

ZEITZ FOUNDATION KENYA



12

women will be trained in the first phase of the programme, whose long-term goal is empowering women and conserving biodiversity across Africa

60

family members and six communities will benefit from the training and employment of these women as anti-poaching conservation rangers in Segera, Kenya

Wildlife conservation, community support, and gender empowerment

The Zeitz Foundation for Intercultural Ecosphere Safety was founded by Jochen Zeitz in 2008. Its mission is to create and support sustainable, ecological, and socially responsible projects to achieve long-term impacts through a holistic balance of conservation, community, culture, and commerce (the “4Cs”). The Zeitz Foundation is a non-profit organisation registered in Germany and Kenya.

Home to the Zeitz Foundation Headquarters, Segera, Kenya, is the most centrally located conservancy in the heart of Laikipia. Nestled between Mount Kenya to the east and the Great Rift Valley to the west, the area displays a stunningly diverse environment of woodland, grasslands, and fertile riverbeds. The local springs attract herds of elephant, buffalo, lion, leopard, and important populations of reticulated giraffe, Lelwel hartebeest, and endangered species such

as Grevy’s zebra, patas monkey, and one of Kenya’s few growing populations of African wild dog. Maintaining a vital migratory corridor as well as permanent refuge, Segera’s 50,000 acres provide wildlife and habitat management for the surrounding Ewaso ecosystem.

The Zeitz Foundation is now supporting a promising new initiative that could revolutionise conservation as well as enable Kenya to take a highly visible leading and progressive role. Through its partners in Segera, the Zeitz Foundation is setting up the first all-women anti-poaching and conservation ranger unit in East Africa, recruited from marginalised women in Segera’s neighbouring communities.

Educating and creating employment for women in rural communities

The initiative seeks to train 12 women to the highest standards of anti-poaching and security, exceeding even the National Police →



Female anti-poacher

Julius Baer Foundation

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Contact

Julius Baer Foundation
Bahnhofstrasse 36, P.O. Box
8010 Zurich, Switzerland
Tel.: +41(0)58 888 4422
foundation@juliusbaer.com
www.juliusbaer.com/foundation

Reserve level. At the same time, the initiative seeks to foster a sensitive, grounded approach, encouraging the rangers to engage and continue living in the communities around Segera, promoting dialogue as a primary driver of peace, intercultural understanding, and preservation.

The approach was originally inspired by the Black Mambas, the world's first female, unarmed anti-poaching unit in South Africa. The International Anti-Poaching Foundation replicated the approach in Zimbabwe, giving rise to the Akashinga ("The Brave Ones"), reflecting a community-driven conservation model that empowers disadvantaged women to restore and manage a network of wilderness areas. Though trained to deal with any security situation, the Akashinga are encouraged to maintain a community-driven interpersonal focus, working with rather than against the local population for the long-term benefit of their own communities and nature.

Similarly, our first all-women anti-poaching unit in Segera, Kenya, will be given the skills and equipment necessary to ensure that this female-led initiative becomes a huge success in East Africa — just as it has proven successful in southern Africa. The age range of participants is 18–35 years, though most are under 25. The older participants possess leadership qualities enabling them to guide and mentor the others. Damien Mander, Founder of the International Anti-Poaching Foundation, who already successfully developed this approach in Zimbabwe, is currently working with us in Segera to develop a template for the entire continent, with Segera serving as a prime case study.

This is an efficient, effective, and scalable model which inspires and empowers women, giving them the opportunity to secure their own destiny whilst safeguarding biodiversity, a concept that has never before been tried in East Africa, until now. We believe this ground-breaking approach may transform conservation forever.

Facts and figures: Kenya

Kenya gained its independence in December 1963. Since then, it has been a relatively stable and democratic country, interrupted occasionally by short periods of political violence. Kenya's geographical and topographical diversity fosters a variety of climates, supporting an abundance of flora and fauna and making it one of the world's first and leading safari destinations. Kenya's economy is the largest in eastern and central Africa.

- Inhabitants: 48 million
- Size: 581,309 km²
- Capital: Nairobi
- Official languages: English and Kiswahili (though 69 languages are spoken in Kenya)
- Unemployment rate: 39.1%
- Economy: Tourism in Kenya is the second-largest source of foreign exchange revenue, following agriculture. Safaris are the country's main tourism attraction.
- Exports: Kenya's main export earnings come from tea, coffee, horticultural products, petroleum products, cement, and fish.

For more information about the Zeitz Foundation, please visit:
www.zeitzfoundation.org

“Developing conservation skills in communities creates more than just jobs, it makes local people directly benefit from the preservation of wildlife. And that can save not only landmark species such as elephants, but entire ecosystems.”

Victor Muposhi, Biologist Professor