

This case study is one of several produced by the **CLARA** network to coincide with the publication of the IPCC Special Report on Land. We're showcasing **CLARA** member climate solutions which demonstrate the **rights-based, low-emission development pathways** needed for reducing emissions while **promoting livelihoods** and **ecosystem integrity**.

This case study is based on one of over 60 participatory assessments carried out with communities in 22 countries through the Community Conservation Resilience Initiative (CCRI).

Maasai in Kenya protect land and biodiversity to sustain forests for future generations

Legislative protection of community forests and financial support to manage community conserved areas are urgently needed

Organisations and individuals involved

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Location

Nyekweri Kimintet Forest in Trans-Mara bordering the Maasai Mara National Park, Kenya.



EDNA KAPTOYO FOR GFC/CCRI

THE INDIGENOUS MAASAI around Nyekweri Kimintet are pastoralists, and the community has lived in harmony with wildlife and conserved forests through customary laws and values. The Nyekweri Forest Kimintet Trust was formed in 2005 by the community to strengthen their ability to conserve biodiversity. The area covers 6,000 acres, and helps to ensure the continued protection of land dedicated to biodiversity conservation. This area is an important biodiversity hotspot with some of the only remaining indigenous forests and is also a significant breeding area for elephants from the Maasai Mara National Park.

In Kenya, every citizen has the right to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations. The Constitution also recognises Indigenous Peoples and classifies community forests that are vested in the communities as community land. The legal framework does recognise the role of community forests in biodiversity conservation, and the Community Land Act is also geared towards ensuring gender equality and tenure security.

However, the Constitution does not specifically provide for

the conservation and preservation of forests, and communities are not supported to strengthen their conservation practices. Community members have identified a lack of legal protection of community forests by county and national institutions as a key external threat.

The community is facing an erosion of cultural values governing conservation, due to the privatisation of lands and loss of traditional ecological knowledge as the youth leave to find employment elsewhere. Deforestation due to charcoal burning and overgrazing are further threats to conservation, and the increasing impact of drought has also resulted in loss of biodiversity and water.

Community members want to sustain their forests for future generations. Community proposed solutions include financial support for management of the conservation area to carry out reforestation initiatives and ecotourism, and the development of community protocols to complement national laws. They require support to engage with policy-makers, to ensure law enforcement and enhance community participation in sustainable conservation.

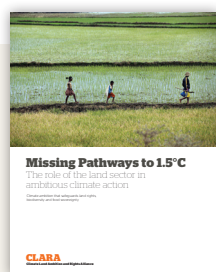
Testimony

Sankau Ole Ntokoyuan, Maasai elder and pastoralist

Ntokoyuan has given up private land to contribute to the conservation of the Kimintet Forest, to continue building the resilience of their conservation efforts. He advises the community trust on conservation issues. "As a community that is keen on conservation, the Community Conservation Resilience Initiative has helped us understand our own issues. It's reminded us of the past, the challenges of the present and that we can now plan to restore our conservation practices and strengthen our resilience more effectively. We are committed to continue our traditional conservation practice."

'Missing Pathways' to climate action

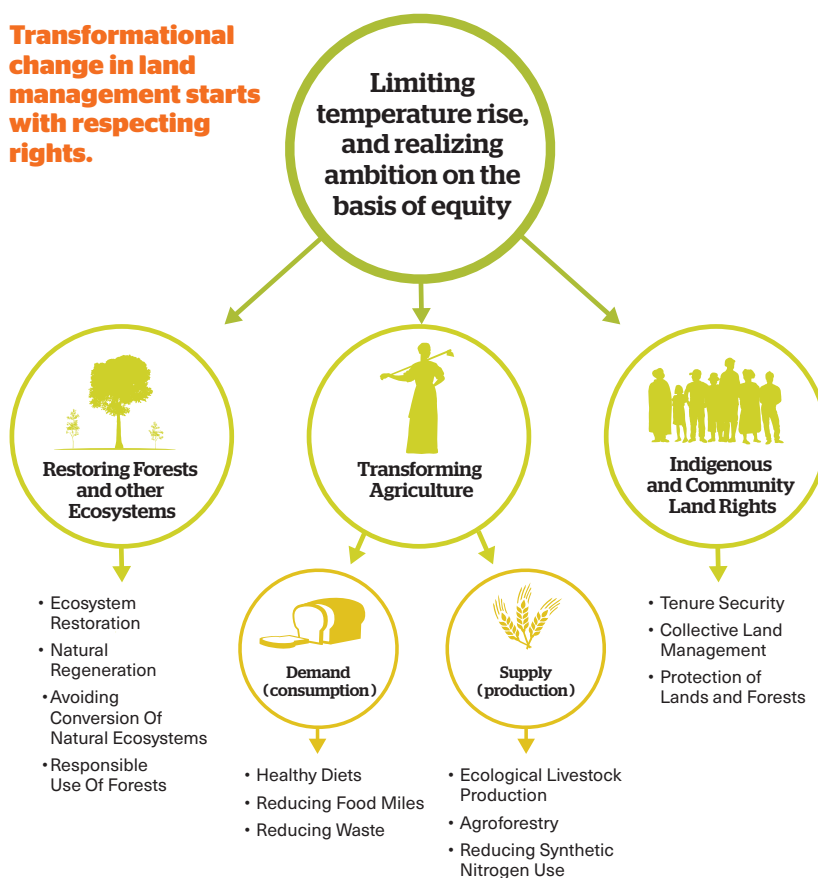
Last year, CLARA published the report 'Missing Pathways', identifying areas of global mitigation ambition rooted in land rights, restoration, agroecology, and food system change.



The climate actions that are needed to support the efforts of this community are...

the legal protection of community forests, an implementation of existing supportive legislation on the county level and by national institutions, and financial support for their conservation efforts. The Maasai of Nyekweri Kimintet Forest are a classic case of Indigenous People lacking the policy, legislative and financial support required to strengthen their conservation and forest restoration initiatives, secure their rights of land tenure and protect their livelihoods. Similar conclusions to the Kenya CCRI assessment were drawn in the Missing Pathways report.

Transformational change in land management starts with respecting rights.



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