

Tourvest CSR initiative empowers women in Africa

To develop its corporate social responsibility (CSR) objectives, Tourvest has partnered with a crafting consortium comprising 18 local women. Through this partnership, it aims to support and develop local entrepreneurs by providing its lodges - Lemala and Kuria Hills camps in the northern Serengeti, as well as the Wildwaters Lodge, the Adrift river-rafting company on the Ugandan Nile River - with lunch boxes weaved from dried banana skins to reduce its impact on the environment.

Tourvest chief executive, Leanne Haigh says it's one of the company's primary sustainability objectives to replace all plastic materials in its lodges and vehicles with more environmentally friendly and biodegradable alternatives, particularly in the popular picnic lunch boxes it packs for its guests.



"We met with Sunday Kisai, the chairman of the nearby Mto wa Mbu village, where we came across the most beautiful hand-made banana leaf boxes. We packed over 5,000 lunch boxes for our guests last year and immediately saw the potential these banana boxes had in improving our environmental footprint."

According to Haigh, Tourvest East Africa has since helped Kisai register his business, Sunday Group and has assisted him in becoming tax compliant with the Tanzanian Revenue Authority, including the purchase of the mandatory Electronic Fiscal Device (EFD) to legally process payments. "Kisai now has 18 women in the village making lunch boxes for us and with our increased demand with two new properties opening later this year, he will be able to train more women. We are very proud to help empower these women to learn new skills and earn an additional income to provide for their families," says Haigh.

Haigh adds that the company's corporate social responsibility policy is underpinned by three Es: **empowering women, education and the environment**. "Our policies ensure that we adhere to the highest standards and conduct our business in a socially responsible and ethical manner. As stewards of our natural and cultural heritage, we will actively seek out opportunities to help

protect the environment, support human rights and continue to engage, respect and support local communities and cultures."

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