

**TO DO! 2011**

**Contest Socially Responsible Tourism**



**Award Winner**

**MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT –  
NKWICHI LODGE**

**Represented by:**

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Niassa Province**

**Mozambique**

**Award Rationale**

**by**

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Source: based on <http://maps.google.de>



## 1 INTRODUCTION

The research on the application of MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT – NKWICHI LODGE was conducted between 30<sup>th</sup> November and 12<sup>th</sup> December, 2011. On behalf of the Institute for Tourism and Development (Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung e.V.), the author travelled to the North of Mozambique (Niassa Province) in order to verify on location the information given in the application.

The area visited is on the Eastern shore of Lake Niassa/Lake Malawi, around the central community of Cobue (pronounced "Kobw'e") with just over 3,000 inhabitants. The sphere of influence of MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT – NKWICHI LODGE<sup>1</sup> comprises a total of 16 villages in the nearby and more distant surroundings of Cobue. These communities have about 300 to 1,500 inhabitants each and most of them can be reached only on foot or by boat.

Within the limited time available, the author was able to visit six of these villages on foot. During the three days of his walking safari, he was able to talk with the representatives in charge (chiefs, teachers, people involved in the project). Furthermore, he was able to visit the teaching and demonstration farm belonging to the project and to clarify with the management of MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT – NKWICHI LODGE the required questions on their concept and objectives. With the following result:

The author recommends awarding MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT – NKWICHI LODGE a TO DO! 2011.

## 2 BACKGROUND AND SETTING

In order to be able to place the overall situation in Northern Mozambique in context, several factors need to be considered: First of all, the consequences of the almost consecutive wars of independence and civil wars between 1964 and 1992 and the resulting poverty of the population to date. In the Human Development Index<sup>2</sup> 2011, Mozambique is at the lowest end, on rank 184 in the list of 187 countries.

Further aspects that represent obstacles to development in the region are the lack of infrastructure and jobs, and the isolated location in Northern Mozambique, as compared to the politically and economically important south of the country. However, unlike other parts of the country, the almost untouched nature has great tourism potential, if only it is used – and that is the overarching goal of MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT – as an instrument for sustainable regional development.

### 2.1 War of Independence and Civil War(s)

The North of Mozambique – especially Niassa Province – was particularly affected by the warfare which lasted for three decades. First, during the war of independence against Portugal (1964 to 1974), then by an equally murderous civil war (1977 to 1992) between supporters of the Frelimo and Renamo<sup>3</sup>. It claimed one million lives and caused more than

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<sup>1</sup> Manda is the name of the region in the hinterland of "Nkwichi". *Nkwichi* is pronounced "kwitshi" which reflects the sound of what it means. The name was given to it by local fishermen. Originally, it was "Mchenga Nkwichi". Mchenga means "sand" in the local Nyanja language and Nkwichi describes the squeaking sound produced when walking along this sandy beach.

<sup>2</sup> The Human Development Index (HDI) can be used as an key information about the well-being of a country. It is published annually in the *Human Development Report* by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

<sup>3</sup> The FRELIMO – Front for Liberation of Mozambique (Frente da Libertação de Moçambique) which was successful in the independence war was from 1977 fought by RENAMO – Mozambique Resistance Movement (Resistência Nacional de Moçambique). The civil war only ended in 1992 with the "Rome General Peace Accords".

one third of the close to 22 million inhabitants to flee the country. The people who at that time lived in the North of Mozambique (and returned after the peace agreement) fled either to neighbouring Malawi or to Tanzania. That's why most of the local people aged 20 to 50 years speak not only the local Nyanja language, but English, too, and not so often the official language Portuguese.

## 2.2 Geographical Location – Infrastructure

The best way to travel to Lago District on Lake Malawi in Niassa Province is via Lilongwe, the capital of the neighbouring state of Malawi. From there, the destination can be reached within two hours (by air taxi and boat trip<sup>4</sup>). The reason for this route lies in the large size of Mozambique (twice the size of Germany) and in the huge distance between the remote North of the country and the Mozambican capital of Maputo, about 2,000 km away in the South of the Republic. This is comparable to a straight length from the Northern tip of Denmark to Rome in Italy.

What also needs to be considered is the poor infrastructure, or sometimes the complete lack of it. From Cobue, there is only a kind of gravel road (for off-road vehicles) leading to the provincial capital of Lichinga (airport) which is four hours by car. Apart from that, there are only paths and here and there some broader dirt roads. All around, there is a lack of electricity, communication facilities,<sup>5</sup> and transport capacities. There are only a few schools and hardly any hospitals.

With 129,000 square kilometres, Niassa Province is larger than Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg together (or about half the size of Great Britain); it covers 16 percent of the surface of Mozambique, but hosts only 4.5 percent of the country's population. With about 900,000 inhabitants, Niassa is a very scarcely populated region by African standards (less than seven inhabitants per km<sup>2</sup>). Lago District – around Cobue – has just about 35,000 inhabitants with an annual per-capita income of about 100 US\$ (rest of the country up to 400 US\$).

## 2.3 Jobs – Livelihoods

The only official employer far and wide is the MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT and NKWICHI LODGE respectively. It currently employs 54 local staff from different villages. With their regular income, they are considered to be among the affluent (see also 4.3). Other jobs are rare, and so are manufacturing, trade or crafts.

In the villages, there are small kiosk-like kinds of shops. A few people own bicycles. 80 percent of the population live on agriculture and fishing. Some of the people manage to sell firewood or reed (to thatch roofs). So this is predominantly a subsistence-based, rural Africa.

Despite their poverty, people do not suffer from hunger here, close to Lake Malawi<sup>6</sup>. The people have fertile soil, can draw back on fishing and do not suffer from water scarcity, as opposed to the communities in the hinterland. However, purchasing seeds may be a problem now and then. Besides, the food habits of the local population are not very diversified (see 4.3).

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<sup>4</sup> The community of Cobue is an official border location for immigration and emigration. The necessary visa is available there.

<sup>5</sup> Exception: Nkwichi Lodge itself is connected to the Internet via satellite dish (and solar power). Around Cobue there is, due to the proximity to the Malawi island of Likoma (areal masts!), mobile phone coverage from Malawi.

<sup>6</sup> However, there were hunger revolts in Mozambique (more in the South of the country) in 2010.

## 2.4 Natural Wealth – Diversity of Species

Niassa Province is said to be the area of Mozambique with the largest forest cover. About 85 percent of the hilly and mountainous areas are covered by indigenous or native forest, in the very sense of the word. So the wildlife is diverse: Elephants, antelopes, lions, leopards, zebras, bushbucks and bohor reedbucks, monkeys, warthogs and wild dogs.

The diversity of species also applies to the water bodies, especially to Lake Malawi, which is only 52 miles broad, but 365 miles long (about 80 x 560 km) and which is therefore also called "The Calendar Lake". The large open areas of the Eastern, Mozambican shore are mainly said to be free of bilharziosis<sup>7</sup> and along major parts of the lake the water is of drinking water quality.

The ninth largest lake in the world is at the same time said to be the fresh water reservoir which is richest in fish and has the highest diversity of species in the world – as far as tropical fish are concerned. According to estimates by WWF, up to 1,000 species can be found here, among them several hundred types of cichlids. There is a correspondingly large population of fish eagles, cormorants and egrets<sup>8</sup>, but also of hippos and crocodiles (off those parts of the shore where there are settlements).

The government of Mozambique has therefore in May 2011 (in cooperation with WWF, MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT and local communities) founded the "Lake Niassa Reserve" which is situated right in front of the NKWICHI LODGE and stretches over 100,000 ha of the lake and which is in due course to be declared a national park. At the same time, MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT in cooperation with the surrounding villages managed to declare about 120,000 ha of untouched hinterland, rich in forest and wildlife, as *Manda Wilderness Community Conservation Area* (hunting, fire, logging prohibited).

At the centre of this protected natural landscape and its amazing biodiversity lies NKWICHI LODGE, in an incredibly beautiful beach location. With its up-market tourism product and its luxurious accommodation facilities, it is the starting point for the commodification of the scenery and a driver for participatory, "eco-social" regional development.

## 3 MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT – NKWICHI LODGE

### 3.1 History

NKWICHI LODGE was opened as early as 2003. However, this is only to be regarded as the preliminary final point of an idea which the two British brothers Paul and Patrick Simkin have pursued since 1994. Both of them were born in Swaziland, grew up in Great Britain and worked in international development cooperation. Together with local people in Africa, they wanted to set up a nature protection project which was to enable community-based economic development at the same time.

At the same point of time (1994), Lola Castro, representative of the UN World Food Programme, worked in the North of Mozambique, taking care of civil war refugees who wanted to return to their original homes, for example, to today's Lago District on Lake Malawi. She recognized, despite the poverty all around, the beauty of the beaches, mountains and valleys (and thus the tourism potential), but she also saw the need for a concept aimed at long-term development.

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<sup>7</sup> Bilharziosis is a tropical, infectious, parasitic disease. Upon contact with contaminated water, larva excreted by snails enter the human skin and move through the lymphatic and blood vessels into the liver, where they continue to develop.

<sup>8</sup> They can be observed from the breakfast table at Nkwichi Lodge with the naked eye.

### 3.2 Structure and Objectives

From 1998, these three above mentioned protagonists have been at the core of a group of investors which has since then grown to five persons. In the years that followed, they set up – with support from the Ford Foundation, Swedish and German institutions/embassies as well as USAID – what is today known as MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT – NKWICHI LODGE (**Tourism** – see below).

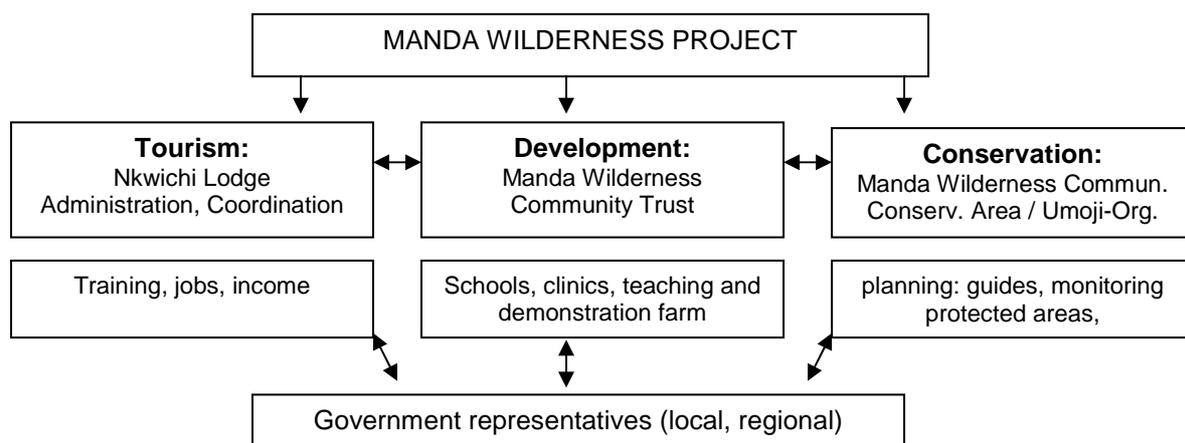
This name basically stands for a kind of umbrella brand, under which a whole set of initiatives and measures has developed (see following overview). What has been decisive from the beginning is the cooperation with the local population and the government of Mozambique, i.e. the provincial government in Lichinga.

Between 1998 and 2002 the group not only managed to build the lodge which exists today and to find and train future staff, but over the years they also managed that the government granted all the communities and villages concerned the respective title deeds<sup>9</sup>.

That was the precondition to be able to set up the *Manda Wilderness Community Conservation Area* mentioned above, which belongs to all the 16 villages (**Conservation**) – with the long-term objective of either charging entrance fees or of offering guided tours with local guides. Owner and custodian of this conservation area is *Umoji* (pronounced Umodshi). The name stands for a community organisation in which all the 16 communities with their 20,000 inhabitants are involved and to which every village may send four elected representatives. *Umoji* means: *we speak with one voice*.

In addition, the community of investors interested in the common welfare also founded the non-profit foundation *Manda Wilderness Community Trust* registered in London to take care of communal infrastructure projects on location (**Development**).

Seen in this way, institutions and fields of activity slowly emerged here at the local level, which are in other countries rather taken up by governmental institutions. Under the umbrella brand MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT, we find the following interconnected initiatives and measures:



<sup>9</sup> In developing countries this is not at all to be taken for granted. The author was able to see the official documents and certificates, a copy is with Studienkreis.

### 3.3 The tourism product

Seen exclusively from a tourism angle, NKWICHI LODGE is a perfect hideaway, a comfortable retreat. Visitors can feel completely at ease and get pampered. The standard is similar to the luxurious safari lodges in East and South Africa. In the six generously spaced chalets (in the forest and yet close to the beach), up to 14 persons can be accommodated. If necessary, there are additional possibilities in two private houses, so that a maximum number of 24 guests can be put up.

The style of the half open, generously designed chalets is aesthetic; they are made of locally available materials (from wood and stone) and have either a balcony or a terrace. Privacy is ensured, bathroom and showers are (concealed from view) in the open, the toilet is in a separate area. Everything is very neat and clean.

The cuisine is excellent. It includes a variety of local and international, vegetarian and non-vegetarian dishes and offers a rich and delicious selection – from *pumpkin and chorizo quiche* to goulash in pepper sauce, fish fillet, aubergine pasta and lemon meringue pie (with fresh salads, vegetables and fruits). Whatever is available will be bought from suppliers in the nearby villages (fresh fish, onions, tomatoes, cassava, rice, corn, mangos) or will be cultivated on the farm that the project owns for teaching and demonstration purposes (organic lettuce, vegetables, herbs).

Those who don't want to bathe in the sun may swim in the crystal clear water, snorkel and watch the fish, go by canoe or kayak, play beach volleyball, go on a guided hike or on a boat trip to the neighbouring village of Mbueca (e.g. to join local people watching a soccer game there).

Those who would like to have breakfast or dinner on the beach, have lunch under a mighty 3,000 year old baobab tree, watch the spectacular daily sunset or simply enjoy a sundowner. The bar is well-sorted. The main reception building called "dining room" is rather used for larger functions or during rains. Most of the guests prefer to dine near the beach. For example, food is served under tent pavilion spending shade or on the so-called "deck" (a kind of wooden terrace under a mighty fig tree); the third option is "Venus Beach", a small sandy bay between the rocks from where you get a very good view of the sunset and the evening star Venus.

NKWICHI LODGE may thus well be experienced as an island where there are no worries. The many friendly and service-oriented employees also contribute to that.

The issues and challenges mentioned above are in no way imposed on the guests. It simply depends on whether the guests care to have a look at the information provided in the chalets and would like to ask questions. Perhaps in order to get the idea to visit the nearby teaching and demonstration farm or to take part in a several days' walking safari to the villages. That will mean plunging into rural Africa.

And you will understand: Here you spend good money for good service (320 US\$ per person per day). But not in order to make one person more prosperous, but a community – slowly and in small steps.

## 4 ASSESSMENT

The comparison of the activities conducted by **MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT – NKWICHI LODGE** with the **six TO DO! contest criteria and three additional questions** leads to the following assessment:

### Evaluation against the TODO! contest criteria

#### 4.1 Taking into account the different interests and needs of the local people through participation

As described above, MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT – NKWICHI LODGE was from the beginning conceptualized in such a way that it should involve the local population, to make them partners in development and give them the opportunity to shape their own future.

Without the discussion and consultation processes with the local communities which started in 1998, it would not have been possible to open a luxurious eco lodge in 2003, in a rather secluded location (which is *not* fenced in and does not need to be protected). Neither would it have been possible to build up the existing structure without knowing about the needs and wishes of the local people (as outlined in 3.2).

The original objective from the beginning: to generate income and employment for the population (**tourism**), to promote their education and training, to improve the infrastructure (**development**) and to protect an almost untouched wilderness area (**conservation**) and to ensure through land title deeds that access to the natural resources is in the hands of local people. All of this has been achieved. Therefore, many people in the region have been occupied from the beginning in and with the respective projects, have been involved in the processes and have been part of the network (directly and indirectly).

In the field of tourism, this becomes evident as follows: Apart from the highest managerial level, almost all the employees at NKWICHI LODGE are from the surrounding villages (50 out of 54 employees). Some long-term employees occupy leading positions (personnel manager, head of department)<sup>10</sup>. Local suppliers benefit from selling vegetables, fruits, fish and construction materials to the lodge.

A former employee of NKWICHI LODGE has in the meantime set up a "Backpacker Lodge" in Cobue. However, it is more often "booked" for meetings and seminars by local people than used by backpackers. And another former colleague from the neighbouring village of Mala has used his savings to open a small shop and has built several boats which he rents out to fishermen.

Again others are responsible for the projects – for example for the *Manda Wilderness Community Trust* (construction of corn mills, schools, small clinics, organisation of sports and cultural events) or for the so-called *Manda Wilderness Agricultural Project* (the teaching and demonstration farm). Or they work with the communal organisation *Umoji*, which can – thanks to the land rights it was entrusted with to administer and control – steer and co-determine the direction and speed of development.

Besides, the participatory cooperation based on partnership is also visible during visits to the villages. In their discussions with the respective "chiefs", the circle of "elders" or the school committees, the two European-African project managers of the *Community Trust* (located in the offices of NKWICHI LODGE) practice a culture of discussion which is common in Africa:

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<sup>10</sup> The success of this concept has also been demonstrated by the Mexican TODO! winner "Haciendas del Mundo Maya" who offer luxurious hotel accommodation in former Haciendas and have trained and recruited almost all their staff from the Maya villages in their area.

Talk in a low voice, listen carefully and always strive for a consensus among all the participants (instead of a majority). Almost every meeting therefore ends with the set phrase: "Dawum' maleza?" – "Does *everybody* agree?"

#### **4.2 Enhancing the awareness of the local people with regard to the chances and risks of tourism development in their everyday economic, social and cultural lives**

In the case of NKWICHI LODGE, this criterion only applies in a limited way. The whole of Mozambique registered about 2.3 million tourist arrivals in 2009<sup>11</sup>. Most of the (beach) tourists must have been from neighbouring South Africa.

Since it was opened in 2003, through the end of 2010, NKWICHI LODGE itself received a total of 3,600 guests (between 300 and 600 annually). It is not an overcrowded destination, given the upmarket holiday product in an exclusive location. In addition, the atmosphere is noticeably comfortable, thanks to the friendly, attentive and really well-trained staff. On the other hand, almost all the visitors relatively easily understand the environmental and developmental concept that NKWICHI LODGE is embedded in. Many guests have previously obtained information from the English and German website (cf. URL at the bottom of the award rationale).

Despite the manageable visitor numbers, NKWICHI LODGE has from the beginning provided information on risks and opportunities during discussions in the communities and has conducted meetings on such questions in cooperation with Mozambican and South African NGOs. NKWICHI LODGE has also offered English classes, trained guides and encouraged local craftspeople and artists to offer their products (wood carvings, jewellery, pottery, woven fabrics).

Due to the overall concept that NKWICHI LODGE stands for, contact with the local population has the same effect as in the cases of many other socially responsible TO DO! winners, too: You are a very welcome and respected guest.

#### **4.3 Participation of broad local population strata in the positive economic, social and cultural effects of tourism**

In this respect, the concept of NKWICHI LODGE proves particularly effective. It does not focus on mere return on investment as the only measure of success. Rather, it is part of a sustainable regional development project. More precisely, this means:

- The staff employed by NKWICHI LODGE gets an average annual salary of 1,444 US\$, while Mozambican minimum wages – depending on the sector – start from 768 US\$ annually. As mentioned above, people living on subsistence farming have a per capita income of 100 US\$ per year. The employees of NKWICHI LODGE support around 1,000 family members in the various villages.
- Calculating all the salaries in total, the more than 50 employees feed about 78,000 US\$ into the local economy.
- For materials for construction and maintenance, local suppliers and craftsmen earn about 35,000 US\$ a year from NKWICHI LODGE. What is remarkable is that – due to the style in which the reed-thatched chalets are built – a new demand/a new market for reed has emerged. Reed is generally harvested and sold by women.

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<sup>11</sup> According to figures provided by the Mozambican Minister for Industry and Trade, Antonio Fernando.  
Source: <http://www.afriqueavenir.org/en/2010/09/02/mozambique-tourist-arrivals-on-the-rise/>

- Adding the local sourcing of agricultural products (for about 8,500 US\$ a year) as well as the jobs given to local tailors (staff uniforms) and potters (the tableware used by the lodge), NKWICHI LODGE feed a total of about 120,000 US\$ per year into the local cash economy – which in turn triggers new impulses in the villages: small shops, kiosks and restaurants are being opened.

The social participation effects mainly stem from the *Manda Wilderness Community Trust* (which is financed by donations, aid money, grants, and a "five-dollars-per-night-visitor's tax" from the lodge). In close cooperation with *Umoji* and the communities, the following projects are currently being implemented or have in the meantime been completed:

- 13 new school buildings for primary school children (and classes for illiterate adults). These are simple but stable brick buildings with tin roofs – instead of bamboo or reed huts which need to be rebuilt after each rainy season. The author was able to see the respective projects in four of the villages.
- Another impressive project is the construction and operation of a small women's and maternity clinic in the central location of Cobue, which for the first time now has a doctor and a midwife on a permanent basis (struggle against child mortality). However, the clinic now and again faces a lack of medical materials and medicines.
- There is also – in Cobue, because of its central location – a boarding school for girls under construction. So far, there have only been primary schools in the villages (because of the large number of students they often work in two shifts). In order to attend higher standards or secondary schools, students have to leave their villages for some time and move to Cobue or even to Lichinga, the provincial capital.
- In order to improve the food situation and to promote sustainable agriculture, the *Manda Wilderness Community Trust* set up the *Manda Wilderness Agricultural Project*. The name stands for an organic teaching and demonstration farm where courses are conducted regularly for both adults and students (!). They focus on the cultivation of pumpkin, carrots, fennel, beans, aubergines, mangold, lettuce, beetroot as well as herbs such as parsley, basil, dill, and spring onions.

These are all products which are often missing on the menu of the population. People here usually grow cassava (manioc) and corn. At most, there will be fish in addition, sometimes chicken as well as cabbage, tomato, and mango.

Participants in the courses will get a watering can as a reward, as well as a basic supply of seeds. Casually, the courses also include information on how to construct an (eco) earthen stove in order to minimise the use of firewood.

An important condition in the cooperation between the *Manda Wilderness Community Trust* and the respective communities is the principle of contribution. As a rule, none of the projects will be implemented unless the respective community covers at least one third of the costs. This may happen in the form of funding, construction materials, or labour.

The culture-related activities of MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT – NKWICHI LODGE are mainly aimed at strengthening the local culture. On the one hand, during the welcoming of guests, information is given on what dress code, what behaviour is adequate when visiting the villages. On the other hand, the lodge always strives to make the Nyanja culture of the surrounding villages visible. Almost all the decorative objects in the chalets are from local designers (woven textiles, bed covers, wood carvings, etc.).

Once a week, one of the many choirs from the local villages performs at NKWICHI LODGE, in June there is a choir festival, in August an canoe race with so-called "dugout canoes", and the various athletics and soccer contests between the communities spread over a period of almost six months.

#### **4.4 Guarantee of the attractiveness of jobs in tourism for the local people by improving working conditions relative to payment, social security, working hours as well as education and training**

To successfully run a luxury lodge in a beautiful but remote area with local staff, this is the only way: fair remuneration, social security, regulated working hours and really intensive training. All these criteria are fulfilled by the business concept (and practised reality) of NKWICHI LODGE.

In addition to the salaries mentioned in 4.3, employees have the possibility to take out health insurance. Four percent of the salary will be transferred to the governmental health scheme by the employer, three percent by the employee.

The working hours of the service personnel are regulated in two shifts – from 6 am to 2 pm and from 2 pm to 10 pm. A number of night watchmen are guarding the compound (because there might be wild animals). There are clear breaks and paid leave. And: mothers with children also find employment here (with a child minder in the nearby staff huts), just like single women.

The training of staff at NKWICHI LODGE is a continuous task. With the help of foreign volunteers and experts, the management has in the past already trained various employees – according to their talents. The "trainee positions" range from cooking and serving to carpenter works, construction and repairs. Some employees were given the possibility to obtain their certificates of secondary education and again others have taken English and computer classes.

All in all, the employees serve (depending on their skills and interests) in eight areas or departments: guest relations, kitchen, housekeeping, boat construction, carpenter's workshop, construction, repairs and technical service, and security/guards.

#### **4.5 Strengthening the local culture and the cultural identity of people living in tourism destination areas**

**AND**

#### **4.6 Avoiding and minimising any social and cultural damage caused by tourism in tourism destination areas**

In the assessment of the activities of MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT – NKWICHI LODGE, these two often mutually dependent criteria can be answered together. The reason: They relate to a phenomenon that may either occur in so called mass tourism (dominance of the tourists) or in backpacker tourism (cheap exploitation of local people). Here, however, the situation is entirely different.

The self-confidence and cultural identity in the villages is intact; it does not need to be strengthened because of negative influences – e.g. through tourism – have not occurred and are not to be expected.

Just the opposite is the case: local people often experience a high degree of appreciation by the guests of NKWICHI LODGE. Whether through the direct interaction that visitors can have on a guided tour with the local guides and guest assistants, whether through the music, dances or handicrafts that tourists can experience and get to know, both in the lodge and in the villages.

A special role, reinforcing identity, is played (politically as well as socially) by the communal organisation *Umoji*. Aware of speaking with one voice (*as one*), of co-determining and controlling future development, one is certain of being able to preserve the cultural heritage.

This also includes the traditional structure of consensus oriented decision making through chiefs, elders and committees (which also include women).

Besides, the village communities in the area regard NKWICHI LODGE as an integral part "belonging to them" rather than a "foreign object". The villages do not serve as a "picturesque scenery" for the lodge. Rather, vice versa: For many, NKWICHI LODGE is the visible promise of a better future.

### Evaluation against the TODO! additional questions

#### **A Could you give some examples which document that your project/measure is in line with environmental compatibility?**

Acting in an environmentally friendly manner is part of the original standard of MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT – NKWICHI LODGE. The main objective, which has also been achieved, had been to declare the Manda Wilderness region a protected area – together with the communities in the surroundings. The same applies to a certain part of the Mozambican Eastern shore of Lake Malawi (see 2.4) – directly at the doorstep of NKWICHI LODGE.

Besides, the work had been and is being carried out in various ways in an eco-oriented manner. When at that time, NKWICHI LODGE and its chalets were built, it was ensured that the natural conditions would be used and that nature in the direct surroundings would be affected only minimally.

The buildings were constructed by hand (without machines) and with locally available materials. Their height was limited (below the tree tops). From the lake, the chalets are hardly visible. Access by boat is to a small, natural port. All the beaches are in their natural state, openly accessible and without constructions.

NKWICHI LODGE uses battery-buffered solar energy for the computers and the communication system, for lighting (also in the chalets), freezers, fridges as well as two water pumps. For extended bad weather periods and emergencies, there is a diesel engine.

Since the guests can be provided with hand crank flashlights, the night lighting of paths on the compound (kerosene lamps) could be reduced to a minimum. Annual savings, according to the management: 1,200 litres of paraffin.

The kitchen burns dead wood collected in the forests and uses earthen stoves which are said to be up to 70 percent more efficient (sparing use of firewood). Furthermore, there is also a solar oven being used for baking.

Even though there is more than enough water available, it is used sparingly. The drinking water comes from Lake Malawi, but is filtered in addition.<sup>12</sup> For the showers or baths, bio-degradable soap is provided.

The used water is cleaned by sand filters and used to water the plants. The waste water from the toilets flows into sink pits on which hardwood trees have been planted.

Kitchen waste is composted; glass bottles, paper and cardboard boxes are recycled. In this context, the teaching and demonstration farm located near NKWICHI LODGE plays an

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<sup>12</sup> According to tests by the international NGO *Water Aid*, the water of Lake Malawi – near NKWICHI LODGE – is "unusually clear" and said to be "safe".

important role. The team there – under the leadership of a local person – feels connected to the idea of permaculture. This means sustainable operations regarding *all* resources – ecological, economic and social.

In that respect, the bold claim that in case NKWICHI LODGE was to be demolished, there would be no visible traces left of it after two years is indeed credible.

**B Are there any examples in the framework of the project which make clear that a just participation of women and men has been taken into account during the planning/implementation phase of your project/measure? Considering gender relation, can be found any improvement of the status/situation of women within your project/measure?**

In the traditional tribal hierarchy, men dominate, also in this region (to the outside, at least). In so far, progress in the involvement of women is limited, or visible in limited ways.

Nevertheless, MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT – NKWICHI LODGE has dealt with this issue and has urged years ago that 20 percent of the members in the *Umoji* committees must be women. This is best visible when issues like schools, health and food are concerned (at least that is how the author experienced it in several discussions in the villages).

NKWICHI LODGE tries to implement these concerns also within the company. Two of the eight heads of departments are women. This includes the second highest position, held by "Big Mama", as staff manager Rebecca Mswachi is commonly called.

It thus does not come as a surprise that most of the participants in the training courses at the teaching and demonstration farm are female. In order to empower women and to enable them to earn an income in their villages, *Manda Wilderness Community Trust* (see 3.2) supports several small business initiatives. For example an agricultural cooperative in the nearby village of Mbueca, which now sells its products to the lodge and other takers. In other villages small bread bakeries have been set up.

**C Through which measures/mechanisms is the economic and institutional sustainability of the project guaranteed?**

As the MANDA WILDERNESS PROJECT in the sense of an umbrella brand is based on three pillars (see 3.2), the economic and institutional sustainability is rather ensured than in danger.

The financial situation of NKWICHI LODGE is stable (the relevant figures were accessible), it is managed in a professional manner, it occupies an upmarket niche and money is being reinvested. Thanks to the permanent training of staff, the long term objective of handing over first the management, then the operations into local hands is not unrealistic. Therefore, there won't be a long term dependence on a European or "Western" management.

The structures for decision making which have been built up over the past few years and communal organisations such as *Umoji* also contribute, as well as the ownership or land title deeds of the communities, and related to that the control over resources (not least through the *Manda Wilderness Community Conservation Area*).

Within the foreseeable future, the existence of the MANDA WILDERNESS COMMUNITY TRUST is not in danger. The trust has donations, aid money and (according to their own information: secure) grants, which ensure implementation of the most important projects in the communities (schools, promotion of small business, organic farm). Here, too, the "training principle" is being followed, the management should increasingly be in local hands.

Besides, the objective of the *Trust* remains to promote the diversification of income opportunities – in case the sputtering spring of "Tourism" should ever run dry.

## **5 CONCLUSION**

Measured against the difficult initial situation in a country that had suffered so many years of war (1964 to 1992), all those involved have achieved an extraordinary success. This applies to both the founders from "outside" with their broad vision of development, and the local people who were ready to work with them.

The impulses triggered by NKWICHI LODGE have set standards; they could be a model for a well-structured, locally adapted process which eventually benefits everybody.

And while a large part of the local population continues to live from "hand to mouth" – at grassroots and barefoot level – all the people asked by the author share the same opinion: "The most important thing we need is schools" Or, as the 72 year old chief George Chila-Chila from the village of Mala with its 375 inhabitants formulated: "You can't achieve anything without school."

## **Members of the Jury TO DO! 2011**

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Verhaltensforscher

**Klaus Betz**  
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**Heinz Fuchs**  
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