



HELPING TO BUILD A FUTURE THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA.

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Press Release January for January 15th 2016

Galana Wildlife Conservancy, Kenya.

It is with great pleasure that we would like to announce that University College Dublin and Pwani University, Kenya have signed Memoranda of Understanding to facilitate academic and student exchanges between our two countries.

The agreements follow an intense period of negotiation and consultation between University College Dublin and Pwani University in Kenya which were facilitated throughout by the NGOs Friends From Ireland, The Galana Wildlife Conservancy Kenya, the Watamu Marine Association Kenya and the Agricultural Development Corporation of Kenya.

This initiative has the support of the Irish Government through the Minister for Skills, Research and Innovation, Mr. Damien English and the Irish Ambassador to Kenya Dr. Vincent O Neill and from the Kenyan Government through the Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Professor Judi Wakhungu, the Kenyan Ambassador to Ireland Mr. Richard Opembe, and the newly assigned Principal Secretary for Agriculture Dr. Andrew Tuimur formerly of the Agricultural Development Corporation.

In addition to the announcement of the MOUs we are also announcing the following:

1. The building of a Scientific Field Research Station at the Galana Wildlife Conservancy in Kenya, designed to promote knowledge and to open up this critically endangered environment and its endangered wildlife to Kenyan and International students of the Sciences. *See Below
2. The commencement by Friends From Ireland of the Galana Secondary School building project on land donated by the Agricultural Development Corporation adjacent to the Primary and Infant School complexes constructed by FFI over the last three years. **See Below
3. The intention to initiate and support an application by the Kenyan Government to have the Galana Wildlife Conservancy considered for inclusion as a World Heritage Site, in conjunction with the existing application relating to Tsavo East and West National Parks.

This is a fresh approach to community-conservation-education challenges in developing countries and has brought together voluntary National and International community and conservation groups, business groups, state agencies and those in relevant political offices, to ensure that promises are kept and goals are achieved.

This model of multi-agency partnership, bringing volunteering and education together to tackle community and conservation challenges in Kenya, will herald the beginning of a significant scientific study of this crucial eco-system and its endangered species, the development of the community which shares that environment and the development of educational facilities from infancy to third level education. It is a model that works through inclusion, the realistic consideration of community, cultural and conservation concerns, the management of realistic goals based on what can be achieved by listening to the issues on the ground and planning processes that start with real dialogue.

For more information following this press release please contact me at johnab@eircom.net or through the following websites www.friendsfromireland.ie www.galanaconservancy.com where information on upcoming community and conservation projects for 2016 will be posted.

***Galana Conservancy Goals 2016**

1. Construction/Renovation of International Field Research Station.
2. Conduct Wildlife Population Census.
3. Nocturnal Camera Trapping Survey in Northern areas of the Conservancy.
4. Commence eDNA sampling within the Conservancy.
5. Develop UCD and Pwani University Research Plans.
6. Continue Maintenance work at Galana Primary School.

The Galana Wildlife Conservancy (GWC) borders Tsavo East National Park in Kenya and consists of a 60,000 acre wildlife haven for some of the world's most renowned and rarest African wildlife species. The GWC is situated on the eastern boundary of Tsavo East National Park and on the northern banks of the Galana River. The conservancy serves as a crucial un-fenced buffer zone between Tsavo East National Park and the vast agricultural areas of the Galana and Kulalu Ranches which are managed by the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC). We have been working since 2008 with local communities, International NGOs and the ADC to preserve this vital habitat and the amazing creatures that rely on it.



In 2013 we started to record and document our resident and transient wildlife populations using road transect counts, static observation point (OPs) counts and camera trapping for our nocturnal inhabitants. It is crucial that we collect data to monitor populations and be in a position to identify positive or negative trends. These research activities presented us with some wonderful surprises. In a 24 month period between September 2013 and September 2015 we photographed and identified four individual



striped hyenas within the Conservancy. The striped hyena is listed as Near Threatened (NT) on the IUCN Red List but with that assessment dating back to 2008 we can only imagine how bleak the picture is now. We are passionate about preserving our “Stripey” population and the other 31 threatened species that are listed in the Kenyan Wildlife Conservation and Management Bill 2013, including Elephant, Lion, Cheetah, Hippo and a host of birds and other smaller creatures. The fact is that we are data-deficient and we hope that a continued research programme will provide a more current scientific overview.

****Friends From Ireland – ADC Goals 2016**

Galana Secondary School Project: The Galana School complex is situated at the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC) Headquarters adjacent to Tsavo East National Park and the Galana Conservancy in Kenya. For many years it had struggled to provide education for its pupils in four dilapidated, filthy and dangerous classrooms. In an effort to provide facilities for the three infant classes and eight primary classes the teachers resorted to teaching in mud and timber hovels that were open to the elements and hygienically unsafe for the children.



In 2013 FFI, in partnership with the Agricultural Development Corporation, The Galana Conservancy, Kulalu Camp and other interested agencies, renovated the four existing classrooms and built a further



four. In 2014 a new Kindergarten was constructed to address the needs of the infant classes and in 2015 a new Kitchen area, Staffroom and Library was added to the Primary School. A huge effort was made by local community members who volunteered to complete the building work. We had volunteers from Ireland, the UK, Canada and Kenya and many more from local business interests and Community groups in the area. The finished buildings and toilets were achieved through a collective determination to take the

children from a state of desperation to conditions that they have deserved for so long. The transformation was breath-taking as you can see from the before and after shots. Many bridges were built with the Galana Community who had never seen volunteers work in such a way. It was initially difficult to explain the spirit of volunteering as in such communities nothing is ever done without a reason or indeed a reward.

Following the tremendous success of the 2013 to 2015 projects the Board of FFI decided to look at the possibility of building a Secondary School in Galana. Following a meeting with Dr. Andrew Tuimer M.D. of the Agricultural Development Corporation in November 2015, we decided to continue with the successful partnership between the ADC and FFI and commence work on the project in 2016. This will be a huge undertaking and require significant planning and funding in the coming years. We will rely on our supporters to continue with us on this journey, to a conclusion that we could not have even dared to imagine just a couple of years ago. In the main this will once again be achieved by the fundraising efforts of FFI Volunteers who will travel to Galana to complete the project. Following

meetings in November 2015 with ADC officials, The Galana Conservancy, Kulalu Camp, school staff, parents and community leaders this project is ready for roll-out.

As was fully expected the community leaders offered overwhelming support and we were delighted to reach all necessary agreements with Dr. Andrew Tuimer and Mr. Mohamud Bulle of the ADC and begin preparations immediately. For its part FFI pledged to fundraise and recruit volunteers to complete the project. The ADC, in an overwhelming show of support to FFI, has committed to handing over 10 acres of land to the Education authorities to be registered as a school. This designation of land not only includes the Secondary School site but also the completed Primary School site. There are currently no secondary schools in the area and children ending their primary school education have no place to continue their studies.

Project Goals - Community:

1. Commence Secondary School Building Project.
2. Commence foundations.
3. Commence Hostel Accommodation Building for Girls.
4. Commence Hostel Accommodation Building for Boys.
5. Provide school furniture, storage and equipment.
6. 12 Month Review of Women's Initiative.

