

Travel That Makes a Difference

Micato provides guests with a meaningful cultural experience

Excerpted from an article by Ann Abel
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For more than 25 years, this luxury-safari powerhouse **Micato Safaris** has been funding the nonprofit foundation Micato-AmericaShare to provide education and other tools for sustainable living to residents of Mukuru, one of Nairobi's largest slums. (And it manages to bring guests to see their work in action in a way that avoids the queasy petting-zoo feeling that's all too common in "slum travel.") Its One for One commitment ensures that for each safari Micato sells, the company pays the cost of sending one child to school, and it encourages guests to



A winner in the goat lottery that was sponsored with money raised by Micato Safaris

fund sponsorships for orphaned or vulnerable children to attend boarding school. A graduate of this program is now the librarian at Micato-AmericaShare's community center in Mukuru. In the Maasai land, Micato developed a partnership with a village and set up a direct deposit banking system to ensure that all proceeds go to directly to the village and village welfare initiatives (as opposed to guides and drivers, who sometime pocket visit fees). The chief and elders were so impressed that they held a full-day celebration to show how they had used their money to preserve their way of life: They had purchased 37 goats and held a big goat lottery. Last year, a 102-year-old guest visited this village and met with the 98-year-old chief, who granted her "respected elder" status. She donated \$5,000 directly to the village.