

MAASAI CULTURAL HERITAGE

COMMUNITY DOCUMENTATION OF
CULTURAL HERITAGE

LAIKIPIA MAASAI COMMUNITY
EXPERIENCE-KENYA

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WHAT IS MAASAI CULTURAL HERITAGE

A community Based Organization (CBO) formed to help community document, preserve and protect the community cultural heritage in its diverse form.

WHAT IS OUR VISION

Maasai Cultural Heritage envisions a world where the indigenous cultures, communities and diversity are recognized respected and protected against commercial exploitation and abuse.

A photograph showing three Maasai women in traditional attire, including red and white patterned shukas and a red and blue striped shuka. They are gathered around a large wooden mortar and pestle, grinding green grass into a fine powder. The scene is outdoors, with green grass visible in the background. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

MISSION

MCH exists to facilitate strengthening, promotion and preservation of Maasai indigenous cultures and heritage in its diverse forms.



OBJECTIVES

- **To assist the Laikipia Maasai in the protection, management, strengthening and promotion of their cultural heritage for their own cultural and economic development**
- **Promote cultural diversity through documenting, recording, and sharing the heritage of the Laikipia Maasai (i.e. Voices of Heritage).**



THREATS FACING THE CULTURE

- **Lack of recognition by policies and national development practices**
- **Lack of formally documentation facts about the culture**
- **Use of culture by third parties for commercial gains without consent and benefit sharing**
- **Disintegration, assimilation and erosion of culture-made people spectators rather than rights owners.**
- **Exploitation of cultural linked resources**
- **Abuse of intellectual knowledge/skills of the community by researchers**
- **Modern society has displayed prejudices against TK. (need for in-depth study on the contribution of TK to the world development)**

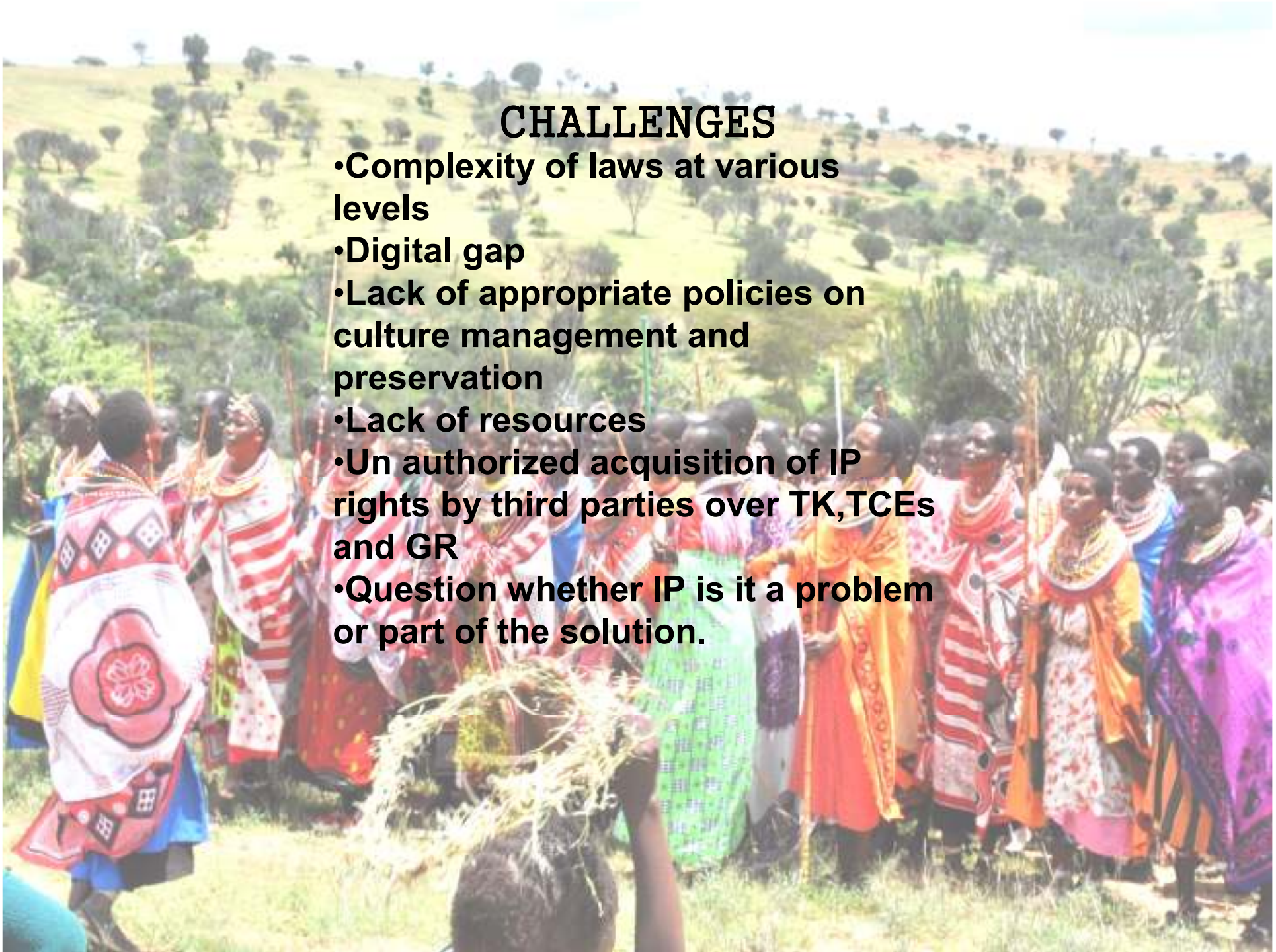
A group of children are gathered in a rural, outdoor setting. One child, wearing a yellow dress, stands on the left, writing on a chalkboard. Several other children, some in red and pink clothing, are sitting on the ground, looking towards the chalkboard. The background shows a dirt path and some trees.

WHY COMMUNITY PROTECT TK.TCEs,GR

- **Valuing TK as part of their cultural identity (reason for its continuity)**
- **Use of TK to sustain social and physical environment (herbal experts from generation to another)**
- **TK maintain good health for both people and livestock(livestock is their livelihood)**
- **TK makes people conserve environment (cultural principal one root per tree)**
- **Enhance and protect TK in the fast growing modern technology.**
- **TK provide pathway to social and economic development.(artistic work and trademark in marketing products).**

CHALLENGES

- Complexity of laws at various levels
- Digital gap
- Lack of appropriate policies on culture management and preservation
- Lack of resources
- Un authorized acquisition of IP rights by third parties over TK, TCEs and GR
- Question whether IP is it a problem or part of the solution.



The image shows two women in traditional Kenyan attire. The woman in the foreground is wearing a vibrant, patterned shuka in shades of yellow, purple, and green, and a multi-colored beaded necklace. She is holding a yellow woven basket. The woman in the background is wearing a white shuka with yellow and black patterns and a beaded necklace. She is holding a colorful beaded cup. The background is slightly blurred, showing an outdoor setting with trees and a building.

PARTNERS IN CULTURE DOCUMENTATION

- ILO- Local Economic Development**
- WIPO- Intellectual property rights
(international law)**
- Kenya copyright office-music,
publications (draft handbook)**



□NMK-Capacity building (archiving skills)

□KIPI-development of marketing marks (trademarks, collective marks)

□AFC(LC)-digitizing and archiving of TCEs, providing backups for our collection

□Duke University (cde)-trainings on documentation



WORKING WITH WIPO

- **Consultative workshop in October 2006**
- **Internship 2007**
- **Accreditation of MCH 2007**
- **Assisted in publishing IP Handbook based on the laikipia Maasai experience**
- **Community capacity building on IP issues**
- **Training program developed**



Cont,

- **Linking the program with other institutions**
- **Advices the government on adopting National legislation to protect TCEs,TK and GR**
- **Assist in research on IP related legal issues**
- **Assist in information sharing,disemination on IP discussions at various level. international, regional and national**
- **Purchased documentation equipments e.g. quality still camera, audio recording machine, laptop and other accessories**

Conclusion

**When an elders dies, it is
like the whole library
burned out.**

Thank you

