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**4th International Institute for Peace Through Tourism African Conference
Kampala, Uganda 2007
“Models of Best Practice”**

“How The Small NGO Can Best Direct Public Funding Toward Program Success”

WildiZe Foundation®, President and Director Ms. Eli Weiss

When I tell people I work in Africa, their usual response is, “Is it safe?” or “Aren’t you afraid?” or “What about AIDS?” As the Founder and Director of WildiZe Foundation®, I believe it is important both in the U.S. and abroad to educate the NGO donor, the public and the traveler about the other side of modern Africa, the positive side that is not often revealed by the international media.

There is a gap between the large conservation organizations’ agendas and the small African community niches that are working toward reaching medium and long-term conservation and development goals. Rather than the standard approach of *telling* the Africans what they need, WildiZe Foundation *asks* our applicants, “How can we can help you help yourselves, and what do you need to attain the results you are looking for?” Aid and assistance are the helping hands, but defining the needs and goals must come from the communities themselves.

WildiZe keys in on two critical challenges: How to get from where they are to where they want to be, and how to do away with the neo-colonial impression of “I am needy, I am poor, I am helpless.” Through WildiZe’s fundamental grant contract process, the grantee has Ownership, Accountability and Responsibility (OAR), for not only the proposal but for the results obtained. The WildiZe Grant offers the grantee an opportunity to increase her/his knowledge base, thus increasing her/ his ability to construct effective on-site solutions toward sustainable development and conservation goals. The WildiZe granting process takes into consideration culture, gender, lifestyle, resources, wildlife and habitat. With our grantees as full participants throughout this process, our collaborative projects have a much better chance of succeeding.

WildiZe is a United States based non-profit organization dedicated to sustainable conservation efforts with respect to wildlife, habitats and the indigenous cultures of Africa. As a result of OAR, WildiZe is better able to assist our grantees in reaching their goals with innovative projects, management style and connecting with other aid organizations, while also creating cultural crossovers between the African and the visitor. With continual on-site visits and follow-up on the progress of the grant, strong partnerships are generated amongst the grantor, the grantee and the donor, creating vital person-to-person relationships between Africans, their communities and the international tourist, who oftentimes is, or becomes, a donor.

When we can alleviate the immediate stress and pressure of everyday survival, then we create mental and physical room to concentrate on conflict resolution between people and wildlife. When we allow ourselves to think outside the preconceived agendas about improving *the African condition*, and engender new relationships, we greatly increase the success of implementing multi-layered conservation solutions relating traditional cultural values with the needs of wildlife. With this too, we are on the road to transforming the helpless victim of circumstance into an empowered force able to foment positive action.

WildiZe Foundation® is a tax exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code, Dedicated to Education and Awareness toward the Protection and Conservation of Wildlife, Habitat, and Indigenous Cultures in Africa. We have only one Earth, If WE don't care, who will?

There are always commonalities upon which to base conceptual and contextual relationships for deeper understandings toward reconciliation—people-to-people and people-to-wildlife. As a global community of valuable beings living in complex systems, bound by the common ground of our Earth, each of us is able to contribute to peace processes by taking Ownership, Accountability and Responsibility for our actions, and communicating this concept of stewardship to our family, our children, our neighbors and peers and by extension, visitors to our respective countries, towns and villages.

Submitted by:
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