



What Do the Children and Youth of Laikipia Think About Rhinos and Rhino Conservation?



An Assessment of the Perceptions on Rhinos and Rhino Conservation from the Children and Youth of Laikipia

January - March 2017

Authors: John Gitonga, Tara Hetz, Agnes Maille, Stanley Ngatia and Rebecca Younan

Table of Contents

1 Introduction	6
1.1 The Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF)	6
1.2 Rhino Conservation in Laikipia	7
1.3 Rhino Sanctuaries in Laikipia.....	7
1.3.1 Ol Pejeta Conservancy	7
1.3.2 Borana Conservancy	8
1.3.3 Ol Jogi Ranch	8
1.4 Assessment.....	9
2 Methods	10
2.1 Method	10
2.2 Sampling strategy and sample characteristics	10
2.3 Data entry and analysis	13
2.4 Limits of this study	13
3 Results	13
3.1 Sample Characteristics.....	13
3.2 Wildlife/Environmental Clubs.....	14
3.3 Rhino Knowledge	14
3.4 Perception/Attitudes.....	16
3.4.1 Rhino & rhino conservation	16
3.4.2 Benefits from Conservancies	17
3.5 Major misconceptions and gaps in knowledge.....	19
3.6 Popularization of Rhino Conservation.....	20
3.7 Communication Means	20
4 Conclusions	21
5 Recommendations	22
APPENDIX 1- Survey	24
APPENDIX 2- Explanation of buzzwords.....	28
APPENDIX 3: Wild Class concept.....	31

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Profile of all 23 focus groups surveyed (see page below).....	11
Table 2. Summary of study representation	132

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Spatial distribution of survey groups sampled	11
Figure 2 Percentage of participants in each focus group that have seen a rhino.....	15
Figure 3 Knowledge about rhinos from all focus groups. Buzzwords are explained in Annex 1.	16
Figure 4 Perception on Rhino and Rhino Conservation.....	17
Figure 5. Perception on the benefits from conservancies by buzzword.	18

LIST OF ACRONYMS

APLRS- Association of Private Land Rhino Sanctuaries
KWS- Kenya Wildlife Service
NICAT- Nanyuki Institute of Computer and Advanced Technology
CITES- Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species
IUCN- International Union for Conservation of Nature
LNC- Laikipia Nature Conservancy
LWF- Laikipia Wildlife Forum
USAID/DOI- United States Agency for International Development/ Department of the Interior
OPC- Ol Pejeta Conservancy
KWCA- Kenyan Wildlife Conservancy Association
LACE- Laikipia Association of Conservation Educators
NRT- Northern Rangelands Trust

The Highlights

Children and youth surveyed in Laikipia:

- Show strong **support** for rhino conservation and conservancies. See **financial benefits** that they or their communities receive through conservation (income through tourism, employment and social-welfare).
- Seldom emphasized personal, emotional and intrinsic benefits, nor did they relate rhino conservation to the conservation of the wider ecosystem.
- Want more opportunities to increase **interaction** among wildlife/environmental clubs and to **visit** conservancies. They have many creative ideas on how to increase their **involvement** in conservation activities and popularize rhino conservation.
- Lack well-defined and impactful club **curricula** in their wildlife/environmental clubs.
- Had some misconceptions relating to rhino conservation including that the consumptive use of rhino parts (**poaching**) is a benefit of rhinos. Also had misconceptions on the **location** of rhinos in Laikipia.

Summary

Laikipia hosts over 50% of Kenya's rhino population, including more than 350 critically endangered black rhinos. All rhinos are found on privately owned conservancies that have set aside land for the protection and conservation of wildlife as well as the establishment of other sustainable land uses.

Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF) is a membership based organization focused on ecosystem and wildlife conservation, and improving the livelihoods of Laikipians through sustainable natural resource management. It is in full support of protecting rhinos and popularizing the conservation of rhinos. However, before it starts popularizing and fully supporting rhino conservation, it wants to understand what its members and all Laikipians think about rhinos and rhino conservation. Key questions include: Do Laikipians think rhinos are important? Should they be protected? Do Laikipians benefit from rhino conservation and the conservancies hosting them?

To address these questions, a LWF working group developed and implemented a survey on the perceptions of rhino conservation in Laikipia. The survey not only gathered information on the perceptions of Laikipians, but also helped develop LWF's communication strategy for popularizing rhino conservation. The working group targeted the children and youth of Laikipia by conducting focus group interviews with wildlife and environmental clubs in 23 different institutions. A total of 792 children and youth from ten primary schools, seven secondary schools, four children's homes,

one youth hub, and one college partook in the survey.

The findings suggest that children and youth in Laikipia believe rhinos are important and that they support rhino conservation. Benefits from rhino conservation and the conservancies were stated by all focus groups and were predominately financial benefits, including income generated from tourism, social welfare and infrastructure support, and employment for locals. However, there were many participants that were unsure of any other benefits from rhino conservation. They argued that benefits from conservancies are limited and the conservation of rhinos is not a priority for the county.

It was evident that all focus groups want the chance to visit a conservancy, develop their wildlife/environmental clubs and have more interaction with clubs at other institutions. Many focus groups said that accessibility to the conservancies is a challenge and conservancies should intensify their efforts to allow more locals to visit the conservancy. However, it was also clear that more than 90% of the focus groups lacked a clear and developed conservation education curriculum or club program. The club activities at each institution mostly included planting trees and cleaning the compound. Few clubs engaged in activities revolving around wildlife conservation and environmental education. It was evident most institutions did not have the time, resources, training, or tools to implement a strong conservation education program.

Over 60% of the 792 participants had seen a rhino and over 95% knew about rhinos. The knowledge and opinions on rhinos and rhino conservation were greater in older participants. But most knew basic biology of rhinos and listed poaching as a threat to rhinos. There were eight focus groups that mentioned that rhinos are used for consumptive means, including that rhinos are killed for their meat and their skin is used to make bags and shoes. These misconceptions were among several other including the location of rhinos in Laikipia and aspects of biology of the species.

The focus groups were in favor of making rhino conservation popular and many wanted to partake in popularizing rhino conservation. Ideas included advertisements, billboards, rhino dramas, comic books, edu-tainment, Mr. and Mrs. Rhino, beauty pageants in support of rhinos, and competitions between schools on wildlife conservation. Most focus groups received their information on rhinos from their school and the media. Many were eager to gain information through trips to the conservancies, visits from rangers and researchers, print media and more interaction between clubs. With this information on communication channels, LWF is better prepared to develop its communication strategy to popularize rhinos and their conservation.

This assessment is the first step to understanding the perceptions of Laikipians to rhinos and rhino conservation. It by no means is conclusive for all Laikipians, but the findings suggest that the children and youth are in favor of protecting rhinos and see rhinos as important. However, much more education on rhinos (and other wildlife) and the benefits of conserving wildlife needs to be taught to children and youth through sustainable, inspiring and directed means.

LWF is developing a new network of Conservation Educators in Laikipia. The effort, known as the Laikipia Association of Conservation Educators (LACE), works to ensure that the activities, efforts, and

talents in individual conservancies and education centers are shared and replicated to best effect throughout the County. LACE is also linked to the conservation education efforts of northern Laikipia implemented through LEWA and Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), implemented with the help of the San Diego Zoo.

The Forum has also introduced a sustainable business approach for participating conservancies where conservation education is an added land use, and pupils that enjoy conservation education as paying customers, subsidize the same conservation education programs for Laikipian pupils. WILD CLASS is a conservation education program with the goal of making Laikipia a premier, sustainable conservation education learning destination for organized Kenyan primary and secondary schools (See Appendix 3). This business model would bring to Laikipia urban primary and secondary school with the ability to pay for their visit. Their “conservation education learning fees” would not only support the conservancies, but also pay for the local schools to visit the conservancies and further develop an impactful conservation education program.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF)

LWF is a membership organization with a holistic approach to conservation. It is characterized by a diverse membership (large scale ranches, pastoralist communities, tourism operators, small scale farmers, community based organizations, self-help groups, natural resource management organizations, conservation and development organizations, and individuals). This diverse representation gives LWF its strength.

Success in conservation depends on how ready people are to practice conservation; conservation cannot just be left to conservation organizations or “conservationists.” For LWF, its goal is to turn everyone into a conservationist in the broadest sense, because conservation is far more than about wildlife. LWF is concerned about wildlife, but also very concerned about a healthy functioning environment, including the people who live here. It is clear that people’s readiness to practice conservation differs, and their readiness (or preparedness) is determined by several things, such as understanding, knowledge, motivation, organization, quality of governance, leadership and what can be practiced within their financial means.

Wildlife Conservation and Conservation Education are two of the themed programs that LWF operates in conjunction with its members. Under wildlife conservation, LWF helps to establish a wildlife conservation strategy that focuses on: securing space for wildlife, strengthening security for wildlife, maintaining and enhancing habitats and connectivity to maximize species diversity, ecosystem services and human well-being. The conservation education theme focuses on supporting LACE and developing WILD CLASS (Appendix 3).

It has become apparent that for natural resource use to improve and ecosystem health to increase in Laikipia, there needs to be a fundamental shift in how resources are managed by the wider

population. The natural resources of Laikipia are many and wildlife numbers and diversity in this landscape are a hallmark of the success of this land use. However, wildlife will only continue to be a resource if the majority of Laikipians perceive them to be important and receive benefits. Rhinos are a key resource to Laikipia county. Understanding the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of Laikipians is essential to crafting the messages that support a conservation ethic in this landscape.

1.2 Rhino Conservation in Laikipia

Laikipia county hosts over 50% of the Kenyan black rhino population and 70% of the white rhino population, including the recently established breeding program for the critically endangered Northern White Rhino in Ol Pejeta Conservancy. Laikipia is home to one of the largest population of rhino in East and Central Africa. Black rhinos (*Diceros bicornis michaeli*) are listed as critically endangered in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, are on Appendix 1 of CITES and are an iconic species to Kenya. Kenya holds approximately 85% of the world's remaining wild black rhinos. The history and status of black rhino in Kenya has been well documented and in the 1960s black rhino were widespread. However, in the 1970s commercial poaching of black rhino occurred at such a scale, it caused a catastrophic decline of the species. In the 1970s, the estimated population of black rhino in Kenya was 20,000 individuals and by 1990 the population dropped to less than 400 individuals. Laikipia is said to host close to 350 of these black rhinos and hopes to increase the population in an effort to contribute to both the short-term and long-term goals of the national Conservation and Management Strategy for the Black Rhino (2012-2016) (KWS, 2012). The white rhinos (*Ceratotherium simum*) were introduced during the decimation of the black rhino population. Their numbers are thriving. Laikipia hosts about 300 white rhinos. In Laikipia county, all rhinos are found on private sanctuaries. The sanctuaries that host rhinos include: Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Borana Conservancy, Ol Jogi Conservancy and Solio.

LWF recently secured a grant from United States Agency for International Development/Department of Interior USAID/DOI to enhance rhino security in Laikipia. The grant focuses on rhino protection through three main themes: supporting ranger training, providing support to anti-poaching efforts and deterrence to wildlife trafficking amongst three conservancies in Laikipia. All of these themes are being implemented in the three conservancies (listed below) and LWF's plans are to gather more funds from USAID/DOI to support rhino conservation in the future. LWF decided to use its portion of this grant as a platform to promote and create more public awareness on the importance of rhinos and rhino conservation in Laikipia. One component of this platform was to conduct an assessment of what local Laikipians think about rhinos and rhino conservation.

1.3 Rhino Sanctuaries in Laikipia

1.3.1 Ol Pejeta Conservancy

The Ol Pejeta Conservancy (OPC) is a large community-focused wildlife conservancy, which holds the largest population of black rhinos in Kenya and East Africa on 110,000 acres. OPC works to conserve wildlife, provide a sanctuary for great apes and to generate income through tourism, and practices livestock ranching. It has a small and growing population of southern white rhinos and the last three

remaining northern white rhinos in the world. OPC seeks to support the people living around its borders and to ensure wildlife conservation is translated into better education, healthcare and infrastructure for this and the next generation. OPC supports over 35 schools in 18 communities. Each of the 35 schools is granted free admission to the conservancy and has received support in the form of infrastructure development, bursaries, conservation education outreach programs, and support to establish intercultural exchange programs with international schools. Many of the supported schools have visited the conservancy and a standard trip lasts about three hours. The trip includes a visit to the chimp sanctuary, time spent at the Morani tourism and education center, and a game drive through the conservancy. The Morani center serves as multipurpose center for both tourists and students to learn about the wildlife present in the conservancy. It includes interactive education tools such as the opportunity to touch and learn about rhino and elephant bones. Students can engage in “conservation in action” activities, which include working with employees on conservancy-related activities. OPC receives over 20,000 students a year. OPC has developed partnerships with several organizations including the Butterfly Effect, Pa-moja, Rift Valley Adventures, as well as some local groups. OPC also offers a public Sunday safari bus to visit the conservancy, departing from Nanyuki at 11 am for discounted rate. The conservancy is currently developing their conservation education curriculum and plan to work with more schools surrounding the conservancy and engage them in competitions, conservation games and conservation activities.

(<http://www.olpejetaconservancy.org/>)

1.3.2 Borana Conservancy

Borana Conservancy is a non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the sustainable conservation of critical habitat and wildlife. It hosts over 25 rhinos and works closely with Lewa on increasing the number of rhinos in a shared landscape. This landscape spreads over 94,000 acres in the northern part of Laikipia county and into Meru county. One of Borana’s core objectives as a conservancy is to manage the interaction between humans and wildlife. Borana conservancy engages in a variety of methods with the surrounding communities including: infrastructure development, strategic fencing, the maintenance of roads, the upgrading of school facilities, access to medicine and healthcare, water distribution and efficient management of that resource, advice on all rangeland management and access to certified and appropriate seed, education efforts and support of a mobile clinic. Borana conservancy supports 18 schools surrounding the conservancy. It pays for teachers’ salaries, provides bursaries to the students, builds classrooms and supports education efforts. The conservancy itself does not have an education program, but it works closely with LEWA Wildlife Conservancy, which has an established conservation education program. The education program received over 3,500 students and takes the students through an interactive education program as well as a game drive. The education building, located at the entrance to LEWA, is one of the best developed education buildings in Northern Kenya. It has a variety of interactive means to educate students about wildlife, the ecosystem and the importance of protecting the environment.

(www.borana.co.ke and <http://www.lewa.org/>)

1.3.3 Ol Jogi Ranch

Ol Jogi conservancy was established as a safe haven for the preservation and future development of

wildlife conservation in 1980. It operates as a functioning cattle ranch and a rhino sanctuary. The total size of the conservancy is 58,000 acres. Of the total conservancy, 55,000 acres are dedicated to rhino conservation and are divided into two sections: Pyramid Reserve and Ranch. It is home to over 70 rhinos, including both Black and White rhinos. The conservancy provides a livelihood for over three hundred employees and their families, including accommodation, a school, health clinic and areas for socializing. For her neighbors and beyond, Ol Jogi provides financial assistance as well as additional support to community development programs. The conservancy has an onsite education program that is interactive and targeted to different ages. The program includes education on general conservation issues including the food web, water management and environmental concerns. Students visit the wildlife research center and get the opportunity to learn about animals from all over the world. The education program is going through changes and plans to include more outreach. (<http://www.oljogi.org/>)

1.4 Assessment

Despite previous rhino conservation efforts in Laikipia between the Chester Zoo, the Save the Rhino Trust, and LWF, an assessment on the perceptions of children and youth on rhino conservation has never been done before.

For this assessment, wildlife and environmental clubs were selected as the target groups. LWF used focus group interviews to ask club members about their perceptions, opinions and attitudes toward rhinos and rhino conservation. Focus group interviews are a method where a group of individuals are selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on from personal experience on the topic that is the subject of the research.

The major questions that the assessment sought to answer were:

- **what do Laikipian youth and children think of rhinos and rhino conservation in Laikipia?**
- **Are rhinos important to Laikipia and should they be protected?**
- **Does the youth benefit from rhino conservation and/or the conservancies?**
- **how do we popularize rhino conservation in Laikipia?**

The purpose of this assessment is thus to:

- **Establish a starting point from which to understand what youth and children think of rhino and rhino conservation in Laikipia**
- **Use this information to develop a communication strategy to popularize rhino conservation in Laikipia**
- **Inform the conservancies, LWF, individual focus groups and Association of Private Land Rhino Sanctuaries (APLRS) on report findings**
- **Create a baseline assessment that can be used for future assessments after wildlife conservation education programs are established**

LWF acknowledges that this report is a preliminary assessment and by no means concludes what all Laikipians think of rhino and rhino conservation. Rather it is the first step in gathering information on

what the youth and children think about rhino conservation. Children and youth are the next generation to protect Laikipia's rhinos and wildlife. They can serve as ambassadors to carry their knowledge back to their families and communities. It is, therefore, critical that children and youth are not only aware about Laikipia's rhino population but also important for conservancies and organizations, like LWF, to understand their perceptions before implementing any education programs or communication strategies. If Laikipia wants to keep its rhinos for future generations, it must engage the Laikipian population in the dialogue on rhino conservation.

2 Methods

2.1 Method

A survey was developed by a LWF working group and tested, and then adjusted after the first few group interviews. A combination of closed and open survey questions was used in the focus group interviews to determine both hard facts (e.g. number of participants who have seen rhinos) and for voicing opinions and thinking creatively (e.g. how to make rhino conservation more popular).

Through joint briefings and regular pairing of the interview teams, survey methods ensured similar settings for each group session. Topics covered in the interview included: number of children and youth that had seen rhinos, by what means and location, number of children and youth that visited a conservancy, their knowledge on rhinos and conservancies, their perceptions towards rhino conservation, conservancies and benefits thereof, popularization of rhino conservation and communication channels for acquiring wildlife and conservation information (for full questionnaire see Appendix 1). The survey questions were used as guidelines to engage with the groups and set a conducive environment for discussion. According to the participants' preferences and understanding questions and prompts were posed and given both in English and Swahili.

2.2 Sampling strategy and sample characteristics

The focus groups were chosen from a list of schools in the region and according to logistical convenience, availability and willingness to participate. They included schools, children's homes and a youth hub and a college. To capture a wide range of variability it was ensured that the focus groups differed in respect to factors that may or may not influence their knowledge as well as perceptions concerning rhino conservation and conservancies in general. Criteria governing the decisions included:

- urban and rural
- public and private and
- conservancy supported and not conservancy supported focus groups.

Another aim was to access primary and secondary schools to cover the views of different age groups (the focus groups' profiles are listed in Table 1). The respective distance of the schools to the conservancies was also considered (Figure 1) as it may influence accessibility to and awareness of conservancies.

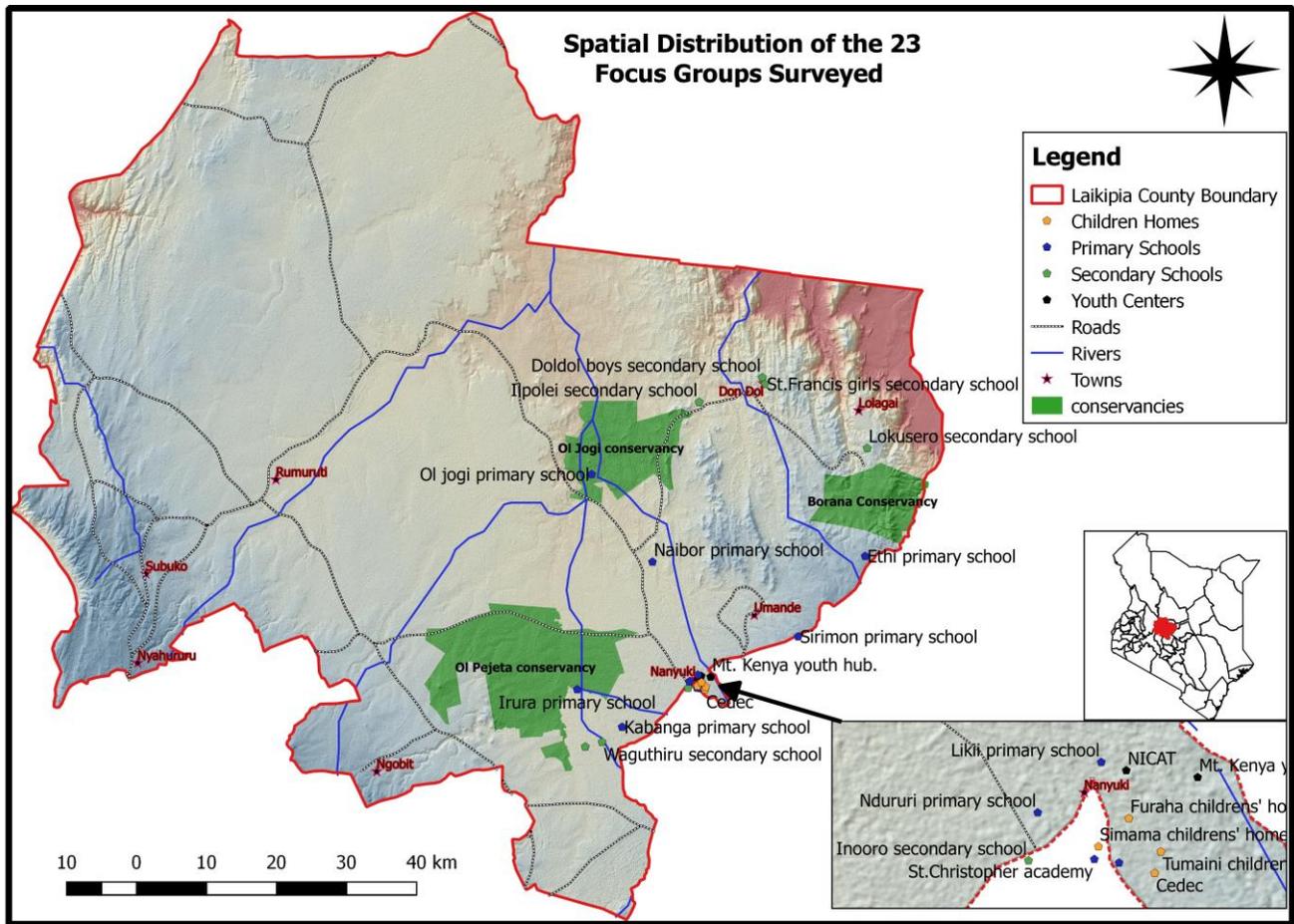


Figure 1. Spatial distribution of survey groups sampled.

Students participating in environmental, wildlife and conservation clubs were chosen as the target groups. This selection implied that they would likely be the most knowledgeable on the topic and have the most exposure to environmental conservation. Where no clubs were available, primary school children were chosen from class 6 to 8, and all participants available at children’s homes were chosen.

The focus group ranged from 10-20 participants. However, several schools had much larger groups of participants and, in that case, two focus groups were formed. Each discussion was led by a facilitator and assisted by a note taker. Prior to commencement, the participating children or youth were informed about the purpose and planned use of the survey, as well as the importance of sharing their opinions and not feeling that the interview was an exam.

Table 1. Profile of all 23 focus groups surveyed (see page below)

Name	Type of institution	Location in Laikipia	Distance to conservancy (km)	# of survey participants	average age	Wildlife/ Env. club	Conservancy supported	% seen rhino	Internet access
Ol Jogi Primary	Public Primary School	on Ol Jogi	0	43	<16	yes	yes	100	Yes (limited)
Irura Primary	Public Primary School	Next to Ol Pejeta	0	38	11	yes	yes	100	Yes
St Francis Sec. School	Public Secondary School	Dol Dol	11	23	17	yes	yes	100	No
Il Polei Sec. School	Public Secondary School	Il Polei	2	31	18	yes	yes	97	No
Brickwoods	Private Primary School	Nanyuki	11	47	11	yes	no	96	Yes
Dol Dol Sec. School	Public Secondary School	Dol Dol	11	22	18	yes	no	95	No
St Christophers	Private Primary School	Nanyuki	11	39	13	yes	no	92	Yes
NICAT	Computer college	Nanyuki	11	50	25	no	no	90	Yes
Lokusero Secondary	Public Secondary School	Mukogodo forest	3	25	17	yes	yes	88	No
Furaha	Private Children's Home	Nanyuki	11	25	<15	no	no	80	No
Simama	Private Children's Home	Nanyuki	11	24	<15	no	no	71	No
Ethi Primary	Public Primary School	Ethi, near Borana	4	31	<15	yes	yes	71	No
Mt Kenya Youth Hub	Youth Hub	Nanyuki	11	16	24	no	no	69	Phones
Sirimon Primary	Public Primary School	Sirimon	17	41	13	yes	no	61	No
Thome Secondary	Public Secondary School	Matanya	3	30	20	yes	yes	60	Yes (limited)
CEDEC	Public Children's Home	Nanyuki	11	19	11	no	no	58	No
Inoro Secondary	Public Secondary School	Nanyuki	11	54	16	yes	no	44	Yes
Tumaini	Private Children's Home	Nanyuki	11	49	<15	no	no	41	No
Likii Primary	Public Primary School	Likii Village	11	55	<15	no	no	33	No
Nduriri Primary	Public Primary School	Nanyuki	11	50	<15	no	no	24	No
Waguthiru Secondary	Public Secondary School	Matanya	5	25	17	yes	no	23	No
Shilu Naibor Primary	Public Primary School	Naibor	10	23	14	yes	no	18	No
Kabanga Primary School	Public Primary School	Kabanga	4	32	13	yes	no	9	No

2.3 Data entry and analysis

If two groups had been interviewed in one location, the answers were compiled into one document. All respondents' answers were then unified by summarizing them into key buzzwords/themes found within the answers given. Buzzword examples include biology for answers relating to the biology of rhinos, or consumptive use for answers revolving around poaching rhinos for their meat or using their skin for making shoes. More examples of the buzzwords are found in Appendix 2. All the surveys were summarized into buzzwords and the buzzwords were sorted into different categories: knowledge on rhinos, perceptions on rhinos and rhino conservation (both positive/negative), perception on benefits from conservancies (both positive/negative), lack of knowledge/misconceptions, popularization of rhino conservation, current means of communication and desired means of communication. This categorization allowed for analysis of the data and identification of central topics.

2.4 Limits of this study

Biases stemming from a “desire to please” are inherent to focus group interviews and discussions. The LWF working group tried to counterbalance this by using the common methods of reflecting answers back to the group, asking for confirmation or disagreement and sometimes prompting discussions through controversial questions or comments. Teachers and club leaders were asked not to actively participate in the discussions to create a more relaxed environment.

As mentioned in the introduction, school-going children and youth are not representative for all Laikipians. However, it was determined that under the current political climate it was not feasible to engage with adults concerning the research topic. 2017 being an election year, access to community members is limited due to other prioritized involvements.

3 Results

3.1 Sample Characteristics

A total of 792 participants were interviewed from 23 focus groups within Laikipia county. The LWF working group conducted focus group surveys at ten primary schools, seven secondary schools, four children homes, a youth hub and a college. The average age for primary schools was 13 years, 18 for secondary schools, 13 for children's homes and 24 for the college, NICAT, and the youth hub.

Focus group	# of focus groups	# of participants	Average age	wildlife club %
Private Primary School	2	86	12	100
Public Primary School	8	313	14	75
Public Secondary School	7	210	18	100
Children's Home	4	117	13	0
Youth Hub/college	2	66	24	0
Total	23	792	16	55

Table 2. Summary of study representation

3.2 Wildlife/Environmental Clubs

Of the 23 focus groups, 55% had a wildlife club. There were no wildlife clubs established in the children's homes, nor the youth hub or college. Only two of the primary schools interviewed (Likii and Ndururi Primary Schools) did not have a wildlife club. All the secondary schools had a wildlife or environmental club. The level of engagement in club activities differed among the institutions. Some clubs had been established for years and were well engaged in activities (St. Francis Girls Secondary School), while others were very young and did not participate in many activities (Kabanga Primary School). The chief club activities included planting trees, cleaning up the environment and tending to the school compound (watering, cleaning). Some of the clubs also participated in writing essays and self-made arts. Both Ol Jogi Primary School and Shilu-Naibor School are members of the Northern Kenya Conservation Clubs (NKCC), which has an established curriculum focused on wildlife and environmental conservation. NKCC was established by Nancy Rubenstein and is supported by Mpala Research station. The other clubs lacked the resources and leadership to partake in other club activities.

3.3 Rhino Knowledge

Over 65% of the 792 participants had seen a rhino. There were three focus groups that had 100% of its participants having seen rhinos: Irura Primary School, Ol Jogi Primary school and St. Francis Girls Secondary School. Both Irura and Ol Jogi Primary Schools are supported by OPC and Ol Jogi conservancies respectively and are located either right next to or within the conservancies. Kabanga primary school had the smallest number of individuals that had seen a rhino (9%). It is not supported by a conservancy but is located very close (3km) from OPC. Despite being supported by NKCC and located 2 km from Ol Jogi, Shilu Naibor Primary School had the next lowest number of participants who had seen a rhino (24%). Private primary schools in Nanyuki had a high number of participants who had seen a rhino. Majority of the participants had seen a rhino on OPC followed by Ol Jogi and Solio ranch. Only five of the focus groups had seen rhinos at Borana conservancy. Most participants saw rhinos during school trips, followed by many seeing rhinos while traveling, or along a fence that borders a public road.

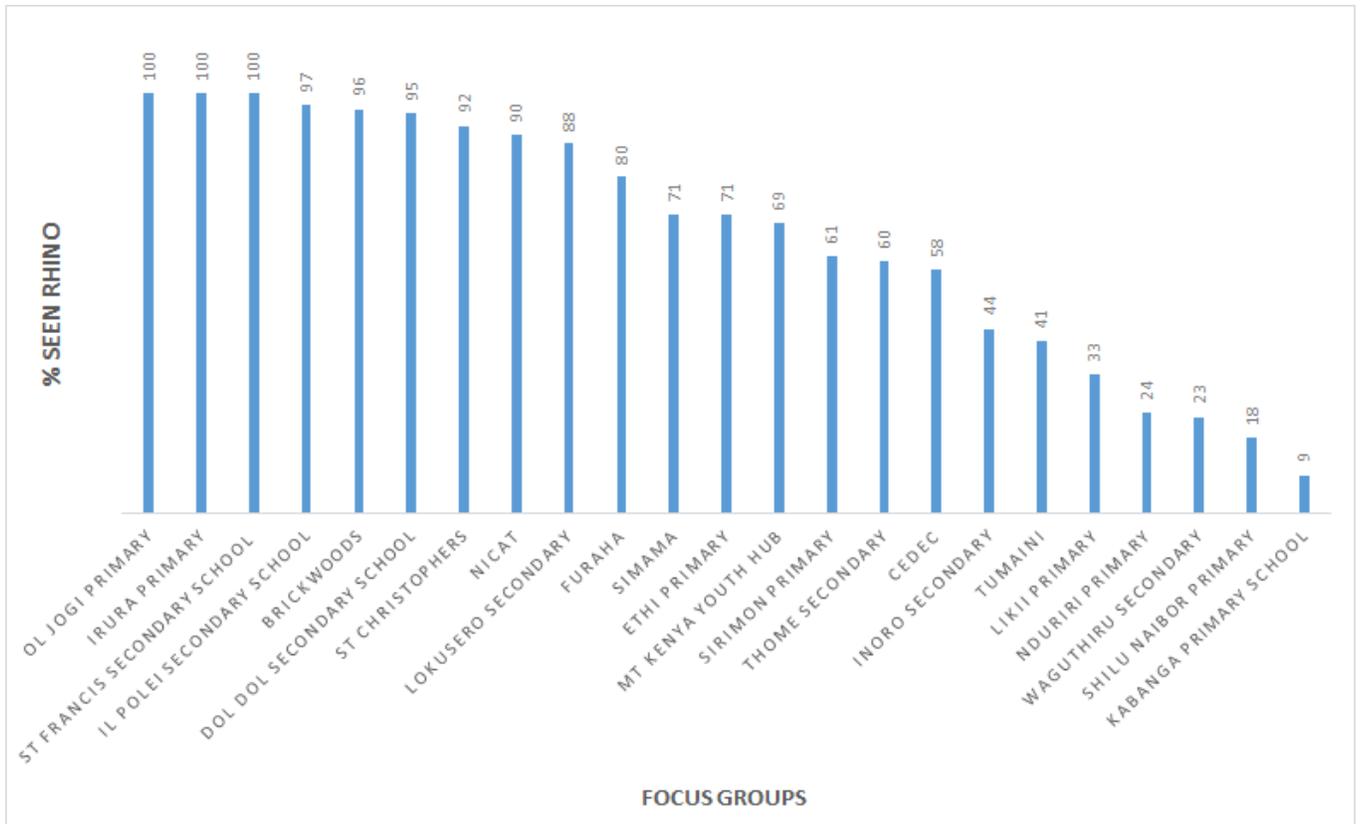


Figure 2. Percentage of participants in each focus group that have seen a rhino.

General knowledge on rhinos was dominated by information on the biology and appearance of rhinos. Most participants provided descriptions of the appearance of rhinos including their size and number of horns, and knew that there are two species of rhinos in Kenya: black and white. Most participants could differentiate between the two species, stating that black rhinos are browsers and white rhinos are grazers. Yet, there were several participants who had never seen rhinos and shared several misconceptions: rhinos have 3 horns, 1 eye and they live in water. Many participants shared personal feelings about rhinos: “they are dangerous” and “are a threat to humans and property”. Poaching of rhinos for their horns was a common theme, as was their status as one of the “big five”. A few focus groups reported that their knowledge about rhinos came from logos, including the matchbox brand, (Kiberiti Rhino) and the cement company, Rhino Cement.

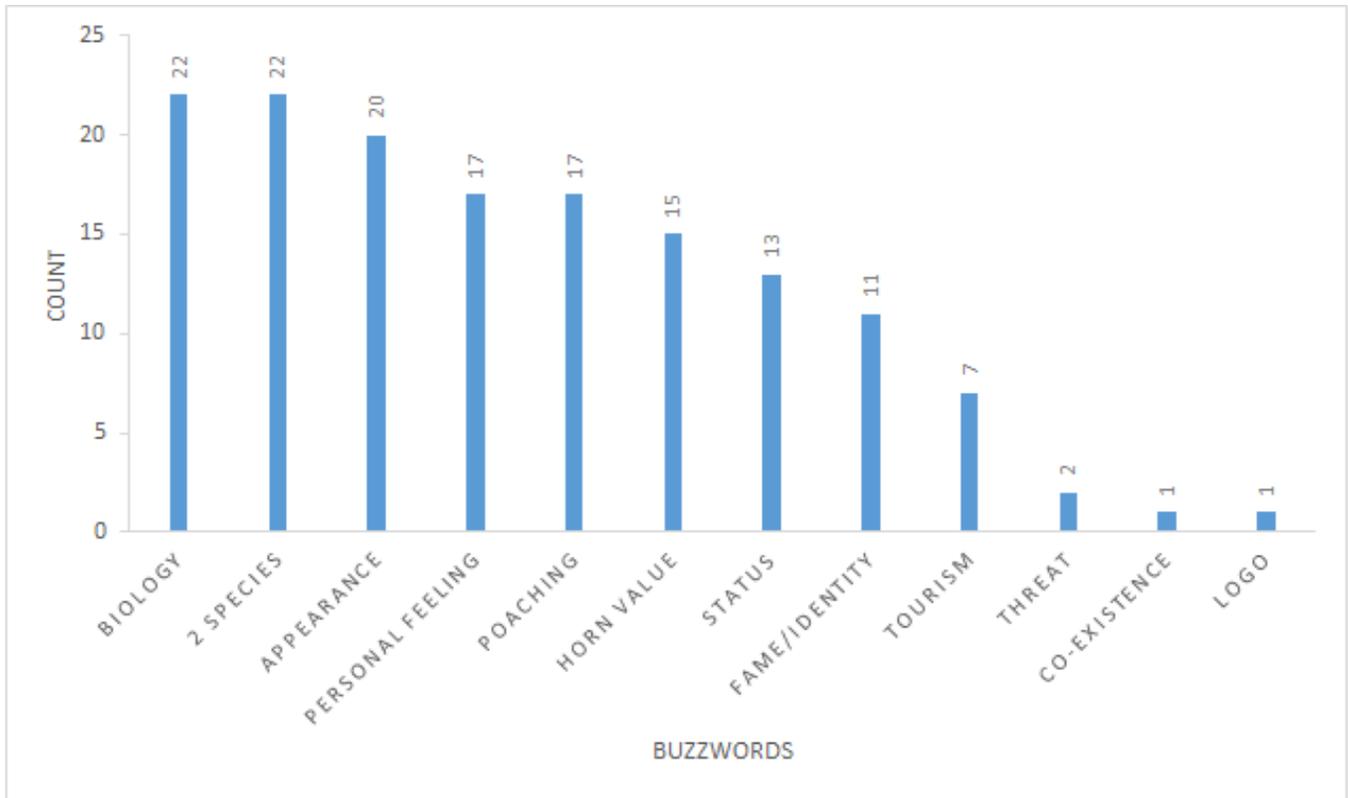


Figure 3. Knowledge about rhinos from all focus groups. Buzzwords are explained in Appendix 2.

Majority of the focus groups believed that rhinos are present in Laikipia county. Ndururi Primary School, Likii Primary School, Sirimon Primary School and Tumaini Children’s home had less than 50% of the focus group agreeing that rhinos occur in Laikipia. Yet, all focus groups listed that rhinos are found on OPC, followed by Ol Jogi Conservancy, Solio Ranch and Lewa Downs. Only seven of the 23 mentioned rhinos are located on Borana conservancy.

Who do rhinos belong to? Answers to this question were dominated by God, the government, everyone and the country of Kenya. There were several focus groups that said rhinos belong to white people, tourists, the conservancies and rich people.

3.4 Perception/Attitudes

3.4.1 Rhino & rhino conservation

Are rhinos and rhino conservation important to Laikipia? Should rhinos be protected? All focus groups said rhinos are important, as they bring tourists to Kenya and Laikipia. Income was the next most stated perception. Participants spoke about the foreign exchange that is brought to the country and the income generated for the country and county due to tourists/visitors. Findings showed that rhino conservation provides several opportunities for employment and many participants shared that they personally knew someone who was employed by a conservancy. Conservation and anti-poaching were main reasons mentioned for protecting rhinos. Conservation was defined as the need to protect rhinos for future generations. If not protected, rhinos would be poached and become extinct.

Protection of rhinos was also important for religious reasons: “they are God’s creation and need to be protected under the bible”. Intrinsic value and emotional importance was only mentioned by less than 25% of all groups.

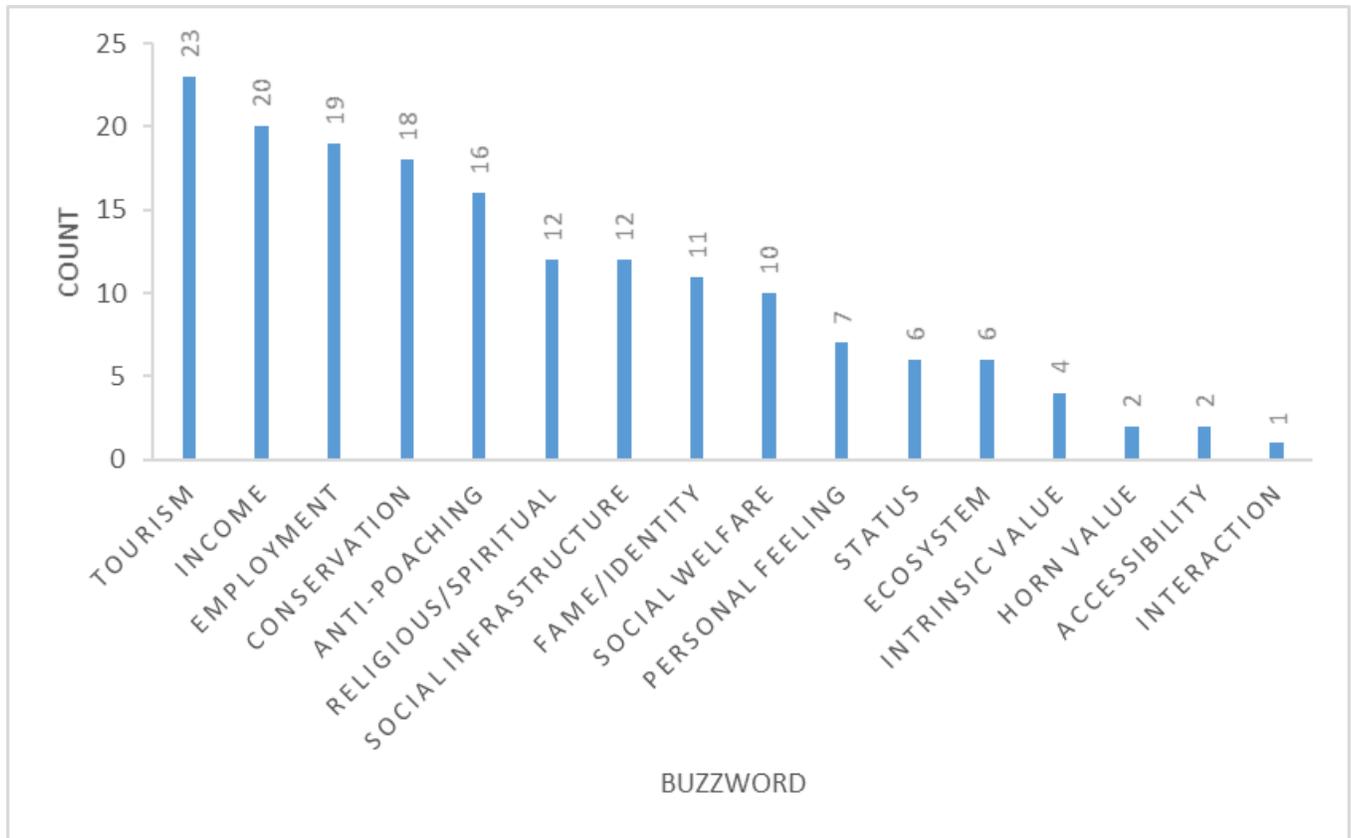


Figure 4. Perception on Rhino and Rhino Conservation by “buzzword”. Buzzwords are explained in Appendix 2.

Nine focus groups listed “negative” perceptions on rhinos and rhino conservation. Lack of benefits was the dominant negative perception. Participants didn’t feel that they or their families benefited from rhinos in Laikipia. Other negative perceptions included lack of accessibility to the conservancies and that fees were too high for locals to afford. Many participants also mentioned the threats that rhinos pose; including their destructive behavior to the community and property. The lively youth hub focus group shared that a lot of money is invested in rhinos, but little is received back to the community. Other negative perceptions included that land set aside by conservancies restricts development and other types of land use, such as farming and cattle grazing.

3.4.2 Benefits from Conservancies

When asked how the participants benefited from conservancies in Laikipia, social welfare, employment and social infrastructure were mentioned most prominently. Social welfare benefits included bursaries, paying for health care, and improving livelihoods. More than 50% of the focus

groups stated that the conservancies provide many jobs for Kenyans and improve the standard of living for those surrounding the conservancies through generating income and by developing the infrastructure (roads, mobile clinics and schools). A few focus groups mentioned that conservancies support the county by bringing in tourism, allowing herders grazing access, and that the presence of conservancies brings fame to the county.

Nine out of the 23 focus groups had negative perceptions on the conservancies and majority of the participants were older, an average age of 18+. The college, NICAT, indicated that there were zero benefits from the conservancies. The youth hub and three of the seven secondary schools had discussions on the lack of benefits from the conservancies. They argued that they did not benefit personally and felt that support from the conservancies was unequal in Laikipia. Yet, support in favor or against conservancies was unclear as many participants had differentiated opinions; they argued both in support of and against benefits received by conservancies. Two of the seven secondary schools with negative views receive support from the conservancies and a large number have seen rhinos; Il Polei and St. Francis Girls Secondary schools. There were three schools that thought few benefits were received from the conservancies. These primary schools are not supported by the conservancies and few had seen a rhino.

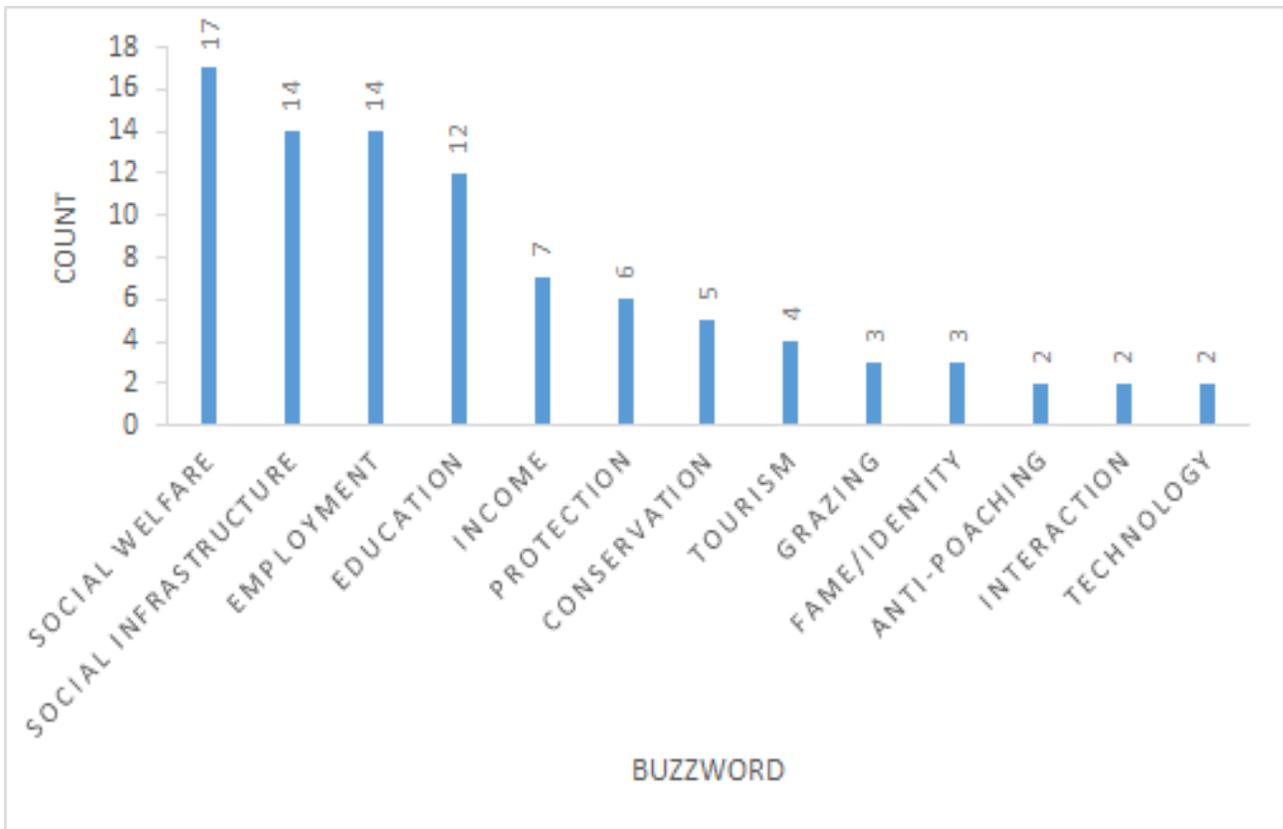


Figure 5. Perception on the benefits from conservancies by “buzzword”. Buzzwords are explained in Appendix 2.

3.5 Major misconceptions and gaps in knowledge

Amongst all focus groups knowledge on rhino conservation was widespread, but several misconceptions and gaps were found. The most reoccurring lack in knowledge was the location of rhino sanctuaries. Most children and youth named most or all conservancies with rhinos in Laikipia (with OPC being the most well-known). But ten in 23 groups named additional locations such as the Mt. Kenya National Park, Mpala Ranch, Enasoit and Lolldaiga hills. Often areas not within Laikipia were named (e.g. Lewa Downs) as well as the William Holden and Mt. Kenya animal orphanage. William Holden, however, used to have two rhinos, which were sadly poached.

A common misunderstanding was the provision of raw materials from rhinos. Some participants (in nine groups) listed the consumptive use of rhino skin, meat and/or horns as a benefit to people from rhino conservation. They were not aware that primarily this would be illegal. Also, no connection was made between the endangerment of rhinos (which was often mentioned) and consumptive use. Practices such as eating rhino meat are no longer common but were still listed as a reason for poaching (at least six groups). Among the wide spread knowledge of rhino biology there were seven groups with misinformation such as rhinos being (semi-)aquatic animals. Of the five groups in which the appearance of the rhino was described in part incorrectly, four were amongst those in which less than 50% of participants had seen rhinos.

Additional points mentioned which stood out were ideas that rhino horns are made from rare metals (three groups) and that conservancies themselves were involved in poaching activities (one group). Access to benefits such as provision of pasture for livestock was also perceived as unfair by some with favorable access granted to wealthy elites. Several groups believed rhino conservation to be a burden on the tax payers, demanding this money should be invested in more urgent matters.

A main gap in knowledge was found in the participants' understanding of conservancies. Most groups were hesitant to explain what a conservancy is. Many groups then went on to describe conservancies as (fenced) areas for the conservation of wildlife through care-taking and/or protection against poaching. Four groups gave no definition of conservancies, even though the majority of respondents had visited conservancies before. Especially in secondary schools the explanations were expanded to involve habitat protection or the conservation of plants as well as animals or habitats at large. There were some discussions concerning the ownership of conservancies with some youth believing they belonged to individuals but others sharing their knowledge on community or organization owned conservancies. There was a misconception of some conservancies also being state owned. Even though so many participants had visited conservancies and some were also benefitting from accessing the conservancies' pasture with their families' cattle, only St. Francis mentioned that conservancies integrate wildlife and livestock. This special feature of conservancies did not stand out to many students. Nor were conservancies' education programs, outreach and community development named as particular mandates. At the same time the purpose of conservancies to protect people from rhinos was overemphasized.

3.6 Popularization of Rhino Conservation

The idea of making rhinos popular was supported by 84% of the participants. Most focus groups fully supported (100%) rhino popularization and many had innovative ideas. Two focus groups had low support of popularizing rhinos: Tumaini children's home and Mt. Kenya youth hub. Several groups mentioned prioritizing rhinos could either result in neglect of other endangered species such as elephants or that land requirements and security costs would become too high if rhino numbers increased. Participants at the youth hub shared that popularizing rhinos would encourage more poaching and only benefit the tourists and not the locals. Many at the youth hub were in favor of popularization and had the idea of each member planting several trees, to receive a free trip to a conservancy.

Participants suggested popularization should occur through accessibility to conservancies. It should also occur through media in all forms: print, online and digital. The groups were in favor of magazines, videos and social media about rhinos and rhino conservation. Many participants have access to social media: Facebook and Instagram through phones in their families. They also stated that rhino conservation could become popular through personal communication, like text messages and WhatsApp groups. Advertisement was also mentioned by each focus group, including creating bill boards and organizing campaigns. Several groups suggested the idea of creating drama with Mr. and Mrs. Rhino and beauty pageants focused on wildlife conservation. Other groups said that it was the conservancy's job, through offering more jobs and providing more benefits, to popularize rhinos and their conservation. Two groups wanted rhinos to be more widespread across the country so that more people had the opportunity to see rhinos, instead of them being consolidated in one area.

3.7 Communication Means

During the survey, it was noted that the students and children could get information about wildlife in various means. Over 70% of the wildlife information was received from digital media (television, radio, movies), education in school curriculum, family and friends and print media, especially magazines from the Laikipian. A small percentage of the groups were also able to access the information through internet, visiting the national parks, and through some branded products with rhino images.

For communication to continue effectively and to reach every person in the community, various measures were recommended that would facilitate this. It was very unfortunate to find some people living in Laikipia have never seen a rhino. Visiting the parks was the first and foremost priority that all the groups wanted. Next, the participants suggested lowering the entrance fees for Laikipians/locals to increase the number of Laikipians visiting the conservancies. Internet, magazines, innovative ways like dramas, arts, events, media and wildlife campaigns/talks were also some of the recommended means of communication. It is important to note that those students with access to the internet would like to receive future information in this way. But for students with no internet access print media was the preferred communication channel of choice.

4 Conclusions

The LWF working group managed to speak with close to 800 children and youth in Laikipia, asking them about their perceptions on rhinos and rhino conservation. Presence of an active, conservancy supported club saw higher percentage of participants seeing rhinos, but was not an absolute rule. There were a few focus groups that had high percentages of participants seeing rhinos that had no wildlife club and are in Nanyuki, 11km from the nearest conservancy. Focus groups with the fewest participants who had seen a rhino were all public schools, were not supported by a conservancies and most had inactive clubs. However, Shilu Naibor is an exception with its support from NKCC and proximity to Ol Jogi, but still having low number of participants seeing a rhino. Distance to a conservancy did not impact the percentage of participants who had seen a rhino.

Rhino, rhino conservation and benefits from conservancies were overwhelmingly supported by all 23 focus groups. The answers we received were similar for all focus groups. Tourism, income, employment were listed as the most important benefits from rhinos and rhino conservation. (It often seemed as though the students in primary schools were regurgitating information that they had learned from their teachers and textbooks.) Discussions were more opinionated with older students and youth. The youth presented mixed opinions on the importance of rhinos and rhino conservation. Opinions included: rhinos are not important to Laikipia and should not be a priority for the county. They argued that rhinos had few consumptive uses and that the benefits from rhino conservation are only seen by a select few. Most saw many benefits from conservancies, but others argued that benefits were limited and not evenly spread around the county. Throughout all discussions, the major focus remained on the monetary value of conservation. Emotional or personal reasons such as “they are beautiful” were rarely given and intrinsic support of conservation mainly stemmed from religious viewpoints.

All focus groups support the existence of rhinos in Laikipia and believe that rhino conservation should be made popular. The primary school participants were more in support of rhino popularization, while the older participants made it clear that more benefits needed to be seen from the conservancies to popularize rhinos and rhino conservation. Popularization of rhinos should be done through media, innovative ideas like beauty pageants and certainly more interaction among clubs at the schools.

All members of the clubs were eager to learn more about wildlife, conservation and the environment, and they were eager to participate in activities. All wanted hard facts about wildlife and wanted to partake in any activity that engaged them with their natural surroundings. Trips to conservancies and interaction among schools was a priority. Almost all clubs meet once a week, but many don't have set activities besides cleaning the compound and planting trees. Only two of the 23 focus groups followed a curriculum on wildlife and the environment (supported by NKCC). All other focus groups lack a defined curriculum and don't have the time, resources nor tools to develop and implement a curriculum.

This assessment is the first step in determining what a part of the Laikipia population perceives is the importance of rhino and rhino conservation. We can say conclusively that the children and youth view rhinos as important to Laikipia, that they should be protected, and that the majority conservancies provide many financial benefits. This information allows us to structure our communication strategy and provide several recommendations.

5 Recommendations

Communication channels. The working group recommends that communication with children and youth in Laikipia occur through interaction between institutions, trips to conservancies, in person visits and print media. Personal communication (text messages, Whatsapp) was also mentioned as a desired means of getting information. Even though online media has many resources and can be very interactive, most schools and children's homes have limited access to internet. Yet, most family members have access to internet through their phones and children are keen to receive information about wildlife from their family member's phones. With this information, LWF is able to start further developing its communication strategy. It was clear that participants are eager to learn, but have limited time during their school day. The time allocated during the wildlife/environmental clubs is an ideal time to implement conservation education material. There is a need for an interactive platform for all wildlife/environment teachers to exchange ideas and learn from one another. A center should be developed to be used as a training ground for educators and place for competitions and events.

Conservation Education Curriculum- Despite children and youth supporting rhino and rhino conservation and seeing benefits from the conservancies, it is evident that a clear, measurable and sustainable conservation education program needs to be put in place. The LWF working group recommends building a conservation education curriculum in junction with its initiative WILD CLASS, and the members of LACE. We suggest each conservancy develop its own education program that falls in line with a county wide curriculum.

The county wide curriculum will be developed through a LACE working group. The curriculum will have key objectives, messages and activities that all students and club members should be exposed to. Each conservancy can then add to the curriculum to make it specific to their conservancy. The funding for such a curriculum would be sustainable by inviting schools from Nairobi, Naivasha and Nakuru to visit the conservancies for several days. These students would undergo the same education curriculum and a part of the conservancy fees would be used to support the local conservation education activities, support the conservation curriculum, and allow local schools to visit the conservancies.

WILD CLASS would coordinate trips, programs and activities for the schools. It would also train club leaders, teachers and conservation education specialists to incorporate conservation education into the curriculum in creative ways. Further, the working group would establish competitions among clubs, interaction among schools, as well as district and county events.

Part of the conservation education program would include well developed monitoring and evaluation. One component of this M&E would include pre and post evaluations for every trip to a conservancy. Results need to be analyzed to allow for adaptation of the education program.

Environmental education material- We recommend developing fact based, interactive and based on existing knowledge education material. The material should be readily available to the students and youth through their schools and clubs, regardless of location. Material should also include notes for teachers and club leaders on how to prepare, implement and follow up on each activity in the education material.

Future assessment- This assessment was the first step in understanding the perceptions of Laikipians; a focus on the youth and children of Laikipia. We recommend further assessments be conducted with different focus groups, including community groups, herder and women's groups. Further, the assessment should be more general with regards to all wildlife and Laikipia's natural resources. This would allow for a better understanding of what Laikipian's view as important and what the county can focus on.

The youth are the future; we need to empower them with knowledge and help shape them into future conservationists. Education is the tool to fulfill this goal. Yet, conservation education cannot only be fact and lecture based, it has to instill pride and sense of ownership of nature for the children and youth. Education programs, education materials, trips and communication are all tools in the toolbox of conservation education, but we also need to somehow instill drive and passion within the children and youth of Laikipia to protect its wildlife and natural resources.

APPENDIX 1- Survey



Laikipia Wildlife Forum
P.O. Box 764 – 10400
Nanyuki, Kenya
Mobile: (254) 0726 500 260
Tel/ Fax: (254) 020 2166626
Website: www.laikipia.org

SURVEY ON PERCEPTIONS OF RHINO CONSERVATION IN LAIKIPIA

Background: Laikipia Wildlife Forum wants to understand what local Laikipians think about rhinos, what they know about rhinos and what we can do to enhance rhino conservation in Laikipia. This survey will allow us to gain a greater understanding of the perception on rhino conservation in Laikipia. LWF plans to use this information to initiate programs, communications and support future grants to increase the involvement of locals in rhino conservation.

Instructions:

- 1.) Collect the individuals of the club/group (10-12 individuals maximum) in one room.
- 2.) The survey should take no more than 1 hour. Make sure to keep track of time.
- 3.) The individual posing the questions is the facilitator/mediator of the survey. The facilitator's job includes:
 - a. Use prompts and probes to stimulate discussion
 - b. monitor time
 - c. Be prepared to explain or restate questions
 - d. Make sure to allow for discussion. This is not an exam and it's best when the group discusses the answers.
 - e. work with the note-taker to debrief immediately after each focus group
- 4.) Recorder/note-taker listens carefully to the answers and writes them down on the questionnaire.
- 5.) Make sure that the information is coming from the students and not the teacher. If necessary, ask the teacher/patron to leave during the focus group survey.
- 6.) Please return the survey to Laikipia Wildlife Forum via email or in person. Or there any questions please call/email.

E-mail: margaret.wambua@laikipia.org and john.gitonga@laikipia.org

Phone: (+254) 0726 500 260

Thank you kindly for taking the time to fill out this survey. We look forward to reading your answers.

Sincerely,

Laikipia Wildlife Forum #VifaruWetuMaliYetu

Date: _____

Time: _____

TYPE OF INSTITUTION (please tick where appropriate)

1.) (A) Primary school.

(B) Children's Home

(i) Public

(i) Public

(ii) Private

(ii) Private

(C) Secondary school.

(D) Others

(i) Public

(i) Public

(ii) Private

(ii) Private

Name of School/Club/Program: _____

Location: _____

Number of participants in survey: _____

Average age: _____

Facilitator: _____

Note-taker: _____

SECTION A: Wildlife/conservation Club:

This is basic background information on the club.

1.) Who here has heard of Laikipia Wildlife Forum? (write down # of raised hands)

b.) If majority say yes, what do you know/think about LWF?

2.) How many pupils/students are in the wildlife/conservation club? (write down # of raised hands)

3.) How many years has the wildlife/conservation club been established?

4.) Which activities does the wildlife/conservation club participate in? (Please tick where appropriate)

- Tree planting
- Cleaning the environment
- Wildlife campaigns
- Wildlife arts and designs
- Essays writings
- Others (list):

5.) Has the wildlife/conservation club visited any conservancies in Laikipia? Yes No

(i) If yes, which conservancies, when you visited (including total number of visits) and why?

6.) If you do not have a wildlife/conservation club, are you interested in starting one and why?

Section B: PERCEPTIONS ON RHINO CONSERVATION IN LAIKIPIA

1 (a) Who here has seen a rhino/vifaru? (write down # of raised hands)

(b) If majority respond with yes, where?
(please list few examples)

(c) How did you see the rhinos/vifaru? What means allowed you to see the rhinos/vifaru? (please list few examples)

(d) If majority respond no to question 1 a, who here has heard about rhinos/vifaru? (write down # of raised hands)

(e) If majority respond yes, from whom?

- 2.) Who do rhinos/vifaru belong to?
- 3.) Do you think rhinos/vifaru are important to you in Laikipia county and why?
- 4.) What do you know about rhinos/vifaru?
- 5.) Should rhinos/vifaru be protected and why?

SECTION C: RELATIONSHIP WITH CONSERVANCIES

- 1.) Who here thinks there are rhinos/vifaru in Laikipia? (write down number of raised hands)
- 2.) If majority answer yes, where are they located?
- 3.) Who here knows what a conservancy is? (write down # of raised hands)
- 4.) How do you benefit from the conservancies?
Use examples only if needed to prompt the discussion (school fees, community/school project development, mobile clinic....)
- 5.) Should we make rhinos and rhino conservation popular? (write down # of raised hands)
- 6.) If majority answer yes, how do we make rhino and rhino conservation popular?

SECTION D: COMMUNICATION

- 1.) How do you currently receive wildlife conservation/education information?
- 2.) How would you like to receive wildlife conservation/education information?

APPENDIX 2- Explanation of buzzwords

	Buzz word	Answers included
Knowledge	Appearance	Size, shape, color, horns, legs...
	Biology	Mammal, activity patterns, food
	Species	Two species (black and white)
	Poaching	Killing (for their horns),
	Horn value	Expensive horns, ornamental use
	Status	Endangerment, threat of extinction
	Tourism	International and domestic tourism
	Income	Foreign exchange, earnings for the country and government, earnings through tourism
	Employment	On the conservancies (rangers, guides), through tourism/lodges
	Ecosystem	Role of the rhino in the ecosystem, relation to plant and other life, intact ecosystem including the role of trees, relation to climate change , part of wildlife
Ownership	Rhinos seen as belonging to God, all Kenyans, the government, KWS, the conservancies, individuals...	
Perceptions/ Positive	Conservation	Conserve for future generations, so they don't die,
	Personal feeling	Positive: liking rhinos, beautify the county, bring joy, felt happy
		Negative: fearing rhinos,
	Fame/identify	"Make Laikipia famous", part of big 5, prestige,
	Accessibility	Proximity to parks, subsidies for entrance fees
	Consumptive use	Ideas of consumptive use of rhino meat, milk and skin (shoes)
	Technology	Computers, I-pads, conservancies provide computer labs
	Intrinsic value	importance of wildlife,
	Interaction	interaction between schools, tourists/Kenyans
	Grazing	conservancies allow cattle to graze, pasture provided during drought
	Education	learning through conservancies/partnerships
	Protection	Reduce human-wildlife conflict, protect people from rhinos,
	Social welfare	Scholarships, bursaries, books, health clinics,
	Religious/spiritual	God's creation, must protect because god made them,
Environment	Planting trees, fishponds,	
Social infrastructure	Building of schools, hospitals, roads, dispensaries, etc	

Communication and Popularization	Online media	Social media and online newspapers/ magazines
	Print media	Magazines, books, newspapers, posters, pamphlets, advertisement,
	Digital media	Television, radio, movies, DVDs...
	Campaigns	Self-organized awareness campaigns
	Competitions	Sports, arts, races, beauty contests...
	Increase population/distribution	Breed more rhinos, spread the rhinos between the counties
	Arts	Drawings, plays, music, poetry, graffiti,
	Self-made art	Poetry, drawing, songs
	Personal involvement	"Become friends with rhinos", "Respect rhinos", work with a ranger,
	International promotion	Awareness raising, tourism advertising
	Tourists/ visitors	That give talks at or provide information to schools
	Outreach programs	Information and education for communities or students
	Personal communication	Whatsapp, door to door, letters, text messages
	Logo	<i>Kifaru</i> matchbox brand, Rhino cement
	Trips/live	Visiting the conservancies
	Anti-poaching	Protecting rhinos from poachers
	Rhino entertainment	Video games, toys,
	School	Get information from teachers, school books,
	Events	Show ground rhinos, Rhino Day, Big 5 day, Rhino showing through town, seminars, conferences
	Club	Information from clubs, club leaders/teachers
Museums/ zoos	Visit museums/zoos	
Conservancy	Conservancy provides more employment, social infrastructure...	
Family/ friends	Stories, speaking with family/friends	

	Buzz word	Answers included
Perceptions/Negative	Lack of accessibility	Tourists are able to access, but not locals,
	Lack of benefit sharing	Income only to conservancies, government supports rhinos and not people
	Lack of benefits	Lack of personal benefits such as direct income
	Costs	Taxes used for conservation work and high conservancy entry fees
	Land requirements	Conflicts with surrounding communities (esp. in West Laikipia), rhinos take up a lot of space,
	Not a priority	More important issues to worry about/ to be discussed at home
	Corruption	Corruption in the anti-poaching system
	Threat	Threats from rhinos to people and property, dangerous animal/can kill when provoked/attack

APPENDIX 3: Wild Class concept



WILDCLASS

Concept Note

Background

LWF and Jacaranda have embarked on an activity to turn conservation education in Laikipia into a sustainable, income generating activity, and land use for ranches and conservancies.

This conservation education effort is designed to accomplish three objectives:

- Encourage development of conservation education as a profitable income generating activity for Laikipia conservancies;
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of conservation education as a land use in Laikipia;
- Subsidize the offering of conservation education to local Laikipia schools.

Market surveys suggest that within a 200-250 km radius there are up to 3M primary and secondary school children each year, who could benefit from access to conservation education programming in Laikipia, if properly managed and marketed. These middle-class and upper-middle class pupils can afford to visit Laikipia as part of an organized school outing.

This school and pupil “pool” represents a potentially steady flow of income in a landscape characterized by inconsistent international tourism revenues, and comparatively weak tourism numbers. This impacts conservancies’ ability to demonstrate tourism as a valuable conservation land use, generating maximum public benefits from private lands.

To advance Laikipia as a conservation education learning destination, Jacaranda Africa joined with LWF to develop a sustainable conservation education strategy, with the aim of pushing the conventional thinking on what has always been a heavily subsidized program in Laikipia.

We are joined by 10 conservation education learning destinations in Laikipia to develop the concept of “WILD CLASS” a conservation education enterprise and land use model supported by the Laikipia Association of Conservation Educators (LACE).

- LACE is a collective effort of 10 wildlife conservation education destinations in Laikipia that embrace the model of WILD CLASS.
- Each WILD CLASS destination offers the potential to develop into a world-class facility offering progressive conservation education learning to Kenya’s youth.
- WILD CLASS is aimed at offering Laikipia conservancies an additional income generating activity;
- Each WILD CLASS visitor provides the potential to sponsor a similar visit by a pupil from an area school.
- Each WILD CLASS destination features a special or unique offering about nature, land use, the environment, and conservation management in Laikipia. These features have been initially captured on film as part of our WILD CLASS development and promotion.

Goal

To make Laikipia a premiere, sustainable conservation education learning destination for organized Kenyan primary and secondary schools.

Purpose

To provide Laikipia with the strength of collective efforts in support of conservation education. With the organization of LACE, and supported by WILD CLASS programming, skills, expertise and service areas, participating conservancies will develop conservation education as a sustainable enterprise and viable land use. Moreover, the WILD CLASS program should become a financially viable and sustainable model for area schools to enjoy the same class of conservation education programs at a highly-subsidized rate.

Components

The components needed to make WILD CLASS a success in Laikipia include:

1. Sales and Marketing
2. Conservation Program Development
3. Business Planning
4. Capacity Building among Conservation Education Staff
5. Facilities Design and Development
6. Financing
7. Monitoring and Evaluation

Model

Over the next 15 years, WILD CLASS will become an independent conservation education enterprise – a non-profit business focused on the delivery of quality conservation education in support of conservancies in Kenya. The scope and scale of the enterprise will be linked to the potential that some conservancies in Kenya can play in hosting environmental and conservation learning. We expect these areas to include conservancies closest to urban population centers.

During the first 5 years, LWF and Jacaranda will seek funding to support development and implementation of WILD CLASS in Laikipia through the Laikipia Association of Conservation Educators. A grant-led 5-year business plan will:

- Reduce risks among Laikipia conservancies in terms of WILD CLASS investment in program, personnel, and facilities.
- Increase the capacity of conservancies to host and manage conservation learning in Laikipia
- Demonstrate the effectiveness of centralized promotion, booking, marketing and sales.
- Strengthen the collective capacity of participating conservancies to demonstrate

After five years, WILD CLASS will be a free-standing enterprise with the ability to continue serving Laikipia conservation education destinations at cost, and expand into other conservancy clusters with similar conservation education support services.

Role of LWF

LWF has been the major conservation education player in the Laikipia landscape for over 15 years. Laikipia schools and pupils have benefitted from learning and excursions supported by donors during this time. The model is highly valued, but not sustainable.

LWF sees itself playing a major role in the development and support of LACE and WILD CLASS over the next 5-10 years.

Over the next five years, LWF intends to appoint a WILD CLASS unit within its Nanyuki secretariat to build the foundations of WILD CLASS and to consolidate the collective actions of LACE.

The WILD CLASS unit will be appointed and operate under the umbrella of LWF, and will be one of 5 programming units served by the LWF secretariat.

An appointed WILD CLASS Director will help form and serve LACE to develop the WILD CLASS model. S/he will assist the conservancies to find the expertise and direct the funding to address each of the components noted above.

We expect the first phase of WILD CLASS (5 years) to be backed by membership in LACE, as well as with the financial assistance of donors and investors. Preliminary funding will allow us to demonstrate cost-sharing approach to conservation education, and the potential of a public-private partnership that can serve as the foundations of a successful conservation education enterprise among participating association members.

Role of Jacaranda

Jacaranda Africa is a premiere, Kenyan, integrated information, education and communications company committed to high-quality conservation education and social communication packages.

To date, Jacaranda has provided conceptual and audio-visual communication services to each of the participating conservancies. Their efforts result in 10 unique advertisements about conservation learning in Laikipia. In addition, they have assembled a commercial video designed to support fundraising and marketing in Kenya and internationally.

In going forward, Jacaranda will assist with marketing, sales, branding, and materials development as their part in the partnership.

Participating Conservancies/Ranches/NGOs

1. Ol Pejeta Conservancy
2. Ol Jogi Conservancy
3. Mpala Research Center
4. Segera Conservancy – Zeitz Foundation
5. Laikipia Nature Conservancy – Ol Ari Nyiro
6. Lewa Wildlife Conservancy
7. Loisaba Conservancy
8. Mt. Kenya Wildlife Conservancy
9. William Holden Conservation Centre
10. Mt. Kenya Trust

Potential Partners

- Wildlife Clubs of Kenya – for networking and curriculum development, promotion and sales; <http://www.wildlifeclubsofkenya.org/>
- Nature Kenya – for networking and citizen science marketing <http://www.naturekenya.org/>
- George Wright Society – for funding and professional support <http://www.georgewright.org/>
- African Wildlife Foundation – for funding and professional support <http://www.awf.org/>
- Pan-African Conservation Education (PACE) – <http://www.paceproject.net> - source of materials and potential funding support
- African Fund for Endangered Wildlife (AFEW) – for curriculum development and promotion <http://giraffecenter.org/>
- Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) <http://kwcakenya.com/>
- Mpala-Live! For assistance with the replication of technology and curriculum relevant to Laikipia/Kenya <http://mpalalive.org/>