

How to choose a sustainable African safari

Excerpted from an article by Eric Rosen



Students hard at work at AmericaShare's Harambee Community Centre. ERIC ROSEN/THE POINTS GUY

Several safari companies have established philanthropic organizations or arms with a broader purview of economic development and social services not just in the areas where they operate, but in entire countries or regions.

Micato Safaris is one of the best-known luxury safari operators, partnering with premier lodges from multiple companies in Africa and Asia to create bespoke itineraries for its guests. However, it also underwrites AmericaShare, which was founded by a Micato Safaris employee named Lorna Macleod more than 35 years ago to support both community development and access to education in Mukuru, one the largest informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya.

Today, the philanthropy operates the Harambee Community Centre, which has library and computer facilities as well as recreational grounds, in Mukuru itself. Residents can come for a quiet place to study or work, look for employment and take advantage of other services. AmericaShare also supplies fresh, drinkable water in the area via multiple distribution points.

Guests who go on safari with Micato in Kenya get to visit the community center to learn more about its efforts and meet students who have benefited from AmericaShare's various educational undertakings during their stay. Those include supplying school uniforms to local children, sponsoring scholarships to primary and secondary schools, and sending some of the most vulnerable children to private boarding schools around Nairobi. In fact, for every safari the company sells, Micato provides the funds to send a child to primary school.

Micato also supports other efforts like Huru International, which supplies sanitary kits and reproductive health education materials to young women (more than 210,000 to date) throughout East Africa who might otherwise have to miss school or work due to the lack of reproductive health services in rural communities. By empowering women to take their health into their own hands, Huru helps them support their families and communities (not to mention cultivating their own careers) in ways that would not otherwise be possible.



Workers make female reproductive health kits at Huru International. ERIC ROSEN/THE POINTS GUY