Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association
Living nature, Living people

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN WILDLIFE CONSERVANCIES STRATEGY

Towards Meaningful Engagement of Youth in Conservancies



All Kenyans (including the youth) must recognize and transform their roles as individuals and communities to take effective custodianship of our rich natural heritage.

National Wildlife Strategy 2030

Youth Engagement in Conservancies

The active, empowered, and intentional partnership with youth as stakeholders, problem solvers, and change agents in their communities."

YOUTH LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE 2009, P.13

Engaging youth is essential for sustainable wildlife conservation. Harnessing the energy, talent and creativity of young people can play a key role in improving the governance and management of conservancies.

Currently, evidence shows that inclusion and participation of youth in conservancy matters stands very low. This can be attributed primarily to conservancy membership which is determined by land ownership. Since most of the land is owned by men, youth are automatically locked out from participating in conservancy decision making platforms.

To ensure sustainability of conservancies, which is an often neglected matter, necessitates passing on leadership from the older generation to the youth generation who are the future land owners.

A conservancy is land set aside for wildlife conservation and other compatible land uses by a community, private landowner, group of owners, or corporate body"

A number of conservancies in Kenya have been proactive in engaging youth in conservancy work, or supporting initiatives in the community aimed at empowering young people. Various conservancies have developed bursary schemes, vocational training, micro-enterprises and ranger programs targeting the youth.



Youth Engagement Through Vocational Training

Inclusion of youth through vocational training-describe ujuzi manyatani: Ujuzi Manyattani is a vocational training delivery model that aims to give alternative livelihoods to indigenous communities in NRT-member conservancies, encourage entrepreneurship, and break poverty and conflict cycles. The programme, led by the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), provides access to learning for people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and those who have been unable to access formal education. Ujuzi Manyattani enables pastoralists to acquire practical vocational skills where other training facilities are absent, without disrupting their way of life. Through the program, youth have been empowered to meet a rising market demand for technical expertise.



Why Engage Youth in Conservancies?

- Kenya is a very youthful country. The median age is estimated at 19 years, and about 75 percent of Kenya's population is below 35 years.

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- It is estimated that Africa's population will be

1.6 billion

by 2030, of which the rapidly growing youth demographic will constitute 42%

60% of Africa's population is below 25 years.

- The youth population (18-34 years) constitute

13,777,600

(**29.0 per cent**) in 2019-KNBS 2019 census

- To a very large extent, Kenya's youth — defined as individuals between the ages of 18 and 35 — will determine the shape of the country's future.

BARRIERS TO YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

- Limited access to, and control over land and natural resources
- Limited relevant knowledge and skills
- Limited participation in decision making processes
- Income uncertainty
- Lack or limited tangible benefits/incentives/rewards from conservation efforts
- Limited influence in biodiversity conservation due to competing priorities
- Conflict and insecurity
- Fragmented youth networks

BENEFITS OF YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

- Increased competencies, self-esteem, skills and knowledge
- Enhanced individual development as it provides youth with opportunities to generate real community change
- Increased status and stature in the community
- Increased self-discipline and time management

Why A Youth Engagement Strategy?

Three-quarters of the Kenyan population is under the age of 35 years. This majority needs the capacity and opportunities to meaningfully participate and engage in conservancy leadership both to grow economically as well as work toward sustainable development goals.

A youth engagement strategy provides a framework to guide the entire conservancy network on its work with and for youth, strengthens the network to engage young people and benefit from their insights, energy and resourcefulness, and ensures that the work of the conservancy network on youth issues is carried out in a coordinated and holistic manner.

This strategy aims to identify effective approaches to meaningfully engage the youth in the conservancy network and inclusion of youth interests in conservation policy and conservancy governance, management and benefit sharing plans.

Kenya is envisioned as a society where youth have an equal and responsible opportunity to realize their full potential and aspirations in social economic and political spheres through honest and hard work."

– KENYA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2019







National Wildlife Strategy 2030

ACTIVITY 3.3.3

Create a culture of conservation in youth through projects and partnerships that engage them in wildlife conservation and environmental stewardship, Including, tree planting, invasive plant removal, river/ watershed management and recycling projects.

ACTIVITY 6.3.2

Develop Youth programs for various age classes to inspire and equip the next generation of conservation leaders. This includes - discovering parks for Youth under 15, Enjoying opportunities for 15 -18 years (short term attachments to these institutions) and exploring careers for the Youth for 18 - 35 years (employment in these institutions).[7]

Evidence shows that if we invest effectively in youth's integrated development, the current generation will contribute to greater economic growth, democracy, and stability.

USAID YOUTH IN DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2022

Goal and Objectives

Goal: To build a network of well informed, skilled, inspired and committed young people to engage in conservation and contribute their time and energy towards the sustainability of wildlife conservancies in Kenya.

The Youth Engagement Strategy is anchored on four mutually reinforcing and interconnected pillar

- YOUTH LEADERSHIP
- YOUTH EMPOWERMENT
- KNOWLEDGE-BUILDING
- ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING

Youth Leadership

Objective: To build a cadre of young women and men who can present youth perspectives on conservation and contribute effectively to strengthening wildlife conservation in Kenya.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- Catalyse establishment of youth forums at the conservancy and landscape level
- Establish of a National Conservancies Youth Forum
- Enhance the leadership, communication and decision making capacities of youth in conservancies



Knowledge-Building

Objective: To build awareness and understanding of young Kenyans on the value of natural resources to their communities' and their personal development, and to mobilize youth to effectively advocate accelerated action for conservation.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- Develop, document and publicise knowledge products on the natural heritage of conservancy landscapes.
- Development and dissemination of knowledge on conservancies and the conservancy network
- Mobilize youth to become part of meaningful conservation action.

Youth Empowerment

To incentivize and build capabilities of Kenya's youth to realize their livelihood and wellbeing goals through wildlife and environmental conservation

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- Support Vocational training relevant for youth in conservancies
- Promote youth-led Nature-based Enterprises in conservancies and regional associations
- Strengthen conservancy employment and internship opportunities for youth

Organizational Capacity Building

To enhance organizational and individual conservancies' capacity to effectively engage with the youth in conservation

KEY ACTIVITIES:

- Assess the capacity status of member conservancies and landscape associations
- Support development of youth strategies at conservancy and landscape levels
- Build the capacity of KWCA to operationalise the youth engagement strategy

About Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA)

Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) is the national representative body and voice for community and private wildlife conservancies in Kenya. As an umbrella body, KWCA's role is to help catalyse the conservancy movement by connecting, informing, convening and representing private and community landowners and other key stakeholders in a shared effort to make wildlife conservancies thrive in Kenya. KWCA supports these 190 conservancies through 12 Landscape Associations as umbrella organizations at an ecosystem level through which conservancies can have a voice, collaborate, share insights and best practices, integrate development planning and manage conservancies at a large scale.

KWCA Vision

Across Kenya there are vast and connected landscapes where people and wildlife co-exist.

KWCA Mission

"To enable wildlife conservancies to thrive in Kenya."







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