

Social Assessment of Protected Areas (SAPA) at Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya



The **Ol Pejeta Conservancy (OPC)** was established in the 1980s as a privately owned protected area (PA), operated on a not-for-profit basis. The conservancy covers 37,000 hectares and has particular conservation significance as a home to the largest population of black rhino.

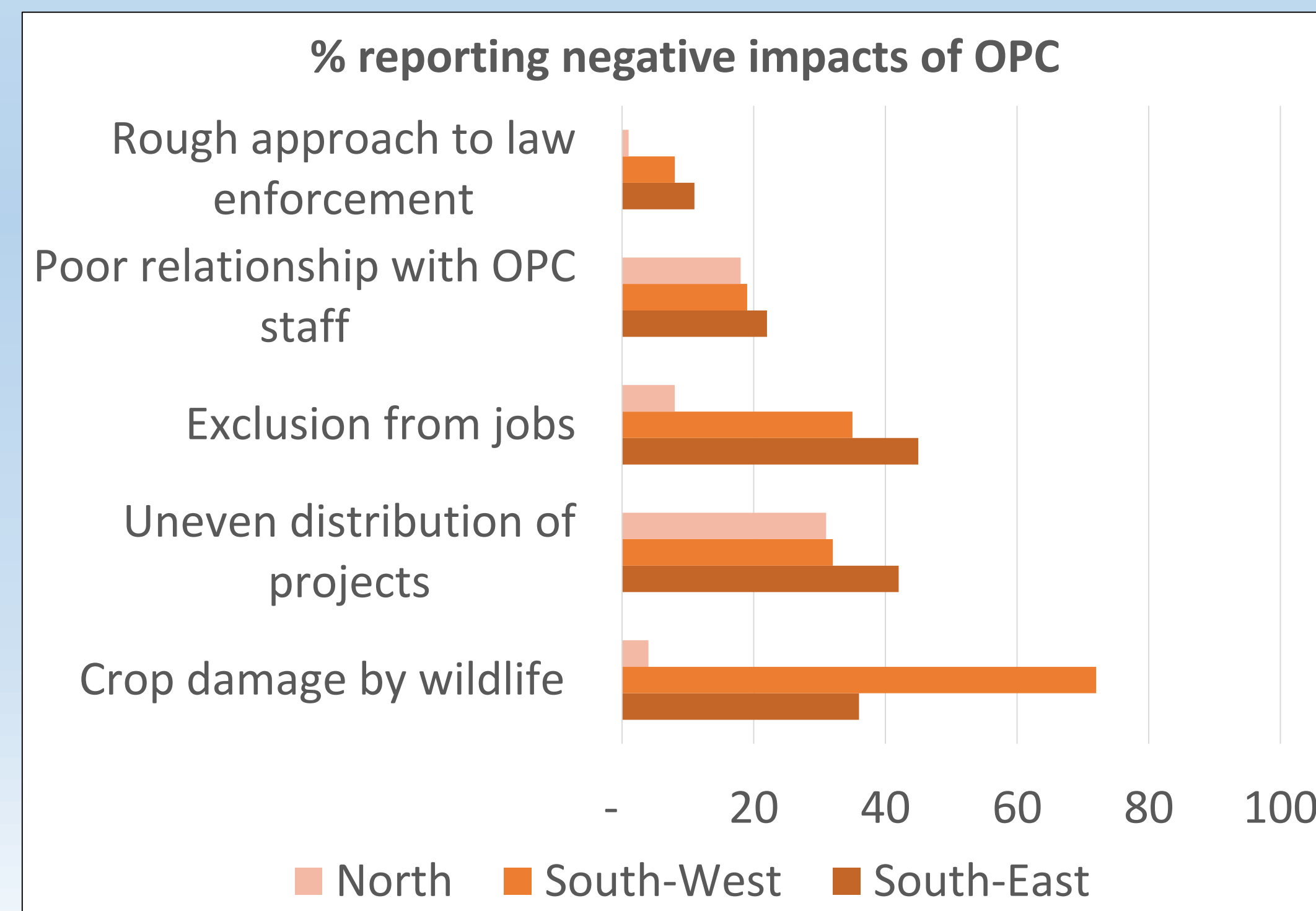
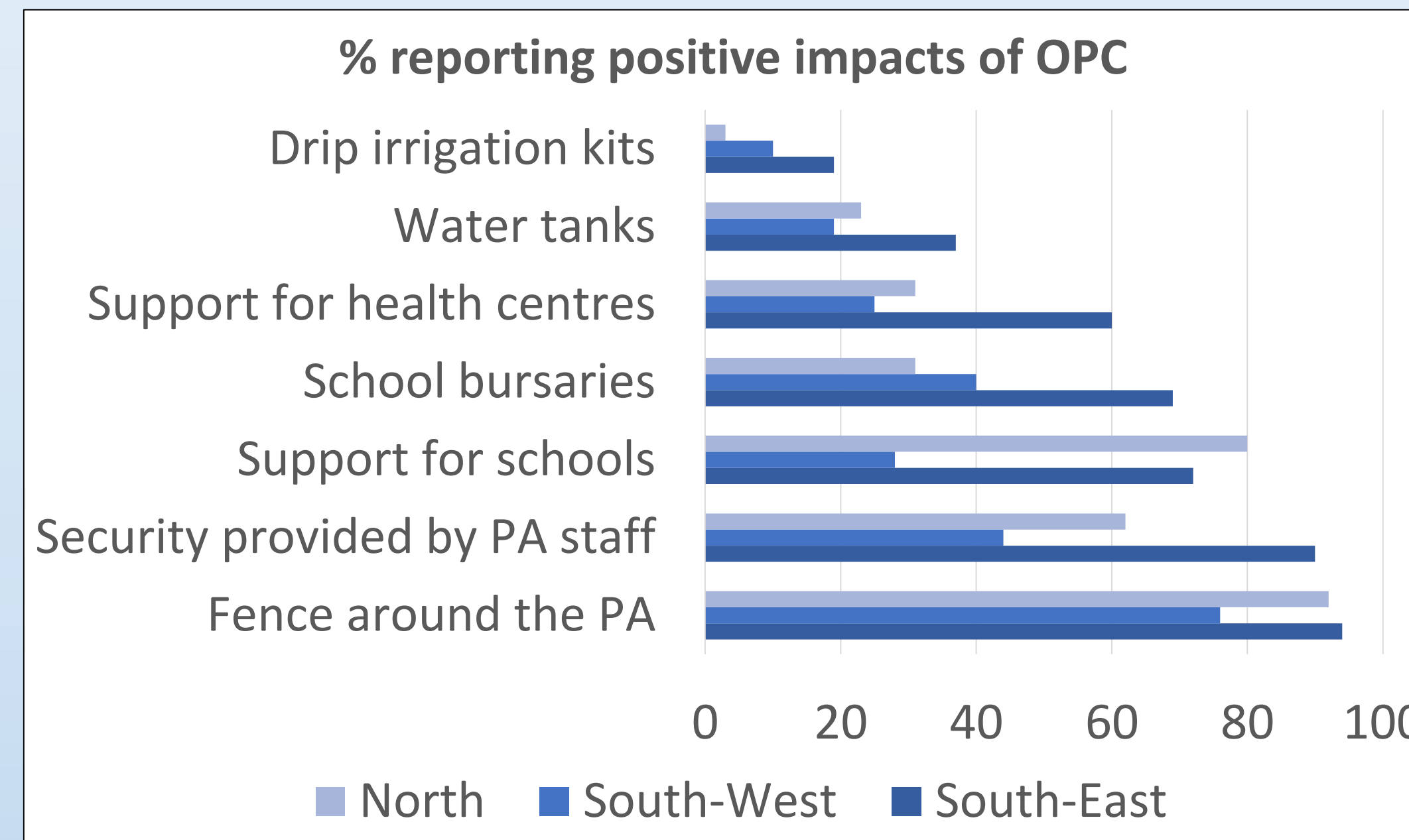
A portion of OPC's revenue is used to fund community programmes including investments in health, education, agriculture, energy and enterprise projects. OPC is entirely fenced other than a corridor for elephants. Members of local communities are not permitted to use any resources within the PA except in periods of severe drought when OPC management has, on occasions, allowed some grazing of livestock.

SAPA is a multi-stakeholder methodology that assesses the positive and negative impacts of a protected area and related conservation and development activities on the wellbeing of communities living within and around the PA.

The SAPA assessment used community and stakeholder workshops and a survey of 231 households, including 141 women and 90 men. The assessment was conducted in the period of January to September 2014 and was facilitated by staff of OPC with support from community representatives.

The results suggest that **fencing of the park** is the most significant positive impact, reducing human wildlife conflict and cattle rustling. Second in significance is the **security** provided by OPC rangers in PA-adjacent communities (even though policing is not officially part of their job).

The most significant negative impact is **human wildlife conflict** which continues, although less than before (related to baboons climbing over the fence and the elephant corridor) and this particularly impacts people in the south-west. In all areas, communities also reported **unfairness in the distribution** of development projects.



In terms of **governance**, the SAPA assessment reveals that communities generally feel that they have a good relationship with OPC staff with the exception of some communities in the south west. Furthermore, men and wealthier people were more likely to report a positive relationship than women and poorer people. In terms of responsiveness to community concerns, of the 25% of people who said they have raised a concern with park staff, 75% felt that some action had been taken in response.

The final stage of SAPA is to move **from assessment to action** through a multi-stakeholder process of sharing the results, and jointly developing recommendations for action. At OPC the following actions have already been implemented:

- Upgrading for fences to stop baboons getting into farmers fields.
- Affirmative action for local community members to get jobs with OPC.
- More equitable distribution of community projects
- Increased frequency of meetings with communities and other stakeholders.
- Information on allocation of development projects shared with communities.
- More effort to mitigate human wildlife conflict.
- Reselection of community representatives using democratic processes.