



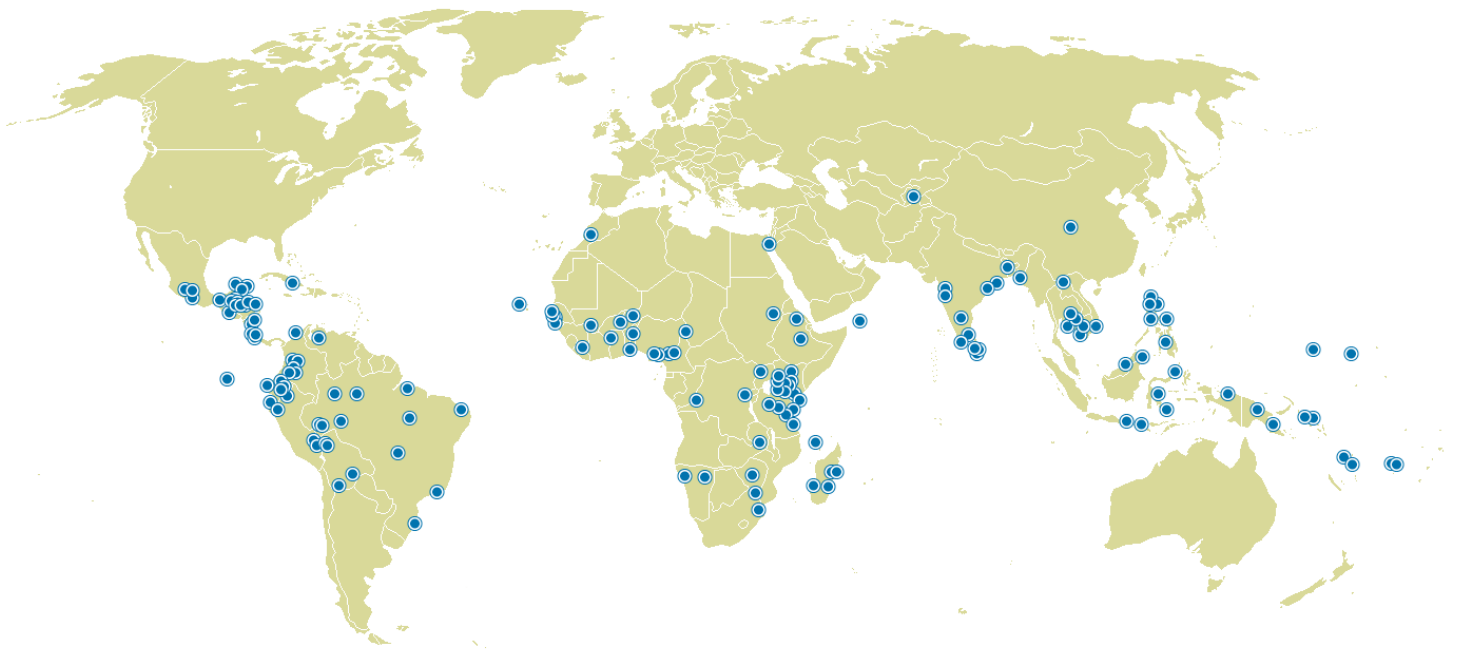
Equator Initiative Case Studies

Local sustainable development solutions for people, nature, and resilient communities

UNDP EQUATOR INITIATIVE CASE STUDY SERIES

Local and indigenous communities across the world are advancing innovative sustainable development solutions that work for people and for nature. Few publications or case studies tell the full story of how such initiatives evolve, the breadth of their impacts, or how they change over time. Fewer still have undertaken to tell these stories with community practitioners themselves guiding the narrative.

To mark its 10-year anniversary, the Equator Initiative aims to fill this gap. The following case study is one in a growing series that details the work of Equator Prize winners – vetted and peer-reviewed best practices in community-based environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods. These cases are intended to inspire the policy dialogue needed to take local success to scale, to improve the global knowledge base on local environment and development solutions, and to serve as models for replication. Case studies are best viewed and understood with reference to [*'The Power of Local Action: Lessons from 10 Years of the Equator Prize'*](#), a compendium of lessons learned and policy guidance that draws from the case material.



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MAASAI WILDERNESS CONSERVATION TRUST

Kenya

PROJECT SUMMARY

Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust preserves the wilderness, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Amboseli-Tsavo ecosystem – an important migration corridor between two national parks. The organization of Maasai communities has mitigated unsustainable practices such as overgrazing and water-intensive farming and introduced alternative livelihood options, including ecotourism. The community benefits from lease payments for conservancy zones, watershed protection, and the provision of ecotourism services. Ecotourism revenue funds community health and education programmes, including scholarships, teacher salaries and clean water.

An innovative programme called 'Wildlife Pays' compensates Maasai herders on a quarterly basis for losses due to wildlife predation in exchange for their participation in conservation activities. An innovative partnership model with the Kenya Wildlife Service has allowed for both local livelihood improvements and extensive wildlife monitoring to improve the protection of threatened species.

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KEY FACTS

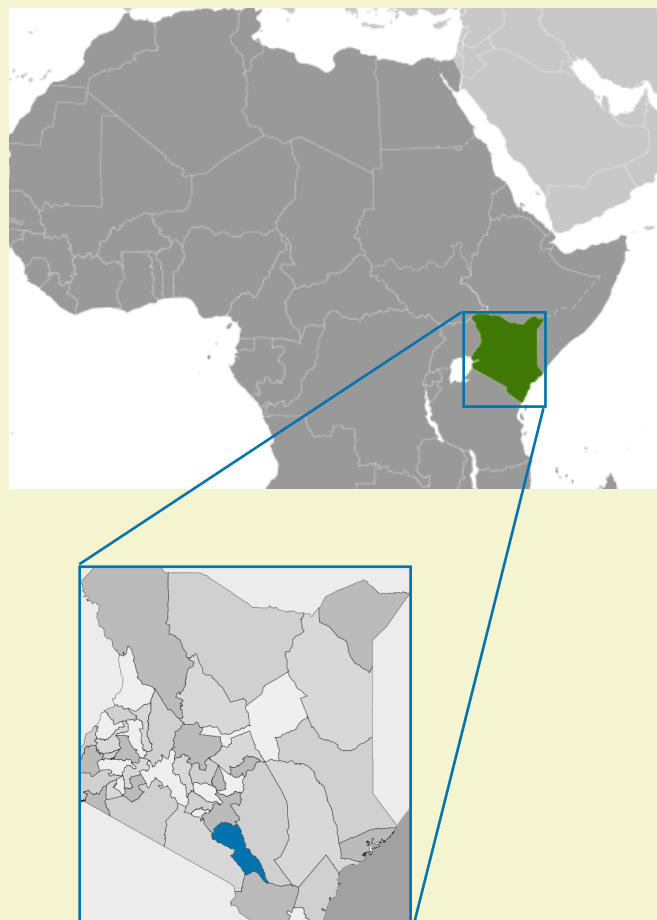
EQUATOR PRIZE WINNER: 2012

FOUNDED: 2000

LOCATION: Chyulu Hills, Amboseli-Tsavo region

BENEFICIARIES: Kuku Group Ranch

BIODIVERSITY: 12,000 acres across two conservancies



Background and Context



Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust (MWCT) was established in 2000 by the Maasai of Kuku Group Ranch as a grassroots conservation trust. The trust focuses on the Maasai landscape and the communities of Kenya's Chyulu Hills, which are set within the Amboseli-Tsavo region of southern Kenya. The region is located in one of East Africa's most iconic landscapes, an area that includes Mount Kilimanjaro and Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks, which together form the largest National Park in Kenya.

The Greater Tsavo and Amboseli Ecosystems

The Kuku Group Ranch forms an important wildlife corridor linking two of Kenya's most ecologically significant and biologically diverse areas: the Greater Tsavo and Amboseli ecosystems. The Maasai communities of this area own all of the land between the protected Amboseli and Tsavo West National Parks, and within their 280,000 acres of land lie important migration corridors and habitat reserves that serve as wildlife dispersal areas and support a significant amount of the region's rich biodiversity. The region also includes rich cloud forests, which, in addition to serving as carbon sinks, provide habitat for a number of rare and threatened species, including sizable elephant populations. The health and integrity of these forest ecosystems are closely linked to the wellbeing of local residents: the rivers and springs that flow from the forest provide freshwater to more than seven million people in Kenya, including the inhabitants of the second largest city, Mombasa.

Much of the region is classified as arid and semi-arid land, making it prone to soil erosion and degradation. The vulnerability of land and soil is heightened by growing pressure from livestock grazing and the conversion of land for agriculture. The region is also increasingly prone to climate variability, including more frequent and prolonged periods of drought. In addition to growing rates of wildlife and livestock mortality, which translate to significant economic losses for Maasai communities, these conditions have led to a destructive

shift towards unsustainable land-use practices such as intensive agriculture that are not compatible with local conditions and lead to ever-greater land degradation.

Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust

Although MWCT was not formally established until 2000, its story begins in 1996, when Italian conservationist Mr. Luca Belpietro and his wife Ms. Antonella Bonomi formed a partnership with the Maasai community of Kuku Group Ranch. The partnership was based around construction of an eco-lodge on Kuku Group Ranch land, with a view to creating a tourism revenue stream that would benefit the local community. The eco-lodge, Campi ya Kanzi, was completed in 1998 and opened for business the same year. Campi ya Kanzi was initially operated by Mr. Belpietro and his wife, but with the Maasai community maintaining legal ownership of the property and receiving a share of lodge revenues. An agreement was put in place that all lodge employees would be sourced from within the community. Four years later, in 2002, it became apparent that the positive impacts of the eco-lodge were not sufficient to benefit the entire community; in response, the lodge began to impose a USD 100 per night 'conservation surcharge' which was used to raise funds to support the fledgling Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust.

The trust operates as a non-profit entity focused on the initiation and development of conservation, education and healthcare programs throughout the local Maasai communities. The trust aims to conserve the wildlife and cultural heritage of the region by focusing on initiatives that create sustainable economic benefits for the Maasai community, providing them with an alternative income source to intensive agriculture. Currently, the trust is exploring new and additional options for financing ongoing conservation efforts in an attempt to reduce reliance on philanthropic funding, which to date has supported much of the work of the trust.

The organization has developed a number of innovative approaches to address persistent challenges that confront local Maasai, including land degradation and human-wildlife conflict. Among the notable innovations advanced by the trust are lease payments for conservancy zones, payments for watershed protection, sustainable ecotourism, wildlife monitoring and conservation, and the development of alternative employment options. All activities endeavour to strengthen the Maasai's cultural heritage and traditional way of life while also expanding healthcare and educational services to the local community.

Governance and institutional structure

An innovative governance arrangement and strategic partnerships have been central to the stability of the trust since its creation in 2000. MWCT is governed by a 13-member Board of Trustees, which includes ten Kenyans, including representatives of the local Maasai community, and three international members (from Italy, Spain and USA respectively). Members of the Board are appointed by the

Trustees: Mr. Luca Belpietro, Ms. Antonella Bonomi and Mr. Samson Parashina, a Maasai from the Kuku Group Ranch community. The Board of Trustees plays an advisory role and guides the Trustees in setting goals and coming up with strategies to achieve them. A Development Committee, appointed by the community, consists of six Maasai men and four Maasai women. The Development Committee advises the Board on the most pressing needs of the community. Another Advisory Board is comprised of six community-elected officials along with the Trust's President.

The trust also has a US-based 'partner' affiliate, Maasai Wilderness Conservation Fund (MWCF), which is a registered 501c3 non-profit, tax-exempt organization. MWCF has its own Board, which consists of heads of foundations that support MWCT, academics, and heads of other NGOs. The MWCF Board raises funds from US donors which it grants to MWCT based on jointly approved budgets. MWCT and MWCF share an Advisory Group made up of close collaborators and leading thinkers in the field.



Key Activities and Innovations



Community-based ecotourism

Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust has assisted the Kuku Group Ranch to secure an advantageous agreement with its ecotourism partner, Campi ya Kanzi. The conservation surcharge (USD 100) applied at the eco-lodge is one of the highest in Kenya. The employment agreement reached with the eco-lodge is also beneficial to the Maasai population, with 95 per cent of lodge staff sourced from the local community. Campi ya Kanzi has grown into a model for the development of low-impact tourism infrastructure, using only solar energy to fulfil its electricity and hot water needs, managing waste sustainably, and recycling all black and grey water. It is the only lodge of its kind that is self-sufficient in its water use, using harvested rainwater rather than drawing on community water sources, thereby avoiding putting unnecessary pressure on scarce resources in this dry environment. Revenues to the community have been substantial, currently approaching USD 400,000 per year. This revenue is directed towards activities that conserve the wildlife of the region and improve the livelihoods of the local population. The trust organizes these activities into three programs: conservation, education and healthcare.

Wildlife conservation

The trust supports a number of conservation activities and maintains a conservation department that employs more than 100 local Maasai people. Conservation activities are divided into four main areas: the conservancy program, the 'Wildlife Pays' program, predator monitoring, and community wildlife rangers. In support of these and other efforts, the trust has also constructed the Chyulu Conservation and Research Centre, where it undertakes knowledge management, research and information exchange activities. Another activity, currently in the exploratory phase, is the development of payment for ecosystem services (PES) schemes around forest and water conservation.

The conservancy program: MWCT has developed a model for a network of land conservancy zones that aims to maintain ecosystem services on community-owned lands between the two national parks. This will entail the protection of standing forest, grassland, and wetlands, among other key landscape features, which entails local landholders foregoing the use of the land for livestock. The cornerstone of the trust approach is the negotiation of lease payments for conservancy zones. To date, the group has negotiated and secured two such management deals to protect a grassland habitat reserve and a critical wetland, totalling 12,000 acres, both of which lie within the migration corridor between the two national parks. These deals allow the community to be compensated for their stewardship of the local ecosystem, funding the creation of alternative livelihood options, which has been important in a cattle-dependent local economy that increasingly suffers from the impacts of prolonged droughts.

The trust is seeking to further develop its conservation program with the intention of protecting 150,000 acres of land that would, in turn, secure meaningful, sustainable revenue for the community. As a complementary activity, the trust also works with community grazing committees to address the negative impacts of the Maasai livestock on the local environment. Specifically, the group has focused on improving grazing practices to protect grasslands, creating buffer zones around key water sources, and working to improve the overall resilience of rangelands. Training and capacity building for local leaders has been prioritized as a way of empowering the Maasai community to maintain local traditions but also to modify their activities in manner that will allow them to thrive in the long term.

Wildlife Pays: The tourism surcharge levied on visitors to the area funds an innovative compensation program for Maasai herders called 'Wildlife Pays.' The program financially compensates herders who lose livestock to wildlife predation in exchange for their full participation in wildlife protection activities. The program was started as a way of reducing retribution killing of wildlife and of bringing herders more

fully into the fold of conservation efforts. Herders receive quarterly payments for the value of any livestock losses. In addition to financing other actions that help to mitigate human-wildlife conflicts – such as the construction of lion-proof livestock enclosures – the Wildlife Pays program is working to generate a more positive attitude among the Maasai towards wildlife conservation. The compensation fund is a valued acknowledgement of the Maasai dependence on livestock for their livelihoods, and of the trade-offs that must be taken into consideration when balancing wildlife conservation with pastoralist livelihoods. The program is self-sufficient and does not rely on philanthropic funding. Surcharges levied on tourists visiting the area to see wildlife more than cover the annual costs of compensation, establishing a pioneering and sustainable new PES model around the protection of wildlife.

Predator monitoring and community wildlife rangers: A third dimension of the conservation program involves predator monitoring and the use of community wildlife rangers. Over 100 Maasai community members are employed by the trust as game guards and predator monitors, making MWCT one of the largest employers of community rangers in the region after the national Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS). The comprehensive program – carried out in partnership with KWS – aims to prevent illegal activities (and in particular poaching), to minimize human-wildlife conflict, and to monitor biodiversity in the region. A formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was recently signed with the KWS supporting trust wildlife security operations and formal training of MWCT scouts. This has enabled the trust to work in much closer cooperation with national authorities. The objectives of the monitoring and wildlife ranger programs are to increase communities' capacity to monitor and protect wildlife throughout their lands, to monitor and maintain conservancy zones in accordance with management agreements, and to improve the data available to assess the impact of resource management choices on species populations.

Payment for ecosystem services

In recent years, MWCT has worked to develop additional revenue streams for the Maasai community through innovative PES schemes. The trust has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Kuku community to act and negotiate on their behalf in exploring these options. One of the first steps will be to assess the

potential economic value of carbon and watershed services resulting from forests on community land. MWCT has secured funding from Conservation International and the JP Morgan Fund for an initial assessment of the carbon assets in the Kuku and Rombo Group Ranches, and has brokered a formal partnership between both these communities and Wildlife Works – a private sector carbon project designer and implementer that has brokered the only two revenue generating, verified carbon credit trading projects in Kenya. It is hoped that a carbon-based payment for ecosystem services scheme would further bolster community conservation efforts and provide an additional incentive for safeguarding local ecosystems.

Health and education programs

The trust has been able to advance a broad vision for linking ecosystem health with community social and economic well-being. Notably, the conservation focus is complemented by healthcare and education programming. Within its education program, the trust supports 20 local primary schools and one secondary school, serving a total of 7,000 students. The trust operates these schools in partnership with the Kenyan government, which provides support in the form of schoolhouse construction, employment of teachers, and the provision of stationery. More than fifty educators are employed by the trust to teach in its schools, making it the largest employer of teachers working on the ranch. MWCT also funds and operates Kanzi Academy, a school for talented students in the region. The academy has so far funded 34 secondary and post-secondary scholarships for Maasai students, of which 15 are still ongoing at various educational levels.

Similarly, the trust health program operates four local dispensaries in partnership with the Kenyan government, reaching about 8,000 people. It also funds outreach services – in the form of out-patient care – to isolated regions that lack access to medical facilities. A new laboratory was recently built to support early diagnosis of local health problems. MWCT was also recently awarded a three-year grant by the Susan G. Komen For The Cure Foundation, which has been used to employ a Health Program Director with responsibility for coordinating all strategic planning, government relations, measurement of clinical program data, and sourcing of grants for the health program.

“Our overall goal is to develop better practices in monitoring of wildlife species, in order to create a protected environment in which wildlife, the integrity of the land, and people can flourish together.”

Mr. Samson Parashina, President, Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust

Impacts



BIODIVERSITY IMPACTS

The trust's activities have had a positive impact on ecosystem integrity and wildlife diversity and abundance in the region. The 12,000 acres within conservancies established on Maasai lands have helped to mitigate unsustainable practices such as over-grazing and water-intensive farming, which has, in turn, improved ecosystem resilience and bolstered the prospects for long-term environmental health. Importantly, the wildlife migration corridors between Amboseli and Tsavo have been fortified and protected.

Reduced human-wildlife conflict

As a result of the Wildlife Pays program, predator mortality rates have declined dramatically in recent years. In 2005, two years before the program was implemented, the number of lions killed on Kuku Group Ranch alone averaged 9-10 a year. Since Wildlife Pays was introduced, a total of five lions have been killed by Maasai herders. This positive trend is directly linked to the innovative MWCT program, which compensates herders for livestock lost to wild predators. By creating an incentive to engage in conservation efforts and abandon retribution killings, the trust has been able to effectively protect a number of charismatic predator species.

Going beyond avoided human-wildlife conflict, MWCT has instigated a partnership with the Zoological Society of London (ZSL) to develop standardized species monitoring protocols in conjunction with Tsavo National Park research teams, a relationship that will facilitate ecosystem-wide data-sharing and build understanding of long-term trends in the abundance and distribution of key species. The partnership was also pursued as a means of strengthening the MWCT conservation program; that is, backing up anecdotal, qualitative successes with solid scientific data on the impacts of different conservation activities. Conversely, data collection and wildlife monitoring undertaken by MWCT also benefits ZSL and KWS, who are charged with species monitoring in Tsavo National Park.

Measuring ecosystem services

The organization is in the process of evaluating the value of carbon and watershed services provided by the community land. It is hoped that this will allow the community to develop a payment for ecosystem services scheme which will in turn create a new revenue stream to finance conservation efforts and the stewardship of local ecosystems. MWCT is also completing a feasibility study for the development of a reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD) project, which would provide protection of the region's threatened cloud forests, as well as other forest areas on the Kuku Group Ranch.

Preserving culture and nature

Perhaps most importantly, the combined work of MWCT in environmental conservation and sustainable livelihoods is allowing the Maasai to maintain their traditions and culture, in which a balance and harmony with local wildlife plays an important part. In the absence of the conservation and development programming advanced by MWCT, the Maasai, out of economic necessity, would likely be forced to farm the land, transforming their culture and their landscape. This has been a trend in other Maasai group ranches in the region, which has had devastating consequences for the local environment; farming in such arid conditions often results in negative impacts on wildlife, water systems and soil quality. Crop failure in particularly dry years is also quite common. The preservation of the pastoralist lifestyle, in careful balance with local ecosystem carrying capacities, provides for both people and nature in this equation.

SOCIOECONOMIC IMPACTS

Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust's efforts to develop new sources of income – through tourism, land leases for conservancy, compensation for livestock lost to wildlife, and alternative employment options – has decreased local dependence on cattle

for their livelihoods. Revenues coming into the community through ecotourism and conservation work are now quite substantial, and have been leveraged to both create new jobs and improve local wellbeing. In particular, new revenue streams have created livelihood opportunities for local people in the provision of essential services such as health and education, and the wider community has benefited immensely from efforts to fill these existing public service gaps.

Employment and capacity building

The trust is the largest employer in the Kuku Group Ranch, employing over 100 people in its conservation activities alone. Revenue from MWCT activities has already greatly softened the financial blow of drought-related cattle losses, which have been on the rise in recent years. With decreased dependence on cattle, the community is now in a better position to adapt to climate variability and to be more resilient in the face of environmental and economic shocks.

The trust has also prioritized training and capacity building for a new generation of leaders within the Maasai community. Trainings provide Maasai employed by MWCT with new skills in sustainable natural resource management that complement local traditional knowledge. By expanding the knowledge base and skill-set of the local population, the trust is working to expand livelihood options, job opportunities, and overall community resilience. MWCT believes that maintaining Maasai cultural heritage is not incompatible with creating new development opportunities for the local population and preparing for the uncertainties posed by climate change.

Education and health

Education and healthcare programs have opened up a number of essential social services that were previously unavailable or underfunded in the region. In addition to employing the only local doctor in the area, the trust is providing a range of health services to the Maasai community through four dispensaries and an outreach program. The collective upshot is that thousands of people who previously lacked access to medical care because of geographic isolation are now being served. The MWCT health program has developed a specific focus on maternal health, including baby clinics, pre-natal health advice, and educational campaigns on family planning. As a result, a significantly higher number of local women are able to give birth at a health clinic, under medical supervision.

The reach and impact of the MWCT education program has been equally impressive. The trust is the single largest employer of teachers in the area, including the government. MWCT also operates a school that serves over 700 students, while also supporting many more schools in the region. A special academy has been constructed and is now in operation which serves gifted students. Many of these students are provided with scholarships that will allow them to access higher education and open up vocational training options.

Women's empowerment

Special emphasis has been placed by the trust on working to ensure the full and active engagement and participation of women in conservation and natural resource management activities. As one example, the first female community rangers were employed in 2011, which has engaged local women in the monitoring of wildlife. Additionally, four of the ten Advisory Board members are women from the Kuku Group Ranch community. This may not seem overly significant, but is in fact a relatively progressive achievement in the context of Maasai traditions. Roughly 46 per cent of the teachers employed by MWCT are women, with 25 per cent of those coming from within the Maasai community.

POLICY IMPACTS

The Kenya Wildlife Society (KWS), the national conservation and national park management agency, has demonstrated keen interest in the 'Wildlife Pays' program, and is closely monitoring its potential to provide a national model for effectively compensating herders for losses to wildlife. MWCT is also increasing its outreach to key government bodies regarding PES and REDD schemes, as well as water and wildlife management.

This engagement with government agencies has been aided by MWCT's profile at the international level. Following a presentation given by MWCT Board members to UNDP and UNEP officers, the Permanent Secretary of Kenya's Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources, and the Acting Director of the National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) during the UNEP Environment Ministers Summit in Nairobi in 2011, NEMA and the Ministry of Environment identified MWCT as an implementing partner in a KWS-led, Global Environment Facility-funded project focusing on Kenya's Southern Rangelands. The project – titled 'Enhancing the ecological integrity of the Tsavo-Chyulu-Amboseli ecosystem through sustainable management and utilization of the natural resources for improved livelihoods and poverty reduction' – aims to maximize ecological and economic benefits from Maasai communal lands in the Tsavo-Chyulu-Amboseli ecosystem.

MWCT has played a leading role in the development of the project, contributing its expertise in effective engagement of local communities in conservation issues, as well as its demonstrated ability to leverage financing for its core program activities. While GEF funding will contribute up to USD 8 million over five years, MWCT is expected to contribute co-financing. The project will also build on MWCT's exploration of potential PES schemes for carbon and watershed services in the Chyulu Hills. The engagement of MWCT in this project is an indication of its increasing role as a case study in how to effectively engage Maasai communities in conservation efforts.

Sustainability and Replication



SUSTAINABILITY

The trust has experienced a great deal of success to date, and is well positioned to not only sustain its operations, but to expand them. The diversity of economic development and revenue-generating activities pursued by the trust ensures that financing of ongoing conservation efforts is secured in the short- to medium-term. Perhaps most central in terms of organizational sustainability will be continuing to ensure that benefits from the trust and from its programs reach the community and are perceived by the local population as positively impacting their lives.

Financial sustainability

At the moment, MWCT is primarily funded through outside donors. The trust recognizes the need to create a measure of financial independence and self-sufficiency and is taking steps to explore innovative funding options that would reduce its reliance on philanthropy. Despite this dependence, MWCT does not rely on any one source of funding, but has been able to develop an impressively diverse portfolio of donor sources. The conservation levy charged to eco-lodge visitors has been a central source of self-generated revenue, and has been used to create employment and to fund conservation activities.

The trust continues to look for ways to capitalize on the economic potential of biodiversity and a healthy environment, having identified this as the cornerstone of both the local economy and of community health and wellbeing. MWCT has also started to explore innovative conservation financing measures, building on the 'Wildlife Pays' program, which itself is a new model of payment for ecosystem services. Discussions have been opened with leaders in the tourism industry on how best this model might be expanded in neighbouring regions. Other options include the REDD feasibility study and the development of a payment for ecosystem services scheme around the protection of the Chyulu Hills watershed.

While MWCT has successfully negotiated and established two conservancies through management agreements with Kuku Group Ranch – protecting over 12,000 acres of critical migration corridor, wetlands and grassland reserves – the trust is exploring longer-term arrangements for expanding the amount of land under conservation. Currently under negotiation is its most ambitious conservancy management agreement to date, which would protect one of the most critical water sources in western Tsavo. Through this agreement, the Kuku community would be paid an annual per acre sum in exchange for a management agreement with MWCT to set aside the acreage as “no graze, no boma, no farming” – prohibiting livestock herding, settlements, or cultivation – and as an area to be managed as an ecological conservancy by the trust. These management agreements bring higher revenue to the Maasai communities than the yield from marginal farming and grazing, and are therefore an attractive proposition. To date, they have been funded with grants; MWCT is now working to raise a substantial endowment that would support the model in perpetuity. The goal of raising a USD 7-10 million conservancy trust fund was defined in 2012 as part of the trust’s four-year plan, which sets out the goal of transitioning from philanthropic grants to creating market-based revenue streams (such as carbon credits) and sustainable long-term models of underwriting (such as endowments.)

Community ownership

In each of its programs, MWCT is demonstrating effective and creative solutions that protect local ecosystems and support a model for delivering long-term benefits for rural communities. Strong community approval for MWCT benefit-sharing arrangements represents a key social component of the initiative’s stability and long-term sustainability. The trust holds itself to a high level of accountability to the community it serves, notably including how revenues flow into the community. The vast majority of direct benefits are paid in the form of new employment, whether in the community ranger program, at the Chyulu Conservation and Research Centre, or within the education and healthcare programs.

As well as being direct beneficiaries of the initiative, local community members are deeply involved in the governance of MWCT. While the trust benefits from having an experienced international board, local representation is never compromised or side-lined. Many of the key roles within the MWCT program areas are filled by local Maasai people. Ongoing training and education of younger community members ensures the capacity of future generations. The Director and Operations Commander of the community rangers program are both Maasai, as are the Wildlife Pays Coordinator, the Conservation Support Officer, and the Simba Scout Coordinator (Simba Scouts comprise eight Maasai warriors paid to patrol Kuku Group Ranch, recording animal – and particularly lion – sightings and locations.)

In 2009, MWCT acquired and renovated a defunct safari camp, transforming it into the Chyulu Conservation and Research Centre. The Centre serves as the MWCT headquarters and is a hub for its many collaborations and partnerships. Research activities provide further alternative livelihood opportunities for the local community, providing training and work for community members as staff, security guards and research assistants.

REPLICATION

The trust is constantly working to expand the reach and ambition of its conservation work. It has opened discussion with leading representatives of the Kenya tourism industry on how some of its best practices might be scaled up, including the application of a 'wildlife surcharge' on the guests of larger hotel concessions within the national parks. Extension of this approach would allow coordinated wildlife security work to be expanded throughout the Maasai lands between Amboseli and Tsavo National Parks.

Plans are also in place to scale-up the MWCT land conservancy initiative. Conservancy deals to date cover 12,000 acres, but have the potential to be expanded to 22,000 acres in the short-term. MWCT is negotiating further conservancy agreements, while simultaneously beginning to raise funds for the creation of a permanent endowment to fund the conservancy network in perpetuity. The help of potential partner funders is also being sought to assist in scaling the endowment and the conservancy network throughout the region.

In March 2011, MWCT hosted the first 'Chyulu Carbon Summit' at its headquarters in the Chyulu Conservation and Research Center. The goal was to discuss the potential for developing payment for ecosystem services schemes in the region, including carbon storage and REDD credits. Representatives from Kuku and Mbirikani Group Ranches, Kenya Wildlife Service, Conservation International, Wildlife Works, African Wildlife Foundation, UNEP and Maasailand Preservation Trust all participated, along with the Chyulu Forest Maasai stakeholders, government representatives, NGOs and private sector carbon brokers. This demonstrates the extent to which MWCT is becoming a regional centre of excellence for community-based conservation and sustainable land management.

Work is being undertaken with neighbouring Maasai communities to encourage the replication and uptake of the trust's activities. MWCT maintains a long-running collaboration with Maasailand

Preservation Trust, a 'sister' community trust in the same ecosystem, which now models its own livestock compensation strategy on the 'Wildlife Pays' program. Given that over three-quarters of Kenya is classified as arid and semi-arid lands, MWCT work has great potential to be replicated in other parts of the country. The UNDP-implemented GEF-Small Grants Programme has held discussions with MWCT to explore potential methods for replicating its activities and sharing knowledge gained in sustainable rangeland management with other pastoralist communities in neighbouring regions.

PARTNERS

MWCT's US-based partner affiliate, *Maasai Wilderness Conservation Fund* (MWCF) is a registered 501c3 non-profit, tax-exempt organization. MWCF raises funds from US donors which it grants to MWCT based on jointly approved budgets.

MWCT has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with *Kenya Wildlife Service*, the government entity responsible for wildlife in Kenya. KWS supports MWCT wildlife security operations and has approved the trust training program for conservation scouts.

Conservation International has been working with MWCT on developing payment for ecosystem services. Together with *Wildlife Works*, they are supporting the Kuku community in a REDD feasibility analysis. The trust has also secured the support of a number of other organizations in this endeavour, including: *AECOM*, who provide a wide range of technical services and assistance and have taken on the trust as a *pro bono* client; the *Solar Electric Light Fund*; and TEEB author Pavan Sukhdev's *GIST Advisory Group*, which is providing technical expertise on calculating the economic value of biodiversity and ecosystem services. The *JP Morgan Fund* has also provided support for this collaboration in PES.

MWCT partners with the *Zoological Society of London*, which has worked in Kenya for over 20 years with strong involvement in the development of national species management strategies, on species-specific research, monitoring, and conservation management. This partnership aims to develop standardized species monitoring protocols for the region. The trust has also engaged with US-based *Texas A&M University's Department of Ecosystem Science and Management* (formerly Forest Science and Rangeland Ecology and Management) to initiate a research partnership based at the Chyulu Conservation and Research Centre to study impacts of herding practice, fire and drought on grasslands, and to develop a long-term management strategy for sustainable use.

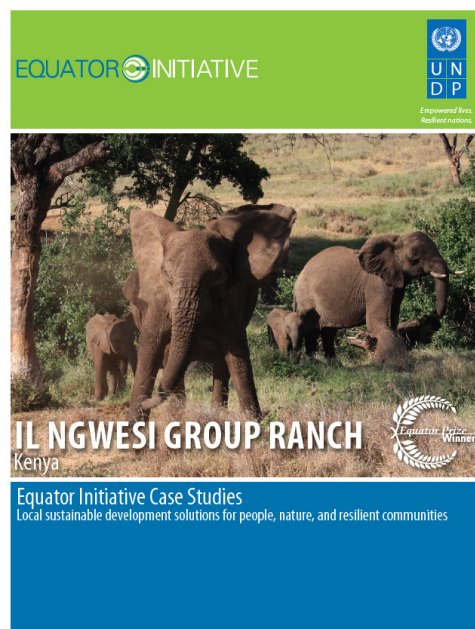
MWCT was selected by *Google Earth Outreach* as one of its 'model' projects for Africa. The trust was also awarded a three-year grant by the *Susan G. Komen For The Cure Foundation* to fund the employment of a Health Program Director. US-based NGO *Partners in Health* assisted the trust in recruitment for this new role.

Additional partnerships include support from *Hotelplan* (a Swiss tour operator), which donated USD 250,000 to build a primary school, including teachers' accommodation, and the *Le Rosey Foundation*, which donates USD 25,000 a year to sustain MWCT core programs.

FURTHER REFERENCE

- MWCT website: <http://www.maasaiwilderness.org/>
- Fundraising webpage for MWCT: www.crowdrise.com/maasaiwilderness
- MWCT brochure: http://maasaiwilderness.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/MWCT_Programs_Brochure.pdf
- MWCT Equator Initiative profile page: http://www.equatorinitiative.org/index.php?option=com_winners&view=winner_detail&id=100&Itemid=683

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