

OLCAN

An illustrated guide

“I, Siranga Naimando am a herbalist. The traditional use of plants as medicine is of great value to the Massai people. The Maa word for medicine is the same as that for plant – olcani. Much of our knowledge is being lost as our children rush forward to their future.

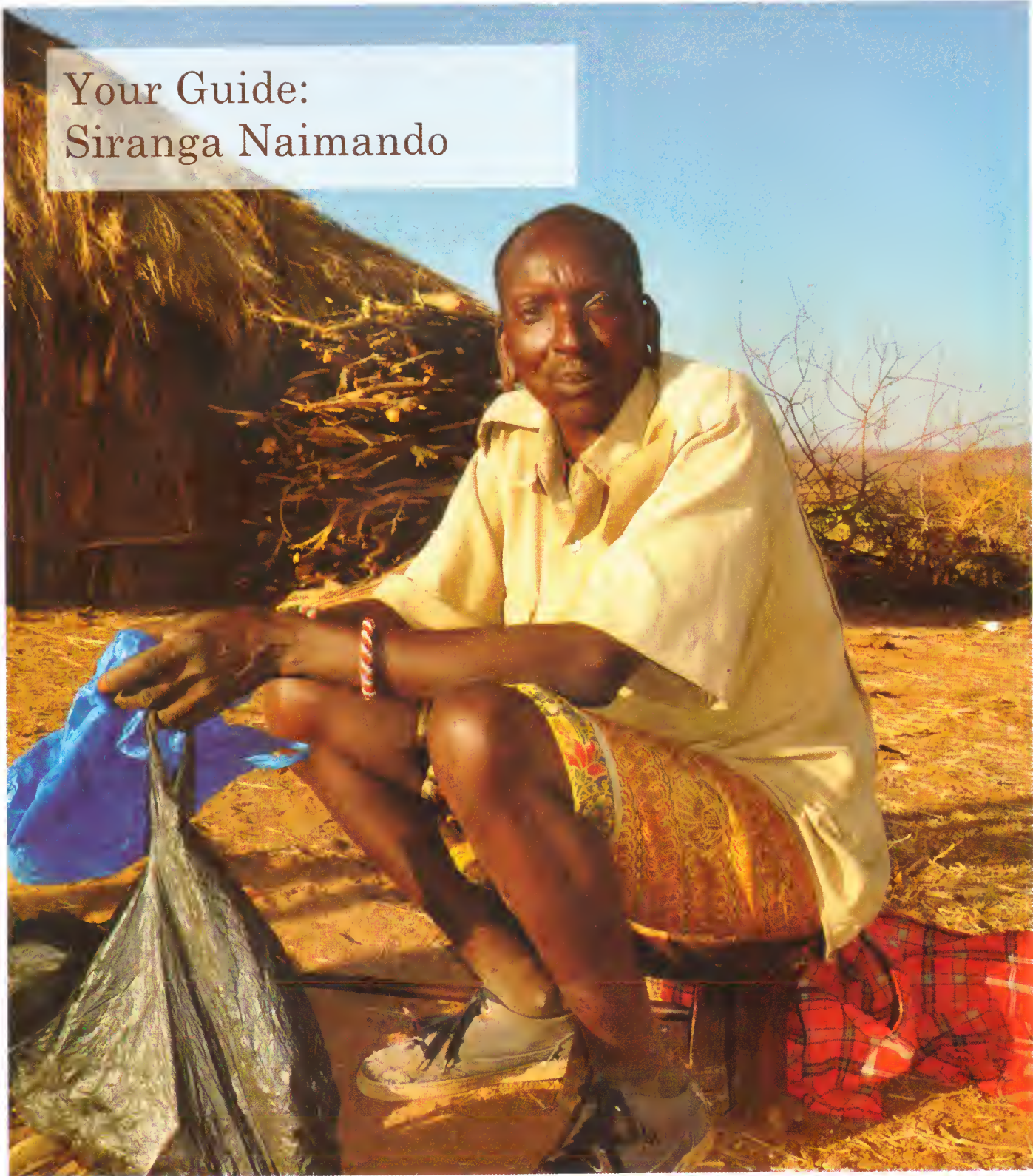
I will be your guide throughout this journey along with the children of Il Polei Primary School who joined me on my travels in the bush to learn about the medicine plants and animals who depend on them.”

The most commonly used plant medicines treat ailments like malaria, fever, wounds, and stomach problems or are used for general strength and prenatal health. The medicines used to cure diseases have mainly the function of strong purgatives and emetics, in order to “cleanse” the body and digestive system from polluting substances.

The frequent medicinal plant use by the Massai shows that governmental health care is hard to come by in this remote region of Kenya, while populations close to health facilities have already lost a large part of their medicinal plant use and knowledge.



Your Guide:
Siranga Naimando



“Plants hold the earth and keep
the rain from running away.”







Senna didymobotrya
(Osenetoi) Maa name

Use: Decoction is made from the leaves and is added to milk and taken as a remedy for malaria. It causes vomiting and reduces the bite of malaria.

Notes:



Aloe secundiflora
(Suguroi) Maa name

Use: The leaves are cut and the sticky juice is squeezed in water. The decoction is taken to reduce the bite of severe malaria. Juice squeezed from leaves is used as eye drops for red, painful eyes. Also can be applied to cuts, open wounds and sores.

Notes:



Carissa edulis
(Olamuriaki) Maa name

Uses: Fruits/berries as well as the flowers are edible; dry branches are burnt and the smoke is inhaled through the nose to relieve headaches (steaming). Extracts have been reported to possess potent antiviral activity against the herpes simplex virus.

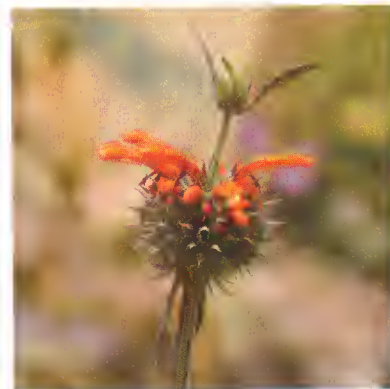
Notes:



Leonotis nepetifolia
(Ol-bibi) Maa name

Uses: The leaves are brewed as a tea for fever, coughs, womb prolapse and malaria. Also leaves can be used to treat eye infection.

Notes:



Ricinus communis
(Empaleki) Maa name

Uses: The seeds of *Ricinus communis* and *Acacia* are pounded together and mixed with water as medicine to expel retained placenta of sheep and cows. Also leaves used to treat boils.

Notes:



Ipomoea hildebrandti
(Lokitengi) Maa name

Uses: Decoction made from leaves and roots is added to milk and eases menstrual pains and excessive menstrual bleeding; or it is mixed with brains and fat of a sheep during early pregnancy if there is danger of miscarriage.

Notes:



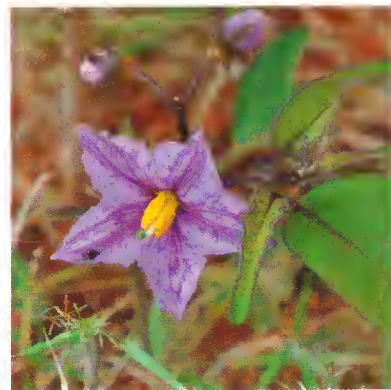




Solanum incanum
(Ntulelei) Maa name

Use: Decoction made from root is added to milk and taken as a remedy for coughs, colds and sore throat.

Notes:



Sansevieria abyssinica
(Nkauraki) Maa name

Use: Decoction made from the roots is taken with sheep fat for lower back pain and for pain in the joints.

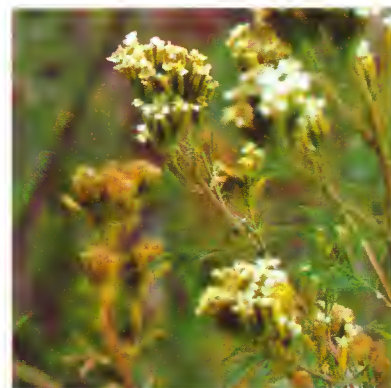
Notes:



Tagetes minuta
(Olbanki) Maa name

Use: Leaves are pounded with a little water and left overnight then squeezed hard to produce an infusion that is used as an eye drop to cure pink eye. (Human as well as goats, sheep and cows) Also used to treat herpes zoster (shingles).

Notes:



Grewia tembensis

(Iri) Maa name

Uses: Ripe fruits are edible; inner bark and roots are chewed for rumbling stomach; decoction from bark is taken by pregnant women for general strength and health; or after any treatment for miscarriage in early pregnancy.

Notes:



Euphorbia heterochroma

(Kang'u) Maa name

Uses: Root decoction is used for flavoring soup used for the treatment of chest complaints, dry coughs and pneumonia. The honey causes considerable irritation to the throat and burning sensation in the chest, which is recommended for treatment of the chest and rib problems related to TB. Can also be used for treatment of diabetes.

Notes:



Ocimum gratissimum

(Olemoran) Maa name

Uses: To treat different diseases, for example upper respiratory tract infections, diarrhea, headache, fever, ophthalmic and skin disease as well as pneumonia.

Notes:







Paintings by

Partrick Seki

Jacob Meshami

James Meshami

Samuel Tikan

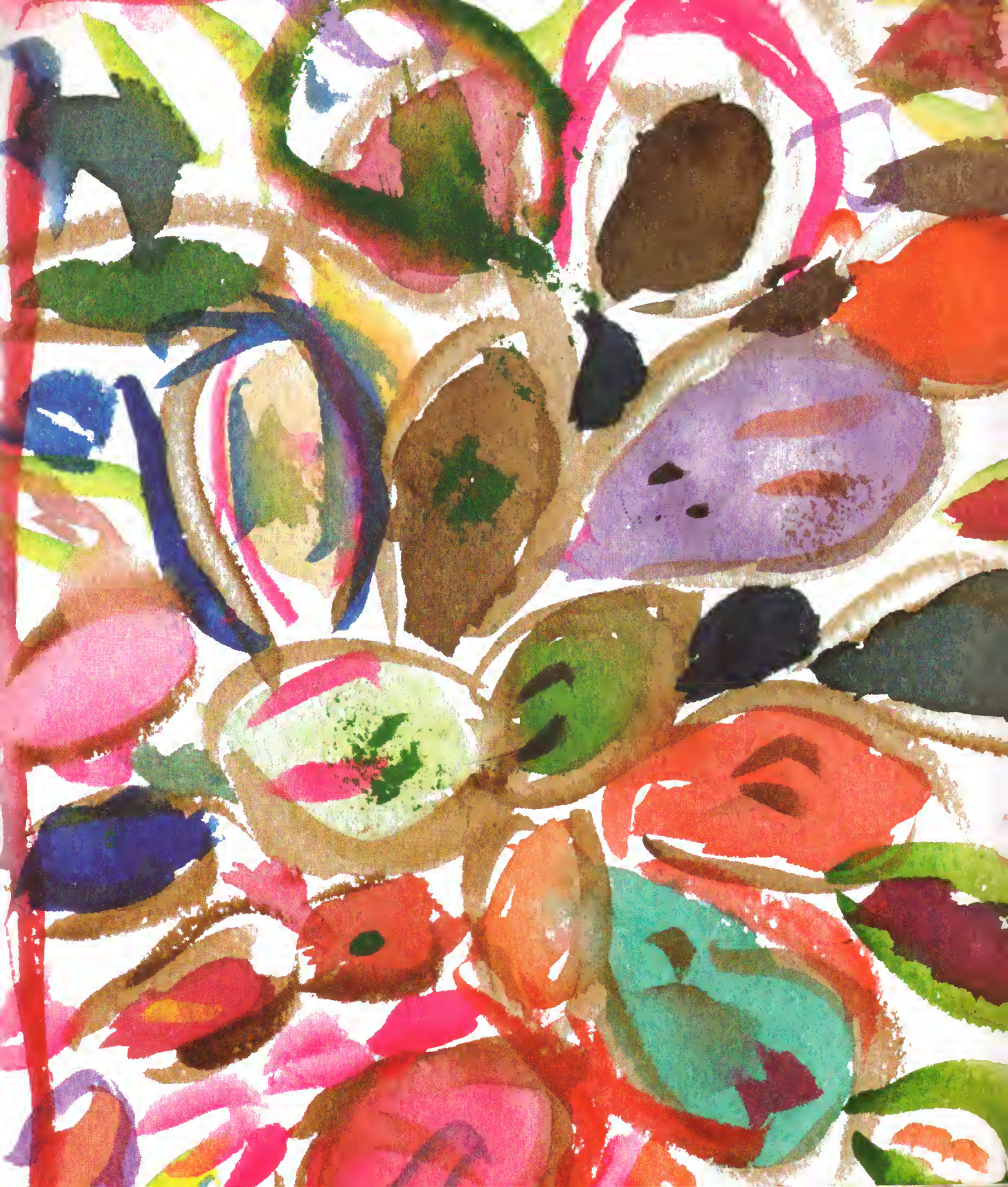
Napunyu Meshemi

Elizabeth Sintaroi

Lekishon Rana

John Sina

Jesika Meshami, opposite page



“Plants feed us, our cows and
goats and our wild animal
neighbors.”







Paintings by

Lekishon Meshami

Soloman Kamerua

Papaa'i Mamai

Napunya Meshami

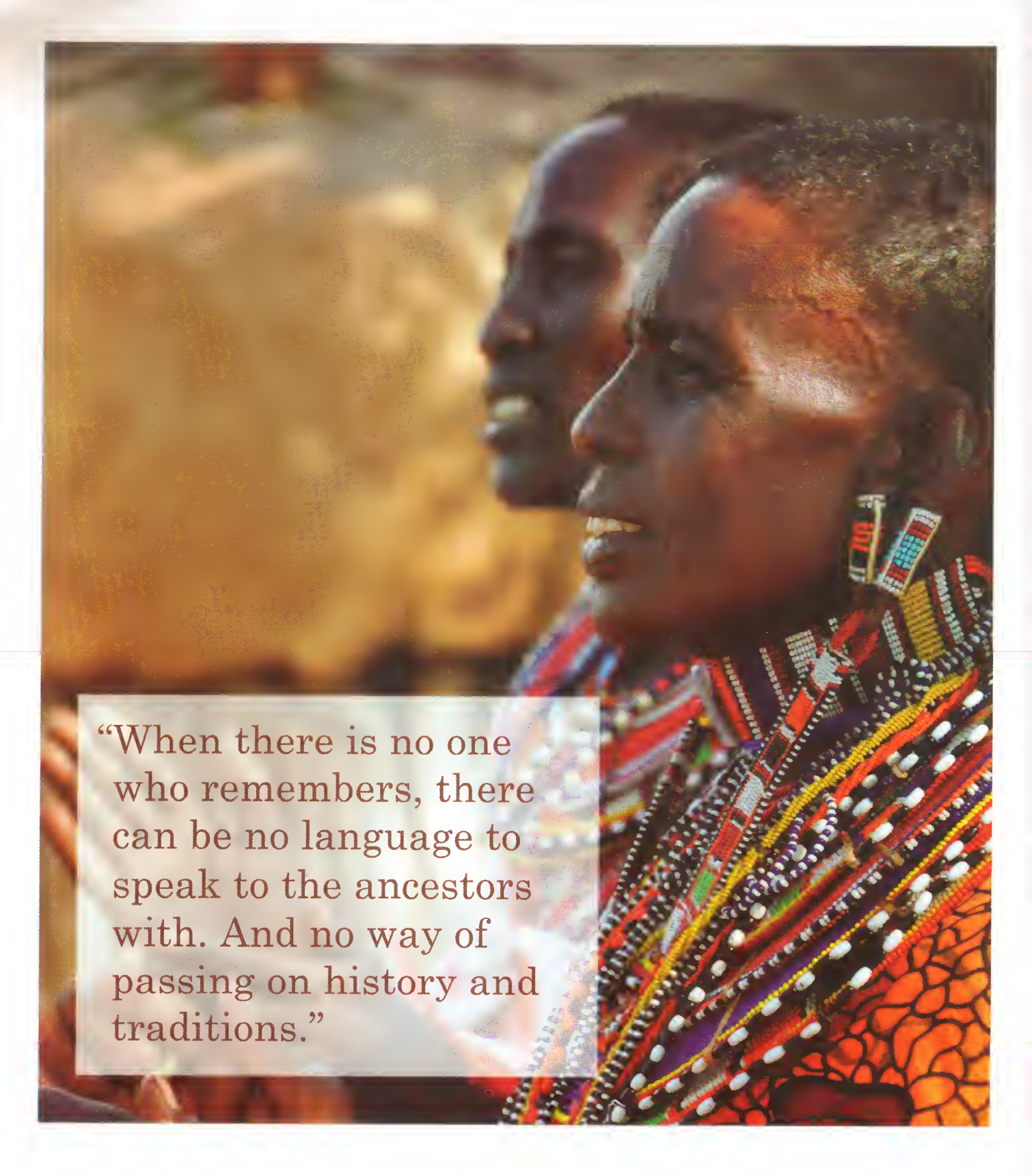
Loifore Kunho

Partrick Seki

Franklin Meshami

Bernard Sintaroi, opposite page



A photograph of two women in profile, facing left. They are wearing traditional beaded jewelry and clothing. The woman in the foreground has a large, colorful beaded earring and a necklace made of many strands of beads in red, yellow, and white. Her clothing features a pattern of orange and black. The background is blurred, showing other people in similar attire. A white text box is overlaid on the lower left of the image.

“When there is no one who remembers, there can be no language to speak to the ancestors with. And no way of passing on history and traditions.”





About the watercolor project

The children of Il Polei Primary School produced these paintings of medicinal plants in watercolor workshops led by Deborah Ross, one of America's leading wildlife artists. Her work has included descriptions of nature for zoological parks and natural history institutions as well as scientific and popular publications.

The children were given paint, brushes and paper and encouraged to explore their own personal vision of the world around them. At first they practiced painting portraits of each other as well as out of school portraits of their elders and extended families, their homes and the animals that center so strongly in their pastoralist lives. The "painting club" as the children referred to it became a way of connecting generations as the elders told their stories and the children interpreted them in art.

Activities soon included trips into the bush to observe plants guided by Siranga Naimando, the community's herbalist, to paint the medicinal plants he pointed out in their neighborhoods.





The herbalist teaches the uses of the plants while the students and the elders paint in the field.

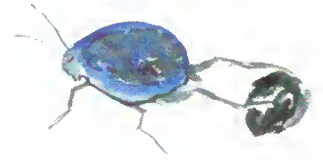


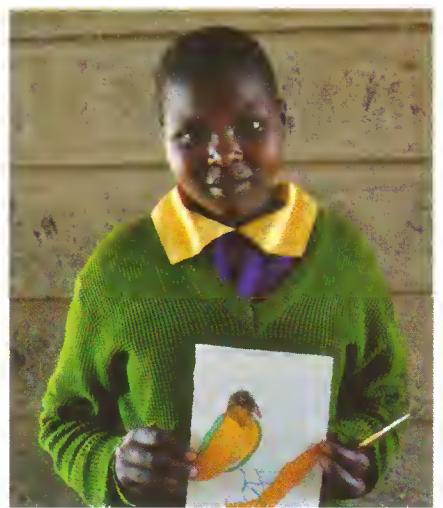
IL-POLEI PRIMARY SCHOOL

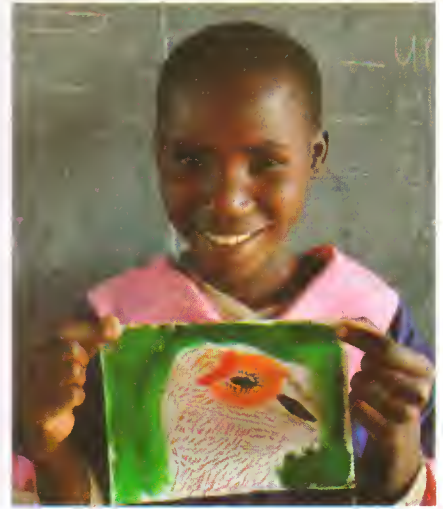
MOTTO : -STRIVE TO LEAD



“The Painting Club began its studies indoors but soon ended up outdoors in search of subjects.”







Painting by
Josephine Wanto



African Conservation Fund

The African Conservation Fund's (ACF) program employs a strategy that builds local capacity for conservation by sourcing funds, providing skills, and creating geographical and cultural linkages regionally and internationally.

Uaso Ngiro Baboon Project

UNBP partners with African Conservation Centre to further UNBP's long-term work in conservation education in local primary schools, mitigation of human-baboon conflict, and the development and training for local ecotourism walks and other bio-enterprises. UNBP provided invaluable logistics, housing and local transportation for the painting club as well as supplying the club's paints, brushes and paper.

The Mukogodo region of Kenya has undergone both rapid ecological and cultural degradation. A severe drought in 2009 wiped out 90% of the pastoralist community's wealth — their cattle and goats. Much of the region's indigenous knowledge is at risk of being lost as these children face a more difficult and different world than their parents knew. The need for conservation, conservation education, and local empowerment in Kenya is extreme. The Mukogodo region is a vital focus point of the ACF's conservation work.

Special thanks to

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John Wanto, teacher
Dr. Shirley Strum, director of UNBP
The School of Visual Arts
The Puffin Foundation

Photography by Deborah Ross
Designed by Melanie McElduff

In loving memory of James Corry (1950 -2011)

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