



forests for change

We are young people from Kenya, Germany, and the USA
who envision a just and sustainable world and believe that
together we can take steps to realize this vision.

We aim to find positive synergies between communities and
forest ecosystems in the Kenyan highlands.



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

The well being of communities and forest ecosystems are dependent on one another. We empower communities through training in sustainable forest-based business. Our aim is to take steps towards sustainability together with local communities.



ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

The resilience of forest ecosystems is strengthened by finding positive synergies between development and forest conservation. We do not want to merely plant trees, but to find innovative ways to incentivize communities to protect forests.



INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE

Sustainable living contributes to secure livelihoods and peace worldwide. We tell stories of people's experiences to spark meaningful global dialogue around sustainability. We aim to contribute to positive human and ecological relationships.

© Kijani - Forests for Change
Berlin, Germany & Nairobi, Kenya
April 4, 2014

Colophon

Texts: Daniel Omondi & Tobias Lohse

Layout: Tobias Lohse (www.MrLoh.se)

Kijani Logo Design: Zach Harris (www.birdsandkings.com)

Project Area Icon Design: Tobias Lohse (www.MrLoh.se)

Elements from Beehive by Andrea Greco, Beekeeper by Luis Prado, Plant by Mateo Zlatar, Apple by Michell Laurence, Elephant by Adrijan Karavdic, Rain by Daisy Binks, Rainbow by Nicolas Morand, Tree by Grant Taylor, Tree by Dan Christopher, Tree by Rishad Patel, Travel by Andrew Richardson, Globe by Chris Tucker and Handshake by Drue McCurdy from the Noun Project were used for this design.

Typefaces: Yummo by Flat-it & Gaspar by Carlos Alonso

Imprint

*Tobias Lohse, Franziusweg 65, 12307 Berlin, Germany
+49 30 7451094 / +1 (312) 593-0256 / +254 716 337962*

Kijani is not responsible for referenced content from any third party.

RATIONALE

Today we face the threats of climate change⁽¹⁾, depleted resources⁽²⁾ and extreme social disparities globally⁽³⁾ which lead to poverty, war, and environmental destruction. We believe that change is in our hands. We also believe that sustainability is not an ideal, but the pragmatic imperative of responsible global citizens who care about the future welfare of our planet and its inhabitants. It is only through such pragmatic efforts that we can build a future in which people live in harmony with each other and their ecosystems.

Nestled in the central highlands of Kenya, the Marmanet forest region acts as a microcosm to help us understand the crucial importance of sustainability. Fifty years ago, the forest covered 40,000 hectares. Fast forward half a century, and over 90% of the forest has disappeared.⁽⁴⁾ Furthermore the local economy - which boomed through the exploitation of wood for 20 years - has collapsed. Today, the crisis of high unemployment and poverty is compounded by a loss of biodiversity and seasonal drought.^(4,5) This is where our project is based.

The highland forests of East Africa are not only important carbon sinks, but are home to unique flora and fauna and also function as water towers. Forests enable rain water to seep into the ground. Without them, rivers and lakes are cut off from their water supply. The micro-climate is destabilized and rainfall patterns are affected.⁽⁶⁾ The water supply from these highland forests is needed not only to support major lakes such as Lake Victoria - source of the Nile - but it provides tens of thousands of rural farmers and pastoralists with water.⁽⁴⁾ From 1980, continuous forest cover in Kenya has reduced by over 75%.⁽⁷⁾ The government aims to tackle this problem by restoring the continuous forest cover to 10% in the next 20 years.⁽⁸⁾

Reforestation efforts to this point have shown that working with local communities is integral to success. After all basic human needs are the fundamental motivators for environmental destruction. People are in search of energy, shelter and livelihoods. In the past decade, reforestation efforts of the government jeopardized the rights of many communities to access firewood and graze their livestock. In some cases people were even evicted from their homes. In response some communities set forests on fire.⁽⁹⁾ To address this conflict, in 2005 the government passed legislation which installed Community Forest Associations.⁽¹⁰⁾ These associations represent the interests of community stakeholders and liaise with the Kenya Forest Services and environmental groups to find solutions to forest restoration. Furthermore Kenyans have done a lot to increase awareness of the importance of their forests.⁽¹¹⁾

Kijani focuses on developing forest areas as opposed to merely planting trees. Sustainability can only be achieved by realizing that humans are part and parcel of a forest ecosystem. Our vision is to link the climate change challenge with socioeconomic opportunities for rural Kenyan communities. We will show that forests can provide lasting livelihoods to the families that live around them. To achieve this we plan to empower the development of forest based businesses, explore the importance of sustainability together with local communities while restoring degraded forest areas. We will then be able to tell the stories of sustainable change to the world.

⁽¹⁾ "Climate Change 2014: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability", IPCC Working Group II, 2014

⁽²⁾ "Peak Everything", Richard Heinberg, 2007

⁽³⁾ "Working for the Few", Oxfam International, 2014

⁽⁴⁾ "Mau Complex and Marmanet forests", Kenyan Ministry of Environment & UNEP, 2008

⁽⁵⁾ "Laikipia Development Plan", Laikipia County Development Office, 2012

⁽⁶⁾ "Lessons from two long-term hydrological studies in Kenya and Sri Lanka", Mungai & al, Agriculture, Ecosystems & Environment, 2004

⁽⁷⁾ "Fighting desertification in Kenya", the UNESCO Courier, 2006

⁽⁸⁾ "Kenya Vision 2030", Government of Kenya, 2008

⁽⁹⁾ "Power, politics and environmental movements in the Third World", Haynes, Environmental Politics, 1999

⁽¹⁰⁾ "The Forest Act, 2005", Parliament of Kenya, 2005

⁽¹¹⁾ "Nobel Lecture of Wangari Maathai", The Nobel Foundation, 2004

PROJECT AREAS

Kijani's main goal is authentic sustainable development. Our efforts focus on three areas of work. These areas are intended to complement one another and contribute to our mission of developing positive synergies between communities and forest ecosystems.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT

We believe that with the correct tools, communities can be empowered to not only realize the ecological benefit of forests, but to also understand their economic benefits. Our goal is to contribute to the economic development of local communities, and to provide incentives for communities to take the call for environmental sustainability into their own hands. We equip forest-based communities through training in sustainable forest-based businesses, such as bee-keeping, mushroom farming and eco-tourism. We complement this training with sustainability education, teaching communities how basic needs can be met in ways that are environmentally-friendly.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

We believe in taking pragmatic steps to address climate change. For forest rehabilitation efforts to be sustainable, humans must be incorporated as part of the reforestation model. We believe that with the correct approach, communities and forests can coexist and support one another. Our goal is to rehabilitate forest ecosystems in a holistic way, securing the health of vital forests for generations to come. We grow forests through direct plantation efforts, starting with 100 hectares in the North Marmanet forest. We complement this with critical research geared at finding positive synergies between communities and forest ecosystems.

INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE

With the connectedness of the world in the 21st century, we believe that our reach and impact can cross borders to an extent that similar projects a mere 10-20 years ago could not. Working across three different continents ourselves, we constantly experience the benefit of combining different perspectives. By creating conversations about sustainability, we want to influence the mindsets and cultures that are at the heart of true change. Our goal is to engage stakeholders around the world - whether that is in the rural highlands of Kenya or the urban jungles of Germany - who want to find practical ways to live sustainable lives. We tell stories to start dialogue around the globe.

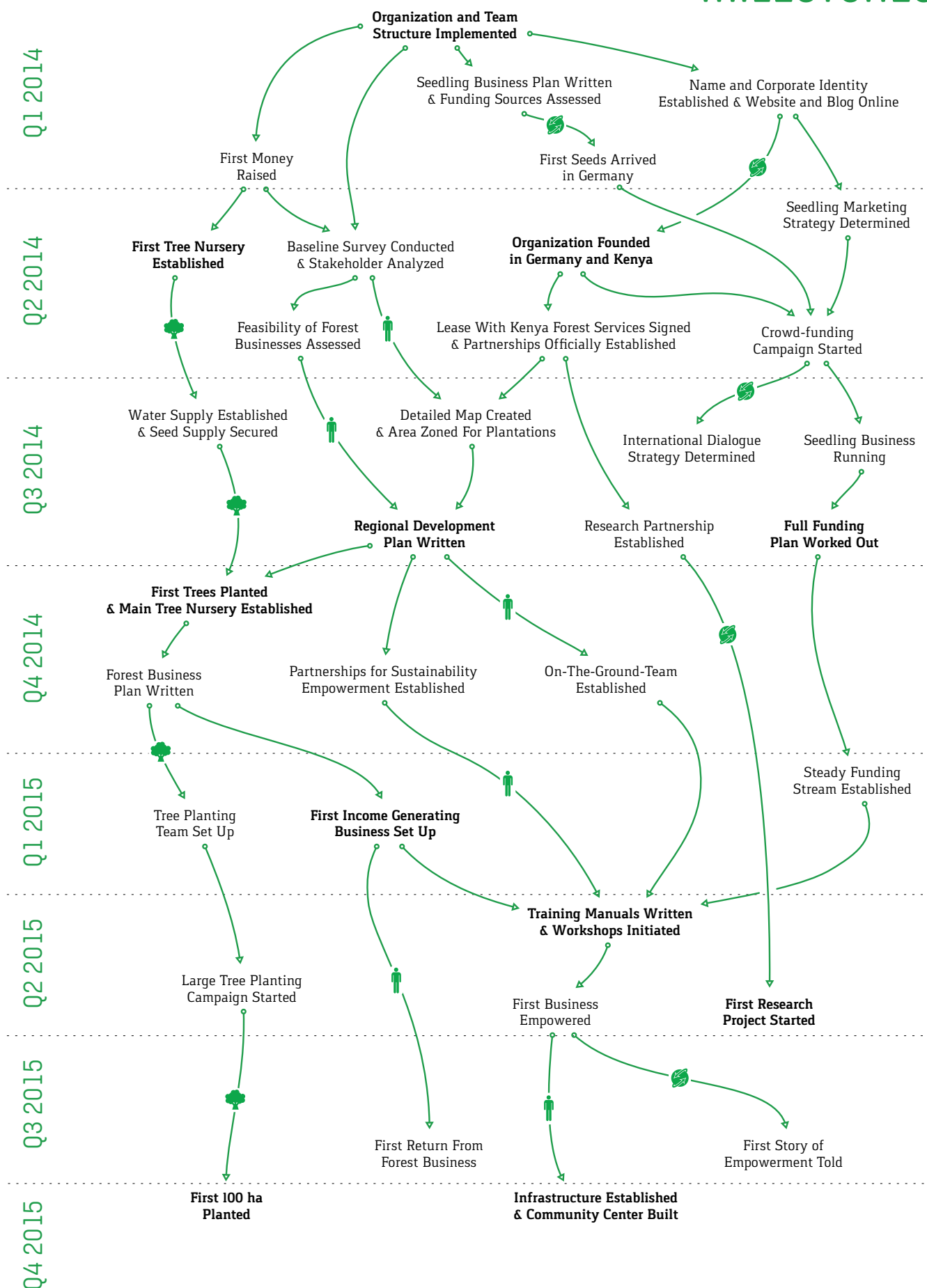
PROJECT PLAN

Kijani is partnering with key institutions in Kenya that protect and rehabilitate forest ecosystems. We are in the process of signing a lease agreement with the Kenya Forest Services for 100 hectares in North Marmanet, central Kenya, where our first project will be based. We can draw from the vast knowledge of the Kenya Forestry Research Institute and our contacts to German and U.S. forestry faculties. We are also partnering with other environmental and community development organizations, such as Springs of Africa, the Mother Earth Network and Tree is Life.

In addition, we have started engaging the local community in North Marmanet, as well as planning for a tree nursery with the capacity to produce 250 000 indigenous seedlings which will be planted in October 2014 and April 2015. Our blog and our website provide project updates and we plan to raise enough money for our activities in early 2015 through a large crowd-funding campaign in the summer.

We are in the process of growing indigenous Kenyan tree saplings in German living-rooms as bonsais. These saplings will be given to donors as a reward and tangible symbol of their impact. Furthermore they will raise awareness and spark dialogue together with the stories of sustainability on our website.

MILESTONES



VALUES

Our values are the expression of who we are as an organization, and what drives us to take bold steps for change. They complement our vision by providing concrete motivating factors that will enable us to achieve our goals and set standards that can be revisited as the project develops.

INTEGRITY & SUSTAINABILITY

We hold ourselves to the highest standards of integrity in the execution of our project. We pursue truth in thought, word and deed and assess the long-term impact of every decision we make.

QUALITY & DESIGN

We believe in the pursuit of excellence in everything that we do. We are not afraid to fail. We have a good time. We conscientiously give our best in the design of our products.

EMPATHY & TRANSPARENCY

We believe in transparency. We share our knowledge and experience freely with those who share our vision. We start by listening. We don't believe we have all the answers.

LEADERSHIP & SERVICE

We are here to serve others. We are here to serve each other. We aim to inspire a sense of dignity, ownership and leadership. We are passionate about enabling others to realize their full potential.

INTEGRATION & PLURALISM

We believe in the strength of diversity. We are inclusive of people from different cultures, races, genders and religion. We believe that consciously embracing differences will yield true, lasting change.

OUR TEAM

We are a team of twelve young people from Kenya, Germany and the USA empowered by experienced international mentors. We believe that by diversifying the input into the project, we will be able to build an organization that is truly multinational and innovative. Each team member brings unique knowledge and experience in areas such as forest management, research, community engagement, business development, legislation, technology, international management, promotion, marketing, and design. All team members work on a purely voluntary basis.

In order to effectively get things done across three continents we have set up clear pipelines and tools for task management, information sharing and decision making. The project development of our organization is spearheaded by five teams. The *Community Team* develops relationships with key stakeholders in the region and researches forest-based business opportunities. The *Forestation Team* is responsible for the development and implementation of our reforestation strategy. The *Funding Team* ensures that we raise the needed money and explores the growth of Kenyan saplings as donor rewards. The *Promotion Team* develops our brand and creates material such as flyers, website, blog or social media content. The *Management Team* coordinates our international operations. Each of these teams contain members from Germany, Kenya and the USA. We believe that by diversifying the input into the project, we will be able to build an organization that is truly multi-national and innovative.

The teams hold video conferences on a weekly to monthly basis and all information is stored in a wiki-structure. Daily tasks are coordinated using modern task management software which ensures full transparency and frictionless communication. It is amazing to work with bright young people from around the globe and see how effortlessly international teamwork can be accomplished without cost.



DANIEL OMONDI - NAIROBI

Oversees our Operations

Co-founder of Kijani, Alumni of the Harambee Entrepreneur Alliance and Global Engagement Summit, Bachelor in Political Science from Northwestern University, experienced as research assistant for the Deportation Research Clinic



TOBIAS LOHSE - BERLIN

Coordinates our International Team

Co-founder of Kijani, has lived on four continents, student of Philosophy and Computer Science, Bachelor in Physics, self taught web developer, experienced in NGO management, design and photography



URS DIETRICH - YALE

Consults on Forest Management

Youth delegate to the UN Forum on Forests, second year Master candidate of Environmental Management at Yale, Bachelor in Forestry Science and Resource Management from TUM, experienced in forestry project management



LIZ WASIRIMBA - NAIROBI

Develops Community Business Models

Campus activist, founder of Christian Union and church youth leader, Bachelor in Economics and Finance from Kenyatta University, experience in accounting and finance, passionate about social and political transformation for Kenya



DAVID OYAGA - NAIROBI

Engages the Local Community

Grew up in rural Kenya, student of Community Development, experienced community organizer and researcher, believes that communities have the capacity to solve their own problems when they are empowered



DAVE WHITEHEAD - DARTMOUTH

Consults On International Management

Co-founder of the Joseph Initiative, experienced in international development and social enterprise, medical student at Dartmouth, Bachelor in Chemical Engineering from Northwestern University, inspired by the East African Youth



ARMIN EICHHORN - BERLIN

Develops our Business in Germany

Entrepreneur, Master of Global Management from Queen's University, experience as project manager for LEGO, passionately develops business models that make the world a better place and earn money at the same time



HARON MAMBE - NAIROBI

Researches the Project Context

Bar candidate at the Kenya School of Law, Bachelor in Law from Mysore University in India, musician and amateur photographer, passionate about harnessing the law as a tool for social change



DICKENS LIKHANGA - NAIROBI

Works Closely with our Partners

Experience as teacher, systems administrator and computer technician, Bachelor in Computer Science from Indian Institute of Technology, passionate about helping the youth to believe in their creative capacity as individuals



THOMAS MAYER - FRANKFURT

Develops our Marketing Strategy

Consultant at EY's Financial Services Organization, experienced in marketing, Bachelor in Business Administration from University of St. Gallen and Singapore Management University, cosmopolitan, believes in helping people to help themselves



JANNIS FUNK - MARBURG

Consults our German Operations

Experience as producer and screenwriter of medium scale film and advertisement projects, Master in Film and TV Production from HFF, passionate about aligning dreams and actions to transform our economy in a sustainable way



ZACH HARRIS - CHICAGO


Crafts Our Visual Narrative


Freelance designer with long experience in visual design, motion and branding projects, Bachelor in Interdisciplinary Graphic Design/Film & Video, passionate about developing identities and communicating visions that make a change



www.kijani.co 

info@kijani.co 

blog.kijani.co 

[@KijaniNGO](https://www.facebook.com/KijaniNGO) 

[/kijani.ngo](https://www.facebook.com/kijani.ngo) 