



Kijani rehabilitates indigenous forests by empowering young Kenyans through training in agroforestry and cultivation of non-timber forest products.

forests for change



www.kijani.ngo

We are young Kenyans and internationals who envision a just and sustainable future for Africa.

forests provide opportunities for socio-economic growth

As business investment and widespread education create new opportunities for growth in Africa, the need for sustainable development is indispensable. In Kenya alone, continuous forest cover has reduced by over 75% since 1980. Many of the youth at Kijani Forests For Change grew up traversing sprawling tree-laden hills as we travelled to our ancestral homes. Large swaths of these forests are now gone and the water supply of the entire East African region is at risk, decreasing agricultural yields and destroying the unique biodiversity.

In addition, the youth employment rate in Kenya stands at less than 40%. Rural areas in particular have few to no prospects for young people, and slums are growing incessantly. Attractive development opportunities in rural areas are therefore crucial for sustainable and self-determined development.

Kijani sees an opportunity in the degraded forest areas. We believe that young people have the capacity to build innovations that will propel sustainable economic empowerment by linking the challenge of climate change with socio-economic opportunities for rural communities in Africa.

RESTORATION THROUGH LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



The Kenyan government has given Kijani 100ha for reforestation in North Marmanet in the central Kenyan highlands. We believe that only the inclusion of economic benefits for the rural poor can ensure the long-term survival of this reforestation effort. We search for low-cost innovations that spread the responsibility and benefits of forest rehabilitation to local communities. Synergies between the ecosystem and sustainable business models generate tangible economic benefits for the community and give the forest a lasting value. We are piloting an innovative model that will grow back parts of the indigenous forest by empowering the local community through training in agroforestry and the cultivation of non-timber forest products like honey.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND EXCHANGE



Exchange and innovation allow us to transform the challenges we face as a planet into opportunities for sustainable growth. Kijani consists of young people with diverse social backgrounds that share an entrepreneurial spirit and a passion for building a sustainable future. We impact youth in two ways: by empowering youth in forest surrounding communities through training in forest-based businesses, and by giving Kenyan and international students and researchers an opportunity to gain practical experience developing innovative concepts in an interdisciplinary team and in collaboration with local communities. Our goal is to become an incubator for innovative thinking around sustainable development in African forest areas.

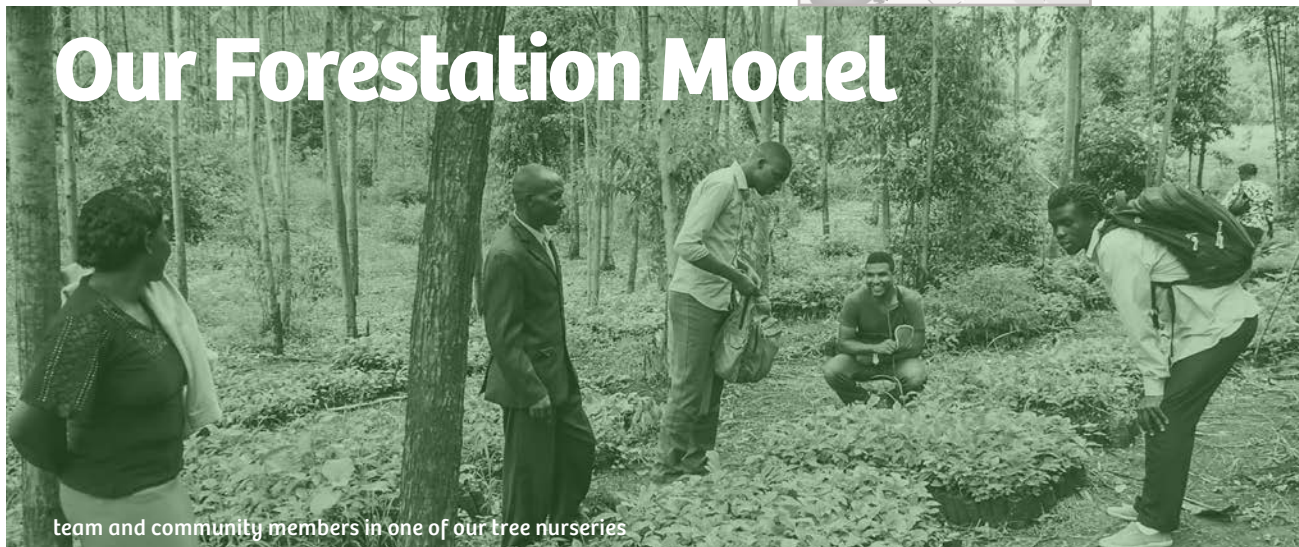
Kijani partners with the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) who manages all government forests. Many of these forests are highly degraded. We have signed a lease agreement for 100 hectares of degraded forest with less than 10% tree cover in North Marmanet in central Kenya, which we aim to rehabilitate in 5 years. Our approach is simple. We assess what income generating activities are simple, sustainable and allow for short-term profits. We have been working hand-in-hand with the local Community Forest Association, a group of forest users that live within a 5 km radius of the forest boundary.

In preparation for our first agroforestry and beekeeping pilot we have conducted a baseline survey of 318 households and established a tree nursery that will be used to source indigenous trees and floral pollinators. Our nursery presently represents the mix of species that are naturally occurring in the forest. With some indigenous trees taking over 20 years to achieve maturity and the threat of elephants and a local community that has historically abused the forest for economic gain, our work will require a long term commitment. This is why we are developing close relationships with forest user groups and promoting a model that enables the local community to gain from the forest without the need to cut trees down.



Together with local stakeholders, we have developed a pilot program that will empower at least 30 community members through the provision of 1 acre of land for agroforestry, the practice of incorporating trees into agricultural landscapes. We will monitor the growth of the trees that are provided to the farmers from our tree nursery and provide training in conservation agriculture. Farmers will be relocated after 3 years, allowing new areas of the forest to be rehabilitated. Through our continued partnership with KFS, we envision rehabilitating countless hectares in the coming years through this simple, low-cost model.

Our Forestation Model



team and community members in one of our tree nurseries

Another project we are working on is bee-keeping. Marmanet is a breeding ground for migratory elephants, and bees act as an ecological way to keep elephants away. Elephants will literally flee at the sound of a swarm of the colorful insects. We will provide 2-3 beehives to each farmer on credit. Bees have been shown to increase crop production by acting as pollinators, and there is a demand for honey on the local market. We are also exploring regional and international markets for honey through a handful of cooperatives focused on community development. We will grow the needed shrubs that our species of bee will require in order to maximize honey production for the local farmers.

partners leverage our expertise and impact



Kenya Forest Service (KFS) manages all government or gazetted forests in Kenya, covering millions of hectares. Kijani has signed a first lease agreement with KFS for 100 hectares in North Marmanet and works closely with KFS officials on the ground.

The Kenya Forest Working Group (KFWG) is a network of stakeholders in forestry and reforestation that meet monthly to share expertise. Kijani has been a member for over a year, gaining valuable insights and sharing our work with other change-makers.



The Kenya Forest Research Institute (KEFRI) has partnered with Kijani since 2013 providing us with ecological background information on our target area and providing key consultancy.

IDEAS is a worldwide youth organization focused on sustainable development. Kijani is working with the Kenyan branch to develop our training workshops in agroforestry and environmental education.



Plant for the Planet (PftP) is an international children tree planting initiative. We are partnering to hold tree planting academies at schools in our target area and represented Kenya at the PftP Youth Summit 2015 in Tutzing, Germany.



The International Small Group & Tree Planting Program (TIST) has developed an effective, grassroots model for community-led tree planting that allows households to receive money from carbon credits. Kijani works closely with TIST to bring their model to our target area, providing added incentives for tree planting.

The Kenyan Ministry of Environment, Water and Natural Resources has created the National Forestry Program (NFP) workshops in order to create a cross-country blueprint for the sustainable rehabilitation of the Kenyan forests that will be released in late 2015. Kijani is the youth representative in the NFP.

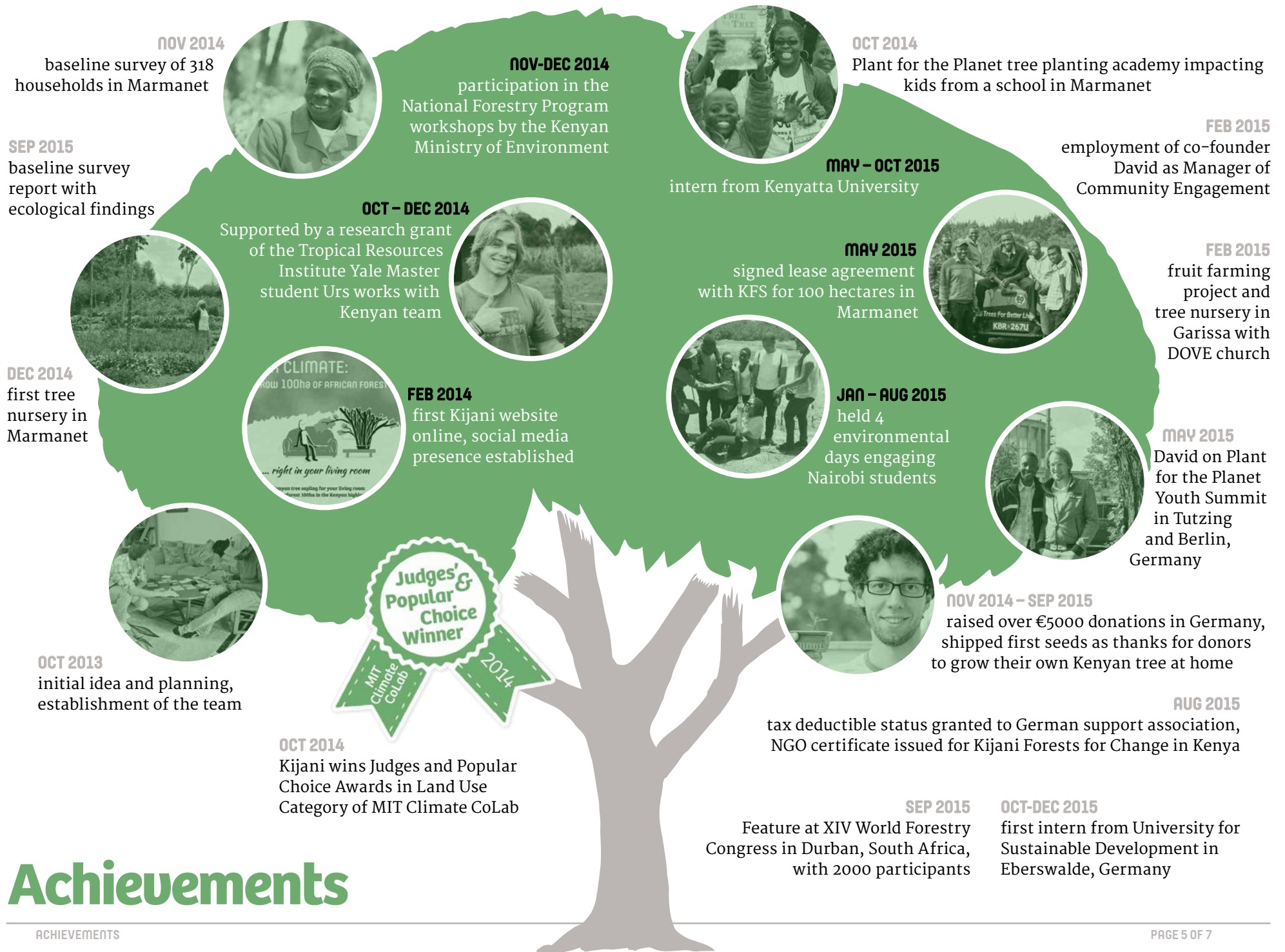


The Mother Earth Network is a Kenyan based interfaith environmental trust. We collaborate on tree planting initiatives around Nairobi, and have shared expertise and personnel.

The Sirikwa Wildlife Trust is another Kenyan youth organization. They seek to promote wildlife and forest conservation. Kijani partners with members of Sirikwa on various activities.



Achievements



values drive us to take bold steps for change

INTEGRITY & LEADERSHIP

We hold ourselves to the highest standards of integrity in the execution of our project. We pursue truth in thought, word and deed and aim to inspire a sense of dignity, ownership and leadership among the people that we serve. We are passionate about enabling others to realize their full potential!

QUALITY & BEST PRACTICE

We believe in the pursuit of quality in everything that we do and conscientiously give our best in the development of the project. We adhere to the best practices in existing fields of sustainability and environmental management

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

Transparency is the key to achieving legitimacy and support. We share our knowledge and experience freely. We strive towards lasting change through continuous and participatory evaluation of our strategy. We are accountable to all stakeholders in the project.

EMPATHY & SERVICE

We listen to the needs of those we work with and join hand-in-hand with them. We aim to uplift the lives of individuals through serving them from the grass-roots level.

INTEGRATION & PLURALISM

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

The Team



the founding members of Kijani

Our team represents unique backgrounds and experiences. Some are orphans or were raised in the grit of slum life, some received a Western education. An entrepreneurial spirit and a vision for a sustainable future unites us. Empowered by experienced mentors our Kenyan team handles the field operations: Co-founder Daniel oversees our operations, community manager David develops our programs on the ground together with Irene, Dickens works closely with partners and organizes publicity events, forestation expert Erick ensures the sustainability of our model, Haron consults on legal matters, and Liz help to develop local business models. Our international team promotes the operations in Kenya: Co-founder Tobias keeps everyone up to date and develops our promotion and website together with Frithjof, entrepreneur Armin provides our donors with seeds to grow their own Kenyan trees at home, and forest expert Urs consults and connects us to international organizations. Other volunteers from Germany and the US support specific initiatives.



skype call between the Kenyan team and supporters from Germany



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We need support for the next leg of the journey. So contact us if you want to volunteer, partner, mentor, or research with us. You can also donate or buy Kijani totebags online. Contact us if you'd like to sponsor us. Check our blog or sign up to our newsletter to receive regular updates, and connect on twitter and facebook.

We are looking forward to hearing from you!

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