

SUSTAINABLE CONSERVATION THROUGH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



CHILDREN IN THE
WILDERNESS 

Eco * Stars

A publication by Children in the Wilderness

Annual Issue 03

WHAT'S INSIDE *Tribute to Russel Friedman * Meet some of our Eco-Mentors * Stories of Africa * Success in the Workplace*

Children in the Wilderness is grateful to Wilderness Safaris for the design and editing of this magazine. Recognising that conservation is as much about people 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.

Introduction

Eco-Stars is a Children in the Wilderness publication. The magazine includes an overview of CHILDREN IN THE WILDERNESS and introduces you to some of its Eco-Stars. Each edition of the magazine will include new stories, new projects and introduce you to new Eco-Stars. For more information on Children in the Wilderness, please visit www.childreninthewilderness.com and for regular updates LIKE us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/Childreninthewilderness/

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



From Janet's Desk

We were not expecting to start the year off on such a sad note with the passing of our beloved Chairman, Russel Friedman, but we hope that the tribute to him on the first few pages of the magazine will shed some light on the huge contribution he made to Children in the Wilderness and conservation throughout Africa. He has left big shoes to fill, but we are inspired to continue his legacy and ensure that Children in the Wilderness continues to grow to great heights. Malcolm McCulloch has kindly offered to step in as Acting Chairman for the time being, and we will be sure to update you when a suitable replacement is found. This is the third edition of our Eco-Stars magazine and we are so proud to share these great stories and achievements with you – from updates on our Eco-Club members across the regions, to inspiring alumni success stories and more. We hope that you take your copy home and enjoy reading about our various programmes. Please help us to 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.

Once again, we thank those who supported us on a successful Nedbank Tour de Tuli and we hope you will come and join us for this life-changing annual event.

Janet Wilkinson
CITW Programme Manager



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Farewell to SAFARI STALWART and LEGEND –

RUSSEL FRIEDMAN





We were deeply saddened to say farewell to our Children in the Wilderness Chairman, Russel Friedman, who tragically passed away from a heart attack on the morning of 4 February 2018 while mountain biking with good friends. Russel was a true safari stalwart and champion – one of Wilderness Safaris' co-founders, Trustee of the Wilderness Wildlife Trust, a core member of the Vulture Study Group, an avid mountain-biker and passionate patron and cyclist leader of the Nedbank Tour de Tuli; not to mention an adventurous traveller and fun-loving, loyal and committed friend and family man. As the longest-serving founder, Russel joined Wilderness Safaris in 1984 and played a pivotal part in its growth and development. He became a Board member of Children in the Wilderness when it began in 2001, succeeding Malcolm McCulloch as Chairman in 2013.

Through all Russel's travels, he made friends with guests and donors from far and wide, spreading the Children in the Wilderness story and raising thousands of dollars to ensure its sustainability and success, as well as for the Wilderness Wildlife Trust. Russel knew that in order for conservation to be successful, it was vital to ensure that the people living in or adjacent to wilderness areas directly benefited from ecotourism as well. He was a passionate advocate of community partnerships and the development of future generations' capacity to protect and better understand the joy and economic benefit of protected wilderness. He made an incredible contribution to the empowerment of Africa's people and the protection of its wilderness areas and will be enormously missed, not only by his family (wife Bonnie and daughter Gabi) but by many in the vulture conservation community, the book dealer and publishing world, the cycling fraternity and of course, several generations of Children in the Wilderness and Wilderness Safaris employees who he mentored and guided – always with the best and most generous intentions.

In the 1970s, Russel had been instrumental in founding the Vulture Study Group and pioneering a change in attitudes to these birds (hence his nickname 'Vulcha'), and by the early 1980s was running the country's most influential natural history book dealer and publisher.

It was through the book business that he met Colin Bell and Chris MacIntyre, the other two founding partners of Wilderness Safaris. He supplied them, and a host of

other naturalists, with books and material for their overland safaris into Botswana and Zimbabwe from Johannesburg. It wasn't long though before he joined the fledgling business, quickly making a substantial impact not only with his conservation ethos, but also his considerable business acumen.

Russel's enormous contribution to the development of Wilderness Safaris is one that is not widely enough known. After some 34 years of passionate commitment, Russel was still an

integral part of the Wilderness family and business. He was often the company's conscience in the areas of ethics, community and conservation and although it is with deep sadness and regret that we say farewell, it is also with deep gratitude that we remember Russel and the role he played in our lives and the life of the company.

His love of life, passion for conservation and his immense integrity will be missed by all who knew him.

Everyone who knew Russel would know he profoundly loved people and was a champion for personal development. He leaves us, as Children in the Wilderness, well-placed to continue to fulfil the vision of the organisation and ensure that its founding principles are maintained and its objectives to donors and children are met. The following tributes from friends and colleagues sum up the impact Russel had on so many lives. Rest in peace, Russ; may you soar with the vultures.



Sue Goatley – *Children in the Wilderness
Zambezi Community Liaison and Programme
Coordinator*

This picture epitomises Russel – so happy on his bicycle riding the Nedbank Tour de Tuli in aid of Children in the Wilderness; a programme so close to his heart. I first met Russel in the late 1990s when my husband, Ron, first joined Wilderness Safaris and even then, he was known as the 'Wise One'. When I joined Children in the Wilderness in 2007, I was lucky enough to accompany Russel and Sue Snyman to Malawi to visit the Children in the Wilderness and HELP programmes there (and I saw my first Pel's fishing-owl!). From then on, he was always around to offer encouragement and advice; I really respected his integrity and leadership.

Nicola Harris – *Nedbank Tour de Tuli – Tour Director*

A giant who has fallen too soon! I was privileged to have shared many special moments with Russel during my time with Wilderness Safaris. His love for cycling and the Tour meant he was always available to help me with any issues or ideas that needed some reflection.

I will often think of our conversations, with his advice and even his antagonising behaviour, which pushed me to reach further and develop the courage to stand up for myself. We both shared a great love for the bush and passion for the preservation of our wilderness areas.

His knowledge and experience guided me through tough times and reminded me that anything is possible; we just have to try. There is definitely a void left in our team, however, we will fondly remember his teachings, jokes and passion for cycling and conservation.

Shuvanayi Tarvinga – *Children in the Wilderness Zambezi Administrative Assistant*

On 1 February, I was blessed to meet Russel Friedman just a few days before his passing. I had heard only good stories about him and his passion for communities and conservation. On meeting this inspirational man, I was motivated to do more; his life story will be my driving force as I continue to work with Children in the Wilderness and its communities.



Chris Badger – *Central African Wilderness Safaris (CAWS), Malawi*

I have tried and failed to encapsulate my thoughts on Russel in a simple phrase – 'unsung hero' doesn't quite do it; 'relentless voice of reason' is nearer the mark, but neither adequately explain just how passionate he was.

He was the man I instinctively contacted for advice. He didn't always tell me what I wanted to hear but the years invariably eventually proved him right. He showed us all that passion, which helped build up the incredible company he was instrumental in growing, needed to be tempered with sound planning and long-term vision.

I have too many memories to share, but in recent years his support was absolutely instrumental in keeping Liwonde's small black rhino population alive.

It was all very low key and typically Russel; quietly effective support and action. Pam and I will really miss him. He was a mentor, a friend, a wise old man and a lot of fun.

Jan Mallen – *Children in the Wilderness South Africa Board member*

Russel always had an incredible interest and was an enthusiastic participant in the lives of both colleagues and friends. He was always tuned in and revelled in the marvellous mysteries of nature and the world around him.

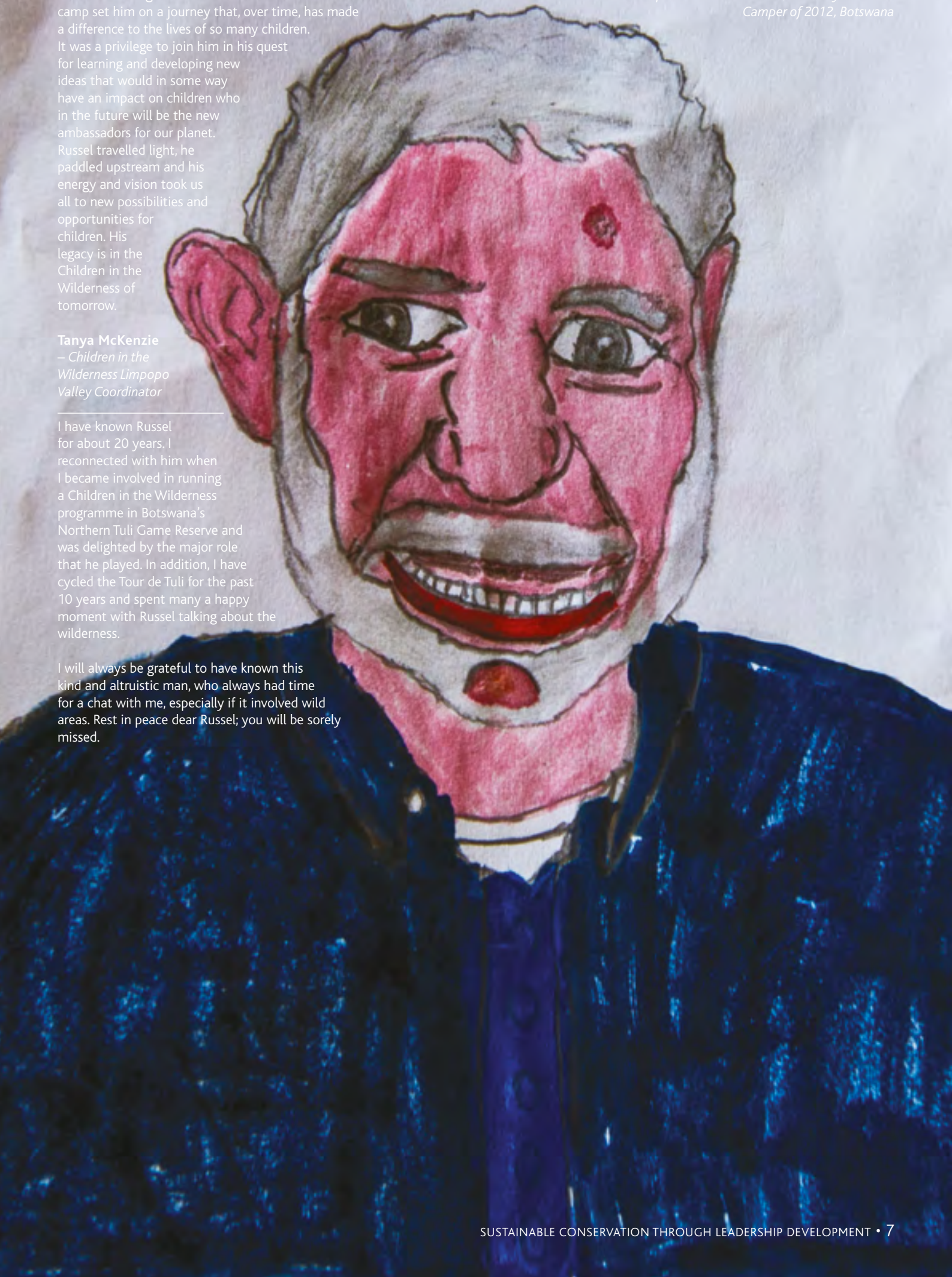
He loved sharing ideas about education and his first CITW camp set him on a journey that, over time, has made a difference to the lives of so many children. It was a privilege to join him in his quest for learning and developing new ideas that would in some way have an impact on children who in the future will be the new ambassadors for our planet. Russel travelled light, he paddled upstream and his energy and vision took us all to new possibilities and opportunities for children. His legacy is in the Children in the Wilderness of tomorrow.

Tanya McKenzie
– *Children in the Wilderness Limpopo Valley Coordinator*

I have known Russel for about 20 years. I reconnected with him when I became involved in running a Children in the Wilderness programme in Botswana's Northern Tuli Game Reserve and was delighted by the major role that he played. In addition, I have cycled the Tour de Tuli for the past 10 years and spent many a happy moment with Russel talking about the wilderness.

I will always be grateful to have known this kind and altruistic man, who always had time for a chat with me, especially if it involved wild areas. Rest in peace dear Russel; you will be sorely missed.

Caption: Russel Friedman, drawn by a Bonoka Camper of 2012, Botswana





OUR
Eco-CLUBS

SAVING OUR PLANET
ONE LESSON AT A TIME



During the course of 2017, we were proud to continue growing our Eco-Club programme and we now have over 2 700 children taking part in Eco-Clubs at partner schools throughout Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, 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 and on a more regular basis.

Children participating on Children in the Wilderness annual camps which are hosted at Wilderness Safaris or partner property camps are selected from these Eco-Clubs. Children in the Wilderness hosted 442 children on 17 camps in 2017, with 192 volunteers.

Most often it is the Wilderness Safaris camp staff, local school teachers and members of the local community who volunteer to run the Eco-Club sessions and annual camps. The interactive, fun sessions are designed to be informative. Environmental projects and tasks are earmarked and organised in cooperation with community members and teachers.

Children are encouraged to participate in the planning process and come up with their own ideas in order for them to take ownership of their clubs and projects. Eco-Clubs increasingly provide positive community development while reaching a wider community.

Please read on to meet some of our extraordinary Eco-Club Members and to hear about the projects their Eco-Clubs are involved in, as well as some of the interesting stories and highlights they would like to share with you.



LAYLA

MEET SOME OF OUR
Eco-CLUB MEMBERS

Botswana



Osego Ntwagaefele – Tubu Primary School (10 years old)

Osego is a very active member of his Eco-Club and excels at school. Art is his passion and he loves drawing pictures with powerful messages behind them, often focusing on conservation. His artwork is always on display in the school, which helps to spread the message about the importance of taking care of our natural resources amongst other learners and fellow community members. Osego is a confident public speaker and during the 2017 Gaborone Global March for Elephants and Rhinos, he asked the director of the ceremony to give him a moment to address all the participants. His favourite quote is: "Take care of the environment so that it also takes care of you". He learned this at the annual camp at Jacana and ever since then, he uses the quote to spread the environmental message wherever he goes. Osego hopes to become a doctor.

Yaone Kilano – Habu Primary School (11 years old)



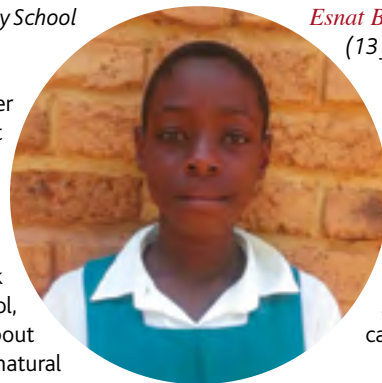
In 2016, Yaone was selected for the annual camp and was flown to Santavani along with her fellow campers for a fun-filled educational programme. During the camp, she showed great potential and was an active participant in all the lessons. Yaone is both an outstanding Eco-Club member and a natural leader. She has picked up expert sewing skills from the Adult Eco-Club based at her school and served as a team leader during a litter picking and sorting campaign. She said she learnt these skills during the annual camp, which included making decorations using sweet wrappers, something she has shared with her Eco-Club. She aspires to become a nurse one day. Her favourite quote is: "Saving our animals today will make it possible for the next generation to see them tomorrow".

Gosego Tantabe – Sankoyo Primary School (10 years old)



Gosego is a humble and dedicated Eco-Club member. He attended his first annual camp in Standard 3 and was the youngest of the campers. Despite this, he was a very active participant and competed with campers much older than him during activities. He believes that no-one is too young to learn about environmental issues. Gosego is a team player and loves to help others. He takes pleasure in his Eco-Club's weekly lessons which keep the club members connected to environmental issues on a regular basis. As a way of sharing the information he learnt during the camp with his fellow club members, Gosego conducts parts of the lessons with the assistance of the Eco-Club Coordinator. Gosego hopes to become a teacher when he finishes school.

Malawi



Esnat Banda – Chihame Primary School (13 years old)

A passion for wildlife brought Esnat to her school's Eco-Club in 2014 where she learnt all about wildlife behaviour, food chains, habitats and ecosystems. A year later, she was one of the campers selected to attend the annual camp at Chintheche Inn.

Her favourite activity during the camp was tree planting and she won an award for doing such a great job during this lesson. Esnat is a strong leader in the Eco-Club who always helps others with their lessons, projects and assignments. She aspires to become a nurse in the future.

Kitty Nkhwazi – Chintheche Primary School (13 years old)



In 2015, Kitty joined the Eco-Club at her school as she wanted to learn more about conservation and wildlife. In the same year, Kitty was one of the Eco-Club members selected to attend the annual camp at Chintheche Inn. During the camp, she enjoyed learning about Lake Malawi and going for a swim, which earned her the 'Duck of the Lake' award. She would like to use the knowledge gained from her Eco-Club to teach her fellow community members about the importance of saving the environment. Kitty is a confident public speaker who shares information with her peers and adults whenever she gets the opportunity. She would like to become a teacher when she completes her education.

Nelia Phiri – Chintheche Primary School (12 years old)



Nelia had always wanted to know what she could do to save the forests in Malawi, which are under threat, and this drew her to the school's Eco-Club in 2015. With the knowledge gained in the Eco-Club, she would like to educate others about the importance of afforestation to mitigate deforestation. She also has a keen interest in learning about the web of life and is fascinated by the way in which all things are connected and dependent upon one another.

Problem solving is one of Nelia's favourite activities in the Eco-Club and she loves and respects wildlife. Although Nelia has not attended an annual camp yet, she has been on a number of Environmental Education trips with her Eco-Club and these have helped broaden her knowledge about the environment. Nelia dreams of becoming a teacher when she grows up.

Namibia

Raja Uararavi – Warmquelle Primary School (15 years old)

Raja, who was born in Purros village, joined the Eco-Club at her school in 2014 and hasn't looked back since. Attending annual camps has been the highlight of her Eco-Club journey so far and she hopes to continue to learn more about the importance of environmental conservation in wilderness areas. Raja would like to become an Eco-Mentor one day.



Tuaseupamwe Tjiseua – Warmquelle Primary School (17 years old)

Tuaseupamwe was born in Warmquelle village to a Himba family. As is customary, Himba, children spend most of their early years learning traditional skills, which meant Tuaseupamwe started school at a late stage. Despite this, he has excelled academically. In 2015, he joined the Eco-Club at his school to learn more about the environment. His favourite activity is watering the garden and watching as the vegetables slowly grow.



Rajapurura Tjikuara – Warmquelle Primary School (14 years old)

Rajapurura is from Opuwo village and joined the Eco-Club at her school in 2014 so that she could contribute towards saving the world. Her best Eco-Club activity is making toys from recycled material after school clean ups.



South Africa

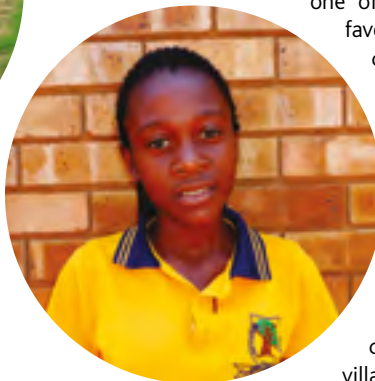
Andile Tsako Ngobeni – Makahlule Primary School (14 years old)

Andile's love for birds drew him to his school's Eco-Club in 2015. His favourite Eco-Club activity is called 'Birds of a Feather' which teaches children how to identify common birds. Aside from his Eco-Club participation, Andile is a good dancer and singer and makes up rhymes about animals and birds. By sharing the knowledge he has learnt during the Eco-Clubs and camp, Andile wants to educate his fellow community members about the importance of environmental conservation. His favourite animal is the lion which he loves for its patience and power. Andile says: "I would like to be a soldier so I can protect my country's people and animals".



Happiness Hlongwane – Makuleke Primary School (13 years old)

Happiness joined her school's Eco-Club in 2015 because she wanted to explore nature and learn more about the environment. In 2016, she was selected as one of the campers and some of her favourite activities included nature drives, games and practical lesson assignments. Happiness loves cheetahs because of their strength and amazing running skills. She says: "I would like to make people aware of the dangers of littering and deforestation. I will use what I am learning from Children in the Wilderness as a way of distributing information to my village people". Happiness aspires to become a veterinarian one day.



The Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area

Afiwa Thatayaone Legwaila – Badale Junior Secondary School (12 years old)

In 2015, Afiwa joined his school's Eco-Club and also attended his first annual camp. He is the current President of his Eco-Club and is caring, responsible and a good communicator. On camp, he enjoyed going on game drives to view the landscape and animals. In 2016, he wrote a poem about respect, which he shared with his Eco-Club members and other learners. In one of his Eco-Club sessions, Afiwa learnt that Botswana's rhino species nearly became extinct because of poaching. Since then, he has committed himself to work towards saving these and other wildlife species, and to achieve this, Afiwa would like to be a conservation biologist when he finishes his schooling.



Keneiloe Parsmonius Ndlovu – Shashi Primary School (13 years old)

Keneiloe is from the Maramani community in Zimbabwe and became an Eco-Club member at his school because he loves animals and wanted to learn more about them. His favourite animal is the kudu – he thinks it is the most beautiful animal in the world. He likes to discuss ways he and his fellow Eco-Club members can solve the problem of littering which affects their community and surrounding areas. Keneiloe was selected to participate in the annual Tri-nations Camps



which were held in Mapungubwe National Park in 2016 and 2017. During the 2017 camp, Keneiloe could not contain his joy when he was presented with a copy of the Eco-Stars magazine, which features his photo on the front cover. Keneileo would like to become a geologist one day.

Shalom Makambanga – Shashi Primary School (12 years old)

Shalom was one of the first learners to join Children in the Wilderness when the programme was introduced at her school in 2015 and she hasn't looked back since. She is a talented and hardworking member and has never missed a single session of her Eco-Club. She joined because she wanted to learn more about the conservation of plants and animals and her favourite activities include planting trees and 'energiser' games. When she attended the Tri-nations Camps in 2015 and 2017, Shalom was an active, creative camper and led her team in completing activities. She was so excited to see elephants in the wild as they are one of her favourite animals. Shalom dreams of becoming a doctor one day.



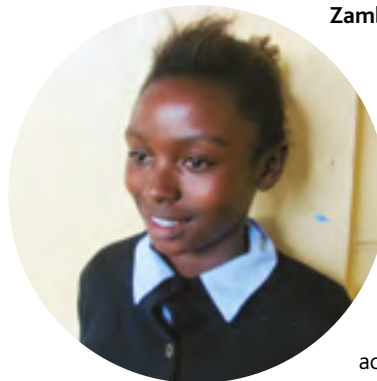
Moba Sepaela – Modikwa Primary School (10 years old)

Moba joined his school's Eco-Club because he wanted to learn more about the problem of littering and its associated challenges. He is a good team player who loves helping others and playing soccer. In December 2017, he was chosen to attend the annual Tri-Nations Camp for the first time. While he was a bit shy at first, soon his confidence improved and he was excited to meet people from different countries and participate in all the activities. He hopes to become a doctor one day.



Zambia

Nancy Tembo – Holy Cross Primary School (12 years old)



Nancy is known as the best English speaker in her class and is a team player in her school's Eco-Club with strong leadership skills. When it comes to Eco-Club activities, she makes sure that things are always under control.

Nancy does not like a dirty environment, so she always picks up every paper, piece of plastic or anything else that belongs in the rubbish bin, a recycling plant or that can be reused – making her a shining Eco-Star. When she grows up, Nancy would like to become a doctor.

Humphrey Lyapwaya – Twabuka Primary School (15 years old)



Humphrey is an individual who excels academically – especially in his favourite subject, Physical Science. He is also an active Eco-Club member and has participated in all activities since he joined in 2016. His favourite activities are playing soccer and tree planting. Humphrey sees himself as an accountant in the future.



Eco-Club Activities



Current Projects

Botswana

- Eco-Club lesson sessions
- Orchard planting
- Poultry farming
- Craft production
- Bird feeding
- Waste management
- Tippy Taps*
- Earth-bench making
- Seating area (donated by a Wilderness Safaris guest)
- Cleaning campaigns
- Tree planting
- Beading
- Worm units
- Compost pits
- Cultural activities (weaving, storytelling, participating in cultural festivals, traditional games, involvement in cultural/traditional meetings or kgotla at school)
- Beekeeping

Top Highlights

Taking to the streets for elephant and rhino conservation

CITW participated in the Botswana leg of the Global March for Elephants and Rhinos (GMFER) on 7 October 2017 in Gaborone, which started at 6am from the National Stadium. This initiative saw a team of Eco-Club members and Eco-Mentors, accompanied by CITW staff, travel over 800 kilometres from Maun to Gaborone, to show their support for conservation. The international GMFER platform continues to grow in popularity, with 130 cities marching in 2016 with one voice to demand an end to the trade in ivory, rhino horn and lion bone. The theme for 2017's march was **Justice for All and Justice for Earth**.

Its aim was to raise awareness, generate global media attention on the crisis, and keep political pressure on world leaders to protect endangered wildlife. CITW Botswana ensured that our future conservation leaders took part in promoting the greater protection of Africa's elephant and rhino, and nine Eco-Club Members and three Eco-Mentors from Shashe, Tubu and Beetsha Primary Schools were selected to participate in the March, with 2017 being the first year that Botswana participated in the GMFER. The participating Eco-Club members made placards with messages about elephants, rhinos, pangolins and lions for the March – a testament to their advocacy for the plight of the planet's animals.

Wilderness Safaris' commitment to conserving and restoring Africa's wilderness areas and wildlife was evident when Grant Woodrow (Wilderness Safaris' COO), Gordon Gilbert (CITW Ambassador), Kai Collins (Wilderness Safaris' Group Conservation Manager), Phatsimo Kwenane (American Embassy Representative) and Tapiwa Buzwani (of Wilderness Safaris Gaborone's Travel Shop), joined the March to support CITW. "We took part in the important March to help our Eco-Club participants gain important insights and knowledge about the plight of our wildlife and natural heritage which is a key part of our Eco-Club programme. We are excited we travelled with nine children from three schools in the North West District Council, together with three Eco-Mentors, to further promote the care and commitment required to conserve Africa's pristine wilderness and wildlife areas. We are fortunate in Botswana to see the Government take such a hard line against poaching and investing to protect our animals", said Lesh Moiteela from CITW Botswana.

"There is so much more to be done to conserve our natural heritage and support of this mission is critical for the country and indeed the region. If we are to ensure that our pristine wilderness and wildlife areas continue to exist – in this generation and those to come – we need the children of Africa to understand the importance of conservation and its relevance in their lives", he concluded. One of the highlights of the March was when CITW Botswana was presented with a special award for being the most involved school programme. "This was a great honour that humbled the team as we all rushed to the stage to accept the award and celebrate the prize with Thea Khama", said Kelly Baitshoki, CITW Botswana Programme Assistant. Thea is a CITW Botswana Board member and wife of Honourable Minister of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism, Tshekedi Khama.



After receiving the award, Osego Ntwagefele – one of the Eco-Club members who participated in the March – asked the programme director to give him the microphone ... this is what he said: "I would like to start by thanking the March organisers for having us here in Gaborone. Today my team and I are very happy that we received this special award. This shows that we are recognised for being able to co-exist and live harmoniously with wild animals. I am thrilled that what we learn in our Eco-Clubs impacts us positively and helps us to conserve our heritage".

Mother Bear brings bears and smiles to our schools across Botswana

Amy Berman, founder of the Mother Bear Project, recently visited Botswana, and went to many CITW partner schools. We loved Amy Berman's report so much that we just had to share what she said: "This past week, I returned home from an incredible journey to Africa where together with Mary and Kelly from CITW and my husband Richy, we distributed and photographed take over 2 000 bears with their new forever friends. We travelled to many pre-schools and primary schools in remote villages down bumpy roads, sometimes passing elephants along the way, much to our delight. What a joy it was to see how much the kids loved their Mother Bears! They were so excited to hear that they could take them home and sleep with their bears, sing to their bears, and play with them – and that if they loved their bears, their bears would love them back!". CITW thanks Amy Berman and all of the knitters who continue to contribute to touching the lives of our CITW children.

The Mother Bear Project at a glance

The Mother Bear Project (www.motherbearproject.org) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to providing comfort and hope to children, primarily those affected by HIV/AIDS in emerging nations, by giving them a gift of love in the form of hand-knit and crocheted bears. The simple gift of a hand-knit bear with a tag signed by the knitter has touched children, who have nearly nothing of their own, with the message that they are loved by someone halfway around the world. The response has been overwhelming with people wanting to help from all over the world.



Malawi

- *Eco-Club lesson sessions*
- *Tree nursery*
- *Root to Fruit project*
- *Ground cover project*
- *Afforestation*
- *Park fence monitoring and maintenance*
- *Environmental awareness campaigns*

Top Highlights

From bare ground to beautiful orchard

Children in the Wilderness Malawi is extremely proud to have played a vital role in taking unproductive bare ground and turning it into a beautiful, verdant area, as well as another area into an eco-garden that has produced fresh vegetables and fruit.

Thousands of seedlings planted to feed communities

Eco-Clubs in Malawi reached their target of raising 20 000 seedlings in the Nanthomba Cluster (Nanthomba, Kavunguti, Mlambe and Kafulafula Eco-Clubs).

These seedlings were, according to the community surveys conducted by Eco-Club members with assistance from the Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) members, required to meet the demands of the communities in the cluster for the 2017/2018 tree-growing season.

Master Banda, the Root to Fruit manager and forestry expert – who is a long-standing supporter of Children in the Wilderness Malawi – has committed himself to making sure that children learn the ethics of reforestation and put them into practice.

He combines theory and practical work when teaching the Eco-Club members.



Namibia

- Eco-Club lesson sessions
- Vegetable garden
- Fruit tree project
- Waste collection campaign
- Environmental awareness campaigns
- Beadwork
- Human-wildlife conflict awareness campaigns
- Water-saving initiatives

Top Highlights

Pack for a Purpose donates to Children in the Wilderness Schools

Wilderness Safaris' guests at Serra Cafema Camp in Namibia generously donated to local community schools. Guests, Laszlo and Rozalia Spende from Germany, together with their guide Liffius Haoseb, as well as Fanus Katondoka, Future Mbwende, and Harry Ganuseb (who is the Marienfluss Conservancy Manager), dropped off the donation at the Otjinungua Mobile School in Marienfluss. Through our partnership with Pack for a Purpose, guests travelling to Wilderness Safaris camps are encouraged to bring a package of school or other supplies for Children in the Wilderness communities.

These donations can make a huge impact on these vulnerable children's lives.

About Pack for a Purpose

Since 2010, Pack for a Purpose (www.packforapurpose.org) travellers have donated over 93 799 kilograms of supplies meeting essential needs in over 60 countries. Pack for a Purpose's mission is to positively impact communities around the world by assisting travellers who want to make meaningful contributions to the destinations they visit.

African Children Stories book launched in Namibia

In 2015, Children in the Wilderness partnered with Dūcere Foundation with the aim of enhancing literacy in children across Africa by promoting story writing, creative writing and the capturing of oral tradition through the Dūcere African Children Stories (ACS) programme. All the stories, which are part of the ACS' 33rd collection, were written by 12 Eco-Club members from Okaukuejo Combined School.

The 2017 book launch day started with a fun-filled masterclass for the teachers, led by Mrs Di Fleming, Executive Director of the Dūcere Foundation. The masterclass was followed by the official launch.

Once everyone had their seats, the school choir cheered the crowd with their traditional songs and dancing, followed by a speech read on behalf of Mr Shipahu, the school principal, about how thankful they were for the support they have received over the years from Children in the Wilderness and from their new partner, Dūcere Foundation.

"On behalf of Dūcere Foundation, we are excited and honoured to be working with the Namibian rural schools on improving literacy and promoting story writing and I am grateful for the support from the school and how well it has received the book launch.

I would like to encourage you (learners) to read regularly so you can improve your reading and writing skills as well as to strengthen your analytical thinking abilities."
– Di Fleming, Executive Director of Dūcere Foundation.



Okaukuejo revitalises its garden

On one of their daily eco-garden inspections, Eco-Club members at Okaukuejo Combined School discovered that their gardens had been destroyed by recent storms which rendered them untenable and unproductive.

Despite this setback, Eco-Club members were able to rehabilitate all the affected portions of their eco-gardens. Working together as a team, their hard work paid off as their gardens yielded their best harvest to date.

South Africa and GMTFCA

- *Eco-Club lesson sessions*
- *Vegetable gardens*
- *Tree planting*
- *Environmental cleaning campaigns*
- *Tippy Taps**
- *Human-wildlife conflict mitigation projects – Chill boma*



Top Highlight Children in the Wilderness revamps KwaZulu-Natal school

In June 2017 at the beginning of the school holidays, Eco-Club members at KwaMqobela Primary School led and assisted by Children in the Wilderness Volunteer, Lawrence Mallen, and a small team of women from the local community repaired and painted the school's facilities including the school principal's office, the staff room and the school library.

Children in the Wilderness' Liza Steyn and Janet Wilkinson, (both from the Johannesburg office) along with Children in the Wilderness Board member Jan Mallen, sorted through the books in the library, getting them in order for the shelves. One of the women who assisted Lawrence and his team was Nozipho Mthembu, who was a previous camper from the 2008 Rocktail camp. Nhlakanipho Ngema from the neighbouring village, KwaMpukane, joined the team on Saturday to finish the cleaning and stocking of the library shelves with all the new English and isiZulu storybooks Children in the Wilderness had bought for the library. Nhlakanipho is also a previous camper at Rocktail in 2011 and 2012.

"It is so rewarding to see these children giving back to their communities - this is how we inspire our children and what we expect from each child who is a participant in our programme. We trust that the children and teachers of KwaMqobela Primary School are going to be delighted with the repaired and repainted library and staff rooms and we hope that the new books are going to inspire a generation of readers." – Janet Wilkinson, Children in the Wilderness Regional Programme Manager.

Top Highlight Eco-Clubs in Zambia walk the talk for rhino

In an effort to promote an awareness of endangered species, Children in the Wilderness Zambia invited Eco-Club members from selected schools, to participate in field trips which took place in Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park (to walk with the rhinos) and Livingstone Museum.

"Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park is home to 11 of the country's total population of 13 rhino and during the walk, the group were lucky enough to see a mother with her three-week-old calf. These animals are known to be intensely private and territorial, so we was extremely fortunate to get close enough to see them in their natural habitat.

As rhino poaching statistics continue to rise, this iconic species is at a crisis point, pushing the remaining rhinos closer and closer towards extinction." – James Mwanza, Children in the Wilderness Zambia Programme Coordinator

The children had the opportunity to interact with Department of National Parks and Wildlife Authority rangers and discuss ways in which the longevity of the rhino can be guaranteed. The rangers also emphasised how important it was for each and every individual to play their part in saving this species.

With a newfound understanding, the groups expressed their gratitude that they were able to see rhinos up close, but many commented on how sad it was that the animals were not able to roam freely and had to be protected by armed guards at all times. Afterwards, the rhino walk students were encouraged to design posters and draw pictures that promoted all they had learnt that day.

To further promote their commitment to conservation, each student pledged to protect wildlife and the environment in which they live and was presented with a Pledge Certificate and a wrist band with the words 'My Wildlife, My Heritage, My Future' to wear as a reminder of their responsibilities as young conservationists.

The visit to the Livingstone Museum with the wonderful interactive displays and information on other endangered species in southern Africa served as a consolidation of the day's activities.

Other aspects of interest included the history of the area, Livingstone's journeys, as well as many other fascinating artefacts that encouraged questions and discussions between the curator and the learners. On one of the field visits, American students and teachers from Ravenscroft School in Raleigh, North Carolina, USA, joined the field trip. Groups of students from the school come to Livingstone annually and a highlight for them is to join the Eco-Club programme, meet



and interact with the Zambian learners and participate in activities organised for them by Children in the Wilderness. They too pledged to look after their wildlife and environment and were very keen to garner support for the plight of the rhino on their return home. The three field trips included an entourage of 90 local school learners, 15 American students, an accompanying teacher from each school, members of a French media team as well as members of the Children in the Wilderness Zambezi Region team.

"I would like to thank all who participated, the days were hugely successful and we're pleased to say that in addition to a lot being learned, many new friendships were made and our budding conservationists plan to lead the way to a brighter future for our wildlife. Our special gratitude goes to Mosi-oa-Tunya National Park and the Livingstone Museum for their support." – Sue Goatley, Children in the Wilderness Zambezi Programme Manager.



Zambia

- Eco-Club lesson sessions
- Tree planting
- Afforestation
- Wordworks literacy programme
- Environmental awareness campaign – Rhino walk
- Endangered species awareness initiatives
- Construction of school eco-benches
- Tippy Taps*

Zimbabwe

- Eco-Club lesson sessions
- Tree planting
- Best Eco-garden and Orchard Project
- Broiler project
- Construction of eco-benches
- Book Aid International Children's Corners literacy project
- Tippy Taps*
- Endangered species awareness campaign – Rhino walk

* Tippy Taps are hygiene and water-saving projects

All Eco-Clubs in all the regions in which we operate have participated in many of the scheduled annual World Environmental Days (initiatives and campaigns).



Top Highlights

Ziga wins the Best Eco-Garden & Orchard Award

For the past five years, Children in the Wilderness Zimbabwe has supplied heavy duty gardening tools, fruit trees and vegetable seeds to help Eco-Clubs to plant vegetable gardens and orchards at their schools in the Tsholotsho, Hwange and Victoria Falls Districts.

These gardens and orchards play an important part in the schools' farming and agricultural syllabus, as well as assisting in supplementing their nutrition programmes. Children in the Wilderness initially assisted in the start-up of the gardens in all these schools and continued with regular visits conducting training in sustainable farming techniques.

Education in eco-gardening places the emphasis on training students and community members



in the development of environmentally friendly practices that have turned previously unproductive soils into productive, well-managed and high-yielding vegetable gardens and orchards. To encourage active participation by all the schools, a floating trophy and an educational tour for Grade 7 to Victoria Falls is presented to the school with the "Best Eco-Garden and Orchard" each year at the end of the rainy season. Ziga Primary School Eco-Club in Tsholotsho District was declared the winner for 2017. Presentation of the floating trophy was made by Children in the Wilderness representatives just prior to the end of the first term and the Grade 7 Eco-Club members toured Victoria Falls and Hwange Hydro Power station as part of their prize.

Prior to having water, proper training in vermiculture and receiving gardening tools, gardening was seemingly impossible for Ziga Primary, which lies in an area characterised by very deep Kalahari sands and little rainfall. Training and the provision of water turned a once dusty landscape into a very productive garden haven.

The school managed to outplay other schools, maintained a mulch cover and soil structure and preserved the microorganisms. They planted according to precise spacing specifications, used 100% compost and no harmful fertilisers. Weeding was done regularly and inter-cropping was used as a pest-control measure.

The school used part of its prize money to buy a further 60 citrus fruit trees to increase the size of their orchard.

"The garden's success has also had a positive impact on the school's finances enabling them to purchase a much-needed safe to secure their national exam papers as well as assisting to cover many other administrative costs the school has previously struggled with." – Sue Goatley, Children in the Wilderness Zambezi Programme Manager.

Wilderness Safaris' guests pop in for a surprise visit
By Sue Goatley, Children in the Wilderness Zambezi Programme Manager

It was break time when we arrived. Under the shade of the magnificent camelthorn tree, some of the children huddled. Others raced around after a soccer ball, barefoot and in the hot sand. Everything came to halt when the vehicles pulled up to the gate, and some of the children rushed to greet their visitors.

A group of business leaders from the USA staying at Linkwasha Camp had been taking part in a leadership course. For many of them, this was their first trip to Africa, and a short visit to Ngamo Primary School in the heart of rural Zimbabwe would provide a small window into Zimbabwean life and culture. A spirited rendition of the song 'Shosholozha' broke the ice.

The visitors realised that the small projects implemented at the school, added huge value to the quality of life of the learners. The solar pump and tanks meant that there was enough clean running water supplied to the school, a fully stocked kitchen meant that there was a decent meal for children every day and the vegetables growing in the school garden provided added nutrition to their diets. They also learnt that the positive impact on the lives of the children at the school was made possible by visitors like them.

Over an ice-cold cup of juice and some biscuits, the Grade 6 children chatted to their international visitors, discovering interesting things about their way of life in America. The guests also found out about the children and their dreams and aspirations.

They were surprised to hear that the lesson for that day was about online bullying, a topic that has become important all across the world. Despite the Atlantic Ocean separating these two worlds, there were a lot of similarities between what is being taught at Ngamo Primary School and in schools in America.

At the end of the day, there was much for the international visitors to reflect on, and lots to discuss. The chalkboards brought back memories of their school days, as did the hard, wooden benches. There was no escaping the hardships that these children in remote rural areas of Africa must endure but in spite of these hardships, a boundless school spirit burned brightly, and enthusiasm rang louder than the steel gong that brought an end to the lesson.

Though these two groups may be worlds apart, there is a common thread that runs as deep as the roots of the camelthorn tree in the carpark at Ngamo Primary School. It takes a visit to the school to awaken them.



Top Highlights Major Regional Highlights

Up, up and away!

One of the major highlights in 2017 for our Eco-Stars across the regions was the partnership between Children in the Wilderness and the 'Flying for Kids World Balloon Project' run by Andrew Parker. Andrew uses his passion for flying hot air balloons to change the lives of children around the world. The project was launched in 2013 and aims to reach communities in over 100 countries by 2018.

The balloon project's aims to:

- Shine the light on and encourage discussion of children's rights all around the world
- Engage children in cultural exchange and understanding by way of international postcard swaps
- Bring joy to those visited, especially those who have never seen a hot air balloon before
- Dare children to follow their dreams, no matter where they come from



When Andrew approached CITW in early 2017 about a possible collaboration, we opened our doors and extended this opportunity to all our Eco-Club members in the communities we worked with. Not only did this project touch the lives of our children but the adults too.

The project kicked off in Zambia in August where Andrew arrived and spent some time with the children before heading off to Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Malawi and South Africa. In each of the countries, our Eco-Club members and other children were able to meet with Andrew, with some children taken on short hot air balloon flights. The success of the project is owed to CITW coordinators in the participating countries and

the unwavering support from various stakeholders such as aviation authorities, Air Force commanders, community leaders and participating children's parents, to mention but a few.

Here are some highlights from Botswana and Malawi:

When Andrew arrived, he found over 1 000 children from Xabara and Shashe Primary Schools curiously waiting for him. Some lucky Eco-Club members had a chance to take a short flight in Andrew's hot air balloon. Andrew says his own dream of flying a hot air balloon started when he was just six years old.

In Liwonde, Malawi, with the assistance from CITW staff and volunteers, Andrew prepared his balloon flight from Nanthomba Primary

School where over 300 children and 100 adults from Nandumbo and the surrounding villages watched in anticipation.

Again, some of our Eco-Club members were lucky enough to take short flights – for the first time in their lives – in a hot air balloon with Andrew. The children also learnt about how balloons can be used for tourism and park patrols.





Eco-MENTOR TRAINING

Training to spread the conservation message



Alongside our programme structure, Children in the Wilderness runs an Eco-Mentor training programme aimed at local community members including teachers and Wilderness Safaris staff members. This programme aims to develop these inspiring people by upgrading their skills, increasing their environmental understanding and enabling them to better implement school and village environmental projects and initiatives.

The training of Eco-Mentors is a vital part of the Children in the Wilderness programme, and it is through this programme 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 camp programmes with confidence.

With all our training sessions, the following quote is always top of mind:

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." Intentional programming and flow learning are some of the key techniques we employ to help translate this idea into practice and all lessons are conducted in a fun, respectful and interactive manner.

Throughout 2017, all our regions continued to conduct Eco-Mentor training sessions. Other training workshops such as entrepreneurial development, computer literacy and women crafts were also conducted, thus improving teaching skills, increasing economic participation and Eco-Club programme development.

MEET SOME OF OUR *Eco*-MENTORS



Without the kindness and support of our Eco-Mentors who volunteer their time, energy and other resources, Children in the Wilderness would not be able to successfully run its Eco-Club and camp programmes and therefore, we are very grateful and proud of these inspiring individuals.

Botswana

MERRIWEATHER PITSEETSILE

Merriweather is a teacher at Habu Primary School. He became an Eco-Mentor when he realised that many people in his community were inconsiderate towards the environment. He wanted to be an environmental ambassador and educate the community about the importance of conservation. "My involvement with Children in the Wilderness and the experience I am exposed to in the Eco-Clubs, give me knowledge and an opportunity to pass my skills and knowledge to the children, not only to the members of our Eco-Clubs but to other pupils as well."



LEBOHANG LEKGETHO

Lebohng comes from Rakops village in Boteti region. He is a teacher at Kareng Primary School and has been the Eco-Club Coordinator since he joined in 2014. His interest in environmental education started way back during his college years.



"I am grateful to Children in the Wilderness for introducing the Eco-Clubs at my school as this not only exposed me to new environmental teaching skills but also assisted me to implement projects in environmentally friendly ways. I am now more willing to continue with environmental education and teach communities and schools in the Okavango region and I am glad that Children in the Wilderness continues to give us support."

ANITTAH RAKHUDU

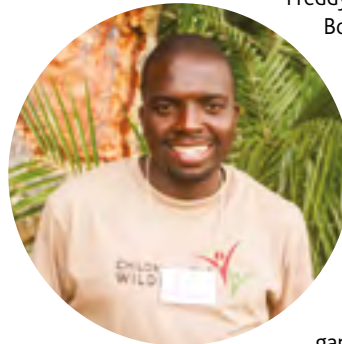
Anittah is a senior teacher and acting Deputy School Head at Sankoyo Primary School. She was born in Serowe village in Central District in Botswana. She joined the Eco-Club as a Mentor in 2013 and has attended the Eco-Mentor training in Seronga and Santawani camps. The Eco-Club at Sankoyo Primary School won a floating

trophy – this was due to the members' commitment and hard work. The award also motivated members to work as a team and even harder. In 2015, Anittah managed to establish the Sankoyo Adult Eco-Club and she currently facilitates projects such as beadwork, weaving and recycling.



FREDDY KHUMBULANI

Freddy is from Malambakwena in north-east Botswana. He is a teacher at Gudigwa Primary School and the Chairperson of the Eco-Club. He is very interested in environmental issues and his love for sharing his knowledge with children is what made him join the Eco-Club.



"Children in the Wilderness supports our school Eco-Club and by doing so it helps the entire school to achieve environmental objectives such as a cleaner school, eco-gardening, etc. through mentoring of teachers, funding of school and Eco-Club projects and exposing the teachers and learners to educational trips to explore the wilderness areas. I appreciate the support Gudigwa Primary School, The Eco-Club members and the Eco-Mentors receive from Children in the Wilderness."





Malawi

Samuel Gama

Thirty-two-year-old Samuel is a Physical Science teacher at Katambasula Primary School. He comes from Mbwesio village on the eastern side of Liwonde National Park. Samuel completed his teachers' training in 2011 from Machinga Teachers' Training College in the southern region of Malawi. In 2014, he joined Children in the Wilderness as a volunteer and Eco-Mentor. Although Samuel has not yet participated in annual camps, he has led his Eco-Club members in various activities and educational trips. What Samuel likes most about the Children in the Wilderness is its advocacy programme on climate change mitigation since deforestation is a major challenge in Malawi.



Sumani Napawa

Sumani is a 27-year-old teacher at Ntapwa Primary School where he teaches Biology, his favourite school subject. He hails from Njahito village on the eastern outskirts of Liwonde National Park. He received his teacher qualification from Machinga Teachers' Training College and graduated in 2012. He joined Ntapwa Primary School's Eco-Club in 2012 when he started teaching there. Sumani has been involved in organising many activities and events for his Eco-Club members, including open days. He has also attended several Children in the Wilderness teacher training workshops and is grateful for the new skills and knowledge gained. Sumani is fascinated by the ecological role elephant (his favourite animal) play in Liwonde National Park's ecosystem.

Namibia

Katjinenena Mururu

Forty-one-year-old Katjinenena comes from Warmquelle village in the Anabeb Conservancy and works at Warmquelle Primary School as the school's eco-garden attendant. He also helps Eco-Club members with their gardening and tree-planting projects. He enjoys making his own

fertilisers using natural and reusable matter for his gardens. He aims to create the best-looking eco-garden in the community, one that also produces the freshest vegetables. In 2017, he played an instrumental role in the biggest cabbage harvest that the school has ever had.

Diana Uakumbua

Diana was born in Windhoek 33 years ago. She is a teacher at Warmquelle Primary School and joined its Eco-Club in 2014 when she started teaching there. Diana is very passionate about early childhood development and spends a lot of time with the younger Eco-Club members. She

believes that passion for environmental conservation should be instilled in children in the early stages of their lives.

South Africa (GMTFCA)

Gerson Khubana

Gerson (48 years old) is an educator at Makahlule Primary School in Makuleke village, Limpopo province. He became an Eco-Mentor in 2010 so he could upgrade his skills on environmental education, share the knowledge with children while at the same time meeting new like-minded people. Gerson believes in cultural diversity and encourages his learners to embrace this in their learnings as this will help them in their life journeys and to help them understand biodiversity.



"Because of my interest in biodiversity and environmental issues, being part of Children in the Wilderness affords me an opportunity to also learn and teach others. With the field excursions that we undertake in wilderness areas, children are exposed to experiencing interactions with wildlife as well as learning to co-exist with wild animals. As an Eco-Mentor, I would like to introduce young children to nature and its beauty to enhance their love for it. I wish this programme could be extended to reach other children who are far away from the parks so we can all contribute to conserving our heritage."

Calvenia Makgosa

Calvenia comes from Serumola ward in Mathathane village, Bobirwa district of Botswana. She completed her secondary schooling in 2001 and then studied Industrial Sewing at Selibe Phikwe Technical College. After completing her course in Dressmaking and Associated Studies as well as Clothing Design and Textile and Business Entrepreneurship at the same college, Calvenia worked as a temporary Home Economics teacher in Moseletla Junior Secondary School. Calvenia's passion for wildlife and conservation began when she worked at Bigfoot Tours in Khutse and Central Kalahari game reserves.



Joining Children in the Wilderness as Tuli Eco-Club coordinator and Eco-Mentor has enabled her to share her passion with children in the three schools where she runs our programme. Calvenia was also instrumental in organising and preparing for the first Tri-Nations Camp that was held in December 2015 in Mapungubwe National Park, South Africa.

She has since participated in subsequent Tri-Nations Camps held at the same park in December 2016 and 2017. On camp, Calvenia was an energetic team leader and Eco-Mentor who enjoyed all activities with the children. She has also, together with her fellow Eco-Club coordinators from South Africa and the GMTFCA, participated in a number of capacity-building workshops organised by Children in the Wilderness. She enjoys travelling to interesting, historical places to learn more about the past.

What is CITW?

An ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION and LIFE
SKILLS programme

- Vision
- Aims
- Programme

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.



Omega Nyathi

Omega is a 38-year-old teacher at Shashi Primary School in Maramani community, Zimbabwe. In 2016, she joined the Eco-Club as an Eco-Mentor because she believes in conserving animals and plants and wants to teach children the importance of nature conservation. She thinks Children in the Wilderness affords children the opportunity to learn about environmental issues affecting their communities while equipping them with important life skills so that they can achieve their dreams. Omega has participated in two Tri-Nations Camps in 2016 and 2017, which were held at Mapungubwe National Park and World Heritage Site. One of Omega's favourite team activities was the 'making a group mascot' project.

She thinks this is a great activity as it teaches and encourages children to work together. Her favourite animal is the giraffe because she thinks they are peaceful animals who rarely fight.

"I would like to nurture children's talents so that they can become the good leaders of tomorrow. I always teach them that perseverance is key to success. I am grateful to be part of Children in the Wilderness because the lessons and activities in our Eco-Clubs and on camps encourage innovation and creativity in children."

Mike Moroka

Fifty-four-year-old Mike hails from Simpson village on the outskirts of Alldays town in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

He received his teaching qualification from Modjadji College of Education and he has been a teacher at Modikwa Primary School for 26 years where he teaches Grades 4 to 7. Mike joined Children in the Wilderness as an Eco-Mentor and volunteer because of his passion to instil a love for the environment and wildlife in young children.

His favourite Eco-Club activities include lessons on littering, team building and leadership. He believes that when children are equipped with good life skills, coupled with exposing them to environmental conservation education, they will grow into responsible and caring leaders.

Mike has since participated in annual Tri-Nations Camps which were held in Mapungubwe National Park. During camp, he enjoyed participating in and helping children completing their activities. He also liked the game drives and visiting the museum in the park.

"I feel privileged to be part of Children in the Wilderness because the programme not only provides me with a chance to instil confidence in children but also allows me to share ideas and experience with other mentors from different countries."

"I feel privileged to be part of Children in the Wilderness because the programme not only provides me with a chance to instil confidence in children but also allows me to share ideas and experience with other mentors from different countries."





Zambia

STANLEY M IMAKANDO

Stanley is a 27-year-old teacher at Twabuka Primary School. He joined Children in the Wilderness as an Eco-Mentor because of his passion for environmental conservation.

"Waste and how we deal with it is a growing issue in Zambia and across the world, with the realisation that the vast majority of the resources that we rely on to sustain our lifestyles are finite.

"It is therefore cardinal to raise awareness on such issues. With the introduction of the Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) Club in our school, we use this opportunity to sensitise our children on the importance of applying sustainable practices to keep our environment in good form for a better tomorrow, and a better tomorrow start now with the little effort that we put in."



“Being part of Children in the Wilderness inspired me and our children to maintain the environment and animals.”

Joyce Sekute

Joyce was born 54 years ago in Dumbwa North District of Livingstone. She previously worked as a teacher at Nalituwe Secondary School before joining Twabuka Primary School and spent more than 33 years teaching between the two schools. Joyce joined Children in the Wilderness as an Eco-Mentor of the Eco-Club members of her school.

"Being part of Children in the Wilderness inspired me and our children to maintain the environment and animals. I get reminded to take care of the environment and wildlife every time I am involved in the Eco-Club sessions.



The lessons and the activities that we do with our learners have been designed in a way that encourage one to take even small steps towards saving our planet."

Thembeni Phiri

Thembeni, who is now 28 years old, works for Wilderness Safaris as Front-of-Office Assistant Manager at Toka Leya Camp.

She joined Children in the Wilderness as an Eco-Mentor because she believes that more focus should be placed on rural children to expose them to information and programmes that will teach them the importance of environmental conservation.

Thembeni finds time to visit Eco-Clubs in the villages located near Toka Leya and present lessons and activities to children.

She thinks that Eco-Clubs are a vehicle for sustainable conservation because they present practical lessons for solving environmental challenges such as climate change, deforestation and littering amongst others.

"It gives me great pleasure to see the children, whose lives I touch every day in my capacity as a teacher and parent, show keen interest in learning about the environment – and most importantly trying to find ways and means to solve environmental problems they face.

It is never too late, we can still manage the environment in a sustainable manner – the power lies in our willingness."

Zimbabwe

Landiwe Ndhlovu

Landiwe is a 49-year-old teacher at Jabulani Primary School where she has worked since 2016.

She is passionate about education and joining Children in the Wilderness afforded her the opportunity to discuss environmental issues with her Eco-Club learners in an interactive and fun way.

"Children should be treated as children. They are special and must be given first priority and I think this is what Children in the Wilderness is all about. Children in the Wilderness is well resourced and its willingness to share knowledge and skills with others is evident. This not only helped the children improve their education but also increased my knowledge on environmental issues."

Landiwe is currently studying further and believes that age should never be an obstacle to improving one's skills and knowledge.

Jacqueline Tarara

Thirty-four years old, Jacqueline is a Grade 5 teacher at St Mary's Primary School in Hwange district where she has taught since 2007. She joined Children in the Wilderness as an Eco-Mentor because she hoped to build a positive attitude in learners so that they can appreciate the natural world.

"Children in the Wilderness is helping our children a lot as its programme assists the school in achieving the Environmental Education curriculum objectives by giving pupils hands-on experiences in addition to theoretical lessons. The Eco-Club programme also empowers students to find solutions to local ecological and conservation problems. A healthy environment nurtures life and builds wise minds."

Praxcedes Madume Mushoriwa

Since 2015, Praxcedes has been a head teacher at Emfundweni Primary School and joined Children in the Wilderness as an Eco-Mentor the same year. Since then, the Eco-Club at her school has seen a great improvement in terms of its teaching skills.

Despite the water crisis at the school, the Eco-Club has been successfully running its eco-garden – thanks to simple gardening techniques they learnt from Children in the Wilderness through training workshops.

Praxcedes attended her first camp in 2016 and looks forward to participating in more down the line. She was thrilled to see the children showing great enthusiasm and passion for learning more about the conservation concepts introduced at Eco-Clubs and was impressed by how interactive and fun the camp programme was.

"I am happy to see what children have learnt and how they also share the information and knowledge with others confidently and proudly. The Eco-Clubs have made me interact with nature in a way I never thought I could. Before I just saw a tree, but now through the Eco-Club modules I can see that now if I do 'A' it has one repercussion for that tree, and if I do 'B' it has a different effect on that tree. Now we can directly see how we affect the environment and in turn see how it affects us."



ANNUAL CHILDREN IN THE

Inspiring the next generation of environmental leaders



Every year, since 2001, Children in the Wilderness has held annual camps in six southern African countries (Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

These camps are made possible by Wilderness Safaris, Mashatu Game Reserve, Central African Wilderness Safaris and other partner companies who close some of their camps to paying guests for several weeks, allowing Children in the Wilderness to host groups of selected rural children on a three-night, four-day camp programme. Groups of 16 to 30 children between the ages of 10 and 17, who have been selected from Eco-Clubs, are invited to attend these camps.

In 2017, we hosted 17 annual camps with 442 children attending in total.

The camps are run by the regional Children in the Wilderness Coordinator and a Camp Director, assisted by a full complement of Wilderness Safaris staff, trained volunteers and Eco-Mentors. Children are assigned to Eco-Mentors who interact with them as counsellors, friends and, most importantly, role models. Children participating in the camps mostly come from the same communities or villages as Eco-Mentors, thus helping to restore a sense of hope to the children, allowing them to see a future for themselves – “if I can do it, so can you” is the subtle encouragement of the Eco-Mentor.



WILDERNESS CAMPS



The camp programmes have evolved over time, shifting their focus on the vulnerable children in communities to environmental education and life skills as the concept of leadership values became a growing priority, with the result that children with such qualities or community influence have been included as participants alongside the more vulnerable youngsters.

Through this, Children in the Wilderness can facilitate sustainable conservation through leadership development, creating leaders who can effect change to their communities.

Overview of our camp curriculum

In each country, the camps follow a standardised curriculum but also include unique aspects of the particular country, especially when it comes to environmental lessons.

For example, children in Malawi learn about reforestation and climate change as deforestation is a serious environmental challenge in that country and in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, they learn about coastal wildlife protection, etc.

Interactive learning sessions, sport, as well as nature activities, including game drives, boat rides (where available) and nature walks are some of the activities included in the fun and jam-packed camp programme.

The Mother Bear Project, one of our long-standing partners (www.motherbearproject.org), provides beautiful knitted bears for each child attending an annual camp. These bears provide security and comfort to the children while on camp, as well as when they return home.

One of the highlights is a quiz night which is always held on the last evening, with the children competing in teams to test what they have learnt over the course of the camp.



YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP (YES) PROGRAMME

Added to our programme structure in 2008, the Youth Environmental Stewardship Programme, formerly known as Environmental Stewardship Programme, hosted its first camps in Botswana.

This programme focuses on children with commitment and potential who have been identified in Eco-Clubs and on annual camps as 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 leadership, communication, team work and further environmental education.

These camps are usually smaller, with fewer children attending, allowing for focused work groups and increased participation of all children, thus giving our Eco-Mentors an opportunity to spend more time with them and identify candidates for the scholarship and internship programme.





Children in the Wilderness has now introduced YES to all countries in which we operate in, allowing the programme to grow with the children and continue to provide them with environmental education and support beyond Eco-Clubs and annual camps. In this programme, children are inspired to come up with methods, through projects, that can contribute to sustainable conservation for future generations.

The ultimate goal of this programme is to prepare our children for careers in environmental conservation, ecotourism, hospitality and other vocations that will positively influence their communities as leaders in environmental conservation.



Launching YES Resource Books

In our previous Eco-Stars publication, the YES Resource Book programme was introduced to our readers and it gives us great pleasure to report that Children in the Wilderness has now finalised the development of the first of the three standardised Youth Environmental Resource Books. Book One of the resource books was launched in November 2017 and has already been rolled out to our regions and is now in use by the YES Clubs.

Prior to the launch of the book, Regional/Country Programme Coordinators were trained on how to use the resource so they could confidently implement the lesson plans. Training of Eco-Mentors on this book is continuing throughout our regions. Our team has begun putting together Books Two and Three which will be available for use by 2020, so watch this space for new updates!



Malawi YES members raise awareness in their communities

Every year, YES Club members organise open days in the communities they live in, to raise awareness about environmental conservation and also meet with community leadership for planning and preparing and coordinating the events.



Little Makalolo YES Camp, Zimbabwe

At the end of the first school term in 2017, the YES Clubs in Tsholotsho hosted a camp at Wilderness Safaris' Little Makalolo Camp in Hwange National Park.

Thirty students attended the three-night, four-day camp, including visiting students from a school in Germany, as well from schools in Harare.

The days' events were a combination of life skills, cultural and environmental activities which included some incredible game drives

in the Wilderness Safaris concession. Despite the initial language and communication difficulties between local and international students, the combining of three different cultures (German, Shona from Harare and Ndebele from Tsholotsho) was hugely successful.

Students interacted well, shared tents and meals and took part in various well-designed group activities that allowed for brainstorming and a good mix of theoretical and practical studies on environmental, cultural and sporting pursuits. In an effort to teach and develop an understanding of biodiversity, particularly in habitats and ecosystems, well qualified Wilderness Safaris guides led the

students on walks around Little Makalolo collecting samples of plants, leaves and insects from the area.

Once back at camp the students, with help from their guides, discussed their findings, considered the advantages of diversity in plant life and were amazed that such a small sample area offered such a wide variety of plants, insects and animals.

The students also looked forward to the informative game drives and they enjoyed some amazing sightings of creatures great and small, including lion and elephant.

These activities were followed by animated discussions on various important environmental issues impacting ecosystems in Hwange.

Students also participated in structured group activities and games that facilitated the learning that all the choices they make have

consequences and that those consequences affect not only themselves but others around them too.

The Zimbabwean youngsters were surprised, but pleased to hear from their German counterparts that they all face similar issues despite coming from different cultures and continents.

Although there is a serious underlying message in all the activities that encourages students to think carefully and make responsible decisions, they also teach the students to break down their own barriers and hang-ups, and engage in new and fun activities to help them grow as young adults.

Straight from the YES Campers

"This was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for me and a dream come true. Let's keep our parks safe and free from poaching for years to come so my children can benefit like I did this weekend." – Natasha Marere, Harare.

"I am now a true ambassador of change in my community. We are told lions are bad animals and they kill people, but today I appreciate that lions have a place in the environment and are to be respected and looked after AND I loved the camp." – Theima Mutsago, Harare.

"It was nice to learn together with friends from another country and part of Zimbabwe, I am proud to be part of the YES Club." – Nelisiwe Sibanda – Tsholotsho.

In a letter of thanks addressed to Children in the Wilderness, Reinhard Thiemann from Lessing-Gymnasium Norderstedt, Germany made these comments:

"I am sure the days at Makalolo [Children in the Wilderness YES Camp] will have a lasting effect on all participants. With my German students, who I meet in classes regularly, I have noticed a tremendous change. Not only do they speak English more fluently now but they also appear to be more independent, taking the initiative while working in groups and

presenting themselves as self-confident adolescents. All these achievements beg for a continuation of this project with further groups in future. Thanks for an unforgettable time in Zimbabwe."

Zambia YES Club members champion environmental rights

In Zambia, land, water and air pollution came under the spotlight as YES members embarked on a number of initiatives to demonstrate just how important it is to protect the environment for future generations.

Water harvest

Water from run-off roofs was collected and stored for future use. Usually, the water is collected during the rainy season and kept for different uses, such as drinking, bathing, watering, cooking and for livestock to drink. This activity encouraged learners to conserve water in case they are ever placed in a situation where it is in short supply.

Rocket stoves

YES Club members made two rocket stoves using clay soil and using twigs for cooking. The concept has been devised to demonstrate how communities can avoid cutting down trees and use eco-friendly material instead, while at the same time, keeping the environment clean.

Tree planting

YES Club members participated in a tree-planting day where 12 citrus trees were added to the school orchard.

Solar water heater

A solar water heater was made using local waste materials found in the environment. The exercise demonstrated more eco-friendly ways of heating water than using hydroelectricity, while also reducing litter.

Materials such as tins, empty five-litre cans for cooking, polyester pipes, plastic connectors and a tap were used in the making of the heater. After the completion of the solar water heater, it was placed in an open space and within just one or two hours, the water was heated and ready for use.



REACHING FOR THE STARS

Meet some of our **YES** Members



Malawi

Aubert Thipa

Aubert is 23 years old and comes from Nsundu village. He joined Children in the Wilderness as a camper in 2008 at Chintheche Inn, while he was a learner at Chintheche Private Secondary School.

After completing his primary schooling, Aubert went to Chintheche Private Secondary School in 2010 and there he joined Children in the Wilderness' Alumni Club, now called Youth Environmental Programme (YES) Club.

He assists in organising YES Club and camp activities and is also an Eco-Mentor to local Eco-Club members. In 2014, he was accepted at Mzuzu Technical College where he is enrolled as a Community Development student and is scheduled to complete his course at the end of 2018.

Rose Chirwa

Now 22 years old, Rose joined Children in the Wilderness in 2007 as a camper at Chintheche Inn while she was a member of Chihame Primary School's Eco-Club.

She graduated to the YES Club when she went to Chihame Secondary School in 2011. After completing her secondary schooling, she went back home and continued to be a strong member of the Club.

In 2016, Rose was enrolled at Phwezi Polytechnic College where she is studying towards a Hospitality and Hotel Management qualification. During college holidays, she goes back to her YES Club and joins other members in activities and projects. Rose is responsible for the catering logistics for all YES Clubs and camp activities. She is also an Eco-Mentor and volunteers her time and services to Children in the Wilderness whenever she is needed.



Namibia

Rachimo Khomob

At seventeen, Rachimo is a Grade 10 learner at Okaukuejo Combined School in Etosha National Park.

He joined Children in the Wilderness back in 2012 when he was in Grade 3 at the same school. Rachimo is a hard worker and achieves top grades at school.

He actively participates in all YES Club activities and enjoys mentoring young children. Rachimo dreams of becoming a cartographer one day.

Esmeralda Nu-Eises

Esmeralda is 19 years old and is a Grade 12 learner at Braunfels Agricultural High School in Kunene region. She joined Children in the Wilderness when she was in Grade 4 at Okaukuejo Combined School.

Esmeralda is a promising story writer and in 2016 she was amongst the Eco-Club members who won the Children in the Wilderness and Dūcere Foundation story writing competition under the banner of the African Children Stories programme.

Her story, titled "The San People" was published in the 33rd collection of the ACS book which was officially launched in Namibia in October 2017.

Esmeralda enjoys fixing things and would like to join a vocational training centre and study towards becoming an electrician in her Haillom San community.







Zambia

Memory Chisola

Memory is 17 years old and a Grade 10 learner at Nalituwe Combined Secondary School in Dambwa central compound in Livingstone. She joined Children in the Wilderness as a YES Club member in February 2017. She is self-motivated, courageous and active in community environmental projects.

"It is a good thing for me to be involved in Children in the Wilderness programmes and initiatives because it gives me and my fellow YES members an opportunity to understand environmental issues and how every component of the ecosystem can be protected."

Memory aspires to become a lawyer and serve the country and the world at large. In order for her to achieve her dream, she plans to be more responsible and to pass her exams while still remaining active in community initiatives.

Immaculate Lyambai

Fifteen-year-old Immaculate is from Dambwa central compound in Livingstone and is in Grade 11 at Nalituwe Combined School. She became a member of the YES Club at her school in February 2017, but Immaculate is not new to Children in the Wilderness – she was a member of Nalituwe Eco-Club before she graduated to the YES Club at the same school. She enjoys singing, painting, drawing and loves playing basketball, but above all she likes to spend time reading and listening to music. She is passionate about making the world a better place and she uses the knowledge and information she gains from her YES Club to advance this desire. Immaculate would like to become a pharmacist when she completes her schooling.

"I think YES Clubs are a very cool thing to belong to because I am able to meet and work with like-minded individuals who care about the environment. My involvement in the programme also encourages me to work hard so I can achieve my personal goals. It really feels good to be part of something that effects positive change to the world."



Davison Sikume

Davison is 19 years old and is in Grade 11 at Nalituwe Combined School in Livingstone. He first joined Children in the Wilderness as an Eco-Club member in 2014 before graduating to become a YES Club member in 2017. He is a persistent and energetic young man who completes his Club assignments and activities diligently. He is a caring and responsible person and also works hard at school. Davison dreams of becoming an engineer one day.

"I would like to encourage other youths in his community to join the Club so that collectively we can work saving our planet and also improve our lives as young people."



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 send their children to further their schooling due to affordability challenges.

Through our Eco-Clubs and annual camps we are able to identify children who are doing well academically, but 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 to cater for the above, children are inspired and have hope for their future.

We are grateful to Wilderness Safaris guests and agents, as well as other partner NGOs and corporates, who all support our scholarship programme.



Top Donors: Canoeing for Children in the Wilderness

In April 2017, Emma Badger and Emma Bryant (both 18 years old) took part in the Devizes to Westminster canoe marathon – a 125-mile race with 77 portages. This legendary race has been going since 1948, and is known as the 'Everest of canoeing'.

These two motivated young women, who are both currently completing their A levels at Lord Wandsworth College in Hampshire, chose to paddle in support of Children in the Wilderness Malawi. The two Emmas raised approximately US\$690 (MK500 000) worth of funds during this short period of time.

This donation has been allocated towards the payment of school fees for children who are part of the Children in the Wilderness programme and a dedicated ledger under the name "Emma & Emma's Scholarship Support" has been opened as a tribute to both ladies, who stepped forward as brand ambassadors and completed a gruelling and extremely physically demanding race to raise both awareness and funds for this all-important programme.

"I am humbled by these girls' courage and actions. Thank you Emma and Emma for your phenomenal contribution to our programme, and well done on making a difference in the lives of our children." – Symon Chibaka, Malawi Children in the Wilderness Programme Coordinator



Internships

The majority of the children whom we work with in our programmes cannot afford tertiary education and therefore their prospects of a career are diminished. With our internship programme, we provide support to our children by connecting them to the workplace, allowing them to gain practical work experience and skills which in turn helps them in starting a career in tourism, environment, conservation and hospitality, as well as in other sectors.

All youths earmarked for internships are largely selected from our Youth Environmental Stewardship programme.

Meet Some of our Scholarship Students

Kaone Samakata

Sponsor: Children in the Wilderness General

Twenty-two-year-old Kemelo was born in Sankoyo village in northern Botswana which borders Moremi Game Reserve. Being located near the Moremi Game Reserve, Sankoyo has wild animals roaming through the village. Growing up, Kaone witnessed human-wildlife conflict with elephant being the main culprits. He did not understand why the conflict took place until he joined Children in the Wilderness as a camper where he learnt more about environmental issues. He now understands the causes of these conflicts and contributes towards finding ways to co-exists with wild animals. In his village, Kaone participates in community meetings and activities aimed at trying to find practical ways to deal with the conflict, which still exists to this day, without causing harm to the animals concerned. The knowledge he got from his involvement prompted his passion for conservation and encouraged him to continue his environmental advocacy work through the Children in the Wilderness programme.

Kaone first joined Children in the Wilderness in 2005 when he was a Grade 3 learner at Sankoyo Primary School. In 2008, Kaone attended his first camp at Wilderness Safaris King's Pool Camp, followed by a second camp there in 2009. In 2017, his hard work and commitment paid off as he was awarded a bursary to do a bridging course in Conservation and Environmental Leadership at the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC) in South Africa. Kaone would like to become an Environmental Education teacher.



Kemelo Kopano

Sponsor: Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC) and Children in the Wilderness General

Kemelo (above right) is 22 years old and born and raised in Tubu village, which is in the north-west district of Botswana. His village is located close to some of Botswana's pristine tourism attractions, namely Tsodilo Hills and the Okavango Delta and because of this, Kemelo was exposed to the tourism industry at a young age. When he was just a boy, Kemelo liked to sit close to animal paths and watch them as they visited nearby waterholes to drink.

This encouraged him to learn more about animal behaviour. Kemelo joined Children in the Wilderness in 2006 when he was in Standard 4 at Tubu Primary School. As an Eco-Club member at his school, Kemelo had the opportunity to attend annual camps which were held in Jacana Camp in 2008 and again in Kaporota Camp in 2009.

In July 2017, Kemelo was sponsored and enrolled for a six-month bridging course in Conservation and Environmental Leadership and was flown to South Africa where the course was conducted at SAWC. As part of the course, Kemelo completed workplace attachments at Wilderness Safaris camps in the Okavango Delta, Botswana. Kemelo aspires to become a professional nature guide.

Prisca Matola (Left) & Debora Mataka (right)



Namibia

Tuahanika "Veno" Kongoro

Sponsor: Rene Don Pizzo through Empowers Africa

Tuahanika is a 15-year-old Grade 9 learner at Elias Amxab Combined School in Sesfontein. She enjoys the crafts taught during the school's Eco-clubs, but her favourite activity in the programme is the catamaran boat cruise in Walvis Bay. She has learned a lot from the programme and would like to become a nurse so that she can serve her community.

Mike Auseb (far right)

Sponsor: Khomas Trust

Twenty years old, Mike is a Grade 12 learner at Braunfels Agricultural High School in Kunene region. He joined Children in the Wilderness in 2012 as an Eco-Club member when he was a learner at Okaukueja Combined School. During an annual camp, he loved watching animals in the wild – especially elephants. He is very keen to learn more about animal behavior and birding. Mike is currently an Eco-Mentor and a tent leader on annual camps and loves working with young children. He would like to become a veterinarian when he finishes school.



Malawi

Prisca Matola (right)

Sponsor: Children in the Wilderness General and SAWC

Prisca is 22 years old and joined Children in the Wilderness as a camper in 2008 when she was a learner at Chihame Primary School, before becoming an Eco-Club member at the same school in 2009. In 2012, Prisca went to Chintheche Secondary School where she joined the YES Club and continued to learn more about the environment. Her secondary schooling was fully sponsored by Children in the Wilderness from 2012 until she completed her studies in 2015.

In 2016, she was given a bursary to study in South Africa where she was enrolled for the six-month bridging course in Conservation and Environmental Leadership. She successfully finished the course and was awarded a number of certificates in Wildlife and Environmental Conservation. Prisca is currently furthering her studies and registered with the Malawi Institute of Tourism where she began her second year in 2018. Every year, Prisca volunteers as camp mentor during the annual camps. She also assists in organising YES open day events. She hopes to become a cabinet minister responsible for social-economic development for rural areas and would like to use ecotourism as a tool to promote rural development.



Eliot Felix

Sponsor: Rosemary Pencil Foundation

At twenty two years old, Eliot is a third-year student at the University of Malawi where is studying towards a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education Languages. Eliot joined Children in the Wilderness in 2007 as a camper when he was just 12 years old. His scholarship from the Rosemary Pencil Foundation not only covered four years of secondary schooling, but his tertiary education as well.

"I found my involvement in the Children in the Wilderness to be life-changing and rewarding – I could not have accomplished so much in my life had it not been for the support from Children in the Wilderness and the Rosmary Pencil Foundation both for which I am grateful."

Every year, Eliot volunteers his time as mentor for the annual camps. He also helps with media collateral editing during major public events organised by YES Clubs. Eliot is planning to study further by enrolling in a Master's programme of Education Policy, Planning and Leadership. He believes that this will help him to influence environmental policy changes in Malawi and sees himself as an education analyst or advisor in the near future.

TERTIARY EDUCATION

Southern African Wildlife College Scholarships



Children in the Wilderness partners with the Southern African Wildlife College

Children in the Wilderness' partnership with Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC), which began in 2016, continues to go from strength to strength. This partnership provides opportunities for Children in the Wilderness participants to build on their environmental education by attending a six-month Conservation and Environmental Leadership bridging course.

The six-month 'Youth Access Conservation and Environmental Education Programme' bridging course exposes school leavers to theory and the practical application of environmental education and the life of a field ranger in a conservation area. Learners spend four months at the SAWC campus in South Africa where theoretical and practical assignments are completed, following which they are work-placed with host conservation organisations in nature reserves for two months for post-training experiential learning. This provides them with first-hand experience and a real understanding of a career in nature conservation. In 2016, our first group of 16 Children in the Wilderness students from Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe completed the course with some of them employed at Wilderness Safaris, Children in the Wilderness, Central African Wilderness Safaris, and Kaindu Natural Resource Trust - to mention just a few.

Another group comprising 20 students from Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe completed their SAWC course in 2017 and have so far completed their two-month practical work assignments. This group will be absorbed into Wilderness Safaris, its partner organisations and host nature conservation reserves on an internship programme gaining valuable work experience preparing them for full-time careers. This programme and the bursaries are made possible by a grant from United for Wildlife, supported by The Royal Foundation of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge and HRH Prince Harry. In addition, Children in the Wilderness partially sponsors the programme and in 2017 alone spent nearly R600 000 to cover tuition fees, accommodation and meals, uniform, transport costs, passport and visa costs, and medical evacuation insurance.



Eco-Stars took time out to chat with some of our tertiary scholarship beneficiaries in Botswana, Namibia, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.



BOTSWANA

Keikantse Tlale (middle), 21 years old – 2017 student

ES: How would describe your experience at the Southern African Wildlife College?

KT: Being a student at the Southern African Wildlife College was my greatest opportunity and has changed my life for better. I have learnt a lot about how to interact with both biotic and abiotic things in the environment.

ES: How has this opportunity impacted your life?

KT: I have gained knowledge and skills to help me play my part in environmental conservation which I could not have acquired on my own.

ES: What does the bursary mean to you?

KT: I am humbled by the generosity of and support from Children in the Wilderness in that the bursary came at the right time for me and this shows that our sponsors care about us and the planet.

ES: Which was your favourite module or activity in the course?

KT: Environmental Education was my favourite since it helped me to improve my confidence, communication and environmental management skills.

ES: What is your advice to the Eco-Stars out there?

KT: My advice to the Eco-Stars is that they should use any given opportunity wisely in order to improve their lives and also to aim high and work hard.



NAMIBIA

Tracey Snewe (middle), 18 years old – 2017 Student

ES: How would you describe your experience at the Southern African Wildlife College?

TS: It was my first time in South Africa and I learnt a lot about nature conservation and environmental education, which I never knew about and I am very proud to be part of this experience.

ES: How has this opportunity impacted your life?

TS: This opportunity has impacted me in different ways, like allowing me to meet people from different countries and also enabling me to gain more insights about other parts of the world. The new knowledge and skills I have learnt have changed my life for good.

ES: What does the bursary mean to you?

TS: I am very thankful for the bursary, which gave me the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to go study at the Southern African Wildlife College. Without this bursary I would never have gained both theoretical and practical nature conservation skills and I also would have never met people from different cultural backgrounds.

ES: Which was your favourite module or activity in the course?

TS: My favourite module was the rangers' camp. We were taught a lot of different things like animal and tree identification, physical training, team work and discipline – which I really enjoyed.



ES: What is your advice for the Eco-Stars out there?

TS: My advice to Eco-Stars is that they should work very hard to achieve their dreams in life.

MALAWI

Chifundo Nyambalo (above left), 25 years old – 2016 Student

ES: How would you describe your experience at the Southern African Wildlife College?

CN: The experience was an eye-opener for me. I felt huge physical and intellectual transformation within myself. The college is well-structured and composed to affect its participants in a positive way.

ES: How has this opportunity impacted your life?

CN: The training has ignited my full interest in pursuing more knowledge in the field of natural environment and the conservation of wildlife.

ES: What does the bursary mean to you?

CN: The bursary opened up opportunities and equipped me with new skills and knowledge that I could not have achieved on my own.

ES: Which was your favourite module or activity in the course?

CN: I really liked every single module. However, my great interest was in Environmental Education.

ES: What is your advice for the Eco-Stars out there?

CN: My advice to the Eco-Stars is that they should work hard and try to apply for a course at the SAWC. They will not regret, but appreciate their time with the college.



Kondwani Chilima, 23 years old – 2017 Student

ES: How would you describe your experience at the Southern African Wildlife College?

KC: The experience was amazing. My understanding about wildlife and its natural environment improved significantly. In my understanding, SAWC is a standard for all wildlife and environmental education colleges out there.

ES: How has this opportunity impacted your life?

KC: I am a primary school teacher by profession. My teaching skills and capability has totally amplified by the effect of the SAWC on my life.

ES: What does the bursary mean to you?

KC: The bursary did bring me a huge opportunity. I will not take it for granted. Given another opportunity, my wish is to go back to the college to further studies. And I wish that all YES Club members could be included in this programme should new opportunities arise.

ES: Which was your favourite module or activity in the course?

CN: Environmental Education.

ES: What is your advice for the Eco-Stars out there?

CN: I advise them to take the chance if the opportunity of going to SAWC comes their way.



ZAMBIA

Obert Singoma, 19 years old – 2017 Student

ES: How would you describe your experience at the Southern African Wildlife College?

OS: I had a very awesome experience whilst at the Southern African Wildlife College. I got to experience nature in the wild. At the rangers' camp, my greatest experience was when we were doing night duty patrols which exposed me to learning more about different animal sounds and helped me to identify them by listening to their calls.

In the bush phase, my greatest experience was when we were doing patrols, which allowed me to see, in close proximity, different animals in the bush and how beautiful and free they looked in the wild. I also got to learn how strong nature is and how it takes care of itself.

ES: How has this opportunity impacted your life?

OS: This opportunity has positively changed my life because it has changed the way I see things.

This opportunity opened a new door in my





life by enabling me to gain new skills and knowledge which are essential in conserving our environment and to leave nature takes its own course. My achievements so far as a result of this opportunity have started to inspire my family and also opened new doors for them to participate in conservation initiatives armed with the knowledge I have shared with them.

ES: What does the bursary mean to you?

OS: The bursary gave me a chance to pursue my dreams and a chance to study abroad. I am grateful to Children in the Wilderness for paying for all my expenses whilst I was pursuing my dreams at the college.

ES: Which was your favourite module or activity in the course?

OS: Of all the modules I undertook whilst on my stay at the college, leadership was my favourite because it enabled me to understand what a true leader should be like as well as teaching me the values of a good leader.

A leader is someone who inspires others to follow and most importantly, I learnt that a good leader should always be ready to make even difficult decisions.

ES: What is your advice for the Eco-Stars out there?

OS: I would like to encourage them to stay focused in everything thing they are doing and to work hard in pursuing their dreams.

I advise them to go out there to help spread the news about the important role played by the animals in the environment and ecosystems and that the planet is home for all, including wildlife.

Nambula Ruth Imbula, 24 years old – 2017 Student

ES: How would describe your experience at the Southern Africa Wildlife College?

NRI: My experience at the college was very nice. I experienced nature at its best, especially during the bush phase. The roar of lions and hyaena calls at night, the vultures feeding on a lion kill, the drill and the discipline, these and many other things made my stay at the college amazingly beautiful.

ES: How has this opportunity impacted your life?

NRI: This opportunity has truly transformed me. I did things before that were affecting my environment negatively but I didn't know that, but now having had been informed and after acquiring knowledge and skills, I know what I must do to make my environment a better place

ES: What does the bursary mean to you?

NRI: This bursary meant a lot to me because it created an opportunity for me to go to college that, without the bursary, wouldn't have been possible for me to go there.

ES: Which was your favourite module or activity in the course?

NRI: My favourite module was the one for Environmental Education and Leadership. In this module, my favourite activity was when we had the guided trail, where we had to take our friends around telling them about the tree we chose.

ES: What is your advice to the Eco-Stars out there?



NRI: My advice to the Eco-Stars is for them to continue loving nature, taking care of it and above all practice what they have been taught.

They must also spread the word to their families and friends about how the ecosystems work and what would happen to our biodiversity if some animal or plant species were to become extinct.



Deliah Shinkonde, 21 years old – 2017 Student

ES: How would you describe your experience at the Southern African Wildlife College?

DS: My experience at Southern African Wildlife College was awesome because I gained vast knowledge in all modules. In addition to acquiring conservation and environmental knowledge and skills, I have also learnt new financial skills such as personal budgeting, which I lacked.

I have learned and improved my understanding of the ecological, economic, aesthetic and recreational value of the wilderness areas and how to deal with conflict from different values and uses of natural resources.

ES: How has this opportunity impacted your life?

DS: This opportunity has impacted my life in an amazingly positive way and I am no longer the same.

Because of this bursary I am able to apply the knowledge and skills I have gained in Science Technology. I have also cultivated leadership qualities and my life has been elevated to a point where I have keen interest in protecting the environment by taking action. I am also able to speak confidently and creatively in raising awareness in my community and elsewhere. I now view the world in a different way and I am able to embrace cultural and biological diversities.

ES: What does the bursary mean to you?

DS: The bursary was one of the greatest gifts I've ever received in my life. It made a huge difference in my life since I had no funds to

further my studies and now I have a career. I appreciate the fact that the bursary covered all my expenses. This is a privilege and I am very grateful to Children in the Wilderness because I could not have done this on my own.

ES: Which was your favourite module or activity in the course?

DS: My favourite module was Conservation because I had access to the real world and never knew the reason behind the problems we were facing in the community, society and the world at large.

This module has made me understand the importance of, and reason why, we need to conserve so that the future generations can benefit and that we all depend on nature and therefore whatever we do the environment, we ultimately do it to ourselves. As for the activities, I enjoyed the trail of trees one where I learned how to stand in front of people and visitors and explain to them the important uses and roles trees play in the environment. I was one of the people who never believed in myself to stand in front and face people but because of this activity I am now a confident communicator and presenter.

ES: What is your advice to the Eco-Stars out there?

DS: My advice for Eco-Stars out there is that when you get opportunity grab it with both hands. Let's not promote laziness but work extra hard for a better tomorrow to promote environmental activism. To bring about the desired change it begins with you and together we can make a positive difference to our planet.

ZIMBABWE

Wisdom Mdlongwa, 23 years old – 2017 Student

ES: How would you describe your experience at the Southern African Wildlife College?

WM: The learning was amazing and deepened my desire and vision to save nature and be a champion of change among the youths in Tsholothso, as most of them do not value wildlife, water or the wonderful birds we have in the country.

ES: How has this opportunity impacted your life?

WM: The training provided a stepping stone to my future career as a safari guide. Having acquired academic knowledge and practical experience, I am determined to show the rest of the world our natural heritage through safari guiding. I have a new dedication and respect towards nature. The work placement at Parks office was a one-in-a-lifetime experience

and opened the doors for a better tomorrow.

ES: What does the bursary mean to you?

WS: The bursary is an important support programme that provided this opportunity to acquire knowledge, experience and exposure to appreciate nature in a different way. I thank the donors and Children in the Wilderness for their generosity. They offered me a change of life to become a better custodian of our natural heritage in Zimbabwe.

ES: Which was your favourite module or activity in the course?

WM: The Environmental Education module, especially for the children, touched my heart. Environmental knowledge has to be imparted when children are young. The sense of responsibility must be developed from pre-school level.

Teachers and parents should demonstrate how to manage the environment to children from a tender age, e.g. saving water, not killing insects. That way, children will grow up with a positive attitude towards nature.

ES: What is your advice for the Eco-Stars out there?

WM: Every youth should guard against abuse of nature in any form and support any environmental activity at home, school or college.



Children's Creativity Stories

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

Our partnership with Dūcere Foundation, which began in 2015, continues to flourish, thus enhancing literacy levels in children across Africa by promoting story writing, creative writing and the capturing of oral tradition through the African Children's Stories (ACS) programme.

Members of our Eco-Clubs from schools across southern Africa were – through a story-writing competition that we initiated when our collaboration with Dūcere began – asked to write their own stories and poems. Children in the Wilderness and Dūcere Foundation then selected the best stories and so far 33 collections have been published featuring stories from Botswana, South Africa, Zambia and Namibia, the latter collection being the most recent publication.

These are available for purchase in Australia and online, and the funds are used to distribute the books in southern Africa. Some of the books are also distributed and sold to Wilderness Safaris camps and are a great read for the guests' children.

In addition to the ACS programme, our children write stories, create artwork and handicrafts as part of their Eco-Club projects and some of these have been featured in this section. The following stories in this section have been published courtesy of Dūcere Foundation.

My Home - Makuleke Community

By Marcia Noniyo Khosa, 15 years old, Makuleke Primary School – South Africa

Makuleke community is the community for the Shangaan people who speak XiTsonga. It is controlled by the Makuleke Traditional Council. Makuleke community is a beautiful place to live because it is part of the Kruger National Park, where there are lots of animals.

When you go into the Park, you see lions, leopards, elephants, zebras, crocodiles, monkeys, buffalos and cheetah.

I hate it when people in my community pollute and cut down the trees for firewood or for fencing. Cutting down trees causes the soil to wash away. People throw away their papers, bottles, and cans, plastic and pampers (disposable nappies).

The animals and the people hate to drink the polluted water and cholera can breed in the water, making people very sick.

The animals in Kruger Park are eating the plastic and it is making them sick. The animals living inside the water, such as the fish, the crocodiles and the hippopotamus will die and become extinct if we don't clean up our land and waterways. It is the people inside the community who are causing the most pollution. If we keep polluting our community there will be no animals left in the Park. The Park provides a lot of employment for people in my community.

We need to talk about pollution and educate the community about the effects they are having on the environment and our future. We need to give them municipal plastic bags to go around and pick up the rubbish and put our rubbish in dustbins, which should be put on every corner.

Instead of cutting down trees we need to encourage our community to plant more trees, as they also act as windbreakers, give us fruits and medicine and also provide us with oxygen. It is happening now and if we do it right, Makuleke community will be a better place to live for generations to come.

The King who could not speak English

By Edizilian Aikanga, 14 years old, Okaukejo Combined School, Namibia

A long, long time ago, lived a Herero man called Kaunovandu. He lived in a village near Okakarara and was known to all as a rich king. The problem was, that Kaunovandu could not read or even speak English, so he had a slave called Kaviku to help him understand the words that people said.

Kaunovandu told everyone in the village that he could speak English and understand it very well, so if anyone needed help, they should come to him. Now, the plan was that Kaunovandu would sit on his chair and that Kaviku would sit behind the chair and tell the king all the things that people said to him.

One day, a woman came to ask for help. She said that her baby was sick and that she had come to ask the king for some medicine. Immediately the slave heard what the woman said and he told the king. The king replied and said, "Go to a Mopani tree and take some leaves off the tree. Break them up with water and give them to your baby to drink." The woman thanked the king and went on her way.

Some days went by with the king continuing to give people advice and help solve their problems. Eventually, Kaviku got tired of telling the king every little thing, so he decided to make a plan to run away from the village. So one day, a man came to tell the king that the water in the village was dirty and people were getting sick and some were even dying from the sickness.

Kaviku decided to lie to the king so that the king would drink the water, get sick and die too. So Kaviku said to the king, "This man says that the water at the river is very clean and that you should go and taste it to make sure that you like it." The king was very happy and said to the man, smiling, "I will go to the river and see." The man wondered why the king was smiling and so he asked the king. Kaviku replied and said "The king is smiling because he is going to make the water in the river clean," The man nodded and went on his way.

The next day, the king and Kaviku went to the river to see the water. It looked very dirty, so the king asked Kaviku, "Why is the water so dirty?" Kaviku replied, "Oh it's not dirty, the people from the village have put something in the water to make it sweet and that's why it looks like that." Now, because the king heard that the water was very sweet, he leaned out quickly to drink it but to his surprise the water was not sweet at all. He did not want to look bad so he carried on drinking the water. After a few days, the king got very sick and eventually he died. Kaviku ran away and never came back to the village.

Hare Tricks Monkey and Hyaena

Written by Babra Mwala, 13 years old, Twabuka Primary School, Zambia

Hare liked playing tricks on other animals. One day he saw his friends Hyaena and Monkey guarding their farms. They always did this so that birds and other animals could not destroy their crops. Hare wore a very brightly coloured cloak, on one side the cloak was red on the other it was green and the middle it was yellow. He then walked along the boundary between Hyaena's and Monkey's farms.

"What a bright red and yellow cloak Hare has," Monkey said to Hyaena after Hare had passed. "It truly is a bright cloak but it is green and yellow," Hyaena said. The two friends argued and argued on top of their voices. After some time, Hare who was listening from a bush nearby walked past the two. He walked between Hyaena and Monkey and they looked at Hare very closely so as to prove each other wrong.

"I am sorry my friend," Hyaena said to Monkey, "you were right," Hare has a red and yellow cloak. "No, no," Monkey exclaimed! "I have seen it from just two metres away and you were right, Hare has a green and yellow cloak."

The two friends argued more heatedly this time. They argued on and on for a long time until they started fighting and they forgot to guard their own farms.

Hare who was hiding disguised behind the mango trees got into their farms and ate all the best fruit he could find and even carried some home without his friends even seeing him.

Naido, the Selfish Man from Siyazama Village

By Grace Fisikale, 15 years old, Sipepa Primary School, Zimbabwe

A long time ago there was a man named Naido and his family and together they all lived in Siyazama village. It was the year of a great drought, where food was very scarce. Nobody had enough food for themselves and their families.

One day Naido decided to go out and hunt so, he took his hunting tools and left the house. However the hunt was not successful as both humans and animals were suffering from the same drought and so the number of animals around was less than he thought. He came back home weary and tired due to hunger.

The next day he got up early to head out for hunting like the previous day, but this day's hunting took him all the way to the mountain range that borders Siyazama and Tshayakahle villages. Once again, not a single animal was seen, but on top of one of the hills Naido saw a small tree that grew between two rocks, full of big, juicy fruits. Without wasting time Naido climbed the hill and started eating the fruits until he was extremely full.

He left feeling so much better from eating but returned home to his family empty handed. He kept the tree with all the fruit a secret. On the third day, Naido told his wife that he was taking a walk to the mountains again, but this surprised his family because he was full of energy unlike all the other family members who had gone for days without food, Naido also never carried his hunting tools nor called his hunting dogs which made the family very suspicious.

Naido's behaviour concerned his wife and made her suspect that he was up to something out in the mountains. He went straight up the mountain to the fruit tree.

Just when he was out of sight his wife sent David, his son to follow his father secretly to see what was happening in the bush, David followed his father until he got to his father's paradise between the rocks, where he found his father helping himself to all the fruit on the tree - he was even talking to himself and rubbing his stomach. David watched from behind the rock with surprise as his father feasted alone while his own tummy rumbled and gumbled with hunger.

Pulling himself away from the temptation of shouting at his father, David decided to walk back home and tell his mother about everything he had witnessed. When the whole family heard what Naido has been up to they could not believe what David was saying about their father, in whom they had put all their trust.

Late that afternoon Naido returned home with a full stomach and was confident that no one knew about his paradise up the mountains of Tshayakahle. He told his wife that he was very tired from his long day hunting for food and he needed a long nap and that he did not want to be disturbed. His wife pretended to hear his words and let him head for the bedroom but she followed quietly behind him.

Feeling extremely sleepy and weak from over eating Naido threw himself on the bed without even bothering to take off his manyathela (traditional sandals).

Only to be rudely awakened by his wife with words that knocked him off balance! "Naido, father of my children, the great protector of this family in which all our hope and faith lies, what you have been doing for the past few days has destroyed any trust we had in you. You promised to be our protector and fender in good times and bad times, and not to only satisfy yourself while the rest of your family is suffering and dying of hunger."

Instead of being angry or violent Naido was engulfed with guilt and self-humiliation. That evening he called all his family members and apologised for his actions. He promised to never be selfish again and vowed to be there for his family until his last breath on earth.

CHILDREN'S
Creativity – Poems

Better life comes from the environment

By Caroline Kamanga, 12 years old, Chihoma Primary School, Malawi

I am the environment
I hate people who destroy me
I love people who care for me
I am the environment

I am the environment
I am important for everyone because I give them enough rainfall
I provide oxygen for all to live
I am the environment
I am the environment

I hate people who destroy me by cutting down my trees
Setting ragging bush fires and killing my innocent animals carelessly
I am the environment

Wild Land

By Prety Mixo Novela, 17 years old, Jim Chavani High School

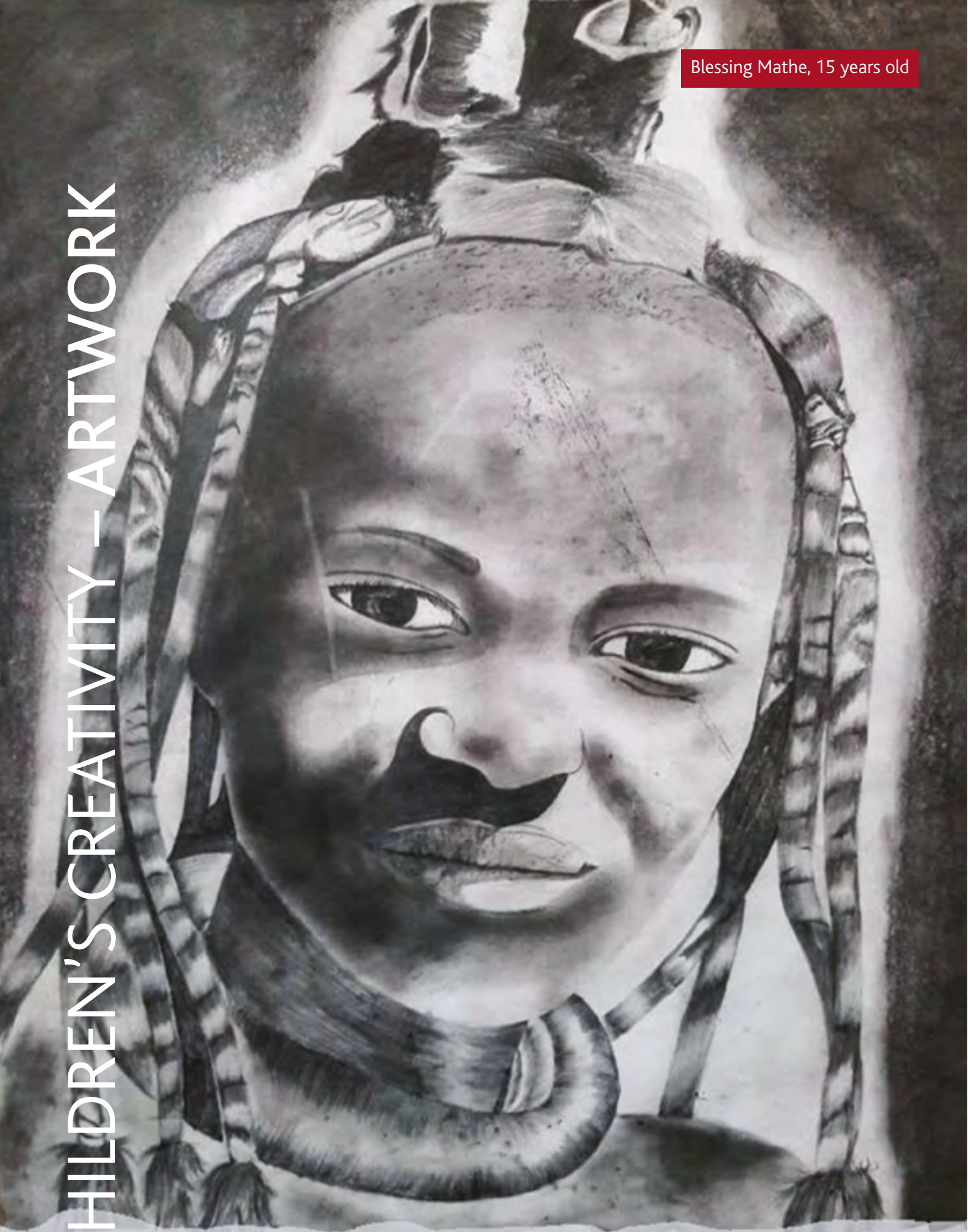
The lions roar
In the wilderness.
Trees so green as the
Green colour in the rainbow.
Rivers flowing from south to north.
Animals grabbing the green leave
From the trees of the land,
To fill their tummies
Water so sparkling like a diamond.
When the sun comes out,
It makes a good picture
Which creates a real African scene?
Rumbling clouds produce our country's anthem
And it creates beautiful
And wonderful beats of the sound
Like drum.

The Wilderness territory
Of our great-great-great parents
Who died oldness
And left us with their forever legacy
Of natural drama.

The fresh air produced by the exhalation of an
Elephant heals broken hearts
Like nobody can.

Blessing Mathe, 15 years old

CHILDREN'S CREATIVITY – ARTWORK



All artwork produced by learners from Jabulani Secondary School.

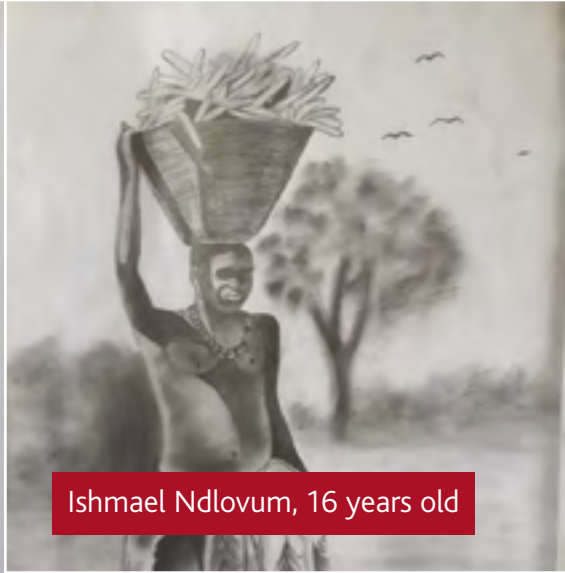
Innocent Ncube, 17 years old



Sefiwe Moyo, 16 years old



Ishmael Ndlovum, 16 years old



Pride Jabula, 18 years old



RAISING ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS THROUGH SPORT

OUR SOCCER IN THE WILDERNESS PROGRAMME, DRIVEN BY CHILDREN IN THE WILDERNESS AMBASSADOR AND EX-PROFESSIONAL SOCCER PLAYER, GORDON GILBERT, CONTINUES TO POSITIVELY IMPACT COMMUNITIES WHICH WE WORK WITH THROUGH COMBINING THE FUN OF SPORT WITH EDUCATION TO RAISE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS.

Gordon, an avid wildlife enthusiast, is dedicated to making a difference in the lives of underprivileged children. Each year, he generously devotes time away from his personal business interests to promote conservation programmes with Children in the Wilderness in remote rural communities whom we partner with.

The inaugural Soccer in the Wilderness clinics took place in Zambia in 2013 and the programme has now been rolled out in other countries such as Botswana and Zimbabwe where Gordon and the Children in the Wilderness team continue to raise awareness in the villages about conservation issues.

BOTSWANA

On 9 November 2017, the Children in the Wilderness team and Gordon Gilbert travelled to Okavango Community Trust villages (Seronga, Gunotsoga, Beetsha and Gudigwa), to host Soccer in the Wilderness clinics which ended on 11 November 2017.

Naledi Kgoba, who is a Children in the Wilderness volunteer and a former Eco-Club member and camper, and now a guide-in-training with Wilderness Safaris and based in Mombo Camp, as well as Yompy Diye Kennetseng (a guide at Mombo Camp), also joined the soccer clinics.

This was a particularly special experience for them, as they could give back to the communities they came from. Seeing people from their home villages had a great impact on the children as they looked up to Naledi and Yompy as role models who

preached the important role of conservation. We kick started our journey by visiting the Okavango Community Trust (OCT) in Seronga where we introduced Gordon to the Community Trust Board so he could share his mission with them.

The Board was impressed and they are looking forward to inviting Gordon to take part in their annual tournament in 2018. Then the soccer clinics started at Seronga Primary where everything was in place and ready for us to start the training. Despite the rain, the training of both girls' and boys' teams went well. In Seronga, the children and teachers were happy to have a moment with Gordon as he passed on the message to take care of wildlife.

The next day, the team headed to Gudigwa Primary School, where the soccer clinics with the students and the community teams took place. Everyone from the community wanted to join in which meant it took a little longer than planned for Gordon to get through all the training. Gordon met with the School Head, Mr Moloji, who appreciated his visit. They chatted about conservation and poaching in their area.

On the final day, the team headed to Beetsha Primary School to continue with the soccer clinics combining it with Gunotsoga Primary school events. At the end of the soccer clinics, the schools were given soccer balls as a reminder to continue their hard work. The Children in the Wilderness team and Gordon have decided to do a follow-up visit to these schools in 2018 to run a tournament in the area to see which schools are applying the skills they were taught during

the soccer clinics and to assist those that are lagging behind. "Children in the Wilderness is grateful to Gordon, Naledi, Yompy, the OCT board and most importantly the children who participated in this exciting initiative. The kind of commitment shown by all involved proves that a lot can be achieved if people come together through sport in advocating environmental conservation." – Kelly Baitshoki, Children in the Wilderness Botswana Programme Assistant.

ZAMBEZI (ZAMBIA AND ZIMBABWE)

In April 2017, Gordon Gilbert assisted with a cross-border interschool soccer competition that included participating Children in the Wilderness schools. The tournament attracted 12 teams from Zambia and Zimbabwe, namely Nalituwe, Twabuka, Holy Cross and Simoonga Primary Schools in Zambia and Jabulani, Emfundweni, Jakalasi, Kapane Primary, Ziga and Ngamo Primary in Zimbabwe. As the games were being hosted in Zimbabwe, there was great excitement getting students across the border. Thanks must go to Wilderness Safaris who graciously offered free transportation for the teams and to both the Zambian and Zimbabwean Immigration Departments who were extremely helpful in facilitating cross-border formalities without passports, ensuring that everything went smoothly for the visiting teams.



Each match was highly contested, but thanks to training of sports coaches at schools in Livingstone, the Zambian team's efforts were visibly superior.

Children in the Wilderness arranged for a floating trophy for the winning team and this year's winner was Zambia's Holy Cross School; runners-up were Twabuka, also from Zambia, third and fourth places were respectively awarded to Jabulani and Emfundweni Schools from Zimbabwe.

Congratulations must go to Gordon who plays a vital role in empowering children through education and sporting fun, as he shares not only his soccer skills but his passion for conservation as well. This is what one student had to say after chatting with Gordon:

"Let us extend our passion for football to preserving our environment because if we do not preserve our environment we will have no environment to play football from." – Elijah Simukonda of Nalituwe Primary School, Livingstone Zambia.



The presence of Wilderness Safaris Zambezi Region Managing Director, Ron Goatley, boosted everyone's morale. Ron commented on the level of camaraderie amongst both students and teaching staff from the two countries and was particularly impressed at the end of the tournament when he saw Zambian teachers offering to help the Zimbabwean teachers develop their training techniques.

With this in mind, Children in the Wilderness would like to work on getting some teacher-training sports workshops going in the months ahead; we believe these efforts will not only enhance the game of soccer for the students but it will also further encourage cross border interaction between the schools.

Suffice it to say, the 2017 Soccer Clinic was a huge highlight on the Children in the Wilderness conservation and culture calendar. We would like to close this year's Soccer Clinic news with an inspiring quote from our ambassador, Gordon Gilbert:

"As an ambassador for Children in the Wilderness, I feel passionate about making a difference where it matters most, there is no measure as to how big or small the impact may be as this will differ every time.

The moral of the story and mission is clear, make it count and do you best to leave a footprint or legacy that you will be proud of. I love to feel I am influencing someone or people in a positive way; if we all strive to be better and do better, this world will be a better place.

I feel that we as humans need to change the mind set of expecting someone else to make it happen; we have the right and responsibility to stand up and do the right thing. To protect and conserve our heritage and leave it in a way we will be proud of for the future generations is what needs to be second nature.

Many have conquered and sacrificed their lives for the life we have today, let's not be greedy and selfish in the way of taking and not giving back. Together we can make a difference, even if it means standing alone to make that first step." – Gordon Gilbert, Children in the Wilderness Ambassador.



THE NEDBANK TOUR

Africa's premier mountain-biking event raises funds for Children in the Wilderness



Over the years, one of Children in the Wilderness' prime fundraising activities has been the Nedbank Tour de Tuli, which is a popular and life-changing event for the cyclists, communities and the organisers. All monies raised directly benefit Children in the Wilderness. Tour de Wilderness, the organiser of this annual Nedbank Tour de Tuli multi-stage mountain bike event, is proud to celebrate the success of its 13th Tour and 10th year of riding through the Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) of Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa. This year saw 255 cyclists ride a total of 248 kilometres along challenging terrain in the three countries between 27 July and 1 August 2017.

"Cyclists from around the world joined us to take part in this remarkable event that once again saw a mix of seasoned riders and first-time participants taking part. We are privileged to be able to enjoy riding in these pristine wildlife areas, and to do so while raising funds for Children in the Wilderness. We are extremely proud that our efforts ultimately translate into making such an important difference to environmental education in our rural communities," said Tour Director, Nicola Harris. Honourable Tshekedi Khama, Botswana's Minister of Environment, Wildlife and Tourism, set the excitement for the days to follow with a memorable address on the first night at Limpopo Valley Airfield.

Along the route, highlights included breaks at beautiful viewpoints such as Cecil John Rhodes' Baobab and Solomon's Wall.



OUR DETAILS

The tea and brunch stops, set up at surprise locations along the route, are always much appreciated; while on the final day the highlight was undoubtedly viewing 200-year-old fossils on display at the Bristow's House, discovered in the nearby vicinity. It was a thrill for participants to be able to meet the local school children supported by Children in the Wilderness at Lentswe-le-Moriti School in Botswana and at Shashe Primary School in Zimbabwe. The children, all bearing their country's flag, expressed great delight at meeting the cyclists and each received a backpack with stationery. The children enjoyed being taken on a few short rides by some of the dusty, friendly Tour participants. "Many people ask us how we manage to pull off such a seamless event and the answer is always the same – an event like this is not possible without the wonderful volunteers

and dedicated staff that we have. I cannot thank my team enough for the hours of effort and tireless energy 24/7 to ensure that our cyclists not only had the best mountain biking experience during the day, but were cared for and spoilt throughout the Tour," Harris added. It took over 150 staff and volunteers who helped put up 1 500 tents (and took them down again), served 8 688 beers, 750 bottles of Painted Wolf wine and 5 800 cups of Bean There Coffee. "We had lots of laughs, drinks at night to toast the day and many new friendships made; the spirit of the 2017 Tour was, as always, remarkable. We cannot thank our sponsors and participants enough for their generosity; together we really can continue to play a meaningful role in developing Africa's next generation of environmental leaders," said Janet Wilkinson, Children in the Wilderness Regional Programme Manager.



Nedbank Tour de Tuli hits the road

In 2017, the Tour de Wilderness team set out to attend two expos, namely The Cape Town Cycle Tour Expo and the 94.7 Mountain Bike Expo as well as attending the Time Adventure Challenge: a mountain biking and trailing running event in Botswana, with the later event focused on marketing, promoting the Nedbank Tour de Tuli to try have more Botswana riders represented in the 2018 cycle tour.

There was certainly no lack of enthusiasm and everyone was really excited to share with the public what the Nedbank Tour de Tuli is about and eager to sign up new riders. The team met many interested riders who hadn't heard about the event and excitedly communicated the highlights of the Tour.

They were equally excited to be reunited with previous participants where many good memories of the event were shared.

"We definitely intend to attend future Expos to ensure that mountain bike riders receive the opportunity of learning about our unique fundraising mountain bike tours." – Nicola Harris, Nedbank Tour de Tuli Director.

Nedbank Tour de Tuli Champions Meet some of the people who make it all happen

Despite its relatively small staff complement, the Tour de Wilderness is a wonderful team of dedicated and passionate individuals whose mission is to make a positive difference in conservation education in Africa, by offering unique mountain bike tours where all proceeds of the funds help Children in the Wilderness to achieve its goals. Giving back, adventure and good health are some of the important core values that drive this team. From 2005 to 2017, Tour de Wilderness has hosted approximately 3 770 cyclists who have ridden over 3 801 kilometres and raised over R20 million.

Mari dos Santos – Tour Administrator

Mari was born in Madrid, Spain and spent her early childhood years in Sao Paulo, Brazil, before immigrating to South Africa with her family. Her work career in the travel industry started in 1977. "In 1999 I joined Wilderness Safaris as the Personal Assistant to the CEO at the time. I am currently the administrator and secretary for the Wilderness Wildlife Trust and assist with the administration on the Nedbank Tour de Tuli. Volunteering on the annual Tour de Tuli has always been one of the highlights of my calendar. Imagine being part of something so wonderful and exciting that benefits and enriches so many people in so many ways, from recipients, participants, to the volunteers. In life, we succeed by helping others without expecting anything in return, it's like planting a tree for someone else to sit in its shade."





THE TOUR TEAM



Nicola Harris
TOUR DIRECTOR



Jonathan Felix
OPERATIONS MANAGER



Vumi Dlakavu
OPERATIONS COORDINATOR



Shona Erasmus
HOSPITALITY COORDINATOR





NEDBANK
TOUR DE

DE WILDERNESS



Mari dos Santos
TOUR ADMINISTRATION



Richard van der Wel
TOUR ACCOUNTANT



Liza Steyn
ADMINISTRATIVE BOOKKEEPER

To learn more about the Nedbank Tour de Tuli, please visit www.tourdewilderness.com/nedbank-tour-de-tuli/

CHILDREN IN THE WILDERNESS' PRESENCE IN

The Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area (GMTFCA)



“The Tri-Nations Camp brings together children from three different countries, providing them with the opportunity to share and appreciate their cultural differences and learning experiences.

It is magical to see them becoming one, united, having fun, while they learn about the wild animals, nature, environment and heritage.”

- Bokang Shopane



Children in the Wilderness Limpopo Valley

Since Children in the Wilderness' major fundraiser, the annual Nedbank Tour de Tuli, takes place in the GMTFCA and as a way of giving back to communities in the Tuli block, we started the Children in the Wilderness Limpopo Valley camp programme in 2010 and have already hosted 13 successful annual camps with funding mainly from our annual Tour de Tuli and from individual cyclists.

Children in the Wilderness in Maramani Community

A number of meetings were held in Maramani in 2017 to streamline our programme to our goals as well as to provide support to our Eco-Club Coordinator and teachers. A new Eco-Club Coordinator, Councillor Luka Ndou, was appointed to take the helm of community and Eco-Club coordination. Councillor Ndou is well respected in his community and has been involved in community upliftment programmes for a long time.

The Eco-Club sessions and projects take place in the primary schools that we work with namely: Jalukange, Limpopo, Shashi and Nottingham – with a combined total of 68 Eco-Club members.

Due to the growth and increasing interest of the Children in the Wilderness Eco-Club programme in the area, more Eco-Mentor training workshops targeted at Maramani teachers and community members are scheduled to take place in 2018.

Children in the Wilderness Eco-Clubs in the Tuli area

Children in the Wilderness Eco-Club programme operates at Mathathane Primary School, Motlhabaneng Primary School and Lentswe-le-Moriti Primary School. Calvenia Makgosa continues to coordinate and implement our programme on the ground. There is a total of 112 learners who are members of the Eco-Clubs in the three schools. Children in the Wilderness provided Eco-Mentor training to 70 community members across the three villages of Mathathane, Motlhabaneng and Lentswe-Le-Moriti which included the school principals, at least two school teachers, village chief, community development team chairperson, village extension team chairperson, general

community members and the councillor of the Tuli area. The aim of the training was to introduce the Children in the Wilderness scope of work to the communities and show community members how they could participate in the Eco-Club projects. All the costs of the training logistics and material were fully funded by Children in the Wilderness.

Children in the Wilderness Eco-Clubs in Alldays

Children in the Wilderness continues to run a successful Eco-Club programme at Modikwa Primary School coordinated by Portia Phokela who is based in Simson village.

The Eco-Club has a total of 40 members. In April 2017, Portia together with another three Eco-Club coordinators from Makuleke and Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa, attended an Eco-Club workshop in Johannesburg organised by Children in the Wilderness.

The workshop was aimed at sharing experiences about the Eco-Club programme implementation in the areas in which they are based, as well as to train them on new skills to help them manage their projects effectively.

More training sessions targeted at Modikwa Primary School teachers and community members have been scheduled for mid-2018. We have received some amazing feedback as the learners embraced the Eco-Club lessons by implementing what they have learnt in their surroundings.

and Zimbabwe – supported by over 30 trained Eco-Mentors attended these three nights-four-days educational, fun-filled camp programmes.

The participating children on these camps were selected from the Eco-Clubs. Camp highlights included a visit to the park museum to learn about the history of the Mapungubwe kingdom and heritage, while game drives, environmental education lessons and activities as well as a visit to the confluence of Shashe and Limpopo rivers were some of the unforgettable camp memories.

“The Tri-Nations Camp brings together children from three different countries, providing them with the opportunity to share and appreciate their cultural differences and learning experiences. It is magical to see them becoming one, united, having fun, while they learn about the wild animals, nature, environment and heritage,” noted Bokang Shopane – Children in the Wilderness South Africa and Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area Programme Coordinator.

What the children had to say:

“It was interesting for me to know that the Zhizo people were the first people to arrive in Mapungubwe while making of the ‘Tippy Taps’ and game drives were my biggest highlights.” – Evans Mphoo, Botswana.

“I discovered that Mapungubwe king was buried on top of Mapungubwe hill in a sitting position facing west – a symbol that their people of Mapungubwe’s leader has passed on and the sun has set on them. Saving water, electricity and picking up litter are some of the commitments I have made on camp.” – Tumiso Ramoroba, 11 years old, Botswana.

“What I liked the most was learning about food chains and webs and how everything depends on one another in the ecosystem. Learning about the Mapungubwe history and heritage was some of my highlights on camp.” – Shalom Makambanga, 12 years old, Zimbabwe

“The most important thing I learnt on camp was that we must not litter and also the importance of saving water.” – Keneiloe Ndlovu – 13 years old, Zimbabwe

“I enjoyed learning about the Mapungubwe kingdom and the special hill. I also like the water conservation and the importance of trees lessons and activities.” – Daisy Chipu, South Africa.

“Learning about the importance of trees as shown in the movie ‘the Lorax’ and the lessons was my greatest experience on camp.” – Monekwe Mathoga, 11 years old, South Africa.

Tri-Nations Camps

In order to empower and involve communities in areas within which our annual Nedbank Tour de Tuli mountain cycling transverses, Children in the Wilderness and Tour de Wilderness believe that the local communities should also benefit from our involvement in the Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Areas (GMTFCA).

For this to happen, Children in the Wilderness, in partnership with the South African Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) and the GMTFCA international coordination officials, holds an annual Tri-Nations Camp for children from Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe who come together to enjoy three nights in the Mapungubwe National Park on this interactive, fun-filled, yet educational conservation camp programme.

To date, we have successfully hosted three Tri-Nations Camps in the area with the most recent camp held from 12 to 15 December 2017 and the inaugural one in the same month in 2015. All the camps took place at the world’s renowned Mapungubwe National Park and World Heritage Site in South Africa. A total of 48 children from three countries in the GMTFCA – Botswana, South Africa

“The most important thing I learnt on camp was that we must not litter and also the importance of saving water.”

– Keneiloe Ndlovu – 13 years old, Zimbabwe



Some of our PARTNERS

Without the unwavering support from our partners, Children in the Wilderness would not be able to achieve its goals.

It is through our partners, donors, supporters, volunteers, and friends that we are able to do our work and realise our aims and objectives. In this section, we look closely at Wilderness Safaris Members Club and Southern African Wildlife College who are two of our amazing partners.

Shayne meets the Herd at Abu Camp



Wilderness Safaris Members Club

Eco-Stars interviewed Shayne Richardson-Bayly who is the Manager of Wilderness Safaris Members Club. We also profiled some of the Club team members.

ES: What is Wilderness Safaris Members Club?

SRB: The Wilderness Safaris Members Club is generous, transparent and easy to use. A proviso – all members and travellers must be African residents. We will provide ease of booking and affordability. Our team will bring you extraordinary rates, tirelessly analysing occupancies in our camps, on our guided explorations and walking trails as well as on our aircraft, to negotiate the very best rates and bespoke opportunities for you – based on your personal preferences.

Bed-nights are unlimited and subject to availability. Membership costs R6 000/BWP4 500, offering exceptional and substantial benefits for members, their families and guests for two years, with an option to renew.

The fee is a charitable donation to Children in the Wilderness.

ES: Who qualifies for membership and how does it work?

SRB: Over the past 35 years, Wilderness Safaris has enjoyed the support of many southern African safari aficionados.

These guests have become great friends who share our mission to understand the wilderness better, to respect it, care for it and share it. They recognise Wilderness Safaris as an authentic safari brand with extraordinary locations.

We are rewarding our local supporters with the membership benefits of our Wilderness Safaris Members Club.

For more information about Wilderness Safaris Members Club, please visit www.wilderness-members.co.za



Meet Shayne Richardson-Bayly

Shayne studied journalism at Stellenbosch University

Her first job was to sustain her travel-bug, seeing her take on roles such as waitressing, apple-picking, bartending, house cleaning – you name it, she did it, in places such as Europe and the Middle East.

Her first "real job" was at Woolworths as a buyer, which, as she says "set the bar high for future things to come."

Following this, Shayne pursued her own interests and has subsequently spent most of her professional life as a self-employed marketing consultant, enjoying the freedom and the challenges that this brought with it.

"I have had exciting fun times working with SA Rugby, Total Sports and Beyond as well as building houses and being a mother to my children."

"I love the authenticity of the Wilderness Safaris experience, the generosity of spirit of the camp staff, the challenge of creating a new sales channel and delighting guests, the extraordinarily good work the company does, and of course the magnificent wildlife in the unique destinations where Wilderness Safaris has camps and explorations."





Q&A Theresa Sowry
CEO – SAWC

Southern African WILDLIFE COLLEGE (SAWC)

About SAWC

The Southern African Wildlife College was conceptualised in 1993 and established in 1996 by the World Wide Fund for Nature, South Africa (WWF-SA). Since its inception, and with the support of WWF-SA and Peace Parks Foundation, the College has trained over 15 000 people from 46 countries, mostly from the SADC region, in natural resource management and conservation practices.

By expanding its reach and becoming involved in training ventures and projects off-site, the College has also built the capacity of over 2 000 previously-disadvantaged South Africans. Eco-Stars had some time to talk with Theresa Sorry CEO of Southern African Wildlife College, and Christopher Kafoteka who is Business Unit Manager: Community, Youth Development & Access unit at SAWC, who both shared our partnership experiences with Eco-Stars.



SOUTHERN AFRICAN
WILDLIFE COLLEGE



ES: In a few words, how would you describe your partnership with Children in the Wilderness?

TS: I would say that the partnership is one of mutual benefit, trust, and like-minded ideas culminating in quality education for young people who would not otherwise have the means to get tertiary education.

The workplace aspect of any programme is just as important as the training modules. Children in the Wilderness offers the workplace component that we desperately need in the SADC region.

ES: How do you foresee the partnership in the future?

TS: I personally would love the partnership to grow into other areas of possible collaboration.

Field guiding, hospitality... In fact any and all conservation related training development programmes that Children in the Wilderness is targeting in the workplace environment. It's important to look at how can we start a young person's ability to develop, and essentially guide them through a number of programmes developing more advanced skills until they have achieved sustainable employment and can start giving back to the industry that has moulded them.

How great would it be if Children in the Wilderness bridging course students returned to the SAWC for the field guiding training or even in a few more years the wildlife management qualifications?

ES: Any other exciting information you would like to share with us regarding this partnership?

TS: The success of the SAWC depends on the collaboration and support of our partners including that of Children in the Wilderness. As an accredited private Higher Education and Training institution we do not receive any direct funding from government and are responsible for raising our own income via training, our partners and the donor community.

Children in the Wilderness helps fund some of the youth on the Bridging Course programme thereby meeting the College half way in sourcing funding for the learners selected for this important skills development programme. It is a privilege to partner with such a passionate team.



Q&A Christopher Kafoteka
Business Unit Manager – SAWC

ES: Briefly, can you tell us about the Youth Access programme and why it is critical within SADC?

CK: The Youth Access: Conservation and Environmental Education bridging programme is a six-month skills development programme targeting youth between the ages of 18 and 26.

The programme targets unemployed people who have just matriculated and who are seeking a career in conservation. The course itself focuses on exposing the learner to the theory and practical application of environmental education and to the life of a field ranger in a conservation area whilst also imparting leadership skills.

Learners undergo a contact training session at the College for four months and then are work-placed in host conservation organisations for two months in order to get a real understanding of an entry level career in conservation and to gain valuable field experience.

The course is critical within the SADC region because it includes work placement during which time the learners actively participate in daily patrols, field operations,

and collection of field data, compiling field reports, game capturing/releasing, reporting procedures and attending poaching court cases. The programme is aimed at developing young conservation minds that are ready to help safeguard the dwindling wildlife populations through participation in law enforcement activities or environmental education.

At the same time the course opens doors for further training opportunities and possible employment opportunities.

ES: Why is it important to partner with organisations such as Children in the Wilderness in this programme?

CK: It is part of the College's strategy that programmes offered at the SAWC are done in consultation with stakeholders within the conservation and environmental sector so that the programmes offered are needs driven and relevant to the industry. Partnering with Children in the Wilderness in the implementation of the Youth Access Bridging Programme is one positive step towards achieving the College's mission. This addresses the need for us to provide cutting edge, hands-on training programmes that will produce competent and motivated

wildlife area managers and conservationists who are able to manage and conserve their protected and associated flora and fauna on a sustainable basis within stated conservation objectives and in corporation with local communities; a quest which is shared by Children in the Wilderness.

ES: Any last thoughts on this collaboration?

CK: Our efforts are more effective and are strengthened through partnerships. A multiplier effect is created when two or more organisations who share a vision, join hands on a common cause. And what better than a cause that helps develop youth across the SADC region to the benefit of our natural heritage?

To learn more about Southern African Wildlife College and the course programmes they offer, please visit their website:

www.wildlifecollege.org.za or call their friendly reception office on +27 15 793 7300 during office hours (08H00 -17H00, SA Time).



"The programme targets unemployed people who have just matriculated and who are seeking a career in conservation."





Where Are They **NOW**?

Former Children in the Wilderness campers now in the workplace or studying further.

While Eco-Clubs are often the first time we meet our children, it is not the last. Children in the Wilderness has developed and continues to update its database of all children who participated in its programmes.

It is through our annual camps, Eco-Clubs, Youth Environmental Stewardship as well as scholarship and internship programmes that we are able to keep in constant contact with our children as they grow with our programme. The regular interactions we have

with our children ensure that we are able to provide further support to identified participants with potential so they can continue with their schooling and ultimately start successful careers.

An interesting aspect of this programme is that the majority of the alumni come back to work with younger children in our programmes as Eco-Mentors and volunteers and this inspires our children to dream big.

BOTSWANA

Kesotlegile "Keso" Ramogapedi

Keso, as he is affectionately known in his community, who joined Children in the Wilderness as a camper in 2008 and 2010 respectively, shares his story in his own words with us.

"My name is Keso and I am 23-year-old young man who was born at Beetsha village. I grew up at Gudigwa village where I completed my Primary School Leaving Examinations in 2008. I grew up in close proximity to the Okavango Delta where wild animals are abundant and I enjoyed creating beautiful artwork of these amazing animals.

As a member of Children in the Wilderness Eco-Club at a young age, I was taught about the importance of wildlife and how to protect them. It was my commitment to the Eco-Club that led Children in the Wilderness to include me in the list of the selected children who were going to attend the annual camp.

I started to believe more in my dreams and wanted to work in the field of tourism as a guide or a wildlife officer to protect the wild and share the beauty of it with the foreign visitors and local people alike.

I never wanted to miss anything pertaining to Children in the Wilderness and the Eco-Clubs as the programme empowered me with skills such as personal hygiene, collaboration, communication, career guidance, to mention but a few, which have played a pivotal role in my career and my life in general.

Even though my initial career dream has shifted a bit from environmental related careers, I still believe that my current career path, which is medicine, that I fell in love with, will still allow me to make positive contributions to the world. I love being with people and share with them with what we all need to do to save our beautiful planet. Due to the lack of motivation and guidance most young people from my community have lost hope of achieving their dreams.

My advice to my fellow young people is that we should do our best to resist temptations and influences from negative people as this distract us from achieving our personal goals – it is only the sky that we should see as our limit."



Gagoope Monnafela

Twenty-three year-old Gagoope, was born in Tubu village in the north-west district of Botswana. He joined Children in the Wilderness in 2008 as a camper when he was a learner at Tubu Primary School.

While growing up in Tubu village, which is part of the Okavango Delta with plenty of wild animals roaming through their village, Gagoope saw this as an opportunity to get free bush meat. He recalls how he used to hunt animals and just how dangerous this was.

During that time, Gagoope thought his actions were justifiable as he and his younger siblings had no one to look after them and they resorted to hunting for survival. Even though, his family had a license to do so, he was not proud about killing wild animals.

His life changed for the better and he was converted to conservation after he attended the 2009 Children in the Wilderness camp in Jacana. Instead of hunting, Gagoope started doing part-time jobs for community members who then paid him and continued to support his family.

Upon realising his commitment and potential, in 2017 Children in the Wilderness gave Gagoope a bursary to study for a six-month bridging course in Conservation and Environmental Leadership at Southern African Wildlife College in South Africa.

After successfully completing his course, he was offered an opportunity to gain practical work experience by Wilderness Safaris Botswana.



Gagoope aspires to become a professional guide. He wants to teach tourists about the beautiful wilderness areas and wildlife of Botswana, and also educate his community about the importance of conservation of all natural resources – thanks to the environmental knowledge he gained from Children in the Wilderness.

"I still cannot believe that I am very close to realising my newfound dream of becoming a professional safari guide and I am grateful to Children in the Wilderness for saving my life, guiding and giving me another chance in life."



MALAWI

Andrew Viyano

Now twenty four years old, Andrew joined Children in the Wilderness in 2007 as a camper when he was a learner at Namandanje Primary School.

He received a sponsorship from Rosemary Pencil Foundation when he was at Phwezi Secondary School, so he could continue with his education since his parents were unable to pay his school fees. Due to his hard work and great potential, the foundation agreed to fund his tertiary studies.

He is currently doing his degree's practical work assignment at one of the biggest broadcasting stations in Malawi. Since joining Children in the Wilderness, Andrew's dream of becoming a journalist has not changed – and it is even clearer today.

Andrew always tells the Eco-Club and other YES Club members that "a desired life is made in one's mind and can be practically realised by working hard towards it."

He is the current president of three YES Clubs in Malawi.



Debora Mataka

Debora is 22 years old and joined Children in the Wilderness in 2007. During her time as an Eco-Club member and camper, Debora always dreamed of a career in medicine.

When she was in secondary school as a YES Club member, she said that she would like to become a nurse. In 2017, her world changed when Children in the Wilderness sponsored her nursing qualification at the University of Malawi and she is now in her second year of study.

"I believe that I am a pillar of my mother and the foundation of her own children. This inspires me to stay focused so I can achieve

my life goals. I would like to encourage all Eco-Club and YES Club members take advantage of and use the opportunities offered by Children in the Wilderness to achieve their greatest potential."

In the photo (left), Debora is standing second from left. She is standing with her fellow YES members at the 2017 Children in the Wilderness annual YES camps.

NAMIBIA

Abiollus Haneb

Abiollus is a 21-year-old Southern African Wildlife College graduate who is currently working as an Eco-Mentor at Jacob-Basson Combined School in Bersig within the Torra Conservancy. He plans to start and implement more environmental projects and strengthen the Conservancy's relationship with Eco-Clubs in his area.

Abiollus was born and raised in Okaukuejo village but now lives in Outjo village. He joined Children in the Wilderness in 2013 as a camper when he was a learner at Okaukuejo Combined School. He continued with Children in the Wilderness when he went to Cornelius Goreseb High School as a YES Club member.

In July 2017, Abiollus was amongst the 20 learners who were offered study bursaries for a six-month bridging course in Conservation and Environmental Leadership at Southern African Wildlife College in South Africa.



"I have participated twice in Children in the Wilderness camps as a camper and more than two times as a tent leader and mentor. My involvement in Children in the Wilderness has changed my life and helped me to achieve my goals in life through exposure to environmental opportunities that I would not



have attained on my own. I enjoyed the great friendships I have made and learnt how special our beautiful Namibia is in the world."



Saara Nüilenge

Nineteen years old, Saara is from Tsandi village in Omusat region. She joined Children in the Wilderness in 2012 when she was a learner at Okaukuejo Combined School before she went to Paresis Secondary School.

While on annual camps, Saara loved teaching children castellation, hygiene and animal behaviour. Saara is currently studying towards a civil engineering degree at the University of Namibia and is the first tertiary student to be sponsored by our partner, Khomas Trust from UK.

Her plan is to obtain a Masters qualification abroad before returning to work in Namibia.



SOUTH AFRICA

Thabo Baldwin Maluleke

Now nineteen, Thabo hails from Maviligwe village in Makuleke community in the outskirts of Limpopo province, South Africa. The village in which he was raised is situated in very close proximity to the Kruger National Park western border fence, so he encountered wildlife as well as human-wildlife conflict on a regular basis. In 2011, Thabo joined Children in the Wilderness as an Eco-Club member while he was in Grade 6 at Boxahuku Primary School because of his passion to conserve wildlife. After completing his primary schooling, he went to N’wanati High School where he continued with Children in the Wilderness as a YES Club member.

Thabo was selected to attend annual camps in 2011 and 2015, which were held in Pafuri region of Kruger National Park.

His passion for wildlife earned him a place to participate in the Elephant Sanctuary programme which took place in Pafuri in 2014. Under the supervision of Dr. Lalley, Thabo and other selected learners participated in tracking, darting and collaring of elephants for research purposes.

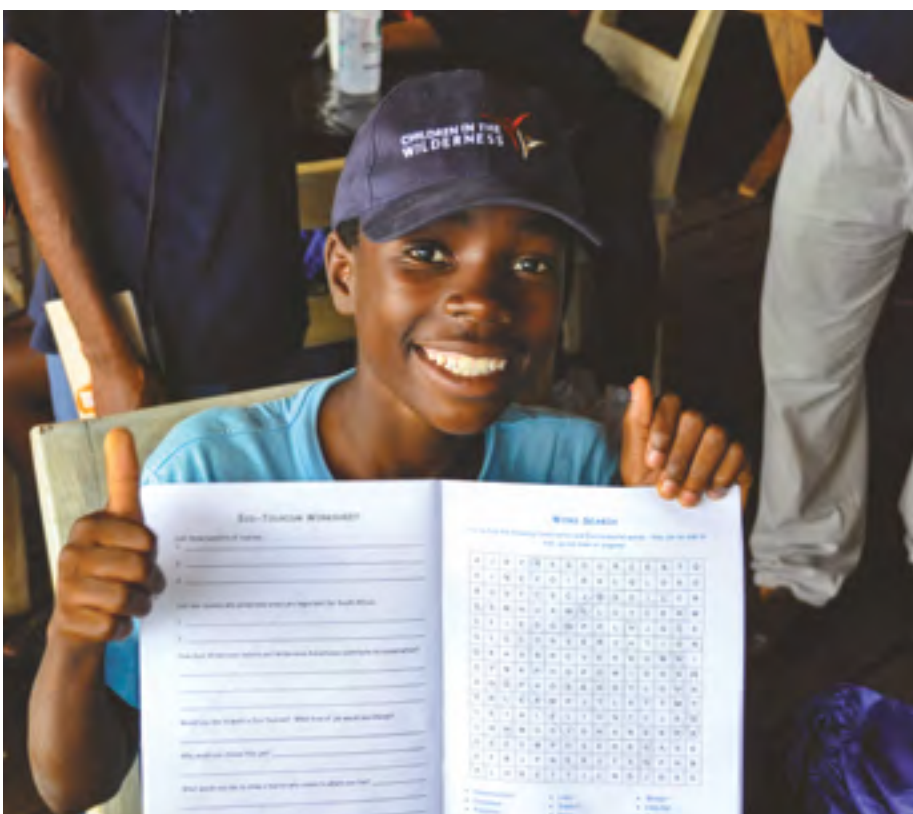
Since he was a young boy, Thabo dreamt of becoming a veterinarian and this has not changed. In 2016, his world changed when Children in the Wilderness arranged an opportunity of a lifetime for him to spend a week with SANParks Veterinary Wildlife Services unit in Skukuza learning about game capture, taking and analysing animals’ blood, tissue and hair samples, as well as assisting in the translocation preparations.

“I am grateful for the exposure and knowledge have gained during my time in Skukuza and believe that this will help me realise my dream. I now understand what a vet job entails and how it feels like working with animals – my path to reach my goal is even clearer now.”

Thabo is now the Assistant Guide and Ranger at the Hoedspruit Endangered Wildlife Centre where he works with a dedicated team of individuals who help protect the many species found in Kapama Game Reserve.

“My involvement in Children in the Wilderness has not only helped my shape my future but also exposed me to the world of conservation where I met and continue to meet likeminded people with whom I share the same vision of protecting wildlife. I would not have achieved this much without the support and guidance of Children in the Wilderness, and I would like to thank Mama Janet* for the role she has and continues to play in my life.”

** Mama Janet is Janet Wilkinson, Thabo’s mentor since he joined the Children in the Wilderness programme and she is also the Programme Regional Manager.*





ZIMBABWE

Delphine Ndlovu

Delphine, aged 20, grew up in Vozheka line in Tsholotsho District. She was born to a family with four children (one boy and three girls) where both parents were unemployed. Her father periodically does piece-work jobs to cater for the daily needs of the family. She joined the Children in the Wilderness scholarship programme in 2007 when she was in Grade 4. Since then, she committed to studying "as that was the only way I could show my appreciation to my sponsors as well as build a better tomorrow for myself, my family and my community," says Delphine. After passing her primary level, Children in the Wilderness continued to support her to do her O Level (she passed 10 subjects with 6As, 3Bs and 1C) and A Level (passed with 3As) at St James High School. In July 2017, Children in the Wilderness invited Delphine to spend two months

getting work experience with them before commencing her studies at NUST University where she is now majoring in Accounting Studies.

"I realised that this was a great opportunity for me to get a sneak peek into the working environment and working in the Children in the Wilderness' accounting department gave me a clearer understanding of my future career. I was more than happy to join them since Children in the Wilderness is doing great work in our community by helping the less privileged children in the rural communities who are willing to learn but have inadequate resources like stationery, uniforms and school fees. Wilderness Safaris is hugely giving back to communities by investing in the many children's education."

ZAMBIA

Kumbuso Mwanza

Kumbuso was born 25 years ago in Mambwe district of Eastern Province of Zambia bordering South Luangwa National Park. He went to St Francis Primary School and later finished his secondary education at St Luke's Secondary School in the same area.

While at secondary school, Kumbuso was a leader of the Wildlife Club which was championed by Conservation Society of Zambia (CSZ). Kumbuso is an artist and loves drawing and has been instrumental in helping the Eco-Club members at Holy Cross and Nalituwe Primary Schools in Livingstone learn more about art and how to draw animals and label indigenous trees in their scientific names.

In July 2017, he was one of the students awarded bursaries to study at the Southern African Wildlife College in South Africa. Upon completion of the training, he did his work placement at Department of Parks and Wildlife in Livingstone. During his experiential training, he impressed his managers with his work ethic and performance and was invited for a job interview and eventually offered a position of Assistant Lodge Manager in South Luangwa National Park.

He is proud of his achievements and is grateful to Children in the Wilderness for opening the doors to opportunities for him.

"The sky is the limit and the only gift you can give to the world is to protect the environment."





MEET THE *Children in the Wilderness* TEAM

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

Our people are our greatest assets who shape Children in the Wilderness' future. Their contributions and the pride they take in what they do, alongside those of our partners, supporters and sponsors, enable us to make a difference to Africa and her children.

Children in the Wilderness is privileged to have such an amazing team of people who not only see their jobs as a career and a means of a living but also as a calling because working with children requires care, love and passion. In the issues of this publication, we briefly introduce you to all our team members as well as sharing detailed biographies of different members every year.

In this issue, we are proud to introduce you to Sue Goatley, Bongani Baloyi and Liza Steyn. Please take a moment to learn more about their amazing journeys with Children in the Wilderness and why they love what they do.



Sue Goatley *Children in the Wilderness Programme Coordinator – Zambezi Region (Zambia and Zimbabwe)*

Sue is a born-and-bred second-generation Zimbabwean and spent her early childhood growing up in the rural farming communities. She trained at Zimbabwe Teachers College and had 25 years' primary school teaching experience in both Southern African and Zimbabwean Schools prior to joining Wilderness Safaris in 2008, where she initiated the Children in the Wilderness programme for Zimbabwe. Today she is the Children in the Wilderness Programme Coordinator for the Zambezi Region which incorporates both Zimbabwe and Zambia; she is also responsible for Wilderness Safaris Community Programmes.



"I have a passion for teaching and believe that through the provision of a good foundation in literacy and environmental education for rural children, hope and ambition can be restored and doors of opportunity will open for the youth of Africa."

Bongani Baloyi *Regional Programme Coordinator – Regional Office, South Africa*



A graduate in Administration and Management from Tshwane University of Technology, Bongani has extensive experience in stakeholder relationships and working with communities, CBOs and NGOs. During a stint with Statistics South Africa, he gained invaluable administrative experience. Bongani previously worked as the Children in the Wilderness Eco-Club Community Liaison in his home village, Makuleke in Limpopo Province. As the Implementation Officer in the Makuleke Communal Property Association which is the title holder of

the Makuleke Contractual Park in the Kruger National Park, Bongani has been involved in the implementation and stakeholder liaison of various community projects at grassroots level.

More recently he worked as a Trainer at the Southern African Wildlife College, attached to the Community Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) Unit before finding his way back to Children in the Wilderness in 2015.

"I am delighted to be back in the Children in the Wilderness family to continue to educate Africa's rural children about the importance of conservation while sharing the wonders of nature with them.

I grew up in an area which is a stone's throw from Kruger National Park but had no privilege to visit the park and see wildlife. Today, I am proud that our programme has bridged the gap that existed between communities and wildlife. My fellow community members and other children in the areas in which we operate our programme now have access to these beautiful wilderness areas and are more positive about conservation than before."



Liza Steyn *Administrator and Bookkeeper – Regional Office, South Africa*

Liza grew up running wild on a smallholding in Benoni, on the far East Rand of Gauteng. Her passion being all things green and growing, she ran her own florist business for 22 years before joining Children in the Wilderness in 2015.

She still calls Benoni home and is happy to make the daily commute to serve as bookkeeper and administrator for Children in the Wilderness.



She is excited to be a part of a team that has, at its heart, the drive and passion to make a difference in the lives of Africa's children through increasing children's self-esteem, teaching new skills and imparting knowledge and appreciation of the natural environment.

"The move to Children in the Wilderness has been life changing for me on so many levels and it's awesome to wake up every morning and look forward to work."

The *team* ...



Janet Wilkinson
South Africa Regional
Programme Manager



Lesh Moiteela
Botswana Community
Relationship Manager



Gabainele 'Gaba'
Modirapula
Botswana Programme
Assistant



Kelly Baitshoki
Botswana Admin Assistant



Tanya McKenzie
Limpopo Valley
Programme Coordinator



Symon Chibaka
Malawi CITW Programme
Coordinator



Christopher Mvula
Malawi Community
Development Liaison and
Children In the Wilderness



Doneux Banda
Malawi Southern Zone Coordinator



Jermain Ketji
Namibia Community Engagement Manager



Agnes Tjirare
Namibia Community Engagement Administrator And Programme Coordinator



Liza Steyn
South Africa Administration and Bookkeeping



Bongani Baloyi
South Africa Regional Programme Coordinator



Lisa Witherden
South Africa Environmental Education Resource Developer



Bokang Shopane
South Africa & GMTFCA Programme Coordinator



Richard Van der Wel
South Africa Accountant



Sue Goatley
Zambezi Region Programme Coordinator



James Mwanza
Zambia Programme Coordinator



Shuvanayi Taruvunga
Zimbabwe Administrative Assistant



Mxolisi Sibanda
Zimbabwe Communities Coordinator and HIV/AIDS Assistant Coordinator



CHILDREN IN THE WILDERNESS AT

A GLANCE

Children in the Wilderness is a non-profit organisation supported by ecotourism company Wilderness Safaris that aims to facilitate sustainable conservation through leadership development and education of rural children in Africa.

Our Vision

By exposing children to their natural heritage, Children in the Wilderness aims to create a network of learning sanctuaries that uplifts and cares for our children and conserves our planet. In this way, we hope to inspire the children to care for the environment so that they can become the custodians of these areas in the future.

How did we come into being?

Children in the Wilderness was initiated after a visit by the late actor Paul Newman to Botswana in 2001. His organisation, the Association of Hole in the Wall Gang Camps, is dedicated to offering educational and recreational camps for children with life-threatening conditions in America and Europe. Inspired and assisted by this organisation, the programme began in Botswana in December 2001 and has since been successfully implemented in a further five southern African countries: Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Over the years the programme has grown and been adapted to the areas in which we operate.

How we try to achieve our vision

This is achieved in a variety of ways, from running Eco-Clubs at schools within the rural communities that live on the edges of the wild areas of Africa, to running three-night camps at Wilderness Safaris and partner camps. The annual camp programme, run at Wilderness Safaris and other partner camps, combines leadership skills, environmental education and recreation – all in a unique and safe wilderness environment.

The programme aims to increase children's understanding and appreciation of the diversity of natural environments, as well as to encourage them by demonstrating the opportunities that exist for them.

Overall, the programme is designed to increase self-esteem, teach new skills and impart knowledge to our children. In this way, Children in the Wilderness introduces children to their wildlife heritage, builds and strengthens their capabilities to cope with life's challenges and educates them with the life skills necessary to actualise their greatest potential.

Our Eco-Mentor Training aims to develop local community members and Wilderness Safaris camp staff by upgrading skills, increasing environmental understanding and enabling them to better implement school and village environmental projects and initiatives.

This project assists in addressing the critical teaching skills shortage in environmental education in southern Africa. Once trained, mentors are able to host Eco-Clubs in the local village schools and assist the Eco-Club members in implementing environmental projects in their village.

The Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) Programme focuses on children with commitment and promise who have been identified in Eco-Clubs and on annual camps as showing leadership potential and a particular interest in conservation.

The YES curriculum is an extension of concepts introduced in Eco-Clubs and at camp, with a greater focus on career guidance, leadership, teambuilding, communication and further environmental education.

These camps and/or clubs 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 mentors to spend more time with the children and identify candidates for the scholarship and internship programme.



An important part of our structure is our Scholarship Programme. In almost all the areas where we operate primary education is free, but secondary schooling usually has a fee attached to it. For this reason, a large majority of children will only ever complete their primary schooling.

Through our Eco-Clubs, YES Clubs and Annual Camp Programme we are able to identify children who are doing well academically but whose parents are unable to send them on to secondary school.

The Scholarship Programme aims to provide these children with an opportunity to complete their schooling, thus allowing them to create a future for themselves. The programme funds the necessary school fees and as often as possible, assists with uniform, stationery, etc. as well. Funding originates largely from donations made by Wilderness Safaris guests, agents, as well as other partner NGOs, corporates, etc.

Overall, the Children in the Wilderness programme:

- Practises and teaches sustainable environmental education
- Fosters leadership qualities in Africa's children
- Exposes children to new experiences and new friends
- Helps to build self-esteem and teach life skills
- Inspires children to continue with their education
- Focuses on everyday issues pertaining to their particular situation, such as HIV/AIDS, nutrition, and poaching
- Provides children with a sense of hope and opportunity

Through all of these programmes, Children in the Wilderness aims to develop leadership values amongst the participants, so as to create leaders who are inspired to care for their legacy and can show others the way.

Finally, a number of other initiatives are run to assist the children, their teachers and their parents within their own milieu, such as school nutrition and village upliftment schemes.





OUR PROGRAMME STRUCTURE





TERTIARY EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Provides funding for students from our programme who are doing Environmental or Conservation courses at tertiary institutions

SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS

Provides children from our programme, who are doing well academically but whose parents are unable to afford to send them to secondary school, an opportunity to complete their schooling

YOUTH ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP (YES)

The YES programme focuses on children with commitment and potential who have been identified in Eco-Clubs and on annual camps as showing leadership and an interest in conservation and on leadership qualities

ANNUAL CAMPS

A Wilderness Safaris/Partner camp is closed for a few days each year, and 12-30 children between 10 and 17 years old are hosted in the camp for a four-day educational and fun-filled programme, including lessons, games, practical sessions and wildlife activities

ECO-CLUBS

Throughout the year, we operate Eco-Clubs in rural schools in the communities with which we work. They follow a structured curriculum, providing all learners interested in the environment a chance to meet, learn, discuss and expand their knowledge of environmental issues. Children participating on the camps are selected from Eco-Clubs

ECO-MENTOR AND TEACHER TRAINING

Our Eco-Mentor Training aims to develop local community members, including local teachers and Wilderness Safaris camp staff by upgrading their skills in environmental understanding and enabling them to better implement school and village environmental projects and initiatives



How **YOU** can make a



difference

HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

There are many ways you can make a difference.

- Monetary donations to assist in covering the day-to-day camp operational expenses, credit card facilities through our e-shop on www.childreninthewilderness.com/donate-now.html or via EFT into the following banking details:
- **Account Name:** Children in the Wilderness Mkambati
- **Bank:** Standard Bank
- **Account Number:** 023031735
- **Branch Code:** 001255
- **Branch:** Rivonia, South Africa
- **Swift code:** SBZAZAJJ

For US Donors: Please use our fiscal partners: Empowers Africa 501C for USA residents – see <https://empowersafrica.org/children-in-the-wilderness/>

Wilderness Safaris agents

Wilderness Safaris agents can elect to give a donation through a Wilderness booking to Children in the Wilderness that will be invoiced at the time of making your reservation. If you would like to donate directly to a specific Children in the Wilderness region, please contact Janet Wilkinson (janetw@wilderness.co.za) for the relevant bank details.

- Become a **Fundraising Ambassador** by creating a fundraising event or participate in a sporting event and make Children in the Wilderness the beneficiary. You can create your own webpage and circulate to potential donors who can donate online via credit card through the GivenGain site <http://www.givengain.com/cause/4773/>
- **Donations in kind** this refers to services or products in kind that could be utilised on the programme and thereby reduce the camp's operational costs. These would include items such as stationery, sporting equipment, school equipment, etc.

When making donations in kind, please ensure that we are advised in advance as there is paperwork for importation that is required to be completed.

In some instances relevant import fees may outstrip the value of the goods and therefore this does need some consideration.

- **MyPlanet Card** is part of the successful South African MySchool initiative. Choose Children in the Wilderness as your beneficiary and every time you shop at partner stores we receive a percentage of your purchase. To apply for my card, please visit <https://www.myschool.co.za/supporter/apply/?beneficiary=11428>
- **Business sponsorship** is a major source of funding. Through sponsorship, visibility of your company brand can be positively built, strengthened and the event can be used as a platform to introduce new products or services.

Our Nedbank Tour de Tuli mountain cycling event generates much publicity in print and media as well as brand exposure to many cyclists. Email us with your ideas info@childreninthewilderness.com

For our scholarship programme, any donations to the programme are warmly welcomed. Note that we only give a child a scholarship if we are assured that the funding that we have will allow them to complete their schooling – so that they do not have to look for sponsorship each year.

For this reason we encourage sponsorship for the three to four years (it differs depending on the country) necessary to complete their schooling.

The rates for scholarships vary slightly in each country, depending also on whether the scholarship is for private or public schooling. The average cost though is approximately USD250 per child per year for school fees, uniform, books and stationery, i.e. a total of USD750-USD1000 for a full scholarship.

For more information related to this project in each country, as well as details on some of the children already on our programme (of which we currently have a total of 287), please visit www.childreninthewilderness.com/our-programmes/scholarship/html



CHILDREN IN THE WILDERNESS 

"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

