

TRANSFORMING HUMAN LIVES

through Wildlife Conservation



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Conservation is not simply about saving an endangered species. It can create employment and tourism opportunities and become a vehicle for transforming lives and livelihoods.

In the early 1980s, a partnership between Anna Merz and the Craig

family led to the creation of the Ngare Sergoi Rhino Sanctuary, a black rhino refuge at the western end of Lewa Downs. The conservation work soon attracted tourists anxious to see some of the last remaining rhinos in Kenya.

From the outset it was determined that the benefits of wildlife protection and the resulting tourism should be channelled back into the communities, helping them to develop and improve their own quality of life. The community conservation approach has been widely embraced by other private

wildlife conservancies including Ol Pejeta, Ol Jogi and Borana, generating direct and indirect benefits for local communities mainly through employment, healthcare, education, water development and enterprise.

The programmes aim to sensitize the communities neighbouring the conservancies on the benefits of wildlife conservation so that they recognise that it is the rhino and other wildlife that have given them a plethora of benefits. In return, the communities take ownership of conservation

SURGICAL SERVICES



PHOTO BY: OL PEJETA CONSERVANCY

Anthony Gakuru

was orphaned at an early age and lived with his elder sister and grandmother. He obtained an Ol Pejeta bursary from 2007 enabling him to focus on his secondary education, graduating with a final grade of A- earning direct entry to Moi University, where he completed a degree in Business Management majoring in Civil Aviation Management.

PHOTO BY: THE SAFARI COLLECTION



Eye surgeons at work

Cataracts are responsible for 43 per cent of blindness in Kenya and trachoma accounts for a further 19 per cent of cases, both of which can be cured with simple surgical procedures.

In 2014, The Safari Collection, the managers of Solio Lodge located in a rhino conservancy, partnered with Medical and Educational Aid to Kenya (MEAK) to bring free ophthalmic services for the surrounding community. A team of 12 worked at Mary Immaculate Hospital in Mweiga,

the nearest small town to Solio Lodge, using their consultation rooms and surgical theatre. They screened/treated 1,759 patients, performed 170 cataract surgeries, visited four local schools and screened 600 hundred children of whom 171 required treatment for a variety of eye infections, especially conjunctivitis.

The nearest dentist to the Lodge is located about 30km away. Few people are able to afford the costs of the service or even the travel to meet the dentist. SmileStar brought a team of four dentists, three dental nurses, a doctor and two support staff plus all the dental equipment and medicines they needed. Mary Immaculate Hospitals again provided the facilities where over 600 patients were examined, 200 teeth extracted, over 80 root infections treated and over 200 toothbrushes and toothpaste handed out.

initiatives and support the aims of the conservancies.

For example, in the case of Lewa, school children have been fed, received bursaries for quality education from primary school to university (424 beneficiaries to date), classrooms, kitchens and libraries have been built and desks writing and reading resources provided. Adults have benefited from literacy lessons and skills such as crop and animal husbandry.

Members of the community also receive civic and business education, while students have learned to operate bakeries, acquired skills such as tailoring or poultry rearing -- benefits which have come directly from the protection of wildlife.

Training communities on sustainable and efficient farming techniques, as well as methods of diversifying crop production has resulted in a wider variety of farm produce both for their own needs, while selling surpluses

to earn income. With irrigation, fruit growing and horticultural production has been made possible.

Women's economic empowerment is an essential element of poverty alleviation. Lewa Women's Micro-Credit Programme has enabled more than 1,800 women to start their own businesses supported by soft loans. Enterprises range from crochet, bead works to small-scale farming.

Lewa's four medical clinics serve up to 90 percent of staff and over 20,000 people from neighbouring communities. The clinics offer diagnosis and treatment in reproductive, preventative, and general health; including HIV/AIDS counselling, testing and treatment, family planning and hygiene. Mobile clinics offer healthcare to communities in remote areas and visit schools to carry out anti-jigger and de-worming campaigns. School children receive treatment for minor ailments, are screened for developmental disorders

1,800
 Number of women Lewa Women's Micro-Credit Programme has enabled to start their own businesses supported by soft loans.

and teenagers benefit from education and counselling.

In 2010, two lodges around Laikipia's most southerly rhino conservancy, opened. Both Solio Lodge and Rhino Watch Lodge are contributing to the local economy and benefiting the community through a wide range of projects. They share the benefits of tourism -- employment, security, and donor funding whilst leveraging a conservation agenda to meet the needs of surrounding communities. ●

PHOTO BY: THE SAFARI COLLECTION



The SmileStar dental team at work

MOBILE CLINICS

Mobile clinics like those of Lewa, help diagnose life threatening conditions and diseases not previously detected. A 16-year-old teenager had given birth at home the night before to a baby girl, Lucy. The 18-hour-old baby had low birth weight, an occipital hematoma (collection of blood in the occipital region which is at the back of the head) and was breastfeeding poorly. The crew did initial first aid and urgently transferred young Lucy to St. Theresa, a mission hospital in Kiirua.

An examination of 10-year-old Karen Kinanu revealed she had an undiagnosed childhood heart disease so was referred to a hospital for further cardiac tests. These indicated she had Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA), a condition which a child is born with, and known in layman's terms, as a hole in the heart.

PHOTO BY: OI JOGI CONSERVANCY



Johnson Leteiyi Rana

23, from Il Polei village was brought up in a family of very limited means. Johnson, the first born in a family of six worked very hard in school and wanted to be a pace-setter for his siblings. However, it was a daily struggle for his parents to ensure the children ate and dressed well and

that each would get a good education.

Successful completion of secondary school education in Dol-Dol Secondary School in 2011, brought joy followed by sorrow as his parents could not afford to pay for a course in a career of his choice. Ol Jogi came to his rescue through sponsorship to join Kenya Medical Training College in Nairobi in September 2013 to pursue a 3-year diploma course in Orthopaedic Technology.