



What information is relevant to pastoral women in milk management?

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Introduction

Pastoral milk production: vital for household food security, nutrition and income

Use: ~85% consumed and shared in the community; ~15% sold in nearby markets

Women as “milk managers”: central to nutrition, household welfare, and decision-making on use, sharing, preservation, and sales

Knowledge gap: women’s milk management practices are documented, but the information guiding them remains underexplored

Aim: To understand what information guides women’s actions in milk management

Conclusion

Women’s practices are intentional, adaptive, **based on systematic knowledge**, and often undervalued in research and development interventions

Observation-based knowledge shapes livestock management to optimize milk, guarantee survival of offspring, and support household nutrition

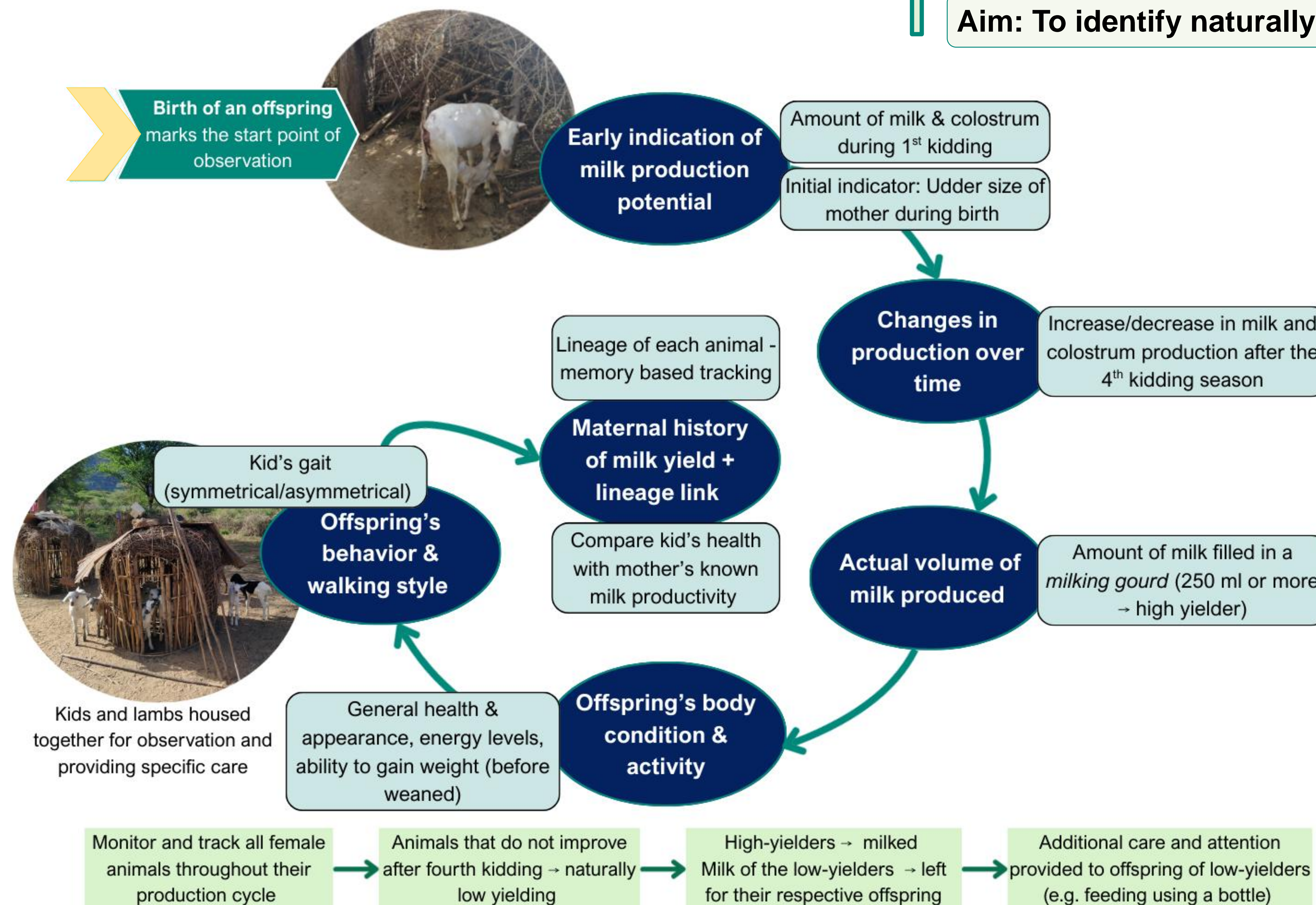
Women are innovators, active decision-makers in livestock management and should be recognized

Co-design essential: interventions in milk marketing are more effective when built on women’s knowledge in low-input systems

Results

1 Information used to identify high-yielders from the herd

Aim: To identify naturally high-yielding animals for milking



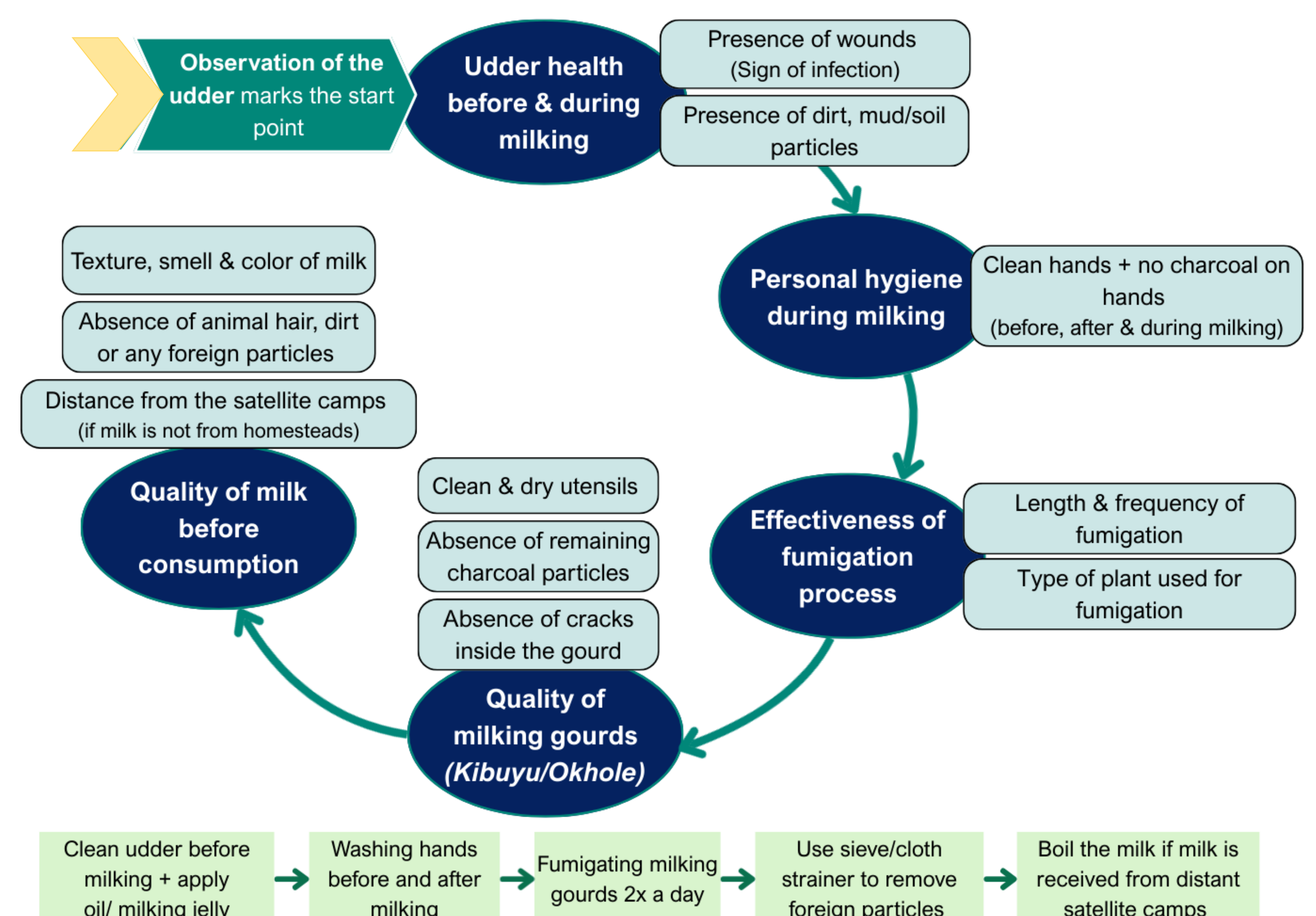
Rendille woman demonstrating milking her goat during a role-play

2 Information relevant pre, peri and post-milking

Aim: Clean, fresh and safe milk for consumption



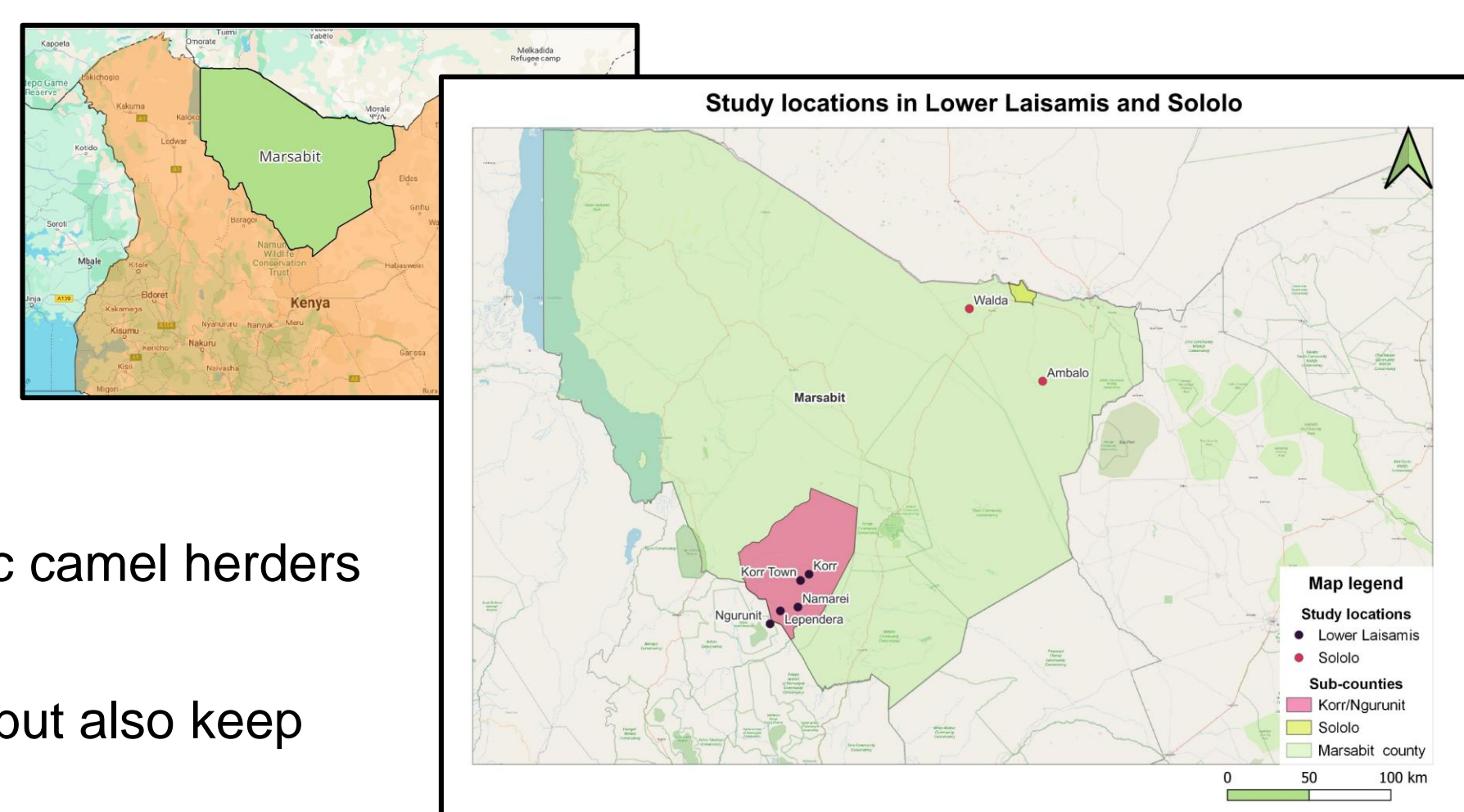
Borana woman demonstrating fumigation process during a role-play



*All photos were taken by the first author with prior oral consent

Study area

- Home to the Rendille and the Borana pastoralists in Kenya's semi-Arid and Arid Lands with high climatic variability
- >70% income in Marsabit → pastoral livestock keeping
- The Rendille** – predominantly nomadic camel herders but also keep sheep, goats and cattle
- The Borana** – primarily cattle herders but also keep camels, sheep, goats



*Map created using QGIS

Methodology



Daily Activity Clocks Focus Group Discussions Role-plays Semi-structured interviews

Explorative qualitative research:

Data collection using a participatory multimethod approach

Thematic coding and qualitative data analysis using MAXQDA v.22.8.0

