

CASE STUDY

Northern Tanzania

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Supporting communities of pastoralists and hunter-gatherers to secure land and sustainably manage resources

UCRT works in support of hunter-gatherer and pastoralist communities in northern Tanzania. In particular, they have assisted the Maasai community of Terrat village in Simanjiro district and the Hadzabe community in securing their land and natural resources and in strengthening their livelihood. They have carried out and supported initiatives like Village Land Use Planning, Cultural Mapping and Community Tourism.

PRINCIPAL ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Ujaama Community Resource Team (UCRT) ; Procasur ; Wildlife Conservation Society

LOCATION

Hanang, Karatu, Mkalama, Kiteto, Loliondo, Longido, Mbulu, Monduli and Simanjiro districts in northern Tanzania

TIMELINE

1997-2004

TARGET AUDIENCE

Civil society organisations, government, local communities

KEYWORDS

Land grabbing, conservation, participatory tools, local government engagement

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Ujamaa Community
Resource Team

GOOD PRACTICES

towards making land governance more people-centred

This case study is part of the ILC's Database of Good Practices, an initiative that documents and systematises ILC members and partners' experience in promoting people-centred land governance, as defined in the Antigua Declaration of the ILC Assembly of Members.

Further information at www.landcoalition.org/what-we-do

This case study supports people-centred land governance as it contributes to:

- Commitment 1** Respect, protect and strengthen the land rights of women and men living in poverty
- Commitment 2** Ensure equitable land distribution and public investment that supports small-scale farming systems
- Commitment 5** Respect and protect the inherent land and territorial rights of indigenous peoples
- Commitment 6** Enable the role of local land users in territorial and ecosystem management
- Commitment 9** Prevent and remedy land grabbing

Case description

Background issues

The region of northern Tanzania is a rich crossroad of different communities and indigenous groups who have historically inhabited the area. These are comprised of hunter-gatherers and pastoralists, with ancient cultures and ways of life that have been passed on through generations. Among them are the Hadzabe (hunter-gatherers), Iraqw (agro-pastoralists), Maasai and Barabaig (semi-nomadic pastoralists), Bantu-speaking Sonjo (hunter-gatherers), and the Akie (hunter-gatherers).

The landscape of this region is characterised by savannahs, grasslands and some mountainous areas. Agricultural cultivations - mainly used by pastoralist communities to diversify their livelihood - cover a small portion of the region. There are national parks, among which the famous Serengeti national park, attracting many tourists due to their wildlife including elephants, zebras, giraffes and lions.

These communities in northern Tanzania face great challenges resulting from pressure on their land security and resource use. Among these are; the loss of pastoralist grazing land to the State and private tourism, hunting or agricultural investment projects, livestock decline due to human population growth, increase in local tensions between agricultural and pastoralist grazing areas, limited capacity and access to information, and land-grabbing caused by investors, hunting companies and international touristic companies (UCRT 2010).

The Simanjiro plains are an area of wildlife diversity, habitually inhabited by wildbeest, zebras and antelopes among other species, which spend the dry season in Tarangire national park. In the last few years, the Masaai pastoralists who live in the Simanjiro plains, have faced the same challenges as in the rest of the region. Particularly, they have suffered from a decrease in livestock per capita, growing migration of people and difficulties in conserving livestock pasture and wildlife areas in farmlands.

Today, 1,000 members of the Hadzabe community live in fragmented areas in the north of Tanzania, clustered around the semi-arid Lake Eyasi basin. As hunter-gatherers, their livelihood relies on hunting wild animals and birds, an activity which is prohibited under the 1974 Wildlife Conservation Act. Due to the threat posed by the Government's anti-poaching efforts, the fragmented Hadzabe communities are pushed to more remote and marginal areas, where pressures from population growth and pressures on land have endangered their territory and survival.

The Ujaama Community Resource Team (UCRT) is an environmental and social justice organisation that works to strengthen livelihoods and social justice for pastoralists, hunter-gatherers and agro-pastoralist communities. It pursues security over land and natural resources, and sustainable community-based natural resources management. In northern Tanzania, UCRT became involved in the districts of Hanang, Karatu, Kiteto, Mkalama, Loliondo, Longido, Mbulo, Monduli and Simanjiro.

Solution

In Northern Tanzania, UCRT has engaged communities to develop strategies for long-term sustainable management and use of land and natural resources. Specifically, in the village of Terrat in Simanjiro district - approximately 80 km from Arusha - UCRT supported the mainly Masaai community to secure their land and manage their natural resources sustainably by engaging with the local legal structures. In 2004 in Terrat, UCRT - in collaboration with other organisations such as the Wildlife Conservation Society and some private tourism companies - launched a conservation programme to protect and restore wildlife in the region. This started in Terrat village. Five tourism companies worked together to prevent permanent settlement and cultivation in this area by signing - thanks to UCRT's mediation - a contract with Terrat village. The agreement stipulated that the companies would pay an annual lease fee to the village, to preserve the plains as livestock pasture and maintain the wildlife's habitat under community control.

Between 2004 and 2006, UCRT also became involved with the Hadzabe community. A cultural mapping exercise was undertaken. This provided support to the community in gaining recognition of its cultural contributions and securing their lands.

Activities

UCRT has launched different initiatives through which they have engaged with communities and supported them in securing their land rights. UCRT's aim is to enable communities to claim their rights by interacting directly with local authorities at district and ward levels. This is done through a number of tools specifically developed by UCRT for this purpose.

Village Land Use Planning

Over the last decade, one of the most effective tools used by UCRT to secure community land rights and facilitate natural resource management has been the Village Land Use Planning (VLUP) tool. The VLUP consists of a series of processes aimed at assisting local communities in clarifying and enforcing local laws regarding resource use. All segments of society can be involved, including women, children, youth, elders, and specific resource users. The VLUP is an open forum where issues pertaining to the land and natural resources of the community can be discussed. It allows for community reflection on land and resources, and an assessment of community needs and uses.

The Local Government Act of 1982 is the main legislation at the foundation of the VLUP. This legislation allows village governments to pass local by-laws. These village by-laws - while they build on Masaai and other indigenous groups' provisions on livestock and use of territory - come to equate in essence national law in Tanzania due to the mechanisms through which they are approved. Village by-laws must be approved by the two main organs of the village government; the Village Assembly (which is made up of all the adults over 18 years living in the community) and the Village Council (which is headed by a Village Chairman, includes at least 7 women and operates through numerous sub-committees). Once they are approved by these two village bodies, they have to finally be approved by the District Council, through which they acquire legal power. Village by-laws are a central component of the VLUP.

In order to best make use of the VLUP, a basic methodology was developed by UCRT consisting of the following steps.

- Introducing the basic principles involved in the VLUP to district and ward officials to ensure coordination with land use planning and district development planning at a higher scale.
- Introducing the main concepts, objectives and procedures linked with the VLUP at village level in order to generate inputs and reactions from the community.
- Developing a land and resource management plan through formal and informal meetings with the community, with the aim of drafting it in a participatory way.
- Having the plan ratified and approved by the Village Council, Village Assembly and District Council.
- Having the plan implemented by the community; demarcating land use zones and ensuring compliance with provisions.

In light of the difficulties that can emerge in terms of land conflict, UCRT also developed the Cross Border Land Use Plan, a tool aimed at preventing the emergence of conflicts on borders.

Cultural Mapping

UCRT began working with the Hadzabe community in Yaeda valley in northern Tanzania in 2004, to support them in securing their land rights according to traditional land use. The Hadzabe are one of the most socially and culturally distinguished communities in the country. They have been highly discriminated against and marginalised. The Hadzabe have lost much of their land due to being pushed out of their historical environment.

The Cultural Mapping exercise that was conducted there entailed:

- Enabling elders to teach the youth about the Hadzabe heritage in a positive light, emphasising the strong connection between land and the Hadzabe culture.
- Illustrating to Government authorities that the relationship between the Hadzabe and their land is an asset to the wider Tanzanian culture, and that the Hadzabe people should be recognised in this respect as gatekeepers of ancient traditions, who have developed a special relationship with the land through generations.

Cultural Mapping has been a very important tool for reclaiming the Hadzabe land with the Government. It gave the Hadzabe community's ancient and unique culture and relationship with the land legitimacy. Cultural Mapping counteracted the loss of land due to pressures from farmers and pastoralists.

UCRT also undertook a VLUP process with the Hadzabe community, which resulted in them securing their land and natural resources' use.

For the Hadzabe community in Yaeda valley, this not only meant that their natural resource use was officially and legally recognised by the Government, but also that in one of the villages with the most numerous Hadzabe population - Mongo wa Mono - the community's historical land was secured and recognised as 'Customary right land of occupancy'. A land use plan was developed with specific by-laws establishing a zone for hunting and gathering for the Hadzabe, where livestock grazing and farming by other communities is prohibited.

Community Tourism

UCRT also worked with communities to assist them in securing the natural resources on their land through tourism and conservation projects. Communities were supported in the development of village tourism ventures in collaboration with private tour operators and the generation of revenue for the communities. UCRT facilitated ecotourism contracts between villages and private investors in Loliondo and Lake Natron areas. A successful Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) scheme was also established in Terrat village.

A new framework for wildlife conservation was established. This not only protects wildlife, but also supports the community. As part of the overall agreement, some village game scouts are paid for contributing to protecting wildlife against illegal hunting and commerce. Part of their job is to collect data on wildlife numbers and movements, as well as to monitor the area against potential land grabbing by external parties. UCRT's support has been crucial in facilitating the negotiations between the community in Terrat village and tour operators. The arrangement has come to be known as "Conservation Easement" and has proved to be beneficial to both wildlife and the pastoralist community.

Importance of the case for people-centred land governance

This case demonstrates how a small local initiative can bring about important social, economic and political change for communities.

UCRT's introduction of the VLUP has created an opportunity for pastoralists and hunter-gatherers to interact with local authorities at ward and district levels and to secure their land and resources. Overall, in the past decade, UCRT has developed participatory land use plans for over 35 villages in northern Tanzania. Through these plans, communities have succeeded in securing their land, they have improved their governance capacity, and acquired skills in land use planning, as well as awareness of their community rights and knowledge of local legal procedures through which to engage with Government institutions.

Cultural Mapping has contributed to the recognition by the Government and the wider society of the important cultural contribution historically made by communities such as the Hadzabe, whose increasing marginalisation had resulted in the loss of their land. Cultural Mapping was instrumental for the reacquisition of land by the Hadzabe. Finally, UCRT's Community Tourism initiative supported the ongoing habitat conservation efforts in the region while creating a source of revenues for communities.

Changes

Baseline

Communities in northern Tanzania have faced major challenges to their livelihoods in recent years, due to increasing pressures on their lands and resources. Challenges such as the loss of pastoralist grazing land to tourism, hunting or agricultural investment projects, as well as land grabbing caused by external investment, have had negative repercussions on these communities, which are dependent on their lands for small-scale farming, pastoralism and hunting and gathering activities. With the help of UCRT, much of this has changed.

Achievements

The development of efficient participatory tools and methodologies enabling communities to secure their land and natural resource rights is UCRT's main achievement. Through the VLUP processes formulated by UCRT, communities have had the opportunity to secure their rights in a way which is sustainable and long lasting. The VLUP permits communities to interact with local authorities at ward and district level directly.

UCRT has launched a new framework for community-based conservation, which safeguards wildlife and benefits the community through its "Conservation Easement" arrangement piloted in Terrat village. This innovative agreement helped the community protect its territory from possibly damaging external interests.

Pastoralist communities and hunter-gatherers are often excluded from commercial opportunities offered in the realm of conservation, as these are generally ambits in which the Government and private tourism companies have the upper hand in decision-making. However, the protection of wildlife greatly depends on communities' ability to manage their land and contribute to conservation. It is imperative that they are included

"For many years, there was a boundary conflict between our village and our neighbouring villages. When UCRT came they taught us conflict resolution techniques that came up with very fruitful results as they allowed us to secure our land. We were able to demarcate our village boundaries and then zone our land through a land use plan. Thanks to the Certificate of Village Land, the Maps and the by-laws in place we can now legally defend ourselves against land grabbers." - Haiyo Yamat, Naberera Ward Councilor

in these processes. By supporting communities and their institutions, UCRT has demonstrated that communities can firstly achieve great results in wildlife protection, and secondly benefit financially from relevant activities.

Finally with regards to UCRT's work with the Hadzabe community, the key achievement was the re-framing of their traditional practices as cultural assets to be recognised and valued by the Government. The participatory Cultural Mapping exercise, which documented the community's profound relationship with their lands and the benefits to be drawn from this relationship, was a positive step towards ending discrimination against this marginalised group. It supported the Hadzabe in securing their land rights and preserving their livelihood as hunter-gatherers.

Overall, thanks to the support of UCRT, communities succeeded in claiming back 29,000 acres of land. More than 8,000 families benefitted from this.

Evidence

UCRT's work with pastoralist communities received attention in the issue of Farming Matters "Listening to Pastoralists":

Florin, M. (2016) *Pastoralist women have the capacity to lead*. Farming Matters, December, p. 32-34 <https://www.ileia.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/FarmingMatters34-4.pdf>

Lessons learned

Lessons for civil society

It is important to involve pastoralist and hunter-gatherer communities in processes like the VLUP because this is a way for them to become capable of claiming their rights to land and natural resource by themselves.

It is crucial to involve local authorities as much as possible to ensure that rules and procedures related to natural resource management are respected by all members of the community.

Allowing communities to benefit from the resources that are locally available makes practices more sustainable and generates positive conservation results. When communities are made responsible for preserving natural resources they will protect them and use them sensibly.

Community education is key at all stages. Communities must be aware of the long term consequences of every action on land and natural resources. This will make the allocation of land and decisions on uses more effective and forward-looking.

Lessons for policy makers

Because VLUP processes are multi-layered, it is important that every governance level is taken into consideration and engaged - not just the community level but also the local and regional levels, as well as the ward and district levels. This makes land use planning agreed upon and effective.

The culture of communities is an invaluable asset. Recognising the importance of the culture of hunter-gatherer and pastoralist communities is crucial for them to overcome their marginalisation and discrimination. It is fundamental that policy makers are familiar with it and its implications on land use.

Challenges

The formalisation of land use practices brought about some challenges. The demarcation of boundaries between villages created conflicts between communities that all have an interest in accessing and using the same land. Similarly, tensions arose with external third parties, such as tourism enterprises, private companies or migrant land seekers, with an interest in accessing land for different reasons. Conflict management was therefore an important component of land use policy implementation. In this account, UCRT developed the Cross Border Land Use Plan, a tool aimed at enabling communities to use their bordering land equitably to prevent the emergence of conflict.

Follow-up

Land insecurity remains an issue in northern Tanzania. Therefore, the project "Piloting New Legal Tools to Secure Communal Rangelands In Northern Tanzania" was implemented by UCRT between 2014 and 2016. The objective was to further facilitate and support the establishment of rangeland communal grazing areas in target villages, secure legally recognised rights to access, use and manage pasture land and livestock migratory routes for the communities, thereby increasing their livelihood security and drought resilience.

An important aspect of the future work of UCRT will be to expand on its advocacy and lobbying activities, with the aim of influencing the national Government on decisions related to land and natural resource management. The ultimate objective is to raise their attention on hunter-gatherer and pastoralist communities. Taking UCRT's work to a national or even international level would be ideal, although maintaining strong links with the community and grassroots levels remains key.

Supporting material

References and further reading

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UNEP (2014) *Natural Resource Management & Land Tenure in the Rangelands. Lessons Learned from Kenya and Tanzania, with Implications for Darfur*. Learning Route Visit.

Photos, videos

Resource Africa UK (2011) A Plain Plan <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuy8h1F7GvE>

Ewass Dam in Terrat village. According to the village land use plan the Dam is situated in the dry season grazing area



Photo credits: UCRT

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