

THE EAST AFRICA WOMEN'S LEAGUE

KILULU LIMITED

The concept of sheltered accommodation for the elderly living in the coastal area was first expressed as long ago as May 1985. At this time the thinking leaned toward a small unit to cater for 6-10 elderly, although it soon became apparent that this idea had to be expanded. A survey undertaken by the Mombasa Branch of The East Africa Women's League revealed that there was a growing number of elderly who could not cope with living on their own –with fifty residents at that time over the age of 70!

The idea for a home became more viable and attempts at gathering information commenced. By September 1988, the Mombasa Branch of the EAWL began to accumulate equipment in readiness for the home ... wheelchairs, walking frames, crutches, etc. were purchased and acquired and, in the meantime, offered on loan to members in need. Slow progress was made from this point until the beginning of 1991 when the subject was raised again, spurring on efforts to establish the legal requirements of such a project. Search for a suitable plot began – prices proved prohibitive and the project seemed to enter another stage of hibernation.

In February 1994 it was agreed that priority should be given to members of the EAWL seeking residency at the home and then places would be made 'open' to all. The idea began to gather momentum ... talks began about forming a company, with Board members selected from the EAWL as well as the local business community. Ideas and plans for the buildings and the immense task of fund-raising were discussed.

Following the death in April 1994 of one of Mombasa Branch's elderly members, it was learned that a generous donation of an unspecified amount would be forthcoming from her family. The donation was specifically directed toward the building of a home for the elderly. The project commenced a serious and dedicated search for a suitable plot, beginning on the North Coast. Again the prices were disturbingly high. Members of the Branch's committee then visited Diani on the South Coast in the vague hope of finding cheaper plots. Fund-raising had to start immediately and within a few months Ksh. 120,000 had been raised.

The amount of the donation was known in February 1995 with various conditions attached. The EAWL was to oversee the project, to safeguard the values and spirit of the donation and to initiate and nurture the dream. Another suggestion was that units could be built to rent out as holiday homes. This idea was rejected on the grounds that the home was to be registered as a charity and would then be unable to become involved in any profit making projects.

The spurt was now on to set up the charity, limited by guarantee, and be in a position to accept the Ksh 2 million gift. In June 1995 a sub-committee was formed to handle all the fund-raising activities. One month later the project had a name – KILULU LTD. Fund-raising was concentrated, imaginative and creative. Other EAWL branches around the country became motivated. Kenyan residents sought to support the charity and others began to dream and plan to live at KILULU. Sponsored walks, lunches, plays, quizzes, sales and a dinner theatre helped to swell the fund.

Eventually a plot for the home was selected and by January 1997 the Title Deeds to the property were in the laborious process of being transferred from Agricultural Use to Residential Use. Shortly after this was achieved a 'well' was dug on the land and 'sweet water' was located at 42ft. Materials accumulated and a mould for making the fence posts arrived on the site ready for the boundaries of the plot to be defined. It was soon found that a medical practitioner was to open a new clinic, with a laboratory, close to KILULU – a substantial asset for the home.

Impressive fund-raising, within the EAWL and the local community, continued throughout 1997. The boundary was defined and over 280 bougainvilleae were planted around the perimeter. KILULU LTD is 'up and running' as a registered charity. The EAWL's Mombasa Branch is proud of its' crusade to nurture the home toward completion, having assisted toward the Ksh 1 million plus already raised to augment the substantial and thoughtful donation of one of its' members.

KILULU LTD is now 'on its' own' and joins the other 6 or 7 local charities regularly supported by the EAWL.