

HIGH FIVE (LVB)

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Cultural Tourism & Community Development – Zambia (& Kenya & Malawi)



Kawaza Village Tourism Project (KVTP) is located in Nsefu Chiefdom bordering South Luangwa National Park in Zambia's Eastern Province. The people living here are of predominantly Kunda tribal origin. KVTP was the first ever community-owned and managed cultural tourism enterprise in Zambia's wildlife-rich Luangwa Valley. It was set up by some local teachers from Kawaza almost 30 years ago now and is one of the longest running and most sustainable community-based cultural tourism enterprises in Africa.

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As you might expect there are few formal employment opportunities for people living in rural areas of Africa. The majority of people are subsistence farmers living off what they can grow. The amount of maize, the staple crop in Zambia, people can grow is decreasing due to climate change (droughts and floods) and of course there is the ever present conflict between farmers and elephants over their crops. The people live in abject poverty with very little cash to provide for essentials.

In many wildlife areas of Africa, particularly here in Zambia's Luangwa Valley, safari tourism brings international tourists into the area. However, few local people benefit directly from tourism, other than those fortunate enough to have jobs in the safari camps and lodges. Additionally, most safari clients never get to experience the local culture, instead spending their time in the National Park viewing wildlife.



To counter this a plethora of community-based tourism enterprises have sprung up over the years, but many have failed due to a lack of access by the community to tourists, marketing skills and initial start-up costs. Kawaza Village Tourism Project has defied all the odds and has been operational for almost 30 years now. Its success lays in the support of neighbouring safari lodges, some of which market an

excursion to the village for a cultural experience as part of the wider safari experience. Other reasons for success have been the technical input when it was initially set up, and on-going, from local safari operator Robin Pope Safaris, along with High Five Club's Co-Founder Cheryl Mvula who has had a relationship with the village and has provided on-going input and advice to the Kawaza team since KVTP's inception.

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Income generated from day visits to the village to experience Kunda ways of living plus overnight stays in traditional thatched huts for visitors to immerse themselves in Kunda culture not only provides an alternative livelihood for the local women and men who run this cultural experience, but also provides a much needed cash boost for women who entertain guests with cultural dances and support of the most vulnerable in the community. Guests often also leave donations for the local Kawaza Primary School, so the wider community benefits too. A great model!



KVTP has had its fair share of 'ups and downs' over the years, as all community ventures do, but it has a real heart and resilience. However, due to the impact of coronavirus on tourism to Zambia, this village community enterprise has had a very lean few years and getting the village ready for the new 2024 season was a stretch too far with the limited resources the village had available after surviving this period.

High Five Club Support:



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High Five Club has provided technical support to the village to support the team there in getting their cultural tourism enterprise started up again after the COVID downturn. H5C members have also joined hands to provide the village with a very modest grant of just ZMW 2,585 (< £100) to fund the local labour costs for the renovation of the village structures (4 tourist huts and the dining shelter), with the community collecting the raw materials needed (mostly grasses). In addition H5C also provided some new cooking pots and utensils.

And KVTP inform us that the village looks wonderful and that tourists are coming back!

Kenya and Malawi

Our Co-Founder Cheryl has also supported the Maasai community in Kenya's Masai Mara and the Chitimba community in Malawi to set up and run their own

community tourism enterprises too. This support is both technical on how to set up and run a tourism enterprise that shares culture with international tourists, but critically supports the community in marketing their experiences and in securing bookings. To read about, or to arrange to visit, the Maasai cultural homestays in Kenya see:



<https://www.responsibletravel.com/accommodation/8006/masai-mara-village-stay-kenya>

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And for the Chitimba cultural homestay on the shores of Lake Malawi, which our community partner in Malawi the Brown Munthali Foundation runs, see:

<https://www.responsibletravel.com/accommodation/34613/chitimba-cultural-homestay-malawi>

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