

**Gendered Impacts of Community-based Conservation Initiatives in Kimana/Tikondo  
Group Ranch outside of Amboseli National Park**

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**Gendered Impacts of Community-based Conservation Initiatives in Kimana Group Ranch  
outside of Amboseli National Park**

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Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

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## **Abstract:**

*Community-based conservation (CBC) has become a common solution to addressing local communities needs and concerns when it comes to conservation initiatives associated with, or outside the boundaries of national parks. However, a critique of CBC initiatives points out that they often assume community homogeneity. Assumptions of community homogeneity lead to inequities in benefit sharing and the exclusion of subgroups (women, ethnic minorities); in some cases, CBC can even exacerbate marginalization. Amboseli National Park in southern Kenya is one of the first and most important examples of CBC, where local communities were included in conservation initiatives and the benefits of conservation were to be shared with local communities. Despite the centrality of Amboseli to our understanding of CBC, little work has explored the gendered impacts of CBC initiatives. This study fills this gap with an examination of the gendered impacts of community-based conservation initiatives in the Kimana/Tikondo Group Ranch near Amboseli National Park. The results from this study show gender disparities in the most frequently mentioned benefits and costs associated with community-based initiatives including school bursaries, employments, payments for ecosystem services and human-wildlife conflict.*

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## Acronyms:

African Conservation Centre- ACC  
Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan- AEMP  
Amboseli Elephant Trust- AET  
African Wildlife Fund- AWF  
Big Life Foundation- BLF  
Amboseli National Park- ANP  
Kenya Wildlife Services- KWS  
Maasai Mara National Park- MMNP  
Payments for Ecosystem Services- PES  
Tsvao East National Park- TENP



## Chapter 1. Introduction

The global conservation complex has become a powerful and lucrative industry working in natural spaces and communities, throughout the world. Historically, many of the first conservation initiatives were based in colonialism. For example, some of the first forest and wildlife reserves, including the ones in Kenya, were established under the guise of resource conservation for sustainability, but were more often established for the use of colonial elites (Cock and Fig, 2000). This style of conservation led to what is known as fortress conservation, which is a “conservation model based on the belief that biodiversity protection is best achieved by creating protected areas where ecosystems can function in isolation from human disturbance” (Doolittle, 2011). In the push to reduce human disturbances and increase conservation of resources and wildlife, many indigenous and local communities were forced to relocate, and lost access to valuable natural resources. The exclusion of local and indigenous communities through, foundations in colonialism and the realization that fortress style conservation alone could not account for all conservation goals led to the emergence of a community-based conservation model.

David Western, a conservationist, is credited with “pioneering and championing the community-based conservation movement” (Waruinigi, 2015). Western defines community-based conservation as “natural resource or biodiversity protection by, for and with the local community” (Berkes, 2007). Community-based conservation attempts to bridge the needs of local communities and conservation goals by including community voices, allowing community management, alleviating community burdens or costs associated with conservation goals, and providing monetary and natural resource incentives and benefits to incentivize local communities to participate in conservation initiatives.

Critics contend however that community-based conservation often oversimplifies the heterogeneity within communities, and can reproduce “top-down” development structures based on local power structures, and the influence of national government agencies, and non-governmental organizations (Agrawal, 2001, Runyan et al, 2014). Western first implemented a community-based strategy to conservation in the Maasai communities surrounding Amboseli National Park (ANP). As a result, community-based strategies developed by Western have been replicated within community-based initiatives in other places around the world. Despite the fact that community-based initiatives implemented within the Maasai communities near ANP have been longstanding there has never been a gendered assessment of the benefits and costs of community-based conservation initiatives in the Maasailand near ANP. Despite implementing community-based conservation initiatives in the Amboseli ecosystem since the 1970’s, there haven’t been any gendered assessments of community-based initiatives. The goal of this research is to fill this gap and highlight any gender disparities that are created, enforced, or reproduced as a result of community-based conservation.

In recent years, many of the leading conservation organizations (such as World Wildlife Fund, Conservation International, IUCN, REDD+ and many more) have implemented community-based initiatives to include local communities within larger conservation campaigns. Previously, fortress conservation initiatives, including establishing national parks and protected areas have excluded local communities from valuable resources they have depended on for generations. Many community-based conservation and integrated conservation development plans were established to ensure local communities were no longer negatively impacted by conservation and furthermore, and to ensure communities benefited from conservation and associated activities.

While community-based conservation initiatives have largely been applauded as necessary steps to benefit local communities, they have also become a “one size fits all band-aid” to addressing communities needs within larger conservation development goals (Berkes, 2007). Scholars and activists have registered a number of critiques of community-based conservation programs. One such critique is that conservation goals and western thought are prioritized over community input or needs, and that community benefits are an additive rather than a main project goal (Berkes, 2007). More specifically many of these initiatives assume “community” to be “idealized as harmonious”, or a homogenous group, and that all members of a community are impacted the same, both negatively and positively by community-based conservation initiatives (Brooks, et al, 2013).

Through previous travel in Kenya, as part of a wildlife conservation field school, I was exposed to many forms of community-based conservation initiatives. In total, we visited 9 conservation sites, and of those only one community-based conservation initiative had an emphasis on the needs of women. This community-based conservation initiative is the result of a grassroots partnership between Twala Women’s Cultural Manyatta and Uaso Ngiro Baboon Project developed by women primatologists and local Maasai women. This partnership created a women’s empowerment village in Laikipia, Kenya offering many entrepreneurial opportunities for local Maasai women while creating critical habitat for a translocated troop of baboons, as well as a wildlife corridor for other native wildlife species. While the partnership between Twala and Uaso Ngiro is an exciting example of bolstering community needs (particularly those of women) and conservation initiatives, for many community-based conservation initiatives, this is not the case. There are instances where within community-based conservation initiatives, especially those associated with national parks or large conservation development projects, the

needs of the community often become secondary goals, and more troubling the needs of marginalized groups within said communities often are largely ignored. Worse off community-based initiatives can further marginalize groups if they don't address existing inequalities prior to developing community-based conservation frameworks for specific communities.

Human development related activities and climate change have severely comprised the environment, and as a result conservation initiatives are increasingly important when it comes to reducing the impacts of climate change, and reversing environmental degradation. However, conservation initiatives, especially community-based initiatives that do not adequately address the needs of the community, especially the marginalized within a community, conservation will not be effective. The environmentalist, Paul Hawken, created a list of solutions to reversing climate change, and within that list women's issues such as girls' education and family planning are listed in the top ten solutions (Hawken, 2017). When it comes to conservation, progress has been made to include community voices in project design, but in most instances the community voices are those of men or wealthy elites within existing community structures. Women have largely become an under-tapped wealth of knowledge on the topics of environment and conservation. More importantly, when women's voices are actively oppressed, a large portion of the conversation regarding conservation is being missed, and in worst case scenarios, women and other groups are being further marginalized.

In order to show the gendered impacts of community-based conservation initiatives in the Kimana/Tikondo Group Ranch near Amboseli National Park, I will first provide a literature review regarding the rise of community-based conservation, navigate the relationship between gender and community based conservation, and finally the barriers to women's participation including ecotourism and limited land rights. Next, I will describe my research methods, the

study area, introduce community-based conservation initiatives outside Amboseli National Park and Maasai culture. Finally, I will demonstrate my results by discussing the gendered impacts or gendered biases that tended to favor men in the most frequently mentioned community-based conservation benefits associated with Amboseli National Park, tourism, and wildlife conservation. To conclude, I will discuss, future studies, policy recommendations and the future of conservation.

## **Chapter 2. Literature Review**

### **Rise of Community-based Conservation**

Modern conservation first began towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Natural resource conservation was achieved through accumulation of land via the state and set aside as national parks, preserves, reserves or refuges. The mentality behind conservation can best be understood through a quote from Gifford Pinchot (leader of American conservation) in which he describes his approach to conservation as, “the application of common sense to the common problems for the common good”. The intentions behind conservation under this perspective can be understood as placing an emphasis on sustainable use and limitations placed on extractive industries. This aspect of the conservation movement was legitimized through science that utilized mathematics to estimate population minimums/maximus as well as maximum yields for harvesting natural resources (Western, et al 1994). During this same time a separate group, preservationists, with more stringent conservation goals came to be under the leadership of John Muir. Preservations gained momentum in establishing policies such as wildlife refuges in the United States which was echoed with the establishment of games reserves in Africa. However, both conservation for sustainable use or conservation for preservation was ultimately the responsibility of the state. However, the sustainability of these approaches to conservation via fortress conservation developments and enclosed protected areas were limited by population growth, continued poverty, and increased consumerism which begged the question if state managed protected areas were truly an effective way to manage use of natural resources and promote conservation (Western, et al 1994).

Post-independence in many colonized African nations, including Kenya, the management of protected areas established by colonial regimes such as national parks and reserves were

turned over to state control and management. State management over the protected areas was reminiscent of colonial governments control over of national reserves (Songorwa, et al 2000). The protectionist mentality surrounding conservation during this time period allowed for the alienation of local communities from the lands they had occupied for generations. The justification behind these motives were based on the idea that local community's education levels made them less equipped to deal with conservation science or less willing to manage wildlife and other resources in a sustainable way (Songorwa, et al, 2000). Additionally, because of the international community's awareness and reverence of national parks much of the management of protected areas and national parks attached to legacies of colonialism and racism falls into the hands of state actors (Adams and Mulligans, 2003). The segregation of humans, land and resources based on race or indigeneity or womanhood were perpetuated in these areas through colonialism, and are often reinforced through development initiatives, including conservation development.

This shift in conservation theory along with three precipitating factors gave rise to a community-based conservation framework. The three precipitating factors outlined by Western are as follows: 1) the need to expand conservation efforts into rural areas 2) movements for grassroots development and 3) movements for human and indigenous rights. Grassroots movements became a popular alternative to government led development (Western, et al, 1994). Additionally, movements fighting for the rights of marginalized groups became linked to issues of environmental health. These movements in relation to conservation highlighted the fact that conservation development excluded the "local". These 3-precipitating factor represent the foundation on which community-based conservation was established, according to Western. Western defines community-based conservation as reserving "top-down, center driven

conservation by focusing on the people who bear the costs of conservation; includes natural resources or biodiversity protection by, for and with the local community” (Western, et al, 1994). Through this approach, conservationists’ hoped to incentivize resource conservation for the local communities, and local communities hoped to regain control and access to resources as well as improved livelihoods. While this definition of community-based conservation appears broad, Western argues that is necessary due to the fact that community-based conservation programs range from the establishment of buffer zones surrounding protected areas, to promotion of conservation of in rural locations. This is necessary to highlight that community-based conservation programs are being established directly or indirectly through previously established protected areas as well as development of new programs targeting rural communities. This broad definition of community-based conservation becomes problematic in the sense that community-based conservation framework has, in some regards, becomes a “one size fits all” solution to unique issues that occur in different regional, ecological, and cultural settings. Additionally, a point I will come back to and explain in greater detail is that community-based conservation initiatives have the capabilities to market well to global donor communities, while having little to no positive impact on local communities nor increasing benefits for the “communities” that are listed as beneficiaries.

### **Gender and Community-based Conservation:**

The community-based conservation literature predominately conceptualized “community” as a single undifferentiated unit. As a result, any initiative that engaged the local communities was viewed to be beneficial for all members of that community. The works of Arun Agarwal, and Firket Berkes begin to expand the understanding of “community” as a heterogeneous group with different sub groups and influenced by pre-existing power structures.

Agrawal emphasized that perceptions of homogeneity were frequently associated within communities located in rural, poor areas in the global south because people living within these locations may “indeed share similar occupations, depend on the same resources, use the same language and belong to the same ethnic or religious group” (Agrawal, 2001). This assumption oversimplifies the complex power structures, gender identities, or existing inequalities that occur within any community regardless of size, socioeconomic status of location. Additionally, assuming a community as a homogenous unit disregards the existence of sub-groups within a community— women, ethnic minorities, children, etc.

Within in these different sub groups we can begin to see that community-based conservation projects over-simplify the needs of the community. Through this oversimplification, inequalities can be exacerbated. Additionally, subgroups within a community, such as women can be further marginalized due to community-based conservation projects. The recognition that communities’ needs are oversimplified in regards community-based conservation initiatives begins to place gender, and more significantly gender inequalities within these in these initiatives into the larger conservation surrounding community and conservation.

Firket Berkes argues that it is necessary for community-based conservation projects to pay specific attention to “equity and empowerment” within a community during project design. In order to understand systems of equity and empowerment or rather, inequality and marginalization, within a community Berkes (2003) states that ecologists need ask questions regarding the benefits and costs of conservation initiatives as well as the different actor (state governments, local governments, conservation NGO’s, and local communities) goals, and the

differentiated power relations amongst actors regarding “differences in class, ethnicity, and gender”.

We can begin to place women and gender disparities in the conversation regarding community-based conservation in through the work of Rebecca Elmhirst and Bernadette P. Ressurrecion. Elmhirst and Ressurrecion (2012) point out that gendered power dimensions and gender roles within a society prescribe gendered relations with the environment. Gender roles within in a society are reflected in the work opportunities available to men and women as well as daily unpaid labor activities (Elmhirst and Ressurrecion, 2012). Established power relations are also apparent within resource access, utilization and control. The introduction of gender into the conversation regarding sustainable development and natural resource management “emphasized how gender is constituted through other kinds of social differences and axes of power such as race, sexuality, class and place, and practices of ‘development’ themselves”. Larger movements to bring awareness to the rights of women within in the international human rights network “effectively linked concerns regarding women and gender within environmentally sustainable development: both having been traditionally marginalized in the past” (Elmhirst and Ressurrecion, 2012).

Introduction of community-based resource management and the assumption of communities as homogenous units “obscures the social differences such as wealth, political power between households, men, women children and ethnic minorities, and it can conceal the local politics of control and inequality” (Blaikie, 2006). More importantly, community-based conservation initiatives that assume community homogeneity can reproduce gender disparities that were established and reinforced through patriarchal control and capitalism. There is a connectedness between women’s issues and environmental movements due to associations of

nature and femininity as well as the exploitation of women and nature through the spread patriarchal power and capitalistic modes of production. Community-based conservation initiatives have an opportunity to correct issues of gender disparity, and exploitation of women and then environment but women are often left out of decision making, resource management, and development planning. Through the work Ruth Meinzen-Dick and Margreet Zwarteveen, and their study of “Gender Dimensions of Resource Management in South Asia” we can see an example of how excluding women’s voices from the decision making process when constructing community-based conservation projects can miss the gendered use of natural resource use and consumption. This particular case examines the participation of women in community-based resource management of water. In one particular example in Nepal, women were excluded from the organization that managed irrigation systems and subsequently access to water. As a result, women were observed taking more water than they were allocated, and not contributing labor to maintenance. Some saw this as water-stealing by women. However due to the fact that women were not consulted regarding water requirement for their fields, the water amounts allocated via descions made by the men were not adequate. Additionally, women did not contribute to well maintenance due to discredit of female labor contribution, cultural restrictions of female labor, and due to the fear of being harassed by males. These issues with irrigation management could have been solved and avoided had women been able to contribute to the management of irrigation systems. Moreover, Meinzen-Dick and Zwarteveen point of that, “little systematic thought has so far been attributed to the linkages between gender relations and communities, or the role of women in community management of resources” (Meinzen-Dick and Zwarteveen 1998).

Through the work of Keane et al (2016) we can see diverse responses to a community-based conservation project, based on gender. This study examines livelihood preferences of Maasai men and women who were members of a community that bordered Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya. The Maasai community living near Maasai Mara, were supposed to be beneficiaries of this community-based conservation initiative. This community-based conservation initiative was based on the implementation of payment for conservancies via the African Conservation Centre and the Mara North Conservancy project. “Conservancies are defined as land set aside by an individual landowner, body corporate, group of owners, or a community for purposes of wildlife conservation” (Keane, et al 2016). The study found that there was preference heterogeneity amongst men and women in regard to the community-based conservation project. Within this project it was determined that women placed more value in conservancy membership than the men did, but men placed more value in wage labor than women did (Keane, et al 2016). Reasons for women’s higher value on conservancy membership may be associated with the amount of control women have in participating in conservancies vs. not participating. For example, monthly conservancy payment is deposited into the account of the head of house (typically men) but women have more opportunity to influence the payment to meet household needs. Additionally, women preference to conservancy membership could also be associated with community level benefits such as infrastructure development.

While the literature paints a picture that women may have unequal access to benefits outlined through community-based conservation initiatives, there are some cases where conservation initiatives contribute to the further marginalization of women. In many cases where CBC initiatives have been implemented outside of protected areas, women are often the most affected by the implementation of protected areas, but are often not consulted in the design of

community-based conservation initiatives. For example, in the Indian Himalayas, women living near the Rahaji and Corbett National Parks. Many of the women were further marginalized through the protected areas and community-based conservation through cultural and practical barriers. (Badola and Hussain, 2003)

### **Barriers to Women's Participation**

Esther Mwangi and Eric Coleman list 6 barriers that limit participation by women in community-based conservation which include:

“1-rules that exclude entry of women into the participatory process; 2-social norms such as segregation, division of labor or gendered biases; 3-social preferences that give more weight to men's participation than women's; 4-entrenched claims by men who are hesitant to give power to women; 5-few personal endowments of property or social networks that would allow effective participation from women, and; 6-household endowments or attributes that prevent effective participation (such as caste position or social status)” (Coleman and Mwangi, 2001)

While Mwangi and Coleman's research regarding community-based conservation and resource management is focused primarily on community-forest management projects, the barriers to women's participation are reflective of larger systemic issues that occur in many facets of community-based conservation and development projects. In many instances project design does not account for existing community inequalities, and failing to address these inequalities before implementing development initiatives can further exacerbate marginalization of women and other minority groups.

Every community that has incorporated community-based initiatives for conservation is wholly unique. Each community has varying landscapes, natural resources, wildlife, social structure, cultural norms, and prescribed gender roles and identities. All of these variables have an impact or construct barriers on how much communities are truly participating, especially

women and other subgroups within a community that are marginalized. One way to understand these barriers is to split them into two categories— cultural and practical barriers (Bruyere, 2017). Cultural barriers that limit women’s participation can include subordination of women, gender identity and roles within a culture, child marriage/dowries, and female genital mutilation or fear of stigmatization. Practical barriers that limit women’s participation are most often their daily duties such as water collections, firewood collection, child rearing, household chores, and other time consuming domestic duties that women are responsible for (Bruyere, 2017).

A case-study in Nicaragua compared the active participation of women in community forest management meetings with household level decision making dynamics and found that at the house hold level women’s participation was more readily excepted rather than compared to participation by women at the community level (Evans, et al, 2016). Women are often limited in participation of decision making outside of the household due to cultural norms or male representation of their spouses. Nicaragua, Belize, Kenya and many other developing nations list national laws that support gender equity or uphold women’s rights enforcement, enforcement at the local level in rural areas, and more specifically the household level lacking (Evans, et all 2015, Kaeser, 2016, Bruyere, 2017).

Through evaluating literature regarding community-based conservation and case studies of community-based conservation initiatives globally, there is programmatic themes that occur in many of the initiatives regarding common benefits associated with community-based conservation initiatives. However, many of the benefits that are thematic in terms of community-based conservation initiatives, include differentiated experiences based on gender. The most common benefits associated with community-based conservation include increased employment opportunities due to increased tourism, and payments for land and ecosystem

services. This becomes problematic however, because in addition to limited participation based on gender, gender disparities also impact who truly benefits from employment and land payments. As you'll read in the following sections gender disparities typically lead to men disproportionately favoring men over women.

## **Tourism and Gender**

Ecotourism, often in coordination with conservation efforts, has been a trend for community development, women's development and women's empowerment in many areas in the global south. In many cases ecotourism provides employment for women most often in service based positions in lodges or other tourism accommodation facilities, or souvenir sales. While these employment opportunities are often open to women, there is limited mobility within the jobs available to women, and furthermore, jobs offered to women are often labor prescribed to certain gender identities. Additionally, employment opportunities offered through ecotourism continue to valorize labor more often associated with masculinity, while women's work is feminized and devalued (Runyan, et al, 2010). Additionally, gendered stereotypes and perceived physical ability often limit employment opportunities for women.

In Ecuador, a woman stated that her basis for opening a B&B as part of local ecotourism initiatives was that it could be done "while [she] keeps the house and watches the little ones" without burdening her husband with asking for support to complete those tasks (Belsky, 1999). Women are often limited in the employment opportunities that are available due to the social structure, cultural gender roles and identities within the cultural context and community setting. Additionally, inclusion in ecotourism processes does not guarantee women's empowerment as

the “tourism processes are reflective of the norms, relations and politics of larger gendered societies” (Tran and Walter, 2013).

Analysis of ecotourism operations have shown trends that local communities, most often are limited in the involvement of ecotourism operations. In Botswana, many local community-members have little to no involvement as owners or managers of tourism operations, and it’s even less likely for local women (Lenao and Basupi, 2016). Moreover, western models of ecotourism based in capitalism and “patriarchal ethnocentrism” have the capacity to reinforce gender inequalities, marginalization of women and “subordination of women within their own cultures”. In Guyana, and the Makushi people’s cultural attitudes are marked of gender equality and respect and as a result Makushi women’s input was taken into consideration in terms of ecotourism development. However, Makushi women were still subjects of gender inequalities though the attitudes of western tourists were observed to show less respect for the Makushi women in contrast to the Makushi women (Dilly, 2003).

### **Land Rights and Community-based Conservation**

Throughout much of sub-Saharan Africa land rights and tenure are still based in customary law. Land rights and tenure tend to favor men through succession of land rights pass down in a patrilineal fashion. Typically, women leave the familial house and marry, gaining access to use her husband’s land. Under customary law, women gain the right to use her husband’s land, but can never become a land owner or title holder. In the context of sub-Saharan Africa, “When it comes to gender and land rights, women are accommodated only in their dependent position as the wives of landholders”(Yngstrom, 2010). Additionally, there is “insufficient attention being paid to power relations in the countryside and their implications for

social groups, such as women, who are not well positioned or represented at the local level power structures. Many of the countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including Kenya, have adopted more gender neutral positions on land rights at the national level, legal positionality of customary law, and the lack of enforcement against gender inequality in rural areas largely limits the weight gender natural policies carry. Lack of land rights in sub-Saharan Africa limit women's earning potential within economies that heavily influenced by agriculture, as well as limited the influence women have over land sales or land development projects. In the case of gender and land rights in Sierra Leone where data showed that women were effected by land development without have power to readily oppose a specific project:

“[Sierra Leonean] women experience this 40,000 hectare bioenergy project as disempowering and disruptive. While these women may have the formal right to participate in land decisions and project benefits, they had no such right in practice. I argue here that this outcome is the result of compound disempowerment that results from the complex interaction of indigenous social and cultural dynamics and the supposedly gender neutral logic of liberal economics”. (Millar, 2015)

Gender inequality in land rights and tenure is not unique to sub-Saharan Africa, and occurs in many countries in Asia as well. Vietnam, India, Nepal, and Cambodia all have power structures that limit women's land rights. Similar to land rights succession in sub-Saharan Africa, in many countries such as India, land rights are passed from father to sons, and it is very rare that women inherit land from their fathers (Chowdhry, 2009). Additionally, despite many national laws within these countries, there are many that “protect” women's lands rights or seek to be perceived as equal land rights. However, many of these laws have become largely symbolic and are less practiced at the local level. Additionally, many of these national laws that seek to ensure gender equality in land ownership are superseded by customary laws that protect cultural rights based in patriarchy rather than uplifting the rights of women.

Land rights are often inherently tied to community-based conservation initiatives, especially those that have wildlife focused aspects, but also community-based initiatives that include the societal roles of women such as water collection and firewood harvesting. Land, and many natural resources are invaluable resource to both humans and wildlife, therefore, land conservation becomes the foundation of most community-based wildlife conservation initiatives.

### **Community-based Conservation- Moving Forward**

Through evaluating these contributions to the academic conversation in regards community-based conservation we can begin to piece together that community-based conservation was inducted as an approach to conservation development due to the failures of state controlled resource management, and exclusion of local communities in regards to fortress conservation. Community-based conservation arose as means to increase the ability to carry-out conservation goals, while making conservation efforts beneficial to local communities whom were most affected by establishment of protected areas and restrictive natural resource policies. However, community-based conservation is met with mixed reviews predominantly due to the assumption that local communities are a homogeneous social group. This assumption leads to the exclusion of marginalized subgroups while often benefitting only certain elite members of the community. Gendered impacts of community based-conservation programs remain largely under researched, and more should be done to understand experiences of women in relation to community-based conservation projects.

More specifically, my thesis research will be addressing the gap in literature regarding gender disparities within community-based conservation initiatives through studying the gendered impacts of wildlife tourism within Maasai communities bordering Amboseli National

Park. Wildlife tourism represents almost 14% of Kenya's national GDP (Kalua, 2017) and subsequent conservation initiatives to sustain the wildlife populations have been marketed as community-based conservation initiatives through benefit sharing with the local communities. Amboseli is one of the most visited protected areas in Kenya in regards to wildlife tourism. Amboseli's annual revenue is approximately 150 million Kenyan Shillings (~ US\$ 2 Million) (Okello, 2008). However, there hasn't been any research conducted on the gendered impacts of wildlife tourism in the area. The greater importance of this research is to gain a better understanding of the gendered impacts of community-based conservation initiatives which can lead to reducing gender disparities and more equitable benefit sharing.

### **Chapter 3. Methodology**

In a prior trip to Kenya as part of a wildlife conservation field school in 2012, I began to see the negative impacts conservation initiatives could have on local communities. Communities I encountered were often left without access to valuable natural resources, and experienced high instances of human-wildlife conflict. As previously mentioned, Amboseli National Park is often viewed as the “birthplace of community-based conservation” making its marked history of integrating community needs into conservation development a great case study to evaluate gendered impacts of community-based conservation initiatives.

To begin this research, I started by analyzing policy documents and project goals listed by Kenyan Wildlife Service, Big Life Foundation, African Conservation Centre, and African Wildlife Foundation. While analyzing these documents I evaluated the community-based initiatives that were being implemented to gain insight into the gendered dimensions of these initiatives. Contacts I had made while previously studying in Kenya include conservation and tourism professionals working at the National Museums of Kenya, Kenyan Wildlife Service, Institute of Primate Research and Sopa Lodge. These contacts assisted me in securing interviews with Maasai community members in the Kimana/Tikondo Group Ranch, and conservation employees working for Big Life Foundation, Wildlife Direct, and African Conservation Centre. Conservation employees were interviewed to verify what community-based conservation initiatives were being implemented, the amount of community involvement, awareness of gender inequalities, and the future of conservation in the area.

Additionally, I conducted interviews with Maasai community members (men and women) from three separate bomas located within the Kimana/Tikondo Group Ranch. I interviewed 16 Maasai women, and 8 Maasai men. Interviews were conducted in English,

Swahili or Maa, with assistance of a translator, whom is Maasai and a fellow student from the wildlife conservation field school we had both participated in. Both women and men were interviewed to gain insight into the gendered impacts of community-based conservation initiatives. Two of the local Maasai men I interviewed were also hired as game scouts by the Big Life Foundation. However, they are categorized in the “men” section of the Table 1 below due to the fact that they are local Maasai men whose employment is a direct benefit from conservation

initiatives in the area. All of the Maasai community members interviewed stated that they were over the age of 18, however specific ages are

*Table 1: Interview Demographics*

<b>Women</b>	16	Women were over the age of 18
<b>Men</b>	8	6 elders, 2 Morani over the age of 18
<b>Conservation Employees</b>	5	4 men, 1 woman
<b>Total</b>	29	

hard to know because many of the Maasai men and women are unsure of their exact age. Of the 8 men interviewed 6 were Maasai elders and two were Maasai morani (status as elder or morani is described in greater detail later in this research) Additionally, the five conservation employees interviewed included four men and one women, and they were all Maasai from the neighboring towns of Kimana, Loitoktok and the Mbirikani Group Ranch. Aside from conducting interviews, and analyzing policy documents, I spent time in the community recording observations on gender dynamics, interactions with natural resources, and Maasai culture. Finally, I spent time in Amboseli National park recording resources available in the park compared to the resources outside of the park.

Through conducting interviews with local Maasai community members, I was able gain insight into which of the initiatives are being implemented, and which aren't. Additionally, I was able to gauge gendered perspectives on the benefits most frequently mentioned by the Maasai

community members. Most importantly, I was able to ascertain which initiatives tend to disproportionately favor men due to existing gender inequalities within patriarchal societies.

### **Limitations**

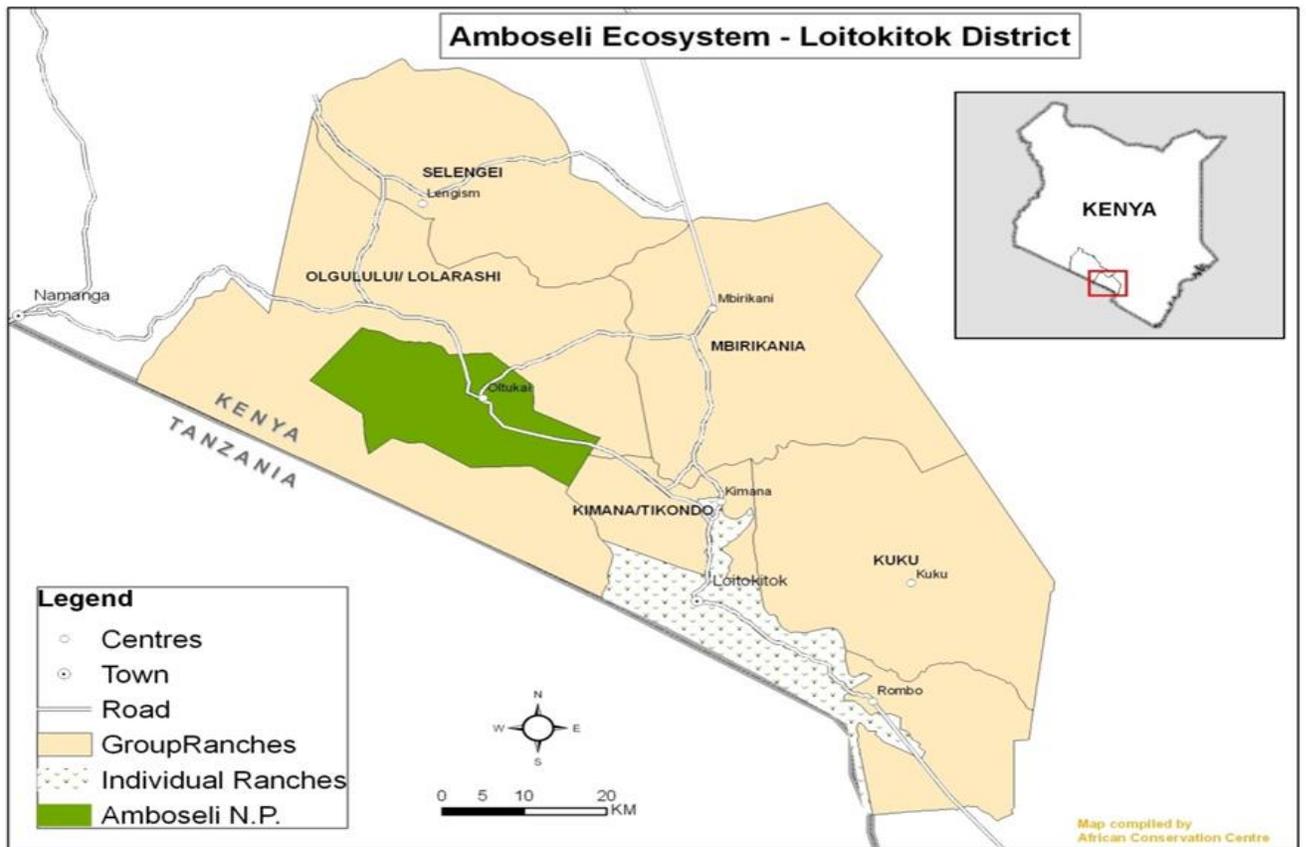
My research was limited by several factors. While my research was supported by receiving the *Ziegler Fellowship*, which covered a small portion of travel costs, but not all of the associated costs of conducting field research were covered. Limited finances dictated the amount of time I could afford to spend on the ground conducting research. While I was able to conduct 30 interviews in ten days, a longer research period to conduct more interviews would strengthen the impact of my research. Finally, I was limited on access to the Maasai women. It was difficult to explain to the Maasai elders (men) that my research did not include compensation for interviews, however in most cases the Maasai elders insisted that I pay the cost of entrance to visit the bomas before I could conduct interviews. My translator was able to explain my research further to 3 of the bomas that allowed for me to conduct research without paying the boma cost of entrance fees. Additionally, the Maasai elders were hesitant to let women speak to me alone, citing “cultural and Maasai customary practices—FGM, marriage dowries, child marriage, and polygamy, could be misunderstood”. My translator later informed that recently many women’s rights NGO’s had been in the area attempting to gauge the current frequencies of practices such as FGM, child marriage and marriage dowries. Because of this, and recognition that FGM, child marriage, and marriage dowries were illegal the Maasai elders stated that one Maasai elder would need to be present for these interviews. The presence of the Maasai elders limited the information I could receive from the women. While 3 of the younger Maasai women I interviewed brought up FGM and child marriage, I believe that if the Maasai men were not

present the Maasai women may have shared further, important information regarding issues Maasai women face.

### Study Area

Amboseli National Park is located in the south-central part of Kenya in the Loitokitok District of the Rift Valley Province. Amboseli lies adjacent to the Tanzanian border and the base of Mount Kilimanjaro. Amboseli National Park was designated as a park in 1973, with a size of 151 square miles, and was established on traditional Maasailand. While Amboseli National Park isn't large in size, compared to neighboring Tsvao East National Park (TENP) and Maasai Mara

Figure Amboseli 1: Ecosystem and Group Ranches



National Park (MMNP), the greater Amboseli Ecosystem encompasses approximately 2,155 square miles. Additionally, the Amboseli Ecosystem extends to Tsvao East National Park and

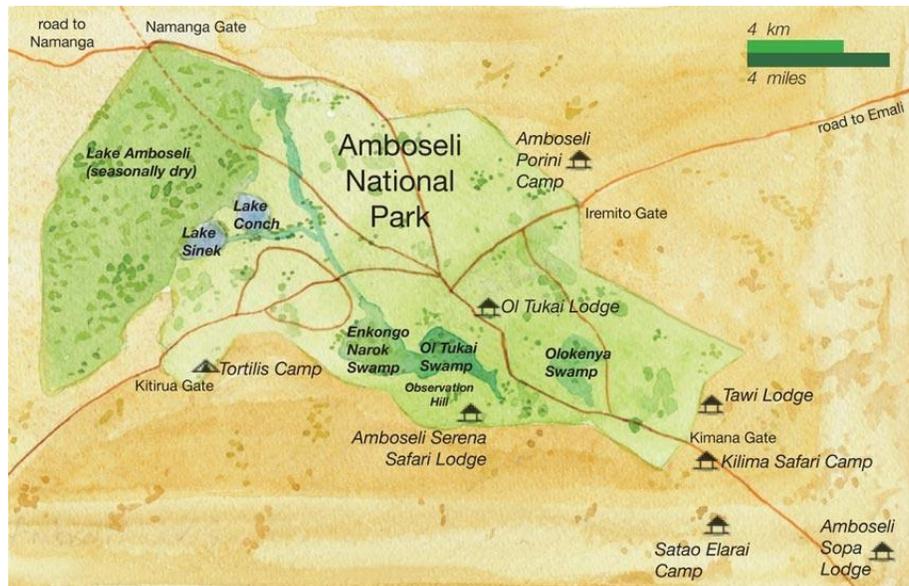
Chyulu Hills National Park, connecting the parks through a wildlife corridor. The Amboseli Ecosystem also includes 6 Maasai community group ranches (Figure 1).

I interviewed members of the Kimana/Tikondo group ranch which encompasses the land leading up to the Kimana Gate entrance into Amboseli National Park. (Figure 2) There are five gates entrances to Amboseli National Park as well as an airstrip within the park. The Kimana Gate is the only entrance that has lodging and accommodations for tourists outside of the park. Within the park there are three lodges, Ol' Tukai Lodge, Tortilis Camp, and Amboseli Serena Lodge.

The communities both in the group ranches and individual ranches living within the Kimana Gate area,

experience high levels of tourism throughout most of the year due to the presence of lodges and other tourist accommodations that are not available at the other gate entrances into Amboseli.

*Figure 2: Entrances to Amboseli National Park*



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Amboseli represented what was left of traditional Maasailand during British colonialism in Kenya. In 1902 an agreement was reached between the British colonial administration and Lenana, the Maasai spiritual leader. The agreement stated that the Maasai people were able to develop the area by their own terms. This agreement “inadvertently” protected the ecosystem

from settlement and hunting”. (Western, et al, 1994) The National Parks Ordinance of 1945 disrupted this agreement. During this time, many national parks were designated on traditional Maasailand, including Tsavo West and Nairobi. Amboseli and Maasai Mara National Park were problematic however, because they fell in the Southern Reserve, an area that was protected by the 1902 treaty. This led to tensions between the Maasai of the southern reserve and the colonial government. As a quick, temporary fix, Amboseli was designated as a national reserve. Designation as a national reserve was meant to ensure that Maasai people benefitted from Maasai Mara and Amboseli. When Kenya gained independence in 1963 the Kajiado African District Councils became the management of Amboseli National Reserve, under which they began wildlife tourism revenue sharing with the local Maasai. This revenue was supposed to be used towards community development projects such as health clinics, education, and increasing access to water. However, many of these projects never came to light. The Amboseli Ecosystem holds great importance for the wildlife, the local Maasai communities, the international conservation community and the Kenyan GDP. The importance of Amboseli led to many powers struggles for management. Battle for control over Amboseli ended with the Amboseli being gazetted as a park in 1974.

### **Community-based Initiatives: Amboseli**

As previously mentioned, Amboseli National Park is often viewed as the birth place of community-based conservation initiatives. After designation as a national park there was a growing recognition for the need for wildlife conservation to occur outside of Amboseli on community lands in addition to the park itself. For example, the greater Amboseli Ecosystem sustains approximately 1,600 elephants while the park itself only hold enough resources to hold approximately 100 elephants, showing that the areas surrounding the park and the corridor

linking Amboseli to Chyulu Hills and Tsavo West National park are invaluable resources to the wildlife living in the park. Without access to resources outside of the park, and migratory paths, many of the wildlife inhabiting Amboseli National Park would not be able to survive.

The recognition of the need for, and implementation of conservation initiatives outside of Amboseli led to many instances of human-wildlife conflict with local Maasai communities, and increased Maasai resentment towards wildlife conservation. As a result, the game warden Daniel Sindiyo, working with David Western, in the 1970's, suggested including community interests, customary values, and traditional pastoral knowledge into the conservation policies. Sindiyo's request to "integrate communities into conservation through the engagement of local communities" in sharing the benefits was undertaken in Amboseli National Park in the 1970s. (Western, 1994)

Previous attempts by the Kajiado African District Council to ensure Maasai community members received benefits from Amboseli when it was designated as a national reserve, largely failed. Amboseli became a National park around the same time as the inception of the newly founded Kenyan Wildlife Service, whose first plan of action included creating "a policy framework with a strong commitment to CBC [community-based conservation] and integrated conservation planning on a national scale". (Western, et al 2015) However, community members viewed this policy as "highly responsive to elephant poaching", but less responsive to instances of humans killed by elephants. This sentiment is often largely reflective of international conservation initiatives and campaigns. One Maasai man I interviewed stated that, "When a white man kills an elephant it's hunting, but when an African kills an elephant, it's poaching".

Community-based initiatives for conservation on the land outside of Amboseli National Park have become a greater conversation, with many actors including— local community

leaders, local governments, state actors, African conservation NGOs, and international conservation NGOs. The main actors “fulfilling” community-based conservation initiatives within the Amboseli Ecosystem include- KWS, AWF, BLF, AEF. Currently, AWF has a system of paid ecosystem services such as land payments and conservation leases to promote conservation outside of the park through monetary community benefits. BLF offers employment opportunities as a community benefit through a game scout program that hires local Maasai men to manage wildlife populations outside of the park. BLF also lists community programs they sponsor to include education and schools, as well as the hosting the Maasai Olympics. Traditionally, for a Maasai man to become a Morani, or warrior, he would hunt and spear a lion. Today, BLF sponsors the Maasai Olympics to provide an alternative path to becoming a Moran. Finally, KWS lists out many community-based initiatives within the Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan from 2008-2018 include, tourism development, wildlife barriers, and fulfilling community partnerships and an education management program. Below *Table 2* lists the benefits currently being implemented at Amboseli National Park, the main actors, and a short description.

*Table 2: Benefits most frequently mentioned by Maasai interviewees*

<b>Benefit</b>	<b>Actors</b>	<b>Description</b>
Human-Wildlife Conflict	KWS, BLF	Efforts to reduce the impacts and costs of human-wildlife conflict in the area. Human-wildlife conflict occurring most frequently in Kimana/Tikondo includes dangerous encounters with elephants, elephant crop raiding, and predators preying on livestock. These efforts include installing wildlife barriers, hiring of local game scouts and reimbursement for loss of livestock.
Education and School Bursaries	KWS, BLF	Bursaries for education are created through shared revenues from park entry fees. Percentages from annual park entry fees are placed into a fund for education bursaries to help with costs of secondary school for Maasai children in the area. I

Tourism and Conservation Employment	Lodges, KWS, BLF	Both direct and indirect employment through conservation and tourism activities provides income generating opportunities for local communities. Tourists lodges hire local Maasai for security, conservation NGO's hire local Maasai as game scouts. Additionally, many Maasai participate in informal tourism systems of cultural tourism in partnership with safari drivers, and curio (souvenir) shop owners.
Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES)	AWF	AWF created a system of payment for ecosystem services for Maasai community members that host wildlife on their land, limit agricultural production to small home gardens, and not creating any permanent settlements. Community members who participate in the PES program receive annual payments.

**Maasai Culture and Gender**

The Maasai represent one of the three cultural groups recognized as pastoralists in Kenya, and are a minority group within the national context. Maasai population makes up a little over 1% of Kenya's population. (Reuters, 2008) However, the Maasai culture is heavily marketed in the tourism industry. (Nasioku, 2004) The second someone arrives in Jomo Kenyatta National Airport, you see numerous photos of Maasai as well as traditional Maasai spears, jewelry and other cultural artifacts a are based I Maasai tradition. The Maasai are Nilotic speakers with their native language being Maa. Traditionally, Maasai were semi-nomadic groups occupying the southern portion of Kenya and northern portion of Tanzania. Prior to colonialization, the Maasai operated within communal land management systems. (Talle, 1988) According to one Maasai elder I interviewed, the Maasai historically did not claim ownership over the land or its resources, that idea came with colonialism. They believed that no one should be denied access to natural resources or land.

Livestock rearing represents the primary source of income for the Maasai, through the selling and trading of goats and cattle. Maasai used to migrate with their livestock in seasonal patterns in search of natural resources and to avoid over grazing. The Maasai migrations mimicked those of the native wildlife in search of the same resources such water, and fertile grazing areas. Maasai, are “patriarchal in structure, and male-dominated in ideology”. (Talle, 1988) Within Maasai culture women are regarded as “social minors and are largely appropriated by male elders through bride wealth [marriage dowries]”. (Talle, 1988) Maasai elders occupy the positions that hold the highest levels of decision making power for their community. Maasai women and girls are considered subordinate to Maasai elders and the Maasai Morans (Warriors). Boys and young men are subordinate to Maasai elders but gain more power once they become a Moran. Morani translates to warrior, and it is a status given to young men once they have proven themselves to be worthy in accordance with Maasai standards. Traditionally, this meant killing a lion with a spear.

The traditional Maasai way of life was severely disrupted by colonialism. Under British rule, land became a commodity— something that could be bought and sold, and a concept that disregarded Maasai views and systems of land management. Additionally, many forest and wildlife reserves were established under the guise of “conservation”, but more readily this land was available to be used by colonial elite. Moreover, prior to British rule, Maasai lifestyle was a subsistence based economy, however under colonization the Maasai were introduced to a market based economy and “transformed to market oriented production”. (Talle, 1988) Prior to this transformation, Maasai women were often able to make decisions or provide input at the household level because through the trading of livestock, goods (such as maize, vegetables and consumable goods) were accumulated rather than cash payments for livestock. Once the Maasai

became integrated to a market economy, and livestock were sold for monetary gains rather than traded for household goods.

Currently, many of the Kenya Maasai are living below the poverty line and recent studies have attributed high rates of Maasai poverty to issues such as “displacement from ancestral land, environmental degradation, discrimination of women, elitism in ecotourism management, alienation from decision making, inequality in sharing revenues, and more” (Wishitemi, et al, 2015). Jan Jindy Pettman (1996) introduces us to the term “trauma injury” which is a lasting effect of colonization continues to disadvantage many communities in previously colonized areas, and continues to promote “poverty, structural violence, institutional racism”. Moreover lasting “trauma injury” contributes to the prevalence of gender-based violence towards Maasai women and gender inequalities through the valorization of masculine labor. (Pettman, 1996) Additionally, prior to colonization, Maasai households and power sharing between Maasai men and women was relatively stable. Moreover, prior to colonization Maasai women and other pastoral societies in eastern Africa, pastoral women often had autonomy over the sale and rearing small livestock and as a result had access to higher social status and even participatin local policitics (Talle, 1988)

During British colonization of Kenya, certain ethnic groups held more validity in the eyes of the colonizers. Ethnic groups such as the Kikuyu and other agricultural ethnic groups were held in greater regard compared to pastoral societies such as the Maasai, Samburu and Borana. State enforements, both during colonization and post-independence require Maasai and other pastoral societies to adopt sedentary lifestyles. Because of this shift, pastoral societies were integrated into international markets through the commercialization of livestock, and most recently the upsurge in wildlife and cultural tourism in the area. Introduction into international

markets radically shifted the status of Maasai women (and pastoral women in general) (Guyo, 2017). Male authority over the livestock commodification and colonial social standards enhanced male power in economics and politics. Pastoral women, including the Maasai, were further marginalized because of their status as pastoralists, colonized subjects and gender. Patrilineal nature of colonized societies often feminizes domestic labor and “consequently [leaves women] without authority or decision making outside the realm of the household” (Talle, 1988).

The Maasai are a polygamous society, and while Maasai women currently occupy the lower rungs of social hierarchy, women as wives are positioned in domestic hierarchy. Maasai women as wives occupy different hierarchical positions depending on which number wife they are. For example, if a Maasai man has 3 wives their decision making power is determined by the order in which they were married. Additionally, due to the polygamous nature of Maasai culture, the Maasai men often have multiple children with each of their wives. Maasai women are responsible for child rearing. One Maasai woman stated that, “men are not responsible for taking care of children, that is the responsibility of the mothers”. In addition to child rearing the Maasai women are responsible for the daily upkeep of household chores, house construction, and cooking and cleaning.

Outside of the bomas and homes, women are responsible for fetching firewood and collecting water. Women collect water daily, walking anywhere from 1-4 km, daily. Women fetch firewood 2-3 times, walking anywhere from 2-10 km. These time-consuming activities limit the time women have available to participate in income generating activities. In *Tables 3 and 4* below, you can see that breakdown of distance all the Maasai women interviewed walk each to collect firewood and water.

*Table 3: Distance Maasai women walk to collect water*

<b>Distance for water</b>	<b># of women</b>
1km	6
2km	4
3km	3
4km	3

*Table 4: Distance Maasai women walk to collect firewood*

<b>Distance for firewood</b>	<b># of women</b>
2-3 km	8
4-5km	5
5+ km	3

### **Current Gender Inequalities**

Despite the fact that the Kenyan Constitution of 2010 deems the practices of child marriage, marriage dowries, and FGM illegal, this is largely ignored within the Maasai community. Additionally, the Kenyan Constitution of 2010 promotes policies of gender equality within landownership which also is not readily adhered to within Maasai culture or local government. According to the United Nations, 73% of Maasai girls had experienced FGM as recently as 2014. (United Nations, 2014) Once a Maasai girl has undergone FGM she is then considered to be a woman and ready for marriage. According to the Maasai Girls Education Fund, girls are often circumcised between 11 and 15 years old, and married shortly after. Despite the illegality of these practices, they “still occur frequently due to corruption among local government officials, powerful male networks of cover-up, and women’s compliance in the circumcision ceremonies”, according to Soila Sayialel of Wildlife Direct.

There are many issues Maasai women face such as FGM, child marriage and marriage dowries that have gained international attention but despite concern and activism the practices are still largely the norm. Many of these current gender inequalities limit the accessibility of

community-based conservation benefits to women. For example, issue of FGM, child marriage and marriage dowries promotes a sense of male ownership over women. A young Maasai girls marriage will be arranged once she goes through FGM (as early as 4-5<sup>th</sup> grade) by her father, male family members, future husband's male family members and once the marriage dowry (offering of livestock and money) has been negotiated. FGM, child marriage and marriage dowries strip Maasai girls of personal autonomy. Additionally, Maasai girls fathers or husbands decide whether or not they will receive an education (one of the most frequently mentioned benefits of community-based conservation in the area.



## **Chapter 4. Results and Discussion**

Maasai community members, both men and women, mentioned many of the same sentiments regarding community-based conservation in the area. However, many of these initiatives disproportionately favored men over women, and there are a few benefits that men and women valued differently. All of the Maasai community members mentioned education and school bursaries and an influx of wildlife tourism and income generating activities as benefits. Both men and women stated employment as a benefit. However, employment opportunities, which will be expanded on later, are different depending on gender. Payments for ecosystem services, and land payments were a benefit mentioned by both men and women however, women did not receive the checks and most often were unsure of the value of the payment checks.

The most frequent negative mentioned due to living near Amboseli National Park and community-based conservation initiatives was issues of human-wildlife conflict, but these issues are beginning to be resolved through construction of elephant fences and wildlife barriers as well as compensation for livestock killed by predatory wildlife.

### **Human-Wildlife Conflict**

The current Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan (AEMP) designated for 2008-2018 by Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) includes many community development and community-based conservation initiatives that should have already or are set to be implemented. Specifically,



*Figure 3. BLF Elephant Fence*

there is a detailed “Community Partnership and Education Management Programme” with the purpose of “enhancing community participation in wildlife conservation for social-economic empowerment”. (Amboseli Ecosystem Management Plan, 2008) The AEMP lists three key points to wildlife conservation on community lands which includes— community participation in decision making for land use planning, increasing or creating economic incentives for conserving wildlife, and reducing or offsetting the costs of human- wildlife conflict.

Under this program, the KWS has included a five-part action plan. Action 2.1 includes rehabilitating and maintaining wildlife barriers. Of the 24 community members I interviewed, all of them listed construction of an elephant fence (Figure 3) as a recent benefit attributed to community-based initiatives. However, this fence was not constructed by KWS of the Kenyan government, but was instead funded by Richard Bonham, the CEO of The Big Life Foundation (BLF). (Image 2.1) Additionally, the fence lies approximately 10 km west from the park boundary and extends from Tanzanian border to approximately 30 km north of the road leading to the Kimana entrance. Community members, both men and women, have stated that

this fence has positively limited the conflict with elephants, especially for the women whom are responsible for fetching water and collecting firewood. This fence however, only prevents elephant conflict and does not deter predators such as lions and leopards from killing local livestock. The Maasai community members I interviewed stated that KWS had not implemented any wildlife barrier or fence maintenance/construction.

*Table 5: Interviewees views on the most problematic wildlife species.*

	<b>Elephants</b>	<b>Predators</b>
<b>Men</b>	6	4
<b>Women</b>	11	4
<b>Conservation Employees</b>	5	5

The second action outlined by the AEMP sought to “reconstitute the conflict resolution committee (CRC)” to negotiate how to best address, mitigate and compensate human-wildlife conflict. The members of the Maasai

communities I interviewed were unaware of any such committee. However, Daniel Ole Sambu, a Maasai man from Mbirikani group ranch works for BLF as the manager of the Predator Protection Program and Predator Compensation Fund. This again is a community-based program, sponsored by BLF rather than KWS. Sambu stated that the predator compensation fund is meant to compensate for loss of livestock and that BLF pays for 70% of cost of livestock loss and asks the Maasai community member to pay 30% to ensure that Maasai community members are taking proper precautionary actions to protect their livestock from predators. These precautionary actions include bringing livestock into the bomas and housing them overnight in corrals constructed of acacia branches. *Table 5* demonstrates the community responses to the question of which wildlife species were the most problematic in terms of wildlife conflict. Five out of five conservation employees recognized that both elephants and predators (lions, hyenas, and leopards) caused issues of human-wildlife conflict for local communities living near Amboseli National Park. Elephants were the most frequently mentioned problematic wildlife

species by both Maasai men and women, but encounters with elephants had been greatly reduced since construction of the BLF elephant fence. Additionally, four women and four men responded that predator species were the most problematic wildlife species due to livestock predation. Throughout the community there was growing concern that issues of human-wildlife conflict were going to continue to increase in the near future because of the current severe droughts and reduced resources.

All of the Maasai interviewed, stated that wildlife conflict with at least one wildlife species was a consequence of living near the park. Eleven out of sixteen women reported that negative interactions with elephants were “dangerous and frequent”. According to Soila Sayialel, employee of Wildlife Direct, conflict and negative encounters between elephants and Maasai women increase during the dry season because the elephants and community depend on the same shared resources. Additionally, Soila stated that increased intensity of the dry seasons due to climate change have led to many hardships for wildlife and the Maasai, were increasing the frequency of conflict. The Maasai women often experience more accounts of conflict with elephants because they are responsible for walking up to 10 km to fetch water and collect firewood. However, eleven women whom shared moments of conflict with elephants also said that with since the construction of the elephant fence by BLF the frequency of human-elephant conflict had dropped drastically which is a benefit for women as a result of community-based conservation initiatives.

### **Education and KWS Bursaries**

Education and school bursaries are provided to local families to help cover the costs of secondary education. Bursaries are created through revenue sharing policies that allocate a

percentage of annual park entry fees for Amboseli National Park to education. Of the twenty-four Maasai community members interviewed, 100% stated that checks or bursaries for education were one of the primary benefits from KWS and living near Amboseli National Park. The school bursaries are shared park revenue from entrance fees collected at Amboseli National Park. I was unable to locate any KWS document that explains how or what percentage of entrance fees is shared with the Maasai. The KWS website does state that direct tourism revenue sharing with local community members in the form of school bursaries only occurs at Amboseli National Park and Tsavo East National Park. Primary school in Kenya is free for all children and classroom gender ratios for primary school are more equal than secondary school. According to the Maasai interviewed, secondary school consists of 3 terms per year, and each term can cost anywhere from 10,000 to 70,000 Kenyan shillings (\$100-700 USD). Even though 100% of the Maasai interviewed acknowledged that school bursaries were a benefit, 100% of them also stated that they “wished for more” or that school bursaries “are not enough”. Daniel Ole Sambu, of BLF shared that approximately 2.6 million shillings (\$26,000 USD) were placed into bursaries for education with approximately 680 children listed as beneficiaries. This breaks down to approximately 2,941 Kenyan shillings (\$29.41 USD). The amount of the bursaries doesn’t cover 1 semester for one child. In order to send their kids to school, Maasai women stated that they depend on tourists to either sponsor their child’s education or from income generated through jewelry sales or agricultural work. The women stated that child rearing and paying for education are considered responsibilities of the women.

In one interview with one of the Maasai women, she explained to me that once a year KWS will survey the area to determine how many children will be of age for secondary school for the following year. Families will then go to the schools once bursaries are posted to find out

if their child/children were receiving a bursary. The bursary goes directly to the school to contribute to cost of enrollment rather than being paid out to each individual family.

Furthermore, of the 16 Maasai women interviewed none had received a secondary education. Their reasoning behind this was most often that their father's chose not to send them. Two of the Maasai women said they were enrolled in secondary school, but when they became pregnant they were forced to drop out and marry. Historically, it was very unlikely that a Maasai women would receive an education because of lack of value placed on women's education, the existence of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), child marriages, and marriage dowries. (Anastasia, Teklemariam, 2011) More value is being placed in girls' education at the familial, local and national levels of Kenya. But the cultural barriers that include child marriages, FGM

*Table 6: Gendered primary and secondary school enrollment of the interviewees children*

<b>Education</b>	<b>Girls</b>	<b>Boys</b>
<b>Primary</b>	27	18
<b>Secondary</b>	1	12
<b>Total</b>	28	30

and dowries are still a reality for the young Maasai women living near the boundaries of Amboseli National Park as well as other Maasai areas in Kenya.

It is important to mention that education for Maasai boys is not guaranteed as there are

families to opt keep boys home to care for livestock instead of pursuing an education, but still more boys receive a secondary education in contrast to girls. The 16 women I interviewed had 58 kids that were currently receiving an education both in primary and secondary. Gendered school enrollment of the children of the Maasai women I interviewed is shown in *Table 6*, to the left.

It's also important to note that when asked why there weren't more girls receiving a secondary

education the women stated that their fathers decided they would be married. However, many women did not answer this question directly, or avoided noting the age of their daughters' when they were married.

Marriages where the girl is under the age of 18 are illegal in Kenyan law, but still occur frequently in the Maasai culture, especially in rural areas. Despite the illegality of child marriages and the communities' knowledge of the illegality of child marriages they still occur frequently and often in secrecy. Part of community-based initiatives include electing Maasai men to watch over 10 homesteads and take note of any prolonged absences from primary school and investigate causation of these absences. Many Maasai girls who go through FGM will go through this process starting as early as 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade. The role of the Maasai men that take on these leadership protections are supposed to report on any instances of FGM, child marriages, and marriage dowries. However, according to Soila's research and on the ground work to prevent FGM, and child marriages she stated "that most often the Maasai men that are supposed to watch over the girls are paid off by families, corrupt, and may even be implicit in instances of FGM or child marriage within their own families".

Despite the fact that education was unanimously perceived as a benefit that comes with living near Amboseli National Park, and from KWS there are clear gender disparities that limit how much women and girls are truly benefitting from this tourism revenue sharing and school bursaries.

### **Ecotourism and Conservation Employment**

As previously mentioned, the Kimana Gate entrance into Amboseli National Park is the only gate that offers tourist accommodations. As a result, income generating activities are

created through the tourism industries. Direct and Indirect employment opportunities are created through wildlife conservation and wildlife tourism in the area. Additionally, there is a bustling system of informal income generating arrangements between local Maasai men, safari drivers and curio shop owners

All of the Maasai community members I interviewed, both men and women, noted tourism and income generating activities as benefits from living near ANP and efforts to conserve local wildlife. Many stated that they felt positively towards wildlife, despite crop-raiding, because “they are the reasons tourists visit the area”. One Maasai elder pointed out that the “Maasai had coexisted peacefully with wildlife for years, and that it wasn’t until colonialism that conflict with the wildlife occurred, but with tourism the Maasai’s relationship with wildlife is improving because

of the money it brings to the area”.

To describe employment, and income generating opportunities I will

*Table 5: Gendered direct and indirect employment opportunities through conservation and tourism*

Employment	Direct		Indirect	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>Conservation</b>	0	2	0	0
<b>Tourism</b>	0	1	16	8

break them into two main categories— direct and indirect employment opportunities. Direct employment opportunities reflect employment through KWS, BLF and the lodges. Direct employment also represents positions that pay employees monthly. Indirect employment opportunities are instances when Maasai community members make a living through self-employment or cultural tourism activities that are unregulated, and informal systems of earning an income. The majority of the Maasai community members interviewed described indirect

employment as the way in which they benefitted from wildlife tourism. As shown below in *Table 7*, you can see all the community members interviewed benefited from indirect employment, or alternative income generating activities as a benefit from wildlife conservation and tourism. Also shown in *Table 4*, you can see that while on 3 out of 8 men benefitted from direct employment through tourism or conservation, while 0 out of 16 women were benefitting from direct conservation or tourism employment.

Only one Maasai man was a direct tourism employee. He was employed at the bar and food services manager at Sopa Lodge and had been working there for over 20 years. The Sopa Lodge bar manager has a 4-year degree from the University of Nairobi in tourism and hospitality. He also shared that most employees at Sopa Lodge were not from the Amboseli area, but instead were from other parts of Kenya and had university degrees in tourism and hospitality management. Direct employment opportunities most readily available to local Maasai men were as security for the hotels, and women were not hired for this position. Sopa Lodge provides a market space for local Maasai women to share their jewelry to tourists, but they are not hired for this position and the market is operated based on informal agreements made amongst the women that sell their jewelry in the space. Additionally, every woman interviewed sells jewelry to earn an income either at the Sopa Lodge or within their traditional bomas.

The aspects of tourism the most of the local Maasai community members benefit from are built through informal arrangements between safari drivers, curio (souvenir) shop owners, and Maasai elders from the traditional bomas. These systems work through informal arrangements and revenue sharing agreements between the drivers, owners, and elders. The safari drivers, whom are mostly employed from Nairobi, agree to bring tourists to visit the traditional bomas. Once at the traditional bomas, tourists are greeted by English speaking Maasai

elders who give a price that tourists must pay to enter the boma and receive a cultural experience. The common price for entry is 2000 Kenyan shillings (\$20 USD). These fees are collected by the Maasai elders (men). Once inside the boma tourists are shown around by the English speaking Maasai elders to see the traditional homesteads, learn about traditional Maasai lifestyles and see traditional Maasai songs and dances performed by the Maasai men and women.

One Maasai elder stated that he was unaware of any employment opportunities offered through KWS, conservation NGO's, or the lodges, but said none of the members of his boma would want those employment opportunities because it is not a part of the traditional Maasai lifestyle that the tourists come to see. Because the price for entry into the bomas is informal there is no regulation of how much the cost of entry is, but also limited transparency for the community members whom are not Maasai elders. The Maasai women do not have a say in where this money goes or how it is spent, but are still expected to perform cultural practices when the tourists visit. The only money they make or control is from jewelry sales which varies. Additionally, all of the Maasai elders stated that they spend the income generated from tourists cost of entry on items for their boma such as flour, maize or other supplies. While I never witnessed any purchasing of community goods, I did see two of the Maasai elders out of their traditional clothing spending money on beers in the local town of Kimana, after previously stating that they do not seek formal employment to maintaining a traditional Maasai lifestyle.

Of the local Maasai men I interviewed, 2 of them had gained employment as game scouts. The job of game scouts is to manage wildlife population ranging on community lands outside of the park and through the Amboseli- Chuylu Corridor. Game scouts are often the first to respond to reports of human-wildlife conflict. Additionally, there recently has been a new task force made up of game scouts created by BLF to monitor individual elephants that have been

identified as the most problematic in terms of crop raiding and dangerous interactions with local community members. A handful of the Maasai women interviewed were aware of this task force, and felt a sense of security through heightened monitoring of problematic elephants. While only 2 of the 8 men interviewed were formally employed by BLF as game scouts, according to BLF in 2013 as many as 300 Maasai community members were hired by BLF. BLF describes these initiatives as “employment derived from wildlife-related activities is therefore essential to wildlife’s survival”. Additionally, BLF accredits itself with being the “largest single employer in the Amboseli-Tsavo Ecosystem”. (BLF, 2013)

While interviewing the two men employed by BLF as game scouts, I inquired about whether or not BLF hires women. The game scouts reported that “women may be [hired] as secretaries, but could not perform the duties of game scouts”. Neither were aware of any local Maasai women employed as a secretary at BLF. Moreover, when pressed as to why women would not be hired as game scouts, they men stated the main reasons were that women, “would be too busy taking care of the children” and “women and men are built different, physically”. The justification as to why women could not be hired as games scouts are reflective of Maasai perceptions surrounding gender roles and identity that limit any employment that women could have to due time constraints of unpaid daily duties (child rearing, water collecting and harvesting firewood), and perceived limitations and inferiority of Maasai women.

In addition to limited availability of direct employment opportunities for women, women’s unpaid daily responsibilities take up much of their valuable time.

During an interview with a Maasai women, she shared that she walked 2 hours a day to sell her jewelry at the Sopa Lodge market 7 days a week, where she worked from 5 AM to 6 PM. In addition to selling jewelry at the market she was still responsible for household duties, taking

care of her 9 children, walking 1km to fetch water daily, and walking 4 km to collect firewood 2 times a week, all while finding time to make her jewelry throughout any given week. Many of Maasai women, becomes the sole income earner for her family, despite the fact the Maasai men are earning an informal income from tourism, the money earned by the women becomes the money that goes to paying for food, clothing, school supplies or tuition for their children. While the Maasai men's primary responsibility is in taking care of the livestock, however this responsibility maybe passed on to children, both boys and girls. Additionally, livestock sales are an income generating activity that Maasai men benefit from. To sum it up— the daily responsibilities of Maasai women are unpaid and time consuming, the daily responsibilities of men are less time consuming and income generating.

Employment both direct and indirect as a result of wildlife conservation, and wildlife tourism within the Amboseli ecosystem are inherently gendered. Prior to conservation in the area Maasai men were the “income” earners through livestock sales and were in control on economic resources. Current employment opportunities are more readily available to men then they are women. Local men with no education or a secondary education have direct employment opportunities as game scouts through BLF, as security for lodges, and men have control over the cultural boma entrance fees, and receive payments for informal agreements between safari drivers, and curio shop owners. Local women are limited and further marginalized in terms of both indirect and direct employment opportunities in the Kimana group ranch through gender inequality, and the pressure of unpaid daily time-consuming activities of women. In conclusion, due to tourism and wildlife conservation men have alternative opportunities to generate an income outside of livestock many of the direct employment opportunities are only available to men and the indirect employment and informal systems of employment are controlled by Maasai

men. While women have a form of indirect employment through jewelry sales through as a result of tourism, that is their only opportunity to generate an income unless they have received a university degree.

### **Payments for Land and Ecosystem Services**

Another one of the benefits most frequently mentioned by the Maasai community members I interviewed was land payments made by AWF for ecosystem services. However, land payments are inherently biased towards benefitting men because of many barriers in Kenya that prevent women from owning land. According the FAO:

“In the decades following independence from the British in 1968, some colonial-era laws lingered and many new laws were introduced, none of which adequately protected women’s property rights. Women continue to experience property discrimination sanctioned by the Constitution, laws and practices (7). The Government’s policy of tenure individualization and privatization in the early 1990s has resulted in weaker tenure security for women. Under customary tenure systems, women were guaranteed a right of use through their husbands after marriage. The process of land registration left women out of adjudication, conferring title to the male household head. Land-use decisions are made by men to the extent that women’s food crop products are marginalized and cultivated on poorer soils. Women’s lack of tenure security is also an issue because men continue to migrate to urban areas, leaving many women to manage lands over which they have no rights.” (FAO)

African Wildlife Foundation (AWF) highlights their project, Amboseli-Chyulu Wildlife Corridor as a successful community-based conservation initiative they developed in the Amboseli Ecosystem. The Amboseli-Chyulu Wildlife Corridor connects ANP, TWNP, and the Chyulu Hills. The corridor provides land for the movement and migration of many of the wildlife inhabiting the area such as lions, elephants, and giraffes. To ensure the protection of the Amboseli-Chyulu Wildlife Corridor and the wildlife that utilize the corridor, AWF launched a land-lease program. According to AWF, “This program uses direct payments to landowners for

every acre set aside for conservation and safeguarded against poaching, subdivision, and other activities that could degrade habitat”.

In recent years, the Maasai community of Kimana Group Ranch opted to subdivide their land, each receiving 60 acre lots of individual land. Men are the only ones who can be listed on the titles of land, and when it came time to decide whether or not to sell land, local government enforced a rule stating that women or a child had to be present to agree with the land sale. It’s important to note that all of the conservation employees recognized that often women were unaware of the land sale being made, or coerced to be there due physical threats in instances of “disobedience”. Subdivision poses many threats to the wildlife corridor, and ecological health of the land surrounding Amboseli National Park. Within the “Community Payment for Ecosystem Services in the Amboseli Ecosystem Leasing Land for Livelihoods and Wildlife” by the AWF, “one of the most severe threat to wildlife in the Amboseli Ecosystem is habitat fragmentation”. With the ability to sell land, and the introduction of irrigation and agricultural development opportunities in Kimana, many Maasai men were selling their land for agriculture. Additionally, many Maasai men sold or leased their land to investors and companies developing tourism lodges. The payment for land sales go directly to men since Maasai women cannot be land title holders, unless their husband were to pass. Even in instances of their husband’s deaths, Maasai women do not become title landowners, but merely receive any future payments for land sales of leases that had already been established through their husbands.

All of the Maasai men that were interviewed considered land payments a benefit of living near ANP, and wildlife conservation. The men shared that they received \$300 USD/yr. as payment for their land. In order to receive these payments from AWF, the land owner is prohibited from “development, fencing, logging, mining, dredging, agriculture, resource

extraction, non-tourism related commercial activity, and illegal taking of wildlife. While the terms of these conservation leases, land payments and ecosystem services were being negotiated, 5 land owner associations were formed. The community leaders of the land owner associations along with a Maasai attorney negotiated the terms for the land payments. AWF states that:

“This lease agreement was presented to the community in a series of community meetings with the landowners at a central location in their community. Women, youth and men participated in these meetings. These meetings were held in Kimaasai, with translation as needed into Swahilli and English. AWF’s Community Organizer (CO), who is from the Kimana community and speaks Kimaasai, English and Swahilli, was pivotal in organizing and facilitating these meetings. (AWF, 2013)

Out of the Maasai community members interviewed none of them were aware or participated in any such community meetings. While women were excluded from or unaware of community meetings and negotiations regarding the conservation lease program, many of the local Maasai men were also excluded from the conservation and negotiations. According to a Maasai elder from one of the bomas, “negotiations were made between AWF and a small group of educated Maasai men” who negotiated terms on behalf of the whole community. According to this Maasai elder the Maasai men who negotiated the terms are also signatories on community accounts where the land payments or conservation leases are help. This small group educated Maasai men then distribute the monetary payments to the participating families. The Maasai elder who shared this information stated that there is a lot of corruption within this arrangement of land payments, and conservation leases. According the AWF the land payments and conservation leases are paid directly to households, but this was contradicted by 3 of the Maasai elders I interviewed who stated that all of Kimana/Tikondo receives payments into a single

community account, and then from that account “community leaders” or the “small group of educated Maasai negotiators” distribute direct household payments.

It’s important to note that while many of the Maasai men and women considered the land payments, and conservation leases benefits of ANP, and wildlife conservation women are largely left out of this benefit from the point of inception of this programs to the currently inability of Maasai women to be land owners and receive the yearly payments. However, there is a small group of Maasai men whom retain the power of overseeing the community accounts, and monetary distribution with little to no accountability or supervision. Moreover, in AWF’s policy document the fact that community meetings for all of Kimana were held, and that payments go directly to the household are listed, were disproved by the Maasai community members interviewed.

## Chapter 5. Conclusion

Through this research and interview responses from the Maasai community members living in the Kimana/Tikondo Group Ranch it becomes apparent that there are gendered differences in both benefits and costs of living near the Amboseli National Park, associated community-based conservation initiatives, and wildlife tourism. Systemic issues of gender inequalities limit how much Maasai women benefit from community-based conservation initiatives in the area because benefits such as education bursaries, direct employment opportunities through conservation and tourism, and payment for ecosystem services, and participation in informal employment arrangements with game drivers and curio shop owners. The only benefit associated with conservation in the area that addressed concerns and the needs of the Maasai women is the elephant fence constructed by BLF as is increased women's physical security from dangerous elephant encounters when collecting firewood and water.

This research provides evidence of the gender disparity in community benefits associated with community-based conservation initiatives at Kimana/Tikondo Group Ranch. Community-based conservation is intended to alleviate any community costs caused by conservation initiatives and more importantly provided benefits for local communities. I argue that in the case of Kimana/Tikondo Group Ranch community-based conservation initiatives cannot truly be labeled as "community-based" when these initiatives reproduce and contribute to gender inequalities and readily benefit men over women.

In the case of the Maasai community living in Kimana/Tikondo Group Ranch, outside of Amboseli National Park the gendered impacts of community-based conservation initiatives are problematic not only for the community members living here, but also for the foundations of community-based initiatives for conserving land and wildlife outside of parks in general. The

model of community-based conservation that was developed in the communities outside Amboseli National Park is one that has been reproduced for community-based conservation in other parts of the world. However, as demonstrated by my research, the majority of the benefits of community-based conservation that were acknowledged by the Maasai community members I interviewed, typically favored men. The unequal opportunities in education, tourism and land payments are extremely problematic in terms of women's rights and women's empowerment, but are also counterproductive to conservation goals.

Across the field, more research regarding the gendered impacts of conservation need to be studied more readily. Especially with many international conservation NGO's working to implement human rights frameworks, and women's empowerment initiative, there needs to be more information regarding how current community-based conservation initiatives effect sub-groups within a community to more appropriately design projects to meet the needs of all members within a society. The future of conservation, specifically community-based conservation lies in gender responsiveness.

In regard to studying gendered impacts of community-based conservation, specifically for communities living near ANP, further studies should include a comparing and contrasting the gendered impacts of community-based conservation initiatives amongst all of the groups ranches living near ANP. Additionally, a study locating differences in the gendered impacts of community-based conservation between Kimana/Tikondo Group Ranch (subdivided) and Mbirikani (Communal Conservatory) to gain further insight into how the subdivision of land impacts both conservation and the benefits associated with land rights.

It has been readily established through literature that for conservation goals, especially wildlife conservation goals, to be met conservation needs to occur on lands outside of established

protected areas such as national parks and reserves (Western, et al, 1994). It is also apparent that women are largely underserved by, or further marginalized due community-based conservation initiatives. Women frequently interact with the environment through consumptive use, and if the voices of women or acknowledgement of women-environment interactions are left out of conservation development then conservation will not be able succeed. Additionally, for conservation efforts to truly be considered “community-based” they must account for all sub-groups within that community. In order for this to happen conservation organizations need to support communities and help build a foundation for equality within a community, prior to implementing conservation initiatives. In doing so, community members will benefit more equally, therefore increasing the chances of success for conservation goals.

### **Policy Recommendations**

Conservation organizations working in the Kimana/Tikondo Group Ranch should develop programs and initiatives that specifically target Maasai women as the primary beneficiaries to promote women’s empowerment and equality. Examples of the programs could include access to women’s and reproductive health programs such as family planning and birth control, programs that encourage diversifying options for income generating activities for women, access to legal counsel and the ability to file reports in cases of gender-based violence, divorce, child marriages, and marriage dowries. By initiating programs such as these, Maasai women would have more autonomy over when and if they wish to have families. By promoting women’s autonomy in family planning, and curtailing the practices of child marriage and FGM, girls and women would be more likely to receive an education. Through establishing formal and direct income generating activities for Maasai women they would gain important economic

mobility and decision-making power. Most importantly, conservation organizations need to promote and facilitate the participation of women within the community-based conservation program design processes to ensure that women's needs are being heard and implemented into community-based conservation initiatives.

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