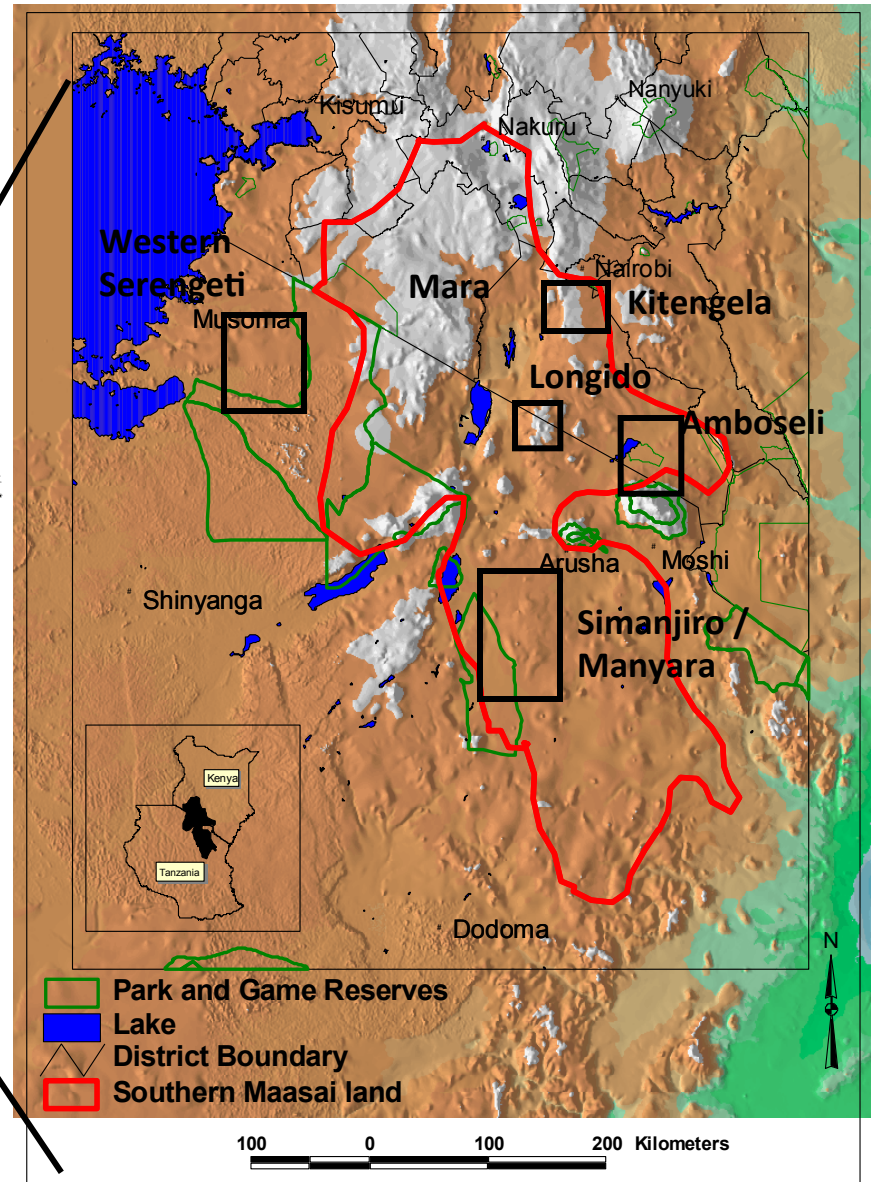# Empowering or Alienating Communities: Conservation in Maasailand, East Africa

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Case studies in and near Maasailand, Kenya and Tanzania

Said (2007)

Maasai and Wildlife Conservation

Overlap in Space

History of land loss

Politics of resource use and control

Alienation *(creating outsiders)*

"the state or experience of being isolated from a group or an activity [or place] to which one *should* belong or in which one should be involved; the transfer of the ownership of property rights."

Oxford English Dictionary online

"A withdrawing or separation of a person or a person's affections from an object or position of former attachment : estrangement"

Merriam-Webster online

Synonyms: estrangement, disaffection, disgruntlement, souring

Empowerment/empower *(strengthening as insiders)*

"give (someone) the authority or power to do something; make (someone) stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights."

Oxford English Dictionary online

"To invest with power, especially legal power or *official authority*; To equip or supply with an ability; **enable**."

The Free Dictionary by Farlex

As process and an outcome of change

Empowerment within Conservation

Authority*: in management and decision making, use of funds, planning.*

Make stronger and more confident: respect local knowledge (means and ends)

Invest with power: provide with knowledge and tools (as well as authority)

Provide an enabling context: respect local forms of communication

Knowledge as power, communication as key to sharing knowledge

Different conservation efforts: empowering or alienating?

- **National Parks**: enclosure, fines, external enforcement, outreach to communities

- **Community Based Conservation (CBC):** wildlife management areas (TZ), community natural resource management areas, conservation trusts, lion conservation/compensation programs

- **Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES):** payment to communities to protect resources (e.g. keep rangelands open for wildlife)

Different conservation efforts: empowering or alienating?

- **Community Based Conservation (CBC):** wildlife management areas (TZ), community natural resource management areas, conservation trusts, lion conservation/ compensation programs

Example #1: Lion Conservation Projects

Ilmurran on *olamayio*

Mbirikani GR, Kenya (near Amboseli NP), July 2000

photo by joana Roque dePinho

1. **Compensation**: payment for lost cattle to owner

2. **Education/improved husbandry**: improved fences, an educational video, herding practices

3. Lion Guardians:
providing employment (ilmurran), education, help with lost livestock, source of pride, monitoring of lion population

Limitations

- **Compensation**: assumes killing is always or primarily economic, equates cattle with money

- **Education/improved husbandry**: ignores Maasai knowledge regarding cattle, husbandry, predators. Assumes that poor bomas and poor herding is due to lack of knowledge or incentives (rather than lack of material, money, or labor).

- **Lion Guardians**: Ignores the complex relations that Maasai have with Lions (including respect), little recognition that others (elders, women) impact ilmurran behavior

What and How do Maasai know about lions?

Not only Ilmurran

- Most liked carnivore
- Respect
- Knowledge of behavior
- Hunting maintains human-lion relations

So what would an empowering conservation intervention look like?

Why do Maasai hunt lions?

Overlapping rationale: reaffirming role of ilmurran in society, help brave and skilled individuals gain prestige, eliminate a guilty lion, send a message to other lions, keep a healthy balance between people and predators.

Table 1: Reasons Maasai hunt lions

Stuady Area	Social Roles		Ecological/Protective	
	Achieving/Reinforcing Role of Ilmurran	Preserve Culture	Response to livestock depredation	Pre-emptive Hunts
GAE	76.44% (n=133)	10.35% (n=18)	14.38% (n=25)	17.82% (n=31)
TME	29.1% (n=16)	12.7% (n=7)	94.6% (n=52)	27.3% (n=15)

Activities of the *ilmuran* are mediating by the elders

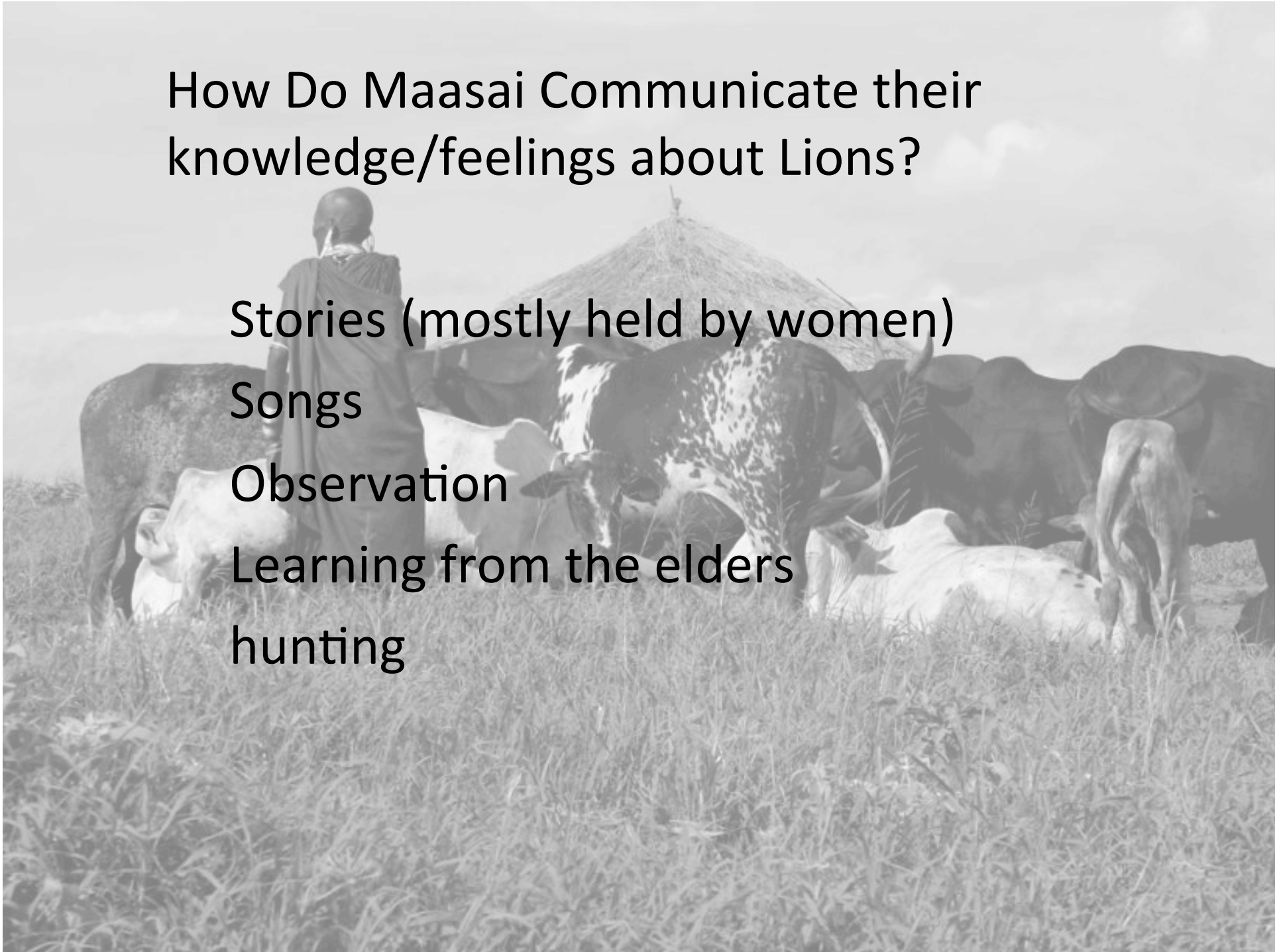How Do Maasai Communicate their knowledge/feelings about Lions?

Stories (mostly held by women)
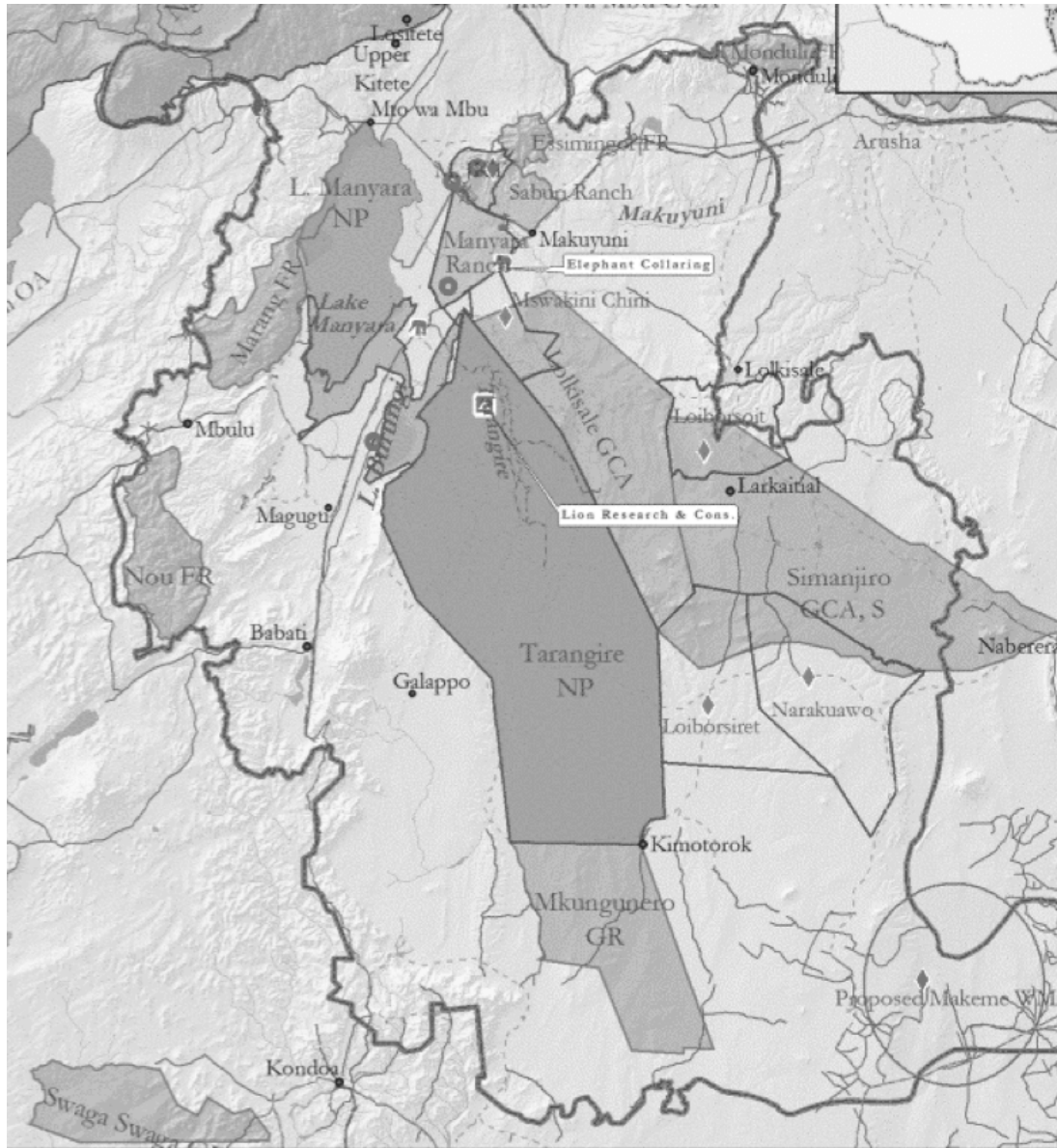
Songs

Observation

Learning from the elders

hunting

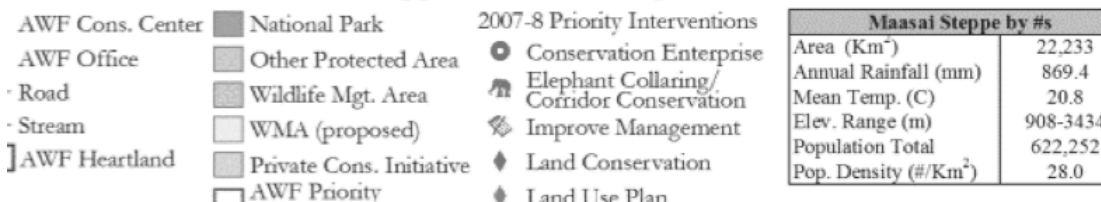What about Community-Based-Conservation AREAS? Such as Trusts?

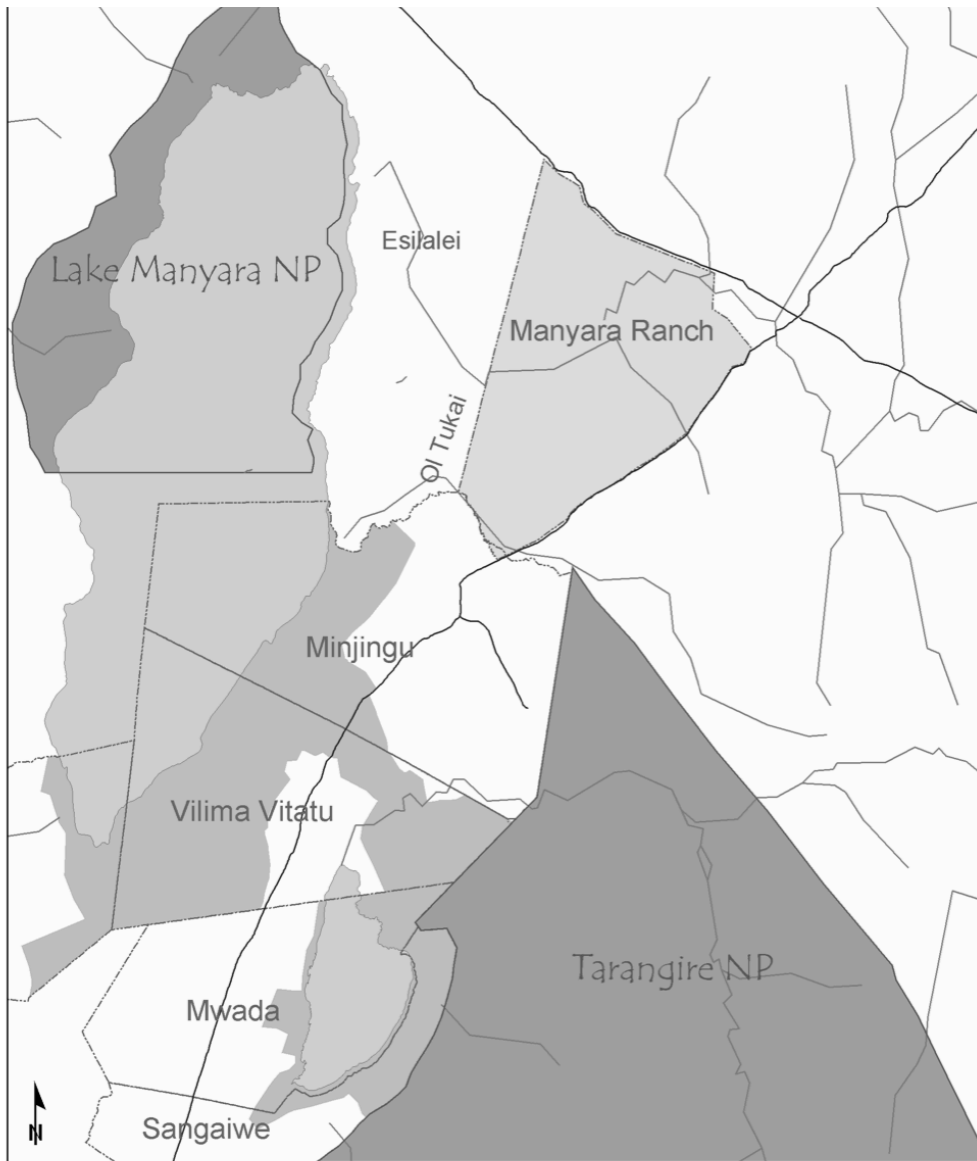Maasai Steppe Heartland: Regional Context

Example #2

The Trust Model
The Manyara Ranch

TME or "Maasai Steppe Heartland":

Kwakuchinja corridor (MR); **Simanjiro Plains** (Sim Easement).

Manyara Ranch: Regional Context

Road	Manyara Ranch
Stream	VNRMA
Village boundary	National Park
	Lake

0 2.5 5 Kilometers
0 2.5 5 Miles

Sources:
ESRI/USGS,
FAO-Africover,
Oikos Institute

AFRICAN WILDLIFE FOUNDATION

AWF Spatial Analysis
Laboratory, Dec-02

Manyara Ranch

- Former state-run cattle Ranch
- Local claims of ownership and use rights
- Threats: increased cultivation in surrounding villages, poaching, charcoal production

→ "Trust" lands to protect migratory and resident wildlife and "traditional pastoralism"

99 year lease
Tanzanian Land
Conservation Trust
(TLCT)

Steering Committee

- Cattle Ranch (herders, bulls for breeding, steers for sale)
- Wildlife conservation (game scouts)
- Pastoralist dry season grazing

But…..

- A lack of transparency
- A lack of participation
- Lack of respect for local knowledge
  - Wildlife
  - Ecology (fire, herding patterns)
  - Livestock
- Communication issues (how knowledge is transferred AND decisions made).

Enkiguena: meeting, consultation, discussion
(or *Olcani* for tree, the common setting)

Ilkisongo, Tanzania

Entumo: meeting, gathering

Ilkaputiei, Kenya

The Enkiguena structure for decision making

1. Agenda is open: only the item for discussion, no pre-determined list of options

2. All have freedom to speak (unconstrained)

3. Meeting finished only when a consensus has been reached

How do NGOs, Gov spread info?

- Written reports

- Formal meetings
  - Set agendas
  - 'front' table
  - Time constraint

Constraints....

Foreign language (science, development, conservation)

How do Maasai see a successful exchange?

- Respect (*enganyit*) - for all ideas/ knowledge
- Trust based on mutual respect
- Unity
- Truth (no *siasa*)
- Listening to each other
- Having information (agenda) ahead of time to prepare (especially for women)

How does this play out with outside groups?

- Informality: attire, presentation - promotes openness and lessens inhibitions

- Humility : the scientists/development worker are humble

- Equal partners: sharing goals, ideas, work

- Trust based on mutual respect: cross checking findings, sharing data and ideas

- Long meetings (no rush!)

Are there examples of empowerment?

And what about:

Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES): payment to communities to protect resources (e.g. keep rangelands open for wildlife)

# Empowered Conservation

- Respect for Maasai knowledge
  - Wildlife, ecology, maps
- Respect for Maasai Communication Structures
  - meetings
    - No front table, no time limit, open agenda, theoretically more open for participation, the 'leader' does not put forth their views as part of the agenda
    - Special efforts to include women and youth
  - Maps: local place names

Maasai Place Names in Study Area
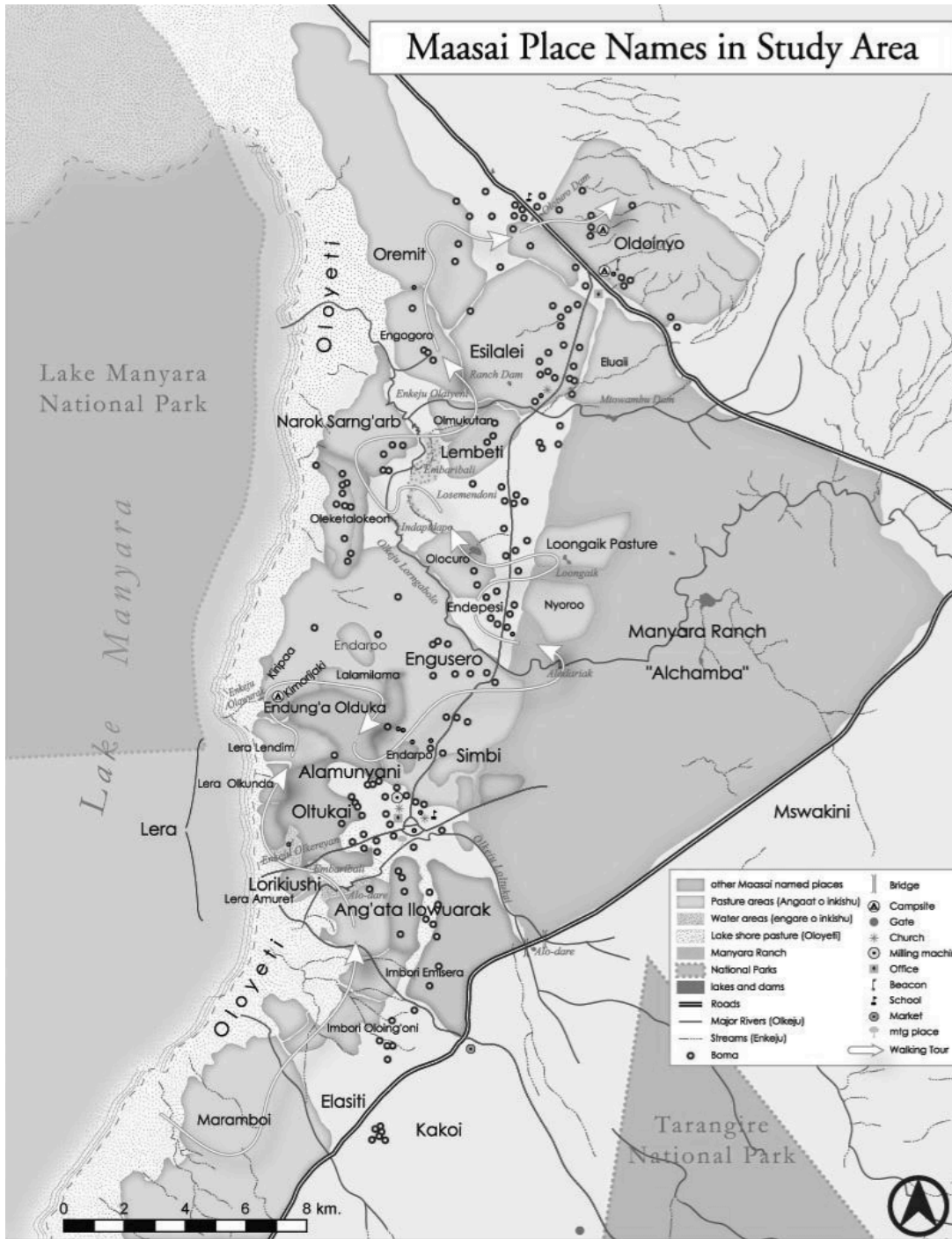
Maasai notions of space to talk about wildlife

Collaborative researh and action for conservation with communities: ILRI, RETO-O-RETO

Mapping fences with GPS

Counting livestock and wildlife

GIS Trainees
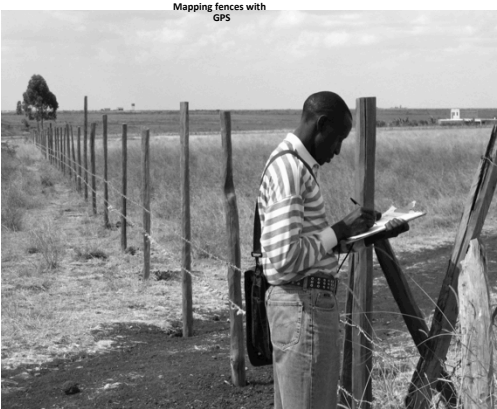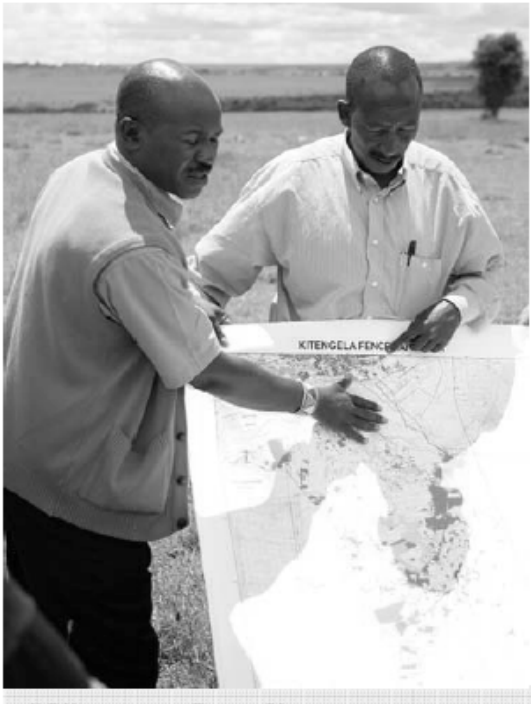
Alienating or Empowering?

- **Financial benefits not enough**

  – **Supporting local needs (i.e. tenure security)**

- **Respect for knowledge**

  – **As both means and ends**

- **Communication techniques**

  – encourage dialogue

  – Respect difference

- **Relationship**: Open Communication, Trust, and respect

- **Participation:** in research, management, Decision making

Thank you – Ashe Oleng!