



OGIEK PEOPLES' DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
2023 ANNUAL REPORT.

ABOUT OPDP

Established in 1999, the Ogiek Peoples' Development Program (OPDP) is a Kenyan-based Non-Governmental Organization dedicated to addressing the enduring historical land injustices faced by the Ogiek community. OPDP's core mission centers around advocating for indigenous peoples' land rights, fostering cultural and linguistic revitalization, promoting sustainable natural resource management, and advancing overall community development aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. Headquartered in Nakuru town, Nakuru County, OPDP operates nationally, collaborating with indigenous communities not only in Kenya but also across the African continent.

VISION:

To cultivate an empowered indigenous community that champions equality and embraces diversity.

MISSION:

OPDP is committed to promoting and advocating for the participation, self-determination, and human rights of the Ogiek community and Indigenous Peoples, striving for sustainable development.

OVERALL GOAL:

To enhance inclusive economic, social, cultural, and political conditions for indigenous communities, fostering equal opportunity and advancement.

CORE VALUES:

- Integrity
- Inclusivity
- Respect
- Diversity

STRATEGIC PILLARS:

- i.** Upholding good corporate governance and enhancing institutional capacity.
- ii.** Advocating for land rights and sustainable natural resource management.
- iii.** Championing human rights and fostering good governance.
- iv.** Promoting environmental conservation and advocating for climate justice.
- v.** Revitalizing culture and language preservation efforts.
- vi.** Empowering gender equality and youth advancement.
- vii.** Aligning with and contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals.

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FORWARD

OPDP's 2023 Annual report highlights OPDP endeavors and achievements of the year 2023. Throughout the year, OPDP remained steadfast in its commitment to advancing the rights and well-being of the Ogiek community, particularly in addressing the critical issue of land rights. As custodians of their ancestral lands, the Ogiek have long faced challenges to their land tenure, leading to protracted legal battles and struggles for recognition. In this report, we outline our efforts to promote justice, human rights, and peaceful coexistence, with a particular focus on advocating for the land rights of the Ogiek people and other indigenous communities in Kenya. Supported by the generous partners, our initiatives have aimed to empower the Ogiek community across Mau forest, ensuring their voices are heard and their rights are protected.

In addition to its focus on land rights advocacy, OPDP's 2023 Annual Report delves into various other initiatives aimed at holistic community development. From educational programs to renewable energy projects, building capacity on climate change and agroecology. OPDP endeavors to encompass a wide spectrum of issues affecting the Ogiek people. Moreover, cultural preservation and revival efforts are integral to OPDP's mission through, the establishment of the Ogiek Cultural Center which will serve as a focal point for Ogiek heritage, traditions, and language. OPDP seeks to instill pride and resilience within the community, strengthening its cultural identity amidst rapid societal changes. The 2023 Annual Report serves as a testament to OPDP's multifaceted approach towards empowering the Ogiek community and fostering sustainable development. By addressing various socio-economic, cultural, and environmental challenges, OPDP remains committed to creating a brighter future for the Ogiek people and indigenous communities across Kenya.

Table of Contents

About OPDP.	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
FOREWORD	4
1. Land rights and natural resources	7
Land rights	7
i. The 6th Commemoration of Ogiek Case:	7
ii. National Land commission (NLC) Validation of Community Register of Lands under Ogiek Claim.....	7
iii. Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ) Engagement:	8
iv. Ogiek paralegals and human rights defenders' capacity building	9
v. Community land registration for Ogiek, Yaaku and Sengwer communities.	9
Natural resources.	10
i. Scouts Capacity Building:	10
2. Culture and Language preservation	11
i. Ogiek Cultural Center	11
ii. Ogiek online language classes-	11
iii. Ogiek Cultural Festival	12
3. Gender and youths	13
i. International Women's day commemoration.	13
ii. Supporting Ogiek women self-help groups.	14
iii. Youth Mentorship program on herbal medicine traditional knowledge	14
4. SDGs- Health, education, clean energy	15
i. Education	15
ii. Clean energy	15
iii. Community awareness forum on climate change mitigation and adaptation	15
iv. Herbalist Stakeholder Forum	16
5. Human rights and good governance	17
i. Human rights stakeholder's forum	17
ii. International human rights commemoration	17
6. Research, survey and case studies	17
i. Case study on Agroecology on climate change and agro ecological practices for three communities: Ogiek of Mau, Sengwer and Yiaku.	17
ii. Land Body Ecologies Research	18
iii. Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation (TAPE) Research	18
7. Networks, Alliances, memberships and partnerships.	19
i. HUGAFO-K	19
ii. ILC Exchange learning.	20
8. Challenges	21
Evictions in Sasimwani and Legal cases at local courts:	21
9. Financial Overview	21

1. LAND RIGHTS AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Land rights

The Ogiek community's quest for land rights spans decades, marked by significant achievements in securing tenure rights in the Mau forest. Despite these victories, the journey towards justice and recognition persists, fueled by the community's resilience and collective determination to reclaim their rights and ensure a sustainable future for generations to come. In 2023, their focus remained on urging the government to implement the African court judgment.

i. The 6th Commemoration of Ogiek Case:

May 26th, 2017, stands as a historic milestone for the Ogiek community, as the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights recognized their ancestral land rights in Kenya's Mau Forest Complex. This 2017 ruling affirmed their status as Indigenous Peoples and custodians of the Mau ecosystem. Six years later, on May 26th, 2023, the Ogiek community held their 6th commemoration of this achievement with determination and resilience across Nakuru, Uasin Gishu, and Narok Counties. During this commemoration, OPDP seized the opportunity to raise awareness about the reparations judgment issued on June 23rd, 2022. Community members were informed on the African Court's orders, outlining crucial measures for the government to rectify past injustices and secure the Ogiek's rights to their ancestral lands and cultural practices. OPDP also highlighted actions taken to implement the court decisions, led by the Ogiek Council of Elders and guided by a Committee of External Experts.

ii. National Land commission (NLC) Validation of Community Register of Lands under Ogiek Claim

The National Land Commission through its Historical Land Injustice Secretariat addresses grievances which stretches back to colonial land administration practices and laws that resulted in mass disinheritance of communities of their land, and which grievances have not been sufficiently resolved between 15th June 1895 to 27th August 2010 resulting into displacement of communities from their habitual place of residence.

On November 29th, 2022, the National Land Commission (NLC) summoned the Ogiek community for hearings on their Historical Land Injustices (HLI) claims. Community leaders from various locations, including those outside the Ogiek claims but related to them, were invited to be heard on their claims before the Commission. A total of 33 claims were heard, addressing historical land injustices affecting the Ogiek community. Out of the 33 claims, 10 claims were admitted after consolidation and verification.



Figure 1 Ogiek Elder, Mr. Kaila present to NLC team on behalf of Ogiek of Uasin-Gishu

In 2023, Under the leadership of Commissioner Hon. Tiyah Galgalo, the NLC's HLI secretariat conducted field visits to engage with the Ogiek community across the Mau Forest Complex. These visits aimed to validate and verify Ogiek claims,

marking a significant step in addressing historical land injustices. Commissioners conducted site visits to locations mentioned in each claim, gaining firsthand insights into the community's grievances and enduring challenges.

<https://landcommission.go.ke/>

iii. Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ) Engagement:



In January 2023, the Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ) played a crucial role in facilitating a multi-stakeholder meeting, bringing together key government agencies and departments such as the Attorney General's Office, the Ministry of Lands, the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), and the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR). The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the implementation of reparations following the African Court's decision regarding the Ogiek community. Subsequently, the KNCHR and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) organized another meeting where it was agreed to escalate the Ogiek matter to the Attorney General's office through an advisory. With the intervention of the OHCHR, the Attorney General agreed to advise the government to establish an inter-ministerial committee to address the issues facing the Ogiek community.

In June 2023, in alignment with the African Court's decision and ongoing efforts, the CAJ coordinated a site visit to the East Mau forest complex. Led by Chairperson Florence Kajuju, the delegation comprised members from various governmental bodies and agencies. This visit aimed to gain firsthand insight into the challenges confronting the Ogiek community and their ancestral lands. By engaging in this visit, the government demonstrated a collaborative approach to addressing the community's concerns and working towards sustainable solutions.

iv. Ogiek paralegals and human rights defenders' capacity building

In 2023, OPDP organized a refresher training session aimed at enhancing the skills and capacity of paralegals and human rights defenders involved in monitoring and documenting the progress of the African Court ruling's implementation. The objective was to bolster efforts in assessing the status of implementation and compiling comprehensive reports to inform advocacy initiatives and the preparation of shadow reports to be submitted to the African Court. The training touched into several key areas, including updates on the current status of implementation, a review of the implementation roadmap with input from community stakeholders, and an exploration of the pivotal role of community paralegals in facilitating implementation efforts. Participants gained a deeper understanding of the indigenous Ogiek people's rights and the specific content and implications of the court rulings, equipping them with the knowledge and tools necessary to effectively advocate for the fulfillment of these rights.

Also in December 2023, OPDP organized security training for human rights defenders. The activity aimed at building the capacity of defenders to learn practical skills and knowledge on how to stay safe. The goal was to help them protect themselves, their data, and their networks from both physical and digital

v. Community land registration for Ogiek, Yaaku and Sengwer communities.

The CLAN- Tenure Facility the project commenced in May 2023 with the aim of facilitating the registration of communal lands for the Ogiek Mau, Ogiek Mt Elgon, Yiaku, and Sengwer communities in alignment with the provisions of the Community Land Act of 2016. The project focuses on communities in Sengwer of Kabolet in Trans Nzoia, Ogiek of Narok, Yaaku of Mukogodo, Ogiek of Chepkitale, and Ogiek of Nakuru, guiding them through the initial steps of community consultations and obtaining free prior informed consent (FPIC).

During the first phase of FPIC meetings held in May, all five communities expressed their consent to participate in community land registration, with community leaders signing FPIC forms witnessed by CLAN representatives. However, the Sengwer community requested additional time for consultation due to internal disagreements. The Yaaku community expressed their focus on reclaiming the Mokogodo forest, their ancestral land, highlighting issues of eviction and restricted access.

The Yaaku community resolved the matter of land registration but emphasized the need to advocate for the restitution of their community forest. The Sengwer community identified two portions of land for registration but faced disagreement regarding one parcel, suggesting further consultations. Lastly, the Mt Elgon Ogiek community appointed an interim Community Land Management Committee (CLMC) to facilitate the registration process and initiated steps to compile a community registrar, demonstrating their commitment to the project.

<https://www.ombudsman.go.ke/>

<https://www.knchr.org/>

<https://thetenurefacility.org/>

NATURAL RESOURCES.

The Mau forest complex is endowed with abundant natural resources that serve as a crucial source of sustenance for the community. Encompassing vast forested areas, these regions currently fall under the jurisdiction of the Kenya Forest Service (KFS). However, the Ogiek community, in collaboration with the OPDP, has forged a productive partnership with the KFS to ensure the effective conservation of these invaluable forest resources. Through the initiatives led by OPDP, the community has cultivated cooperative relationships with various stakeholders, notably community forest associations and community scouts stationed in Logoman and Kiptunga forests. These partnerships have significantly bolstered the community's capacity to access, utilize, and participate in decisions regarding the natural resources within their lands and territories.

Throughout the year 2023, OPDP has been actively involved in several noteworthy projects aimed at advancing the community's interests and promoting sustainable natural resource management.

i. Scouts Capacity Building:

The Rehabilitation and Conservation Program, initiated by OPDP in August 2016, has been instrumental in engaging community forest scouts. Initially, 18 scouts were selected and appointed by the Logoman Community Forest Association (CFA). Subsequently, in 2018, Kiptunga CFA selected and trained 15 additional scouts who joined the KFS to support the protection of Kiptunga and Mariashoni forests. These dedicated scouts have played a pivotal role in the restoration and conservation of the Mau Forest, achieving significant milestones along the way. Noteworthy accomplishments include the rehabilitation of 40 hectares of Logoman forest and over 10 hectares of Mariashoni forest, through the planting and nurturing of more than 1 million indigenous trees. They have also been actively involved in combating forest fires, reducing charcoal burning and cedar post chopping, reporting instances of forest destruction to KFS officers, raising community awareness on environmental conservation, and participating in various community initiatives. Presently, there are 20 community forest scouts operating within the Mau Forest, with 8 stationed in Logoman Forest, 12 in Kiptunga Forest, and 2 in Nkareta Forest. Periodic review forums, facilitated by OPDP and other stakeholders, are conducted to assess the scouts' performance and provide guidance for future engagements.

In 2023, OPDP, in collaboration with the scouts, KFS, and community forest associations, undertook the rehabilitation and planting of 5000 indigenous trees, contributing to the restoration of over 5 hectares of degraded forest. Additionally, OPDP actively participated in the development of the Kiptunga CFA

participatory forest management plan. A capacity-building meeting for forest conservation stakeholders was organized by OPDP to provide training on the following key areas:

- **Forest Laws and Policies:** Scouts received comprehensive training on forest laws and policies, including the Forest Conservation and Management Act of 2016 and other relevant regulations governing forest protection and conservation. This segment also covered guidelines and policies specific to the roles and responsibilities of community forest scouts.
- **Security Management:** Scouts underwent training on security management, focusing on information recording, handling, and sharing. Strategies for dealing with potential threats from illegal loggers and enhancing security within the forests were also addressed.
- **Collaboration and Partnership Among Stakeholders:** The importance of fostering collaboration and partnerships with forest rangers, CFAs, and other conservation stakeholders in promoting forest and water catchment area protection and conservation was emphasized during the training sessions.

Income-Generating Activities: The training sessions explored new opportunities for augmenting conservation efforts while simultaneously promoting the livelihoods of the scouts. Topics included eco-tourism and other income-generating activities such as tree nurseries and agroforestry.

1. Culture and Language preservation

i. Ogiek Cultural Center

In 2020, OPDP acquired 5-acre plot of land for the establishment of the Cultural Centre, strategically situated within the Maasai Mau Block, an integral part of the expansive Mau Forest Complex. Most construction part of the centre were completed in 2023 enabling the centre to host the 5th Ogiek culture day. The Cultural Centre serves as a focal point for various activities aimed at preserving and promoting the rich heritage of the Ogiek community. Among its key features are the Ogiek Museum, which serves as a warehouse for traditional artifacts essential to Ogiek culture and tradition. Here, visitors can immerse themselves in the vibrant history and customs of the Ogiek people through the display of indigenous items.

Additionally, the Centre hosts an Ogiek Village, offering visitors a glimpse into the traditional way of life of the Ogiek community. The serene surroundings provide an ideal background for cultural culture and knowledge. Moreover, the Cultural Centre encompasses a Herbal Garden, showcasing the rich biodiversity of the region and traditional medicinal plants utilized by the Ogiek for generations. This botanical haven not only serves as a source of knowledge but also highlights the intimate connection between the Ogiek people and their natural environment. Furthermore, the Centre features a complex building comprising a hall, library, and recording room, facilitating various educational and community-oriented activities. One notable initiative is the adult education program, catering to over 12 students from the local Ogiek of Nkareta community. With the assistance of dedicated volunteers, participants receive instruction in fundamental subjects such as English, Kiswahili, and Mathematics, empowering them with essential skills for personal and professional development.

In essence, the Cultural Centre stands as a testament to the commitment of OPDP to preserve Ogiek culture, foster community development, and promote sustainable living practices. Through its diverse offerings and educational initiatives, the Centre serves as a beacon of heritage conservation and empowerment within the heart of Narok County.

ii. Ogiek Online Language Classes

Language and culture serve as integral components of an indigenous individual's identity, representing a connection to ancestral heritage and traditions. Recognizing the significance of these aspects, OPDP has prioritized language revival as a pillar of its initiatives towards realizing Ogiek identity, particularly for Ogiek individuals assimilated into mainstream societal groups. In 2023, a pivotal step was taken with the initiation of virtual Ogiek language classes at the Nkareta Ogiek Cultural Centre. This endeavor was essential in transmitting linguistic knowledge to Ogiek youth, ensuring the preservation and continuity of their native tongue. The online classes served as a means to bridge geographical barriers, enabling participation from over 15 youths residing across the Mau forest region. By equipping the younger generation with language skills, OPDP endeavors to foster a sense of cultural pride and identity among Ogiek youth, strengthening their connection to their heritage and community.

iii. Ogiek Cultural Festival



Figure 3 .Procession during the 2023, 5th Ogiek cultural day in Nkareta

From August 23 to 25, 2023, the 5th Ogiek Cultural Festival unfolded as a vibrant celebration of the Ogiek community's profound cultural legacy, serving as a pivotal platform for addressing crucial issues pertinent to their well-being. Themed 'Ogiek Cultural Linkage with Nature,' the event convened over 2000 individuals, comprising indigenous and local communities, administrative representatives, local, national, and international NGOs, delegates from the Narok County government, clergy members, and officials from government agencies and commissions, including the Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ) and the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR).

The festival commenced with an exhilarating hike through the Maasai Mau forest, engaging 76 participants, including media personnel and Narok County forest rangers who provided guidance and ensured safety throughout the journey. Participants interacted with Ogiek elders along the trail, gaining profound insights into cultural landmarks and routes with the climax being the majestic Osururiet waterfall.

Central to the festival were captivating cultural exhibitions, showcasing diverse art, crafts, and performances that allowed attendees to delve deep into the essence of Ogiek culture, fostering a profound appreciation for their unique traditions.

Complementing the main festivities were a series of side events designed to enrich the festival's agenda. These encompassed the Tirap Youth Trust mentorship program, awareness sessions on education and healthcare accessibility, climate change mitigation efforts, discussions on herbal medicine, Agro/. ecology, and renewable energy initiatives. Addressing critical issues such as gender equality and environmental sustainability, these events underscored the holistic approach essential for the comprehensive development of indigenous communities.

As dusk descended, Ogiek men congregated within the confines of the Ogiek village for an enchanting storytelling session around a crackling bonfire. Here, venerable elders regaled the audience with captivating narratives steeped in traditional wisdom, ensuring the transmission of ancestral knowledge from one generation to the next, thereby fortifying the Ogiek's bond with their heritage.

The festival's final day reverberated with jubilant celebrations of Ogiek cultural heritage and communal solidarity, commencing with the ceremonial erection of a shrine by Ogiek elders. Participants engaged in a myriad of cultural exhibitions, traditional dances, and poetic recitals. Distinguished guest speakers underscored the imperatives of unity, justice, education, and gender equity within the Ogiek community.

The Festival stood as a testament to the resilience and dedication of the Ogiek people in safeguarding their heritage. It underscored the indispensable role played by OPDP, the sagacity of the Ogiek Council of Elders, and the collective endeavor required to preserve their natural resources and cultural identity.

Throughout the festival, esteemed speakers emphasized the paramount importance of acknowledging historical legacies, safeguarding the rights of future generations, and advocating for justice, education, and gender parity. Beyond being a cultural extravaganza, the Festival embodied the unwavering resilience and unity of the Ogiek people, paving the way for continued progress, heritage preservation, and advocacy for their rights and traditions.

3. Gender and youths

i. International Women's day commemoration.

On March 8, 2023, Nakuru County joined the global community in commemorating International Women's Day under the theme "Digital: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality." This significant occasion provided a platform to underscore the pivotal role of digital technologies in enhancing gender equality by facilitating access to digital resources. It served as a rallying call to celebrate the contributions of women and girls utilizing the digital sphere to address social and economic disparities through innovative initiatives and digital literacy programs.

In preparation for the event, Nakuru County, in collaboration with various stakeholders, including OPDP's Gender Officer, established a committee tasked with planning the International Women's Day celebrations. This collective effort aimed to ensure a meaningful and impactful observance of the day.

OPDP, in conjunction with the Nakuru County government and other Civil Society Organizations operating within Nakuru County, orchestrated a series of activities to mark the occasion. These activities included a vibrant procession along the town center avenue, captivating entertainment, informative exhibitions, and inspiring speeches delivered by prominent leaders addressing gender inequalities and advocating for women's empowerment through digital platforms.

The event attracted women from diverse backgrounds, including rural and urban areas, alongside Nakuru County women leaders, representatives from Civil Society Organizations, members of the media, and academicians, among others. The gathering convened at Nyayo Garden to honor the significance of the day. Hon. Josephine Atieno Achieng, the Gender County Executive Committee Member (CECM), graced the occasion as the guest of honor, while Dr. Peter Ketyenya also added his esteemed presence to the event.

The overarching objectives of the day were to celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness about gender equality issues, advocate for accelerated gender parity, conduct fundraising initiatives for women-focused charities, and promote innovations aimed at fostering gender equality in the digital realm.

Through collaborative efforts and collective commitment, the International Women's Day commemoration in Nakuru County served as a testament to the unwavering dedication to advancing the rights and representation of women, harnessing the power of digital technologies to drive positive change and create a more inclusive society for



Figure 4. Ogiek women during the issuing of Usonog women with tents

On July 8, 2023, OPDP fulfilled its commitment on supporting women by delivering a tent and seats to the Usonog Women Group located in Nessuit Location, Njoro Sub-county, Nakuru County. The group had expressed a keen interest in acquiring a tent that they could rent out to generate income for their team. Additionally, they anticipated using the tent for their own meetings. The women were elated to witness their request come to fruition. Members of the wider community, including elders, youth, and women from various groups, joined the Usonog Women Group in celebrating this milestone and witnessing the support they received.

On September 4, 2023, the OPDP delivered another tent, this time to the Olopiriik Self Help Group situated in Olokurto location, Narok County. This group had voiced their urgent need for shelter during a meeting held in January 2023. In an open space, community members had struggled to endure the harsh rays of the sun, prompting them to disperse in search of shade, causing disruptions during the meeting. As a result, one of the pressing requests that emerged was for tents and seats, which was later formalized through written requests. Since then, group leaders have consistently followed up, presenting their requests and outlining how the acquisition would not only provide shelter but also serve as an income-generating opportunity for the group.

iii. Youth Mentorship program on herbal medicine traditional knowledge

On 25th February 2023, 20 youths drawn from Nkareta and environs met in the Ogiek Cultural center for a mentorship program that was meant to transmit the knowledge to them by the herbalists.

OPDP conducted a youth forum aimed at supporting intergenerational transfer of knowledge, from the traditional healers to the youths at Ogiek Cultural Center in Narok. The mentorship programme was organized in the manner of a Community forum involving the medicine men and women (Herbalist or specialists), youths (Mentees) and women sharing experiences on traditional medicine and showcasing the traditional herbs. The program was meant to transmit the knowledge from the specialists from the holders who are the herbalists to the young mentees. The herbalists demonstrated myths and rituals associated with the herbs from extraction to the process of administration. The youths will have the first hand opportunity to appreciate the role of the traditional healers and learn about the various diseases/health conditions that are handled by them.

4. SDGS- HEALTH, EDUCATION, CLEAN ENERGY



i Education

In 2023, with the support of partners and well-wishers, OPDP continued its efforts to ensure that Ogiek students have access to education at various levels. Seven Ogiek girls were enrolled in the Wiser Girls full scholarship program for secondary education, bringing the total number of Ogiek girls attending Wiser Girls Secondary School to 17. Additionally, OPDP provided ongoing support for two girls with disabilities from Sasimwani to pursue their primary education in a special school

ii Clean Energy

OPDP supported four families in Narok with Solar panels. This was geared towards advocating for attainment of Goal 7 renewable energy. While climate change involves the emission of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, solar power helps reduce the amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases released.

iii Community awareness forum on climate change mitigation and adaptation

The Ogiek who are traditionally hunters and gatherers have been adversely affected by climate change. This has been attributed by dispossession from their territories and massive destruction of forest which has affected their economic, social and cultural rights.

In effort to address the effects, OPDP has been at the forefront in advocating for climate justice and environmental conservation within the indigenous peoples' lands and territories. Some of the strategies being employed include raising awareness on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies as well as supporting the community with nature friendly practices.

On 12th and 24th August, 2023, Ogiek peoples organized the community forum and a side event session during Ogiek Cultural day on climate change mitigation and adaptation. The events attracted 50 and about 100 community members respectively of elders, men, women and youths with the intent to build their understanding on climate change. The events were conducted in a participatory manner which provided an avenue to the community to reflect on the past, and present on how the dynamics of climate change has interfered with their way of living.

Some of the factors which the community highlighted to have fueled climate change in their territories included insecure land tenure rights. This was considered to be an enormous predicament that paved the way for the encroachers to enter their territories and destroy their precious resources.

iv Herbalist Stakeholder Forum

Through the support of GEF Small Grant Programme (SGP), OPDP has been supporting herbalists through training them on mechanisms of protecting their intellectual property rights. Herbalists are key drivers in addressing health and biodiversity. OPDP fast-tracks training of herbalists and engaging stakeholders such as the County government of Narok, KFS, National Museum of Kenya, Cooperative department and Kenya Industrial Property Institute (KIPI).

OPDP convened a county stakeholder's forum bringing together stakeholders from the community (including traditional herbalists and elders), County government officials and stakeholders from the Kenya Forest Service, Kenya wildlife services and the Kenya National Museums of Kenya. The forum aimed at broader awareness raising on the importance of traditional medicine in fighting diseases and maintaining a healthy ecosystem. The forum also targeted the fight against Covid-19 now that the Covid-19 variants are emerging negatively affecting the society. The community appreciated the importance of supporting their forest ecosystems which in the end up supporting their health and promoting their wellbeing.

<https://www.thegef.org/what-we-do/topics/gef-small-grants-programme>

5. Human rights and good governance

ii. Human rights stakeholder's forum

On October 24, 2023, OPDP convened a stakeholders meeting that brought together 32 participants from various institutions, including governmental bodies at both county and national levels, legal entities, human rights organizations, civil society groups, media representatives, and members of the Ogiek community.

The primary aims of the meeting were twofold: To foster collaborations with relevant institutions to support the Ogiek community in advocating for justice, human rights, and peaceful coexistence among all members of the community and the general population. Additionally, the meeting aimed to facilitate the development of recommendations that promote the legal empowerment of this marginalized group, ensuring their voices are heard and their rights are protected.

Funded by the European Union and UNDP, the project runs for a duration of one year, from August 2023 to July 2024. It targets Ogiek women, youths, and the general population, with a focus on six sub-counties: Njoro, Molo, Kuresoi South, Kuresoi North, and Gilgil.

The primary objective is to enhance the capacity of youth and women regarding Kenyan laws and policies to improve access to justice. The project's interventions encompass community awareness, capacity building, advocacy, and partnership and networking.

iii. International human rights commemoration

The Kenya National Commission on Human rights (KNCHR) in partnership with OPDP hosted the 2023 international rights day at Mariashoni. The event brought together Ogiek community members from East Mau and representatives of Ogiek of Sasimwani. The community leaders utilized the occasion to condemn the government led evictions that were conducted by Kenya Forest Service (KFS) in Sasimwani and the threats of evictions in East Mau. The community called on the government to implement the Ogiek case in Mau calling the respect of court judgements that are favoring the community.

6. Research, Survey and Case Studies

i. Case study on Agroecology on climate change and agro ecological practices for three communities: Ogiek of Mau, Sengwer and Yiaku.

The documentation of the Agroecological practices was instigated by the need to know the challenges and parameters behind uptake of Agroecology among indigenous peoples. Through the Agroecology Fund collaborative work of the hunter gatherer communities, OPDP facilitated a case study on Agroecology and Climate Change among three communities of hunter gatherer under the network of Hunter Gatherer Forum

Kenya. African Indigenous Vegetables play a critical role in every home daily consumption and especially to women. For hunter gatherer communities, beekeeping is a source of livelihood and hence this informs the reason for documentation of indigenous Food Systems and the impact of climate change.

The Ogiek customarily relied on the forest for their livelihoods, practicing mobile beekeeping and hunting as main food procurement activities. Therefore, honey and beekeeping are central to the economic, social, cultural and religious life of the Ogiek and other communities such as Sengwer of Embobut forest and Yiaku of Laikipia county. These communities practice bee keeping in small-scale extensive systems, largely using traditional log hives scattered over large areas of the forest.

Recently, there have been growing efforts to increase honey production through the introduction of modern technologies and intensification of production. For example, promotion of beekeeping has been an important element in the rural development policies of the Kenyan government and international agencies, aiming to increase productivity in the honey sector and facilitate the marketing of bee products by setting up producers' cooperatives. The research was carried out to examine the status of agroecological practices among the hunter gatherer communities in Kenya and identify policy gaps that exist for further recommendations.

ii. Land Body Ecologies Research

The Land Body Ecologies (LBE) is a research project led by a team of researchers with academia, human rights and professionals from various fields. The research has established various field stations 'Hubs'; which are the Arctic North (Northern Finland), India, Kenya, and Uganda with the main Hub in London. The aim of the research is to understand the suffering that occurs when land is harmed and explore ways in which mental health and ecosystem health may be codependent. This study seeks to understand mental distresses that might occur when connection to land is altered through one's ability to live on it or actively in it, through impacts such as climate change, displacement, or forced eviction.

From 2021, OPDP through the Land Body Ecologies (LBE) has been carrying out collaborative research on the effect of Climate Change on Mental Health known as Solastagia. This research informed data collection of target groups among the Ogiek of Mau across the Mau forest as a means of establishing the effect of climate change and mental health. Through this collaborative work by academia, indigenous peoples, and civil society organizations, research was conducted targeting elders, women and youths who were previously evicted from their territories. Through this research OPDP was able to establish that evictions not only result in economic and social challenges but also affect the mental health of the evictees. data generated in this research will be published as means of building evidence that climate change affects mental health of indigenous peoples.

OPDP team with some community members were able to join other collaborative implementations of the LBE project during the Month of June 2023 in London Hub. This festival involved experts from the climate change policy makers, academia and researchers who joined the conservation through discussions, sharing stories and podcasts that were recorded during the research

<https://wellcomecollection.org/visit-us>



Figure 6 OPDP Director in a panel during the LBE Festival in London

ii. Tool for Agroecology Performance Evaluation (TAPE) Research

Through partnership of OPDP with Indigenous Partnership for Agrobiodiversity & Food Sovereignty, Alliance Biodiversity & CIAT and CGIAR, a survey was conducted in Nessuit, Mariashoni, Nkareta and Keneti. The results of the survey informed how Agroecological practices among indigenous peoples are growing as it focused on the principles of Agroecology. The study also revealed the strength of transition of the Ogiek community in the areas of study and how the performance in terms of the principles of Agroecology affected the food systems.

7. NETWORKS, ALLIANCES, MEMBERSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS.

i HUGAFO - K

Hunter Gatherers Forum Kenya(HUGAFO-K) is a network comprising members from eight hunter-gatherer communities, namely the Ogiek of Mt. Elgon, Waayu, Waata, Ogiek of Mau, Sengwer, Aweer, and Yaaku communities. Established in November 2019, the network had a vision to empower and unite these communities through training, advocacy, learning, and linkages.

On October 20th, 2023, the American Jewish World Service(AJWS) called for a meeting with members of Hunter Gatherer Forum Kenya (HUGAFO-K) at the Ogiek Peoples Development Programs (OPDP) board room. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the progress made by HUGAFO-K and to develop strategies to achieve their goals. The meeting was attended by 4 officials from American Jewish World Service (AJWS) and 8 members from HUGAFO-K, making a total of 12 participants. During the meeting, both AJWS officials and HUGAFO-K members had the opportunity to share their insights, ideas, and accomplishments. They engaged in thoughtful conversations to identify the next steps towards advancing the goals of HUGAFO-K. Overall, the meeting served as a platform for fruitful exchanges and collaboration between AJWS and HUGAFO-K.

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ii LC Exchange learning.



Figure 7 Participants of the ILC exchange learning interact with community at Kiptunga forest

Through a collaborative effort facilitated by the International Land Coalition (ILC), In October 2023 the Ogiek community welcomed a delegation comprising representatives from various parts of Africa for a profound learning exchange activity. This event, organized jointly by ILC Africa, The Tenure Facility, and Community Land Action Now (CLAN), provided a unique opportunity for the delegates to engage with the Ogiek community and gain insights into their conservation efforts within the Logoman and Kiptunga forests. During their visit, the delegates had the chance to witness firsthand how the Ogiek community, in partnership with the Kenya Forest Service (KFS), has successfully implemented forest conservation initiatives.

Moreover, the exchange program enabled the delegates to grasp the intrinsic connection between the Ogiek community and the indigenous forests they inhabit. As a hunter-gatherer community, the Ogiek rely on the forest not only for their livelihood but also for their cultural and spiritual practices. By immersing themselves in the Ogiek way of life, the delegates gained a deeper understanding of the profound relationship between indigenous peoples and their natural environment.

In addition to exploring the Ogiek community's sustainable practices, the delegates were enlightened about the Ogiek land struggle and the landmark judgments delivered by the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights (ACPHR). Through engaging discussions and informative sessions, the Ogiek community shared their journey of resilience and determination in advocating for their land rights. They shed light on the challenges they face and the ongoing efforts to secure recognition and justice for their ancestral lands.

Overall, the learning exchange activity provided a platform for meaningful dialogue and mutual learning between the Ogiek community and the visiting delegates. It showcased the remarkable conservation initiatives undertaken by the Ogiek within the Mau forest while highlighting the broader struggle for indigenous land rights and environmental preservation.

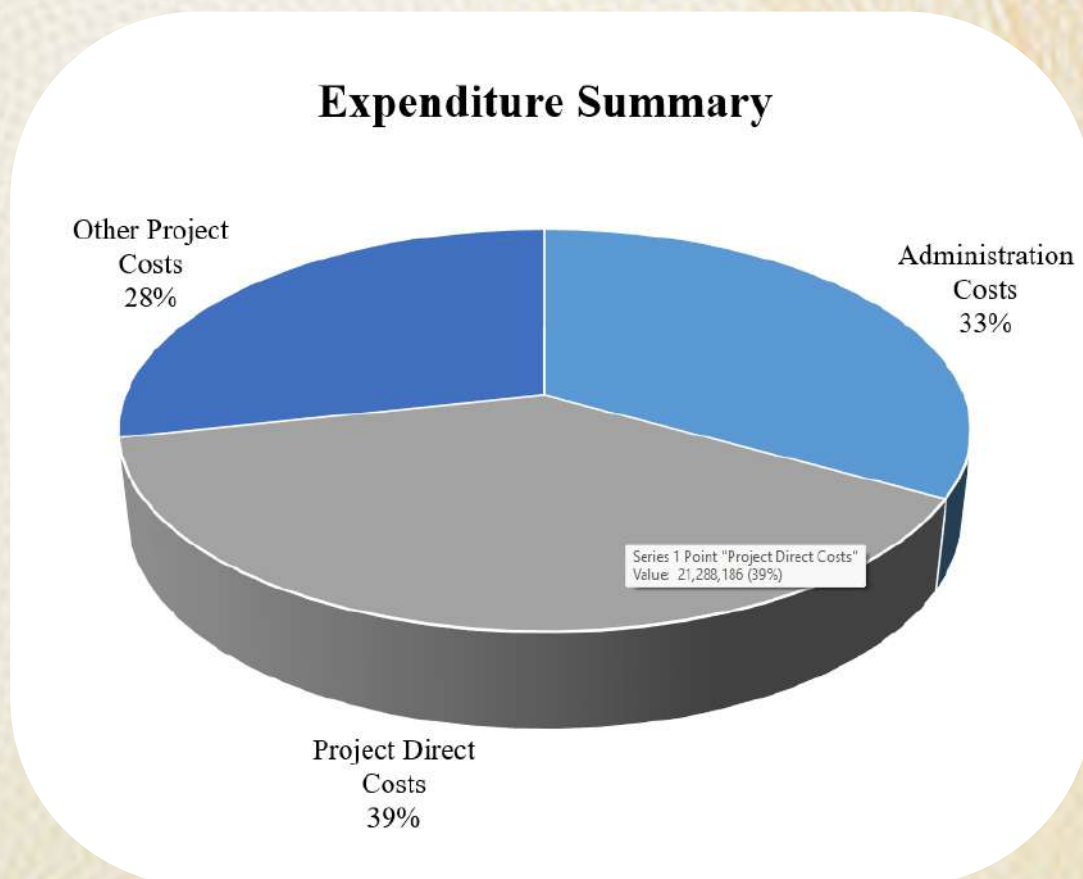
8. CHALLENGES

Evictions in Sasimwani and Legal cases at local courts:

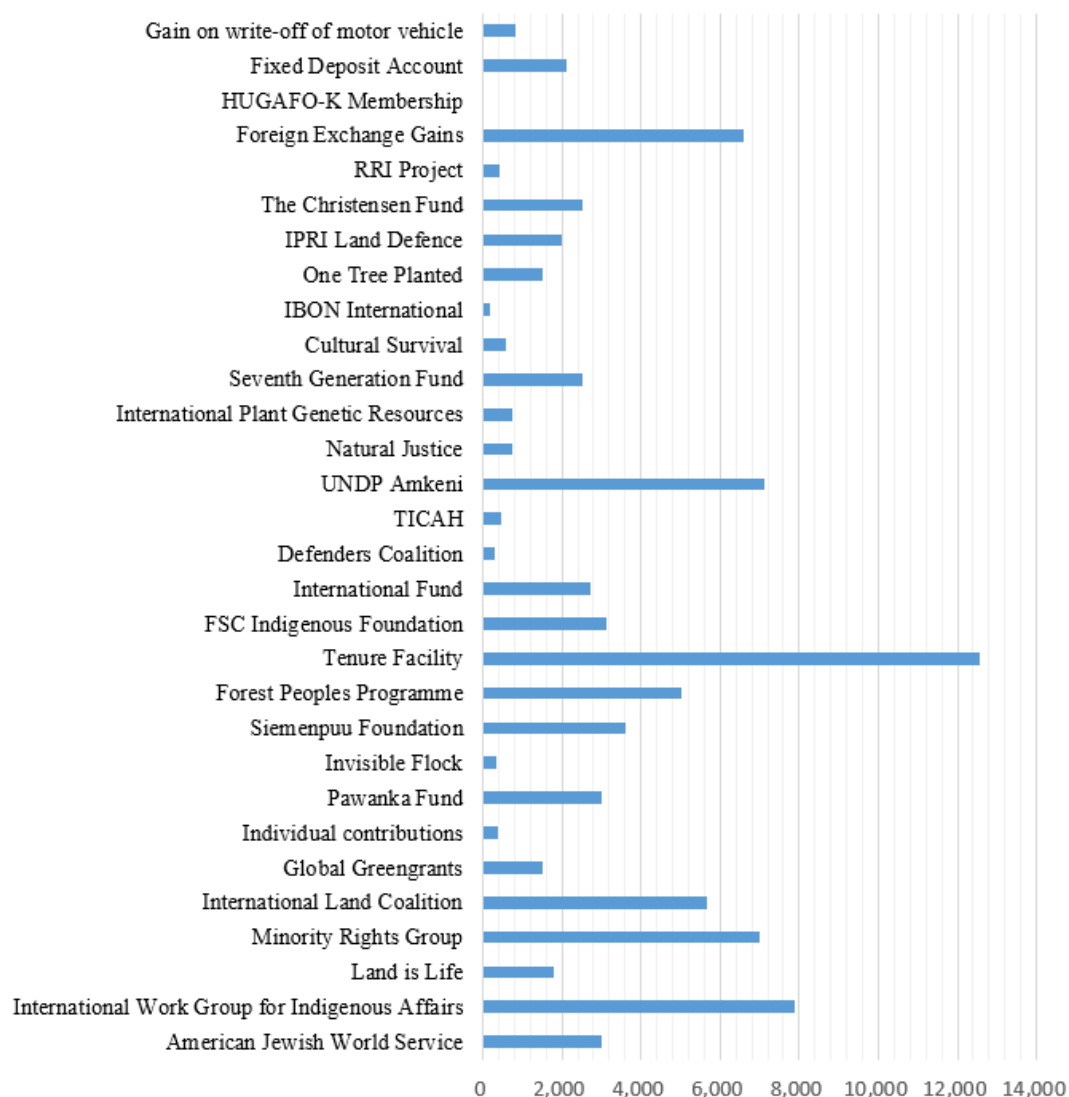
On October 26, 2023, the Ogiek community in Sasimwani faced forceful evictions orchestrated by government authorities. This led to the displacement of households and severe disruption of livelihoods. In response, OPDP mobilized resources to provide humanitarian aid to the affected community members, including essential supplies and legal support. Legal initiatives were pursued to challenge the unjust evictions and secure the community's rights in Sasimwani, demonstrating a steadfast commitment to justice and resilience in the face of adversity.

Efforts by the Ogiek council of elders to halt the evictions through courtesy visits to various government agencies did not bore fruit as their demands were not heard. The state agencies stood on the ground that they are following orders from above.

9. FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



INCOME ANALYSIS



AMOUNT RECEIVED IN KES "000"





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