



WE ARE VICTORIA FALLS PRESS RELEASE

Victoria Falls wins Silver Award for sustaining employees and communities throughout pandemic

11th April 2021, Cape Town, South Africa. Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe won the Silver Award for 'Sustaining Employees and Communities throughout the Pandemic' at the WTM Responsible Tourism Awards Africa 2022.

This [prestigious award](#) is recognition for the tireless ingenuity and resilience of the community. As all destinations come out of the pandemic it also sets a benchmark for important values. Victoria Falls relies on tourism for approximately 80% of its jobs. The destination believes it is critical to look after its people; employees, communities, and environment to build a sustainable future.

'It means a lot for Victoria Falls to be recognized in this category' said Ms Shelley Cox of We Are Victoria Falls. 'We have an extraordinary community, and we live our values. We are responsible for one of the seven natural wonders of the world, and we want to be a world leader in sustainability, conservation and responsible tourism'.

Speaking about the award, Permanent Secretary Munodawafa of the Ministry for Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry said; 'Tourism is the life-force of Victoria Falls – it provides jobs, skills and meaningful exchange with the rest of the world. It is the reason we all get up in the morning and when it suffers, we all suffer. But in Zimbabwe, I like to think we do things differently. We get up and we make a plan to make sure we all come through together. This effort has been led by individuals, organisations and agencies that work together – it sets us apart, and long may it continue.'

Victoria Falls own Wild Horizons also received a Gold Award for Growing the Local Economic Benefit – a double win for the destination.

From the low points of 2020 Victoria Falls is now seeing signs of recovery. Trade confidence in booking Victoria Falls has nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels, with 74% of trade feeling confident in the destination, compared to 85% in 2019 – according to a [recent survey](#).

Most of the wonderful public, private and collaborative initiatives that have won Victoria Falls this award are listed on the [We Are Victoria Falls Website](#). Further information on the award can be found [here](#).

Examples of Note:

- **Food for Work Scheme:** The COVID-19 taskforce, spearheaded by the District Medical Office for Matabeleland North, organised a "Food for Work" program, overseen by Shearwater, for volunteers



to help the town with improvement and clean-up projects. In exchange, the volunteers (including previously employed tourism workers) received a meal and food to take home to their families.

- **The Children's Feeding Scheme:** conducted by the Pastoral leadership and the Victoria Falls COVID-19 Taskforce, the scheme supplied one meal per day, Monday to Friday for school children in the region. In less than six months 577,088 meals were served to children from around Victoria Falls.

- **Anti-poaching volunteers:** Zimbabwe National Parks Authorities, the Victoria Falls Anti-Poaching Unit (VFAPU), the Wild Horizons Anti-Poaching Unit, Zambezi Horse Safaris, Victoria Falls Wildlife Trust and professional guides collaborated to increase anti-poaching activities, work together on wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, and to maintain the area's environmental integrity.

- **Tourism Worker Vaccine Scheme:** The government prioritised the vaccination of tourism workers in Victoria Falls in their second roll-out. This was a world-first and shows the recognition of the importance of the tourism community to the economy, and the importance of the health of this community.

- **Food supplies for medics:** Jafuta Foundation worked consistently to delivered food packs and supplies to front line medical staff who assisted in the vaccination of the Victoria Falls community.

- **We Are Victoria Falls SME support:** We Are Victoria Falls on behalf of Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, coordinated a competition targeting small entrepreneurs to upgrade their marketing material, providing market access via Wetu, and a week-long regional travel media fam trip. Winners include guides, micro-businesses, transfer companies and community/village experiences.

This [50 second video](#) provides a look behind the scenes

About We Are Victoria Falls

We Are Victoria Falls is a public-private initiative that represents the tourism community of the UNESCO World Heritage Site city. It is mandated by the Ministry of Environment, Climate, Tourism and Hospitality Industry, and supported by IFC, a member of the World Bank Group.

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