

HIGH FIVE CLUB

changing lives, £5 at a time

Mara Riante Nursery School, Kenya

We are thrilled this month to be supporting the Maasai community who live in the Mara Riante area of Kenya's Masai Mara. This is a community that Cheryl Mvula has worked with extensively over the past 3 years in ending their exploitation by the tourism industry in Kenya (see the Pro-Poor Tourism page of Cheryl's website www.tribal-voice.co.uk). It is a very pro-active community and one that is already implementing several development projects within their area. People here are especially passionate about education, and the majority of parents want their children to receive a good education.



Background

The Kenyan government has really marginalized the Maasai tribe and give very little support for health and education facilities in rural areas like the Masai Mara. Therefore, education provision, particularly for the youngest children, is down to the community themselves to provide. This is difficult for a community that live hand to mouth, and hence many Maasai children never get the chance to go to school, instead they stay in their village and help look after the cows and goats.

Last year the community in Mara Riante built the first nursery school in the area using their newly acquired tourism income, earned from now fairly traded visits to their cultural manyatta by safari tourists to learn about the Maasai way of life. The school consists of one classroom, two toilets and a rain water harvesting system to provide drinking water for the children. They have secured the services of a qualified teacher who is excellent.



He lives in a shared hut in the village so they were very lucky to secure him on this basis, as

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teachers normally require a brick house for their sole occupation in order to tempt them to leave the town and work in a remote, rural area such as this. The village tourism initiative also pays for his salary.

The school has been so successful that almost all parents in the area have registered their children at the school. Rather than turn any child away, the school is now in the position of catering for the learning of 93 three to six year olds, all squeezed onto 16 desks. Previously these young children either did not attend school or walked 5km to the nearest school, meeting wild animals, including elephants, on the way!



High Five Club Support

The community would like to expand the school, adding one more classroom, to better cater for the needs of the 93 pupils and also build a brick house adjacent to the school to house 2 teachers, as they will need to recruit one more teacher to teach in the second classroom. The community have the funds from their village tourism initiative to finance 50% of these build costs. They can also fund the desks and chairs for the new classroom, and the parents have agreed to pay a small fee per child per term to take on the two teachers' monthly salaries.

The High Five Club is hence thrilled to be able to give the Mara Riente community a helping hand to realise their dream by providing the other 50% of the classroom and teachers' house build costs – a donation of £2,275 in total. We are able to achieve this through our own monthly High Five Club memberships, supplemented by some of the monies from our very generous 'educational projects' benefactor. This further cements our long-term support of the Maasai tribe in Kenya's Masai Mara in a big way. We will send you photos when the build is complete and the children have taken up residence in their new classroom! **For further information contact Dr Cheryl Mvula on Cheryl@highfiveclub.co.uk**

