

LAMP

Leadership and Management Program

A Decade of Evidence 2014–2024

SERA CONSERVANCY, NORTHERN KENYA. GRADUATED FROM LAMP (LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT PROGRAM), 2018.

"Being a sanctuary chairman, I feel wildlife is ours and not the Kenya Wildlife Service's or the Government's, and that is why I commit my time to talk to rangers and communities to take care of this wildlife."

— Hussein Leparmai, Chairman, Rhino Committee, Sera Conservancy, Kenya

2,098+

Community Leaders
Trained

94%

Improved conservation
behaviours

29% → 93%

Men Proposing Solutions

Zero

Impact Decay at 3–7 Years

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For more than ten years, we have worked alongside conservation partners across East and Southern Africa delivering LAMP to indigenous communities mainly in community wildlife conservancies. That relationship has given us something most programs do not have: a decade of close observation. Funders have continued to commission LAMP year after year. Participants who completed it wanted their families, colleagues and communities to do the same. Almost every conservancy we worked with had LAMP in their plans for their board, their women's groups, their youth and their herders.

In 2024 we decided to put numbers to what we had been hearing anecdotally for years. We developed a questionnaire designed to capture both kinds of evidence: hard measures such as leadership positions held, conservation behaviours changed and income streams established, alongside open questions that left plenty of space for participants to describe what had happened in their own words. Three members of staff spent eight months working through our lists of past participants, arranging face-to-face interviews or conducting them by phone where that was more practical. By the time they finished, 255 people had been surveyed from a pool of around 1,500 graduates available at the time. That sample carries a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$.

Leadership positions increased across the board, and the behavioural measures (attending meetings, speaking up, participating in decisions, proposing solutions) moved from below 20% to 92–95% across all respondents. Women entered LAMP with 55% already in leadership roles, 30 points behind men at 85%. By the time they finished, 99% of women held a leadership position, compared to 97% of men. The gap had been eliminated.

The verbatim responses went further than we expected. A thematic analysis of the open-ended comments identified three patterns that emerged from the data:

- The Awakening: 119 participants unprompted used metaphors of “waking up” to describe a shift in how they saw themselves and their role in their communities.
- Family Harmony: The survey recorded 295 mentions of improved household peace and reduced domestic conflict alongside women's leadership rising from 55% to 99%.
- Economic Decoupling: 97% of graduates established new income streams that did not depend on extracting resources from the land.

The survey results show that LAMP achieves what the published research literature describes as one of the most documented challenges in conservation and development: behaviour change that holds for years after delivery ends. The community results sit alongside an ongoing track record with management teams and senior staff in conservation organisations. That track record shapes how the online version of LAMP is now being built.

Key sources and research cited throughout this document are listed in full at the end of this briefing.

A SECTOR-WIDE CHALLENGE

Impact Decay

Capacity building globally receives roughly \$20 billion per year. The OECD-DAC identified in 2006 that it was one of the least responsive targets of donor assistance. Twenty years on, the same question remains the focus of major sector evaluations: the Global Environment Facility's Eighth Overall Performance Study (December 2025), drawing on its \$26 billion portfolio across more than 6,000 projects, identifies the codification of project results into national policy frameworks before funding ends as the primary pathway to long-term sustainability. A systematic review of 54 behaviour change studies found that most interventions have small positive effects or none at all. A PNAS study of 136 projects across 40 countries found that only 43% showed behavioural success. The Revelator's review of 59 conservation failure studies identified a consistent cause: a lack of genuine community ownership.

Ownership Gap

There is a structural pattern in how many capacity-building programs are built. Investments in delivery are typically high, while the underlying human foundation required for long-term sustainability receives less focus. A Mathematica study found that programs launched without prior trust-based engagement saw lower sustained participation, even when the benefits offered were identical. GiveWell's analysis reinforces this, noting that even rigorously designed community participation interventions can have zero measurable impact on behaviour. They found when funding stops, conservation projects and programs often stop because participants were treated as passive recipients rather than owners.

Gender Reality

The World Economic Forum and UNECA project that gender parity in African leadership will not be achieved until 2063. Their research notes that while women often hold significant influence over household resources, social norms and domestic conflict remain documented barriers to formal leadership.

The funding context makes this question more pressing. The OECD's preliminary 2025 figures show total official development assistance falling 23.1%, the largest annual contraction on record. Bilateral development programming, which includes capacity-building work, fell 26.3%, a record drop for this previously resilient category. As budgets contract, the question shifts from how much aid is available to which approaches produce results that hold once the funding ends.

THE LAMP APPROACH

LAMP is built around one question: what does a person need to experience to change how they think and act, for good?

The answer shapes the whole program. LAMP uses a See-Feel-Change methodology and a discovery learning approach, both grounded in adult learning principles. LAMP trainers create the conditions for participants to discover things for themselves, in a setting they trust and at a pace that sticks. The trainers themselves reflect this. Laviya Lekuuk joined LAMP as a community youth representative in 2021 and is now a fully qualified trainer working with rangers, herders and community leaders across Kenya. That path is central to how the program works.

The structure reinforces it. Nine days of training delivered across four modules, with three to four weeks between each one so participants can go back to their communities, test what they've learned and return with real evidence of what works. Learning happens in both places. The training room and the community feed each other by design.

This is why the results last. A person who discovers something for themselves owns it in a way that a person who was told the same thing never quite does.

The methodology behind LAMP originated in 2003 as a Change Leadership program. Over the following eleven years it ran across corporate organisations, government bodies and international agencies in the UK, Europe and Africa, including UN agencies, UKAID-funded programs and financial institutions. In 2014, it was adapted for pastoralist conservation communities, which is where the ten years of impact data in this briefing comes from. Alongside that community work, LAMP has continued to run with management teams and senior staff in conservation organisations.

"Your hugely practical and applied methodology offered under LAMP is of real value and all the team are energised by it."

— Mike Watson, CEO, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy

What the Survey Found

For years, the feedback from LAMP participants was consistent but anecdotal. We frequently heard that the program "changed lives." The premise of LAMP has always been that everyone is capable of more than they realise. When a person is given the right tools, and the space to have an "aha" moment where they see and feel their own power to make a difference, their whole path changes. When a person's thinking changes, everything else follows.

In 2024 we decided to put numbers to what we had been hearing anecdotally for years. We developed a questionnaire designed to capture both kinds of evidence: hard measures such as leadership positions held, conservation behaviours changed and income streams established, alongside open questions that left plenty of space for participants to describe what had happened in their own words. Three members of Forward Consulting staff spent eight months

working through our lists of past participants. They contacted 255 people from across eight years of program delivery. Of those, 132 were women (52%) and 123 were men (48%). Interviews were face-to-face where possible (181, 71%) and by phone where that was more practical (74, 29%). Names came from training attendance records. The sample is everyone that could be reached, not a selection for success. At a sample size of 255 from a pool of around 1,500 graduates available at the time, the survey carries a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of $\pm 5\%$.

Awakening: The Psychological Shift

"I was a board member but I understand nothing about the conservancy. I am confident now about my leadership position because I am informed. It opened my mind and now I feel now I can even proudly go and speak about conservancy in front of everyone, I know what to say."

— **Wote Lepina, Board Member, Nkoteiya Conservancy**

"Elders never supported me much when I asked them to talk to the young people to stop killing wildlife but after LAMP I got full support because I now know how to support them with the respect they deserve. I am now confident, people used to oppose conservancy even some board members but after LAMP everything change we all speak the same language."

— **James Lekalaile, Conservancy Chairman, Naapu Conservancy**

These are not isolated responses. In our 2024 survey, 119 participants used variations of the "waking up" or "opening eyes" metaphor without being prompted. Over 15% of all comments mentioned phrases like "I was blind, but now I see" or "I was in darkness". The curriculum teaches leadership and management, but its most reliable function is removing the perceived ceiling on what participants believe is possible for themselves.

The Awakening turns a passive recipient of donor projects and programs into an active custodian of their own conservation and economic future.

A SpringerLink analysis of capacity building in Africa identified a core sector failure: the issue of mindset has not been considered in most programs implemented over the last few decades. The mindset gap is what LAMP addresses directly.

WHY WOMEN CHANGE: FOUR THEMES FROM 132 SURVEY RESPONSES

The free-text survey responses from the 132 women in the 2024 cohort reveal four specific patterns that explain why women change the way they do.

The Erosion of "Shyness" and Fear : 71 of 132 women

Many women described an internal barrier that prevented them from participating in public life. The training appears to have removed this "shyness," allowing them to express themselves without fear. *"Before LAMP I was very shy and I could not even stand before people, but now I can speak and express myself without fear."*

Mentorship and the “Multiplier Effect” : 54 of 132 women

More women than men expressed a sense of duty to pass their knowledge on to others who did not attend. They frame their individual growth as a communal asset. *“When I meet women who are feeling low, just as I was, now I take time to educate them. I have become a teacher to my fellow women.”*

Identity Beyond Domesticity : 82 of 132 women

There is a clear shift in how women define their place in society. They moved from seeing themselves purely through household chores to seeing themselves as formal members of community institutions. *“I thought that as a woman I cannot do what a man can do but now I know I can. Even the chairperson of the conservancy is now a woman!”*

Time Management as Freedom : 98 of 132 women

While this sounds like a basic management skill, for women with heavy domestic burdens, planning is expressed as a way to gain the freedom to pursue business or leadership. *“I now set realistic goals and know how to achieve them.”*

Family Harmony: The Social Enabler

Family Harmony is the quiet structural enabler of consistent leadership. The 2024 survey recorded 295 mentions of improved household peace and reduced domestic conflict. Every participant reported an increase in status and confidence within their family unit.

The reason this matters is practical rather than sentimental. A woman cannot lead a conservancy if her participation causes conflict at home. She cannot attend meetings or hold leadership roles if her household does not support her. Domestic instability acts as a structural barrier to conservation.

“My family is staying in harmony unlike before where I fight them most of the time. I involve all my family in decision making process for example when I want to sell a goat I also give my wives a chance to select which goat is to be sold. My wives are now free and also my elder boys tell me I have become a good father... LAMP has helped me to set my family vision and understand conservancy vision which is to advocate conservation. ”

— Lenantoyie, Board Member, Sera Conservancy

“ I started leading my family first before I started looking for community leadership position. I started listening to my husband and children before making critical decisions. ... I reported baby elephant which was found lost by herders. I called the rangers and they came to help the baby elephant and re-united it with its mother.”

— Namusungu Leodip, Board Member, Sera Conservancy

The data shows that both men and women identify the household as a site of change. For women, harmony opens up economic independence and the right to speak. For men, it provides tools for social mediation. By working on the family as a system, LAMP creates the domestic stability required for public leadership.

Economic Decoupling: The Stewardship Engine

Economic Decoupling means moving a family's income away from the land it is trying to protect. Our data shows that 97% of LAMP graduates built new income streams after the program. These are incomes that do not depend on cutting trees, killing wildlife or taking more from the land than it can sustain.

When a leader has a stable business, their commitment to the conservancy shifts from a temporary job to a long-term interest. They no longer need the land to provide an immediate payout because their household is already secure.

" Before LAMP I was dormant and now I run an M-Pesa business, a shop and I keep goats plus sheep for sale. I was a very quiet person and could not talk to people. Now I can empower women and help change their thinking. ... I am also teaching women to stop cutting down trees for charcoal. I helped a lady start chicken farming so that she can stop cutting down trees for charcoal burning."

— Gilliant Rotich, Finance Officer, Isiolo Voice of Women, Leparua Conservancy

" My village are leading in grass reseeding, and we are selling seeds to other conservancies. This is because I mobilized them to plant grass which they did because they no longer doubt me. ... We stopped as villagers to cut down trees. They stopped killing of wild animals. Burning charcoals has also stopped."

— Ajuk Lendire, Board Member, Sera Conservancy

Changes in Leadership

The result that stands out is the closing of the gender gap. Women entered LAMP with 55% already in leadership roles, 30 points behind men at 85%. By the time they finished, 99% of women held a leadership position, compared to 97% of men. A gap that mirrors the broader inequality across the sector had been eliminated. Of those who came in with no leadership role at all, 97% held one afterward, with 70% in conservation-specific roles.

Had a leadership role

	Before LAMP	After LAMP
Female	55%	99%
Male	85%	97%
Total	69%	98%

Conservation-related leadership role

	Before LAMP	After LAMP
Female	47%	84%
Male	84%	93%

	Before LAMP	After LAMP
Total	64%	88%

Those with no prior leadership position (N=66)

	Before LAMP	After LAMP
Leadership position	0%	97%
Conservation position	15%	70%

The same lens applied to conservation: of the 82 people who entered LAMP with no conservation role, 59 (72%) now hold one.

Changes in Behaviour

All respondents

Figures show the percentage of respondents answering 'Always' before and after LAMP

Leadership behaviour	Before LAMP	After LAMP
Attend meetings	17%	95%
Speak up in meetings	19%	93%
Participate in decisions	19%	92%
Propose solutions	17%	92%

Looking at the gender breakdown shows why. Women entered with lower starting rates on every measure, as low as 7% proposing solutions before LAMP. Men started higher. Both groups end up at 92–95% across all behaviours.

Female respondents

Figures show the percentage of respondents answering 'Always' before and after LAMP

Leadership behaviour	Before LAMP	After LAMP
Attend meetings	10%	93%
Speak up in meetings	11%	92%
Participate in decisions	9%	92%
Propose solutions	7%	92%

Male respondents

Figures show the percentage of respondents answering 'Always' before and after LAMP

Leadership behaviour	Before LAMP	After LAMP
Attend meetings	24%	95%
Speak up in meetings	29%	92%
Participate in decisions	30%	92%
Propose solutions	29%	93%

The End of Impact Decay

The key finding for any long-term partner is the absence of impact decay. Sustaining gains once active delivery ends is one of the most documented challenges in conservation and development. Multiple independent studies confirm this. In our survey, the scores of graduates trained three to seven years ago were no lower than those trained recently. In several cohorts, they were higher.

Training cohort comparison

Figures show the percentage of respondents answering 'Always' after LAMP, by year of attendance

Cohort	Years since training	Attend meetings	Speak up	Participate	Propose solutions
2017–18 (n=11)	7–8 yrs	100%	100%	100%	100%
2019 (n=20)	6 yrs	100%	100%	100%	100%
2020–21 (n=27)	3–5 yrs	100%	96%	100%	100%
2022 (n=101)	2–3 yrs	96%	95%	94%	94%
2023 (n=50)	1–2 yrs	92%	90%	90%	90%
2024 (n=46)	<1 yr	87%	85%	78%	80%

Research in this area consistently finds that behavioural gains reduce over time once a program ends. The survey data does not show this. Graduates from three to seven years ago score no lower than recent graduates. In most cases they score higher. There has been no formal follow-up in the intervening years.

On the methodology

The before/after measures are retrospective. Graduates were asked at a single interview after training to describe both their current behaviour and their behaviour before LAMP.

This approach addresses a known problem in evaluation research. Howard's 1980 work on response-shift bias established that participants' standard for self-assessment shifts during training, so the criterion they apply before differs from the criterion they apply after. In leadership and behaviour-change contexts, this typically means pre-training self-ratings are inflated: participants overrate themselves because they have no clear reference frame for what trained behaviour looks like. Once trained, they rate themselves more accurately. A conventional pre-post comparison then understates real change, because the pre-training number was already too high. Retrospective measurement asks for both ratings from the same vantage point after training, so both 'before' and 'after' rest on the same understanding of what the behaviour looks like.

A reader might still ask whether graduates are simply reporting what they think the researcher wants to hear. If they were, the most recent cohort, closest to the training and most likely to give the flattering answer, would score highest. They do not.

Graduates trained seven and eight years ago score at or above the 2024 cohort on every measure. That pattern is inconsistent with answers shaped by what the researcher seems to want.

LAMP and the Published Research

The table compares LAMP’s survey findings to published sector research.

Metric	Sector Baseline	LAMP Result
Behaviour change after training	43% CBC success / 31% failure (PNAS, 136 projects, 40 countries)	92–95% 'always' engaging in all key leadership behaviours
Sustained impact 3–7 years post-training	RCTs find no sustained positive effects once intervention ends (Nisa et al., 2019)	2017–21 cohort (3–7 years post-training, n=58): equal or higher scores than recent cohorts. Zero decay confirmed.
Female leadership representation	26% women in local bodies, sub-Saharan Africa (UN Women, 2024)	55% → 99% in leadership roles. Gender gap eliminated.
Active decision-making ('always')	No comparable benchmark. Rarely measured	19% → 92% (all participants)

OUR FUTURE PLANS

The 2024 survey gives LAMP a foundation it didn't have before.

We are proceeding with continued delivery of LAMP across Kenya and East Africa. The programme runs in four variants tailored to specific audiences: Board, Community, Managers and Rangeland. Alongside that, we are deepening the trainer base through further Trainer of Trainers (ToT) courses, so the programme doesn't depend on a small core team to deliver it. That work has already started.

Two further programmes are in development. Online LAMP is designed to extend the engagement and results of the face-to-face programme to organisations worldwide. IMPACT takes the influence, facilitation and change skills that produce LAMP’s results and makes them available to conservation professionals already working in the sector. The aim is a shift in professional identity from conservation expert to conservation change-maker.

We'll keep building the evidence base throughout. The 2024 survey is a start. We'll continue to track cohorts, collect data and refine the methodology as the picture develops.

“I contribute a lot in meetings, something I never used to do. As a Maasai woman, ‘now I know that I am also a human being’. My husband passed away but I can stand out strong even in meetings where men are present. I was so fearful, not any more, I am more courageous.”

— Elizabeth Keneo, Community Group Member & Health Promoter, Ilingwesi Conservancy

LAMP VARIANTS

LAMP is one methodology, tailored to four audiences. Every variant shares the same foundational curriculum. This covers leadership and management, building strong organisations, personalities, communication, planning and goal setting, partner and community engagement, time and priority management, relationships, motivation and teamwork. Modules run monthly across three or four sessions, with practice in the community between each one. What changes by variant is the audience, the specific topics added on top and the pacing.

Community LAMP

For Indigenous Peoples and Local Community (IPLC) members across conservancy and coastal/marine contexts. Additional topics: basic ecological principles, income generation.

Board LAMP

For conservancy board members and governance committees. Additional topics: conservancy governance, the roles of Chairperson and board members, plus basic ecological principles.

Managers LAMP

For senior staff inside conservation organisations. Additional topics: fundraising and proposal writing, delegating with confidence, situational leadership.

Rangeland LAMP

For pastoralist herder communities. Additional topics: ecological principles for rangelands, how grass grows, the effects of grazing, planned rotational grazing, plus fieldwork experience and application.

SOURCES & RESEARCH BASE

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