



gatekeeper


# Participatory Land Use Planning as a Tool for Community Empowerment in Northern Tanzania

Ujamaa Community Resource Team

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**Key highlights  
in sustainable  
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management**





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The report has been prepared by the Ujamaa Community Resource Team in concert with Fred Nelson of Maliasili Initiatives. Fred is a specialist in community land and natural resource management who has a long-term familiarity with UCRT and its work through various collaborations, and who was able to capture and distill the key lessons from UCRT's work. Contact information: UCRT: Edward Loure, Coordinator, [coordinator@ujamaa-crt.org](mailto:coordinator@ujamaa-crt.org); Fred Nelson, Executive Director, Maliasili Initiatives, [fred.d.nelson@gmail.com](mailto:fred.d.nelson@gmail.com)

# Executive Summary

Across much of Africa, surging competition over land and resources amongst local, national, and international groups of people is threatening to deprive local rural communities of control over and access to the territories and natural resources upon which their livelihoods depend. Development strategies that reconcile emerging conflicts over land and natural resource use, and which provide local communities with secure rights and tenure, are increasingly critical to rural livelihoods and sustainable development.

Tanzania has a progressive policy and legal framework for strengthening local communities' collective land and resource tenure, based on local government institutions developed in the 1970s and land reforms carried out in the 1990s. This enables registered villages to secure rights over defined areas, and to develop local by-laws and land use plans governing use of lands and resources, including zoning both communal and individually-controlled lands.

This paper presents several case studies to show how the Ujamaa Community Resource Team (UCRT) has been working within Tanzania's legal and policy framework to support a diverse range of pastoralists, agro-pastoralists and hunter-gatherers, all of whom face fundamental threats from external appropriation of, or encroachment on, lands and natural resources. The work also responds to local needs to rationalise resource use rights amongst competing local groups, such as farmers and livestock keepers. By using participatory land use planning, it is possible to balance the need to secure local tenure with the need to maintain flexibility and mobility across larger areas according to traditional adaptive management practices in semi-arid environments. It can also strengthen the voice of local groups in the face of external pressures.

However, major questions remain about the ability of local groups to enforce resource access and use rules, particularly in relation to more powerful central government and external private interests. Conflicts continue in many areas as local by-laws and land use plans are ignored or contravened. This highlights the importance of on-going engagement with political and policy processes whilst also working on local planning initiatives. Formalising land rights at the village level also involves trade-offs between strengthening local rights and maintaining access to resources at the larger scales needed for example by pastoralists in semi-arid regions. As climate change continues to change the ecological parameters of local production systems, such trade-offs will need to be continuously appraised and addressed.

# Participatory Land Use Planning as a Tool for Community Empowerment in Northern Tanzania

Ujamaa Community Resource Team

## Introduction

Across much of Africa, concern is growing over an emerging 'land grab', whereby local communities will lose control over and access to the territories and natural resources upon which their livelihoods depend (e.g. Vallely, 2009). This surging competition over land and resources amongst local, national, and international groups of people is being driven by a range of political and economic forces operating at these multiple scales (Nelson, 2010). Development strategies that reconcile emerging conflicts over land and natural resource use, and which provide local communities with secure rights and tenure, will be increasingly critical in the near future in light of these trends.

Northern Tanzania, with its rich savannahs, grasslands, and montane landscapes, and diverse array of farmers, pastoralists, and hunter-gatherer communities, has long been subject to competition amongst groups of people over land and resources. During the past century, the loss of extensive areas of land to external interests such as large-scale commercial farms or state protected areas devoted to wildlife and tourism has had a major impact on northern Tanzania's indigenous communities. Legal and policy measures propagated during the colonial and post-colonial periods have often served to expropriate local resources or have failed to recognise traditional systems of land use based on common property management, such as transhumant pastoralism. Promoting external commercial investment remains a major national policy objective, and often comes into conflict with local livelihoods dependent on the use of natural resources such as water, soil, pasture, forests, and wildlife. Local communities in northern Tanzania, as in many other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, need means of securing rights and access to land and resources and of resolving conflicts over resource use.

Since the late 1990s, the Ujamaa Community Resource Team (UCRT; Box 1) has worked with a wide range of communities across northern Tanzania to help local people secure

rights over lands and resources and to strengthen local management institutions. One of the main strategies for pursuing these aims has been through a process of participatory land use planning (PLUP), based on Tanzanian laws and policies.

This report describes UCRT's experiences in facilitating these processes in a range of social and ecological circumstances over the past decade, highlighting some of the strengths and weaknesses of PLUP in northern Tanzania. Many of the key lessons that emerge from UCRT's experience in northern Tanzania will be relevant to efforts to enhance local participation, tenure security, and resilient livelihoods in other parts of Africa. The preparation of the report involved reviewing background documents including relevant Tanzanian laws and policies and land use plans and by-laws from the villages, as well as discussions with UCRT staff. The report has been produced with the support of the Joint Oxfam Livelihoods Initiative in Tanzania.

#### BOX 1: THE UJAMAA COMMUNITY RESOURCE TEAM

The Ujamaa Community Resource Team (UCRT) is a non-governmental organisation established in 1998 with the core mission of working with pastoralist, agro-pastoralist, and hunter-gatherer communities in northern Tanzania to improve their livelihoods through sustainable natural resource management. The UCRT was formed in order to help these communities to use existing legal tools and combine formal mechanisms with local knowledge and traditional practices to take a pro-active approach to securing and planning the management of lands and natural resources. A central tool employed at the outset, and a foundation of UCRT's work throughout the past decade, is the development of participatory land use plans and village by-laws which can serve to formalise and strengthen local land rights and traditional management practices and resolve conflicts amongst competing resource users. During the course of the past decade, UCRT has facilitated the process of developing participatory land use plans and local governing by-laws in over 35 villages in seven districts across northern Tanzania.

## Policy framework

Participatory land use planning (PLUP) in Tanzania is grounded in the national policy and legislative framework governing land tenure and local government.

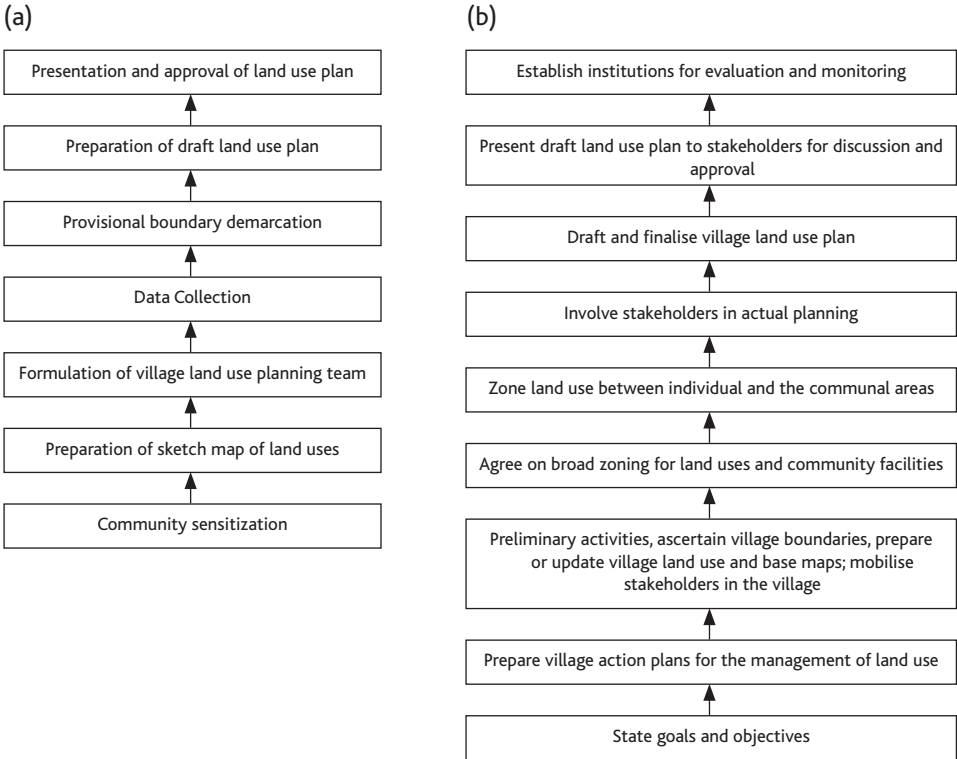
The legal basis for village land use plans is found in Tanzania's local government legislation (mainly the Local Government Act of 1982), which enables village governments to pass local by-laws. Village by-laws are a central component of the PLUP process because they give the land use plans a legal basis for enforcement. This enforcement component is essential because, inevitably, both villagers and outsiders may violate the provisions of the land use plans from time to time.

The by-laws must be passed by the two main organs of village government, the Village Assembly and the Village Council. The Village Assembly comprises all the adults resident in the village, and the Village Council is the main executive body of the community, and is elected by the Village Assembly every five years. The Village Council is headed by a Village Chairman, and has numerous sub-committees such as finance, development, environment and natural resources, education, water, and so forth. The Village Council is required to ob-

tain Village Assembly approval for many key decisions involving the use of resources. Village by-laws must also be approved by the elected District Council for them to come into force. Once the District Council approves village by-laws, they have legal force equivalent to any other law in Tanzania and violators can be charged in courts of law.

The Village Land Act requires villages to allocate lands between individual and communal categories, as well as designating some lands as areas set aside (*akiba*) to be allocated to the individual or communal areas at a later time. The Village Land Act thus provides a relatively secure tenure framework for communal land uses such as grazing pastures and forests, as well as specific requirements for basic land use planning and zoning. The National Land Use Planning Commission (NLUPC) in Dar es Salaam produced guidelines for PLUP in 1998, and has carried out land use planning activities at the village level in many locales. The Land Use Planning Act has more recently provided a more detailed set of procedures to be followed in land use planning at the village level (Figure 1a and 1b).

**FIGURE 1: FORMAL STEPS IN THE LAND USE PLANNING PROCESS IN TANZANIA AS DESCRIBED BY (A) 1998 NATIONAL LAND USE PLANNING COMMISSION GUIDELINES; AND (B) THE LAND USE PLANNING ACT OF 2007.**



# Participatory land use planning process and methodology

The UCRT developed its methodology for PLUP in the late 1990s, learning from parallel efforts to strengthen local rights over lands and natural resources such as forests, and also working with government officials at the NLUPC. The basic UCRT process has been developed in line with national policies, laws and administrative procedures (Figure 1a and 1b), but places a greater emphasis on the participation of different groups within the village and allows ample time for different views and interests to be taken into account at the local level. A particular priority is to facilitate extensive discussions at the sub-village level and amongst different local social groups to ensure that the process engages directly as many as possible of the individual villagers, and does not simply operate through the village government and its committees. This enables villagers to be fully involved in facilitating their own planning processes. While local communities almost invariably recognise the importance of zoning different land use categories and developing local rules governing uses,<sup>1</sup> there is often a lack of knowledge about the formal legal and administrative procedures that need to be followed to guide the process. Villagers also lack the capacity and resources to secure certain forms of technical support, such as the production of maps and even typed by-laws. UCRT's role is therefore to provide knowledge, expertise, and human, technical, and financial resources to facilitate the planning process as well as for following up at higher levels of district and national government. UCRT works closely with district staff throughout the village-level process, mainly district land and natural resource officers, and thus also works to promote more participatory development processes at the district level.

Once the views and ideas from the entire community have been incorporated, the plan should be ratified and approved by the Village Council, Village Assembly and finally the District Council. The Land Use Planning Act of 2007 also now requires the minister to approve land use plans, which are forwarded by the relevant district authorities.

Once approval has been sought and obtained, the villagers begin implementing the plans by demarcating the different land use zones, usually done using paint to mark certain landmarks, and by ensuring compliance with provisions and rules.

The villagers also set up the necessary local governance structures and procedures to refine and modify their plans as necessary in a continuing process.

## Case studies from northern Tanzania

In 1998 UCRT began working in five villages; by 2009, it had worked on PLUP and related natural resource management issues in 37 villages in seven districts across northern

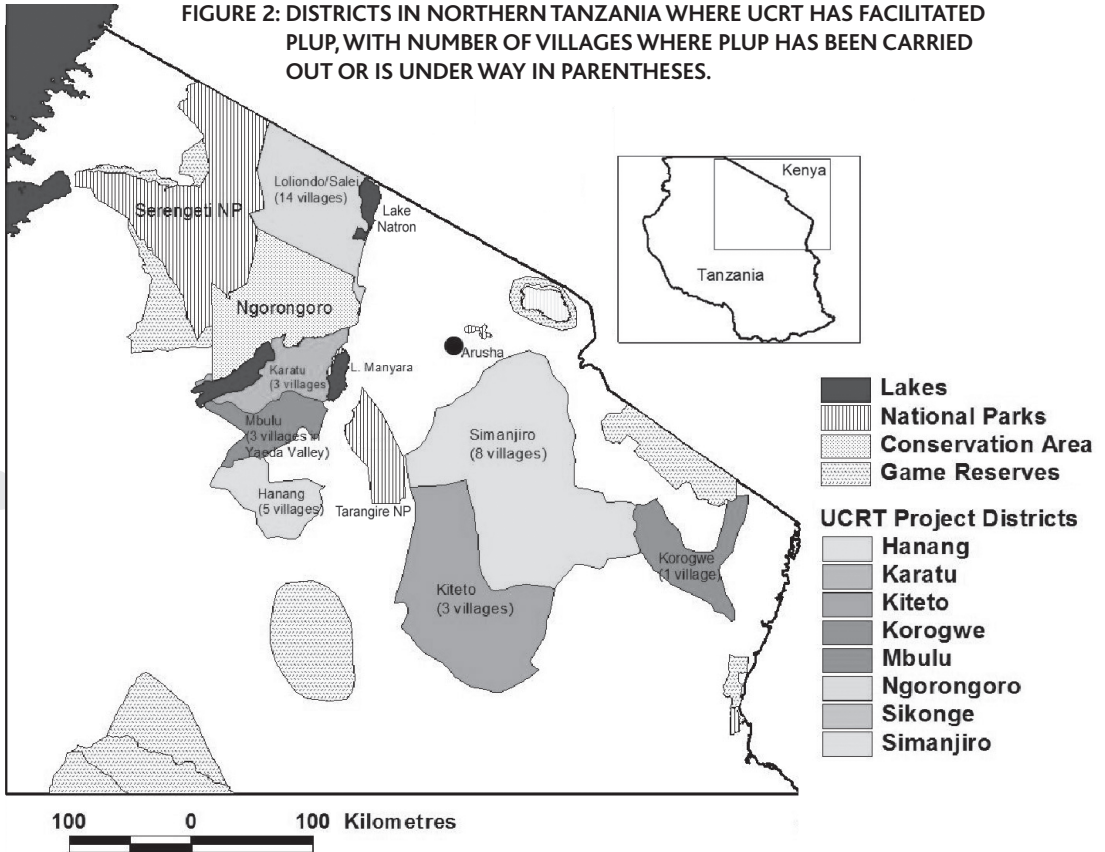
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<sup>1</sup> The term "zoning" may mean different things to different people. Officials see it as a way of permanently demarcating, fencing off areas for exclusive use, i.e. ordering complex landscapes into relatively simple and non-overlapping categories. Pastoralists tend to have a more flexible and integrated approach, reserving areas for particular use and managing them through conditions/rules of access, sometimes with physical demarcation occurring along a gradient of scarcity/importance (i.e. the more strategic/high-value an area is, the more likely there is to be a barrier of some sort).



Tanzania (Figure 2). This section summarises some experiences from different social, cultural, and ecological contexts where UCRT has carried out long-term PLUP work in collaboration with local communities, district government, and other stakeholders.

**FIGURE 2: DISTRICTS IN NORTHERN TANZANIA WHERE UCRT HAS FACILITATED PLUP, WITH NUMBER OF VILLAGES WHERE PLUP HAS BEEN CARRIED OUT OR IS UNDER WAY IN PARENTHESES.**



## Loliondo: the contested highlands

Loliondo Division is in Ngorongoro District, with the Kenyan border to the north and Tanzania's famous Serengeti National Park to the west (Figure 2). The area is inhabited by Maasai pastoralists and agro-pastoralists, and transhumant<sup>2</sup> pastoralism is the dominant traditional form of land use. Agricultural cultivation covers only around 5% of the land area but is practised extensively, and has been used by pastoralists to diversify livelihoods since the 1950s at least (O'Malley, 2000). The area is part of the greater Serengeti ecosystem, and the wildebeest migration from the Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya to the Serengeti plains passes through the western part of Loliondo every year. Wildlife is abundant and found in comparable densities as in Serengeti National Park (Maddox, 2003). Loliondo has become a focus for wildlife-based investments in tourism camps and lodges since the early 1990s, which has brought both threats and opportunities for the resident local communities. There has also been great interest by government policy makers and international NGOs in Lo-

<sup>2</sup> 'Transhumance' refers to regular but flexible seasonal movements between different wet and dry season pastures and livestock ranges.

liondo because of the area's strategic importance for wildlife conservation in the greater Serengeti. Loliondo thus faces a wide set of competing land use interests, from the local to the global level. This has created both the need for and constant challenges to local efforts to be pro-active in planning their land and resource use patterns and practices.

UCRT first began working on the PLUP process with Oloipiri, Maaloni, and Magaiduru villages in the late 1990s, and soon expanded to also work with Ololosokwan, Soit Sambu, and Arash villages. All six of these villages developed participatory land use plans and village by-laws, following the methodology described above, and most of these were approved by the Ngorongoro District Council in 2000, which gave the by-laws legal force. The villages are adjacent to each other and share many community members, ties, and family relationships, and as in other pastoralist areas there are reciprocal ties that enable resource use across larger areas than individual villages. By working on the PLUP process with all the villages at the same time, UCRT was able to harmonise many of the PLUP provisions, for example so that dry season grazing areas are contiguous and overlap the boundaries of several different villages.

Generally, the by-laws cover a wide range of community-level rules and regulations which go well beyond land use issues and include matters such as education, water use, security, and rules regarding community work (Box 2).

**BOX 2: SAMPLE VILLAGE BY-LAWS**

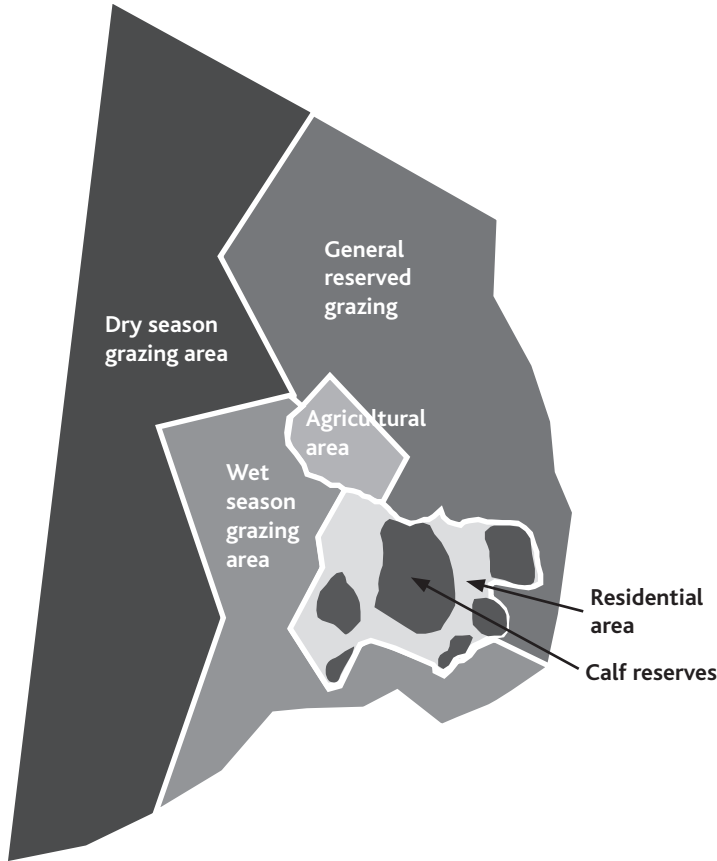
These are extracts from some of the village by-laws for the village of Oloirien-Magaiduru (translated from Kiswahili):

- 14.1: The *ilokeri* (pl., sing. *olokeri*) area has been set aside for calves, sick cows, cows that have given birth, and draught power animals.
- 14.2: It is prohibited for anyone to farm, burn, build, or cut trees in the *ilokeri* without authorisation from the sub-village members.
- 14.3: It is prohibited for anyone to graze adult cattle in an *olokeri*.
- 14.4: The area *Angata ker*i has been set aside for grazing pasture for livestock and wildlife at any time.
- 14.5: It is prohibited to build permanent structures in the *Angata ker*i area.
- 14.6: Structures which will not be used for more than six months for livestock enclosures and camps for tourists of not longer than one month are allowed in the *Angata ker*i."

As is evident from Box 2, the by-laws' provisions for land and resource uses build on traditional Maasai rules governing the movement of livestock, including those that apply to movement between different wet and dry season grazing areas. Each village generally contains a fairly comprehensive suite of resources—such as different types of grassland forage, water sources, salt licks, and small forests—which may be needed during the course of annual grazing movements. Communities' traditional rules have evolved over many years and are known to the whole community. Seasonal movements of livestock are traditionally determined by meetings of community elders. The western portion of the villages, which border Serengeti National Park, have traditionally been set aside for grazing during the middle of the long dry season that generally spans June-October in northern Tanzania. The land use plans also describe areas set aside for calves and young cows

(Figure 3). These areas, called *ilokeri*, are under the authority of individual households, as opposed to most pasture areas which are collectively held and accessed by the entire community. Finally, areas are also designated for permanent residence (only seasonal residence is permitted within the communal grazing areas) and agricultural cultivation.

**FIGURE 3: LAND USE ZONES FOR OLOLOSOKWAN VILLAGE IN LOLIONDO, NGORONGORO DISTRICT, AS DEFINED BY THE VILLAGE BY-LAWS AND LAND USE PLAN**



A main function of the land use plans, in Loliondo and throughout pastoralist areas of northern Tanzania, is to reconcile communities' own competing interests in agricultural cultivation—which has expanded in recent years in order to increase food security and sources of income—with traditional livestock management. By clearly demarcating areas for cultivation, communities undergoing changes in their livelihoods, demography, and ethnic composition can think about the trade-offs involved in land use decisions and how they can best plan their land uses in a secure and sustainable way. This is also important because immigrants from urban areas are increasingly coming to pastoralist areas in northern Tanzania to acquire plots of land for farming. By developing land use plans in a participatory way, it becomes more difficult for land to be allocated in ways that might go against the interest of the overall community. Newcomers who do not follow procedures for requesting and being allocated land from the village government can be taken to court.

In this way the land use plans and village by-laws also safeguard communities' lands and resources by formalising the rules (by-laws) that govern use and access of their lands.

However, this process of formalising land use rules and practices has also had some local disadvantages. A key element of land use planning is not only fixing boundaries between different land use zones within the community, but also determining the physical boundaries between different villages. Certificates of Village Land are required by the 1999 Village Land Act and are used to document a village's boundaries and thus the spatial extent of its rights under the land laws. Fixing the boundaries formally between villages can result in conflicts between neighbouring communities; traditionally boundaries between pastoralist villages were less important and not fixed to a line running through the land (Hodgson and Schroeder, 2002) and there was wider recognition of other communities' rights to access those areas during periods of stress, through reciprocal linkages between communities.

While formalising rights over land is essential for pastoralists to avoid losing their land to external uses and encroachment from immigrant farmers, it should be emphasised that the lands held by individual villages are generally not sufficient to sustain pastoralist production systems, and these wider reciprocal relationships at the scale of many villages or even districts remains central to pastoralist land uses in northern Tanzania. PLUP at the level of individual villages cannot account for this, but UCRT uses several strategies to attempt to incorporate these wider concerns. First, by working closely with district staff, larger-scale issues can be linked to district planning processes. This is important since district-level decisions can either support or disable local plans and enforcement efforts. Second, UCRT often works with multiple villages to harmonise resource management plans and rules over larger areas. In a number of cases UCRT has started working with an individual village on a land use plan, but when it became apparent that resource uses extended over larger areas (e.g. conflicts between livestock grazing and farming, charcoal extraction, or pastoralist movements), the work was extended to additional villages in order to scale-up the scope of planning efforts.

Tensions over village boundary demarcation in Loliondo have been exacerbated by the growing importance of local tourism ventures, which involve negotiated contracts with tourism companies. Such tourism ventures have expanded rapidly in Loliondo during the past 20 years as a form of land use and communal income. This rising value of the land increases villages' interests in securing their own areas. As a result of these factors, most of the Loliondo villages have minor boundary conflicts which have impeded them from obtaining their Certificates of Village Land because the full village boundaries are not yet agreed. Only Ololosokwan village has obtained this certificate as a result of UCRT facilitation in collaboration with district and regional government authorities.

An even greater challenge to the local land use plans has come from forces and interests outside the local villages. The Loliondo area is used as a tourist hunting concession which the government allocated to a member of the royal family of the United Arab Emirates in 1992 in very controversial circumstances (Honey, 1999). Tourist hunting concessions in Tanzania are allocated by the government's Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, without being required to seek the agreement of villages over siting, even if villages have fully documented land rights over an area. In Loliondo there have been frequent conflicts between the hunting operation and communities' tourism agreements with photograp-

ic and camping tourism companies, as well as between hunting and pastoralist grazing practices and interests. These investors and government decision makers entirely ignore local land use plans and regulations, and unlike the villages, have substantial amounts of power and money. In 2009 there were intense conflicts between villagers and government authorities over land use in Loliondo linked to the hunting concession's presence, with more than 100 homesteads being forcibly evicted from zoned village grazing and residential land. These dynamics have been a major challenge to the viability and relevance of the communities' land use plans and by-laws, and indeed to the entire body of UCRT's work in Loliondo over the past 11 years.

## **Yaeda Valley: securing land and resources for hunter-gatherers**

The Hadzabe are one of Tanzania's most unique and threatened human cultures, with a deep reservoir of indigenous knowledge about natural resource use that has enabled them to survive in a challenging semi-arid environment. The Hadzabe are strictly hunter-gatherers and do not raise any livestock, although nowadays some do tend crops. They have gradually been displaced to remote and relatively inhospitable semi-arid areas as other groups of people have taken over more productive lands over the past several centuries. By the 1990s only 1,000 Hadzabe survived in fragmented areas of northern Tanzania centered on the semi-arid Lake Eyasi basin south of Ngorongoro.

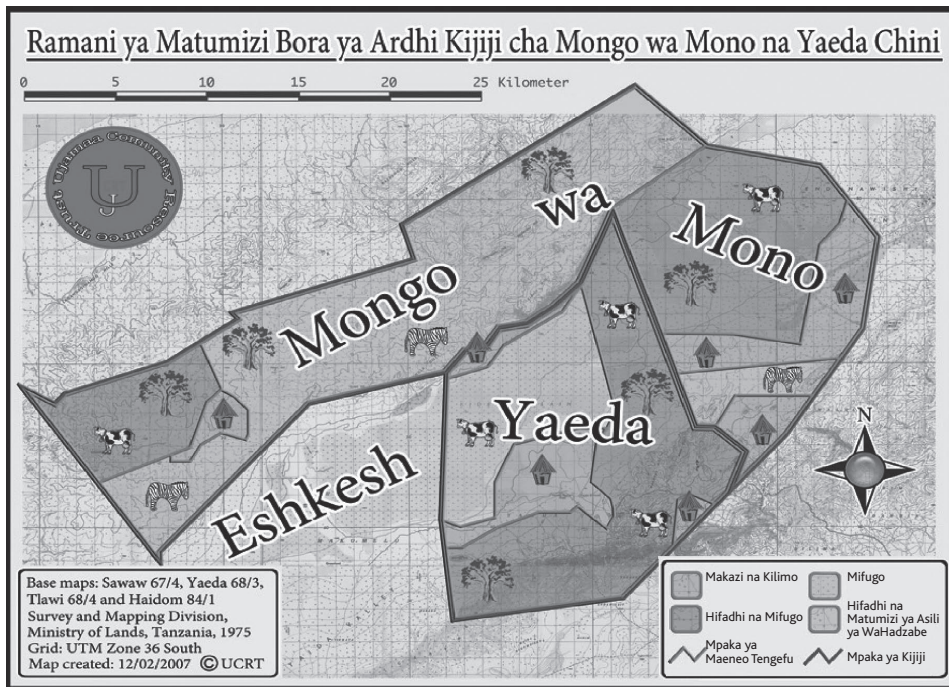
The cultural survival of these remaining communities has been threatened by several forces. First, their entire livelihood, based largely on hunting and eating wild animals and birds, had been effectively prohibited by the *1974 Wildlife Conservation Act*. Government anti-poaching efforts pushed the Hadzabe into more remote and marginal bushlands. Even in these areas, though, their lands were endangered by increasing pressures from human population growth and expanding resource use in adjacent areas. If natural resources were allowed to continue to be used unsustainably, the Hadzabe would have lost their livelihood and their culture. The survival of the Hadzabe is not only a matter of preserving cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity, but of maintaining the kinds of adaptive systems of indigenous resource management and knowledge systems that are needed to cope with new crises such as climate change. For example, as agriculture becomes less productive as a result of drought, loss of fertility and climate change in many other areas, the kinds of knowledge that hunter-gatherers possess about harvesting wild foods (plants, honey, etc) may become more important to food security and nutritional well-being for other communities as well. Sustaining those resources and the knowledge that enables their sustainable exploitation is critical for the Hadzabe but potentially also for other communities in northern Tanzania as pressures increase.

In the face of these challenges, the UCRT began working with the largest remaining Hadzabe settlement in the Yaeda Valley, Mbulu District, which lies south of Lake Eyasi. The objective was to use PLUP as a way to help the Hadzabe to secure their core remaining land area and resources, and to regulate use and appropriation of these areas by neighbouring groups of people. The most critical outcome of UCRT's work in Yaeda Valley was securing the Hadzabe their own village, Mongo wa Mono, where Hadzabe are the majority of the residents. This enabled the Hadzabe to control a village land area, and to become the legally-authorized managers of these lands through their Village Council. This is the only Hadzabe-majority

village in Tanzania; in all other areas where Hadzabe persist they are minorities within villages controlled by other ethnic groups, and often the Hadzabe have no representation at all on Village Councils and thus do not participate in local decision-making processes.

Once Mongo wa Mono was established, it developed a land use plan and by-laws governing a range of resource zones and use patterns. A key measure was reserving a large stretch of hills in the valley strictly for hunting and gathering activities by prohibiting livestock grazing and farming in this area. This 40 by 10 kilometre strip, which runs along the Kidero hills, contains a range of resources such as wildlife, honey, springs, and numerous baobabs and other native plants which provide critical sources of food for the Hadzabe (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4: LAND USE ZONES IN MONGO WA MONO AND YAEDA VILLAGES, YAEDA VALLEY, MBULU DISTRICT



Translation for land use zones key: 'Makazi na Kilimo'= residence and agriculture (dwelling icon); 'Mifugo'= livestock (cow icon); 'Hifadhi na Mifugo'= conservation and livestock (cow and tree icons); 'Hifadhi na Matumizi ya Asili ya WaHadzabe'= traditional conservation zone (zebra and tree icons).

One major outcome of the PLUP process has been that the ecological condition of this area has improved considerably over the past decade and can support hunter-gatherer livelihoods. It has allowed the recovery of local wildlife populations, which faced competition for livestock grazing as well as from hunting by farmers that had immigrated to the area. The recovery of wildlife and other natural resources (e.g. water sources, forested areas) has improved the food security of the local Hadzabe.

The Hadzabe continue to face challenges to their land use plans and by-laws from external interests in controlling and accessing their lands. Village leaders are often offered bribes by pastoralists from neighbouring areas who wish to graze their livestock in the community's richly-vegetated reserved area, particularly in drought years. Fortunately, the resurgence of wildlife in the area has also increased the abundance of tsetse flies, which help to deter livestock to some degree. There is a constant threat of local leaders colluding with outside interests to sell off pieces of land or access to the community's key reserved area. Higher-level government decisions also remain a potential threat, as in 2005-2007 when national and district government proposed allocating the Yaeda Valley as a hunting concession to an investor from Abu Dhabi (McCrummen, 2007). This proposal was however ultimately rejected, due in part to effective local mobilisation to resist this external imposition of extractive resource use. By forming their own village with its elected government and enforceable by-laws, the Hadzabe have the formal institutions to defend their interests, marginalised though they may be as a community.

The UCRT has worked closely with the Mbulu district government, particularly the District Land Officer, and the district officials now use the UCRT work as a model for PLUP in other parts of the district. District officials appreciate a range of outcomes from the PLUP work in Yaeda Valley, including the resolution of some conflicts between different ethnic and resource user groups in adjacent villages in the valley, as well as the formal natural resource conservation mechanisms developed and implemented at the village level. Building these partnerships at different levels of government and among diverse communities of people has been a key for improving the status of the Hadzabe.

## **The Simanjiro plains: local benefits from wildlife and range-land security**

One of the most distinctive features of northern Tanzanian landscapes is the relative abundance of large wild mammals—elephants, giraffe, zebra, lions, and many others. For local communities, living alongside wildlife is a fundamental challenge. Many species eat and damage crops, predators attack livestock, and elephants and buffalos can injure and even kill people. At the same time, wildlife underpins a tourism industry that is one of Tanzania's largest sources of foreign exchange and financial investment. Wildlife is owned by the government, and the tourism industry—which includes the trophy hunting industry—is heavily regulated. Most revenues from wildlife flow to the central government and private investors, with communities excluded from many commercial opportunities. At the same time, though, wildlife throughout northern Tanzania depends heavily on community lands for key habitats and resource uses.

The Simanjiro plains in Simanjiro District are a critical area for wildlife populations, particularly those that spend part of the year in Tarangire National Park (Figure 2). UCRT has worked in this area for over a decade with Emboreet village, which borders Tarangire and includes a small portion of the Simanjiro plains. Throughout its work in Simanjiro, solving conflicts between pastoralist livelihood interests and external wildlife conservation interests has been a central challenge. Government hunting concessions and efforts to expand state protected areas have presented repeated threats to local land use patterns. UCRT has, however, worked to help some villages in Simanjiro to capture benefits from tourism activities.

In 2004, UCRT began working with a range of private tourism companies and other collaborating NGOs on a new mechanism for generating village-level benefits from wildlife. A group of five tourism companies agreed to draw up a contract with Terrat village. This contract agreed to pay the village for preventing permanent settlements and cultivation in the village's portion of the Simanjiro plains. The tourism companies did not want to use the area for their businesses (and in the past four years never have). Instead, they simply wanted to design a mutually agreeable framework that would lead to the village voluntarily protecting the valuable wildlife habitat on their lands. This agreement has established a new framework for community-based conservation which both safeguards wildlife and benefits the community (Nelson *et al.*, 2010). UCRT has been the lead co-ordinator of the agreement, and has also built the capacity of Terrat village to benefit from its resources by facilitating land use planning and helping the village obtain its Certificate of Village Land. This has helped the villagers to defend the contracted area from outsiders attempting to farm it.

## Lessons learned

This section examines some of the key lessons that have emerged from the UCRT's experiences with facilitating PLUP at the local level during the past decade.

### Securing the resource base

The clearest and most lasting benefit of PLUP for local communities in different parts of northern Tanzania has been to create clear rules governing access to land and resources. For communities that are totally resource-dependent, such as the Akie and the Hadzabe, developing land use plans, village by-laws, and additional supporting documentation such as Certificates of Village Land have been critical to enacting local conservation measures and enforcing sustainable use regulations. For these communities, the PLUP process forms the basis for community-based natural resource management which is a key to conserving vulnerable ecosystems and supporting local livelihoods.

For many pastoralist communities, these same PLUP measures have helped to secure seasonal livestock pasture, to maintain communal access to rangelands that perpetuate internal equity and cultural values, and prevent conflicts between farming and livestock herding. As the demand for land in Tanzania continues to rise as a result of human population growth, increasing resource consumption and wealth, and growing penetration of global markets and investments, the pressure on local communities' lands and resources will increase. Using existing legal and institutional mechanisms for securing local land and resource claims is critical if community interests are to be advanced and defended in the near future. PLUP provides the strongest basis for doing this in rural Tanzania.

### Local governance and accountability

At the local level, land use plans and village by-laws are only as effective as the local governance institutions that enforce and oversee them. Land use plans are intended to provide an equitable collective framework for managing shared, communal resources. But such collective provisions depend on the accountability of local governance insti-



tutions such as Village Councils to pursue the community's shared interests. If village governance institutions are instead used to pursue individual leaders' interests, then land use plans will often be subverted to those interests, or simply ignored.

There are valuable lessons to share from some active and informed Village Assemblies that are able to demand accountability from their elected village governments.

For example, Ololosokwan village's very active Village Assembly demanded an audit of the Village Council's use of tourism receipts in 2003. It then voted to discharge from office the entire Village Council in 2007 and to re-elect a new council as a result of allegations of corruption. Arash village posts information outside the village government office on how tourism revenues are used as one mechanism designed to encourage transparency (Figure 5). In other villages, though, communal revenues are not being used transparently and may be primarily benefiting individual village leaders. Similarly, village leaders may allocate land contrary to established rules, procedures and communal interests. For pastoralists and hunter-gatherers, the accountability of village governance institutions is often the key difference between whether or not local resources are secured and protected, or sold off and lost forever.

**FIGURE 5: VILLAGE REVENUE (MAPATO) AND EXPENDITURE (MATUMIZI) FIGURES POSTED OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE OFFICE IN ARASH VILLAGE, LOLIONDO DIVISION**

4.	MBUKEN.	8.160.000=	3.297.000=	25%
5.	OLALAA.	6.624.000=	4.630.000=	40%
6.	VITONGOJI (4) VYA MAALONI.	49.748.000=	11.080.000=	70%
	JUMLA KUU YA KATA.	138.676.000=	41.342.000=	22%
				30%
<b>A) JUMLA KUU YA MAPATO:</b>				
	1) MICHANGO YOTE YA WANANCHI	= Sh. 41.342.000=		
5.	2) KUTOKA DED-NGORONGORO	= Sh. 25.000.000=		
	3) MICHANGO MINGINEYO	= Sh. 185.000=		
	Jumla KUU YA MAPATO =		66.527.000=	
<b>B) JUMLA KUU YA MATUMIZI:</b>				
7.	1) Kufungua A/C, Cash Book na Vitabu vya SAK	=	221.000=	
	2) Kupeleka Mawe na Mchanga (Lori 70) Site	=	2.486.000=	
	3) Jengo la Utawala (Adm. Block)	=	41.380.000=	
	4) Hostel inayojengwa na TASAF (mchango)	=	4.000.000=	
	5) Nguvu Kazi (Mbuken na Lyatwani)	=	351.000=	
	6) Nauti ya kupeleka fedha Benki	=	68.000=	

This is why UCRT is increasingly training entire villages in accountability and democratic governance procedures as a complement to the PLUP process and to ensure it has a more sustainable impact. UCRT has also recognised the fundamental importance of local political processes, such as village government elections. While UCRT must be careful in its involvement in such local politics, the reality is that its entire work and organisational mission largely depends on the ability of villagers to hold leaders accountable and thereby develop stronger local governance institutions over time.

These local governance issues highlight the need to go beyond formal planning or legal empowerment processes and to address the political processes that shape practical governance outcomes.

## National governance, policy and advocacy

The other key lesson emerging from the UCRT's experience is that local interests and plans can still often be overridden by national or even global interests even where local governance institutions are transparent and accountable, local capacity is high, and local rights have been strengthened and clarified. One prominent example of this which has created conflicts over and over again in the areas where UCRT works is the allocation by Tanzania's central government of hunting concessions on village lands. Many of the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist areas where UCRT works in northern Tanzania continue to host wildlife populations, which have always co-existed with pastoralist land use practices. Because wildlife is owned by the government, and the government increasingly places priority on attracting commercial investments and generating revenue from wildlife, it continues to allocate village lands for hunting concessions. This creates many conflicts with local land use plans, and local and even district authorities do not have the right to resolve these conflicts as they are created by actions at the national level.

The impact of national policy and governance processes on local livelihoods and resource management practices has seen UCRT evolve from a strictly local capacity-building organisation to playing a growing role in policy advocacy as a necessary complement to village-level work. And since it is impossible for a small community-level NGO working in remote rural areas to have any impact on national policy by itself, UCRT has also deepened and broadened its partnerships with other national organisations and networks, such as the Pastoralists' Indigenous NGO's Forum (PINGOS) and the Tanzania Natural Resource Forum, as well as some international partners, such as Oxfam-Ireland and Norwegian People's Aid. UCRT is also increasing villagers' capacity for direct involvement in policy advocacy, and links the grassroots with national policy debates.

A major organisational challenge for UCRT in the future will be developing more effective ways of influencing national governance decisions, while at the same time maintaining its historic strength of deep community-level presence and engagement. Balancing these aspects is a continuing challenge, particularly as governance processes in Tanzania seem to become more dominated by national political elites and commercial investments.

## Policy implications

How can these lessons be applied more widely? Tanzania's village-based local governance framework provides a critical basis for collective action and communal land and resource management. A major challenge for many other countries in sub-Saharan Africa will be to develop similar kinds of enabling institutions for community-based land and natural resource management. While Tanzania's policy and legislative environment for village governance and land tenure is largely enabling, the wider institutional context continues to create major challenges to local participation and resource rights. Other sectoral policies and laws, particularly for high-value resources such as wildlife and tourism, conflict directly with village land management interests and rights, and the mechanisms for resolving such legal conflicts in Tanzania remain weak or ineffective, since these conflicts have persisted for more than a decade (see Masara, 2000 and TNRF, 2008).

Implementation of policies and laws is a challenge, as formal policy provisions are often subverted by informal political interests. For example, while district officials bear formal responsibility for supporting local communities to secure rights over village lands, such officials often are more oriented towards personal interests in being able to access resources at the district level themselves, or to continue playing a 'gatekeeper' role. District officials also tend to be more oriented towards responding to national directives and interests in controlling lands and interests rather than local interests.

Indeed, one of the major lessons from the UCRT experience relates to the limitations of 'policy' in the context of contemporary Tanzania. Frequently there are wide gaps between formal government policy and the actual decisions and implementation process that shape local land rights and resource management outcomes. In this way, formal policy is often subverted by informal political interests and negotiations for resource access amongst different parties. For local communities and their supporters, it is thus critical to look beyond formal policy to this informal political realm when developing strategies for strengthening resource rights and tenure.

## Balancing secure rights with flexible access

In many semi-arid areas where local livelihoods depend on extensive patterns of land and resource use, a major trade-off exists between securing local rights over land and maintaining flexibility and wider rights of use and access beyond the village scale. On the one hand, it is clear that rural communities are increasingly threatened by global and national interests in natural resources that local people depend upon. As a result, communities such as those in northern Tanzania where UCRT works, have become preoccupied with defending local rights against external expropriations which threaten their very existence. Events during the past two years in Loliondo reinforce how real these threats are, and that they are increasing in scope and intensity.

Nevertheless, there are also clear disadvantages to 'enclosing' local resource use systems within the fairly rigid structures of village-level land use plans and regulations. Imposing these boundaries of land ownership and management may create conflicts between adjacent communities, who may fear losing access to areas across village boundaries that they need for seasonal uses such as livestock grazing or watering points. If empowering villages with rights and regulatory authority means boxing resource use patterns within the confines of individual villages, this may ultimately impair the sustainability of pastoralist or hunter-gatherer livelihoods which need greater mobility and flexibility, particularly in light of changes in the climate and resource distribution.

Communities across Africa are struggling to cope with these inherent trade-offs between the advantages and disadvantages of formalising rights and enclosing landscapes within local resource governance jurisdictions. The case of Kenya's group ranches (communal land ownership units established for pastoralist communities in the 1960s) illustrates this well. Group ranches have proven so pervasively susceptible to land appropriation by local or external elites, and unable to maintain collective rights and access, that they have been widely converted into individual land holding units to secure pastoralists' access rights, even though group ranch residents recognise that they cannot maintain semi-

arid livestock production on such small individual land parcels. Thus while individualising their land, pastoralists are also making informal access agreements across the boundaries of their properties to maintain the viability of livestock production (Mwangi, 2005).

In northern Tanzania matters are not yet so extreme, although they may become so in the future if communal village lands prove unable to resist external political-economic pressures. Villages often contain most of the resources that pastoralists or hunter-gatherers require during the course of the year, and when conditions are extreme reciprocal relationships across village boundaries allow for access at larger landscape scales. A fundamental aspect of land use plans in northern Tanzania is that they integrate a blend of traditional resource management practices, such as different grazing zones or customary protection of water sources, with formal modern legal institutions. UCRT has focused on capturing traditional rules and giving them a legal form that communities can use to secure rights and resist encroachments. By working with district planners and officials, and by working to harmonise land use plans across multiple adjacent villagers, UCRT has also tried to use PLUP to balance the trade-offs between localising tenure and maintaining larger-scale management and use systems.

## Conclusion

PLUP can be a powerful tool for capacity building, empowerment and conflict resolution when communities are really partners in the process and their interests are central. For external facilitators, such 'bottom-up' processes require deep levels of local knowledge, long-term relationships, and a well-established physical presence. Decentralised organisational structures, for example the use of field officers from target communities, can help promote meaningful local participation and control of development processes as well as the sustainability of external forms of support.

Tanzania possesses an exceptionally enabling institutional framework for local communities to collectively secure rights over and manage lands and natural resources. The PLUP process has had a substantial impact in many vulnerable and marginalized communities being able to strengthen their tenure security and regulate resource uses in sustainable ways.

However, in order to be effective such land and resource use planning efforts must be addressed across different scales and linked to policy and political advocacy efforts at national or even global levels. Local plans are also fundamentally linked to local accountability for making collective decisions about how to use shared resources—if there is no local accountability and transparency in decision-making, there is no 'P' in PLUP. While Tanzania's policy environment enables local groups to formalise rights over lands and resources, Tanzania's political economic environment is increasingly skewing power relations in favour of non-local actors such as commercial investors or national government bodies and political elites. This is the greatest current threat to local livelihoods and resource tenure interests, and must be addressed in strategic and collaborative ways if formal local planning processes are to have a lasting and sustainable impact.

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**International Institute for Environment and Development**

3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD

Tel: (+44 020) 7388 2117

Fax: (+44 020) 7388 2826

E-mail: [sustag@iied.org](mailto:sustag@iied.org)

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