



# EXPERIENCES OF LIVESTOCK KEEPERS IN USING BIO-CULTURAL PROTOCOLS IN KENYA

**“Samburu Community and their Red  
Maasai Sheep”**

Jacob Wanyama  
LIFE NETWORK/LPP/LIFE AFRICA TRUST



# SAMBURU COMMUNITY



- Maa-speaking pastoralists in Northern Kenya.
- Closely related to the Maasai, with estimated 800,000 hhs in 9 counties of Kenya
- Nine clans divided into two main subdivisions, White Cow & Black Cow.
- Eight keep livestock & the ninth are hunters & gatherers.
- Moved to present area following the 1911 Treaty between Maasai leader Lenana and the British.
- Still maintain authenticity of their culture 0 defying modern trends
- Keep small EA Zebu cattle, Red Maasai sheep and EA goats.



# COMMUNITY-BIOCULTURAL PROTOCOL?



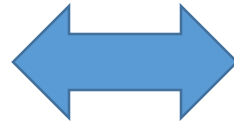
- Document prepared by representatives of communities in consultation with lawyers and specialists in ITK
- Details community's unique resources, related traditional knowledge, lifestyle and the environment.
- Puts on record community's role in mgmt. of biological diversity (contribution & rights in managing them)
- Can cover wide range of issues (Access and Benefit Sharing, Protected Areas, Bio-trade, AnGR, Extractive industries etc.
- Powerful tool in the protection of biocultural rights.
- Supported by recent adoption of the Nagoya Protocol on Access & Benefit Sharing Art 12 (referred to as "community protocols").
- Been developed with a number communities in various countries.
- This presentation is on one of the first BCP to be developed on Animal Genetic Resources.

# RED MAASI SHEEP

- ❖ An indigenous sheep kept by the Maa people of EA for centuries and endowed with genes for resisting worms (*Haemonchus* spp.)
- ❖ Considered very important in lives of the Maa people
- ❖ But now considered endangered by:
  - Socio-Economics
  - Climate change
  - Science
  - Development/Policies



**Red Maasi - Dorper mix on the Market in Narok**



**Red Maasai at ILRI, Kenya**



## CULTURAL VALUE OF RED MAASAI SHEEP

**Birth:** A sheep slaughtered to celebrate the birth of the child, a ceremony known as “lkupoket” - the acceptance or acknowledgement of the newborn baby into the clan.

**Circumcision:** Boy wears a sheep’s skin before and after circumcision and also sits on a sheep’s skin when being circumcised

**Transition from boyhood (Moran) to manhood:** Very important time in a young man’s life. A sheep is slaughtered to mark a transition from boyhood to manhood when one gets married.

**Marriage:** Groom gives mother in law a sheep and nick names her “Paker” to mean sheep in Samburu language

**Health (Medicine value):** Sheep’s fat is believed to cure snakebites and also measles.

**Death:** When one dies of old age, the sheep’s fat is smeared on the deceased’s mouth as a sign of last respect and wishing him or her good life in the next world.



# MOTIVATION FOR SAMBURU BCP

## RED MASAI

unique genetic capability to cope with parasitism

Threats of extinction

Cultural value



# PROCESS - DEVELOPMENT



**Step 1:**  
Participatory  
documentation  
and awareness  
creation of local  
knowledge and  
practices on the  
RMS Sheep

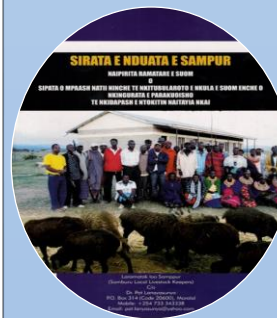


**Step 2:** Drafting  
BCP with  
support from  
Environmental  
or biodiversity  
property right  
and other  
professionals  
(NJ, LIFE  
Network & LPP).



**Step 3:**  
Feedback  
workshop  
community  
representatives:

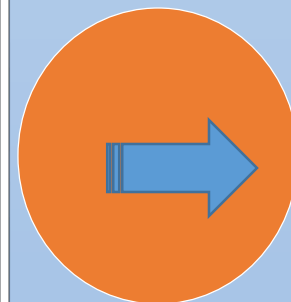
- Check  
corrected of  
draft BCP and  
endorse
- Plan on the way  
forward



**Step 4:** Editing,  
publishing &  
printing (a  
colorful  
document)



**Step 4:** Official  
launching &  
awareness creation  
about BCP with  
participation of  
policy makers.



**Step 5:**  
Implementation

- Awareness  
raising, buying in  
and influencing
- Institutional  
capacity building
- Community  
conservation  
and sustainable  
utilization  
effects





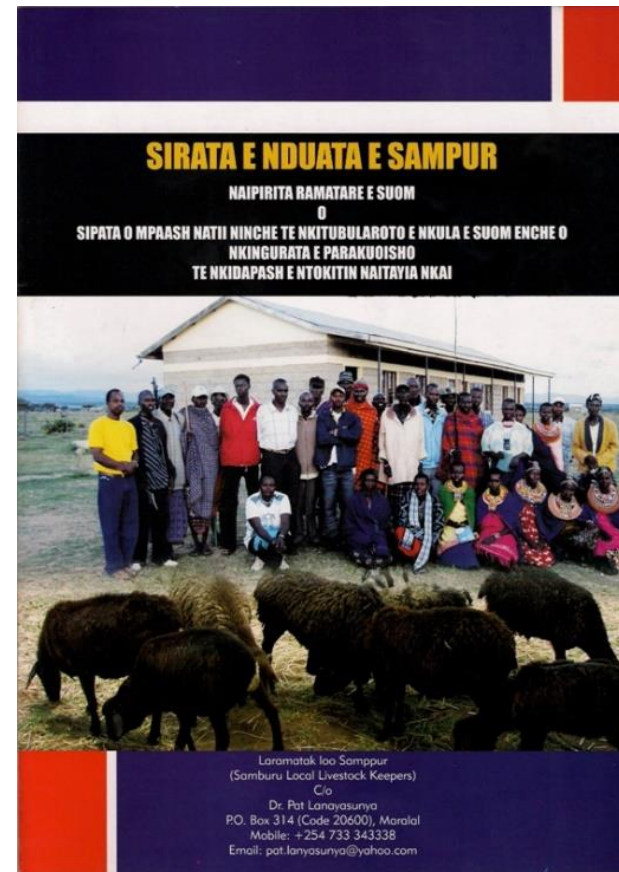
# THE PROTOCOL



## ❖ Describes:

- Samburu; who they are & how their ways of life is interlinked to conservation & sustainable use their indigenous livestock & related biodiversity.
- Their concern on undervaluing of their livestock and their role in conservation.

## ❖ The Protocol is written in Samburu and English and presented in their own words.







# IMPLEMENTING THE PROTOCOL



## ■ Promotion

- Official launching officiated by the Kenya's Director of Livestock Production, Kenya
- Sharing the BCP locally, Country wide (across within and across Communities) & Internationally
- Formation of Samburu Indigenous Livestock Breeders/Conservation Group

## ■ Policy advocacy, research & development Programs

- National: National AnG Advisory Committee – National Strategy
- County Government: Breeding Farm – Ownership & Composition
- Community: Expand to other Resources - Conservancies (UNDP/GEF Project)
- Inclusivity: AU-IBAR Red Maasai BCP
- Finding Niche Market: Nutritional values for products from Red Maasai Sheep

# POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES



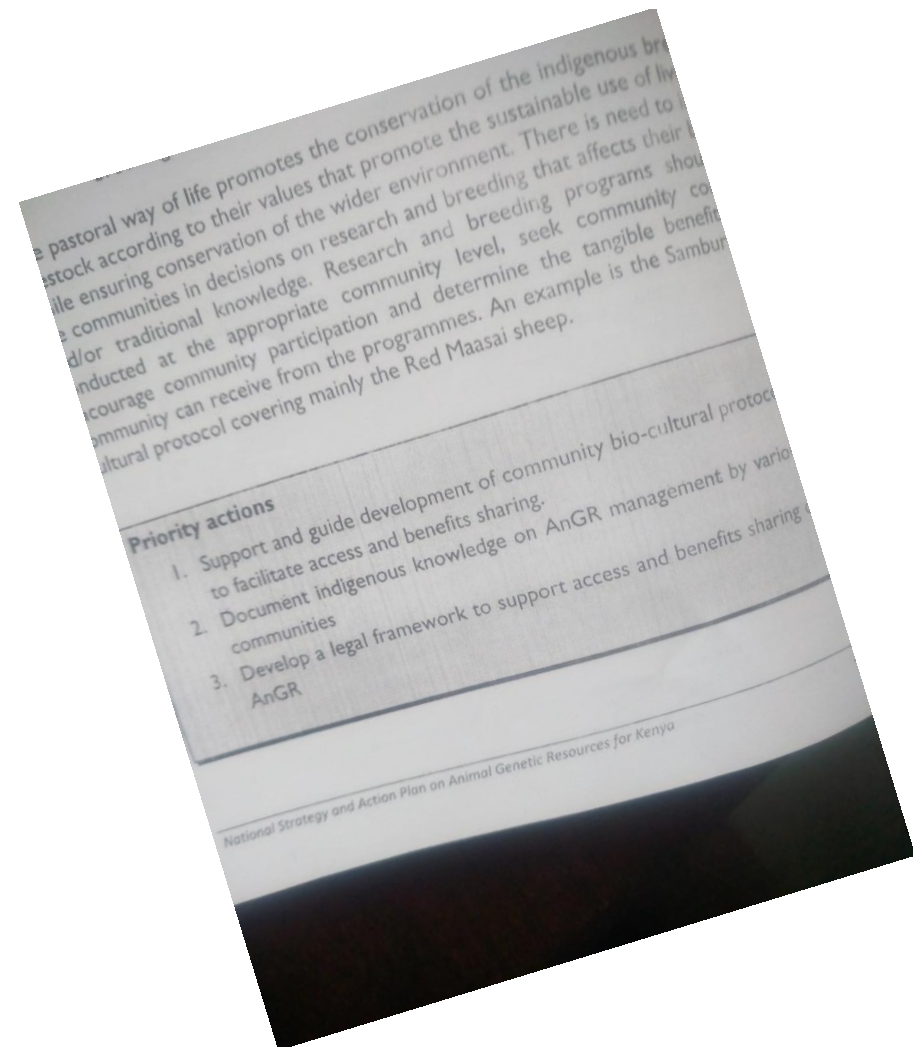
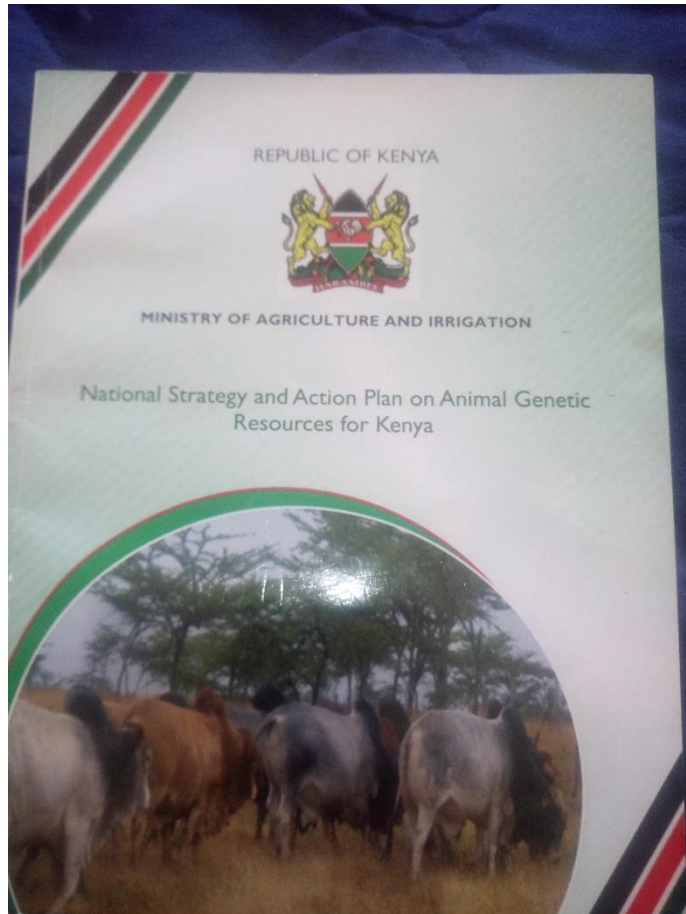
**National**  
**National Strategy Plan of Action on**  
**AnGR**

**County**

**Government Farm**



# Kenya National Strategy and Action Plan on AnG for Kenya







# BREED PROMOTION

## FINDING A NICHE



*Looking for unique marketable properties and products*

## LINKAGES & GOING BEYOND



*Engaging other actors*

## REVERSING THE TREND



*Exchange with Maasai in the Southern Kenya*



# LESSONS LEARNT

1. **BCP is tool for bridging the gaps between customary, national and international law regarding conservation and sustainable use of indigenous livestock breeds and resolving future conflicts over bio-cultural rights.**
2. **Development of BCP is just the beginning, the real work is using it to:**
  - Encourage and motivate communities to continue conserving and sustainability utilizing their indigenous animal genetic resource
  - Engage and provoke various stakeholders (Breeders groups, Local and National Governments, Research institutions, Development agencies, Private sectors) to **BUY IN** & start doing something around indigenous livestock breeds and BCP
  - Raise profile of the indigenous livestock breeding groups nationally and internationally.
3. **The hard part on BCP process is how to incorporate it into National and Local government policies and laws for resource allocation.**
4. **Awareness raising and institutional capacity building is key.**



# ACKNOLEGEMENTS

Samburu Community-based Red Maasai  
Breeders

League for Pastoral Peoples – Germany

LIFE Network

LIFE AFRICA TRUST

Natural Justice





# THANK YOU

