

MAMA SIMBA



IMPACT EVALUATION REPORT 2025

Monitoring and Evaluation Department
Tony Wild Foundation
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Key Quotes and Messages

“Before Mama Simba, I saw lions only as a threat to my livestock. Now I understand their value, and through this programme, I have seen direct support for my family. That is why I now stand for lion conservation.”

Elizabeth Lenamaita - Kiltamany

“In the past, people neglected their dogs. Today, inspired by how Kura’s Pride works with Mama Simba, many of us feed, vaccinate, and care for them. This change has made our community more compassionate.”

Namangin Lengudee – Sasaab

Cultural Shift:

Communities have moved away from lion killing as a mark of honour, with women now leading advocacy for lion protection.

Women’s Empowerment:

Mama Simba has given women a strong voice in conservation and community leadership, though male-dominated decision-making still poses challenges.

Reduced Conflicts:

Human–lion conflicts have declined due to lion monitoring, improved bomas, and collaboration with warriors, though camels remain highly vulnerable.

Restored Grazing Lands:

“Lokere” grass reserves are revitalising degraded lands, providing pasture for both livestock and wildlife, and reducing the need for long-distance grazing.

Invasive Threats:

“Mathenge” continues to spread across key grazing and settlement areas, threatening livestock and livelihoods.

High-Impact Actions:

Lion reporting, restoration, awareness efforts, and community services (dog clinics, water pans) are seen as the most effective interventions.

Future Vision:

Mama Simba women aspire to expand to other conservancies, strengthen technical and leadership capacity, and scale up Lokere and Mathenge control for greater impact.



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List of Acronyms

ELC – Ewaso Lions Conservation
FGD – Focus Group Discussion
FMNR - Farmer Managed Natural Regeneration
KII – Key Informant Interview
M&E – Monitoring and Evaluation
ToC – Theory of Change

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1. Executive Summary

The Mama Simba Programme, launched in 2013 by Ewaso Lions, has transformed the role of women in Samburu conservation. Born from the recognition that women, despite being central to households and cultural life, were historically excluded from conservation, Mama Simba has empowered women as leaders, educators, and protectors of lions.

This endline evaluation (2025) assessed the programme's ecological and social impact, comparing Mama Simba members with non-members across six Samburu villages (Kiltamany, Lempaute, Naisunyai, Remot, Sasaab, and Wamba West Ward). Using surveys, FGDs, KIIs and administrative data, the evaluation examined attitudes toward lions, human-wildlife conflict, women's empowerment, ecological restoration, and livelihoods.

Key Findings

1. Women's Empowerment and Leadership

- Mama Simba women are now trusted conservation leaders: 100% of members and 97% of non-members trust them to prevent conflict and report lions.
- Women's voices, once excluded, now shape conservation and community decision-making.

2. Shifting Attitudes and Reduced Retaliation

- 94% of Mama Simba members report more positive feelings toward lions compared to 64% of non-members.
- Retaliatory lion killings have dropped sharply, replaced by lion reporting and mediation. Over two-thirds of Mama Simba households have prevented retaliation in the past five years.

3. Improved Coexistence and Reduced Losses

- Mama Simba members lost fewer livestock to lions (average 1.9 animals/year) compared to non-members (3.4 animals/year).
- 44% of members reported that lion reporting directly prevented livestock losses.

4. Dog Welfare as a Conservation Tool

- 100% of Mama Simba households reported improved dog health, compared to 79% of non-members.
- Vaccination campaigns have reduced rabies and increased compassion for dogs, improving livestock protection.

5. Ecological Restoration and Water Security

- All Mama Simba members participate in land restoration (vs. 50% of non-members).
- Restoration methods include grass reseeding, soil bunds, invasive species removal, and tree planting, improving pasture and drought resilience.
- 94% of members reported digging water pans on the river during the dry season, directly benefiting livestock, wildlife, and households.

6. Cultural Transformation

- Lion killing, once celebrated, has been replaced with cultural pride in lions as "treasures" and "symbols of identity."
- Conservation is now aligned with Samburu traditions, strengthening both culture and ecology.

7. Perceived Growth of Lion Populations

- 83% of respondents believe lion numbers are increasing; 50% observed cubs or breeding activity in 2024–2025.



Conclusions

Mama Simba has proven to be a holistic, women-led conservation model delivering measurable ecological and social benefits: reduced conflict, improved livelihoods, habitat restoration, and stronger cultural identity. Conservation is now linked with tangible household gains such as jobs, scholarships, and water access.

However, challenges remain: weak monitoring systems, women's heavy workloads, inconsistent invasive species management, reliance on donor funding, and persistent human-wildlife conflict risks. Without scaling and sustainability strategies, many gains risk being lost.

2. Introduction

The Ewaso Lions organisation was founded in 2007 to address the growing challenges of human-wildlife conflict in northern Kenya, where communities live alongside lions and other wildlife. As human settlements expand, competition for space, pasture, and water has increasingly put people and wildlife in direct conflict, often resulting in livestock predation, retaliation killings of lions, and strained relations between conservation efforts and local livelihoods. Within these dynamics, women, despite being central to household and community life, were often excluded from conservation decision-making, even though they hold strong influence over family attitudes toward wildlife.

To respond to these challenges, the Mama Simba programme was created in 2013 as a pioneering initiative to bring women into the heart of conservation. The programme recognises that women, as caregivers, educators, and community leaders, are uniquely positioned to foster coexistence with wildlife. Mama Simba provides training in conservation awareness, ecological restoration, rangeland management, and sustainable livelihoods, empowering women to take active roles in protecting lions and the broader ecosystem.

Programme Objectives and Theory of Change

1. Empower Women as Conservation Leaders
2. Promote Coexistence & Reduce Conflict
3. Enhance Education & Literacy
4. Preserve Culture & Strengthen Community Identity
5. Improve Livelihoods & Economic Resilience
6. Build Climate & Community Resilience

Theory of Change is grounded in the belief that when women are empowered as conservation champions, they influence households and communities to adopt positive behaviours toward wildlife. By integrating women into conservation dialogue and practice, the programme builds a culture of coexistence, reduces conflict, and ensures that conservation benefits are shared more equitably. Over time, this inclusive approach is expected to protect lion populations, improve community well-being, and create a sustainable model where both people and wildlife thrive.

3. Evaluation Purpose, Objectives, and Questions

This evaluation seeks to determine the end-of-programme outcomes of the Mama Simba initiative and generate evidence to guide the design of future conservation programmes. The focus is on measuring both ecological and social impact, with special attention to community engagement, human-wildlife coexistence, and women's leadership in conservation.



The objectives of the evaluation are, but not limited to;

- i. Assess the effectiveness of Mama Simba in achieving its intended objectives.
- ii. Evaluate the impact of conservation, education, and economic empowerment initiatives on the Samburu community.
- iii. Identify lessons learned and best practices for future programme improvements.
- iv. Provide evidence-based recommendations for scaling and sustainability.

The Key Learning Questions are;

- i. To what extent has the project increased community tolerance towards lions and carnivores?
- ii. How effective has the lion monitoring and conflict mitigation efforts been in reducing human-wildlife conflict?
- iii. What impact has the project had on women's empowerment and alternative livelihoods?
- iv. How has environmental literacy improved among women and children?
- v. What has been the contribution of the project towards habitat recovery and drought resilience?
- vi. What are the key challenges faced, and how can they be addressed for future sustainability?

This evaluation provides critical evidence of how women-led conservation impacts both people and wildlife. By measuring tangible outcomes, improved tolerance, reduced conflict, better dog and livestock management, ecological restoration, and water access, the report will demonstrate how Mama Simba strengthens coexistence and resilience. Lessons learned will directly inform the scaling and refinement of women-driven conservation models in northern Kenya and beyond.

4. Methodology

The endline evaluation of the Mama Simba programme applied a mixed-methods approach, combining structured quantitative surveys with qualitative insights. A comparative cross-sectional design was used, contrasting programme members with non-members to measure differences in attitudes, practices, and conservation outcomes.

Sampling & Coverage

Data were collected purposively within the Mama Simba programme geography, reaching 16 members and 14 non-members across six locations: Kiltamany, Lempaute, Naisunyai, Remot, Sasaab, and Wamba West Ward. This ensured coverage of diverse community settings where the programme has been active.

Table 1: Sample Size

Village	Mama Simba member	Non-Mama Simba member	Overall
Kiltamany	2	0	2
Lempaute	3	0	3
Naisunyai	1	5	6
Remot	2	2	4
Sasaab	7	7	14
Wamba West Ward	1	0	1
Total	16	14	30



Data Collection & Sources

- **Surveys:** Structured questionnaires included Likert-scale measures, recall of reporting incidents within the past 12 months, and open-ended prompts.
- **Supplementary Sources:** Where available, data were triangulated with focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs), GIS/telemetry records, and administrative data.
- **Core Dataset:** The main source was the Mama Simba Endline Dataset (Excel), enriched by respondent narratives embedded within the dataset.

Analytical Approach

- **Quantitative:** Descriptive statistics (Means, Medians, & Modes), member vs. non-member group comparisons, and trend analysis of dated entries. Likert scale responses were harmonised on a scale for consistency.
- **Qualitative:** Thematic synthesis of open-ended notes and narratives to capture community voices and lived experiences.

Ethical Safeguards

Informed consent was secured for all participants as outlined in the survey tool. Data were anonymised and findings are reported in aggregate form only, ensuring confidentiality and protection of respondents.

Limitations

- A small sample size (n=30) constrains statistical generalisation.
- Potential selection and recall bias.
- Limited structured GIS/biophysical data restricts the ecological depth of analysis.
- Absence of a concurrent control group and baseline panel limits causal attribution. Results should be interpreted as indicative rather than definitive.

Despite these constraints, the evaluation provides valuable insights into community-level changes, highlights the unique contributions of women-led conservation, and offers lessons to strengthen future programme design and replication.

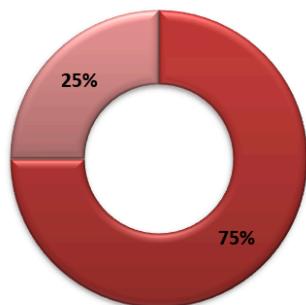
5. Findings

5.1 Household Characteristics

The evaluation engaged 30 respondents across Mama Simba programme areas, equally split between members (n=16) and non-members (n=14). The sample was predominantly female, reflecting the intentional design of the Mama Simba programme as a women-centered conservation initiative. Among members, 75% were women compared to 71% among non-members, resulting in an overall 73% female participation. This highlights the central role of women in conservation and community life, while still capturing perspectives of men who influence household and livelihood decisions.

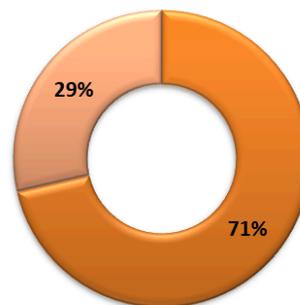


Gender of Mama Simba Respondents



Female Male

Gender of Non-Mama Simba Respondents



Female Male

Figure 1: Gender of Respondents

Household structures were relatively similar between members and non-members, averaging 6.7 persons per household. Household sizes ranged from 3 to 12 individuals, with Mama Simba households reporting a slightly higher mode (7 persons) compared to non-members (mode of 5). The large household sizes point to the high dependency levels within pastoralist families, shaping resource needs and vulnerability to conflict when livestock are lost to predation.

Across both groups, pastoralism was reported as the sole primary livelihood activity (100% of respondents). This underscores the pastoralist context in which human-wildlife interactions occur, where livestock security and grazing access directly influence tolerance toward lions and other carnivores.

The respondents have lived in their communities for a long period, averaging 26 years overall. Mama Simba members reported a slightly shorter average residence (23 years) compared to non-members (31 years). Length of residence ranged widely, from 2 years to a maximum of 58 years, reflecting both long-term community roots and newer arrivals. Among Mama Simba members, participation spans over a decade. Some women joined at the programme's inception in 2013, others in 2014, while the most recent cohort joined in 2024. This mix shows both sustained engagement from early members and ongoing expansion of the programme to include new participants.



5.2 Livestock ownership

All households interviewed own livestock, with goats/sheep and dogs being universally present (100% of both Mama Simba members and non-members).

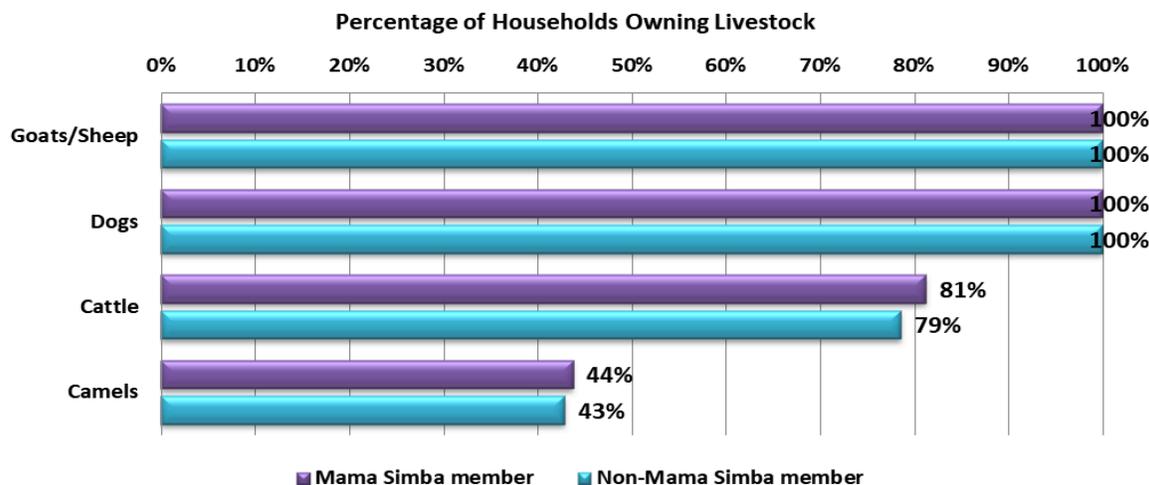


Figure 2: Percentage of Households Owning Livestock

- **Cattle:** Owned by 80% of households overall, with Mama Simba members averaging 3 cattle compared to 5 among non-members. The median herd size is small (2–3 cattle).
- **Goats/Sheep:** Universally owned, with an overall average of 29 animals per household. Non-members reported slightly larger flocks (34 vs. 26 among members), though the median herd size remains similar (20–22).
- **Camels:** Less common, owned by 43% of households, averaging 2 camels per owning household.
- **Dogs:** All households reported keeping dogs, averaging 2 per household, reflecting their importance for herding and protection.

5.3 Trainings and Activities

The Mama Simba programme demonstrates strong community engagement and commitment to conservation. All members (100%) actively participate in lion location reporting and patrols, ensuring direct contributions to wildlife protection. High involvement is also evident in restoration/tree planting (94%), dog vaccination clinics (81%), and school awareness campaigns (81%), underscoring the programme's integrated approach to conservation and community well-being.

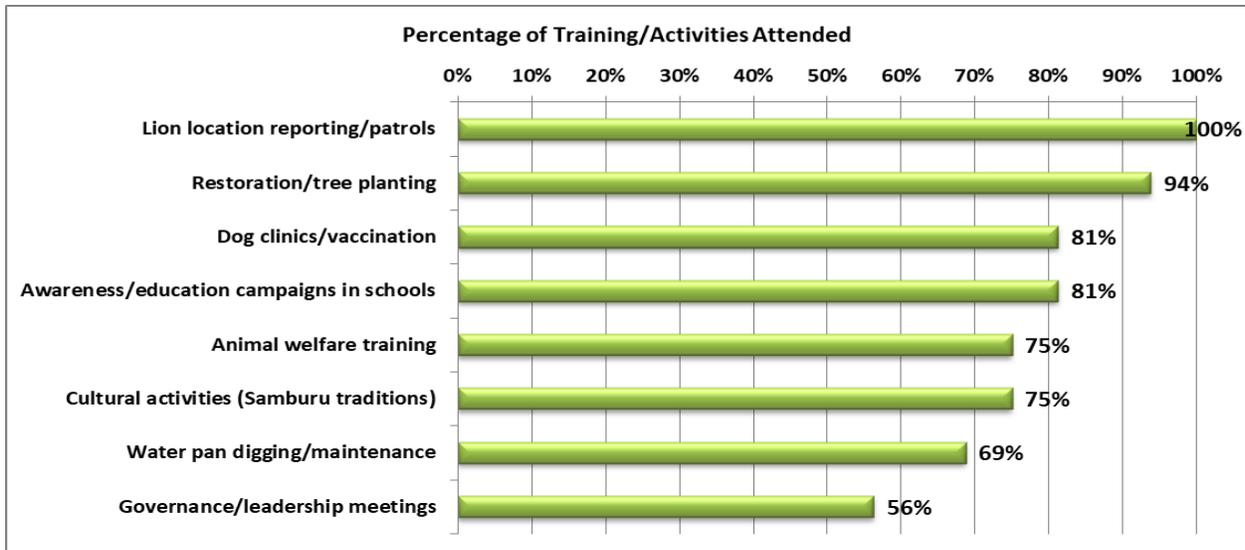


Figure 3: Percentage of Training/Activities Attended

Mama Simba members reported attending an average of 23 activities or meetings annually (ranging from 4 to 65), reflecting consistent dedication to programme activities. Importantly, 50% of members have accessed formal training. The programme activities center on wildlife conservation and rangeland management, with a focus on both restoration and capacity building. Key interventions include solar installation and LAMP (Leadership and Management Programme) training, establishment and management of nurseries, and training on ecological restoration best practices (notably conducted by CERK in Limuru in March and May 2025). Restoration work is reinforced through methods such as circular bunds and the management of invasive species, all aimed at improving ecosystem health and resilience.

However, the findings also highlight a gap: only 19% of trained members completed post-training evaluations, limiting the programme's ability to systematically assess knowledge retention and impact. Strengthening monitoring and evaluation of training could further enhance programme effectiveness and accountability. Overall, these results show that Mama Simba is a highly participatory and impactful initiative, with opportunities for donors to support capacity building, structured training follow-up, and scaling of proven conservation interventions that link wildlife protection with community development.

5.4 Increased tolerance towards lions and carnivores

The Mama Simba programme has generated a profound transformation in community attitudes, behaviours, and livelihoods, moving Samburu households from conflict with lions to coexistence and cultural pride.

1. Shifting Perceptions of Lions

Mama Simba members demonstrate near-universal positive attitudes toward lions, with 94% strongly agreeing they feel more positive about lions today and that lions are vital to Samburu culture. Non-members also show strong positivity, 90% strongly agree lions are culturally important, though only 64% feel more positive than five years ago, reflecting slower change outside



the programme. Qualitative insights reinforce this shift: while lions were once seen as threats, they are now described as “treasures,” “blessings,” and symbols of pride.

2. Conflict Reduction and Coexistence

Lion killings and retaliatory attacks, once common, have declined significantly. Instead, communities now report lion sightings, set aside land for conservation, and increasingly view lions as part of a mutually beneficial system that also supports grazing and reduces human-wildlife conflict. All Mama Simba members (100%) believe coexistence with wildlife brings more benefits than costs, compared to 97% of non-members.

3. Trust in Mama Simba Women

Mama Simba has established deep credibility within Samburu communities. Members unanimously trust Mama Simba women to report lion locations and prevent conflict. Trust also extends beyond direct members, with 97% of non-members expressing confidence in Mama Simba women, showing the programme’s influence at the community level.

4. Economic Benefits and Livelihoods

Conservation is now directly associated with economic gains. Respondents highlight jobs, extra goats, tourism opportunities, transport income, and scholarships for children as tangible benefits of lion conservation. These improvements are strongly linked to changing attitudes, and lions are increasingly seen as an asset that supports family livelihoods and community development.

5. Women Empowerment and Education

Mama Simba has created space for women to play a central role in conservation and decision-making, while improving literacy and education opportunities. Women-led initiatives are credited with reshaping norms, empowering families, and strengthening conservation outcomes. Education and awareness programmes are influencing not only Mama Simba members but also the wider community.

6. Cultural Transformation

Cultural values around lions have shifted dramatically. What was once culturally acceptable, like lion hunting for ceremonies or protection, is now rejected. Instead, lions are embraced as integral to Samburu identity and heritage. This reflects a wider cultural adaptation where conservation and tradition reinforce one another.

5.5 Reduced conflict between lions & livestock

The evaluation demonstrates that Mama Simba has had a significant impact on reducing retaliation against lions, improving reporting systems, and protecting community livelihoods.

1. Reduction in Lion Retaliation

69% of Mama Simba members and 50% of non-members reported having avoided killing a lion or prevented retaliation in the last five years because of programme interventions. This shows both a strong direct impact on members and meaningful spillover effects in the wider community.

Several respondents reported cases where lions attacked livestock (camels or cows). In the past, such incidents would have led to retaliation, but now community members, especially women and youths, intervene to prevent lions from being killed.

Mama Simba managers are contacted to help mediate conflicts, instead of resorting to violence.



Sons and morans (warriors) have also shifted behaviour: some now actively protect lions, stop peers from retaliation, and join advocacy teams like Warrior Watch. Families reported a cultural change, where instead of killing lions, they monitor footprints, report sightings, and seek non-violent solutions.

These incidents illustrate a major behavioural shift from retaliation to protection. Community members, especially Mama Simba women and their families, are playing a key role in mitigating conflict, preventing lion killings, and promoting peaceful coexistence despite livestock losses.

2. Increased Lion Reporting

In the past year, all the respondents reported lion sightings. On average, Mama Simba members reported slightly more frequently (35 times) than non-members (31 times), with some individuals reporting over 200 times, highlighting active surveillance and engagement.

3. Trusted Communication Channels

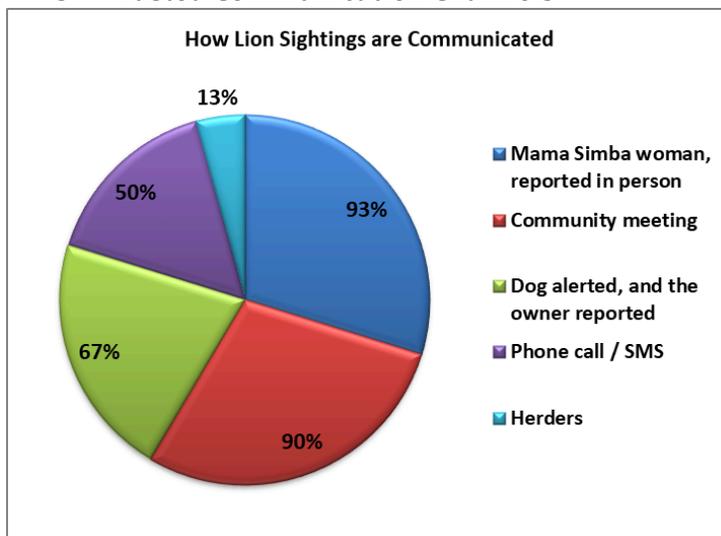


Figure 4: How Lion Sightings Are Communicated

The most common channels for learning about lion sightings are Mama Simba women reporting in person (93%) and community meetings (90%), showing the programme's central role in trusted, face-to-face communication. Other significant sources include dog alerts reported by owners (67%), while phone/SMS alerts are much more common among Mama Simba members (75%) compared to non-members (21%), reflecting stronger programme connectivity. Learning from herders is minimal (13%) and only reported among Mama Simba members.

4. Reduced Livestock Losses

Despite ongoing risks, Mama Simba households experienced fewer livestock losses to lions in the past year (average of 1.9 animals) compared to non-member households (average of 3.4). This suggests that Mama Simba interventions are helping mitigate the economic costs of coexistence.

5. Averting Loss Through Reporting

Forty four percent (44%) of Mama Simba members confirmed that Mama Simba reporting directly prevented livestock loss, while only 21% of non-members reported the same through community reporting channels. This reinforces Mama Simba's effectiveness as a frontline early-warning system. The respondents described the reporting doing the following;

- **Early warnings/alerts:** Mama Simba members frequently alerted herders about lion presence in specific areas (e.g., Manturee in August, near Ngare Ntare River, and around a mountain), helping to prevent livestock losses.
- **Conflict mitigation:** Alerts and reporting saved large herds of goats and camels from predation, including a specific case of 25 goats saved at Lengopia.
- **Recovery of livestock:** In one case, a camel herd was reported and successfully returned to its owner, reducing potential conflict.



- **Geographic coverage:** Incidents and reports were noted in Kalama, Lepus Leluai, Loijuk, Lengopia, and near the Ewaso core area, showing wide programme reach.

The examples highlight how timely lion alerts and reporting by Mama Simba women directly prevent livestock losses, reduce retaliatory killings, and strengthen peaceful coexistence.

6. Perceived Improvement in Reporting Systems

Both Mama Simba and non-members unanimously (100%) agreed that the speed and frequency of lion reporting has “much improved” since the programme began, reflecting widespread recognition of its success.

5.6 Improved dog welfare

Dog ownership is widespread, with households typically owning an average of two dogs (ranging from 1–6). Dogs serve critical community roles, with all households (100%) using them for night-time livestock protection, and most (90%) also relying on them for herding.

Access to veterinary services is high with 97% of households reported their dogs received treatment, vaccination, or deworming in the past year, with an average of 3.4 visits per household. Vaccinations were nearly universal (97%), while 63% received veterinary treatment and 23% deworming.

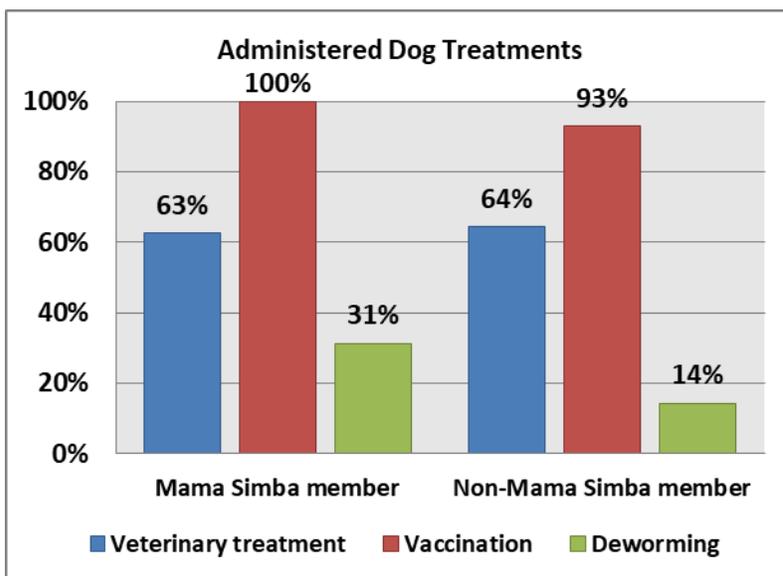


Figure 5: Administered Dog Treatments

The impact of Mama Simba activities on dog welfare is clear. All Mama Simba members (100%) and most non-members (79%) reported dog health is now ‘much better’ compared to before the programme, with only 7% of non-members perceiving it as worse. Participation in dog welfare awareness sessions was much higher among Mama Simba members (75%) than non-members (14%). Importantly, over 90% of participants found these sessions very helpful, highlighting the effectiveness of community education.

Over the past years, the community’s treatment of dogs has shifted from neglect and killing to compassionate care, regular feeding, vaccination, and medical treatment. Dogs are now valued, protected, and integrated into family life, with rabies significantly reduced due to widespread veterinary support.

Overall, the Mama Simba programme has significantly improved both the health of dogs and the awareness of their role in livestock protection, strengthening coexistence between people, livestock, and wildlife.

5.7 Improved coexistence between people & wildlife



Over the past five years, communities have reported significant reductions in human-wildlife conflict and retaliatory lion killings, with 84% noting fewer incidents and 87% citing a decline in lion harm. This reflects changing attitudes and effective conflict-mitigation strategies. Core interventions are particularly early reporting systems and grazing restoration, each credited by over 90% of respondents having been central to improved coexistence. Dog welfare, awareness campaigns, and water access through pans have also made strong contributions.

Lion presence remains high, with 80% of households reporting sightings in the past year and 50% confirming cubs or breeding activity, especially in 2024 and 2025. Encouragingly, 83% of respondents believe lion populations are increasing. Mama Simba members consistently reported greater participation and benefits compared to non-members, particularly in awareness, school outreach, dog welfare, and water access, demonstrating the added value of the programme.

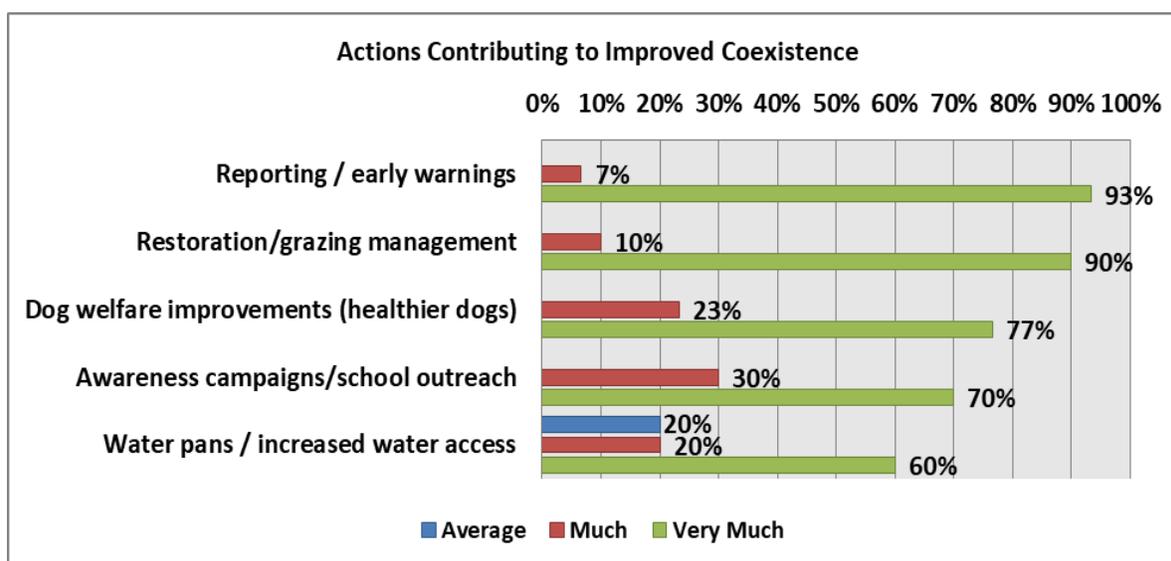


Figure 6: Actions Contributing to Improved Coexistence

Beyond conflict reduction, Mama Simba's initiatives, such as reporting sightings, habitat restoration, water pans, and invasive species management, have improved pastures, secured water for both wildlife and livestock, and reduced competition. Outreach to schools, herders, and youth has enhanced positive conservation attitudes, cultural pride, women's empowerment, and created opportunities such as employment and scholarships.

The respondents demonstrated strong local knowledge of lions by naming and tracking specific prides and individuals, such as Nanai and Naramat, reflecting a sense of ownership and connection to lion conservation. Together, these findings show that Mama Simba is fostering long-term coexistence between people, livestock, and lions while strengthening community resilience and conservation stewardship.

5.8 Increased and healthier numbers of wild carnivores

Most respondents regularly encounter lions near their villages. While Mama Simba members reported seeing or hearing lions sometimes (44%) or rarely (25%), were non-members more likely to report frequent encounters, either monthly (36%) or weekly (36%). Overall, 80% of households reported multiple lion sightings in the past year.



Half of all respondents (50%) observed lion cubs or breeding activity, with non-members slightly more likely (57%) than Mama Simba members (44%). Breeding was reported mainly in 2024 (53%) and 2025 (40%), showing recent evidence of population growth.

Perceptions of lion population trends are encouraging, with 83% overall believe lion numbers are increasing, with Mama Simba members especially optimistic (94% vs. 71% of non-members). Only 13% overall perceived a decline.

These results indicate strong and frequent lion presence, ongoing breeding activity, and community confidence in lion population recovery, with Mama Simba members showing slightly more cautious sightings but greater optimism about growth.

5.9 Increased awareness of conservation

All Mama Simba members (100%) reported actively participating in restoration work in Lokere, compared to only half (50%) of non-members participating in any restoration work. Mama Simba members unanimously recognised restoration results, while some non-members were uncertain, 21% said no ground had been restored, and 14% said they didn't know. Still, a majority (64%) of non-members agreed that several hectares (1–10 ha) had been restored.

Mama Simba members identified a diverse range of restoration methods, with the most widely applied being soil bunds/erosion control (100%), grass reseeding (94%), and fencing/enclosures (94%). Other methods included invasive species removal (44%) and tree planting (19%).

Mama Simba members are not only leading in participation but also have clearer awareness of techniques and outcomes, highlighting their central role in driving restoration, while non-members show lower awareness and engagement.

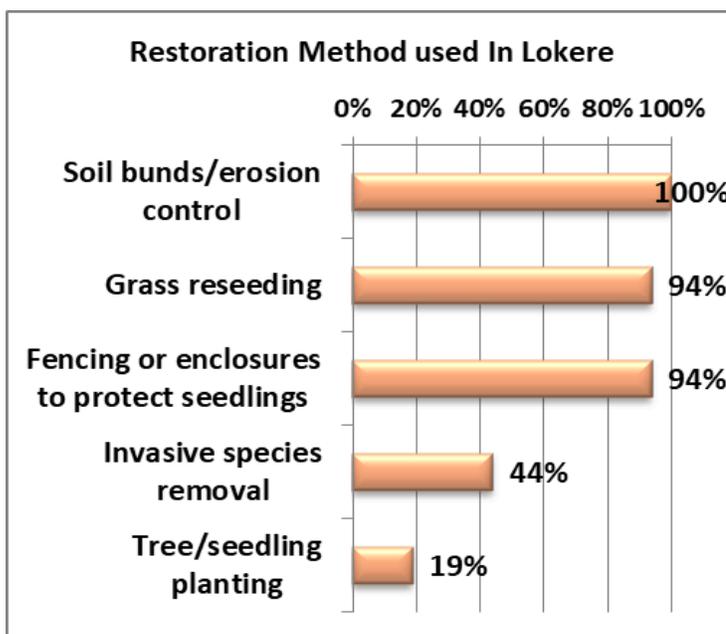


Figure 7: Restoration Method Used In Lokere

Women highlighted key restoration activities, notably Lokere grazing reserves and grass reseeding, valued for restoring degraded lands, improving pasture, and enhancing drought resilience. They also recognised circular bunds for soil conservation, water hole digging for supporting livelihoods and wildlife, and invasive species management, particularly Mathenge removal. Indigenous tree management through FMNR was seen as vital for ecological recovery. Complementary activities included fencing, conservation training, exposure tours, adult education, and cultural practices such as beadwork. Overall, women emphasised that restoration is a holistic process, blending practical land management with cultural traditions and knowledge-sharing to sustain ecosystems and community resilience.



5.10 Improved water availability

The findings demonstrate the vital role of the Mama Simba initiative in strengthening community water security. Almost all Mama Simba members (94%) have been directly involved in creating or maintaining water points such as pans and wells, compared to limited recognition among non-members. On average, Mama Simba members reported nearly double the number of functioning water points compared to others (95 vs. 47). Importantly, 94% of Mama Simba members observed significant improvements in water availability during droughts, while non-members were less certain. These efforts have directly enhanced community resilience by improving daily life, livestock health, and wildlife survival.

The respondents indicated that improved water availability has greatly benefited both people and the environment. It has reduced livestock and wildlife deaths, lowered human-wildlife conflicts, and ensured animals no longer invade homesteads in search of water. Respondents interviewed reported that water pans now support 50–250 animals, easing daily household duties and strengthening coexistence between people, livestock, and wildlife.

5.11 Cultural awareness, Growth of indigenous trees/removal of invasive species

The Mama Simba programme has significantly strengthened community conservation awareness and action. More than three-quarters of participants reported gaining vital knowledge in conservation, indigenous practices, and cultural identity, with many noting substantial improvements in understanding lion ecology, tree planting, and water management. Women's leadership through Mama Simba has translated into action: 94% of members planted indigenous trees in the last five years favouring species like Sokotei and Mwarubaini (Neem) for their drought resilience and wildlife value, helping restore degraded lands and sustain ecosystems.

The respondents also reported progress in tackling invasive species, though results remain uneven, with some areas showing reductions while others reported increases. Broader impacts of the programme include improved livelihoods, reduced human-wildlife conflict, stronger cultural identity, greater women's empowerment, and enhanced access to education.

Despite these successes, the programme faces persistent challenges with security risks from human-wildlife conflict (94%), weak monitoring and data systems (75%), limited funding (31%), and uneven community uptake (25%). Participants recommend scaling up Mama Simba to new areas, reducing women's workload during restoration, strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems, and ensuring financial sustainability.

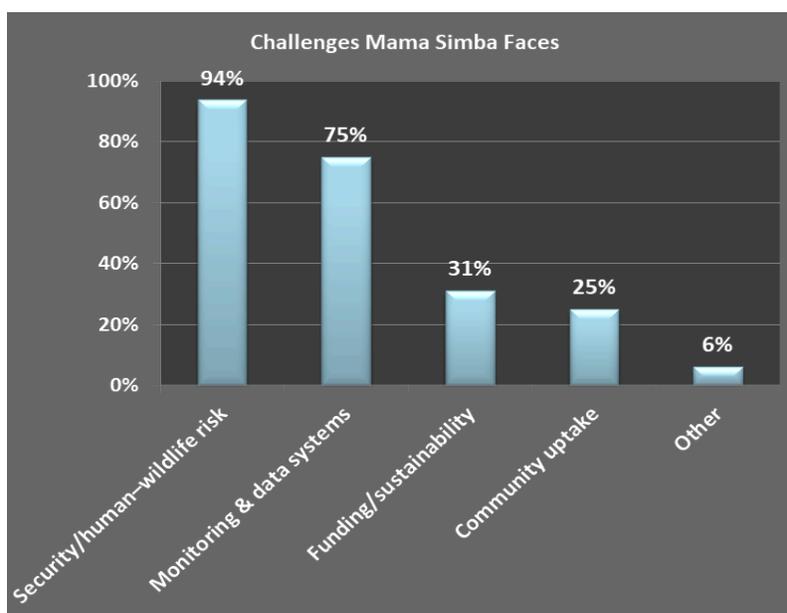


Figure 8: Challenges Mama Simba Faces



Respondents reported that evaluation of Mama Simba's impact should focus on a mix of ecological indicators (lion sightings, restoration efforts, invasive species removal, water holes, tree planting) and social indicators (Lokere participation, cultural trainings, education activities, and conflict cases). This balance reflects both environmental restoration and community engagement as core areas of impact.

The most important changes attributed to Mama Simba center on a balance of environmental restoration (Lokere, water holes, invasive species control), social transformation (women's empowerment, literacy, livelihood improvements), and conservation impact (reduced conflicts, lion awareness, cultural preservation).

Overall, Mama Simba demonstrates a holistic and community-driven conservation model that delivers both ecological and social benefits, with strong potential for expansion and deeper impact with donor support.

6. Conclusions

- 1.** The evaluation demonstrates that the Mama Simba programme has successfully transformed women's role in conservation, improving coexistence between people, livestock, and wildlife in Samburu. The programme has built strong community trust, enhanced tolerance toward lions, and significantly reduced retaliatory killings. Conservation has become associated with tangible livelihood benefits such as improved water access, reduced livestock losses, job creation, scholarships, and tourism opportunities.
- 2.** Ecologically, Mama Simba has advanced habitat restoration through reseeded, bunds, water points, and indigenous tree planting, while also improving dog welfare and veterinary care.
- 3.** Socially, the programme has empowered women as credible conservation leaders, increased literacy and awareness, and reinforced cultural pride in lions as symbols of Samburu identity.
- 4.** However, challenges remain. Security risks from human-wildlife interactions, weak monitoring systems, uneven community engagement, and limited financial sustainability threaten long-term impact. While invasive species management has made some progress, results are inconsistent. Post-training follow-up and systematic data collection remain underdeveloped. The programme's small scale relative to community needs also highlights the need for expansion.
- 5.** In short, Mama Simba offers a holistic, women-led conservation model that has achieved demonstrable ecological and social outcomes. With strengthened systems and donor investment, it holds strong potential for replication and scaling in northern Kenya and beyond.