Photo credit: International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW)

tenBoma in Kenya
International Fund for Animal Welfare

Summary

tenBoma is a wildlife security initiative that identifies, anticipates, and counters threats to wildlife by applying predictive methodologies to determine when and where wildlife crime events are likely to occur. tenBoma, meaning ten houses, is inspired by an African community security philosophy that if ten houses look out for each other, the broader community is safer. The initiative builds capacity of both local law enforcement and communities to (1) deny safe haven to wildlife criminals, (2) increase community security, and (3) reveal the organized criminal networks involved in illegal wildlife trade. Data are continually collected in the field, aggregated with existing reports, and analyzed by security experts. This valuable synthesis of information is disseminated to frontline enforcement personnel to address wildlife crime, as well as to local communities to ameliorate the root drivers of wildlife crime.

Learning Questions Addressed:

- What are examples of institutional arrangements, such as dedicated units or embed programs, that improved the capacity of enforcement or prosecution staff?

- What factors are necessary for effective cooperation among national, sub-national, and local authorities, especially for Wildlife Enforcement Networks?

- What are some successful examples of partnerships used to deliver competency-building activities, and what made them work?

Problem

Anti-poaching and trafficking efforts in Africa are implemented in specific locations but remain disparate and disconnected, which significantly impedes overall efforts to counter wildlife crime. The status quo for ranger patrol efforts has been one-dimensional. Rangers conduct patrols that are largely routine in nature and conducted merely to monitor designated patrol areas. This leads to missed opportunities to develop a more comprehensive intelligence picture, which could support more predictive analytic modeling to increase both efficiency in countering poaching activity and improve ranger safety.

Approach

The International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) partners with the Kenya Wildlife Service and other groups to implement tenBoma and develop a systems-based approach to addressing wildlife crime. tenBoma works to collect and aggregate threat data that is both directly and indirectly related to wildlife crime, and synthesize reports from the community level up to the national and global level, creating a vertically integrated pipeline of information which is analyzed by security experts to illuminate the full spectrum of wildlife crime from local trafficking networks to global organized crime.

The proportion of illegally killed elephants has dropped from 42 to 30 percent.

Photo credit: IFAW

To initially implement tenBoma as a pilot in the Tsavo Conservation Area in Kenya, the Kenya Wildlife Service provided IFAW with Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) data collected over a five-year period under the auspices of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). IFAW then compiled and analyzed the data to develop a baseline of spatial and temporal poaching trends and tactics over the five-year period. IFAW presented the analyses to the Kenya Wildlife Service, which enabled the agency to allocate resources in a targeted manner, resulting in more effective enforcement and investigative operations. IFAW also provided the Kenya Wildlife Service, Big Life Foundation, Tsavo Trust, and Southern Rift Association of Land Owners with a mobile collection platform and embedded expert mentors to encourage adoption of tenBoma data collection, reporting, and analysis methodologies. As tenBoma iteratively develops a more accurate common intelligence picture, the initiative can identify the barriers to enforcement response such as providing vehicles to increase operational efficiencies and communications equipment to engage with communities in key areas.

Results

The Kenya Wildlife Service, in cooperation with IFAW, reduced poaching to zero incidents in targeted areas that had been poaching hotspots. The program helped to facilitate an overall reduction in poaching in the Tsavo Conservation Area by 43% since 2015 and by 84% since 2014.

Trends show there are tangible results in the region. According to a 2017 MIKE report released by CITES, the proportion of illegally killed elephants (to total elephant deaths) in East Africa has dropped from 42% to 30%. The report found that the reduction of poaching in Tsavo is so significant that it has directly contributed to a regional reduction in the proportion of illegally killed elephants.

Additionally, tenBoma has exposed high value nodes and connections within the poaching and wildlife trafficking network. To date, many poachers and traffickers have been arrested by the Kenya Wildlife Service as a direct result of tenBoma-provided support, but in order to protect the integrity and operational security of ongoing law enforcement operations, limited details are made available to the public.

About this case study series: In 2017, USAID collected case studies addressing the questions posed in the Combating Wildlife Trafficking Learning Agenda. The finalists represent both USAID-funded and non-USAID-funded activities from around the world. The information provided in the case study series does not necessarily represent the views or positions of USAID or the U.S. Government.

Lessons

- **Building a solid partnership based on relationships with partners is essential to success.** Under the tenBoma framework, IFAW did not simply provide Kenya Wildlife Service with one-time equipment and training workshops; they developed solutions together after review of real-life challenges and implemented them as a team, playing to the strengths of each organization.

- **Establishing long-term mentorship ensures uptake of new technology.** Tools should be integrated iteratively to disrupt existing workflows. Facilitating integration of these tools through mentorship ensures the greatest success. By establishing long-term mentorship with partners, IFAW has been able to create an agile cycle that rapidly deploys technology and collects user feedback, then returns, upgrades and collects user feedback to make continuous improvements.

- **Leveraging expertise from intelligence professionals, national and international law enforcement personnel, and current and former military personnel is critical in the fight against modern poaching and trafficking networks.** Poaching and wildlife trafficking are carried out by professional criminal networks that often use the same methods to facilitate recruiting, movement, and logistics support as other organized crime syndicates. tenBoma's method of recruiting a team with skillsets beyond those found in traditional conservation work helps African communities and governments to challenge a highly sophisticated criminal system.

- **Assigning specific roles to individuals ensures accountability and continuity in expertise and increases perceived ownership of a task.** tenBoma successfully implemented role-based assignments for ranger teams, adopting an adjusted version of best practices from western militaries.

To learn more about tenBoma, visit: https://www.ifaw.org/united-states/get-involved/tenboma-anti-poaching-revolution