



Case study: Innovation in solid waste management - Kicheche Laikipia Camp – a Gold Eco-rated Facility

Sound waste management and optimization of resource recovery require concerted effort from the management, and reliable data on solid waste generation and composition. An increasing number of tourism facilities in Kenya are appreciating the need to put up conservation measures or lose out on the resources they rely on due to activities that destroy the environment. Knowledge about solid waste sources and types as well as information on its composition and rates of production and disposal is essential for the design and operational aspects of any tourism facility (Shamshiry EL, et al, 2011). The application of responsible tourism to protect natural wildlife habitats, innovation in resources conservation and support to community wellbeing has managed to put Kicheche Laikipia Camp on the map as one of the best tourism facilities in Kenya.

Kicheche Laikipia is a small luxurious tented camp situated in the Ol Pejeta Conservancy in Laikipia County, approximately 240 kilometers from Nairobi City. The luxurious camp has been commended greatly due to their waste recycling and reducing techniques. Most significant, Kicheche Laikipia Camp has been awarded Gold level Eco-rating Certification by Ecotourism Kenya for their outstanding and replicable best practices. The camp is guided by its corporate environmental policy which puts emphases on environmental protection, conservation of resources, waste management, compliance to relevant legal requirements and sustainability in areas of operations. The policy is implemented through a well-defined environmental management system (EMS) with clear management plans in water, energy, and solid waste management

Through the three - 3R's initiative: reduce, reuse, and recycle; Kicheche has made significant reduction on organic, plastic, glass and metallic waste. Waste management begins at source with adequate and clearly labelled bins placed strategically within the premises. Constant staff sensitization and guest briefing is also emphasized. An inventory on the camps waste production is kept and regularly updated for monitoring purposes.

Waste management at the facility, has been achieved through impressive and innovate initiatives. For instance, organic waste is composted in a properly sealed and lockable pit to make manure. Great pride is taken into providing the guests with fresh organically grown vegetables from the manure. While organic waste is used as compost not all of it is put to this use, Kicheche has devised a way of making their own marmalade from lemon skins and honey.

Cabbage, potato and carrot peels, spinach and kale sticks are used to make salads and snacks further reducing the amount of organic waste generated to a negligible portion.

Metallic waste tins are re-used to store honey – harvested from the camps beehive initiative - and others modified for use as candle holders. Through innovation by a staff member, with special skills in cutting and remodeling glasses, 'used wine bottles' are redesigned into flower vases or expertly cut into water drinking glasses. Some of the used wine bottles are also decorated using beads, purchased from the local community, and used to serve water in the guest tents.



Decorated wine-bottles



Tins re-used to put honey.



Metallic tins re-used to make candle holders



Re-used glass tins to store marmalade.

The waste tetra-packs have also been put to good use by planting indigenous trees' seedlings which are later transplanted within the camp premises or donated to the local community as a means to promote nature conservation. The old used tyres from the safari vehicles are not wasted; they are filled with soil and used for growing various types of flowers and herbs.



Old tires used to grow herbs



Plastic tins and tetra-packs used to grow indigenous tree seedlings

In an aim to reduce plastic waste production, water is bought in 18 litre dispensers and served in 10 litre vessels at the guest tents which reduce on the need to use bottled water. Emphasis is also put on the use of solar rechargeable flashlights so as to reduce on cell battery waste. The Excess plastic, glass, metallic and electronic waste is sold to licensed recycling firms through Kicheche central purchasing office in Nairobi or disposed through recycling companies in Nanyuki town.



Rechargeable flash light reception



An 18 litre water dispenser at the main reception

Every business no matter how green has an impact on the environment in which it operates. It is therefore the responsibility of all tourism facilities to ensure that these impacts are reduced to a minimum to enhance responsible tourism.

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