

OL PEJETA CONSERVANCY



COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 2018 - DECEMBER 2018



INTRODUCING OI PEJETA'S MEDICAL CARE OUTREACHES

Recognising the need to support local communities' quest for a healthy life, OI Pejeta identified access to quality healthcare as being one of the major challenges. Through the Community Development Programme, OI Pejeta runs a healthcare unit that works in partnership with the government and other stakeholders to provide proper healthcare to those living around our boundaries.

In July 2018, medical camps were rolled out with funding from JW Seagon and in collaboration with the Laikipia County Medical Department. Their goal was to bridge health access gaps as well as to reduce pressure on the Powys Dispensary (the only facility in the Northern Approaches). Activities were conducted in Debatas, Eleri, Njoguini and Tangi-Nyeusi, and are run on an alternate weekly basis. Mobilization is supported through Community Health Volunteers and the OI Pejeta SMS blasts. Of the total illnesses observed, upper respiratory conditions remained the most prevalent.

Services offered:

1. Preventive and Curative
2. Mother and baby care
3. HIV Counselling and testing services
4. Health talks
5. Malezi Bora

CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Conservation education allows us to spread a deeper understanding and enthusiasm for our planet's wellbeing, as well as the continued existence of its most threatened inhabitants. We recently collaborated with the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) on a series of community visits, which give members a chance to enjoy our wildlife, including the chimpanzees. These wild animals are a part of their heritage, something that people come from all over the world see. By showing how they, too, are a part of the story, we hope to invite them to join our efforts and help us when they can with things like reporting illegal wildlife activity reporting and spreading awareness.

So far, we have been pleased to host groups from Njoguini, Mirera, Weruini, and Kibung'i, taking them on game drives around the conservancy as well as tours of Sweetwaters Chimpanzee Sanctuary.

Kibung'i community group visited the chimpanzee sanctuary accompanied by an OI Pejeta guide.



MENTORSHIP OF SCHOLARSHIP STUDENTS

We currently have 66 fully sponsored students in our scholarship program, 53 in secondary school and 13 in primary school. 14 candidates are sitting for their final exams this year with 13 in secondary school and 1 in primary school. This is a great milestone.

During the April and August school holidays, a team from Education met with the scholarship students for performance appraisals, where the students got a chance to share their personal and academic achievements. Mentors were also on board to offer advice and counsel to the students. They play an important role in providing support and experience to the children, gently guiding them towards better efforts, discipline and performance - in life as well as class. This ensures that they get the best out of their education, and can go on to do well, even beyond their school years.





ENERGY

Over the years, OI Pejeta, in collaboration with our partner Die Ofenmacher e.V., has facilitated access to Improved Cooking Stoves (ICS) for communities surrounding the conservancy. In the past month, we have been conducting training with 14 stove builders drawn from the local communities. The training, led by our partners Die Ofenmacher, is aimed at enhancing both stove building skills and capacity. It is also a chance to grow employment and entrepreneurship.

The stoves are efficient, environmentally friendly and can be acquired at a subsidised rate of Kshs. 350. Since they burn less fuel, women can spend less time out collecting wood, which in turn means less deforestation. On top of this, they have contributed enormously to reducing medical issues, because they are smokeless. The instances of respiratory disease, one of the biggest health problems in the area, are already decreasing.

CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE FOR SUSTAINED YIELDS

Getting the most out of agricultural land, in a sustainable and responsible manner, is crucial to farmers who need to make a living out of a small area. By training community members in advanced farming techniques, huge changes have been made to crop yields and soil health. This includes crop rotation, zero tillage, mulching and conserving moisture, all of which are practical to apply and do not require extra equipment or cash. It makes it possible to get more out of the land, for a longer period of time - win win.

Leah Magu is a farmer in Karai, Lamuria, who has practised conservation agriculture since the year 2002 at Male Tigithi, and later migrated to Karai in 2003. Since she started, she has continued to enjoy increased yields. Last season, she harvested 900 kilograms (10 bags) of maize from her one-acre plot, compared to 360 kilograms (4 bags) of maize per acre from non-practising neighbours.



TECHNOLOGY USE IN LEARNING - THE ARES BOX

In August, OI Pejeta in collaboration with Afrotech and Rotary International, among other partners, facilitated a three-day training session on the use of the African Ruggedised Education Solution (ARES) box (an offline server preloaded with educational e-content).

The training brought together over one hundred teachers, principals and education representatives from schools surrounding the conservancy. The goal was to familiarise educators with this new and very powerful resource that provides almost everything students and teachers need to move forward in a digital world.

In addition to the training, 11 schools have been issued with more than 135 computers, 10 projectors and assorted electronics in the last two years. This is ongoing and further devices will continue to be distributed to community schools.

ARES has been designed in such a way that power outages dust and heat do not interrupt learning. Moreover, this server can run for over six hours on its battery and connect with up to forty Wi-Fi connected devices – notebooks, tablets and smartphones.

Some of the content on the ARES box includes: Wikipedia for Schools, Khan Academy videos, STEM resources, 45,000 downloadable books from the Gutenberg Library, Virtual Science Lab, The African Storybook Project, World Atlases, TED Talks and much more. The device also allows teachers to add their own local content and is currently being updated with conservation education content from OI Pejeta.

Laikipia County Speaker Patrick Wajgwa hands over a certificate to Mr. Ringera, Deputy Principal of Sweetwaters Secondary School.



TESTIMONY FROM A HAPPY FODDER FARMER

LAIKIPIA CATTLE, WATER AND WILDLIFE PROJECT (DARWIN PROJECT)

In 2015, Mrs. Wachira from Withare community - one of the Laikipia cattle, water and wildlife project beneficiaries - started leasing seven acres of land. She planted and harvested maize for four seasons, but unfortunately wasn't able to make any profits due the cost of production and rent.

Last year, she heard about smart fodder production and the training our project provided. Having learnt the necessary techniques and information, she planted her seven acre farm with Rhode's grass. In the first season, she harvested 1,500 bales (an average of 214 bales per acre).

Her bales cost Kshs 70 each to produce, and was able to sell a bale at Kshs 150 each. This means she managed to make a total profit of Kshs 75,000 - a much better return for her efforts!

This project was funded by the Darwin Initiative and implemented in partnership with the Laikipia Forum, Fauna & Flora International and OI Pejeta Conservancy.

