

ACACIA ADVENTURE HOLIDAY RESPONSIBLE TOURISM POLICY

Acacia Adventure Holidays' aims are to benefit in the best ways we can, the communities and environment through which our tours travel and minimise the negative impacts we may cause. In cases where we do not operate the tours, we aim to work with our overseas partners, monitoring their attitude and practises on the road and encouraging responsible operations.

TRAVELLING RESPONSIBLY

1. Environmental Factors on the Road

On all Acacia-run tours we:

- Regulate our food shopping, buying locally wherever possible
- Use shopping boxes which can be reused, instead of plastic bags
- Cook on gas and minimise our use of charcoal and wood campfires
- Run energy saving lights and allow passengers to recharge electrical appliances as we drive, minimising the demand for generator power at local campsites
- Ensure we leave campsites clean and un-littered
- Bury and burn biodegradable waste if practical
- Always carry out non biodegradable waste, to be deposited responsibly where it can be collected
- Encourage passengers to buy drinks in returnable bottles
- Work to ensure we're not to be wasteful of truck and local resources
- Donate used vehicle parts and oil to recycling centres for local use
- Run our routes as efficiently as possible to minimise unnecessary fuel consumption in relocating vehicles

2. Encouraging Respect and Responsible Travel Habits

On all Acacia-run tours we aim to ensure that:

- Our tour crew lead by example, setting good RT practises and encouraging co-operation from the group.
- Responsible behaviour and environmental concerns in the area we're visiting are discussed in the pre-departure meeting.
- The tour leader gives regular talks and information regarding the significance of the culture, religion and environment being visited. This helps develop understanding and cultural exchange.
- We encourage cultural interaction with local people through conversation and games, such as a friendly football match at the side of the road.
- Passengers and crew adhere to the cultural sensitivities of dress in the areas they visit.
- We discourage giving handouts to beggars or children in the street. It breeds a culture of begging, can cause fights and unrest between recipients and can undermine the authority of parents who may earn less than the value of the item or money donated.
- We donate necessary items, such as footballs, school equipment or food stuffs to organised charities or community centres on our route where they can be distributed or used fairly.
- We ask permission before taking pictures of local people.
- We don't touch or mistreat ancient sites, such as Damaraland's ancient cave paintings, as dirt from hands can cause erosion.
- We respect the wildlife we encounter. We aim to avoid antagonising or distressing them, feeding them, (where they can get sick from unusual food) or touching them, which can transmit disease or may trigger an animal attack.
- We carry flora and fauna reference books to promote interest and inform passengers of unidentified plants or animals.
- On night drives, we only use the guide's flashlight, to prevent distress to animals found.
- Our environmental guidelines for travel – our 'Acacia Code of Conduct' is outlined on the notice board of all our trucks.

GIVING SOMETHING BACK – SUPPORTING LOCAL ECONOMIES

1. Supporting Local Businesses

Acacia aims to support the local economy by:

- Buying food from local markets wherever feasible.
- Using locally run accommodation, restaurants and services wherever possible, and avoiding use of international hotel chains.
- Giving employment priority to African residents/nationals as tour crew on Acacia tours, wherever possible.
- Working closely with small local African companies to encourage local employment, development and investment.

2. Supporting Local Charities & Community Projects

Cultural interaction can benefit both our passengers and the local communities we visit. Over the years we have been able to support a number of initiatives, made friends and we regularly involve our groups in hands-on style visits to, project work with and collections for the following charities/groups on our tours.

- **Bwindi Orphanage & Buhoma Community Project, Uganda**
Groups meet the Bwindi orphanage group, with the chance to sponsor a child to cover their education. There is also the opportunity to take walks with local guides to visit the local school, hospital and Batwa community.
- **Softpower School Regeneration Project, Jinja, Uganda**
An initiative, developed to refurbish schools in the Jinja area and support local teachers. Groups give an afternoon of their time to practical help, from painting classrooms to leading games with the children.
- **Meserani Masai Village Community, Arusha, Tanzania**
A Masai village with which we have developed a strong friendship over the years. We support the community through our visits.
- **Uthando Cape Town Project, South Africa**
An umbrella NGO, that provides funding and assistance to grass roots, sustainable community projects and small businesses in and around Cape Town's townships. We support their Cape Flats project through visits to the projects and donations from our groups.
- **Hwange Wild Dog Project, Zimbabwe**
A successful project we visit and support, that rescues injured or expelled wild dogs, where possible rehabilitating them back into wild packs. They also run a successful breeding programme, helping to save the species.
- **Valley of a Thousand Hills Community Project, Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa**
A village in the lower Drakensberg, that benefits from our visits. Groups spend the night with a Zulu family in their house, providing unique cultural experiences for both parties and supporting the Thousand Hills community project.
- **Greater Kruger Animal Orphanage, South Africa**
A project, housing and if possible rehabilitating orphaned wild animals.
- **Khama Rhino Sanctaury, Botswana**
A sanctuary we support and regularly visit, where successful breeding programmes have resulted in healthy black and white rhino populations in the area.

In 2009 we are actively encouraging our passengers to engage in community work in Africa with our new Voluntours - trips aimed at providing a rewarding mix of travel experiences and volunteer work. Our Voluntours support the following organisations:

- **Nandavu Community School Project, Zambia** – Helping to build a local school for the village
- **Victoria Falls Anti-Poaching Unit, Zimbabwe** – Assisting patrol units in Victoria Falls Nat. Park
- **Great Kei Kabusi Conservations Area, South Africa** – working in the field and communities on sustainable conservation and education projects
- **Amani Childrens Home, Tanzania** – Aiding staff in the day-to-day running of the children’s home

Acacia is also a supportive member of the following conservation groups:

- East African Wildlife Society <http://www.eawildlife.org>
- Wildlife & Environment Zimbabwe <http://www.zimwild.co.zw>

3. Campaigns

Acacia is currently involved with two unique campaigns:

- **Football For Fun**
A campaign designed to encourage beneficial cultural exchanges, support African charities and bring about some excitement for South Africa’s 2010 World Cup. Our Overland passengers are encouraged to buy a special Footballs For Fun ball which can then be used in friendly matches with the local children or groups along our route and donated to their project/ school/village after the game. The full profit from each ball goes to African charities including **The Starfish Project** and **Just a Drop**, working respectively, to fight AIDs and bring clean water and sanitation to rural African villages. The footballs are fair-trade products.
- **Crazy for Kenya** is a campaign we are heading along with artists and musicians in the townships of Nairobi, helping get the Kenyan youth back on their feet after recent problems in the area. We have teamed up with local artists and hip hop musicians and are showcasing their work online. (Facebook and www.crazyaboutkenya.com)

OFFICE PRACTISES

Within the offices of Acacia we constantly work to improve efficiency of energy and resources through:

- Managing our printing habits – printing only when necessary and double-side printing wherever possible.
- Recycling waste paper, toner cartridges, folders, glass bottles, cds and other office equipment
- Operating efficient heating and air-conditioning systems

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