

WEBINAR

Advancing Rights-Based and Community-Led Conservation in Africa

September 10, 2026
9–10:30 a.m. ET | 1–2:30 p.m. GMT

Rights and Resources Initiative
rightsandresources.org





Welcome!

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Report Findings & Recommendations

Overview of the Africa Conservation Report



Review and Assess

Examine experiences with community conservation across Africa to understand what is working and where gaps remain.

Understand Scale and Significance

Evaluate the current reach, strengths, and limitations of community-led conservation initiatives continent-wide.

Distil Lessons for Success

Identify and document the elements that drive successful, lasting community conservation outcomes.

Key Challenges

The Core Problem

Despite communities being on the **frontlines of conservation** across Africa, **systemic barriers** continue to undermine their rights, recognition, and fair share of benefits.

Limited Legal Recognition

Community land and resource tenure rights lack formal legal recognition in most African jurisdictions.

Government Reluctance

African governments remain reluctant to relinquish control of valuable natural resources to local communities.

Insufficient Benefits

Local communities do not sufficiently realize the benefits of conservation, despite their significant contributions.

Methodology and Scope

Phase I

Literature reviews and case studies

Expert Review

Peer validation and feedback

Phase II+

Additional research and updates

Scope

Formal and informal community conservation initiatives across **4 regions**, **27 case studies**, and **23 countries**.

Regions Covered

West and Central Africa, Southern Africa, and East and Horn of Africa.

Timeline

Phase I (2022–2023): literature reviews, case studies, expert reviews. Additional research conducted in 2026.

Case Study Countries

Map 1. List of 23 Countries Assessed in this Study



The report draws on 27 case studies across 23 African countries, spanning all major sub-regions of the continent to capture the diversity of community conservation approaches.

Types of Conservation Models Analyzed

Joint Management

Government, local and religious leaders collaborating for the protection of sacred sites.

Community-Led Conservation

Full community ownership and management of natural resources and conservation areas.

NGO-Supported Conservation

Community-based conservation initiatives supported and facilitated by non-governmental organizations.

Co-Management

Shared governance between State, private sector, and community actors for protected areas.

Marine Areas (LMMAs)

Locally Managed Marine Areas governed by coastal communities to sustain marine biodiversity.

Designation of a totem species by communities

Members of clans or families will not eat, kill or trap totemic animals.

Traditional Indigenous Qero Regime

Practiced in Ethiopia for 400+ years.

Community - State

Co-ownership between the community and the state.

CAMPFIRE model

Local districts and communities.

Key Findings

1. The Scale of Community Conservation

Namibia

20%

Area of national land established under the national Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM) program.

Tanzania

7%

Of national land area under gazetted Wildlife Management Areas, securing community conservation at scale.

DRC

4.5M

Hectares secured by 227 community forests across the Congo Basin rainforest — one of the world's most critical ecosystems.

Ghana

80+

Community Resource Management Areas buffering state protected areas across the country.

Key Findings

2. The Benefits of Community Conservation

Environmental

Customary laws and community regulations actively maintain conservation practices and protect natural resources across generations.

Economic and Social

In Kenya alone, conservancies host **142 ecotourism facilities** with impact reaching over **700,000 households**.

Governance

Community tenure rights security is strengthened alongside more robust, locally accountable governance structures.

Key Findings

3. Elements of Successful Community Conservation

Secure Collective Rights

Tenure security enables long-term sustainable livelihoods and responsible resource management by communities.

Empowered Governance

Inclusive, community-led governance with full and meaningful participation of women and youth at all levels.

Sustainable Livelihoods

Communities must equitably benefit from conservation initiatives and receive the **"lion's share"** of revenues generated.

Key Recommendations and Call to Action

Conclusion

African nations must prioritize rights-based, community-led initiatives as the most effective and equitable mechanism for scaling area-based conservation in line with international and national commitments.

Call to Action

- ✓ Call for legislative and policy reforms to prevent and resolve these conflicts between protected areas and the rights of IPs and LCs.
- ✓ Call for mainstreaming human-wildlife conflict prevention + mitigation in national conservation policies, robust grievance/redress mechanisms, and sustainable financing for damage compensation.

01 Strengthen 30x30 Implementation with strong community conservation elements

02 Develop Inclusive NBSAPs with full participation of communities

03 Integrate community support in financing

04 Adopt a human rights-based approach in all conservation policy and practice

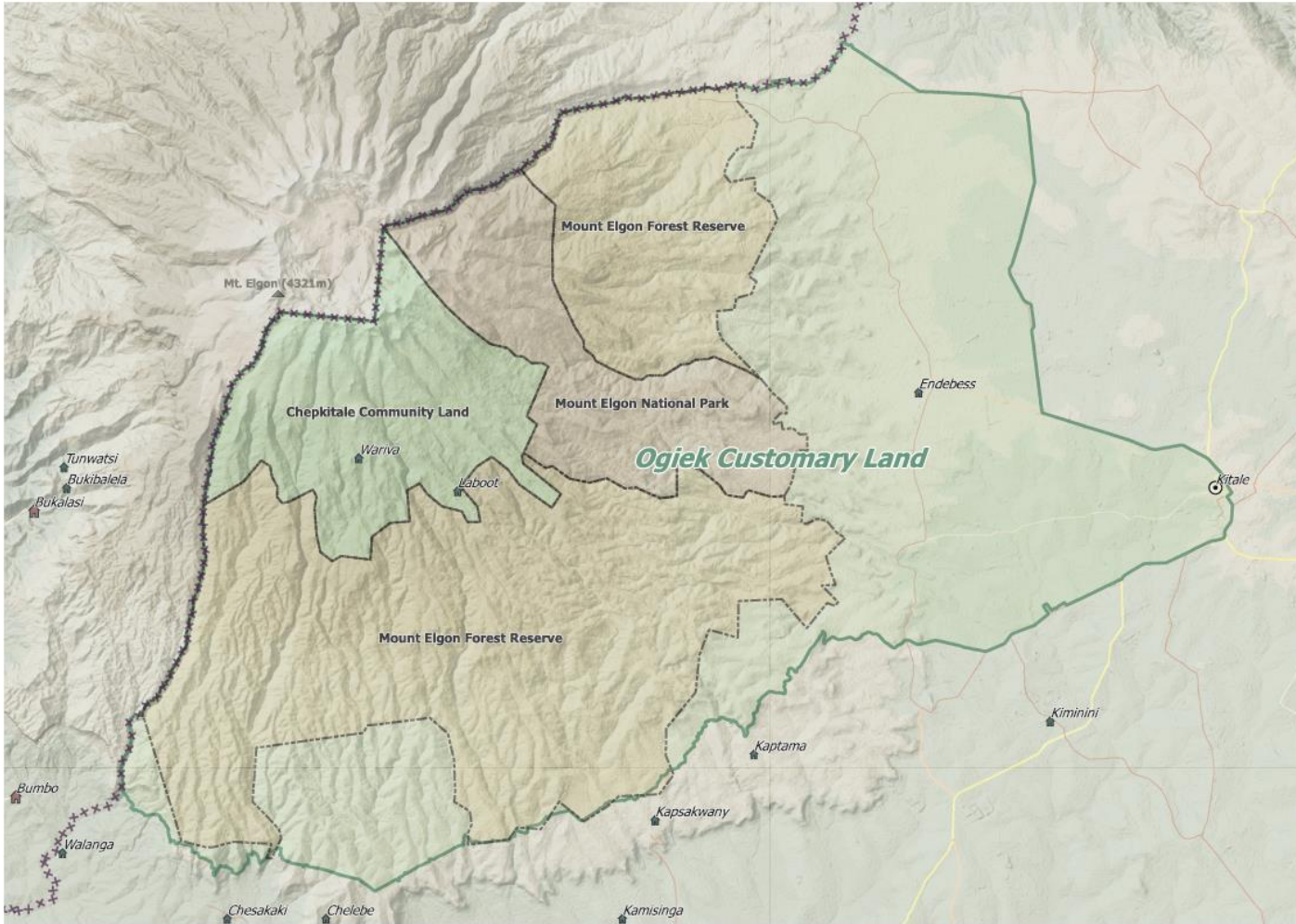
05 Prioritize Full, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) and communities' traditional knowledge, values, and practices

CASE STUDY 1: EXAMPLE FROM EAST AFRICA

Restitution Of State Protected Areas: The Case of Ogiek Conservation on Mount Elgon - Kenya

Presented by Peter Kitelo (CIPDP)

The Customary Land of the Ogiek Community of Mt. Elgon, Kenya



Key Facts

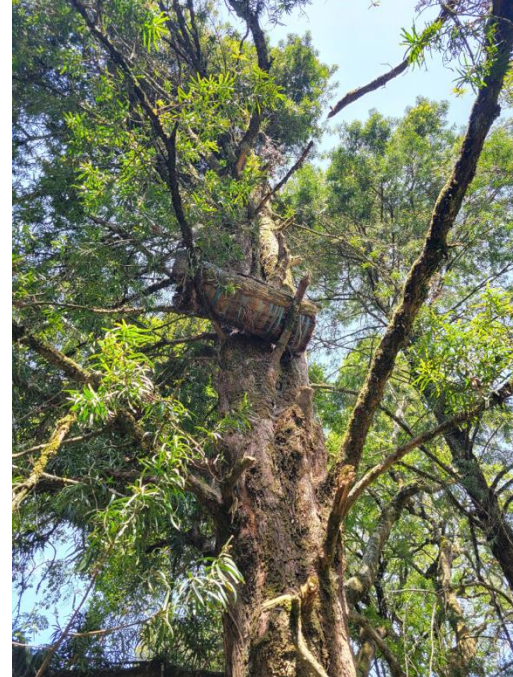
- The Ogiek community of Mount Elgon in western Kenya is an Indigenous forest-dwelling, hunter-gatherer group who have lived in the region's caves, moorlands, and high-altitude forests for centuries.
- The Ogiek of Mount Elgon face numerous threats to their lands and livelihoods, ranging from encroachment to cattle rustling, eviction, and a national reforestation scheme.
- Home to 400 vegetative species and at least 144 bird species.

An Early Morning Photo of Chepkitale taken from Laboot



Mt. Ogiek: Key Success Factors

- ✓ Community Resilience
- ✓ Community Leadership
- ✓ Open for Dialogue

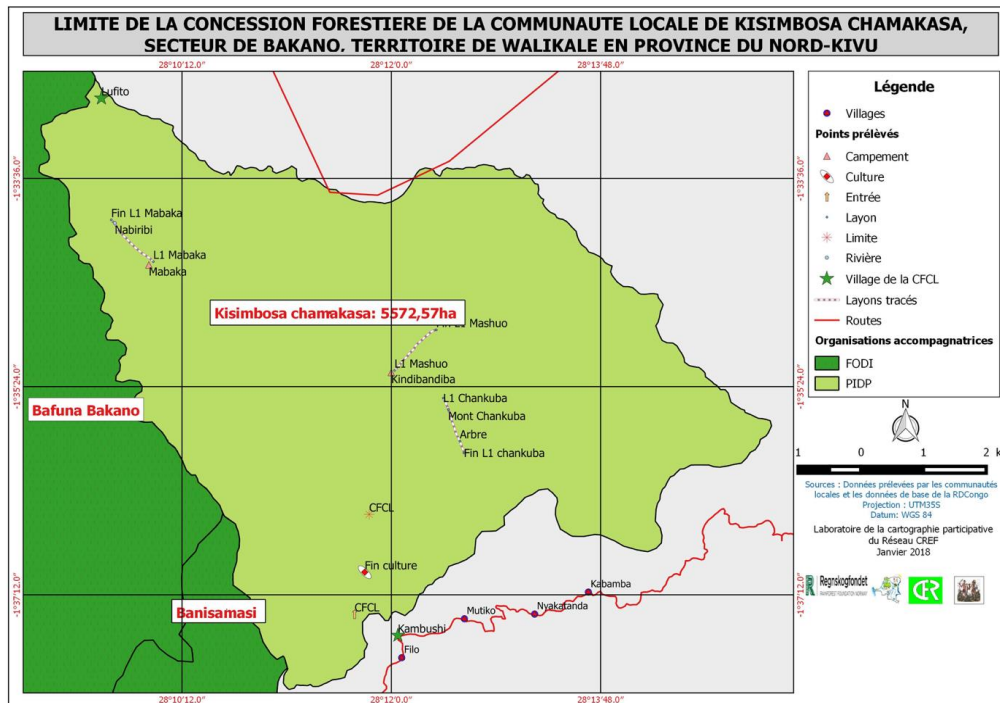


CASE STUDY 2: EXAMPLE FROM THE CONGO BASIN

Forêts protégées par les communautés (CPF) ou prairies sur des terres communautaires : le cas des forêts communautaires de Kisimbosa Cha Makasa et d'Ikulua Loleke – RDC

Presented by Joseph Itongwa (ANAPAC RDC)

Kisimbosa, une aire Conservée Communautaire, RDC



Faits clés

- 5 572 ha des forêts Communautaires de Kisimbosa pour 4 Groupes autochtones communautés pygmées Bambuti Babuluko de la province du Nord-Kivu, (KISIMBOSA CHA MAKASA), accompagnées par PIDP KIVU.
- Un titre de sécurisation depuis 2018.
- La Conservation est basée sur les pratiques, savoirs et valeurs culturelles.
- La prise de conscience la diversité des ressources naturelles leur perte et dégradation, ainsi que des conflits armés, associés aux problèmes d'exclusion dans l'établissement et la gestion des Aires Protégées.
- La déperdition de la culture, par des Nouvelles génération.
- 40 507 ha de la forêt Communautaire d'Ikulua Loleke, légalement détenue et gérée par les chasseurs-cueilleurs pygmées vivant dans sept villages de Pendjwa, dans la province de Maindombe. Accompagnée par ANAPAC RDC.



Engagement Actif des Communautés de Kisimbosa



Engagements

- Démarcation des territoires
- Identification des ressources biologique dans Kisimbosa
- Etablissement d'une équipe de surveillance Communautaire de la Biodiversité
- Organisation des forums culturels annuels
- Dialogues interculturels
- Appui aux moyens de subsistances
- Plaidoyer légal

Kisimbosa: Forêts Intactes, Biodiversité Instaaurée, Moyens de Subsistances Assures

Facteurs clés de succès

- ✓ Une prise de conscience collective et la conviction des communautés
- ✓ Engagement collectif, et unité Communautaire, cartographie, revitalisation des savoirs et pratiques favorables et durables, la sécurisation et le plaidoyer
- ✓ Défense des territoires, lutte contre les menaces extérieures
- ✓ La valorisation des activités du genre et l'implication de le jeunesse
- ✓ Collaboration et partenariat, (ONG, Etats, partenaires, scientifiques)
- ✓ Evaluation de Gouvernance (IUCN)
- ✓ Promotion des efforts communautaires

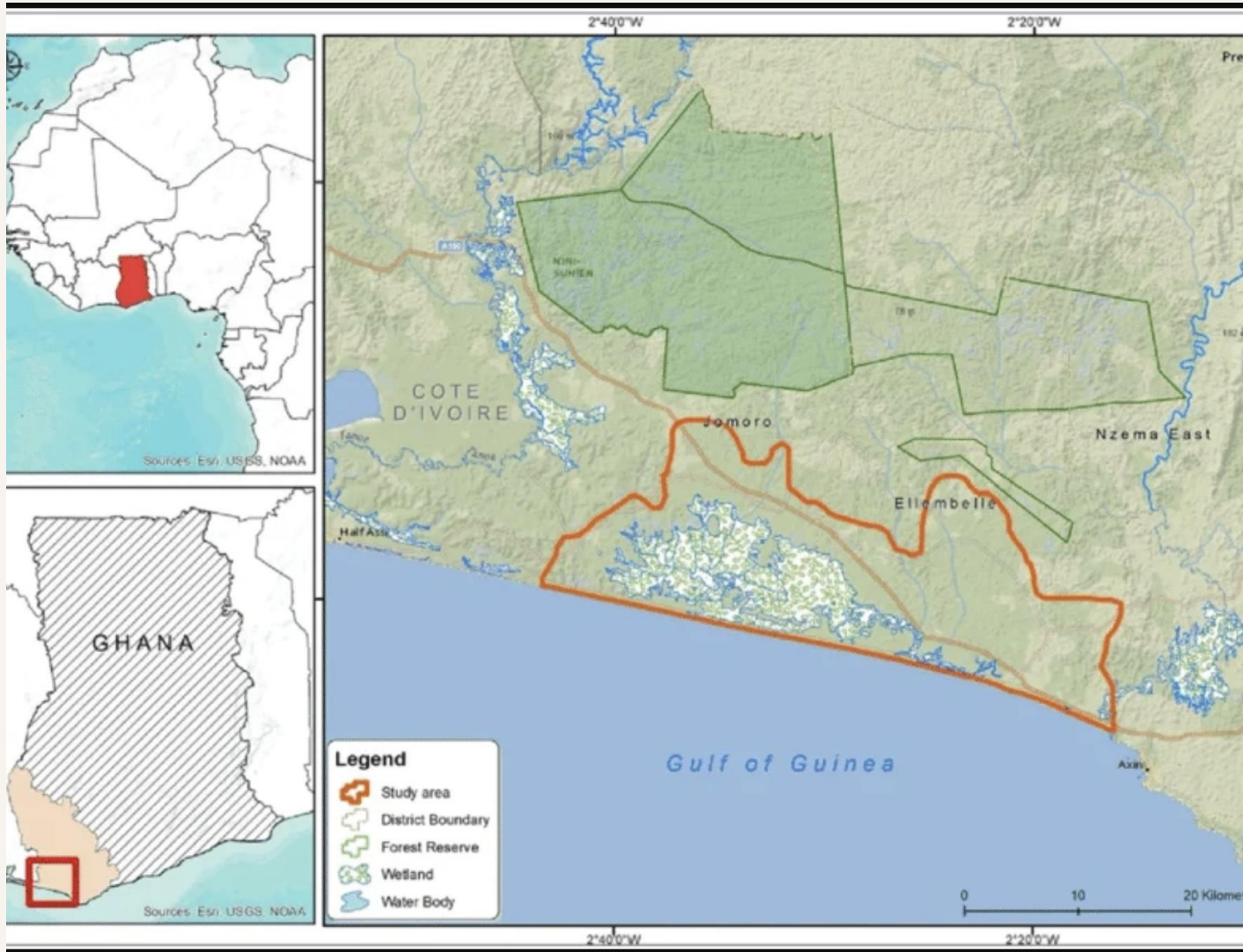


CASE STUDY 3: EXAMPLE FROM WEST AFRICA

Formalized Community of Multiple Resources on Community Lands: Amansuri Community Nature Reserve - Ghana

Presented by Mina Beyan (GLI-Liberia)

Map of Amansuri Community Nature Reserve, Western Ghana



Key Facts

- Amansuri Catchment: 1,010km²
- Wetland ecosystem: 100km²
- Ghana's only known peat swamp forest
- Community reserve established in 2000
- Six communities contribute land
- Managed through a community-led partnership

Amansuri Wetlands: Biodiversity, Culture, and Livelihoods



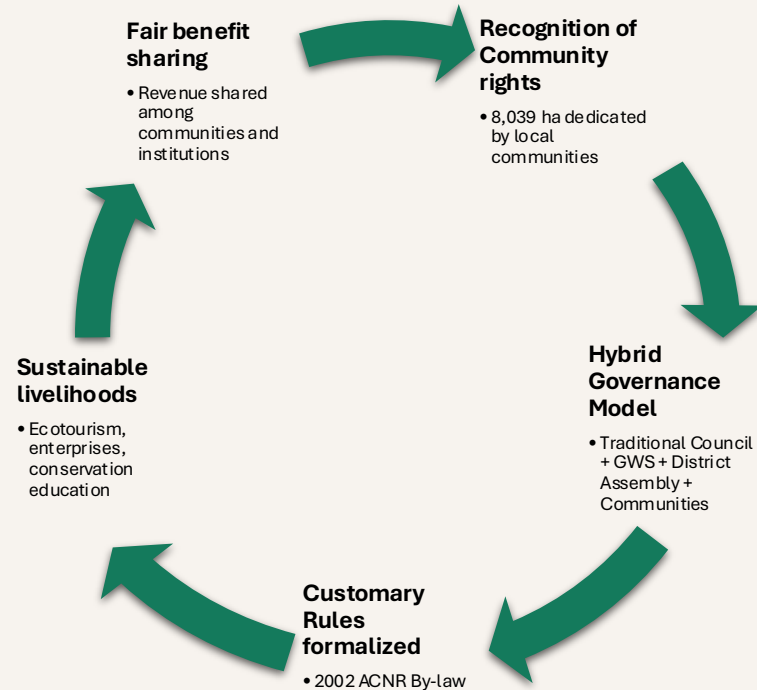
The Challenge

- Agricultural expansion
- Mangrove harvesting
- Increasing resource pressure
- Declining traditional protections
- Ecosystem degradation risks

Conservation Value

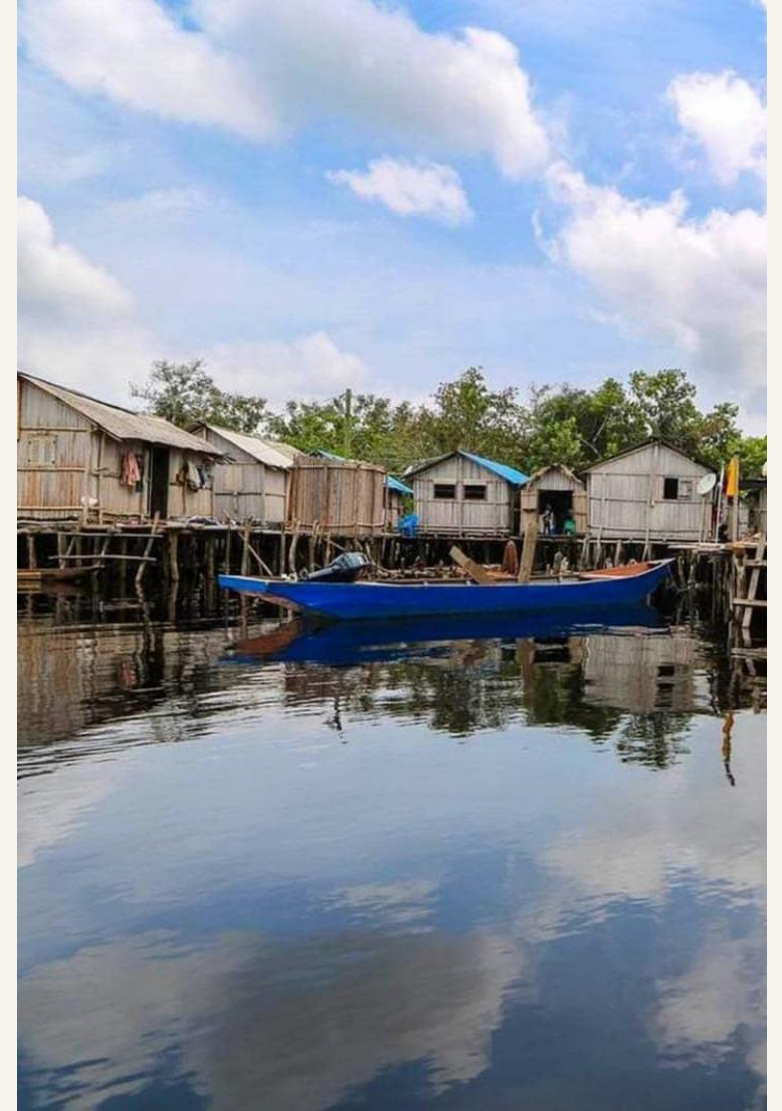
- 237 plant species
- 27 mammal species
- 105 bird species
- Marine turtle nesting sites
- Important bird area

Amansuri Wetlands: Key Success Factors



Results

- ✓ Protected critical wetland ecosystems
- ✓ Conserved key species and habitats
- ✓ Generated tourism revenue
- ✓ Created a replicable model for Africa

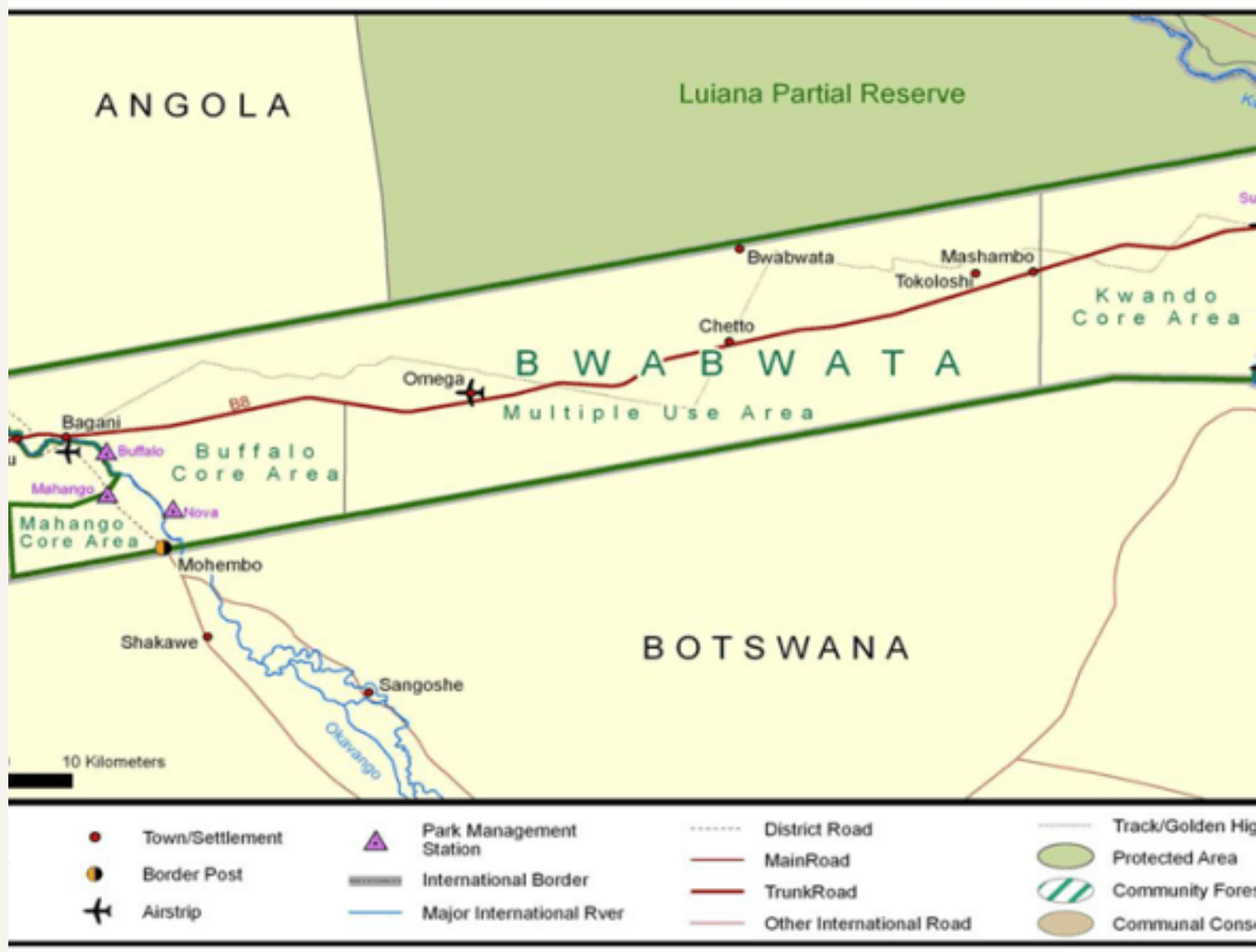


CASE STUDY 4: EXAMPLE FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA

Community ‘Co-Management’ of State Protected Areas: The case of Khwe San and Government Co-Management of Bwabwata National Park – Namibia

Presented by Malidadi Langa (AICA)

Map of the Bwabwata Landscape, Namibia



Key Facts

- **Park size:** 6,100km²
- **Natural features:** Low vegetated sand dunes. Okavango River in the west and the Kwando River in the east.
- **Vegetation:** Broad-Leafed Kalahari Woodland
- **Wildlife:** Large concentrations of elephant and buffalo, also sable and roan antelope

Kyaramacan Association members Attending an MOU meeting in Bwabwata



Bwabata National Park: Key Success Factors

Despite the Khwe San's lack of legally recognized traditional authority, denial of land rights, and ongoing inter-ethnic tensions , the Bwabwata co-management model stands out as a unique institutional success in many ways:

- ✓ **Robust policy and legal framework** enabling a legally recognised Kyaramacan co-management Association to engage in collective bargaining and benefit sharing with the Ministry of Environment, Forestry, and Tourism (MEFT).
- ✓ **Integrated land use planning** that enables effective land use planning and zonation into core conservation zones and a multiple use zone where communities can engage in livelihood activities while contributing to conservation.
- ✓ **Devolution of resource use and concession rights** to the Kyaramacan Association enables them to directly receive 100% of revenues from trophy hunting, ecotourism, and NTFP harvesting 9Devil's Claw, a high value medicinal plant.
- ✓ **Legal recognition and empowerment of communities** as environment stewards with responsibility for key conservation roles like patrols and anti-poaching activities, game counting/monitoring, HWC verification, and prevention and control of bushfires.
- ✓ **Long-term technical support** from CBNRM support organisations like the Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) and the Namibian Association of CBNRM Support Organisations (NACSO).



Q&A



Closing Remarks

A person is seen from behind, rowing a wooden boat on a calm body of water. They are wearing a vibrant, patterned shirt with circular motifs in blue, yellow, and red. The background shows a hilly shoreline under a clear sky. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent reddish-brown filter.

Thank you! Merci ! Asanteni

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