

Tusk
Conservation
Symposium
2019

**Advancing
Conservation
in Africa**
Report



Kindly sponsored
by ISPS Handa



ISPS
HANDA

Executive Summary

African conservationists often work in remote and isolating conditions, rarely having a chance to share their challenges and solutions with others in the same field. Having witnessed how winners and finalists attending our annual Tusk Conservation Awards were benefitting from such an opportunity, we decided to hold an inaugural symposium in South Africa in 2017 and bring many of our project partners together, most of them meeting for the first time.

Following the success of that event, the Tusk Conservation Symposium 2019 saw representatives from 45 Tusk-supported projects across 16 African countries assemble at the Mount Kenya Safari Club in Kenya from 7th-10th October. Generously sponsored by ISPS Handa, the four-day gathering comprised a mixture of workshops, three-minute "success spotlights", training sessions, open debates and networking. Participants also had a day in the field at the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and a poignant visit to see the planet's last two surviving northern white rhinos at the Ol Pejeta Conservancy.

The most significant impact from the Symposium will be the relationships and collaborative ventures that flow from it. At the outset, Tusk offered up a fund to enable exchange visits and the development of joint initiatives. As a result, 21 proposals were submitted – a clear demonstration of delegates' collective desire to collaborate. The intention is that the majority of these requests will be granted travel bursaries by Tusk. The importance of this was hailed by leading Kenyan conservationist Dr Winnie Kiiru of The Elephant Protection Initiative in her highly entertaining and thought-provoking keynote speech during the closing reception, which was attended by many from the Kenyan conservation community as well as senior representatives of the Kenyan Government and The British High Commission.

We are incredibly grateful to all our partners who joined us for this Symposium and made it such a success, and we are hugely indebted to ISPS Handa, for making it possible through their generous sponsorship. We would also like to acknowledge the very kind contribution from Milton Group LLC, who sponsored the closing reception.



Monday 7th October

Workshop 1:

Making conservation make economic sense

Fanny Vassez *Blue Ventures*

Dr Gladys Kalema *Conservation Through Public Health*

Rufu Roba *Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT)*

Blue Ventures have been reversing the decline in fish stocks on the densely populated Anjouan Island of the Comoros. Through the creation of a local fisherwoman association they were able to galvanise the local community and enable a four-month closure of the fisheries in 2017. The results were incredibly positive, with octopus and fish stocks recovering rapidly, and octopi growing considerably larger, increasing in value. The community is now drying its harvested fish and octopi to reduce the amount of wasted stock and to diversify their income, and Fanny posed the question of how to make the dried products competitive on the local market.

Recommendations from the workshop included:

Conducting market research and adding more range to the products

Zoning, rotational closures and long-term management plans to prevent future pressure on the environment

Bringing the government on board by inviting key individuals to workshops

Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH) are producing 'Gorilla Conservation Coffee' on the border of Uganda's Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. CTPH supports more than 500 farmers by buying their coffee at a premium price, while a donation from every bag sold supports CTPH's community health projects. The workshop provided a number of suggestions to overcome the challenge of differentiating themselves from others using gorillas in their marketing, as well as how to reduce their shipping costs.

Recommendations from the workshop included:

Developing clearer conservation (and impact) messaging, providing a QR code for people to go into greater depth

Securing some form of certification to help with marketing (even developing a gorilla-specific certification)

Securing funds to scale up operations from social impact investors, donors and revolving funds

Developing linkages to the Uganda Wildlife Authority (and gorilla trekking) and tour operators

Thanks to the **Beadworks** initiative of **NRT Trading**, 1,300 women across nine community conservancies in Kenya are now able to continue their semi-nomadic lifestyle while earning a living, as an alternative to charcoal production or over-grazing. They can now access better healthcare, invest in solar power, and support their children's education. Advice was sought on how to expand the initiative across 20 conservancies, to support 5,000 women by 2020.

Recommendations from the workshop included:

Securing a partner for sales and marketing

Using drop-ship companies instead of couriers to reduce shipping costs

Exploiting an anti-plastic marketing message

Linking income directly to a specific conservation cause



Success Spotlights – 1

- The Cheetah Conservation Fund** has been helping farmers protect their livestock from cheetah and wild dogs outside Namibia's protected areas, undoing negative attitudes towards the carnivores and engaging people in conservation.
- Conservation Lower Zambezi** is significantly reducing elephant poaching in Zambia by investing in specialised units (e.g. marine, aerial, canine, rapid response and intelligence units) with specialist training and incentives for success.
- The Lamu Marine Conservation Trust (LAMCOT)** has increased green and hawksbill turtle hatchling survival rate to 97% through engaging the local community, supporting local tourism, and organising regular beach clean-ups.
- By engaging the local community and supporting the government's anti-poaching capacity with a dedicated and well trained anti-poaching unit, the **Mali Elephant Project** has reduced elephant poaching from 83 in 2015 to zero in 13 months.
- Community engagement, school outreach and the development of tree nurseries has seen the **Mountain Bongo Surveillance Project** overcome the threats of charcoal burning and illegal hunting to protect the critically endangered mountain bongo and its habitat in Kenya.
- The Mokolodi Wildlife Trust's** education programmes have reached more than 260,000 children at their model nature reserve 16km outside of Gaborone, Botswana.
- By uniting and coordinating activities between 15 conservancies in Kenya's greater Maasai Mara landscape, the **Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association** is helping control livestock grazing, opening up wildlife corridors and successfully restoring wildlife populations (especially wild dogs).
- The Ruaha Carnivore Project** has succeeded in reducing carnivore mortality by 80% since 2011 in Tanzania's Ruaha landscape, by engaging the local community in conservation and enabling them to invest in their needs.
- In South Africa, **VulPro** has rescued almost 700 endangered vultures, of which 300 have been released back into the wild, with those not fit for release joining their captive breeding programme.
- Through vaccinating dogs, the **Milgis Trust** has brought rabies under control in part of northern Kenya, ensuring dogs are now healthy enough to guard livestock effectively, reducing the loss of livestock and the killing of predators in retaliation, such that 25 lion have now returned to their area.

Tuesday 8th October

Training

The Symposium included three training sessions for the participants on the following topics:

- 1 Teambuilding, by Forward Consulting
- 2 Organisational Capacity Building, by Maliasili Initiatives, including a panel discussion with four participants who are also partnered with Maliasili
- 3 How To Engage An Audience, by Forward Consulting

Success Spotlights – 2

- 11 Through a big collaborative effort with the Zambian Department of National Parks and Wildlife and local communities, **Conservation South Luangwa** are successfully reducing snaring in and around South Luangwa National Park.
- 12 Through investing in basic park infrastructure and the Uganda Wildlife Authority's veterinary and ranger capacity, the **Uganda Conservation Foundation** is restoring the Murchison Falls National Park such that tourism is now booming and generating \$300,000 through revenue-sharing per year for the local communities.
- 13 By supporting local community members through every stage of their education (from primary school to PhD) and empowering local leaders, the **Zambia Carnivore Programme** has generated unprecedented local interest and leadership in field-based carnivore conservation.
- 14 Employing 18 elephant guardians from the local community to drive elephants away from crops has seen the **Yankari Game Reserve** in Nigeria increase levels of tolerance towards elephants such that none have been killed since 2015, even though elephant crop-raiding has not gone away.

Workshop 2:**Valuing nature – how to mainstream conservation education**

Lalarisoa Rakotoarimino *Community Centred Conservation (C3)*
 Lesley McNutt *Coaching for Conservation*
 Sboniso Phakathi *Southern African Wildlife College*
 Elaine Hake *Lilongwe Wildlife Trust*

In Madagascar, **C3** have been extending a successful environmental education programme that began tackling overfishing, reef destruction, turtle poaching and a decline in the dugong population in and around the Nosy Hara Marine Park. Through training Madagascar's youth to become environmental leaders and supporting youth-led outreach campaigns in local communities, C3 have succeeded in changing environmental behaviour and improving children's education and health. Their programme has been recognised and certified by the Ministry of Education – with which they have an MOU – and their programme will be integrated into the national curriculum in 2020.

A common theme in the discussion afterwards was the importance of involving and recognising the authorities in the development of programmes and at workshops, while also looking at cross-cutting themes so that environmental education messages can be covered under a variety of subjects.

The **Southern African Wildlife College (SAWC)** have integrated **Coaching for Conservation's (C4C)** programme into their training programme as a result of the 2017 Tusk Conservation Symposium. C4C's lessons feature animal mentors, and use sport to convey their conservation messages. For example, cheetahs' speed and agility are translated into soccer skills of fast dribbling and acceleration, while human-wildlife conflict is explored through role play revealing how keeping livestock safe can help save cheetah. The programme has reached 28,411 children in 121 schools. To increase the scale of the project, C4C identified that they needed to train more trainers. SAWC were meanwhile looking to reinvigorate their educational training and were able to offer the institutional support for C4C. They now have a 6-week children's programme and the training of trainers is underway with institutional accreditation.

The discussion that followed explored how C4C could keep extending their programme. Suggestions included linking the programme to national rugby teams, as well as to Tusk's PACE programme. Other participants expressed their interest in adopting the model for their work.

The need for increased environmental awareness has been recommended by the Malawian Government. **Lilongwe Wildlife Trust (LWT)** have responded by reaching 17,500 children in more than 400 schools. Their programme includes class-based and practical lessons, extra-curricular wildlife clubs and the training of teachers. Having asked local communities what specific challenges they're facing and checking content with the local Department of National Parks and Wildlife, the programme has been approved by local authorities and LWT are working towards influencing the national curriculum.

Linking to Sustainable Development Goals and other sectors (development, health etc.) were among the recommendations made in the discussion afterwards for integrating programmes into national curricula. Meanwhile, identifying people's connections to the natural world and what's important to them (e.g. soil or water conservation), to clan systems (e.g. Uganda) or totems (e.g. Cameroon) were all suggested for introducing conservation messaging more widely and ensuring that it gets through.



Wednesday 9th October

Field Workshops

The Symposium included field workshops and presentations with the **Lewa Wildlife Conservancy** and **Northern Rangelands Trust** teams, covering rangelands management, adult education, anti-poaching, security and community-led conservation.



Thursday 10th October

Success Spotlights – 3

- 15 **Global Animal Health** tested the dogma that rabies vaccines must be stored in cold chain conditions and found that it was not necessary, making their mass dog vaccination around the Serengeti National Park easier and cheaper, reducing the likelihood of rabies spreading to wildlife populations.
- 16 **Ripple Africa** have empowered local communities in Malawi to take responsibility for fishery management and stop the use of mosquito nets that catch extremely small juvenile fish, simply by demonstrating the benefits of doing so.
- 17 In Zimbabwe, the **Malilangwe Trust's** Cadet Ranger Programme is successfully using 97 scouts as ambassadors and teachers to foster an understanding of the importance of conservation, combining enhanced employment opportunities with education.
- 18 The poaching of elephants in Kenya's Tsavo landscape has reduced from 99 in 2013 to 5 in 2018 thanks to the **Tsavo Trust** providing aerial and ground patrol support to the Kenyan Wildlife Service, and using Tsavo's iconic super tuskers to secure funding.

**Workshop 3:
Women as conservation advocates**

Dr Crystal Mogensen *The Maa Trust*
 Shivani Bhalla *Ewaso Lions*
 Julius Lekenit *Grevy's Zebra Trust*
 Delphin Mukira *Mount Kenya Trust*

• In Kenya's Maasai Mara landscape, the **Maa Trust** found that women were excluded from conservation. Taking chores such as collecting water or firewood away from women can free up 5-8 hours per day in which they can be economically productive and benefit from awareness programmes. Through their vocational training centre, they currently engage 105 women in sustainable honey production and 579 in beadworks. The increased income is helping them tackle common problems: installing water tanks overcomes the challenge of water collection; household solar systems are powering homes; school fees can be paid consistently; gas or ethanol stoves reduce the need to collect firewood. Environmental benefits are accruing through these measures, as well as from the reduced need to trade livestock for income. The women are feeling empowered. They are securing positions on their local conservancy and school boards, and challenging injustices.

• **Ewaso Lions** work in unfenced areas in Kenya, including three national reserves and surrounding community conservancies, where people, livestock and wildlife share the same landscape. Their work with communities has seen the recovery of lion numbers in community areas, because people have come to accept them. Wildlife traditionally belonged to women in that region, but it was taken away from them, and the project has succeeded by restoring that sense of ownership and creating opportunities for women. Women are now in positions of leadership, and are role models for the next generation.

• Acknowledging that women are the chief resource managers for their families, the **Mount Kenya Trust** has focussed on engaging them in conservation through awareness and involvement in decision-making. The project has established a women-led tree nursery, from which the project purchases the trees at a certain height. This provides income for the women, some of which has been reinvested in energy saving stoves (150 so far) reducing the need to collect firewood. To date, 20,000 women in the region have also benefitted from access to family planning and healthcare through a mobile clinic.

• **The Grevy's Zebra Trust** provides opportunities for women to get involved in conservation, and empowers them by providing literacy training. The project presently employs 29 women scouts, and thanks to data collected by them on the detrimental impact that it would have, an oil pipe was re-routed. A female leader, 'Mama Grevy' has

emerged thanks to the project, defying taboos and confronting men in support of zebra conservation, winning the Disney Conservation Leadership Award as a result. The project has created opportunities for women to talk about and address their problems, leading to health improvements. The project has even promoted zebra-patterned sanitary pads to directly link health improvements to conservation.

The discussion that followed identified the following common factors between the four projects:

There has been a paradigm shift in conservation through the acknowledgement that women are the main resource users

The involvement of women is essential in overcoming the challenges of human population growth and natural resource consumption

Conservation can be a catalyst for change, enabling women to become leaders and role models

Women's empowerment requires the involvement and empowerment of men about women

Breakthroughs have been achieved when women have been empowered to speak out and challenge cultural barriers

Success Spotlights – 4

- 19 **Save the Waterberg Rhino** are helping secure two million hectares for the world's second largest rhino population through regular communication with willing stakeholders, creating a collaborative plan for collective action.
- 20 **Local Ocean Conservation** managed to solve a short-term problem of cashflow through a crowdfunding campaign using the turtle as the flagship, which raised \$52,000 and created a new community to engage with.
- 21 In Guinea, the **Chimpanzee Conservation Center** is monitoring the release of chimps back into the wild, and having tested many collars that don't work over long distances, they are finally having success with new Iridium collars.
- 22 Tusk's **Pan African Conservation Education (PACE)** programme is succeeding in getting schools to deliver conservation education by believing in school teachers and providing materials that are interesting and can help across many subjects, including literacy.
- 23 By investing in what people need (e.g. education, health, local capacity, livelihoods, female empowerment) and not in what one might assume they need, **Painted Dog Conservation** have been successfully tackling human-wildlife conflict in Zimbabwe, to the extent that a local farmer did not demand compensation for loss of livestock because of the benefits the community has been receiving from the project.
- 24 By enhancing community ownership of natural resources in Namibia, **Integrated Rural Development & Nature Conservation (IRDNC)** are developing an improved land tenure model with more empowered and informed communities, who will eventually have more control over their land.
- 25 While the conservation needs in eastern DR Congo are enormous, the **Gorilla Organization** and the **Walikale Gorilla and Forest Conservation Project** are proving that the few resources they have can make all the difference in protecting 488 Grauer's gorilla within their community forest.
- 26 **Savé Valley Conservancy** in Zimbabwe are protecting and growing a key rhino population by overcoming the impact of snaring through committed, ego-less and open teamwork.



Workshop 4: Building future conservation leaders – Panel Discussion

Dr Gladys Kalema *Conservation Through Public Health*
 Olivier Nsengimana *Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association*
 Simson Uri Khob *Save the Rhino Trust*
 Mike Watson *Lewa Wildlife Conservancy*
 Dickson Kaelo *Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association*

During an open discussion, comments and recommendations from the panel and other participants included the following:

- Gladys Kalema said that women leaders have to try harder to be heard. She has had to overcome cultural perceptions of the role of women, including the notion that it is not safe for women to do fieldwork.
- Having lived through the Rwandan genocide, Olivier Nsengimana stressed the importance of connecting with people, as well as taking risks, adapting strategies, and pushing beyond comfort zones. He feels that conservation is helping rebuild the country.
- Participants stressed that there should be more opportunities to study wildlife and conservation (as well as management training for conservation), with Simson Uri Khob noting that he had benefitted from studying overseas. While local national leaders in conservation are emerging, the academic world is still dominated by Western men.
- Gladys Kalema backed up that assertion by noting that 80% of members of the International Primatological Society are not from primate range states, a scenario that the recently formed African Primate Society is countering, with 250 of the 300 delegates at its 2019 conference being African. She nevertheless added that there are still too few opportunities for African researchers to rise and that many have left the field of primatology.
- Mike Watson noted that what has to change is the notion that conservation is a luxury and preserve of people predominantly from overseas.
- Dickson Kaelo observed that at least in Kenya it is important to make the distinction between tourism and conservation, but that there are now Kenyan researchers beginning to emerge. For him personally, being nominated for a Tusk Conservation Award had made a big difference.
- Participants registered that it can be a challenge to employ people who want to work in remote, rural areas, and that parents will push their children towards more lucrative professions, as conservation currently doesn't pay.
- Greater recognition is also needed for the roles played in conservation by those with other skill sets such as builders, mechanics et al. While education is important, it's not always essential to have a strong formal education, as running the right team with persistence, passion and dedication can lead to just as much success.

Conclusion

The participants' closing remarks confirmed that the Symposium had achieved what it had set out to: it had showcased a wide range of solutions that others could learn from, and presented the opportunity to build relationships between Tusk's project partners. The emphasis on education and women's empowerment (including family planning) was particularly well-received, as both must be part of a holistic approach that was widely acknowledged as the way forward.

Among the recommendations for a next symposium was the suggestion to invite decision-makers and participants from other sectors. Participants recognised that their work has to be made relevant to the climate crisis, and that the debate needs elevating to the political elite and the urban majority.

Collaboration in Action

The willingness to collaborate and exchange ideas that was cultivated during the Symposium was demonstrated by the large number of proposals that were received for exchange visits between Tusk's partners. More than 15 of these will be funded by Tusk, including the following:

- The Wilderness Foundation and Vulpro will look into the feasibility of reintroducing Cape Vultures to South Africa's Eastern Cape
- Zimbabwe's Savé Valley Conservancy's SSPU (Special Species Protection Unit) will visit the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy Anti-Poaching Unit in Kenya to learn from their success
- Nigeria's Yankari Game Reserve will visit Save the Rhino Trust in Namibia to learn how their community-based natural resource management promotes conservation within communities

- Vulpro will visit Zimbabwe to develop vulture conservation plans with the Malilangwe Trust and Savé Valley Conservancy
- Zimbabwe's Painted Dog Conservation will visit the Zambia Carnivore Programme to share and exchange ideas and approaches that would benefit the two organisations, who are both protecting African wild dogs in their respective areas
- Rwanda Wildlife Conservation Association will visit Coaching for Conservation in Botswana with a view to replicating their successful education initiative
- Ripple Africa and Conservation Lower Zambezi will visit each other's projects to share and learn ideas about fisheries management
- The Chimpanzee Conservation Center will travel from Guinea to Uganda to learn how to replicate Conservation Through Public Health's social enterprise, Gorilla Conservation Coffee, for marketing roasted peanuts for chimpanzee conservation
- Southern African Wildlife College and Kenya's Northern Rangelands Trust will visit each other to help develop SAWC's course on livestock herding and health
- Kenya's Tsavo Trust and Uganda Conservation Foundation will visit each other to learn from each other's anti-poaching approaches in their respective areas
- Global Animal Health Tanzania will visit Conservation Through Public Health in Uganda to implement a One Health disease transmission research and control project





Tusk Trust
4 Cheapside House,
High Street, Gillingham,
Dorset, SP8 4AA, UK

T +44 1747 831 005
E info@tusk.org

UK Registered Charity No: 1186533

 [@tusk.org](https://www.facebook.com/tusk.org)
 [@tusk_org](https://twitter.com/tusk_org)
 [@tusk_org](https://www.instagram.com/tusk_org)

ROYAL PATRON
HRH The Duke of Cambridge, KG KT

www.tusksymposium.com