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Presenter Information

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Supporting community action with science to balance pastoral livelihoods and wildlife conservation in savannas of east Africa

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Introduction While pastoralists and rangelands have been the subject of scientific study for decades , it is only recently that communities and policy makers have become part of the scientific process , rather than the subject of study alone . Broad reviews of these efforts suggest that they are more successful if teams attempt to create people or institutions that span the boundary between communities , policy makers and communities (Cash , Clark et al . 2003) . Here , we attempt to integrate knowledge from policy makers , communities and researchers in Maasailand of East Africa to promote action to balance poverty alleviation and wildlife conservation (see [www .reto-o-reto .org](http://www.reto-o-reto.org) for more) .

Methods , results To better connect researchers , communities and policy makers , we used the model of creating a boundary individual (Cash , Clark et al . 2003) , or community facilitator , (Nkedianye et al . in prep) whose goal was to span the boundaries between these different ways of knowing and acting (Figure 1) . Our objective was not only to establish these links , but to scale up those linkages to the national and international scale by linking together and integrating lessons from five different major landscapes in Kenya (Mara , Amboseli , Kitengela) and Tanzania (Longido , Simanjiro / Manyara / Tarangire) . This facilitation team was the centerpiece of a larger , inter-disciplinary scientific team .

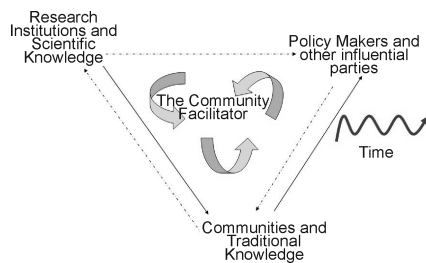


Figure 1 The role of the facilitators as boundary individuals who integrate the knowledge systems of researchers , policy makers and communities .

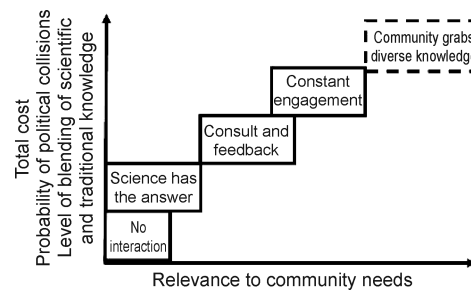


Figure 2 Producing relevant information for communities is costly , is politically perilous and requires blending scientific and traditional knowledge .

Figures 1 and 2 adapted from Nkedianye et al . in prep .

Conclusions We learned several lessons from this work (Kristjanson et al . 2007 ; Nkedianye et al . in prep) , including : 1) Greater integration of science with communities makes research more relevant , but can be expensive and increases the probability of political collisions (Figure 2 above) ; 2) Information truly is power for marginalized pastoral communities ; 3) Asymmetries of power and access to information must be explicitly addressed ; 4) Trust plays a critical role in allowing integration among actor groups to occur quickly and sustainably ; 5) There is power / utility in developing hybrid knowledge that integrates indigenous and non-indigenous knowledge ; 6) Scientists have a role in creating and facilitating cross-scale linkages ; and 7) Efforts like these take time and long-term engagement .

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