



**Final Evaluation Report**  
*for*  
**The Siemenpuu Foundation Programme in Kenya, 2022–2025**

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

|            |                                                       |
|------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| ABS        | Access and Benefit-Sharing                            |
| BCP        | Biocultural Community Protocol(s)                     |
| CA         | Contribution Analysis                                 |
| CARD Ltd   | Centre for Analytical Research in Development Limited |
| CBO        | Community-Based Organisation                          |
| CECM       | County Executive Committee Member                     |
| CJRF       | Climate Justice Resilience Fund                       |
| CLMC       | Community Land Management Committee                   |
| CSO        | Civil Society Organisation                            |
| DAC        | Development Assistance Committee                      |
| DANIDA     | Danish International Development Agency               |
| EIWEN      | Endorois Indigenous Women Empowerment Network         |
| ELMOSARETU | El Molo, Samburu, Rendille, Turkana                   |
| EWC        | Endorois Welfare Council                              |
| EU         | European Union                                        |
| EUR        | Euro                                                  |
| FGD        | Focus Group Discussion                                |
| FPP        | Forest Peoples Programme                              |
| FPIC       | Free, Prior and Informed Consent                      |
| GEF        | Global Environment Facility                           |
| GESI       | Gender Equality and Social Inclusion                  |
| GFC        | Global Forest Coalition                               |
| GURAPAU    | El Molo community group                               |
| HUGAFO-K   | Hunter-Gatherer Forum of Kenya                        |
| IIN        | Indigenous Information Network                        |
| ILC        | International Land Coalition                          |
| KFS        | Kenya Forest Service                                  |
| KII        | Key Informant Interview                               |
| KEQs       | Key Evaluation Questions                              |
| KWS        | Kenya Wildlife Service                                |
| LAN        | Lokichar Action Network                               |
| LAWA       | Lamu Women Alliance                                   |
| LPA        | Lmartin People's Association                          |
| MAT        | Mutual(Iy) Agreed Terms                               |
| MEL        | Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning                   |
| MFA        | Ministry for Foreign Affairs                          |
| NJ         | Natural Justice                                       |
| NLC        | National Land Commission                              |
| NORAD      | Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation          |
| NRT        | Northern Rangelands Trust                             |

|        |                                                        |
|--------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| OECD   | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development |
| OH     | Outcome Harvesting                                     |
| OPDP   | Ogiek People's Development Programme                   |
| PWD    | People with Disabilities                               |
| SALT   | Society for Alternative Learning and Transformation    |
| SEECBO | Sengwer of Embobut Community-Based Organisation        |
| SGP    | Small Grants Programme                                 |
| SIDA   | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency   |
| SIPP   | Sengwer Indigenous Peoples' Programme                  |
| ToC    | Theory of Change                                       |
| ToR    | Terms of Reference                                     |
| UNDP   | United Nations Development Programme                   |
| YLT    | Yiaku Laikipiak Trust                                  |

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Background:

Siemenpuu – Foundation for Social Movements' Cooperation (Siemenpuu) has supported civil society organisations (CSOs) in the Global South since 2002 through core funding provided by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA). Siemenpuu's programme focuses on four thematic areas: energy justice, feminist agroecology, community forests, and biocultural rights. During the 2022-2025 period, Siemenpuu supported biocultural rights work in Kenya through 11 projects, with total funding of EUR 636,622 and EUR 65,264 in self-financing from partners, bringing the total to EUR 701,886. After completion of the projects, Siemenpuu commissioned a post-programme evaluation, carried out between July and August 2026 to assess the extent to which the programme contributed to strengthening the realisation of biocultural rights in Kenya.

The evaluation was structured around the five Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development–Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) evaluation criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation methods included a comprehensive desk review, nine interviews with partners, two focus group discussions (FGDs), six interviews with representatives of the target communities and two (2) interviews with donors' representatives. The evaluation data were qualitatively analysed, producing the following findings.

## Key Findings:

The evaluation findings are presented according to each of the OECD-DAC criteria, with the key evaluation questions addressed under each criterion.

## Relevance:

The evaluation found that the programme was relevant. Siemenpuu supported some of the most marginalised Indigenous and minority communities in Kenya, many of which have small populations, limited political representation, and face historical land injustices, weak recognition, and exclusion from governance and resource allocation. For example, the Lmartin community in Samburu County has historically had limited visibility and recognition compared with the dominant Samburu community. Similar challenges affect other minority communities, including the El-Molo people in Loyangalani, Marsabit county, whose livelihoods depend on fishing, but had limited influence over investments and decision-making in Lake Turkana.

The programme was particularly relevant because it addressed multiple dimensions of biocultural rights simultaneously. The development of BCPs and non-BCP customary documentation provided Indigenous communities with a mechanism for documenting their identity, customary practices, traditional knowledge, territories, and governance systems, while also strengthening their ability to engage with external actors. Land and territorial rights emerged as one of the most significant issues addressed by the programme. Support for land registration and BCP development was therefore highly relevant to communities facing threats of eviction, loss of ancestral territories, and external exploitation of natural and cultural resources.

The implementation gaps in Kenya's existing legal and policy framework, including [Article 63 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010](#), the [Community Land Act 2016](#), and the [Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Expressions Act 2016](#) made the programme also relevant. BCPs provided a practical mechanism for communities to document, articulate, assert, and seek realisation of their recognised biocultural rights.

**Coherence:**

The evaluation findings from the limited donor mapping indicate that Siemenpuu occupies a distinct but complementary niche within Kenya's Indigenous Peoples' rights funding landscape. While larger bilateral and multilateral donors tend to operate at the national level and provide larger-scale funding, Siemenpuu and other Indigenous community funders focus on locally led actions by Indigenous organisations in geographically remote and relatively small Indigenous communities. Its distinctive emphasis on Biocultural Community Protocols (BCPs) as a practical entry point for articulating and advancing biocultural rights differentiates it from other funders.

The mapping identified potential complementarity and overlap between the Siemenpuu Foundation and other donors, with several donors supporting related areas, including Indigenous Peoples' rights, land and territorial rights, traditional knowledge, customary governance, biodiversity, and community capacity strengthening. Evidence from the desk review and interviews highlighted potential complementarity. It also showed that there was a potential overlap. However, the evaluation did not verify these relationships because it was beyond the scope of the limited donor mapping.

**Effectiveness:**

The programme was effective in generating tangible community-level results, particularly through the development and use of BCPs to protect biocultural rights. The eight partners produced new and substantially revised BCPs, as well as non-BCP biocultural documentation. Importantly, the BCPs were not simply project outputs. They became practical instruments for advocacy, negotiation, protection, and engagement with duty bearers. Examples include the use of BCPs by Indigenous communities in Loyangalani, Marsabit County, to engage with the Kenya Electricity Generating Company PLC (KenGen) on wind power generation; sought protection from eviction for Ogiek and Sengwer communities; and strengthened claims to traditional knowledge and genetic resources for the Tharaka community.

The programme also contributed to securing land rights and protecting ancestral and sacred sites. These included community land registration processes led by the Lokichar Action Network (LAN), the restoration and reclamation of sacred sites led by the Endorois Indigenous Women Empowerment Network (EIWEN) and strengthened community governance over ancestral territories supported by the Society for Alternative Learning and Transformation (SALT), among others. The engagement with duty bearers also improved. For example, the government officials, such as representatives of the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), participated in restoration activities in Baringo County, while county government officials were engaged in the development of the BCPs. Despite the improved relationship with duty bearers, the evictions of Sengwer and Ogiek communities continued during the programme period, demonstrating that improved engagement did not eliminate structural threats.

The BCP process also contributed to strengthening community participation, including greater involvement of women and youth and, to some extent, people with disabilities. Nevertheless, evidence shows that women and youth had not gained substantive influence over customary decision-making, which remained limited. Disability inclusion was also weaker than expected, as indicated in the programme design.

**Impact:**

The programme contributed to a range of territorial outcomes, including community land registration in Lokapel, reported conservation and development designations in Maasai Mara, the reclamation and restoration of forest areas, and the protection of ancestral and sacred sites. The programme also strengthened communities' ability to

respond to risks through documentation, advocacy, legal processes, and engagement with authorities. Evidence of systemic institutional change remains limited. While government engagement increased, there is insufficient evidence that BCPs have been systematically incorporated into government policies, plans, or legal frameworks. These outcomes were multi-actor achievements involving communities, government authorities, courts, other donors, and civil society organisations. The evaluation therefore considers Siemenpuu's contribution to these outcomes to be credible but does not attribute the outcomes directly to Siemenpuu.

### **Sustainability:**

The sustainability of the Siemenpuu programme was mixed, with stronger prospects for the continuation of some achievements than others. Sustainability was particularly evident where results were embedded in community knowledge, skills, ownership and management systems. For example, the community-led BCPs and customary knowledge documentation and community land documentation will likely continue providing communities with tools for advocacy, engagement and protection of their rights.

The strengthened capacity and confidence of Indigenous communities to resist evictions and claim their biocultural rights are also likely to continue, particularly among the Sengwer and Ogiek, who secured court orders, and the Aweer, whose petition provides an ongoing basis for claiming their rights.

Similarly, the reclaimed ancestral sites in Tharaka and sacred sites of the Endorois are now under community control and are expected to continue serving community interests. The secured ancestral sites coupled with improved environmental conservation further strengthen the prospects for sustainability because of the contribution of these changes to cultural and religious practices.

The sustainability of CSO networks is moderate, as they provide continued platforms for learning, knowledge exchange and movement building.

### **Priority Recommendations:**

- Maintain and deepen Siemenpuu's niche of supporting small, emerging, and first-time Indigenous organisations through flexible, proportionate, and risk-based grant management and tailored capacity support.
- Strengthen partner-led networks and collaborative action through well-designed joint grants that support peer learning, collective advocacy, and movement building.
- Support the operational use and recognition of BCPs by investing in advocacy, county and national government engagement, and follow-up on existing commitments
- Establish a simple guideline to support grant management for indigenous organisations using joint and activity based granting arrangements, supported by clear capacity milestones and appropriate fiduciary, mentoring, and reporting support.
- Strengthen the sustainability of partners and results through tailored organisational, legal and governance capacity support, and bridging support between programme cycles.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background to the Programme

Siemenpuu — Foundation for Social Movements (referred to in this report as “Siemenpuu”) was founded in 1998 by 15 Finnish development and environmental Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). Since 2002, it has supported CSOs in the Global South through funding that enables grantees (referred to in this report as “partners”) to design and implement their own locally led initiatives. Support is directed towards community-level action, Indigenous groups, environmental justice, agroecology, and the strengthening of biocultural rights. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (MFA) is Siemenpuu’s core funder through its discretionary programme support instrument.

Siemenpuu’s 2022–2025 programme period covered four thematic areas: biocultural rights, energy justice, feminist agroecology, and community forests across five focus countries: Kenya, Liberia, Mali, Mozambique, and Myanmar. In Kenya, which is the focus of the Programme Level Evaluation, funding was directed towards biocultural rights. The Siemenpuu Kenya programme sought to strengthen the realisation of Indigenous Peoples’ biocultural rights. Siemenpuu supported biocultural rights work in Kenya through 11 projects, with total funding of EUR 636,622 and EUR 65,264 in self-financing from partners, bringing the total to EUR 701,886.

The Siemenpuu Kenya programme supported projects to develop new and update existing Biocultural Community Protocols (BCPs) and non-BCPs customary documentation. The processes were community-led and aimed at documenting each community’s identity, culture, customary governance, spirituality, and way of life, as well as their customary relationships with their landscapes and their associated rights to steward their lands, waters, and forests.

**Box 1. Siemenpuu Partners in Kenya 2022-2025**

| Partner/Grantee Organization                               | Target Indigenous Community            | Target County        |
|------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Yiaku Laikipiak Trust (YLT)                                | Yiaku and Lmartin                      | Laikipia and Samburu |
| Endorois Indigenous Women Empowerment Network (EIWEN)      | Endorois                               | Baringo              |
| Sengwer Indigenous Peoples Programme (SIPP)                | Sengwer                                | Elgeyo-Marakwet      |
| Society for Alternative Learning and Transformation (SALT) | Tharaka                                | Tharaka-Nithi        |
| Indigenous Information Network (IIN)                       | Maasai                                 | Narok                |
| Friends of Lake Turkana (FoLT)                             | El Molo, Samburu, Turkana and Rendille | Marsabit             |
| Natural Justice (NJ) - Not an Indigenous organisation      | Aweer                                  | Lamu                 |
| Lamu Women Alliance (LAWA)                                 | Bajun, Swahili, Sanye Aweer and Orma   | Lamu                 |
| Lokichar Action Network (LAN)                              | Turkana                                | Turkana              |
| Ogiek Peoples' Development Programme (OPDP)                | Ogiek, Endorois, Sengwer and El Molo   | Narok                |

Following the completion of the programme, Siemenpoo commissioned a post-programme evaluation. The evaluation was conducted between July and August 2026 by the Centre for Analytical Research in Development Limited (CARD Ltd), a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) consulting firm based in Nairobi, Kenya, with operations in other African countries and beyond.

## 1.2 Purpose and Scope

The main purpose of the evaluation was to provide Siemenpoo Foundation with an independent assessment of the implementation and results of its Kenya programme, and to identify lessons learnt, best practices and recommendations to inform the 2026–2029 programme period and beyond. The evaluation is also expected to give Kenyan partners insights for their own work and cooperation, and to support Siemenpoo Foundation in communicating programme results and challenges to a wider public, supporters and other stakeholders.

## 1.3 Objectives of the Evaluation

The evaluation sought to **achieve** the following specific objectives:

- Increase understanding of the best ways to support the strengthening of the biocultural rights of Indigenous communities in Kenya.
- Assess how Siemenpoo has managed to build the organisational and technical capacities of its grantees.
- Provide recommendations for improving Siemenpoo's partnership management and grant-making practices.
- Provide evidence and enhance understanding on the extent and significance of the outcomes and impact achieved.
- Strengthen Siemenpoo's understanding of its role as a funder and partner in Kenya.

## 1.4 Key Evaluation Questions

The Key Evaluation Questions (KEQs) guided this evaluation process, analysis and reporting the evaluation findings within [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development–Development Assistance Committee \(OECD-DAC\)](#) evaluation criteria. These questions form the common thread throughout the evaluation.

| Criterion             | Evaluation Questions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Relevance</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How successful has the programme been in addressing the rights, needs, priorities and engagement of the Indigenous communities in Kenya?</li> <li>▪ What is the added value and synergies of the partnership with Siemenpoo for the partner organisations?</li> </ul>                       |
| <b>Coherence</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How does the Siemenpoo programme complement or align with the programmes of other donors supporting Indigenous Peoples' organisations in Kenya?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Effectiveness</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent do the outcomes observed contribute to the programme-level objectives as articulated in the programme's Theory of Change?</li> <li>▪ To what extent has the Siemenpoo programme been able to support the organisational development of the partner organisations?</li> </ul> |
| <b>Impact</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Have the projects contributed to the intended impact of Siemenpoo's programme?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Sustainability</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To what extent are the results achieved sustainable?</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

## 2 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The evaluation process was consultative and involved the Siemenpuu programme team and the Biocultural Rights Working Group to ensure coordination and an objective, reflective process. CARD Ltd. assembled a balanced team of technically skilled and experienced professionals with expertise in programme evaluation, gender equality, Indigenous Peoples' rights and social inclusion, and qualitative methods to ensure a rigorous process and sufficient reflection.

### 2.1 Evaluation Approach

The evaluation adopted an integrated approach that was theory-based, utilisation-focused, and programme-level, within the overarching OECD-DAC evaluation framework. It was theory-based because the findings were used to test Siemenpuu's Programme Theory of Change, rather than assessing results in isolation, thereby enabling a systematic assessment of how and why the intended results were achieved. It was utilisation-focused because the findings are intended to be used by the Siemenpuu Foundation team, partners, and other key stakeholders involved in biocultural rights programming in Kenya. The report therefore presents best practices, lessons learned, and forward-looking, practical recommendations. Finally, the evaluation adopted a programme-level perspective, focusing on the overall performance, achievements, outcomes, and lessons of the Kenya Programme, rather than assessing the performance of individual projects.

### 2.2 Data Collection Process

Evaluation data were collected on the implementation and results of the Siemenpuu Kenya Programme, as well as on the donor funding landscape for biocultural rights in Kenya, using qualitative methods as described in Box 2.

| Box 2: Data Collection Methods      |  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Method                              |  | Procedures Carried Out                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Comprehensive Desk Review           |  | Key programme and partner documents were reviewed. Evidence was extracted including the draft outcomes statements and preliminary evidence across the 11 projects.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Targeted Semi-structured Interviews |  | Semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of nine (9) partners, six (6) interviews involving five (5) representatives of target communities and one (1) representative of LPA and two (2) FGDs were conducted: one mixed FGD with LAWA target beneficiaries and one women-only FGD with EIWEN target beneficiaries. Five (5) additional local representatives from Lamu County were interviewed, comprising two women leaders, two youth representatives (one male and one female), and one elder. |
| Light Donor Mapping                 |  | Information from key donors working on Indigenous Peoples' rights, biocultural rights, and community forestry was reviewed. Two grant-making organisations with functions similar to Siemenpuu's grant management role were interviewed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |

Respondents were purposively selected based on stakeholders identified in the harvested outcomes, their availability, and information gaps identified during the desk review. Attention was paid to ensuring that feedback was obtained from diverse groups, including women, elders, youth, and people with disabilities.

Before the engagements, the consultants explained the purpose of the evaluation and obtained oral informed consent from participants. The consultants carefully considered relevant cultural and gender sensitivities during the interviews and discussions.

Additionally, the evaluation methodology combined aspects of Outcome Harvesting (OH) and Contribution Analysis (CA) across the data collection, analysis, and reporting processes to generate a rich and credible assessment of the Siemenpuu Kenya Programme. The two approaches informed the development of the interview and focus group discussion guides. During the desk review, outcomes were identified, and the Programme's contribution to the observed changes was documented. During the interviews, probing was undertaken to establish what actors did differently as a result of the programme's work, and other actors.

## **2.3 Data Analysis and Report Writing**

All qualitative data collected through the desk review, outcome statements, semi-structured interviews, and FGDs were systematically reviewed and analysed to identify key themes, emerging patterns, and interconnections among themes. Interview and FGD data were transcribed prior to analysis. Using thematic analysis, the findings were categorised and organised under the relevant OECD-DAC evaluation criteria to support the analysis and reporting of the evaluation findings.

During data analysis, the harvested outcomes were triangulated with evidence from FGDs and interviews. In assessing the results, the outcomes were described, their significance assessed, and contribution analysis undertaken. The outcomes and associated programme contributions were also assessed against the programme's Theory of Change.

The findings were illustrated through selected harvested outcomes, change stories, and examples drawn from the evidence. Further analysis was undertaken to identify patterns and differences across thematic areas, geographic locations, grant-making modalities, and partner types. The analysed data were consolidated into this evaluation report, taking into account feedback from the Siemenpuu Foundation team.

For the limited donor mapping, donors were clustered according to the geographic regions in Kenya where the Kenya Programme was implemented by local partners and mapped against relevant funding priorities. A limited comparative analysis of the donors was undertaken to identify areas of complementarity, overlap, and potential synergy with Siemenpuu's funding priorities.

## **2.4 Evaluation Limitations**

Only two limitations were identified. They include:

- Some key informants, particularly from national and county governments, were unavailable despite confirming appointments. Findings on government engagement, BCPs, land and territorial processes, and institutional influence therefore rely substantially on partner, community, and documentary evidence.
- Lack of baseline and inconsistent results data constrained assessment of change between programme inception and completion. The evaluation therefore relied partly on retrospective accounts and reported achievements by the partners.

## 3 KEY EVALUATION FINDINGS

Findings are presented against the five evaluation criteria set out in the Terms of Reference (ToR). Each section opens with the relevant key evaluation question(s). The findings are presented and supported by change stories, and other evidence generated during this evaluation.

### 3.1 Relevance

#### *How successful has the programme been in addressing the rights, needs, priorities and engagement of Indigenous communities in Kenya?*

The evaluation findings show that the Siemenpuu Kenya Programme was relevant at three key levels: its targeting of marginalised Indigenous groups, its responsiveness to the needs and priorities of Indigenous Peoples, and its focus on addressing the implementation gaps of the existing legal and policy frameworks.

#### **Responsiveness to community-defined priorities**

Evaluation findings from the desk review, partner interviews, and FGDs generally demonstrated that the programme addressed specific Indigenous community priorities and needs articulated in the partners' applications. The Siemenpuu programme targeted Indigenous communities bearing the legacy of historical injustices, persistent evictions, and exclusion from national and county-level resource allocation and management, particularly in relation to land, water, and forests.

These challenges included the loss of ancestral land following the gazettment of areas such as Lake Bogoria (Endorois) and Boni-Lungi Forest (Aweer); persistent evictions from forests affecting the Sengwer and Ogiek; and displacement of the indigenous communities from communal lands to make way for large-scale investments in Marsabit and Lamu counties. These examples demonstrate the indigenous communities' continuing struggles with external pressures from government and private investors. Against this context, support for BCP and non-BCP processes among partners was a relevant intervention under the Siemenpuu Kenya programme.

Another area in which Siemenpuu demonstrated relevance was in addressing threats to cultural values and traditional knowledge, particularly among the Lmartin and Tharaka communities. Siemenpuu's support for BCP development to secure biocultural heritage was relevant to the need for formal recognition of the biocultural identity of the Lmartin community, which faces the risk of cultural extinction. It was also relevant to documenting and revitalising threatened languages, cultural practices and customary laws for the Tharaka community.

#### **Kenya's legal and policy context**

It is important to note that, since 2010, Kenya has increasingly used litigation to address disputes over rights and resources, particularly involving communities, CSOs, and other rights holders, alongside administrative, political, and customary mechanisms. However, communities often face difficulties pursuing legal processes without sufficient documentary evidence to support their claims. Many of the communities targeted by the programme lacked sufficient documented evidence of their historical connection to and governance of their ancestral territories, making it difficult to protect their rights.

The Constitution of Kenya (2010) recognises culture as foundational (Article 11) and provides for community land traditionally occupied by hunter-gatherer communities to be held as ancestral land (Article 63(2)(d)(ii)). The Community Land Act (2016) and the Protection of Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Expressions Act (2016) were subsequently enacted to operationalise these provisions. In practice, however, as the [2024 case study on the local communities involved in the Siemenpuu Foundation funded project of Yiaku Laikipiak Trust and Lmartin People Association](#) documents (page 18), this legal recognition remains difficult to realise for communities whose customary governance systems have traditionally been undocumented and transmitted orally.

*“Communal land tenure is still complicated despite having the BCP,”* one Yiaku elder in Doldol told researchers. The Mukogodo Forest, ancestral to the Yiaku, remains under a Community Forest Association structure dominated by the surrounding Laikipia Maasai community, limiting Yiaku decision-making power within their own territory.

BCPs directly address this policy implementation gap. They document customary laws, land-use practices, and local governance systems that have historically been transmitted orally. BCPs also provide communities with a single, internally agreed reference point from which to negotiate with external actors.

### **Gender Equality and Social inclusion**

Women, in particular, play important roles in economic and livelihood activities among Indigenous communities. However, their substantive participation in customary decision-making structures, such as councils of elders and chieftaincy structures, remains limited, as these structures continue to be largely dominated by older men.

The review of the BCPs revealed that gender and social inclusion were addressed to some extent. A few BCPs provide for fair representation. For example, the Ogiek BCP provides for at least one-third representation of either gender, as well as women’s and youth caucuses, while the Endorois BCP provides for the representation of women and people with disabilities. These remain exceptions rather than a consistent standard across the BCPs.

The emphasis on the participation of women, youth, and people with disabilities in the design of the Siemenpuu programme, as well as their subsequent engagement during programme implementation by partners and inclusion in the BCPs, demonstrates the relevance of the Siemenpuu Kenya Programme.

### ***What is the added value and synergies of the partnership with Siemenpuu for the partner organisations?***

The evaluation findings show that Siemenpuu’s distinctive added value lay in its willingness to fund and support small, localised organisations embedded within affected Indigenous communities, including organisations with limited previous access to external donor funding.

Siemenpuu directly funded or supported grassroots organisations including Lokichar Action Network (LAN), Lamu Women Alliance (LAWA), and Sengwer Indigenous Peoples Programme (SIPP). It also supported smaller and less formalised organisations through joint or hosted arrangements, including Lmartin People’s Association (LPA), GURAPAU (the El Molo community group), and Endorois Welfare Council (EWC). This approach enabled Siemenpuu to reach organisations that might otherwise have remained largely invisible to and overlooked by

mainstream donors because of their small size, limited institutional structures, or limited experience with donor requirements.

The experience of LPA provides particularly strong evidence of this added value. During the evaluation interview, LPA reported that Siemenpuu provided its first-ever grant from an external donor. He said:

*“This was our first grant and, to be honest, it had the most far-reaching impact on our very small community, unknown to the external world.”*

This was echoed by the OPDP Executive Director, who noted that many small and localised Indigenous community groups, such as EWC, remain largely invisible to mainstream donors that tend to support more established organisations such as OPDP and SALT. Some of these smaller organisations are not formally registered or have limited organisational structures and mandates.

The 2024 Lmartin and Yiaku case study *on the local communities involved in the Siemenpuu Foundation funded project of Yiaku Laikipiak Trust and Lmartin People Association* had similar findings as quoted on page 23:

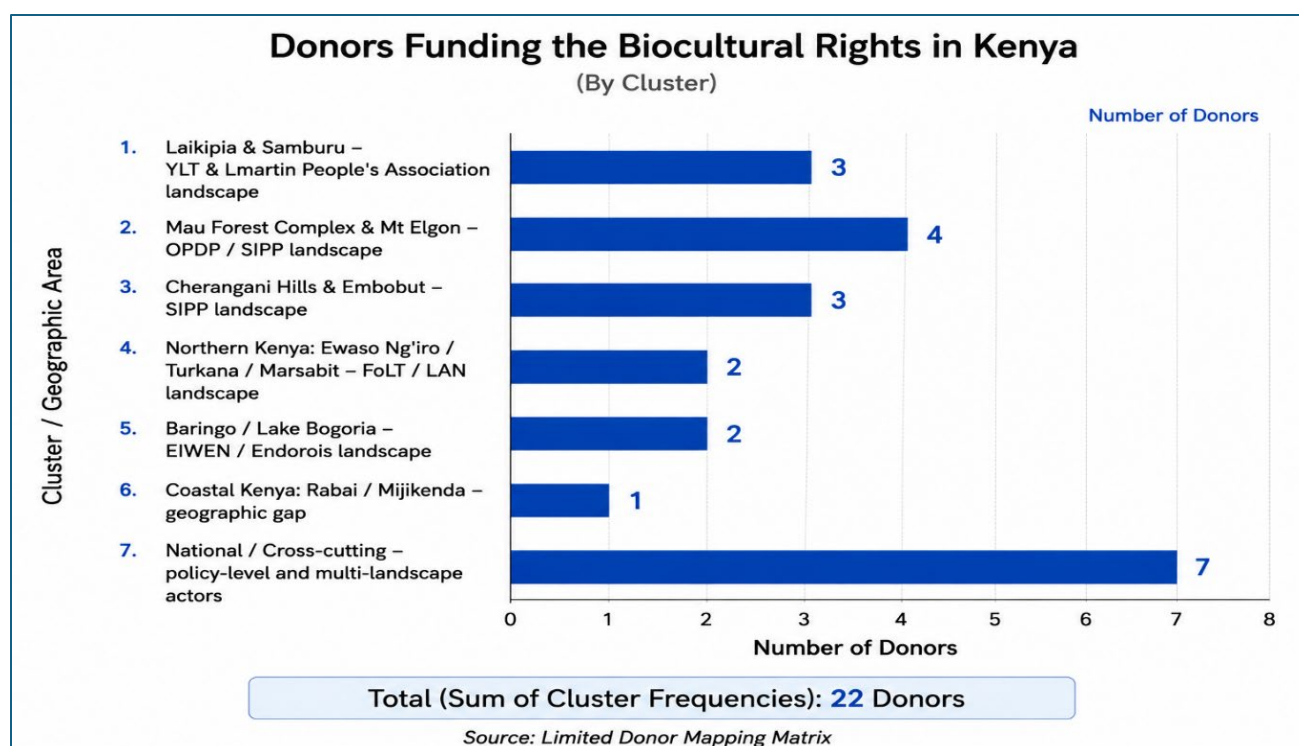
*“Without the support of Siemenpuu Foundation, they would not be able to organise and support communities and would otherwise feel invisible.”*

The Programme partnership also generated synergies by connecting partners through joint projects, creating platforms for knowledge exchange, and supporting emerging movement-building efforts. This was particularly evident among the 110 CSOs engaged in the programme by the 10 partners between 2022 and 2025.

## 3.2 Coherence

***How does the Siemenpuu programme complement or align with the programmes of other donors supporting Indigenous Peoples' organisations in Kenya?***

Donors identified from the limited mapping exercise were classified according to the geographic areas, referred to as clusters by the consultants, in which they support activities involving or relevant to Siemenpuu-supported partners operating within those areas (Figure 1).



**Figure 1: Kenya Donor Landscape on Biocultural Rights Funding**

The results presented in Figure 1 show that some donors funded projects across two or more clusters. The findings also suggest that donors supported different dimensions of biocultural rights. These include Indigenous Peoples' rights, land and territorial rights, traditional ecological knowledge, customary governance, biodiversity conservation, and access and benefit-sharing. Other areas, including climate resilience, livelihoods, women's rights, policy advocacy, and community capacity strengthening, provide complementary support for the realisation and protection of biocultural rights.

### Areas of Complementarity

The findings from the mapping suggest that there were potential areas of complementarity between the Siemenpuu Foundation and other donors. Five of the 22 donors documented funding or institutional relationships with a named Siemenpuu partner during 2022–2025, suggesting there could have been contributions to some of the achievements reported by Siemenpuu partners. These include the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (OPDP, 2021–2022 and the 2024 Biocultural Protocol launch with YLT and Lmartin); the Forest Peoples Programme (an ongoing 2022–2027 grant to the IIN and OPDP); the Access and Benefit-Sharing Initiative of the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) (the YLT and SALT) both in 2022, which falls within the period; and the International Land Coalition, through OPDP's current membership in the coalition.

### Potential Overlap

Potential thematic or geographic proximity, rather than direct overlap, was identified in two clusters (Box 3). In the Laikipia/Samburu cluster, the UNDP/GEF SGP, the Christensen Fund/Community Juries for the Rights of Nature (CJRF), and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) support related areas. The

UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme (supports the Biocultural Protocol methodology with the YLT and Lmartin). These examples suggest that different donors may have supported different parts of the same change process.

| Box 3: Donors Overlap with Siemenpuu Foundation |                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Donor                                           | partner(s) co-funded | Nature of overlap                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme                 | OPDP                 | USD 30,000 (2021–22) for preservation of Ogiek traditional and medical knowledge — thematically adjacent to, but administratively distinct from, Siemenpuu's biocultural-rights support                           |
| Forest Peoples Programme (FPP)                  | SIPP; IIN/GFC        | FPP funded SIPP's Embobut land-case litigation support directly, and funds IIN/GFC's ongoing 2022–2027 programme on community resource-mapping in the Maasai Mara — a substantial, active co-funding relationship |
| GIZ / ABS Initiative                            | YLT; SALT            | GIZ directly funded printing of YLT's 2nd-edition Yiaku BCP (2022) and, via PELUM-Kenya/the African Biodiversity Network, supported SALT's ecological-intensification work (2022)                                 |

### Funding Modality and Scale

Across the 22 donors identified, a clear pattern in the funding models and scale of funding emerged. Larger bilateral and multilateral donors, such as NORAD, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), operated mainly at the national or policy level during the Siemenpuu Kenya Programme. They provided large-scale funding, often through governments or intermediary organisations. In contrast, Indigenous-led funders, such as the Christensen Fund and the Seventh-Generation Fund, provided smaller grants directly to grassroots organisations.

This was confirmed by the two donors during the interviews. They stated that they fund Indigenous organisations directly. Although Rights and Resources Initiative (RRI) funds policy work in Kenya, it also has a component that directly funds Indigenous groups, such as OPDP. International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) also provides funding directly to the Rabai Forest Association, a small Indigenous grassroots network of ten villages in Kilifi County. Its funding approach is similar to that of the Siemenpuu Foundation.

### Position of Siemenpuu's Kenya Programme in the donor landscape

Siemenpuu Foundation occupies a distinct position in the donor landscape, alongside a few other donors. The evidence on funding approaches shows that Siemenpuu does not compete with large bilateral programmes in terms of funding scale. Although it funds local Indigenous organisations and shares a similar grassroots funding approach with several smaller philanthropic funders, in some cases supporting the same partner organisations, Siemenpuu focuses on BCP development as an entry point and then supports communities to apply BCPs. This places Siemenpuu in a distinctive position.

Another key distinction is Siemenpuu's willingness to work with Indigenous communities in geographically remote areas and to support relatively small Indigenous communities, such as the Elmolo in Loiyangalani and the Aweer deep within the Boni-Lungu Forest. At the same time, Siemenpuu does not focus only on biocultural

heritage but takes a broader biocultural rights approach, with BCPs serving as one of the tools through which these rights can be articulated.

### 3.3 Effectiveness

#### *To what extent do observed outcomes contribute to the programme-level objectives in Siemenpuu's Theory of Change?*

The first part of this key evaluation question sought to establish the observed outcomes, as described in the methodology on outcome harvesting and contribution analysis. The second part of the question is addressed in Section 3.3, which tests the Siemenpuu Theory of Change, reflecting on both the effectiveness and impact of the Programme.

#### 3.3.1 Programme Results Achievement

The evaluation findings identified four broad categories of change to which the Kenya programme contributed alongside other funders and actors: the use of BCPs as rights-claiming instruments; strengthened land and territorial rights; improved engagement with duty-bearers and strengthened community participation in community processes. The evaluation findings show that the development and use of BCPs and other biocultural documentation were the most common outcomes across partners, while the other categories of change were observed among two or more partners.

As discussed in this section, the observed outcomes reflect the programme's contribution within broader processes of change involving multiple actors and factors.

### ***Biocultural Community Protocols as Rights Claiming Instruments***

#### **Outcome Findings:**

By the end of the Siemenpuu programme in 2025, the majority of the projects (8) had completed 8 BCPs, a registered transfer document (by LAN), and customary documentation (by SALT) through a community-led process supported by the programme (Box 4).

| Box 4: BCPs Developed and Practical Application |        |         |                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------|---------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Status                                          | Number | BCP Use | Explanation on BCPs                                                                                                                                                                            |
| New BCPs                                        | 6      | 4       | - They included Lmartin, Nyekweri Oloirien/Maasai Moran, Loiyangalani communities (ELMOSARETU), Aweer and other indigenous communities in Lamu county and Elmololo.                            |
| Updated BCPs                                    | 2      | 2       | - Endorois — existing BCP updated by EIWEN and subsequently updated again by OPDP through EWC.<br>- Sengwer — existing BCP updated by SEECBO, with a specific focus on Embobut/Embubut Forest. |
| Old BCPs                                        | 2      | 2       | - Yiaku and Sengwer (under SIPP — with target of three counties). No redrafting carried out.                                                                                                   |
| Non-BCP documentation                           | 4      | 0       | - Tharaka (SALT), Lokapel Community Land (LAN), Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT) and Inventory of Mukogondo Forest Genetic Resources (YLT)                                                          |

The findings presented in Box 4 indicate that six (6) of the eight (8) BCPs were used, in addition to the two BCPs developed under the previous Siemenpuu programme. The BCPs were mainly used for three purposes: advocacy, negotiation, and rights protection as explained below.

The first use of the BCPs was primarily as an advocacy tool, as demonstrated by the following two examples. In the case of IIN/GFC, the BCP was used to respond to tourism-related pressures affecting the Maasai Mara National Reserve and the Nyekweri Conservancy in Narok County, an area predominantly inhabited by the Maasai community. Nyekweri Forest is a critical Indigenous ecosystem where the local Maasai community relies on traditional customary laws to protect wildlife, trees and water catchments. In Lamu, with support from Natural Justice, the BCP provided a basis for a 2023 petition to the Kenyan Parliament, submitted through a Lamu Member of Parliament, seeking the return of the Boni-Lungi Forest to community management. The Boni-Lungi Forest in Lamu County was gazetted as a public forest reserve in November 2017 under the [\*Declaration of Public Forest, Boni-Lungi Forest, 2017\*](#), with the stated aim of protecting its unique coastal biodiversity and supporting local conservation.

The second use of BCPs was to support negotiation and the assertion of community rights. The evidence indicates that BCPs served as protective instruments through which communities could articulate and defend community-defined rights in response to external threats and pressures affecting their land, natural resources, cultural heritage, and livelihoods. This is particularly relevant in the Kenyan context, where Indigenous Peoples continue to face threats to their lands and territories, including displacement associated with large-scale investments by the government and private investors. For example, in Loiyangalani, Marsabit County, the BCP developed with support from Kenya Programme (ELMOSARETU BCP) was used to negotiate directly with the county government and Kenya Electricity Generating Company PLC (KenGen) on project-related benefits, including budget allocations and the impacts of the wind power project. Initially, the Indigenous communities, mainly the Elmololo, Samburu, Rendille, and Turkana, through their professional groups, had opposed the KenGen wind power project because of concerns about inadequate consultation, exclusion, and lack of transparency. In addition, the groups called for the project to change its name from the “Marsabit Wind Power Project” to the “Loiyangalani-Mt. Kulal Wind Power Project” to respect local cultural and geographical heritage. It is important to note that the project is located a few kilometres from the Loiyangalani Wind Power Point, which has a long history of legal disputes over land ownership with Turkana community, an indigenous community living in Loiyangalani area.

Following engagements between the communities and KenGen as reported by FoLT during the interview, supported by the newly developed BCP, KenGen agreed to fast-track the registration of community land in the area where the wind power project would be located, among other benefits associated with the project. This provides indicative evidence of a change in investor engagement associated with the BCP process. However, available evidence does not establish that the BCP caused or fast-tracked community-land registration.

The third use of BCPs identified was to support the restoration and protection of ancestral forests and sacred sites. This is particularly important because most of the Indigenous communities targeted by the Siemenpuu programme depend on forests not only for their livelihoods but also for a range of biocultural practices, including cultural and religious activities. Within these forests, communities have identified and protected specific areas, including water sources, sacred sites, and areas of unique biodiversity, particularly those containing indigenous tree species. Regarding the specific use of BCPs for restoration and protection, the

consultants identified the Sengwer and Endorois as two communities that provide clear examples of how BCPs contributed to these outcomes.

For the Sengwer, the BCP contributed to engagement with government institutions, including a September [2024 National Land Commission](#) hearing and fact-finding mission concerning Sengwer land rights. The BCP contributed to these processes by providing documented evidence of Sengwer territorial areas, thereby strengthening the community's ability to document and defend its ancestral forest rights, although the broader land-rights issue remained unresolved at the time of the evaluation.

Among the Endorois, the BCP was used to support the restoration of sacred sites and cultural practices. Newly identified sacred sites, which replaced sites submerged by the rising waters of Lake Bogoria, were fenced and used for traditional rituals on four occasions during the project period. The BCP was also updated to include issues relating to women's and disability rights and climate impacts. These updates were incorporated into community leadership and Council of Elders discussions, creating greater opportunities for women and people with disabilities to participate in community decision-making.

The application of BCPs was significant to Indigenous communities for three main reasons. First, by documenting these biocultural values, customary practices, sacred sites, and community rights through BCPs, communities create an important safety net for protecting and reclaiming their ancestral resources. Second, BCPs provide a collectively agreed reference point that can strengthen communities' position when engaging with government authorities, private-sector investors, and other external actors. Third, the value of BCPs is particularly evident in their ability to make community-defined governance systems and customary institutions visible alongside statutory structures. As noted by the Natural Justice Regional Director, statutory structures such as Community Land Management Committees (CLMCs) may change over time, whereas the customary institutions documented through a BCP can provide greater continuity in representing how a community understands and governs its relationship with its territory:

*"One of the strengths of a BCP is that it documents the community's own customary governance structures and ways of making decisions. A CLMC is a statutory structure elected by the community to manage registered community land, and its membership can change over time. The customary institutions recognised and documented through a BCP may have a longer continuity within the community. The BCP can therefore help ensure that these community-defined governance systems remain visible and inform engagement over land and resources alongside the CLMC and other legal mechanisms."* — Natural Justice KII.

This suggests that the added value of BCPs is not that they replace formal land-governance or legal mechanisms, but that they complement them by documenting the customary institutions, norms, and decision-making systems that may not be fully captured within statutory arrangements. In this respect, BCPs can strengthen community agency by providing a shared basis for advocacy, negotiation, and rights-based engagement. However, the evidence does not support treating BCPs as instruments that independently confer legal title, guarantee tenure security, or prevent rights violations.

### ***Contribution analysis:***

The process of developing and updating BCPs was a direct contribution of the Kenya programme for eight partners, with a few other donors also contributing to the process, as noted in the coherence section. However, the subsequent utilisation of the BCPs depended largely on the Indigenous communities and their partners. Evidence from partner interviews indicates that BCP development processes often began with awareness-raising among communities and relevant authorities, as demonstrated by LPA for the Lmartin community in Samburu. He explained:

*“That opportunity was godsend. Because the process itself of the BCP development was a real eye-opener for us... when I read from the documented narratives of the knowledge holders... you realise that indeed we have gaps and these gaps need to be filled, and they should be filled fast.” — KII, respondent from El Martin People’s Association*

The process contributed to increased community awareness of their rights, the mechanisms available to protect them, and avenues for seeking redress when rights were violated. It also strengthened communities’ ability to use BCPs as documentary evidence in rights-related engagement and advocacy. The validation process provided an additional platform for communities to engage duty bearers and advocate for the recognition and use of BCPs. These findings indicate that the Programme support contributed directly to intermediate outcomes in the form of increased awareness, knowledge and community capacity to articulate and advocate for their rights.

## ***Improved relationships with both national and county governments***

### **Outcome Findings:**

The evaluation findings indicate that the programme contributed primarily by supporting community-led processes and creating platforms through which Indigenous communities could engage with national and county government officials. Government involvement varied across projects and included participation in BCP validation, community mobilisation, restoration activities and public dialogue. These forms of engagement should, however, be distinguished from formal government recognition or institutionalisation of BCPs. For example, county officials and Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) participated in restoration activities at the Endorois Sosishe spiritual site. The participation of the Samburu County Executive Committee Member for Culture, Gender and Social Services in the launch of the Lmartin Biocultural Community Protocol in 2024 provided an opportunity for relationship building. During the launch, the County Executive Committee Member publicly pledged to lobby the County Cabinet for the formal recognition of the Lmartin as a distinct minority community. This represented an important public commitment by the county government towards recognising a community that had previously been subsumed under the dominant Samburu identity. However, at the time of the evaluation, the evidence available did not establish whether this commitment had subsequently resulted in formal county-level recognition. The example therefore demonstrates the Programme’s contribution to creating a platform for government engagement with indigenous communities and generating interest in supporting the adoption of BCPs within policy frameworks.

The emerging improved relationship, awareness and interest among duty bearers is important for two main reasons. First, it indicates a gradual improvement in government engagement with Indigenous communities and their participation in decision-making. Second, increased government recognition creates an opportunity

for BCP processes and their content to be incorporated into and recognised through legal and institutional processes at both national and county levels. For example, during the advocacy workshop organized by OPDP in October 2024, the partners formally shared copies of the BCPs with the county governments represented at the event. At the time of the evaluation, none of the counties was reported in the interviews to have adopted the BCPs. The advocacy workshop was therefore another platform for awareness creation to the county government and relationship building between the indigenous community and county officials.

The adoption and institutionalisation of BCPs by the duty bearers remained a weak link in the 2022–2025 Kenya Programme but the finding should be nuanced in light of Kenya’s 2025 [Access and Benefit Sharing Regulations](#). While the programme contributed to the development and use of BCPs, increased awareness among government authorities and greater engagement between communities and government actors, there was limited evidence that specific BCPs had been systematically incorporated into government policies, plans or administrative practice. Only in Laikipia, as documented in the YLT progress report and further reported during the interview, was it found that the Laikipia government had incorporated the BCP into the county policy framework.

The 2025 Access and Benefit Sharing Regulations establish an important formal legal pathway for the recognition and use of Community Protocols in the context of access to biological resources and associated traditional knowledge. The Regulations recognise community protocols and provide a role for County Environment Committees in their development, while also recognising community protocols, customary laws and procedures in processes for obtaining prior informed consent. This means that the key institutionalisation gap is not the complete absence of a legal pathway for community protocols, but rather the limited and uneven operationalisation of specific BCPs within government policy, planning and administrative practice.

### **Contribution analysis:**

While these changes cannot be associated solely with the Siemenpuu programme, the evidence indicates that the programme contributed to creating the conditions, processes, and platforms through which communities could engage government authorities and demonstrate the value of their biocultural knowledge and community-led conservation approaches. Across the projects, desk review evidence showed that local administration and other government actors were involved, particularly in BCP validation, community mobilisation, documentation of biocultural values, and engagement processes. These activities were important because they provided communities with documented evidence of their customary laws, cultural practices, sacred sites, and resource-management systems, while also creating opportunities for government actors to become familiar with and respond to community-defined priorities.

The Endorois experience provides a concrete example of this contribution. With Siemenpuu support, the community used its BCP and related processes to support the restoration of the Sosiche spiritual site at Lake Bogoria. The participation of county officials and the KWS in Indigenous tree-planting activities at the site in 2023–2024 provided tangible evidence of government engagement with a community-led restoration initiative. The Programme’s direct support for the BCP and community-led process helped create the platform through which such engagement occurred, linking KWS with the Endorois community. This eventually led KWS to allow the restoration of the sacred sites, creating new ones and permitting Endorois communities to carry out cultural events at those sites. The Programme’s contribution was therefore to strengthen the community’s capacity to

document and present its biocultural priorities and to create an opportunity for government actors to recognise and participate in community-led conservation and restoration.

The contribution evidence is therefore strong at the level of increased community capacity, government engagement, and the creation of pathways for recognition, rather than at the level of confirmed institutional or rights outcomes. The observed changes also depended on the actions of communities, local organisations, and government actors.

## ***Security of land tenure and territories***

### **Outcome Findings:**

Across Kenya, land remains a critical issue, despite being a source of livelihoods in diverse ways. For the Indigenous peoples, land represents more than just a source of livelihood. As indicated earlier, it represents a connection with their ancestors, traditional knowledge, medicine, and other cultural and livelihood practices. Earlier analysis under the evidence criterion demonstrated that all Indigenous groups targeted by the Siemenuu Foundation faced challenges related to land ownership and control, despite land rights being an important component of their biocultural rights. The evaluation findings show that the programme contributed to securing land registration (by LAN), partial land handover (by SIPP), forest rehabilitation and reclamation of sacred sites as indicated (by EIWEN) in Box 5.

| <b>Box 5: Size of land and Forest Secured</b> |                                   |                           |                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Community</b>                              | <b>Land size secured/restored</b> | <b>Partner associated</b> | <b>Nature of outcome</b>                                                          |
| Sengwer                                       | 24.21 ha.                         | SIPP                      | 1.21 ha reclaimed in Kapkok Glade Forest and 23 ha in Embubut forest              |
| Maasai                                        | 14,000 ha                         | IIN                       | Registered as a development/forest conservation area in Maasai Mara, Narok County |
| Ogiek                                         | 40–60 ha                          | OPDP                      | Land rehabilitated in East Mau Forest                                             |
| Lokapel                                       | 13,634 ha                         | LAN                       | Community land formally registered                                                |

In relation to reclaimed territories, the evaluation also identified evidence among the Endorois and Tharaka communities. Among the Endorois, the community reclaimed sacred sites around Lake Bogoria. Newly identified sacred sites, including sites that replaced those submerged by the rising waters of Lake Bogoria, were fenced and subsequently used for traditional rituals on four occasions during the programme period. In Tharaka, six ancestral sacred sites were identified, documented and reclaimed. The documentation provided evidence of the communities' historical and cultural connections to these sites and strengthened their ability to protect and continue accessing them.

The securing, registration, reclamation, and rehabilitation of Indigenous lands and territories are significant to Indigenous communities because land is not only an economic asset but also the foundation of their livelihoods, cultural identity, traditional knowledge, governance systems, and biocultural rights. Land ownership enables Indigenous communities to manage and use their resources through their own self-determined customary processes. It also strengthens communities' legal position and bargaining power when negotiating with government authorities, conservation agencies, and private-sector actors. It can also provide a basis for

defending their rights against external pressures, although it does not provide absolute protection against government action, compulsory acquisition, conservation restrictions, or private-sector pressure.

### **Contribution analysis:**

The programme contributed to the observed territorial outcomes through two main pathways, although these outcomes cannot be attributed to the programme alone. The first pathway was through support for BCP development and related documentation, which strengthened communities' capacity to articulate their territorial rights and created opportunities for engagement with government authorities and other external actors. By documenting customary laws, traditional practices, sacred sites, natural resources and historical relationships with their territories, BCPs provided communities with community-generated evidence that could be used to articulate and support territorial claims and protection efforts. For example, among the Endorois, Yiaku and Maasai communities, the identification and documentation of sacred sites and other biocultural resources helped strengthen community claims and efforts to protect these resources. In the Endorois case, this included the identification and documentation of sacred sites, including sites that had been submerged by the rising waters of Lake Bogoria. In Tharaka, although the process was not based solely on a BCP, the Programme's supported documentation of biocultural heritage contributed to the identification and reclamation of six ancestral sites.

The second pathway was direct support for land registration, particularly in the case of the Lokapel community (Box 6). The Lokapel land-registration process was cited in programme documentation as a best-practice example from which other Indigenous communities could learn. Formal registration provided the community with legal recognition of its land interests and a stronger basis for managing and protecting its territory. This pathway differs from the BCP pathway in that it resulted in a formal land-tenure outcome, whereas BCPs primarily strengthened communities' capacity to document, articulate and advocate for their territorial rights.

#### **Box 6: From Anonymity to Reference Point**

Before LAN's Siemenpuu-supported documentation and registration work, the Lokapel community had, in the words of the LAN respondent, "no identity" in any official or public record: "No one could reference this community before we documented it." Community land-rights mobilisation, participatory mapping, and a 14-day formal government survey culminated in a validated plan and a title deed that officials confirmed was ready.

The outcome is double-edged. On one hand, Lokapel has become a reference case. The other communities visit to learn from it, the community's chairman has presented the process directly to a government minister, and government officers cite Lokapel in trainings as the community that "started it well" by not skipping steps such as protecting cultural sites. On the other hand, more than a year after the title was declared ready, it remains undelivered, held up — according to the respondent — by county-level political contestation over who gets credit for community land titling, compounded by rising investor interest in Turkana linked to oil. The National Land Commission has had to step in once already to publicly affirm the title's validity.

The contribution evidence is strong in demonstrating that the Programme strengthened the capacity, evidence base and platforms through which communities could pursue territorial claims and protection. The evidence for direct contribution to formal land-registration outcomes is more specific in cases such as Lokapel, but still reflects the combined influence of community action, partner support, government processes and other actors.

The findings suggest that communities in Kenya pursue multiple, complementary pathways to strengthen land tenure security. There is no single pathway for securing land tenure for Indigenous and local communities in Kenya. Communities use a combination of formal community land registration and adjudication, strategic litigation, the recognition and documentation of customary rights (BCPs), and negotiated community-based arrangements, such as partnerships with investors or conservation actors (private investors). The appropriate pathway depends on the nature of land rights, the historical context of the community, and the specific threats to tenure security.

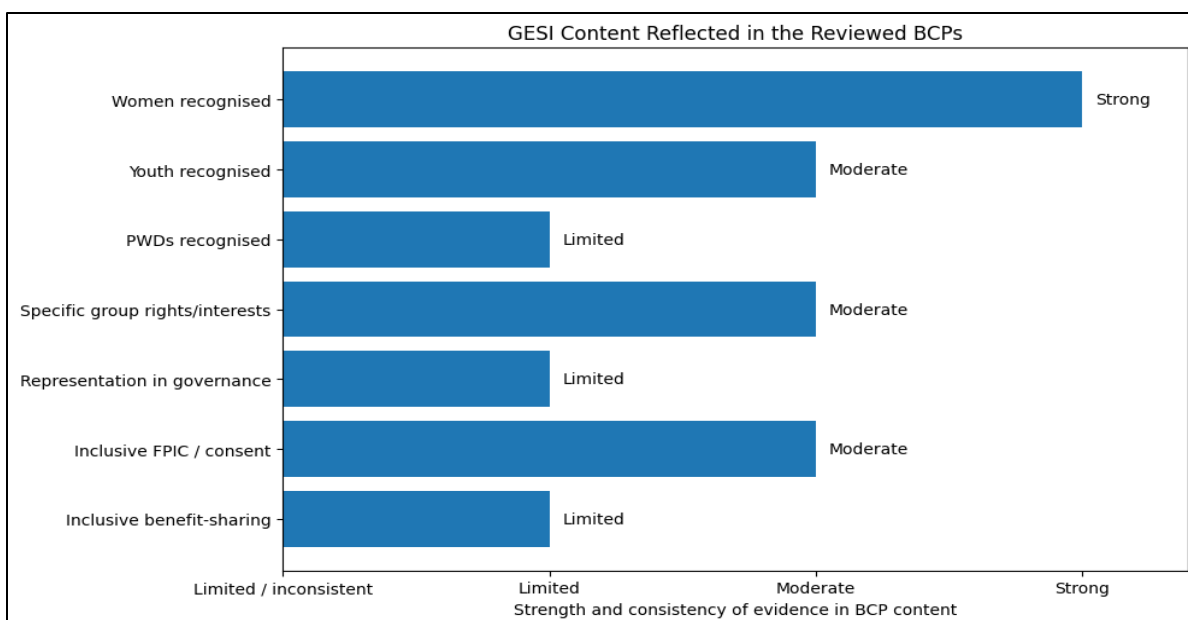
## ***Strengthened Community Participation***

### **Outcome Findings:**

The BCPs indicate that community participation was strengthened, particularly through community-led consultations, mapping, documentation, validation, and engagement with government and other external actors. Participation also extended beyond BCP preparation to actual application by Indigenous communities. For example, FoLT communities used their BCP and land-rights knowledge to demand consultation from KenGen, an energy investor, while the Endorois BCP reports stronger community organisation, cohesion, and collective voice claiming back their sacred sites from KWS. However, the evidence is stronger for expanded opportunities and mechanisms for participation than for increased decision-making power. Traditional elders and authorities remain influential, and the BCPs provide limited evidence that women, youth, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and other less powerful groups gained equal influence.

The findings from the desk review showed that there were deliberate efforts to promote women's participation. Participant data collected during the review of partners' progress reports showed that women constituted approximately 40–75% of participants in BCP processes. Compared with other groups, women's participation was particularly pronounced, with deliberate efforts made to strengthen their involvement. These included updating BCPs to incorporate women's rights and concerns, as demonstrated by EIWEN; strengthening women's involvement in governance processes in Baringo County; and supporting women's livelihood initiatives through YLT.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) analysis was carried out to assess the extent to which women, youth, and people with disabilities were engaged in the development of the BCPs and represented in their content. The analysis was based on a four-point scale and the following interpretations: **Strong**, where the issue is clearly and substantively addressed in the BCPs; **Moderate**, where the issue is addressed but only partly or inconsistently; **Limited**, where the issue receives little attention in the BCPs; and **not evident**, where there is no clear evidence that the issue is addressed.



**Figure 2. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Analysis of BCPs**

The results of the review of **BCP content** are presented in Figure 2. It can be observed that women were the most recognised marginalised group, while youth were moderately reflected, and specific attention to persons with disabilities was less reflected. Where women’s roles and interests were explicitly recognised in the BCPs, it provided a basis for greater recognition of their contribution to community governance and resource management. For example, the Endorois BCP explicitly addresses the roles of women, youth, and persons with disabilities, while the Endorois Intersectionality BCP calls for women’s inclusion in land and natural resource decision-making. However, this was not consistently translated into concrete provisions guaranteeing women’s representation.

Similarly, youth were recognised in some BCPs through their roles in cultural knowledge transmission, environmental stewardship, and community activities, but their formal representation in governance was less well documented across the BCPs. Youth participation was more evident, including young people in Tharaka helping to protect reclaimed ancestral sites, taking on community roles previously held by elders in Lamu, and learning traditional knowledge from elders in Marsabit county while contributing their own skills (Box 7).

#### **Box 7: Indications of Youth Engagement**

*“Those who completed the traditional [practices] are from [the] first-grade generation. But as you can see, their cultures are diminishing, but through this book you can see that their traditions will go to the future generations.” — Lamu FGD, community representative*

*“...initially it was just the old generation deciding things in terms of leadership, in terms of community decisions, but now we’ve seen the changes... youth are really willing to take those responsibilities.” — Salwa Mahmoud KII*

*“...there was inclusion of youth, women, the different age sets of men. So it meant that... some youths were able to learn from the elderly, but also the youth [contributed back].” — FoLT KII, on the Ngalani BCP process*

*“Inter-generational interactions... women participation was amplified by the process... PWDs included as well — part of planning.” — OPDP Partner Interview.*

While partners' project reports indicate PWD participation in the Programme activities, relatively few BCPs explicitly address their representation, specific rights or differentiated needs. The Endorois Intersectionality BCP is a stronger example, explicitly addressing PWDs' roles in resource management, decision-making and access to resources.

The observed changes among women, youth, and PWDs are also significant because they move inclusion beyond participation in terms of numbers towards greater opportunities for different groups to influence community decisions and benefit from biocultural resources. Gender and social inclusion are also significant because the inclusion of marginalised groups strengthens the sustainability and legitimacy of biocultural rights and community governance. Indigenous women, youth, and persons with disabilities often hold important knowledge about land, forests, natural resources, cultural practices, and livelihoods. Increasing their participation can therefore help ensure that BCPs and related community processes reflect the interests, experiences, and knowledge of diverse groups within the community.

### **Contribution analysis:**

The programme contributed to stronger community participation by supporting community-led BCP processes that created spaces for people to document their knowledge, map their territories, validate priorities, and engage external actors. The contribution was not simply the production of BCP documents. The process appears to have strengthened communities' confidence and capacity to participate in decisions affecting their lands and resources. In Loiyangalani, Marsabit County, for example, participatory mapping and validation brought together community representatives, traditional women leaders, and youth.

For women, the contribution was most evident where BCP support was combined with targeted mobilisation and livelihood opportunities. In Yiaku community, the Programme supported mobilisation to participate in the livelihoods projects and also encouraged women to contest positions in community land governance. In Lamu, women who had previously depended on men to access forest resources began producing and selling value-added bee products, creating a new income stream and greater economic agency.

For youth, the programme helped create opportunities to move from being largely excluded from community decision-making towards more active participation. In Lamu, youth previously excluded from decision-making that was largely reserved for elders became involved in community issues and land-rights advocacy. The BCP process in Loiyangalani, Marsabit county also enabled youth to learn traditional knowledge from elders while contributing their own skills.

The evidence shows that the contribution was uneven and should not be overstated. Evidence is stronger for increased opportunities, confidence, and engagement in the BCP process than for a fundamental redistribution of decision-making power.

### **3.3.2 Effectiveness of Joint Projects**

Desk review findings, confirmed through interviews with partners, indicate that the Programme supported three joint projects involving between two and five partner organisations, as summarised in Box 8.

| Box 8: Joint Projects Supported by Siemenpuu |                                |                                    |           |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Lead Partner                                 | Partners Involved              | Joint Project                      | Status    |
| EIWEN                                        | EIWEN, OPDP, SALT, YLT and LPA | Beekeeping                         | Completed |
| YLT                                          | YLT, LPA                       | BCP for Lmartin & formation of LPA | Completed |
| OPDP                                         | OPDP, EWC, SEECBO and GURAPAU  | Joint BCP development              | Completed |

Analysis of the joint project arrangement indicated that capacity building and learning among partners were the main benefits. This occurred through technical and experiential peer-learning exchanges, which were identified as a common benefit during partner interviews. YLT reported that working with LPA on the Lmartin BCP provided a strong example of skills transfer and mentorship to LPA. This was also appreciated by LPA during the telephone interview, with the organisation acknowledging YLT's support, which contributed to strengthening its organisational capacity and preserving the culture of the Lmartin community.

Other partners felt that the joint project was an innovative way of taking collective action that would contribute to building localised movements, creating opportunities for sustained relationships and collective action across organisations and communities, as one partner said:

*"Movement building... Documentation of practices... Knowledge exchange and learning among communities... Increased interest in beekeeping as a livelihoods improvement strategy." — EIWEN Partner Interview.*

The following are the consultants' reflections on the joint projects' experiences (Box9).

| Box 9: Consultants' Reflections on Joint Projects                                                      |                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| What worked                                                                                            | What did not work                                                                                                                        |
| - Created stronger relationships, trust, friendship and greater familiarity with each other's work.    | - Decision-making and control of the implementation were not necessarily shared equally.                                                 |
| - Partners worked beyond the scope of their individual organisational boundaries.                      | - Partners felt that resources were concentrated with lead/host organisations.                                                           |
| - Contributed to potential for movement-building by creating connections between communities           | - Host organisations had disproportionate influence on the implementation calendar.                                                      |
| - The BCP-related collaborations appear to have strengthened organisational relationships and learning | - The beekeeping project produced relationship benefits but weak outcomes for beneficiaries due to lack of data to quantify the benefits |

### **3.3.3 Testing the Theory of Change**

*The second part of the effectiveness questions examined how the above observed outcomes contribute to the programme-level objectives outlined in Siemenpuu's Theory of Change.*

The evaluation findings indicate that Siemenpuu's Theory of Change is broadly valid in the Kenya context, although the strength of evidence varies across the different levels of the results chain. The testing was carried out at two levels: causal pathways and testing the assumptions.

#### **Causal Pathways:**

The strong evidence is at the level of outputs and community-level outcomes, where Siemenpuu's inputs, particularly support for community-led BCP processes, contributed to community mobilisation, awareness creation, documentation of biocultural rights through eight BCPs and other forms of customary documentation. These processes are consistent with the Theory of Change's intended pathway from support to local communities towards their empowerment and strengthened capacity to participate in decisions affecting their environment and livelihoods.

The evidence is particularly strong for the biocultural rights pathway. BCP development provided an important mechanism through which communities documented their territories, customary institutions and practices, natural resources, and relationships with their lands. This strengthened communities' ability and confidence to articulate their rights and provided a basis for engagement with government authorities and other external actors. Siemenpuu's global Theory of Change envisages community empowerment leading to communities being better able to defend and protect their areas. The evaluation evidence shows that local communities' capacity increased, leading to the practical application of BCPs.

The causal pathway becomes less conclusive at the higher outcomes and impact levels. Processes supported by the Kenya Programme contributed to territorial, environmental and governance changes, including increased recognition of community rights and strengthened engagement with responsibility bearers. However, these changes cannot be attributed to Siemenpuu alone. They resulted from the interaction of Programme support with other donors, government agencies, courts and legal processes, partner organisations, and pre-existing community capacities and mobilisation. The evidence therefore supports a contribution pathway rather than a direct attribution pathway.

The evaluation also finds that the Theory of Change was only partially realised in relation to its cross-cutting dimensions of equality and participation. The involvement of women, youth, and people with disabilities in BCP development and content marks important progress, yet this has not consistently translated into the more equitable and inclusive decision-making and livelihood outcomes anticipated by the Theory of Change.

#### **Testing of the assumptions:**

Five assumptions from the global Siemenpuu Theory of Change were tested to assess their validity during this evaluation. The results and implications are presented in Box 10.

| Box 10: Testing the Assumptions for Kenya Programme                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Global Siemenpuu ToC assumption                                                                                                                                    | How it was tested in Kenya                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Judgement / implications                                                                                                                                                  |
| Local communities participating in the programme are sufficiently committed to the jointly set objectives.                                                         | Communities used BCPs, customary knowledge documentation and other tools for advocacy, negotiation and protection of their rights.                                                                                                                                          | <b>Held:</b> Continue and strengthen the BCP approach and ensure that communities remain at the centre of developing and applying these tools.                            |
| Increased freedom and participation of civil society promote democratic governance and accountability, improving the functioning and democratic nature of society. | Communities and CSOs increasingly engaged in advocacy, legal processes and dialogue with government and other duty bearers. However, engagement did not consistently result in formal recognition or incorporation of community demands into policies and legal frameworks. | <b>Partially held:</b> Move beyond participation and engagement towards institutionalisation by targeting specific county and national institutions and policy processes. |
| The state, authorities and other actors in the target areas work with sufficient consensus to achieve the same objectives to reduce poverty and inequality.        | Government engagement improved in some areas, but government responses to community claims were uneven and formal recognition of community rights remained limited in some cases.                                                                                           | <b>Partially held:</b> Strengthen engagement with specific duty bearers and develop advocacy strategies that address institutional and policy barriers.                   |
| Siemenpuu is able to identify organisations and projects committed to the goals and capable of implementation.                                                     | The programme identified 10 partners and - evidence indicates that partners developed organisational and technical capacities during implementation.                                                                                                                        | <b>Held:</b> Maintain the locally driven partner-selection approach while continuing to assess organisational capacity and governance risks.                              |
| Siemenpuu succeeds in ensuring sufficient resources for operations.                                                                                                | Siemenpuu provided financial support to the 10 partners to the extent of funding most indigenous smaller groups.                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Held:</b> Strengthen partners' fundraising, resource mobilisation and financial sustainability capacities.                                                             |

As indicated in Box 10, the assumptions were found to hold to varying degrees. Assumptions concerning community commitment, partner selection and networking were largely supported, as communities demonstrated strong ownership of the programme and actively used BCPs and other tools to strengthen advocacy, document their rights, protect cultural and natural resources, and engage with duty bearers.

Assumptions relating to government responsiveness and alignment among actors were only partially supported. Government engagement and participation increased in some cases, but this did not consistently translate into formal recognition, policy adoption or institutional change. Similarly, although the programme created opportunities for collaboration among CSOs, donors, government and communities, coordination and complementarity among these actors remained uneven. This suggests that the Theory of Change was strongest where change depended directly on community and partner action, but less certain where results depended on external actors and broader institutional processes.

## 3.4 Impact

### *Have the projects contributed to the intended impact of Siemenpui's programme?*

The evaluation found evidence of emerging higher-level changes (Box 11) contributing to the programme's intended impact which is: **"People reached by the programme have better and equal opportunities to develop sustainable living conditions and livelihoods, as well as to participate in decision-making affecting the state of their environment."**

Given the timing of the evaluation, several of these changes are best understood as emerging impacts or progress towards longer-term impact rather than fully realised or sustained impacts.

| Box 11: Kenya Programme contribution to Global Impact                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Impact                                                                   | Brief description on contribution                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Progress in Securing Legal and Biocultural Rights</b>                 | Across the programme portfolio, the evaluation identified several territorial and legal-recognition processes at different stages of completion, some of which require continued follow-up. These include more than 13,634 hectares of community land undergoing formal registration or receiving recognised conservation-area status through LAN; the reclamation of ancestral and sacred sites in Tharaka and Endorois, respectively; and petitions submitted to Parliament that have initiated legal processes. These changes are occurring at different levels and are contributing to improved opportunities for people to develop sustainable living conditions. At the same time, these examples point to communities in Tharaka and Endorois being better able to make independent decisions concerning the reclaimed areas. |
| <b>Reduced Eviction Risks</b>                                            | Conservatory court orders provided legal protection in some cases, while BCPs and related community documentation strengthened communities' ability to document and demonstrate their historical and cultural relationships with their territories, articulate their rights, and engage in advocacy and legal processes when facing eviction or dispossession. Court orders and the allocation of forest land to Sengwer community temporarily provided conditions that enabled them to continue farming and carrying out other activities without interference. This fulfils part of the intended impact, indicating progress towards the development of sustainable livelihoods.                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Environmental restoration, biodiversity and community stewardship</b> | The evaluation established that the programme contributed to environmental protection, restoration, and Indigenous-led stewardship. The reclamation and documentation of ancestral and sacred sites in Tharaka and around Lake Bogoria strengthened community recognition of and stewardship over culturally significant areas. This contributes to self-determination by strengthening communities' ability to make decisions concerning their territories without interference from external actors.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Promoting equality and inclusion</b>                                  | To some extent, the Programme incorporated gender, youth and disability inclusion, with particular attention to women and persons with disabilities as beneficiaries and active participants. The Programme therefore contributed to creating more equal opportunities, particularly for vulnerable rural communities. The inclusion and participation of these groups represent an important step towards more equitable participation in development processes and access to programme benefits.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

## 3.5 Programme Sustainability

### *To what extent are the results achieved sustainable?*

The sustainability of the programme results was assessed based on the extent to which the changes achieved are likely to continue beyond the period of Kenya Programme support. Sustainability was judged using a three-point scale. **High** indicates that results are highly likely to continue, supported by strong local ownership and capacity. **Moderate** indicates that results are likely to continue, although some risks or conditions may affect their sustainability. **Low** indicates that results may continue, but significant weaknesses or risks remain.

Based on this assessment, the following evidence of programme sustainability beyond 2025 was identified, as presented in Box 12.

| Box 12: Sustainability Indicators for Kenya Programme                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Observed Changes                                                                   | Evidence from the programme                                                                                                                                                                       | Judgement/Justification                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Capacity built among the partners and target beneficiaries                         | Partners' capacity increased and in each of the target communities their key people trained leaving knowledge and skills with them                                                                | <b>Strong:</b> The partners will be able to use those skills to continue scaling the achieved outcomes as they continue to serve the needs of their target communities                                       |
| Continued use of community documentation and processes showing community ownership | BCPs and documentation of customary knowledge, identity, customary laws. Including the Lokapel community land registration provides communities with tools for continued advocacy and engagement. | <b>Strong:</b> BCPs remain to be legal, advocacy and protective tools to protect knowledge, rights and provide management mechanisms within communities leading to ownership and application when necessary. |
| CSO network strengthened through building trust and learning                       | Kenya Programme was able to work /interact with 110 CSOs                                                                                                                                          | <b>Moderate:</b> They continue providing platforms for learning, exchanging knowledge and movement building and collective actions.                                                                          |
| Environmental conservation and improved biodiversity                               | Reclaimed ancestral areas, sacred sites, protected forests and demand to manage the natural resources                                                                                             | <b>Strong:</b> The Indigenous communities' sense of belonging since they have restored the cultural practices. They will continue protecting and managing the natural resources                              |

Overall, the programme has established a strong foundation for continued results, but some outcomes require continued support, advocacy and external engagement to be sustained. The strongest sustainability factors are the increased capacity of partners and communities to continue using BCPs and community documentation, as well as strengthening ownership of environmental conservation and restored ancestral and sacred areas. These changes are embedded within community structures and can therefore continue beyond programme support. On the other hand, CSO networking is likely to continue but depends on continued collaboration and learning.

## 4 SIEMENPUU PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT

The evaluation findings presented in this section address two interrelated evaluation objectives: how Siemenpuu can improve its partnership management and grant-making practices, and how it can strengthen its understanding of its role as a funder and partner in Kenya.

### 4.1 Grant Management

*Strengthen Siemenpuu's partnership management and grant-making practices by clarifying and strengthening its role as both a funder and a partner in Kenya.*

The analysis in this section sought to understand how Siemenpuu channelled resources to local Indigenous partners and how funding decisions were made. Feedback from partners on the grant-making model indicated that Siemenpuu's approach was small-scale, thematic, project-based, relationship-oriented, and locally focused.

#### Partner Selection:

The selection of local partners was a key strength of Siemenpuu's grant-making model. The deliberate programme design undertaken before the call for applications helped ensure that funding priorities and partner selection were aligned with the Kenyan context and intended changes. Feedback from partners indicated that the selection criteria were favourable to small and local organisations that are close to Indigenous communities, including smaller and less visible organisations often overlooked by mainstream donors. Importantly, partners reported that the selection criteria recognised community legitimacy, Indigenous knowledge and local accountability as important strengths alongside formal organisational capacity. This contributed to locally relevant project delivery and strengthened community ownership.

#### Funding Modalities:

Box 13 presents the findings on how Siemenpuu funded the 10 partners and other smaller Indigenous organisations and groups in Kenya.

| Box 13: Funding Modalities for Kenya Programme          |                                                                                                                                                   |                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Funding modalities                                      | Findings                                                                                                                                          | Number of Partners |
| Direct/Single-partner grant                             | - 9 partners received and managed the grant and implemented activities in their target communities                                                | 9                  |
| Joint/Lead-partner grant                                | - Each of the three lead organisations (YLT, OPDP and EIWEN) received, managed and provided funds to member partners for implementing activities. | 3                  |
| Activity based sub-granting                             | - a funded partner (OPDP) channelled smaller amounts to grassroots Indigenous groups/ community groups to undertake specific activities           | 1                  |
| NB: Some partners were involved in two or more projects |                                                                                                                                                   |                    |

Findings presented in Box 13 show that Siemenpuu used three funding modalities, with the direct funding model being the dominant modality in the Siemenpuu programme. According to feedback from partners, this modality was relatively simple, with clear responsibilities between Siemenpuu and the partners. The joint funding modality, commonly used in consortium arrangements, was also used for the beekeeping joint project. The micro-granting/sub-granting modality enabled funding to reach hard-to-reach, localised, and often very small Indigenous groups that are frequently overlooked in favour of relatively larger Indigenous organisations. For example, El Molo communities living around Lake Turkana were reached through this approach and supported to develop a Biocultural Community Protocol (BCP). This modality appears particularly effective for supporting small Indigenous communities.

The consultants observe that the use of three funding modalities provided Siemenpuu with a flexible approach to reaching different types of partners and Indigenous groups. Together, the three modalities enabled Siemenpuu to balance simplicity, collaboration, and inclusiveness in its grant-making approach.

### **Continuity Between Programme Cycles:**

The third feature identified by the consultant is the transition period between one programme cycle and the next associated with different project periods funded by Siemenpuu Foundation. While the consultant recognises this as good practice from an accountability perspective, as it allows projects to be completed and formally closed, it also has inherent disadvantages, particularly for rights-based programmes that depend on continuity, relationships and momentum built over time.

The gap between programme cycles can result in the loss of momentum generated during implementation, as expressed by partners. This is particularly problematic for advocacy around BCP adoption and movement-building work, where maintaining community interest, sustaining networks and organising collective action require continuous engagement. Once activities stop, it can become more difficult and costly to re-engage partners, communities and stakeholders when the next programme begins.

However, the consultant recognises that the Siemenpuu Kenya Programme faces similar time-bound programming constraints to other programmes and projects in international development. The consultant's reflection on the grant-making model produced the following key learning points (Box 15).

| <b>Box 14: Consultants' Reflections on the Granting Model</b>                                          |                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>What worked</b>                                                                                     | <b>What did not work</b>                                                                                                                      |
| – Small grants enabled support to relatively Indigenous/community-rights initiatives.                  | – Project-based grants limited flexibility, particularly when partners needed to respond to changing circumstances or emerging opportunities. |
| – The thematic focus gave coherence for joint projects                                                 | – Short grant periods did not correspond to the time required for the realisation of Indigenous biocultural rights.                           |
| – The open-call mechanism provided a relatively transparent route for organisations to access funding. | – The donor retained substantial decision-making power over what was funded, raising questions on control over grant management               |
| – The models allowed Siemenpuu to work with organisations relatively close to communities              | – The models could be further developed, but financial risks with small community-based organisations would require more attention            |

## 4.2 Organisational Capacity Building

*To what extent has the Siemenpuu programme supported the organisational development of partner organisations?*

The evaluation found that Siemenpuu contributed to both technical capacity and organisational capacity, but the nature and depth of support differed considerably across partners. Regarding technical capacity, Siemenpuu was generally effective in strengthening partners' technical and programme-delivery capacities, particularly in relation to biocultural rights, BCP development, community mobilisation, advocacy and environmental action. This represents an important strength of the model because the support was closely connected to Indigenous organisations' own priorities and areas of expertise. It was also well aligned with the programme's substantive objectives and, in several cases, enabled partners to undertake activities for which they had previously limited experience or resources.

Regarding organisational and institutional capacity, the evidence shows that Siemenpuu's contribution to organisational capacity was more uneven than its contribution to technical capacity. While some partners, such as LAN, strengthened their financial management, support for project performance reporting systems, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL), governance, and fundraising practices were limited or inconsistent (see consultants' reflection in Box 15).

| Box 15: Consultants' Reflections on Organisational Capacity |                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Organisational capacity area                                | Evaluation findings                                                                                                         |
| Financial management                                        | Some partners strengthened financial reporting and internal control systems; smaller organisations faced greater challenges |
| MEL                                                         | Capacity and practices were uneven across the partners                                                                      |
| Governance                                                  | Organisational maturity varied considerably across the partners                                                             |
| Fundraising                                                 | Established partners were generally better positioned to diversify funding                                                  |
| Reporting/compliance                                        | Formal requirements could be demanding for grassroots organisations                                                         |

The evaluation also found that organisational capacity should not be measured only by formal systems. Some partners, such as SIPP and YLT, reported that they had not received organisational capacity-building training, although they had gained experiential capacity through grant management.

It is also important to highlight that smaller Indigenous organisations may have limited systems for bookkeeping, MEL, or donor management, but they may have strong community legitimacy, Indigenous knowledge, local accountability, and trusted relationships with rights-holders. In contrast, more established organisations such as Natural Justice, SALT and OPDP may have stronger formal systems and greater experience working with donors, but this does not necessarily mean that they have stronger community legitimacy.

Based on the evidence presented above, the consultants conclude that Siemenpuu provided varied technical and organisational capacity support, reflecting the different needs and characteristics of Indigenous organisations, but support was less systematic in strengthening organisational and institutional capacity.

## 5 BEST PRACTICES, LESSONS LEARNT AND CHALLENGES FACED

The following are the best practices and lessons learnt from the implementation of the Kenya programme across 11 projects by the 10 local partners. These are worth carrying forward to the next Kenya Programme.

### 5.1 Best Practices

The following are the best practices identified from the Siemenpuu Kenya programme:

- A hybrid granting model is well suited to biocultural rights projects because it allows for flexible grant-making approaches based on partners' specific needs, organisational capacities, and implementation contexts.
- Responsive and relational partnership management by Siemenpuu provides flexibility to support partners according to their individual needs while maintaining rigorous grant-management practices.
- Matching partners' capacities promotes peer-to-peer learning and experiential capacity building among partners.
- Updating BCPs ensures that BCPs respond to emerging needs and address gaps identified during implementation.
- Community-led BCP processes support an inclusive approach to both the development process and the content of BCPs.
- National events serve as learning and advocacy platforms for promoting BCPs among duty bearers.

### 5.2 Lessons Learnt

The following are the lessons learnt from the Kenya Programme experience.

- BCPs are most effective when treated as living tools rather than end products. They should be used for advocacy, negotiation, land protection, conservation, and engagement with government authorities as need arises.
- Joint projects can build movements, but joint funding does not automatically create equitable partnerships.
- Peer-to-peer learning can be a powerful form of capacity development. The experience of YLT mentoring LPA demonstrates that established grassroots organisations can serve as effective capacity-building partners for emerging organisations.
- Recognition and legal change require multi-actor strategies. The major land and territorial outcomes were achieved through interaction among communities, government, courts, legal institutions, donors, and civil-society organisations.
- Women participated significantly in many BCP processes and livelihood activities, but their representation in formal decision-making remained limited. The lesson is that participation should not be measured only by numbers.
- Flexible, relationship-oriented funding is particularly appropriate for grassroots Indigenous organisations.

## 5.3 Challenges Faced

The following challenges were identified through the evaluation:

- Security risks affected the implementation of activities in some programme areas, particularly those involving Natural Justice and LAWA, and resulted in delays in implementation timelines.
- Evictions of the Ogiek and Sengwer communities also delayed activities, as partners had to respond through legal action, including court proceedings, and mediation processes with the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS).
- The SIPP project experienced significant weaknesses in financial administration and internal controls, which resulted in a special audit in December 2025.

## 6 CONCLUSION

Siemenpoo's 2022–2025 Kenya Programme was relatively small compared with some other donors operating in the Indigenous Peoples' rights sector. The evaluation found that its contribution was significant and distinctive relative to the size of its funding. This was largely because Siemenpoo deliberately reached small, grassroots and often underfunded Indigenous organisations that are less likely to receive direct support from larger donors. For several partners and communities, the funding was described as timely and, in some cases, the only external funding available.

The programme operated largely through bilateral relationships, partner exchanges, mentorship, learning events, and joint projects, which strengthened collaboration and began to create a wider network of Indigenous and civil-society organisations. The joint projects demonstrated the potential for collective action, although they also showed that joint implementation does not automatically result in equitable decision-making or resource-sharing.

The programme was successful in the development and use of Biocultural Community Protocols (BCPs) and other customary documentation processes. Eight projects developed or updated BCPs, and six used them for advocacy, negotiation, rights protection, or engagement with government and other duty bearers. While engagement with government increased, there was limited evidence that BCPs had been formally incorporated into government policies, plans, or legal frameworks. These achievements involved multiple actors, including government, courts, other donors, and civil-society organisations; therefore, the evaluation considers Siemenpoo's role as one of credible contribution rather than direct attribution.

The central lesson for the next phase is that Siemenpoo's comparative advantage should be protected while addressing the vulnerabilities of the organisations it supports. Future programming should retain flexible, locally led funding but differentiate support according to organisational maturity, strengthen financial and organisational capacity, promote more equitable joint projects, and invest more deliberately in network building and institutionalisation.

## 7 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are derived from the evaluation findings.

| OECD-DAC<br>Criterion | Practical and Forward-Looking Recommendations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Relevance</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preserve and deliberately deepen the niche of funding very small, unregistered or first-time grantee organisations</li> <li>▪ Develop proportionate, risk-based due-diligence and grant-management guidelines appropriate to smaller and emerging Indigenous organisations, combining accessible requirements with stronger accompaniment where organisational systems are still developing.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Coherence</b>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Strengthen proportionate donor coordination with confirmed co-founders, in consultation with partner organisations, and systematically track co-funding and contributions to shared outcomes to identify complementarity, reduce duplication and improve contribution analysis.</li> <li>▪ Allocate an appropriate share of future Kenya funding to well-designed network-level or collaborative grants, building on the peer-learning and collective-action benefits of the joint projects while establishing equitable governance, partner roles, resource-sharing and decision-making arrangements from the outset.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Effectiveness</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support operationalisation of the BCPs by shifting marginal funding toward advocacy support, county-level relationship-building, and following existing commitments</li> <li>▪ Where hosted funding arrangements are used, establish explicit capacity-strengthening strategies with agreed organisational milestones towards direct grant management where appropriate. Clearly define and adequately resource the fiduciary, mentoring and reporting responsibilities undertaken by host organisations.</li> <li>▪ Close the momentum gap between programme cycles for rights-based, movement-building work by introducing a bridging mechanism, so that community trust, network cohesion and BCP follow-through are not lost during the transition</li> <li>▪ For joint/consortium grants, agree resource-sharing, sub-granting and decision-making arrangements at the design stage and provide clarity on host/lead-partner costs and accountability mechanisms</li> <li>▪ Move beyond participation numbers by setting and tracking the qualitative indicators of women's substantive influence in community governance and decision-making, while strengthening deliberate inclusion of people with disabilities, youth and other groups that remain under-represented in programme processes.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Impact</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a simple, standardised organisational capacity reflection at the beginning and at the end of each grant cycle to design and measure the extent of organisational capacity building.</li> <li>▪ Deliberately monitor and resource the legal/systemic processes already in motion for some of the Indigenous communities.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

|                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sustainability</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Undertake simple organisational and fiduciary capacity assessments at grant inception and provide tailored financial-management, administrative and governance support throughout implementation</li> <li>▪ Strengthen community legal literacy, governance and negotiating capacity in relation to conservation finance and benefit-sharing arrangements, including transparency over revenues, community decision-making, intermediary accountability and safeguards for community land and biocultural rights.</li> </ul> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

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