

Conservation is really about people as much as it is about wildlife

In Kenya, it is estimated that 65% of Kenya's wildlife lives in community and private lands.

This means that the majority of the responsibility for protecting Kenya's wildlife lies with local Kenyan citizens, not just within national parks or conservancies.



Lewa Wildlife Conservancy works in close partnership with its surrounding communities.

Lewa has developed education programmes to bring children closer to nature, enterprise schemes to empower women, and medical clinics to improve health. All of this improves Lewa's conservation success.

At Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, we envision a future where people across Kenya continue to value, protect and benefit from wildlife. This future depends on communities being able to derive their day-to-day livelihoods in ways that are compatible with thriving wildlife habitat. As a result, we invest heavily in the livelihoods of our neighbours through various programmes.

Faith Riunga | Head of Education Programme, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy

One of the biggest surprises people have when they first visit Lewa is learning the amount of investment we make in improving the livelihoods of our local communities. For too long, the narrative of conservation that has been perpetrated, and often practised, is one where wildlife exists in isolation from indigenous people.

When most people think of conservation in Africa, they think of vast, wild places with barely any human inhabitants. But for many African countries that hold wildlife, that couldn't be further from the truth.

Lewa runs various programmes to fulfil the commitment we have made to our neighbours. Through established development committees in communities next to us, we evaluate the greatest needs in an area and, where possible, support this need.

Over the years, the education and community development programmes have grown from strength to strength; today, we have extensive programmes that impact thousands of people.

Education

We support 23 primary and secondary government schools with close to 10,000 children in total by building classrooms, dormitories, laboratories, boreholes, teachers' houses, kitchens and libraries.

Healthcare

Our four clinics, run in collaboration with the Kenyan Government, provide healthcare services to more than 50,000 people annually.

Micro-enterprise

Our women's micro-enterprise programme provides low interest loans to more than 1,800 women, helping them to run their businesses and improve their families' livelihoods.

Bursaries

We provide education bursaries for more than 400 students each year.

Water

Our 11 water programmes ensure that 20,000 people have access to clean and safe water for both domestic use and farming.

Forestry conservation

We champion the protection and maintenance of forest cover through support to the Community Forest Associations.

Employment

Across Lewa and its lodges, approximately 450 people are employed in various capacities, with more than 90% coming from neighbouring communities.

Conservation education

More than 5,000 children visit Lewa annually for a conservation education experience, which empowers them with knowledge to become stewards of their natural world.

Today, Lewa can attribute much of its success – 14% of Kenya's rhinos, zero poaching in six years, zero intrusions in years, the world's largest population of Grevy zebra, to highlight just a few of our recent accomplishments – to the participatory and inclusive conservation model we have created.

Conservation has provided us with a platform to not only contribute to saving endangered species, but also to improve the lives of the people who have shared their land with wildlife for centuries.