

Q2 2020

Kasigau Corridor REDD+ Project **Impact Report**

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Q2 2020 Summary

Strength and sustainability in the face of a global pandemic

Long-term investments continue to show their positive impact, in combination with adaptive project activities.

Sustainable agriculture and elephant deterrents: Increased change in attitude towards improved agricultural techniques and Human-Wildlife Conflict deterrents

COVID-19 assistance for communities: continued distribution of handwashing buckets and masks, as well as food assistance to those most vulnerable

Hadithi Crafts Support Group: Continued dedication to community income streams despite challenging conditions





Sustainable agriculture and elephant deterrent fences: Improved agricultural techniques are effectively deterring Human-Wildlife Conflict and rapidly changing attitudes within the community

The Sasenyi and Ngambeyi regions within the project area are particular hotspots for Human-Wildlife Conflict. The project has been working since 2013 on long term research and development of agricultural practices and systems to reduce Human-Wildlife Conflict, especially with elephants which regularly destroy smallholder crops that are essential to household food security and livelihoods.

In Sasenyi, Wildlife Works has long worked with deterrent fences, initially starting with chilli and engine oil fences, on frontline farms on the boundary of Rukinga Sanctuary. The type of fences used shifted as the team looked into more sustainable options that were both affordable with locally available materials, and more successful in deterring elephants. The use of a metal strip and binding wire fence, affectionately known as the “Kasaine Fence” after the Wildlife Works researcher implementing the project, started in late 2013.

The program expanded in 2018 to include tests of different crops (including black-eyed peas, white sorghum, moringa, and rough lemons), as well as climate-smart agricultural practices including zy pits (tree planting holes filled with mulch, manure and compost) and V-bands (land-forming to interrupt and infiltrate water). Overall, the goal is to deter elephants through a combination of confusing sights and sounds, and less palatable crops, while improving yields and requiring fewer inputs.

This quarter, lush crops are thriving in farms testing combinations of these new soil and water conservation techniques, different crops and elephant-deterrent fences. The results have been evident and compelling both to the farmers adopting these practices, and to their neighbours. The research team has seen a recent and clear shift in attitudes toward these practices at the main test farm site of Sasenyi in Marugu location. Additional farmers in Ngambenyi in Kasigau location, which is a secondary test site where deterrent fences have been installed, have also seen a reduction in Human Wildlife Conflict.

Years of testing different fences and crops are now coming to fruition, and although uptake on neighbouring farms is still low, there is significant promise for the years to come in helping farmers' efforts to increase productivity and protect their crops.



Highlights





COVID-19 assistance for communities: Continued distribution of handwashing buckets and masks, and food assistance to the most vulnerable community members

In the spirit of Harambe, the Kenyan tradition of community self-help, the county within which the project operates has established a County Resource Mobilization Committee to identify urgent needs and priorities in the community during the time of COVID. Wildlife Works was nominated to be a member of the Committee, with the project's Head of Community Relations, Laurian Lenjo, attending meetings on the project's behalf. This has enabled the project to help direct County resources where needed within the Kasigau Corridor REDD+ Project communities, as well as assist in areas where there are gaps in funding.

In the extreme rural areas of the project, until recently conditions among subsistence farmers have been quite good, as abundant rains have led to a good crop this year. Conditions are now beginning to deteriorate, however, and there is otherwise little to no income as roadside eateries and other small businesses – large sources of informal employment – remain shut down.

Wildlife Works has continued to distribute masks, handwashing buckets and liquid detergents to all locations in the project area. The project was also able to fulfil further requests for assistance of food parcels for vulnerable members of the community through the County Resource Mobilization Committee. The project has additionally provided support to help address urgent needs: The project has provided funds to help rebuild a community member's house that was lost in a fire, provided food to the large family of a single mother with HIV, and undertaken numerous additional activities to support the community at this time.



Hadithi Crafts Support Group: Continued dedication to community income streams despite challenging conditions

The Hadithi team took some time to work from home in April in order to evaluate how they could deviate from their business-as-usual approach to buying crafts from their groups. Many of the community that they work with are vulnerable to COVID-19, predominantly through age and pre-existing conditions, but also vulnerable to the effects of poverty. The team therefore moved ahead in May and June with adapted purchase days involving limited weavers' presence, with social distancing, overseen by group chairladies and Hadithi staff.

The Craft Support Group has, despite the challenging conditions provided by COVID-19, spent over \$22,600 in the past quarter on baskets and other crafts within the Kasigau Corridor communities. Although lower than the \$39,000 spent in the same quarter last year, it is still significant income to women in the community who have seen many other streams of income reduce to little or nothing. Critically, Hadithi members provided 1,500 reusable facemasks to any member of their producers who required one, as well as additional masks for family members where needed.

The purchase of crafts encourages diversity in livelihood types, and maintains household incomes. This in turn reduces pressure on wildlife and habitat, by reducing poor use of natural resources. And critically during this time of COVID, the steady flow of revenues from this small scale enterprise demonstrates the resilience that the REDD+ project has helped to establish in the community. This is the heart of what durable, market-based conservation is about.



Adaptive practices in the face of challenging and changing conditions

Changing conditions, brought by the seasons and COVID, have required strong teamwork and adaptation in the project's activities.



Challenges

Fire outbreaks in the ecosystem: Bringing stakeholders together across the landscape

Limited ability to implement large scale community projects

Adapting methods of operation for Locational Carbon Committees



Fire outbreaks in the ecosystem: Bringing stakeholders together across the landscape

Following a significant and prolonged rainy season with substantial grass growth across the ecosystem, during the current dry season there has come an increased risk of fire outbreaks, whether natural or accidentally started. There have been multiple fires of varying size both inside and outside the project area.

Wildlife Works has constructed firebreaks and hired an extra grader to help deal with any fires in the project area. The fires inside the project area have been small and managed well.

However, there have been more extensive fire outbreaks in the wider landscape outside the immediate project area. Stakeholders in the region have been pulling together to combat risks and fire outbreaks throughout the ecosystem. Over the years the project has built up significant relationships with neighbouring teams and within its communities. When a fire has started in the ecosystem, whether in the National Parks, community areas, or inside the project area, the Wildlife Works rangers, aerial surveillance, and workshop teams have mobilised to combat the fire in conjunction with these stakeholders, including Kenya Wildlife Service, the Sheldrick Wildlife Trust, Tsavo Trust, and the community. Not only has this coordinated approach prevented fires outside the project area from reaching the REDD+ project, it has limited the damage to wildlife and habitat in the area and deepened our relationships and solidarity with stakeholders.

In this time of immediate danger to wildlife and habitat, those relationships are proving their strength and reliability.



Limited ability to implement large scale community projects

The Locational Carbon Committees, the community-based institutions established to direct carbon revenues to initiatives prioritized by each community, approved their 2020 projects at the start of the year. However, the current pandemic has not allowed for approved large-scale community projects to be implemented as planned. Community attitudes can be affected by lack of project activities, so the project has been engaging closely with the Committees. There has been little backlash, as the communities well understand how COVID has impacted the ability to carry out work in a safe manner.

At the same time, the project has been extremely visible to the community through its role on the County Resource Mobilization Committee and through its direct funding and distribution of masks, handwashing stations, and other resources.

Additionally, Wildlife Works has stepped in to address urgent issues in the communities when they have arisen. One example is the repair of Bungule water pipeline, which was destroyed by heavy rains. The pipeline serves more than 2,000 people in Kasigau Location, and was quickly repaired through funding from Wildlife Works operations.

The project has focused on demonstrating flexibility, staying in constant contact with the community, and mobilizing resources and assistance rapidly in response to needs as they have arisen; these actions have helped maintain confidence in the REDD+ project.



Adapting of Methods of Operation for Locational Carbon Committees

Given the current pandemic, the Locational Carbon Committees have been unable to continue their normal meetings for decision-making on community expenditure.

The Committees have therefore been utilising the tools they have to address emergency issues arising. Most committees have been having digital conversations to agree on the diversion of community income to emergency funding requirements, such as provision of facemasks to community members, and reusable sanitary towels to vulnerable girls. This latter issue is significant: The project has had a longstanding program to distribute sanitary towels to girls through the schools. With students now at home, it has become much harder to support good sanitation and sexual health education for girls. Some of the Locational Carbon Committees have prioritized investing in distribution of sanitary towels directly to the most vulnerable girls in the community; this also provides a way to check in with them and support girls who are at greater risk during the pandemic. Without the REDD+ project and the community-based institutions it has created, the girls in the area would remain more vulnerable and unserved.

As the pandemic continues, the project will focus on helping to expand the tools of the Locational Carbon Committees, so they can continue to be effective in light of the current and likely ongoing constraints.

This may not be the only time in the project's history where large-scale disruption of project activity occurs. It's important that the team and communities adapt to address the changes in whichever way they can. The project has built a strong foundation amount of resilience in the communities, that can and now must continue to grow in context of COVID.





Forest Impacts

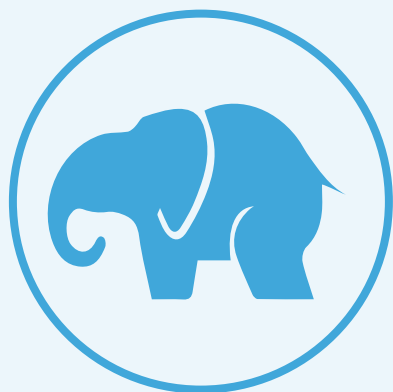


- ✓ Protects over **200,00 hectares** of dryland forest
- ✓ **13,936,339 million tonnes** of GHG emissions avoided to date

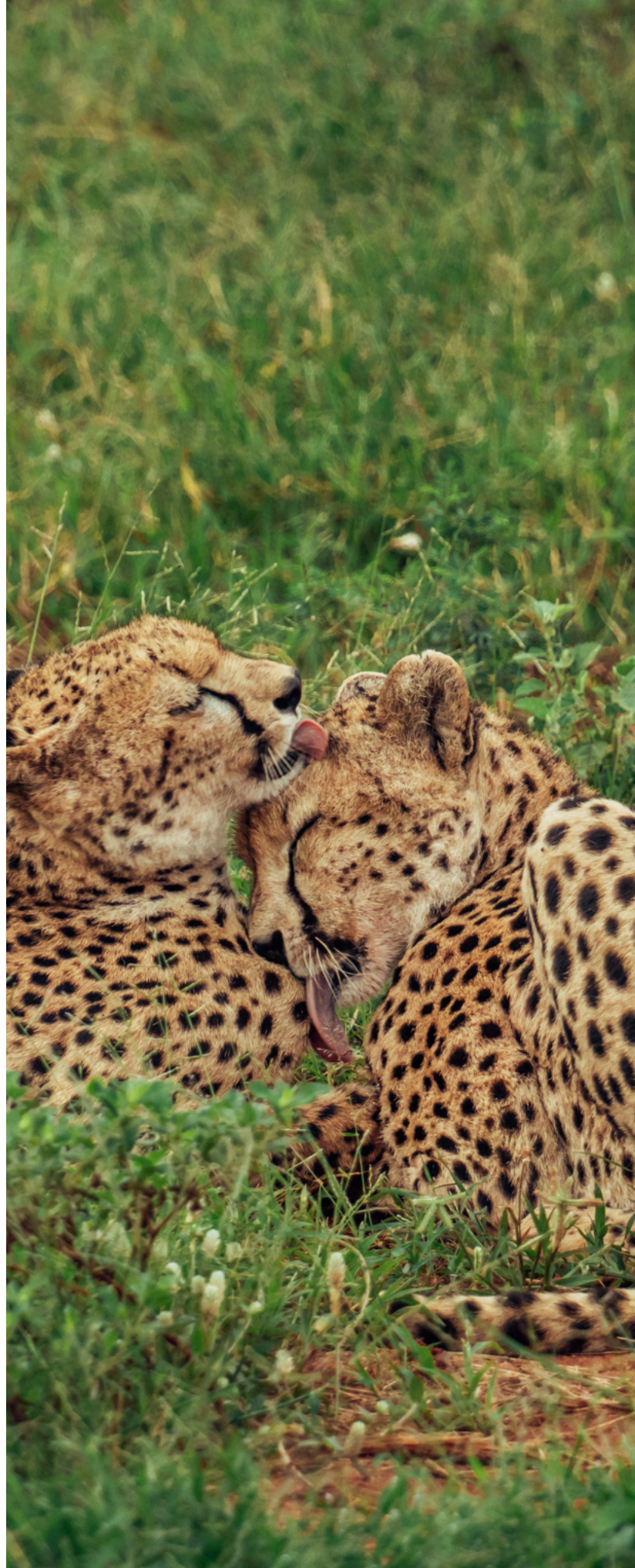


Impact Over Time

Wildlife Impacts



- ✓ **12,000** wild elephants live in the Tsavo Conservation Area / Tsavo-Mkomazi ecosystem (2000+ of those elephants call the project area home)
- ✓ Home to more than **20** species of bats, over **50** species of large mammals, over **300** species of birds and important populations of IUCN Red List species, including African Elephants, African Wild Dog, Cheetah, Grevy's Zebra and Lion
- ✓ Almost **10,000** vehicle and walking patrols undertaken since 2012 by the Wildlife Works rangers in six Base Stations
- ✓ Aerial patrol teams have completed over **1,000** flight days since 2015, covering nearly **231,000** km over the entire Project Area and surrounding areas



Impact Over Time

Community Impacts



- ✓ **50,000** community members with access to drinking water from improved harvesting and pipelines
- ✓ Over **300** locally hired employees, 2nd largest employer in the county, a third of which are women
- ✓ **28** classrooms have been built and over **13,000** students have been awarded scholarships from the project, totaling over **\$700,000**
- ✓ Project works with over **2,000** women across **50** women's groups and associated community ventures (e.g., basket weaving, beadwork and agro-businesses)



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