

A close-up, high-resolution photograph of a tiger's face is the central focus. The tiger has orange fur with dark black stripes and is looking directly at the camera with a calm expression. The image is framed by a white circular border that is partially cut off at the top and bottom. The background is a soft, out-of-focus natural setting.

**BUILDING
RESILIENCE FOR
PEOPLE LIVING
WITH WILDLIFE**

zsl.org

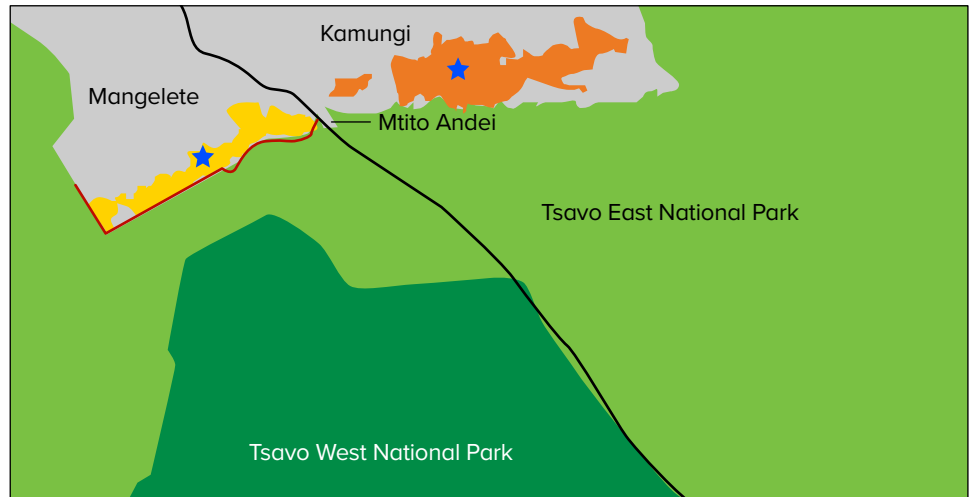
Thanks to the generosity of donors to our **For People, For Wildlife** appeal, ZSL and partners set up a project in 2020 to support four communities in Kenya and Nepal to co-exist with wildlife by building financial resilience, improving livelihood opportunities and forging better relationships with wildlife authorities. The project, named **“Stewardship and rural development for poor and marginalised frontier communities living alongside protected areas and high conservation value species”** aimed to reduce the costs of living alongside wildlife and contribute to poverty alleviation, decreasing engagement in illegal activities and encouraging stewardship over vital habitats in Kenya and Nepal.



CONTEXT

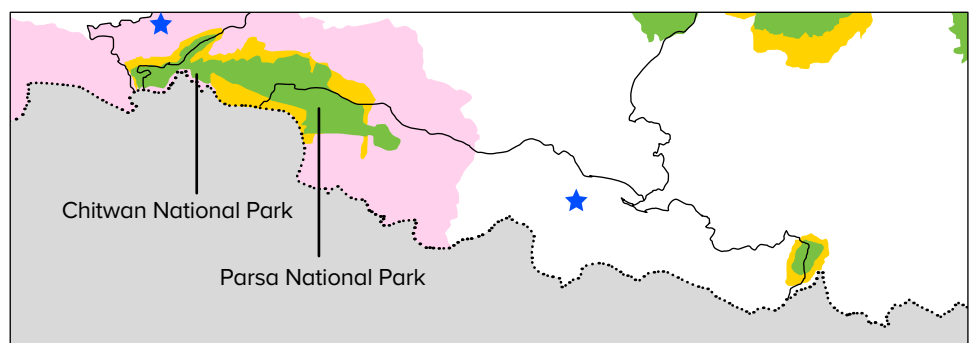
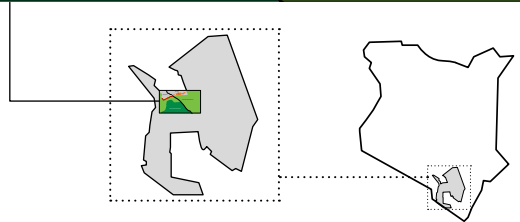
Life is hard for rural communities living on the edge of protected areas in Kenya and Nepal. Limited income-generating opportunities and no access to savings or loans schemes results in poor financial security, and in turn over-reliance on natural resources for subsistence and livelihoods (such as trapping wild animals for meat or harvesting wood to make and sell charcoal). This has negative consequences for people and wildlife, as unsustainable resource use causes habitat degradation and prey depletion, leading to unpredictable wildlife movement and an increase in the likelihood of dangerous encounters and conflict with people.

People living in these places are also increasingly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, such as drought and erratic rainfall, which can lead to poor harvests and livestock deaths. Wildlife can be affected too, when without enough water or food available in protected areas, animals such as elephants, lions and leopards venture more frequently onto community land, damaging crops and killing people’s cattle, goats and chickens. This brings them into conflict with people and can sometimes result in people and animals being injured or killed. The impact of this on people’s lives exacerbates poverty, sometimes making them more vulnerable to participate in wildlife crime activities, which threatens endangered species such as elephants, rhinos, lions and tigers, and worsens relations with protected area authorities.



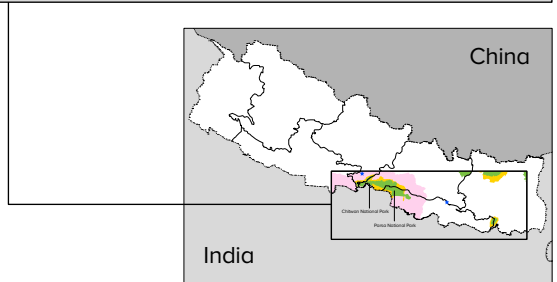
KENYA PROJECT MAP

- Protected Areas
- Intensive Protection Zone
- ★ Project sites
- Current fence
- Mombasa highway



NEPAL PROJECT MAP

- Terai Arc Landscape Nepal
- Protected Area
- Buffer Zone
- ★ Project sites
- Province Boundary
- ⋯ International Border



WHAT DID WE DO?

The project began in November 2020 working with two communities on the boundaries of Tsavo West and East National Parks in south-eastern Kenya and with two communities in Nepal, one in the buffer zone of Chitwan National Park and the other further to the east bordering Doodhpani Community Forest in Dhanusha District. Over the subsequent three years, 1,298 people actively participated in and benefited from the project's different activities.

THE PROJECT FOCUSED ON FOUR KEY THEMES:

- 1. Improving financial security by establishing community banks or village savings and loans associations**
Over 400 people continue to be active members of 10 village savings and loans associations in Kenya and 2 community banks in Nepal established by the project, with over 80% female membership in both countries. The banking schemes provide access to low-interest loans and have helped to increase household financial management amongst members through training and regular coaching.
- 2. Supporting community members to diversify income and adopt new, wildlife-friendly livelihoods**
Livelihood options were developed in consultation with communities and local partners to decrease people's reliance on harvesting natural resources and to improve financial and food security. Nearly 400 people were trained in new enterprises under the project including vegetable farming, goat and chicken rearing, beekeeping and shop keeping, amongst other options.

- 3. Fostering human-wildlife coexistence through conflict mitigation and dialogue**
Nearly 300 people were trained in locally relevant human-wildlife conflict mitigation techniques, including how to stay safe around high-conflict wildlife and in the implementation of farm-based measures to protect their new livelihoods, such as designing and building predator-proof livestock enclosures, planting crops that animals don't eat and using scarecrows. Community meetings with protected area and local government authorities were also established to increase open discussions and ensure community voices were heard on human-wildlife conflict issues, providing a space to relay concerns, and improving people's ability to cope when conflict incidents occur.

- 4. Building positive relationships between communities and park authorities**
The project facilitated over 100 interactions between community members and protected area staff, including drop-in sessions, outreach meetings and in Kenya, bus tours into Tsavo's National Parks to safely view wildlife in the way that previously only tourists enjoyed. These activities helped to build trust by providing opportunities for community members to raise grievances, give feedback, ask questions and suggest solutions. This was particularly important in places where relations had previously been built on misunderstandings, a lack of communication and hostile feelings.



887
WOMEN



60 PEOPLE WITH
A DISABILITY

1,298

people actively participated in the project, including 887 women and 60 people with a disability

412 PEOPLE JOINED
THE COMMUNITY
BANKING SCHEMES, WITH
80% FEMALE MEMBERSHIP



398
PEOPLE

engaged in new
wildlife-friendly
livelihood options

291 PEOPLE
WERE TRAINED IN
HUMAN-WILDLIFE
COEXISTENCE MEASURES

204 HOUSEHOLDS

benefitted from predator-proof enclosures
to protect livestock and bees



OVER 116

interactions were facilitated to build better
relationships between community members
and protected area authorities

OUR IMPACT

The aim of the project was to improve the wellbeing of people in four communities in Kenya and Nepal living alongside high-value and conflict species, contribute to the protection of natural resources and promote human-wildlife coexistence.

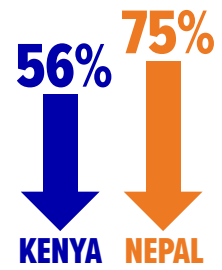
By the end of the project, the wellbeing score of participants had increased by over 40%, despite challenging socio-political conditions in both countries (including the Covid-19 pandemic and cost of living crises), and a prolonged drought in Kenya. The perceived benefits of being a community bank member were key to this result - not only did they build financial resilience through access to low-interest loans (typically 6-12% compared to 25-35% from commercial financial institutions) but participants also felt stronger connections had been built within their communities. In Nepal, this included people from different ethnicities working together for the first time.

“The project had a positive impact on me and my family’s lives. With the establishment of the community bank, we get financial services on our doorstep, which has boosted my confidence to start a new livelihood. Right now, I am making good money that supports my family’s needs, as I am able to provide health care, education and other necessities.”

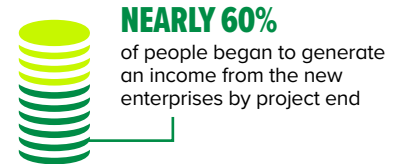
Sunita Musahar, community bank member in Nepal



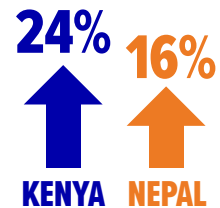
An increase in participant wellbeing was accompanied by a decrease in the use of and dependency on natural resources, such as collecting firewood or fodder for livestock, and the hunting and consumption of wildlife. This included fewer incidents where community members killed wildlife as revenge for damage or losses from conflict, helping to protect species such as lions, leopards, tigers, birds and snakes. Contributing to this result was the project’s outreach activities, which helped to foster positive relations between community members and protected area staff, as well as increased people’s awareness of the importance of biodiversity and the consequences of engaging in wildlife crime.



The number of community members illegally using natural resources decreased by 56% in Kenya and 75% in Nepal compared to project start

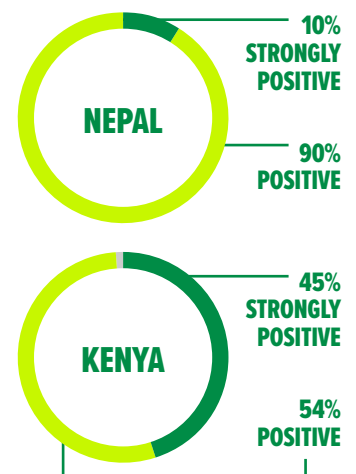


ON AVERAGE, 95% OF PEOPLE SAID THAT HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT HAD EITHER “STRONGLY DECREASED” OR “DECREASED” IN THE FINAL YEAR OF THE PROJECT



People’s perceived ability to cope with human-wildlife conflict increased by 24% in Kenya and 16% in Nepal compared to project start

ATTITUDES TO CONSERVATION



By project end, 100% of respondents in Nepal and 99% of respondents in Kenya reported having ‘Strongly Positive’ or ‘Positive’ attitudes towards conservation.



“ I have learnt that the environment including trees are very beneficial to us. Even the way I relate with wildlife has changed. I now know they are of great benefit. ”

Pauline Mwangela,
VSLA member in Kenya

These opportunities for engagement, such as drop-in sessions, stakeholder meetings and national park bus tours also provided a space for community members to air any problems in an informal setting, including those regarding human-wildlife conflict such as slow compensation processes for wildlife-related damages in both countries. This increased dialogue alongside training in how to mitigate conflict with wildlife and the installation of measures to protect crops and livestock, led to increases in people’s perceived ability to cope with conflict and more positive attitudes towards conservation by the end of the project.

Overall, the project delivered significant results for people and wildlife, laying the foundations for community members to continue to build resilience through the banking schemes, enterprises, mitigation of human-wildlife conflict and increased engagement with protected area authorities, in turn supporting coexistence with wildlife and protection of these critical habitats and species in Kenya and Nepal.

This project was made possible by donors to our 'For People, For Wildlife' appeal in 2019, which raised over £1.5 million, including £702,074 of matched funding from the UK government.

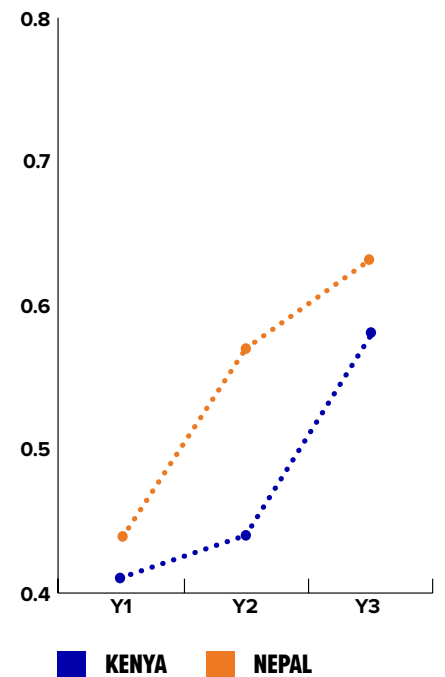
Thank you to everyone who supported this important work.



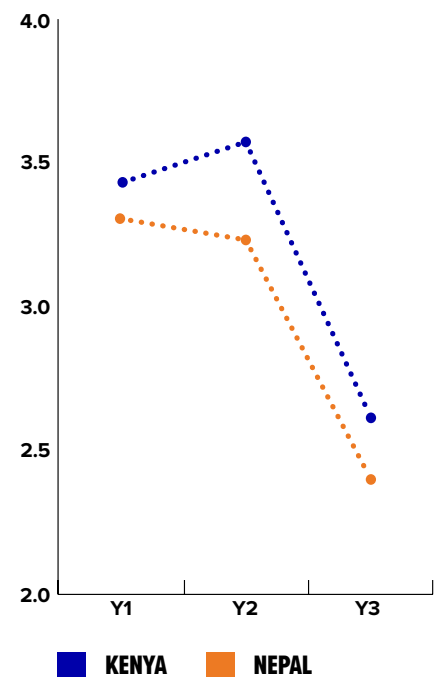
OUR PARTNERS



THE WELLBEING SCORE OF PARTICIPANTS INCREASED BY 41% IN KENYA AND 43% IN NEPAL COMPARED TO PROJECT START



SELF-REPORTED DEPENDENCY ON NATURAL RESOURCES DECLINED BY 24% IN KENYA AND 27% IN NEPAL COMPARED TO PROJECT START





Regent's Park
London
NW1 4RY
zsl.org