



IMPACT

Indigenous Movement For Peace Advancement &
Conflict Transformation



EWASO NYIRO RIVER CAMEL CARAVAN 2023

11TH EDITION

In response to the adoption of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, different stakeholders have domesticated the integration of SDGs into different strategic plans, internal policies and frameworks. The UN 2030 Agenda is based on global sustainable development goals and covers the five critical pillars: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnerships. It contains 17 goals and 169 targets that provide broad guidelines for sustainable development. The 17 Goals are all interconnected, and the aim is that these should be achieved by 2030. All the SDGs have linkages to, and are important for, water security.

The Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation, IMPACT Kenya, piloted the Ewaso Ng'iro Camel Caravan, in 2013, as an initiative designed to assist in achieving SDG No 6, which calls for access to clean water and sanitation for all, with more emphasize on target 6.6, protection and restoration of ecosystems and 6.B, Participation and local engagement.

The initiative supported by several state and non-state actors, including The Ewaso Ng'iro North Development Authority (ENNDA), established under Ewaso Ng'iro North River Basin Development Authority Act CAP 448 of the Laws of Kenya. ENNDA is amongst 6 basin development authorities namely; Lake Basin Development Authority, Kerio Valley Development Authority, Tana and Athi Rivers Development Authority, Coast Development Authority and Ewaso Ng'iro South Development Authority. who over time become crucial members in the journey that now aims at lobbying and advocating for restoration of the Ewaso Ng'iro river basin.

The overarching objective/ theme of this year event was 'Collective Conservation and Restoration of Ewaso Ng'iro North Ecosystem.'" Which is further strengthen by The United Decade on Ecosystem Restoration that seeks to build capacity of marginalized groups that stands to lose most from the continued destruction of ecosystems – such as indigenous people, women and youth to take an active role in restoration.

The walk focused on communities living along the river from its origin, Lake Olbolosat in Nyandarua county, to the downstream communities living as far as Wajir and Garissa. The walk prioritized three key target areas, the upper stream users, the middle stream users and the lower stream users as priority ecosystem and endorse related action plans for protection and restoration.

One of the key priorities is capacity needs assessment, including a clear central data system of the Ewaso Ng'iro river which will help in informing policies and strategic development. This will feed the restoration and protection of the Ewaso Ng'iro ecosystem. The need to further engage all stakeholders to draw a road map to the achievement of SDG 6. This calls for review of the catchment action plan to incorporate the new development trends within all Counties that are part of the basin, as well as mapping of more stakeholders and actors working in the area.



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Catchment Characteristic

The Ewaso Ng'iro North Catchment Area covers an area of about 210,000 km². The catchment area extends from Latitude S 000 25' to N 040 29' and from Longitude E 36 0 20' to E 41 0 55'. Altitude ranges from 150M above sea level at the Lorian swamp to the Mount Kenya whose peak is 5,199M above sea level. Most of the catchment lies below 1,000M above sea level. The catchment neighbors Somalia to the East and Ethiopia to the North, Rift Valley to the West and Tana catchment to the South. Ewaso Ng'iro North Catchment Area has a mean annual rainfall of 411 mm which ranges from over 800 mm in the high lands to less than 400 mm in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) areas. The rainfall is more erratic temporally and spatially in the ASAL areas¹.

The Ewaso Ng'iro North River is the only major river in the basin. It originates from the slopes of Mt. Kenya and Aberdare Range, with several dry river valleys joining it at its middle and lower reaches. It has the following tributaries: Ewaso Narok, Likiudu, Liliaba, Ngare Ndare, Ngusishi, Timau, Sirimon, Teleswani, Ontulili, Likii, Nanyuki, Rongai, Burguret, NaroMoru, Isiolo, Moyok, Ngobit, Suguroi, Pesi and Mutara. The river flows into the Lorian swamp where it is an important source of water for recharging the groundwater and maintaining vegetation cover. The river crosses seven counties namely, Nyandarua, Laikipia, Meru, Samburu, Isiolo, Garissa. (Figure 1)¹

The vegetation cover is mainly savanna and grassy semi-desert vegetation. Mosaics of forest cover are also scattered across the catchment. The forests in the basin comprise a critical part of the hydrological ecosystem and have numerous economic, social, cultural, and ecological values, as they provide essential goods and services. Human encroachment is threatening the forest reserves in the basin and there has been a significant loss of vegetation cover.

Land use along the Ewaso Ng'iro North Basin ecosystem includes forest, grassland/rangeland, and agricultural land. The Basin has a limited population density and therefore for most of the area there are insignificant urban and built-up areas especially between the middle and lower stream.

¹Ewaso Ng'iro North Catchment area – Catchment management strategy (2015 – 2020)

The dominant land use in the Basin are rangelands although there is agriculture in the upper and lower basin, as well as wildlife conservation areas both private and community based. There are certain areas on steep slopes where land use is unsuitable for crops and creates a problem when used for livestock because overgrazing leads to rapid and often irreversible sheet erosion. ⁱⁱ The basin is critical to the survival of pastoral communities, fauna and flora in Northern Kenya. It provides essential ecosystem services as shown in (figure 2)ⁱⁱⁱ

“In order to solve pertinent issues on social economic and environmental related matters along the basin, the caravan calls for all stakeholders who can approach it holistically”. (Ole Tingoi)

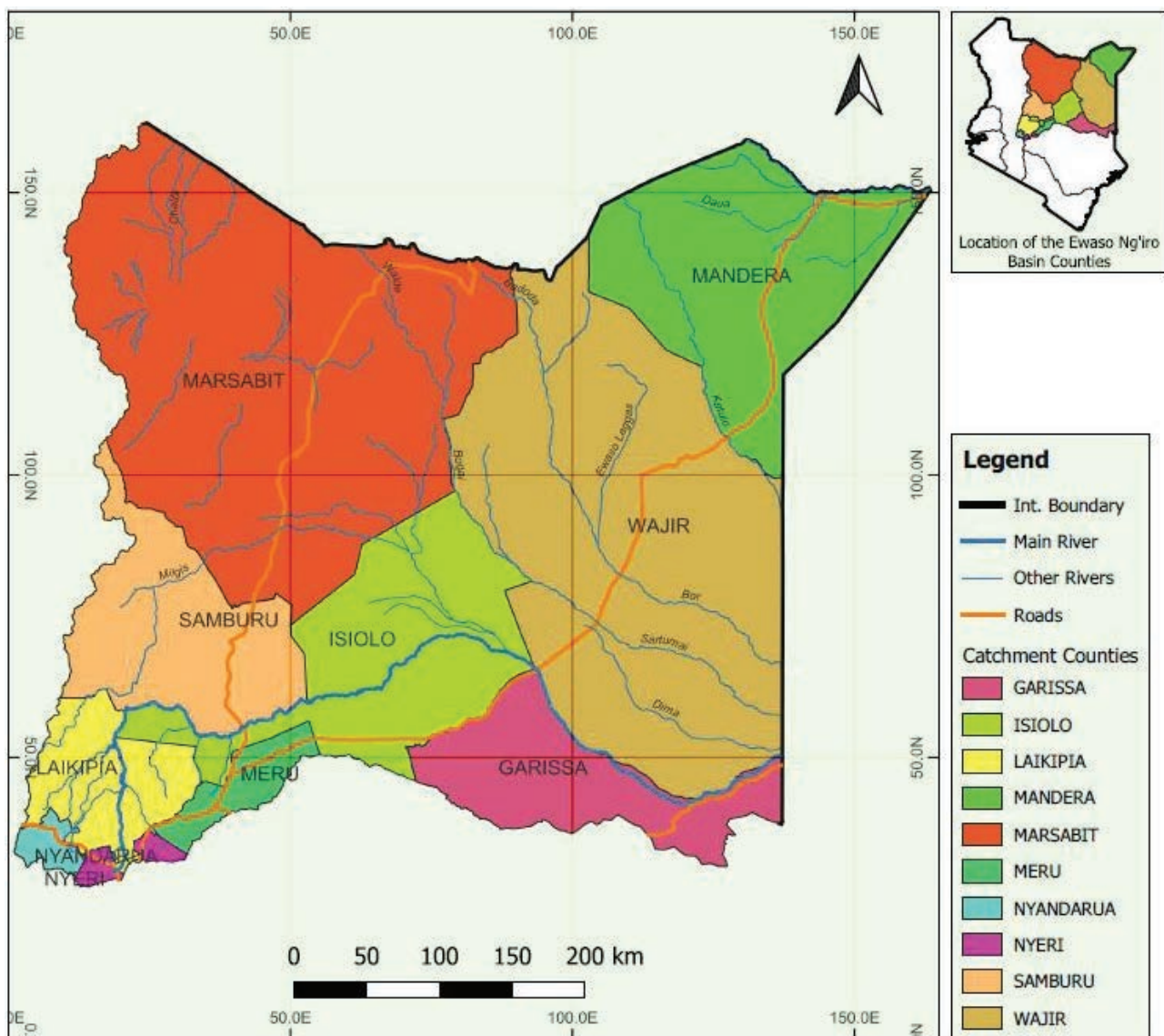


Figure 1 Map showing all the Counties of the Ewaso Ng'iro River Basin

ⁱⁱ Ewaso Ng'iro North Integrated Water Resources Management and Development Plan (2020)

ⁱⁱⁱ Polly Ericksen, Jan de Leeuw, Mohammed Said, Silvia Silvestri & Lokman Zaibet (2012) Mapping ecosystem services in the Ewaso Ng'iro catchment, International Journal of Biodiversity Science, Ecosystem Services & Management, 8:1-2, 122-134, DOI: [10.1080/21513732.2011.651487](https://doi.org/10.1080/21513732.2011.651487)

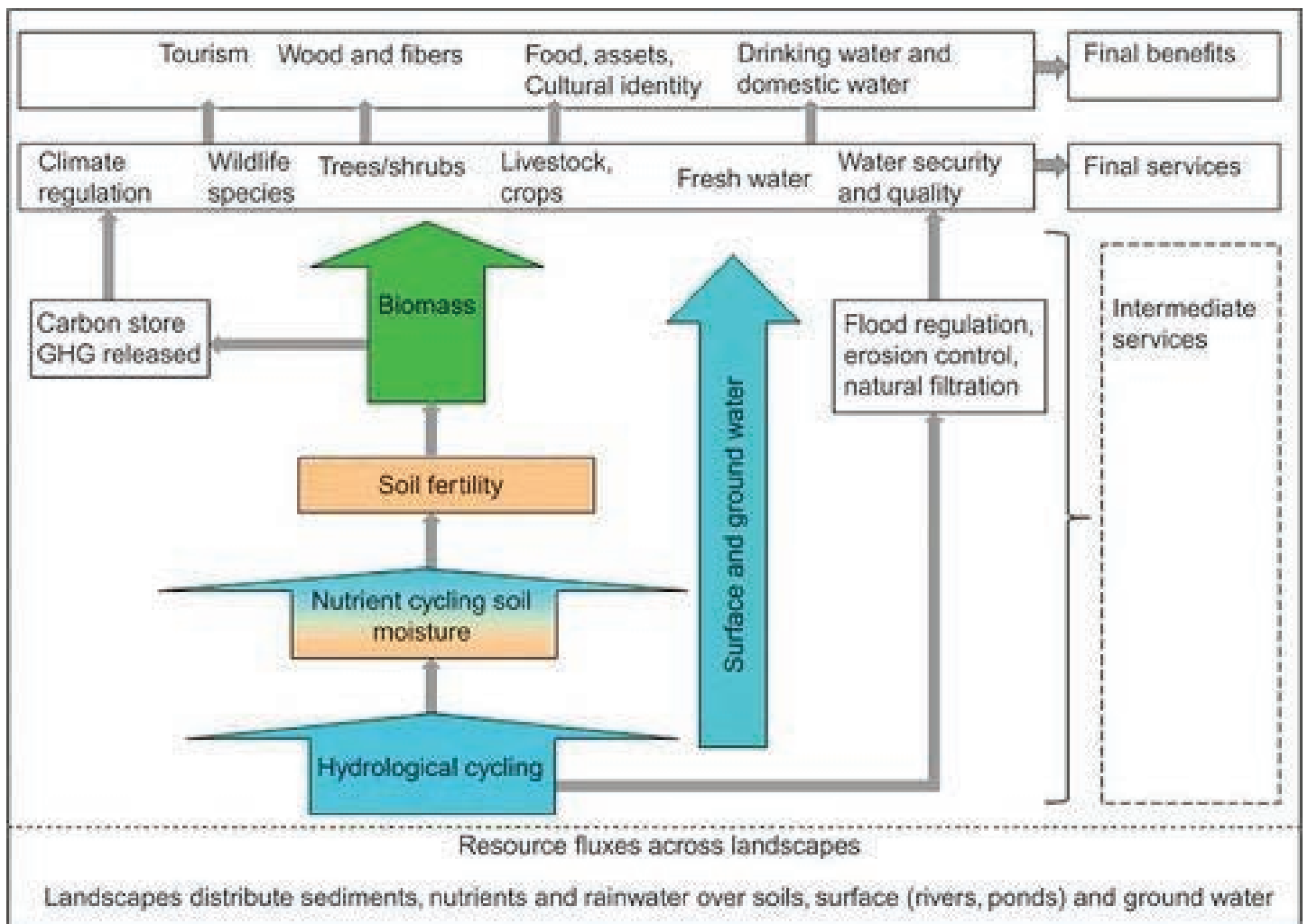


Figure 2: Schematization of the Intermediate and Final Ecosystem Services and Benefits of the Ewaso Ng'iro North River Basin

Activity Description

The 2023, Camel Caravan, is the 11th edition since its inception. This time, the walk marked one of the longest and harsh terrains since. The walk was flagged off on 3rd of August, at Garfasa Isiolo County, and its final day was celebrated at Archers post on 9th of August, which also marked the United Nation International Day for Indigenous People.

Throughout the journey, participant spent their nights within community areas and engaged with the local communities in climate action storytelling and discussions, peace issues as well as listening to downstream communities on how best the Ewaso Ng'iro river basin can be conserved and restored again. Each day, before embarking on the next journey, the community planted trees in designated locations as well as environmental cleanup.

The harsh terrain, hot and dry, was a significant illustration of how resilience communities living in these areas have been in the advent of change in environment. Other communities who are not used to the harsh conditions also adapted quickly and intermingled with others to form one community with one purpose and driven by the same course; Ewaso Ng'iro river. Within the group were security personnel who ensured that all participants and the route were secure.

The Red Cross team and a nurse from the government were present to ensure everyone is attended to in case of any health-related matters.

No.	Date.	Venue	Activities
1	3rd August 2023	Isiolo to Gafarsa	Travelling of participants
2	4th August 2023	Gafarsa.	<p>Flag off of the procession to mark the start of the Camel Caravan by ACC Garba Tulla. Distribution/planting of tree seedlings at Gafarsa Primary School.</p> <p>Pupils were engaged in the 'adopt a tree' model where they were given tree seedlings to take care of either in their homesteads or schools</p> <p>Information dissemination on environmental protection and conservation – This was done by Tingoi, Halima and Issa of IMPACT, IPL and ICT respectively</p>
3	5th August 2023	Malka Daka	<p>Visits to the Ewaso N'giro River, adjacent farms, market Centre and distribution of tree seedlings.</p> <p>The farmers were also encouraged to adopt biopesticides in their farms. This comes after report of over use of synthetic fertilizers and other pesticides that are not environmental friendly.</p> <p>Inter-generational conversation on conservation. Participants gathered in the evening for introduction and interactions with one another. This created an opportunity for the upstream and downstream WRUA members to share ideas and air their concerns regarding the river</p>
4.	6th August 2023	Barambate	<p>Meeting with community leaders, members and distribution of tree seedlings. Having managed to allocate five thousand tree and fruit seedlings to this years' Camel Caravan, ENNDA along with partners undertook the 'adopt a tree' model for each household in Barambate along with schools and Institutions such as the chiefs' camp, police camp and mosques.</p> <p>Planning meeting with Elders and WRUA members.</p> <p>Video screening of past Camel Caravan Events. This was showcased to educate the community members on the main objectives of the camel caravan and experience of participants documented over the years</p>

No.	Date.	Venue	Activities
5	7th August 2023	Gotu	<p>Visits to Institutions, farmlands and individual plots.</p> <p>Media interviews and video coverage was done along the Ewaso Ng'iro river and Gotu springs. Community voices on the current drought and security situation were captured for documentation and information sharing</p> <p>Distribution of tree seedlings to individual households, primary schools and police camp</p>
6	8th August 2023	Camp site within Daaba	<p>Following discussions between partners and community members on the distance to be covered and security situation, it was agreed that participants be ferried by vehicles from Gotu to the Camp</p>
7	9th August 2023	Archers' Post	<p>Flag-off of the procession to mark the Final Day of Camel Caravan & Celebration of International Day of Indigenous People. This was done by the Chief Guest – Principal Secretary State Department of ASALs and Regional Development.</p> <p>Tree planting at Archers' Post</p> <p>Entertainment, Final speeches by the Chief Guest, Partners and community member representatives & Closure.</p>

Camel Caravan 2023 Route Map



Figure 3 The 2023 Camel Caravan Route Map

The final day of the camel caravan which also marked the International Day for the world's indigenous peoples, was celebrated at Archers Post. The theme for 2023 is "Indigenous Youths as Agents of Change for Self-Determination," which 'underscores the role that indigenous youths play in forging their communities' path toward self-determination. It recognizes their unique contributions, heritage, determination, and resilience. With the 11th edition of the camel caravan theme "collective conservation and restoration of Ewaso Ng'iro North ecosystem," put the youth in the limelight towards actualization of goal of the caravan.

The final day was marked by colorful procession to the banks of the already drying Ewaso Ng'iro river, followed by speeches from different stakeholders and partners that facilitated the whole journey.



He welcomed all on board and appreciated their presence and participation. He reminded the gathering that IMPACT, Isiolo Peace Link and MID-P had participated in the Event over the years and desire implementation of practical steps to improve water volumes across the board and by extension peace, harmony and improved livelihoods. A call to all farmers in the basin, to adopt techniques that are not harmful to the environment which include the use of biopesticides in upper streams and big flower farms. A need for centralized data collection center was also emphasized by John Tingoi, as this will help stakeholders to make imperative decisions in their interventions



John Ole Tingoi
IMPACT Kenya



Three member representatives were given an opportunity to air their grievances and experience regarding the past and present state of the Ewaso Ng'iro river. The following is a summary:
They noted Lack of political goodwill by relevant County governments and agencies to implement policies that govern illegal water abstraction by flower farms and farming and sand harvesting along the riparian sections of the river.
The need for further sensitization and inclusion of more Partners for eventual implementation. They requested that the Kenya Water Resource Authority be involved in the coming editions of the camel caravan so they can interact and draw realistic solutions to the seen negative impacts of climate change on Ewaso Ng'iro river.



Representatives
Water Resource Users Associations



He thanked partner CSO's for being at the forefront in ensuring the restoration of Ewaso Ng'iro North River ecosystem. He mentioned that ENNDA's main mandate is to plan, coordinate and implement development projects and programs in the Ewaso Ng'iro North basin and catchment areas.
That ENDDA had overtime drilled boreholes across Counties along with equipping them with solar panels to cushion communities against water scarcity.
He added that planting of trees is key in conservation of the environment and that ENNDA, under the presidential directive is tasked with planting two hundred and fifty thousand -250,000 tree and fruit seedlings each year, progressively until year 2032.
Eng. Ali mentioned that his office along with Kenya Water Resource Authority and the respective County Governments will work closely with CSO's to restore the great Ewaso Ng'iro river.

He reminded participants that the camel caravan was the brainchild of IMPACT, MID-P and Partners for Resilience back in 2013 and that he was happy to witness partners marking the 11th edition in 2023. He mentioned that as Kenyans, it is prudent to join hands, reason together and focus ahead for a win-A-Win situation in terms of prudent water use and environmental conservation
He praised the increase in involvement of youth in the 2023 caravan as these are future leaders and asked partners to keep up the same.

Eng. Ali Ibrahim Hassan
Managing Director ENNDA

Molu Tepo
Executive Director MID-P





Dr. Idris appreciated the invitation as the Chief Guest and said that the Camel Caravan Event was a worthy cause in the interest of the community in improving livelihoods. He gave a brief overview as follows:

- ✓ That the state department is mandated to coordinate overall planning and development of policies for arid and semi –arid and regulate the use of water resources in Partnership with Stakeholders.
- ✓ That the government recognizes the need to address inequalities and vulnerabilities in arid and semi-arid lands.

He thanked all partners and participants for their well-thought-out initiatives and advised us of the necessity to have all on board for a combined effort on ecosystem protection.

That concerted efforts by both the National and County governments will help to promote and facilitate sustainable livelihoods through supporting advocacy tools such as the camel caravan.

He urged ENNDA and the County Government to establish a mechanism for ensuring equitable compensation and benefit sharing for the local communities arising from the economic exploitation of resources in the region

He then called upon all to pull together to improve catchment areas and by extension water volumes and informed all his desire to join the Event next year.

Dr. Idris Dakota

Principal Secretary – State Department of ASAL and Regional Development



He started off by appreciating the participants who trekked for the six days of the caravan.

He addressed the National and County Government representatives on the need to fast track policies formulated by Civil Society Organizations regarding such matters as water governance and sand harvesting regulations.

Mr. Kaunga pointed out that it takes collaborative efforts to push for such policies by respective county governments and Institutions like ENNDA to ensure that implementation is done at the grassroots levels.

Malih Ole Kaungua

Executive Director – IMPACT Kenya



She appreciated the presence of Partners and community members and said that success is about planning today for a better tomorrow and underscored the need for all to be on board for implementation of Strategic Plans to address matters – conflict and water scarcity. That the river is a source of livelihood to millions of humans, livestock and wildlife.

She reiterated the need for capacity building and for all to join hands to identify the root cause of dwindling water levels and desertification and devise amicable solution to the problems.

She further added that IPL's office is open for consultation and assistance and advised on the need to exchange contacts for follow-ups.

Halima Ali

Programme Coordinator – Isiolo Peace Link



The Ewaso Ng’iro River Basin faces many threats and challenges. Some of the challenges identified during community conversation meeting and participants interactions include, over-abstraction and unregulated abstractions leading to water conflicts; climate change, drying up of springs; drought; uncontrolled sand harvesting; large demand for irrigation water; degradation of groundwater quality by agricultural chemicals; water pollution; destruction of forests; soil erosion; erratic rainfall; inadequate data; overgrazing; siltation and reduced water levels in pans and dams; poor land use practices; water conflicts; poor water governance; water scarcity; lack of coordination; forest fires; insecurity; flooding especially in the lower parts of the catchment, among others.

Additionally, Ewaso Ng’iro North Integrated Water Resources Management Plan summarizes the key issues in the basin and classified them into four groups. (Table1)^{iv}

Challenge	Classification
Water resources availability, management, and development issues	<p>Surface water resources: Spatial and temporal variability; Inadequate protection; Poor water quality</p> <p>Groundwater resources: Inadequate protection; Poor water quality</p> <p>Inadequate water resources infrastructure: Bulk water supply and transfers; Limited formal irrigation schemes; Insufficient water supply schemes; Funding for future projects</p> <p>Hydrometeorological: Inadequate monitoring network and monitoring; water allocation and use</p>
Institutional issues	<p>Institutional arrangements: National policies and legislation; National institutions; Basin and sub-basin institutions; County governments; Partnerships and engagements</p> <p>Enabling environment</p> <p>Transboundary and trans-county issues</p>
Biophysical issues Climate:	<p>Inadequate flood preparedness; Inadequate drought preparedness; Climate change</p> <p>Environment: Poor land use and catchment management; Natural vegetation loss; Biodiversity loss</p>
Biophysical issues Climate:	<p>Inadequate flood preparedness; Inadequate drought preparedness; Climate change</p> <p>Environment: Poor land use and catchment management; Natural vegetation loss; Biodiversity loss</p>

Table 2: Main categories under which key issues in Ewaso Ng’iro North issues are classified

^{iv}Ewaso Ng’iro North Integrated Water Resource Management and Development Plan (2020)

To address all these issues reliable data is among the key areas that need attention. It was ranked as one of the key challenges among others that need quick redress. Reliable and verified data means that the government agencies and other stakeholders are able to put in place measures, plan effectively and execute them in a manner that will have an impact to the people living along the basin. It was also noticed that there are no coordinated actions among all several stakeholders working in the area as well as between government agencies and county government that are responsible for management of the basin.

They also needed to put more effort into monitoring and evaluation and standard operations practices that will yield reliable information. The state agencies have been reluctant in pursuing their mandate, citing lack of resources.

Conclusion and Way forward.

The caravan message home was that the Ewaso Ng'iro river basin is a high priority ecosystem for protection and restoration. To further this agenda, "The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration is a rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems all around the world, for the benefit of people and nature. It aims to halt the degradation of ecosystems and restore them to achieve global goals. Only with healthy ecosystems can we enhance people's livelihoods, counteract climate change, and stop the collapse of biodiversity." (About the UN Decade | UN Decade on Restoration, n.d.) Therefore, it overstates the need for a collaborative approach that will bring synergies from prospect actors into action. Some of the key institutions identified during the final meeting that will help in shaping and reviewing the Ewaso Ng'iro North Basin restoration action plan include,

- i.** Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation
- ii.** Water Resources Authority
- iii.** Ministry of Environment & Forestry
- iv.** The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)
- v.** The Kenya Water Towers Agency (KWTA)
- vi.** Kenya Forest Service (KFS)
- vii.** The Kenya Meteorological Department (KMD)
- viii.** Centre for Training and Integrated Research in ASAL Development (CETRAD)

- ix.** The County Governments of the ENN Basin
- x.** Ewaso Ng'iro North Development Authority (ENNDAA)
- xi.** Community based organizations and Non-governmental Organizations including Water Resources Users Associations, Forests Associations, Irrigation Water Users
- xii.** Development Partners
- xiii.** Global Water Partnership EA
- xiv.** Mount Kenya Ewaso Water Partnership (Public-Private Partnership)
- xv.** Kenya Water Partnership

The walk also established some key and broader water-related goals in the Ewaso Ng'iro River Basin, and short to medium term key actions that need to be adopted or further re-engagement.

The priority actions identified are as follows:

1. Strengthening of institutional capacity, participation and coordination.
2. Improving stakeholders' engagement and coordination.
3. Water Quality Management.
4. Groundwater Management.
5. Hydro-meteorological monitoring.
6. Strengthen the enabling environment to support institutions.
7. Improve Water Demand Management and sustainability.
8. Improve Water Security and Governance.
9. Protection and improvement of Catchment Areas and Water Towers.



- Enhancing Partnership – National/County Government and CSOs along with Budgetary allocation for Disaster mitigation.
- Capacity building of youth and enhancement of cohesion and peace building initiatives in-line with the Theme of International Day of Indigenous People – *'Indigenous Youths as Agents of Change for Self Determination'*
- Leaders to consult regionally, for Peace building is both a process and a collective responsibility.
- Diversification i.e., the need to explore alternative livelihood sources and embrace agro ecology
- Ecosystem restoration initiatives – continuous monitoring of the 'Adopt a tree' model
- Check and reverse encroachments and farming activities on riparian areas and blockage of waterways
- Enhance capacity to inculcate attitudinal change to end illegal abstraction and degradation of catchment areas.
- Incorporate and implement the right strategies to ward-off pollution i.e., direct watering of livestock and extensions of adjacent farms.
- Rehabilitation of degraded water catchment areas through planting of trees through watering and care to maturity and minimize evaporation.



 **Victorlyn_Mukiri**
GIS Intern, IMPACT Kenya FOLLOW

♥ 116,124 likes

I participated in the Ewaso Ng'iro caravan, a walk to save the river and its resources. I had never trekked for such a long distance before, but I was inspired by the cause and the people I met. We planted trees, learned about the culture and the challenges of the river, and admired the beauty of nature. I faced some difficulties, such as the high temperature, but I was ready and supported by others. I valued the experience as a geographer and a human being, and I would do it again if I could.

[#CamelCaravan2023](#)
[#PamojaTuhifadhiEwasoNyiro](#)

 **SianoI_Kolol**
Student, Kenya University FOLLOW

♥ 226,389 likes

I took part in the camel caravan, a walk to save Ewaso Ng'iro North, a lifeline for northern Kenya. I walked from Isiolo to Samburu in August, under the theme "Together We Save Ewaso Ng'iro". I was amazed and saddened by the landscape, the effects of environmental damage, and the people's struggles. I learned, planted trees, and connected with others who cared. I wanted to inspire others, to show that we can make a difference for a greener future. I believe in collective action and urgency. This experience made me more aware of our planet, our impact, and our potential. I want to be a change-maker, a storyteller who can share the beauty and the importance of Ewaso Ng'iro North.

[#CamelCaravan2023](#)

 **Lilian_Panasei**
Associate Trainer, ActionAid G.P. FOLLOW

♥ 596,176 likes

I took part in the Ewaso Camel Caravan, a walk to save the Ewaso river that sustains many communities and life forms. I am a young activist for climate action and women empowerment, and I loved meeting others who cared about the same things and learning about the problems and solutions of the river. I was grateful for the comfort and convenience that the organizers gave us, such as water, medical care, tents, beddings, electricity, and charging points. I also enjoyed the meetings and community engagement that gave me great insights. The only thing that I wished could be better was the quality of food, especially at lunch and when it was burnt.

[#PamojaTuhifadhiEwasoNyiro](#)



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