



Mama Mboikai

**Sukutan Village,
Laikipia, Kenya**



I took these pictures of the vegetation because I wanted to show that we have a lot of trees and bushes. We **use over 50% of all that you can see in this picture** for medicine, food and building material.

When I was young I was taught about the different uses of the plants and which ones could be used for medicinal purposes. I am still learning and improving my knowledge and at the same time I'm teaching people who don't know about these resources. Some plants are medicinal and some can also be used for making tea. If someone is ill **we use the local medicinal plants to try and cure that person because the hospital is very far**. These bushes can be used all year,

even during a drought like in 2007, because we use the roots, bark and sap. **We don't cut the whole tree**, normally only the branches. If you clear every tree you can't find medicine anymore. We believe that a person who cuts a lot of trees will be cursed.

I took a picture of this Mama because she is preparing medicinal roots in that pot. You boil them and then you use it to clean the woman's uterus after she has given birth. You can also make porridge with it and give it to the woman.

I learnt how to become a midwife from my mother since she was also a midwife herself. When I grew up and I was around 15 **my mother taught me about the different medicines**, where to find them and how to prepare them. It makes me feel good to help my community.



We are seeing the **changes in the seasons**. We can't predict the seasons anymore. When you are waiting for the long rains you receive the short rains. It is different every year, we can only guess. Now that it is getting drier we will be managing our livestock better. As the animals get healthy we will try and **sell some before the dry season** and then save the money for future use.

The camel is a livestock in our community. It produces more milk than any other livestock and we believe that the milk is medicinal. During dry periods there is still food for them because they eat the leaves and branches of the tall trees. **It is better nowadays to have more camels than cattle** because the cat-

tle die faster in a bad drought like the one in 2007. We have also come together as a community and planned how to use the pastures more sustainably. On the other side of the river we set aside pastures to be used only during the dry season. Nobody is allowed to build their Boma on that side or take their livestock there during the rainy season. This is the agreement that was made by the Elders.

These are the **Morans, the security men of the community**. When you are in a certain age group, you are collected and circumcised, that is how you become a Moran. You are a Moran until you marry, then you belong to another age group. I took this picture of the armed Morans because they normally carry these weapons when they take our cattle out to graze. When the predators attack or there is cattle-raiding they can protect our livestock and us.

I have experienced cattle raiding. That is why it is so important that the Morans are around. The **cattle raids were bad around three years ago**. Since then it has been peaceful.



This beehive we have built ourselves. You cut a log, dry it, then hollow it out and cover the sides with lids. Then we tie it in the tree to protect it from the honey badgers. Only **the hunter-gatherer group, the Dorobo, is making the beehives** and collecting the honey. The others buy honey from us. The honey harvests depend on the flowering season. During the dry season it is difficult to get any honey. I noticed that in the past the flowering season was longer.

