

KUKI GALLMANN

Kenya national, author, poet, conservationist and founder of The Gallmann Memorial Foundation(GMF)/GallmannAfrica Conservancy, of the Laikipia Nature Conservancy of the Great Rift Valley Trust and of the Laikipia Highlands Games (Sports for Peace)

Kuki Gallmann settled 42 years ago in Ol ari Nyiro in Laikipia, a 100.000 acres estate on the edge of the Great Rift Valley which at the time was a cattle ranch with 10.000 of livestock.

After the tragic loss within three years of both her husband (killed in a car accident when she was pregnant with their unborn daughter) and her 17-year old son, who died in her arms from the fatal bite of a puff adder (Emanuele loved and studied snakes), her family's deep love for Africa and desire to protect it was transformed into a burning resolve to save its wilderness, wildlife and culture, through which she found her life's purpose, becoming an environmental activist, writer and spokesperson for Africa's environment.

In the aftermath of her tragedies, Gallmann dedicated herself to keeping Ol ari Nyiro and its dream alive. She trained herself in land management and conservation strategies, and raised her daughter, Sveva, to understand and respect traditional African culture and nature and the importance of service to the community.

As a living memorial to her husband and son, she established The Gallmann Memorial Foundation with the specific purpose to harmonise development and conservation. The Foundation aims to prove that Africa can survive out of the ecological, creative and sustainable use of its natural resources. She sold the cattle and transformed Ol ari Nyiro into a Nature conservancy.

Ol ari Nyiro is a refuge for elephant, buffalo, zebra, cheetah, leopard, lion, waterbuck, impala, and the rare hunting dog. It boasts the only protected relic indigenous forest remaining in the area, the Engelesha forest, close to the Tugen Hills where millennium man was found.

Its extraordinary biodiversity - natural springs, sixty two man-made lakes, the breathtaking Mukutan Gorge and varied landscape from 3000' to 7000' - supports 479 identified species of birds, and 2350 species and subspecies of plants identified so far. The Mukutan gorge is regarded "botanically the most varied non forested area in East Africa" (Truman Young, Phd).

Three species new to science, two of which endemic, have been discovered in Ol ari Nyiro. Two of them in 2013 alone: one butterfly, only existing in the Enghlesha Forest (*Aslauga gallmannae*, in June 2013, and one frog, *Tomopterna gallmanni*, in November 2013, in addition to the endemic *Aloe francombei* (1998).

It is to **wildlife protection, reforestation, the environmental education of youth, community service, preservation of traditional skills, research, culture, and the promotion of peace** that the programs of the Foundation are primarily dedicated and its international outreach focused. Having so launched and implemented an extremely important **integrated eco-cultural development programme**.

Kuki Gallmann chose as the Foundation's logo two African acacia trees, one larger and one smaller. They are the portrait of those that she planted on her husband and son's graves at Ol Ari Nyiro. The symbol of survival and hope, they stand as well as an ever-present reminder to the world that life in the spectacular, fragile, yet harsh environment of Africa is dependent upon humanity and nature co-existing in harmony if either is to survive. Kuki Gallmann has made Ol Ari Nyiro into a living example of this conservation principle, also utilizing culture as an instrument of Development.

She founded **the first private antipoaching force in Kenya** in 1980, when killing of rhino and elephant became a menace. **Anti-poaching and habitat conservation programmes** for imperiled African wildlife are ongoing.

ZOOLOGY:

- **Pilot study on the ecology and behaviour of the endangered indigenous Black Rhino** living on Ol ari Nyiro was the first project of the Foundation -1985/1990, in

partnership with the Zoological Society of London, the KWS and the WWF. Rhino were little studied at the time and this project the first of its kind in East Africa. An electric fenced **Rhino sanctuary** of 20 x 5 km has been established within the conservancy.

- **Elephant Corridors:** a pilot study to overcome human/wildlife conflict in the region of Laikipia, where Ol Ari Nyiro is situated, was initiated by the GMF in 1991, in partnership with the WWF and KWS and London Zoological Society. For the first time ever in Kenya, Elephants were radio collared as part of this project.
- **Biodiversity studies:** Ol ari Nyiro is on the flyways. It has 479 species of birds identified so far, some of which are globally endangered. Ongoing biodiversity surveys in the fields of Entomology, Amphibians and Reptiles, Ornithology, Small Mammals and Botany are performed regularly, twice a year in Ol ari Nyiro by scientists of the National Museums of Kenya.
- An in- depth study on the Honey guides birds was based in Ol ari Nyiro for over 15 years, and migratory birds are regularly ringed to monitor their ranges.
- **Predators:** a healthy population of lions is monitored with some individuals outfitted with radio collars. Ol ari Nyiro has a rare specimen of Melanistic leopard.
- **Fish propagation:** All Ol ari Nyiro dams have fish Tilapia Nilotica; studies on fish culture have been performed with University of Newfoundland and Moi University in Eldoret.

BOTANY AND ETHNOBOTANY:

Extensive botanical and ethnobotanical studies and Vegetation maps have been undertaken. GMF is assisted by local herbalists whose knowledge is recorded.

- **Reforestation:** A flourishing nursery and replanting program for native species has been undertaken. Thousands of trees are donated each year to local school children and a tree planting Award is given annually to the most thriving trees as an incentive. The Foundation has established a yearly tree planting competition

amongst local school children and regularly hosts volunteers from the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya, LWF, and the KWS and attachments from various local universities.

- **Organic farming:** Graduates of the Kenya Institute of Organic farming a (KIOF) created model vegetable gardens using the organic method and teaching the same to local school children and neighbours to curb the use of pesticides and protect the biodiversity.
- **Eco Charcoal** KG pioneered the production of sustainable eco-charcoal to fight the illegal charcoal trade and de-forestation, by producing top class cheap charcoal in state of the art retorts, from the fast re-growing lelechwa shrub, and supplying the neighbors with an environmentally acceptable alternative to Forest Charcoal; a project (2003/2006) was conducted in Partnership with the United Nations Development Programme.
- **Essential oils.** Innovative schemes for the sustainable and organic extraction of essential oils from common plants for medicinal and cosmetic purposes.

EDUCATION:

- **The Laikipia Wilderness Education Centre (LWEC)** was established by KG in 1991. The Centre, dedicated to her son, has been host to-date to thousands students from neighboring villages as well as from around the world. The curriculum is based upon experiencing the bush and its wildlife first-hand, learning environmental stewardship, and gaining a greater appreciation of the delicate balance between humans and nature. **Over 50.000 African children to-date** have seen their first elephant on Ol Ari Nyiro **for free**.
- **The African Humanities and Biodiversity can** hosts up to 50 students in attractive research bandas and the Artist Court, with Lab and Herbarium, and a new Museum; it concentrates on ethnobotany, anthropology, archaeology, arts and music, in addition to cosmology and astronomy.

- **Sponsorships:** Bright children who are in a state of need are sponsored each year by the GMF to Secondary Education.

AWARD

Kuki Gallmann established The Gallmann Memorial Foundation Environmental Award for the best environmental record in the schools of the regions of Ol Morani, Sipili and Kinamba in Laikipia.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND HEALTH CARE

- **The most important project going at present is LAND OF HOPE.** This Model Community Centre comprises a Pre-school kids Nursery, a vocational Centre-with adult literacy facilities, and a Sports complex, with arena, football and volleyball fields. It employs full time staff, amongst them teachers, caretakers, and a coach. It has been built on 300 acres of land purchased and donated for this purpose by KG and her daughter, Sveva.
- **Handicapped and underprivileged youth** from the Nairobi slums are hosted regularly for free on Ol ari Nyiro by KG for healing and creative environmental awareness retreats.
- **Schools and Dispensaries, Roads and Water catchments** have been constructed by KG and the GMF for neighboring communities.
- **Local Libraries and schools and school labs and dispensaries** are provided with Books, Equipment, medicine and materials.
- **ARTS and CRAFTS.** GMF is assisting the women of the Samburu, Pokot, Kikuyu and Turkana tribes, Gallmann's neighbors, with the development of micro-enterprises utilizing their specialized knowledge and skills.
- A **Dispensary** was donated in 2013 to the Ndidika Community where volunteer doctors regularly attend the community members.
- A state of the art **Maternity Clinic** dedicated to her son was built by KG and the GMF in 2006 and donated for the rural community of Ol Moran, which will

benefit a population of over 30.000 people.

THE GREAT RIFT VALLEY TRUST, THE GREAT RIFT VALLEY ACADEMY and HEALING THROUGH ART.

Kuki recently formed, with her daughter Sveva, and major Kenyan and international personalities **The Great Rift Valley Trust**, which aims to create the **Great Rift Valley Academy**, a world centre for excellence for artists and the arts, on the conservancy of Ol Ari Nyiro. Here world artists will come and create original art together with local artists, at the symbolic Cradle of Human kind. In addition to contribute to create cultural bridges across diverse nationalities and cultures, this initiative will give the local populations who are involved in all these programmes pride in their own culture, a sense of identity, and a creative and solid base on which to build their indigenous development.

- **2005 PRELUDE**, a world class major musical event in partnership with la Compagnia di Valerio Festi and The Sarakasi Trust, was successfully presented, to launch this scheme, to international guests in February 2005. This extraordinary event was financed entirely by Kuki. It was followed by
- **2006 WINGS**, with CMS /AEWA. On April 9th, 2006 a gathering of creativity and music based on the element AIR to celebrate the **FIRST World Migratory Bird Day**.
- **2007 EARTH –HEALING THE RIFT**, in help of UNEP Plants for the planet, one Billion tree campaign.
- **2008 Aqua**. After the 2007 post-election Violence
- **2009** Relief feeding during drought for six months.
- **2008, to date THE LAIKIPIA HIGHLANDS GAMES**. Sports for Peace-on World Peace Day, winner of the Peace and Sport Award.

TRIBAL ANNUAL GATHERINGS:

- 2010 PRAYERS FOR THE EARTH
- 2011 PRAYERS FOR THE TREES
- 2012 MOTO NA MAJI (Healing Buddhist Ceremony with the Shinnyo-en)
- 2013 PRAYERS FOR PEACE
- 2014 PRAYERS FOR HOPE

WRITING:

Gallmann's autobiography, a world bestseller, "I Dreamed of Africa" (Viking, Penguin) is published in 21 languages. This book has recently been made into a major feature film by Columbia Pictures, starring Kim Basinger.

At the Kenya Premiere of the film she raised substantial funds that have been distributed amongst the local communities of Ol Moran, Sipili, Kaptuya and Tebelekwa women Group.

She has written four other bestselling books, including "African Nights", "Il colore del Vento" (The colour of the Wind, a collection of poetry in Italian), "Night of the Lions", and "Elefanti in Giardino". She is working at a new book at present. She has cooperated to a book with Italian photographer Carlo Mari, SAFARI and on a book on Africa from the air with Robert Haas for the National Geographic, "Through the Eyes of the Gods".

She contributes to several publications.

AWARDS

Kuki Gallmann is the recipient of His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands' "Order of the Golden Ark" Award "for outstanding services to conservation in Kenya and for promoting the study of local plants for medicinal purposes".

She was awarded

- 2001 Founder's Award by The American Society for the Protection of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) in New York in 2001

- 2001 The Mimosa d'Oro for the Woman of the Year Award in Catania, and
- 2006 The Peruvian Order por la Proteccion del Ambiente
- 2009 Event of Year World Award by the Peace and Sport Foundation in Monaco
- 2010 The Africa Hero Award by the Africa Foundation, life time award (US)
- 2011 The Eco - Warrior Award (Australia)
- 2012 Grosso d'Oro Veneziano International Award for life time Conservation achievement (Italy) amongst others,
- and was appointed the first World Ambassador for the United Nations Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) 2006.

She holds an honorary Degree in Human Sciences at the University of St. Lawrence, USA, and is a Honorary Warden with the Kenya Wildlife Services.

She is a goodwill ambassador for the African Medical Research Foundation and their Flying Doctors Outreach Program.

She is a Founder Member of The Global Peace Initiative of Women, the Laikipia Wildlife Forum, The Ecotourism Society of Kenya, the Association of Private Land Rhino Sanctuaries, The Pan African Youth Leadership Forum, and the Founder of the Gallmann Africa Conservancy (USA).

She is a member of the Olave Baden Powell Society, Nature Kenya, International Board of the Pan African Youth Leadership Forum and of the Global Peace Initiative of Women (GPIW) and a member of the Italian Board of WWF.

One of her major interests is building and decorating. She personally designed and built on the estate the well-known Mukutan Retreat, an exclusive tourist Resort, and a stunning ecotourism health Centre facing the Rift Valley dedicated to her daughter, Makena's Hills which opened December 2001. Both lodges have appeared in the American Architectural Digest (May 1995 and November 2001) and in many of the major prestigious international publication of the sector.

She is the patron and member of the board of governors of several local institutions, and protagonist of several documentaries. She became a Kenya citizen in 1997, and is a

passionate world goodwill ambassador and spoke person for her adoptive country. Her daughter Sveva, who holds an Msc in Human Sciences at New College , Oxford University after volunteering in a leprosary in India, returned to Kenya to coordinate and implement her award winning brainchild, the 4 Generations Project, in partnership with the Ford Foundation, and the Nando Peretti Foundation, a pilot and innovative education scheme to protect proactively local endangered cultures. Kuki Gallmann divides her time between Ol ari Nyiro, Nairobi, international speaking engagements and writing.

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