

Q4 2020

Kasigau Corridor REDD+ Project

Impact Report

Honoring forest heroes: Joseph Ngeti and Jessica Njeri



Kasigau: Putting lives on the line, on the front lines of conservation

In 2020, the Kasigau Corridor REDD+ Project continued to deliver unwavering impact for the forest, wildlife, and community, delivering social services and economic resiliency in a time of economic collapse. The world's first REDD+ project, Kasigau continues to deliver groundbreaking results for, and in partnership with, the 120,000 community members living within the project area.

Key achievements for 2020 include:

- 1. Guarding the forest.** Through the sustainable financing of REDD+ carbon sales, the project was able to assure the employment of all its rangers and patrol the forest in full force. During the year, rangers conducted 1,468 ground patrols covering 138,649km, and flew 349 aerial patrol days using two gyrocopters, covering 78,389 km.
- 2. Economic resilience.** There are 49 crafts groups supported by the project, with over 1,500 members – mostly women. These groups earned over \$150,000 in income, an increase over 2019 sales. This highlights the role that REDD+ can play in using carbon finance to develop stable, resilient alternative livelihood opportunities.
- 3. Access to education.** In 2020, bursaries were awarded to over 4,000 students in the project area, of whom 51% were girls. \$235,000 were awarded, a huge contribution providing thousands of children with improved access to education during the heart of the COVID pandemic.
- 4. Support for girls.** With schools shut down for an extended period during the height of the pandemic, the community lost a critical channel for supporting girls with sanitary hygienic products, education, and support, leaving girls especially vulnerable. During this period, Wildlife Works arranged to deliver 1,164 sets of reusable sanitary pads and girls' underwear in four of the six locations of the project area. The project also conducted trainings for 1,022 girls on sexual health, sanitation and drug abuse, stepping in to provide social services in the vacuum created by COVID.
- 5. Community social investments.** Throughout the year key social programs, such as building a new greenhouse for the Lusario Widow's Group, advancing research and development of agricultural systems to reduce Human-Wildlife Conflict, distribution of handwashing buckets, masks, and food assistance to the most vulnerable community members, and numerous other initiatives, continued forward despite the pandemic.

These incredible results were made possible only through the tireless efforts of the community and Wildlife Works staff on the ground, who carry the work forward often at great personal cost – and sometimes the ultimate cost. This report is dedicated to the memory of Joseph Ngeti and Jessica Njeri, two of Wildlife Works' most devoted rangers, who lost their lives in separate fatal elephant attacks towards the end of 2020. This heartbreaking loss is a reminder that people are putting their lives at risk on a daily basis in service to their communities, wildlife, the forest, and planet Earth.

The Kasigau Corridor REDD+ Project, a pioneer in wildlife conservation, protects over 200,000 hectares of dryland forest with over 11,000 wild elephants that live in this ecosystem (2,000+ of those elephants call Rukinga their permanent home). The project provides social programs that impact 120,000 local people and provides the local community of the Kasigau Corridor region with long-term jobs that replace unsustainable sources of income such as poaching, subsistence agriculture and illegal tree harvesting. In an area where wildlife and human survival were at odds, the project has created a market-driven solution to wildlife conservation through an expansive community-led, community-based conservation model, with profound and lasting impact.

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2020 Impacts



✓ Forest Patrol

- 1,468 patrols from six base stations covering 138,649 km
- 349 aerial patrol days using 2 gyrocopters covering 78,389 km



✓ Community enterprise

- 49 crafts groups supported comprising over 1,506 members (mostly women)
- Over \$150,000 in purchases of various crafts paid directly to the community
- \$10,000 of relief funding sought by Hadithi to support groups during COVID-19



✓ Access to education

- 4,004 (partial bursaries) awarded to students (51% girls) equivalent to \$235,000
- 61 primary schools provided with examination revision materials
- 7 schools provided with infrastructure



✓ Women and girls

- 1,164 sets of reusable sanitary pads and girls' underwear distributed in four of the six locations of the project area
- 1,022 girls attended trainings on sexual health, sanitation and drug abuse

Q4 2020 Summary

Light at the end of the tunnel after an extraordinary and challenging year

Despite the real ups and downs of the year and of the quarter, there have been many promising moments that demonstrate how the resilience and perseverance of the project are making a profound impact on community prosperity, wildlife protection and durable conservation.

✔ Community projects go full steam ahead

✔ Collaboration across the landscape to control fire outbreaks

✔ Increased visibility of Eco-charcoal heroes





Community projects go full steam ahead

During the 4th quarter of 2020, community project implementation went full steam ahead after many slower months due to COVID-19 restrictions. Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and Community Coordination Offices (CCOs), in collaboration with Wildlife Works representatives, opened tenders and awarded projects to the best bidders. Six locations across the project area participated in this process including Mwachabo, Mwatate, Sagalla, Marungu, Kasigau and Mackinnon.

The Locational Carbon Committees — through which the communities directly allocate carbon revenue towards community driven initiatives — approved project budgets, awarded and signed contracts, and set aside bursary (educational scholarship) funds.

Ground-breaking of various projects was done before commencement, normally ceremonial, but in this case due to COVID restrictions entailed meeting school committees for introductions and introducing contractors to various sites.

CBO, CCO and Wildlife Works staff also conducted progressive monitoring of on-going projects to ensure that they have been executed properly according to the project's stipulated procedures. Additionally, Bursary committees held evaluation meetings in various locations across the project to highlight the successes and challenges faced during the previous bursary dispatching process.

It was critical that the project reengaged the community in project implementation during this past quarter, not only to jump start uncompleted projects that were halted during the height of the COVID-related restrictions, but to engage the community and provide assurance that the project has and will continue to persevere in the face of adversity and challenging circumstances.



Highlights





Collaboration across the landscape to control fire outbreaks

Fire is a major risk to a REDD+ project due to the potential for reducing biomass and releasing CO₂ into the atmosphere. It is critical to maintain a strong patrol presence in the air and on the ground to deter any potential illegal activities that are prone to escalating fire outbreaks.

Due to the extended dry season, there were continued fire outbreaks throughout the first part of the quarter across the project area and neighbouring protected areas. Fires were first detected by the Wildlife Works aerial patrol teams, using two gyrocopters, leading to the mobilisation of six base station ground patrol teams. To help address the outbreaks, new firefighting equipment was procured, including a modified truck for carrying water.

Thankfully, the start of the rainy season in November reduced any further fire outbreaks in the area. During the fire season and beyond, security teams coordinate to maintain regular patrols as much as possible and collaborate with other key stakeholders in the landscape, especially with the local communities, the Kenya Wildlife Service and other NGOs operating in the area.



[Watch the Video Here](#)

Increased visibility of eco-charcoal heroes

Throughout the fourth quarter, there were increased visits to the Eco-Charcoal centre by local community members to learn about the damage that bush charcoal can do to the environment and to learn about the process and benefits of producing eco-charcoal.

An exciting moment for the project: The Eco-Charcoal Supervisor, Constance Mademu, was featured on national television network KTN's primetime feature called "Hero of the Week." As part of the feature, viewers were introduced to Wildlife Works, the Eco-Charcoal program, and Constance's story as a former bush-charcoal producer-turned conservation hero.

On a local level, it is important for the project to continue providing education to community members on not only the threat of traditional charcoal production, but also the available alternatives and options for sustainable income generation. On a national scale, it is crucial for people to make the connection between the charcoal they buy on the side of the road or from their local shop, to the destruction of forests in Kenya. Thanks to the engagement of the Community Outreach, Greenhouse, and Eco-Charcoal teams, local communities are gradually seeing first-hand the benefits of this important initiative.



Continued commitment in spite of challenges faced

Hard work and unwavering dedication from everyone at the project has pulled people together in tough times. There is always more work to be done, and there are fresh challenges at every turn, but the team at the Kasigau Corridor REDD+ project are incredibly dedicated to continue making a difference for the 120,000 people living in the project area and the environment they live in.



Challenges

✔ Heart breaking loss of two dedicated Wildlife Works Rangers

✔ COVID-19: Continued COVID-19 disruptions to community meetings

✔ Addressing Human-Wildlife conflict in hotspot areas



Heart breaking loss of two dedicated Wildlife Works Rangers

Wildlife Works lost two of its most devoted rangers in separate fatal elephant attacks towards the end of 2020. Joseph Ngeti, an experienced ranger who had been with Wildlife Works for 15 years, was tragically killed by an elephant on 7th November 2020 while conducting a routine ranger foot patrol in part of the project area. Just over a month later, on 8th December 2020, Jessica Njeri was killed when a rogue elephant bull attacked the ranger vehicle that she and her colleagues, as well as two Kenya Wildlife Service officers, were travelling in. Wildlife Works is offering financial and moral support to the families at this difficult time.

The project is now researching various options to determine what combination of initiatives can be implemented to help avoid accidents such as those that have occurred. They are already entering into an agreement with the Kenya Wildlife Service, specifically for further security and research purposes. This will be an ongoing process as they navigate various avenues to help mitigate every risk possible to keep rangers safe.

These tragic deaths are a reminder that people are putting their lives at risk on a daily basis in service to their communities, wildlife, the forest, and planet Earth. We honor their memory.



Continued COVID-19 disruptions to community meetings

Despite a number of increased freedoms since lockdown, there have still been continued restrictions on community meetings during this past quarter. Due to restrictions set out by the Ministry of Health, there have been lower numbers of people attending community meetings caused by fear of contracting the coronavirus.

These meetings are a key part of the project's continued communication and engagement with the community, and it's therefore important to have face-to-face meetings whenever possible. Having a lower number of attendees on average requires the community team to carry out more meetings in order to continue to reach as many people across the project areas as possible. The community team has continued to follow the guidelines for meetings, including providing hand washing stations at the meeting venue, having each participant wear a mask, and keeping social distance in the meeting venues. As well as ensuring that there is a lower risk for anyone to contract the coronavirus at the meeting, it also increases confidence in community members to attend.



Addressing Human-Wildlife conflict in hotspot areas

During the past quarter, there was a huge outcry from communities in hotspot areas regarding elephants invading their farms. Human-wildlife conflict is problematic for both communities and for farmers. Whilst farmers face losing their entire crop, as well as further damage to other property, the wildlife risks being killed or wounded from their interactions with communities.

Community morale regarding the REDD+ project is boosted when human-wildlife conflict is dealt with quickly. Community meetings were carried out in hotspot areas where there is human-wildlife conflict to understand the key issues, educate community members on conflict mitigation, and to increase an open dialogue. The Community and Greenhouse teams have worked together to bring community groups from hotspot areas to visit Wildlife Works, which was aimed at improving awareness of the project as well as providing further education on farming methods to help reduce human-wildlife conflict. This will be an ongoing and important endeavor.



Impact Over Time



Forest Impacts



- ✓ Protects over **200,00 hectares** of dryland forest
- ✓ **15,535,113 tonnes** of GHG emissions avoided to date

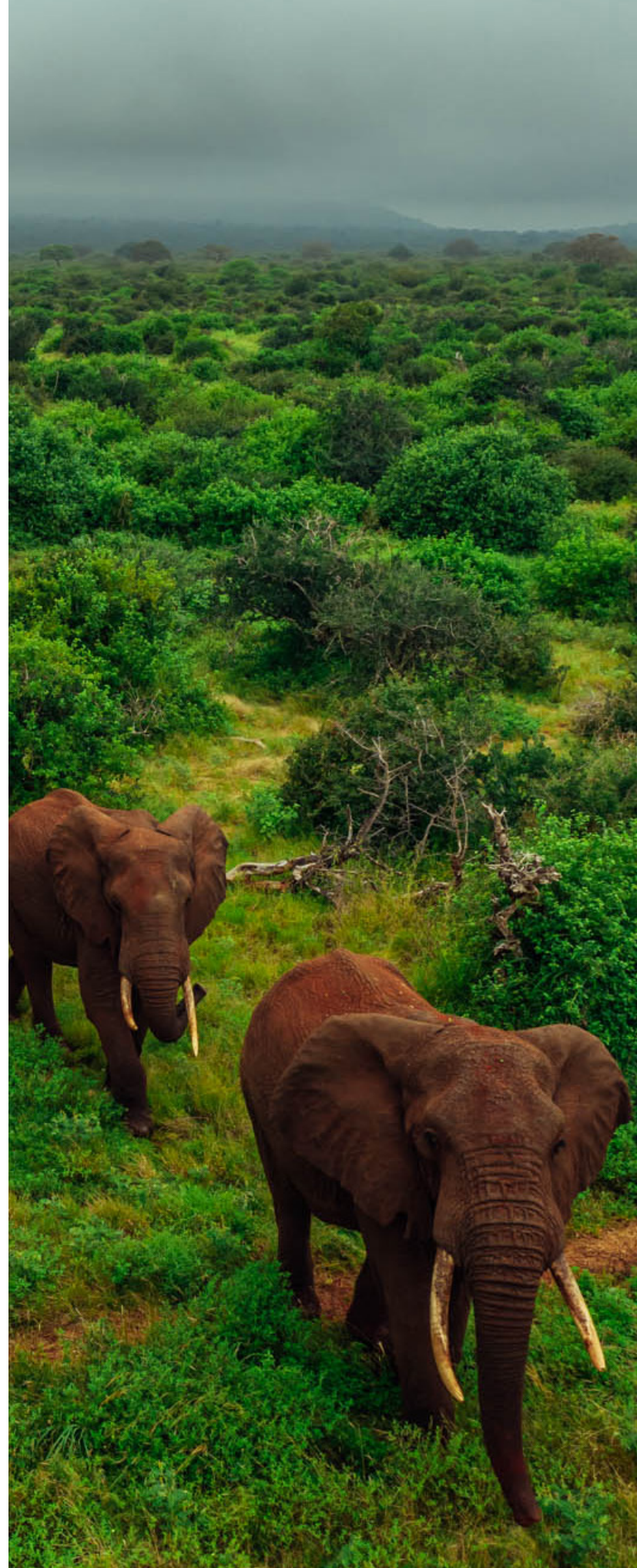


Impact Over Time

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 **10,500** vehicle and walking patrols undertaken since 2012 by the Wildlife Works rangers in six Base Stations
- ✓ Aerial patrol teams have completed over **1,200** flight days since 2015, covering nearly **260,000** 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 **330** employees with 300 being locally-hired, and a third of whom are women; One of the largest employers in the County
- ✓ **34** classrooms have been built or renovated, while close to **17,000** students have been awarded full and partial scholarships from the project, totaling nearly **\$950,00**
- ✓ Project works with over **2,000** women across **50** women's groups and associated community ventures (e.g., basket weaving, beadwork and agribusinesses)



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