



*Samburu morans with cattle at an 'olmuget' ceremony in Westgate Conservancy. Photo/USAID*

## KENYA

### RESILIENT COMMUNITY CONSERVANCIES PROGRAM

The Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) is a local membership organization of community conservancies in northern and coastal Kenya that builds peace and improves livelihoods through conservation. Formed in 2004 by the Lewa Conservancy with support from USAID, NRT brings together local pastoralist land owners and the Government of Kenya to promote the long-term conservation of wildlife in Kenya's northern rangelands and coastal region.

At present, NRT oversees 395 community-owned and managed conservancies covering nearly 425,000 square kilometers. NRT works to improve the lives and livelihoods of more than 620,000 residents from 185 different ethnic groups spread over eleven counties in one of Kenya's major wildlife migration corridors. The Resilient Community Conservancies Program (RCCP) is a five-year (2015-2019) comprehensive program designed to scale up support to NRT's existing community conservancies in northern and coastal Kenya and strategically support new conservancies.

### OUR WORK

RCCP activities will result in i) landscape-level biodiversity conservation outside Kenya's nationally Protected Areas, (ii) expanded economic opportunities for conservancy communities anchored in biodiversity, (iii) lasting peace, reflected in reduced conflicts over natural resources, (iv) reduced wildlife trafficking across conservancies, and (v) enhanced resilience in the ability of people and landscapes to withstand climate variability and shocks.

## ACTIVITY AREAS

**Governance and Peace:** The RCCP works to strengthen conservancy institutions and develop high standards of governance within community conservancies. The RCCP builds peace and advances indigenous approaches to averting resource-based conflicts. A key activity under this program is support for each conservancy to develop a participatory Conservancy Management and Community Development Plan, which articulates a long-term development vision for conservation and development and serves as an investment plan for the conservancies with the private sector.

**Resilient Livelihoods:** RCCP activities will support conservancies (i) to improve the ability of their communities to mitigate, adapt to and recover from shocks and stresses, and (ii) to improve the ability of rangeland ecosystems to resist and recover from drought and long-term climate stress. The RCCP extends NRT's Conservancy Livelihoods Fund, which allows conservancies to apply for funding for resilience projects such as building sand dams, developing eco-tourism sites, or starting savings and loan schemes.

**Security:** Working closely with the Kenya Wildlife Service and the Kenya Police, the RCCP supports NRT's community monitoring program to address the threats from poachers and cattle-rustlers. The program equips conservancy rangers with the skills and equipment to perform wildlife surveillance and security monitoring. In turn, this information provides credible data on poaching that will feed into national and international databases such as the Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Elephants under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species.

**Ecosystems:** Reversing ecosystem degradation and building productive and resilient rangelands through more effective planning, management and monitoring of natural resources is a key component of RCCP's resilience and biodiversity conservation strategy. To date over 2 million hectares are under rangeland restoration and management.

**Wildlife:** Community conservancies provide considerable gains to wildlife conservation through improved security and increased community awareness of the value and potential benefits of wildlife. The RCCP supports the establishment of community conservancies in critical wildlife dispersal areas and the rehabilitation of rangelands. These conservancies serve as a vital refuge for wildlife and are significant assets for tourism investments for the communities.

**Enterprise:** The enterprise component of RCCP develops new economic opportunities, adding value to the livestock market chain with an average \$ \$1 million to \$1.5 million annual revenue generated, empowering over 1,000 women through bead work enterprises, diversifying tourism opportunities which produce an average \$900,000 income annually, and generating market-based conservation financing options for conservancies.

**Growth and Sustainability:** Under the RCCP, NRT's path to self-reliance could potentially result in a 30:30:30 proportional revenue sources from commercial investments, the county government and the donor community. NRT is working to scale up commercial revenue and invest in an endowment fund that will sustainably generate revenue for the operational costs of conservancies, while increasing county government support with the recognition that conservancies provide a public service in wildlife conservation.

**BUDGET:** \$19.9 million

### DURATION

September 2015 –2020

### ACTIVITY LOCATIONS

Baringo, Garissa, Isiolo, Laikipia, Lamu, Marsabit, Meru, Tana River, Samburu, and West Pokot counties

### IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

The Northern Rangelands Trust

### KEY PARTNERS

County Governments, Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Police, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association, Laikipia Wildlife Forum, Rural Focus and Centre for Humanitarian Change, Grevy's Zebra Trust, Samburu Girls Foundation

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