

RECOMMENDATIONS

01

As long as the main source of livelihood for Kenyan pastoralists is extensive livestock production, conservancies must ensure that pastoral communities get sufficient access to pasture and water. This is critical, as restricting access to conservancy resources renders neighbouring non-member communities vulnerable to the impacts of droughts, climate variability and climate change.

02

When planning new conservancies, it is critical to establish open lines of communication with conservancy members and non-members alike, to create awareness about how the conservancies will function, avoid misunderstandings, and clarify what the conservancies will and will not achieve, and for whom.

03

Conservancy members need to be clearly identified so that decisions (e.g. electing new officials) are democratic. Equally, marking livestock within the conservancy could enable better monitoring of non-member livestock, which could preserve grazing plans during droughts, control livestock theft, and avoid 'cheating' during livestock offtake.

04

Conservancies with multi-ethnic ownership need to ensure that any leadership position allocations, employment opportunities, and direct financial benefits are shared in proportion to the respective community population sizes, and equitably across different gender and age groups.

05

It is important to ensure that conservancy security operations are seen as legitimate and responsive to the concerns of groups within and outside of the conservancy. One way to do this is to employ non-members as rangers. By sharing conservancy benefits, such employment could also help to address the widening inequality between conservancy members and non-members.

06

Conservancies should adopt landscape-level thinking:

- Maintaining good relationships and open dialogue – at inter-community, and even inter-county levels – could help to ensure access to pasture and water beyond conservancy boundaries, particularly during extreme droughts.
- By cooperating with each other (e.g. through memorandums of understanding), county governments could facilitate reciprocity, enabling members from different counties to access resources in an organised and equitable manner.
- Providing non-members with employment opportunities within conservancies could further encourage reciprocity.

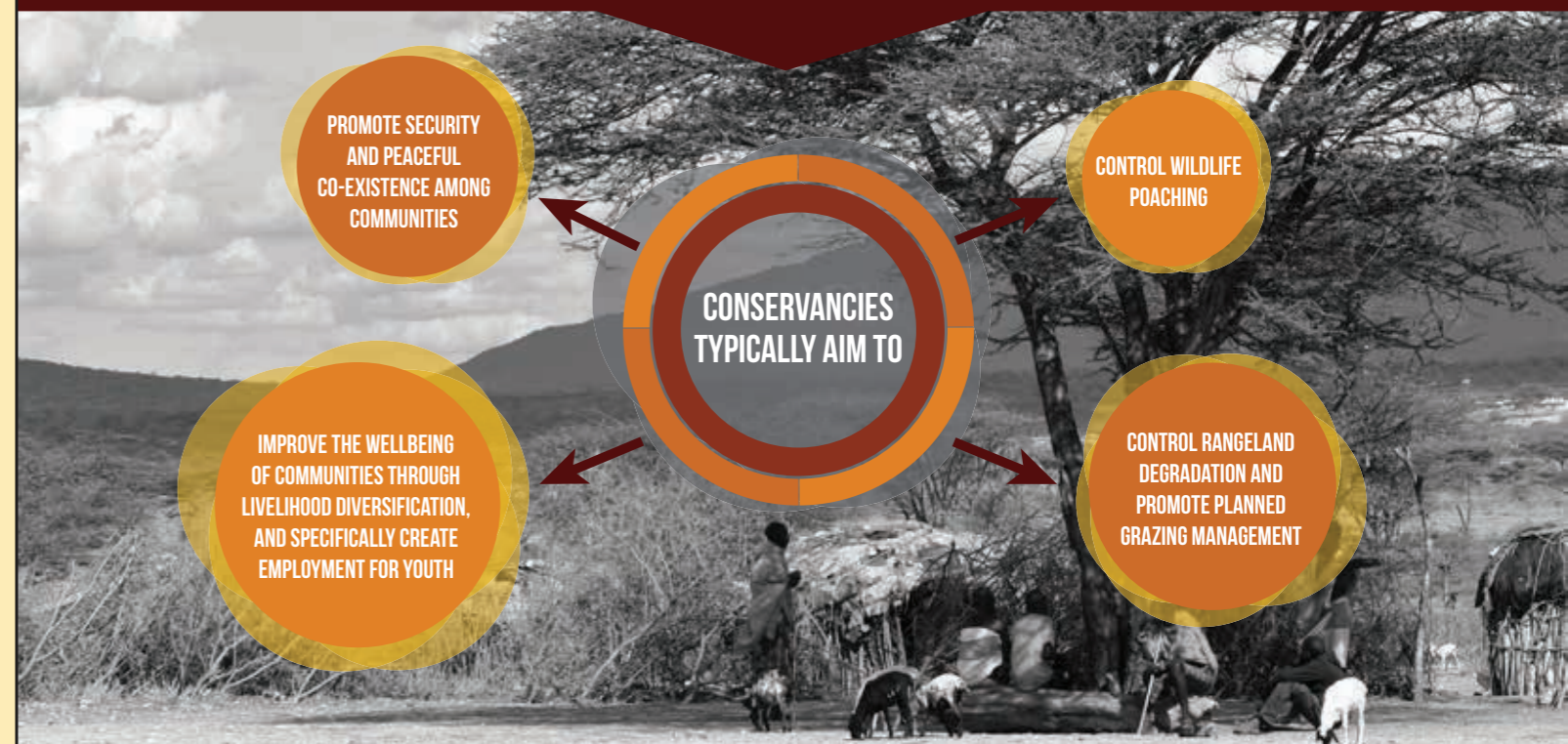
07

As conservancies provide a crucial source of social capital in precarious semi-arid environments, it is important to determine whether communities would be willing and able to sustain the conservancies in the absence of support from NRT.

08

It is necessary to consider the long-term role conservancies can play in relation to climate change, as the negative impacts of frequent and severe droughts on both livestock and wildlife could compromise the use of conservancies as an ecosystem-based adaptation strategy.

THE CONSERVANCY MODEL TAKES A COMMUNITY-BASED, NATURAL-RESOURCE MANAGEMENT APPROACH THAT ALLOWS COMMUNITIES TO MANAGE AND BENEFIT FROM WILDLIFE RESOURCES.



Since the early 2000s, community-based wildlife conservancies have been established in 10 arid and semi-arid counties of northern Kenya as a means of promoting wildlife conservation and diversifying livelihoods to alleviate poverty.

2000

By 2017, more than 30 community conservancies had been established under the Northern Rangeland Trust (NRT) and, to a lesser extent, under the county governments of Marsabit, Samburu, Baringo and Turkana.

2017

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONSERVANCIES COMES WITH BOTH BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE COMMUNITIES THAT SURROUND THEM. THESE DIFFER ACCORDING TO PEOPLE'S ETHNICITY, AGE, GENDER, AND WHETHER OR NOT THEY ARE CONSERVANCY MEMBERS.

HOW DECISIONS AROUND CONSERVANCIES ARE MADE, AND BY WHOM, AFFECTS THE LIVELIHOODS OF NEARBY COMMUNITIES, AND IMPACTS ON THEIR CAPACITIES TO ADAPT TO OTHER STRESSORS, LIKE CLIMATE CHANGE.

HERE, WE EXPLORE A NUMBER OF THE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH THESE CONSERVANCIES, TO UNDERSTAND HOW THEY AFFECT COMMUNITY RESILIENCE.



IMPROVED SOCIAL SERVICES AND AMENITIES

In Kalama, women have many new responsibilities. For example, they have helped to build and stock the Girgiri Mixed Secondary School library, to build a health care centre, and to disburse bursaries to 64 children from the village.

"As a subcommittee mandated to manage the disbursement of bursaries, not a single complaint has been raised in the two years we have been in charge, unlike previously when many members complained."
- female official



HOUSEHOLDS BENEFIT FROM DIVERSIFIED INCOME

Livelihood diversification can enhance community resilience to increasing vulnerabilities. Conservancies have used this approach to lessen the burdens felt by households during times of shock and stress.

"We are fortunate that my son got the SACCO loan. He bought a motorbike that he uses for his transport business. This has helped us during the dry season when there is no milk. We use the money from his business to buy milk in Isiolo town."
- Elizabeth Ekiru



PLANNED GRAZING AND IMPROVED SECURITY

For the Turkana community, the Nasuulu conservancy's biggest contribution towards promoting access to water and pastures has been the realisation of peace and security, and planned grazing. To minimise conflicts over water during the dry season, morans from each of the four communities – Turkana, Samburu, Somali and Borana – using the same watering point, water their livestock on different weekdays.



BENEFITS

Improved income from tourism as a result of increased abundance of wildlife.



Improved social amenities and services.

Education bursaries given to the children of conservancy members.

Improved employment and loan opportunities:

- Youth are employed as scouts and drivers.
- Women and youth access loans through the Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization (SACCO).
- Women's businesses (e.g. beadwork) benefit from improved market linkages.

Reduced poaching, and improved security and peace as a result of scout surveillance, conflict resolution committees, and the involvement of warring communities in joint activities (e.g. joint patrols, sports, seminars).

Improved access to pasture and water due to planned grazing management which is governed by laws that are enforced by grazing committees.



Drought-related livestock losses are minimised, as NRT Trading offers to buy livestock from members at premium prices when droughts are anticipated.

Declining use of key tree species for the production of charcoal.

CHALLENGES

Human-wildlife conflict remains a perpetual problem around conservancies. When communities fail to receive promised compensation for injury, death, or crop losses, their relationships with conservancies are strained.

Only conservancy members qualify for loans, bursaries, employment opportunities, market linkages and improved amenities. As a result, tensions often occur between members and non-members, especially during times of drought.

In multi-ethnic conservancies, employment and leadership opportunities are shared equally among ethnic groups, and not in proportion to their respective population sizes. This often results in discontent among the larger groups.

Non-member communities claim they are exposed to aggression from armed conservancy scouts, who they say abuse their position at times.

During droughts, non-members (and at times, even members) are not always able to gain access to critical grazing resources within conservancies.

Non-members forcefully encroaching on the conservancies can cause conflict, particularly between different ethnic groups. Furthermore, non-members invited into the conservancy by members, who fail to comply with the set rules, can disrupt the grazing management plan.

Lastly, elders who once solely determined access to grazing resources feel their powers have been reduced from being the main decision makers to second opinion providers.

Some dishonest members collude with non-members to benefit from the livestock offtake programme by selling livestock from outside the conservancy to NRT Trading.

Reduced felling of trees in the conservancies may cause more destruction in areas outside the conservancies where there are no stringent rules and regulations.

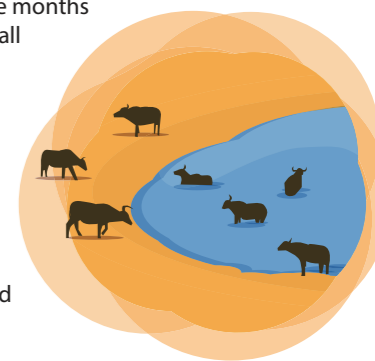
NO COMPENSATION FOR HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICT

During a visit to Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) in Isiolo county, the research team witnessed a widow claiming compensation after losing all of her 18 goats to hyenas. A similar case comes from Kalama where a leopard injured about 15 people in 2015. Each month, KWS receives approximately 700 compensation claims like these. However, the high compensation values set by the Wildlife Act of 2013 (e.g. Kshs 5 million for human death; Kshs 3 million for injury leading to permanent loss of earning potential), make it difficult for the government to comply. Consequently, no claims have been paid since 2013.



UNEQUAL ACCESS TO CONSERVANCY RESOURCES

Since the establishment of the Biliqo Bulesa conservancy, non-members (e.g. from the Borana community) are no longer able to access the Kuro Bisan Owwo hot spring - a source of salty warm water traditionally used for three months of the year to deworm small stock during droughts. Similarly, women living in Lewa Downs, near the private Lewa Conservancy, who used to collect firewood from the conservancy area when it was still a ranch, now get arrested and fined for doing so.



ETHNIC TENSIONS AROUND LIVESTOCK DESTOCKING

In 2016, to destock before the drought, the Nasuulu conservancy was allocated 400 cattle to sell to NRT Trading - 100 cattle for each of Nasuulu's four communities. However, while the Samburu and Turkana communities have large cattle herds and could easily fill these quotas, the Somali and Borana communities do not. It angered the Samburu and Turkana communities that, despite these herd size differences, they could not increase their allotments, and they alleged that some non-members had cheated the system. This simmering dissatisfaction came to a head in 2018, when the Turkana and Somali communities clashed over access to pastures.

