Escape Foundation Update on the Aitong Health and Maa Bricks Projects

Aitong Health Project

We are delighted that we now have Ezekiel Karino now on board as Aitong Health Project Coordinator.

Ezekiel excelled at interview and brings with him a vast background of knowledge having set up, and run, 5 clinics at Lewa Conservancy. Ezekiel will be with us on a 6 month contract to develop a full comprehensive proposal for the Aitong Health Project. This will include:

- Setting up a legal entity for the clinic – such as Aitong Clinic Trust – which will be formed from all of the clinic stakeholders, and this entity will hold the land title.
- Working with architects and clerks of works to design and cost out infrastructure work needed
- Drafting Terms of References for all stakeholders detailing their roles and responsibilities in this public-private partnership for both the project development and operating phases
- Working with business consultants to develop a 5 year business plan for the clinic, with decreasing support over this period so that at the end of 5 years it is 100% self-sustaining.
- Developing a comprehensive healthcare plan for the Aitong area to prevent, as well as treat, common ailments.

Our goal is that this proposal will be ready by August to be sent to interested partnering organisations to fund the infrastructure and operational costs. It is so pleasing to now see this project underway. It has been in the planning phase for 3.5 years and I was beginning to lose hope that it would ever get off the ground as the majority of supporters want to see the proposal before committing, but no-one was willing to fund the creation of the proposal. We truly appreciate the support on this.

Maa Bricks

After a long delay, we are delighted that the hydraulic brick machine, soil mixer, conveyerbelt and 3 phase generator have now arrived in the Mara.
Ronald Kamau (left) has been hired as Maa Bricks coordinator and Peter Kulali (right) has arrived this week for his 5 week role training the youth in brick making.

For the next 4 days, Ronald and Peter are working together to make test bricks from the various soil samples and ensuring that all equipment and materials are ready for the youth starting their training on the 18th April.

Throughout the last two weeks we have been holding stakeholder meetings with community elders and leaders about the plans for the project, and then meetings with interested youth. In total, we received 125 applications for Maa Bricks, and from this we selected the 40 youth who will commence their training next week. The initial one month training period will be unpaid, but once this is complete, the youth will be paid based on the number of bricks produced.

The first project that will be used as the training for Maa Bricks, will be the construction of a beadwork satellite office under one of our community rainwater harvesting roofs. Our idea is that the vast space underneath the rainwater collection roof can be used as an enterprise hub, where different business ventures can be developed.

The second project for Maa Bricks, once the initial training is completed, will be housing for Maa Trust staff. We were unable to secure the land that we are currently renting where the HQ is now, but one of our trustees has bought the neighbouring plot for our use. I have been working with architects to develop a dream HQ for us that would satisfy the needs of all of our programmes. Your kind support will mean that we can launch the project and build a new staff quarters on the new site which will comprise of 18 staff rooms, 4 washrooms and a communal cooking/eating/relaxing area. As we will be relocating the whole HQ now, rather than adding to our existing infrastructure on our current plot, we still have a substantial amount of money to raise, approximately $200,000, so that we can build our dream office and programmes set up.
This will be a visitor centre / beadwork centre and a youth centre with an IT hub and meeting rooms. Behind the youth block there will be a camping zone for residential training sessions and children’s holiday camps with a large toilet and shower block. Below are some of the initial designs from the architects.

It is so satisfying to see these projects coming to fruition thanks to the support of Escape Foundation. We are very grateful and look forward to continuing our partnership together.
The site that we have bought has an existing house on it. We will repurpose this house as the main offices. To the left of the existing house we would like to build a visitor centre / beadwork shop / beading centre. To the right, and behind the house, we would like to build a youth centre.

The Maa Trust Youth Centre

Angled views of the front of the youth building, with washrooms behind.
Centred view of the front of the youth building

Rear view of youth building

Male and female washrooms and camping space for residential courses and conservation holiday clubs with children.
The Maa Trust Beadwork Centre

Front view of beadwork/visitor centre. Visitor reception area on right, info centre in the centre and beadwork shop/coffee shop on the left.

Angled view of the front.

Side view of the open beading centre. There will be roll down canvas walls for when it rains.
Rear to front views with the beading centre on the right and visitor reception area on the front left.

Back view of the beading centre and beadwork shop/visitor centre at the front right.