

# How We Do Conservation Education Outreaches: My Experience in Nsimbo Outreach Campaign

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Western Tanzania landscape hosts a significant core natural place that supports the survival of wildlife but also provides livelihoods to agro and pastoral communities surrounding it. The landscape is also interconnected by wildlife corridors and dispersal areas some of which are now vulnerably surrounded while others are occupied by people. Landscape health is threatened by increased interaction between humans and wildlife hence intensified cases of conflicts. The persistent conflicts are those related to interactions between humans and elephants and lions. Being a conservationist in this landscape requires a persevering professional who can face issues of human-wildlife interaction with readiness to work in a wide range of working conditions.

Conservation outreach is one of the tools that LCMO uses to reach the wider community to purposefully raise awareness on environmental conservation. Through outreach, we provide knowledge on human-lion and other [wildlife coexistence](#), but also emphasize improving environmental management which plays a key role in supporting rural livelihoods, food security, and addressing climate change. LCMO has designed its outreaches to effectively disseminate public conservation education and encourage local participation in conservation through public meetings and film screenings. Usually, our morning public meetings gather more men (household heads), and a few women, whereas, in the evening, almost all community members join our conservation education talks and film shows.





*Figure 1: Miss Belinda introducing the representatives from LCMO, TANAPA, TAWA and OCS during the outreach in Sitalike village*

In October 2022, a team of three LCMO staff embarked on a three weeks public outreach mission in Nsimbo District Council. During that trip, we planned to reach 18 villages that were in the recent limelight for high human-wildlife conflict and increased encroachment. The main purposes of the outreach were to provide education awareness regarding Human-Lion conflicts, illegal use of trophies, poaching, and habitat degradation.

Most of these areas were new to us and also village leadership changes from time to time and so we were supposed to make prior notice to the District Council through the District Game Officer to link and introduce us (and our outreach mission) with respective Village Executive Officers (VEOs) and village chairmen leading each of 18 villages. The VEOs and chairmen would organize local meeting invitations to inform community members of the meeting and the turnout is always big when it comes to human-wildlife-related issues.

On our side to effectively deliver our message well and competently address all concerns, we always team up with representatives from Tanzania National Parks Authority (TANAPA), Tanzania Wildlife Management Authority (TAWA), the Officer in Commanding Station (OCS), and the District Game Officers and each will have a session to present and answer questions related to his/her presentation. Meetings start at 10:00 AM and extend to noon and thereafter the team prepares for an evening film screening session.



**Figure 2: One to one talk with village members before starting the outreach**

The first outreach event happened in Sitalike village, which is at the doorstep of Katavi National Park and the first day has not always been easy for the team, the inner fear to stand before new faces and tough questions that might make people see that we value wildlife over people among many factors but gratefully our team is always cautious about all of these. We are always early before people gather and we utilize this time to have one-to-one talks with some community members who arrived early. These chats give us a short picture of the village, the situation of human-wildlife conflict, or any other environmental-related challenge. Chats enlighten us about present issues, connect us with community members and also help us in shaping and focusing our

presentation.



**Figure 3: Miss Belinda presenting on mitigation measures on Human-Lion Conflicts in western landscape**

When it's time for a presentation, our loudspeakers are all on and loud. The VEO and his team run a round introduction of village government and village members and we also introduce ourselves. At this time, people gathered in numbers and we organized ourselves and the public meeting sessions starts. The LCMO team member leads the presentation alongside the invited partners. Once all representatives were done with their presentations, we gave the

community the chance to ask questions this is the most exciting moment that also requires a diverse knowledge of wildlife and species-specific conservation values/benefits and issues, wildlife laws, policies, and current conservation updates in



the country and also a few social issues. In some cases, sensitive questions such as the allocation of new lands to community members come up and we always direct them to the district officials as we are not in a position to address such questions,



*Figure 4: A village member raising his concern regarding Human wildlife conflicts*

The increased incidences of human-lion and elephant conflicts, and limited support and locals' involvement to address these issues have made people feel powerless and sometimes see that the existing policies favor wildlife over them. This is one of the toughest concerns that we always encounter and that is why we always emphasize the need for the district game officers and conservation wardens from TAWA and TANAPA in our meetings as they are in

charge of human-wildlife interaction-related issues at the district level. Another tough concern is consolation, according to Tanzania Wildlife law act No.5 of 2009 the government doesn't offer compensation rather than consolation, some complain the amount is small while others on the bureaucracy revolving around the whole process. Of course, for one to be consoled, all the verification as required by the regulation must be done to avoid cheating and approval of false information. The regulation is so strict to ensure that people will not be reluctant and see it as an opportunity for their gain. It always requires a calm mind to listen and address these questions. This is one of my observations and takeaway lessons we got when we are out for outreach.



*Figure 5: Rewarding of promotional material (calendar) to a village member at Tumaini village*

During the outreach, we also share reading materials such as a brochure, LCMO branded calendars, and reusable bags to discourage the use of plastic bags, t-shirts, and caps. We don't just give out this material randomly, we have with us questions based on topics presented or even the films we are airing and the active participants are the ones rewarded.



*Figure 6: A visit at Ugalla River which boarder Ugalla Game Reserve on the opposite side*

In some villages, our meetings end early and occasionally create time to explore the village and visit scenic places. for instance, I visited the Ugalla river which separates the Katavi and Tabora regions, On the other side of the river there is a beautiful Ugalla Game Reserve, exploring new foods or even taking shade and listening to village stories. This is another exciting moment in the field, such experiences rejuvenate us and give us new motivation to do our

best in the next day's events.



*Figure 7: A night film show at Usense Village*

Evenings are also one of the most exciting sessions, before the film screening, we do a short presentation and music, always local music to attract people. People gather, dance, listen and watch wildlife documentaries and also ask questions. Film shows are still a novelty in most areas where we work as only a few people can afford televisions but also no electricity in other areas. This activity attracts a broader audience, for instance, we had about 500 in one night in Usense village which is nearby Msaginia Forest Reserve which borders Katavi National Park. Our day ends around 9:00 pm and we close for another day but one last plea that people also raise is to support park visits so that they may see these animals in films in their natural environments. Luckily, [LCMO](#) through the “[A Day in the Park](#)” program, has been supporting community park trips and so far, over 1000 people have visited Katavi National Park. It took us three weeks to accomplish our Nsimbo outreach despite being a tiring activity, I always find the strength to invest my energy into it as it is very rewarding in terms of the impact we bring to the community and also the chance to explore the western landscape.

Conservation community outreaches connect us with different communities, it also, opens the eyes of so many community members, and rises the will for people to volunteer in wildlife and environmental conservation activities. Continuous involvement of local people in conservation will have a high impact on behavioral and attitude changes in human-wildlife conflicts.



*Figure 8: A village member representative giving the word of thanks on the behalf of the village*