



LION GUARDIANS

2020
IMPACT
REPORT

“Meipurru
erishata elotu.”



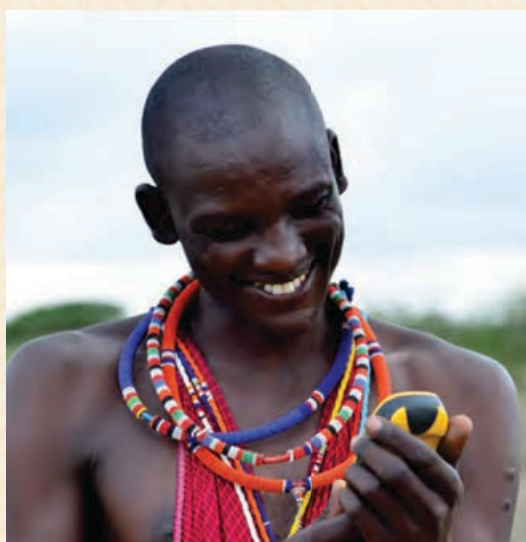
*Opportunity does not
roar as it approaches.*



A Year of Opportunity

At Lion Guardians, our greatest successes have been borne out of seemingly insurmountable **challenges**, and 2020 was no exception. We found extraordinary **opportunities** that enabled us to hone our work, further improve outcomes for lions and communities, and reconsider some of the basic assumptions behind conservation. We are proud to share the **growth and impacts** we have achieved over the last year. [Learn more in our team's video message.](#)

AN OPPORTUNITY TO REFLECT
AN OPPORTUNITY TO FOCUS
AN OPPORTUNITY TO ADAPT
AN OPPORTUNITY TO QUESTION
AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT
AN OPPORTUNITY TO SUSTAIN
AN OPPORTUNITY TO HOPE



An opportunity to reflect



“During COVID, I learned while we may not be **connected through blood**—we may not even know each other—but we are all **connected through humanity.**”

Jackson Kikardi, Lion Guardians Assistant Program Manager

When COVID cast its shadow around the world, so much became uncertain—including how we could protect local communities, lions, and our team during a pandemic. We took this opportunity to strategically reflect on nearly every action in our program, looking at the safety, efficiency, and outcomes of each. We found ways to streamline our research and conflict work, as well as expand our support to neighboring communities during this difficult time. As a result, we ended up with a more effective conservation program and a deeper relationship with stakeholders. [See what life during COVID is like at the Lion Guardians camp.](#)



7,175
masks
distributed

4,000
bars of soap
distributed

450
community
health workers
supported with
equipment



“

Lion Guardians is the **first organization to offer us help** during this crisis. We appreciate the organization for thinking about us during this difficult time when the world is fighting an unknown disease.

- Oloiboni Tamei, Village Elder, Iloirero community



An opportunity to focus



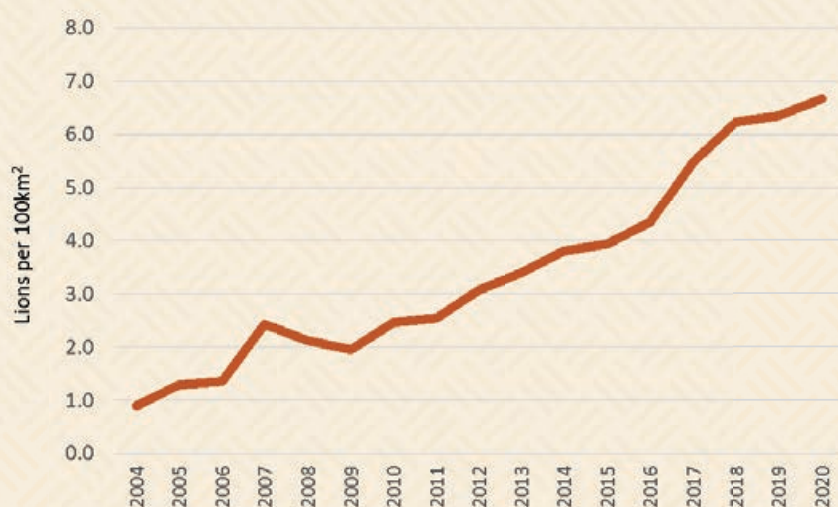
“There are so many lions now—they are thriving. But that means our work, too, must change.”

Luke Maamai, Lion Guardians Program Manager

Our successes and those of our conservation allies have contributed to unprecedented outcomes in the Amboseli-Tsavu ecosystem. Locally, traditional “rite of passage” lion hunts are mostly a thing of the past, and **recent research by Program Manager Luke Maamai** found that young Maasai men increasingly want lions in their ecosystem, likely because of education initiatives and employment opportunities. This increasing tolerance has transformed the landscape for local lions; our ecosystem is now one of the few places in the world where the lion population is growing.

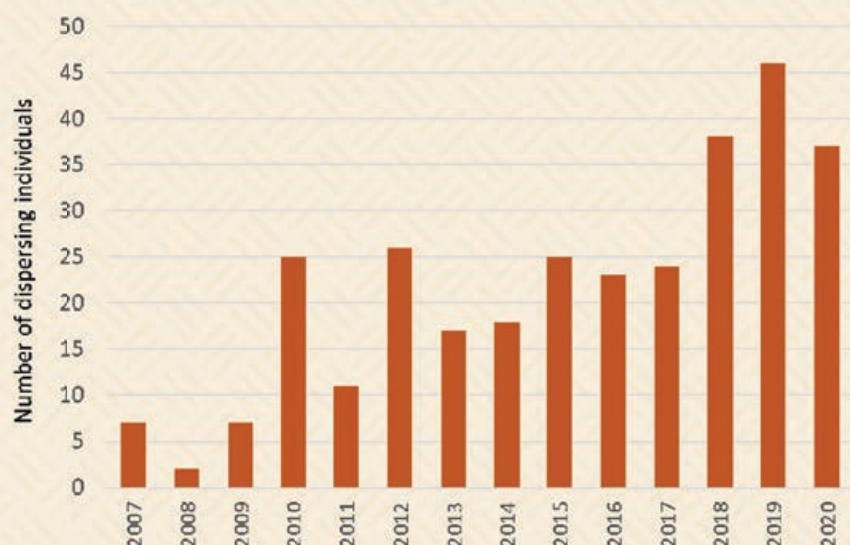


Lion Density 2004 to 2020



Over the past several years, the Amboseli lion population has gone from a “sink” (a population that relies on individuals immigrating from other areas) to a “source” (a population successful enough to supply individuals to other areas). Lions from our operating area are now known to disperse as far as 200 kilometers, providing critical genetic diversity to populations across East Africa.

Lion Dispersal 2007 to 2020



With these successes has come a new challenge: more lions means more attacks on livestock, causing increased tension. In 2020, we recognized that the changing pattern of conflict was an opportunity to focus our work, and made a team-wide decision to prioritize intense and proactive conflict mitigation.

~80%

surveyed Maasai from our area want lions in their ecosystem

246

lions estimated in our area of operation

>6x

increase in lion population density since 2004

8x

increase in lion dispersal since 2007

An opportunity to adapt



“Guardian Orumoi kept vigil night after night during a time when lion attacks were high. This allowed many of us to sleep at night so we could work the next day and provide for our families.”

Mzee Kapaito Ole Seleka, Village Elder, Enkong’u Narok

Focusing on conflict mitigation gave us the opportunity to better meet current needs in our ecosystem. During 2020, we grew our team and expanded our toolbox to include innovative mitigation tools rooted in both traditional knowledge and rigorous science, enabling us to respond more quickly and effectively when hotspots flare.

Conflict camps: We set up temporary camps near hotspots to reassure communities and stage our suite of rapid response efforts.

Night patrols: During conflict, our team spends nights safeguarding livestock and watching for lions.

Community liaisons: We stay in close contact with communities, gathering information and ensuring their needs are met.

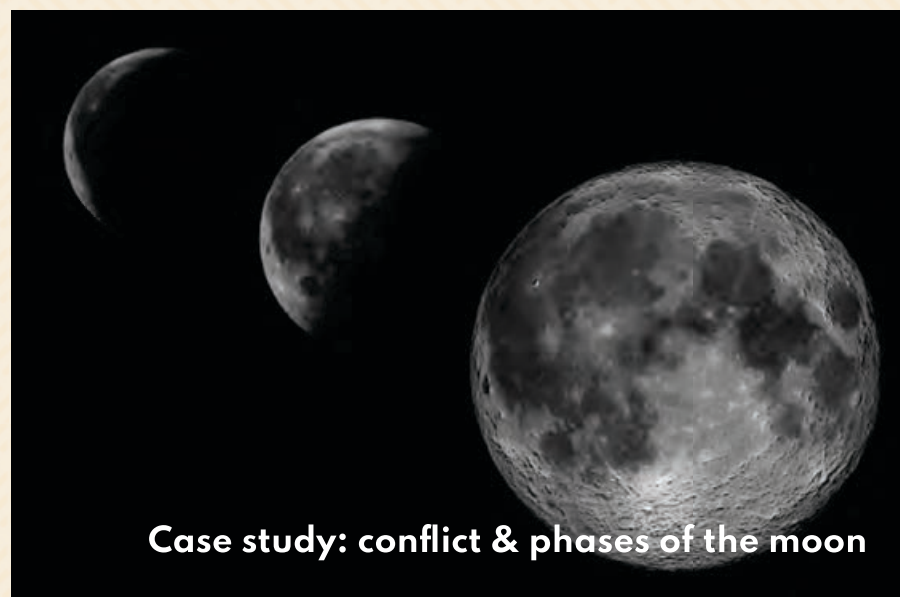
In 2020, we also doubled down on our efforts to proactively avoid lion-livestock conflict, such as locating lost livestock and employing “master herders” to improve local husbandry practices. We are even working to predict when and where hotspots may occur, based on various biological and social variables—such as moon phases and school holidays—and adapting our work in response.

Lion monitoring: Our team identifies problem lions to collect data and determine strategies to resolve conflict.

Mock hunts: Mock hunts push lions into safer areas and deter them from attacking livestock again.

Master herders: Veteran Maasai herders help communities improve herding practices to protect livestock from future attacks.

[Learn how our conflict program is changing the lives of communities and lions.](#)



Case study: conflict & phases of the moon

87%

of hunts stopped alongside our conservation partners

92%

success in containing & cooling conflict hotspots

36

“mock hunts” conducted

158

days spent on the ground in mobile conflict camps

4

management & conflict team members hired



An opportunity to question



“We always need to be asking ourselves ‘why?’—if we aren't doing that, we can't deliver effective conservation solutions.”

Salisha Chandra, Lion Guardians Director of Strategy and Knowledge Management

This year, as COVID and increased conflict prompted us to take an introspective look at our work, we pioneered a large-scale project to improve the understanding and use of metrics in the field of conservation. We created a framework of questions to help organizations understand and define the system in which they work, the goals they have for their work, and the potential effects of their actions. For example:

Who are the **beneficiaries** of the work, and what are their **needs**?

What other **forces, interactions, and stakeholders** are involved in the system?

What is the **problem** you are trying to address, and what are the **key drivers**?

What is the **long-lasting change** that you want to see?

What are the **actions** that you will take to **create this change**?

What **unintended effects** might result from your actions?



We are now using this framework to evaluate and improve our own efforts, such as honing our conflict work and collecting metrics better suited to our goals. We have also begun to share this framework more widely to assist other organizations, starting with **Women for the Environment: Africa (WE Africa)**.

An opportunity to connect

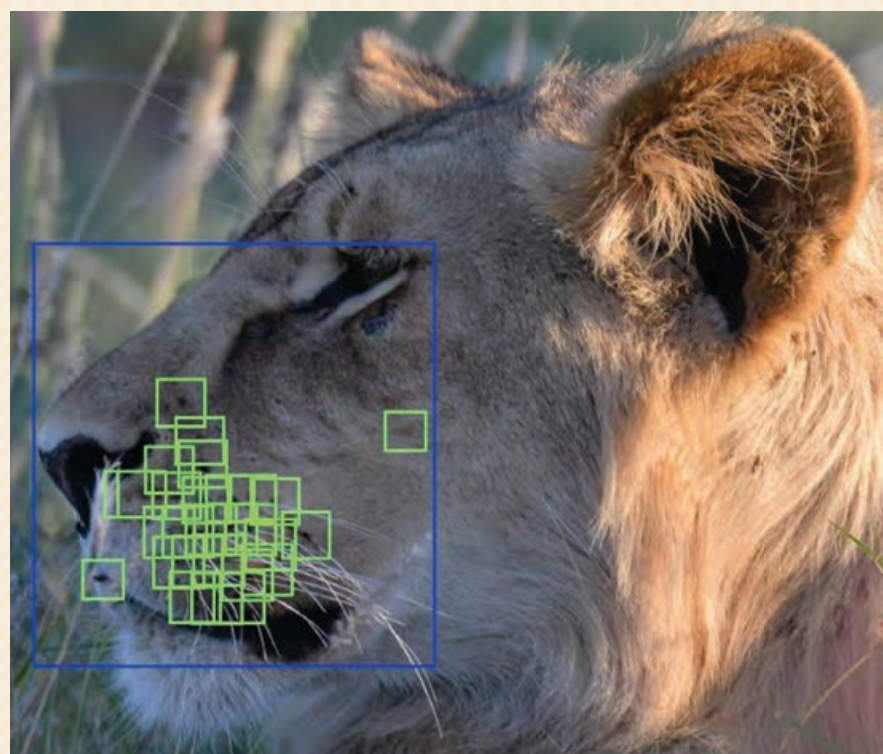


“Lion Guardians are the best example of an organization that shares its experiences and lessons learned, allowing their impact to grow through the development of others.”

William Ole Seki, Maasai elder and Cofounder of KOPELion, Ngorongoro Tanzania

We are energized by the new knowledge, experience, and perspective we gained in 2020, yet in order to take full advantage of what we learn, we need to share it with others. Last year brought fresh opportunities to connect with colleagues and supporters around the world through both traditional and unexpected avenues. Our team delved deeply into collaborative initiatives, published new scientific findings, and embraced the pandemic-inspired explosion of virtual venues.

Impact Scaling



- Our **LINC** database garnered requests from potential new users from Zimbabwe to India. In 2020, the LINC team focused on adapting the servers, system, and personnel to enable growth in LINC's user base and its underlying AI technology.

- Via the **PRIDE Lion Conservation Alliance**, we continued to help shape collaborative conservation efforts, including co-hosting the **2020 Pathways Conservation Conference** in Kenya. This was the largest and most diverse Pathways event to date, and included a four-day women's conservation leadership training for 30 senior managers from 14 African countries.



- Over the last three years, we have helped conceive, create, and develop **WE Africa**, a 12-month environmental leadership program. WE Africa launched in January 2021 with a founding cohort of 20 diverse women leaders from 12 African countries; you can learn more [in this video](#).
- We collaborated to help build the **International Wildlife Coexistence Network**, a brand-new initiative that provides expert assistance, training, collaboration, and shared research to enable coexistence around the world. Lion Guardians serves on the IWCN's 'Coexistence Council' and helps model the implementation and benefits of community-led solutions.

Media & Outreach



Doing Conservation Differently: Lessons from Lion Guardians / Explorers Club Public Lecture Series

Keynote Address: A Conservation Journey / Fulbright-Hays Virtual Summit

Kenya Sees Lion Cub Boom for the First Time in Decades / Associated Press

Improving Conservation Impact Through Collaboration and Inclusion / Jackson Wild Virtual Summit

Conservationists find opportunity and community amidst current crises / Mongabay Newscast

Panels on **Transforming Conservation** and **Women Changemakers /** Smithsonian Earth Optimism Summit

Building a road to recovery for subtle racism in conservation / Mongabay

Rethinking Conservation During and After a Pandemic / Florida International University

Scientific Publications



We shared **herding best practices** that reduce human-wildlife conflict, improve pasture management, and maximize productivity. We incorporated these guidelines into our own work, for example by employing “master herders” to help communities improve their livestock management.

Another publication **documented** multi-generational links between dispersing lions from Tsavo West, Amboseli, and Nairobi National Parks. This illustrates that community lands can serve as “corridors of tolerance” that enable lions to move between protected areas—a finding that sparks new hope for lions in these landscapes.





An opportunity to sustain



“I am so grateful for the **generous support** we received this year. It is a great motivation to our team to know that so many people all around the world **believe in us and what we do.**”

Jeremiah Purka, Lion Guardians Conflict Team
Leader

In 2020, the pandemic gave rise to an uncertain fundraising environment, so we tightened our belts and became more fiscally conservative. We reduced funding to program areas affected by COVID lockdowns such as impact scaling, since we were unable to travel for partner engagements. Yet 2020 gave us opportunities to scale our work using lower-cost and accessible virtual venues. Meanwhile, we directed a higher proportion of our resources toward our Lion Guardians Amboseli conflict mitigation efforts and, in doing so, sustained and grew our core work. By hiring needed conflict team members and giving performance raises, we also bolstered our support from the community.

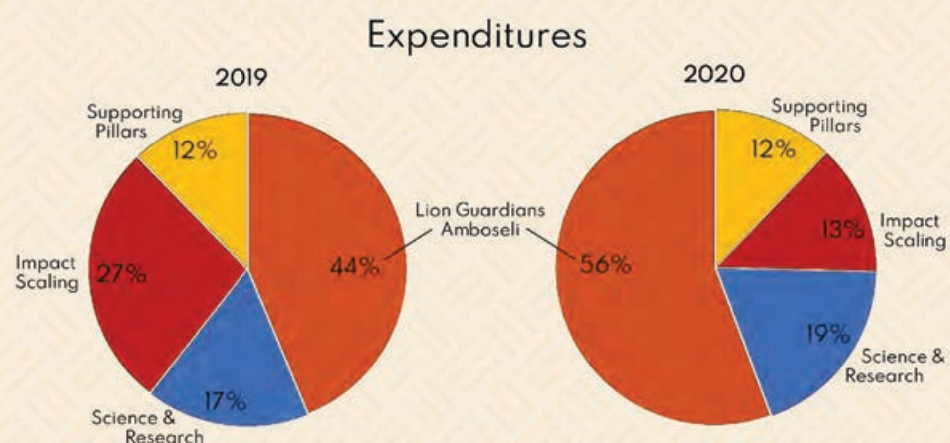
Below, we detail revenue received through our fiscal sponsor, Lion Guardians U.S., as well as expenditures by program area for our field operations in Kenya and our support of other grassroots initiatives in Africa. Lion Guardians is looking toward the future as we build our short- and long-term reserves to serve as a permanent source of income and strengthen our financial position.

Revenue and Expenses, Calendar Year Ending 2020



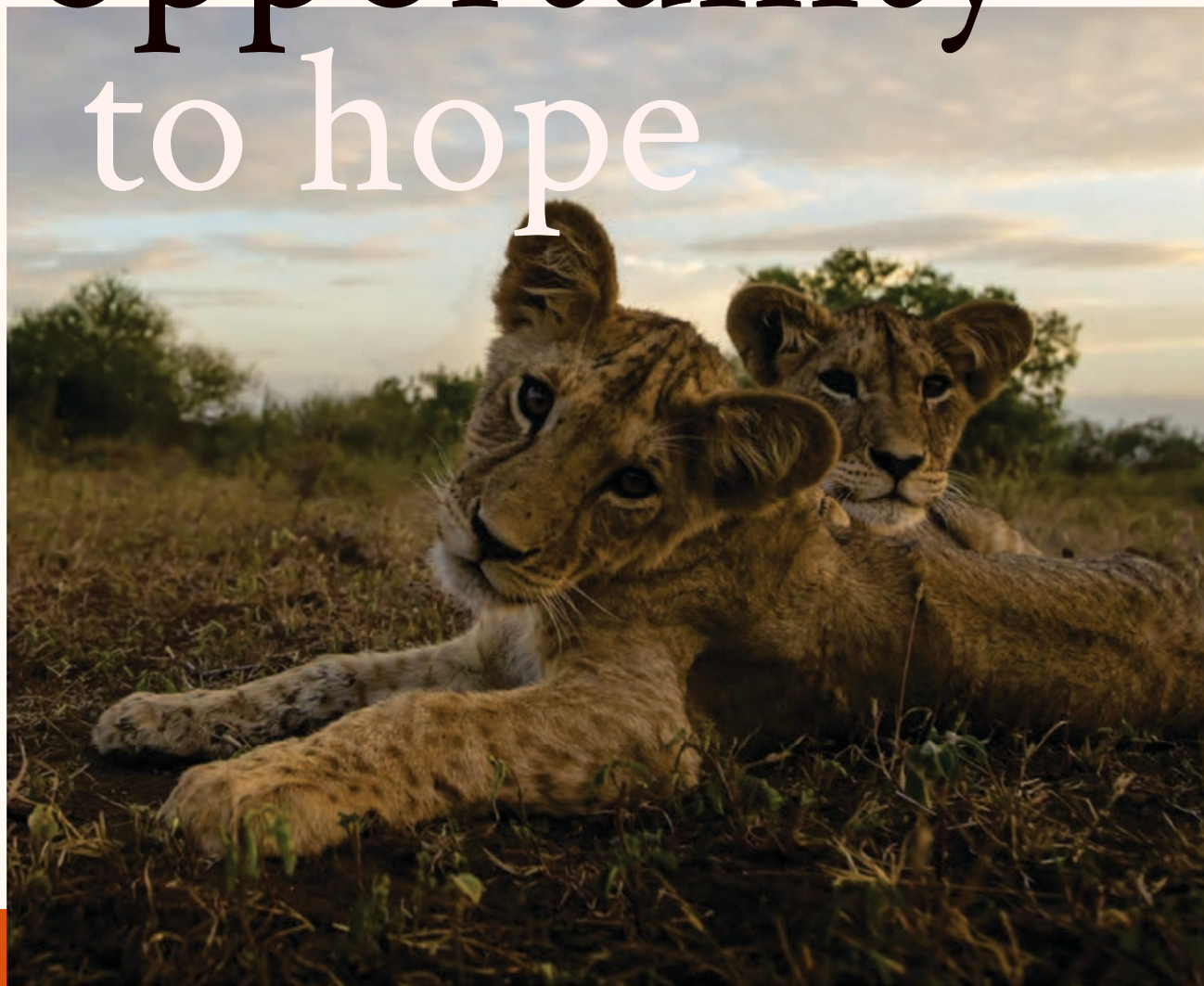
(Complete financial reports are available upon request.)

Total 2020 Revenue	\$987,001
Total 2020 Expenditures	\$647,624
Change in Net Assets	\$339,337





An opportunity to hope



“Considering the challenges last year, things could have been very bleak. But we decided to use these opportunities to **think, evolve, and become better** at what we do. We now look at the future with **great hope.**”

Eric Ole Kesoi, Lion Guardians Community
Manager

Opportunity truly does not roar as it approaches; in 2020, our team had to work hard to recognize opportunities and make difficult decisions to capitalize on them. As a result of these efforts, we are better able to evaluate our impacts, focus our work, and connect with others. We are committed to making further progress on these efforts in 2021 and beyond, by:

- Committing more resources to our mobile conflict work and developing new, innovative mitigation tools;
- Further testing our assumptions and evaluating the effectiveness of our interventions to ensure maximum impacts;
- Sharing our metrics framework with interested organizations and working with them on implementation;
- Connecting in new ways to bring awareness to our efforts, share our lessons learned, and support other organizations;
- Staying abreast of the COVID situation to ensure the safety and resilience of our team and neighboring communities.

The entire Lion Guardians team is invigorated by the prospect of a brighter future for communities, lions, and conservation. Thank you to the generous network of supporters that continues to make our impacts possible and enables us to seize opportunities that come our way.

A Special Thanks

The Woodtiger Fund

Ganesh Ramani

Acacia Conservation Fund

The Bromley Charitable Trust

The Wildcat Foundation

The Shared Earth Foundation

The Blue Foundation

One Voice Charitable Fund

Rosenthal Family Foundation

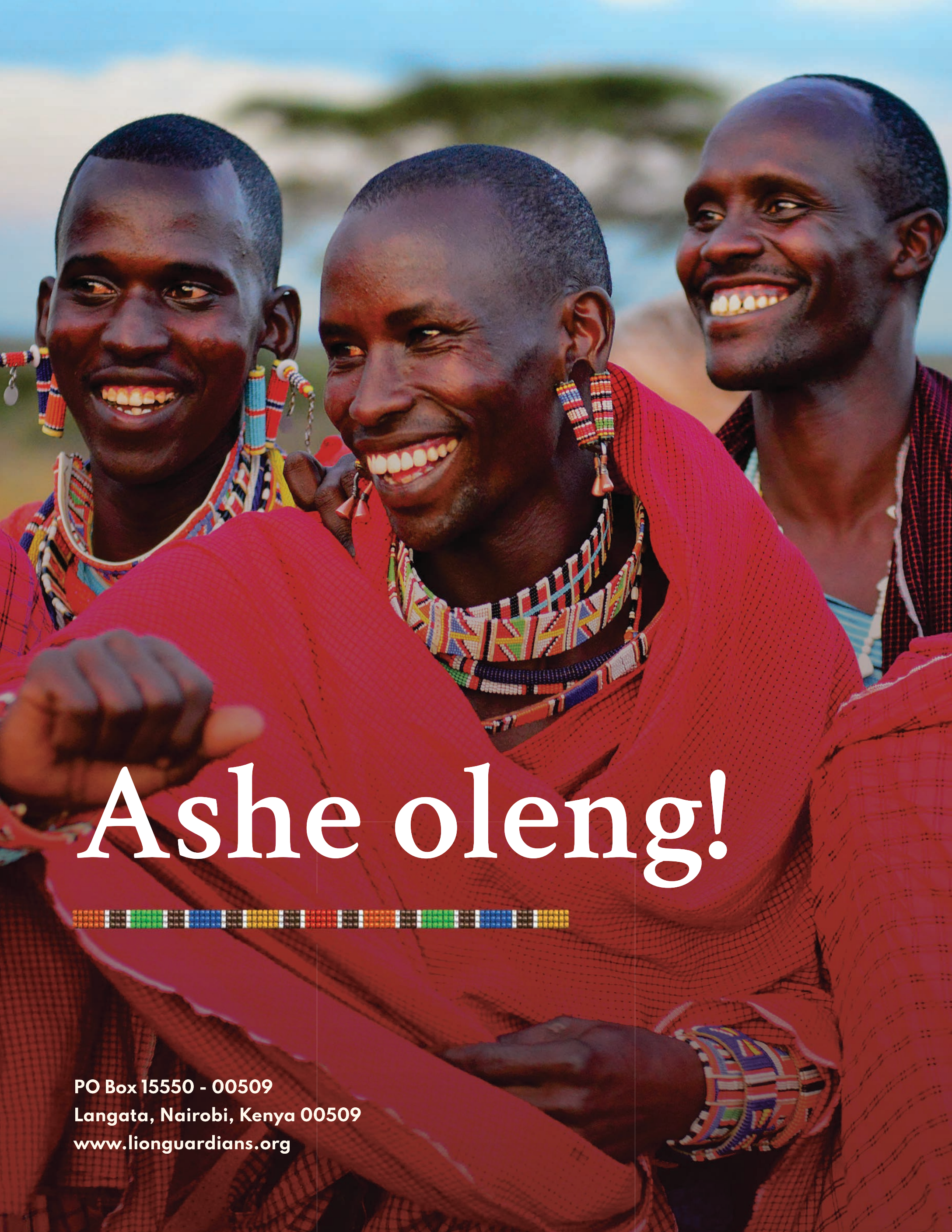
Jessie M. Harris

The BAND Foundation

Stadler Family Charitable

Foundation

Wildlife Guardians



Ashe oleng!

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