

# Lamu Conservation: A Case Study Understanding Community Participation in Lamu Spatial Plan, Kenya

Brenda Lugano, M.S.

Advisors: Renata Serra (chair) and Jamie Kraft

## INTRODUCTION

Lamu Old Town is one of the oldest and best-preserved Swahili settlement in Lamu Archipelago. Located just off the coast of Kenya, it has retained its traditions and ways of life. The discovery of oil off the coast of Pate, a Lamu island, is expected to significantly impact this coastal area, especially in conjunction with associated large scale infrastructure development (as planned in the Lamu Port-Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) project).

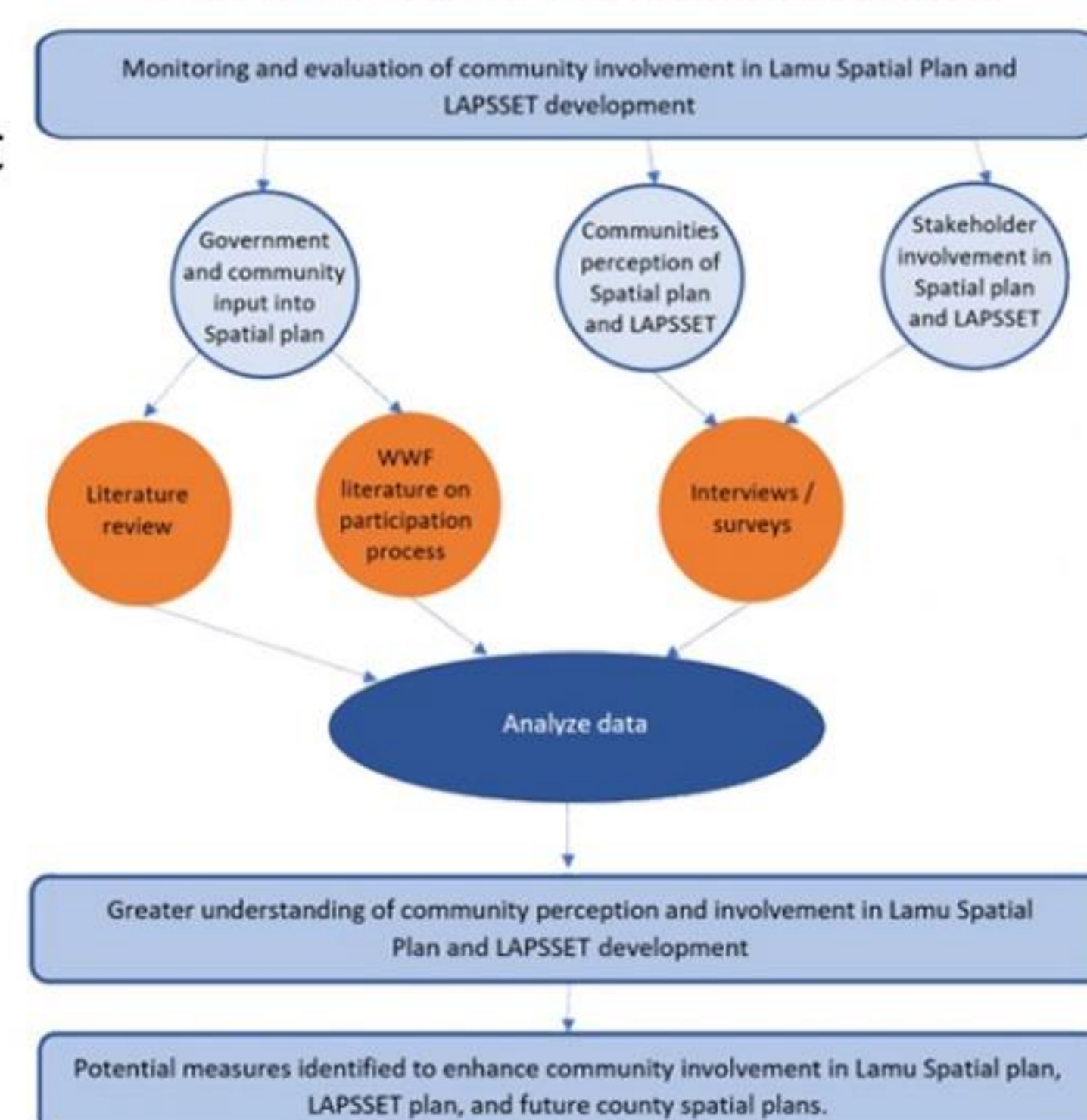


The Lamu Spatial Plan aims to conserve the environmentally sensitive areas within Lamu County. The spatial plan aims to help guide future development, use, and conservation of land and resources in the county for 10 years.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Understanding involvement of community and other stakeholders on developing the Lamu Spatial Plan (LSP).
2. Understanding community perception and involvement of LSP and LAPSSET plan.
3. Understanding other stakeholder/ key informant's involvement in both the LSP and LAPSSET project.

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:



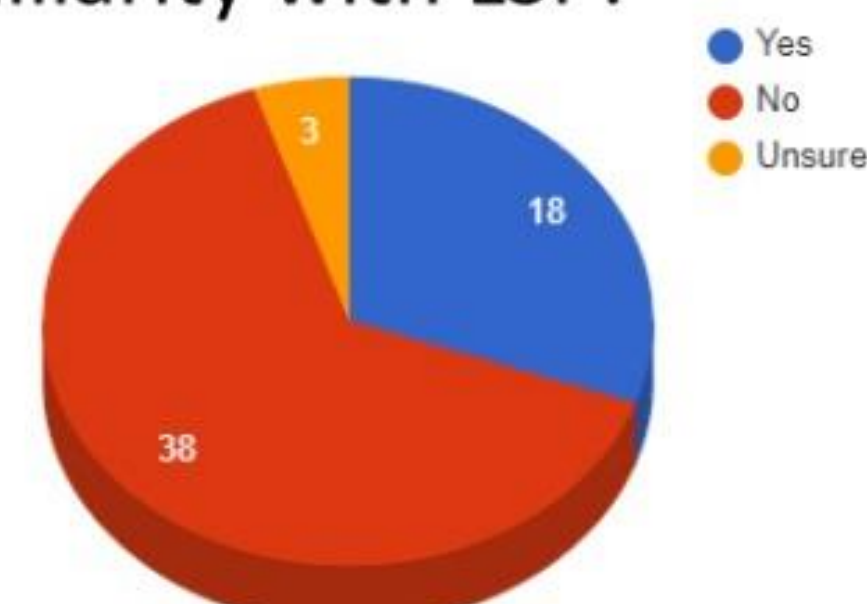
## METHODS

1. Literature Review
2. Survey (60 participants)
3. Informant interviews/ informal meetings during site visit

## RESULTS

1. Many community members had no knowledge or involvement on LSP and LAPSSET but wished that they did.

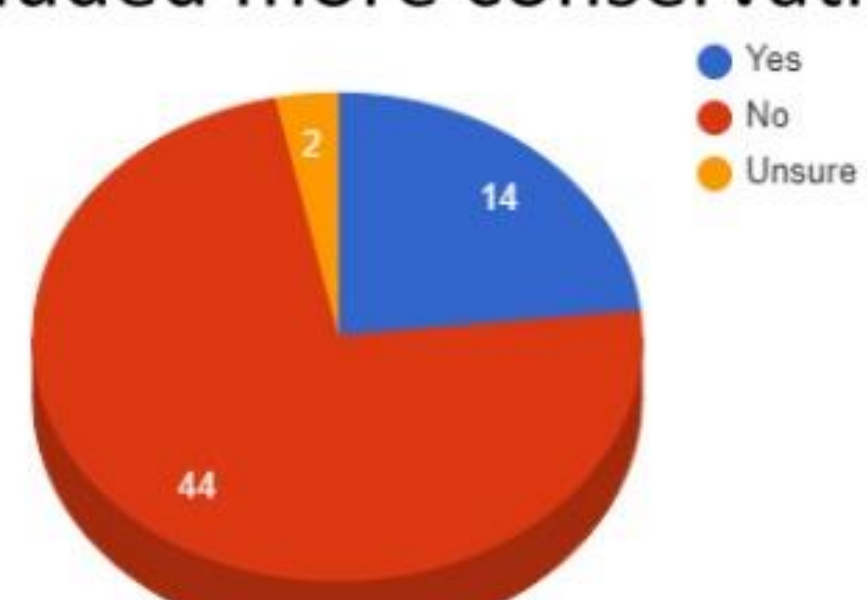
Familiarity with LSP:



"Would have loved to be involved in the decision-making process." (LAPSSET)

2. Lamu Community felt that LAPSSET project posed a threat to the area and way of life.

Residents that wished LAPSSET included more conservation:



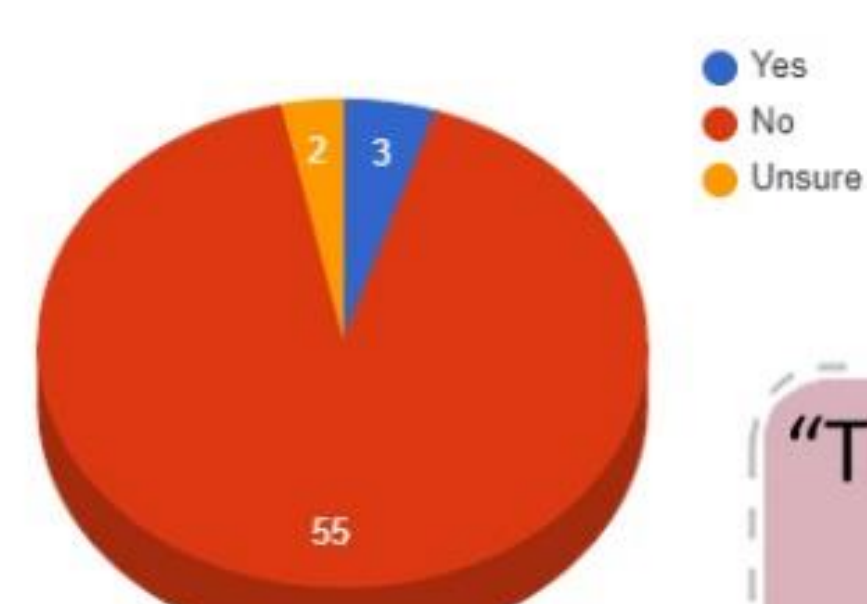
"There needs to be compensation to those whose lands have been taken to pave way for LAPSSET project."

"I know that LAPSSET poses a big threat to Lamu Old Town's UNESCO's heritage title but I see no hope that the title will be able to withstand current developments."



3. Lamu Community felt they were not benefiting from LAPSSET project.

Residents that knew anyone that was participating in LAPSSET work:



"There is an issue of locals not being considered as first priority."

"Residents feel that the LAPSSET port wasn't for them and would not benefit them at all."

## CONCLUSION

Community perceptions and participation are vital in large endeavors such as the LSP and the LAPSSET plan, indeed imperative in the context of Lamu Old Town, which wants to uphold its UNESCO status. The LSP and the LAPSSET plan will not only have major impacts on the conservation of natural resources but also on social and cultural heritage of the region. **The people's voices and involvement are vital to development processes that sustain the natural and cultural heritage that make Kenya unique in eastern Africa and the world.**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

So far, WWF Kenya has done a good job of establishing a process of involving community members in its process. This process merely needs to expand and include more residents as well as disseminate information about the LSP. The LAPSSET authority would benefit from the residents also being aware of what is happening in the region in relation to the project and provide community members with an opportunity to share their concerns.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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