

## Eco-tourism

### Objectives:

- For students to explore and appreciate different perspectives.
- To make links between their own lives and those of people in Kenya.

### You will need:

- Some preliminary work with students about the geography of Kenya – location, climate, people, landscape etc.
- Several copies of the role cards (one role for each pupil)

**Time:** 45-60 minutes

### Instructions:

- Explain to the pupils how tourism benefits Kenya – an important means of earning money.
- Set the scene – A tourist Company has applied to build new tourist lodges in one of Kenya's National Wildlife Parks.
- Tell the pupils that they are going to stage a Public Enquiry in which they will take on the roles of people that may benefit from or be affected by the construction of the new tourist lodges. Also, tell the pupils that you will be leading the enquiry and will be making a decision at the end based on their contributions.
- Divide the class into groups representing the different roles and give each group copies of their 'Role Cards'.
- Ask the groups to read their 'Role Cards', to decide what the main points are and who in their group will make those points to the whole class (in this way no one child has to remember it all and everyone can be involved).
- When the groups are sufficiently confident with the main points of their role, it is time to call the meeting to order and ask for contributions from the different representative groups.
- At the end of the contributions ask the groups questions to clarify points they have made and make your decision.

### Alternatively:

At the end of the Presentations ask half the groups to prepare a summary of 3 of the strongest arguments for the new lodges and some one from each of the groups to present these to the rest of the groups. Do the same for the contrary arguments. The Chair can sum up and retire to consider their position in the light of the evidence presented or declare in favour of the stronger case.



## Background notes for Teachers

Refer also to the Case Study: Ecotourism: [http://www.learningafrica.org.uk/downloads/casestudy\\_ecotourism.pdf](http://www.learningafrica.org.uk/downloads/casestudy_ecotourism.pdf)

In many developing countries tourism is one of the leading foreign exchange earners. For some, it is one of the few export opportunities available. Tourism is, therefore, a powerful force in the economic development of these countries. Increased awareness of the potential that tourism seems to hold has been growing, and many developing countries have actively supported its development, Kenya being one of them.

In Kenya, tourism is accepted as an economic boon and a valuable asset to the national economy. Tourism plays an ever increasing and crucial role in the growth and development of Kenya's economy as the agricultural base, traditionally the country's main source of foreign exchange earnings, declines. Tourism is Kenya's second largest source of foreign exchange earnings after horticultural exports. Tourism earned US\$302,631,000 in 2001.

But tourism faces many challenges as this activity demonstrates. The industry provides employment to 153,000 people but there is a predominance of foreign multi-national companies controlling the tourist industry in Kenya.

### Information to support this activity:

**BBC Kenya profile:** [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country\\_profiles/1024563.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1024563.stm)

**Eco Tourism Society of Kenya:** <http://www.esok.org/>

**Kenya Tourist Board:** <http://www.magicalkenya.com/>

**Responsible Travel** – an organisation which promotes itself as offering holidays that “benefit the environment and local people”. Use the Kenya page links to discover the kind of ‘ecotourism’ holidays on offer.

[http://www.responsibletravel.com/TripSearch/Africa\\_Middle%20East/Country100002.htm](http://www.responsibletravel.com/TripSearch/Africa_Middle%20East/Country100002.htm)

**BBC report** on the problems facing Kenya's National Parks and possible solutions:  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/3396423.stm>

## Roles

### **The Tourist Safari Company view**

We in the tourist industry want a healthy business. We want financial security, trained and responsible people to work for us. We have helped to develop the natural attractions of Kenya by putting money into building new hotels and lodges. We need to keep a steady flow of visitors – who stay longer and visit more often. We bring prosperity to Kenya through earning money, particularly dollars. We provide jobs in our hotels and safari lodges as cooks, waiters, cleaners etc. We take tourists to Maasai areas to buy handicrafts and beadwork. We employ the young Maasai as guides in our safari lodges because the tourists are interested in coming face to face with people from a different culture. We spend a lot of money providing good hotels and making the Park lodges really comfortable. This proposed new lodge means more work for local people, firstly in setting it up and then in running it and attracting increasing numbers of people to it. We can provide a lot more people with holidays as our prices are lower.

### **Indigenous people: the Maasai**

We are Maasai living near the National Park. We used to be able to bring our cattle, which are very important to us, into this area for grazing, water and salt. Now that it is an area for tourists, we are not allowed to come in to it any more. We had no say in that decision which has made a huge difference to our lives, not for the better. Wild animals come and graze on our land outside the Park area and use our water supplies, but we are not allowed to bring our animals inside the Park for grazing or water which we used to be able to do. It is not fair on us. If you build more lodges the situation will be worse for us. People, our livestock and the wildlife are competing with each other for water and land as it is. New lodges would just make matters worse. The lodges use up our resources. They cut down the trees for firewood to use to cook and boil water for their guests, so now the Maasai women have to walk miles to get any firewood.

It is true that some of our young people are employed by hotels as night watchmen but the jobs are not well paid. Our young men dance for the visitors but we do it without joy, as it is just a show for money, which makes me sad. Our women have great skills in beadwork, making necklaces and bracelets, which in good times were given as gifts; now they do it for money too. Tourists come to the manyatta where we live to look at us and bargain with us. Rich tourists often try to get crafts for almost nothing. It feels as if we are in a zoo! Some of them have no respect for our culture. It makes me very sad but we need to earn money. We are worried about having a new lodge – it will make the situation worse for us.

## Roles

### **Kenyan Government Ministers**

Tourism is a very important industry in Kenya as it brings in money from abroad. We know that Kenya has some really good tourist attractions. We have stunning scenery – lakes, mountains and volcanoes. To add to that we have an impressive range of wildlife – thousands of different kinds of birds, animals like giraffes, rhinos, leopards, lions and cheetahs. Of course people from America and Europe want to come here and enjoy all of that and we welcome them with open arms. We need the money that it brings in to develop our country. That is why we need to charge taxes and entry fees into the National Parks. We need dollars to build hotels, roads for the tourists, to provide for the needs of our own people as well as the tourists. We want them to be happy during their stay so that they will tell their friends and come back. Of course we want to take care of our natural environment and we are blessed with great natural beauty and a wide range of attractions but at the same time we need to build up our tourism industry. I would support this development.

### **People from the Ecotourism Society of Kenya.**

We want to promote tourism in a way that will protect Kenya's natural environment, reduce the impact of tourism on our environment and improve the lives of communities who are affected by tourism. We would like the new lodges to be run in ways that save energy, do not cause pollution and reduce the use of natural resources so that we all work together to keep our natural environment safe and beautiful. If we are good caretakers then tourism can continue and be a positive part of our lives, including the people living near or in the National Parks.

We aim to make sure that the benefits of eco-tourism are equally shared by all the groups involved and the environment is protected. The local community should be involved in this, particularly in the decisions about what happens and where it happens. People can see the point of looking after their natural environments if they are getting something out of it. Our job is to educate people about the importance of taking care of the forests and parks and wildlife. We can offer training in the management of people, money and the environment so that people can take up responsible jobs that benefit themselves their families and their environment.

We can see the benefits of providing experiences for tourists with special interests. We all have an awareness of the high value of natural attractions in the locality; we share the same understanding of the need for sustainable tourism. We feel the same way about keeping what we have and not spoiling it. We want to develop the local tourist industry in responsible and eco-friendly ways. We are developing ratings that we can award to hotels and lodges, depending on how "Green" their practices are. This proposal is not the best way forward.

## Roles

### **Several local views**

People from this community are looking for a healthy place in which to live with food, adequate and clean water, health care, rewarding work for decent pay, education and recreation; respect for our cultural traditions; and opportunities to make decisions about the future. The companies talk about giving us jobs but they don't say that they are mostly low paid, low skilled jobs. Often they are part time, as well as only being there when it is high season for the tourist industry. Then they go home and we are left with nothing. Being a tourist area makes everything more expensive for us too.

The hotels and lodges use scarce resources like land where we could be growing crops to feed our families. Precious and scarce water is used for watering the lawns and flowers of the hotels. They have water in their pools and we have to go without water. Worse than that, sewage from the hotels and lodges often ends up in our streams, polluting them and making the water unsafe to drink. Often the wild animals are a problem to us – they trample our crops and kill our goats and cattle. Sometimes the tourists behave badly and get drunk and abusive. This is a very bad role model for our young people. We don't want them to behave like that.

### **People from Maasai community**

We are working with the people from the Ecotourism Society of Kenya. We have created a conservation area in one of the National Parks. In this project we are involved in the decision – making. We can see that there are real efforts made to preserve our natural environment. At the eco-lodge we generate electricity from solar panels, we don't burn wood. We are using new ways of "green" waste management, like composting . We can re-use water and re-cycle our waste. In lodges like the ones proposed none of this is going on. They just use up resources instead of caring of them. In fact there is such a shortage of wood now that in some areas of the National Parks there is a ban on using wood for fuel.

We are getting proper training so we can run things in the future. We have small craft projects which make money for our community. The tourists who come to eco-lodges are different: they are interested in our culture and treat us and the environment with respect. We allow only small groups in our lodges, no more than 12. In this way we are not overusing the parks. We are protecting the plants and the animals for the future – we need to think about conserving our heritage for our children and their children.

At the lodges they leave litter, they don't re-cycle their waste and use resources that the local people need. Because so many visitors come here the roads are breaking up! So many mini-buses create air and noise pollution. The grass is wearing thin! Often they disturb the animals. The proposed lodge will add to these problems. I know that they provide more package holidays which include a safari at a much cheaper price than ecotourism can but we need to ask whether this is the best for our natural environment in the long-term. We charge higher prices but there are plenty of people from Europe and the USA who are willing to pay. We want more ecotourism.