



## SUCCESS STORY

# Life among the trees

Samburu tribal women in the arid regions of Northern Kenya are learning that they can earn money from trees without harming the environment. With the help of Fintrac Inc. and Lubanchem, a Kenyan processing company, and through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Samburu women are no longer cutting down indigenous trees for fuel wood but are instead earning income from the sustainable harvests of organically certified wild crafted gums and resins. These natural products are traditionally harvested by Samburu women for spiritual and healing purposes but now they are earning money from them and have created sustainable harvesting methods to meet international demand. These women are sustainably harvesting frankincense, myrrh, gum Arabic and a range of other exotic plant extracts.

Samburu tribes are largely nomadic and pastoralist. Men herd cattle during the day while women tend to domestic chores. This leaves women little opportunity to earn income. Conventional agriculture is difficult because of water shortages and because Samburu clans, composed of five to six families, are constantly on the move to find grazing land for cattle.

Training Samburu women to sustainably harvest wild crops enables them to maintain a steady income while preserving Kenya's natural habitat wherever they travel. Many are now expert at tapping trees according to size and species without breaking trunks and branches, ensuring that the trees can be harvested for many years to come.

The production groups are also earning organic certification for their products through the Institute for Marketecology (IMO), a Swiss company that is mapping the area, checking for chemical use (non-existent), and training the women in organic techniques. Lubanchem, primarily an organic processor, guarantees a price premium for gums and resins with organic certification.

This project is funded by USAID through its Kenya Horticultural Development Program. The program, which is managed by Fintrac Inc., provides technical assistance to more than 80,000 small-scale farmers throughout Kenya. The Lubanchem-Fintrac partnership with Samburu women provides sustainable income used to pay for children's education, healthcare, and food while preserving tribal traditions and important ecological resources for future generations.



Lubanchem owner Sadqa Haq, meets with Samburu tribal women in Northern Kenya.

**For more information or to purchase products, please contact Sadqa Haq, Lubanchem Limited, PO Box 43553, Nairobi, Kenya.**

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