Greetings!

Replicable Best Practices: A case study of Kilima Camp Masai Mara

Most eco-rated facilities showcase at least one outstanding best practice in either conservation, community engagement or sound business practices. Sustainability is a crucial component in the attainment of any development goal within the accommodation sector of the tourism industry. A facility’s daily operations should aim at enhancing its eco-credentials while boosting sales and contributing towards socio-economic development.

This week’s eco-byte shares an enlightening case study on Kilima Camp’s replicable best practices, specifically in water management and staff welfare. The camp is located on the edge of the Siria escarpment (Oloololo escarpment) in a private concession area of 119 hectares bordering the Masai Mara National Reserve. Just recently, the facility was awarded Gold eco-rating by Ecotourism Kenya, joining a growing number of notable facilities with excellent and replicable best practices in responsible tourism.

This facility has shown considerable growth within the certification, having first joined the scheme in 2009 where it was rated Bronze and improved to Silver rating in 2014 after a few reassessments. This camp has been very consistent in implementing all recommendations given after every assessment, owing to the steadfast commitment of the management towards improving operations in line with sustainable practices in tourism. Some of the replicable practices are as noted below;

**Water conservation**

One of the things Ecotourism Kenya highly encourages eco-rated facilities is to conduct rain water harvesting. Some of the advantages of rain water harvesting include; low cost maintenance
of the harvesting system, lower water bills (where your water is supplied by a company), great for irrigation, reduces ground water demand and reduces soil erosion and floods. In addition, rain water is multi-purpose and can be used for all sorts of things such as flushing toilets, washing vehicles and watering gardens.

Kilima Camp has a very commendable rain water harvesting practice in place, whereby all mabati (iron) roofed buildings within the facility have been guttered and a tank in place to collect as much rain water as possible. There are at least ten (10) tanks and when all are full, there is approximately 42,000 liters of rain water collected. Being on a higher altitude, the area has a longer wet season all year round. This complements the main water source for the camp-sourced from a dam within the facility land, hence reducing dependence and demand for ground water. Overall, rain water harvesting is beneficial to the environment and can also be helpful to your bank account.

**Staff Welfare**

Staff welfare involves all the practices by an employer which are directed towards providing the employees with certain benefits in addition to wages and salaries. Welfare facilities are essential for the health of the company, since they bear a close connection with the productiveness of the labour force. These welfare facilities entail sanitary and hygiene facilities, accommodation facilities, medical facilities, recreational and cultural facilities, development facilities among others. Responsible tourism operators must therefore provide their staff with adequate welfare amenities, unless it is clearly unreasonable in terms of time, trouble, cost and physical difficulty.

Kilima Camp was noted to have quite impressive staff accommodation, sanitary and recreational facilities which have been improved over time. The staff housing and sanitation provided is decently constructed, safe and secure. The staff quarters were also noted to be clean, with sufficient water provisions (mostly rain water). The team has developed a cleaning schedule for the ablution block where everyone participates hence encouraging team effort while at the same time maintaining proper hygiene conditions. In regards to recreation, the camp has a canteen where employees have entertainment facilities during their break times. In addition, there is a playing field for volleyball, football and basketball. A dart board has also been provided for those with a preference for indoor games.
Staff welfare is an important aspect to your business. Aside from proper accommodation and sanitation facilities, it is also worthy to invest in your staff, through training and education opportunities and skills development, which is essential for improving a company’s overall sustainability performance. To quote Sir Richard Branson, “The way you treat your employees is the way they will treat your customers.” After all, the success of your company or business is largely anchored on how you treat your staff.

Lately, the Eco-rating standard was reviewed and a lot of emphasis laid on staff welfare issues. This was incorporated in line with other international standards that the EK eco-rating standard is benchmarking on, such as Fair Trade Tourism and Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC), which heavily focus on staff welfare issues including; training, capacity building, affirmative action, working conditions and compliance with labor laws.

Ecotourism Kenya highly commends Kilima Camp for their efforts on water management and staff welfare and congratulates the camp team on attaining Gold Eco-rating Certification!
Eco-rating Certification Program

The Eco-rating Certification Scheme is a sustainable tourism certification program that aims to promote responsible tourism in Kenya. The program was launched in 2002 by Ecotourism Kenya in cooperation with tourism stakeholders in Kenya with a prime focus of recognizing best practices in business practices, conservation, community and cultural performance by tourism accommodation facilities. The accommodation facilities that apply and meet the criteria set are awarded Bronze, Silver or Gold certification based on their performance. Please see hyperlink ECO-RATING SCHEME

What’s latest on EK Eco-rating Certification?

In this month, the Eco-rating team will be in the Nakuru/Naivasha regions while in September the team will head to the Coastal and Nyanza/Western Kenya regions. If you would like to be featured in these set of audits, please contact the secretariat through ecorating@ecotourismkenya.org.

Have you registered for the annual Eco-warrior awards?

Do you have your ticket for the Ecowarrior Awards 2016 Gala Dinner? The Colourful event will be held at Radisson Blu Hotel in Upperhill, Nairobi on 14th October.

#EcowarriorAwards2016
#SustainableTourismOurDiversityOurStrength

Get yourself a ticket or tickets at: http://www.ecotourismkenya.org/award/register.php