

Positive IMPACT

Perhaps more than anywhere, tourism in Africa can have a profoundly beneficial effect. Today's travellers increasingly seek to travel with purpose, looking to support projects for wildlife and wild places — and neighbouring communities. In this new series, **Sue Watt** looks at the links between tourism operators and projects that help you effortlessly give back.

In the spotlight:

LESSONS IN CONSERVATION

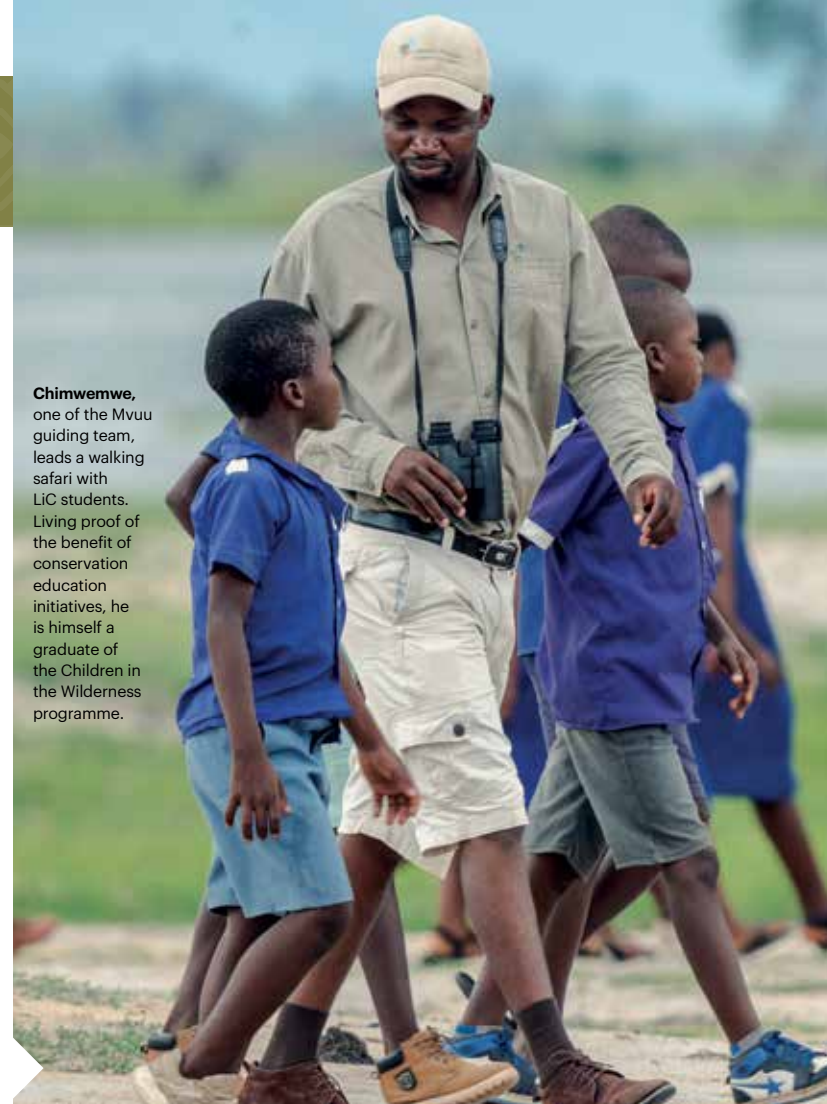
Across Africa, lodges and camps work closely with myriad projects. Here, Pam and Chris Badger of Central African Wilderness Safaris in Malawi highlight their favourite NGO

Lessons in Conservation (LiC) focuses on building *people*, not things. It emphasises long-term change by equipping children from underprivileged communities with environmental education and wildlife experience, aiming to create conservation champions who return to their communities and inspire future generations.

LiC gives children a positive, enjoyable and memorable experience, which reinforces the lessons in a meaningful way. Fun activities and hands-on interactions with wildlife ensure that conservation is not only understood but embraced. When kids enjoy what they're learning, they're far more likely to carry that knowledge and passion back to their villages, ensuring the conservation message is truly impactful.

Dean Carlisle, founder and CEO, spent years guiding in South Africa's top reserves, and wildlife conservation lies close to his heart. He started LiC while still at university, with little in the bank and a bold idea to

Chimwenwe, one of the Mvuu guiding team, leads a walking safari with LiC students. Living proof of the benefit of conservation education initiatives, he is himself a graduate of the Children in the Wilderness programme.



DANIEL BADGER

teach youngsters about the importance of conservation. They've since taught over 7000 children from rural areas across 110 schools and organisations in 10 African countries, and led more than 50 educational excursions, offering students direct exposure to wildlife and ecological principles.

Central African Wilderness Safaris began our partnership with LiC at our Mvuu Camp in Liwonde in April 2023, kicking off with lessons and games for children living on the peripheries of the park. In October, LiC delivered its first lessons at our Chelinda Camp in Nyika. We facilitate game drives, boat safaris, meals and environmental education lessons in partnership with LiC and work with their volunteer programme, providing meals and accommodation.

We're excited to grow this relationship. Our guests are always interested to learn about these initiatives, and they can observe a class or purchase lessons for the children. **WWW.LESSONSINCONSERVATION.COM**

ATTA For Action Project

SAVE
FOUNDATION
WWW.SAVEFOUNDATION.ORG.ZA

ATTA for Action is a new initiative from the African Travel and Tourism Association, aimed at connecting travellers to high-impact projects — all vetted — via tourism operators.

SAVE was founded in 2006 to support educational efforts in Cape Town. As it grew, it developed vegetable gardens providing soup kitchens, to improve health and malnutrition in disadvantaged communities. It has since added health and wildlife rehabilitation projects to its portfolio, from raising funds for Rhino Rangers in Namibia to supporting the Bush School and Wildlife Centre in SA, and arranging volunteer support for community and conservation projects.

El Karama Lodge, Laikipia, Kenya

Owner-run El Karama Lodge has a USP that blends family-oriented, experiential safaris with purposeful, sustainable travel. Embracing a range of conservation activities on their conservancy which include lion and leopard monitoring, bird counts and reforestation, they also support national and regional researchers in the broader landscape. Totally solar-powered and built from recycled materials, the lodge also focuses on employment and empowerment with its neighbours. What does this look like in practice? With their emphasis on supporting small businesses, El Karama works with local beaders (pictured below) making L'Atelier Kenya designs for its shop, provides its wine bottles to glasscutters to recycle into crafts, and buys local produce for its farm-to-fork menu. Opportunities for education within their community is key too. These include training on conservancy infrastructure projects, internships and career mentoring for Kenyan students, and school visits for children — all supported through tourism.



WILDERNESS

Impact in numbers:

WILDERNESS DESERT RHINO CAMP

Renowned safari operator Wilderness has been working with Save the Rhino Trust and three community conservancies in Damaraland in Namibia for 21 years. Their newly-rebuilt Desert Rhino Camp, where guests can track rhinos, began life as a field station for protecting Namibia's last remaining free-roaming black rhinos. Their stats are impressive:

- Poaching levels have reduced by 80 per cent
- It has the largest and longest-running black rhino database
- 95 per cent of Save the Rhino Trust employees are from local communities
- The partnership has empowered the trust to increase its range by 20 per cent
- Rhino numbers have more than quadrupled

Herd mentality
CLAWS' communal herding programme in Botswana sees kraals erected to prevent lion predation on livestock



HELICOPTER HORIZONS

Great Plains Conservation's Big Cat Initiative

Some 25 years ago, Dereck and Beverly Joubert, founders of Great Plains Conservation, established Big Cat Initiative (BCI) with *National Geographic*, aiming to protect rapidly declining big cat populations and their habitats. The NGO funded 157 projects in 29 countries up until 2022, when it came under the sole management of the Great Plains Foundation and has since supported a further 11 initiatives in nine countries. Recent grantees include CLAWS Conservancy in Botswana and WASIMA in Tanzania, both working to promote human-lion coexistence. And in Niokolo-Koba National Park, Senegal, one of West Africa's stronghold habitats for large carnivores, it funded the Leo Foundation to provide ranger training on survey techniques and technology.