with people and learning new things, and I enjoy learning about them and the best thing is having fun with new people and seeing new places. That is all I can say for now. Thank you CITW.

Ingrid Geingos (15)

I love CITW because it help us to see the animals that we did not see, and to have fun. Even showing us the places we did not see, it's nice to be in CITW camp. Thank you for giving me chance to come visit.

Claudia Shilipipo (12)

It's good to join CITW because it teaches us the difference between male animal and female animal. The CITW also teaches us different trees. I want to thank CITW by teaching us different type of things, the different type of trees and animals.

Rocky Hawaxas (12)

It is nice here we eat too much and the place is and beautiful we play different games like soccer. I just want to say thank you CITW for me to be here.



Children in the Wilderness Rwanda, in partnership with Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund International, Muhisimbi Voice of Youth and Conservation Heritage Turambe, organised their very first Conservation Camp in the Volcanoes National Park area of Rwanda. The Conservation Camp 2019 hosted 40 children from the environmental clubs of four schools (including Bisate Primary School) for four days, starting on the 23rd July 2019.

During the camp the children learned about all four National Parks in Rwanda: Volcanoes National Park, Akagera National Park, Nyungwe National Park and Gishwati-Mukuru National Park.



Report by Ingrid Baas, Wilderness Safaris Rwanda GM and CITW Regional Coordinator

We welcomed many visitors to the camp, all of whom contributed and taught the children about conservation and a possible career in the environmental or tourism sector.

The Gorilla Doctors explained about their work and the researchers of the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund elaborated before what they do on a daily basis. Chief Park Warden Prosper Uwingeli visited, and spoke to the children about the importance of the National Park, and how the children from the Eco-Clubs are the ambassadors for the environment. The children had lessons from the Park guides, and from the Head Chef of Bisate Lodge.

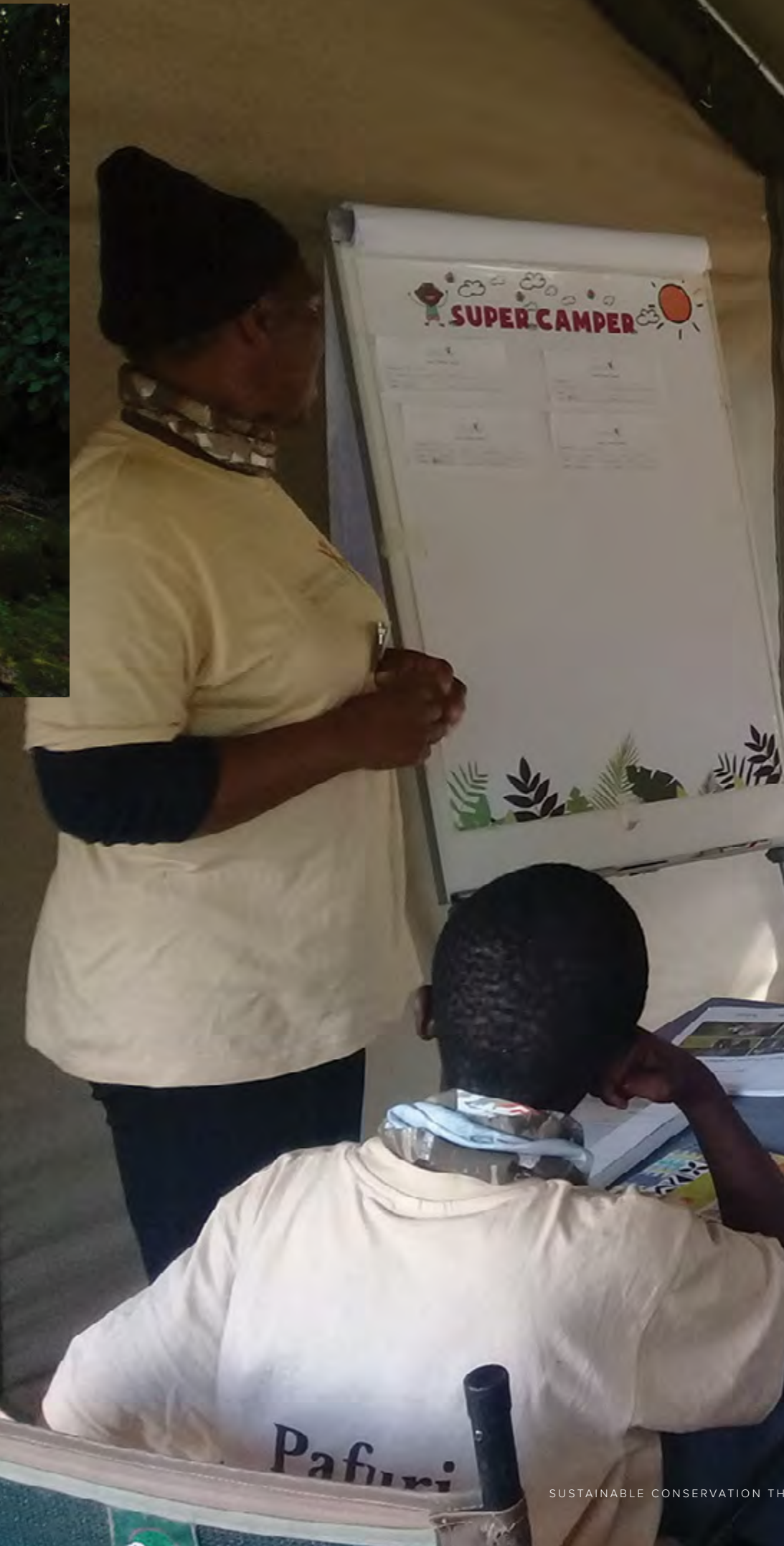
The Rwandan Wildlife Conservation Association facilitated a workshop about African grey-crowned cranes and bats. Being the first Conservation Camp in Rwanda there was a lot of interest from the media. The national television and radio stations joined us for two days, and interviewed many of the children and Eco-Mentors.

Through the making of masks, posters of animal adaptations, and with the production of presentations and drama plays, the creativity of the children was not forgotten.

The winning act was presented on the last afternoon when the official District Leaders and Headmasters of the schools came to visit the camp.

We also had lots of fun with games, dancing and singing. One of the highlights was when we visited the Headquarters of Volcanoes National Park, and after that had a nature walk, including a scavenger hunt in Buhanga Eco Park.

It was an amazing camp! CITW, Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, Muhisimbi Voice of Youth in Conservation and Conservation Heritage Turambe are already planning the next Conservation Camp. Watch this space!



SOUTH AFRICA

Pafuri Trails Eco-Club – June 2019

This was our first CITW camp at Pafuri in some two years. The camp took place from 26 to 28 June 2019 at Pafuri Walking Trails Camp in the far north of the Kruger National Park, where eight children from Makuleke schools participated.

Bongani Baloyi (above) was joined by teachers Virginia Hatlane, Leinah Chauke, CITW Makuleke Programme Liaison, Rhulani Ngwenyama, and seven staff members from RETURNAfrica's Pafuri Camp.

Our heartfelt thanks to RETURNAfrica for their generous contribution to the success of the camp, as well as SANParks, who waived their daily conservation fees, in addition to hosting the campers and their teachers at Punda Maria Environmental Education Centre.

Matsalwa Icon Nobela

I learnt that cutting trees is not good because the environment is not going to be in balance.

Wisiso Chauke

I learnt about different animal behaviours and their life-span. I loved it when the elephants welcomed us to the camp.

Vutomi Mabasa

I learnt how to track animals and how they behave.

CITW continues to empower and involve communities in the areas our annual Nedbank Tour de Tuli fundraising mountain bike event traverses. From 12 to 15 July 2019, we hosted 18 children from Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe;

they were supported by 11 Eco-Mentors, including Wilderness Safaris staff and interns, Eco-Club coordinators and teachers from the three countries, as well as Mapungubwe National Park staff. The camp included game drives, guided walks, environmental

education lessons and activities, a visit to the confluence of the Limpopo and Shashe rivers, a tree-top boardwalk, and a visit to the Mapungubwe Museum.

We also introduced the campers to the Nedbank Tour de Tuli set-up team

who were busy with pre-tour prep at Mapungubwe.

This allowed the campers and the mentors to make the connection between CITW programme implementation and fundraising.

**Joseph Mosedame,
Botswana**

I learnt about natural resources and how to use them wisely to support all forms of life on earth.

Gerald Dube, Zimbabwe

I have learnt about making new friends and not to cut down trees.

**Boitumelo Makotana
Mosen, South Africa**

The mentors made me feel welcome and taught me the importance of respect.



PAFURI TRAILS YES CLUB
– SEPTEMBER 2019

The CITW Makuleke YES Club annual camp was held from 27 to 29 September at Pafuri Walking Trails Camp. Eight YES Club youth from Makuleke's N'wanati High School attended.

They were supported by a full camp staff complement of nine Eco-Mentors (teachers, guides, chefs, housekeepers and a wildlife tracker).

We are grateful for the continued support of the Makuleke Communal Property Association, The Makuleke Traditional Council, The Department of Basic Education represented by the Malamulele South Circuit office, RETURNAfrica as well as N'wanati High School.

The children had a lot of fun while learning about and appreciating Pafuri's heritage and wildlife. Not only did the children learn, but so did the teachers, some of whom were attending a CITW camp for the first time.



Tsundu Macebele

One thing I will always remember about this camp is when an elephant came next to my tent.

Basani Makondo

I learnt about different animals, trees, birds, animal tracks and how to stop conflicts between wildlife and humans.

Hloniphani Devine Makamu

I learnt about respect, leadership values (perseverance and responsibility) and how to take care of the ecosystems.

ZAMBIA

Learning and fun was the order of the day at CITW Zambia's annual camp held at Toka Leya. Thirty students from five schools in Livingstone, together with their Eco-Mentors, were hosted.

On arrival, each child received a pack containing stationery, a t-shirt, and a hat. Volunteers acted out camp rules and the students had to guess what rule it was, providing a fun way to convey the rules, while also breaking the ice between students.



Comments from the children awarded "Super Camper" status for their outstanding characteristics



Gideon Simwanza

I enjoyed seeing the camp and discussing the animals we saw with the guide. I really learnt a lot.

Andrew Muwelya

My favourite part was going on the boat cruise and seeing all the elephants.



Gift Mliapo

I liked learning about all the animals and seeing so much water in the river, it was so nice.

Emeldah Musandi

I learnt a lot about birds and mammals around us. The lessons were so interesting.



Mwemba Hakoola

I enjoyed the discussion about the environment and learning how all animals are important.

Charles Kakoma

I really loved watching the animals on the game drives and playing with other campers was so much fun.



Beenzu Kasimbo

I loved the discussion about the environment and how we can look after it locally.

Westwood Sitali

I enjoyed discussing about the animals, making the team mascot, and riding on the fast boat.





Lungile Muzamba

Camp was amazing and fun: playing games, competing in the quiz, eating the food, seeing all the wild animals, and learning more about the environment.

Junior Simwanza

I loved learning all about the ecosystem, and going for the game drive and getting to actually see the animals in the bush.

Giles Mauhys

This camp was so much fun, thank you very much for taking me, I would love to come back any day there is another camp.

Sithokoziwe Moyo

I really enjoyed learning new things about the environment and playing games and the food was so good.

Mbalenhle Moyo

It was fun, the food and games, learning about elephants and ostriches.

Christabel Shoko Sinamatella Primary School

I found the game drive so much fun, in getting to see all the animals and learn more about them.

Munashwe Dewah

The camp itself was very beautiful, and my highlights were learning all about the animals and the delicious food.

Tanaka Murumbi

Enjoyed the camp especially playing games and interacting with others.



ZIMBABWE

Nineteen children from St Mary's Primary School and five from Sinamatella Primary School, attended CITW Zimbabwe's tremendously successful Camp Hwange this year.

Accompanied by two Eco-Mentors, one from each school, on arrival, each child received a pack containing stationery, a t-shirt, and a hat for their stay at camp, from where they were divided into teams.

As the theme of the camp was insects, the teams were appropriately named Butterfly, Moth, Bees, and Dragonfly.



YES

CLUB STARS



The Youth Environmental Stewardship Programme focuses on children with commitment and potential who have been identified in Eco-Clubs and on annual Camps through showing a particular interest in conservation.

The programme is an extension of concepts introduced in Eco-Clubs and during camp, with a greater focus on career guidance, communication, leadership, teamwork and further environmental education.

These camps are usually smaller, with fewer children attending, allowing for focused work groups and increased participation of all children. The YES programme also allows the opportunity for Eco-Mentors to spend more time with the children and identify candidates for the scholarship and internship programme. YES Clubs have been running in Botswana since 2008, where 582 children have been hosted to date. As our programme grows in each region, YES Clubs and Camps are introduced, allowing the

programme to grow with the children, and continue to provide them with environmental education and support. The programme also aims to inspire them to develop conservation methods that can sustain their lives and those of the future generations.

In a nutshell, the YES programme envisages taking campers to the next level, preparing them for careers in environmental conservation, ecotourism, hospitality and other vocations.

MEET SOME OF OUR REGIONAL **YES** CLUB STARS



MALAWI

Davie Nkosi, Chihame

Hailing from the Nkhata Bay area, Davie joined CITW in 2011 at the age of 15. Now 23, Davie had this to say about his growing environmental knowledge.

"CITW directly inaugurated my passion for wanting to become an environmental activist one day. My camp experience in 2011 was awesome.

Since then, as an Eco-Club member and later as a YES Club member, I have been consistently amazed by, and remain curious about, nature and its positive impact on humans.

"My passion is to acquire a tertiary qualification in environmental sciences, so that later on I am able to initiate and conduct proper research, which would help policymakers and implementers to better realise positive change and developments, in line with conservation and socio-economic development.

"I believe that positive change is possible. I enjoy the fellowship I have with YES Club members in my local community when I am on school holidays.

The spirit we have when we are in our YES Club is amazing! I wish to live and see our own generation creating environmental policies, as well as their implementation".



Janet Kaombe, Nangondo

At 23, Janet joined CITW at Nangondo Primary School, based in CITW's southern Liwonde zone, in 2008.

Of her environmental knowledge, she says, "I joined CITW 11 years ago. I am still with CITW as a YES Club member at Ntapwa. My eyes have been trained to see the value of wildlife and the natural environment.

"I quickly appreciate the role and the value of wildlife in their ecosystems and their value to the people who live near wildlife in protected areas. This knowledge will live with me forever.

"I am one of those girls who aims higher. I am currently doing a professional course at Machinga Teachers' Training College.

"When I graduate, I will get a job with the Ministry of Education. In my education, and through my capacity as a teacher, I will be able to educate more students about the environment and conservation through Eco-Clubs and wildlife clubs. I thank CITW".



spending his time in the workshop learning new skills. Chris is a bright student and a very high achiever, who wants to become a pilot, as well as an environmental teacher so that he may share what he has learned.

Barbara Mwala is an intelligent thirteen-year-old girl who studies at Twabuka Secondary school. She first joined the CITW programme through the school's Eco-Club back in 2016 and has followed it through to her current position in the YES Programme.

She is an active member who possesses strong leadership qualities. Barbara loves to plant trees and understand their importance for oxygen, and to provide protection from the elements for many animals.

Barbara wants to be a part of the movement to ensure the environment is protected for future generations to enjoy, by becoming a primary school teacher so that she may work with the children and show them all she has learned.

SOUTH AFRICA

Hloniphani Devine

Makamu is a fifteen-year-old learner at N'wanati High.

"I joined CITW in 2017, because I wanted to learn more about nature. My favourite activity in the YES Club is literacy.

Mpho Brilliant Nyabani

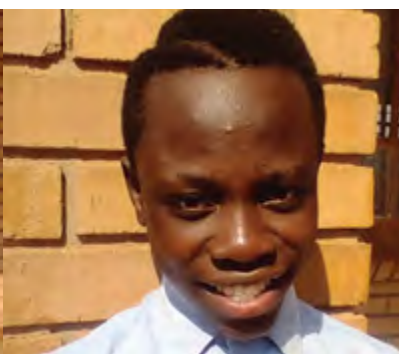
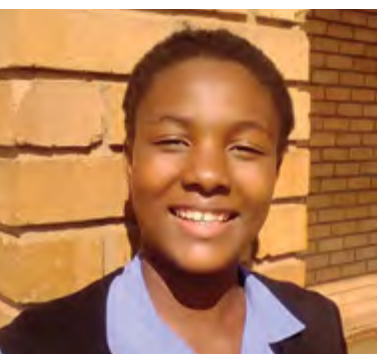
– N'wanati High School

A fairly recent addition to the YES Club family at N'wanati, fifteen-year-old Mpho joined CITW in 2017 as an Eco-club member, "because I love nature and I want to be a nature guide in future. My favourite thing in the YES Club is to learn about how to

ZAMBIA

Chris Malambo

is an active YES Club member of Nalituwe Secondary School where topics like the pros and cons of deforestation are covered, as well as environmental protection and educating others to do the same (reduce, reuse and recycle).



I will be happy to do camping and projects in future too, because I love hands-on activities as well. My strengths include poetry and storytelling. I am confident and I am also a good listener".

take care of our environment and animals. We have not yet started a specific project in our school. My passions are drawing and playing the keyboard at church".

Seventeen-year-old Chris understands the harmful consequences of litter and plastic, and led a group of his fellow members to make bins out old plastic bottles to help clean up the school. When given the chance to go on a YES Camp, he loved

ZIMBABWE



Lubelihle Makwelo is a confident and independent Form 4 student at Sipepa High School.

She has just turned 16 and has already achieved the position of Deputy Head Girl.

She has been a part of the YES Programme since 2018, and was lucky enough to be able to attend a YES Camp that same year, where she loved her time game-viewing, as it brought her closer to nature and the larger animals like buffalo and elephant.

She was also inspired by the lessons about conservation which have changed her daily life.

For example, one of her favourite lessons in the YES Programme so far has been the one on litter and the ways we can stop this and clean up our environment.

Her mentor says she is one of the brightest students in her class and a real team player who is always friendly, even earning the role of the overall leader on the last camp. Lubelihle hopes to continue her studies and become a qualified accountant.



Ishmael Tshuma is a quietly-spoken seventeen-year-old who attends Ngamo Secondary School, and is currently in Form 4. He joined the CITW programme in 2014 through the Eco-Club at Mpindo Primary, and then later the YES Programme when he graduated to Form 1 in 2016.

His favourite parts of the programme include creating artwork, and the opportunity to grow fruit trees such as mango, mulberry, granadilla, and lemons in the school's YES orchard project.

When given the chance to attend a camp, he says he had never seen so many types of animals all in one place, and now understands the importance of keeping the environment clean through campaigns like picking up litter.

His mentor says that Ishmael is very strong academically but can be shy and not too confident with people.

He tries to push himself to overcome this through his interests in group activities such as working in the garden and playing sports. His dream is to gain the confidence and knowledge he needs to become a tour guide in a national park.



Thando Sibanda is a lovely sixteen-year-old girl enrolled in Form 4 at Ngamo Secondary School. She has been a long-standing member of the Eco-Club and YES Programmes, having joined in 2013 (when she was in Grade 5).

She says that what interests her about the Club is not only the valuable lessons on ecosystems, but also the life skills that they are taught which will help members progress further in the future.

Her favourite club activity is growing fruit trees and working in the garden, though she also loved her time on camp, learning to draw the birds and animals around her, and express her creativity.

Working with nature in so many different avenues has brought out a caring quality in her, and because of this she is hoping to train to become a nurse and care for those desperately in need.

Her mentors commend her leadership skills as well as her strong communication skills. She excels in English, Agriculture, and Science, and loves to participate in group activities such as sports.



YES

CLUB ACTIVITIES



MALAWI

One of the topics covered on the 2018 December YES camp was a discussion on how manufacturing industries observe environmental conservation standards.

The YES Clubs developed objectives and planned for educational trips to some of the manufacturing industries they had noted, and between January and August 2019, undertook two investigative/ educational trips to two manufacturing companies.

Vizala Rubber Factory, Nkhata Bay, Northern Malawi

After an educational tour starting in the rubber tree forest and moving on to the factory, the youth sought interviews with the factory managers in order to learn about how they manage their environmental issues.

The youth were informed about how chemicals and rubber are safely handled, from the forest to the final products, and also learned how staff safety is observed in the company.

Illovo Dwangwa Sugar Factory, Dwangwa, Central Malawi

This environmental educational trip took YES youth to the Illovo Sugar Factory at Dwangwa, on the central shores of Lake Malawi.

Here, they were taken into the sugarcane plantations, then to the factory, and finally to a discussion forum.



ZAMBIA

Tippy Taps

These are hands-free, hygienic and water-saving hand-washing devices.

YES Club members learn about the importance of hygiene to combat disease as they construct these devices using sticks, string, and a water container.

Pressing on a stick with one's foot tilts the water container to wash one's hands.

Eco-gardens



YES Club members establish a garden where they learn more about agriculture, composting and nutrition.

The members tend the garden throughout the year, planting a variety of crops that are then harvested and used as part of nutrition programmes at the schools.

Worm farms



Students construct 1 x 1 metre square, 50 cm deep organic compost heaps, and introduce red wiggler worms to accelerate decomposition and help to create fertiliser for the eco-gardens.

Art competition

In this friendly regional competition, students showcase their artistic abilities and share their perspectives on their favourite wild animal and their animal's habitat.



Sapling protection competition

In another competition currently open across the Zambezi region, students have been asked to come together to create "sustainable cages"; i.e. using only recycled materials to create something that protects the young saplings due to be planted in their tree-planting project.

ZIMBABWE

In addition to Tippy Taps, eco-gardens, worm farms, the art competition and sapling protection competition (per Zambia), Zimbabwe's YES Clubs manage these projects too...



Orchards

YES Club members prepare the ground, plant and care for sapling fruit trees. Through this programme, YES Club members learn about agriculture and the benefit of trees in the environment, as well as gain

a sense of responsibility and care, as they do everything they can to help the trees flourish.

Tsholotsho monthly clinic run

During school terms, the Sipepa Clinic nurses are brought around to every partnered school in the region for a Wellness Day.

These "clinic runs" provide primary healthcare to the students and teachers, and include inoculations, immunisations, deworming treatments, as well as the treatment of any minor illnesses currently affecting the wellbeing of the students.

Enterprise camp

This camp is designed for female YES Club members. Along with their environmental studies, the focus of the camp is to teach the girls valuable life and leadership skills, and to introduce them to entrepreneurial concepts. Watch this space for an update in the next issue of Eco-Stars!



Meet the Eco-Mentors

ECO-MENTOR

Thanks to the generosity and support of our Eco-Mentors who volunteer their time, energy and other resources, Children in the Wilderness is able to successfully run its Eco-Club and camp programmes.

We are very grateful to – and proud of – these inspiring individuals!

BOTSWANA

Zarauka Uaja – Tswaragano Primary School

Zara has been a teacher for 10 years, covering all subjects in the primary school curriculum, but specialising in Maths and Science. She enjoys delivering the lessons in the Eco-Club curriculum as they are simplified, and she just has to read up and prepare herself to be able to share them.

Her aim is to ensure this Eco-Club is successful since it is the first Eco-Club in the city! Zara enjoys mentoring the children because she believes it is important to instil good life skills in them so that they can grow up and become responsible adults.

"I am privileged to be one of the Eco-Club mentors, because through the training that we do, we instil creativity and increase the children's passion for environmental conservation!"



Keoratile Bobe
– Tswaragano
Primary School

Bobe has been a teacher for 24 years, covering all primary school subjects.

What she likes about the Eco-Club is how it teaches the learners to take note of their environment, while extending their knowledge to other learners and the community as well. Her strength in the Eco-Club is keeping the school clean and reminding the children not to litter; she enjoys encouraging the learners to reduce, reuse and recycle waste.

Thirty-two-year-old **Montsheki Malatsi** is currently a senior teacher at Gunotsoga Primary School. "

I joined the Eco-Club in April 2013 as an Eco-Mentor and participated in CITW Eco-Club Mentor training in July 2014 in Seronga, as well as the Maun training in July 2017. I am very proud that Gunotsoga Eco-Club won the floating trophy in 2016; our success is motivated by dedication and the hard work of Eco-Club members on their activities. "My father is a professional guide and my mother works in the safari lodges of Botswana's Okavango Delta.

Angelica Mills –Eco-Mentor Volunteer, Bobirwa

"Children in the Wilderness has changed my life. Not only did I learn a lot about myself as a person, but I also learned a lot from the children, their environment, their backgrounds and even more about wildlife. I have a completely different outlook on life now, and I am even more motivated and inspired to get children involved in nature conservation.

CITW has provided my life with purpose and meaning. Spending time in the bush educating children has fuelled my personal growth, and restored my faith in humanity. It has inspired me to become more and more involved in making a difference".



Dimpho Mangogola
has been an active CITW Eco Club Mentor since 2012. In 2018 she was asked whether she would like to become the Eco-Club

Coordinator for Mathathane Primary School. Dimpho agreed and from that moment on, the Eco-Club has not looked back, growing from strength to strength! Dimpho facilitates regular fun club lessons, and engages the members, always excited and open about new material and resources.

Dimpho is doing such a phenomenal job that her Eco-Club has grown from 42 members to well over 55 in less than two school terms. She is creative and enthusiastic, and we are looking forward to some Eco-brick furniture from them soon.

"My favourite thing about CITW is that it exposes us to the practical side of conserving the environment and wild animals".



Khumo Dingalo is the Eco-Club coordinator for Mabolwe Primary School. Mabolwe is a fairly small school on the border of Zimbabwe,

forming part of the CITW Bobirwa expansion. Khumo's engaging and fun personality instantly fitted in and he

quickly became a part of the CITW Bobirwa family. He always offers assistance with great enthusiasm for CITW, ensuring efficient and smooth running of the programme. Khumo is a naturally brilliant teacher and a role model for his Eco-Club children who are as active, enthusiastic and excited as he is. "I joined CITW three years back.

"My favourite part of the programme is its drive to conserve and sustain the resources that exist on Mother Earth. I joined because I have the interests of the children at heart. CITW is special as it develops the skills and knowledge of children and the community at large. It promotes peaceful coexistence and the children acquire lifelong survival skills e.g. vegetation production, creation of artefacts and basketry.

"My ambition is to further my own educational level so that the children can learn more from me. My inspiration in life is seeing the people living in conservation areas realise the value of their environment, and take responsibility for conserving and sustaining the richest of nature".

MALAWI



Chrissy Saka is the Deputy Headmistress of Chintheche Primary School, and she is one of two CITW Eco-Club coordinators at

the school. Chrissy joined CITW in 2006 when the programme was first introduced at the school.

Every year Chrissy volunteers as CITW Camp Mentor, and she always participates in every CITW event that takes place in the Nkhata Bay District. Chrissy carries the honorific "Mother CITW" in the Nkhata Bay District for her understanding of the programme and the support she provides.

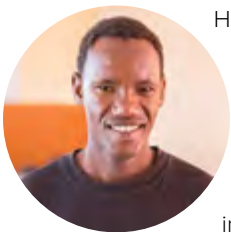


Elizabeth George, or Lizzy as she is known on CITW Camps, is Central African Wilderness Safaris Mvuu Camp Manager.

When a CITW camp is running at Mvuu, she becomes one of the camp Eco-Mentors, while at the same time hosts the CITW camp (where she manages the background activities for the smooth and productive running for the children).

Lizzy thrives on the smiles of the children! She is, without a doubt, one of the most supportive and active contributors from CAWS Mvuu Camp, working towards the success of the CITW programme in Liwonde Zone.

NAMIBIA



Hailing from a disadvantaged Hai//om San family, twenty-three-year-old *Abiollous Haneb* is a shining inspiration to his Eco-Club members.

After joining CITW in 2013 as a camper and sponsored learner, he went on to graduate from the Southern African Wildlife College in 2017, after attending a six-month bridging course in Conservation and Environmental Leadership.

Abiollous was an Eco-Mentor at Jacob Basson Combined School in Bergsig in the Torra Conservancy for two years, and has since moved to Okaukuejo Combined School.



Abiollous is very passionate about CITW and the projects they implement at the Eco-Clubs, and he actively volunteers for the annual camps as Eco-Mentor whenever he gets the chance.

"CITW changed my life, and I love working with them because I love working with the children, especially being able to positively influence those from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds.

I am also grateful for the learning opportunities I personally receive from the Eco-Club lesson plans".



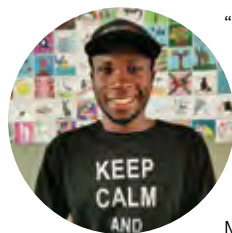
Mulla Mulenyane is a thirty-seven-year-old institution worker and a volunteer teacher at Warmquelle Primary School. He

joined CITW in 2015

and has been an active Eco-Mentor since then, as well as a key player in implementing Eco-Club projects at the school. Mulla loves their clean-up campaign days, and enjoys playing soccer with the children, and reading story books with them.

"It all starts in the mind. I love working with the children – all they need is love and care, and they will start listening to you. And when you have their attention that's when you can start teaching them."

RWANDA



"I am *Jean Damascene Nkuriragenda*. In February 2018, I was privileged to take part in CITW Eco-Mentor training at Bisate Primary School

and have enjoyed working with the Wilderness Safaris and CITW teams and the community at large since.

"I would like to further my education in environmental and conservation studies so that after completing my studies, I can participate in different environmental projects. I desire to inspire more children to love the environment and understand how sustaining the environment means caring for our health.



"I would like to express my appreciation to Wilderness Safaris' staff members for their great partnership with Bisate Primary school in the Eco-Clubs and other projects, for the betterment of the school. I feel privileged to be an Eco-Mentor at Bisate Primary School.

"Our actions are the seeds of the fruits that we will harvest tomorrow".

SOUTH AFRICA



Fifty-three-year-old *Risimati Calvin Chauke* is a science teacher at N'wanati High School in Makuleke, Limpopo.

Calvin has been involved in environmental awareness programmes since Children in the Wilderness was reintroduced to his school in 2018, and he was the first teacher to request the school management team become part of the programme.

"I joined CITW in 2019 April as a volunteer Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) mentor, because I want to know more about nature conversation, and to explore environmental issues and raise awareness in others".

Leinah Chauke is a teacher at Joas Phahlela Primary School in Makuleke, Limpopo, who joined Children in the Wilderness in 2010 as an Eco-Club teacher and mentor when the programme was launched in her community.

"The introduction of CITW in my community made me realise the importance of environmental conservation and I wanted to be part of this movement to effect positive

change in the lives of the children that I teach, as well as those of my fellow community member".



Musa Zulu is a Staff Trainer at Wilderness Safaris. He joined the company in November 2017. Musa grew up in Pietermaritzburg,

also known as uMgungundlovu, in KwaZulu-Natal. In 2012, he relocated to Johannesburg via the Culture, Art, Tourism, Hospitality, and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) general travel learnership programme.

"When you start at Wilderness Safaris, all staff new staff members go through a training process that entails multiple presentations from the various divisions within the company.

"One of those presentations was from Children in the Wilderness, where almost everyone who goes to that presentation comes out wanting to volunteer on one of the camps – and I was one of those people.

"I attended the CITW camps in June and July 2018, and have since attended three to date, in roles ranging from Eco-Mentor and camp photographer to assistant camp director."



ZAMBIA



Paul Kampala completed his Primary Degree with the University of Zambia, having specialised in Maths and Science.

He began his studies in 2013 and finally qualified in 2017.

Paul first came across CITW in 2017 while he was completing his work experience at Holy Cross Primary School, and got to see a few Eco-Clubs in action. He later took a permanent teaching position and volunteered to become an Eco-Mentor.

His favourite part about being a member of the CITW family is the opportunity to attend the Eco-Mentor training workshops, where, having attended the past two, he greatly furthered his understanding of the environment. These also provided him with the chance to meet fellow mentors and, in his words, "allow iron to sharpen iron".



Simon Nyone attended the David Livingstone College of Education from 2003 to 2004 where he obtained his Primary Teacher's Certificate.

He became a teacher at a remote school in the Kazungula District before moving to a position at Lupani Primary School in 2014.

In 2015, he upgraded his qualification to a Bachelor's Degree in Education at the University of Zambia.

Through his patent love of nature and gardening, the school appointed him CITW Eco-Mentor. He loves seeing his pupils' love of nature grow, and his favourite part of the CITW programme is the new perspective it gives his students on their surrounding environment, especially while they are still young and willing to learn.

ZIMBABWE



Landeni Sithole began her career after graduating in 2013 with a Diploma in Education from the United College of Education in

Bulawayo. She is currently stationed at Ziga Primary School where she teaches Grade 2. When Landeni first heard about the Eco-Club Programme, she was excited to be given the opportunity to become an Eco-Mentor.

She has always wanted to learn more about the wild animals found in her area, many of which she had only seen on TV.

Landeni loves the way the lessons reinforce and complement the science lessons the children are already studying.

Sisa Masuku completed her Diploma in Teaching and is currently enrolled in an Honour's Degree in Agriculture through Lupane State University.

Teaching at Kapane Secondary School, Sisa first came across the CITW YES Programme, and signed up to be a mentor in 2016 because she has always been fascinated by nature and her surroundings, and the programme brought together her two passions (nature and working with children) perfectly.

Her dream is to be able to learn more about environmental and animal-related sciences.

ECO-MENTOR TRAINING

The training of Eco-Mentors is a vital part of the Children in the Wilderness programme, and it is through this training that we are able to educate Eco-Club members and spread the conservation message. Once trained, Eco-Mentors are able to participate in and run both Eco-Clubs and camps with confidence.

BOTSWANA

Gaborone Yacht Club

Fern Brasem held a wonderful Eco-Mentor training session along with “Teacher Lisa” at the Gaborone Yacht Club over two days in February 2019. The Eco-Mentors were reminded of the reason behind the Eco-Clubs and the importance of their commitment to running the clubs.

Day 1 was all about the five Tshwaragano Primary School teachers who have volunteered to run the Eco-Club - Zarauaka Uaja, Keoratile Bobe, Morekolodi Dinake, Joseph Tshose and Tiny Moraloge.

On Day 2, two Wilderness Safaris Members Club participants, Pushpa Ramesh and Mimi Gowoka, joined in, both of whom thoroughly enjoyed their time. They added invaluable insights on the topics covered, and are interested in helping out on the school’s Eco-Club programme.

Here’s what the teachers had to say about these really productive and successful two days of training...



“I have learnt that I can change life through teaching learners to love, understand and conserve their environment.” – **Keoratile ‘Bobza’ Bobe**

“I learnt that if one thing is destroyed in the food chain, it will affect the whole ecosystem”. – **Joseph Tshose**

“The transpiration experiment helped me learn how to teach this concept to my children in class”. – **Morekolodi Dinake**

Fern also challenged the Eco-Club to translate the Eco-Club’s “I Am Alive” song into Setswana, which they did, and now sing in both languages!

Ke a tshela (I am alive) Ke tsogile (awake) Ke tlhantse (alert) Ke mathagatlhaga (enthusiastic)

Ke a tshela Ke tsogile Ke tlhantse Ke mathagatlhaga

Ke a tshela Ke tsogile Ke tlhantse

Ke tlhantse Ke tsogile ke a tshela

Ke a tshela Ke tsogile Ke tlhantse Ke mathagatlhaga

Bobirwa – Masego Cluster

In 2018 Children in the Wilderness Bobirwa expanded their reach into the Masego community (cluster), including the villages of Gobojango, Mabolwe and Semolale. Working with these schools and Eco-Club coordinators has been inspirational, as Eco-Club activities are run at the schools regularly, continuously teaching the Eco-Club members about nature and wildlife.



The coordinators are filled with passion and enthusiasm for CITW and the learning that takes place in the Eco-Clubs. In July 2018 the initial Eco-Mentor training for the Masego Cluster was held at Semolale village and was skilfully conducted by Lisa Witherden.



Representatives from the three villages attended the training and included school teachers, police officers, the Semolale Village Development Committee Chairperson and the Semolale Village Chief. During the training various topics were covered – these included the building of a Tippy Tap, energiser songs and games, the flow-technique learning method and many Eco-Club lesson plans covering the ecosystem, species adaptations and more.



Bobirwa – All schools

In April this year CITW Bobirwa brought together all the Eco-Club Coordinators and Mentors, mostly school teaching staff from the six schools in our region, for training as well as a team building exercise.

The training was conducted by **Lisa Witherden**, who passionately and with great skill taught a variety of topics. The topics ranged from the solar system, tree identification and species adaptations, to energisers and fun games.



All participants engaged enthusiastically, showing a keen interest not only in the topics but also in holding challenging conversations about human-wildlife conflict scenarios and their possible solutions. Tuli Safari Lodge generously hosted the three-day training, providing the group with delicious meals and luxurious accommodation.



Gunotsoga and Maun

Lesh Moiteela, Gaba Modirapula and Kelly Baitshoki organised the logistics of the training to be led by Lisa Witherden. From Maun, Gunotsoga Village is a ten-hour drive and hop over the Okavango River on a ferry. The team stayed in the beautiful Gunotsoga Cultural Village, right on the outskirts of Gunotsoga Village.

Being just 400 metres from the river, they heard hippos grunting, with the evenings sitting around the fire filled with beautiful birds settling down for the night, and elephants crunching on mopane trees.

Twenty-two enthusiastic teachers from Gunotsoga, Seronga, Gudigwa and Beetsha Primary Schools participated in interactive lessons from the CITW Eco-Club Resource Book, starting off with a refresher on what CITW is, and how we do things.

Eco-Clubs have been running in these villages since 2006, so most of the teachers have been exposed to the programme and run Eco-Clubs in their schools every Wednesday.

Back in Maun, a full day of training with Tubu, Habu, Shashe and Sankuyo primary schools followed.

This training was held in the Wilderness Safaris office in Maun, with a more intimate group of nine teachers.



“All in all, the training was extremely positive and constructive. It was wonderful to have the Mentors comment that they will not only take home learnings on our actual lessons, but also teaching techniques which they are excited to implement in their own classrooms.” – **Lisa Witherden**

MALAWI

CITW Malawi's Eco-Mentor training took place over two days in early February 2019 for the Liwonde Zone (Southern Malawi), and the following week for the Chintheche Zone (Northern Malawi).

Combining the two training sessions, the 48 participants comprised...

- 24 Eco-Mentors/teachers from 12 Eco-Clubs
- 12 school principals (included for their buy-in and support)
- 4 CITW zone representatives
- 8 YES Club leaders from four YES Club centres

All participants demonstrated their understanding of the basic innovation for and design of environmental solutions, designed a number of prototype tools to be used as models for solving environmental issues as well as demonstrated practical competence and capability in running sessions with children in their respective schools.

Additionally, CITW Malawi Regional Coordinator Symon Chibaka undertook a three-month online and practical training course with the Design Squad Global (DSG) in 2017/2018.

Symon was educated on what the DSG programme is all about, as well as how to facilitate DSG teacher training.



RWANDA

Janet and Lisa headed to Rwanda at the end of October for Eco-Mentor Training with Ingrid and Aline at our schools in the region.

First up was new partner school, Akayange Primary School, located just outside Akagera National Park's North Gate. Apart from the nine teachers, they were joined by two Community Officers from African Parks, who are working on various community projects in and around Akagera National Park.

Then it was on to Bisate Primary School just outside of Volcanoes National Park where they have been running Eco-Clubs for the last 18 months, headed by Eco-Mentor Jean Damascene.



Finally, Gisunzu Primary School, also new to CITW. This school is located close to Gishwati Mukura National Park and had a full day of training with six eager teachers who really took to the CITW Eco-Club curriculum.



CHILDREN IN THE WILDERNESS AMBASSADORS

Children in the Wilderness is very privileged to have two phenomenal ambassadors based in South Africa – Peter van Kets and Jacques Marais.

Together, these two larger-than-life adventurers create awareness and spread the CITW message through their amazing 'Beyond Expeditions'. In September 2018 they set off on a journey into the African Rift Valley as part of their second *BEYOND EXPEDITIONS* Project to navigate the Nile-Congo Divide in Rwanda. Jacques elaborates...

CHILDREN IN PARADISE

Heartfelt. As in, you can really, really feel it in your heart ... That's about the closest I can come to expressing what travelling through Rwanda really feels like. On the remote gravel roads, in tea plantations, on high mountain footpaths, in dusty villages, and inside brightly coloured taverns ... there is openness and engagement everywhere, with a friendly smile right behind every 'Murakozi chanel!' greeting. The levels of poverty here – in general – seem way less divisive than in South Africa, and the incredibly fertile soil also makes it that much easier for families to feed themselves.

Like anywhere else in the developing world, chances are you will hear the ubiquitous 'Give me money!', but generally the kids were more interested in our hairy legs or the Isuzu Xrider vehicles than in a quick handout. Just getting to Rwanda proved to be a massive adventure ... Our DUNLOP 'Beyond the Rift Valley' Expedition started in Cape Town and meandered north via Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Tanzania before eventually reaching the capital city of Kigali a solid 5 300 km later. This was just the beginning, as we'd set our hearts on exploring every adventure opportunity along the mythical Nile-Congo Divide Trail traversing this tiny country.

In the end, Rwanda delivered way more adventures than we could ever have expected, but amongst these, our experience with the Bisate Eco-Club stands out as one of my most cherished memories from this expedition.

A major focus of our trips has always been 'doing it for the children', and Peter Van Kets and I are proud official ambassadors for Children in the Wilderness. It was therefore with a huge sense of pride that we got to participate in a tree-planting ceremony with the CITW Bisate Eco-Club at the gorgeous Wilderness safaris Bisate Lodge, right in the foothills of the Virunga ranges.

Approximately 60 very excited youngsters attended an outdoor lesson on the importance of a reforestation project to extend neighbouring Volcanoes National Park to create more habitat for the Park's Endangered mountain gorillas, and each of the kids then got to plant their own indigenous tree in the CITW Eco-Club Forest at Bisate Lodge.

This is just one small way in which CITW assists in educating kids in Africa's wildest places, in the process helping them to appreciate the important part a sustainable natural environment plays in their collective future.

It is therefore no wonder this non-profit organisation stands firmly as one of the primary driving forces behind our *BEYOND EXPEDITIONS* Series, and our African journeys will always be so much more than just another environmental adventure.

The documenting and filming of these adventures will continue to showcase the great work done to educate the many kids living in remote wilderness areas.

For more information, please visit www.beyondexpeditions.co.za.

- Photographs & Text: Jacques Marais



HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

As a Children in the Wilderness supporter, we profoundly appreciate your ongoing interest in the welfare of the children on our environmental education-based programmes.

Besides Pack for a Purpose, and any of the other donation channels mentioned in the magazine, here are other ways to contribute to CITW.

EMPOWERS AFRICA has partnered with us in order to provide a cost-effective solution to fundraising in the United States by acting as our fiscal sponsor.

www.empowersafrica.org/partners/children-in-the-wilderness/

GIVENGAIN

Ride, walk, run or undertake any 'sponsorable' activity for our cause by becoming a Children in the Wilderness fundraising ambassador through GivenGain.

www.givengain.com/c/childreninthewilderness/


www.childreninthewilderness.com/donate-now/how-can-you-make-a-difference/

*Children in the Wilderness is grateful to **Wilderness Safaris** for the design and editing of this magazine.*

Recognising that conservation is as much about community as about the environment, Africa's premier ecotourism company, Wilderness Safaris, partners with the Children in the Wilderness programme as well as the Wilderness Wildlife Trust, both of which have helped change the face of nature-based tourism in Africa.







"In the end, we will conserve only what we love, we will love only what we understand, we will understand only what we are taught".
Baba Dioum



www.childreninthewilderness.com