



4<sup>th</sup> PACT International Conference, Narok, Kenya  
Draft Conference Proceedings Report



August 2025



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Indigenous Livelihoods Enhancement Partners (ILEPA) and Pathways Alliance for Change + Transformation (PACT) hosted the *Making Indigenous-Led Research Count* conference, in Narok, Kenya. From August 25th to August 28th, 2025, the conference brought together Indigenous Peoples (Youth, Women, Elders), policymakers, government officials, academic researchers (student and early career included) in multiple disciplines, conservationists, donors/funders, rights activists, and journalists from Africa, Asia, and the United States of America.

The gathering affirmed a simple yet powerful principle: research about Indigenous Peoples must be led, owned, and interpreted by Indigenous Peoples themselves. Participants highlighted that research has too often been extractive and externally driven, producing data that marginalizes rather than empowers. By contrast, Indigenous-led research ensures that evidence is relevant, accurate, and transformative. Grounded in the spirit of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other global frameworks, the conference emphasized the importance of knowledge sovereignty, the decolonization of research, and self-determined development. While not always explicitly stated these three central themes also indicate the well-being of Indigenous Peoples and their communities.

Indigenous Peoples play an indispensable role in shaping and sustaining community-led development, particularly Indigenous women. Women have historically carried the responsibility of ensuring family and community resilience important indicators of community well-being. By foregrounding women’s agency, the conference demonstrated how Indigenous-led research must be both gender-responsive and intergenerational to secure just and sustainable futures.

In reference to the role of universities in research, the conference was a declaration that Indigenous Peoples are not merely subjects of study but producers of knowledge, not relics of the past but custodians of the future. By affirming the need for genuine partnerships between academic institutions and Indigenous Peoples’ organizations, it demanded universities must move beyond extractive approaches and instead support methodologies that center Indigenous epistemologies. The commitment to Indigenous-led research thus marks a paradigm shift toward dignity, justice, and sustainable, self-determined futures.

The conference was convened through the collaborative efforts of ILEPA and PACT in partnership with academic institutions, including Maasai Mara University and University of Michigan. These organizers brought together complementary strengths—community-based advocacy, regional

and continental networks, and scholarly expertise—to create a platform where Indigenous voices could lead in shaping research agendas.

## PREFACE

The conference marked a historic milestone in advancing Indigenous knowledge sovereignty and self-determined development. Anchored in UNDRIP, ILO Convention 169, the SDGs, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, it positioned Indigenous-led research as central to dignity, justice, and sustainable futures.

Participants included community elders, women, youth, scholars, policy makers, and government representatives from Africa, Asia, and the Americas—underscoring the interconnected struggles of Indigenous Peoples across diverse ecological and cultural landscapes. Grounded by traditional prayers, songs, and testimonies from the Maasai of Narok, the gathering began with a decolonial act of ceremony, affirming the legitimacy of Indigenous epistemologies and setting the tone for dialogue rooted in memory, ritual, and lived experience.

Key contributions from leaders highlighted structural imbalances in research that have historically disempowered Indigenous Peoples. They emphasized the urgent need to reclaim research as a site of resistance, ensuring that communities set the agenda and control both methodology and interpretation. Universities, including the University of Michigan, School of Sustainability and Environment, and Maasai Mara University, responded by affirming that true partnerships must move beyond tokenism—pairing academic rigor with Indigenous epistemology to address global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and cultural erosion. This call for genuine collaboration was reinforced by women leaders, who underscored gender and intergenerational equity, challenging exclusionary research structures and elevating the knowledge of women, elders, and youth.

The conference affirmed that Indigenous Peoples must lead research about their own territories, knowledge systems, and solutions to environmental and socio-cultural challenges, positioning such research as central to resilience, justice, and identity. The Majimoto community visit provided a living testament to this principle: through meticulous documentation, the community reclaimed ancestral land, strengthened livelihoods via livestock initiatives, and advanced healthcare through the Indigenous Navigator Project—achievements aptly described as “self-determined development.” Beyond these local successes, the visit created a platform for sharing learning, building deep partnerships, and reinforcing the global movement for Indigenous research sovereignty. Reflections from international delegates situated Majimoto’s

experience within a wider tapestry of Indigenous renewal, affirming a universal aspiration for autonomy and justice while strengthening solidarity across continents.

The proceedings affirmed a paradigm shift: from research on Indigenous Peoples to research by, with, and for Indigenous Peoples. At the heart of this shift is **strategic research** that influences policy decisions, a deliberate approach rooted in Indigenous priorities that blends ancestral wisdom with modern methods to safeguard land, culture, and livelihoods. Its impact is profound—validating knowledge systems, shaping policies, amplifying voices, and ensuring that data empowers rather than marginalizes. Done ethically and inclusively, Indigenous-led research becomes not only a tool of inquiry but also an instrument of resilience, justice, and transformation. This conference stands as both a record of dialogue and a catalyst for structural change in how knowledge is produced, validated, and applied, charting a path toward sustainable, inclusive, and self-determined futures.

## Table of Contents

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>2</b>
<b>PREFACE</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1. CONFERENCE OVERVIEW</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>1.1</b> .....	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>
.....	<b>6</b>
<b>1.2 PARTICIPANTS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>1.3 CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES AND ANTICIPATED OUTPUTS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>1.4 METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>2. THEMATIC INPUT(S) AND DISCUSSION SESSIONS</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>2.1 INDIGENOUS PEOPLES’ EXPERIENCES AND PERSPECTIVES IN ENGAGING WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLES-LED RESEARCH</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>2.2 ENGAGING WITH AFRICA INDIGENOUS PEOPLES &amp; LOCAL COMMUNITIES DIALOGUE STRATEGY IN THE FOREST PEOPLE CLIMATE PROGRAM OF CLUA</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>2.3 YOUTH/EARLY CAREER LEADERS PANEL</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>2.4 POLICY TRENDS IN RECOGNITION AND PROMOTION OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE AND WELL-BEING INDICATORS</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>2.5 EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS IN PRACTICAL RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT OF INDIGENOUS LED RESEARCH AND EDUCATION</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>2.6 A PRACTITIONERS PANEL</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>2.7 EXPERIENCES IN IPs’ AND Lcs’ ACCESS TO FINANCE SUPPORT IN RESEARCH</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>2.8 THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA, COMMUNICATION AND PUBLICATION IN PROMOTION OF INDIGENOUS-LED RESEARCH AND EDUCATION</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>3. PATHWAYS TO SOLUTIONS: WORK GROUP SESSIONS</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>3.1 WELL-BEING INDICATORS WORKING GROUP</b> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>3.2 INDIGENOUS-LED RESEARCH AND EDUCATION WORKING GROUP</b> .....	<b>25</b>
<b>3.3 ACCESS TO RESOURCES WORKING GROUP</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>4. INFORMAL GATHERING &amp; NETWORKING: CULTURAL GALA DINNER</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>5. PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH DEMONSTRATED: COMMUNITY LEARNING VISIT, MAJI MOTO, NAROK COUNTY</b> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>6. ANNEXEURE</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>ANNEX I – PROGRAM SCHEDULE</b> .....	<b>30</b>
<b>ANNEX II – MEDIA COVERAGE</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>ANNEX III – LIST OF PARTICIPANTS</b> .....	<b>36</b>
<b>ANNEX IV – ABOUT THE SPEAKERS</b> .....	<b>44</b>



# 1. Conference Overview

## 1.1 Introduction

The 4<sup>th</sup> Pathway Alliance for Change and Transformation (PACT) International Conference on Indigenous-Led Research and the first Africa Indigenous Peoples’ and Local Communities’ Dialogue Strategy within the Forest Peoples’ Climate Program of the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA) marked a historic milestone as the first of its kind to be convened in Indigenous Peoples’ territory in Kenya.

Previous PACT conferences held in the United States, Nepal, and Indonesia are responsible for immediate positive changes relating to (1) relationships among Indigenous Peoples, non-Indigenous academic institutions, and governments; (2) inspiring and training early-career and young Indigenous leaders; (3) improved connections and strategies for diverse funders to best support Indigenous Peoples; and (4) enhancement of national and regional awareness of Indigenous rights and environmental issues and the important role that Indigenous-led research and education play in solutions to conservation, climate change response, and food sovereignty. ILEPA as the host organization and fellow PACT partner designed this conference to build upon those previous positive changes.

The proceedings opened with the Kenyan National Anthem, followed by prayers delivered in the Maasai language by an Age set leader from the Maasai community. Post prayers several speakers set the tone and themes for the 4<sup>th</sup> PACT International Conference., which included speaking about Indigenous-led research and well-being. ILEPA’s Executive Director Mr. Kimaren Ole Riamet and first opening session speaker extended a warm welcome to all participants. He emphasized the quality, inclusive and cross-sectoral nature of the dialogue to come especially with such diverse participants across communities and sectors present.

Following Ole Riamet, Indigenous Peoples’ leader Ole Simel emphasized the centrality of Indigenous-led research in shaping policy and correcting narratives that have historically undermined Indigenous communities. As conservators of their environments and cultures they must identify problems, generate solutions, and safeguard communities including their role as conservators. Next on behalf of PACT, Samuel Nguifo, founder and executive director of the Center for Development and Environment (CED) underscored the importance of convening Indigenous groups into a unified network to reclaim research sovereignty. According to Nguifo, the 4<sup>th</sup> Conference provides a global platform to mainstream Indigenous-led research in policy and decision-making, ensuring that Indigenous voices are not peripheral but foundational to transformative change.

Representing Maasai Mara University, Prof. Samson Mabwoga articulated a vision of higher education as a catalyst for amplifying Indigenous voices, integrating local innovation, and promoting collaborative research

that both respects and leverages community expertise. Ms. Milka Talaa, representative of the Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI), issued a call to reclaim Indigenous-led research and education as pathways to dignity and respect, and as tools to challenge entrenched power dynamics.

Commissioner Caroline Lentupuru, of the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), emphasized NGEC's constitutional mandate to promote gender equality and non-discrimination for minorities and marginalized groups. Commissioner Lentupuru stressed the value of research lies not in its academic permanence on library shelves but in its capacity to generate policy, inform development, and redress systemic inequalities.

Finally, Hon. Josphat Lowoi, Secretary - Minorities and Marginalized Affairs Unit (MMAU) in the Office of the President, called the conference a watershed moment in the transition from marginalization to empowerment. Recalling the re-establishment of his Unit in 2023 with a mandate to promote and protect Indigenous and marginalized communities, Lowoi announced the development of a national policy on Indigenous Peoples' rights supported by the World Bank, NGEC, MPIDO, and other partners.

## 1.2 Participants

The conference attracted a truly global audience, bringing together a diverse array of participants and perspectives. Delegates included representatives from both national and county governments, development partners, Indigenous Peoples' organizations, women and youth leaders, and scholars from leading academic institutions. International representation was notably broad, with participants drawn from Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, the United States of America, Cameroon, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Republic of Kenya. This diversity underscored the universality of Indigenous struggles and the shared urgency of advancing Indigenous-led research across continents.

Beyond the physical gathering, the conference also leveraged digital platforms to maximize reach and inclusivity, with live streaming via [YouTube](#). Creating this accessibility allowed for virtual participation and real-time engagement from global audiences. This hybrid model reinforced the conference's commitment to accessibility, knowledge-sharing, and cross-cultural dialogue. It ensured the conversations extended beyond geographical boundaries and contributed to strengthening a truly interconnected global movement for Indigenous research sovereignty.

### 1.3 Conference Objectives and Anticipated Outputs

The objective of the conference is to develop a framework to move discussions to actionable activities. Specifically, the conference objectives were as follows:

- i. Foster national, regional, and international awareness of how Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and land stewardship practices are solutions to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation & resilience including overall well-being
- ii. Demonstrate reasons why Indigenous Peoples' self-determination in developing and implementing research projects is crucial for unlocking their biodiversity and climate solutions and in enhancement of well-being.
- iii. Energize (a) early career Indigenous scholars and leaders and (b) non-Indigenous academic institutions to partner with Indigenous Peoples, including through piloting PACT's first ever Youth training.
- iv. Create strategies and logistics for ensuring that Indigenous Peoples' research, education, and climate, biodiversity solutions and overall aspiration towards well-being can be financed directly and sustainably by Funders.

Mr. Ole Riamit expounded the theme of conference being '**Indigenous-led Research and Education**' from three lenses through which the conference discussions will take outlined as follows:

- i. **Wellbeing indicators relevant for Indigenous people** – *What critical indicators should be monitored in order to put a pulse on what IPs are doing (trackable)?*
- ii. **The place of youth/early career leaders in IP led research** – *What is the place of early career leaders in the place of Indigenous- led research?*
- iii. **Indigenous ways of knowing and doing** - *What is the place of Indigenous Knowledge and does learning only constitute class learning? Does learning constitute observations and experiences?*

The expected outcomes of the conference are multifaceted, reflecting both immediate and long-term ambitions for Indigenous-led research and advocacy. The outcomes are:

- i. Trackable well-being indicators relevant to Indigenous People<sup>1</sup>
- ii. Framework for promoting Indigenous-led research to inform action<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> By the end of 2026 there will be a report and article highlighting these well-being indicators.

<sup>2</sup> This Framework has been created and is available.

- iii. Solidarity and collaboration through synergizing actors; and Community experience on how creatively engage in research.

## 1.4 Methodology

ILEPA structured the conference through a rich blend of keynote addresses, moderated thematic panel and plenary discussions, and breakaway sessions designed to foster deeper dialogues, reflections, and collaborative learning. Keynote speakers provided high-level framing of the central themes including Indigenous-led research and well-being. Panel discussions brought together diverse voices, including Indigenous leaders, government representatives, scholars, and development partners. Panels allowed for multi-perspective analysis of the central themes exchange of best practices across contexts. Breakaway sessions created spaces where participants engaged directly with one another, shared localized experiences, and co-created solutions tailored to the realities of Indigenous communities.

- a) The Mentimeter platform, a technological method, complemented the in-person methodologies. Where appropriate, participants engaged with the Mentimeter platform to contribute anonymous insights, vote on priorities, and visualize collective opinions instantly. This layered methodology enhanced inclusivity and participation along with the creation of collective knowledge production. Together the methodologies ensured the grounding of conference outcomes and products such as well-being indicators in both theoretical insights and lived experiences.

## 2. Thematic Input(s) and Discussion Sessions

### 2.1 Indigenous Peoples' Experiences and Perspectives in Engaging with Indigenous Peoples-led research

Prof. Kyle White from the University of Michigan and PACT Secretariat convenor presented a keynote address to start day one post opening session. He emphasized the importance of helping students appreciate human rights through the lens of Indigenous Peoples. Using forests as an example, Prof. Kyle explained healthy relationships are mirrored in thriving ecosystems, where conservation and human well-being are interdependent. He stressed that for Indigenous Peoples, wellbeing emerges from relationships at the heart of conservation and that entire communities must be involved. He concluded with the powerful reflection: "Forest is us, we are part of nature, and nature is us."

Prof. Arun Agrawal followed delivering a keynote address outlining the University of Notre Dame's initiatives. These initiatives included training young Indigenous leaders and critically assessing emerging technologies like

artificial intelligence, to ensure they align with Indigenous values and contexts. Prof. Arun spoke to how Indigenous knowledge has gained respect in academic spaces, it continues to be sidelined in policy-making processes, particularly within U.S. politics where setbacks remain evident.

Prof. Sarone Ole Sena explored the role of non-state actors, particularly NGOs, in advancing Indigenous-led research and education. His work, particularly through, Maasai Education and Social Change, (IMEC), has focused on transforming communities “village by village,” strengthening Indigenous knowledge systems from within. He stressed that local people have been conducting research within their communities for generations and will continue to do so.

Concluding this round of keynote speakers, Mr. Joseph Ole Sipitiek, the County Executive Committee Member (CECM) for Tourism, highlighted the intersections between tourism, conservation, and Indigenous custodianship. Using Loita as a case study, he emphasized that good governance in conservation is rooted in Indigenous stewardship. Such models remain under threat. He underscored the urgency to align tourism and conservation practices with the custodianship principles of Indigenous Peoples.

At the plenary session, participants reflected on the power of research as both a tool of influence and a means of self-determination. They reaffirmed that “we are all researchers,” a sentiment translated in the Maasai language as “*Mmemanyayu meleeno*,” capturing the collective ownership of knowledge production and its centrality to Indigenous renewal. Participants also pointed to difficulties in developing local human resources and building capacity at the community level, particularly among Indigenous people with little or no formal education. Persistent struggles include the misalignment between external funders and Indigenous priorities, a lack of deep understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems, weak community engagement, and project failures that perpetuate cycles of marginalization.

These challenges continue to undermine the sustainability of Indigenous-led initiatives. Participants created recommendations to sustain local knowledge systems, empower communities, and ensure that development interventions are aligned with Indigenous priorities.

Recommendations from the session:

- i. Translate Indigenous-led research into actionable policy frameworks
- ii. Strengthen training for Indigenous communities at all levels.

## 2.2 Engaging with Africa Indigenous Peoples & Local Communities Dialogue strategy in the Forest People Climate Program of CLUA

Ms. Edna Kaptoyo, Grantmaking and Partnerships Officer, *Pawanka Fund*, introduced the session by highlighting the diverse strategies in climate resilience and the need for funding to match community goals. Funders' external dictation of how money should be used has created and continues a persistent gap between funder and community priorities. Due to this persistent gap Ms. Edna underscored funding must be community-led, with priorities defined locally rather than imposed externally. She discussed how the central role of youth as present leaders should be a local priority. Finally, Ms. Edna discussed how true resilience also encompasses conflict resolution, cultural and language revitalization, and systems change beyond incremental adjustments.

Samuel Nguiffo, delivered the keynote address on forests in Africa. He emphasized the complexity of defining a forest and that it cannot be reduced to a technical or industrial concept. It must be defined by the communities who live within and depend on it. For Indigenous Peoples, forests are not just trees. They represent land, identity, and cultural continuity.

He noted crises facing African forests today are rooted in more than a century of marginalization. Two major challenges persist: the commodification of forests as mere economic resources and the rapid combination of multiple destructive activities—both legal and illegal—that accelerate degradation. Shrinking forest space has led to increased competition, conflict among different actors, and the erosion of Indigenous cultures, economies, and learning systems that traditionally thrived within forest ecosystems.

Reflecting on the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Commission Report, Nguiffo cautioned that at the current pace of exploitation, economic growth driven by unsustainable forest use will not last beyond the next forty years. He warned that without urgent interventions, not only will ecological collapse ensue, but invaluable Indigenous knowledge systems tied to the forest will also disappear. To avert such a crisis, he stressed that solutions must be community-driven, rooted in the lived experiences, knowledge, and practices of Indigenous Peoples who have sustained forests for generations. He called for recognition of youth diversity as critical to this process. Positioning young Indigenous leaders as essential custodians in bridging traditional wisdom with contemporary strategies for forest conservation and sustainable development.

In a virtual presentation, Deborah Delgado, representing the Climate and Land Use Alliance (CLUA) through its Forest Peoples and Climate (FPC) Program, outlined the Alliance's vision to shift power and resources directly to Indigenous Peoples (IPs), Local Communities (LCs), and Afro-descendant groups.

CLUA's approach prioritizes self-determined development as the cornerstone of both thriving ecosystems and resilient communities. Central to this vision is halting deforestation and protecting tropical forests while advancing people-centered strategies. The program seeks to reform financing models, moving away from top-down, extractive systems toward direct support for IP- and LC-led initiatives.

Ms. Delgado emphasized well-being indicators must be defined by communities themselves rather than imposed externally. In other words, "thriving forests require thriving communities." She discussed how this means, Indigenous-led research is indispensable for grounding policy and practice in local realities. Critical local realities included the recognition of East Africa and savannah ecosystems, alongside CLUA/FPC priority geographies such as the Congo Basin and the Amazon.

Ms. Delgado further stressed the importance of youth and women as central actors in shaping climate and conservation futures. Youth serve as bridges between traditional knowledge systems and modern advocacy tools. Often youth use digital platforms to amplify voices globally and push for accountability in climate finance and policy. CLUA's strategy embeds youth leadership in indicator-setting processes to ensure that their priorities shape future funding frameworks. Women's perspectives, likewise, are seen as essential in sustaining cultural integrity and intergenerational continuity.

To operationalize these commitments, CLUA aims to create direct financial channels for IP- and LC-led organizations, promote research partnerships positioning youth as co-creators of knowledge, and incorporate gender and youth equity as core measures of success. As Delgado concluded, "youth and women's voices must be visible in every indicator of success we use."

During the discussion post Ms. Delgado's presentation, Ole Simel raised the concern of CLUA's strategic focus appeared limited to the Congo Basin. He urged the Alliance to expand its attention to East Africa and other forest-linked landscapes. In response, Ms. Delgado affirmed that while the Congo Basin remains a priority, CLUA's vision extends beyond tropical forests, recognizing that ecosystems are deeply interconnected. She emphasized that East African landscapes such as savannas and grasslands are equally significant, both for their role in carbon sequestration and for their importance as cultural and livelihood landscapes for Indigenous communities.

Mrs. Marima highlighted the strong presence of women at the conference and their consistent demand for meaningful inclusion in decision-making processes. Ms. Delgado reiterated CLUA's commitment, affirming that women's and youth voices are "non-negotiable" within its well-being indicators strategy. She stressed

women's leadership and perspectives are essential for ensuring cultural integrity, intergenerational knowledge transfer, and the design of equitable funding frameworks that reflect the lived realities of Indigenous Peoples.

### 2.3 Youth/Early Career Leaders Panel

To walk the talk about centering youth the conference included not only a panel with youth, but moderated by youth. Judy Kipkenda (Kenya) and Sharana Sherpa (Nepal) served as the moderators for the panel, which highlighted the voices of youth and early-career Indigenous leaders in advancing nature conservation through Indigenous knowledge systems.

Laurice Nyangono (Cameroon) started off the panel with the discussion that forest is not only a source of health, shelter, and construction materials but also a spiritual connection to ancestors. Education systems need to integrate culture, citizenship, and sustainability skills. Edith Santiyian (Kenya) followed and observed although there are many opportunities for youth to engage in governance and policy many remain underfunded and unrepresented for Indigenous youth

Elias Kimayio (Kenya) raised concerns about restrictive land policies disadvantaging Indigenous youth. Kimayio called for reforms and capacity-building. Carson Kiburu (Kenya) stressed the importance of decolonizing knowledge by intertwining Indigenous systems with contemporary science through intergenerational dialogue. Saris Pauline, Executive Director at Pragmatic Social Action from Northern Kenya, warned of the erosion of Indigenous identity as youth risk assimilation into other communities, compounded by weak documentation of Indigenous knowledge.

Finally, Soinei Parsena (Kenya) highlighted barriers to accessing opportunities, noting that policy processes often privilege a select few while excluding broader youth participation. Collectively, the panel called for stronger inclusion of Indigenous youth, better documentation of knowledge, and deeper integration of culture into education and conservation strategies.

Through a Mentimeter poll, Indigenous youth shared how they see themselves as bridge-builders between traditional knowledge and modern approaches, ensuring intergenerational transfer of wisdom while driving innovation through technology, advocacy, and cultural revitalization. They view forests not only as ecosystems but as sources of identity, spirituality, health, and livelihood.

Yet, their contributions remain constrained by systemic barriers, including exclusion from decision-making, limited access to climate finance, and lengthy policy processes that sideline Indigenous perspectives. Cultural erosion, migration, and the dominance of external research further undermine Indigenous continuity,

while forced evictions, lack of legal awareness, and mentorship gaps perpetuate marginalization. Despite these challenges, new opportunities are emerging. Youth-led networks such as the Kenya Indigenous Youth Network and cross-border advocacy platforms are amplifying Indigenous voices. Digital storytelling and cultural festivals are revitalizing identity and fostering solidarity. Increasing participation in policymaking, use of biocultural rights frameworks, and engagement in academia are also expanding their agency.

Hope is drawn from mentorship, global representation, and the growing recognition of Indigenous knowledge in climate action. As youth continue to assert themselves, they stress that they do not bring only stories but also tangible solutions, affirming their indispensable role in shaping self-determined and sustainable futures.

#### **2.4 Policy trends in Recognition and Promotion of Indigenous knowledge and well-being indicators**

Ms. Ann Sammante, Head of Programs and Partnerships at Mainyoito Pastoralists Integrated Development Organization (MPIDO), introduced the last session of day one on harvesting lessons and experiences on national, regional, county governments in policy trends in recognition and promotion of Indigenous Peoples' rights. Recognition must move from rhetoric to implementation. Also, the recognition and implementation of Indigenous Peoples' rights seems to be an indicator of well-being for Indigenous communities.

Hon. Josphat Lowoi, Head of the Minorities and Marginalized Affairs Unit (MMAU), started the panel by providing an overview of laws in Kenya protecting Indigenous Peoples' and their well-being. He discussed how Kenyan Constitution recognizes Indigenous Peoples in Kenya. Article 56 of the Kenyan Constitution obligates the state to address the needs of minorities and marginalized groups, and Article 260 defines communities while safeguarding their rights across education, land, health, and infrastructure. He noted the Community Land Act of 2016 provides a framework for the registration of communal land, further strengthening tenure security for Indigenous communities. As discussed throughout day one of the conference land tenure and Indigenous communities well-being are interconnected.

In 2023, the MMAU office was established through an Executive Order to spearhead recognition, mapping, and policy development for Indigenous Peoples. This included the ongoing formulation of the country's first Indigenous Peoples Policy and a draft bill aimed at securing Indigenous rights beyond policy into law. By incorporating Indigenous experts into governance structures and pursuing inclusive consultations, Kenya is making steady progress toward embedding Indigenous priorities in its governance framework. Hon.

Lowoi affirmed, “Kenya is on course to lead Africa in creating strong legal and policy instruments to protect Indigenous Peoples’ rights. This is no longer optional—it is a constitutional mandate.”

Commissioner Caroline Lentupuru of the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) highlighted Kenya’s progress in embedding Indigenous voices within governance and policy frameworks. Minority and marginalized groups now enjoy reserved representation in commissions and senior government roles. NGEC has a dedicated commissioner representing Indigenous communities. She discussed how draft policies undergo public participation before legislation, ensuring community-driven and inclusive frameworks. As a milestone example, she cited the Meteorological Law, which now requires the inclusion of an Indigenous expert on its board to integrate traditional forecasting with scientific predictions. Affirming the way forward, she stated, “We are in the right direction. Policies and laws must embed Indigenous knowledge—not as an afterthought but as a core component of national development.”

Ms. Sharana Sherpa from Nepal shared that the 2015 Constitution of Nepal formally recognizes Indigenous Peoples as *Adivasi Janajati*, with 59 groups officially listed while many more await recognition. The Constitution guarantees inclusive representation, promotion of Indigenous languages, and protection of cultural heritage, while Nepal has also ratified international instruments such as ILO Convention 169, requiring state agencies to align national laws with global standards.

Nepali governance structures permit Indigenous Peoples to exercise authority at lower levels of government. Some local municipalities legalized customary institutions in conservation areas. For example, the Shagya Act passed by Chumnoebri Rural Municipality to safeguard cultural practices within protected zones. Throughout the day other speakers and participants have highlighted the importance to Indigenous Peoples’ well-being to able to govern themselves and participate in cultural practices.

Ms. Sharana discussed that even with the local customary governance and other Nepali laws and policies gaps remain. Indigenous communities often find their languages and food heritage under threat. Encouragingly, initiatives such as the Master’s in Indigenous Studies program at Kathmandu University—the first in South Asia—show the potential of Indigenous-led education models. Ms. Sharana emphasized, “Indigenous well-being begins with education rooted in our languages, food systems, and governance traditions—not imposed models.”

Cindy Yohana, a youth leader from AMAN (Indonesia), highlighted that while Indonesia’s official narrative claims “we are all Indigenous,” this has limited the recognition of distinct Indigenous Peoples. Government priorities often lean toward economic trade. The 1945 Constitution—particularly Articles 18B and

28B—recognizes Indigenous Peoples and their traditional rights, and Article 25(3) protects traditional languages.

Ms. Cindy explained how landmark legal decisions in Indonesia created critical milestones such as the 2012 Constitutional Court ruling affirming that customary forests belong to Indigenous Peoples rather than the state. Complementary frameworks such as the Social Forestry and Customary Forest Programs, along with the Village Law of 2014, empower communities with legal access to land and self-governance. Some districts have integrated local knowledge into development plans, and while the law permits local content curricula, national implementation remains weak.

AMAN has responded to the local content curricula law by establishing over 100 Indigenous community schools to safeguard language and traditional knowledge. Ms. Cindy stressed economic measures still dominate current well-being indicators. She called instead for holistic frameworks centered on territorial security, spiritual harmony, and biodiversity health. She concluded with, “Our survival depends on embedding Indigenous well-being indicators beyond GDP—in schools, in forests, and in our governance systems.”

Samuel Nguiffo from Cameroon observed that, much like in other Central African countries, the recognition of Indigenous Peoples faces a major challenge: while the 1996 Constitution provides their rights must be protected and promoted, it neither defines who qualifies as Indigenous nor provides a census. This leads to policy paralysis. Mr. Samuel emphasized that Cameroon’s approach, which often ties Indigenous recognition to donor-funded projects, is inadequate. He argued that the government must establish comprehensive legal and policy frameworks, noting, “Indigenous Peoples in Cameroon are valued for their knowledge but invisible in law. Recognition cannot remain selective or donor driven.”

Ms. Mary Beth Jäger, representing the University of Michigan and the PACT Secretariat, highlighted the complex realities of deliberate erasure and widespread public ignorance persist of the 574 federally recognized tribes and over 100 state-recognized tribes in the United States. She noted that recent policy shifts, such as a federal Executive Order declaring English the official language, threaten Indigenous language revitalization and undermine cultural continuity. Redefining well-being, Ms. Mary Beth stressed that Indigenous perspectives go beyond physical health to encompass cultural and spiritual vitality, land security, and community cohesion.

Ms. Mary Beth gave the example of the Swinomish Tribe, which reframed health metrics away from calories and the Body Mass Index toward food sovereignty, language continuity, and intergenerational knowledge transmission. The Swinomish also adopted the first Tribal Climate Adaptation Plan in the U.S., grounding climate resilience in cultural priorities. However, persistent barriers such as policy hostility, grant

defunding, and even denial of the climate crisis continue to weaken Indigenous-led initiatives. Ms. Jäger underscored that the vision forwards rests on community-based research and youth leadership as central pillars of resilience, affirming that “True well-being is not just the absence of disease—it’s the presence of language, land, and culture for generations to come.”

## **2.5 Experiences and lessons in Practical recognition and support of Indigenous led research and education**

Starting day two, Lawrence Ole Mbelati, a Maasai leader from Kajiado County and serves as General Manager for the Indigenous-led Enoonkishu and Mbokishi Conservancies in the Northern Mara ecosystem moderated the conservation session. The conversation focused on the intrinsic link between land security as a prerequisite for biodiversity security. Insecure tenure perpetuates evictions, land-grabbing, and ecological degradation. His reflections discussed Indigenous Peoples are not passive beneficiaries of conservation initiatives. Indigenous Peoples can and are shaping governance frameworks, policy design, and ecosystem stewardship. Indigenous knowledge constitutes a strategic resource for climate resilience, sustainable livelihoods, and long-term conservation planning. Ole Mbelati emphasized “community-led conservation is not charity; it is strategy.”

In his keynote address titled *"The Evolution and Future Trajectories of Partnerships Around Indigenous-Led Research and Education, Including the Role of Academia in Centering Indigenous Self-Determination"*, Prof. Kariuki Kirigia, called for a paradigm shift in the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and academic research. Prof. Kirigia challenged participants to shift from extractive models of knowledge production to frameworks rooted in co-creation, community participation, and Indigenous self-determination. Current practices, he observed, continue to sideline local researchers, reducing them to assistants rather than recognizing them as scholars.

Prof. Kariuki Kirigia spoke critically of external funding models that dictate research agendas while marginalizing Indigenous priorities. Instead, he advocated for community-driven research frameworks that respond to the societal challenges Indigenous communities already understand and navigate. Prof. Kirigia stressed the need to recognize both traditional intellectuals working within institutions and organic intellectuals who emerge from community struggles and counter-hegemonic movements. He also proposed co-designing research projects from inception with Indigenous communities, ensuring fair recognition through shared authorship and intellectual credit rather than token acknowledgments.

Also important to this paradigm shift away from extractive research is a shift in epistemological framework. Prof. Kirigia rooted in African philosophies of knowledge, underscoring the importance of

epistemology, ontology, cosmology, and pedagogy in reshaping academic approaches. He framed research as “re-search”—a process of remembering and reconnecting broken histories, stories, and systems. In this context, Indigenous knowledge must be restored as a legitimate and authoritative system rather than being relegated to anecdotal input.

Finally, the professor highlighted multiple real-life examples of the paradigm shift. Prof. Kirigia shared about the *Institutional Canopy of Conservation (I-CAN) Project*, led by Prof. John Galaty of McGill University. It successfully combined academic rigor with community participation. The results included impactful findings while nurturing Indigenous scholars such as Dr. Salau Rogei and Dr. Clarkson Lugusa. Through partnerships with NGOs such as ILEPA, SORALO, MPIDO, and IMPACT, the project demonstrated meaningful research thrives as a collective endeavor.

Another example was his ongoing research in Olderkesi and Sekenani. The research examines how land subdivision, privatization, and the establishment of conservancies link local processes of dispossession to global capitalist systems. Wildlife conservancies, he argued, serve as key examples of how global capital penetrates Indigenous spaces under the guise of conservation while reshaping governance structures to the detriment of Indigenous autonomy. Referencing the works of Mark Ruttar, Dr. Esther Mwangi, and Prof. Galaty, Prof. Kirigia argued that the study of land privatization remains urgent.

He further recommended institutional innovations such as dual degree programs and exchange partnerships between African and international universities—for example, Maasai Mara University collaborating with the University of Toronto. Such initiatives, he suggested, would not only enhance scholarly visibility but also strengthen global Indigenous solidarity.

Finally, Prof. Kirigia emphasized that knowledge production is never neutral but is inherently a site of power. Indigenous research, therefore, is inseparable from the broader struggle for self-determination. He called for deliberate mentorship, equitable funding access, and institutional reforms to facilitate the transition of Indigenous Peoples from research assistants to independent researchers and thought leaders. He also underscored the ethical imperative of ensuring that publication practices respect Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) and safeguard sensitive Indigenous data. The professor concluded with, “Knowledge production without Indigenous voices is epistemic violence... To decolonize research, Indigenous people must move from objects of study to authors of knowledge. Research is remembering—a reassembling of broken histories into a just future.”

## 2.6 A Practitioners Panel

Following the keynote, the panel discussion brought together both grassroots and academic voices. The panelists offered reflections on the intersection of Indigenous rights, research, and global governance. Ms. Jane Meriwas, Executive Director of Samburu Women Trust in Kenya, drawing on her experiences in Samburu, spoke about the transformative potential of community-led and participatory research, particularly in advancing women's rights. Through story-based documentation grounded in oral histories and cultural narratives, her work has illuminated practices such as child beading, which has now been recognized as a harmful cultural practice and criminalized through national policy. By placing evidence in the hands of communities first, before engaging policymakers or academics, Meriwas demonstrated how knowledge ownership fosters both trust and legitimacy, transforming research into a powerful tool for justice and advocacy.

Building on this, Prof. Andy White, from the University of Michigan and a founding PACT partner, emphasized the importance of cross-regional alliances as a strategy for Indigenous empowerment. He observed that colonizers historically consolidated their dominance through transnational networks. To counter challenges Indigenous Peoples must also build similar solidarity. Highlighting the work of the Pathways Alliance for Change and Transformation (PACT), he illustrated how Indigenous-led research and education are reshaping global discourses by generating original Indigenous frameworks for development, well-being, and resilience. For example, initiatives redefining well-being beyond Western economic metrics—such as GDP and growth rates—toward measures rooted in land, language, and culture, embody this shift. According to Prof. Andy, these alliances are not a luxury but a survival strategy, particularly as Indigenous communities confront extractive models such as carbon markets and renewable energy projects.

The debate over carbon markets provided a critical point of convergence in the panel. Prof. Andy noted that, while carbon projects are often promoted as climate solutions, they have introduced serious risks for Indigenous communities, including disputes over ownership of carbon rights, trees, and land—frequently without the safeguard of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). This lack of legal clarity has left many communities vulnerable to land grabs and exploitative contracts. He contrasted this with positive examples, such as U.S. tribal initiatives and Costa Rica's frameworks, where Indigenous-led climate assessments and legal protections for carbon rights have shaped more equitable policy.

Both Meriwas and White converged on the argument that Indigenous research and advocacy must not be confined to Western academic standards or external metrics of success. Both insisted community-driven research, oral histories, and Indigenous epistemologies must be recognized as authoritative forms of knowledge in themselves. As the panel concluded, it became clear from their presentations and discussion essential

strategies for resisting exploitative systems and advancing sustainable, just futures include community-led research, global Indigenous alliances, and safeguards for self-determination. Once again, while not always explicitly stated these strategies also indicate the well-being of Indigenous Peoples and their communities if and how they are being implemented.

## **2.7 Experiences in IPs' and LCs' Access to Finance support in research**

Mr. Kimaren Ole Riamit opened the next discussion by stressing bureaucracy privileges written evidence while Indigenous systems value oral traditions. Often this results in Indigenous erasure through “data silence.” He emphasized that policymakers respond to documented data. Ole Riamit urged communities to translate oral knowledge into written formats for stronger advocacy.

Prof. Elifuraha Laltaika, Senior Law Lecturer at the Faculty of Law, Tumaini University Makumira, discussed the severe funding gap. Only 2% of climate finance is earmarked for Indigenous Peoples, yet even this small percent rarely reaches the ground. He argued that financing must not only support adaptation but also address compensation, strategic minerals for clean energy, and green technology. Resources should reflect Indigenous Peoples' central role as conservators.

Following the professor, Ms. Edna Kaptoyo shared lessons from Indigenous-led financing through the Pawanka Fund. They direct funding toward governance, food systems, and intercultural exchange, guided by self-determined priorities. She noted that such funds also build mentorship, governance capacity, and collaboration with other financing organizations, ensuring holistic empowerment of communities.

Dr. Patrick Kamundia Waweru, Senior Lecturer, Researcher, and Chairperson of the Department of Environmental Studies, Geography and Agriculture at Maasai Mara University, described Maasai Mara University's initiatives to preserve Indigenous culture within its 2024–2029 Strategic Plan. Some of the ways to preserve culture include establishing a cultural center, a library repository, and a botanical garden in collaboration with elders. The university also promotes Maa culture through awareness programs, cultural weeks, regalia days, and by sponsoring Indigenous students, linking research and education directly to community benefit.

Prof. Ben Ole Koissaba, Post-Doc Fellow- Advanced Rehabilitation Research CEO and Consultant at Rarin Consulting Services, speaking from his experience as a grant reviewer, asserted that funding exists but Indigenous actors often lack readiness to access it. He stressed the importance of mastering donor language, building networks, developing grant-writing skills, and strategic positioning. Prof. Ben urged Indigenous communities to tell their own stories to disrupt extractive financing models.

The session closed with Hon. Josphat Lowoi providing a government perspective. Hon. Josphat noted challenges in securing national funding due to misconceptions about external donors and a lack of clarity on Indigenous identity definitions. While political goodwill exists, he observed that counties receiving Equalization Funds have shown little progress, exhibiting the need for collaboration, accountability, and stronger policy frameworks to ensure meaningful support for Indigenous Peoples.

#### 2.8 The role of the Media, Communication and Publication in promotion of Indigenous-led research and education

In his keynote address, Prof. Morombi Ole Ronkei, Independent Communications Consultant, urged the need for Indigenous Peoples to reclaim narrative sovereignty in the face of shifting media dynamics. He posed critical questions: What is your Indigenous story? Who is telling it? Why does mainstream media suddenly take interest? He observed how mainstream coverage often focuses on crisis-driven catastrophes to attract attention. Such visibility is neither sustainable nor empowering. According to Ole Ronkei, waiting for mainstream media to provide positive and consistent coverage is fatal. Indigenous communities lack the numerical strength, influence, and clout to command such attention. Instead, he urged Indigenous Peoples to undertake their own research and publications. Anchor Indigenous Peoples existence on solid evidence and produce repositories of knowledge housed in schools, homes, and community institutions. Intentional documentation not only strengthens intergenerational continuity but also creates intellectual capital that will become invaluable.

Ole Ronkei further called for the creation and use of alternative media platforms as survival strategies: organizing community barazas, academic symposiums, and online forums such as Zoom sessions to share findings and control the narrative. He concluded by stressing the importance of cultivating circumstances that compel mainstream media to engage, while simultaneously marshalling networks of Indigenous intellectuals as ambassadors of survival, resilience, and transformation.

Patu Santoo Naikumi, Chairperson of the Mau Forest Conservancy Committee, described his journey as a young Indigenous scholar. He spoke about the importance of balancing traditional knowledge systems with contemporary education. For Mr. Naikumi, Indigenous identity is a source of strength, not a limitation. He argued modern education should not erase but rather complement Indigenous ways of life. It should also serve as a tool for empowerment and social justice rather than simply a pathway to salaried employment. Mr. Naikumi emphasized the resilience required to navigate between two worlds. Also, storytelling remains a powerful method of transmitting identity, challenging harmful practices such as female genital mutilation and early marriage, and mentoring the next generation. He concluded that education must be harnessed to document progress, empower youth, and reinforce cultural pride.

Stephen Moiko, Social Scientist, Founding Director at NabaRa Consult, built on this perspective by addressing the structural barriers Indigenous scholars face in knowledge production, especially the privileging of Western languages, methodologies, and publishing systems. He critiqued academia's overreliance on peer-reviewed texts in English and French. This overreliance marginalizes Indigenous languages and oral traditions as legitimate forms of scholarship. Moiko advocated embracing multimedia formats—such as podcasts, videos, and recorded oral narratives—as valid scholarly outputs that honor Indigenous epistemologies. He urged universities to recognize Indigenous languages within their libraries and support alternative forms of dissemination. For Moiko, reclaiming authorship means not only protecting sacred knowledge from exploitation but also decolonizing research protocols and making space for dissertations and theses written in Indigenous languages.

George Sayagie offered insights from his over two decades of experience in mainstream media, and its evolving relationship with Indigenous communities. He observed that while media outlets once relied on extractive, parachute journalism, there has been a shift toward collaboration with Indigenous storytellers to co-produce content that reflects community voices, values, and languages. Sayagie emphasized the need to blend data with emotion in storytelling to maximize advocacy impact. He called for investments in youth media training and digital knowledge hubs that can preserve Indigenous narratives for future generations. According to him, partnerships between mainstream and Indigenous media can amplify visibility and credibility, but only if they are grounded in ethical practice, consent, and community control. As he noted, “the internet never forgets,” making timely documentation of Indigenous experiences critical to preventing external appropriation.

Dr. Patrick Maundu, ethnobotanist working at the National Museums of Kenya, representing the Kenya National Museums, spoke to the institutional frameworks supporting the documentation and protection of Indigenous knowledge. Highlighting Kenya's 2016 Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Expressions Act and the Nagoya Protocol, as both examples of requiring benefit-sharing and legal safeguards when Indigenous knowledge is documented or commercialized. He linked these efforts to emerging global frameworks such as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, urging communities to take an active role in shaping documentation processes and ensuring youth participation. Dr. Maundu stressed the need for county-level Indigenous knowledge databases governed by communities themselves. He warned sacred knowledge must not be published without appropriate protections. His remarks reminded all participants that documentation is not a neutral exercise but one deeply tied to sovereignty, law, and intergenerational responsibility.

Finally, Prof. Angelo Nai Kuney, an experienced Kenyan educator, curriculum developer, and senior lecturer who from the University of Embu, offered a forward-looking call to action. He urged Indigenous Peoples to

move beyond narratives of victimhood toward a mindset of power, agency, and long-term planning. He challenged youth to embrace digital tools for authorship, advocacy, and research. This will position youth as critical actors in shaping the next fifty years of Indigenous futures rather than merely responding to short-term crises. Prof. Angelo discussed education as simply not about personal advancement but about disrupting stereotypes, redefining how Indigenous Peoples are perceived, and ensuring that each generation leaves behind a legacy that affirms dignity and resilience. His remarks reframed the panel's themes, emphasizing that Indigenous Peoples are not passive recipients of change but active agents of knowledge production, conservation, and global transformation.

### 3. Pathways to Solutions: Work Group Sessions

During the session, participants engaged in highly interactive work group discussions complemented by real-time online engagement through Mentimeter. These formats created an inclusive space for reflection and exchange, enabling participants to collectively analyze key themes, share community-based experiences, and voice perspectives across diverse backgrounds. Together, these approaches broadened ownership of the discussions, and ensured the emerging outcomes reflected both individual voices and collective consensus.

#### 3.1 Well-Being Indicators Working Group

The work group specifically on generating an indicative list (see below) of well-being indicators relevant to Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPs & LCs), including mechanisms for tracking and the central role of youth in sustaining such processes.

**TABLE 1 INDICATIVE LIST OF WELL-BEING INDICATORS RELEVANT FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES**

Dimension	Well-Being Indicators	Means of Tracking	Role and Place of Youths
<b>Social</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food security &amp; sovereignty</li> <li>• Access to culturally appropriate education</li> <li>• Access to health services</li> <li>• Vibrant social life</li> <li>• Access to natural resources as IPs</li> <li>• Gender inclusivity</li> <li>• Communal cohesion</li> <li>• Recognition of self-worth</li> <li>• Strong social groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protection of seeds</li> <li>• Balance between modern &amp; traditional medicine</li> <li>• Gender balance in different sectors</li> <li>• Secure access to resources - Healthy families</li> <li>• Registration of social groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Custodians of community data</li> <li>• Peace advocates</li> <li>• Trainers of Trainers (ToTs) in social groups</li> </ul>
<b>Economic</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value addition</li> <li>• Ownership of land and herds</li> <li>• Diverse income sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proportion of raw materials processed locally</li> <li>• Access to markets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active citizens driving local economies</li> <li>• Use of technology to share stories &amp; raise awareness</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preservation of culture</li> <li>• Protection &amp; promotion of Indigenous languages</li> <li>• Strong identity</li> <li>• Documentation of Indigenous knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergenerational language transmission</li> <li>• Number of fluent speakers</li> <li>• Practice of cultural rituals</li> <li>• Protection of sacred sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural ambassadors</li> <li>• Intergenerational connectors</li> <li>• Cultural innovators blending tradition &amp; modernity</li> </ul>

<b>Environmental</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding pastoralist livelihoods from disruptive projects</li> <li>• Protection of ecosystems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of legal frameworks</li> <li>• Community monitoring systems</li> <li>• Storytelling circles documenting change</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovators in climate adaptation - Stewards &amp; advocates for the land</li> <li>• Custodians of ecological knowledge</li> <li>• Voices in climate justice &amp; policy</li> </ul>
<b>Political</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ending exploitation</li> <li>• Representation in governance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracking policy developments</li> <li>• Monitoring quality of public participation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocates in policy &amp; governance spaces</li> <li>• Contesting political leadership positions</li> </ul>

**3.2 Indigenous-led Research and Education Working Group**

The work group developed robust and practical strategies to enhance the uptake and institutional support for Indigenous Peoples (IP)-led research, beginning with the *principle of self-identification* as a foundational step toward asserting ownership over knowledge systems. Participants emphasized the importance of establishing a dedicated center or institute to anchor IP-led research, providing both a physical and intellectual home for these initiatives. Such a center would ensure proper documentation, foster research conducted in Indigenous languages, and safeguard methodologies that reflect Indigenous epistemologies rather than defaulting to mainstream academic models. The integration of emerging tools such as artificial intelligence was discussed as a potential asset, provided its application respects Indigenous protocols and knowledge sovereignty.

Equally significant the group identified roles for youth as central actors in leading and sustaining Indigenous research processes. Participants proposed mentorship and capacity-building programs to train young people not only in research methodologies but also in practical skills such as grant-seeking to reduce dependence on external actors. A peer-review mechanism rooted at the community level was recommended to ensure accountability, cultural legitimacy, and validation of Indigenous research outputs. Independent media platforms were also highlighted as vital for narrating Indigenous stories authentically, countering mainstream narratives, and amplifying the visibility of IP-led knowledge production. Collectively, these strategies reflected a vision of IP research as a self-sustaining ecosystem grounded in cultural identity, youth leadership, and knowledge sovereignty.

### **3.3 Access to Resources Working Group**

This working group focused on generating practical ideas aimed at triggering and enhancing support for Indigenous-led research and education. Central to their discussion was the recognition of systemic barriers that impede access to resources and education for Indigenous Peoples. These barriers include weak infrastructure for data acquisition and analysis, reliance on westernized curricula, and inadequate capacity-building within Indigenous communities, many of whom still struggle with contemporary education frameworks. Political interference, limited recognition and legitimacy, declining donor commitments, and stringent funding requirements were also highlighted as critical obstacles. In addition, insecurity, technological gaps, language exclusion, and widespread discrimination against Global South Indigenous Peoples compound the challenges faced by Indigenous communities in research and education.

To address these structural barriers, the group underscored the importance of establishing Indigenous-owned and Indigenous-led knowledge institutions. Developing curricula that reflect Indigenous values and methodologies, alongside the establishment of research hubs and data centers, were identified as urgent priorities. These institutions would not only anchor Indigenous research but also serve as platforms for producing and preserving knowledge in Indigenous languages, thereby resisting the dominance of external, westernized frameworks. Furthermore, participants emphasized the need to train youth as the next generation of Indigenous researchers and to expand mentorship networks that connect early-career scholars with experienced leaders.

The work group also stressed the necessity of creating funding structures tailored to Indigenous realities. Suggested solutions included forming alliances to reduce competition over scarce grants, establishing pooled resource centers, and creating a global Indigenous funding mechanism that allows communities to access resources directly without bureaucratic interference. Financial literacy, particularly in grant development and management, was identified as an essential skill set for Indigenous communities to build resilience in navigating donor environments. By removing rigid funding conditions and ensuring that grants align with Indigenous priorities rather than donor interests, communities could secure greater autonomy and sustainability in their research agendas.

Finally, the work group called for stronger policy frameworks and mutually respectful partnerships that recognize and legitimize Indigenous Peoples' rights and contributions. This involves updating registries to ensure proper recognition of Indigenous communities, strengthening governance structures, and creating platforms for Indigenous voices in national and global policymaking spaces. They also encouraged

the use of independent Indigenous-led media and community-based forums to amplify research outcomes, thereby reshaping narratives around Indigenous knowledge and survival. Collectively, these solutions represent a roadmap for overcoming entrenched challenges and affirm the transformative potential of Indigenous-led research and education when adequately resourced, legitimized, and centered within Indigenous worldviews.

#### 4. Informal Gathering & Networking: Cultural Gala Dinner

Ended of day two of the conference, participants enjoyed a vibrant Indigenous-themed gala dinner that provided both a celebratory conclusion and a unique networking platform. The dinner provided an opportunity to unwind and in a relaxed atmosphere were delegates, scholars, community leaders, development partners, and policymakers who could engage in informal dialogue, build alliances, and reflect on the outcomes of the gathering.

The evening was enriched by captivating performances of Indigenous Maa music, whose rhythmic chants, traditional instruments, and graceful dances brought to life the cultural heritage of the Maasai people. This cultural expression created an immersive experience that blended learning with celebration, demonstrating the inseparability of knowledge, identity, and culture. The gala dinner functioned as an affirmation of Indigenous pride, resilience, and solidarity across diverse communities.

#### 5. Participatory Action Research Demonstrated: Community Learning Visit, Majimoto, Narok County

The Majimoto site visit on day three provided an iconic and deeply instructive moment in demonstrating the power of community-centered action oriented Indigenous-led research, evidence-backed public interest litigation, and community self-determined development. As articulated by Kimaren Ole Riamit, Director of ILEPA, the guiding philosophy was captured in the Maa proverb *Teniborr Enamuke, niririki kewon*— “when one cuts a shoe for oneself, it must fit.” Only data produced and interpreted by Indigenous Peoples themselves can authentically reflect their lived realities.

Ole Riamit emphasized ILEPA’s ultimate goal to enhance community self-determination: “We succeed when communities no longer need us, on account of their meaningful empowerment.” This philosophy was vividly illustrated in the Majimoto Group Ranch case, where youth-led documentation of corruption in land subdivision, coupled with persistent litigation, secured a landmark judgment (ELC 268 of 2017) restoring 600 parcels of land. Ole Nasi, a respected community elder, testified to the victory’s magnitude: “Every man now has his own place. We never thought the land would return — but truth cannot be erased.”

Beyond legal restitution, the visit showcased innovative resilience strategies led by the community. Through a rotational Sahiwal bull breeding program, Majimoto households significantly improved livestock productivity. Strategic hay silos shifted pastoral practice toward bringing pasture to cattle rather than cattle to pasture. Community members such as Gabriel Lepore narrated how these initiatives multiplied wealth even

during drought, reducing vulnerability and migration. These interventions demonstrated the community's ability to adapt Indigenous ecological knowledge into sustainable practices for the future.

The Indigenous Navigator Project further expanded this framework of self-determined development. With youth-led data collection identifying healthcare as a priority, Majimoto established a hospital and maternity wing that has already served over 200 women. Delegates from across the globe responded to this achievement with admiration. Prof. Elifuraha Laltaika of Tanzania connected the experience to Vicky Tauli-Corpuz's vision of self-determined development, stressing that progress is not "fishponds in dry villages" but what communities themselves choose. Delegates from Nepal, Cameroon, the United States, and Indonesia expressed solidarity, affirming that Majimoto's struggle and triumph resonated with their own contexts.

National and county leaders also offered reflections. Dr. Maundu of the National Museums of Kenya emphasized that "data wins" and celebrated Majimoto as a model of research rooted in communities rather than theory. The County Director of Culture (Narok) commended ILEPA's work, calling for county-wide replication and highlighting youth innovations like the Maa language app.

Commissioner Lentupuru noted that ILEPA had achieved what international NGOs often claim but rarely deliver—sustainable, inclusive development engaging women, youth, and elders alike. Finally, Hon. Lowoi, representing the Office of the President, closed with a powerful reminder: "This land is not just soil. It is your history, your lineage, your future. Better you don't marry than sell your land." Together, these voices reinforced Majimoto as a living testament to the resilience, agency, and self-determined development of Indigenous communities.

At the close of the Majimoto site visit, participants were hosted to a sumptuous, well-prepared Indigenous lunch served in the open wilderness, creating both a cultural and sensory experience that went beyond nourishment. The meal, prepared using traditional Maasai recipes and locally sourced ingredients, symbolized the community's deep connection to their land, livestock, and environment. Sharing food in this way provided a space for fellowship, reflection, and informal dialogue, reinforcing the spirit of hospitality and collective identity that underpins Indigenous ways of life. For many visitors, the lunch was not only an introduction to unique culinary traditions but also a lived expression of cultural continuity and resilience—an affirmation that food, like land and language, remains a vital medium of Indigenous self-determination and heritage preservation.

## 6. ANNEXURE

ANNEX I – Program Schedule

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1okx3e66WqcV8hyGvsKbigNfV1UNmQjQY/edit?usp=sharing&oid=108481817273368778407&rtpof=true&sd=true>

### **PACT 4<sup>TH</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS-LED RESEARCH, AND AN INAUGURAL AFRICA IPS' & LCS' DIALOGUE STRATEGY IN THE FORESTS PEOPLE CLIMATE PROGRAM OF THE CLIMATE AND LAND USE ALLIANCE (CLUA)**

August 26<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> 2025

Zebu Lodge, Narok, Kenya

#### a) Meeting Objectives:

- i. Foster national, regional, and international awareness of how Indigenous Peoples' knowledge and land stewardship practices are solutions to biodiversity conservation and climate change mitigation & resilience including overall well-being
  - ii. Demonstrate reasons why Indigenous Peoples' self-determination in developing and implementing research projects is crucial for unlocking their biodiversity and climate solutions and in enhancement of well-being.
  - iii. Energize (a) early career Indigenous scholars and leaders and (b) non-Indigenous academic institutions to partner with Indigenous Peoples, including through piloting PACT's first ever youth training.
  - iv. Create strategies and logistics for ensuring that Indigenous Peoples' research, education, and climate, biodiversity solutions and overall aspiration towards well-being can be financed directly and sustainably by Funders.
- 
- i. Indicative pathway towards track-able indicators related to Indigenous well-being in the context of Forests Peoples Climate Program of CLUA and beyond
  - ii. Indicative list/scope of Indigenous people's indicators for well-being
  - iii. Indicative framework towards enhancing support for indigenous-led research, Climate and Biodiversity Actions
  - iv. Partnership and solidarity strategies between IPs, LCs, States, Academia/Universities and development partners towards a robust movement to promote indigenous-led research

#### b) Agenda Program

**TABLE 2 AGENDA PROGRAM**

<b>DAY 1: 26/08/2025:</b>				
<b>Time</b>	<b>Areas of Input</b>	<b>Thematic areas/contributors/</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Moderator</b>
<b>8:30am</b>	Arrival & Registration	ILEPA and PACT Secretariat		<b>ILEPA</b>

<b>9:00am</b>	Welcome	National anthem Indigenous Invocation by Elders/ Ilaiguenak Introduction of Participants- Maasai Welcome Osingolio	<b>ILEPA Programs - James Twala</b>
<b>9:30am</b>	Welcoming & Official Opening Remarks Why are we here?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indigenous Peoples Leader, Ole Simel</li> <li>• Indigenous Peoples Partners, RRI</li> <li>• PACT Secretariat, Samuel Nguiffo</li> <li>• Academia, Maasai Mara University</li> <li>• National Equality and Gender Commission (NGEC)- Commissioner Caroline Lentupuru, MBS, HSC</li> <li>• National government-Director Minority &amp; Marginalized communities' unit -Hon Josphat Lowoi</li> </ul> <p>Conference Objectives &amp; Overview of the agenda,</p>	<b>ILEPA Director- Kimaren Riamit</b>
<b>10:30am</b>	<b>Tea/Coffee Break</b>		
<b>11:00am- 1:00pm</b>	<b>Session I: Indigenous Peoples Experiences and Perspectives in engaging with IPs led Research</b>		
	<b>Areas of Inputs</b>  Exploring Experiences and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples and LCs with Research  Exploring perspectives of Research Institutions in engaging IPs and LCs in Research work  The place of early career Indigenous scholars and leaders and in research	Maasai welcome osingolio  Keynote Address - Experiences and Lessons from 1 <sup>st</sup> Nations of the America's - <b>Prof. Kyle White (20 minutes)</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentimeter of youth and Research (<b>10 minutes</b>)</li> </ul> Keynote Address - <b>Prof. Arun Agrawal (10 minutes)</b> reflections on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How Western and academic institutions have evolved in their engagement with Indigenous knowledge since your early groundbreaking work.</li> </ul>	<b>Stephen Moiko</b>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The current opportunities and challenges to further institutional support and global recognition.</li> <li>How your new role at the University of Notre Dame and potential ties with the global Catholic university network might help elevate Indigenous-led research and education.</li> </ul> <p>Keynote address: Exploring experiences and lessons from non-state actors (NGOs) in the promotion indigenous-led research and education: <b>Prof. Ole Sena (10 mins)</b></p> <p>Maasai welcome osingolio</p> <p><b>Breakout reflection session (constituent specific :30 Minutes Each)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>IPs community</b></li> <li><b>Academia/Learning institution</b></li> <li><b>Youth focus-</b></li> <li><b>Development donors/Partners</b></li> </ul> <p>REPORT BACK <b>Plenary (Discussion, Q &amp; A)</b></p>	
<b>1:00-2:00</b>	<b>LUNCH BREAK</b>		
<b>2:00-3:30</b>	<b>Session II: Sharing of Africa IPs' &amp; LCs' Dialogue strategy in the Forests People Climate Program of CLUA</b>		
	<p><b>Key Input Areas:</b></p> <p>Appreciating CLUA's strategy of the forest people's climate program and the place of youth in Africa</p> <p>Appreciating trends in forest conservation dynamics in Africa and the place of youth</p> <p>Exploring pathways towards track-able indicators for well-being relevant to Indigenous Peoples. (including the place of indigenous knowledge systems and practices)</p>	<p>Overview of CLUA's strategy for forest people's climate programs and the Place of youth (Virtual presentation) <b>Deborah Delgado (20 Mins)</b></p> <p>Overview of forests landscape in Africa and the place of IPs and LCs including their knowledge systems and practices- Africa Cameroon-Samuel <b>(10mins)</b></p> <p><b>Panel Discussion</b></p> <p>Reflections on the place and role of early career Indigenous leaders and Indigenous youth in Nature Conservation and climate change actions and their interaction with Indigenous Knowledge systems <b>(25mins)</b></p>	<b>Ms Edna Kaptoyo</b>

	Exploring areas of urgent Partner support in the context of Indigenous conservation, climate response actions, and sustainable development to promote well-being for indigenous peoples and LCs	<p>(<i>Sharana &amp; Judy</i>) from Asia to moderate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• central Africa/ (Cameroon youth)</li> <li>• Indigenous forest people- (sengwer Yaaku, &amp; ogiek youth)</li> <li>• Pastoralist of the northern and southern rangelands of Kenya and Northern Tanzania (e.g Maasai, rendille, youth)</li> </ul> <p>A rejoinder from Asia and USA representative <b>3 mins</b></p> <p>Overview of well-being indicators relevant for indigenous peoples the case of Maasai pastoralist communities in East Africa (<b>10 mins</b>) <b>ILEPA</b></p> <p><b>Plenary Discussion and Q &amp; A</b></p>	
<b>3:30pm-4:30pm</b>	<b>Session III: Policy trends in recognition and promotion of Indigenous knowledge and Well-Being Indicators Relevant for Indigenous Peoples including support for indigenous-led research and education</b>		
	Harvesting lessons & Experiences of national, regional, county governments in policy trends in recognition and promotion of indigenous peoples' rights	<p><b>Panel Discussion (7 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflections from Cameroon rep.</li> <li>• Reflections from Kenya rep.</li> <li>• Reflections from Indonesia rep.</li> <li>• Reflections from Nepal rep-</li> <li>• Reflections from the US-mary beth</li> </ul> <p><b>Plenary Discussion and Q &amp; A</b></p>	<i>Ms Ann Samante</i>
<b>5:00pm</b>	<b>WRAP UP OF DAY 1</b>		
	<b>TEA BREAK</b>		
<b>DAY 2: 27/08/2025</b>			
<b>8:00-8:30am</b>	<b>Arrival &amp; Registration</b>	<b>ILEPA and PACT Secretariat</b>	<b>ILEPA</b>
<b>8:30am - 9:30 am</b>	<b>Session IV: Policies and programmes - Experiences and Lessons in practical recognition and support of Indigenous -led research and education, in Climate action and Biodiversity Conservation</b>		
		Keynote address -The evolution and future trajectories of partnerships around Indigenous-led research and education including the role of academia in centering Indigenous self-determination	<i>Lawrence Mbelati</i>

		<p><b>Prof. Kirigiah (15 minutes)</b></p> <p><b>Practitioners Panel discussion (7 minutes)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indigenous Peoples-led Conservation initiatives in Kenya- <b>John Kisimir</b></li> <li>How cross-regional alliances like PACT can support transformative climate and biodiversity solutions-<b>Andy White</b></li> <li>Experiences from Northern Tanzania -</li> <li>Experience of 1<sup>st</sup> Nations in Carbon markets and Renewable Energies; Meribeth</li> <li>Kenya’s National Product Industry, NMK- <b>Dr Evans Taracha-Joining virtually</b></li> </ul> <p>Rejoinders from -Indonesia on &amp; experiences – Nepal- Community experience <b>Plenary Discussion and Q&amp;A</b></p>	
<b>10:00am-10:30am</b>	<b>TEA BREAK</b>		
<b>10:30am-11:30am</b>	<b>Session V: Trends in IPs &amp; LCs access to Finance support in research, Biodiversity Conservation and Climate Action</b>		
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>IPs and LCs Perspectives, Elifuraha Laltaika</li> <li>Development Partners/Donor Perspectives, CLUA/TCF/Pawanka/Tebtebba/RRI</li> <li>Prof. Ben Koisaba</li> <li>Government Perspectives-Govt Rep</li> <li>Maasai Mara university and the Maasai Culture- Vice Chancellor</li> </ul> <p><b>Plenary, discussion Q &amp; A on Access to Access to Finance</b></p> <p>Maasai Osingolio</p>	Kimaren Riamit
<b>11:30am-12:30</b>	<b>Session VI: The role of the media, communication and publication in promotion of indigenous-led research and education</b>		

		Keynote address – the strategic value of media and publication in the promotion of indigenous- led research and education. <b>Prof. Ole Ronkei (10 mins)</b>  <b>Panel discussion (7 mins each)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prof. Meitamei Ololodapash</li> <li>• Dr. Daniel Nchorira</li> <li>• Mainstream media practioner</li> <li>• Masharen Ole Sironka</li> <li>• Dr. Waweru Kamundia</li> </ul> <b>Plenary, Discussion Q &amp; A</b>	<b>Dr Elizabeth Partoren</b>
<b>12:15-1:00pm</b>	<b>Session III: Looking ahead: Strategies towards enhanced uptake and support of Indigenous-Led research</b>		
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Well-Being indicators working group breakout Session</b></li> <li><b>2. Indigenous-led research and education working group breakout session</b></li> <li><b>3. Access to resources working group breakout Session</b></li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generate an indicative list of well-being indicators relevant to IPs &amp; Lcs and the means of tracking including the place and role of youth</li> <li>• developing robust practical strategies to enhance uptake and support for indigenous-led research and</li> <li>• generating practical ideas on how to trigger, enhance support towards indigenous-led research and education</li> </ul>	
<b>1:00pm</b>	<b>Lunch Break</b>		
<b>2:00-3:00</b>	<b>Presentation of group work session</b>		
<b>3:00-3:30</b>	<b>Presentations of recommendations and key messages of conference</b>		
<b>3:30pm-4:00</b>	<b>Wrap of Day 2, logistic update on the field day.</b> <b>Tea break</b>		
<b>6:00pm</b>	<b>Cocktail dinner- OSIM LENTARA</b>		
<b>Day 3: 28/08/2025 – Community Visit- Maji Moto (All Day)</b>			

## ANNEX II – Media Coverage

The conference received wide coverage across print media, social media platforms, and various news channels, as listed below:

Ü <https://Indigenouselivelihoodenhancement.app.box.com/s/wn80hculs17pj8kj9048zd4d5841yjoh>

<https://www.youtube.com/live/X4PvSDV6jnw>

ü <https://www.facebook.com/J.Lowoi/posts/today-i-had-the-honour-of-joining-participants-of-the-4th-international-conferen/1423092102877317/>

<https://www.facebook.com/ILEPA.Narok.Kenya/videos/4th-pact-international-conference-26082025/709177622154220/>

ü <https://x.com/NGECKenya/status/1960611178893467732>

ü <https://www.culturalsurvival.org/news/memanyayu-meleeno-Indigenous-led-research-path-self-determination>

ü <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/national/article/2001528010/lessons-from-Indigenous-knowledge-in-climate-and-policy-conference>

## ANNEX III – List of Participants

**TABLE 3 LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>PARTICIPANT</b>	<b>CONSTITUENCY / AFFILIATION</b>
1.	Ms. Sharana Sherpa	Center for Indigenous Peoples Research and Development (CIPRED - Nepal)
2.	Mr. Nima Lama	Center for Indigenous Peoples Research and Development (CIPRED - Nepal)
3.	Mr. Birendra Kumar Magar	Center for Indigenous Peoples Research and Development (CIPRED - Nepal)

4.	Mr. Ang Pasang Sherpa	Center for Indigenous Peoples Research and Development (CIPRED - Nepal)
5.	Mr. Annas Radin Syarif	Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN-Indonesia)
6.	Mr. Stefanus Masiun	Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN-Indonesia)
7.	Ms. Cindy Yohana	Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN-Indonesia)
8.	Ms. Ni Kadek Ayu Septiari	Aliansi Masyarakat Adat Nusantara (AMAN-Indonesia)
9.	Mr. Nguiffo Tene Samwel	Center for Environment and Development (CED - Cameroon)
10.	Mr. Lerys Nyangono	Center for Environment and Development (CED - Cameroon)
11.	Ms. Dikobo Penda	Center for Environment and Development (CED - Cameroon)
12.	Ms. Jeanne Biloa	Center for Environment and Development (CED - Cameroon)
13.	Mr. Arjun Ramachandran	School of the Environment and Sustainability (SEAS-USA) at the University of Michigan
14.	Dr. Andy White	School of the Environment and Sustainability (SEAS-USA) at the University of Michigan
15.	Ms. Doris Kiambati	School of the Environment and Sustainability (SEAS-USA) at the University of Michigan
16.	Mr. Dillon Foster	School of the Environment and Sustainability (SEAS-USA) at the University of Michigan
17.	Dr. Klerkson Lugusa	Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT)

18.	Ms. Judy Oreheya	Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement and Conflict Transformation (IMPACT)
19.	Mr. Daniel Kobei	Ogiek Peoples' Development Program (OPDP)
20.	Mr. Elias Kimayio	HUGUFO
21.	Ms. Ann Samante	Mainyoito Pastoralists Integrated Development Organization (MPIDO)
22.	Mr. Joseph Ole Simel	Mainyoito Pastoralists Integrated Development Organization (MPIDO)
23.	Mr. Patrick Kikonya	Mainyoito Pastoralists Integrated Development Organization (MPIDO)
24.	Mrs. Jane Meriwas	Samburu Women Trust
25.	Mrs. Agnes Leina	Il'laramatak Community Concerns (ICC)
26.	Ms. Milcah Talaa	Right and Resource Initiatives (RRI -Kenya)
27.	Mr. Samuel Lekhoyan	Indigenous Youth
28.	Ms. Judy Kipkenda	Koibatek Ogiek Women and Youth Network- (KOWYN)
29.	Mrs. Grace Nashami	Maasai Economic Block
30.	Ms. Silvanus Lesuuda	Network Empowering Samburu Transformation-(NEST)
31.	Mr. Lawrence Mbelati	Naboisho Conservancy
32.	Ms. Edith Santiyian	Indigenous Youth
33.	Mr. Edward Porokwa	Pastoralists Indigenous Non-Governmental Organizations Forum (PINGO's Forum-Tanzania)
34.	Mr. Lari Letoluo	Maasai Cultural Ambassador
35.	Mr. Osman Abdille	Pastoralist from Northern Kenya

36.	Mr. Nyangori Ohenjo	Centre for Minority Rights Development (CEMIRIDE)
37.	Mr. Titus Abwoga	Centre for Minority Rights Development (CEMIRIDE)
38.	Ms. Pauline Saris	Centre for Minority Rights Development (CEMIRIDE)
39.	Ms. Semerian Sankori	Patinaai Osim
40.	Mr. George Wanyonyi	National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC)
41.	Hon. Josphat Lowoi	Office of the President Minority & Marginalized Communities Unit Affairs
42.	Commissioner Caroline Lentupuru	National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC)
43.	Dr. Maundu Patrick	National Museums of Kenya
44.	Mr. Johnson Ole Sipitiek	Narok County CECM – Trade & Tourism
45.	Ms. Yvonne Siopot	Ewang'an Nadede Advocacy Initiatives – Africa (ENAI)
46.	Mr. Timothy Toyianka	Ewang'an Nadede Advocacy Initiatives – Africa (ENAI)
47.	Prof. Francis Mburu	Maasai Mara University
48.	Dr. Kamundia	Maasai Mara University
49.	Mr. Lankeu Reson	Maasai Mara University
50.	Dr. Daniel Nchorira	Maasai Mara University
51.	Prof. Karioki Kirigia	University of Toronto-Canada
52.	Dr. Elifuraha Laltaika	Tumaini University Makumira-Tanzania
53.	Dr. Lenachuru	Researcher
54.	Steve Moiko	Naibara consultant ltd
55.	Prof. Ole Sena	DVC Academics -African Leadership University
56.	Prof. Ole Rongei Morombi	Scott Christian University former Vice Chancellor

57.	Dr. Ben Ole Koissaba Ph.D., MASE, CDPM	University Co-Founder-Diaspora University
58.	Dr. Sammy Roore	Maasai Environment Development Consortium (MEDEC)
59.	Dr. Hassan Roba	The Christensen Fund
60.	Edna Kaptoyo	Pawanka Fund-Kenya
61.	Elija Toirai	One Mara Carbon Project
62.	Dr. Steve Merika	Indigenous Scholar
63.	Ezekiel Keterere	Indigenous Youth
64.	Curson Kiburo	Kenya Indigenous Youth Network
65.	Mbugua Stanley	Citizen TV
66.	George Sayagie	The Standard Nation
67.	Steve Ntaya	Paran Radio-Indigenous Radio station
68.	Daniel Sito	Neyiolo Live Digital Media-Indigenous Media house
69.	Eric Muntet	Olakira TV-Indigenous Television
70.	Dr. Loletutum	Indigenous Youth
71.	Soine Parseina	Indigenous Advocate
72.	Maison Nkuruna	Indigenous Poet
73.	Nightingale Wakigera	Africa Community of Planetary Partners for Health and Environment (ACOPPHE)
74.	Maison Kipila	Africa Community of Planetary Partners for Health and Environment (ACOPPHE)
75.	Lesarge Simpanoi	Kenya Indigenous Youth Network

76.	Rarine Mereu	Indigenous Youth
77.	Dr. Evans Taracha	National Museums of Kenya
78.	Leshan Kereto	Tareto Africa Trust
79.	Purity Naisiano	Young Scholar
80.	Naini Kararei	Indigenous Youth
81.	Kalu Leparo	Kenya Indigenous Youth Network
82.	Mike Lema Olosho	Ewangan Olosho Community-Based Organization
83.	Kiseento Samuel	County government
84.	Samuel Montoi	Ewuaso Nyiro South Development Authority
85.	Gaelle Sinto	Just Dig It!
86.	Benson Narankaik	Maasai App Developer
87.	Alfred Kiyapi	Maasai Mara University student leader
88.	Micheal Muntet	Indigenous young Scholar
89.	Sokoine Martine	Indigenous young Scholar
90.	Jualian Loshiro	PARAAN Network
91.	Simpiri Koinet	Indigenous Youth
92.	Leonard Siripo	Indigenous Pastoralist
93.	Sale Kotikash Patrick	Research Assistant
94.	Natalie Yiakonick	Indigenous Youth
95.	Glady Chemu	Baringo Indigenous Peoples Organization
96.	Maxwell Sankei	Indigenous Teacher

97.	Phoebe Nadupoi	Communication specialist-Indigenous Author
98.	Saruni Saoli	My Indigenous Knowledge In Action (MIKIA)
99.	Dr. Elizabeth Partoren	Nature and People as One
100.	Hon. Julian Katimwa	Empowerment os the Sourthern indigenous Pastoralist Alliance (Esipa Network)
101.	Rodgers Meitekini	CEO Easyprop Capital Ltd
102.	Endoo Dorcas	J.O. Arbitrator & EIA/EA
103.	Rose Orguba	Indigenous Youth
104.	Delvine Parkolwa	Indigenous Youth
105.	Lukas Kasosi	Cultural Survival
106.	Samson Luari	Indigenous Youth
107.	John Leparsanti	Indigenous Youth
108.	Leonard Krop	Indigenous Youth
109.	Silvia Kaarie	Indigenous Youth
110.	Abigael Chepkasi	Indigenous Youth
111.	Felix Onyango	Innova Africa
112.	Stephen Kipino	Indigenous Youth
113.	Sam Makko	WWAC
114.	Reagan Siamito	Indigenous Youth
115.	Dr. Purity Ngina	National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC)
116.	Kimaren Riamit	Executive Director ILEPA
117.	James Twala	Programs Manager ILEPA

118.	Easter Kinyua	Finance and Administration ILEPA
119.	Margaret Yenke	Accountant ILEPA
120.	Susan Lesancho	Procurement officer ILEPA
121.	Mwethya Ndambu	Admin assistant ILEPA
122.	Cecilia Kiletenyi	Librarian ILEPA
123.	Keneyia Parkire	Project Coordinator ILEPA
124.	Naisiae Naadokila	Project Coordinator ILEPA
125.	Jonathan Meikwaya	Project Coordinator ILEPA
126.	Elias Sakau	Project Coordinator ILEPA
127.	Joseph Mbelati	Project Coordinator ILEPA
128.	Benson Nkoitiko	Field assistant ILEPA
129.	Nkuito Seneu	Security ILEPA
130.	Ian Leshan	Communication officer ILEPA
131.	William Natimama	Board Chairman ILEPA
132.	Benson Kesui	Board Member ILEPA
133.	Rose Kudate	Board Member ILEPA
134.	Antola Lanoi	Board Secretary ILEPA
135.	Ruth Sipitiek	Maasai Mara University
136.	Simon Kirokere	Narok Youth Empowerment Forum
137.	Masharen Ole Sironka	Researcher
138.	Patu Naikumi	Indigenous leader

139.	Eunice Maarima	Women leader
140.	Amos Mwendwa	Indigenous Youth
141.	Adnaan Mohamed	Kenyatta University
142.	Dekow Shallow	Kenyatta University

#### ANNEX IV – About the speakers

**Hon. Josephat Lodeya Lowoi OGW.** The Secretary, Minority and Marginalized Affairs Unit at the Executive Office of the President. He is a seasoned public servant and respected leader recognized for his unwavering commitment to inclusive governance and the empowerment of marginalized communities. Lodeya has distinguished himself as a strong advocate for the rights, dignity, and welfare of historically excluded groups. In this role, he has demonstrated inclusive leadership, working to ensure that minority voices are not only heard but meaningfully represented in governance and development processes.

**Caroline N. Lentupuru, MBS, HSC,** is a Kenyan Commissioner at the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) (appointed Dec 2021), focusing on minority/marginalized groups and regional coordination. A recognized 2025 National Hero, she is a Gender Equality specialist known for fighting FGM and promoting education for vulnerable girls.

**Stanley Kimaren Ole Riamit** is a holder of a Master of Arts degree in Development Anthropology from McGill University in Canada, and holds a Post Graduate Diploma in Project Planning and Management, from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA), and a BSc. degree in Foods, Nutrition and Dietetics from Egerton University, Kenya.

Ole Riamit is an Indigenous Peoples' leader from the Pastoralists Maasai Community in southern Kenya. He is the Founder-Director of Indigenous Livelihoods Enhancement Partners (ILEPA) a community based Indigenous Peoples organization based in Kenya. The organization is a non-for-profit Indigenous organization for human rights, Environment and development serving Indigenous Pastoralists communities in Kenya. ILEPA serves as the Secretariat of a Pan-African Dialogue platform for CSOs and IPs Observers to REDD+ related processes.

Kimaren has extensive exposure and experience in engaging with and influencing international processes and mechanism of interests to Indigenous Peoples, in which he has represented the global indigenous Peoples movement in various capacities. He has for example served as Chair of the International Indigenous Peoples Forum on Climate Change (IIPFCC), Anglophone African representatives to the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility (FCPF) and most recently as Southern CSOs Active Observer to the Green Climate Fund (GCF) among other important portfolios.

Kimaren is a researcher and field instructor for two distinct international Field study programs undertaken in East Africa associated with two overseas Universities since 2009, namely, Utrecht University College in the Netherlands and the Canadian Field School in Africa (CFSIA) under the leadership of McGill University. The two programs focus on a wide range of issues related to development discourse and praxis, including

participatory processes, Inclusion and Indigenous Peoples rights and their livelihoods and environmental conservation among other themes.

As a researcher, Ole Riamit has undertaken and published a number of research work on issues related to Climate change impacts on Indigenous Peoples, the place of Indigenous Knowledge systems and customary institutions in climate change response measures, land tenure security and natural resource management. Kimaren is an accomplished facilitator and interlocutor. He has facilitated high profile conferences and workshops related to climate change and REDD+ in the context of Indigenous Peoples and local communities. Specifically, he has facilitated REDD+ and indigenous Peoples and local communities related workshop in partnership with the World Bank group of Companies including the International Colloquium held in Kenya with forest dependent communities amongst others.

Ole Riamit is interested in Anthropology of Development, human rights and governance. He is primarily interested in the discourses of development, development institutions, how development is impacting grassroots communities in Africa, and social movements that are challenging prevailing forms of development pathways, from an indigenous Peoples Perspective. Specifically, how property, rights to land and natural resources, decision making-arrangement interact to safeguard or impede rights to basic indigenous peoples' survival.

**Joseph Ole Simel** is a Kenyan activist, serving as the Executive Director of Mainyoto Pastoralist Integrated Development Organization (MPIDO), which works to empower Maasai pastoralist communities. With over two decades of experience, he is a leading advocate for Indigenous land rights and environmental sustainability. Simel has represented African Indigenous Peoples at various international platforms, including the UNDP Civil Society Advisory Committee and global climate change summits. He has played a vital role in Kenya's constitutional reforms, advocating for the protection of Indigenous land rights and addressing the marginalization of these communities.

**Dr. Elifuraha Laltaika** is a Senior Lecturer at Tumaini University Makumira in Arusha, Tanzania where he teaches Natural Resources Law. A former Senior Fellow at OHCHR in Geneva and a former member of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, he has published extensively on Indigenous Peoples' rights and consulted for various institutions. He is the 2022 recipient of the Svitlana Kravchenko Environmental Rights Award recognizing his "impact in the law while working to support local communities". A Fulbright Scholar, Elifuraha served as a Harvard Law School Visiting Scholar. He holds a Doctorate in Law from the University of Arizona.

**Anne Sammante** An Indigenous woman from the Maasai pastoralist community in Southern Kenya, currently serving as the Head of Programs and Partnerships at Mainyoto Pastoralists Integrated Development Organization (MPIDO). Additionally, she is the National Coordinator of the Indigenous Peoples National Steering Committee on Climate Change, a network mobilizing indigenous communities in Kenya to address climate change challenges. With over 10 years of experience in Indigenous issues, her expertise spans environment and climate change, land and natural resources rights, gender equality, and local livelihoods and food security. She excels in institutional and Indigenous capacity building, project monitoring and evaluation, grant management, strategic planning, financial management, procurement, and resource mobilization. She holds a Master of Business Administration in Strategic Management and a Bachelor of Commerce in Finance from the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in Nairobi. She is pursuing a Doctorate in Leadership and Governance at Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) in Nairobi. Samante is the Permanent Indigenous Peoples Committee (PIPC) representative for the Anglophone Africa subregion

**Deborah Delgado Pugley** Strategy Coordinator, Indigenous Peoples, Afro-descendants, and Local Communities (IP, AD, & LC) Forests, People, Climate program. She is also an associate professor and researcher at the Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru. She also is a visiting scholar at KU Leuven and Ghent University. Delgado-Pugley has researched environmental and climate policies at the international and territorial level. Her field experience centers around the Amazon regions of Bolivia and Peru, where she has led research teams on climate change, Indigenous movements, human rights, natural resource management, and gender. During the last ten years, she has followed the UNFCCC process as a multiscaled agenda. Delgado-Pugley completed a PhD in international development (Catholic University of Louvain) and sociology (EHESS Paris School of Social Sciences Studies).

**George Sayagie** is a Nation Correspondent for Narok County. He was a reporter in Molo for 4 years before moving to Narok in the same capacity in October 2011. He also reports for The standard.

**Prof. Ben R. Ole Koissaba** is a prominent researcher, advocate for Maasai land rights, and a community development professional based in Kenya. He is a co-founder of the Diaspora University Town (DUT) project, holds a Ph.D. in International Family & Community Studies, and has authored works focusing on historical land injustices in Kenya.

**Dr. Patrick Maundu** is an ethnobotanist working at the National Museums of Kenya (Kenya Resource Centre for Indigenous Knowledge – KENRIK). He is also an honorary fellow at Bioversity International (formerly International Plant Genetic Resources Institute – IPGRI). Patrick has devoted much of his life to research and promotion of local foods. He led a multi-institutional traditional vegetables research and promotion initiative (2001-2006) in 10 African countries that saw the return of traditional vegetables in the Kenyan markets and diets. For these efforts, he was recognized as a guardian of biodiversity in a Global campaign for Diversity for Life and in addition received the international CGIAR communication award in Washington late in 2006.

**Edith Santiyan:** A Maasai Activist Who Turns Juicy Inspiration into Climate Action. Founder and CEO Nalala Tree Foundation. She is also a former Nairobi summer school for climate justice aluminae

**Edna Kaptoyo** is a social development professional with 15+ years of experience in Indigenous Peoples rights, policy advocacy, and sustainable development. Currently the Grantmaking and Partnerships Officer at the Pawanka Fund, she brings deep expertise in climate and environmental policy, global advocacy, and Indigenous self-determined development. Her background includes leadership roles in the non profit sector, with strong experience in stakeholder engagement, multilateral processes and the implementation of community led development.

**Elias Kimaiyo Kibiwot** is a member of the indigenous Sengwer community of Embobut Forest in Kenya. He is a human rights defender from the Sengwer an indigenous hunter and gatherer community. The community has endured conflict with the government since the colonial era. Inspired by the perpetual forced evictions and human rights violations of the community, Elias joined community leaders who were advocating for the rights of Sengwer community on land ownership. He is dedicated to serving his people towards overcoming all inhuman injustices to enable them to pursue their land ownership rights.

**Judy Kipkenda** is the director and founder of KOWYN and Co-Chair of the UN Global Indigenous Youth Caucus, Judy has over 10 years' experience in advocating for Human and Environmental rights. She earned a Bachelors in Arts -Public Relations - from The university of Nairobi in Kenya and a Diploma in Journalism

from the Kenya Institute of Mass Communication. Previously, she worked at Ogiek Peoples Development Program (OPDP) and Program For the Heritage of Ogiek and Mother Earth (PROHOME) before founding KOWYN. Judy has training on Paralegalism and Climate Justice. Judy has severally represented her people the Ogiek People and Indigenous Peoples in high level events as a speaker including the inaugural African Climate Summit 2023.

**Lawrence S. Ole Mbelati** is a Kenyan conservation practitioner and expert in climate change resilience and adaptation, currently serving as the General Manager of Enoonkishu-Mbokishi Conservancies in the Maasai Mara. He is also recognized for his work in social justice, land consultation, and intellectual property advocacy for the Maasai community.

**Prof. Kyle Whyte, PhD** is a faculty member at the University of Michigan where he is George Willis Pack Professor in the School for Environment and Sustainability, University Diversity and Social Transformation Professor, and Professor of Philosophy in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. Kyle teaches in the SEAS environmental justice specialization. He is founding Faculty Director of the Tishman Center for Social Justice and the Environment, Faculty co-Director of the Energy Equity Project, co-Principal Investigator of SEAS' Global Center for Understanding Climate Change Impacts on Transboundary Waters, Faculty Associate of Native American Studies, and Senior Fellow in the Michigan Society of Fellows. His research addresses environmental justice, focusing on moral and political issues concerning climate policy and Indigenous Peoples, the ethics of cooperative relationships between Indigenous Peoples and science organizations, and problems of Indigenous justice in public and academic discussions of food sovereignty, environmental justice, and the anthropocene. He is an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Kyle is currently a U.S. Science Envoy, a co-Chair of the U.S. Geological Survey's Biodiversity and Climate Change Assessment, and a member of the 136 PROCEEDINGS OF THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON INDIGENOUS-LED RESEARCH AND EDUCATION, 2024 Indigenous and Local Knowledge Task Force of the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. He serves on the White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council. He has been an author for the U.S. Global Change Research Program, including on the National Climate Assessment, and for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Working Group II. He is a former member of the Advisory Committee on Climate Change and Natural Resource Science in the U.S. Department of Interior, the National Academies' Resilient America Roundtable, and of two environmental justice work groups convened by past state governors of Michigan. He is President of the Board of Directors of the Michigan Environmental Justice Coalition.

**Mary Beth Jäger** is an enrolled member of the Citizen Band Potawatomi, Xicana, and of German descent. She serves as a research coordinator for the Tishman Center For Social Justice and the Environment at the University of Michigan. Jäger works on several research projects focused on Indigenous-led research and Indigenous Knowledges to advance equity and justice in environmental sciences. Mary Beth works with fellow Potawatomi Dr. Kyle Whyte on these projects. One of the projects is Pathways for Transformation and Action, which CIPRED is a founding partner. Jäger serves as a co-lead for the Fostering Indigenous led Research Convergence Work Group hosted by the US National Science Foundation funded Navigating the New Arctic-Community Office. Mary Beth also is an associate of the Collaboratory of Indigenous Data Governance. Outside of work Jäger has multiple interests including reading, going to the beach, learning Potawatomi, and gathering with friends and family around a meal.

**Milka Chepkorir** is an anthropologist, indigenous person, and climate and human rights activist. Her advocacy was further known when she took the button to represent her community the Sengwer People who lives around Embobut and Kapolet Forest to defend their land rights after being forcefully evicted by

Government of Kenya in the name of conservation. Previously, Milka coordinated Community Land Action Now (CLAN), a network of Kenyan rural communities striving to register their community lands. In 2020, she was an Environmental Justice Fellow at Natural Justice, Kenya. Her interest in gender inclusion in collective tenure rights has informed her work with the community leadership and women to incorporate gender issues in the land rights struggle. She draws her motivation from the desire for justice for Indigenous Peoples and local communities and from her training in anthropology through her bachelor's degree and master's degree in Gender and Development Studies (in progress) at the University of Nairobi. Milka has represented her community and presented their issues in different UN mechanisms and processes and was an Indigenous Fellow at OHCHR in 2016. She currently is the Policy and Advocacy co-coordinator for Africa at the ICCA Consortium. Milka supports community governance, processes and practice aimed at Defending Territories of Life for Indigenous Peoples and local communities. She got Bachelor of Anthropology degree from Maseno University. Currently, she is studying a Masters in Gender and Development Studies at the University of Nairobi. Currently she is serving as the Africa Regional Facilitator at Rights and Resources Group

**Mr. Joseph Ole Sipitiek** is a prominent Kenyan politician serving as a County Executive Committee Member (CECM) in Narok County, known for his loyalty to Governor Patrick Ole Ntutu. He has held portfolios in Tourism, Culture, and Education, focusing on youth empowerment and development. He is influential in Narok East politics. Mr. Sipitiek holds a Master's degree in Environmental studies specializing in community development.

**Prof. Angelo Nai Kuney** is an experienced Kenyan educator, curriculum developer, and trainer affiliated with University of Embu. He has built extensive teaching and training experience through his service under the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), where he taught for three years in secondary school, seven years in a diploma teacher training college, and another seven years in a private university. His expertise spans curriculum development, particularly in designing and digitizing educational content, as well as evaluation and training, where he has served as a curriculum support material evaluator and a national trainer under the Ministry of Education's G-United program. Additionally, he has contributed as a panelist with the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development, participating in discussions on secondary school set books.

**Prof. Arun Agrawal** is the Pulte Family Professor of Development Policy at the Keough School of Global Affairs and the inaugural director of the Just Transformations to Sustainability Initiative at the University of Notre Dame. His research and teaching focus on environmental politics and sustainable development. Agrawal's work examines the political economy of institutional change, sustainability and conservation and development. He has written on Indigenous knowledge, community-based conservation, common property and commoning, agrarian change and the governance of environment and sustainability. His fieldwork has taken him to more than 20 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. His research has found support from both public and private foundations around the world, including the National Science Foundation, the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation, the MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Moore Foundation, the United Kingdom's development cooperation agency and the U.S. Department of Defense. Agrawal's current projects include grants from the U.S. Department of Defense Minerva Research Initiative to examine the effects of demographic and climate change on sociopolitical stability in Africa and a grant from the National Science Foundation to support international undergraduate training. Agrawal's work has appeared in *Science*, the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, *American Political Science Review*, *Current Anthropology* and various *Nature Portfolio* journals among others. He serves as a member of the editorial board of the *PNAS*. and several other interdisciplinary development and

sustainability journals. He earned his doctorate in political science from Duke University, and he holds an M.B.A. from the Indian Institute of Management in Ahmedabad. He has held teaching and research positions at the University of Michigan; Yale University; University of Florida; McGill University; University of California, Berkeley; Indiana University and Harvard University.

**Prof. Kariuki Kirigia** (PhD, McGill University) is an Assistant Professor within the School of the Environment and African Studies Centre at the University of Toronto. Kariuki's research lies at the intersection of climate change, biodiversity conservation, territories of life, land governance, food security, African epistemologies and pedagogies, and sustainability in Africa, and adopts engaged approaches to research sutured by partnerships with African indigenous organizations and African universities. Prior to joining the University of Toronto, Dr. Kirigia completed an FRQSC-funded postdoctoral fellowship at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, which examined the institutional alienation of African indigenous communities from conservation in Kenya. In the past, he has conducted research on the nexus between floriculture investments, land and water governance, and local food security in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, and the Netherlands; agriculture, youth, and food security in Ghana; vocational education and corporate social responsibility (CSR) in Tanzania; payment for ecosystem services (PES) in Uganda; and community-driven hydro-electricity projects and microfinance loans among small-scale entrepreneurs in Central Kenya. Some of Dr. Kirigia's key publications include journal articles, book chapters, and an edited volume titled "'African Potentials' for Wildlife Conservation and Natural Resource Management: Against the Image of 'Deficiency' and Tyranny of 'Fortress'".

Dr. Kirigia is currently working on a book manuscript titled "Promises of Property: The Expansion of Capitalist Relations on an African Indigenous Frontier" and is involved in several collaborative research projects in Africa and North America focused on various themes including climate change, biodiversity conservation, and land governance.

**Prof. Morompi ole Ronkei**, EBS is an alumnus of University of Oregon where he completed a B.A., M.A. and Ph.D. in Journalism and Communication. Dr. Morompi has served with Compassion International in different roles for over ten years serving for six years as area director of programs for Africa Area. He has served our country Kenya, in various public service appointment levels: He was among the 14-member presidential task force on Building Bridges Initiative (BBI). He Served as the chairperson of Taita Taveta University Council following the public university council chairs appointment by the former Education CS Fred Matiang'i. He has undertaken various evaluation assignments for the World Bank including client surveys in Kenya, Tanzania and Ghana.

He is a man of faith and a believer in prayer, he has been in the planning and coordination of Kenya National Prayer Breakfast. He is one of the patrons in the Africa Youth Leadership Forum, AYLFF.

**Prof. Sarone Ole Sena** is a distinguished Kenyan academic, author, and educationist specialized in development studies and pastoralist education, known for his work in community-based action learning. He serves as the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic Affairs (DVCAA) at the International Leadership University (ILU)-Kenya and former Regional President for GULL. The Anthropologist Who Took the University Back to the Village.

From the wide plains of Maasailand, where knowledge was once passed around the fire and measured by wisdom rather than certificates, emerged a scholar who would later bridge two worlds with rare grace and courage. Professor Sarone Ole Sena is a Kenyan academic, cultural anthropologist, and institutional leader whose life's work has been devoted to understanding and reshaping the relationship between education, culture, and social change among indigenous communities.

Born into a Maasai pastoralist setting in Narok South, Prof. Sena's early life was shaped by communal values, oral tradition, and the lived realities of marginalization that many pastoralist communities experienced under colonial and post-colonial systems. These formative years would later define his intellectual direction, giving him a lifelong commitment to ensuring that education did not erase identity but strengthened it.

Professor Sena's academic path is remarkable both in its breadth and depth. He pursued higher education across some of the world's most respected institutions, earning a Bachelor of Education from the University of Nairobi, before advancing to an M.Phil at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom. His academic quest then took him to Canada, where he completed an MSc at McMaster University and later a PhD at McGill University.

Throughout this journey, Prof. Sena remained anchored to one central question, "How can formal education serve as a tool for empowerment rather than alienation for indigenous societies?" This question became the backbone of his specialization in Cultural Anthropology, particularly in examining how schooling transforms social structures, leadership, and identity within pastoralist communities such as the Maasai.

**Samuel Nguiffo** directs and manages the Center for Environment and Development (CED) in Cameroon's capital, Yaounde. A lawyer by training, Nguiffo has devoted himself to the Herculean task of stopping the liquidation of the region's forests for short-term profits. He was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize in 1999, for his efforts on protection of the tropical rainforests of Central Africa.

**Sharana Shepa** is a communication associate at CIPRED from Nepal. She has also actively participated in the International Indigenous Forum on Climate Change (IIFC)

**Parseina Soinei** is the Managing Partner in the Parseina Soinei & Co. Advocates firm. She has worked for top-tier organizations in Nairobi. She is skilled at commercial law and litigation. Her area of expertise includes conveyancing, tax, contract structuring, company set up, company law, real estate sales and purchases, securities, employment law, arbitration and mediation as well as mergers and acquisitions.

She is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya, a Registered Notary Public and a Commissioner for Oaths with over 3 years' experience as a legal practitioner.

She handles legal briefs before various Courts and Regulatory Authorities including the Kenya Revenue Authority, Kenya Investment Authority, the Competition Authority of Kenya and the Kenya Industrial Property Tribunal.

Saris Pauline, Executive Director at Pragmatic Social Action from Northern Kenya