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Greetings!

Responsible tourism promoting Socio-economic development

Responsible tourism refers to the involvement of tourists in environmental conservation activities that are directly linked to addressing human development needs, and promotes equitable sharing of benefits accrued from tourism with local communities. The tourism sector has contributed significantly to the economic growth of Kenya through foreign exchange earnings from tourists who come to experience the beauty and diversity of our country. We are endowed with immense potential; from the sandy beaches at the coast to the raw energy of wildlife at the Maasai Mara and the serene and tranquil nature that our Country offers.

Tourism has been recognized as a key economic strategy needed for socio-economic development. In line with principles of ecotourism, tourism accommodation facilities (camps, lodges and hotels among others) are being encouraged to foster socio-economic development of the communities in the areas in which they operate. Some of the Eco –rated facilities have been able to make significant strides on this front and the communities livelihoods and standards of living have improved in a big way!

<u>Lessons from Campi ya Kanzi</u>

Campi ya Kanzi is a facility located in the beautiful Chyulu Hills within Kanzi Ranch which is part of the Larger Kuku Group Ranch, owned by the community. The Chyulu Hills are located in Southern Kenya, dividing Tsavo and Amboseli plains.



(Source: www.luxurysafaricamps)

This luxurious Gold-ecorated ecotourism lodge has promoted the socio-economic development of its associated Maasai Community in the following ways:

Employment: Majority of employees at the Camp (eighty percent) are drawn from the local community which is above the recommended figure of 70 percent required by relevant legislative requirement in Kenya (Employment Act 2007). Through income generation, employees have been able to cater for their families and improve the standards of living.

Conservation: Through the MWCT which is a trust in this area, the livestock lost as a result of wildlife predation has been compensated for and thereby encouraging conservation as well as improving community relations.

Health: The Trust (MWCT) has conducted health outreaches within the community. This project has reached over 1000 people within the community. The trust has also employed a doctor and nurses to facilitate health services in the 4 health centers that it supports.

Education: As part of education initiative, scholarships and bursaries have been awarded to local students. In 2015, 42 students were given bursaries in while in 2016 the number increased to 52. The trust has also employed 57 teachers spread across 22 schools in the local area in addition to building some classrooms, a library and providing school equipment.

Climate change Mitigation and adaptation:The ongoing REDD+ project include community members as part of the stakeholders. This is a project that aims to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest reduction by encouraging communities to plant trees

because trees play a vital role in carbon absorption from the atmosphere. They will then benefit through monetary compensation of carbon credits.

Lessons from Severin Sea Lodge

Severin Lodge is a Gold-ecorated accommodation facility under the Ecotourism Kenya's Eco-rating certification scheme.

This facility has promoted the social and economic development of the community in the area in which it is located in the following areas which include:

Employment: Majority of employees at the Severin Sea Lodge come from the local community (about 65%). Through employment creation and income generation, the standard of living among the local people has improved immensely.

The Facility is also committed to local empowerment through initiatives to help local people including:

Supporting local enterprises;

Severin Sea Lodge supports Likoni Quality Furniture. This furniture shop was founded by the Association for the physically disabled to provide them with a platform to create income. The facility procures all its furniture items strictly and directly from this association (APDK)

The facility also supports a local physically challenged artist to create the signage carvings for the guest rooms.

The Lodge also supports Bombolulu Workshop by procuring leather items for them directly. This includes menu folders, room information folders, key rings as well as all leather used in the workshop.

Severin Sea Lodge purchases from the locals where possible. This primarily includes the supply of vegetable and fruits. Fish is also procured locally from Barracuda Fish Shop.

Education:

1. The craftsmen training Centre**:** Through a partnership with the German Association of International Cooperation (GIZ), the hotel has established a training centre for local youth within its premises. The centre, which is housed in the green building, offers training for practical skills in: masonry, carpentry, plumbing, electrical and metal works. The centre had just taken its first cohort of fifteen students in 2017. The students are

trained in line with German training standards and will after training possess practical skills.

2. Skills for Kenya Initiative**:** Severin Sea Lodge Management is a founding member of this association that financially supports young Kenyans in their vocational education and training in order to give them better access to working life and helps them to develop their own skills and knowledge.
3. The management of Severin Sea Lodge has supported some local children to pursue tertiary learning. By 2017, 8 students in different universities and colleges in Kenya had benefitted from this bursary system.

We would like to encourage other facilities to also think of ways to contribute to the socio-economic development of local people in areas in which they operate and in this way they will be upholding the principles of responsible tourism!