



# CONNEKT CONSERVING NEIGHBOURING ECOSYSTEMS IN KENYA AND TANZANIA



DECEMBER 2017 - FEBRUARY 2021

This report intends to share approaches, interventions, lessons learned and results from the CONNEKT project (*Greater Kilimanjaro Initiatives to enhance community participation in sustainable conservation of the trans frontier ecosystem and wildlife* - Grant Contract FED/2017/394-715), a transboundary conservation initiative connecting key wildlife dispersal in the Greater Kilimanjaro ecosystem, stretching across the Southern Kenya and Northern Tanzania borders.



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# WILDLIFE PROTECTION

In Tanzania

**19** ENDUIMET RANGERS

(of which 7 women) with no previous training were trained as Community Rangers\*



**8** RANGER POSTS

and gates equipped with photovoltaic systems, enabling Enduimet WMA rangers to operate 24/7



**A NEW DIGITAL RADIO SYSTEM**

installed in Enduimet WMA links rangers, 4 gates, the management headquarters and the District Game Officer, increasing the safety of people and wildlife



**38** COMMUNITY RANGERS

obtained a further firearm handling training and certificate from the Tanzanian Government

## WOMEN

**339** WOMEN IN TANZANIA

AND

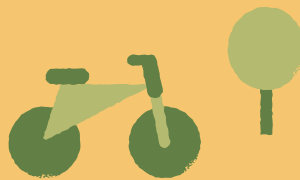
**25** WOMEN IN KENYA

have learnt about Marketplace Literacy, and can identify micro business opportunities in the villages



**7** WOMEN

were trained as rangers and are employed in Enduimet WMA



**45** WOMEN

were trained in eco-tourism business start-up

**174** WOMEN

were trained in milk production



\* Village Game Scouts in Tanzania, Rangers in Kenya

# CONNECTIVITIES



Rombo and Kitirua conservancies covering

**220** km<sup>2</sup>

have new Management Plans, securing their role as key wildlife connectivities in Kenya



5 communities in the 3,650 km<sup>2</sup> unprotected wildlife corridor, the Maparasha-Iliangurunyi, share today

**5** COMMUNITY RANGERS

to protect people and wildlife

# SECURING LIVELIHOODS

**394**  
FAMILIES

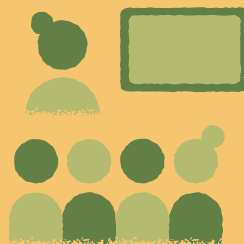


secured their crops

AND

# EDUCATION

More than  
**4,000**  
STUDENTS



AND

**58** ENVIRONMENTAL TEACHERS

from priority wildlife corridors in Kenya and Tanzania worked together to improve human-wildlife coexistence

**1,758** ha  
OF CROPLAND

were protected successfully with simple tools to prevent crop destruction

# PROJECT FACTSHEET

## KEY INFORMATION

Sector: Conservation

Lead Partner: Oikos East Africa

Other Partners: African Conservation Centre, Istituto Oikos

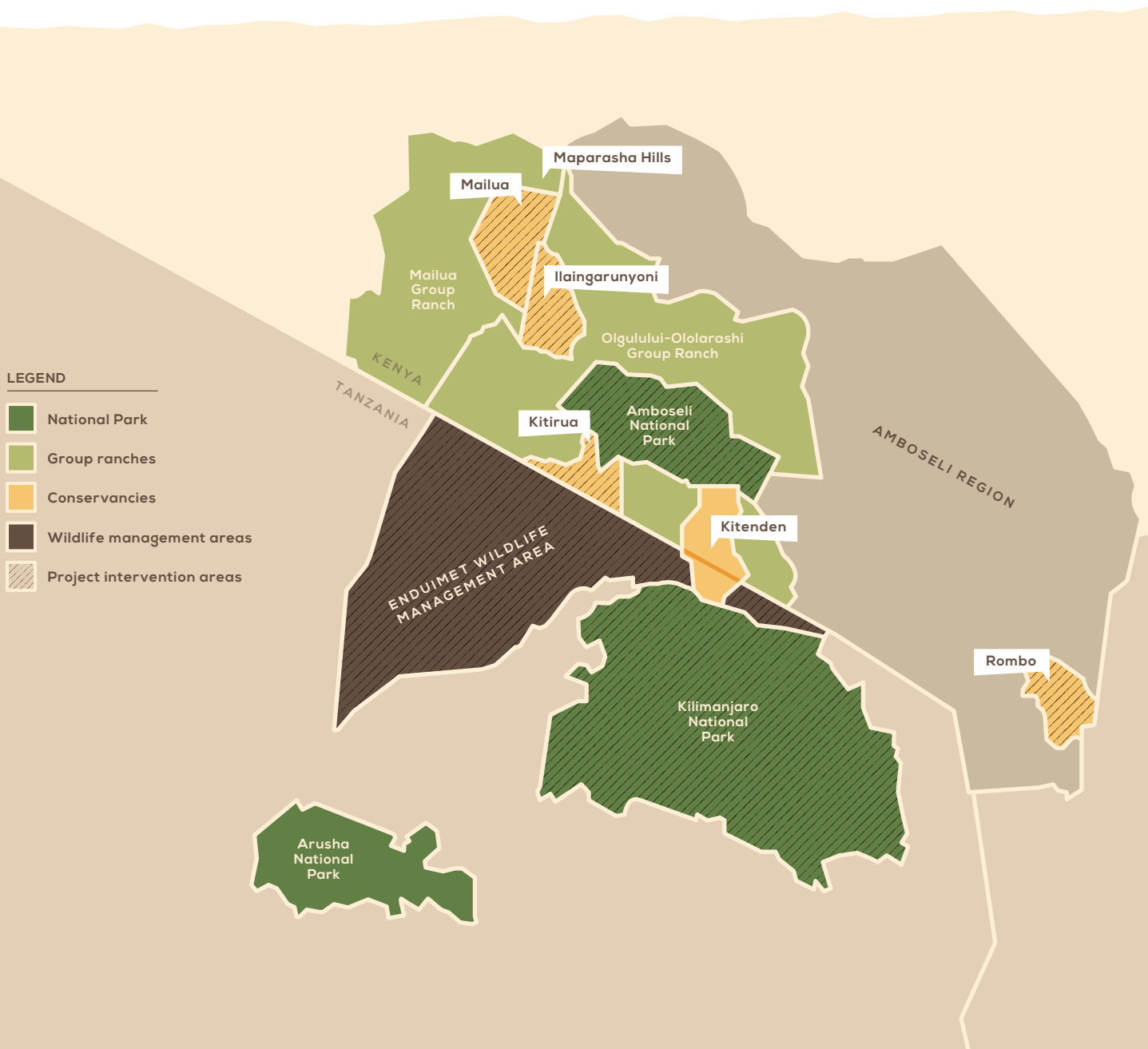
Budget: EUR 1,439,289 (EU contribution 1,151,431 EUR) Duration: December 2017 - February 2021

## BACKGROUND

The southern Kenya-northern Tanzania borderland area is one of the richest in Africa for wildlife and biodiversity.

The region spans 16 parks and reserves, but wildlife populations rely heavily on seasonal dispersal and migration in areas outside the protected areas. These same areas are also supporting pastoralist communities. Increased livestock density, land use changes, fencing and climate change are the biggest threats to the survival of people, livestock and wildlife in the Greater Kilimanjaro ecosystem, where rangeland's productivity declined over 30% in recent years.

The project is built on several decades of work on the ecology and conservation and with communities to increase their commitment and ability to protect wildlife. It is designed to integrate traditional values and knowledge with rigorous data informed decisions.



# 1. UNDERSTANDING AND CONSERVING CONNECTIVITIES

CONNEXT was established with the aim of conserving some of the remaining vital dispersal connections in **one of the most diverse ecosystems on earth**, stretching over 15,500 km<sup>2</sup>. Its focus was guided by those identified as urgent priority by the Borderland Conservation Initiative, a trans border information sharing network comprising all levels of stakeholder from communities to government authorities.

Both the traditional Maasai pastoralist livestock management systems and the wildlife rely on the same seasonal movements to find grazing, water, minerals and suitable habitat in dry and wet seasons. **Maintaining the ability to move freely through the rangeland is therefore crucial to both wildlife and livestock.**

Protecting wildlife corridors is a priority both in Kenya and Tanzania Wildlife Conservation Acts; Kenya's Vision 2030 has recognised corridors as an important aspect of its future development and Tanzania has finalized in 2021 an extensive corridor analysis ranking all existing corridors by functionality and protection needs. Community managed Conservancies and Wildlife Management Areas conserve in both countries the most important remaining wildlife corridors.

In **Kenya**, the project targeted the community **Conservancies of Kitirua and Rombo**, and the **proposed conservancies of Iliangaranyoni-Maparasha** which, as part of the surrounding Maasai Group Ranches frame and connect the core wildlife area of Amboseli National Park with Tsavo and Chyulu Hills National Parks, the Southern Rift and across the national border and in **Tanzania** the 11 communities forming **Enduimet Wildlife Management Area**, a 750 km<sup>2</sup> natural dispersal area and key corridor between Amboseli, Kilimanjaro and Meru National Parks and the Lake Natron ecosystem.

## ENDUIMET WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA (TANZANIA)

In Tanzania CONNEKT targeted the 11 rural communities which in 2003 had established **Enduimet Wildlife Management Area (EWMA)**, a 750 km<sup>2</sup> wilderness area joining the Kilimanjaro-Amboseli ecosystems and functioning as an important wet season dispersal area and feeding ground for Amboseli and Kilimanjaro wildlife: **of the 1600 elephants monitored** by the Amboseli Trust for Elephants, **30% spend part, or most of the year, in Tanzania** between Enduimet and Kilimanjaro.

EWMA promotes biodiversity conservation, tourism and the sustainable social economy development of the **40,000 community members of the eleven villages** of Tingatinga, Ngereyani, Elerai, Olmolog, Lerang'wa, Kitenden, Irkaswa, Iremeta, Endonyomali, Ildonyoo and Kamwanga.

CONNEXT created **new nature-based business opportunities**, provided equipment for the development of ecotourism and Human-Wildlife mitigation means to **more than 160 farmers**, engaged with **300 women** and **more than 4,000 children** to promote conservation of natural resources and strengthened the WMA governance.

## MAPARASHA - ILIANGURUNYIONI PROPOSED CONSERVANCY (KENYA)

The Matapato Maparasha-Iliangurunyioni landscape is a very important yet poorly known and underfunded wildlife corridor located between Amboseli and Shompole-Olkiramatian Group Ranches in the South Rift. The area covers 3,650 km<sup>2</sup> and encompasses five communities (Meto, Lorngosua, Maliua, Osilalei, Oldonyo Orok). **No formal protected areas exist within the Matapato region**, requiring communities and wildlife to coexist side by side with very little conflict mitigation services. **Incidents of wildlife crime and human wildlife conflict** represented tipping points which can either reinforce or undermine conservation efforts in the region. Effectively managing such incidents highlights the importance of **having community-led conservation efforts** that draw on community leaders and teams of community rangers on hand to respond and foster conservation action in the region. CONNEKT funded the Southern Rift Association of Land Owners (SORALO) to employ 5 community rangers which today patrol this area, monitoring wildlife movements, anti-poaching, responding to conflict incidents and are trained as Conservation Ambassadors with the community.

### ROMBO EMAMPULI CONSERVANCY (KENYA)

The Rombo Emampuli Conservancy was set aside as 100 km<sup>2</sup> in 2010 and lies to the east and north east of Rombo Group Ranch. It is an important link for wildlife between Tsavo West NP and the Amboseli ecosystem and it is used by elephants, giraffes, wild dog, eland, lesser kudu, gerenuk, impala, as well as jackal, leopard, lion, pangolin and has rich and varied birdlife. The conservancy northern boundary is defined by the Mokoine River, that arises in the Loitokitok forest on Kilimanjaro and continues to Tsavo West NP. It has been **exploited for irrigated agriculture and settlements** and as part of the land use planning and conservancy management planning the community chose to excise a limited area from the Conservancy, and instead, add an area of approximately 3,000 ha in the south along the Tsavo West border, so that the entire Tsavo border to the Rombo Group Ranch adjoins the Conservancy today. The **security** and **anti-poaching** for the Conservancy and Group Ranch is carried out by the conservation organization BigLife, managing **35 community rangers from 2 ranger posts**. For the past 12 years Olowuaru Camp in the south west corner has been the only functioning source of eco-tourism revenue for the community and the collector of research and monitoring information. In 2020 the conservancy management drafted an agreement with an investor from the adjacent Kuku Group Ranch to lease **2,000 ha** and build a lodge in the north east area of the Conservancy, thus increasing revenue from tourism.

CONNEXT worked closely with the ACC consultants for the **development of the Land Use and Grazing Plans** and has produced the **Conservancy Management Plan**, an essential requirement for Rombo full registration, according to the 2013 Wildlife Act. The Plan will be implemented by the Rombo Wildlife Conservancy Trust (RWCT), some of the main achievements are that the protected area increased by 20% to 12,000 ha and benefits the 3,684 Group Ranch member households and now has guidelines on moving forward. The Land Use and Grazing Plans are also being implemented with input and monitoring from CONNEKT and an MoU is being agreed for long term partnership between ACC and RWCT.

### KITIRUA CONSERVANCY (KENYA)

Kitirua Conservancy was established in 1984 as the first conservancy in Amboseli ecosystem. The conservancy covers approximately 120 km<sup>2</sup> (12,140 ha) and is the direct ecological link between Amboseli National Park and Enduimet WMA in Tanzania, elephants and livestock move across the two protected areas. Livestock grazing is regulated and **rangers play a key role in protecting the grazing areas**. The high income from the exclusive tourism uses from two long term investors, Ker and Downey Ltd and Elewana Ltd, benefits the **11,485 households** of Olgulului-Olarashi Group Ranch (OAGR). The income from tourism also funds all wildlife protection operations which are ensured by 16 rangers and a conservancy manager. In 2020 the OAGR Group Ranch subdivision plans **nearly doubled the size of the conservancy** and new lease agreements are under discussion.

CONNEXT has produced the **Kitirua Conservancy Management Plan**.



Fed by the waters of Mount Kilimanjaro ecosystem, Lake Amboseli is a permanent source of water for wildlife and livestock.





**“Before the CONNEKT project I was a single ranger trying to cover a very large area, however now I have a team of four rangers and the equipment we need to work. KWS has seen the effort we are making and as a result want to work very closely with us”.**

Moses Parorit, SORALO ranger in Maparasha

## 2. COEXISTENCE

Human-wildlife coexistence is **one of the most pressing conservation issues in Kenya and Tanzania**. Population growth and migration, land use changes and sometimes good conservation efforts with outcomes that include local increase of wildlife populations, have exacerbated the conflict between people and wildlife.

CONNEXT invested human and capital resources to mitigate and, where possible, **resolve the drivers of conflict**, promoting coexistence and increasing tolerance.

Achieving a peaceful coexistence with neighbours as large as elephants requires multiple interventions. Individuals must feel safe, must be able to protect their livelihoods, and must be able to have alternatives.

A range of interventions building on **new knowledge, basic equipment, appropriate low cost and tested technologies** such as chili fencing, showed that prevention of conflict and loss of livelihoods is achievable and affordable.

In Tanzania farmers were coached and equipped with a set of tools that deter wildlife from invading cropland and organised themselves in specialised Crop Protection Teams. This community led set up proved to be an effective strategy to support coexistence. Thanks to the introduction of skills and equipment, **the livelihoods of at least 394 families were secured and 1,758 ha of cropland were protected** (Table 1).

CONNEXT also networked with various Tanzania-based organisations working on different models of Human Wildlife Conflict (HWC) mitigation to stimulate knowledge-exchange and facilitate the dialogue between teams working frontline to promote coexistence. As a contribution to the recently developed Tanzania Human Wildlife Conflict National Strategy CONNEX also engaged with the Tanzania Wildlife Agency (TAWA) Northern Zone to identify skills and equipment needed to **form a team of rangers specialised in HWC mitigation**. Twenty TAWA rangers visited 5 different models of community-led mitigation initiatives piloted by organisations such as Tanzania People and Wildlife, Kope Lion, Lion Landscapes, Southern Tanzania Elephant Project and Enduimet WMA. Hands-on observations of different solutions tailored for a complex range of landscapes and livelihoods was a stepping-stone in forming **the first team of specialists at national level**. In Kenya CONNEX allowed to supported recruitment of five community game rangers from the Matapato region, and training (inhouse), equipment and deployment of these rangers and others deployed in the area, enabling them to secure 3,650 km<sup>2</sup>. Additional co-financing support was mobilised to send all five Matapato rangers for a three-month ranger training at the Kenya Wildlife Service Law Enforcement Academy in Manayani. The advanced training enabled the 5 Matapato rangers to conduct **joint patrols and coordinate operations** in partnerships with other wildlife protection and conservation entities in the Amboseli region, namely Kenya Wildlife Service, Olgulului Community Rangers, Biglife and Lion Guardians.



CONNEX trained 24 Village Game Scouts. Women are a core element of wildlife protection, and the WMA offers job opportunities to young Tanzanians.



Elephants strongly dislike the smell of chili. A chili fence made of hanging cloths impregnated with chili powder and oil is a very effective elephant deterrent. Producing chilli powder is labour intensive, but chili is homegrown and a cheap ingredient.

Crop Type	Beans	Maize	Wheat	Tomato	Banana	Maize & Beans	Other	TOTAL
<b>Total ha</b>	747	556	5	329	0.4	145	154	1937
<b>ha Secured</b>	685	479	5	317	0.2	125	148	1758
<b>% area secured</b>	92%	86%	93%	96%	50%	96%	86%	91%

Crops protected by village Crop Protection Teams in village members of Enduimet WMA.

## 3. INVESTING IN NATURE

### FREEDOM TO EXPLORE (TANZANIA)

Wildlife tourism is one of the most important economic activities of Kenya and Tanzania contributing respectively to 10% and 15% of the two countries GDP.

CONNEKT aimed at **supporting community-led tourism enterprises** which could directly generate income for people coexisting with wildlife. Through a partnership with Honeyguide Foundation, the catch phrase **Freedom to explore** integrated a pool of marketing initiatives which build knowledge, offered business opportunities, equipped small tour operators and unlocked the potential for wildlife tourism in the landscape.

In Tanzania, CONNEKT aligned the interventions in support of ecotourism development to the needs of Enduimet WMA, a poorly known community-based protected area outside the class safari circuit.

CONNEKT increased the visibility of the **Greater Kilimanjaro as a tourism destination** through a pool of marketing initiatives:

- **8 visibility boards** were placed on main roads and junctions that lead to the WMA
- **postcards** were printed and distributed at tourism fairs and key high-traffic shops in Arusha
- a high-quality **promotional video** was produced and is visible on YouTube, including both Tanzania and Kenya sites
- **a new dedicated website** for the Greater Kilimanjaro Ecosystem allows to download 16 cross country safari itineraries ([www.connect-kilimanjaro.info](http://www.connect-kilimanjaro.info))
- the WMA and the Longido Cultural Tourism Programme, located a few km from the Kenyan border, received **camping equipment and bicycles** to increase visitor's opportunities to explore.

**The COVID-19 pandemic exposed some unanticipated fragilities of the international tourism business, suspending the full potential of the outcomes of the project, but tools and knowledge will remain among the beneficiaries to exploit future opportunities.**

# TRAIL BLAZE

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## Itinerary 1

An 8-day safari in the west Kilimanjaro area riding camels, staying in a 'Maasai Boma' styled camp, seeing elephants in the Amboseli flat pans and trekking up Longido Mountain. It is going to be an active 8 days of adventure and fun.

[Download Itinerary](#)



## Itinerary 2

This is an 8-day adventure taking you round Kilimanjaro, heading off to the eastern slopes, and then traversing round the north through green forest of the Kitenden, down the slopes towards the west and Sinya pans and Engasurai plains. Nights spent camping and staying in the magic of a replica Maasai village.

[Download Itinerary](#)



## Itinerary 3

A 6-day safari in the West Kilimanjaro area riding camels, staying in a 'Maasai Boma' styled camp, seeing elephants in the Amboseli flat pans. This 6 day adventure is full of a diverse selection of activities and places to stay.

[Download Itinerary](#)



## Itinerary 4

This is a 6-day adventure taking you round Kilimanjaro, heading off to the eastern slopes, and then traversing round the north through green forest of the Kitenden, down the slopes towards the west and Sinya pans and Engasurai plains. Nights spent camping and staying in the magic of a replica Maasai village.

[Download Itinerary](#)



## Itinerary 5

A 4-day safari in the west Kilimanjaro area riding camels, travelling to Enduimet and seeing elephants in the Amboseli flat pans.

[Download Itinerary](#)



## Itinerary 6

This is a 4-day adventure taking you round Kilimanjaro, heading off to the eastern slopes, and then traversing round the north through green forest of the Kitenden, down the slopes towards the west and Sinya pans and Engasurai plains for some walking and biking.

[Download Itinerary](#)

16 downloadable itineraries to explore the Greater Kilimanjaro Ecosystem @ [www.connect-kilimanjaro.info](http://www.connect-kilimanjaro.info)

### NOONKOTIAK WOMEN CENTRE AND OLOWUARU CAMP (KENYA)

Noonkotia Women's Cultural Centre (*Enkang ontomonok*) is situated close to Kimana Gate of Amboseli NP in a piece of land set aside by the community. CONNEKT has provided **soft furnishings** for the beds, chairs, tables and cupboards **and kitchen equipment**. A training workshop was held to help the women understand their registration and fundraising approaches and aspects like medicinal plant walks, and the Enkang hosted the Oikos MPL training of trainers in Kenya. A **flyer** has been produced, a **Facebook page** established and a **young Maasai** from the community who has had hospitality training and experience is partially **supported to help marketing, coordination and guidance**. Noonkotia and Olowuaru were also featured in the CONNEKT videos. COVID-19 constraints on international visitors have shown that the ideal market to target is the domestic visitor, with their own transport who would like a cheap and unique place to stay close to Amboseli, as well as the international visitors who would visit but not stay.

Olowuaru Camp in Rombo Conservancy has been a valuable eco-tourism initiative with a research angle for 11 years. The Director and community camp staff have been a major partner in the conservancy management planning, providing information, photos, data and accommodation. ACC has been able to channel other funds into the **rehabilitation of the camp**, replacing the main tent with a building, purchasing 2 new tents, furnishings, solar power and building showers and toilets. This has made it suitable for hosting meetings and education activities, of which **2 major events** have already been held and enabled development as a Research Centre and for Research based Eco-Tourism.

### NAROPIL MILK COOPERATIVE (KENYA)

Naropil Milk Cooperative was an on-going initiative that CONNEKT has added value to by supporting a **training programme in milk hygiene, handling and marketing for 196 people (174 women, 22 men)** at 7 cluster sites. A milk ATM at Kimana was hired until full milk bulking in the cooler could be underway and in the first quarter of 2020 earned KSh 438,210 even though COVID-19 forced closures of restaurants and cafes that had been major purchasers of the milk.

In pastoralist societies handling of milk is the responsibility of women: **this initiative benefits women directly** and aims also to enhance careful rangeland and grazing management by showing the value of healthy rangelands in support of higher milk yields thus higher income.

### WOMEN'S LEATHER COOPERATIVE (TANZANIA)

**Tanzania hosts the third largest livestock population of Africa**, nevertheless, a number of reasons have so far hindered an adequate valorisation of the leather sector. Today, most part of the sector's exported goods are raw skins which are shipped to Asia and Europe, therefore, the added value is extremely low. Yet, the Tanzanian Government has recognised the strategic importance of the leather sector. Unprocessed skins have no value but are abundant in pastoralist communities, **through tanning the value increases up to tenfold**. Natural tanning, using the locally sourced vegetable bark of black wattle (*Acacia mearnsii*), commonly called mimosa, does not require the use of chrome, complex machineries or large amounts of water and its environmental impacts are minimal. **Natural tanning is a labour-intensive process**, each tanning cycle lasts 21-28 days for cattle skins and 7-14 days for goats/sheep skins. During each cycle, the leather must be stirred 3 times a day and the soaking baths of water, lime, ammonium sulphate and fresh papaya must be replaced every 2 to 3 days. The hard-earned money from selling leather can be used by the women to **educate their children, pay for medical bills, and invest in saving groups**.

CONNEKT has trained **24 women** from the Enduimet communities and equipped a leather processing centre in Sinya. The Sinya artisanal group is associated with a larger network of almost 100 women supported by the EU in previous programmes and working in artisanal leather production, the benefits of being part of the larger consortium are the services of a **marketing manager and technical support**.

In 2020 COVID-19 severely impacted the business opportunities arising from the tourism business, and **for 4 months the centre remained closed to prevent the spread of the virus**, nevertheless, the Sinya Women Group has been supported to attend national fairs and markets and managed to reach **a turnover of approximately 300 USD**.



## 4. COMMUNICATION ACROSS BORDERS

Kenya and Tanzania share some of the most biodiverse ecosystems of the world. The CONNEKT landscape hosts some irreplaceable wildlife corridors that contribute to maintain the gene flow which is essential for healthy ecosystems. Different land tenure, national policies and economic growth do not favour data and information flow between the two countries, but by following rigorous national protocols CONNEKT strived to build dialogue from neighbours across borders. The strongest rationale for such exchanges was **building trust between actors** working for the same goals but separated by political boundaries.

CONNEKT organised a **cross border dialogue strengthening workshop** in Longido in 2018, followed in 2019 by a cross-border exchange visit for conservation practitioners. From Kenya this involved the Conservancy Managers and Group Ranch Chairpersons from Kitirua, Rombo and Matapato as well as the Deputy Senior Warden of Amboseli NP, who is now the senior Warden and from Tanzania representatives from Enduimet WMA, Kilimanjaro National Park, Meru National Park and District Game Officers. Although the investment was substantial, these were extremely beneficial events. One result that already materialised is **regular joint cross-border patrols between OOCR and Enduimet WMA** which are now held quarterly, with rangers from the respective countries patrolling large areas at the same time, thus increasing impact of antipoaching operations. CONNEKT project managers have also attended a **Northern Tanzania Corridors workshop in 2020** and two regional Southern Kenya, Northern Tanzania communication and planning workshops.

A **visit of women from Kenya** to the leatherwork and eco-tourism initiatives in Tanzania and a **Marketplace Literacy training workshop** given by Tanzanian trainers to Kenyan women has increased informal communication and facilitated learning of practical means of livelihood enhancement. CONNEKT also facilitated Conservation Education exchanges. Visits from the ACC Education Outreach Officer to conservation education activities run by Oikos and reverse visits of the Oikos team to a Wildlife Clubs of Kenya patrons training workshop in Kenya stimulated frequent exchange of ideas and information and practical materials.



*Mrs Betty Looiboki and Mr Kenneth Ole Nashuu, respectively Senior Wardens of Kilimanjaro and Amboseli National Parks met for the first time in 2018 in Longido, Tanzania, during a dialogue-strengthening workshop organised by CONNEKT.*



## 5. INVESTING IN CHILDREN

Children are instrumental for the future survival of Kenya and Tanzania natural heritage. In both countries CONNEKT invested in children and youth and **engaged with more than 4,000 children** through education conservation school programmes, children drama groups, clean-up days, wildlife field trips and broadcasting radio programmes narrated by children. This range of initiatives aimed at **improving attitude toward human wildlife coexistence** and at increasing appreciation of the values of conservation of wildlife as a key element of development, as well as showcase opportunities arising from wildlife conservation. Rangers visiting schools and presenting on their jobs disclosed the potential for business and career opportunities, and increased understanding of the scope of law enforcement.

The education programme in Kenya worked in partnership with the Wildlife Clubs of Kenya and a training weekend for the patrons of Wildlife Clubs was held in 2019, attended by 37 teachers (23 men, 14 women) from 6 schools plus the sub-county Education officer, 6 ACC CONNEKT team members, and 3 CONNEKT Oikos team members, with training by 2 WCK trainers. In Kenya a total of **6 schools Wildlife Clubs** are now active, with **1,354 children** participating, 100 school conservation teachers and 6 head teachers involved whilst in Tanzania CONNEKT targeted more than **3,000 children from 5 schools**.

Lockdowns during COVID-19 impacted the programme which had everyone's safety as a core priority, but this also pushed the team to identify creative solutions such as **exclusively outdoors activities**, nature walks and fact-finding, conservation plays and drama, conservation film sessions, artwork and poetry, conservation debates and games, poster development on the theme of 'Reduce, Reuse & Recycle' at home and bird-watching, all held outdoors. CONNEKT education initiatives mobilised funds from the Kenyan Community Wildlife Fund (CWF), which sponsored a **bird watching weekend** at Olowuaru Camp in Rombo for 6 students mostly pastoralists, who identified new bird species which were added to the Rombo bird list. Wildlife based "bush cinema" films were shown in the evenings and a professional quality video was made and further partnership activities planned.

Conservation of rangeland ecosystems as a tool to increase pastoralist communities wellbeing and climate change resilience was at the centre of an innovative **10-episode radio programme** which was partly narrated by children from Enduimet WMA schools. The programme was co-funded by CONNEKT and broadcasted in Tanzania by the Tanzania Broadcasting Corporation, the largest national media outlet. Education conservation through radio was **the safest way to deliver messages to a wide audience during the COVID-19 pandemic**.



## 6. GOVERNANCE

Good governance of protected areas is **one of the most important drivers for the success of any wildlife protection scheme**. Embarking in initiatives to improve transparency and accountability of governing authorities is a challenge that often does not show immediate results and can raise conflict and retaliation when incorrect processes are exposed. Acting on governance processes was therefore a very delicate aspect of CONNEKT's project setup. **In Tanzania**, CONNEKT has delivered **a series of tailored trainings** based on needs assessments **to the key governing bodies of Enduimet WMA**. These are constituted by the Authorised Association - AA (a community-based representation of 3 community members per village forming the WMA, namely Ildonyo, Leremeta, Endonyoemali, Tingatinga, Ngereyani, Elerai, Olmolog, Lerangwa, Kitenden, Irkaswa and Kamwanga) and the 10-members board. The board unfortunately changed after the training and a refresher training was delivered to the new 10 board members. One important training outcome reported by the AA was the **increased awareness of the roles and the rights of communities in the management of the protected area**, and a better understanding of benefit sharing regulations.

Another governance tool which was set to increase the project's outcomes was **the creation of a consortium of partners** engaged in strengthening the capacity and upgrading the equipment for tourism and antipoaching of Enduimet WMA. The consortium was formed in 2018 and regulated by an MoU and included implementing partners Oikos, Honeyguide Foundation, Big Life Foundation and The Nature Conservancy, together with the district of Longido and the WMA as final beneficiaries. In 2018, the consortium and the WMA representatives agreed on the need to support the WMA through a dedicated protected area manager, a setup which proved very successful in other WMAs in Northern Tanzania; The Nature Conservancy sustained the WMA with funds to cover the costs of the salary of the manager.

The 2017 WMA constitution was revised in 2018 to accommodate also roles and responsibilities of the WMA manager who become the liaison person between CONNEKT, the consortium of development partners and the WMA governance representatives. The position is today self-funded by the WMA.

During the project's lifespan, the implementing partners collaborated on multiple levels, met quarterly, engaged as a coalition with the WMA avoiding cross communications, identified synergies and needs, harmonised some protocols and technologies provided to the WMA and strengthened the respective interventions. It was also instrumental that Big Life was working in the same landscape as CONNEKT in the Kenya landscape on a parallel EU funded intervention, thus allowing for extra coordination. This mechanism was definitely a positive addition to CONNEKT's governance.



*The Longido District Commissioner delivers the training certificate to a newly trained female ranger. Occupational opportunities deriving from wildlife conservation are one clear community benefit.*

## 7. THE FUTURE: CONSERVING ECOSYSTEMS WITH COMMUNITIES IN THE DRIVING SEAT

There is a strong evidence that the long-term sustainability of conservation efforts increases when it is led-by, and directly benefits, the bearers of the risks of coexisting with wildlife. **In Kenya, over 65% of wildlife is found outside protected areas and reserves**, and mostly in landscapes shared with pastoral communities who are keen to co-exist with wildlife as long as they are meaningfully engaged in championing and benefiting from conservation efforts. Kenya has recognized community conservancies as a land use under the Wildlife Act of 2013, making them an attractive land use option for communities and landowners. By placing **communities at the centre of wildlife conservation** and improving conservation incentives, conservancies in Kenya are securing livelihoods while reversing wildlife decline.

Lack of ownership and benefits that communities receive from conservation initiatives hinders their long-term commitment. In Tanzania, recent policies such as the **National Human-Wildlife Conflict Strategy**, signed in October 2020, pivots around community engagement and advocates for applicable, sustainable and locally available technologies to increase tolerance towards wildlife, including promoting direct and tangible benefits. As a step toward a better structured engagement of communities in conservation strategies, **the new policy actually goes beyond acknowledging local communities and makes them central to conservation**. In Kenya, the local communities in the Amboseli ecosystem together with stakeholders - NGOs and county government, have developed a **10-year ecosystem management plan (AEMP) 2018-2028** with financial support from KWS and ACC to guide an integrated management strategy for that landscape. This has empowered the community in being front and centre to determine and balance the various development and land use interests.

CONNEKT has built on these principles and has expanded pilot initiatives to **ensure that the basic principles of community-based conservation were put into practice**. For instance, human wildlife conflict prevention schemes are established and owned by the farmers; children were made aware of what the economic advantages and the career opportunities are offered by wildlife and why is nature conservation central to everyone's wellbeing; improved dialogue between law enforcement authorities such as government rangers, village leadership, group ranch representatives, and community representatives increased transparency and reduced opportunities for powerful politics and corruption; conservancy management plans in Kenya for Rombo and Kitirua, developed by CONNEKT, were entirely community driven. Realising a Management Plan in a participatory manner is complex and not free of obstacles; restrictive utilisation of resources which could have increased chances for rapid rangeland restoration were excluded from the Management Plan in Rombo, grazing limitations were not well received by pastoralist communities and personal interests still influenced some of the decisions, but sustainable resource management also leads to conservancies being valuable dry season grass banks, and **vital wildlife corridors between Kenya and Tanzania are today better protected thanks to clear management tools**. Collaborative efforts and new partnership between conservation organisations were essential aspects of these successes.

## 8. LESSONS FROM THE FIELD AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Transboundary initiatives are complex and require a lot of effort to overcome radically different legal and customary national frameworks. The foundation to build dialogue between actors was based on mutual trust, trust was built on communication that was achieved through face-to-face meetings involving stakeholders from the grassroots level to the institutional one. The process to achieve spontaneous transboundary coordination to increase wildlife protection had to **overcome logistical and monetary constraints** and requires longer time than 3 years to be fully achieved. **CONNEKT set the foundations for future dialogue**, but collaborative mechanisms should be embedded in the national wildlife protection policies to be independent from donor funds.
- **Community based conservation can be successful if communities** are in the driving seat and **receive tangible and relevant benefits**. Transparent, accountable governance mechanisms should nevertheless be in place and audited by third parties even when communities own and manage their natural resources.
- External mechanisms to support grassroots conservation initiatives is possible if **strong relations with local communities are developed**, understanding their needs and designing solutions (simple and adoptable).



A ranger helps a community member offload his bicycle. Collaboration and mutual respect build also on simple actions.

- Human-wildlife conflict was identified as a major set-back in the path to coexistence and more investment than initially foreseen was needed. **Equipment to mitigate conflict must be sturdy, locally available and intuitive to use.** A key factor for the long-term sustainability of Human Wildlife Conflict Mitigation practices was to establish **few and simple procedures** and support the creation of organised teams at community level. Data-driven selection of effective tools proved to be very successful, adoption of effective and convincing solutions among non-direct beneficiaries were observed already at the end of the project.
- **The sub-division of OOCR** announced in 2019 during the Amboseli Ecosystem Management Planning was an unexpected development which has led to internal and policy complications among land-owners and stakeholders (factors outside the project control). However **the innovative design of the sub-division plan**, maintaining shared grazing zones, conservation areas and limiting settlement, while issuing virtual as opposed to land based titles could become an example for other pastoralist communities. ACC is committed to assisting implementation.
- COVID-19 was a major and unexpected constraint for CONNEKT, but it stimulated **creative solutions** in particular for the educational activities such as designing more outdoor events, innovative radio programmes, and for the rangers antipoaching patrols (more smaller teams to prevent contagion increase coverage and account for possible increased medical leave days - SORALO).
- Having the opportunity to develop a **focus on areas such as Rombo and Maparasha** that had previously had very little attention proved very valuable and worth long-term commitment.
- All tools required by existing policies must be in place to **bring the voice of community based protected areas to the public discourse** and attract funding and investors. Management plans were a key stepping-stone toward the accountable development of Rombo and Kitirua.
- **Enduimet WMA was a poorly known tourism destination** but through a professionally designed marketing campaign CONNEKT has put Enduimet on the map.
- Community-led and driven conservation **takes time to build momentum.** In the Maparasha corridor it took until the third year of the project for communities to see the impact of the project's first two years and momentum around conservation begin to snowball on its own.
- Conducting wildlife protection on privately owned land requires ranger teams to have **very good interpersonal skills as well as the respect** and backing of the wider community and leaders. The SORALO training for Conservation Ambassadors enhanced this skill for the community rangers.
- **Coordination** between implementing partners working in the same landscape was instrumental to achieving greater goals and should be a requirement of conservation initiatives.

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