



Project Kenya 2017-2018: Project Report



A unique conservation project giving a voice to
the unsung heroes of Kenya

31st October 2017 - 9th March 2018

Stand Up for Nature

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Project Aim

Stand Up for Nature (SUN)'s aim was to find inspirational people throughout Kenya and make films about them and their relationship with wildlife that would be relatable to a local audience. They would then use their Bicycle Powered Cinema to show these films in remote communities across the country.

Contact Details

Project email address: HanandJam@StandUpforNature.org

Project website address: www.StandUpforNature.org

Facebook: [@StandUp4Nature](https://www.facebook.com/StandUp4Nature)

Instagram: [@StandUpforNature](https://www.instagram.com/StandUpforNature)

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Special thanks go to:

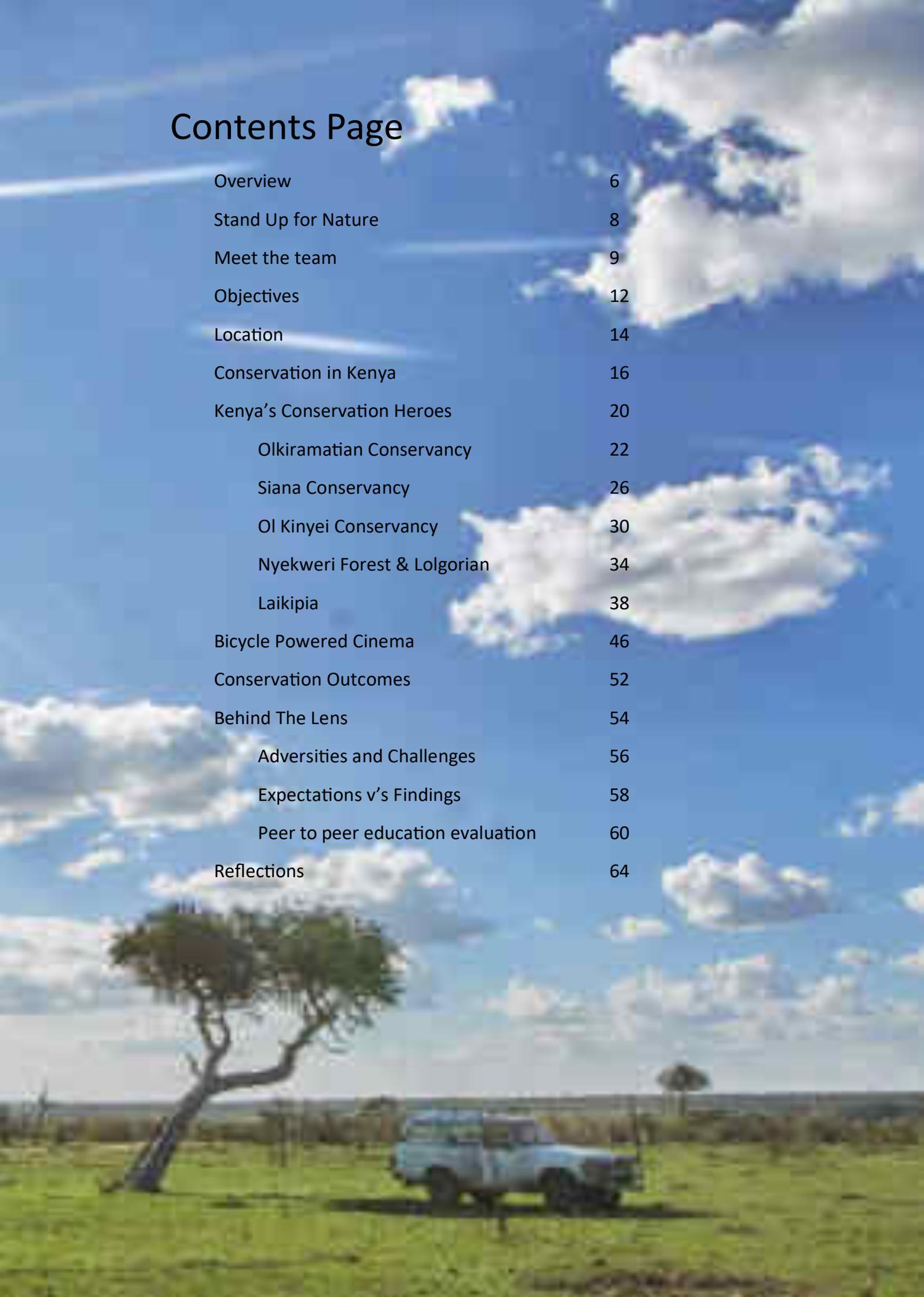
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Overview

In Kenya, Hannah and Jamie produced the first ever extensive series of local language films (Maa & Swahili) following the remarkable stories of Kenyans fighting to protect their wildlife. They produced 10 short films on a range of topics from a Maasai man who habituated himself into a troop of Baboons to a boy who hand-reared a buffalo. Using local people to front these films proved extremely successful and the stories which were told were relatable and inspiring to the masses.

During the second part of the project the films were taken back to rural communities using a bicycle powered cinema. 10,000 people were reached in rural communities across Kenya.

Feedback revealed that many communities had never before seen their fellow Maasai in a film talking so passionately about wildlife and talking in Maa. Showing relatable people in the films, proved to be an effective way of inspiring more people and this was very much supported by audience feedback.

All films made during the project were given to the in country organisations to aid and support their community outreach programmes. These will continue to be shown in schools and villages across Kenya.





Stand Up for Nature

'Stand Up for Nature' was founded by Hannah Pollock and Jamie Unwin, the organisation focuses on producing short films that target a wildlife crime or human wildlife conflict issue. They then use their bicycle powered cinema to show these films to rural communities. Bringing about cultural evolution to conserve wildlife is at the core of their organisation.

Hannah and Jamie are both incredibly passionate about protecting our natural world. They've seen the impact their bicycle cinema project can have and believe it has a lot of potential as a tool for conservation and educational outreach.

Their motivation to make a difference is infinite, inspiring the younger generations and showing people that there is hope yet are their main aims. So many people around the world are doing incredible things to protect wildlife but often their story goes untold.

Stand Up for Nature wants to shine the light on their stories and share their incredible message around Kenya.

Hannah Pollock

I will treasure my time in Kenya forever, the people we met were all so inspirational and welcomed us into their lives with open arms. Many not only lived in difficult situations but also encountered human-wildlife conflict issues on a daily basis, yet their optimism and resilience to find a solution is remarkable. I've had a love of wildlife and the natural world for as long as I can remember and all I've ever wanted to do was be able to make a difference. 'Stand Up for Nature' has enabled me to invest my time in something I truly believe in. Sharing local stories and using these to hopefully bring about cultural change in a healthy, organic way to ensure the conservation of our planets wildlife! The support we've had so far has been overwhelming and I can't wait to see what happens next!



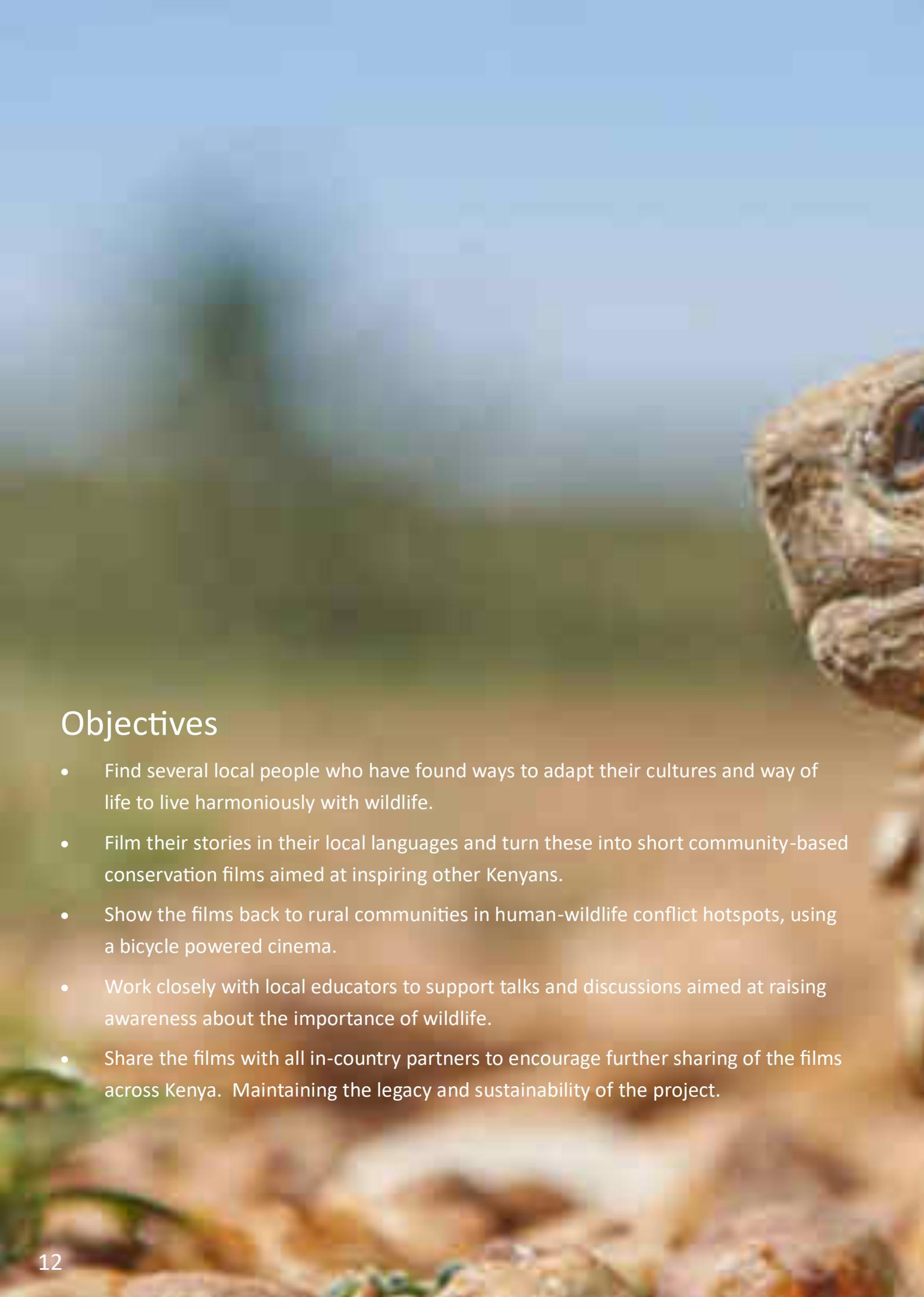
Jamie Unwin

I've always felt helpless in the face of all the depressing news regarding the plight of planets environment and its inhabitants. I was incredibly fortunate to travel to Malawi in 2015 and this opened my eyes to conservation and made me realise, that it's certainly not impossible to help our diminishing wildlife populations. Coupling my scientific background with wildlife filming has enabled me to target what I feel most passionate about; wildlife crime and human wildlife conflict issues.









Objectives

- Find several local people who have found ways to adapt their cultures and way of life to live harmoniously with wildlife.
- Film their stories in their local languages and turn these into short community-based conservation films aimed at inspiring other Kenyans.
- Show the films back to rural communities in human-wildlife conflict hotspots, using a bicycle powered cinema.
- Work closely with local educators to support talks and discussions aimed at raising awareness about the importance of wildlife.
- Share the films with all in-country partners to encourage further sharing of the films across Kenya. Maintaining the legacy and sustainability of the project.



Location

Kenya is a country in East Africa, bordering the Indian Ocean in the south east. Neighbouring countries are Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Spoken languages are Swahili and English (both official), and numerous indigenous languages mainly Kikuyu and Luhya.

The largest and most populous city and the national capital of Kenya is Nairobi. This is where our project had a base as it is central to our various field locations.

Kenya's climate varies from tropical along the coast to arid in interior. Kenya's landscape varies from low plains near its coast at the Indian Ocean, to a fertile plateau in west. The country's interior is dominated by the central highlands with the country's highest point Mount Kenya at 5,199 m. The highlands are bisected by the Great Rift Valley, a large natural depression that runs through Kenya with a north to south orientation, within the Valley is a chain of volcanoes, some of them are still active.

North of the Kenyan Rift Valley lies Lake Turkana, formerly known as Lake Rudolf. It is the world's largest permanent desert lake. The Lake Turkana area is regarded by many anthropologists as the cradle of humankind due to the abundance of hominid fossils. It is close to here that our first site where we focussed on baboons is located.







Conservation in Kenya

The variety of wildlife and natural habitat types in Kenya is unprecedented. From its palm fringed coastline to the snow-capped summit of Mount Kenya. Kenya is well known as one of the most popular wildlife destinations in the world. But these diverse ecosystems are under threat. Population pressures, poverty, climate change, drought, deforestation and government discrepancies challenge the sustainability of this beautiful country. Key flagship species such as the African elephant, rhinoceros and lion are battling human-wildlife conflict whilst endangered mammals such as the Grevy's zebra and wild dog cling to the edge of survival. Considering this, great strides in conservation have taken place. Often it is the work of large conservation organisations that hits the news but worldwide there are communities conserving wildlife against all odds. It is those people living closest to the wildlife who can make the biggest difference to their survival. Some people have found ways to live harmoniously alongside wildlife. Sharing their stories and motivations with others in the same cultural and economic position is invaluable.

The primary locations for this project were the greater Maasai Mara landscape and Laikipia. These two areas host the most wildlife in the country and therefore it is here where much wildlife conflict occurs. The Maasai Mara is a vast area in southern Kenya managed by the Maasai people. Due to increasing encroachment and the rise in human populations, human-wildlife conflicts are prevalent. Lion populations are inferred to have undergone a reduction of approximately 43% over the past 21 years. Information about ways in which local people can co-exist and live alongside lions is essential. One important approach is showing ways in which farmers can more successfully protect their livestock using non-lethal methods against lions such as boma improvement. Solutions to the conflicts need to be addressed with the communities otherwise Kenya may lose one of its most iconic species from its most iconic landscape.

It is not just lions which are impacted, in the Maasai Mara, vultures have declined by 50% over 30 years. They are now described as being on the brink of extinction in Kenya. Large carnivore poisoning is having a devastating impact on their numbers. Farmers have been found to lace the carcasses of cattle with poison, but one poisoned carcass can lead to cascading effects leading to multiple deaths. Vultures are at largest risk as primary scavengers. The importance of vultures is often overlooked but they play a critical role in keeping the environment clean. A single living vulture is estimated to be worth approximately USD 11,000 because of the scavenging services it provides.

Issues of crop raiding by elephants also creates widespread conflict in the region. African elephants are crucial to the ecosystems they inhabit. They are also under threat from habitat loss and poaching. Poaching is the key issue with them being targeted for personal meat and sale in the illegal ivory trade. To live peacefully with wildlife, solutions which don't compromise the human population need to be prioritised.

Laikipia is a vast area in northern Kenya. Publicity of this area is very much centred on the previous conflicts and land invasions that were rife here. Drought has put immense pressure on the people and in turn this has brought with it an escalation in wildlife crime. In Laikipia we primarily focussed on rhinos, as well as the Grevy Zebra. Much like the trade in ivory, rhino horn is extremely desirable on the black market, mostly used as a powder in Asian medicine. About 96% of black rhinos were lost to large-scale poaching between 1970 and 1992. Grevy zebras are endangered and are confined to the Horn of Africa, specifically Ethiopia and Kenya. They have undergone one of the most substantial reductions of range of any African mammal. They are estimated to have declined by more than 50% over the past 18 years.





Kenya's Conservation Heroes

Hannah and Jamie travelled to Kenya in search of inspiring individuals who despite poverty, conflict and civil unrest are actively protecting wildlife. Their journey took them from the heat of the South Rift valley to the slopes of Mount Kenya. They found some remarkable people and produced 9 local language films. Individuals they made films of included an elder protecting an elephant maternity forest, a mother standing up for women's voices in her community, a man who has habituated himself within a troop of baboons, a young girl who expresses her love of wildlife through art and a boy who hand raised a buffalo. All were made in either Maa or Swahili and each of these films for the first time shines the spotlight on the inspiring efforts of local Kenyans. For the first time Hannah and Jamie's films share stories that are immensely inspiring but most importantly, relatable to rural communities in Kenya.





Olkiramatian Conservancy

The Olkiramatian Conservancy is in the south of the Great Rift Valley, Kenya. This film focussed on extending the knowledge of the local people regarding baboon behaviour. Baboons are generally a hated species across most of Africa. Regarded as a pest, few see them as anything more than just an annoyance. By understanding certain signs and signals made by the baboons it was our hope that people would be more informed and better understand the ways in which they might be able to avoid conflict.

FILM ONE

Sisco grew up hating baboons, not dissimilar to most of the Maasai people. He even told us about a time he killed six of them in retaliation to them taking one of his baby goats. However, when he was offered the opportunity to study baboons and learn more about their behaviour and social structure, he soon found that there was more to this animal than he had thought. Having now spent the last few years habituating himself within a troop of baboons he has grown to love them, and he has earned their trust.

The unusual twist is that the baboons fear the traditional Maasai clothing. So, whilst they have accepted Sisco into the family, he is only welcome when wearing Westerners clothing and a baseball cap.

With unprecedented access to the troop he has been able to study their behaviour closely. He now uses this information to inform other people of the best ways to avoid conflict with the baboons. Information such as what time of year they are likely to be coming into conflict more readily as well as what their different calls mean. In his film he described the benefits of baboons on the ecosystem. He is open with the viewer, describing his past dislike and shows the audience where he lives and introduces us to his family, he explains that despite their differences, it is possible to coexist with baboons.





Sisco's film was a great success. Numerous people reacted to his film, saying they had no idea about the benefits of baboons. Even his family were shocked when they saw how close he was able to get to the baboons and how no aggression was displayed. Not only were we showing people a film for the first time, they were seeing an animal that they saw every single day but in a completely different light.







Siana Conservancy

Siana Conservancy is within the Maasai Mara ecosystem. This film highlighted the positive impact that communities can have when they all work together. It looks at the issues involving wildlife corridors and empowers females to believe that they too can have an impact on conservation and have a voice within their community

FILM TWO

Mpoe is a founding member of the Siana conservancy Mpoe played a huge role in convincing many of his community members to give up their land for the benefit of the wildlife and has also helped give women a voice such as Kingasunye who is a role model for young girls. He is a respected elder and so people naturally gravitate and listen to what he says. He has used this respect within his community to really champion wildlife protection and in the film, describes the benefits that the wildlife has for the community. He also touches on tourism and highlights the economic benefits of wildlife for the Siana conservancy.

Kingasunye is a role model for young girls. She completes the expected everyday tasks of a Maasai woman such as caring for her children, doing beadwork and looking after the animals but she also believes passionately that women should have a voice in the community and as such she sits on the board of community members that make all the decisions regarding the conservancy and the people alike. She then feedbacks the information to all the other women ensuring their voices and opinions are represented.



This film received a lot of positive feedback, particularly on the fact that it featured a woman. Many women across the country said that they could relate to Kingasunye and appreciated that her voice along with the voices of other women were valued when decisions were made within the community. It gave many other women the belief that they too could have an impact. Even one 11-year-old boy said after a film showing that he liked that she had an opportunity to speak out about her thoughts and beliefs and that he too thought women deserved to be included in important community decisions. This also shows the evolving views of the younger generation.









Ol Kinyei Conservancy

Two films were made in this conservancy. The first film which features Stanley, focussed on cheetahs and showed a man who despite having lost his own livestock to cheetahs was prepared to stand up for them. The second film also touches on human-carnivore conflict with specific reference to lions but also through the story of Sammy, highlights how hard work will bring you success. No matter what your background is, you can make a difference.

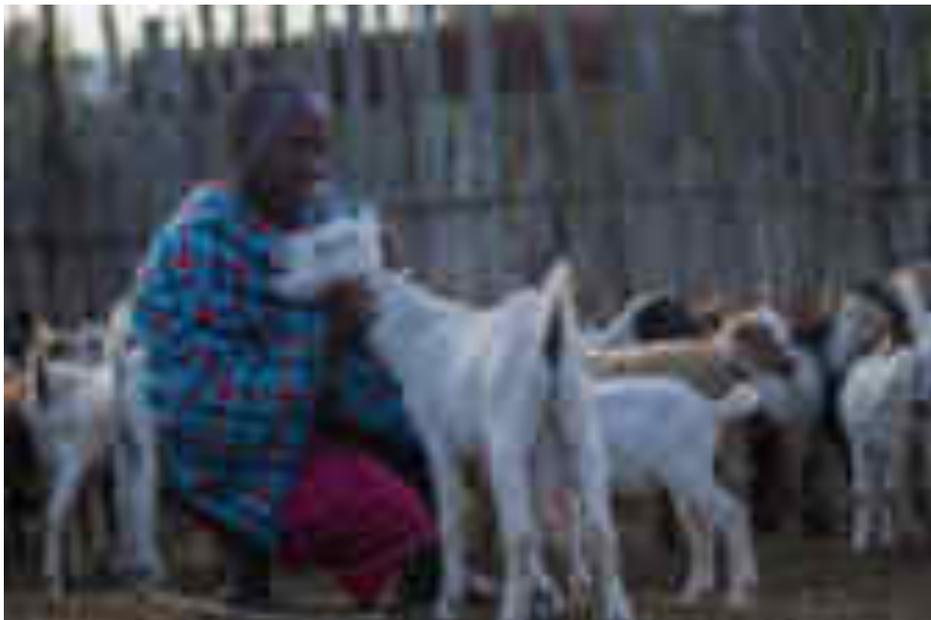
FILM THREE

Stanley works as a guide with Gamewatchers Safaris. His livestock were killed by cheetah, the whole village reacted badly including his own family, but Stanley stood up to them all and convinced them not to retaliate. He actively promotes the protection of wildlife.

FILM FOUR

Simon is the Head of Ol Kinyei Conservancy Rangers. He is very passionate about wildlife and has known Sammy for a very long time, he has watched Sammy grow up and achieve amazing things. He is very proud of Sammy's accomplishments and introduces this film by referencing Sammy and giving his support for his work. Sammy was incredibly humble, so it was good to hear what Simon had to say and ensured the viewer had increased respect and understanding for Sammy's efforts.

Sammy is the Community liaison officer and assistant warden for the Ol Kinyei conservancy. One of the initial founders of the conservancy. He had a hard childhood; his mum left the family when he was a baby and his father died when he was young (5-7 years old). Raised by relatives, they were very poor. From a young age he liked wildlife and had a dream to set up a conservancy as he believed this would be a good way of helping to support community members. The Ol Kinyei Conservancy was set up. He worked his way up financially, saving money to buy sheep, goats and cows. Now he is happy and has built a home for himself, living with his wife and 5 daughters, it is his hope that each of them will go to school. He supports his family by being employed doing his community role, he sells produce from his livestock and keeps bees. He has around 50 hives and produces enough to supply camps as far as Nairobi. He has had livestock killed by lions in the past but doesn't hate the lion and didn't choose to retaliate against them. One of his main roles is to deal with any issues concerning the community and the conservancy and he deals with all the leases for the conservancy land. He really shows that with hard work and determination anything is possible.



Again, these films received a great amount of positive responses. One key thing was with regards to Sammy and his relationship with lions. When the film starts, and you hear him say that he doesn't think lions should be killed, the majority of the Maasai audiences would be horrified, even questioning if he was really a Maasai man because it is unheard of for a Maasai person to favour lions over livestock. However, as Sammy explains his reasoning and shows that whilst he keeps livestock and carries out the other traditional aspects of Maasai life he has also learned to survive and thrive with the wildlife. His entrepreneurship and unique ways of generating an income using the wildlife, was particularly inspiring for the younger generations. Seeing him make an income by keeping bees, highlighted to a lot of people that they too could do this.





Nyekweri Forest & Lolgorian

The Nyekweri forest and Lolgorian are located up the escarpment on the west boundary of the Maasai Mara reserve. The forest is also known as the elephant maternity forest as elephants leave the Mara during the wildebeest migration and come here to give birth. Two films were made here, the first tells the story of Dominic whose love for all animals really shows as he tells of his unique personal experiences. The second, looks at a respected elder and hears his story and views on why protecting the forest is so important.

FILM FIVE

Dominic - When he was growing up he stood up and spoke out about wildlife crime and poaching, he felt the pain for wildlife and didn't want to see it getting hurt. Many people mocked him calling him 'wildlife man'. He raised the eyebrows of multiple organisations like WWF because he was unique, he was passionate about wildlife and was doing things to protect wildlife off his own back. He didn't go to school for very long and could have stayed as a livestock herder for the rest of his life, but he showed that even though he hadn't been to school he could still get into college to be trained about wildlife. He hand-reared an orphaned buffalo calf for 2 years. In this film, Dominic tells us about his life and why he is so passionate. At the end of the film he touches on human-elephant conflict and crop raiding. His job now is to inform people of the best ways to protect their crops from elephants and he explains this in the film. The key message is that deterrents need to be varied, elephants are clever and will get used to any one deterrent if it is used continuously, regular changing of techniques is beneficial.

FILM SIX

Tompooy is a respected elder (67yrs) he has experienced many things in his life, worked for the police, government and tourism sector. It was while he was a tour guide in the Maasai Mara that he realised that Kenyan people cannot afford to stay in the expensive lodges, he now has a unique idea and vision to set up an affordable 'lodge' for children to stay in when they visit the Mara. He is the founder of his conservation organisation and after building himself a house he then donated it to the community scouts after realising they had nowhere else to stay. He wants everyone to see the beauty in nature and his message to people to save the forest is empowering as he recognises that everyone can have a positive impact no matter their background. He says 'We do not want what you can't afford' really highlighting that he understands the backgrounds and economic situations of people may vary but that there is something everyone can do and that is simply spreading the knowledge of the importance of the natural world.

Many people in Kenya were shocked by Dominic's film, they thought he was mad to have hand reared a buffalo but also respected his determination. He was particularly popular with school children, many of which felt they could relate to him when he explained his short time at school. Tompooy was greatly respected by everyone and it was his film which seemed to have the most positive response from them all. People listened and respected him due to his age and they reacted well to what he had to say, particularly to the bits where he explained that it doesn't matter who you are when we all breathe the same air. In a way he empowered everyone by giving value to whatever it was that people could do. In this film we also had some close-up elephant footage, the reactions from the audiences when this came on was incredible. Apparently, they had never seen elephants so close before and it was great to see people enjoying looking at them instead of reacting and retaliating to their presence with fear.









Laikipia

Laikipia is a vast area in Northern Kenya. It is home to primarily pastoralists, meaning people live off the land and as such meet wildlife readily. We collaborated with the Laikipia Wildlife Forum and worked across 4 different conservancies; Il Ngwesi Group Ranch, Borana, Ol Pejeta and Ol Jogi with a focus was on rhinos. Rhino conservation is highly complex and, in many ways, controversial as for it to be successful it must rely on many people working together. Difficulties arose with filming in this area more so than any other location, partially this was due to the sensitive subject matter but there were also trust difficulties regarding filming and community conservation. The area is naturally on high alert due to recent invasions and conflicts.

FILM SEVEN

Kitonga is an elder in Il Ngwesi Group Ranch. He was one of the original founders of the ranch and is extremely knowledgeable about the areas history. He recalls a time in his youth when wildlife could be seen everywhere and more recently he said that there used to be so many Rhinos in 1980 but then people started hunting them until the rhinos became extinct here. The community came together to try and bring Rhinos back. They gave up their land for wildlife and all worked extremely hard to make it a success. He recalls how it was hard at times but essential that everybody came together. They lost one black rhino to poachers but claim to have learnt from it and he says they are now stronger than ever. They have improved security and wildlife numbers are growing. Due to increased protection for the rhinos, the people and livestock are now also better protected.

Tirimus, as the head of security, Tirimus spoke fondly of how having rhinos present in the area had meant that he and his men had stepped up their security and were prepared to protect the wildlife at all costs. He spoke of the benefits the wildlife brought to the areas and expresses how much it hurts him when he loses one. He has a family and livestock like most pastoralists in Kenya but has also chosen to dedicate his life to wildlife protection.



This film was received very well. People respected Kitonga instantly due to his age and so were engaged with and interested to hear what he had to say. Feedback also revealed that people were surprised with how much Tirimus cared for the rhinos and how much time he invested in their protection. They respected and understood that when someone poaches a rhino this has personal consequences on the rangers and protectors because of the time they have invested. They likened this to how they personally would feel if someone harmed one of their animals. After watching this film, we noticed people starting to consider wild animals as having something other than monetary value.







FILM EIGHT

Wilfred is a community herder and he believes the environment is important and crucial to everything. He implores people to look after it. He is extremely knowledgeable and explains how grass banks allow for cattle to be grazed and then sold at market. But these grass banks need managing. He says that dividing land into zones helps with management and allows time for rejuvenation. A huge problem across Kenya is overgrazing, due to high numbers of badly managed livestock. Very often conservation measures focus more on the obvious solution of telling people to reduce their number of cows. However, cows are extremely important to Maasai people and are used as a sign of wealth. A balance between what people want and what benefits wildlife needs to be found. Wilfred describes a fresh outlook which says that you don't have to reduce your number of cows, you just need to manage them better and engage in livestock to market. Sell your livestock when times are hard then buy more again when the rains come. There will always be a market for healthy cows. The saying of 'quality over quantity' applies here. He says "we need our environment to live, we must all come together to play our part no matter how big or small. If we allow our wildlife to go extinct that will be a very sad thing."



Wilfred is very knowledgeable, and people really respected him for that. This film wasn't as suitable for children as it was more technical than our other films, but it received good reactions from adults who listened to Wilfred's message. People are so used to being told to reduce their livestock that hearing another alternative from Wilfred was appreciated.

FILM NINE

Youseff is a 13-year-old boy. His passion for wildlife is infectious. We visited his school in OI Jogi and asked the teachers of the school to select a few students who might be able to talk on camera. They didn't select Youseff, they didn't even know his name, but he put himself forward and it soon became clear that he would be the best fit. When asked what he wanted to be when he was older he confidently said that he wanted to be a neuroscientist. His interest and passion for wildlife was evident and he was excited to be a voice for young people.

Susan loves wildlife and expresses this love through her art. She is 18 years old and unfortunately cannot afford to go to school, but she loves watching the wildlife she finds around her home and actively tries to teach her family and neighbours about the animals. She has stood up to people that she has seen trying to harm animals and though being quite quiet and shy in herself, as she got more comfortable around us we were able to see just how passionate and how hard she is prepared to work. She would like to be like Wangari Maathai when she is older. Susan's town bordered OI Pejeta Conservancy, she showed us her drawings of elephants, lions and rhinos but also told us that she had never seen these animals herself as she couldn't afford the fees to go into the reserve. Instead, she drew based on what her friends had told her they had seen. We'd like to thank OI Pejeta who granted us free admission for Susan and her mother allowing us to take them into the reserve for Susan to see wild animals for the first time.



This film was unique in that it focussed on young people. We felt that not only was it important to give young people a voice but also to show others that you can make a difference at any age. We visited many schools and a lot of children told us that they could relate to Youseff and Susan and seeing them made them feel more confident in being able to do something themselves. When we revisited Youseff's school with the film we spoke to his teacher. His teacher said that hearing what Youseff had to say on the film really touched him but also made him incredibly proud, he said that he listened to what Youseff had to say and it made him see wildlife and the power of working together differently. When we returned to Susan, we met what appeared to be a different girl. When we first met

Susan she was incredibly shy and timid however after returning with her film and showing her, she became confident and even stood up in front of her community to speak after the showing. She told us that she had always felt strongly about wildlife protection but by us coming and taking the time to film and share her story made her believe that it was important and gave her the confidence to speak out and fight even more for what she believes in.

We also learned that her family had managed to save enough money for her to go to school.



FILM TEN

This was a short film which comprised of two wildlife club school performances. The children at Sirimon Primary school recited a poem about the Big Five and poaching. At Ol Jogi Primary school the children presented a play they had written about rhino poaching.

These were well received at showings and upon seeing this film, other schools said that they were going to investigate creating a wildlife club for their own students.







Bicycle Powered Cinema

Stage 2 of Project Kenya was the bicycle power cinema. Fundamentally once we'd made the films the most important part was then showing them back to the remote communities.

The Bicycle power cinema concept has been around for a while but its technology is still not readily available which is what led Jamie to creating his own system for our previous project in Malawi. The communities we wanted to reach with the films in most cases do not have electricity and so a way of showing the film without the use of electricity or a television was needed which was why the bicycle powered cinema was a perfect solution.

Technically the bicycle powered cinema was a great success. By building our own bicycle powered cinema, we were able to use any bicycle to create electricity to power the cinema equipment. We designed and built a new bicycle cinema for project Kenya, we took what we had learnt from the previous cinema we built for the project in Malawi and improved on almost every aspect. The new cinema was far easier to use, much lighter and very portable. We were really impressed with what we had built as it managed to withstand extreme temperatures, dust, rain, and being bashed around in a car for 5 months. The bicycle drew in large crowds of people, often intrigued to see what the bicycle was being used for. There was great excitement in schools and communities as people wanted to have a go. Very often in schools, after the film showings, science teachers would use the bicycle cinema to explain energy transfer from kinetic to electrical and the use of a dynamo. In many schools and communities particularly around the Mara, many people had never seen a bicycle before. We tried to give everyone who wanted to try cycling a chance and it was very rewarding seeing people get on the bicycle with no idea how to cycle and take the time to show them how to do it.

If the organisations on the ground were able to have their own cinema, the sustainability of the project would be in their hands. Whilst we are on the ground we managed to reach a lot of people and quickly learned that some organisations had well established community outreach and other organisations had less extensive programs. The organisations with extensive community outreach programs were very excited to have the films and had the structure in place to extensively use them once we had gone. Those without structured outreach programmes would benefit most from the cinemas.

We believe bicycle cinemas are the best way of reaching people living in extremely remote areas however there is the concern that if organisations are unable to purchase a cinema unit, the showings of the films will be more limited. With this in mind, whilst in Kenya we prioritised showing the films in the most remote areas with the understanding that our partner organisations would still be able to show the films using their own projectors in locations with electricity. Some organisations did not have the capacity to do any of their own film showings, so they were incredibly grateful for the time we had invested into their community outreach whilst we were there.



The bicycle powered cinema enables us to reach people who have never seen film/moving images before!









Conservation Outcomes

The 10 films were shown to 10,000 people and contributed to community conservation across Olkirimatian, Shompole, Siana, Ol Kinyei, Ol Jogi, Ol Pejeta, Borana conservancies, Il Ngwesi group ranch and Lolgorian area. These conservancies are distributed across the Mara ecosystem and in Laikipia County in Northern Kenya.

We partnered with 4 main organisations, World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Kenya, the South Rift Association of Land Owners (SORALO), Gamewatchers Safaris and Laikipia Wildlife Forum. These 4 organisations benefited by having films produced for free in the areas they work and they now have access to all 10 films that were made in Kenya to support their community outreach work.

The films are also available for free to other Kenyan conservation organisations so that the films can continue to be shown in schools and communities across the country. It is the hope that many more thousands of people will see the films over the coming years. Each film portrays a different message and so the collection provides organisations with a really helpful educational tool.

The films provided many benefits:

Vast amounts of natural history films are made across Africa, but they are never seen by the people best placed to protect the wildlife, we took wildlife films to people who live alongside some of the world's most iconic wildlife but yet have never seen a single film that's been made about them. Most viewers already had pre-conceived ideas about the wildlife in our films and how it impacts on their daily lives. Our films showed this wildlife in a different way and helped change opinions. The positive response this received was overwhelming.

If people have seen wildlife films before they are often in English and either hosted or narrated by someone foreign, these films support the idea in communities that wildlife conservation is for 'foreign white people', our films actively tackled this because they only showed local relatable people and the films were all in the local language. Our films provided local inspiring stories and empowered communities.

Our films supported the idea of Community conservation and re-enforced community relations with protected areas. Good community relations is integral to sustainable wildlife protection.

On an individual basis, each one of the contributors in our films had the opportunity to speak out perhaps for the first time about their passion for wildlife. The films gave them a platform to share their ideas with their fellow community members as well as further afield.

It is extremely important for everyone to work together. By providing all our partner organisations with all 10 films, everyone has access to a wide selection of educational material on different wildlife species and conservation concerns. Thus allowing ideas to be shared between communities who never would have ordinarily had the opportunity to meet.







Behind The Lens

Adversities and Challenges

This is the part of our report which is slightly more personal in covering certain aspects and challenges that we faced behind the lens. We're referring to behind the lens for a reason. Having a camera out in Kenya, as we found, instantly put us into a stereotype of people. Thousands of people every year travel to Kenya to film or photograph its iconic wildlife. Very often, film crews are working for companies with big budgets behind them. Or other people with cameras may be tourists who are able to afford the average price of a lodge at USD 500. As a tourist, Kenya is a very expensive country to stay in, as such we found that it is primarily only wealthy people that visit Kenya, meaning the vast majority of Kenyans are only ever exposed to rich foreign people. Because they don't see less wealthy foreign people, everyone seemed to assume all foreign people were very rich. We often found it really helped if we stayed in the most basic accommodation or camped within communities as this seemed to gain people's respect. The few times we were offered free lodging at the tourist camps when we were working with the safari company, often this made it more challenging to explain to local people that we were not 'rich'.

The other issue we were faced with a lot was referring to our skin colour. As a white person in Kenya we found that we were also instantly assumed to be very wealthy. Again, we were honest with people and if asked took the time to explain our situation. We told them how we had just graduated from University and weren't being paid for this project. We explained that our equipment had been sponsored by grants. We really found that conversation and understanding was key to building a successful project. We welcomed any questions from local people and certainly asked a great deal ourselves. We formed some great friendships by being open.

Another major issue we often came across was that in the past people had come to make a film, then take the film away for a western audience and the local people had never seen the films that often they themselves are featuring in. This ultimately means that there is very little trust in filmmakers. All our films were made not for profit, neither of us took a wage and everyone in the films appeared voluntarily. We were extremely careful to ensure our relationships with people were genuine and that there was no hidden agenda. We were there to make films about local people for the local people. When we told people this they were often shocked as it was something they just weren't used to and very often they believed we were lying. We spoke to a lot of people about their experiences with filming and heard that often when they were paid by people they would say whatever they are told to. This was the opposite of what we wanted, we didn't want to script the stories we wanted them to be completely honest – because we made it very clear these films were going to be shown back to communities it was in everyone's best interest to be honest.

People found it incredibly difficult to accept that we weren't making any money out of the films and it took a long time for people to understand we weren't getting paid. It was extremely difficult to explain this when people questioned how we were able to afford a car and all the expensive filming equipment, we explained what a grant was but often people would just think we had been given "free money".

We'll be forever grateful to those that listened to us. Looked past the colour of our skin and our nationality and saw us for what we are; two incredibly passionate young people trying to do our bit to help wildlife conservation, and do what we can to give a voice and a platform to those people who often go unheard.



Expectations v's Findings

Something we didn't expect, was the sheer extent to which money plays a part in wildlife protection. We did find some people who had an enormous passion for wildlife regardless of the money, but it was harder than we had expected to find these people. When we first met people, it seemed they were telling us what they thought we wanted to hear. Often people would rattle off the benefits of wildlife, tourism and foreign revenue being the main ones, it was apparent these benefits had been drilled into them at school but carried little meaning past that. Protecting wildlife only because of money in our opinion is a dangerous position to be in. If tourism or funding suddenly disappear (as can happen) then wildlife protection will all most certainly disappear immediately, and people will revert to how they used to be. We're not saying money should be completely out of the picture, it is very clear that wildlife does both directly and indirectly provide a high percentage of jobs but it's very important other benefits are included to achieve sustainable wildlife protection. In our opinion, a more sustainable method of wildlife protection is long term social and cultural change. Therefore, we tried to steer our films away from money as much as we could. When we got to know people and conversations became more relaxed this was when the more passionate reasons for protecting wildlife emerged, we felt it was essential we captured these reasons and showed them to other Kenyans who may not have heard them before. The people we made films of were protecting wildlife because; they personally felt the pain for wildlife, they had seen it disappear in their lifetime and wanted their children to be able to still grow up in a wild Kenya, they found it deeply interesting to observe and study, they saw it as something Kenyan's should be proud of.







Peer to peer education evaluation

We evaluated the value of peer to peer education on the subject of existing alongside and thus protecting wildlife. We predicted that understanding would be greater when education was delivered by a trusted person from the same cultural background.

As expected seeing fellow Maasai people, from a similar cultural and economic background on a film was hugely successful in getting the messages across. The stories were relatable, and this was a key aspect. Our films covered a wide variety of people including, elders, herders, women and children meaning audiences of all ages could relate with what was being said. Being British if we had simply stood in front of a group and said 'don't kill wildlife because...' we wouldn't have gotten anywhere. Peer to peer education and learning from those you trust is crucial. We often found that organisations would try and get us to make films that were more of a lesson and full of facts, it could have been very easy to succumb to these pressures, but we managed to explain the benefits of making films with a personal approach, where you were introduced to the character, their family and their everyday life. Overall this made the films far more relatable. We are very happy to say that it was a massive success and the organisations who had differing opinions at the beginning saw and understood the benefits by the time we had finished the bicycle-powered cinema showings.









Reflections

We are incredibly thankful to all those people, who gave us the support we needed and believed in our idea. Project Kenya was ambitious in many aspects, we had never made films in a different language, we weren't going back to the UK to edit the films, we didn't know how the Kenyan people would react to the films and we had to build a bicycle-powered cinema that would need to be able to sustain 5 months of challenging conditions in Kenya! We are however incredibly proud to be able to say that the project was a massive success and I couldn't be prouder of what we managed to achieve. We produced the first ever extensive series of local language films about local unsung wildlife heroes and managed to show 10,000 people the films. Kenya is a rapidly developing country and it faces huge challenges. Now more than ever the plight of Kenya's wildlife and natural spaces lies in the hands of the local people and the decisions they make. The people we met filled us with so much hope as their stories were so inspiring and full of passion. We hope that those people will continue to achieve amazing things and ultimately inspire many of their fellow Kenyans. It was astonishing to hear first-hand from people living around the Maasai Mara that they have never seen a wildlife film or even some of the wildlife in the Mara. Being able to then show them our films was really rewarding. The stories they told were relatable to the masses. We believe that it's crucial to hear the thoughts of the people living alongside the wildlife and give them a platform to share their stories It is our hope that the films we made of the unsung heroes will continue to be shown for many years and to many more thousands of people. We hope now that Project Kenya can be used as an example of what we can do and that we will go on to discover many more inspiring people all over the world and share their stories with thousands more local people.

Thank you to everyone who has supported us both in the lead up, during and post Project Kenya. We had an incredible time in Kenya. We met so many incredibly inspirational people and the experiences we've had will truly stay with us for a lifetime.

