

# Eco Tourism at Karen Blixen Camp



**Karen Blixen Camp is an eco friendly luxury camp located in the beautiful Mara North Conservancy. We strongly believe responsible tourism has the capacity to protect a natural wildlife area, alleviate poverty through proper working conditions and contribute positively to the local community**





Dear Reader,

Eco Tourism is the Buzz Word in today's tourism - if you Google it, it has more than 3,6 million hits. Yet nobody really seems to be able tell what it incorporates and what qualifies a property to use it for its operation.

Karen Blixen Camp strongly believes that Eco Tourism is responsible and sustainable tourism, that it has the capacity to protect a natural wildlife area, alleviate poverty through proper working conditions and contribute positively to the local community. With the great support from our agents and appraisals from our guests we know that Eco Tourism has come to stay in the today's traveling market.

The responsibility doesn't end at the property – the ground operators, travel agents and travelers should make a stand; and enquire about the responsible tourism practices of the property they plan to book or visit. I cannot believe that anyone visiting a camp in a fragile ecosystem as the Masai Mara would wish to contribute to deforestation or pollution: That freshly chopped wood is used for heating the shower water or for cooking food, let alone that the wastewater produced is led directly into the Mara River.

There are no doubt that the future of wildlife tourism and survival of many wilderness areas across the African continent is very bleak and, if we don't begin to take Eco Tourism very seriously, there will be very little left of the Africa we love for the next generation.

One of the most rewarding events this year has been the consolidation of Mara North Conservancy. The Maasai landowners and the camp operators have agreed to sign a lease that will protect this area and its the wildlife for the next 15 years and thereby safeguard one of the world's most beautiful places. The Maasai landowners receive a direct and predictable income for setting aside their land for wildlife conservation and we have the privilege to game drive within their homeland area. We are very proud that a dedicated local community and a responsible tourism sector together can conserve a wildlife area.

We are also very proud that we have been approved by the Danish Embassy and Danida to establish a hospitality school for the Maasai youth. Our ambition is to invest in the education of tomorrow's young chefs and waiters. Our school will also offer IT as well as foreign language courses for our staff and the Maasai community. In future, when you visit our camp, your safari guide will be able to share his or her knowledge in German, French or Spanish.

The ideas I have put into Karen Blixen Camp do not have any copyright attached to them. However, no property or operation can stand alone, but must be followed and supported by others for the travel market to make a sustainable and long term impact on the environment.

The knowledge is there to make the changes so let's us share the responsibility.

Yours faithfully,

Martin Sonderby Nielsen  
Founder of Karen Blixen Camp



## A cooking school for Maasai youth

### **Education is a strategic social investment, benefitting both the local community and the private sector**

**E**ducation is highly important in Kenya. Parents will do everything possible to secure education for their children. Life in the Mara is no exemption, but for the majority of the young Maasai a full course of secondary or tertiary education is still out of reach. There is simply no secondary school found in the area; and for most families school fees and the cost of living in the big cities are simply too high. Studies show that the education level in the local Mararienda village is very low: out of a population of 2,000 only ten people have attended college education and only two students have registered for their first degree in a university. The research also shows

gender related concerns as only two girls out of 100 pupils graduate with a full primary school education. Lack of affordable and accessible education facilities clearly prevents the Maasai youth from expanding their full employment opportunities. More than 50 percent of Maasai youth find themselves in constant unemployment, contributing to the cycle of poverty.

Being located in one of the most famous wildlife areas with visitors from around the world, Karen Blixen Camp relies on our staff to give our visitors that little extra from their safari experience. This is why we wish to establish the Karen Blixen Hospitality School; giving the Maasai youth the possibility of accessing affordable education. Learning for Life is a community-private sector project funded by Danida and Karen Blixen Camp. Our goal is to enable graduated chefs and waiters



to seek employment at camps in the Mara. We are currently very busy building the classrooms and the boarding unit for our future students, which will be located within the camp's premises. The cooking school will give students a comprehensive and practical hands-on understanding of fundamental cooking skills; balancing between the classical cuisine and modern recipes. Education will be full time and students will be prepared for entry-level positions such as commis-chef, demi-chef, chef de partie, or baker and pastry chef. Later, a food and beverages program for those who wish to become waiters as well as a short term course for room attendants will follow.

#### **IT education**

Karen Blixen Camp will also offer IT education. A classroom will be completed with laptops and internet connection and an IT teacher will be

employed. IT courses for beginners, intermediate and advanced levels will be offered, not only for our future students, but also for our camp staff as well as the local Maasai community. Our target for 2015 is to offer IT education for all our staff and make sure that at least 20 percent of the Maasai children and youth, girls and boys alike have received IT education.

#### **Literacy and Language courses**

Foreign languages courses such as German, French or Spanish will be offered to our safari guides, enabling them to enhance their qualifications and in future offer professional wildlife guiding in the above languages. Adult education will be made available for those wishing to become literate in languages as Maa, Swahili and English.

Karen Blixen Camp believes education is a strategic social investment that effectively contributes to the betterment of the local communities as well as the private sector. The direct benefit for us and other camps is access to an international skilled local workforce that gives an outstanding service; competitive with the best restaurants and hotels in the world.

#### **About Danida**

Karen Blixen Camp has been granted funding from Danida through its Innovative Partnership for Development Program. IPD has the objective to alleviate poverty through job creation, economic growth and social development.

Companies receiving IPD funding should align their business practices with the principles of the UN Global Compact and support the UN Millennium Development Goals.

Danida is the Danish International Development Assistance to developing countries. Please visit [www.ambnairobi.um.dk](http://www.ambnairobi.um.dk) for more information about Danida in Kenya.

# Holistic Forestry

## Kenya's rich natural wildlife is threatened by widespread deforestation

Only 1.7 percent forest cover remains of the ones vast woodland areas. Commercial farming and wood logging diminished the larger part in the past. Today charcoaling is the biggest threat to the environmental stability of Kenya. It is estimated that 70 tons of charcoal are sold at the Nairobi market every day. This represents an annual destruction of 120 km<sup>2</sup> of Kenyan forest. Much is consumed by the urban Kenyan households, whom for economically reasons depend on firewood or charcoal for their basic domestic cooking needs. Large quantities are also being exported for the barbeques in the Middle East.

Paradoxically, safari tourism has traditionally contributed to this environmental disaster by using unsustainably harvested firewood and charcoals as an inexpensive way for heating up water for their paying clients' showers. Maybe, oblivious of the fact, that they are destroying the very foundation their own businesses are relying on.

Masai Mara is experiencing similar ecological challenges. Precious virgin forested areas have been destructed for commercial (tourism) and household use of charcoals and firewood during the last 20 years. The damage is beginning to become significant. In some areas, especially around the small villages, the shallow volcanic topsoil is disappearing due to deforestation. Most Maasai women now have to walk at least 5 km in search of firewood. Ambitious reforestation initiatives are vital to restore the previous acacia forest cover and renewable energy solutions must be found.



*Teddy Kinyanjui doing what he loves*

### **Karen Blixen Forestry School**

Karen Blixen Camp is partnering with the Woodlands 2000 Trust. We will establish the Karen Blixen Forestry School and offer entrepreneurial and vocational forestry education for the Maasai youth. Our mission is to conserve and enhance the beautiful Masai Mara by teaching the Maasai youth how grow and sustainably manage multi-use woodlots, providing them with a decent income for the future as well as environmental security.

The Karen Blixen Forestry School will offer 18-months courses with theoretical tuition and practical demonstrations, emphasizing on indigenous commercial woodlot farming to supply the region with sustainably grown certified forest by-products. The first module will teach the students about Masai Mara agro-climatic conditions, indigenous trees and their uses, the establishment of tree seedling nurseries and how

to successfully plant, protect and nurture the seedlings to maturity. The second module will prepare the students on how to establish their own self-financed woodlots through the sale of seedlings and sustainably produced wood fuels and building materials. Students will learn about basic gross margin analysis, accounting practices, value addition and efficient utilization of their woodlot crop. The majority of students are expected to establish their own commercial woodlot, while others are able to seek employment as junior foresters at camps within the area. Students will also learn how to raise awareness about the beautiful Masai Mara and reforestation by perform-

ing speeches for guests and interaction via the internet.

### **Growing 25,000 trees a year**

Karen Blixen Camp has employed Teddy Kinanjui from the Woodlands 2000 Trust as the lead consultant for this project. Mr. Kinanjui and his forestry team have established a tree nursery with the holding capacity of 5000 seedlings, which we aim to double by December 2010. The tree nursery is irrigated by recycling the wastewater from the carwash area utilizing a simple waterway system.

Since 2006 we have planted 12,000 seedlings within the camp grounds. Our initial focus is pioneer tree species. These are trees that are primarily endemic to the lower Mara River Basin and are sturdy enough to withstand wildlife and livestock damage as well as drought. On a smaller scale, we are also focusing on rare high value endangered tree species that are difficult to germinate from seed in order to create a small-scale botanical garden for the long-term conservation of these selected species.

Our future plans is to expand the degraded forests along the riparian zone of the Mara River to reduce erosion, increase bird and protect wildlife habitat. This will be undertaken using an integrated systematic holistic approach incorporating local community partners and stakeholders with applicable Government licensing and technical expertise.

### **Plant trees for smaller carbon footprints**

We invite our travel agents and guests to sponsor a woodlot. The ambition is to increase the Masai Mara forest cover, reduce CO2 emission and alleviate extreme poverty amongst the Maasai youth. Sponsorships will run for a chosen period providing the graduated junior forester with a salary and the necessary funds to buy seeds and tools until his/her woodlot is financial self-sustainably. Donated funds can also be forwarded to our Holistic Forestry project with growing of pioneer tree species and/or the small-scale botanical garden with growing of rare and endangered tree species for the long-term conservation of these selected species.



### **The Woodlands 2000 Trust**

The Woodlands 2000 Trust is a Kenyan based organization that offers afforestation consultancy services to private companies, farmers and landowners who are interested in commercial and environmental sustainable woodlot farming. The overall objective is to create a sustainable and profitable tree products industry that contributes towards poverty alleviation, conservation and increased bio-diversify in semi-arid regions.

The Woodland 2000 Trust was established in 2001 with a grant from the British Government, DFID, Department of International Development's Business Partnership Program, in close partnership with the Tamarind Group. The Trust has facilitated the plantation of 700,000 trees in Kenya.



*Olisuk Concession a natural forested area protected by Karen Blixen Camp*

# Green Technologies

**Karen Blixen Camp has been constructed to run in the most environmental friendly manner using the latest green technologies**

**B**eing located in one of the most densely populated natural wildlife areas in the world, offering visitor exclusive safari experiences represent many conflicting interests. No matter the precautions taken, human interfere will always put pressure on the ecosystem and its wildlife. The important question is; how should one ensure an absolute minimized impact on the environment?

Karen Blixen Camp has 24 hour electricity, powered by an extensive solar panel system. During sunny days the solar panels follows the position of the sun and the solar energy goes into the battery bank ensuring electricity is also available at night or on rainy days. The benefit is obvious; there is no excessive use of diesel fueling noisy generators and our outlet of CO2 is kept at a minimum.

The total investment in the solar system with 55 solar panels of 165 watt each with the battery bank amounted to 135,000 USD. It is estimated that, with good care, the solar system will last us 8-10 years. The equivalent usage of power provided by a generator will cost 54,750 USD per annum or 547,500 USD for 10 years usage. The cost buying the generator exempted. In this context, investing in green technologies rather than the good old polluting ones makes financial sense.

Traditional safari tourism relies on firewood and charcoals as their main source of energy. But with only 1.7 percent forests cover left in Kenya, usage of firewood and charcoals makes no longer any logic.

Karen Blixen Camp is using gas burners for heating water for the outdoor guest showers. Outside each tent, a gas cylinder has been placed with pipes connected to the main water tank. Every time the guest opens the hot water tap, water



*Our zero energy cold room: Four walls of sustainable grown charcoal, some chicken wire to hold it all together and an insulated roof - and you have a 40M3 cold room, where the temperature never exceeds 8 Celsius degrees*



*Eco Tourism is a business imperative. Not only a moral observation. Using green technologies is always an opportunity. Also in Africa. Kenya offers a wide range of very enthusiastic companies who are specialized in the development and sale of green technologies. There is really no excuse not to go green. And it makes great financial sense too*

runs through and the gas fuels a flame that will heat up the water. Gas is also used for cooking. The benefit is simple; when not using firewood and charcoal we do not contribute to the deforestation of Kenyan woodlands.

Gas, however green it may seem, is transported over long distances, before it reach our camp. And gas is rather expensive. 25,000 USD is yearly allocated for payment of gas in our budget. Admittedly, expenditures we would like to cut down without compromising the comfort of our guests.

Within the next two months Karen Blixen Camp will invest in solar water heaters. The recent development of solar technology now allows, sufficient energy from the sun to be captured, even on cloudy days. Adding to the benefit, the solar waterheaters can be centralized into one unit, connected to our main water system, providing hot water for all 22 guest tents on a 24 hour base. We believe the investment in solar waterheaters will be returned within ten months.

Rainwater catchment will be installed on all roofs throughout the camp. We estimate that the rainwater will supply us with 20 percent of our consumption for our guest showers and laundry.

Wastewater treatment is another important matter when running a camp out in the bush. Water for guest showers, washing of bed linens, and not to mention flushing toilets, creates wastewater. All wastewater produced are led into the sewage system and directed into the septic tank. From here the wastewater is mechanical treated as it runs through channels of charcoal and sand filters, ending in two huge soak pits. The surface water is collected and used for watering our bush garden. We test the grey water by sending samples to the Kenyan National Laboratory to ensure zero out let of polluting agents.

Our future plan is to have our grey and black water treated separately. Recent technology allows continual treatment and recycling of toilet waste water through a closed and odorless micro wastewater cleaning tanks.

Karen Blixen Camp is committed to recycle all waste produced. However, we must admit it present a very challenging affair to accomplish this obligation. The western world benefit from governmental regulated waste management systems, whereas countries like Kenya still struggle to establish sufficient and effective recycling plants throughout the country. Much depend on the private sector as well as the people working in the takataka (garbage) business. We compost the organic waste and separate and transport the non-degradable waste back to Nairobi. We liaise with a private company who collects our waste and sell it to recycling companies.

Moreover, we have stopped buying PET mineral water bottles as no proper recycling plant can be found in Kenya. Instead guests are provided with refillable water bottles. We will continuously strive to align our business practices with a sustainable purchase policy for reduced waste production.

#### **A school built of old milk and juice cartons**

Peter Rosenberg was previously working with Tetra Pack, Kenya, as the Product Director. In 1997 he opened EcoTech, a company recycling used Tetra Packs by melting the old milk and juices packages into blockboards. The combination of plastic and foil makes these blockboards very durable and all weather proof building materials. 800 tons of waste is recycled this way. Tetra Pack has adopted Mr. Rosenberg' initiative for other countries to have their waste handled responsible.

Ramji Haribhai Devani, a large Kenyan company, was established by Mr. Devani in the late 1970's. The company collects all types of hard plastic and is melting the plastic waste into termite proof plastic poles. Rhino Charge is one of the biggest customers, using the plastic poles in their commitment to protect the Abedare Forest by fencing in the forest.

Karen Blixen Camp has bought 33 tons of Eco-Tech block boards and 20 tons of recyclable plastic poles to build our hospitality school and boarding unit. With the solar panel system our school will probably be one of the greenest of its kind.

# Trade, not aid

**The tourism industry is often criticized for not ensuring that enough of its revenue goes back to the host community**

**K**aren Blixen Camp distributes its revenue in many different ways following the principle trade, not aid, making it possible for the local Maasai community to profit from our presence in their area.

Karen Blixen Camp protects 3,400 acres (1,373 Ha) of natural wildlife area as a private concession. Eleven Maasai families have decided to lease their land to us and in return we pay them a fixed bed night fee every time a guest stays at our camp. The bed night fees accumulate to 70,000 USD annually.

We support locally produced goods and use local suppliers. Free ranging and eco friendly Masai goats and lambs are sold by Masai herdsmen and served for our staff. Milk for the staff's morning tea also comes from the local Masai cattle. For logistic and contractual work we hire local trucks and jeeps. We spend 40,000 USD annually using local suppliers, saving us money, time and diesel not purchasing from Nairobi.

When guests previously visited the traditional Masai village the ticket fee often did not benefit the villagers. Karen Blixen Camp has together with Tribal Voice, UK, initiated a simple ticketing system to ensure direct payment and transparency. When guests visit the local Masai village they are obliged to obtain a ticket at the camp. We keep track of all sold tickets and at the end of each month the total amount is calculated and the money paid. In this way, the villagers are ensured to receive the money they are entitled. On behalf of our guests we forwarded 5,000 USD to the traditional Maasai village in 2009.

The beautiful Maasai artifacts for sale in the gift shop are made by a local women's group. Since we wish to promote trade, not aid, prices are negotiated and the gift shop makes a profit every time a guest buys the artifacts. Last year we bought Masai beadwork worth 3,800 USD and sold everything, making the business profitable for both parties.





### **Alternative housing for the Maasai - Why Eco Housing?**

Most Maasai families reside in small huts made of cow dung, but many wish to improve their standards of living. The delicate cow dung dried roof and walls cannot provide adequate protection against the weather, especially during the rainy season. Moreover, airborne diseases as common cold, pneumonia and tuberculosis are constant risk factors in these poorly ventilated living conditions with a constant exposure to smoke. Brucellosis, a bacterial disease affecting people in close contact with cattle, is also a hazard as it is transmitted to humans through consumption of unpasteurized milk and possible through inhalation of dry dust.

The natural resources of the Masai Mara have for generations been taken for granted, but these days are over. It is important that modern alternative building techniques are introduced to preserve the forest cover and water resources and at the same time improving the living standard in a cultural and environmental sensitive way.

Karen Blixen Camp is considering how we can facilitate better housing for the Maasai. We have asked an architect to design three types of houses using EcoTech blockboards and plastic poles. The idea is that an individual local Maasai family can come to our partner, Muskaki Enterprises's, shop in Aitong and buy their preferred model house with rainwater catchment and solar panel system. We will donate the salary for the architect and cover the cost of transporting building materials from Nairobi to Masai Mara.



### **IFU, Investment fund for developing countries**

Karen Blixen Camp is a Kenyan registered company owned by Danish shareholders. IFU, the Investment Fund for developing countries has granted us a loan, as a part of their objective to promote economic and social growth in developing countries.

IFU has invested with Danish companies in Africa for nearly 40 years and is one of the most experienced institutions when it comes to investing in and setting up businesses on commercial terms on the continent. Companies must integrate an ambitious CSR policy to ensure high standards in respect of environment, labour principles, human rights and anti-corruption. Please visit [www.ifu.dk](http://www.ifu.dk) for more information on Danish investments in Africa.



## Working conditions

**Being the single largest sector in the world economy, tourism plays a key role for many African countries. Tourism creates jobs and incomes for millions of people. As such tourism is capable of contributing positively to the UN Millennium Development Goals; alleviating extreme poverty and hunger through full and decent employment**

**A**frica is highly dependent on the global economy, but the global economy is not dependent on Africa. Africa accounts for less than 1 percent of annual global capital inflows and for less than 2 percent of the world trade. The entire GDP of Africa (excluding South Africa and Nigeria) is about equal to that of a small country as Ireland. According to the World Bank an estimated 44 percent of the African population will continue to live in extreme poverty with less than 1 USD per day. In absolute terms, the number of poor people has nearly doubled, from 200 million in 1981 to 380 million in 2005. Sadly, the financial crisis has pushed another 65 million people into vulnerable employment. They and their family find themselves living in extreme poverty without a financial stable job, but reliant on casual, seasonal

or own-account labour. To beat the poverty line, 11 millions of jobs must be created every year in Africa. Research shows that nine out of ten jobs are created in the private sector; making private sector led economic growth crucial for employment generation and poverty reduction.

In this light tourism presents a key role, being the single largest sector in the world economy with millions of people depended on the revenue generated. Tourism of today has a huge responsibility of contributing to a better and more just world.

But tourism must be conducted in a responsible manner, adhering to international accepted standards. Tourism is, unfortunately, a fiercely competitive global market, with incentives for putting short-term earnings before long-term environmental considerations. Protecting the environment, respecting workers' right, ensuring full and decent employment as well as promoting gender equality is crucial should the tourism industry wish to have a sustainable impact in the developing countries; alleviating extreme poverty through job creation and economic growth. Karen Blixen Camp observes the Working Law of Kenya 2007 and respects the International Labor Organization's (ILO) declaration on rights to work. We support the UN Global Compact and are obliged to submit a yearly communication on

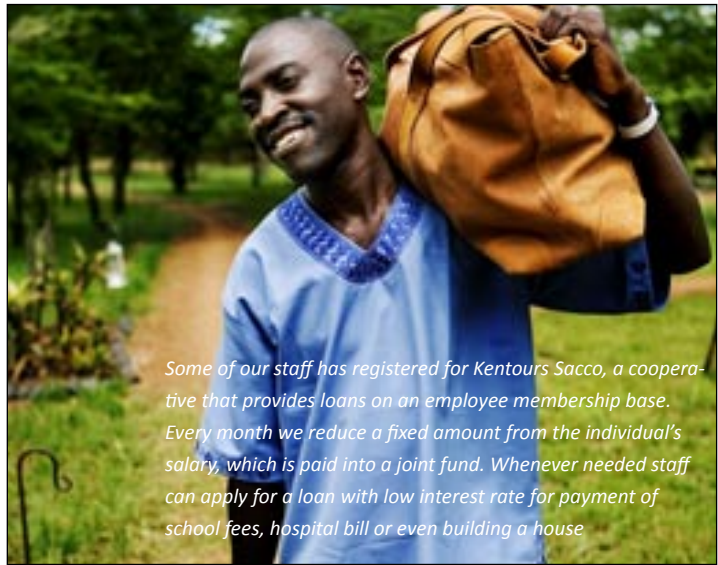
our progress. Moreover, we have adopted the UN Millennium Development Goals and are working towards setting our own targets: By protecting the environment, alleviating poverty through proper working conditions. By increasing HIV/Aids awareness and investing in education and making the benefit of IT technologies available for our staff and local Maasai community.

We employ 96 staff members. 86 are working at the camp in the Mara and 10 are working at the head office in Nairobi. All staff is employed on a permanent contract with a 3 month probation period. This ensures full and productive employment with job security, rights in case of termination as well as social and medical benefits. We refrain from using casual and seasonal labor as this renounces above stated rights. The salary consists of a base salary, travel or housing allowance as well as a service charge, where 5 percent of our total revenue is paid as a monthly bonus salary. Staff works on a monthly schedule with 21 working days, 7 days on leave and an additional 3 weeks holiday a year.

The International Labour Organization has endorsed workers with the universal right to freely join an association and to bargain. We respect and encourage these rights. All staff is free to join any chosen association. Five staff members have been democratically elected to form the staff committee. The committee represents the staff and act on their behalf, raising questions or matters that worry them. Staff is also able to voice any concern through the monthly staff meetings where the entire staff and the management are represented. In case of any misinterpretation between an individual staff member and the management, the company responds to the chosen labor union with attention to resolve the matter. Staff is also encouraged to formally negotiate salary and terms of employment at least once a year.

Social security is provided through the National Social Security Fund (NSSF), which reimburses social benefits when a member retires from a regularly paid employment or to the dependants of a deceased member. NSSF also offers funeral grants.

Medical insurance is important in countries with-



*Some of our staff has registered for Kentours Sacco, a cooperative that provides loans on an employee membership base. Every month we reduce a fixed amount from the individual's salary, which is paid into a joint fund. Whenever needed staff can apply for a loan with low interest rate for payment of school fees, hospital bill or even building a house*

out welfare state funded healthcare systems. Our staff has insurance through the National Health Insurance Fund. NHIF covers the individual and his/her close family in case of in-patient medical help (hospitalization), but not in case of out-patient medical help. When needed, staff is able to seek medical help at the local Mararienda Health Clinic. Such out-patient activities (consultation fee, test and medication) are paid by the company. In case of extended medical treatment, staff has the option of being referred to private or national hospitals in Nairobi. Two doctors, Dr. Ingrid Helweg Gichere and Dr. Raphael Gichere from Kenyatta National Hospital, Nairobi, are attached for counseling and monitoring of health for all staff. The doctors also come to our camp and inform about HIV/Aids and family planning. Our staff is able to pose any questions on matters that worry them and their families.

Promoting gender equality is crucial. Poverty is not gender-neutral, but affects men and women in different ways. Women are more likely to be employed in vulnerable jobs – in farming, as unpaid

family workers or as own-account workers – with no or little financial security or social benefits.

Karen Blixen Camp is committed to promote gender equality. Women and men are given the same employment conditions and salary is paid in accordance to qualifications. Women are also given 3 month of maternity leave. Of the 96 staff members, only 12 are women. In other words; we are still lacking far behind securing a 50 percent gender ratio amongst our staff. The reasons are partly due to barriers within the society and educational barriers. Women are therefore strongly encouraged to apply. During 2010/11 we will conduct a study to better women' working conditions at the camp.

Working in the bush means living in the bush. Our staff accommodation comprises two stone houses; canteen, flush toilets and hot and cold water showers. All staff rooms have a bed, beddings, linen, a mosquito net and a lockable cupboard for private belongings. The canteen serves breakfasts, lunches and dinners. TV with DSTV provides news from the outside world and a DVD shows movies. Twice a year, a football tournament between the camps of the area is arranged.

## UN Global Compact

The UN Global Compact asks companies to align their business practices with the ten universal accepted principles:

### Human Rights

1. Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights;
2. make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

### Labour

3. Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the recognition of the right to collective bargaining;
4. the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;
5. the effective abolition of child labour; and
6. the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

### Environment

7. Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;
8. undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and
9. encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

### Anti-Corruption

10. Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

## The UN Millennium Development Goals by 2015

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development





*One of the world's most beautiful cats, which Mara North Conservancy are proud to host six of*

# Mara North Conservancy

**Karen Blixen Camp is located in the beautiful Mara North Conservancy. We protect more than 30,000 Ha of stunning natural wilderness in close partnership with the Maasai communities and our tourism partners**

**M**ara North Conservancy is one of the most densely populated wildlife areas within the Masai Mara Ecosystem. The conservancy forms the vital north western corridor of the Greater Masai Mara Ecosystem. It is the favored habitat for a large variety of very unique African wild animals and serves as key dispersal area for the annual great wildebeest migration.

Mara North is home to the Leopard Gorge, a vital birthing and maternity ground for the big cat predators, made world famous by the BBC's Big Cat Diary. Five prides of lions amounting to 52 family members, seven cheetahs and at least six leopards has made the conservancy their homeland area. In the northern corridor the scenic Lemek Hills make an important wildlife refuge, particularly to a pack of highly threatened African wild dog.

## **Community and tourism conservation**

Communities living in natural wildlife areas must be provided with the economic incentives to set aside their land for wildlife conservation. The Mara North member camps guarantees the Maasai landowners fixed monthly lease payments for the privilege to game drive within the beautiful wildlife area. The lease payment is not subject to the number of conservancy tickets sold and therefore not dependant on any fluctuations in tourism. The concept is truly innovative and marks the only second time that the Masai landowners in this area have received direct, predictable and transparent income from wildlife, allowing the community members to plan ahead for the future.

## **Ecosystem Management**

Professional wildlife management is crucial. Brian Heath, Seiya Ltd. has been appointed as Mara North Conservancy' Conservation Manager with Marc Goss as the daily Manager and Benson Ketere as Head Warden of the ranger surveillance team. Seiya Ltd. is an international recognized conservation company with over 40 years of wildlife conservation experience.

Mara North employs 30 rangers to protect the conservancy and its wildlife. Their foremost objectives are anti-poaching enforcement, controlled grazing zones for livestock, restoration of natural habitats and response to human/wildlife conflicts.

Poaching has been and is a very current threat to wildlife. Elephants are still being shot in great numbers to remove and sell their tusk for ivory productions. Plain game as zebras or wildebeests is caught in snares to be sold at the growing worldwide bushmeat market. Marc Goss and his rangers will, when necessary, arrest and hand over suspects to the Kenyan Wildlife Services and the Kenyan Police. The day and night surveillance of the wilderness area most definitely prevent poachers to access and destroy wildlife within the Mara North Conservancy.

Human-wildlife conflicts occur in areas where man and wild animals live side by side. The Maasai have never hunted the plain games for meat, but entirely depended on their livestock. However,

## **Exclusive and private wildlife area**

Mara North Conservancy is of the exclusive use of the eleven member camps. Guests visiting our area are ensured of a truly private safari experiences with controlled vehicle density and sound ecotourism practices. The number of beds per camp has been restricted to ensure minimum impact. Starting in 2011, only Land Cruisers and Land Rovers are allowed and must be accompanied by a professional safari guide. Mara North camps and their guests must adhere to a professional code of conduct when game driving. Mara North Conservancy was established as a not-for-profit public company on the 1st of January 2009.



*Three siblings of the famous Leopard Gorge pride.  
The picture are from March 2009, so today they are  
almost grown ups*



traditions have prescribed for every young warrior to kill a lion to reach his manhood. This practice has unfortunately not completely ceased to exist. Young Maasai warriors will still kill the big cat predators in retaliation for attacked livestock. Marc Goss and his rangers are responding to any human-wildlife conflicts occurring within the area to discourage retaliations and find a joint solution for future co-existence. Mara North Conservancy has introduced a compensation scheme in the event of predator-livestock conflicts. The scheme works as an insurance fund which landowners pay half into and the member camps the other half. The cost to the individual landowner is on average 21 USD per year. Moreover, we are introducing predator proof enclosures (bomas) to keep livestock safe at nights as well as recommending better herding practices.

Controlled grazing and zoning for livestock is important to accommodate both wildlife and livestock. Mara North Conservancy keeps certain zones and hours restricted for grazing. Cattle grazing are permitted in areas, where they do not interfere with wildlife such as the big cat predators.

### **The story behind**

The Masai Mara is one of the most beautiful wildlife areas in the world; famous, for the great migration. However, only a relatively small portion of this unique ecosystem is protected by the Kenya Government. The Masai Mara National Reserve was established in 1961 and protects an area of 1,510 km<sup>2</sup>. On the north, west and the east border of the National Reserve the Masai Mara Ecosystem was divided into several group ranches under communal land trust.

During the early 1980s the Maasai were given permission to re-inhabit their traditional homeland areas. The Kenyan Government subdivided these group ranches into 60 Ha plots, issued to individual Masai landowners, making it difficult to create a sustainable, well coordinated and effective wildlife protection with recognizable benefits for the wildlife and the communities.

Prior to the establishment of the Mara North Conservancy, the wildlife area was known as Koiyaki-Lemek and was under management of

the Koiyaki-Lemek Wildlife Trust. Ten different associations with 143 directors were responsible for collecting and distributing park fees as well as protecting the area; a very challenging task with different political interests. It is estimated that the Koiyaki-Lemek Wildlife Trust generated approximately 2,5 Mill USD from the years 2005 to 2007, but only managed to distribute 20 percent of this revenue to the Maasai landowners, giving each landowner a total of 8 USD per Ha per year. Furthermore cattle grazing, human settlement as well as development of new tourist establishment was uncontrolled.

During the fall of 2008 the founding member camps of Mara North decided to address the Maasai leaders to find a sustainable and long term solution for the conservation of the area. Numerous meetings were held beneath the shade of acacia trees, before the 878 Masai landowners decided to lease their land to the Mara North Conservancy.

Today, the eleven Mara North member camps are obliged to pay 112,000 USD per month in fixed lease payments, which on a yearly base accounts to 1,3 million USD. 83 percent is distributed as lease payments, paid directly into the individual landowner' bank account and 17 percent is allocated for conservation management with employment of rangers, vehicle surveillance and maintenance of infrastructure. As a result, each Maasai landowner is secured 37.50 USD per Ha amounting to at least 2,220 USD per year. In comparison farmers will pay approximately 22 USD per Ha for leasing the wildlife area for cultivating.

#### **Our contribution to Mara North Conservancy**

Karen Blixen Camp is founding member camp of Mara North Conservancy. We guarantee the payment of 27,500 USD per month. This makes us the single largest contributor with 330,000 USD per year in fixed lease payments. Martin Sonderby Nielsen, Managing Director of Karen Blixen Camp, is member of the Executive Board of Mara North Conservancy and acts as its Treasurer. Katrine Sonderby Nielsen, CSR Manager of Karen Blixen Camp, assist with fundraising and communication work.





*Mara North Conservancy Rangers on foot patrol near Maternity Bush, an central area of the Conservancy. Every month hundreds of snares are found by rangers*



# Stay in Touch...

We are very keen to share our knowledge as well as learning more about green technologies and eco tourism practices. We welcome any question or comment you might have, so please don't hesitate to contact us.

Send an email on [info@karenblixencamp.com](mailto:info@karenblixencamp.com). Give your comments on our guestbook on [www.karenblixencamp.com/guestbook](http://www.karenblixencamp.com/guestbook) Or simply post your favorite photos on our Facebook wall on [www.facebook.com/karenblixencamp](http://www.facebook.com/karenblixencamp).

You are also welcome to go to our wildlife blog as well as our Facebook and read about the most exciting wildlife sightings from the savannah or follow our forestry project or the building of our hospitality school.

Many thanks,  
Karen Blixen Camp



[www.karenblixencamp.com](http://www.karenblixencamp.com)