

PLCnetwork of the Southern Hemisphere

by Dr Julia Baum.
Photos by @julias.lens
unless otherwise stated.

Social Change for Conservation, and Conservation for Social Change

Somkhanda rhino dehorning operation.
Photo © Chris Laurenz



Dr Julia Baum



PLCnetwork of the Southern Hemisphere is a platform and consulting firm with a passion for private, community and company conservation action. We invite conservation areas and projects to become members to share knowledge, build partnerships and initiate project collaborations. Dr Julia Baum, Founder of PLCnetwork, seeks to establish it as a dynamic consultancy and network contributing to a paradigm shift across the conservation sector towards an international conservation economy, in which conservation and societal growth can go hand in hand. Our members do not have to formally be proclaimed or accredited, or fit into usual formats of regulated conservation models.

We seek to highlight any and all unique and innovative ways in which conservation can function, and we seek to discuss and solve challenges to obtain success.



Our **mission** as PLCnetwork of the Southern Hemisphere is to increase the publicity, networking opportunity and business potential for our members as well as the engagement of the public in conservation.



PLCnetwork member

Klipspringer (*Oreotragus oreotragus*)




Sibusiso Mathe at Somkhanda Community Game Reserve.
Photo © Josh Field Media



Collared lion (*Panthera leo*) at Somkhanda.
Photo © Phoenix Capture Photography

Our world is composed of social-ecological systems. They surround us in everyday life where social factors are interlinked with ecological factors. Protected areas and conservation projects provide a clear example of how such social-ecological systems function.

 Conservation action is influenced by normative values and societal problems, often economically driven behaviours. In turn, the condition of our natural environment influences our economies and social context. Understanding these interlinkages is generally the key to establishing, maintaining and enhancing a sustainable lifestyle for our future.

A common tool worldwide for addressing environmental challenges and protecting

wildlife and biodiversity is the implementation of protected areas managed by governments. In many cases, such protected areas are important contributors to conservation outcomes, however, often are not inclusive of sustainable-use options in local economic settings. Less clear is also how this global expansion of conservation estates can be achieved in the context of increasing economic needs and development demands caused by growing human populations.

 Conservation action beyond governmental mandates that strengthens holistic approaches is a vital component of worldwide efforts in protecting species and habitats as well as in achieving sustainable development goals.



PLCnetwork member




Wild camping experience, Morani Conservancy, Kenya.
Photo © Dalmas Lekorere @morani_conservancy



Women workshop, Morani Conservancy, Kenya.
Photo © Dalmas Lekorere @morani_conservancy

The implementation of privately and community-owned protected areas as well as conservation action in the form of company and individual projects are continuously gaining momentum – including, for example, innovative approaches in educative tourism.

The Southern Hemisphere offers a striking amount of such conservation areas and projects that can contribute to establishing conservation economies, representing a wide range of motivations, sizes, corporate models and stories. Well-known types in Africa, for example, are game ranches, nature reserves, eco-lodges, conservancies and mountain retreats, amongst many more.

 Based on both **consumptive** and **non-consumptive** uses of wildlife and landscapes, privately owned places and projects provide a set of invaluable and diverse

benefits to society – both tangible and intangible.

A conservation economy evolves when economic, social and ecological drivers start functioning along a common trend and actors in all sectors work towards shared outcomes.

The foundation is to utilise wildlife and biodiversity assets for solutions in both conservation and livelihood development simultaneously.

Resources within and outside of protected areas or conservation projects need to be incorporated. Focus must equally lie on people beyond these areas and projects. Establishing value chains through diverse activities will contribute to economic growth of a region, which in turn reduces acute pressures on its wildlife and biodiversity.



African bush elephant (*Loxodonta africana*).

In 2017, PLCnetwork took form by going live with its website as a first business tool. Our model is two-fold, no matter whether a conservation area or project is starting up or is established in the conservation and tourism sector for a long time.

1 We promote members through digital means by offering them an online presence.

2 We support them with direct consulting based on a personal connection.

Originally, the focus was on inviting privately-owned game and nature reserves in South Africa as network members, based on Julia's research experience; yet PLCnetwork quickly expanded beyond national borders and accommodated different types of members from many countries seeing the potential and demand for collaboration based on shared interests and challenges.

Today, PLCnetwork collaborates with member types ranging from

private concessions in national parks via community conservancies to company biodiversity offsets.


 We believe the private landowners, lodge managers, project managers, rangers as well as all other actors and stakeholders behind these approaches are at the forefront of enhancing international conservation through their expertise, skills and local insights. Let us share and utilise this knowledge!



Photo © <http://andbeyond.com>

Through communication and long-term collaboration, we thus engage in conservation project implementation, nature-based tourism solutions and community development efforts.

Our aim is to induce long-lasting social change for conservation based on our approach of innovative 'conservationpreneurship', which in a nutshell, we define as:

"The activity of initiating collaborations and projects that engage with financial, intellectual, social-ecological efforts through communication in cross-scale partnerships to promote innovative conservation decision-making."

The main aim of a conservation-preneur is solving a conservation problem, regardless of the resources he or she currently controls. Subsequently, making a profit later on may well be part of the achievement, however, working towards creating a bigger picture outcome is priority – with benefits for the local and regional context in social-ecological forms.

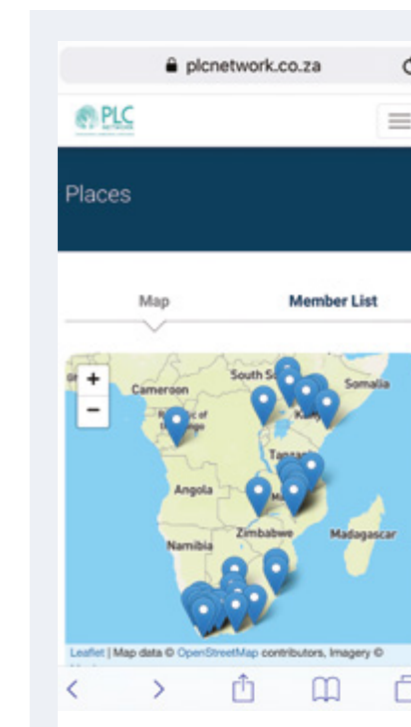
Accordingly, PLCnetwork is developing unique approaches with which we can achieve measurable outcomes, to then scale up and apply without geographical restriction. We are looking into modern funding mechanisms (e.g., crowdfunding), give-and-

take partnerships, community enterprise development and branding approaches.

Soon, PLCnetwork will create a mobile app through which our members will be able to connect directly and securely. This will turn our consulting efforts into a truly interactive network of conservation areas, projects and entrepreneurs across the Southern Hemisphere to share benefits

and collaborate towards building conservation economies.

On a concluding note, we would like to mention that to date our entire work is achieved on a remote basis – with our founder, Dr Julia Baum, living in South Africa, our conservationpreneurship assistant, Sungeni R. Karonga, living in Malawi, and our third team member and advisor, Jonas Baum, living in Germany. ■



Get involved!

We invite our audience to communicate and connect with us. We are looking forward to welcoming many more members soon and to engaging in exciting collaborations!

PLCnetwork of the Southern Hemisphere can be reached via:
 @ info@plcnetwork.co.za
 Scan the QR code or visit
 www.plcnetwork.co.za to learn more and register as a member!

