Eco-Stars
A publication by Children in the Wilderness
Annual Issue 02

What's inside
How our programme works • Meet some of our Eco-Stars • How you can make a difference

Sustainable conservation through leadership development
Introduction
Eco-Stars is a Children in the Wilderness (CITW) publication. The magazine includes an overview of our programme and introduces you to some of the people involved in the programme – our Eco-Stars.

Each edition of the magazine will include new stories, new projects and introduce you to new Eco-Stars. For more detailed information on Children in the Wilderness, see www.childreninthewilderness.com and for regular updates LIKE us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/Childreninthewilderness/

For any comments or queries, please email: info@childreninthewilderness.com
From the Chairman’s Desk

I believe that Children in the Wilderness is vital to Wilderness Safaris, as these children are the future custodians of the wilderness areas of Africa. Currently, Wilderness Safaris is tasked with being the administrators of nearly 3 million hectares of protected land, but in reality the CITW children in years to come will be the primary caretakers and protectors of these precious areas. But people can only begin to care by learning and understanding the importance of this valuable resource.

If people in and around wilderness areas do not protect them, they will continue to be under increased pressure from other commercial ventures. CITW also enables and gives opportunities to the children to be exposed to the tourism industry which will in turn benefit companies such as Wilderness Safaris.

Russel Friedman
Chairman

Children in the Wilderness at a Glance

Our Eco-Clubs

Eco-Club Activities

Eco-Mentor Training

Our Annual camps

Our Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) programme

Meet some of our YES Members

Scholarship Programme

Meet some of our Scholarship students

Tertiary Education

Children’s Creativity: Stories, Poems, Artwork

Meet the Children in the Wilderness team

Soccer in the Wilderness

Community Development Initiatives

Nedbank Tour de Tuli

The Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Area (GMTFCA)

Tri-Nations Camps

Some of our partners

Where are they now?

How can you make a difference?

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Children in the Wilderness (CITW) 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, has grown and been adapted to the areas in which we operate.

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 YES Programme, 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.

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.

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.

Back at their villages, the children are faced with many challenges. The Eco-Clubs make use of school curricula suited to the specific country or community, delivered in a fun, interactive and engaging manner. 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.

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.
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.
During the course of the year, the Children in the Wilderness ground team operates Eco-Clubs in the various communities with which we work. 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 the Annual Camps are selected from Eco-Clubs.

Most often it is the Wilderness Safaris camp staff, local school teachers and members of the local community that volunteer to run the Eco-Club sessions.

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 are increasingly providing positive community development while reaching a wider community. Projects to date have included beekeeping, planting vegetable gardens and trees, crafts and beadwork.
Clubs
Meet our Eco-Club Members
Calistars Wanga
A natural born leader from Beetsha Primary School, Calistars joined the school Eco-Club in 2014, when he was in Standard 4; now at 12 years old he is the Eco-Club chairperson! He has represented the Club in training up other Eco-Clubs, in particular, training an Adult Eco-Club on beekeeping. He also gave an overview of the Eco-Club projects during prize-giving ceremonies at school.

Calistars is a composer and actor as well. During the Annual Camp, he was the creator and star of an anti-poaching drama that was subsequently performed at Beetsha Primary School on June 16 (the Day of an African Child).

Shevven Gabriel
Shevven joined the Shashe Primary School Eco-Club in 2014 when she was in Standard 4. She is now 11 years old and in Standard 6. She is the vice chairperson of the Eco-Club.

She is a very active member and her passions are beading and crocheting. A real leader, she is happy to teach the other members these skills. During school prize-giving ceremonies, she is always chosen to be an usher. Whenever guests visit the school, Shevven is the one who talks to them, telling them all about the Shashe Eco-Club.

Kaone Monnaatshipi
Kaone is 10 years old, in Standard 5, and is a learner at Shashe Primary School. She joined the Eco-Club in 2014 when she was in Standard 3 and was only eight years old.

Kaone is a very committed member of the Club and possesses many different skills. She likes sewing, beadwork, picking up and sorting litter, making mats out of used plastic bags and she also has a worm unit at home. She is one of the best basket weavers in the Club. She learnt her weaving skills from her mother, who is one of the members of the Shashe Adult Eco-Club.
Dalitso Chikapa
Dalisto is a 10-year-old learner at Bandawe Primary School. He is in Grade 6 and has been a member of the Eco-Club since 2015. Dalisto loves animals, his favourite being a giraffe. He would like to become one of the greatest scientists in the field of wildlife and environmental management.

Caroline Kamanga
Caroline is 11 years old and a Grade 7 learner at Chihama Primary School. Caroline joined the Eco-Club in 2014 and is a very active and committed member of the Club. She would like to become a professional journalist one day.

Emily Manjara
Emily is a Grade 7 learner at Okaukuejo Primary School, located in Etosha National Park. Emily joined Children in the Wilderness in 2016 as a camper. She is an enthusiastic learner, and would like to become a doctor one day. Her dream is to one day open an eye clinic as most elders in her village suffer from eye problems.

Laina Joshua
Laina is a Grade 6 learner at Okaukuejo Combined School and has been an Eco-Club member at the school since 2014. She loves cooking and learning about wildflowers. She is interested in expanding her knowledge on the environment.
South Africa

Katekani Mhlanga
Katekani is 12 years old. She is a Grade 7 learner at Joas Phahlela Primary School in Makuleke village. She joined the Eco-Club as she is very interested in learning more about animals and their behaviour.

Her favourite animal is an elephant because it is more intelligent than any other animal she knows of.

“My favourite activity is when we learn about the water cycle. I have learnt that every drop of water is very important in our life and in the environment.”

Katekani would like to encourage people in her community not to cut down trees but to plant more instead, and also to stop poaching as it impacts negatively on our beautiful parks. Katekani dreams of becoming a pilot in the future.

Sithembele “Smah” Mlambo
Thirteen-year-old Sithembele is from KwaMpukane in KwaZulu-Natal. She is in Grade 7 at Vululwazi Primary School and is an active and hardworking member of the school’s Eco-Club. She loves writing and has written a poem called “Do Not Litter”. Her dream is to make South Africa a peaceful place to live in.

Ntokoto Chauke
Ntokoto is a Grade 7 student at Boxahuku Primary School in Maviligwe village. He is 12 years old. Ntokoto joined the Eco-Club in 2013 because he wanted to learn more about the environment and how to conserve it. He is a keen artist and his favourite activity is drawing.

Ntokoto loves all animals but his favourite is an elephant, because of its body size and also because elephants are peaceful animals and are not dangerous if you know how to behave towards them. “I would like to encourage my fellow community members to stop littering, poaching and cutting down trees.”

Ntokoto would like to be a professional chef one day.
Zambia

Mweembe Sikabbubba

Mweembe is a 14-year-old Grade 7 learner at Twabuka Primary School in Sinde village. She is an artist and a committed member of the school’s Eco-Club. She joined the Eco-Club in 2014 when she was in Grade 5. Mweembe is one of the best students at Twabuka Primary School. She sat for her national examinations for secondary level in November 2016.

Ester Chibwe

Ester is 14 years old and is in Grade 6 at Twabuka Primary School. She is a dedicated member of the Twabuka Primary School’s Eco-Club. She is the only student that has planted 15 indigenous trees so far, and she takes care of them during school term as well as when school is in recess. She is also one of the students under Children in the Wilderness’ scholarship programme.

Zimbabwe

Anxious Ncube

Anxious is 14 years old and is in Grade 6 at Ngamo Primary School. Anxious is an enthusiastic and committed member of the Eco-Club at Ngamo and is the first learner to take up any challenge that includes problem-solving activities. She is a responsible girl who has leadership qualities and works well with other children. Anxious is an above-average student, self-motivated and participates well in class. She loves reading storybooks, dancing and playing netball.

Melusi Masuku

Melusi is a 13-year-old Grade 6 learner at Ziga Primary School, a student who is always willing to learn. Melusi is a keen member of the Eco-Club at Ziga Primary School. He participates enthusiastically in all activities. He is very passionate about wildlife and hopes one day to become a guide or work as a ranger with National Parks.
Eco-Club Activities

Current Projects

Botswana
- Eco-Club lesson sessions
- Vegetable gardens
- Arts and handicrafts
- Beekeeping
- Vermiculture
- Beadwork
- Weaving

Malawi
- Eco-Club lesson sessions
- Tree nursery
- Root to Fruit project
- Tree nursery training
- Environmental awareness campaigns
- Park fence monitoring and maintenance

Namibia
- Eco-Club lesson sessions
- Vegetable gardens
- School nutrition programmes
- Fruit tree project
- Waste collection campaign
- Beadwork
- Environmental awareness campaigns
- Human-wildlife conflict awareness campaigns
South Africa
Eco-Club lesson sessions
Vegetable gardens
Tree planting
Environmental awareness campaigns
Tippy Taps*

Zambia
Eco-Club lesson sessions
Tree planting
Tippy Taps*
Solar cars
Afforestation

Zimbabwe
Eco-Club lesson sessions
Tree planting
Best garden project
Broiler project
Vermiculture
Tippy Taps*
Solar cars
Afforestation

* Tippy Taps are hygiene and water-saving projects
Our Adult Eco-Clubs focus on assisting with skills training, livelihood diversification projects, business skills and providing an important link between parents, elders, teachers and children on our programme. We realised that when it came to environmental learning and traditional skills there was no link between the adults and the children in the villages where we work: hence the introduction of our Adult Eco-Club programme. Through this programme, adults, mostly women, join the children’s Eco-Clubs to learn more about conservation and the environment; they then teach the children traditional skills and uses of trees, plants, etc. This programme has provided a wonderful link between adults and the children, with both groups learning a lot from one another.

**Botswana**

There are currently four Adult Eco-Clubs operating in Botswana. All took part in numerous training events in 2016 to provide them with new skills and to enhance existing skills.

In addition, Little Sun lamps were provided to all Adult Eco-Club members to sell to their communities as one of their income-generating projects. This is a vital initiative as the majority of the families do not have electricity in their homes. The Little Sun lamps, which are solar powered, thus help with light during the night and hopefully will reduce the number of accidents caused by use of candles and other unsafe means of lighting.
Shashe Adult Eco-Club
The Shashe Adult Eco-Club was the first Adult Eco-Club in the Children in the Wilderness stable. In 2013, Wilderness Safaris’ Community Development department initiated an Empowering Women Project in Maun, by assisting the already-established Shashe Women’s Group at Shashe Primary School with start-up capital and business guidance to begin various business projects.

Each group of women completed an application form and project proposal, which included the project requirements, what it would produce and how and to whom the women were planning to sell their products. Discussions also focused on repayment terms, product marketing, sustainability of the projects, etc. A final dimension of the project included providing financial guidance and business and marketing skills training.

This Women’s Group effectively led to the establishment of what today is our Adult Eco-Club programme.

The Shashe Adult Eco-Club is involved in the following projects to sustain and improve their livelihoods:

- Beadwork
- Basket weaving
- Sewing
- Helping Shashe Primary School Eco-Club with gardening and traditional livelihood skills such as weaving and beadwork
- Tapestry-making
- Creating hand-made paper using elephant dung

Beetsha Adult Eco-Club
Beetsha Adult Eco-Club was formed in 2015 by eight women and one man. The Club’s main aim is to improve livelihoods through the selling of handmade crafts. All members of the Club were unemployed and life was not easy for them. They then decided to come up with a way of sustaining themselves and taking care of their families. The Club works very closely with Beetsha Primary School Eco-Club and assists it with its garden project as well as teaching its members traditional skills related to making a living.

Beetsha Adult Eco-Club is involved in the following projects:

- Milling
- Beekeeping
- Basket weaving
- Vegetable gardening
- Screen printing, batik, tie-dyeing

Habu Adult Eco-Club
Habu Adult Eco-Club was started in 2014 comprising a group of 12 women and one man with the primary objective being to share cultural and historical knowledge with the Habu Primary School Eco-Club members as well as teaching them traditional livelihood skills such as basket weaving, leatherwork and sewing, which they can use to make a living.

At the same time, the group members use their traditional skills and talents to improve the Club’s livelihoods by making crafts, artwork, patchwork, dresses, batik and tie-dyeing which they sell to generate income.

Gunotsoga Adult Eco-Club
Gunotsoga Adult Eco-Club, established in 2015, is situated in Gunotsoga village, on the outskirts of the Okavango Delta. It is made up of eight members, seven women and one man. One of its objectives is to help Gunotsoga Primary School Eco-Club members with their planned daily activities. Another aim of the group is to improve the livelihoods and standards of living for its members. This is achieved through basket weaving, dress-making, carving and moulding. The Club sells its products to the general public and companies to generate an income; Wilderness Safaris and Children in the Wilderness are amongst the Club’s customers.

Other Adult Eco-Club initiatives
In 2015, Children in the Wilderness provided Adult Eco-Club members with Wonderbags to sell to the community, from local people to camp sites. The profit made was shared amongst the members with some deposited into the Adult Eco-Club account.

In 2016 some of the Adult Eco-Club members were trained in beekeeping and were provided with all the required equipment, which included five hives, five complete sets of protective clothing, three smokers and five knives.

A milling machine was also provided to start a milling factory, which the Adult Eco-Club is operating on a private basis, while waiting for the required documents to run the business. The initiative came at the right time – when local farmers had just started harvesting. Their workload is now much reduced, as threshing and winnowing that used to be done manually can now be done using the machine.

Adult Eco-Club members were also trained in screen printing, tie-dyeing and beadwork. Currently members are waiting for printing equipment to print various items and sell on to the community and others.
Zambia

Children in the Wilderness Zambia has established two Adult Eco-Clubs, in Sinde and Lupani villages. The objective of the Club is to encourage parents and communities to participate in environmental and conservation management practices and protect nature as well as to promote livelihood diversification and generate income. Both groups have memberships of 40 people.

The Adult Eco-Clubs are project-based, and in 2016 the focus was on planting 500 indigenous trees and to establish eco-gardens in the two communities. The membership for both groups is thirty. The Eco-Clubs have been able to establish eco-gardens and have planted 700 indigenous trees in the villages.

Zimbabwe

There are two Adult Eco-Clubs operating in Zimbabwe. They are based at Ngamo and Ziga Primary schools in the Tsholotsho district. These clubs are involved in the following services and products:

- Sewing
- Craft making
- Crochet work
- Batik, tie-dyeing
- Basket weaving
- Goat rearing

In 2016 the Eco-Clubs underwent some training events and other exciting projects and activities took place.

Women’s Craft Workshop

In January 2016, Children in the Wilderness Zimbabwe facilitated a three-day craft workshop specifically aimed at women from the rural communities surrounding Ziga and Ngamo Primary Schools. Ngamo Primary School hosted the event and 45 women attended.

The project, funded by Grand Circle Foundation, USA, taught this motivated group crafts such as sewing, knitting, beadng, crochet, batik, tie and dye, weaving and basket making. Dorcus Mbedzi from Ingonyama Crafts, a trained facilitator on “The Financial Inclusion and Access to Finance for Women Entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe,” hosted the workshop with assistance from two trainers from the Jairos Jiri Centre in Bulawayo.

This fantastic initiative also included instruction and information on simple business management, focusing on stocks, record keeping and pricing as well as the introduction of saving clubs. This was all aimed at developing self-reliant women in the community to generate an income for their families, actively contribute to their communities’ income earning capacity and reduce poverty levels.

A market for these products has been identified and manufacturing is well underway with sales already in progress; in time, we hope to have some of their beautiful merchandise for sale in Wilderness camps.

Goat Rearing Project

Many in the rural communities in which Children in the Wilderness Zimbabwe operate are subsistence farmers, struggling to get by in typically drought-ridden areas; the families often struggle to afford schooling for their children.

These areas are, however, characterised by mixed woodland vegetation consisting of an abundance of camelthorn and sickle bush, a food source greatly favoured by goats, making it an ideal area for goat rearing. Seeing an opportunity for these communities to generate more income, Children in the Wilderness Zambezi Region approached Grand Circle Foundation for assistance to start a goat rearing project for the Ziga Community in Tsholotsho.

With their generous donations, we were able to provide the women of Ziga with male goats, along with the materials for goat pens and shelters, and medication and dips.

Thirty women became members who were then asked to contribute one female goat to this venture, as well as their time and efforts tending to the daily upkeep of the herd.

The South African Kalahari Red goat breed was specifically chosen for numerous reasons: they are hardy animals and therefore well suited to the harsh conditions, their superior breed is known to enhance the tenderness of the meat when bred with common goats and they are less susceptible to disease and parasites, therefore needing fewer vaccinations than other breeds. Cross breeding with the common goat will therefore generally improve the overall quality of meat and milk yields.

It is hoped that in the future, these women will ‘share’ the goats with other local goat breeding communities so as to help reduce inbreeding and further improve goat by-products, whilst simultaneously improving the project as a sustainable business, and ultimately strengthening the communities. There is a ready market in Zimbabwe and local abattoirs have advised that demand far outweighs supply.

The extra income these households will bring in should not only help pay their children’s much-needed school fees, but once the project is sustainable and producing reasonable profits, also create a revolving credit fund that can be used to start new and innovative “from seed to table” sustainable micro-projects.
Meet some of our Adult Eco-Club members

**Botswana**

**Ngonde Sehuro**

Ngonde joined Shashe Adult Eco-Club in 2013. In the beginning, she was very shy and reserved but today she is a confident, hardworking and proud member of the group. Ngonde never went through formal school education and the highest form of education she received was at primary school level. Despite this, she is a talented and very skilled basket weaver – a skill she learnt from her family at a very young age. She was very excited to join the Adult Eco-Club as, together with other members, they use their natural talents and skills to make a living and improve their livelihoods.

"Before I joined this group, I felt very hopeless but now I am very confident and walk with my head high in the community as this group has changed my life for the better."

**John Mbango**

John is a very committed member of the Gunotsoga Adult Eco-Club. He volunteered to use his ploughing field as a beekeeping farm for the Club. He is very generous in sharing the knowledge and skills he has on beekeeping with his colleagues as well as with the Beetsha Adult Eco-Club members.
Kanyengwa Ngaazive
Kanyengwa is from Habu village in Botswana. She enjoys sewing and sharing her skills with others. She did not have any training in sewing but learnt the skill from her mother when she was a young girl. Kanyengwa has never had any formal employment; she takes the Club activities very seriously as it is her only source of income.

Sewing or dressmaking is an essential skill to have among the BaHerero ethnic group. It is this reason that inspired Habu Adult Eco-Club to take sewing as one of their projects.

Zambia
Margaret Mweemba
Margaret is 53 years old and the mother of five boys and two girls. She is dedicated to serving nature by promoting environmental projects in the community. Margaret is the chairperson of Sinde Village Adult Eco-Club. She was at the forefront in the transition of Twabuka Primary School from being a community school to becoming a government school and now oversees the implementation of their Eco-Club projects and activities. Her Eco-Club has been instrumental in the reforestation programmes in the village and at Twabuka Primary School. Margaret is also the treasurer of the School Governing Body at Twabuka Primary School.

Kenford Mamu
Fifty-three-year-old Kenford is a deputy village headman in Mulauli village and a committed member of Lupani Adult Eco-Club. Kenford is a retired waiter but still works as a part-time gardener. He provides leadership support for the development and growth of the Adult Eco-Club in the Sinde area. He is in charge of the eco-garden in Siatela village and also involved in all other school projects in the area.

Zimbabwe
Dorothy Ncube
Fifty-seven-year-old Dorothy – a mother of six children – is the founding member and current chairperson of Jabulani Adult Eco-Club which was established in 2013. Also, she is the wife of Ngamo village headman, Jonson Ncube.

One of Dorothy’s key roles is to make sure that the Eco-Club achieves its goals. She manages a group of 14 members, and she is also actively involved in the making and selling of crafts and curio products. She leads by example and is well respected in the community.
Eco-Mentors hail from within the school system and are local community members or Wilderness Safaris staff members. Our Eco-Mentor training 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, as this is how the organisation seeks to educate its Eco-Club members and spread the conservation message. After training, Eco-Mentors are able to participate both in camp programmes as well as at Eco-Clubs. All our training sessions are conducted with the following quote in mind:

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand.”

Techniques such as intentional programming and flow learning are used to help translate this idea into practice and all lessons are combined with interactive, fun activities.

All countries continued to conduct Eco-Mentor training sessions in 2016: enhancing teaching skills, sharing knowledge and further Eco-Club development training.
Meet some of our Eco-Mentors

**Botswana**

**Ewetse Peo Manthe**
Ewetse was born in Orapa and grew up in Letlhakane village in Boteti sub-district. She is married and has two children. A graduate from the University of Botswana, she is a teacher at Gunotsoga Primary School.

Ewetse joined Gunotsoga Eco-Club in 2014 as an Eco-Mentor. Then, in 2015, she and other Eco-Mentors formed the Gunotsoga Adult Eco-Club where she was selected as the Club advisor.

“Children in the Wilderness acts as a platform for me to learn more about the environment and impart the knowledge to both learners and adults in my community. I joined the Eco-Club to help grow future conservationists who perceive human life as science, as I am passionate about nature. I have participated in the Eco-Mentor training programme, two camps in Santawani and a literacy workshop in Zimbabwe. I was recently trained in beekeeping with the other Adult Eco-Club members. I pray that the relationship Gunotsoga Primary School has with CITW continues, and I feel humbled by what it has done. I am aware of the reputation of this programme within different areas and I am happy to be associated with such a well-respected organisation.”

**Moathodi Nawa**
Moathodi is a senior teacher at Beetsha Primary School in a small village in the Okavango Delta. He comes from Tonota village. His interest in teaching children the importance of conservation was triggered after attending a Stellar Programme (literacy course) in Zimbabwe in 2015 sponsored by Children in the Wilderness Botswana. He was appointed Eco-Club Coordinator in 2015. His Eco-Club at Beetsha Primary School was nominated as the best Eco-Club in Botswana in that year. He attended four training events that were sponsored by Children in the Wilderness Botswana, which included: El-Hefni Eco-Mentor Workshop, Stellar Programme, Refresher Course for Eco-Club Coordinators and Beekeeping with the Adult Eco-Club members from Beetsha and Gunotsoga.

“Children in the Wilderness is doing a great job – more especially for people like us who live in rural areas and our children are benefitting a lot by being exposed to their natural heritage.”
Malawi

Vitumbiko Chinyama

Vitumbiko is a 25-year-old Grade 7 teacher at Msauka Primary School and has been a YES Club member since 2012. She graduated as a qualified Primary School teacher in 2014. Her views on Children in the Wilderness are that it is a working and life-changing programme. She testifies from her own experience with Children in the Wilderness:

“My life with Children in the Wilderness noted positive changes in those areas where I used to struggle. Areas like doing things with total self-confidence, believing that children can learn from me, being a team player and aiming higher.”

One of the most beautiful elements in her life is the immediate change that she always sees in children when they first join Children in the Wilderness as Eco-Club members or when they come to camp, and then thereafter. Changes include the smiles, more confidence to aim higher than before, the understanding and the love of wildlife.

Vitumbiko volunteers every year for a variety of Children in the Wilderness events. She is now a member of the Children in the Wilderness activities planning core team.

John Mtaya

John is 44 years old and started working with Children in the Wilderness in 2006 while he was a teacher at Chihame Primary School. John has seen the Children in the Wilderness programme, as well as himself, grow in terms of management and coordination. He is now the deputy head teacher of Chihame Primary School, but also manages Children in the Wilderness Chihame cluster centre, where he leads eight Eco-Club mentors.

John is the funniest and most popular teacher with the learners at the school. Most of what he has to say to the learners is well received because he says he discovered a working communication approach with the children, which is “meet them where they feel safe, supported and confident.”

Working together with Eco-Club and YES Club members, John has supported a number of successful school conservation-related projects such as:

• Stop, Sink and Shed – a run-off water project
• Forestation – school woodlots by Eco-Clubs and YES Club members
• School environmental education trips

John’s Children in the Wilderness cluster centre, as of 2016, registered the highest number of active Eco-Club and YES Club members. Children in the Wilderness Malawi considers John one of its core staff who contributes towards the success of the programme.
Namibia
Lucrecia Kapetua
Lucrecia is a teacher at Elias Amxab Combined School. She joined Children in the Wilderness in March 2012.

She believes that Children in the Wilderness programme is all about care, love and teaching the children about the importance of environmental conservation.

“As a mentor and with the skills I have gained from Children in the Wilderness, I can use these to close the gaps that exist in our curriculum as we live in a challenging society. The challenge lies with the implementation as most educators are not well vested in sustainability issues and environmental learning approaches. I aim to introduce more environmental projects such as tree planting, waste management, veld walks to appreciate animals and trees, and cleaning campaigns.”

Petrina Nangobe Lyambo
Petrina is a teacher at Elias Amxab Combined School and has been involved with Children in the Wilderness since 2016. She thinks Children in the Wilderness is a very worthwhile programme as it helps to educate children on the importance of conserving the world’s most precious gift – ours natural resources.

Petrina’s favourite activity is participating in the Eco-Mentor training. She loves this programme because it is very empowering for teachers and increases their environmental understanding:

“I also get to meet new people and learn about new things. To make a difference, I will educate my community through presenting simple lessons about conservation to Eco-Club members and use them to present some role playing to other school learners and the community at large. It is only through environmental education that we can safeguard our environment.”
South Africa
Samson Shishavela
Samson, 47, is originally from Bungeni area in Limpopo Province. He is a teacher at Makuleke Primary School and joined Children in the Wilderness in 2010. Samson has become an Eco-Mentor because of his love for nature and the environment, as well as his love of working with the children.

He thinks that Children in the Wilderness is a good organisation which helps children, together with the adults, to view the environment in real life. One of his favourite Eco-Club activities is the anti-littering campaign because it makes our environment a healthy and clean place to live in. He loves elephants and thinks they are vital as they are a keystone animal.

“As an Eco-Mentor, I will continue to encourage children, together with my staff, members to look after our environment, because every good result has a starting point. I think Children in the Wilderness should continue to operate as usual, because it has made a great impact on everyone around my community.”

Portia Phokela
Children in the Wilderness South Africa has partnered with Mogalakwena Research Centre to bring the Children in the Wilderness Eco-Clubs to the Modikwa Primary School in Simson village, Limpopo Province, as part of giving back to the community through which the Tour de Tuli traverses. Portia, a local woman and mother of two, hosts the Children in the Wilderness Eco-Clubs where she herself attended primary school. Portia, a local woman and mother of two, hosts the Children in the Wilderness Eco-Clubs where she herself attended primary school. Portia, a local woman and mother of two, hosts the Children in the Wilderness Eco-Clubs where she herself attended primary school. She is delighted to be giving something back to her old school and to the children of her village. Portia works at the Mogalakwena Eco-Centre and delights in sharing her love for the environment through the Eco-Clubs, which she has been running since 2014.

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Virginia Hatlane
Virginia is 47 years old and hails from Mhinga village in Limpopo Province. She is a teacher at Boxahuku Primary School and joined Children in the Wilderness as an Eco-Mentor in 2011. Virginia joined because of her love for nature and because she wanted to teach the children to care for the environment through sustainable living. Her favourite animal is a lion – her reason being because they are patient animals.

“Children in the Wilderness is an excellent initiative. It exposes the children to real environmental issues facing society, and it gives them an opportunity to come up with possible solutions to mitigate the problems. One of my favourite activities is the vocabulary development game in the endangered species session/lesson. As a teacher and an Eco-Mentor, I aim to make a difference by engaging children in hands-on activities as these can bring about good results.”
Zambia

Monde Yuyi
Monde is a Grade 1 teacher at Simoonga Primary School and has been an Eco-Mentor since 2013.

"Being part of the Children in the Wilderness programme has opened my eyes. The Eco-Club lessons are an integral part of our Environmental Science syllabus and provide more practical aspects of environmental management. I learn a lot on current methodologies in teaching through the Eco-Club curriculum.

The Children in the Wilderness partnership with schools has really been helpful in the lives of pupils and teachers in many ways, including contributing to conservation and environmental management. Wake up teacher, wake up parent, wake up community, and wake up the clergy, civic leader and the children to serve your environment regardless of personal difference for your own benefit tomorrow."

Mercy Mulumbwe
Mercy is a 40-year-old teacher at Nalituwe Combined School. She joined Children in the Wilderness in 2009 and believes that the Eco-Club programmes are good as they keep us in tune with the environment. They help children understand the environment they live in and create awareness on how they should look after the environment as well as exposing them to the dangers of destroying or polluting it. They also help teach how to create sustainability for future generations. These programmes also help the children to be creative and innovate.

"As a mentor you are there to give guidance to the children on environmental and social issues. You have to make sure that when you interact with the children on environmental, life skills and social learnings, the environment in which these take place should be conducive and safe for the children. You are there to instil knowledge, love and care for the children and our environment. It means that one should have love for the children and the environment. It calls for personal interest, on how much you value and feel for the environment. Without the environment there would be no life."
Charity Nyoni
Charity is an Early Child Development teacher at Jabulani Primary School in Matebeleland North. She is not currently qualified but she is in the midst of a college course for a Diploma in Education which she is hoping to complete in 2017.

Charity became an Eco-Mentor in July 2016 and became a mentor as soon as she started working at the school.

“I just love it and love the whole ecosystem/environment protection approach. We currently have 30 students in the Eco-Club and it makes such a difference to them. The children love it so much, especially as the topics the Eco-Clubs cover are often in the syllabus for Science and for their new subject, Agriculture, and therefore, the children really benefit from it on multiple levels. For me I love it because the teaching strategies we learn through the Eco-Clubs can be implemented throughout other subjects and have made me a better teacher.”

Sihlesenkosi Mzacana
Sihlesenkosi has been a teacher for 23 years with the last eight spent at Jakalasi Primary School in Tsholotsho district near Hwange National Park. She holds a degree in Education Planning and Policy Studies. Her wish is to see the Eco-Club teaching resources used throughout the schools in Zimbabwe.

“Through Children in the Wilderness, my teaching experience has been broadened. Children in the Wilderness provides the basics that are useful in managing the environment. It further helps the children’s wellbeing and education upliftment as well as actively involving them in managing our environment.”
Children in the Wilderness runs Camp Programmes in six southern African countries (Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe). For these, Wilderness Safaris, Mashatu, Central African Wilderness Safaris and other partner companies close some of their camps for several weeks each year, allowing Children in the Wilderness to host groups of selected rural children instead. Groups of 16 to 30 children between the ages of 10 and 17, pre-selected from Eco-Clubs in the surrounding areas, are invited to spend three nights in camp and participate in the programme.

The Camps themselves are run by the regional Children in the Wilderness Coordinator and a Camp Leader, assisted by a full staff complement of volunteers and Eco-Mentors. Eco-Mentors are assigned to the children, interacting with them as counsellors, friends and, most importantly, role models. Since many Eco-Mentors come from the same communities or villages as the camp participants, by their example they 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.

When the programme began in 2001, the selection process focused mainly on the vulnerable children in the communities.

However, 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. In this way, the programme facilitates sustainable conservation through leadership development, reaching further than one camp, and growing in strength and influence.
Overview of Curriculum
The camps in each country follow a standardised curriculum but also include unique aspects of the particular country, particularly in terms of the environmental lessons; for example, in Namibia the children learn about desert-adapted animals and plants, in Zambia about the Victoria Falls, etc.

The curriculum includes interactive learning sessions, sport, as well as nature activities, including game drives, boat rides (where available) and nature walks. On the last night of camp a quiz night is held, with the children competing in teams to test what they have learnt over the course of the camp.

One of our partners, Mother Bear (www.motherbearproject.org), provides beautiful knitted bears for each child attending an annual camp.
The Youth Environmental Stewardship 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 career guidance, communication, leadership, teamwork and further environmental education. These camps are usually smaller, with fewer children attending, allowing for focused work groups and increased participation of all children. The YES programme also allows the opportunity for Eco-Mentors to spend more time with the children and identify candidates for the scholarship and internship programme.

Previously called Environmental Stewardship Programmes (ESP), these have been running in Botswana since 2008, where they have hosted 240 children to date. As the Children in the Wilderness programme grows in each country, YES camps and Clubs are introduced, allowing the programme to grow with the children and continue to provide them with environmental education and support. The programme also aims to inspire them to develop conservation methods that do or can sustain their lives and those of the future generations.

In the end, the YES programme envisages taking campers to the next level, preparing them for careers in environmental conservation, ecotourism, hospitality and other vocations.
Children in the Wilderness has begun developing a standardised three-year Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) resource book programme as part of our YES programme’s sustainability strategy. The resource books will have clear learning outcomes and as their primary focus the following key components:

- Environmental Education
- Life Skills
- Culture and Heritage
- Community Environmental Projects
**Malawi**

In Malawi, YES members communicate their message through posters to invited guests and the general public each year, during a YES Open Day event. In 2016 the youth underwent more capacity building training workshops assisted by experts in the field of media. The youth also managed to produce their quarterly newsletters for the year as well as a number of posters for their annual Open Day events which took place in August 2016.

**Namibia**

The YES camp was specially conducted for 15 secondary school learners. We had 13 Children in the Wilderness scholarship students and 2 from Children Life Change Centre.

The YES programme in Namibia changed its approach this year by focusing more on career exposure and life lessons through engaging the students with professionals from various industries; more fun ways to learn were adopted. We achieved this by having the group spend two full days in Windhoek networking with individuals from various industries, compared to only an afternoon city tour previously.

Fifteen learners participated along with six staff including a chef and paramedic. This group will be the first students we use to mentor Eco-Club members in Namibia so the emphasis was on life coaching and career exposure to groom them into mentorship roles. The different speakers touched on the importance of access to a support system during critical stages of school and career development, enhancement of academic and career development plans, exposure to diverse perspectives and experiences. They also emphasised the importance of evaluating skill gaps before leaving school and most importantly, self-actualisation.

During the Career Days segment, the beneficiaries spent the first morning with auditors and Chartered Accountants from Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC). One can’t express how rewarding it was to watch them engage with the professionals.

PWC, through their Mentoring Connections Programme, offered our group invaluable expertise on their chosen careers, the challenges thereof and their personal experiences throughout high school to where they are now.

The group then met up with Rachel, an environmentalist from the Giraffe Conservation Foundation, who dealt with the importance of nature being in balance and the benefits thereof. The foundation operates the Khomas Environmental Education Programme (KEEP) which is a field-based environmental education programme that allows young people to reconnect with nature. KEEP seeks to build a culture of environmental awareness, social responsibility and action in Namibia. Additionally, it hopes to equip our future leaders with the skills to live more sustainably and ultimately to improve their living conditions.

**South Africa**

We were delighted to catch up with some of the high school children who have participated in the Children in the Wilderness camps at Pafuri Trails since 2013. These children form the Makuleke YES group and have quietly been trying to make...
a difference in their communities. Some of them got together to do a door-to-door clean-up in their village for their 67 minutes for Madiba.

In our workshop with these Makuleke children, the focus was life skills, tertiary education and entrepreneurship via three main topics: The River of Life, Grow Your Own Money and I Want To Be A … Lindy Nieuwenhuizen, a die-hard Tour de Tuli and Children in the Wilderness volunteer, hosted The River of Life sessions where children created their own picture that reflects how they see what has been significant in shaping the direction of their lives.

Children in the Wilderness’ Bongani Baloyi (also a Makuleke community member) hosted the Grow Your Own Money sessions where children learned about square-metre gardening and the value of growing and trading vegetables in the square metre. The financial aspect of these sessions proved thought provoking – how much does your household currently spend on fresh vegetables and how you can save this money growing your own?

Janet Wilkinson (Children in the Wilderness SA programme coordinator) facilitated the I Want To Be A … session which provided information on study paths and options for tertiary education and ways to fund this education. Children were encouraged to do further research into their dream careers and study paths required. Information was provided to encourage considering ‘Plan E’ – become an entrepreneur, start your own small business.

Although the three topics touched on tough issues such as money (or rather lack thereof) and dealing with disappointment of disappearing dreams, the children remained upbeat and focused on the many positives. After lunch and a quiz, the children were divided into smaller groups which brainstormed acts of kindness and ways to volunteer within their communities; they undertook to hold monthly YES meetings to implement these. Ideas included filling road potholes with sand to help passing motorists, starting a community vegetable garden, making tippy taps, planting more trees, and helping the elderly and poorer people in the community.

The day ended with a slide show of memories from all the Children in the Wilderness Pafuri Trails camps, which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. Each child went home with packets of vegetable seeds to “grow their own money.”

Some quotes from the workshop feedback forms:

- CITW has helped me know how to correctly choose my dream career and the best institution – LLOYD (18)
- CITW has taught me life skills I need to achieve my goals. It has taught me the values of leadership – DESTINY (16)
- It has taught me to respect others – PHANUEL (16)
- CITW has helped me even not to lose hope on my career – XIHUNDLA (18)
- CITW has taught me how to make my own money – NTWANANO (15)
- It has made me proud and believe in myself that I can make it whether I do have money or I don’t have money. CITW teach me to love where I belong – JESSICA (17)
- It helped me to know that I don’t go to university I can start my small business and make my own money to make a living – THULISILE JUDITH (17)
- They teach me to respect others and to volunteer at elders who need my help – PHINDILE (15)
- It has opened my eyes to see how I can be responsible on my own and to be who I am – MIXO PRETTY (18)
Zimbabwe

During the first quarter of 2016, Children in the Wilderness Zambezi hosted its first YES Camp for the year at Davison’s – one of Wilderness Safaris’ camps situated in Hwange National Park. A total of 24 students were selected from Ngamo and Kapane Secondary Schools in Tsholotsho to participate on the camp which was aimed at promoting sustainable development through education, mentoring and the promotion of leadership skills.

The camps focused on teamwork, advanced environmental education, teaching our younger generation to participate in the decision-making processes in the management of our natural assets, and education on how they can positively impact and change their own communities through the initiation of environmental and social projects at both school, and within their communities. Students were exposed to various lessons in conservation management through a number of activities such as game drives, guided walks, structured lessons and role play. Much was learnt and each participant left the camp inspired to make a difference in both their school and home environments.

Tsholotsho Careers Day 2016

Kapane Secondary School, in the Tsholotsho District of Matabeleland North, were the hosts for the YES Programme Career Day, held on 2 September 2016. Invited guests included heads of schools and teachers, nursing staff, representatives from the Zimbabwe Republic Police, Agricultural Extension Officers, lecturers from local Polytechnical Colleges and Universities, members of the local business community and local leadership.

The school grounds were a hive of activity; song and dance performances by students provided entertainment before speakers were invited to share with all present. The focus for the day was “career orientation and guidance,” the aim being to expose students to a variety of careers, more especially to introduce them to members of the community that are gainfully employed.

The personal stories from invited speakers were aimed at encouraging the students to look at realistic vocational careers that utilise their strengths and individual abilities where there are job opportunities and where they would hopefully be able to find future employment.

“When students see that there is relevance between their studies and future career aspirations, they tend to exhibit more involvement and motivation.” – Kapane Primary School Teacher

The YES Programme members contributed with poems and speeches about the importance and value of a good education and the school’s Head Girl, Angela Sibanda, closed with thanks to the organisers and contributors: “Respected Headmaster, our honourable guests, fellow students and the career day organisers,

Thank you for a very successful day. To the organisers and guest speakers, thank you for this day that has enlightened us on future plans. To my fellow students I believe you have been greatly empowered by the Youth Environmental Stewardship Programme. Today you understand that life is a reality not a fantasy, and that we should aim for the sky so that when we fall, we land above the clouds.

We appreciate that we should work hard for something that we should own. That we should open our eyes and ears to opportunities. Fellow girl students, I hope our attitudes have changed. Marriage is not an achievement, but a benefit that comes with age. To make a change in your life, it begins with yourself because you are responsible for the change you want. To the guest speakers, we greatly appreciate your love for putting us in front of your jobs and coming to guide us to be better people.”
Meet some of our Youth Environmental Stewardship (YES) Members

Malawi
Innocent Liwinga
Twenty-one-year-old Innocent was a learner at Chihame Primary School between 2004 and 2012, before furthering his schooling at Chintheche Secondary School from 2012 to 2015. He passed his Secondary School education with credits.

He joined the Children in the Wilderness programme as a camper in 2007. He was an Eco-Club member at Chihame Primary School until 2012 when he graduated to become a YES Club member.

In 2016 he went to South Africa to do a bridging course at the Southern African Wildlife College. He successfully finished the course and was awarded a number of certificates in Wildlife and Environmental Conservation. His greatest wish and goal in life is to see the world become a complete healthy home for all living things.

Prisca Matola
Prisca, who is now 20 years old, was a learner at Chihame Primary School between 2004 and 2012, then at Chintheche Secondary School from 2012 to 2015. She passed her Secondary School education with credits.

She joined the Children in the Wilderness programme as a camper in 2008. She was an Eco-Club member at Chihame Primary School until 2012 when she graduated to become a YES Club member.

In 2016 she also went to South Africa to do a bridging course at the Southern Africa Wildlife College. She successfully finished the course and was also awarded a number of certificates in Wildlife and Environmental Conservation. Her greatest wish and goal in life is to serve the people of Malawi by aiming to become the Minister responsible for socio-economic development for rural areas.
**South Africa**

**Thabo tells of his recent work experience:**

My name is Thabo Boldwin Maluleke, I was born and raised at Mabiligwe village around Makuleke community in Limpopo Province. My dream is to become a vet and work in the Kruger National Park (KNP) as I have a lot of interest in working with wildlife and helping vulnerable animals that are under threat from extinction through poaching.

I want to thank Children in the Wilderness and South African National Parks for giving me the opportunity to spend time in the Veterinary Wildlife Services. This opportunity has been an eye-opener and given me a lot of information based on my dream job and how to work as a team in the laboratory or in the field.

I met a lot of people from America, Germany, Spain and many students from Pretoria. This was my first visit to KNP’s Vet camp area in Skukuza and I was lucky enough to see all the Big Five animals during my first week!

My biggest highlight was working with the Veterinary Wildlife team; the experience that I gained from them has made a very big difference in my life. Ever since I was little I always wanted to be part of nature conservation, I always had a goal to work with wildlife. This opportunity has brought a positive change in my life, as my life will never be the same again.

Being a qualified vet will be a dream come true for me and my family. In order to reach my dream I have to work harder every day at school. Now I have some practical experience for my dream job from the previous work experience at Skukuza, I believe that nothing will stop me from accomplishing my goal of becoming a vet.

Last but not least thanks to Children in the Wilderness for giving me a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, to spend time at Skukuza, I dedicate this message to Janet Wilkinson for recognising my potential since 2011 and the other special thanks to Dr. Markus Hofmeyr from Skukuza Wildlife Services in hosting me for 14 days. The opportunity has brought a very bright light in my life. Keep up the good work.

**Some highlights from Thabo’s visit:**

- Seeing the different machines used in the lab for processing different samples.
- Seeing lions on my way back from Satara; I was seeing them for the first time in my life.
- Spending time with rhinos.
- Working with an African wild dog for the first time.
- Working in the lab wearing lab coat and gloves this made me feel like my dreams come true.

I helped with the capture of six white rhinos for translocation out of KNP. I did the sampling of blood, hair and tissue as well as helping to bring the animals up on their feet and loading them into their transport crates. I was taught to use time wisely when dealing with big animals like these, because sometimes they wake up before you are finished and they may become very aggressive and dangerous to deal with.

**Zambia**

**Fransisco Zion Mwanza**

Fransisco was born in Livingstone and completed his secondary education at St Raphael Secondary School in 2014 and obtained a full certificate. In 2016, Fransisco was one of the 16 Children in the Wilderness scholarship recipients who did a course in Environmental Education and Nature Conservation at the Southern African Wildlife College in South Africa.

He has recently completed his workplace experiential training with the National Parks and Wildlife office in Livingstone, Zambia.

“I never believed a saying which says everything is possible until I found myself at Southern African Wildlife College. The training opened many doors for me and I would like to return to the College to do guide training. I like birds and I would like to be a safari guide”.

**My best moment was presenting to the children during a Children in the Wilderness Annual Camp. I felt so unique and proud to also stand before people and present to them the relevance of understanding of living and non-living organisms and why it is and will ever be necessary to co-exist**.”
Zimbabwe

Methuli Tshuma

Methuli is 21 years old and comes from Ngamo village in Zimbabwe. He did his primary schooling at Ngamo Primary School before completing his Grade 12 studies at Tsholotsho Secondary School where he passed with flying colours.

Methuli joined Children in the Wilderness in 2009 when he was only 13 years old. He is one of the first Youth Environmental Stewardship members and today is a camp Eco-Mentor. He is also a part-time volunteer teacher at Tsholotsho Secondary School.

Methuli always wanted to be involved in Natural Resources and Wildlife Management and when the opportunity to study at the Southern African Wildlife College in South Africa presented itself, he grabbed it with both hands. He has completed his bridging course in Environmental Education and Nature Conservation and has recently completed his work experiential training with Wilderness Safaris in Hwange National Park. Methuli plans to enrol for a degree in Tourism, Hospitality, Natural Resources and Wildlife Management.

Zambia

Banji Boka

Banji was born on 20 October 1995 in Lusaka and completed her secondary education at Petauke Boarding Secondary School in 2014 where she obtained a full certificate.

Banji joined Children in the Wilderness in 2016 as community volunteer and was actively involved in solid waste management at Holly School.

In 2016, she applied and was recommended for a course in Environmental Education and Nature Conservation at the Southern African Wildlife College, South Africa. She has recently completed her work experiential training with the National Parks and Wildlife office in Livingstone, Zambia. Banji would like to study towards a degree in Environmental Education. At a recent Annual Camp held at Toka Leya Camp, Boka presented an interactive topic with children on the Three Rs – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

“Nature is life and good management comes through education. Education is a continuous thing and the training at the college is a stepping stone to my long term vision to study a degree in Environmental Education.”
Scholarship Programme

An important part of our structure is our Scholarship Programme. In a number of areas where we operate, primary education is free, but in some areas secondary schooling always has a fee most households cannot afford, limiting them from sending their children to school. For this reason, a large majority of children will only ever complete their primary schooling.

Through our Eco-Clubs and annual camps we are able to identify children who are doing well academically, but whose parents are unable to send them on to secondary school. Our Scholarship Programme then gives these children an opportunity to complete their schooling and to give them inspiration for their future.

The programme provides funding for the necessary school fees and as often as possible, we try and assist with uniforms, stationery, etc. as well. Funding originates largely from Wilderness Safaris guests and agents, as well as other partner NGOs and corporates.

Internships

This programme focuses on supporting our children beyond the life of an Eco-Club, annual camp, by connecting them to the workplace, allowing them to gain practical work experience and skills. This assists our children in starting a career in hospitality, environment, tourism and conservation, as well as in other sectors.

Children earmarked for internships are largely selected from our YES programme. The 16 Children in the Wilderness students who attended the Bridging Course at the Southern African Wildlife College were all supported in work placements and internships thus putting what they had learnt into practice.
Meet some of our Scholarship students
Scholarships

Namibia

Learner: Utanaukaije “Bella” Tjiraso  
Sponsor: Children in the Wilderness General  
Profile: Utanaukaije is a Grade 12 learner at Braunfels Agricultural High School near Khorixas. She joined Children in the Wilderness in 2011 when she was a Grade 6 learner at Elias Amxab Combined School. Despite being an orphan, nothing can stop Utanaukaije from achieving her dream to become a lawyer when she finishes school.

Learner: Willem “Spono” Thaniseb  
Sponsor: Khomas Trust  
Profile: Willem is also a learner at Braunfels Agricultural High school near Khorixas. In 2010, Willem joined Children in the Wilderness as an Eco-Club member when he was in Grade 5 at Jacob Basson Combined School. He aspires to be a mathematician one day.

Malawi

Learner: Bright Nyoni  
Sponsor: Children in the Wilderness General  
Profile: Nineteen-year-old Bright is a Grade 11 learner at Chintheche Private Secondary School. His dream is to become an accountant one day.

Learner: Valines Chirwa  
Sponsor: Rosemary Pencil Foundation  
Profile: Valines is 16 years old and is in Grade 8 at Bandawe Girls Secondary School. Valines stays with her grandmother and would like to become a nurse when she finishes school.

Zambia

Learner: Kaniki Morris  
Sponsor: Children in the Wilderness General  
Profile: Kaniki Morris, aged 17, is a learner at Linda Secondary School. He is an orphan and child-head of his household, taking care of his sister and grandfather aged 92. He would like to be a teacher after completing his education.

Learner: Mutema Sikute  
Sponsor: Children in the Wilderness General  
Profile: Mutema is 20 years old and doing Grade 10 at Linda Secondary School. He is an orphan and looks after his siblings and grandfather. Mutema would like to be a social worker one day.
In April 2016, Children in the Wilderness partnered with the Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC) to provide opportunities for Children in the Wilderness participants to build on their environmental education by attending a six-month Conservation and Environmental bridging course. The first group of 16 Children in the Wilderness students from Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe attended the course and have completed their two-month work experiential training with Wilderness Safaris, Children in the Wilderness and the Zambian Wildlife Authority.

This is a particularly exciting initiative, as scholarships, internships and ultimately job creation form a huge part of Children in the Wilderness’ programme structure. Now, not only are we able to reach children throughout their school career through Eco-Clubs and annual camps, but we can continue the conservation journey of those that show a keen interest in environmental issues by providing them with the opportunity to expand on their knowledge and gain an accredited qualification at the one of the region’s leading conservation training institutions.

The bridging course, entitled “Youth Access Conservation and Environmental Education Programme”, exposes school leavers to theory and practical application of environmental education and the life of a field ranger in a conservation area. Learners attend SAWC for four months, 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.
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.

SAWC provides bursaries to the Children in the Wilderness students, as well as other students from South Africa attending the programme, which was 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. Each bursary is worth over R60 000, covering tuition fees, accommodation, uniforms and study material. All other costs, such as passports, work permits and transportation were covered by Children in the Wilderness.
Terrance Muhlauri, 27, Zimbabwe

Eco-Stars: How would you describe your experience at the South African Wildlife College?

Terrance Muhlauri: At first, it was challenging because it was not exactly what I expected. It was a bit different from normal college life and being away from home was not very easy. However, despite the challenges I still had my passion for the environment and that made me enjoy my experience at the college.

ES: How has this opportunity impacted your life?

TM: I have learnt so many things about the environment such that I have decided that if I could pursue a degree in Environment Education I would do so, so that I can impact my community.

I acquired life survival skills during our field work where for example, we would go in the bush for five days and be given just two litres of water to use per day. I had to learn to conserve water and survive with limited resources. Hence this experience has really changed my life for the better.

ES: What does the bursary mean to you?

TM: The scholarship meant to me that there are caring people out there willing to educate and empower young people like me and I feel challenged to change the world as far as environmental education is concerned.

ES: Which would you say was your favourite course and why?
**Bridget Mack, 21, Zimbabwe**

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

BM: It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience as I learnt about my environment, how to recycle plastic, how I can help improve how we humans treat animals and I managed to conquer my fear of wild animals when we did our “bush phase.”

Above all, I learnt how to communicate with all age groups and to respect other people’s cultural values.

ES: How has this opportunity impacted your life?

BM: It has changed my life a lot because I can now help farmers in my village to deal with problem animals. Before the course, I used to kill snakes and other animals but now I have been educated not to and my life has changed.

Career-wise, this opportunity helped me to have a different view of my future were I could have given up and come back home.

**Janet Kaombe, 21, Malawi**

Eco-Stars: How would you describe your experience at the Southern African Wildlife College?

Janet Kaombe: One of the greatest things I have learnt at the college was how to work in a team and most importantly how to cooperate with people from different cultural backgrounds and values. This changed the way I perceived the world.

ES: How has this opportunity impacted your life?

JK: I was fortunate to be selected to attend the bridging course. The knowledge I have learnt in Environmental Education has helped me to convey conservation awareness better in my home country, Malawi. My self-esteem and communication skills have greatly improved since I attended the course and I am more confident to interact with people.

ES: Which would you say was your favourite course and why?

JK: I would say Field Ranger training where during the anger training I learnt the importance of trust and to understand different animal behaviours. I also loved the discussions about interesting facts of trees and their uses.

ES: What is your greatest wish?

JK: My greatest wish and goal in life is to participate in the process of bringing about positive change in my local community through educational empowerment.

**Chimuka Lyempe, 19, Zambia**

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

Chimuka Lyempe: I cannot thank Children in the Wilderness and the Southern African Wildlife College enough for their generosity. I had a lot of educational fun at the college. I never knew that learning could be fun but Southern African Wildlife College made it possible. The highly experienced and dedicated staff at the college made our stay lovely and fruitful. The knowledge I have gained has helped me transform my community in ways that I never imagined.

ES: How did you find the practical component of the Environmental Management and Nature Conservation course?

CL: When I did my workplace assignments, I realised that practicals are very different from classroom theory and the experience helped me to further understand what I have been taught in the classroom and translate that into practice.

ES: How would you like to make a difference?

CL: I would like to build a career in Environmental Education. My dream began to come true when I was selected for a scholarship for this course at the Southern African Wildlife College in South Africa.

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**TM: I would say Environmental Education because it is very practical which makes it easier to grasp taught concepts. I also learnt to understand how the environment and human beings are related.**

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

TM: When you want to get things done in life you need to focus and you should do what you love so that you do it with passion without being pushed.

Sometimes in life one has to learn to adjust and adapt, because had I not done that at the Southern African Wildlife College, I would have given up and come back home.

**BM: I would love to go back to Southern African Wildlife College in South Africa to further my studies because the college focuses more on practical training and it makes it easier to apply the learnings in the workplace.**

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

BM: I would advise them to love nature and help protect animals and stop rhino poaching.

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**Children looking for Sponsorship**

For more information on how you can support our scholars, and to view their profiles, visit our Scholarship Programme page. Here, you will find details related to the children requiring sponsorship in each of the countries in which we operate:

Namibia is a dry country. It takes a long time to rain sometimes, and it mostly rains in the northern parts of the country. Our beautiful desert doesn’t get enough rain but the animals and plants in the desert can cope with little water, especially the Welwitschia and the !Nara plants.

The leaves of the welwitschia plant grow up to 4 metres long across the ground in a tangled mess. The leaves on the sand help to prevent wind erosion. The !Nara plant is a thorny plant and grows round spiky fruits which are very nutritious and are eaten by the Namibian people and by the animals.

Namibia is a large country and it has a lot of attractive things, especially for tourists. We have rock paintings, big sand dunes, the sea at the coast and Cape Cross. We have a lot of beautiful national parks where you can find different types of animals, such as kudu, hyaenas, jackals, lions, springbok, baboons, elephants, puku antelope, gemsbok, cheetah, wildebeest and giraffe. We have many different cultural groups such as the Herero, Damara, Nama, San, Kavango, Owambo, the Caprivian and many more. There are a lot of different things in our country. I would like to hear about your country too!

Artwork and handicrafts are an important part of our programme. Children with artistic talents are encouraged to create artwork and handicrafts as individuals or groups.

Another key aspect of our Children in the Wilderness programme is focused on creating an environment in which Africa’s next generation of leaders can thrive, and improving creative-writing skills and confidence levels plays a part in this.

Children in the Wilderness has partnered with the Dûcere Foundation, aimed at enhancing literacy levels in children across Africa by promoting story writing, creative writing and the capturing of oral tradition through the Dûcere African Children’s Stories Programme. The Dûcere African Children’s Stories Programme aims to provide an African alternative in terms of children’s literature – one that is more relevant to everyday life in rural southern Africa. Thirty-two collections have been published so far, featuring stories written by children in Botswana and Zambia. These are available for purchase in Australia and online, and the funds are used to distribute the books in southern Africa.

The collaboration between Children in the Wilderness and Dûcere kicked off in 2015 with a story-telling competition, in which Eco-Club members from schools across southern Africa were invited to submit their own stories and poems. From these, several have been selected to be included in various Dûcere African Children’s Stories Collections.

All stories in this section have been published courtesy of Dûcere Foundation.

**My Namibia**

*By Cholastic Kaurianga, 15 years old, Okaukuejo Combined School – Namibia*

The San people were hunter-gatherers. They moved from one place to another place in search of food, water, shelter and animals to hunt. They did not have a permanent home and moved from place to place. The San women would stay at home while the young boys and men went hunting. They usually gave birth to more than three children. The boys would be taught how to hunt and the girls were taught how to do home chores, like cleaning and preparing the food for the men.

When the men came back from hunting with meat, the people would celebrate that same night. They would dance around the fire singing songs and dancing until late. When the men went hunting they would usually keep their water in an empty ostrich egg shell. There were also days when all the members would go and gather wild fruits together.

The San people mostly ate wild fruits and game meat. Sometimes if there was not much meat, the people would share it amongst all the members as they sat around the fire, singing songs. The next day they would move to another area where there were more wild animals to hunt and fruit to collect.

A long, long time ago there lived a group of people of light complexion. They didn’t live in houses as we do, but in caves and under trees. These people didn’t use pots or knives or forks. They were using all the things that nature could give them.

They made fires using stones which they would strike together and they used ostrich eggs as pots. These people hunted and gathered food from the veld. The women would gather the wild berries and fetch water while the men would go and hunt in the bush.

They used spears to kill the animals. They would bring the animals back to the cave and the women would cook the food, while the children were playing and cleaning the caves.

The young girls would take care of their siblings and the men would rest, because in those days for men, hunting was a big job. The men would rest and then wake up and eat the food that the women had prepared. They would take care of their livestock and if the meat was finished, they would go and hunt again. Time flew by and these people starting making houses with sticks. They made baskets with grass and would put their food in them. They began to cook food in pots and stopped hunting in big numbers.

**The San People**

*By Esmerelda Nu-Eises, 16 years old, Okaukuejo Combined School – Namibia*

**The Hai!am People**

*By Rejoice Rezzy Garas, 16 years old, Okaukuejo Combined School – Namibia*
The parents let their children work less and started sending them to school. The men took more care of their livestock. And so the times changed and it is the children who are now forwarding our tradition.

We, the great grandparents, must tell the children about the past. We used to live in the northern part of Namibia, but now we are all over the country. We call ourselves the Hai|om people – One Hai|om, one nation.

Muzomba and the Forest
By Caroline Mweemba, Grade 5, Twabuka Primary School – Zambia

A man called Muzomba wanted to cut down trees and build himself a house. He had an axe but he had no handle. Muzomba walked around the forest wondering how he could get a handle for his axe. He said to himself “I really need a handle for this axe; I wish I could get a tree cut.”

The trees heard him, there was one very thin tree that was overshadowed by the other trees and it could not grow. The big trees always made fun of it and had not much use for it. They said to Muzomba, “You can take this little tree, it is weak and we don't need it.” Muzomba pulled out the small tree and went home singing happily and he made a handle for his axe. The next day he went into the forest and started cutting down the big trees. He built himself a house and started selling the other trees.

Meanwhile the remaining trees were very sad about the death of their friends. “If we had not given him the small tree we would not have suffered this much,” they said.

Semi and Grandpa
By Semian Ngende, Grade 2, Twabuka Primary School – Zambia

Once upon a time there was boy called Semi and his grandpa called Jamu. One day Semi and his grandpa Jamu decided to play a hide-and-seek game. They boy then went and hid in a groundnut cover and then a hen came and swallowed the cover in which the boy went to hide.

Thereafter the hen was eaten by a wild cat which went to drink some water in a stream nearby and was unfortunately caught by a crocodile and in the process the crocodile was caught in a net from the fisherman who was fishing. The fisherman took a knife to slice the bubble fish and he moved the net to the other side of the river only to find a crocodile inside.

He cut it in the stomach and found the wild cat. He cut the wild cat in the stomach and found the hen which had been eaten by the wild cat and then he cut the chicken and found the covers for the groundnuts in which the boy had hid.

When they tried to break the groundnut, they just heard a voice saying, “Grandpa, you have failed to find me.”

The Sun and the Wind
By Gerald Kapumbwe, Grade 4, Twabuka Primary School – Zambia

The sun and the wind always quarrelled as each tried to boast that he was stronger than the other.

One day they saw a man along a path and he was wearing a heavy cloak. “There comes a man”, said the sun, “Let's ask him who is stronger than the other.” The wind thought the man was going to answer in favour of the sun. It was a cold day and a warm sunshine was just what the man needed. “No!” said the wind, “let us try to make the man remove his cloak. Whoever makes the man remove his cloak is stronger.”

They agreed and the wind started. The wind blew and blew but the man held on to his cloak. The wind failed to make the man remove his cloak. It was now the sun's turn. It shone and shone. At first it was only a good warmth; then as the heat increased the man found it very difficult to walk with his cloak on so he removed it.

The sun said, “I told you – I am the strongest!”
Children in the Wilderness

By Jacobina Naapopye Shuuveni, 16 years old,
Okaukuejo Combined School, Namibia

Children in the Wilderness
We are here to protect our nature and future resources! Most of the places you travel to have green plants.

Green plants are there to make you happy whenever you are sad, look around at nature instead of stressing yourself.

You too can join an Eco-Club and start discovering more about caring for nature. And learning about our natural resources. Nature is filled with beautiful colours. But the most important colour is green.

We, the young generation,
It is our responsibility to take care of nature for the future generations.

Most people do not know that they have a responsibility to care for the environment. They think plants are there to be abused.

So we the children at Okaukuejo Combined School are here to help you with the way that you should deal with your plants and natural vegetation.

We must start decreasing pollution and deforestation. If we don’t, our green plants will die and our environment will be empty and ugly.

Green plants are the ones that keep us alive, we breathe in the oxygen they produce. So we do not die.

I am hoping that the people of Africa respect the environment and don’t cut down our green plants and trees.

Lift off!

By Emmerensia Auses, 15 years old,
Okaukuejo Combined School, Namibia

Lift off! Lift off!
I’m blasting into space.
I’m so frightened travelling at this pace.

I’m going to distant places.
I’ll meet such different faces.
Then I’ll come back and unpack with presents from outer space!

Challenges

By Eben-Ezer Sheehama, 14 years old,
Okaukuejo Combined School, Namibia

A child, a seed into a flower,
Among wild trees in the wilderness.
A forest full of different kinds of trees.
Dead and alive; it takes a lot to survive.
It takes respect, dignity, values and principles.

For you to make it.
Learn to be tough, to face challenges.
A wilderness full of weird and scary things.
It is for you to be smart.
And give it your best shot.
As for a flower, among other flowers.
There might be no rain.
But still it has to do its best.
To get water, to survive.
Children’s Creativity
Artwork

Curly Mpala, St Mary’s Primary School
Zimbabwe

Gothusaone Masupatsela, Kareng Primary School
Botswana

Awakhiwe Zikhali, Kapane Primary School
Zimbabwe

Daniel Sikhosana, Ziga Primary School
Zimbabwe

Brilliant Mpofu, Kapane Primary School
Zimbabwe
The successful implementation of the Children in the Wilderness Programme is essentially owed to the dedication and commitment of the people who work tirelessly for the next generation. Our people are at the heart of Children in the Wilderness as an organisation and their contributions, alongside those of our partners, supporters and sponsors, enable us to achieve our vision. We are very proud to be working with such a wonderful team. In this section, we’d like you to get to know three of our staff members. On the following page, we have also included a brief profile of each team member from all the regions. We will continue to provide you with a full profile of each team member in the subsequent issues of the magazine.
Agnes Tjirare – Namibia
Community Engagement Administrator and Children in the Wilderness Programme Coordinator

Agnes Mujozikua Tjirare is from a small village in the north-eastern part of Namibia known as Okakarara. She joined Wilderness Safaris right out of high school in 2008 as a waitress for about a year at Andersson's Camp and then very quickly realised being out in nature was extremely fulfilling.

She soon started investing in guiding books and cleaning guide vehicles as well as packing their cooler boxes to earn trips into Etosha and Ongava Game Reserve. In no time she was a qualified guide and decided she had to carry on with her tertiary studies which led her to a management position at Desert Rhino Camp with a better schedule for distance studies.

After a few years she returned to the Windhoek office as a Logistics Administrator at the Wilderness Safaris warehouse and then joined the Training department as a Service Trainer for all 11 camps and lodges of the company. She joined the Children in the Wilderness family as Programme Coordinator/ Community Engagement Administrator in 2016.

She possesses a Diploma from the University of Namibia and is currently a law student at the University of South Africa. She intends to specialise in Environmental law at Master’s level and add legal weight to the conservation efforts in her country.

She has also completed a few other courses such as International Hospitality modules with Lobster Ink (Cape Town), National Guiding Licence courses with the Namibian Academy of Tourism and Hospitality (NATH), Dispute Resolution with H&E labour consultants and numerous internal training courses.

“**My involvement with Children in the Wilderness has taught me that knowledge is like a source of light that should continuously be shared for everyone to enjoy a brighter future.”**

James Mwanza – Zambia
Children in the Wilderness Programme Coordinator

James Mwanza comes from Zambia’s South Luangwa area, specifically the Lupande Game Management Area. He joined Wilderness Safaris as Assistant Community Liaison and Children in the Wilderness Programme Coordinator in January 2015. James has 12 years’ work experience in NGO project management.


James previously worked for the World Wildlife Fund for Nature in their Land Use Planning Project in Zambia and was the Programme Coordinator for the Livingstone Tourism Association.

“**Environmental success is not changing the whole world but it makes one’s attitude change to appreciate nature.”**

James has recently completed an international diploma in Private Sector Development from the Swedish Institute of Public Administration.

Janet Wilkinson – South Africa
Children in the Wilderness Programme Coordinator

Janet grew up and matriculated in the Eastern Cape before moving to Johannesburg. Her working career began in the motor industry and over the years she has worked extensively in the sports, hotel and travel/tourism industries.

Janet earned an MBA with her dissertation on Sustainable Development. Janet’s passion is for the environment and with a keen interest in conservation of nature she has completed courses in field guiding and wildlife filmmaking.

In 2011 Janet joined Children in the Wilderness and her love for the bush and conservation is her driving force in making a difference in the lives of the children and communities she meets. Her innovative thinking ensures that the children’s experience on camps and in Eco-Clubs is filled with educational activities, allowing them to grow, learn and have fun!

“**Working with Children in the Wilderness gives me the opportunity to share my passion and interest while nurturing wonderful young minds.”**
The team that makes it all happen

Gabaineele “Gaba” Modirapula
Botswana – Children in the Wilderness Programme Assistant

Mary Hastag
Botswana – Children in the Wilderness Programme Coordinator

Kelebogile “Kelly” Baitshoki
Botswana – Children in the Wilderness Admin Assistant

Christopher Mvula
Malawi – Community Development and Children in the Wilderness Liaison

Agnes Tjirare
Namibia – Community Engagement Administrator and Children in the Wilderness Programme Coordinator

Symon Chibaka
Malawi – Children in the Wilderness Programme Coordinator

Eco-Stars • Annual Issue 2

56
In November 2013, Children in the Wilderness, in partnership with former professional soccer player Gordon Gilbert, launched an inspirational soccer programme – Soccer in the Wilderness. The programme combines the fun of sport with education to raise environmental awareness in local communities where Children in the Wilderness is present.

The inaugural Soccer in the Wilderness clinics took place at Sinde Football Club, Twabuka Middle School and with Wilderness Safaris staff at Toka Leya Camp in Zambia and Jabulani Primary School in Zimbabwe. Gordon and the Children in the Wilderness team raised awareness in the villages about conservation issues, including poaching and rhino conservation, motivating and inspiring them to get actively involved in the conservation of the wilderness areas they live next to. The importance of setting goals and having the discipline and dedication to achieve them was also discussed to encourage the children to broaden their horizons and to aim high. More clinics have been run in Botswana and the programme will continue to be rolled out.
Botswana
In November 2016, Gordon Gilbert conducted soccer clinics and motivational talks with Wilderness Safaris’ staff members at Vumbura and Mombo camps.

Zambezi (Zambia and Zimbabwe)
In 2016, Gordon Gilbert, graciously took time out from his busy schedule to visit Zimbabwe and Zambia once again, using soccer to promote conservation; by exposing the children to the importance of team work through the game itself and then spending time with the groups mentoring and teaching them about the value of nature and the impact this had on their future, Gordon was able to connect with everyone in a truly unique way.

The programme kicked off in Zambia, where Gordon spent time with four schools – Twabuka, Simoonga, Nalituwe and Holy Cross Primary, as well as a team from the local community of Sinde Village.

Gordon then braved the intense summer heat and cycled across the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe carrying bags filled with donated soccer balls, before being transported to the remote area of Tsholotsho on the border of Hwange National Park, where he met with children from rural Zimbabwean schools. These included Ziga and Kapane Primary School as well as Ngamo Primary and Secondary Schools. Soccer in the Wilderness aims to raise awareness in these remote villages about various conservation issues, including poaching and rhino conservation, motivating and inspiring the local people to get actively involved in the conservation of the wilderness areas they live adjacent to.

Whilst in Zimbabwe, there was an exciting soccer match between Ngamo Primary and Ngamo Secondary which combined both female and male students – during this highly-competitive match, it was interesting to watch the students concentrating on the game at hand whilst completely oblivious to a herd of wild elephants literally a few metres away from their soccer pitch. The combination of community and nature in harmony was awe inspiring. Children in the Wilderness is extremely proud to be associated with Gordon Gilbert in this inspiring Soccer Clinic; we are grateful for the role he plays by sharing his soccer skills and passion for conservation as we empower children through education.
Children in the Wilderness’ other related initiatives, depending on the country and region, include community development programmes to reduce poverty, improve living conditions, and enhance local education systems through improving school infrastructure, scholarship programmes, nutrition programmes and the promotion of small community businesses.

We are currently involved in the following projects, amongst others:

- School infrastructure development
- Teacher training programmes
- Nutrition programmes in schools
- Deworming programmes
- Introduction of vermiculture projects
- Setup and development of vegetable gardens
- Installation of solar water pump and water tank systems
- Park fence monitoring and maintenance
- Management of extensive scholarship programmes
- Library setup and development
- Literacy programmes
As a non-profit organisation, Children in the Wilderness depends on funding in order to realise its objectives. The opportunities presented by the programme are always increasing. There is, therefore, a need to be proactive with regards to fundraising in order to realise the programme’s potential.
One of Children in the Wilderness’ prime fundraising activities has been the cycle tours, which have proven both popular and life-changing for the cyclists, communities and the organisers.

In order to streamline this capability and to enable us to continue to operate on the leading edge of great cycle events, all fundraising events are operated under Tour de Wilderness – an umbrella brand which manages and coordinates all fundraising sports events for Children in the Wilderness.

All monies raised directly benefit Children in the Wilderness. In this way, Tour de Wilderness assists in ensuring the sustainability of the Children in the Wilderness programme through adventure tourism with a purpose.

The annual Nedbank Tour de Tuli attracts cyclists from across the globe and provides them with an unforgettable opportunity to follow wildlife trails in pristine wilderness areas within the Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Areas (GMTFCA) that include Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Cyclists not only have the opportunity of encountering a variety of wildlife, but the route also includes magnificent scenery and cultural interactions with the local communities living on the boundaries of these protected areas.

Tour de Wilderness, the organiser of the annual Nedbank Tour de Tuli multi-stage mountain bike event, is proud to celebrate the success of its 12th Tour which saw 330 participants cycle across 275km of challenging and remote terrain in Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa between 28 July and 2 August 2016.

“The 2016 Tour not only delivered plenty of adventure, camaraderie and a total immersion in some of Africa’s most pristine and spectacular wilderness areas, but further entrenched the Tour as one of Africa’s premier mountain biking events. Cyclists from across the globe joined us to participate in this year’s Tour, which has raised a record-breaking amount for Children in the Wilderness. We are extremely proud that our efforts for the Tour ultimately translate into making such an important difference to environmental education in our rural communities”, said Tour Director, Nicola Harris.
Meet some of the people who champion the Nedbank Tour de Tuli.

The Tour de Wilderness team is a small group of motivated, passionate individuals who strive to make a difference in conservation education in Africa by offering unique mountain bike tours. This team values good health, adventure and the importance of giving back above all else.

Nicola Harris – Tour Director
Nicola loves a challenge and heading up the Tour provides the perfect obstacle course.

"I started with Children in the Wilderness in 2008 where it was a mighty team of two creating the magic of the Tour. On paper it seemed like this event was an impossibility and only once I had seen all our hard work in action did I understand what a unique and special event this was.

What many people don’t realise is the enormous effort that goes on behind the scenes to ensure a seamless event, from the pre-Tour arrangements to the actual transport of bikes, tent setups, food, drinks, luggage movements – to say nothing of operating in three different countries for one event.

I cannot thank my team and volunteers enough for the hours of effort and tireless energy 24/7 to ensure that our cyclists not only have the best mountain biking experience during the day, but are cared for and spoilt throughout the Tour.

I feel privileged to be part of this remarkable team making a difference to the sustainability of our wildlife areas and of course the children. I am so proud of what we do and feel blessed that I have an opportunity to make a difference in this world and call it my job."
The rest of Tour de Wilderness team members

Mari dos Santos  
Tour Administration

Jonathan Felix  
Operations Manager

Richard van der Wel  
Tour Accountant

Shona Erasmus  
Hospitality Coordinator

Liza Steyn  
Administrative Bookkeeper

Vumi Dlakavu  
Operations Coordinator

To learn more about 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)
CHILDREN IN THE WILDERNESS LIMPOPO VALLEY

As a direct result of the cycle tour, Children in the Wilderness Limpopo Valley was started in 2010 and has already hosted twelve successful Annual Camps with funding from the cycle tour and from individual cyclists. We hosted our first Tri-Nations Camp in December 2015 with children from the three countries in the GMTFCA, at Mapungubwe National Park in South Africa. Another Tri-Nations Camp took place in December 2016: see more on Page 68. In 2016 there were a total of seven Eco-Clubs supported by Children in the Wilderness in the GMTFCA, with 225 Eco-Club members.

CHILDREN IN THE WILDERNESS ECO-CLUBS IN THE MARAMANI COMMUNITY

Sibusisiwe Ndlovu from the Maramani Community was appointed as the Children in the Wilderness Eco-Club Coordinator for the area. In August 2015 Sibusisiwe took part in an Eco-Mentor training programme in South Africa, where she received training and materials to assist her with coordinating the Eco-Club programme. The Eco-Club curriculum provides lesson plans for 25 Eco-Club sessions, enough to cover one year of weekly Eco-Clubs sessions at school.

The schools benefiting from these are Shashe Primary School, Nottingham Primary School, Jalukange Primary School and Limpopo Primary School.

Another Eco-Mentor training took place on the 11th of March 2016 at Shashe Primary School in Zimbabwe. A total of seven teachers from Nottingham, Limpopo, Jalukange and Shashe Primary Schools attended the training workshop. The ward councillor, Mr Luka Ndou also attended the training.

CHILDREN IN THE WILDERNESS ECO-CLUBS IN THE TULI AREA

Calvenia Makgosa, a Mathathane community member is the Children in the Wilderness Eco-Club Coordinator for the area. She oversees Eco-Clubs at Mathathane Primary School. Calvenia also attended the Eco-Mentor training and received the necessary materials to run the Eco-Clubs in August 2015. An additional Eco-Mentor training was also done on the 20th of October 2015 at Mathathane Primary School in Mathathane village in Botswana. Nine teachers, including the school Headmaster, from Mathathane and five teachers from Mothlabaneng Primary Schools attended the training.

CHILDREN IN THE WILDERNESS ECO-CLUBS IN ALLDAYS

Portia Phokela is a local community member from the village of Simson near Alldays who hosts the Children in the Wilderness Eco-Club at Modikwa Primary School in the village. She has been hosting the sessions every two weeks since February 2015 and the principal of the school is delighted at the interest and enthusiasm from both Portia and the children in the Eco-Clubs.

The Eco-Club programme was introduced at Kranenberg Primary School near Musina in South Africa. An Eco-Mentor training workshop also took place at Kranenberg Primary School where three teachers, including the school headmistress, and two officials from Mapungubwe National Park and World Heritage Site participated in the training.

The GMTFCA programme continues to grow, with more Eco-Mentor training workshops and other activities planned in the coming months.
Tri-Nations camps

Children in the Wilderness and Tour de Wilderness, through the annual Tour de Tuli mountain bike cycling event, believe that the local communities through which the tour traverses should also benefit from our involvement in the Greater Mapungubwe Transfrontier Conservation Areas (GMTFCA).

Thus, Children in the Wilderness, in partnership with the South African Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA), Peace Parks Foundation (PPF) and the GMTFCA, holds an annual Tri-Nations Camp for 15 learners from Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe who enjoy three nights in the Mapungubwe National Park on this fun-filled, yet educational conservation camp.

In December 2016, five children from various Children in the Wilderness Eco-Clubs in Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe were selected to attend this Camp, which focused on environmental learning set in the broader context of the work being done in the GMTFCA. The innovative Camp built on what the children had learnt in their Eco-Clubs and other environmental awareness programmes throughout the year and included various life skills activities, such as a careers workshop that focused on opportunities in tourism and conservation.

Dr Sue Snyman, Regional Programme Director, identified the parallels between the Tri-Nations Camps and the work of the Transfrontier Conservation Areas as being instrumental in establishing the value of the camps: “The rural learners attending this Camp had the opportunity to interact with, and befriend, their peers from neighbouring countries. Through shared experiences, fun and education, they learnt that it is only through international cooperation and friendship that we can save Africa’s wild places, and by extension, ourselves.”
This second Tri-Nations Camp forms part of a larger project, which has seen the three countries that make up the GMTFCA collaborate on a number of initiatives. These include the Nedbank Tour de Tuli mountain-biking event aimed at promoting awareness of the area and ecotourism opportunities. Involving communities that live in and around the GMTFCA is of key importance, with rural schoolchildren identified as its future custodians.

Activities during camp included a visit to the Mapungubwe Interpretive Centre, a trip to the confluence of the Shashe and Limpopo rivers where all three countries meet, and other fun lessons and games. Highlights were the country presentations done by the children on the first day, where everyone learnt about the other countries participating on the camp, as well as the three team songs which were all creative and fun.

What the children had to say:
“I would like to make a difference by keeping the dirty things out the environment so that it should be clean at all times.”
Fhumulani, 14 years old – Zimbabwe

“Wilderness areas are important because they take care of the animals and plants.”
Juddley, 13 years old – South Africa

“I had fun with people from different countries. It was absolutely fun! I would like to learn more about life with the wildlife. I would like to make a difference by changing mindsets. It will be my theme for next year so I will include every lesson I learnt here to my big Adventure 2017 Action plan.”
Jonathan, 15 years old – Botswana
some of our partners

The success of Children in the Wilderness primarily depends on the support from our partners, donors, friends and volunteers. Below are some of the partners we work with:

The Mother Bear Project
The Mother Bear Project is a 501(c)(3) 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 in the world 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. Thousands of patterns have been distributed, and wonderful bears have been received from people of all ages, backgrounds and knitting abilities. It has brought people together to do something kind in the face of a challenging problem. Mother Bear donates bears to all the children attending our annual camps.

Pack for a Purpose
Children in the Wilderness has partnered with Pack for a Purpose for a number of years, allowing guests to bring much-needed supplies to remote rural communities by using their extra international flight luggage allowances.

If guests are not able to deliver the goods themselves, then Children in the Wilderness staff assist by collecting the supplies from the guests on arrival at the airport and distributing as needed. This partnership provides an excellent opportunity for people to have a big impact with little effort!
Dúcere Foundation
African Children Stories
Inspired by a visit to a Zambian primary school, Dúcere Publishing aims to provide an African alternative in children's literature. Each collection of African Children's Stories is filled with short stories submitted by students as all too often library shelves and school bags are filled with Western stories that have little relevance to the reality of a primary school student in southern Africa. Children in the Wilderness, along with the Dúcere Foundation, has already published stories written by our South African Eco-Club members. The Namibia collection will be launched in 2017.

Wilderness Safaris Residents Programme
In 2013, Wilderness Safaris launched its Residents Programme, where African residents are invited to become an integral part of the world of Wilderness. Members receive preferential rates, high season availability and last-minute discounted specials. The membership fee is only R6 000 and goes directly to Children in the Wilderness – tax-deductible for South Africans. Membership offers substantial benefits to members, their families and guests for two years, with an option to renew.
Where Are They Now?
Former Children in the Wilderness campers now in the workplace and/or studying further.

While Eco-Clubs are often the first time we meet our children, it is not the last. The annual camps and Eco-Club programmes mean that we keep in touch with them regularly, encouraging them to continue their schooling and to attain their goals in life. Here are a few stories of some of our participants.

**Botswana**

**Naledi Kgoba** who went to camp in Kwapa in 2009, was one of the lucky ex-campers to be nominated to attend an Environmental Bridging Course at the Southern African Wildlife College. He went to Banoka Bush Camp for his workplace assignment and we are looking forward to seeing Naledi completing his studies and hopefully being employed by Wilderness Safaris. Naledi is working very hard to ensure that he realises his dream of becoming a qualified nature guide. Naledi volunteers as an Eco-Mentor on Children in the Wilderness camps every year.

**Utlwanang Vivian Mosheti** was a camper in 2009 at Vumbura Plains when she was in Standard 7. She continued with her schooling up to Junior Secondary School and is presently an Eco-Mentor and Activity Leader in Botswana’s annual camps. Her mother, who is a housekeeper at Vumbura Plains, paid for her vocational course studies at Career Dreams; here she was trained in Food Production and is now a Staff Chef at Xigera Camp. Utlwanang is also studying further through Lobster Ink to become a professional chef.
Malawi

Chifundo Nyambalo is 22 years old and joined Children in the Wilderness in 2008. He did his primary education at Kafulafu Primary School and then his Secondary School education at New Era Secondary School from 2008 to 2011.

When he could not find space in University, he applied for a job with Central African Wilderness Safaris (CAWS). In 2012 he was employed as one of the general staff at Mvuu Camp in Liwonde National Park. He worked really hard and showed interest in trying other tasks within the company. He then joined the guiding department and underwent guide training, later becoming a trainee guide.

In 2016 he went to Southern African Wildlife College for further training related to guiding and environmental management. Chifundo is one of the happiest, most well-developed safari guides at Mvuu Camp in Liwonde National Park.

Chifundo is one of the volunteers and Camp Eco-Mentors, who volunteers every year. He is brilliant in the role of camp logistics and teaching children about wildlife.

He would like to become one of the top managers in CAWS or National Parks and achieve his ideas relating to ecotourism and rural development.

Debora Mataka Banda is 17 years old and first joined Children in the Wilderness in 2011 as an Eco-Club member. She started her primary school education at Chiira Primary School where she was also a dedicated member of the Eco-Club. Between 2010 and 2014 she did her secondary education at Bandawe Girls Secondary School.

She passed her secondary school final exams with distinctions. Last year she was selected to go to Kamuzu College of Nursing (University of Malawi) where she is studying towards a psychiatric qualification.

Debora is one of the most committed YES Club members in her community (Bandawe – Chintheche). She is a role model to so many girls in her local community. She is only the second girl to go to University from her local community together with Mercy Mapiko who is also an Eco-Mentor and ex-camper.

Namibia

Amy Coetzee is 19 years old and from Klein Aub village in the Rehoboth Rural Constituency in the Hardarp region in central Namibia. She first joined Children in the Wilderness in 2009 when she was in Grade 9. She is currently studying towards an accounting degree at the University of Namibia.

“I can’t express how fortunate I feel to have been around such caring and inspirational friends from Wilderness Safaris. I will do the best I can to keep sharing the love, knowledge and fun with current and future CITW participants. Thank you!”
Petrus Lazarus first joined Children in the Wilderness in 2004 as a camper and takes pride in his involvement in the programme. It taught him and other learners a lot with regard to careers, HIV/AIDS awareness, loving the environment as well as helping them to explore their beautiful country. Petrus progressed through the Wilderness Safaris Namibia training system, to become arguably the most qualified barman in Namibia – he has an honours degree in Tourism and Hospitality from the International University of Management.

“Children in the Wilderness encouraged me to study hard and I’m today an educated person. I am presently working as a supervisor for Wilderness Air and I am based at Doro Nawas airstrip. I am grateful to CITW for making my dream come true.”

Zambia

Ezelia Gemma Njobvu Twenty-five-year-old Ezelia was born in Livingstone and is 25 years old, having completed her secondary education at Linda High School in 2011 where she obtained a full certificate. Ezelia has been involved in community programmes such as art and crafts and also participated in reforestation programmes at her former Primary School at Nalituwe. She joined Children in the Wilderness in 2016 as a volunteer and an Eco-Mentor.

In July 2016, Ezelia was amongst the YES members who were selected to study at the Southern African Wildlife College where she enrolled a six-month bridging course in Environmental Education and Nature Conservation. She was one of the top achievers at the college. As part of her studies, Ezelia completed her two-month workplace experiential training with the National Parks and Wildlife office in Livingstone.

Grace Konidaris is 24 years old and hails from Kitwe village near Livingstone. She completed her secondary education at Kalulusshi High School in 2011 where she obtained a full certificate.

In 2016, her passion for the environment and wildlife landed her at the Southern African Wildlife College in South Africa where she studied a bridging course in Environmental Education and Nature Conservation for six months. Grace has successfully completed her work experiential training with the National Parks and Wildlife office in Livingstone.

Grace loves playing and working with children. She was invited to attend a Children in the Wilderness annual camp as an Eco-Mentor, tent leader and team leader and excelled in teaching the children about living and non-living things. During camp, she shared a tent with six girls whom she constantly advised about the dangers of alcohol abuse, drugs, teenage pregnancies and early marriages.

“I enjoyed college life especially in the area of environmental education and bringing awareness to friends and the community at large. The college provides a real-life experience and modern ways of managing the environment. It further brings a sense of responsibility that every human being must have towards nature. It’s a life-changing experience. Given the opportunity I would like to further my education experience in nature conservation.”

At a recent Children in the Wilderness annual camp at Toka Leya, Ezelia was a tent leader taking care of and mentoring young girls in environmental education; she also presented a topic on water conservation.
Adolf Jaison Moomba

Adolf Jaison Moomba was born in 1992 in Mazabuka and completed his secondary education at Zimba High School in 2009, obtaining a full certificate. Adolf has been involved in the reforestation programmes which were initiated by the Green Pop organisation. He fell in love with the environmental activities he was involved in and then decided to join Children in the Wilderness as an Eco-Mentor at Holy Cross School.

“I studied at Victoria Falls University and obtained a qualification in Business Administration in 2015. I then worked for Livingstone Tourism Association as an Administrative Assistant before meeting my dreams to study the bridging course in Environmental Education at the Southern African Wildlife College in 2016. I have completed my in-service training with Wilderness Safaris at Toka Leya Camp in Livingstone.”

Adolf was tent leader looking after eight boys at the Children in the Wilderness annual camp that was held at Toka Leya recently. He was also a team leader and presented on the importance of trees and the reforestation topics.

“I never knew what nature was and its benefit in totality until I set my foot in Southern African Wildlife College. This was a turning point and now nature is my friend. I pledge to support and protect its relevance.”

Webster Ndlovu

Webster Ndlovu is a warm, calm, gentle and composed student who is diligent and very industrious. He is enthusiastic, proficient and has a meticulous interest in school work. He has independent, balanced and discreet judgement.

Webster has a positive attitude towards his studies, has a strong sense of responsibility and strives hard to do his best. He gets on well with his peers.

Webster attended the annual camp in 2009 when he was in Grade 7, which was Zimbabwe’s second camp as Children in the Wilderness had only started in 2008.

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Delphine Ndlovu participated on a Children in the Wilderness annual camp in 2009, where her Super Camper qualities included being a quiet, conscientious young lady, kind and helpful at all times and popular amongst her peers. Delphine did her primary schooling at Ngamo and started her secondary schooling at the newly-built Ngamo Secondary School. Here she excelled and achieved above average marks, thus was recommended as a good candidate for a scholarship by the headmaster. On receiving a scholarship Delphine moved to St James Secondary where she was a boarder.

Delphine Ndlovu

She worked hard and consistently achieved good results, passing her O levels well. Delphine is currently doing her A levels at St James High School where she is studying Business Studies, Economics and Accounting. We are sure she will do well in these. While waiting for her A level results she will work on getting her driver’s license and taking a computer course. Delphine hopes to get into University next year to pursue a degree in Accountancy.

Comments noted for his Super Camper Badge were: Webster is a very bright and humble young man; he has joined in all the activities and is a good team player.

Webster has just written his A Level exams and is awaiting his results. He hopes to go to the University of Zimbabwe to study medicine – at Children in the Wilderness, we are very proud of his achievements thus far, as he has been a shining example of a scholarship student.
How can you make a difference?
Make a Difference

There are many ways you can make a difference. Visit http://www.childreninthewilderness.com/donate-now/how-can-you-make-a-difference/ to see how.

Monetary donations to assist in covering the day-to-day camp operational expenses can be made via EFT using 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

If you would like to donate directly to a specific Children in the Wilderness region, or via credit card, please contact Sue Snyman (sues@wilderness.co.za) for the relevant bank details.

For US donors, please use our fiscal partners: Empowers Africa, a 501C for USA residents – see https://empowersafrica.org/children-in-thewilderness/

- **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 a MyVillage MyPlanet 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 biking 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/ourprogrammes/scholarship/html

- 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.
“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