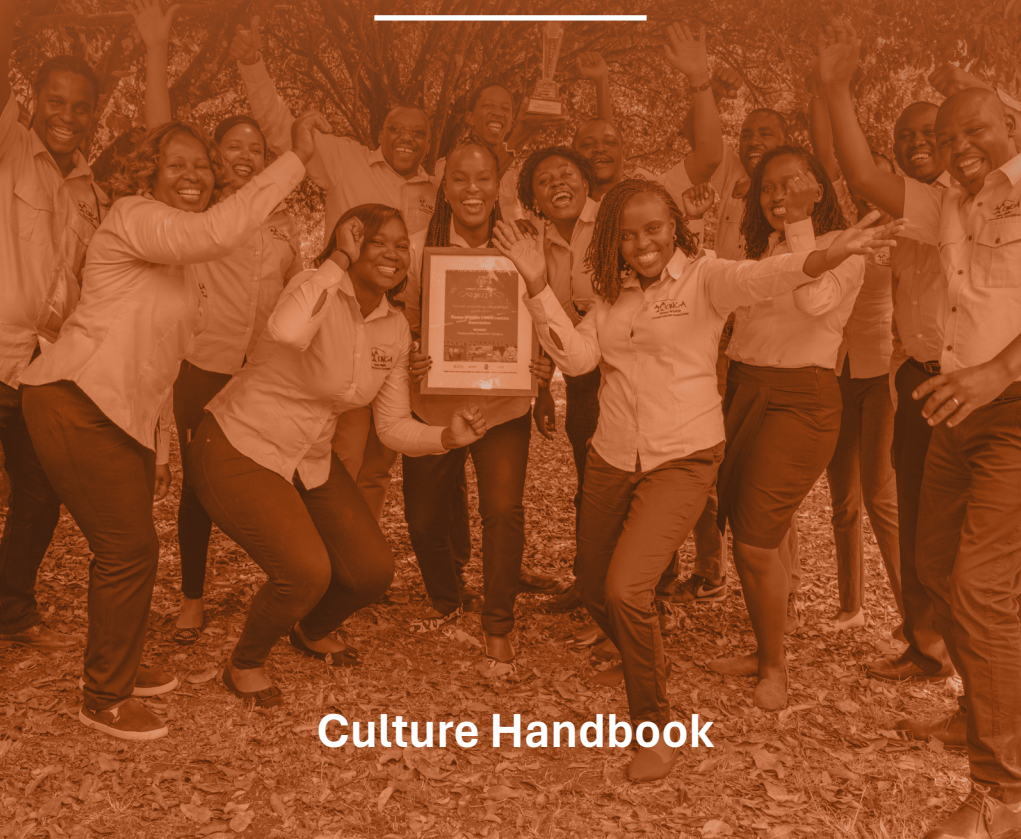
KWCA

Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association

Living nature, Living people

Our Culture, Our Identity

Strengthening Our Shared Purpose



Culture Handbook

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Foreword

Our Culture is Our DNA

At KWCA, **culture is at the heart of who we are and how we work together to achieve our shared purpose**. It's not about the values we believe in it's about living them every day in our relationships, decisions, and in our work across Kenya's conservancies. Our culture **is about how we show up for our members, partners, friends and supporters**. It's what drives our passion for conservation and keeps us focused on making a real, lasting difference.

This culture handbook is a reflection of our shared identity and what we value. We value co-existence, one voice, adaptability, partnerships and teamwork. **We embody professionalism, support one another, celebrate each other's contributions, and make sure everyone feels included and empowered**. For new team members, this handbook is a friendly introduction to what we stand for. For the rest of us, it's a reminder of what makes KWCA special and a guide for how we keep growing stronger together.

By living out these values, **we create a workplace where people do their best work**, meet challenges with creativity, and stay committed to our goals.

I invite you to engage with this handbook use it to stay grounded in our values, to align your actions with our organizational principles, navigate challenges with integrity and mutual respect. When we show up with intention and unity, we're better able to support conservancies and drive lasting change.

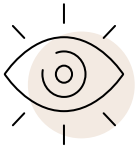
Thanks for being part of the KWCA family. Together, we're shaping the future of locally led conservation in Kenya.



"Our culture is not just what we do—it is who we are"

Dickson Kaelo | CEO

Who we are



Our Vision

Connected landscapes conserving wildlife and benefiting people



Our Mission

Accelerate the growth of equitably governed and effectively managed conservancies to positively impact local communities and wildlife.

How we work

We work with over 200 conservancies to champion biodiversity conservation in Kenya's unprotected areas and to make conservation rewarding to local people by:



Amplifying the voices of conservancies to ensure their interests, needs and stories are heard by key decision makers and they are participating and influencing policy processes.



Connecting conservancies with partners and investors, to mobilise financing and technical assistance to make their conservation plans succeed and become more effective



Providing relevant information and tools to support them in making informed decisions.

Our logo

Our logo embodies our story and vision

KWCA
Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association
Living nature, Living people

Why giraffes?

- **We believe in coexistence:** Giraffes are the epitome of co-existence. They predominately live in community areas and do not harm nor cause conflicts with humans. They do not compete with others
- **We value teamwork:** Giraffes live in groups with strong family bonds, scouting the landscape together to keep each other safe.
- **We value nature:** Giraffes are gentle beautiful giants constantly reminding us nature is beautiful and we should be gentle with our environment. They also represent an urgency for action to conserve nature due to their endangered status. Giraffes help balance the habitat, infinitely inspiring the human race. Less talk more action.
- **People are the centre of our work:** The person in the middle and our tagline living nature, living people, represents our belief that conservation is not just about wildlife but also about the people who live alongside wildlife. They have the power to determine whether wildlife perish or thrive. We believe that positioning local communities as architects of conservation solutions, success becomes a reality.

Our 2030 Goals and Outcomes



Stronger Landscape Associations:

- Technical and financial support to start-up and early growth associations
- Institutional policies development
- Governance training
- Legal support
- County governments engagement
- Advocacy for county conservancy fund bills



Effective conservancies:

- Support emerging and Operational conservancies become mature and effective
- Support in Land registration, mapping and boundaries
- Development of land use and management plans
- Governance and leadership trainings
- Business planning
- Climate adaptation projects



Advancing Policy Change:

- One unified conservancy voice
- Bridging the gap between policy and practice
- Conservancy participation in policy making processes
- Influencing conservation, environment and land policies, laws and strategies at national and county levels



Durable Financing:

- Kenya Conservancies Fund
- Nature based enterprises
- Sustainable finance mechanisms
- Private sector investments
- Livestock markets value chains



A Stronger KWCA:

- Increased membership engagement
- Improved internal policies and systems
- strong team culture
- long-term partnerships built and maintained
- Diversified sources of funding

Our Core Values

Our values shape how we work, interact, and serve. Our culture is defined by five foundational core values:

1. Co-existence,
2. One Voice,
3. Adaptability
4. Partnerships
5. Teamwork.



Value #1 Co-existence

We believe that people, wildlife, and nature are deeply interdependent and can coexist for mutual benefit. Guided by this understanding, we foster cohesion and trust within our team and with our conservancy members through open communication, mutual support, and a culture where every voice, whether from staff, members, or partners, is heard, valued, and respected.



Value #2 One Voice

We provide a platform for a united voice to champion conservancies' interests and needs. In doing so, we listen actively, seeking to understand while respecting diverse perspectives and communicate with one unified message ensuring information flows across team, partners and the entire KWCA membership.



Value #3 Adaptability

"You can't build an adaptable organization without adaptable people—and individuals change only when they have to, or when they want to.

– Gary Hamel"

We're committed to the sustainability of Kenya's conservancies. We embrace change with an open mind, staying resilient in the face of challenges, trying new things and continuously learning as we go. We bring a positive attitude, stay flexible, and encourage new ideas and solutions while staying true to our mission in an ever-evolving conservation landscape.



Value #4 Teamwork

We are a lean, robust and passionate team committed to the success of conservancies. The foundation of teamwork is built on trust, respect and a shared purpose. We support one another, celebrate wins together, communicate openly, and value every role. We collaborate across teams and achieve more together for the benefit of our members.



Value #5 Partnerships

At KWCA, we know strong partnerships help us go further, starting with how we work together as a team. We support each other, stay connected, and share ideas openly. That strong foundation helps us build great relationships outside the organization too, making sure we grow and succeed together, every step.

Our Guiding Principles

Our guiding principles shape our culture, actions, decisions and work ethic and ensure we uphold the highest standards of professionalism



Integrity: We do the right thing, always. Our actions reflect honesty, fairness, and ethical ideals.



Transparency: We practice openness in actions, processes, decisions, and communication.



Accountability: We take responsibility for our actions. Each of us owns our tasks and delivers on commitments.



Trust: We rely on each other with confidence. Our relationships are built on honesty, reliability, and mutual respect.



Commitment: We give our best in all we do. Challenges do not deter us - we stay focused on our goals.



Respect: We value each other's perspectives. Every individual is treated with dignity and fairness.



Professionalism: We hold ourselves to high standards in the way we work, communicate, and relate with others. We aim for excellence, stay true to our commitments, and treat everyone with respect.

Our Work Culture

At KWCA, Work is more than just a job. Our work environment makes us feel inspired, supported and proud of the impact we make to communities. It's an environment where we grow professionally, show up for our members and partners, team up with other passionate and dedicated colleagues who are in the mission of making a real difference in community conservation across Kenya.

Here is how we live our work culture;

- We support each other and create an inclusive space for everyone
- We're always learning and growing
- We keep communication open and respectful
- We do work that creates real impact on the ground



Our Communication Culture

Communication at KWCA is not just about passing information, it's how we build trust, work better together as team and how we stay aligned to our shared mission.

Here is how we live our communication culture;

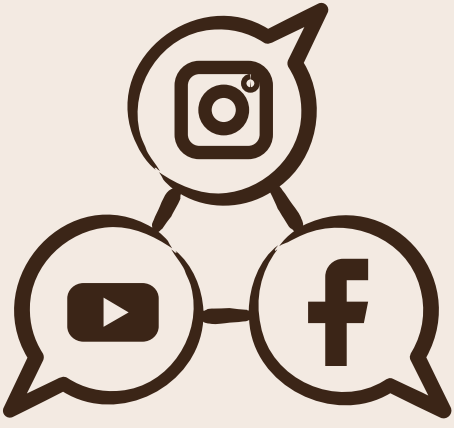
- We share updates timely, give feedback and work through challenges as a team
- We listen intently to understand different perspectives, especially when view points differ to avoid misunderstandings and build stronger connections.
- We encourage all team members to speak up, ask questions and share ideas.
- Every voice matters. We strive to create a space where people feel heard, respected, and supported regardless of role, opinion, or background.
- We are sensitive to our audience and we aim to communicate in ways that are thoughtful, inclusive and purposeful
- We give and receive feedback with humility and a focus on growth.
- We share knowledge openly helping each other contribute meaningfully.
- We hold ourselves and each other accountable to these communication standards.

Our Social Media Culture

How we live our Social Media Culture;

- We use social media to share our work with the world. We use it responsibly and creatively to promote our mission, engage with our members, share our success stories and field highlights to inspire action and awareness.
- We represent KWCA professionally online by upholding the organizations's values and ethical standards in all online interactions.





Our Recognition and Reward Culture

At KWCA, we believe that a simple "thank you" goes a long way. We recognize and celebrate effort, progress, and success whether it's a major milestone or everyday commitment. Our recognition and rewards policy outlines the different ways we celebrate excellence and commitment. We've created a workplace where everyone feels proud to be part of the team, feels seen, appreciated and encouraged to keep doing their best.

How we live our recognition and reward culture;

- We regularly celebrate both individual and team achievements, big or small.
- Everyone's effort matters. Recognition cuts across all roles.
- We value both personal wins and collaborative successes.
- Appreciation happens in the moment not months later.
- Our recognition and rewards process is fair, transparent, and based on a clear criteria.
- Leaders lead by example by modelling a culture of appreciation
- Our recognition and rewards vary, they include:
  - Verbal recognition and public appreciation
  - Well-being and professional development opportunities to support and motivate employees
  - Thoughtful, values-aligned rewards that highlight meaningful contributions

Recognition is like a relay race

Think of our recognition and reward culture like a 4x100 relay race. Each team member runs their stretch with focus and determination, but the win belongs to the whole team. A dropped baton or slow handoff can cost the race, reminding us that everyone's performance matters.

Success in a relay, just like in our work, relies on trust, timing, and shared responsibility. And while we celebrate victories as a team, it's just as important to recognize each runner's effort along the way.

Acknowledging individual contributions builds confidence, keeps motivation high, and strengthens team spirit. When people feel seen, supported, and appreciated, they give even more not just for themselves, but for the whole team.



Our Care and Wellness Culture

Our staff and board are our greatest asset. Personal well-being is essential for impact. KWCA is committed to creating a supportive environment where everyone can perform optimally physically, mentally, and emotionally.

We promote care and wellness by providing flexible working hours, health benefits, team bonding, and office refreshments. For board members, we extend this same commitment recognizing that their ability to lead effectively is tied to their own well-being and balance.

This is how we live our care and wellness culture;

For staff;

- We respect **personal time**. Routine work and field travel are scheduled Monday to Friday to preserve weekends for rest, family and personal time
- We integrate **work life balance** metrics into performance appraisals and wellness assessments.
- We provide **Flexible working hours**: Staff are trusted to manage their time in ways that support both productivity and personal well-being.
- We encourage **Extended travel** when work overlaps with weekends or holidays, team members must schedule down time for rest and recovery in natural, calming environments.
- We encourage **Daily wellness habits like** '*ME Time*' to offer space for personal reflection, meditation, or quiet rest in a dedicated space.
- We encourage **Outdoor mental refreshment**: We encourage staff to take nature walks and debrief strolls to reduce screen fatigue and restore focus.

- We provide **physical wellness activities** on a quartely basis and use open areas for light physical activities to re energise and bond through play.
- We take advantage of staff meetings to assess staff health, both physically, mentally and emotionally through **regular check in activities**, without judgement and offer supportive systems.
- We provide **mental health awareness and support** through our medical insurance provider for staff seeking mental health support services from profeesional counsellors and therapists.

For the Board:

- We ensure **safe, timely and comfortable travel arrangements** for our board members travelling long distances to and from board meetings and field visits with options for rest or recuperation.
- We schedule meetings in serene, nature aligned environments with **wellness friendly meeting arrangements** with breaks, light refreshments and hybrid participation to ease participation.
- We respect board members' **personal time**. Meetings are kept off weekends and holidays when possible, with efforts made to avoid overloaded schedules.
- We promote emotional **well-being culture** through open dialogue, occasional informal check-ins, and access to personal development or wellness resources when available.



Our Open - Door Culture

> Open door access is at all levels, individual, team and at the organization level.

At KWCA, an open-door culture isn't just a rule, it's how we work, connect, and grow together, it's also how the office is set up. Got a question, idea, or something on your mind? You don't need an appointment or formal invite. We're all about open, honest chats, and making sure everyone at all levels feels heard, supported, and part of the team.

This is how we live our open door culture;

- **We're all approachable and available.** our Leaders and colleagues are open to listen, engage and offer support whether it's a quick check-in, a new idea, or resolving a challenge. We make ourselves available when we are required to support.
- **We offer timely, real-time support.** Informal chats and spontaneous consultations help keep things moving and address issues as they arise. We also deal with emergencies urgently.
- **We promote transparency and trust:** Openness builds a culture of clarity, accountability, and collaboration.
- **We respect roles and workloads.** While always open, we're mindful of each other's time, priorities, responsibilities and workloads.
- **We lead with empathy.** Our leaders model open-door values by being responsive, supportive, and tuned into team needs.

Our Leadership Culture

At KWCA, leadership isn't about titles, it's about people. We believe great leaders lift others up, listen attentively, and lead with honesty, care, and purpose. Everyone, no matter their role, has the chance to lead and make a difference.

We're all about creating a culture where trust, teamwork, and personal growth thrive. When we lead with empathy and stay open and accountable, we build a stronger, more connected team.

This is how we live our leadership culture;

- As leaders **we walk the talk and lead by example**. We show up, live our values, and set the tone for the rest of the team
- **We put people first.** We practice people-centred leadership which means being there for your team and partners offering support, empowering them and helping them shine.
- **We make decisions together.** Everyone's input counts. We listen, share ideas, and make choices that reflect the whole team.
- **Leadership is at all levels.** We don't need titles to lead. Everyone takes initiative, own their work and lead from where they are.
- **We lead with emphathy and accountability.** We listen actively, show emotional intelligence, respect, and do what we say we'll do. That's how we build trust.
- **We emphasize transparency in leadership processes.** We share information opnely, communicate our intentions clearly and build trust through consistent actions.
- **We support learning and growth** through mentoring and coaching, sharing knowledge and lessons with our members and landscape associations to help them grow.
- **We work better together**. We break silos, collaborate across departments, and aim for impact as one united team.

Our Recruitment Culture

Our recruitment is built on transparency, fairness, diversity, and alignment with our core values. We aim to bring in passionate, diverse, and committed individuals who'll grow with us and help make a real difference. This is how we live our our recruitment culture

How We Live Our Recruitment Culture;

- We hire for **values and mission** alignment and prioritize people who genuinely connect with our work and mission.
- We evaluate how well candidates **fit within KWCA's culture**, working style, tean dynamics and with a team spirit.
- Our recruitment process is **fair and transparen**t and based on clear, open procedures that promote fairness and intergrity.
- **We actively seek to attract talent from different diverse backgrounds** to enrich our team and and broaden our perspectives.
- **We hire as a team:** Different departments participate in hiring processes to make sure it's the right fit all around.
- **We introduce** new team members to our organizational values, expectations and working culture from day one.



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Magadi Tenting centre, Seminary Road off Magadi Road.
P.O Box 1038-00518 Nairobi Kenya Mobile: +254 (0) 708 418 522
Email: info@kwcakenya.com
Website: kwcakenya.com