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A TENT WITH A VIEW SAFARIS – STRATEGY FOR POSITIVE IMPACT 2011

A NEW BEGINNING – HIGH HOPES FOR THE FUTURE

In 2010, we began to shift our goals as new opportunities became available. The constant battle with JUKUMU, our landlords, over what happened to the rent from Sable Mountain lodge had long been wearing us down. Our attempts to focus them on a coordinated strategy to help the villagers for whom they were responsible, had fallen on deaf ears. The plan we wrote was ignored in favour of no plan and a “shut up and pay” attitude, backed up by the international donors behind JUKUMU. It was a microcosm of so much of the aid problem in Africa; the necessary protocol of the donor governments and large institutions is often entirely juxtaposed to the practical realities on the ground, and failed systems are rolled out simply because the paperwork is in place. JUKUMU was the first WMA to be tried in Tanzania, and there is now a determined effort to set up WMA’s throughout the country. Only last month, I was talking with Tanzania’s premier elephant researcher, Alfred Kikoti, and he told me about the WMA in the area around his West Kilimanjaro project. In selling the idea to the community, the leaders lauded the success of JUKUMU and its relationship with Sable Mountain lodge, as the concept’s biggest breakthrough!

The idea of village controlled areas, earning rewards for the community as compensation for losing rights over land it was once free to harvest, is of course, an excellent one. The practical means by which this is achieved is the problem, and the solutions are far better sought locally though a union of public and private sector. This document is posted on our website precisely because we need to show you, our clients, what it is we are trying to do for the community and the environment. As such we are determined to see money meant for the village reach its target. Precedent encourages community leaders to find ways to use money for their own personal benefit, and the once unlikely champions of the people – the private sector – are now in the ideal position to be exactly that. Not only are they required to support the local people by their clients, but they are likely to be around for the long-term (development workers usually get two years only), and they have valuable business skills to help devise and implement strategies. It is also likely that, once involved deeply and with a strategy they helped form, many camp owners will push beyond their required support to see programmes succeed. This private and public sector relationship is especially relevant in tourism, and the WMA’s are especially created to encourage tourism.

2010 was a breakthrough year for our relationship with Kisaki village. We joined forces to free ourselves of JUKUMU and are now anxious to show how we can work together for the benefit of the

people. We are finally able to implement the original plan to connect Kisaki hospital with European counterparts able to provide training, medicine and equipment to dramatically improve facilities.

DOCTORS ON SAFARI

In March 2011, we finally cemented our first relationship between the village hospitals of Kisaki (the nearest village to Sable Mountain) and Mkwaja (the nearest village to Tent With A View, Saadani), and a major overseas university hospital. Thanks to considerable efforts from Dr Gary Connett, we now have a first round of student doctors from Southampton University coming to work in our two community hospitals later this year. They will live in the camps at our expense, providing a comfortable home whilst they are here, and travel to the villages each day. This is the first stage of a long term plan which, we hope, will soon incorporate senior consultants coming out and training local doctors in specialist fields, again whilst based at the camps. The relationships built between institutions will lead to increasing support with medical supplies and equipment, and the development of a long term strategy for improved public health. We anticipate a rapid increase in participating camps to provide accommodation, and university hospitals to support community health over the coming years.

Work on a strategy document with UK healthcare professionals has started, and once it is ready we will lay out the plans for all to see here on the website. This plan really does have far reaching possibilities if approached with the right energy.

KODODO – THE FORGOTTEN VILLAGE

Kododo is a village in the Uluguru Mountains, that dominate the view looking North from Sable Mountain lodge. It is at the end of the longest and worst kept track crossing the range, and as such it is very remote and little visited.

The local ambulance here is a strong young man who runs several miles across mountain tops with a patient on his back. The school has three teachers for over 700 pupils. Few teachers are prepared to live so far from even a regular newspaper. The same can be said for the hospital. It has been ready, with a house built for the doctor, for several years now, but remains unused because no doctor will live here.

The people of Kododo remain in remarkable spirits, presumably because they still don't fully comprehend how badly they are being treated, having always been treated that way. The problem is that with so few students reaching even secondary education (the first pupils in the school's history managed this in 2009), no one from the area manages to walk the corridors of power, and so no one ever lobbies for the necessary change.

To sort out the problems for Kododo is no picnic. Even our 4x4's have their greatest workout when we decide to visit the village, and then only when the road is dry. Somehow we have to make the village self-sufficient enough to keep professionals happy without running away to Morogoro, the main town at the foot of the mountains. There is, of course, a strong phone signal (being on top of

the mountain), the climate is wonderful, and spring water flows into the village fed by gravity alone. We need to harness solar energy for electricity to bring reliable light and refrigeration to the hospital, and perhaps a TV to the school staff room. We need a reason to keep us around the village more, and to offer regular transport back to the urban world. With improved comfort, we can induce improved teachers, and any kind of doctors. With improved education, more students progress into the civil service, so the village gets a voice, and the ball begins to roll.



We have been involved in Kododo for several years now, focusing on the school and its heart-breaking lack of support. We have bought new desks for three classrooms to minimise the number of pupils sitting on the floor, we have trebled the number of textbooks to a still pitiful 1 between 5 ratio for the luckier classes, and we have provided uniforms, sports equipment and musical instruments in considerable numbers. All of this has been achieved with tremendous support from the company Families Worldwide and the Hampshire school of the MD's children.

It is time now to up the ante; to increase the pressure on local government and look for funding to lift the school to new standards. We have a plan that, by early 2013 we will complete the building of

a comfortable hostel for teachers and doctors, which will include Europeans in the “Doctors on Safari” programme. This is no small undertaking both financially and logistically with the remoteness of Kododo, but it could have a profound effect on the future fortunes of the village.

THE SAADANI WILDLIFE RESEARCH CENTRE

Your safari vehicle passes the park entrance, and the surly guard takes your money and begrudgingly opens the gate. You soon forget this as you come across a magnificent pride of lions, only to see the researcher’s car parked on the other side of the tree, with a decidedly disgruntled scientist staring daggers at your guide. Having left the park two days later, you cannot help but chuckle inwardly as you pass the broken down vehicle of the angry researcher, forced to give up his study because the funds have run out.



With a little added poetic licence, perhaps, the scenario described above is symbolic of the unnecessarily flawed relations that often exist between the three potentially interdependent entities in the safari world. The camps and their clients would love a deeper understanding of the wildlife they are out to watch, the researchers are desperate for a long term source of stable funding, so that they can organise goals around biological criteria and not financial ones, and finally the park rangers would love to learn more about the wildlife they protect, pick up language skills, and be much more comfortable conversing with visitors, particularly in their new area of expertise. If all three entities can then unite to promote better relations with the community, we really are cooking on renewable energy. Welcome to the Saadani Wildlife Research Centre.

At Tent With A View, we now have a dedicated wildlife research centre, focused initially around the elephant study we are undertaking with renowned specialist Alfred Kikoti and his team. Five elephants were collared in 2010, and will continue to be monitored via satellite communication over at least five years to come. The research is focused in several areas including range and corridors, diet and physiology, and, perhaps most importantly, human/elephant conflict. Reducing the latter is a key goal for us as a company, and we are using the lecture theatre within the centre for teaching

students, rangers and clients about the herds in Saadani, as a means to improve understanding towards them and lift the social carrying capacity (numbers acceptable to the local people).

We are funding full time biologists living in the camp to run the centre, collect and process data, present lectures, and report to ourselves (including you – our clients), the park authorities, and the wider elephant research community.



The centre will also feature information about the endangered green turtles which breed on our beaches. Up to the minute data will be provided about nests due to hatch, and the turtle research team from TANAPA will often be available to present their own lectures.

We have several rooms at the camp dedicated for researchers to live entirely supported by us. We are encouraging further analysis of fauna, flora, and the way forward for community based conservation. It is our duty to find ways to provide community benefits from our national park - not the sort of plans which simply encourage community leaders to fill their pockets, but well thought out strategies that are relevant to the specific area, and that have far reaching goals for projects which do not die the minute the outside prop disappears.