



STRATEGY

2026 - 2030

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	4	OUR STRATEGY	28
INTRODUCTION	6	Mission	28
ACRONYMS/GLOSSARY	8	What Makes OPDP Unique?	28
OPDP'S JOURNEY AND ACHIEVEMENTS	10	Vision	28
African Court Judgement of 2017 & 2022	10	Core Values	29
The formation of an advocacy network for Hunter-Gatherer communities	10	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Why They Matter To OPDP	29
Indigenous-Led Conservation and Climate Action in Mau Forest	11	Overall Problem	30
Establishment of Ogiek Cultural Centre and Ogiek Museum	12	THEORY OF CHANGE	32
Global Partnerships and Influence	12	STRATEGIC PILLARS	34
Movement Building and Collective Advocacy	13	Pillar 1: Land & Natural Resources	34
Strengthened Livelihoods	14	Pillar 2: Human Rights & Good Governance	36
Institutional growth	14	Pillar 3: Environmental Conservation & Climate Justice	38
WHERE WE WORK	16	Pillar 4: Socio-Economic Empowerment	40
UNDERSTANDING OUR CONTEXT	18	Pillar 5: Gender, Youth & Social Inclusion	42
Organizational Strengths	20	Pillar 6: Culture & Language	44
Organizational Challenges	22	Pillar 7: Research & Documentation	46
Organizational Opportunities	24	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	48
Organizational Threats	26		



FOREWORD



For generations, the Ogiek people have been the guardians of the Mau Forest and our other ancestral lands. Our identity, our knowledge, and our very survival are woven into the fabric of these ecosystems. Our history, however, has been marked by a long and arduous struggle for recognition, for the right to our land, and for the preservation of our unique culture against formidable forces.

This document, Ogiek Peoples' Development Program Strategy for 2026-2030, is not merely a plan. It is a testament to our resilience. It is a declaration that we are

not just survivors; we are architects of our own future. It builds upon the historic victories we have achieved, including the landmark decisions by the African Court on Human and Peoples Rights in 2017 and 2022, reinforcing recognition of our rights, and channels that momentum into a concrete path forward.

Over the next five years, OPDP will focus on transforming our rights into tangible outcomes, guided by **our seven strategic pillars**, each with specific objectives that we aim to achieve. These pillars include:

- 1 **Land and Natural Resources,**
- 2 **Human Rights and Good Governance,**
- 3 **Environmental Conservation and Climate Justice,**
- 4 **Socio-economic Empowerment, Gender,**
- 5 **Youth and Social inclusion,**
- 6 **Culture and Language,**
- 7 **Research and Documentation,**

And will shape all our initiatives and decision-making. Across all pillars, OPDP will strengthen internal governance and build strategic partnerships grounded in mutual respect and shared goals.

This strategy is our collective map, drawn from the wisdom of our elders, the energy of our youth, partners, and the entire community. It outlines how we will move from securing our rights to thriving upon them. Our vision is clear: a future where every Ogiek person lives with dignity, where our culture flourishes, where our lands are protected and restored, and where our community is self-reliant and strong.

I urge every community member, partner, and friend of the Ogiek to embrace this strategy. Let us walk this path together, with unity and determination, to build a legacy of prosperity and strength for generations to come.

With hope and resolve,

Daniel Kobei
Ogiek Peoples' Development Program (OPDP)

INTRODUCTION

Ogiek Peoples' Development Program (OPDP) is a Kenyan-based organization, founded in 1999 and registered by the Kenyan Government as a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in 2001. Established by Ogiek elders, opinion leaders, farmers, and professionals, OPDP emerged in response to deep-rooted historical land injustices that have systematically denied the Ogiek people their rights as Kenyan citizens. For generations, the Ogiek people have been custodians of Kenya's forests - protecting land, biodiversity, and culture in the face of persistent exclusion.

OPDP's work is centred on advancing the recognition and protection of Indigenous Peoples' identity, culture, and rights. Its core areas of focus include securing Indigenous land rights, promoting inclusive and participatory development, strengthening community voice and governance, safeguarding the environment, and supporting pathways to sustainable development.

Headquartered in Nakuru town, Nakuru County, OPDP operates nationally and is an active part of the broader Indigenous Peoples' movement in Kenya and across Africa. Through partnerships and solidarity with other Indigenous communities and organizations, OPDP contributes to collective efforts to advance Indigenous rights, justice, and a secure future.

Over the years, OPDP has played a central role in advancing Indigenous land rights, legal recognition, and community representation. However, despite landmark legal victories and growing recognition of Indigenous Peoples' rights, the Ogiek continue to face dispossession, marginalisation, and development imposed without their free, prior, and informed consent.

This Strategic Plan sets out OPDP's priorities for the next five years. Grounded in Ogiek leadership, values, and knowledge, this strategy seeks to consolidate hard-won gains, defend Ogiek land rights, and strengthen community-led governance, livelihoods, and resilience.



ACRONYMS

OPDP	Ogiek Peoples' Development Program
ILC	International Land Coalition
IMPACT	Indigenous Movement for Peace Advancement & Conflict Transformation
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
UNEA	United Nations Environment Assembly
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
COP	The Conference of the Parties
CSW	The Commission on the status of women
UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
ACHPR	The African Court on Human and People's Rights
GOOTOP SOGOT	The Ogiek Council of Elders



OPDP'S JOURNEY AND ACHIEVEMENTS

1 AFRICAN COURT JUDGEMENT OF 2017 & 2022



In 2017, the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights delivered a historic judgment recognising the Ogiek as an Indigenous People and affirming their collective rights to ancestral lands in the Mau Forest. The Court found the Government of Kenya in violation of multiple rights, including land, culture, religion, natural resources, and development. In 2022, the Court issued reparations orders, directing the government to provide remedies, establish a development fund, issue collective land titles, and legally recognise the Ogiek. This ruling established a strong legal foundation for Indigenous land rights in Africa and positioned OPDP as a leading Indigenous rights organization globally.

2 THE FORMATION OF AN ADVOCACY NETWORK FOR HUNTER-GATHERER COMMUNITIES

OPDP engagement in advocating for the Indigenous peoples' rights in Kenya, especially the hunter-gatherer communities across Africa, has led to the formation of a network named Hunter-Gatherer Forum Kenya. This consists of six (6) hunter-gatherer communities in Kenya, namely Ogiek of Mt Elgon, Ogiek of Mau, Yaaku, Waayu, Aweer of Lamu in the coastal region, and Sengwer. With OPDP hosting the network since its formation, its main focus is



to strengthen advocacy efforts among these communities. The network has marked some successes in solidarity actions, including joint submission to the task force on Building Bridges Initiatives, joint fundraising for projects such as the development of bio-cultural protocols, celebrating community events, including cultural days, and information exchange.

3 INDIGENOUS-LED CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE ACTION IN MAU FOREST



OPDP has directly restored over 200 hectares of degraded Mau Forest and mobilised 25 trained community forest scouts to support forest protection and surveillance in Mau Forest Complex. It has grown over 200,000 assorted species of trees across various sites in the

Mau Forest complex, contributing to biodiversity protection and climate resilience. This demonstrates Indigenous stewardship in action, reducing forest destruction, improving ecosystem recovery, and strengthening the Ogiek's role as custodians of their ancestral lands.

4 ESTABLISHMENT OF OGIEK CULTURAL CENTRE AND OGIEK MUSEUM



Linked to the land rights and identity of the Ogiek, the centre was constructed in 2021-2022 and launched on 19th March, 2024. It aims to preserve Ogiek culture and knowledge, as well as serve as a hub for training and supporting community empowerment on human rights and livelihood empowerment programs. The centre houses the first-ever Ogiek museum and collections of the Ogiek community. It has a herbarium where indigenous herbal medicines are grown, an Ogiek village with beautifully crafted Ogiek traditional huts, and a recording studio that will act as a space for passing down traditional knowledge through the recording of songs and stories. There is also a library for Ogiek and other Indigenous Peoples to preserve their publications and books.

5 GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS AND INFLUENCE

OPDP has joined the International Land Coalition (ILC), strengthening its global engagement on land rights, tenure security, and Indigenous advocacy. For its leadership in the litigation for the restoration of Ogiek land rights in Kenya, OPDP received the 2018 International Land Coalition (ILC) Good Practices Award.



6 MOVEMENT BUILDING AND COLLECTIVE ADVOCACY



OPDP convened a landmark national workshop bringing together hunter-gatherer communities from across Kenya - including the Ogiek of Mau and Mt. Elgon, Yiaku, Sengwer, Waayu, and Aweer. This led to the formation of HUGAFO-K (Hunter-Gatherers Forum Kenya), a unified advocacy platform to strengthen collective voice, solidarity, and action. OPDP supported the formation and registration of Gotoop Sogoot Council, created to offer leadership in the community and support in engaging the government on the implementation of the African Court judgment. OPDP also supported the formation of Tirap Youth Council, a youth-led organization to empower and enable Ogiek youths, through mentorship and training, to advocate for their rights.

7 STRENGTHENED LIVELIHOODS



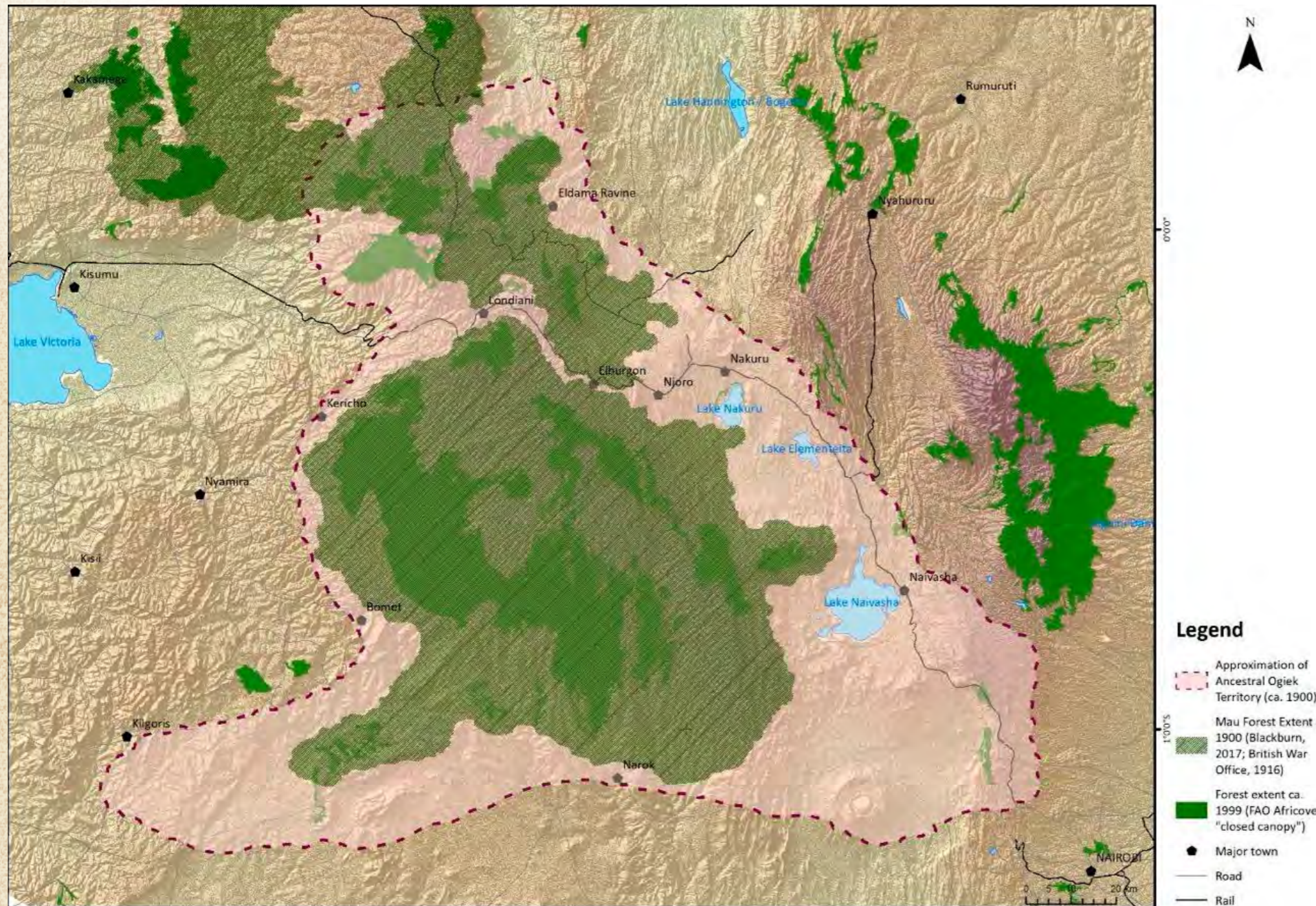
More than 20 organized self-help groups received support to strengthen livelihoods through activities such as beekeeping, dairy farming, sheep rearing, herbal enterprises, and skills development. These initiatives have helped participating households diversify income sources, improve financial stability, and reduce vulnerability to economic shocks. Increased participation of women and youth in these groups has also contributed to greater inclusion in local economic decision-making. In partnership with Friends of Lake Turkana (FoLT) and IMPACT, OPDP advanced a human-rights-based approach to renewable energy, grounded in Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). Over 50 households gained access to solar home systems, and a biogas plant was installed at the Ogiek Cultural Centre. These interventions improved household energy access, reduced reliance on unsustainable fuels, and strengthened community participation in energy governance.

8 INSTITUTIONAL GROWTH

OPDP has continued to strengthen its internal systems, staffing, and governance structures. Improvements in financial management, coordination, and program oversight have enhanced the organization's ability to manage grants responsibly and respond to community priorities. This steady institutional growth supports the long-term sustainability of its legal, environmental, cultural, and livelihood programs.



WHERE WE WORK



An Approximation of Mau Ogiek Territory ca. 1900. (OPDP with A. Versteegen, 2020. Source: Living Ogiek leaders recalling information from their elders.)

OPDP operates primarily within the Mau Forest Complex, the largest indigenous montane forest ecosystem in Kenya, nestled in the Rift Valley highlands. This vital landscape serves as one of the country's most important water towers, feeding major river systems and lakes across Kenya and into Tanzania. Headquartered in Nakuru, OPDP works across six counties within the Mau region; Nakuru County, Narok County, Kericho County, Baringo County, Nandi County, and Uasin Gishu County, while also engaging other Indigenous communities across Kenya and Africa through the Hunter-Gatherer Forum-Kenya.

While the Mau Forest remains OPDP's core operational area, the organization also engages at county, national, regional, and international levels to advance policy advocacy, strengthen coordination and promote Indigenous land rights and environmental governance.

UNDERSTANDING OUR CONTEXT

This situational analysis seeks to provide a clear and balanced understanding of the context in which the Ogiek People's Development Program (OPDP) operates, including its internal capacities, constraints, and the broader external environment shaping its work.



ORGANIZATIONAL STRENGTHS

1. Cross-functional Collaborative Team

OPDP is supported by a cross-functional collaborative team with experience across legal advocacy, conservation, research, communications, finance and community engagement. Staff capacity has gradually been strengthened through targeted recruitment and access to local and international training opportunities.

2. Governance, Accountability & Compliance

Robust governance frameworks and organizational policies guide OPDP's operations, while regularly audited financial accounts and filing of annual returns to the Public Benefit Authority demonstrate strong accountability. Accreditation and formal recognition by regional and international bodies - including the African Commission, UNEA, IUCN, ECOSOC among others, enhance institutional credibility and enable effective engagement in regional and global policy and advocacy spaces.

3. Infrastructure & Institutional Systems

Core physical infrastructure such as the OPDP office, Cultural Centre housing the Ogiek Museum, library, internet hub, herbarium, an agroecology site and the cultural village, plus organizational internal controls are in place to support efficient operations and consistent program delivery. Financial management, administrative and coordination systems provide a stable institutional base to manage funding responsibly and scale activities as opportunities arise.

4. Partnerships, Networks & Strategic Positioning

OPDP maintains strong partnerships and is actively embedded in strategic networks at local, national, and international levels, including HUGAFO-K. These relationships enhance visibility, learning, solidarity, and influence, and have been effectively leveraged for advocacy, strategic litigation, and resource mobilisation. OPDP is recognised as a trusted partner and convener within Indigenous rights and conservation spaces.

5. Community Trust & Indigenous Identity

Deep community trust underpins OPDP's work. Strong relationships with grassroots structures such as the Ogiek Council of Elders, Ogiek Women groups, and Ogiek youth movements reinforce OPDP accountability and trust. It is unique, as an Indigenous Peoples' organization, bringing lived experience, cultural authority, and authenticity to its advocacy.

6. Community Engagement, Culture & Identity

OPDP benefits from strong community engagement and ownership of its work. Annual cultural events provide important platforms for visibility, unity, and cultural revitalisation. Opportunities to further strengthen the preservation of Ogiek culture, language, and traditions include dances, cultural practices, and knowledge transmission.

7. Organizational Capacity & Leadership

OPDP benefits from strong leadership that provides stability and strategic direction. A pool of young, skilled, and committed staff offers significant potential to carry forward the organization's vision. Current infrastructure supports existing operations, and there are clear opportunities to strengthen internal systems further, build on existing capacities, and responsibly scale impact over time.





ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES

1. Inadequate Assets, Equipment plus Infrastructural needs

OPDP operates across a vast and often rugged landscape, where communities are geographically dispersed, and infrastructure is limited. This makes mobility both costly and logistically challenging. With the growth in staff numbers, there is an increasing need for an additional dedicated vehicle to facilitate timely field engagement, monitoring, and community follow-up activities. Additionally, OPDP does not yet own land or a permanent office space, resulting in continued expenditure on rent and limiting long-term institutional stability. The lack of other operational equipment further affects efficiency and service delivery. Strengthening core infrastructure is therefore critical to enhancing outreach, coordination, and overall sustainability.

2. Human Resource Capacity Gap

While OPDP has committed and professionally trained staff, many are aligned to specific disciplines, which creates gaps when addressing cross-cutting activities such as monitoring and evaluation (M&E), research, advocacy, policy engagement, and knowledge management. This diversity of work requires broader technical competencies and adaptive skill sets. Emerging organizational needs include areas such as data analysis, impact measurement, resource mobilisation, and knowledge management. Targeted capacity building and strategic recruitment remain a key institutional priority.

3. Changing Donor Landscape and Funding Uncertainty

The donor environment is increasingly competitive, with a growing number of organisations vying for limited funding opportunities. Funding priorities have shifted toward short-term, results-driven models. Many donors prioritise thematic trends that may not always align fully with Indigenous-led, long-term community processes. This combination of intense competition and changing funding frameworks creates uncertainty and limits flexibility for core institutional support. For community-rooted organizations like OPDP, securing predictable, adequate, and unrestricted funding remains a significant challenge.

4. Inadequate Financial Resources to meet Community Expectations

Available financial resources are often insufficient to meet the scale of community needs and expectations. As a grassroots organization, OPDP is closely embedded within the Ogiek community, and there is a strong preference for immediate, tangible interventions such as land rights, conservation, livelihood support, etc. However, limited funding forces prioritisation and may create tension between strategic programmatic planning and urgent community demands. Balancing sustainability, accountability, and community expectations requires careful communication and resource mobilisation.

5. Insufficient Research, Documentation, and Knowledge Management

Substantial traditional knowledge, cultural heritage, and programmatic experience remain under-documented within the Ogiek community. While OPDP has been able to do some documentation and publication, this has not kept pace with the breadth of work being undertaken. There is a need to strengthen research capacity and invest in structured documentation, which is essential for safeguarding Indigenous knowledge and amplifying community voices at national and international levels.





ORGANIZATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

1. Legal, Policy & Institutional Frameworks

OPDP operates within a strong and increasingly supportive legal and policy environment for Indigenous Peoples' rights at national, regional, and international levels. Favourable legal precedents, including the Ogiek judgment, continue to create space for advocacy, implementation, and accountability. OPDP's accreditation and observer status with key institutions such as UNEA and the ACHPR further enable meaningful engagement in formal decision-making spaces and strengthen its influence.

2. Partnerships & Collaboration at the county, national, and grassroots level

OPDP maintains strong collaborations with both the county and national levels of government in Kenya. It has partnered with Nakuru and Narok counties on policy initiatives related to legal matters and agroecology. At the national level, OPDP works closely with constitutional bodies such as the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, the National Gender and Equality Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman, the National Lands Commission, and the Department of Justice, among others. These collaborations enhance empowerment and improve access to justice for the Ogiek community. Positive relationships with Councils of Elders across six counties further strengthen OPDP's legitimacy, coordination, and community anchoring, while supportive county governments provide an enabling operational environment.

3. Partnerships & Engagement regionally & internationally

OPDP is a key player at the regional and international advocacy and policy platforms, including Conference of the Parties (COP) on climate, COP on biological diversity, Land Conferences, ACHPR sessions, Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), UNPFII, and other global forums. These spaces offer opportunities to amplify community voices, influence policy outcomes, and strengthen accountability. International engagement also creates avenues for improved documentation, research dissemination, and evidence-based advocacy.

4. Media Advocacy

OPDP's strong relationships with radio stations, television networks, journalists, bloggers, and international media offer valuable channels to increase visibility and shape public discourse. Expanding use of digital and social media platforms can enhance awareness, mobilisation, and public engagement.

5. The Ogiek Cultural Centre

OPDP can leverage the Ogiek Cultural Centre to explore income-generating initiatives such as agroecology and cultural tourism. The library supports documentation and research; the museum supports preservation of cultural heritage; the herbarium enhances knowledge transfer for the community, and eco-tourism supports conservation.





ORGANIZATIONAL THREATS

1. Shifting Political Landscapes

Changes in government leadership and shifting political priorities pose risks to policy continuity and implementation. Limited political goodwill toward Indigenous Peoples' rights, coupled with potential policy interference, can undermine advocacy gains. Periods following elections present heightened risks where land rights defenders face threats and intimidation as land is politicized, as well as, in some instances, heightened land dispossessions and renewed threats of community evictions.

2. Changing Market Dynamics and Fiscal Policies

Economic inflation in the country presents ongoing risks to OPDP's work. Tax fluctuations, changes to tax exemption policies, and trade-related frameworks may affect operational costs and program sustainability. Fluctuations in the US dollar and other foreign currencies pose risks to budgeting, financial planning, and grant management, particularly given OPDP's reliance on international funding sources.

3. Non-implementation of the African Court Ogiek judgment

Despite landmark legal victories, including the Ogiek judgment, non-implementation or prolonged delays in enforcement remain a significant threat. Slow or inconsistent implementation undermines community confidence, prolongs insecurity over land tenure, and weakens trust in legal and governance systems.

4. Environmental & Climate-Related policies

Conservation and climate change have both led to human rights violations in Mau Forest in the form of evictions and land tenure insecurities. Carbon credit-related conservation projects have caused evictions of Ogiek, disregarding the Ogiek judgements delivered by the African court, which granted Ogiek ownership of Mau.

5. Cultural & Social Pressures

OPDP operates within a broader socio-cultural context where Indigenous identity faces ongoing pressure from dominant communities. There is a continual risk of cultural assimilation affecting Ogiek identity, language, and cohesion. Safeguarding Indigenous culture remains a critical challenge and requires intentional integration across programming and advocacy work.

6. Funding Cuts and Global Policy Change

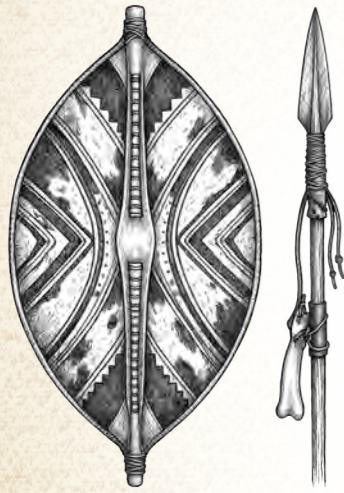
The organization faces uncertainty related to sustainability planning amid a changing donor landscape. Increased competition for limited funding, shifts in foreign aid policies, and geopolitical dynamics - such as reductions or withdrawals of funding by major donors, including the US government - pose significant risks to long-term financial stability.

7. Security Risks (Physical & Digital)

Staff, community members, and partners face both physical and online security threats linked to advocacy work, land rights defence, and public visibility. These risks require ongoing attention, including risk mitigation and digital security practices. Politically driven changes to cyber laws in Kenya, such as the Computer Misuse and Cybercrimes Act 2025, risk criminalising the work of human rights defenders while disregarding their legitimate advocacy efforts. Similarly, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has a growing influence on indigenous languages and cultures, which poses a risk to the authenticity of community knowledge.



OUR STRATEGY

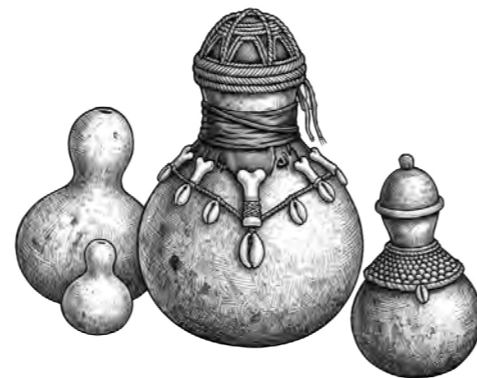


VISION

Empowered Indigenous Peoples with secure land and thriving cultural heritage.

MISSION

OPDP exists to empower, promote, and protect land rights, human rights, environmental rights, and cultural heritage of the Ogiek community and other indigenous communities.



WHAT MAKES OPDP UNIQUE?

OPDP is a pioneering indigenous-led organization dedicated to advancing the rights, culture, and development of the Ogiek community. Combining legal advocacy, community-led conservation, and cultural preservation, OPDP empowers the Ogiek people to protect their land, heritage, and future. The organization has played a key role in landmark land rights litigation, facilitates annual cultural events, and manages the first-ever Ogiek Cultural Centre and Museum - a unique hub for heritage, learning, and community cohesion at the edge of the Mau Forest.

Through research and programs led by the community, OPDP safeguards Indigenous knowledge and intellectual property while strengthening the community's capacity to lead its own development. By integrating culture, conservation, and advocacy, OPDP ensures the Ogiek community can claim their rights, celebrate their identity, and shape a sustainable and robust future. OPDP is also unique in the implementation of programs reaching diverse groups in the community, i.e., women, youth, people with disabilities, the elderly, and children.

CORE VALUES

The context of bringing social change in addressing the human rights of the Indigenous Peoples rests on the following core values: Quality, Integrity, Inclusivity, Accountability, Respect, and Diversity.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs): WHY THEY MATTER TO OPDP

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are deeply aligned with the mission, values, and lived realities of the Ogiek community, and therefore central to our 2026–2030 Strategy. For OPDP, the SDGs are not abstract global ambitions but practical and moral commitments that reflect the community's long-standing struggle for land rights, environmental stewardship, cultural survival, gender equality, youth empowerment, and accountable governance. They provide a globally recognised framework through which OPDP advances Indigenous self-determination while ensuring that the Ogiek are not left behind in national and international development processes.

At the heart of OPDP's work is the defence and restoration of community land rights, exemplified by the historic judgements of 2017 & 2022 by the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, which affirmed the Ogiek's rights over their ancestral lands. This milestone, alongside OPDP's environment conservation, gender-related programs, renewable energy initiatives and community-led research, collectively advances: SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities), SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions). Through these interconnected efforts, OPDP demonstrates that securing Indigenous land tenure reduces poverty, strengthens institutions, protects biodiversity, promotes food sovereignty, advances inclusive leadership, and safeguards holistic community well-being.

Strategically, integrating the SDGs into the 2026–2030 framework strengthens OPDP's policy influence, partnerships, resource mobilisation, and impact measurement. For OPDP, sustainable development is not an imported agenda; it is a lived practice embedded for generations in Ogiek knowledge systems. When Indigenous rights are secured, forests thrive, cultures endure and development becomes both just and sustainable.

OVERALL PROBLEM

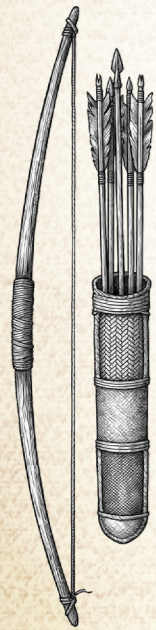
The Ogiek community continues to face persistent land tenure insecurity, cultural erosion, marginalisation, and the negative effects of both climate change and conservation.

These injustices have resulted in the loss of cultural identity, erosion of traditional knowledge, mental health effects, and weakening of social cohesion. At the same time, the Ogiek have continued to experience limited access to education, livelihood opportunities and participation in national development processes. Environmental degradation and exclusion from forest governance further threaten their sustainability and well-being.

OPDP seeks to address these interconnected challenges by advocating for land justice, cultural protection, human rights, inclusive development, and environmental stewardship for the Ogiek and other Indigenous Peoples globally. In summary, OPDP's work confronts systemic exclusion, violation of land and cultural rights, socio-economic inequities, and threats to traditional knowledge and environmental stewardship, to empower the Ogiek and other Indigenous communities to secure justice, preserve their heritage, and achieve sustainable development.



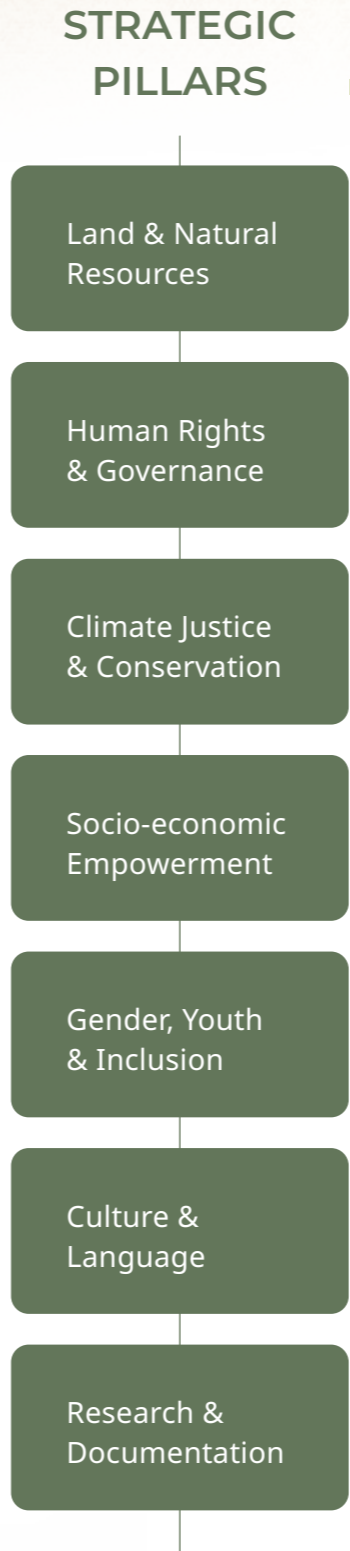
THEORY OF CHANGE



OPDP's theory of change is grounded in the belief that secure land rights, recognised identity, and inclusive governance are the foundations of Indigenous self-determination.



By securing Ogiek collective land tenure and strengthening community-led governance, OPDP supports Ogiek people to assert their human rights, steward forests sustainably, and build resilient livelihoods. This change is reinforced by empowering women and youth as well as others, revitalising culture and language, and generating community-driven evidence to influence policy and accountability. Together, these strategies enable Ogiek communities to move from dispossession to lasting stewardship, dignity, and self-determined development.



- STRATEGIES**
- Capacity building
 - Documentation
 - Advocacy
 - Partnerships & collaboration



STRATEGIC PILLARS

PILLAR 1: LAND & NATURAL RESOURCES

Land is the foundation of Ogiek identity, survival, and self-determination. It sustains livelihoods, anchors cultural heritage, and underpins community governance. Yet despite binding judgments - including the landmark judgement of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights - the Ogiek continue to face delays in implementation, weak enforcement, and ongoing threats to their ancestral territories.

The goal arising from this pillar focuses on closing the gap between legal recognition and practical reality. OPDP will drive the operationalisation of court judgements through land adjudication, restitution, legislative alignment, and accountable governance systems at national and county levels. Legal victories must result in secure land tenure, recognised boundaries, and functioning community land institutions.

At the same time, OPDP will strengthen community capacity to govern and defend ancestral lands. This includes participatory mapping, monitoring systems, legal literacy, and protection mechanisms for land and environmental rights defenders. Women and youth will play a central role in land governance structures to ensure inclusive and representative decision-making.

Through coordinated legal action, policy reform, and community stewardship, OPDP will secure formal recognition of Ogiek land rights and establish durable systems to protect their lands and natural resources for generations to come.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- African Court judgments are operationalised through national and county-level land processes
- Ogiek community land is formally recognised, mapped, and governed
- Communities have the legal knowledge and systems to defend their land
- Women and youth meaningfully participate in land governance structures

OBJECTIVES

1. To accelerate Implementation of the African Court judgments on the Ogiek.
2. To Strengthen Community Governance.
3. To Promote Sustainable Livelihoods and Ecological Stewardship.
4. To Advance Strategic Advocacy and Partnerships.
5. To Enhance Participatory Mapping and Monitoring of the land.

KEY ACTIONS

1 Accelerate Legal Implementation: Accelerate legal implementation by operationalising the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights ruling through national legislation, land adjudication, and restitution mechanisms, while ensuring accountability via community-led legal audits and public reporting, and advancing a comprehensive land rights advocacy strategy to secure its full and effective implementation.

2 Strengthen Community Governance: Strengthen community governance by formalising inclusive land governance structures that integrate traditional leadership, youth, and women, while developing clear community protocols for land use, conservation, and dispute resolution, and building the capacity of human rights defenders and local leaders in Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), paralegal skills, and land rights literacy to ensure informed, accountable, and rights-based decision-making.

3 Promote sustainable livelihoods and ecological stewardship: Focus on scaling up agroecology and Indigenous food systems to restore degraded lands and strengthen climate resilience, facilitating community-led reforestation and biodiversity conservation grounded in Ogiek ecological knowledge, and engaging in carbon project negotiations with strong safeguards to ensure equitable benefit-sharing and protect cultural integrity.

4 Advance strategic advocacy and partnerships: Work on building strong coalitions with national and international Indigenous networks, civil society, and donors, while launching targeted advocacy campaigns to influence policy reforms and conservation practices, and organizing community forums and cultural events that amplify Ogiek voices and narratives.

5 Enhance participatory mapping and land monitoring: Deploy GIS mapping and dashboard tools to systematically map and track land, forest, and tenure security, while promoting real-time data collection and reporting to strengthen evidence-based advocacy for land rights.



PILLAR 2: HUMAN RIGHTS & GOOD GOVERNANCE

Human rights are central to addressing the systemic challenges faced by Indigenous communities in Kenya. Despite constitutional guarantees, the Ogiek continue to struggle with a lack of official recognition, exclusion from meaningful participation in public affairs, and persistent discrimination in resource allocation and political representation. These barriers undermine their identity, dignity, and inclusion in national development.

Equally critical are the rights to culture, language, land, and natural resources. While the Constitution provides for their protection and court judgments have affirmed Ogiek land rights, implementation remains slow and inconsistent. Strengthening legal and policy frameworks is therefore essential. By anchoring human rights as a strategic pillar, OPDP works to secure recognition, equality, and justice for the Ogiek, ensuring their voices, heritage, and land rights shape a more inclusive and sustainable future.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Ogiek are recognised and visible as rights-holders at national and international levels
- Violations are documented, challenged, and reduced
- Women, youth, PWDs, and elders participate meaningfully in public spaces
- Cultural identity, language, and heritage are safeguarded and promoted

OBJECTIVES

1. Promote and protect indigenous peoples' rights through litigation, awareness, and access to justice
2. Safeguard identity and culture by pursuing recognition and preserving language and traditions
3. Advance inclusion by upholding the rights of women, youth, PWDs, children, and the elderly, while strengthening good governance
4. Enhance accountability and advocacy by monitoring government agencies and raising indigenous peoples' visibility nationally and internationally
5. Build strong partnerships with like-minded organizations to create synergy and impact

KEY ACTIONS

- 1 **Advocacy and Visibility:** Undertake local and international advocacy, participate in media programs, and contribute to public participation forums and shadow reports to amplify indigenous voices.
- 2 **Monitoring and Reporting:** Monitor, document, and report physical and digital human rights violations while safeguarding and strengthening the capacity of human rights defenders, paralegals, and human rights monitors.
- 3 **Awareness and Civic Education:** Conduct sensitisation forums on indigenous rights, civic education on legal frameworks such as GBV and FGM, and awareness on Article 56 of the Constitution.
- 4 **Capacity Building:** Train women, youth, and persons with disabilities to diversify leadership, participation, and knowledge of rights.
- 5 **Partnerships and Networks:** Build alliances with like-minded organizations and institutions to amplify advocacy and create synergies for greater impact.



PILLAR 3: ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION & CLIMATE JUSTICE

OPDP seeks to strengthen community-led environmental conservation and climate justice initiatives. This pillar integrates indigenous knowledge with modern approaches to ecosystem restoration, agroforestry, and sustainable land management. It also promotes awareness, capacity building, and advocacy to ensure that Indigenous Peoples' rights and contributions are recognised in climate and environmental governance at local, national, and international levels.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Improved forest cover and ecosystem health in Ogiek territories
- Indigenous ecological knowledge is documented and applied
- Ogiek voices recognised in national and global climate platforms
- Communities actively leading conservation and monitoring efforts

OBJECTIVES

1. To promote landscape restoration, monitoring, and conservation of the Mau Forest and other Ogiek ancestral lands through agroforestry, indigenous tree planting, sustainable land use, and eco-tourism for conservation.
2. Strengthen community capacity, participation in climate justice processes, and knowledge systems for climate adaptation, mitigation, and environmental protection for inclusive policies and climate justice frameworks that recognise Indigenous Peoples' rights and contributions to environmental stewardship.
3. Preserve and integrate Ogiek indigenous ecological knowledge (herbal plants, forest species, cultural conservation practices) through documentation and promotion of the herbarium.

KEY ACTIONS

Natural forest restoration & Agroforestry support

- 1 **Support indigenous forest restoration** through indigenous tree planting and protection projects in degraded parts of Mau Forest.
- 2 **Establishment of community agroforestry demonstration plots** for food security, land and soil restoration, and climate resilience.
- 3 **Expand the Ogiek herbarium**, including trees used in some Ogiek cultural practices as a way of preserving biodiversity and traditional medicinal knowledge.
- 4 **Strengthen community-led forest monitoring and reporting** using community forest scouts and environmental defenders, incorporating digital forest and landscape monitoring systems.
- 5 **Promote eco-tourism activities** within the Mau Forest for conservation and forest ecosystem learning.
- 6 **Capacity building:**
 - Train indigenous communities and local communities, especially women and youth, on climate-friendly agricultural practices, agroforestry, and landscape restoration
 - Undertake awareness creation campaigns on climate change, forest laws and policies
 - Promote Ogiek participation in climate change dialogues and policy engagement
 - Support exchange-learning programs with other Indigenous communities on forest conservation and landscape restoration
- 7 **Conduct advocacy and strategic engagement** with government and national, regional, and international climate platforms (such as Conference of the Parties, United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, and Convention on Biological Diversity) to promote climate justice, secure recognition of Indigenous Peoples' role in climate adaptation and mitigation, and to document and disseminate Ogiek ecological knowledge for policy influence.



PILLAR 4: SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

This pillar aims to enhance the socio-economic well-being of Ogiek communities by promoting diversified, climate-resilient, and culturally grounded livelihood systems that increase household income, strengthen food security, empower women and youth, and reduce reliance on unsustainable forest extraction. It recognises that economic resilience and environmental stewardship must go hand in hand, particularly within the fragile ecosystem of the Mau Forest.

This pillar prioritises the revitalisation of traditional knowledge systems, such as sustainable beekeeping, indigenous seed preservation, herbal medicine, and forest-friendly agroforestry while integrating appropriate innovations that align with community values and rights.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Increased household income and food security
- Expanded access to clean energy and basic services
- Ogiek youth, accessing education and skills opportunities such as Tech
- Community development aligned with environmental sustainability

OBJECTIVES

1. To expand access to renewable energy and clean cooking technologies in Ogiek communities.
2. To promote agroecology, food security, and nature-positive livelihoods (e.g., beekeeping, honey, and herbal products).
3. To increase access to education through scholarships, mentorship, and cultural integration in schools.
4. To improve community wellbeing through health access and traditional medicine research.
5. To generate evidence and policy insights on sustainable Indigenous livelihoods.

KEY ACTIONS

- 1** Establish a **community-based clean energy program** that provides subsidized clean cookstoves and household solar systems while training local youth for installation and maintenance.
- 2** Develop **integrated agroecology and beekeeping demonstration hubs** that combine training, production, and market linkages for honey and indigenous products.
- 3** Create a **structured Ogiek scholarship and mentorship program** that supports vulnerable students while integrating cultural knowledge into learning pathways.
- 4** Improve **community wellbeing through health support access and traditional medicine**. Implement a community health and traditional knowledge initiative that combines mobile health outreach with documentation and protection of indigenous medicinal practices.
- 5** Establish a **participatory research and policy advocacy platform** that documents Ogiek livelihood models and translates findings into policy engagement at the county and national levels.



PILLAR 5: GENDER, YOUTH & SOCIAL INCLUSION

This pillar aims to mainstream social inclusion (women, youth, the elderly, and people with disabilities) in our programmatic work, reduce gender disparities, eliminate gender-based violence (GBV), increase women’s participation in development through livelihood programs, and promote more inclusive participation and exercise of power in decision-making arenas. This involves broadening access to resources, skills, and opportunities in economic, social, and political spheres to achieve overall gender equality and social well-being.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Women and youth actively participating in governance and leadership
- Increased economic independence among women
- Reduced tolerance for gender-based violence
- Youth equipped as advocates, entrepreneurs, and climate leaders

OBJECTIVES

1. To advocate for the inclusion of indigenous women and youth in decision-making spaces.
2. To enhance the capacity of indigenous women, youth, men, the elderly, and people with disabilities to participate in policy dialogues and development programs.
3. To improve the economic, political, cultural, and social status of indigenous women, men, PWDs, the elderly, and youths.

KEY ACTIONS

- 1 **Women & Youth Leadership Participation:** Conduct quarterly civic education and leadership empowerment sessions for women and youth to increase their ability to participate in decision-making forums at the community, county, and national levels.
- 2 **Economic Empowerment:** Support and train organized women and youth groups in income-generating initiatives through business skills, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship coaching to enhance sustainability and economic independence.
- 3 **Economic Rights Awareness & Access:** Conduct awareness campaigns and targeted sessions to sensitise women and youth on economic rights and opportunities, plus how to access public and private economic processes.
- 4 **Human Rights Education & Legal Empowerment:** Train community members on human rights and legal frameworks and provide GBV legal advice and referral services to victims.
- 5 **Monitoring & Reporting Human Rights Violations:** Establish a community-based monitoring system to document and report discrimination, GBV, and other human rights violations.
- 6 **Advocacy for Gender Laws & GBV Prevention:** Advocate for the implementation of gender-progressive laws and conduct awareness campaigns against GBV in collaboration with government offices, civil society, and other stakeholders.
- 7 **Strengthen Partnerships & Networks:** Build strategic partnerships with gender-focused organizations and networks to improve program effectiveness and coordination.



PILLAR 6: CULTURE & LANGUAGE

This pillar is grounded in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Kenyan Constitution (2010), which protect Indigenous peoples' rights to preserve and practice their culture and language without discrimination or forced assimilation.

The Ogiek Cultural Centre is a central platform for this work. It hosts the first-ever Ogiek Museum, a recording studio for preserving oral histories and songs, a library, and an ICT hub with Wi-Fi and a herbarium for conserving traditional medicinal plants and ecological knowledge. The centre also features a model Ogiek village, reflecting traditional housing and lifestyle, and is adjacent to a section of the Mau Forest, highlighting the deep connection between culture and land. It serves as a learning hub for research, agroecology, and renewable energy, while providing a community space for dialogue, cohesion, and intergenerational knowledge sharing.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Increased use and learning of the Ogiek language
- Cultural knowledge is documented and accessible
- Strong intergenerational knowledge transfer
- Culture integrated into conservation, education, and advocacy

OBJECTIVES

1. Preserve and revitalise the Ogiek Language through Oral Traditions, tangible and intangible artifacts.
2. Promote intergenerational knowledge transfer and cultural education through mentorship and storytelling, etc.
3. Digitize and document Ogiek Cultural Heritage.
4. To organise cultural events annually.
5. To promote the Ogiek identity.

KEY ACTIONS

- 1 **Operationalise the Ogiek Cultural Centre as a learning hub** by hosting at least 12 structured learning sessions annually for Ogiek youth, researchers, and visitors, using the museum, herbal garden, and traditional village to deliver hands-on education on Ogiek history, traditions, and ecological knowledge.
- 2 **Conduct at least one annual cultural event.**
- 3 **Establish at least four local and two international exchange learning programs** per year, focused on land rights and livelihood aspects such as agroecology and renewable energy solutions (biogas and solar), targeting Ogiek farmers, youth, and partner institutions.
- 4 **Organize biannual mentorship sessions and annual school-holiday cultural camps** reaching a minimum of 100 Ogiek youth per year, to facilitate intergenerational transfer of Ogiek traditions, values, and skills.
- 5 **Develop and maintain a digital learning platform** and two Wi-Fi-enabled community access points at the Cultural Centre to provide open access to Ogiek cultural content, reports on cultural injustices, court rulings, and digital storytelling resources.
- 6 **Research, compile, and publish one comprehensive Ogiek language dictionary** that documents oral literature, proverbs, and indigenous expressions, and formally integrate it into the Ogiek Library and selected educational institutions.
- 7 **Design and implement a structured eco-cultural tourism program** utilising the Mau Forest, delivering at least six guided cultural hikes annually that combine storytelling, demonstrations of traditional ecological knowledge, and conservation education, benefiting both community livelihoods and forest stewardship.
- 8 **Promote the design and use of the traditional Ogiek dress and ornaments, tools, and artefacts.**



PILLAR 7: RESEARCH & DOCUMENTATION

Research and documentation are foundational to the preservation and promotion of Indigenous peoples' rights, cultures, and development priorities. For the Ogiek community and other Indigenous Peoples in Kenya, the systematic collection, preservation, and dissemination of indigenous knowledge, historical experiences, and contemporary issues is critical for informing policy, advocacy, education, and sustainable development strategies. By building a strong evidence base, OPDP aims to support data-driven engagement with stakeholders at national, regional, and international levels.

This pillar seeks to bridge the existing information gaps by undertaking participatory research initiatives, archiving oral histories, mapping traditional territories, and producing publications that amplify indigenous voices. This pillar also supports OPDP's overall mission by ensuring that interventions are informed by accurate, culturally grounded, and community-owned data, which strengthens advocacy efforts and enhances visibility and legitimacy in development processes.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

- Increased Ogiek and Indigenous peoples-led research publications
- A functional community-owned knowledge repository
- Increased use of evidence in advocacy and litigation from community-led research
- Community members skilled in research and documentation
- Strong research partnerships nationally and internationally

OBJECTIVES

1. Establish an indigenous peoples research protocol.
2. Build a comprehensive archive of Ogiek historical, cultural, and socio-economic knowledge.
3. Support evidence-based advocacy through community-led research.
4. Strengthen community capacity in participatory research, documentation, and knowledge management.

KEY ACTIONS

- 1 Design and implement a community-led research framework, integrating indigenous methodologies and ethical guidelines for data collection and sharing.
- 2 Conduct field-based ethnographic and socio-economic studies, including interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory action research.
- 3 Develop digital platforms and tools for storing, managing, and sharing documented knowledge, including GIS-based mapping systems and a Digital Repository.
- 4 Organize training workshops and mentorship programs for youth and community members on documentation, research ethics, data analysis, and storytelling.
- 5 Host annual research and cultural forums where findings are shared with stakeholders, including policymakers, scholars, and development partners.
- 6 Publish and disseminate research outputs through books, policy briefs, newsletters, academic journals, and social media to reach diverse audiences.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of this Strategic Plan was a collective effort made possible through the invaluable support, partnership, and commitment of many individuals and institutions.

OPDP extends its sincere appreciation to the International Working Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) and UNDP for its financial support that enabled the strategic planning meetings to take place. This support facilitated staff participation, logistics, and a conducive working environment that allowed meaningful engagement, reflection, and collaboration throughout the process.

We are deeply grateful to Maliasili for their outstanding role in organizing and executing the strategic planning workshop. The facilitation was thoughtful, participatory, and impactful, providing staff with a structured space to reflect, refine ideas, and strengthen the strategic direction of the organization. Many of the plan's strongest priorities and strategic pillars emerged directly from these rich and well-guided sessions.

OPDP further recognises its Board of Management for their continued guidance, oversight, and belief in the organization's mission. We thank them for their leadership and for providing strategic direction and approval that strengthen OPDP's institutional accountability.

We also acknowledge the dedication and commitment of our staff, whose teamwork, openness, and cross-departmental collaboration were central to the successful development of this Strategic Plan. Staff members from different departments came together with a shared purpose, contributing their insights, expertise, and experiences to craft a unified and forward-looking roadmap for the organization. Our sincere appreciation also goes to all our partners who have supported OPDP's programs and initiatives over the years. Their sustained collaboration and investment have made it possible to achieve the impacts, milestones, and success stories reflected in this Plan. Each partnership has contributed meaningfully to advancing OPDP's work and mandate.

Finally, we acknowledge and honor the Ogiek community, whose resilience, knowledge, and lived realities remain the foundation and driving force of OPDP's work. This Strategic Plan is ultimately anchored in their aspirations, rights, and wellbeing and we remain committed to advancing their sovereignty.





OGIEK PEOPLES' DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (OPDP)

Biashara Street, Nyamakoroto House, 2nd Floor, Room. 210

P.O. Box 424 - 20115 Egerton, Nakuru, Kenya

Tel: +254 51 2213803 Cell: +254 722 433757

Email: opdp@ogiekpeoples.org / opdp2001@yahoo.com