

## Finlays Community empowerment

At Finlays we are dependent on the people, communities and collective collaboration in our regions of operations. By acting as a catalyst for positive change we support the strengthening of the community around us economical, environmentally and socially. From Bush to Cup, everything we produce is infused with passion and pride. Every single step of the process is packed with care and commitment, because what we do and how we do it pours through people's daily lives. Our values are the lifeblood of our organisation, guiding each member of our global team and inspiring the way we work. We don't just develop our products, we develop communities; we don't just support our customers, we support the planet, through taking a landscape approach where we operate, we are involved with a variety of programmes and projects on social conditions such as empowering women, improving the quality of life, increasing diversity and environmental challenges/ approaches.

**Gender empowerment:** Working towards a gender balance in Kenya, Finlays has demonstrated our leadership in the promotion of gender equality and women empowerment. From the promotion of a safe and secure working environment to ensuring that all persons thrive in an ethnically and culturally diverse organisation. JFK's commitment to gender equality and women empowerment is not only a human rights issue but also contributes to the attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (especially goal number 5 covering gender equality) and full compliance with the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of Kenya 2010.

Since the project began in January 2015, significant progress has been achieved. Simply having a policy and strategic framework in place, does not always translate into automatic equality between women and men in the workplace. It has highlighted the need to consider as part of the process issues such as, socialisation, education, changes in business strategy in the face of global competition.

Some key highlights

- A Policy on Gender Equality and Diversity was initiated in 2015.
- A commitment was given to achieving significant representation of women at all levels within the business. Targets were agreed for each level of the business with an overall target of 33% as stipulated in Kenya's constitution.
- Representation of women at all levels increased from 28% in 2014 to 31%, with a notable change being within junior management; 22% to 28%.
- At board level the glass ceiling shattered, through the appointment of Mrs Catherine Kivai as the first female Finance Director.

**Community Empowerment:** Sri Lanka Finlays have engaged with our local communities, working with local villages and empowering teams of community volunteers.



People have traditionally seen the estate as providing all their support and facilities even if they do not work for the company. By mobilising empowering educated young persons on the estates to take ownership for their villages we have seen a significant improvement in morale, living standards and community relations. We have achieved this by providing the tools and assistance, resulting in programmes on local water management, local environmental awareness, local waste management and village clean ups. Promoting sustainable living, improved living conditions, dignity and village pride.



The project has been such a success that we rolled out to all our estates in Sri Lanka.

**Weaving project:** Creating value from waste, the Maisha Endelevu group create a

variety of beautiful collections of Bags, hats, mats, decorative ornaments and jewellery, etc. all from discarded plastic waste streams. The group came together in 2013, adding value since its inception and comprises of 15 members. It began to support and improve the livelihoods of our community and to reduce the negative impact of waste on our local environment.

Protecting the environment is important as Kericho country, which forms part of the world-famous Rift valley, in north east Kenya and is nestled within the on the edge of the Mau Forest. The forest is the largest remaining indigenous montane forest in East Africa. It hosts valuable biodiversity; fauna and flora and is a pinnacle source of East Africa's water.



Providing Support and skills development of our community members, who needed it most, are just as important. Our beautiful products are hand woven using upcycled plastic bags which are collected from nearby villages and collection points, producing a variety of products. Our products are sold locally in Kericho and made to order through email orders. Beyond this our Group is expanding its market reach and our product lines; we have recently introduced children's school bag range.

Project goals:

- Manage waste in a sustainable way through upcycling plastic bags into products such as bags, mats, pencil holders, hats.
- Improve livelihoods of members through the proceeds received through the sales of the products made by the group.
- Educate employees and the community on HIV/Aids
- Empower group members through skills enhancements.