



Berichte und Impressionen

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NOORMEKAYU KAIGIL



Noormakayu had requested that we interview her at 3PM, when she would have cleared most of her daily work log. We got to her home ten minutes later with the intention of giving her a few extras to spruce up- she was still busy and nowhere near spruced up. She apologized and ushered us into an adjacent room before excusing herself to go check on her customers who were making loud impatient noises. Noormekayu sells a local Maasai alcoholic drink made from the roots and fruits of some wild tree that tastes more like wine, only not chilled! Before we start with

the criticisms, this drinks are legal and safe unlike the illicit drinks laced with chemicals to ensure a TKO, that are sold in most of our major towns. Apart from this, Noormekayu also has a mini kiosk (retail shop); rears poultry for their eggs and meat and sells milk at the local weekly market in Talek. All the while we are talking, her tipsy customers pop in frequently interrupting our session to say hello; ask who we are; or complain about the lack of service. It's obvious she has a good thing going but she needs to improve on it if she is to make tangible gains from her businesses.

Noormekayu's husband in his mid 70s is polygamous with 4 other wives. Though considered wealthy by the local standards the husband- Kaigil- is now an old man who is unable to care for all his wives and children adequately, hence the need for his youngest wife to engage in commercial activities to supplement their income. Noormekayu prides herself in the fact that she has been able to take her children to school, feed them as well as clothe them despite the rising inflation coupled with poor tourist turnout this year. Many of the locals barely survive through the first half of the year when it is low tourist season, waiting to cash in on the second half when it is peak season for the tourism sector here in the Mara. On what she needed subsidized for her by EP- Noormekayu picked the Biogas Digester! She already has 2 Solar lamps she bought from EP and feels that a bio digester at this time would help her counter the rising problem of scarcity of firewood..." we have cut down too much vegetation, there is hardly anything left except inside the game reserve and we need to stop depending on wood fuel".

Below are excerpts of our very candid interview with the mother of 5, who says she is up to the challenge of running and maintaining a Bio digester because one, it is the only way to go for her community in the future and two, she has what it takes- 40 cows worth of fresh dung and a water borehole outside her gate!

Q: What do you use for cooking?

A: I use firewood, which I hire someone to collect for me from as far as the conservancy and the game reserve

Q: How much to pay for this service?

A: I pay 80 shillings for a bundle that only lasts one day and cooks only two meals.

Q: What do you use for lighting in your house?

A: I use 2 solar lamps for two rooms and a kerosene lamp for two other rooms. I have had to expand my house to accommodate my businesses and the extended family I live with, so I now have four rooms to light up at night.

Q: How much do you spend on kerosene per week?

A: I buy 1 liter of kerosene at 120 shillings every Wednesday in Talek market.

Q: What is the size of your livestock?

A: I have 40 cows, 42 sheep and goats and 26 poultry. I also plan to buy a donkey and a cart soon, which I can use to transport goods for people at a cost.

Q: Who takes care of the livestock?

A: We take care of them with my husband except for the herding which we have employed someone to do.

Q: Where do you graze your stock considering the problem of shrinking grazing fields in the Mara?

A: We graze in the buffer zones between the conservancy and the reserve, however during the very dry spells we venture into the reserve and conservancy in the nights to graze. This is illegal and liable for penalty when caught.

Q: What are the common livestock diseases you have to deal with?

A: Foot and Mouth (Orkirobi-Maa dialect), Trypanosomiasis (Entorobo) and MCF(Inkatii) which is spread by the Wildebeests during their breeding seasons.

Q: Do you have access to veterinary services?

A: Yes we have government vet who is called in from Sekenani (about 30KM away) in case of a problem. He charges 20 shillings per cow for his services.

Q: Don't you have any local preventive measures to manage livestock diseases?

A: We manage Trypanosomiasis locally using Verobin, which we buy at the agro vet shops and inject the cattle with. In the case of MCF, we stay away or migrate from their breeding zones during the first half of the year.

Q: What's in the future for your livestock with shrinking grazing fields as more people fence their land and un usually longer spells of drought in the Mara?

A: As much as I would like to acquire more livestock, it has become increasingly difficult to even take care of what I have now. I think we may have to reduce our stock to manageable sizes.

Q: What do you need most to make your life easier-a Biogas Digester, a Toilet & Bathroom or a Solar Lamp?

A: A Biogas digester.

Q: Besides the 3 options given, what 3 other things do you wish for?

A: I wish:

- Education sponsorship for my children
- An upgrade of my house and homestead to make it more decent
- To expand my small businesses and make them more productive and profitable.

Bella Adhiambo

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