

2024
EDITION



ANNUAL EWASO NGIRO CAMEL CARAVAN REPORT

Theme: *"Shaping our vision on cultural heritage, pastoral livelihoods and biodiversity along Ewaso Ngiro North River Ecosystem."*

**KIPSING, ISIOLO COUNTY
6TH - 9TH AUGUST**

BACKGROUND

The Ewaso Nyiro Camel Caravan is one of the iconic events along the Ewaso Nyiro North River basin, which cuts across 6 counties in Northern Kenya. IMPACT Kenya in collaboration with other partners like MID-P among others, through the Partners for Resilience program, piloted the Ewaso Nyiro Camel Caravan, in 2013, as an advocacy initiative designed to bring communities together living along the Ewaso Nyiro North River Ecosystem to spearhead the protection and restoration within the ecosystem. Since then, the event has been able to bring several stakeholders such as communities, government agencies e.g. Ewaso Nyiro North Development Authority (ENDA), Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry and several NGOs and lobbyists on the table.

This year's initiative proposes a transformative gathering geared towards reflecting, visioning and celebrating diversity of communities. The event will bring together diverse communities and resource user groups in the basin stakeholders, for a five-day event, during which the participants will be involved in a series of activities that aims at forging peaceful coexistence while celebrating the richness of the basin, and devising further measures on the restoration and equal sharing of the natural resources within the basin.

The communities will distinctively highlight different approaches of ensuring that the ecosystem thrives and continues to support the livelihoods of the communities it serves. For continuity a working group for tracking the outcomes of the campaign will also be developed to act as a focal point for this annual event. The event is also considered to be a build-up of the international year of rangelands and pastoralist as declared by the UN to be in 2026. The Ewaso Nyiro Camel Caravan event spans four days, each dedicated to distinct activities aimed at promoting community engagement, environmental stewardship, and sustainable development: <https://impactkenya.org/event/camel-caravan-2024-2/>



EVENT OVERVIEW

DAY 1: TRAVEL OF ALL PARTICIPANTS TO KIPSING.



On August 6, 2024, at around noon, a total of 246 participants—comprising 68 women and 178 men—gathered at the river crossing opposite the Ngarendare Market to embark on a three-day camel caravan. The participants represented diverse communities from Samburu, Laikipia, Isiolo, and Nyandarua counties. Among them were members of Water Resource User Associations, Community Forest Associations, Community Land Management Committees, civil society organizations, community-based organizations, and peace ambassadors, standing shoulder to shoulder with local community members. Together, they embarked on a symbolic journey from the Ngarendare River to the Kipsing Riverbank.

The walk unfolded under intense sunshine, sparking meaningful conversations between community members and other stakeholders in attendance. This journey was a testament to the resilience and cooperative spirit of communities across the mid, upper, and lower Ewaso Nyiro ecosystem. Despite the challenging weather conditions, the caravan was successfully completed, underscoring the importance of cross-border collaboration, community engagement, and participant bonding.

Upon reaching the Kipsing Riverbank, the community celebrated the successful conclusion of the walk with vibrant traditional dances, music, and shared communal meals. This joyous occasion not only marked the end of the journey but also deepened communal ties, leaving all participants with cherished memories of unity and shared purpose.



The Camel Caravan journey featured the Indigenous Communities Food Festival, a vibrant celebration of traditional food systems and cultural heritage. This event highlighted the rich culinary diversity of the participating communities, fostering a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. By sharing food and cultural expressions, the festival deepened participants' appreciation for indigenous heritage while strengthening communal bonds. A goat was presented to each participating indigenous community, serving as a centerpiece for the day's festivities. This practice emphasized both traditional food preparation methods and the communal sharing of resources.

Traditional Goat Slaughter and Preparation

Community members demonstrated traditional methods of slaughtering and preparing goat meat, reflecting the diversity and depth of indigenous culinary traditions:

Slaughtering: Conducted with strict adherence to cultural and traditional practices.

Preparation: Included diverse cooking techniques such as roasting and stewing, showcasing the variety of indigenous cuisines.

Cooking: Communities displayed their unique recipes, creating rich local flavors such as nyirinyiri and mnono. Each community presented its food, shared the preparation process, and distributed the meat among participants.

Sharing of Meat and Strengthening Bonds

Sharing the prepared meat played a vital role in reinforcing social bonds and demonstrating hospitality. The distribution of goat parts varied according to gender, age, and roles within the community, reflecting traditional values and ensuring inclusivity:

Women and Girls:

Cuts Received: Parts commonly used in cooking, such as legs, ribs, shoulders, liver, and kidneys, which are considered delicacies for preparing traditional dishes.

Herders:

Meat and Bones: Herders, who are integral to livestock management, received cuts of meat and bones. The bones are often used to prepare nutrient-rich broths essential for their physically demanding work.

Elders:

Prime Cuts: Elders were honored with the most tender and prized cuts, including ribs, back, and tenderloin. This distribution symbolizes respect and recognition of their wisdom and status in the community.

This traditional approach to slaughter, preparation, and distribution underscores the importance of resource sharing, cultural preservation, and social harmony. The festival created a tapestry of rich flavors and traditions, leaving participants with a deeper appreciation for the significance of indigenous food systems and their role in strengthening community connections.

The event also featured a stand hosted by the (B)eat the Locust team, showcasing innovative food solutions through samples of cricket and locust biscuits, as well as cricket and locust powder. These products were displayed for participants to explore sustainable and alternative protein sources. The community members enthusiastically tried the samples, with all the biscuits and powders consumed during the festival. This interaction not only highlighted the potential of edible insects as a nutritious and eco-friendly food option but also sparked curiosity and conversations about sustainable dietary practices.





The day began with vibrant traditional dances and songs performed by different ethnic groups participating in the caravan. Local musicians also performed peace-themed songs and compositions celebrating the Ewaso Nyiro River ecosystem. Following this, participants were divided into groups (women, elders, youth, and WRUAs) to discuss their respective roles in environmental peacebuilding and the challenges they face. Below are the presentations from each group.

Roles of Elders in Peacebuilding and Environmental Conservation

Elders from the mid, upper, and lower Ewaso Nyiro River ecosystem play a critical role in peacebuilding and environmental conservation. Leveraging their wisdom, experience, and respected status, elders contribute significantly to conflict resolution and ecosystem protection through:

Conflict Transformation: Using alternative dispute resolution (ADR) methods and traditional practices, such as issuing traditional curses against harmful actions.

Guidance: Offering leadership and resolving disputes related to communal resources like land and livestock.

Challenges

- ▷ Insufficient protection of communal properties such as land and livestock.
- ▷ Sand harvesting leading to water shortages, soil erosion, and gully creation.
- ▷ Climate change contributing to water scarcity.
- ▷ Criminal activities across community boundaries.
- ▷ Involvement of spiritual leaders (Oloibon and Laisi) in cattle rustling.
- ▷ Illegal activities and settlements in riparian areas.
- ▷ Lack of community involvement in sand harvesting policies.
- ▷ Livestock theft leading to insecurity.

Recommendations

- ▶ Elders should take charge of protecting the river for community benefit.
- ▶ Facilitate frequent elders' meetings on peace and conservation matters.
- ▶ Elders must advocate for peace, avoiding tribalism and revenge practices.
- ▶ Involve local age-set leaders (Laigwanak) in peacebuilding dialogues.
- ▶ Livestock theft victims should report accurate details to facilitate resolution.
- ▶ Form boundary committees to resolve inter-boundary conflicts (e.g., Laikipia-Isiolo-Samburu).
- ▶ Include elders in grazing plans and involve them in implementing community bylaws.
- ▶ Push community-developed bylaws on peace and grazing plans to county assemblies for enactment.
- ▶ Enforce existing policies with elders' involvement.

Roles of Youth in Peacebuilding and Environmental Conservation

Monitoring: Young Morans monitor environmental changes and report illegal activities like poaching and deforestation.

Peacebuilding: They foster harmony between communities through peace dialogues and initiatives.

Advocacy: Promote peace via local artists and sports events featuring peace songs and spoken word performances.

Challenges

- ▷ Poor information flow between elite and herder youth.
- ▷ Political incitement by local leaders.
- ▷ Lack of youth inclusivity in WRUAs.
- ▷ Disunity among youth.
- ▷ Limited knowledge-sharing, with many youth spending more time in towns.
- ▷ Financial constraints for youth initiatives.
- ▷ Limited understanding of roles in peace and conservation.

Recommendations

- ▶ Ensure youth inclusion in decision-making processes.
- ▶ Register local youth groups and encourage formal setups.
- ▶ Appoint community peace and conservation ambassadors.
- ▶ Conduct benchmarking and exposure tours to enhance knowledge and skills.
- ▶ Establish local training institutions to teach youth different skills for economic empowerment.
- ▶ Develop a youth summit to formulate policies supporting ecosystem conservation.
- ▶ Incorporate conservation topics in school curriculums.
- ▶ Formulate and enforce policies to regulate sand harvesting.

Roles of WRUAs (Water Resource Users Associations)

Water Management: Allocate water resources fairly, construct sand dams, and implement water conservation projects.

Conflict Mediation: Mediate conflicts over water resources and prevent escalation.

Conservation Initiatives: Protect water sources through reforestation, riparian area protection, and pollution control.

Advocacy and Inclusivity: Represent community concerns, advocate for sustainable policies, and empower women and youth in conservation efforts.

Success Stories

- ▷ **Construction of Sand Dams:**
Built three sand dams at Gafarsa-Malkadaka and one at Loisukut, enhancing water storage and availability for local communities.
- ▷ **Provision of Water Tanks:**
Supplied water tanks to schools, dispensaries, vulnerable groups, orphans, and the elderly, ensuring access to clean water for essential needs.
- ▷ **Establishment of Sub-Surface Dams:**
Successfully constructed 13 sub-surface dams in Kurum, contributing to sustainable water management and supply.
- ▷ **Increased Awareness and Community Visibility:**
Raised awareness about WRUAs, making them visible and recognized by many communities for their importance, contributions, and the ownership of their projects.
- ▷ **Recruitment and Registration of New Members:**
Expanded membership through effective recruitment and registration efforts, strengthening the organization's reach and capacity.
- ▷ **Development of SCAMP Document:**
Created a Sub-Catchment Management Plan (SCAMP) to guide WRUAs in sustainable water management and conservation practices.
- ▷ **Capacity Building:**
Conducted capacity-building initiatives to equip members with skills and knowledge for better resource management and governance.

- ▷ **Successful Conflict Resolutions:**
Mediated and resolved water resource-based conflicts, fostering peace and collaboration among communities.
- ▷ **Local Resource Mobilization:**
Mobilized local resources to implement community projects, showcasing self-reliance and sustainability.
- ▷ **Acquisition of Office Spaces:**
A few WRUAs have secured office spaces, providing a dedicated environment for operations and coordination.

Challenges

- ◆ Outdated Sub-Catchment Management Plans (SCAMP).
- ◆ Illegal settlements in riparian areas.
- ◆ Lack of capacity building for WRUA committees.
- ◆ Inadequate resources for management and monitoring.
- ◆ Limited youth and gender inclusivity in WRUAs.

Recommendations

- ◇ Conduct civic education on the importance of WRUAs and existing policies.
- ◇ Update and standardize water management policies.
- ◇ Empower WRUAs with direct funding and logistical support.
- ◇ Foster partnerships between government, stakeholders, and communities.
- ◇ Increase inclusivity by involving women and youth in WRUA activities.



PARTNERS:



**Pastoralists Alliance
for Resilience and
Adaptation Across
Nations**


*Building and strengthening resilient, transformational
partnerships and social movements*



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