

# LATEST IMPACT UPDATES FROM OUR GREAT PLAINS INITIATIVES

# **Q4 IMPACT REPORT | OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2021**

In the last three months of the year we often see projects slow down in preparation for the start of the new year.. Our projects seem to have done just the opposite, with huge progress being made, particularly in our Conservation Education Camps in both Kenya and Botswana, the Solar Mamas installations of family units in the Okavango Delta and the Kenya Indigenous Tree planting. With tourism still highly affected by Covid-19, it is exciting to see the community and conservation projects pushing forward with resilience and impact.

# **SOLAR MAMAS**



#### A recipient family of a household solar system

The last quarter of 2021 saw exciting progress with the Solar Mama project. The project aims to bring solar electricity to off-grid communities in Northern Botswana through a women empowerment initiative. This quarter our Solar Mamas managed to install 50 family household units, bringing electricity to homes for safe after-dark light for kids to do their studies and for women to continue to run businesses.

Our Solar Mamas have been working hard in installing households across the five Okavango Community Trust villages and are seeing an increase in excitement around the project. Each village's Kgotla have also received a unit for community engagements with the Solar Mamas giving educational talks on Solar Energy.



Installation of a solar unit by our Solar Mama



Gobo and the Solar Mamas sharing knowledge on Solar Energy





# **EDUCATION**

Sustainable conservation is inextricably linked to the communities living among the wildlife,

# KENYA CONSERVATION HOLIDAY CLUB

In partnership with the Maa Trust, an educational and inspiring Conservation Camp was held in October 2021 in three village cluster groups in the Masai Mara. The camp covered both social and conservation themes with a focus on advancing child rights, child safeguarding, parental care and community-based conservation. A great success of the camp was that parents and kids attended together to be taught as a community.

The Maa Trust conservation strategy is to inspire the next generation to be eco-warriors with a mindset of conservation-based-development, that the opportunities of development are 'because of the wildlife'. Linking conservation of the environment and ecosystems with community development.



Attendees of the Indigenous Tree Planting educational session



Students attending the tree planting session

The conservation theme of indigenous trees and their importance to their ecosystem was key, with the students learning how to plant trees and look after them. The parents and children were given 4 saplings each with the competition of follow ups to check on the saplings and the best household will win a prize.



#### PACK FOR PURPOSE

As part of the Pack for Purpose initiative Great Plains guests bring school supplies with them in their luggage to distribute to the community schools. Supplies are requested on a needs-basis and this quarter 8.5kg of stationary supplies and sanitary pads were donated and distributed to the students of Talek School in the Masai Mara.



8.5kg of school supplies and sanitary pads donated to Talek School in Kenya

## **TIPITIZANE CRAFT GROUP**

Mma Kea and her team in Botswana make up the Tipitizane Craft Group, a women-empowerment enterprise in Seronga village. There was great progress for the craft ladies in recent months. Boilamang has taken the skills she has gained from the Tipitizane Group and has now started her own

craft company in Maun selling styles and products to tourism. Another success story is Alice, who we support to go to a Women Expo in Francistown to learn about Media Marketing and she is now marketing her products on Instagram and even set up another side business with the success. Mma Kea supported the Botswana Kids Conservation Camp in October by sewing together rucksacks for the students and has also been busy sewing our safari Covid-19 bags that include sanitisers, masks etc for our guests for the last few years.



Tipitizane ladies creating tie dye bags for the Kids Educational Camp in Botswana



## **BOTSWANA CONSERVATION EDUCATIONAL CAMP**

After a few years of pausing the camps, it was exciting to see the Botswana Great Plains team, led by Gobo, back in action in December 2021 for a Conservation Education Camp. 180 kids from the Okavango Community villages took part in the camps as our team moved through the villages. A range of exciting lessons were held both in the classroom and in the field from the Okavango Delta water system, waste management, tree planting, wildlife crime and prevention and living with elephants.





Somalia, head of Rhinos Without Borders, educating the students on understanding animal behaviour



Gobo with enthusiastic students learning about their local ecosystem



Somalia, head ranger at Rhinos Without Borders, took the students on a 'patrol walk in the bush' experience, sharing his vast knowledge of understanding the signs in nature from bird sounds, wind direction, what to look out for etc. Ecoexist supported this message with a session on elephant awareness and how to react when you come across elephants and wild animals as well as other endangered species and how to protect them. Letso, our Sustainability Officer, gave an exciting and educational session on caring for our environment through waste management of litter, recycling and reusing to reduce our impact on our environment.

A tree awareness session, lead by Mpho, included understanding the value of trees in our ecosystem and how they operate. Through a practical outdoor session the students learnt how to plant a tree and look after it so it grows well. 30 carefully selected indigenous trees were planted by the kids in their home communities.



Session on the value of trees, how and where to plant them and how to nurture them.



The students planted indigenous trees in their home communities





# **GREEN HEART OF GREAT PLAINS**

#### **CONSERVATION ROOTS**

The Great Plains Kenya team, led by Paul Kamau, have had a busy quarter in planting indigenous trees in the Masai Mara ecosystem as part of the Conservation Roots program. Paul is an expert horticulturalist and carefully selects tree species from his Tree Nursery (based at Mara Nyika camp) to plant in certain areas for ecosystem restoration and soil protection.



Guests planting indigenous trees with the GPC team in the Masai Mara

Over this quarter Paul has planted 620 trees (five separate species) with support from our safari guests as well as his team. The benefits of carefully controlled and managed indigenous tree planting are extensive to the land and the communities.





#### **GLASS CRUSHER**

There were big things happening with our Glass Crushing initiatve in Botswana this quarter, led by Letso, with an increase in glass being delivered from the local community in Maun. Our Great Plains Glass Crusher is the only option for recycling glass in Northern-West Botswana and avoid the land fill.



We continue to partner with a local brick moulder in Maun to replace her existing Okavango sand with sustainable recycled sand. Mma Temane from Kethaba Enterprise noted "Glass bricks are better quality compared to the natural Okavango sand and most of our customers prefer to use them rather than natural sand".

We are also looking at new ideas for the increased amount of sand produced for community needs. Exciting discussions of future businesses with a focus on women empowerment are in place.



Letso, demonstrating the Glass Crusher to Travel for Impact and the US embassy representative.



## RECYCLING PLAYGROUP

The Botswana Environmental team are becoming well known in the communities and are constantly looking for new ideas to educate and inspire. This quarter, the team visited a playgroup in the village of Matsaudi to teach all things waste management. There were over 30 participants ranging from 3-5 years old. The playgroup involved creating plastic bricks as well as a great game of football.



Educational session on recycling and caring for our environment



# **PROJECT RANGER**

As the repercussions of Covid-19 continue to affect conservation efforts, we continue to support units and teams of rangers across Africa to keep their operations running and expertise in the field protecting our endangered species.

Project Ranger Grantee

# CONSERVATION & WILDLIFE FUND HWANGE, ZIMBABWE



CWF rangers in training to protect the wild spaces of Zimbabwe



The CWF rangers removing snares from the bush

# "Thanks to the grants from Great Plains Foundation CWF have been able to keep our scouts employed and patrolling." – CWF

CWF continues to protect the fauna and flora in and around Hwange National Park. A challenge this area faces is poachers laying down snares. Anything could walk into a snare from lion to zebra to elephant and cause injury, and possibly death. The CWF team found a lioness who had died as a result of the snare, having huge consequences to her pride she left behind. The rangers have collected hundreds of snares so far, with as many as 64 in a single patrol. This quarter also saw the increase in using SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) – the digital data logging system to track patrol information.



#### Project Ranger Grantee

## **ENDUIMET, TANZANIA**

We continued to support Enduimet Wildlife Management Area in Northern Tanzania this quarter, who work tirelessly to protect wildlife that also move through corridors into Kenya's Amboseli region and beyond. The patrols, carried out by two large teams of rangers, cover the area looking for signs of illegal activity and situations of concern.

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The team were pleased to report 0 elephant deaths this quarter. "With the valuable support from Great Plains Foundation, we have managed to finance and implement all the conservation activities planned for this quarter, all contributing to the efforts of conserving this important transbondary ecosystem" – Enduiment Wildlife Management Authority.

Project Ranger Grantee

# PITTRACK, SOUTH AFRICA



Carl Thornton, head of PitTrack with Balloo



Carl Thornton addressing the patrol rangers

Project Ranger's support to PitTrack has supported the continuation of their essential operations using a highly skilled K9 unit team protecting the Greater Kruger National Park. The team have been working hard on patrols, communication and support with surrounding units and training. The PitTrack team have also been working on increasing engagement with local schools and communities with 5 sessions managed in Q4.





Project Ranger Grantee

# **BUMI HILLS, ZIMBABWE**

Project Ranger continued it's support of Bumi Hills and their antipoaching efforts in the Lake Kariba area of Zimbabwe, home to a plethora of endangered wildlife. These patrols cover a wide variety of operations on land and also Lake Kariba and water systems from recovering snares, fishing nets, and patrolling for signs of poachers such as dinghies and rigs and making arrests.



The team at Bumi Hills are protecting a vast range of species from mongoose to elephant in their conservation activities.





#### Project Ranger Grantee

#### BUSHLIFE,

In Q4 we continued our support for Bushlife Conservancy in Zimbabwe. This supported a new Mana East Base staffed with scouts, vehicle, food, water, fuel and supplies for Bushlife to continue their operation in protecting the area against illegal activities. Antipoaching patrols are carried out on a regular basis and this new unit base has allowed for an increased ground area for patrolling.

Project Ranger Grantee

# **ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME INVESTIVATE CENTRE, DRC**

Project Ranger has continued to support the establishment of the ECIC in the DRC, through the Maisha group. This funding has been supporting the infrastructure of the fusion room and technological advances, as well as training for staff.

Project Ranger Grantee

# **ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME INVESTIVATE CENTRE, DRC**

UCF has managed to continue their operations of patrolling, law enforcement and snare removal in 700,000 hectares across both Murchison Falls and Queen Elizabeth, making a high number of poaching arrests, confiscations of weapons. UCF were able to continue to provide intel to Quick Reaction Force teams including the surveillance of high-risk target areas for lion prides, trafficking routes and known 'hunting grounds' among poachers, all while supporting Uganda Wildlife Authority for high risk patrols.



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