



Serena News

Insights and Inspirations in the World of Serena Hotels

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Sustainability Newsletter for Serena Hotels

AMBOSELI SERENA SAFARI LODGE EMPOWERS WOMEN IN KIMANA



Members from the Kimana Women's Group in Amboseli, Kenya

It has been more than one year since the start of the partnership between a group of rural women small-scale farmers, the International Labour Organization (ILO), African Pro-Poor Tourism Development Centre (APTDC), Tech for Trade and Serena Hotels in the Amboseli, Kenya region. What started as an economic empowerment initiative has now grown to become a sustainable business, where the lives of women and their families have been immensely enhanced.

The Kimana Women's Group from the Amboseli region is a self-started group of HIV+ infected and socially affected women that provide support and raise awareness on HIV and AIDS within their community. Starting their group with no donor support, the women would travel door to door to mobilize and invite other women to join their group. In collaboration with doctors in the region, a few of the women were trained on nutrition and medicine management. These women then passed on their knowledge and trained others in the group and the surrounding community.

Once the group was formed, APHIplus (AIDS, Population and Health Integrated Assistance) with expertise from Amiran Kenya assisted the women in agriculture production through facilitating training on greenhouse farming. In the dry region of Amboseli, the Kimana Women's Group has now established their business with two pieces of 2-acre land each to grow various fruits and vegetables, such as oranges and paw paws, for sale.

With the support of ILO, Tech for Trade and APTDC, the Kimana Women's Group was introduced to Serena Hotels as a potential supplier of fruits and vegetables to **Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge**, situated 45km from their main area of operation. During the partnership, Serena Hotels has worked to ensure practices and standards of quality and cleanliness align with their values as an organization and assisted in other business logistics, such as setting up a business bank account. To achieve this, training was provided to the Kimana's Women's Group to produce and package goods in an internationally acceptable manner, and improve overall business skills, thus building capacity and improving markets.

Today, the Kimana Women's Group of twenty individuals has become the sole supplier of fruits and vegetables to **Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge**.

AMBOSELI SERENA SAFARI LODGE EMPOWERS WOMEN IN KIMANA

Interview with Khilan Shah, Regional Purchasing Manager of Serena Hotels



Maasai woman entrepreneur from the Kimana Women's Group in Amboseli, Kenya

Khilan Shah, Regional Purchasing Manager of Serena Hotels, has been actively involved in spearheading support to the Kimana Women's Group and has witnessed the successes of the partnership. In July, partners in the initiative had the opportunity to sit down with Khilan Shah to gain further insight on this partnership. Below is the transcript from the interview.

Q: Why did Serena Hotels decide to work and partner with ILO, APTDC, Tech for Trade and the community at Kimana?

A: Working with and assisting in the development of communities where we do business is very much a part of the culture at Serena Hotels, being one of the many agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN). AKDN is a network which operates interactively and supports various initiatives across Africa and Asia to improve the quality of lives for communities within these regions. There are and have been many other initiatives for economic empowerment that are in place in the countries where Serena Hotels operates. We have a similar model in Tanzania, where we work with farmers, local curio artisans, other women's groups and disadvantaged groups.

I remember a Maasai woman from the Maasai Mara region who had come to see me in Nairobi. I was surprised to see how dressed up she had come for this meeting, as if she were going for a wedding. It then occurred to me how much she valued this meeting, and it is situations like these that continue to encourage us to support our local community members. We encourage manufacturing in Kenya, thus sourcing locally and ensuring quality and standards are met as opposed to importation. Serena Hotels ensures minimal importation, importing only where products are not available or where specialized items and equipment are needed. As you can see, it was only natural for Serena Hotels to engage and work with such a community and initiative.

Q: How has this partnership helped or enabled Serena Hotels to help these women become better entrepreneurs?

A: A lot of time and effort is invested by Serena Hotels, with the aim of growing groups such as Kimana Women's Group to become better entrepreneurs. We spent almost six months engaging with the Group, first educating them on the quality of produce to meet our guests' expectations and standards. It is important, for example, to ensure sewage water is not used for farming. We assisted in providing awareness and education on our expectations and on meeting the local compliances to tax and other regulations. We required the suppliers to form an association, open a bank account and register with the local revenue authority.

It also gives us great satisfaction to see this particular women's group be able to improve their standard of living. They have been able to pay for their children's school fees, buy land for investment and meet their basic necessities and needs. It is also satisfying to see the growth of their business and skills.

Q: As Serena Hotels, how has this partnership benefited you?

A: This partnership has undoubtedly created shared value. Serena Hotels has also benefited in several ways. Without the need to send supply trucks frequently from long distances (i.e. Nairobi to Amboseli) by switching to local sourcing, we have reduced our carbon footprint and at the same time, financially reduced our cost of doing business. We now have fresher produce supplied in the least possible delivery time at competitive prices.

Initially, we did assist the women's group by making advance payments, and we now have the joy in seeing the group grow and be able to meet our normal payment terms competitive to other suppliers.

Q: What do you see or feel is the future of the partnership?

A: In line with our practice to assist local communities in and around where we do business, we see this partnership model flourish and replicated to an increasing number of Serena Hotels properties based in rural areas. We foresee some of these initiatives contributing to the broader economy by way of encouraging reduction in the rural-urban migration, a model that we would like to see others in the industry also emulate.

SERENA HOTELS TAKES STEPS TOWARDS A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT

LAKE ELMENTEITA SERENA CAMP

Hot springs, produced through geothermal heated groundwater, are found in the extreme southern end of Lake Elmenteita in Nakuru, Kenya. It is a resource that plays a vital key role to both the local community and the lake system. However, hot springs face a major challenge due to littering. To help create awareness, **Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp (LESC)** staff in conjunction with Soysambu Wildlife Conservancy, Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), as well as local communities and hotels held a joint litter collection exercise on September 21st, 2016.

Local authorities see learning by exposure to the ‘natural’ world as a vehicle to facilitate an integrated understanding of the growing importance of environmental education today. Therefore, local authorities have identified key suggestions such as building awareness of the hot springs, increasing knowledge on the basic understanding of the surrounding environment, building skills through training individuals to identify and solve environmental problems and increasing participation across the community.

In this way, environmental education is seen as an investment in healthy, critical-thinking generations of children with a strong connection to their environment, an investment that is crucial to the future of our planet.

Serena Hotels has introduced the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) to its partner schools. Through ESD, eco-clubs are being launched in these schools to encourage students to take ownership of their own waste management, tree planting and facilitate a culture of being environmentally conscious throughout the school. Eco-clubs promote innovative solutions to environmental challenges and that one can also have a career in the environmental field – such as a Naturalist or Marine Biologist.

POLANA SERENA HOTEL

It was the third edition of **Polana Serena Hotel’s** action towards litter collection and beach clean ups, and this year the Serena city hotel in Maputo, Mozambique organized a clean up on the beach of Costa de Sol. Under the Portuguese slogan, “Juntos Fazemos a Diferença” meaning “Together We Make A Difference”, a team of 60 volunteers from Bigservice, Disotel-Sternblu, Flor Real, Kukula, Rentokil and SIQAS e Vibeiras joined staff from **Polana Serena Hotel** one more time to support this worthy cause.



Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp (LESC) staff participate in clean up of hotspring in Nakuru, Kenya



Staff volunteers at Polana Serena Hotel making their way to participate in the beach clean up in Maputo, Mozambique

LAKE ELMENTEITA SERENA CAMP SUPPORTS THE LITTLE SISTERS OF ST.THERESE OF THE CHILD JESUS HOUSE OF HOPE

The Little Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus House of Hope institution was started in the year 2006 with the main aim of helping HIV+ children through giving them hope and opportunities towards a better future. The facility is exclusively for girls and is situated along Nakuru-Nairobi Highway, 6kms from **Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp (LESC)**.

At the moment, St. Therese is home to 57 children - 1 in a tertiary college, 6 in secondary school and 50 in primary school. St. Therese has two home locations - one nearby **LESC** in the Nakuru, Kenya region and one in the Meru region.

The children in the facility are not all orphaned. Some still have parents but are brought to the home due to their status and the attention they need in terms of medication, diet and even care, which otherwise is not sufficient and easily accessible in this remote region.

Running the facility is entwined with quite a number of challenges, mainly that many of the children in the facility fall sick, which often raises the cost of medication and catering for school fees for the children is a challenge to the institution. Donations from well wishers have gone a long way in providing food and fees provisions. However, further support is required.

LESC has been working hand in hand with the home by often visiting the children and donating amenities such as cooking flour, soap and issuing used guest slippers.

St. Therese also runs a vegetable farm with a variety of livestock ranging from goats, chickens, pigs, cows and rabbits. They are all for subsistence use in the home. To provide further assistance, organic waste from **LESC** is collected by St. Therese and fed to the livestock.

Through continued support, **LESC** hopes to help St. Therese overcome their challenges through providing sustainable solutions in medication and school fees for the children at The Little Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus House of Hope.



Staff from Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp (LESC) singing songs with the children of The Little Sisters of St. Therese of the Child Jesus House of Hope

"Your generation has the opportunity to make a break with the past and create a beautiful new world."
- Muhammed Yunus, Winner of Nobel Peace Prize 2006, Commencement Speech 2008

KENYA: THE ULTIMATE BIRDWATCHING DESTINATION



A view of flamingoes and a sleeping warrior opposite Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp (LESC)

On August 21st 2016, Nature Kenya – the East Africa Natural History Society (EANHS) held a full day bird watching event and lunch at **Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp (LESC)** in Nakuru, Kenya.

Along with the large occupancy of flamingoes in Lake Elmenteita during this time, visitors had a chance to observe over 90 different bird species, such as the African Fish Eagle and the Blacksmith Plover. The First Lady of Kilifi County, Mrs. Liz Kingi, also accompanied the Nature Kenya team during the bird watching event.

Nature Kenya – EANHS is Africa's oldest environmental society, dating back to 1909. The purpose of the organization is to promote the study and conservation of nature in the Eastern Africa region. Nature Kenya implements these aims through their mission of “connecting nature and people to take action for biodiversity conservation”.

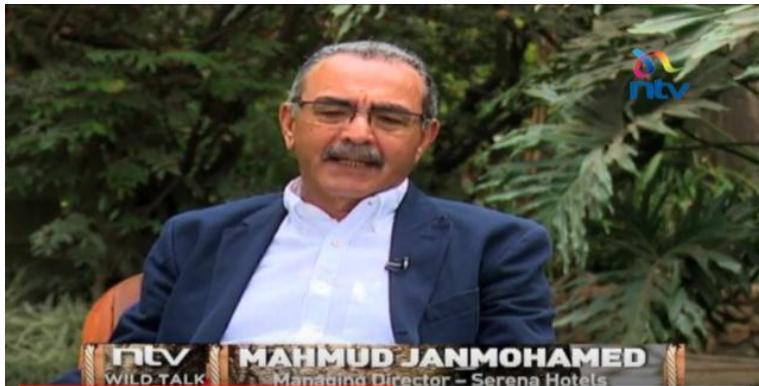
Over recent years, a huge focus has been placed on bird tourism. Nature Kenya has been working towards raising awareness on Important Bird Areas (IBA) and Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) based on routine monitoring and coordination. The organization's findings and monitoring shows that the state of biodiversity is deteriorating and pressures are mounting despite the efforts put in. Results suggest much more work needs to be put in to reverse the current downward trend in these biodiversity losses.

Serena Hotels has partnered with Nature Kenya as a Corporate Member to advocate for the protection of IBAs and KBAs. Several of the Serena Hotels' properties in Kenya, such as **LESC**, **Sweetwaters Serena Camp (SWSC)** and **Serena Mountain Lodge (SML)** are located in IBAs and KBAs – areas that need to be looked after, monitored and protected from further deterioration.

As Serena Hotels are Corporate Members of Nature Kenya, **Nairobi Serena Hotel** provides guests an opportunity on a complimentary basis to attend bird watching events within the city of Nairobi, Kenya, a full day bird watching excursion and to visit the National Museums of Kenya.

SERENA HOTELS TALKS CORPORATE INVOLVEMENT IN THE ENVIRONMENT ON NTV'S WILD TALK

On September 20th 2016, Serena Hotels was featured on the weekly Kenyan segment known as NTV Wild Talk. Along with NTV, SafariLink and Safaricom, the Managing Director of Serena Hotels was interviewed to discuss corporate players' role in wildlife and conservation issues. There are several key takeaways from each corporation's interview that corporate players from various industries can learn from.



Mahmud Jan Mohamed, Managing Director of Serena Hotels, interview with NTV Wild Talk's host Smriti Vidyarthi

Serena Hotels

As a company that has been around for over 40 years, Serena Hotels is a long-term player in the region. Serena Hotels finds it critical to play a role in order to continue seeing the environment, communities and wildlife around them exist and grow. From sea turtle and butterfly conservation in Mombasa, Kenya to tree planting across the 24 properties in East Africa and Mozambique, Serena Hotels has continued to play a role on the environment in numerous ways.

As mentioned by Mr. Jan Mohamed, Managing Director of Serena Hotels, sustainability should become a priority for all corporates. Over the years, Serena Hotels has seen several negative impacts on the environment, an important example being poaching. Companies can find opportunities to get involved that are unique to their location. For example, butterfly conservation started off 13 years ago as a small project for Serena Hotels in Mombasa, Kenya 13 years ago. However, butterflies play a huge role in our environment and the conservation of butterfly species is just as important as other wildlife. Today, the butterfly conservation project has turned into a Butterfly Park located at the Serena Beach Resort & Spa (SBRs), Mombasa where not only are butterfly species bred and protected, but guests and local community members are educated on the importance of conservation and of butterflies to our ecosystem.

Moreover, consumer interests have changed immensely over the recent years. Gone are the days where travelers travel to a beach destination to lay around and tan all day - the "responsible traveler" is growing more and more each day. Therefore, it is important for corporates to not only play a part, but to get their consumers involved in the process as well.

NTV – Though several media companies discuss current local and international news, politics, etc., very few touch upon environmental topics and discussions. NTV strives to start a conversation on these issues and fill the gap that was evident in media. There has been a large impact created from NTV's involvement in environmental and wildlife issues. The first episode of NTV Wild Talk was held in Tsavo West National Park, with **Kilaguni Serena Safari Lodge** as a partner, featuring the Mzima Springs. NTV received several calls and emails asking questions such as, "Is that actually located in Kenya?" Through NTV's work, viewers are educated on their own country through a local lens. A focus is placed not only on environmental and wildlife issues, but also on the beauty that exists within Kenya - thus promoting viewers to learn more about the environment around them and the important role they play in it.

SafariLink - SafariLink notes placing a large focus on the younger generation, as they are our future. The company believes that by targeting this generation, a culture can be established where it becomes natural for individuals to conserve our environment and wildlife.

Safaricom - Safaricom has found opportunities to use their core business in technology towards the environmental and conservation projects they invest in. To achieve this, they have embarked on an exercise to tag wildlife so as to track their movement and patterns.

"You have everything you need to build something bigger than yourself."

- Seth Godin

THE STORY OF: THE AMBOSELI WASTEWATER LAGOON



Wastewater Lagoon at Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge in the Amboseli National Park, Kenya

In the 1980's, a Serena Hotels constructed lagoon consisting of six chambers was established at **Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge (ASSL)**. The Lodge is connected to the lagoon through the use of septic tanks and a drainage system, bringing the wastewater from **ASSL**'s kitchen, bathrooms and laundry directly into the chambers. Through a process of aeration, oxygenation and sunlight exposure, the water travels throughout each of the six chambers and undergoes a natural cleaning process.

Through an innovative constructed lagoon, natural environmental process and monitoring their waste, **ASSL** has simultaneously contributed positively to the environment in the Amboseli National Park. This unique constructed lagoon in Kenya has contributed to **ASSL** obtaining its status as Africa's Leading Eco-Hotel by the World Travel Awards, 2013.

How does one know that this water is clean and safe for use? The lagoon has been certified by environmental authorities and is regularly checked by these authorities to guarantee the water is safe and hazard free for use. Moreover, the products used by **ASSL** (i.e. shampoos, shower gels, soaps, laundry detergent etc.) are all environmentally friendly, ensuring there is minimal impact to the environment. The combination of eco-friendly products and the natural environmental process that cleans the water also ensures an odourless area for guests and animals inhabiting Amboseli National Park. Lastly, the presence of fish living in the lagoon is a key indicator that the water is non-toxic and safe.

There are several efforts one can see within Amboseli National Park that are being implemented to mitigate the effects that climate change has on the park, as the snow continues to disappear from Mount Kilimanjaro. Serena Hotels works closely with Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) on reforestation projects to strengthen the park for the animals. In addition, waste management initiatives, such as the **ASSL** lagoon, can help reduce the effects that individuals have on the surrounding environment. On a wider scale, the invertor systems at all Serena Hotels lodges are set for optimum energy consumption and reduced usage of the generator, thus reducing the usage of fuel, noise and air pollution. In addition, synchronized generators and energy saving bulbs are installed in a phased manner. The introduction of synchronized generators at **ASSL** have resulted in a fuel consumption saving of 25%.

This is why I would emphasize...our responsibility to improve the quality of life in places throughout the world where that quality is unsatisfactory - fighting poverty, improving health and education, expanding opportunity - as the first manifestation of a healthy pluralistic ethic. Pluralism means responding to diversity not only at home, but on a global basis, creating genuine "visions of opportunity" wherever constraints or reversals are in the air.

- His Highness Aga Khan IV (Adrienne Clarkson Prize for Global Citizenship Acceptance Speech, 2016)

SERENA HOTELS AWARDS AND ACCOLADES - 2016



Left to Right: Daniel Kangu (General Manager, Nairobi Serena Hotel), David Sem (Country Sales Manager, Serena Hotels TPS Tanzania), Rosemary Mugambi (Marketing Director, Serena Hotels TPS East Africa), Charles Muia (Operations Director - Lodges, Serena Hotels TPS East Africa), Elizabeth Njeri (Camp Manager, Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp), Janet Maina (Social Media Executive, Serena Hotels TPS East Africa)

SERENA BEACH RESORT & SPA, MOMBASA AND SWEETWATERS SERENA CAMP, NANYUKI WIN AT THE KENYA ECOWARRIOR AWARDS

Serena Hotels is pleased to announce that **Serena Beach Resort & Spa (SBRS)** located in Mombasa, Kenya won the “Best Eco-Rated Facility of 2016 - Hotel” Award and **Sweetwaters Serena Camp** took the first runner up position under the “Best Eco-Rated Facility 2016 – Camps” category at the recently held Kenya Ecowarrior Awards Gala Dinner. The award ceremony took place on October 14th 2016 in Nairobi and was hosted by Ecotourism Kenya, an organization that promotes responsible tourism practices within the tourism industry. The finalists consist of tourism initiatives from within Kenya that enhance social-cultural, economic and ecological sustainability in their operations.

This has been a gratifying year for **Serena Beach Resort & Spa** as the property obtained the Gold Eco-Rating Certification from Ecotourism Kenya and its partner Fair Trade Tourism in May 2016. Serena Beach Resort & Spa is only one of the several Serena Hotels’ properties in Kenya that is Gold Eco-Rating certified. **Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp** and **Sweetwaters Serena Camp** are also included in this list.

OTHER AWARDS

Other awards that various Serena Hotels’ properties were rewarded with include:

World Travel Awards – Serena Hotels won the top Accolade for *Africa’s Leading Hotel Brand* amongst others which included: *Africa’s Leading Green Hotel 2016: Nairobi Serena Hotel*, Kenya, *Kenya’s Leading Business Hotel 2016: Nairobi Serena Hotel*, *Tanzania’s Leading Hotel 2016: Dar es Salaam Serena Hotel*, *Tanzania’s Leading Hotel Suite 2016: Presidential Suite at Dar es Salaam Serena Hotel*, *Tanzania’s Leading Boutique Hotel 2016: Zanzibar Serena Hotel*, *Zanzibar’s Leading Hotel 2016: Zanzibar Serena Hotel*, *Uganda’s Leading Hotel 2016: Kampala Serena Hotel*, *Uganda’s Leading Hotel Suite 2016: Presidential Suite at Lake Victoria Serena Resort*, *Rwanda’s Leading Hotel 2016: Kigali Serena Hotel*, *Mozambique’s Leading Hotel 2016: The Polana Serena Hotel* and *Mozambique’s Leading Hotel Suite 2016: Presidential Suite at The Polana Serena Hotel*.

World Luxury Spa Awards – **Nairobi Serena Hotel** won this award for its Maisha Spa, Continent Winner in Best Fitness Spa and Country Winner in Best Spa Manager.

Chef’s Delight Award – **Nairobi Serena Hotel** won three awards for its Aksum Bar: Best Cocktail Lounge in a Hotel, The Mandhari Restaurant: Best Fine Dining Restaurant in a Hotel and Chef Roy: Most Innovative Chef in a Hotel.

World Barista Competition – Denis Agaba the Ssese Pastry Shop Barista and Ugandan Champion 2016/2017 represented Uganda in the World Barista Competitions both in Dublin and China. He has now transformed the coffee products as well as service at Serena Hotels, especially for the Peal of Africa Restaurant at the **Kampala Serena Hotel**.



Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge, one of the first Serena Hotels created in 1973, is located against the backdrop of Africa's highest mountain – Mount Kilimanjaro. At the centre of 'Maasailand', the lodge's architectural design and décor reflects elements of local culture and visually complements the environment. The brilliant primary colours and iconic shapes represent the legendary warriors and reflects the Maasai Manyatta (a traditional Maasai home) theme. Each room is housed in a single storey-building opening directly on to the grounds, with hand-painted wildlife murals and décor that reflects the traditional artifacts of the Maasai people.

THE SERENA HOTELS PORTFOLIO

HOTELS

KENYA

Nairobi Serena Hotel

TANZANIA

Dar es Salaam Serena Hotel

Lake Duluti Serena Hotel

UGANDA

Kampala Serena Hotel

RWANDA

Kigali Serena Hotel

MOZAMBIQUE

Polana Serena Hotel

SAFARI LODGES

KENYA

Mara Serena Safari Lodge

Amboseli Serena Safari Lodge

Kilaguni Serena Safari Lodge

Serenet Mountain Lodge

Ol Pejeta House

TANZANIA

Lake Manyara Serena Safari Lodge

Ngorongoro Serena Safari Lodge

Serengeti Serena Safari Lodge

Serena Mivumo River Lodge

TENTED CAMPS

KENYA

Lake Elmenteita Serena Camp

Sweetwaters Serena Camp

TANZANIA

Kirawira Serena Camp

Mbuzi Mawe Serena Camp

Selous Serena Camp

RESORTS

KENYA

Serena Beach Resort & Spa

UGANDA

Lake Victoria Serena Golf Resort &

Spa

RWANDA

Lake Kivu Serena Hotel

ZANZIBAR

Zanzibar Serena Hotel

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Tourism and Promotion Services (TPS), operating under the brand name Serena Hotels, is an affiliate company of the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED). TPS promotes tourism by building, rehabilitating and managing hotels, resorts, palaces, forts, safari lodges and camps that contribute to economic growth and the overall investment climate in an environmentally and culturally sensitive manner.

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