



# ANNUAL REPORT

—  
2023

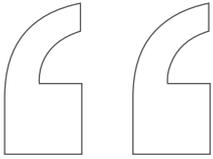




**Cover:** In this photo by Adnan Yakub, community conservancy member, Rose Apua Muya, pours milk into a Turkana gourd during a meeting in Kalama. The Conservancy supports Muya by issuing bursaries to her children and providing coverage for her family through the Conservancy Emergency Fund.

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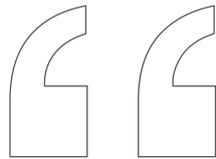
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Unlike before, communities now stand as trailblazers of biodiversity conservation, actively driving rehabilitation initiatives and playing a vital role in the restoration and preservation of our rangelands.

**Rosemary Nenini,**

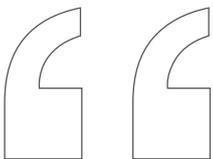
Chairperson, Twala Cultural Manyatta Women Group, Naibunga Upper Community Conservancy



The development of participatory forest management plans through our conservancies and partners has paved way for the community to participate in managing forests in Tana River County, reducing degradation trends and improving our livelihoods.

**Abdula Masoud,**

Chairperson, Kipini Community Forestry Association



Thanks to Ufugaji Bora Mashinani, I gained new knowledge. I am not only a herder but also a supplementary feed supplier, providing other herders in my community with certified livestock feeds for their valuable herds, and enabling them to preserve their livelihoods.

**Isaack Lekoloi,**

Ufugaji Bora Mashinani trainee, Kalama Community Conservancy





“ “

We did not know there were nine different mangrove species and that they all needed different places and soils to grow, so our initial attempts at mangrove restoration were unsuccessful, as very few survived. The survival rate of mangroves is now very high because of the training we received from NRT and The Nature Conservancy.

**Zulfa Hassan,**

Chairperson, Mtangawanda Women Association Group, Pate Marine Community Conservancy

“ “

Biashara Mashinani taught me good financial practices like saving and recordkeeping. I now have a savings account, which has helped me during emergencies and in expanding my businesses. Running multiple businesses at the same time has been easier since I can keep records and track growth.

**Charles Loyatoman,**

Biashara Mashinani trainee and entrepreneur, Masol Community Conservancy



“ “

Following the loss of livestock, our main livelihood, due to drought in 2022 and early 2023, parents struggled to pay school fees. The Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project provided education bursaries for students, so our children remained in school and focussed on their education.

**Sadia Mohammed,**

Chairperson, Nasuulu Community Conservancy



# Overview

## Who We Are

Established in 2004, the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) is an umbrella organisation serving 45 member community conservancies spread across 6.37 million hectares of northern and coastal Kenya and Uganda.

With the generous assistance of its donors, partners and both the county and national governments, NRT continues to support and finance indigenous institutions and provide training enabling them to:



Enhance governance structures.



Lead efforts to promote peace and safety.



Identify, implement, and manage developmental and entrepreneurial projects that transform people's lives and drive the growth of businesses.



Spearhead wildlife and natural resource conservation.



Establish relationships with investors, the government and others for a sustainable future.



## Our Vision

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Resilient communities and ecosystems.

## Our Mission

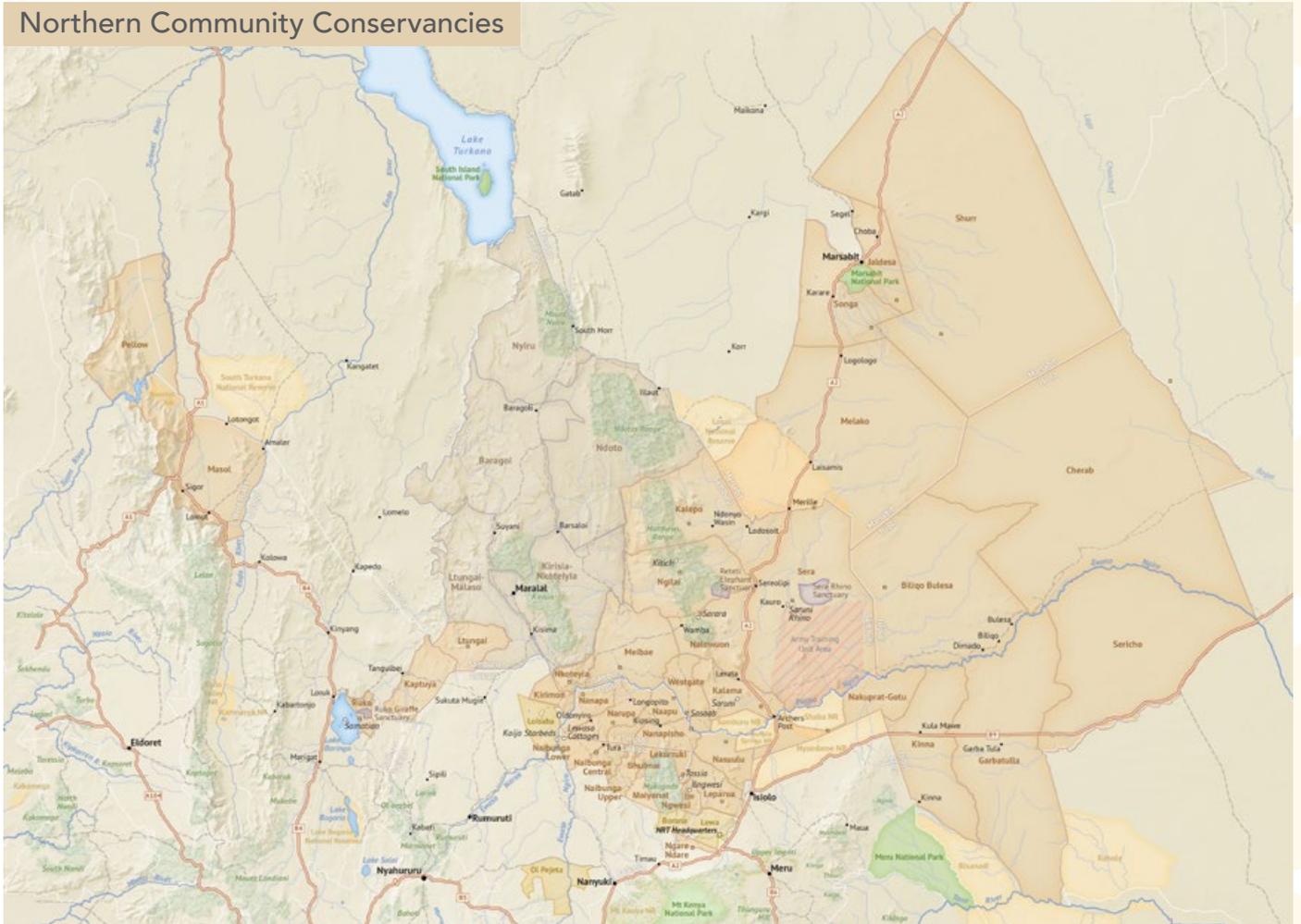
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Develop resilient community conservancies that transform lives, secure peace, and conserve natural resources.



# Our Member Conservancies

## Northern Community Conservancies



## Coastal Community Conservancies



## Message from the Chairman

Change is the only constant. As we navigate the intricacies of a dynamic landscape, the world is calling on us to embrace the new normal.

At the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), we continue to forge ahead, supporting indigenous communities in our member conservancies in preserving nature and building their resilience.

Over the last 20 years, NRT has grown in size, professionalism and impact, expanding its membership to 45 community conservancies in Kenya and Uganda. NRT's community conservancy model has been widely adopted as it has proven to be an effective instrument for fostering peace, protecting wildlife, and accelerating economic development.

The rapid growth NRT has experienced, while applaudable, has presented multiple challenges. Each difficulty encountered has been successfully surmounted, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to working with our member conservancies to increase their climate resilience. This would not have been possible without the unfailing support of our staff, partners and donors across the globe.

It is an undeniable fact that when extreme weather events, such as extended droughts and floods triggered by climate change occur, the most vulnerable populations suffer the most. Climatic events not only lead to devastating losses, but also undermine economic growth in the underserved areas we operate in, as critical infrastructure is destroyed, widening the inequality gap.

A socioeconomic baseline survey recently conducted in 25 NRT member community conservancies, revealed, among other factors, that only 21% of the respondents had graduated from secondary school.

As a community-owned and led institution, we have a long-term goal of ensuring that communities in our member conservancies receive 12 years of education (equivalent to completing secondary school), have an average life expectancy of 75 years, earn Ksh 270,000 (USD 2,000) annually in household income, protect endangered species and maintain healthy ecosystems.

We recognise indigenous communities, who have lived in harmony with wildlife for centuries, are essential to the long-term success of conservation.



Therefore, we continue to empower our member conservancies to become self-sufficient, financially-viable institutions by investing in conservancy leadership development and implementing effective peace, livelihood, and conservation programmes that transform lives and positively impact indigenous communities.

This forward-thinking approach aligns with our 2050 Vision and 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, both created in 2023, to drive the development of vibrant, sustainable communities and ecosystems. As the new year unfolds, we will continue to leverage partnerships within and outside of the conservation space to realise our vision and optimise the impact of the community conservancy model.

Employing an agile, multifaceted, problem-solving approach will increase our effectiveness in addressing existing and emerging conservation issues. I remain confident that with our strong management team and exceptionally talented staff, we will overcome the obstacles in our path, and diligently execute and deliver on our mission.

Reflecting on 2023 and its lessons positions us for future success. This annual report is a testament to what can be achieved when grassroots communities are empowered to steer conservation and their development. I sincerely hope that reading about the meaningful progress made in 2023 with your support, encourages you. We are proud of the milestones accomplished together, and honoured to have you be part of our conservation journey.

**Dr. Julius Kipng'etich,**  
Chairman of the Board

## From the CEO's Desk



I grew up herding my father's livestock in a village in a nomadic, maa-speaking, pastoralist community in remote northern Kenya, where I quickly developed a firm understanding of the importance of a healthy ecosystem. Not in a sophisticated manner as you would imagine, but rather in a personal way.

Born and raised in West Gate Community Conservancy in Samburu County, I discovered from an early age that changes in the natural environment, for better or worse, affected me and my family at a molecular level.

A healthy ecosystem meant finances for school fees were available and all our basic needs could be met. As long as the surrounding rangelands, forests, and rivers were in good shape, and our livestock had access to pasture, we could make ends meet. Our well-conditioned herds would produce greater yields and fetch higher market prices when sold, generating sufficient income for my parents.

When the tide turned and a catastrophic drought hit, wiping out much of my father's herds and the livestock economy on which our pastoralist community relied, life became much more difficult.

For many families, including mine, drought was just one more item in a burgeoning list of challenges communities in this arid part of Kenya contended with. It not only robbed the people of their livestock, but also the only source of livelihood.

A lack of access to basic necessities including water, and a spike in human-wildlife conflict as elephants competed for water, exacerbated the already dire situation. Raising school fees under these circumstances, when every day was a fight for survival, was impossible. I had no choice but to shelve my academic dreams.

Had the West Gate Conservancy community not rallied together to sponsor my education, I would not have been the first in my family to go to school, the first from the Conservancy to graduate from a Kenyan university or the first conservancy manager of West Gate.

The community, despite the prevailing circumstances, paved the way to success for me and set me on a path that saw the boy frequently spotted grazing his family's cattle, sheep and goats, grow to become the winner of Stanford Law School's Environmental Sustainability Award, and the CEO of the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT).

Owned, led and driven by the indigenous communities it supports, since its inception, NRT has sought to empower marginalised communities and increase their climate resilience through its community conservancy model.

Having started with nine member conservancies in 2004 when NRT was instituted, today, communities in 45 conservancies, spanning 6.37 million hectares have put their faith in us to guide and support them in their conservation journey, a responsibility we do not take lightly. Like any other family, we are delighted to see ours grow, and it was with open arms that we welcomed Mayianat and Shulmai Community Conservancies into our membership in 2023.

I consider it the highest honour and privilege that every day I lead NRT's amazing team in transforming lives and conserving nature in the most marginalised parts of northern and coastal Kenya and Uganda. Working alongside unfailing partners, we are implementing programmes, that are catalysing economic development and driving climate adaptation in arid and semi-arid lands.

Our vocational and business management training programmes, Ujuzi Manyattani and Biashara Mashinani are raising entrepreneurs in member community conservancies, and promoting livelihood diversification while buffering pastoralists against climate shocks. Through their income-generating activities, these conservancy entrepreneurs are growing the local economy by approximately Ksh 752 million (USD 5.5 million) every year.

We will soon be crossing the 20-year mark of NRT's existence and I am joyous when I reflect on our impact over the years. 2023 saw us continue to make a real difference for people and nature and achieve remarkable milestones.

In a year hallmarked by inflation, unemployment and a spike in the cost of living, our member conservancies created 1,130 temporary job opportunities on top of 1,592 permanent jobs. Additionally, we disbursed loans to over 5,300 enterprises across the NRT landscape, enabling them to expand.

The 2022 drought extended into January 2023. To support struggling pastoralist families during this challenging time and promote access to learning, using revenue from the Northern Rangelands Kenya Carbon Project, which is advancing the frontiers of natural climate solutions, we disbursed bursaries to thousands of students in community conservancies, including those enrolled in secondary school or pursuing higher education in colleges and universities.

And when the El Niño phenomenon swept across the country causing extensive flooding, we did what we do best, showed up for communities when it counted the most. Marshalling our resources, we acted swiftly to respond to government leaders' calls for emergency evacuation assistance, saving lives, including that of a mother and her unborn child who were airlifted to a hospital.

2023 saw us enhance hospitality management and marketing of community-owned tourism bandas (self-catering accommodation facilities). These efforts bore fruit and tourism revenue climbed to Ksh 128.8 million (USD 954,074), providing indigenous communities with much-needed funds to finance priority development projects in various areas including education, water, health and infrastructure.

Most of Kenya's wildlife are found outside government-protected areas and are hosted on

community lands. Community conservancies play a vital role as wildlife corridors between the protected areas. The community conservancy structure provides an effective structure for community wildlife protection, facilitating tourism. When an entire community commits to coexist with wildlife and becomes wildlife guardians, critically endangered species flourish while the community benefits from tourism revenue.

In 2023, Sera Community Conservancy maintained its impressive streak of not having any rhino poached in their Sanctuary. Even more commendable is the fact that Sera set a record as the first community conservancy to perform black rhino ear notching in Kenya.

At the coast, sea turtles nested and hatched unencumbered as conservancy scouts stepped up patrols, and community members joined NRT Coast in beach cleanups, preventing marine litter pollution. Through our Gear Exchange Programme 85% of the fishermen in Kiunga Community Conservancy in Lamu County demonstrated their commitment to safeguarding the ocean by trading in their beach seine nets for sustainable fishing gear.

This has not only helped preserve the ocean floor and fish habitat, but also increased fish catch, population and size, improving fishers' livelihoods and the ocean's capacity as a carbon sink. Further boosting carbon sequestration efforts, women in NRT Coast conservancies planted thousands of mangroves in 2023.

Across the NRT landscape, over 100,000 trees were planted in terrestrial forests during the year, further contributing towards the achievement of Kenya's national tree planting goals. To prevent deforestation, we supported the development of community forest associations and participatory forest management plans.

Additionally, we formulated an Energy Strategy that will see improved access to clean and reliable energy in member community conservancies, ensuring the safety of women and young girls, who frequently trek long distances on paths fraught with danger to fetch firewood.

Over the course of the year, we fortified our partnerships with the county and national governments amplifying the impact we had on communities. Several county governments approached us for support in conservancy formation and we willingly lent our expertise.

Among governmental leaders, appreciation for community conservancies as an effective instrument for economic development and peace-building is rising. We will continue to align our member conservancies' management plans with county integrated development plans, and work hand in hand with county leaders to draft legislation that fosters an enabling environment for communities to conserve their natural resources.

Building on the findings of a recently concluded organisational review, in 2023, we devised NRT's Vision 2050 and Strategic Plan. Both are shaping our future and will remain our blueprint and compass as 2024 unfolds.

Working with Connected Conservation Foundation, we will continue to deploy our Internet of Things (IoT) network, which is Africa's largest landscape-wide conservation network. This will enhance anti-poaching initiatives across the NRT landscape, making wildlife conservation safer and easier for front-line community scouts.



**Tom Lalampaa,**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Northern Rangelands Trust

In closing, I take this opportunity to thank our staff and senior management team, who are the boots on the ground, traversing the country, and frequently beyond its borders to address the needs of our member conservancies. Your tireless efforts do not go unnoticed, and your dedication keeps me going.

Our esteemed donors and partners, are integral to our success. We are grateful to each one for their unfailing support of our member conservancies and our operations. Thank you for all you do. I am incredibly proud of the impact we achieved together in 2023.

I owe a debt of gratitude to our Board of Directors and our Council of Elders, whose wisdom, timely guidance and direction ensure we withstand catastrophic setbacks and experience continuous growth year after year.

Lastly, to you all who followed our work in 2023, *asante!* Our conservation journey continues in 2024, and we are glad to have you by our side.

## Abbreviations

**BMU:** Beach Management Unit

**CI:** Conservation International

**CFA:** Community Forest Association

**CLF:** Conservancy Livelihoods Fund

**CoMMS:** Conservancy Management and Monitoring System (a simple system for monitoring trends in wildlife (Wildlife-CoMMS), attitudes (Social-CoMMS), and vegetation (Veg-CoMMS) in conservancies)

**DANIDA:** Danish International Development Agency

**EU:** The European Union

**GESI:** Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

**HWC:** Human-wildlife conflict

**Kiunga Community Wildlife Association (KICOWA):** Kiunga Community Conservancy

**KFS:** Kenya Forest Service

**KWS:** Kenya Wildlife Service

**NKRCP:** The Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project

**NRT:** The Northern Rangelands Trust

**Kenya RangER Program:** The Kenya Rangelands Ecosystem Services Productivity Program

**TNC:** The Nature Conservancy

**USAID:** United States Agency for International Development

**WSTF:** Water Sector Trust Fund

For this report: Ksh 135 = US\$ 1

The Kenya shilling-to-dollar exchange rate fluctuated throughout 2023, ranging from a low of 127 to a high of 155.

# Together We Are



[www.nrt-kenya.org](http://www.nrt-kenya.org)



# LIFETIME IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS



**701,000**

local community members benefitting from the conservancy model



**1,366**

permanent staff



**162**

development projects



**6.37 million**

hectares under conservation



**14**

conservancies receiving **Ksh 36.3 million (USD 268,888)** in carbon revenue each year



**32,870**

students have benefitted from bursaries



**Ksh 565 million**

disbursed in CLF history

# 2023 IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

## Peace

**14,923**



community members engaged in peacebuilding initiatives

**245**



peace interventions conducted to prevent conflict

## Governance

**Ksh 671 million** 

(USD 4.9 million) generated in commercial revenue for conservancy operations

**Ksh 192 million** 

(USD 1.4 million) received in funding from 2 county governments

**611** 

people from 29 community conservancies underwent LAMP training

**2** 

new community conservancies joined NRT membership

**300** 

people attended International Women's Day celebrations in Ruko Community Conservancy

## Wildlife

 **11** Hirola  **3** Giraffe

 **2** Black rhino **births recorded in conservancy sanctuaries**

**0** 

cases of elephants poached for ivory

**107** 

sea turtle nests identified

**40-kilometre** 

electric fence erected in Naibunga to mitigate human-wildlife conflict

**4** 

scouts awarded for outstanding protection of the endangered sea turtle and hirola

## Rangelands

4,000



herders reached by the Mobile Education Programme

3,000



hectares of degraded rangelands restored

50,000



semi-circular bunds constructed

## Marine

85%



of fishers voluntarily exchanged illegal beach seine nets for new sustainable gear

8,789



tonnes of ocean plastic waste collected

50,790



mangrove seedlings planted

## Forest

150,030



trees planted across 5 conservancies

60



biogas digesters installed

## Livelihoods

Ksh

77.9 million



(USD 577,037) disbursement approved by the CLF to various conservancies

Ksh  
**35.5 million**



(USD 262,962) generated by  
BeadWORKS in product sales

Ksh  
**16.4 million**



(USD 121,481) generated  
by bandas (self-catering  
accommodation facilities)

## Human Rights

**4**



policies and Free Prior and Informed  
Consent (FPIC) guidelines developed

**120**



community members  
participated in validation of a  
draft grievance mechanism

## Carbon

Total of

Ksh  
**322.9 million**



(USD 1.9 million) disbursed across  
all NKRCPC conservancies

**31**



development projects  
implemented with  
carbon funding

Ksh  
**90 million**



(USD 555,625) issued in bursaries benefitting 13,122 students

# Chapter 1

## Independent and Self-sustaining Community Conservancies

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167 conservancies existed in Kenya as of 2023, 44 of which were NRT member community conservancies, and an additional NRT member located in Uganda. The majority of these conservancies were established within the last 20 years.

The community conservancy model is still evolving, but has demonstrated significant potential and generated positive and direct economic, communal and environmental results.

NRT member community conservancies cover 6.37 million hectares and are benefitting over one million people, protecting 65% of the country's wildlife and driving economic growth through sustainable land use.

Since its inception, NRT has grown at an exponential rate, with an increasing number of community conservancies applying for membership. NRT has remained steadfast in pursuing its goal of increasing its members' independence by investing in capacity building, good governance and mentorship and policy development.



NRT continues to work alongside community conservancies in resource mobilisation and improvement of the legal environment through the development of conservancy policies. NRT is also working closely with policymakers in an effort to increase conservancies' funding from both national and county governments.

This helps ensure the sustainability of the expanding community conservation movement while reducing reliance on donor funds.

NRT has led the way in developing resilient community conservancies that can transform lives, build peace and conserve the natural environment.



## What is working so far?

- Commercial revenues continue to grow, although this remains heavily skewed to a few conservancies.
- County Governments continue to support conservancies. However, their contribution is still heavily focused on capital investments.
- The Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project (NKRCP) continues to generate numerous social, economic and environmental benefits for the 14 NRT member community conservancies (21 conservancy units) participating in its activities.

Increasing the independence and self-sustaining capacity of our member community conservancies is a journey of a thousand steps. In 2023, with partners' support, we achieved the following milestones in improving the community conservancies' sustainability:



- Ksh 671 million (USD 4.9 million) was generated in commercial revenue for conservancy operations, an increase of 11% from 2022.
- Ksh 192 million (USD 1.4 million) was received in funding from the Samburu and Lamu County Governments.
- Nasuulu Community Conservancy completed the construction of its three Ksh 23 million (USD 170,370) tourism bandas (self-catering accommodation facilities).
- NRT's capacity building team delivered Leadership and Management Programme (LAMP) trainings in 29 community conservancies to enhance governance. The team also trained conservancy board committee members in financial management and provided QuickBooks training for conservancy managers.
- Two business incubation initiatives were implemented in Nasuulu and West Gate Community Conservancies, resulting in the construction of Nasuulu tourism bandas and a training facility, respectively.
- 15 newly recruited senior conservancy management staff underwent orientation on NRT's programmes and activities.
- NRT's grants team provided fundraising capacity-building training to 83 conservancy managers and staff.
- NRT Coast conservancies rolled out a regional community-driven fundraising campaign, resulting in new grants of Ksh 52 million (USD 382,752) to support programmes and operations of the regional office. Six NRT Coast conservancies applied for funding under the Water Resources and Climate Change Investment Project. Pate and Kiunga Community Conservancies secured Ksh 20.5 million (USD 151,851) and Ksh 2.2 million (USD 16,296), respectively, through private fundraising.
- West Gate invested Ksh 13 million (USD 96,296) received as compensation for a power line, from the Kenya Electricity Transmission Company, into a training centre.
- NRT East's community conservancies independently submitted funding proposals to the Water Sector Trust Fund and USAID STAWI Programme.

We continue to develop and implement tailor-made financial solutions for our member conservancies, providing support in financing, business incubation, partnership formation and fundraising. These efforts will likely ensure that 10 conservancies undergoing the pilot programme are well-positioned to achieve sustainability in the coming years.



## Chapter 2

### Flagship Species and Habitat Conservation

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Wildlife and the ecosystems they inhabit are essential to our survival on Earth. Approximately 65% of Kenya's wildlife lives outside government-protected areas.

Conservancies host a significant proportion of the national and global populations and provide vital range and landscape connectivity for critically endangered wildlife.

In the NRT landscape, three member community conservancies are operating wildlife sanctuaries and spearheading community-led conservation of endangered species, facilitating their recovery.

These conservancies are well-positioned to address wildlife threats such as habitat loss aggravated by climate change, poaching, human-wildlife conflict, and unplanned settlements, which cause rangeland degradation, destroying wildlife habitats, and cutting off critical wildlife corridors.



Through their efforts, NRT's member community conservancies are significantly contributing to the achievement of Kenya's goal of conserving its wildlife heritage. With improved community and wildlife safety, increased anti-poaching patrols and enhanced wildlife monitoring, poaching has declined, wildlife populations have grown and stabilised, and elephant range has expanded into previously insecure areas.

NRT's community conservancy model not only promotes wildlife protection, but also the coexistence of wildlife and people, and the transformation of the lives of indigenous groups through community-based tourism. This ensures that the communities protecting wildlife earn and directly benefit from their natural resources while conserving them.

Revenue from tourism helps fund community development projects that address community needs such as improved access to education, healthcare and clean safe water.



## Ecological Monitoring

Wildlife monitoring is carried out by community conservancy scouts using our Wildlife Conservancy Management Monitoring System, also referred to as Wildlife-CoMMS, or WCoMMS. Wildlife-CoMMS is a conservancy scout-based monitoring system that helps conservancy scouts collect and monitor trends in wildlife behaviour, illegal activities, wildlife mortality and human-wildlife conflict. It also enables them to collect information on social attitudes toward wildlife and conservation. This data helps conservancies shape and adapt their wildlife management approach, as it highlights priorities, successes, and sometimes failures.

Conservancy scouts are currently monitoring 15 endangered and critically endangered species found in NRT member community conservancies: the hirola antelope, black rhino, Tana River red colobus, Tana crested mangabey, elephant, African wild dog, Grevy’s zebra, reticulated giraffe, Rothschild’s giraffe, Beisa oryx, two endangered sea turtles: green and hawksbill, roan antelope, pangolin, and the pancake tortoise.

To complement the data obtained from Wildlife-CoMMS, NRT, in collaboration with the KWS, Grevy’s Zebra Trust and other partners, undertakes periodic wildlife population surveys, and researches on wildlife habitats. NRT also monitors elephants’ movements and behaviour and undertakes elephant collaring exercises in collaboration with Save the Elephants.



15

endangered and critically endangered species found in NRT member community conservancies currently being monitored by conservancy scouts

### To further enhance ecological monitoring across our member community conservancies,



- » 702 conservancy scouts underwent Wildlife-CoMMS training tailor-made for Wildlife-CoMMS database operators.
- » 5 Wildlife-CoMMS feedback sessions were held across the NRT landscape and attended by 139 community conservancy scouts.



Rangers demonstrating how EarthRanger works at the Lewa Wildlife Conservancy/NRT Joint Operations and Communications Centre.



# Safeguarding Endangered Species

## The Hirola

The hirola (*Beatragus hunteri*) is the world's most endangered antelope, with an estimated global population of around 500 individuals. It is endemic to the arid woodlands and savannahs of Kenya and Somalia. Since 2012, Ishaqbini Community Conservancy in Garissa County has been leading the recovery and protection of the species, through its hirola sanctuary, Kenya's first community project of its kind.

### In 2023:



- » 42 hirola were counted inside the sanctuary in a combined aerial and ground survey. Two herds of 11 and 9 individuals were also sighted outside the sanctuary.
- » 10 new hirola births were recorded inside Ishaqbini Sanctuary.
- » 50,909 heads of livestock from 334 households in Ishaqbini were vaccinated against multiple diseases including black quarter (BQ), anthrax, contagious bovine pleuropneumonia, and sheep and goat pox. The vaccination exercise was conducted to improve the health of livestock, safeguard the livelihoods of the pastoralist Ishaqbini community, and reduce the risk of disease transmission from cattle, goats and sheep to hirola.
- » Predation continued to undermine hirola population growth outside the sanctuary.
- » Rangeland rehabilitation activities were undertaken, and a pilot grass irrigation project was launched. It is anticipated that these initiatives will ensure an adequate supply of forage is available for hirola.

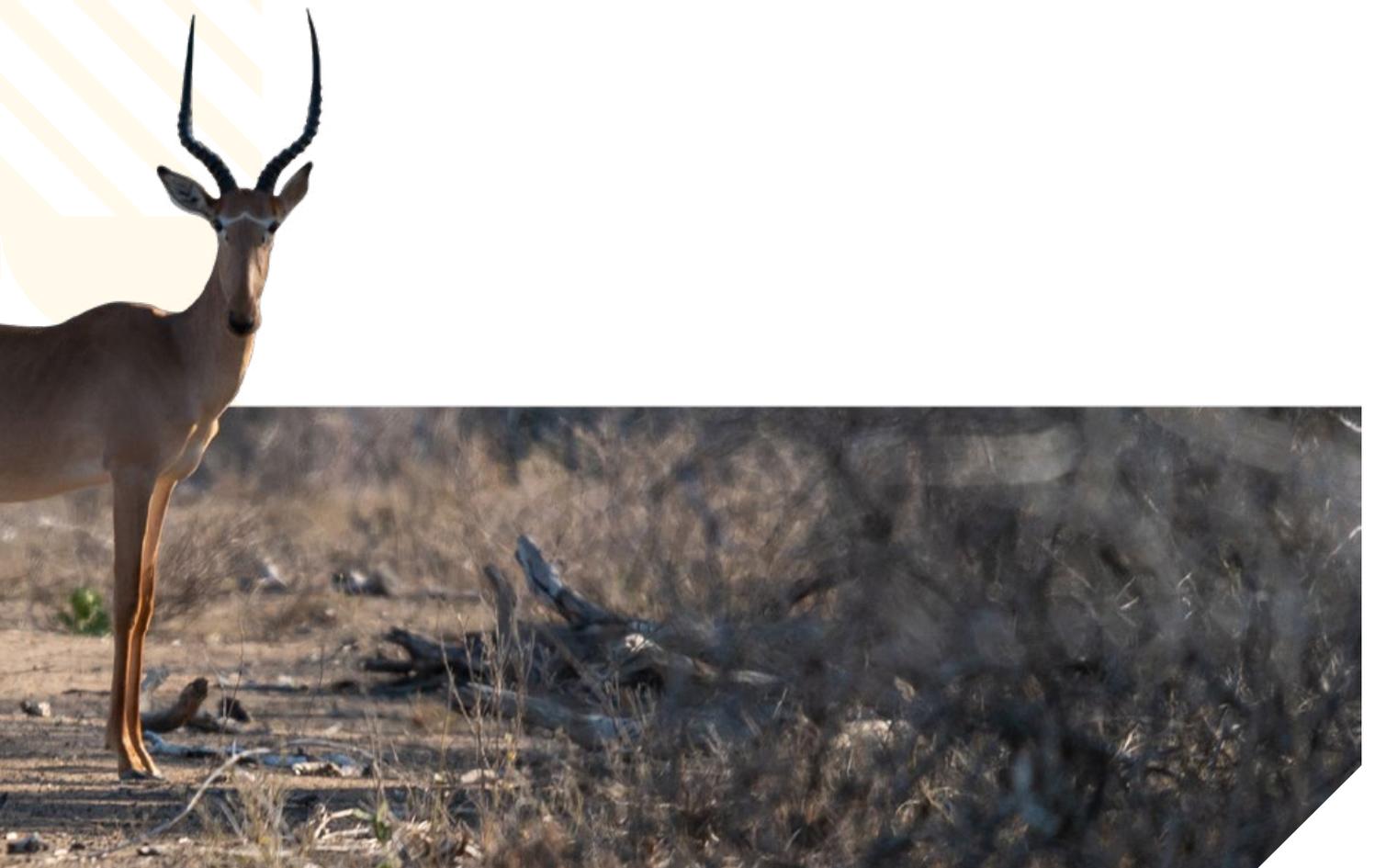


### Hirola Sanctuary Population (August 2012-December 2023)



Since 2013, the hirola population has grown steadily. In 2021, a drought hit northern Kenya, adversely impacting the critically endangered hirola in Ishaqbini Hirola Sanctuary.

To increase the species' chances of survival as the region continued to grapple with the drought, and address overpopulation in the Sanctuary, 64 hirola were released from the Sanctuary in 2021, nearly halving its population. Hirola numbers in the Sanctuary have steadily increased since the release.



## The Rothschild's Giraffe

The Rothschild's giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis rothschildi*) is a subspecies of the Northern giraffe that is native to Kenya and Uganda. Over the years, the species has suffered habitat loss as a result of human settlement and poaching for its meat and hide.

From 10 in 2021 to 16 (10 female and 6 male) in 2023, the population of the Rothschild's giraffe in Ruko Community Conservancy, Baringo County, has steadily increased after the endangered species was successfully translocated, between 2020 and 2021, from the disappearing Long'icharo Island on the eastern shores of Lake Baringo, to a 17.7 square kilometre sanctuary on Ruko's mainland.

The IUCN classifies the Rothschild's giraffe as near threatened, with less than 3,000 Rothschild's giraffes left in Africa, 800 of which live in Kenya.

Ruko Community Conservancy is awaiting KWS approval to translocate more Rothschild's giraffes from other parts of the country to its sanctuary to expand their population, diversify their gene pool, and create a breeding ground that will facilitate the reintroduction of the giraffes to areas where they were once found.

### In 2023:



- » The Conservancy reported livestock influx in Ruko Giraffe Sanctuary and conducted community awareness meetings to deter herders from invading the facility.
- » Ruko Community Conservancy partnered with Twiga Walinzi to raise giraffe conservation awareness among community members.



## The Black Rhino

The black rhino (*Diceros bicornis*), also known as the hook-lipped rhinoceros, is a rhino species that is native to eastern and southern Africa.

Over the years, rampant poaching and habitat loss have led to the decline of the black rhino population, and the species is now classified as critically endangered.

The African Rhino Specialist Group of IUCN's Species Survival Commission estimated a 4.2% growth in black rhino numbers from 2021 to 2022, with approximately 6,487 individuals across Africa.

## Sera Rhino Sanctuary

In 2015, Sera Community Conservancy made history by becoming the first community conservancy to establish a breeding sanctuary for black rhinos in East Africa, the Sera Rhino Sanctuary.

To create the Sanctuary's founding population, the Sera community, KWS, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy and NRT collaboratively reintroduced 10 critically endangered black rhinos to Sera, 25 years after the last black rhino was poached in the area.

Having started with a founding population of 10, the Sanctuary has seen a 100% increase in rhino numbers, and Sera Rhino Sanctuary is currently home to 21 rhinos.

The formation of the Sanctuary has led to the creation of jobs, with 114 community members employed in various roles, including conservancy scouts and rhino caregivers.

The Sanctuary has contributed to the economic growth of Sera through tourism, which generates revenue for community development projects such as education, water and health.

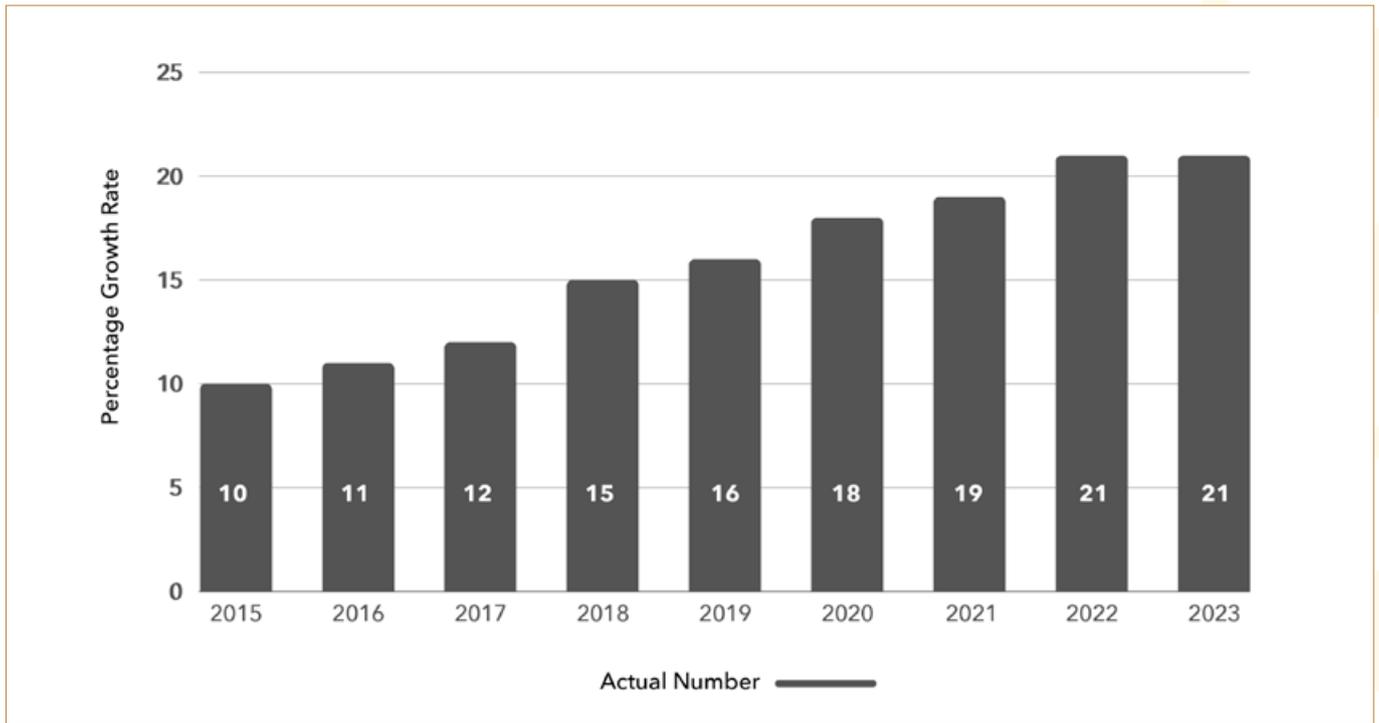
### In 2023:



- » 2 black rhino calves were born at Sera Rhino Sanctuary but regrettably died from natural causes.
- » 6 black rhinos were ear-notched to improve monitoring and enhance their protection.



### Growth Rate of Black Rhinos in Sera Rhino Sanctuary



### Beisa Oryx

The Beisa oryx (*Oryx beisa*) is a subspecies of the East African oryx and mostly inhabits arid shrublands and grasslands, foraging on grass, leaves, buds and fruits.

Large populations of the Beisa oryx can be found in Nakuprat-Gotu Community Conservancy, as well as the adjacent National Reserves of Shaba and Buffalo Springs.

Kenya’s current Beisa oryx population is 11,765. The IUCN Red List classifies the species as endangered.

The 2021 National Wildlife Census conducted by the KWS revealed there were 2,414 individuals in the Laikipia-Samburu-Isiolo ecosystem in 2021.

814 individuals were counted during an aerial census conducted in September 2021 in Nakuprat-Gotu Community Conservancy and the surrounding reserves.



## The Grevy's Zebra

The Grevy's zebra (*Equus grevyi*) is the largest living wild equine. This species stands taller than the plains zebra and has thinner, distinct black and white stripes and large fuzzy ears. It is listed as an endangered species by the IUCN.

In the past, Grevy's zebra freely roamed the semi-arid scrublands and plains. However, due to poaching, habitat loss and civil unrest in the 1970s, their population drastically declined.

Competition for pasture and water between livestock and people due to climate change-induced drought reduced their numbers even further, and confined them to southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya, where today they can be found in NRT member community conservancies in Samburu, Marsabit, Isiolo and Laikipia Counties.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) listed the species as endangered, with less than 3,000 individuals remaining in the wild, particularly in NRT member conservancies within Laikipia, Samburu, Isiolo and Marsabit counties.

## The Pancake Tortoise

The pancake tortoise (*Malacochersus tornieri*) is a unique and interesting species of tortoise with a thin and flat shell that enables it to be more agile, flexible and faster than any of its counterparts. It is native to the arid shrublands and savannahs of Kenya and Tanzania.

Populations of the pancake tortoise have rapidly diminished due to habitat loss caused by human encroachment, and hunting by illegal pet traders attracted to its distinctly coloured shell. The pancake tortoise has been classified as critically endangered by the IUCN.

NRT and Lewa Wildlife Conservancy have partnered to better understand the species' presence and genetic composition in northern Kenya.

### Pancake Tortoise Survey Numbers (2023)

Conservancy	Numbers
Lewa Wildlife Conservancy	75
Il Ngwesi Community Conservancy	12
Leparua Community Conservancy	38
Nasuulu Community Conservancy	12
Lekurruki Community Conservancy	15
Kalama Community Conservancy	21
West Gate Community Conservancy	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>178</b>

## The African Wild Dog

The African wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*) is the largest wild canine in Africa and is regarded as the world's most efficient hunter, with a hunting success rate of 80%.

Populations of African wild dogs have plummeted over the years, largely due to habitat fragmentation, poaching and disease, with an estimated 6,600 individuals remaining. The species is listed as endangered by the IUCN.

Several NRT member community conservancies in Marsabit, Samburu, Isiolo and Laikipia Counties are home to the African wild dog, and collaborate closely with other organisations to monitor, maintain and safeguard this threatened predator and its unique ecosystem.

## The Pangolin

Of the eight existing pangolin species, four are found in Africa. Temminck’s Ground pangolin (*Smutsia temminckii*), the only pangolin species found in eastern and southern Africa, has become severely endangered in recent decades due to poaching and trafficking for its meat and scales. The pangolin accounts for up to 20% of all illegal wildlife trading and is believed to be the world’s most trafficked mammal.

Pellow Community Conservancy in West Pokot County is home to the pangolin, with community members reporting increased sightings and illegal captures of the species in recent years. The Conservancy has intensified its conservation efforts for the species, with trained scouts focusing on pangolin protection and raising awareness in communities about the importance of conserving this endangered mammal.

## Sea Turtle and Marine Mammal Conservation

Five species of sea turtles can be found in the waters off Kenya’s north coast in Lamu County, where NRT Coast supports Pate and Kiunga Community Conservancies in conserving two species: the critically endangered hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and the endangered green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*).



Since 2016, community conservancy scouts in NRT Coast’s marine conservancies have been monitoring and protecting sea turtles, marine mammals, and other marine Endangered, Threatened and Protected Species (ETPs). Poaching, collection of turtle eggs, loss of nesting habitat, and netting as bycatch are all threats sea turtle populations face in coastal Kenya.

In 2023, 4 sea turtles were rescued after being caught in fishing nets as bycatch in Kiunga Community Conservancy.

Working in partnership with KWS and fisheries’ Beach Management Units (BMUs), the Conservancy identified 107 sea turtle nests. This is the first time NRT Coast marine conservancies have recorded more than 40 nests in a year since the inception of the community-based Sea Turtle Conservation Programme.

The rise in sightings of nests is largely attributed to the operationalisation of the recently upgraded KWS Mongo Sharif Camp, which has increased conservancy scout patrols, enhanced sea turtle monitoring and improved management of marine litter and plastics, resulting in cleaner coastal beaches.

Sea Turtle Nest Sightings in Kiunga (2023)			
Period	Species		Total Nests
	Green Turtle	Hawksbill Turtle	
January-March	30	-	30
April-June	48	1	49
July-September	15	-	15
October-December	12	1	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>107</b>

# Key Species Monitoring

## Primates

Ndera, Lower Tana Delta, and Hanshak Community Conservancies are home to two of Kenya's most endangered primates: the Tana River red colobus and the Tana River crested mangabey, which are endemic to the riverine forests of the Lower Tana River and cannot be found anywhere else in the world. Their populations are estimated at less than 2,000 individuals along the Tana River.

Both species are endangered by habitat loss caused by logging, clearing of land for agriculture, the drying out of riverine forests due to shifting Tana River dynamics and climate change, which has led to decreased rainfall and increased drought frequency in recent years.

In 2023, the Kenya Institute of Primate Research conducted a survey in 34 forest patches in Ndera Community Conservancy and Tana River Primates National Reserve, which revealed that:

- The Tana River red colobus population in the examined area (22 forest patches) was between 1,005 and 1,144, with an average of 1,075 individuals. The Tana River mangabey population (in 14 forest patches) ranged from 973 to 1,032, with an average of 912 individuals. The population was primarily made up of adults, with poor juvenile recruitment.
- The forest patches under active protection by Ndera Community Conservancy had the highest number of primate groups (132), with 82 groups observed in the other forest patches surveyed. The Conservancy's forest patches supported 66% of the Tana River red colobus and 69% of the Tana River mangabey groups.



# 35,283

sandgrouse were counted in Sera Community Conservancy and 1,021 in Kalepo Community Conservancy during the 2023 census



# Elephants

## The African Savanna Elephant

African savannah elephants are the largest land animals on Earth. They are found in Sub-Saharan Africa, with 20% being in eastern Africa. Their population has declined due to poaching and loss of habitat, and they are classified as endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature's Red List of Threatened Species.

In 1973, Kenya's elephant population stood at 167,000. By 1989, this population had plummeted to 16,000, primarily due to widespread ivory poaching. As of 2021, the Country's elephant population numbered 36,280 individuals, with a 2.4% annual growth rate.

## Elephants' Movements

Save the Elephants (STE) has been undertaking extensive research on elephants in Samburu County for the past two decades. As part of STE's research, collars fitted with global positioning systems are placed on select elephants, and the data collected from these collars is used to analyse the elephants' movements.

NRT, in collaboration with STE, collared more than 50 elephants in order to examine how community conservancies affected the expansion of elephant safe range, and identify crucial corridors in the landscape that require conservation.

## Elephant Habitat Restoration

Critical habitat for elephants has been destroyed and fragmented due to deforestation, agriculture and urbanisation.

NRT and the conservancies are safeguarding elephant habitat by spearheading community-led conservation, raising awareness about wildlife corridor protection, securing elephant ranges, promoting sustainable land-use practices, and implementing habitat connectivity and restoration projects across the NRT landscape, including reforestation.

## Technology

NRT and its partners are harnessing the power of technology to protect endangered species, including elephants, and improve ranger patrols. Through EarthRanger (a real-time data application), an upgraded radio network fitted with cloud-based sensors and an Internet of Things (IoT) network, we are now able to gather, monitor and analyse wildlife and environmental data in real time at our Joint Operations and Communication Centre. This innovation has connected all conservancies across the NRT landscape to a wide area network, enabling real-time monitoring in member conservancies.

## Anti-Poaching Patrols

NRT and the conservancies continue to prioritise wildlife safety in response to the risks posed by trophy poaching.

In community conservancies, wildlife conservation and management are mostly carried out by NRT's conservancy scouts and wildlife response units, who support the KWS' efforts through daily patrols, wildlife monitoring and conservation awareness campaigns.

## Human-elephant Conflict

The conflict between humans and elephants is increasingly taking centre stage, as it currently is one of the leading causes of elephant mortality across the NRT landscape. To address this, NRT is creating elephant exclusion zones by erecting fences around settlements and farmlands in regions where elephants abound. This ensures the safety of community members and their property while preventing potential human-elephant conflict.

## Aerial Surveys

The population of elephants in the NRT landscape is estimated using aerial surveys carried out by the KWS and other stakeholders. A census is conducted every five years.

## Elephant Mortality

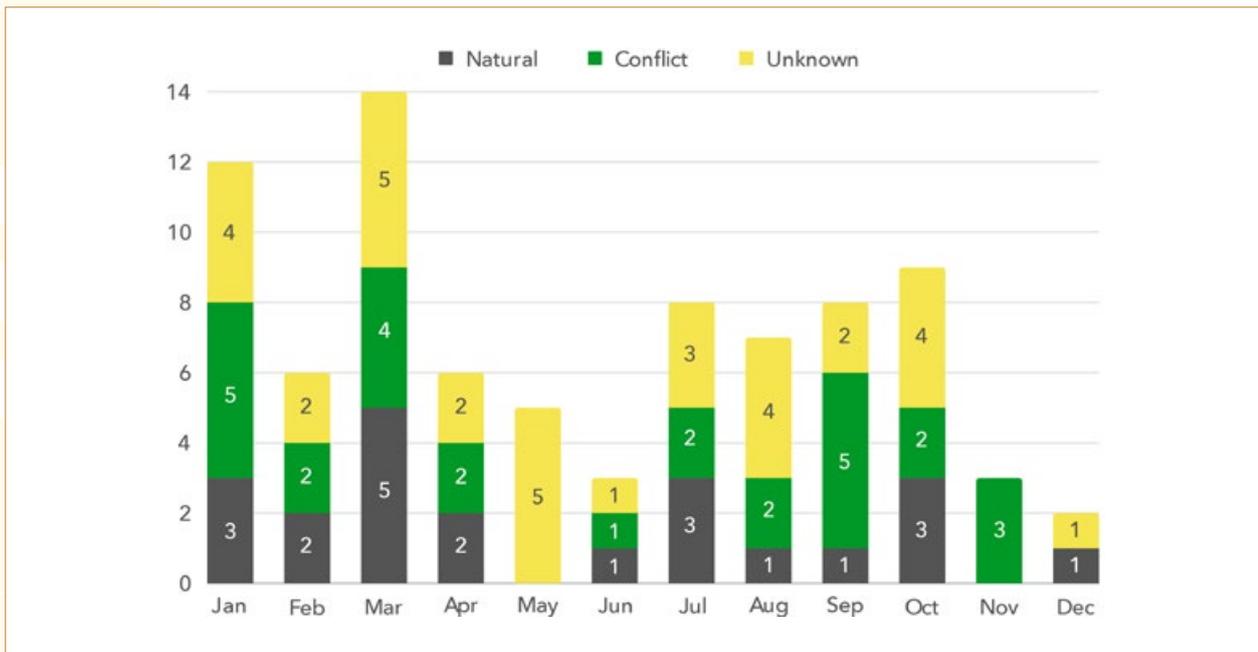
The Proportion of Illegal Killed Elephants (PIKE) in NRT member community conservancies (Samburu, Laikipia, Isiolo, Meru and Marsabit Counties) in 2023 was 33%, up from 20% in 2022.

In 2023, there were no cases of elephants poached for ivory in NRT member community conservancies. This is a noteworthy achievement for the conservancies, coming off a peak of 103 poaching instances in 2012.

83 elephant deaths were recorded in 2023 across the NRT landscape, a significant drop from 392 cases recorded in 2022. The four consecutive failed rainy seasons experienced in the last two years contributed to elephant mortality.

In 2023, elephant deaths were mostly attributed to Human-Wildlife Conflict (HWC), and natural and unknown causes. Naibunga, Nannapa, and Nasuulu Community Conservancies reported 11 cases of HWC, a significant decrease from 80 in 2022.

Elephant Mortality in NRT Member Community Conservancies by Cause of Death (2023)



## Causes of Elephant Mortality in NRT Member Community Conservancies (2023)

Conservancy	Conflict	Illegally Killed	Natural	Problem Animal Control	Poaching	Unknown	Grand Total	PIKE (%)
Biliqo Bulesa	2	0	1	0	0	0	3	66.67
Il Ngwesi	0	0	3	0	0	1	4	0.00
Kalama	2	0	0	0	0	2	4	50.00
Kalepo	2	0	1	0	0	6	9	22.22
Maiyanat	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.00
Meibae	0	0	1	0	0	3	4	0.00
Melako	0	0	1	0	0	2	3	0.00
Naibunga	5	0	2	0	0	4	11	45.45
Nannapa	3	0	2	0	0	3	8	37.50
Nasuulu	3	0	0	0	0	1	4	75.00
Ngilai	2	0	3	0	0	0	5	40.00
Nkoteiya	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	100.00
Pellow	1	0	2	0	0	1	4	25.00
Sera	1	0	0	0	0	3	4	25.00
Shulmai	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.00
Songa	1	0	1	0	0	1	3	33.33
West Gate	0	0	2	0	0	2	4	0.00
Lower Tana	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.00
Garbatulla	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.00
Hanshak	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.00
Kirimon	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	100.00
Ltungai	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	100.00
Masol	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	100.00
Naapu	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	100.00
Nakuprat-Gotu	0	0	1	0	0	1	2	0.00
Grand Total	28	0	22	0	0	33	83	33.73

This PIKE data is yet to be harmonised by the Wildlife Research and Training Institute and KWS.

## Sera Makes History as the First Community Conservancy to Perform Black Rhino Ear Notching in Kenya

On the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of July, Sera Rhino Sanctuary in Sera Community Conservancy in Samburu County made history by conducting Kenya's first black rhino ear notching and transmitter fitting exercise.

Six endangered black rhinos had their ears notched and transmitters implanted in them during the procedure, enhancing their protection and conservation and enabling researchers and conservancy scouts to easily identify and track them during daily patrols.

The exercise was conducted by the Kenya Wildlife Service, led by the Senior Assistant Director and Head of Capture and Veterinary Services, Dr. Isaac Lekolool, and in partnership with Sera Community Conservancy, NRT, and the Samburu County Government.

Ear notching is normally performed on rhinos aged two and a half years or calves that have been separated from their mothers. However, during this exercise, rhinos aged between three and six and a half years that had lived in Sera Rhino Sanctuary for the last eight years were selected for the procedure. A V-shape mark was placed on them to facilitate their identification throughout their lifetime.

"Through the concerted efforts of the government and dedicated stakeholders, we have successfully reversed the decline in rhino numbers in Kenya over the past three decades. This accomplishment is a testament to our unwavering commitment to safeguarding and conserving these magnificent creatures for upcoming generations," said Dr. Lekolool.

Thanks to a dedicated team of conservancy scouts and strong community and partner support, no poaching incidents have been recorded in Sera Rhino Sanctuary since its establishment.

"The Conservancy's primary focus is growing the population of these endangered rhinos and preserving their habitat," explains Sera's Conservancy Manager, Reuben Lendiria.

The Sanctuary's rhino protection initiatives have not only facilitated low-impact tourism activities, creating employment opportunities for local community members, but also generated revenue for community development priorities, including the provision of education bursaries and access to clean water.



# Chapter 3

## Transforming Lives, Improving Livelihoods

Increasing climate resilience, and supporting indigenous communities in becoming economically robust and adaptable to a rapidly changing environment in the event of a disaster remains a priority for NRT.

NRT envisions a future where in its member community conservancies, all people complete high school and achieve an average life expectancy of 75 years, and annual household income is Ksh 270,000 (USD 2,000).

NRT operates in areas which have historically underperformed on national development indicators. Access to basic needs like water, education, health, and energy is severely limited in these regions. This has adversely affected the livelihoods of indigenous communities.

Through the community conservancy model, our member conservancies are improving the livelihoods of the communities at the forefront of wildlife and natural resource protection.

This is not only the right thing to do, but also it fosters community-led conservation, ensuring the success of environmental programmes and helping combat climate change.





## The Education Programme

In Kenya's Arid and Semi-arid Lands (ASALs), children's access to formal education is hindered by a confluence of political, social, and geographic factors.

A socioeconomic baseline survey NRT Trading (MashinaniWORKS) conducted in 2021 in 25 community conservancies in Isiolo, Laikipia, Marsabit, Samburu, Lamu and Tana River Counties, revealed that only 21% of the respondents had completed secondary education.

Rural schools in ASALs lack basic infrastructure, and learning is hampered by the semi-nomadic nature of communities, which makes it difficult for children to attend a single school for the required full term. Furthermore, formal education has always been a low priority, particularly for young girls.

Teacher retention in schools in remote areas is also a big challenge, owing to a lack of accommodation and insecurity.

In line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 4 (excellent education), 5 (gender equality), and 8 (decent work and economic growth), all of which emphasise school investment, NRT has made education one of its critical pillars, and seeks to ensure conservancy members attain at least 12 years of formal learning (including high school).

Our Education Programme supports schools in community conservancies in the following areas:

- Infrastructure development
- Student mentorship
- Scholarship support for secondary and tertiary institutions
- Capacity building for teachers, parents, and management boards
- Conservation education
- Operational support (provision of school meals and supplies)
- Health and sanitation



### In 2023:

- 13,246 students from 20 community conservancies benefitted from education bursaries worth Ksh 91.2 million (USD 675,555) funded by the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project (NKRCPP) and the Conservancy Livelihoods Fund (CLF).
- Ksh 32.1 million (USD 237,777) was disbursed to build and refurbish classrooms and facilities in 11 primary and secondary schools in 22 conservancies between 2022 and 2023.
- 2,222 students underwent mentorship through programmes supported by Conservation International implemented in 23 schools. An additional 2,338 received mentorship under the ICEP Programme. 4,560 students in total were mentored.
  - 79 teachers were trained on the new competency based curriculum.
  - 7 schools in 7 community conservancies received desks and revision books funded by the ICEP programme.
  - Headteachers and conservation club members in 24 primary schools in Nkoteiya and Naibunga Upper, Central and Lower Community Conservancies underwent training on the creation and management of conservation clubs.



## Carbon Project-funded Infrastructure Projects Rolled Out in 2022-2023

Conservancy	Projects
Sera	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Fenced Sereolipi Primary School's compound.</li> <li>» Purchased 2 <i>jikos</i> (charcoal burners) for Sereolipi Primary School.</li> </ul>
West Gate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Renovated an Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) classroom in Narapai Primary School.</li> <li>» Constructed a new classroom at Kiltamany Primary School.</li> <li>» Constructed a new ECDE classroom at Lpus Leluai Primary School.</li> </ul>
Kalama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Constructed an ECDE Centre at Naandadapo.</li> <li>» Constructed a library at Kalama Primary School.</li> </ul>
Nasuulu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Furnished Samburu Community School's dormitory with beds and mattresses.</li> </ul>
Biliqo Bulesa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Constructed an administration block at Goda Primary School.</li> <li>» Constructed a classroom at Awarsitu Primary School.</li> </ul>
Naapu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Fenced the compound of Lenkuruma Primary School.</li> <li>» Fenced Mokori ECDE Centre.</li> </ul>
Nanapisho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Constructed teachers' quarters at Nooloroi Primary School.</li> <li>» Constructed a classroom at Lengwenyi Primary School.</li> <li>» Fenced the compound of Kipsing Primary School.</li> </ul>
Nakuprat-Gotu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Constructed an administration block at Gotu Primary School.</li> <li>» Constructed a new madrasa classroom in Gotu Primary School.</li> <li>» Fenced Gotu Primary School and installed a gate, enhancing safety within the school.</li> <li>» Constructed two ECDE classrooms at Nakuprat Nursery School.</li> </ul>
Naibunga Lower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Built an ECDE classroom at Il Motiok Centre.</li> <li>» Purchased 60 school desks for an ECDE classroom at Il Motiok Primary School.</li> <li>» Constructed an ECDE classroom at Oloshaki Centre.</li> </ul>
Melako	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Renovated a classroom at Tirgamo Primary School.</li> <li>» Installed a solar power system at Merrile Mixed Day Secondary School.</li> </ul>
Leparua	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Fenced Kakili Primary School</li> </ul>



Samburu Community School located in Nasuulu Community Conservancy.

## Carbon Project-funded Infrastructure Projects

### Biliqo Bulesa Community Conservancy



➤ Constructed Goda Primary School's administration block.



➤ Purchased a generator to facilitate the pumping of water from the Ewaso River to the Biliqo community.

### Lekurruki Community Conservancy



➤ Tassia Lodge was renovated to enhance the overall guest experience and maintain the Lodge's facilities.



➤ The borehole and Tassia Lodge were equipped with a solar power system.

### Lekurruki Community Conservancy



➤ Fenced Lenkuruma Primary School to enhance safety within the school compound.



### Naibunga Central Community Conservancy



Constructed a concrete tank at Nkiloriti.

### Naibunga Lower Community Conservancy



Constructed Naserian ECDE Centre.

### Naibunga Upper Community Conservancy



Rehabilitated the borehole at Olampaa.

### Nakuprat-Gotu Community Conservancy



Constructed an administration block at Gotu Primary School.

### Nasuulu Community Conservancy



Constructed tourism bandas in Nasuulu.

### West Gate Community Conservancy



Installed a solar power system at Lpus Lelulai Dispensary.

## A Second Chance at Life: Mentorship Programme Transforming Girls' Education in Northern Kenya

Like any other young person her age, Elizabeth Muyere was excited about life. She had grand dreams she could not wait to fulfil. Every day she woke up with boundless enthusiasm, ready to take on the world.

In a fleeting moment, it all changed.

She became pregnant at the age of 18, while in form three. With the confirmation that she had conceived, Elizabeth's plans for her future came crashing down like a house of cards. The idea of raising a child in poverty as a single mother with no education was unthinkable.

Her parents had undergone great financial strain to put her through school. Having to inform them that she was expectant broke her to pieces. She wished she could turn back the hands of time, and make different decisions, wiser choices.

The news she was carrying a child was met with shock and disappointment. Her father demanded that she drop out of school and marry the father of the child. In her village, Elizabeth became the subject of gossip and the target of jokes and all

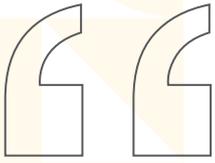
forms of ridicule. Young girls were cautioned not to follow in her footsteps. At best, she was a disgrace.

It all became too much for young Elizabeth who was also getting accustomed to pregnancy and all the changes that were taking place in and around her. The thought of leaving her homestead to face hostile remarks from villagers terrified her to the point where she was too scared to leave home. Isolated and weighed down by grief and uncertainty, she contemplated an abortion.

Elizabeth, then a student at Kurum Secondary School in Naibunga Central Community Conservancy, in Laikipia County, recalls being too embarrassed to attend class, so she dropped out and stayed home.

In time, she found solace in her mother, who was understanding and supportive. Eventually, Elizabeth safely delivered a healthy baby girl. Three months after her little one was born, Elizabeth bumped into Brenda Naserian, one of her former secondary school teachers.





The majority of my peers got married off early when they fell pregnant. However, I was lucky enough to pursue my dream of becoming a teacher, which fuels my desire to ensure that one setback does not discourage young girls from accomplishing their goals

**Brenda Naserian**

Naibunga Central Community Conservancy

Naserian made it her mission to bring Elizabeth back to school as she too had suffered the same fate as Elizabeth and nearly dropped out.

“The majority of my peers were married off early when they fell pregnant. However, I was fortunate enough to pursue my dream of becoming a teacher, which fuels my desire to ensure that one setback does not discourage young girls from accomplishing their goals,” Naserian explained.

Speaking with Elizabeth, Naserian made a convincing argument that Elizabeth’s mother could look after her grandchild. Understandably hesitant at first, Elizabeth followed Naserian’s advice and eventually resumed her studies. Her self-confidence returned gradually and in 2023, Elizabeth successfully completed secondary school.

She hopes to enroll in a vocational training programme and take up a career in the hospitality industry.

Many young girls in the pastoralist setting Elizabeth comes from have been denied access to education by a confluence of factors including a patriarchal setup in which decision-making is traditionally vested in men, retrogressive cultural practices such as early marriage and female genital mutilation, and the climate crisis. Elizabeth would have become yet another statistic, had Naserian, her former teacher, not intervened.

To improve girls’ education, NRT, with support from the AKO Foundation through Conservation International, implemented the Girls’ Mentorship Programme, which has recruited, trained, and deployed 23 fully trained female teacher interns in 23 schools across 14 community conservancies, to mentor, increase enrollment and retention, and facilitate a smooth transition of young girls from one educational level to another.

Naserian, Elizabeth’s former teacher is one of these teacher interns and has brought back 13 young girls to school, after convincing them that despite the setbacks encountered, they could still pick up the pieces and excel in their education.

Naserian has also mentored over 200 young girls at her school who have now either completed their secondary education, moved on to tertiary institutions, are employed, or have ventured into small-scale business.

Since the inception of the Girls’ Mentorship Programme in 2022, over 2,220 girls have been mentored and 15 teen mothers and girls who were married off at a young age have resumed their studies, with increasing enrollment recorded in all 23 schools where the Programme is being implemented.

The female intern teachers, who serve as role models, collaborate with the 23 schools, the provincial administration, and the Ministry of Education in extremely difficult circumstances to retrieve girls who were married off at a tender age and support their return to the classroom. The Teachers Service Commission also supports the Programme by providing curriculum training and capacity building.

Despite the prevailing challenges, which are compounded by poverty and limited access to resources, the Girls’ Mentorship Programme continues to bridge gender and societal gaps in community conservancies and drive their economic development through education. Plans are underway to recruit more female teachers and expand the Programme.

The mentorship of young girls forms one component of a multipronged approach that NRT—with partners’ support—is taking to foster gender equality and social inclusion across northern and coastal Kenya. This approach has seen the two regions experience positive change over the last decade.

The change is attributed to member conservancies’ efforts to empower women and young girls and amplify their voices in conservation, leadership, natural resource management and community development.

## Water Resource Management

In Kenya, 9.9 million people drink directly from contaminated surface water sources, according to the United Nations Children’s Fund.

The majority of NRT member community conservancies are located in areas where access to a sustainable water supply and basic sanitation is lower than the national average. Climate change, competing demands for water, the dispersed nature of settlements, unreliable seasonal water sources, environmental degradation, and poor water project management all contribute to water scarcity.

During the dry season, communities, primarily pastoralists, are hit hard by drought, forcing women and herders to trek more than 15 kilometres per day to find water for domestic use and livestock. Socioeconomic factors, including the enormous distance to water sources, insecurity caused by conflict over limited water access, and the cost of water and its transportation, compel many households to consume unsafe, contaminated or saline water, endangering their health and impacting their livelihoods.

Across the NRT landscape, we are addressing water scarcity by:



Developing infrastructure, such as boreholes and dams, to ensure safe and reliable water access for people, wildlife and livestock.



Providing generators to facilitate water trucking during emergencies, and supply water for livestock and domestic use.



Collaborating with forested conservancies and Community Forests Associations (CFAs) to protect water catchment areas.



Developing water resource management strategies and building capacity at the conservancy level.



Providing irrigation support in agricultural zones.



**WATCH NOW**

[Droplets of Hope: Providing Water to the Leiyai Community](#)



Women fetching water from the Nantudu water pan in Nannapa Community Conservancy.

2023 saw our member community conservancies experience drought in January and heavy rain the rest of the year due to the El Niño phenomenon, which caused severe flooding in multiple community conservancies and many parts of the country. This highlighted our communities' lack of preparedness for extreme weather events, whose frequency is expected to rise in the future.

The flooding will likely be followed by a dry season, which will make access to water even more difficult. To improve the water supply in community conservancies, the following actions were taken in 2023:

- 21 water projects (community and institutional) were completed, benefitting 6,540 households.
- The Tura-Narasha Water Supply Project was successfully launched, fostering peaceful coexistence among communities in Narupa and Naibunga Central and Lower Community Conservancies in Isiolo and Laikipia Counties.
- Member community conservancies designated funds from their NKRCF revenue for the implementation of 6 water development projects (full list on page 50), demonstrating their recognition of the critical role water plays in enhancing livelihoods.
- Water consumption for production steadily rose, particularly for agricultural use, with communities outside of the usual agricultural setup, such as those in Biliqo Bulesa's Isine farms and Nakuprat-Gotu's Attan area, adopting irrigation to diversify their livelihoods.
- Effective water governance remained a crucial need during the year. Therefore, sensitisation meetings centred on water governance were held across the NRT landscape, to build management capacity at the conservancy level.
- The water department monitored the quality of current and proposed water sources regularly to determine their status and identify water changes. The department also provided appropriate treatment steps for mineralised drinking water, ensuring human safety. The quality of water for livestock and wildlife was also monitored regularly to ensure its parameters remained within acceptable limits for livestock and wildlife safety.
- Water intervention funding in member community conservancies increased as new partnerships were formed, and development partners recognised the importance of conservancies in overall water development planning.



## Ripples of Hope: Improving Water Access for People and Elephants in Nannapa Community Conservancy

The desilting of a water pan at Nantudu, which had been out of commission for nearly three years, has thrilled community members in Nannapa Community Conservancy.

The water pan's heavy siltation had made it difficult for the community to access clean water for domestic and livestock use, as most of the pan was filled with sand.

On multiple occasions, elephants had become stuck in the silt while attempting to drink from the water pan. 10 elephants had been safely rescued, thanks to the community's quick responses.

Munkai Lekaato, a resident of Nannapa, recalls the challenges they faced before the pan's desilting. To access water, community members had to trek nearly 20 kilometres to Ewaso River, endangering themselves, as herds of elephants frequented the route.

"The water we used to fetch from the pan was barely enough, and it was so dirty we could not let children bathe in it," explained Munkai, who was ecstatic that the days of going to fetch water in the river were in his rearview.

The Nature Conservancy, Nannapa Conservancy, and NRT worked together to desilt the water pan which also supplies wildlife with drinking water. The Conservancy has implemented practical measures to prevent human-elephant conflict over this precious resource.

Jackson Lekumoisa, Nannapa's Conservancy Manager explains, "We developed schedules for water usage to minimise conflict. Elephants drink at night when they are most active, while community members and livestock utilise the pan during the day."

This has ensured that communities, their livestock and wildlife continue to coexist peacefully, making life easier, safer and better for all.



[From Mud to Miracles:  
Nantudu Water Pan Quenching  
Thirst of Humans and Wildlife](#)

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## Water Development Projects Implemented in NRT Member Community Conservancies in 2023

Conservancy	Infrastructure	Estimated Beneficiaries
<b>ISIOLO COUNTY</b>		
Narupa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Rehabilitation of 2 sand dams at Tuale to improve access to clean water.</li> <li>» The implementation of the Tura-Narasha Water Supply Project is ongoing to improve water access for the residents of Parkuruk and Narasha areas.</li> </ul>	100 households (h/h) 500 h/h
Nannapa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The water pan at Nantudu was desilted, resolving the perennial problem of elephants getting stuck in the mud, and providing water for wildlife, livestock, and people.</li> <li>» Conducted a hydrological survey for the proposed borehole for Labarishereki that will supply water for domestic use. The drilling, equipping and distribution of the borehole is scheduled for the first half of 2024.</li> </ul>	100 h/h, livestock and wildlife 500 h/h at Labarishereki
Biliqo Bulesa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Irrigation pumps were installed on farms in Biliqo Isine to support farming and improve livelihoods.</li> <li>» The communities of Biliqo Marara, Dima Adho, Biliqo and Bulesa allocated funding from their NKRCPC revenue towards the rehabilitation and extension of water supply systems, to improve water access in the respective communities.</li> </ul>	500 h/h
Kinna	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» An influx of livestock during the drought season necessitated the urgent rehabilitation and solarization of the borehole at Kinna.</li> </ul>	2,000 h/h
Naapu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» A hydrological survey for the proposed borehole that will supply Lagaaman with water for domestic use was conducted.</li> </ul>	600 h/h at Lagaaman
Nakuprat-Gotu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The borehole at Attan Village was equipped and developed to provide villagers with water for domestic use and agriculture, promoting livelihood diversification.</li> <li>» Reinstalled and rehabilitated a well pump at Nakuprat-Gotu's headquarters, enhancing community conservancy scouts' access to safe, clean water.</li> </ul>	500 h/h 24 community conservancy scouts, 800 h/h, livestock
Nasuulu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Installed a water supply system at Nasuulu's bandas, enhancing water access at the bandas and the conservancy scouts' quarters.</li> </ul>	2,400 h/h

SAMBURU COUNTY		
Ltungai	» The procurement of materials for equipping and developing the Ltungai-Sunoni borehole is ongoing. When complete, the borehole will provide the community with clean water for domestic and livestock use.	200 h/h
Kalama	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The borehole at Lerata A was equipped with a solar power system to improve distribution to the Lerata community.</li> <li>» 4 No. 10,000l uPVC storage tanks were supplied to Waso Girls High School, facilitating rainwater harvesting and enhancing access to safe water.</li> <li>» A borehole was developed in Longerded in Kalama, with support from the Basecamp Explorer Foundation, to enhance water access to the Conservancy's headquarters and Laresoro Dispensary. Both the new and an old existing borehole are now used to supply the community with water.</li> </ul>	150 h/h 500 students
Meibae	» Rehabilitated the Conservancy's headquarters' water supply system, improving its water supply and the cheetah camp's.	38 community conservancy scouts
Sera	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Serviced and rehabilitated the supply systems in Sera Rhino Sanctuary, ensuring continuous water supply.</li> <li>» Plans were made to develop the water supply at Sereolipi using the Conservancy's NKRCF funds.</li> </ul>	130 community conservancy scouts, wildlife
West Gate	» The Naisunyai Water Supply Project was completed, enhancing water access for the residents of Naisunyai Village, Naisunyai Dispensary and Naisunyai Primary School.	250 h/h
Ngilai	» Serviced and rehabilitated a pump at Ngilai's headquarters, improving the water supply.	16 community conservancy scouts
MARSABIT COUNTY		
Jaldesa	» A borehole was cleaned at Dirib Gombo, and its pump was tested to determine its suitability for solar equipping and distribution. Its yield was found to be low. Therefore, a proposal was made to drill a new borehole to improve water access for the community.	2,000 h/h
Melako	» Constructed 2 additional masonry tanks at Irrir, providing the community with access to clean water for domestic use, and facilitating water storage.	200 h/h

LAIKIPIA COUNTY		
Ngare Ndare	» Rehabilitated a borehole at Ethi	530 h/h
Il Ngwesi	» Rehabilitated the sand dam at Sang'a, improving the community's, livestock's, and wildlife's access to clean and safe water.	500 h/h in the dry season
Shulmai	» Constructed a water pan at Soropeai to provide water for livestock and wildlife. A few settlements near the pan are also using its water.	700 h/h, livestock, and wildlife
GARISSA COUNTY		
Ishaqbini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Secured a Ksh 60.8 million (USD 450,370) grant from WSTF to facilitate the development of Kotile's water supply and the rehabilitation and expansion of the water pan at Alijerere, which will enhance water supply for domestic and livestock use, and sanitation in Kotile, Korisa and Hara Villages.</li> <li>» Rehabilitated and expanded the water pan in the Hirola Sanctuary, improving water access for wildlife.</li> <li>» Rehabilitated a 150 cubic metre masonry tank in the Sanctuary and successfully implemented a pilot grass irrigation project.</li> </ul>	Wildlife in the Sanctuary
TANA RIVER COUNTY		
Ndera	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Rehabilitated Ndera's headquarters' water supply system, improving conservancy scouts' access to clean water.</li> <li>» Secured a Ksh 35.5 million (USD 262,962) WSTF grant for the development of Baomo's water supply and a new water pan in Weljan. This will enhance water supply for domestic use, livestock and wildlife. It will also improve sanitation in villages and promote the planting of mango trees, improving livelihoods.</li> </ul>	13 conservancy scouts  Baomo: 800 h/h  Water pan in Weljan (Bahati Village): 3,000 h/h
LAMU COUNTY		
Awer	» Commissioned a 285-litres-per-hour desalination plant, providing clean water to the residents of Kiangwe Village who have no alternative source.	120 h/h
Pate	» Secured a Ksh 31 million (USD 229,629) grant from WSTF for providing access to safe water and sanitation through desalination in Mtangawanda Village, <i>djabia</i> (underground water tank) construction, and improvement of the water supply in Ndau Village and at the Ocean Plastic Recycling Centre.	3,765 h/h

<p>Kiunga</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Secured a Ksh 28 million (USD 207,407) WSTF grant for desalination in Kiwayu Village, <i>djabia</i> construction in Ishakani Village and at the Ocean Plastic Recycling Centre, and toilet construction in select villages in the Conservancy.</li> </ul>	<p>Kiwayu Village: 547 h/h Ishakani Village: 165 h/h Recycling Centre: 1,815 h/h Toilets: 186 h/h</p>
<p><b>BARINGO COUNTY</b></p>		
<p>Kaptuya</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Cleaned and tested the pump of the borehole in Kaptuya to enhance water supply for domestic use to the community and Kaptuya Primary School. The borehole’s yield was found to be low, necessitating an alternative water source.</li> <li>» Trucked water to Kaptuya Primary School ensuring adequate water supply after its borehole broke down.</li> </ul>	<p>230 h/h and 158 students</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» The construction of a water pan at Simotwo in Saimo Soi Ward and Lemuyek in Loyamorok Ward is ongoing, Supported by the EU-funded RangER Program. The water pans will improve access to water for domestic, livestock, and wildlife use, and promote peaceful coexistence in the community.</li> <li>» The rehabilitation of the irrigation system at Embossos is nearly complete, which will open up parts of Arabal for agriculture, increase food security and serve as a unifying factor for the Pokot, Tugen, and Il Chamus communities in Mukutani Ward. The Project is supported by the RangER Program.</li> </ul>	<p>Lemuyek: 280 h/h Simotwo: 310 h/h and live-stock  230 h/h</p>

### The Future of Water Development

The El Niño episodes experienced in 2023 underscored the need for wider efforts in harvesting and storing flood waters for use during the dry season. We recognise that a multi-stakeholder approach is required for improved and sustained access to safe and clean water, with the Government taking lead.

As El Niño rains are expected to continue, we will accelerate the implementation of strategic and priority water development initiatives, while leveraging partnerships with other stakeholders, including the Government, to increase water access for the indigenous communities in our member conservancies.



## Improving Health Care

Health care facilities in northern and coastal Kenya are limited, and community members in remote areas often trek long distances to receive medical attention.

Government services and amenities are still sparse in these expansive areas, which are also plagued by poor road connectivity, impeding emergency evacuations, especially during floods.

In line with our 2050 Vision, NRT envisions increasing the average life expectancy of communities in its member conservancies to 75 years, up from the 63 reported by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics following the 2019 census.

Through partnerships, and a well-governed health programme, we aspire to increase life expectancy in all the 10 counties where we presently operate. To achieve this goal, NRT supports county governments' health activities by:

- Constructing health care delivery outlets.
- Providing mobile outreach services.
- Supporting conservancies in delivering primary health care through Community Health Workers (CHWs).
- Purchasing medical equipment and supplies for facilities constructed by either NRT or the community conservancies.

### In 2023:



- » CHWs from Laresoro Dispensary in Kalama Community Conservancy visited villages in 6 zones and attended to 302 people, providing emergency care, prenatal care to expectant mothers, and immunising children.
- » Lekurruki Community Conservancy upgraded Lekurruki Dispensary and installed power supply in it using finances from the Carbon Community Fund. The Laikipia County Government equipped the Dispensary, which is set for operationalisation in 2024.



A community health worker attends to a child at Laresoro Dispensary in Kalama Community Conservancy.

## Access to Reliable Clean Energy

According to Kenya's Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority's 2021 Energy Statistics Report, 7% of people in northern Kenya had reliable access to energy, compared to the national average of 62%.

Most parts of northern and coastal Kenya have limited to no access to the national grid and many use unsustainable sources of energy such as charcoal and firewood for cooking. This increases deforestation and leads to the emission of carbon dioxide, which when inhaled triggers chronic respiratory diseases.

In 2020, NRT piloted the Biogas Project in four community conservancies to reduce the pressure on shrinking forest habitats and provide alternative, clean sources of energy. The Project has since expanded to include more than 20 conservancies.

### In 2023:



- » NRT developed its five-year Energy Strategy, whose objectives were based on the results of an energy capacity needs assessment conducted earlier in the year. The Energy Strategy directs how NRT will support households and institutions in member community conservancies by providing the appropriate governance structures, knowledge, funding, and partnerships to increase access to clean, reliable energy.
- » The assessment, conducted in 591 households in 9 counties, found that the most used sources of energy were:
  - Firewood: 76%
  - Solar: 57%
  - Charcoal: 48%
  - Kerosene: under 3%
- » 60 biogas digesters were installed in Hanshak Community Conservancy, bringing the total units installed to 800, since the inception of the pilot project in 2020.
- » 2,000 community and board members, 60% of whom were women, were trained on clean energy in 16 conservancies.



Katelina Lekanta, a beneficiary of NRT's Clean Energy Project, in Kalama Community Conservancy.

## The Conservancy Livelihood Fund

The areas in which NRT member community conservancies are found are characterised by extreme weather events due to the effects of climate change. These climatic shocks increase the vulnerability of pastoral communities and lead to the loss of livelihoods.

The existence of our member conservancies has made life better for indigenous communities as the conservancies provide employment, increase household income, and generate revenue for funding community development priorities through conservancy-based commercial projects.

To accelerate community development, NRT established the grant-funded Conservancy Livelihoods Fund (CLF) in 2015, which positions conservation-related activities to provide direct, tangible, and long-term livelihood benefits to community members. CLF empowers communities to identify, plan, and implement development programmes of their own choosing.

The fund continues to increase community resilience to climate change, alleviate poverty, and promote economic growth at the household and conservancy levels.

To date, the CLF has disbursed Ksh 565 million (USD 4.1 million) for 182 projects across all NRT member community conservancies, benefitting an estimated 88,662 people.

### In 2023:



- » 18 community conservancies from all five NRT regions submitted applications to NRT for CLF funding, to support education, microfinance, vocational training, tourism, health, and water development projects.
- » The CLF approved the disbursement of Ksh 77.9 million (USD 577,037) to the 18 community conservancies. The distribution of the funds began in 2023 and will continue throughout 2024.
- » Ksh 1.2 million (USD 8,888) was disbursed to Sera Community Conservancy to fund its Education Bursary Programme, benefitting 124 students.



Students dancing during a bursary launch event at Garbatulla Community Conservancy.



Kurum Secondary School in Naibunga Central Community Conservancy.

## Addressing the Climate Crisis: How NRT Member Community Conservancies are Championing Climate Action

Anywhere you go in Africa, you will find incontrovertible evidence that climate change is not an abstract concept. For many across the NRT landscape, its consequences are the harsh reality as they bear the brunt of extreme climatic events.

With an emphasis on areas crucial for biodiversity and ecosystem functioning and services, NRT member conservancies are addressing the climate crisis by conserving northern Kenya's rangelands and coastal habitats in line with global targets to protect 30% of the planet for nature by 2030.

Our 45 member community conservancies are taking bold climate action and moving with urgency to strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable. Among the solutions the conservancies are implementing to combat climate change is the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project (NKRCP).

Awarded Triple Gold Status by the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) due to the benefits it provides to wildlife and communities, and named a Lighthouse Project by the Natural Climate Solutions Alliance, the NKRCP is restoring degraded rangelands across 1.9 million hectares (4.7 million acres), and is anticipated to remove 50 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over 30 years—the equivalent of the annual emissions from over 10 million cars.

Through carbon credit sales, the Project is generating sustainable development income for indigenous communities, increasing their resilience.

In northern Kenya, overgrazing, unplanned settlement, and climate change have led to 70% rangeland degradation and a proliferation of invasive plant species. Using a popular three-part cartoon series, our Rangelands Programme team is raising awareness of rangeland rehabilitation and empowering communities to act on mitigation strategies, such as the development of grazing and livestock movement plans.

In many parts of Kenya, competition for water is rife and contributes to inter-ethnic, human-wildlife, and livestock-wildlife conflict. Climate change further impacts water availability by influencing when, where, and how much rain falls. To address water scarcity, our Water Programme team traverses the NRT landscape, surmounting terrain challenges to lay down infrastructure that grants tens of thousands of households, access to safe, clean water.



A decline in water and pasture for livestock, due to climate change-induced drought, triggers natural resource-based conflict among pastoralists in northern Kenya. NRT and our member community conservancies' investments in water development promote peacebuilding by making water available for all.

To further avert potential conflict, our peace team collaborates with member conservancies to carry out peacebuilding and conflict resolution missions, and conducted over 70 peace interventions across five counties in the first half of 2023.

At the Coast, community conservancies are spearheading the implementation of our Marine Programme, whose goal is to preserve marine life and improve livelihoods. The more fish and marine life there are in the sea, the more carbon is sequestered from the atmosphere, locking it away. By implementing measures to safeguard ocean health, NRT Coast conservancies are increasing the ocean's efficacy as a carbon sink and improving the lives of communities whose livelihoods depend on the marine ecosystem and fisheries.

Other initiatives NRT Coast community conservancies have undertaken to promote marine conservation and contribute to the fight against climate change include mangrove and coral reef restoration, ocean plastic collection, sea turtle conservation and sustainable fishing, preserving fishers' livelihoods.

In an applaudable move, 85% of fishers owning illegal beach seine nets in Kiunga Community Conservancy in Lamu County voluntarily exchanged their nets for sustainable fishing gear through NRT Coast's Gear Exchange Programme. This has not only prevented habitat damage, overexploitation of nearshore reefs and the decline of fish populations, but also increased carbon sequestration.

90% of rural Kenyan households use firewood fuel for cooking, according to the Ministry of Energy. This exerts enormous pressure on forests. Through our Clean Energy Project, conservancies are reversing this trend by installing biogas digesters in community members' homesteads. The digesters make cooking easier, improve community health, and promote the conservation of forests, which reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Our Livelihoods Programme further builds communities' climate resilience by promoting livelihood diversification. The Programme has seen 962 youth and women gain vocational skills and self-employment through MashinaniWORKS' (NRT Trading) Ujuzi Manyattani Programme, and 300 pastoralist herders undergo Ufugaji Bora Mashinani Programme's training, increasing their livestock production capacity. Additionally, 1,200 women from pastoralist communities are earning an income through BeadWORKS, a handicraft business, while 2,767 youth and women are engaged in entrepreneurship through our Biashara Mashinani Programme.

To promote climate adaptation and drive nature-positive development across the NRT landscape, through our Conservancy Livelihoods Fund, we have disbursed more than Ksh 565 million (USD 4.1 million) to member conservancies for community development, implemented over 182 projects since 2015, financed nearly 4,000 enterprises to empower youth and women, and provided bursaries to 32,870 students since 2014.

Further bolstering these livelihood improvement efforts, the indigenous communities in our member conservancies are conserving over 10 million acres of land for multiple endangered species, including the hirola, the world's rarest antelope, black rhino and the Rothschild's giraffe. This facilitates low-impact tourism, a vital conservancy income stream that accelerates conservancy communities' adaptation to climate change, while aligning with Kenya's 2030 National Wildlife Strategy.

With support from our partners, we have achieved incredible milestones as we strive to improve indigenous communities' climate adaptation. However, much more is left to be done and we will continue to harness our ingenuity to unlock the full range of solutions that will drive the growth of our member conservancies despite climatic shocks.



The NKRCP was awarded Triple Gold Status by the Climate, Community and Biodiversity Alliance (CCBA) due to the benefits it provides to wildlife and communities, and named a Lighthouse Project by the Natural Climate Solutions Alliance

## Chapter 4

## Integrated Peacebuilding in Indigenous Communities

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Peace is an essential base for social and economic development. In its absence, societies are prone to conflict, violence, and instability. The UN Sustainable Development Goal 6 promotes peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provides access to justice, and advocates for effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Through our Peace Programme, we collaborate with member community conservancies, government agencies, and relevant partners to avert, manage, minimise and resolve disputes.

The nature, and scale of ethnic conflicts in northern Kenya are ever-changing. Political rhetoric, changing traditional leadership systems, unemployment and easy access to illegal firearms have all contributed to the ethnic conflict experienced in the region. Climate change and a growing human population competing for diminishing natural resources have aggravated the situation, raising the stakes even higher. This has impeded development, perpetuated poverty, and disrupted people's lives for years.

NRT's Peace Programme employs a community-led peacebuilding approach in which conservancy managers, local elders, interfaith religious leaders, youth, women, and county and national government leaders are engaged to facilitate peace meetings, empower peace champions and promote nonviolent conflict resolution.



## Pillars of the NRT Peace Programme



## Peace Interventions

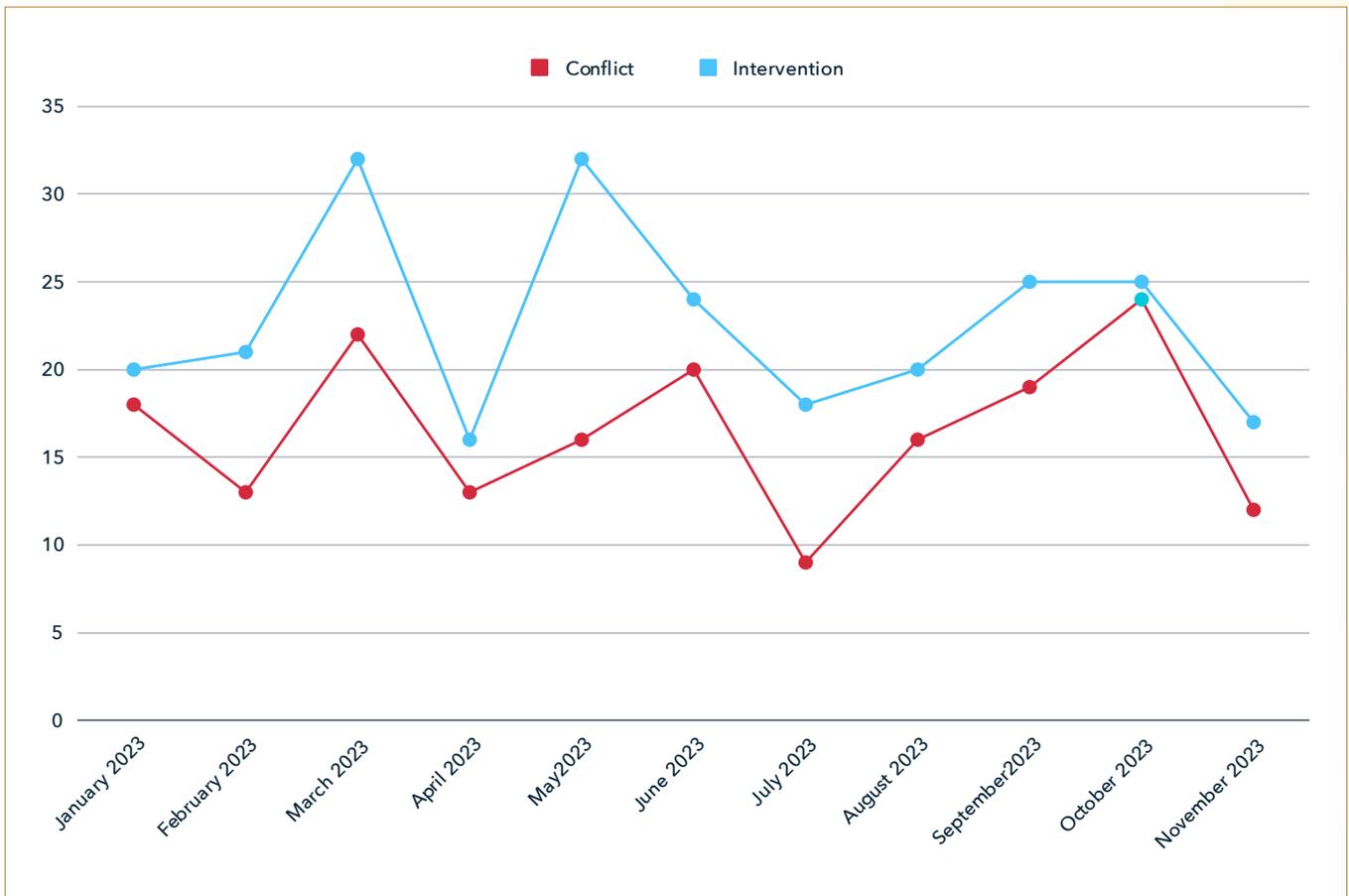
The relationship between NRT and its member conservancies creates a neutral platform to bring people together for dialogue—offering an alternative dispute resolution option to conflict.

### In 2023:

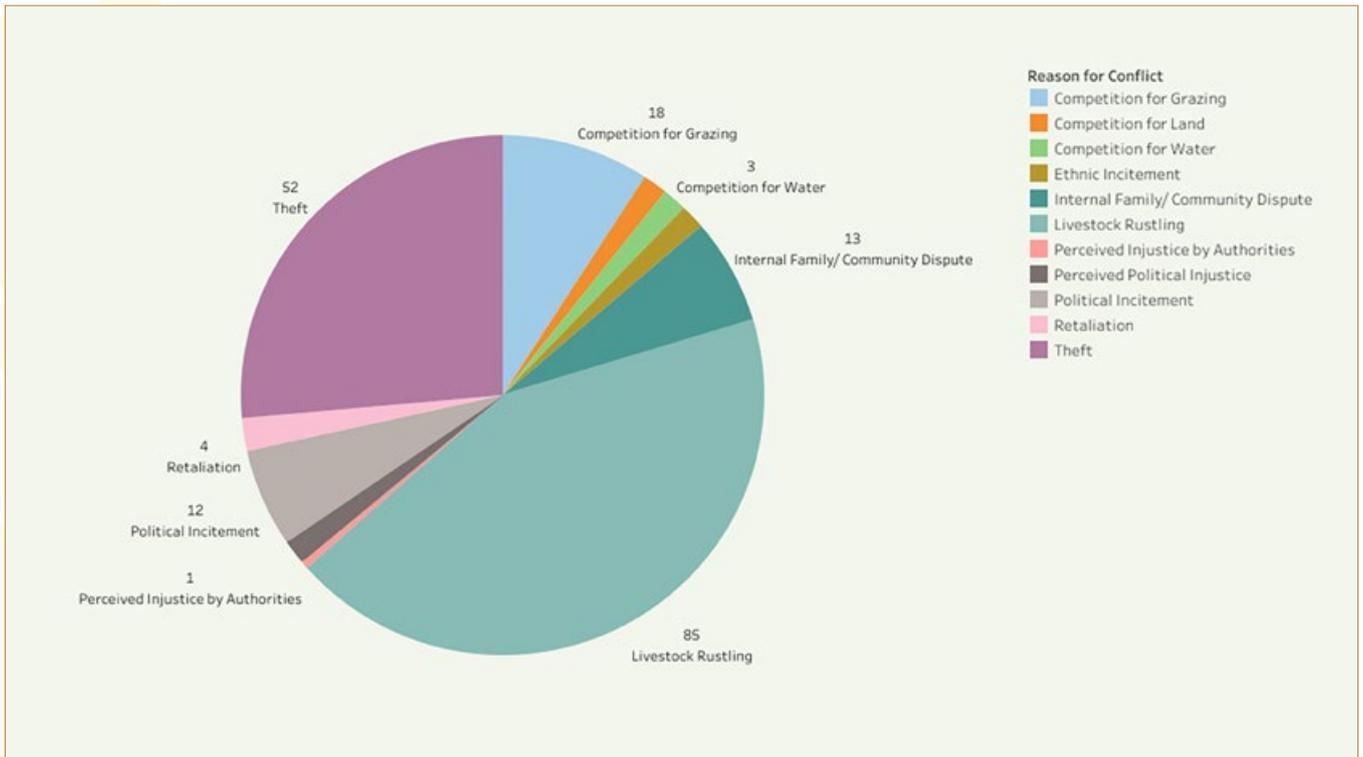


- » NRT’s peace team successfully conducted 245 interventions to prevent conflict in six counties that are conflict hotspots: Marsabit, Isiolo, Samburu, West Pokot, Laikipia and Baringo.
- » Peace actors’ strategic interventions led to a decrease in conflict incidents from 256 in 2022 to 180.
- » 14,923 community members participated in peacebuilding activities, marking an increase in community involvement in nurturing harmony across the NRT landscape. The rise was attributed to an inter-conservancy approach, effective planning by the peace team, and greater community understanding and appreciation for peacebuilding processes.
- » The severe and extended drought, conflict over limited resources, and migration across counties and conservancies led to 117 fatalities, up from 67 in the previous year. 68 people suffered injuries.
- » Peace actors’ efforts and interventions significantly decreased livestock theft from 24,082 in 2022 to 14,614 in 2023. The conservancy leadership, scouts, peace team, the National Police Service, reservists, peace ambassadors and liaison officers all responded swiftly to theft incidents, recovering 8,922 heads of livestock.

### Peace Interventions Vs Conflict Trends



## Causes of Conflict



## Peacebuilding Newsbytes

### In 2023:

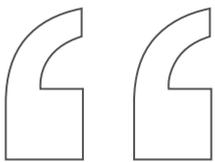


- » NRT's peace department participated in and supported four Maa peace dialogues, that brought together four governors, 22 current and former legislators, and leaders from maa communities in Samburu, Laikipia and Isiolo Counties. The leaders emphasised the importance of abandoning the outdated culture of livestock raiding. This leadership intervention is expected to improve herders' attitudes, behaviours and practices, promoting harmony in the landscape.
- » 608 people (32 women and 576 men) from five counties participated in a high-level inter-moran peace dialogue meeting to deliberate on integrated peacebuilding in the landscape. Top county National Government Administration Officers (NGAOs) and peace actors attended the meeting, in which morans proposed and ratified several resolutions, including ending livestock theft, collaboratively developing grazing plans across conservancies, and engaging in community dialogue.
- » Building NRT staff's and peace ambassadors' capacity to foster peace remained a critical component of peacebuilding, increasing their knowledge and ability to respond to shifting conflict dynamics in different areas.
- » The NRT peace department, in collaboration with NGAOs, hosted a joint inter-county and inter-conservancy peacebuilding meeting at Nanapisho Community Conservancy. Nine community conservancies attended the meeting, whose aim was to increase women's participation in peacebuilding.
- » 15 intercommunity peacebuilding dialogue sessions were held in Kinna, Garbatulla, Sericho, and Cherab Community Conservancies in NRT East to foster peaceful coexistence among the Region's ethnic groups. As a result of these peacebuilding sessions, once-warring villages in Kinna and Garbatulla Community Conservancies agreed to open the



Belgesh Market. Plans are underway to open three more markets: Korbasa, Escort and Banane.

- » Two inter-county and inter-conservancy meetings were held in Sera and Melako, involving four community conservancies: Sera, Biliqo, Cherab, and Nakuprat-Gotu. The meetings were convened to increase and enhance communities' and conservancy leadership's peacebuilding capacity, and improve inter-conservancy collaboration to reduce livestock theft and raids.
- » To reduce tension at the West Pokot-Elgeiyo Marakwet border, the peace team and West Pokot peace actors, as well as Pokot and Marakwet inter-community peace committees in Sigor, conducted a series of peace dialogues in collaboration with the government security team.
- » In Baringo County, herders who had invaded Ruko Community Conservancy withdrew amicably, following an inter-community meeting held to foster peace.
- » Seven peace talks were held in Leparua Community Conservancy to address conflict incidents involving four pastoralist communities that arose over pasture and increased insecurity. The peace talks led to a decline in road banditry and allowed access to markets and schools.



The devastating experiences that some women have gone through have driven them to advocate for and become champions of peace through the Women Peace Council. Their strength lies in their ability to be the voices of their communities, supporting efforts to prevent planned attacks and engaging in dialogue with morans.

**Qureshi Bille,**

Chairperson of NRT East's Regional Women Peace Council

## Peace Programme Challenges

Building and sustaining peace in the areas we operate has grown increasingly difficult. To foster lasting peace, a holistic and integrated approach is required that is characterised by the involvement of political leaders, increased access to education, and the availability of long-term income-generating opportunities that promote livelihood diversification.

Our peace team continues to strive to build peace across the NRT landscape while surmounting numerous challenges, including:

- The current global and local economic crisis, which escalated cattle theft and road banditry in 2023.
- Inadequate funding for the Peace Programme.
- The effects of climate change, which lead to increasingly frequent and severe droughts that decimate pastoralists' livestock herds—the source of their livelihood—plunging them into poverty and ultimately leading to livestock raids.
- Some indigenous communities are reluctant to divulge information about conflict perpetrators.



**WATCH NOW**

[Women for Peace Champions](#)





Moran peacebuilding forum in Sera Community Conservancy.

## Strengthening Conservancy Governance

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Community conservancies have proven to be effective instruments for cultivating peace, increasing community resilience, promoting good natural resource management, combatting wildlife trafficking, and developing sustainable enterprises and livelihoods that are directly or indirectly related to conservation and preserve biodiversity.

We believe that community conservancies, which are increasingly recognised as vital institutions in Kenya and throughout Africa, are the most effective way for governments and development agencies to deliver the right, long-term solutions for wildlife protection and other sustainable land uses that can lead to improved livelihoods.

Pastoralist, farming and fishing communities in northern and coastal Kenya, where NRT operates, face numerous interlinked challenges, including insecurity, poverty, social exclusion, severe natural resource degradation as well as human and livestock population growth, and bear the brunt of the negative effects of climate change.

NRT, therefore, seeks to enhance conservancy governance by strengthening the management skills of community conservancy leaders through its Leadership and Management Programme (LAMP), financial trainings, inclusion of all social groups and in the coastal conservancies, improving the governance of fisheries that underpin the local economy.

NRT also provides fundraising support and collaborates with the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association (KWCA) to advocate for laws and policies that foster a conducive environment for the growth and development of community conservancies.



## Enhancing Leadership and Governance in Community Conservancies

In 2023, we doubled down on our efforts to conduct specialised finance management and governance trainings for conservancy boards, managers, committees, and community members, empowering them to lead effectively, as well as provide the guidance and direction NRT member community conservancies need to achieve self-sufficiency.

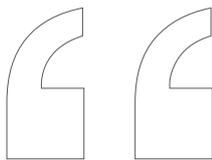
### The Leadership and Management Programme

NRT's Leadership and Management Programme (LAMP) provides a powerful transformational process for enlightening, equipping and empowering indigenous people and local communities to exercise their human rights in managing their land, conserving natural resources and wildlife, and securing their livelihoods in the face of an unpredictable future.

#### In 2023:



- » 611 people (429 women and 182 men) from 29 community conservancies underwent LAMP training.
- » 203 women from NRT Mountain, East, and Centre's regional caucuses received and graduated from LAMP training.
- » NRT Coast's marine conservancies conducted a LAMP training for 42 youth conservation champions from the fishing community, empowering them to actively participate in conservation and development activities. To facilitate the delivery of similar LAMP trainings, six community members were selected to participate in a LAMP training of trainers course.
- » 51 board members and local leaders from Ngilai and Kalepo Community Conservancies underwent LAMP training.
- » 30 people from Ishaqbini Community Conservancy (15 newly elected board members and 15 local partners) received training on good governance, leadership, managerial roles and financial management.
- » 30 morans from Ngilai, Ltungai and Kalepo Community Conservancies underwent a three-day LAMP training to increase their participation in community conservation and conservancy operations.
- » 47 community conservancy scouts from West Gate graduated after successfully undergoing LAMP training to improve their leadership skills.



Over the years, NRT's community conservancy model has increased awareness of and participation in community conservation, leading to improved and sustainable livelihoods.

**Andrew Dokhole,**  
Council of Elders Chairperson

## Financial Management Training

Effective financial management at the community conservancy level accelerates the development of community conservancies, increases their sustainability and promotes transparency and accountability.

In 2023, financial management trainings were conducted in 14 community conservancies. 80 conservancy finance committee members and 42 conservancy managers attended the trainings.

### Financial Management Trainings Conducted in 2023

County/NRT Region	Conservancy	Finance Committee Members Trained
Samburu/Centre	Kalepo, Meibae, West Gate, Kalama and Ngilai	28
Laikipia/Mountain	Kirimon and Ngare Ndare	14
NRT Coast	Ishaqbini, Awer, Kiunga, Ndera, Lower Tana Delta, Pate and Hanshak	38

## Governance Index

To ensure continuous improvement in conservancy governance, NRT measures the management effectiveness of each of its members using the governance index, which informs the tailored support to be provided to each community conservancy.

The average governance score for 2023 was 68%, reflecting an average performance in voice, legitimacy, fairness and rights, and direction categories across all conservancies. The improvement in the score from 62.6% in 2022 was attributed to NRT's increased efforts in enhancing conservancy capabilities in governance and management.

### Conservancy Governance Performance (2023)

Category	Percentage Score
Accountability	64.50
Fairness and Rights	66.45
Legitimacy and Voice	68.92
Direction	71.34
Performance	69.73

## Conservancy Annual General Meetings

The four community conservancies in NRT West (Pellow, Ruko, Kaptuya and Masol) held pre-annual general meetings and annual general meetings in which they discussed the conservancies' progress and financial reports. 1,200 community members attended these meetings.

Kirimon Community Conservancy also hosted an annual general meeting with 400 community members attending, 60% of whom were youth. The meeting's agenda included discussions on conservancy progress, audited accounts, board election results, and 2024 plans.

In NRT East, 15 community conservancies held annual general meetings.

## Conservancy Elections

Each NRT member community conservancy has a board of directors that is democratically elected by the community. The board oversees the conservancy's finance, grazing, and peace committees, whose members are also elected by the community.

### In 2023:



» 7 community conservancies from three NRT regions conducted board elections.

### Community Conservancy Elections Held in 2023

Conservancy	County/NRT Region	Representatives	Men	Women	Persons with Disabilities	Youth
Kirimon	Laikipia/NRT Mountain	15	5	3	0	7
Awer	Lamu/NRT Coast	11	4	4	0	3
Ishaqbini	Garissa/NRT Coast	15	8	4	1	2
Masol	West Pokot/NRT West	52	22	19	3	8
Ruko	Baringo/NRT West	12	4	4	0	4
Pellow	West Pokot/NRT West	13	4	4	0	5
Kaptuya	Baringo / NRT West	16	8	6	1	1
Naapu	Isiolo/NRT East	12	5	5	0	2
Nanapisho	Isiolo/NRT East	12	5	5	0	2
Narupa	Isiolo/NRT East	15	11	0	1	3
Nannapa	Isiolo/NRT East	15	10	2	0	3
Melako	Marsabit/NRT East	20	11	4	1	4

## Organisational Structure

NRT is owned and run by the indigenous communities it serves through community conservancies, which are governed by democratically elected boards. The Council of Elders (CoEs), chaired by the Conservancy Manager of Melako Community Conservancy, Andrew Dokhole, is NRT's highest decision-making body. The Council comprises elected chairpersons from each of NRT's 45 member community conservancies.

NRT is also administered by a Board of Directors, chaired by Dr. Julius Kipng'etich and vice-chaired by Mr. Jarso Mokku. The NRT Board reports to the overarching Council of Elders and consists of representatives from various institutions including the Kenya Wildlife Service, Kenya Forest Service, and the Ministry of Environment.



## Board of Directors

NRT's Board of Directors oversees the operations of the NRT community and convenes biannually to provide support in strategic planning.

All members of NRT's Board listed below serve on a voluntary basis. The Board is accountable to the overarching Council of Elders, which is NRT's primary governing body.

Our Board comprises the following members:

- Dr. Julius Kipng'etich (Chairman)
- Jarso Mokku (Vice Chairman)
- Prof. Patricia Kameri-Mbote
- Mbuvi Ngunze
- Eva Warigia
- Joy Obuya
- Dr. Betty Addero Radier
- Ademola Ajagbe
- Joanna Elliot
- Andrew Dokhole
- Dr. Kevit Desai
- Mike Watson
- Dr. Mike Harrison
- Alexander Lemaroko
- Ali Daud Mohammed
- Geoffrey Kaituko
- Rosemary Okumbe (Company Secretary)

## The NRT Council of Elders

NRT was founded and is owned and run by the indigenous communities that form the community conservancies, through the Council of Elders (CoEs), which comprises the elected chairpersons of all 45 NRT member community conservancies.

The CoEs meets biannually to deliberate on, review and approve the organisation's operations and finances. It also addresses any concerns that arise.

## Development of Conservancy Management Plans

Conservancy Management and Development Plans (CMDPs) outline conservancies' long-term goals for growth and conservation. The CMDPs of NRT member community conservancies are developed through a participatory process that involves all stakeholders and communities in the conservancies and serves as a tool for directing conservancy management action, fundraising and promoting accountability. All completed conservancy plans can be found on the NRT website.

## Changing Attitudes and Perspectives: Social-CoMMs

Social-CoMMS was developed to evaluate the socioeconomic status of conservancy communities and measure the social impact of conservancies' and NRT's programmes.

A Social-CoMMS survey was carried out in 11 conservancies in 2023, in which 5,156 households, comprising 2,365 men and 2,791 women were assessed. An analysis of the data collected, and the information gathered yielded the following findings:



### In 2023:

- » 637,703 conservancy members benefitted from community conservation.
- » 28% of respondents received education bursaries from the community conservancy over the last five years.
- » 69% of the community members surveyed reported an improvement in their socio-economic status in the last five years.
  - » 76% of respondents indicated they felt safe and secure because of the conservancy scouts' patrols and the 59% of stolen livestock that was recovered, restoring their livelihood.
  - » 59% of those surveyed reported their general well-being had improved during the last five years.
  - » 6% of respondents indicated they had received permanent employment benefits from their conservancies, while 14% reported receiving casual employment benefits.
    - » 59% of the respondents reported an increase in income over the last 12 months. An average income of Ksh 88,301 (USD 654) was recorded.

## Gender and Social Inclusion

NRT is focused on increasing the participation of all social groups in conservation and community development by integrating a gender equality perspective at all stages and levels of policies, programmes, and projects, both internally and within its member community conservancies.

Our Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Programme continues to strategically identify GESI gaps and promote culturally appropriate solutions to ensure that all community conservancy members and leaders—regardless of gender—can fully engage in and benefit from NRT’s conservation efforts and livelihood improvement activities.

### In 2023:



- » The first draft of a five-year GESI strategy was developed. The strategy will serve as a roadmap for mainstreaming GESI throughout the NRT landscape and will be completed and operationalised in the first quarter of 2024.
- » 60 women from five NRT regions attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> Women Leadership Summit. The annual event is supported by Conservation International (CI) and recognises the importance of the participation and influence of all social groups in leadership and conservation.
- » 300 people attended the International Women’s Day celebrations organised by NRT in collaboration with the Baringo County Government and Ruko Community Conservancy.
- » 12 representatives from our women in conservation caucus participated in two cross-exposure learning opportunities: the KWCA’s national women forum for gender training and policy frameworks, and the Maasai Mara Women Conservancies Association women forum, to deliberate on the challenges women encounter in conservation. Both events emphasised the significance of women’s continuous training and learning.
- » Two NRT staff were named recipients of CI’s 2023-2024 Emerging Indigenous Women Leaders Fellowship. This prestigious fellowship promotes women’s leadership in rangeland management. The two staff are implementing CI-funded projects that are improving the financial literacy of women board members and leaders, and optimising communications and storytelling to empower and build the capacity of emerging women leaders in northern Kenya.
- » A GESI survey was undertaken in NRT’s marine community conservancies of Pate, Kiunga, Awer and Lower Tana in partnership with The Nature Conservancy. The survey revealed the following findings:
  - Men continue to be the primary stewards of culture in these communities and are perceived as significant decision-makers in many aspects.
  - Women participate in local savings and self-help groups, positioning them to explore emerging and existing opportunities for social and economic empowerment.
  - The rate of drug usage by male youth is high, reducing their productive participation in fisheries and marine activities and employment prospects.
- » 35 women from NRT member community conservancies successfully completed CI-funded LAMP trainings.
- » Women caucuses were organised in four out of five NRT regions.
- » 120 women who serve on peace councils in NRT East and Centre attended an introductory gender and social inclusion training.
- » 150 women leaders and entrepreneurs from nine NRT member community conservancies involved in MashinaniWORKS’ (NRT Trading) BeadWORKS Programme attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> Star Beaders Conference, where they exchanged ideas on best practices, shared their experiences and challenges, and explored opportunities to develop sustainable businesses that advance climate action and gender equality.

# Chapter 6

## Marine Ecosystems and Mangrove Forests

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Restoring marine ecosystems and mangrove forests is more than just an ecological endeavour. It is also a commitment to supporting the local economy and protecting wildlife and marine habitats, as these ecosystems operate as carbon sinks, regulating global climate patterns and mitigating the effects of climate change.

Through its marine programme, NRT supports women's groups in restoring and replanting mangroves in the degraded mangrove ecosystems. In Kenya's coastal areas, nearly 40% of the mangrove forests have been destroyed.

Marine resources are constantly threatened by unregulated overfishing of nearshore reefs and illegal fishing. This has led to habitat destruction and a decline in fish populations.

Mangrove deforestation through illegal logging, charcoal burning and the encroachment of the forests for agricultural purposes and human settlement have resulted in the loss of forest cover in most areas.

These challenges not only affect the two ecosystems, but also the livelihoods of coastal communities and the biodiversity relying on both marine and mangrove forest habitats.





## Marine Management

NRT's Marine Programme seeks to safeguard marine ecosystems, reduce fishing pressure in nearshore areas, provide a community-driven approach to marine management, and promote livelihood diversification across NRT's coastal conservancies.

## Coral Reef Restoration

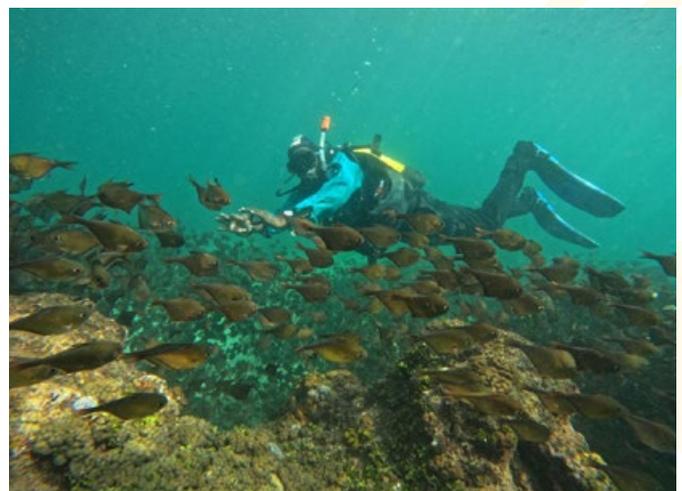
Global warming, aggravated by the El-Niño phenomenon, poses a huge threat to the marine ecosystem. Rising ocean temperatures cause coral bleaching and their mass die-off, affecting fish and invertebrate species that rely on coral reef habitats.

Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies in Lamu County are spearheading the restoration of degraded coral reef areas by constructing artificial reefs. In addition to enriching the marine ecosystem, and improving fisheries within Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) and fish replenishment zones, these artificial reefs prevent soil erosion, and help protect coastal communities from the effects of strong winds, waves and water currents.

### In 2023:



- » NRT Coast commenced the operation of the Artificial Coral Reef Restoration Project in Kiunga Community Conservancy.
- » Pate and Kiunga Community Conservancies restored 0.5 hectares of reef within LMMAs and fish replenishment zones.
- » 40 coral reef restoration experts from Kiunga Community Conservancy were trained and actively engaged in the design and deployment of coral structures.
- » 20 artificial reef structures and 9 nursery structures were constructed and deployed to restore degraded reef areas.
- » 26 youth from 13 Beach Management Units (BMUs) in Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies underwent training in fish data collection, enhancing the management of fisheries.
- » Conservancy scouts conducted biannual coral reef monitoring surveys in 18 sites in Kiunga and Pate Marine Community Conservancies to assess fish density.
- » Extensive scuba-based coral and seagrass surveys were conducted in 26 sites in Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies. The surveys' results guided the review of the Kiunga Marine National Reserve (KMNR) Management Plan and the development of best practices for coral reef adaptability.



Scuba-based coral reef survey in Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies.

## Fisheries Co-Management

To counter the adverse effects of illegal and destructive fishing on marine ecosystems, NRT Coast through its partners has supported communities in Kiunga and Pate Conservancies in designing and implementing effective fisheries co-management areas that benefit people and the environment.

The co-management areas comprise different zones including no-take zones, seasonal closures, gear restriction zones, species-specific zones, and multi-use zones. The zones are established strategically for long-term impact, and the zonation plan is reviewed every five years.

### Curbing the Use of Destructive Beach Seine Nets

The use of beach seine nets has caused considerable harm to coral reefs by capturing non-targeted marine life and upsetting the natural balance of the marine ecosystem.

To conserve Lamu County's marine habitats, in 2023, NRT Coast, The Nature Conservancy, the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, Kenya Wildlife Service, Basecamp Explorer Foundation, and Fauna & Flora partnered to implement a voluntary gear exchange programme and curb the use of illegal and destructive beach seine nets in Kiunga Marine National Reserve (KMNR).

This initiative aligns with NRT's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, which aims at reducing the use of beach seine nets within the Reserve by 50% by 2026.

### Additionally, in 2023:



- » 80 community conservancy members from Pate and Kiunga, including fishers, beach seine net owners, traders, and local leaders, underwent training on the impact of various fishing gears on the environment and fish populations.
- » 176 beach seine fishers (11 owners and 165 crew) voluntarily agreed to cease using beach seine nets and exchanged 85% (11 out of 13) of the seines in KMNR for new sustainable fishing gear through the Gear Exchange Programme.
- » 8 local buyers were provided with cold storage equipment, enhancing the fish value chain.
- » 232 fishers involved in the pilot of the Fish-to-Market Project were trained on marine safety, sustainable fishing practices, and fish handling, processing and hygiene, reducing post-harvest losses.



A group of fishers using beach seines in Kiunga Community Conservancy.

## Locally Managed Marine Areas



### Spotlight on Locally Managed Marine Areas

Locally Managed Marine Areas (LMMAs) are regions in coastal Kenya that are organised in a way that marine resources are owned and managed by local coastal communities in partnership with NRT, donors, relevant government agencies and other partner organisations. Communities typically set aside at least part of the LMMA as a no-take zone or impose certain gear, species, or seasonal restrictions to allow habitat and resources to recover from fishing pressures, or to sustain or increase fish catch.

In 2023, three new LMMAs: Shimo la Tewa, Mike Inn, and Coral Garden, were established and demarcated, increasing the total number of LMMAs from 6 spanning 661 hectares to 9 covering an area of 747 hectares.

### Octopus Closures

For years, octopus fishers in Pate and Kiunga Community Conservancies in Lamu County struggled to catch large octopuses, resulting in meager earnings. The women in these Conservancies changed the narrative when they took up octopus farming, a historically male-dominated industry.

With support from NRT and its partners, among them The Nature Conservancy and Fauna & Flora, these women devised effective fishery co-management strategies including octopus closures, implemented every four months to allow the octopus to breed and grow.

They were also issued two fishing boats and trained on fishing techniques and financial literacy. Additionally, some of the women were taken on an exposure visit to Madagascar in 2018, which broadened their understanding of the ins and outs of octopus farming, and led to an increase in the women's octopus harvests as they applied the knowledge they had gained.

With increased octopus sizes and catches, the women's income improved, allowing them to save enough money to purchase a parcel of land on which they constructed a nursery school for their children.



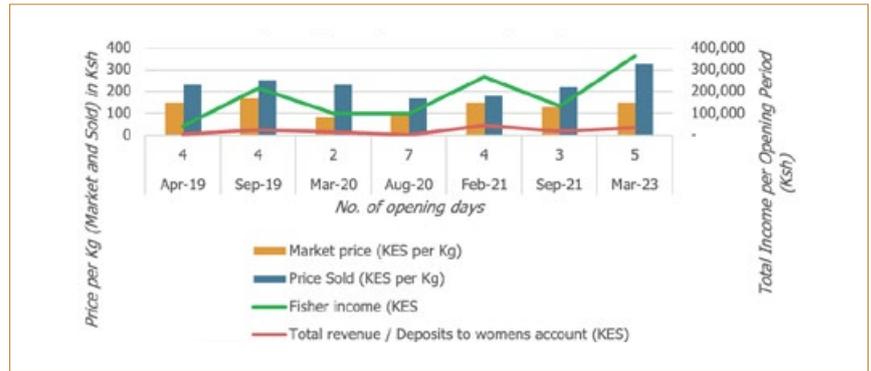
Women in Kiunga Community Conservancy showcasing their octopus harvest after the opening of closures in Mwamba Mkuu.



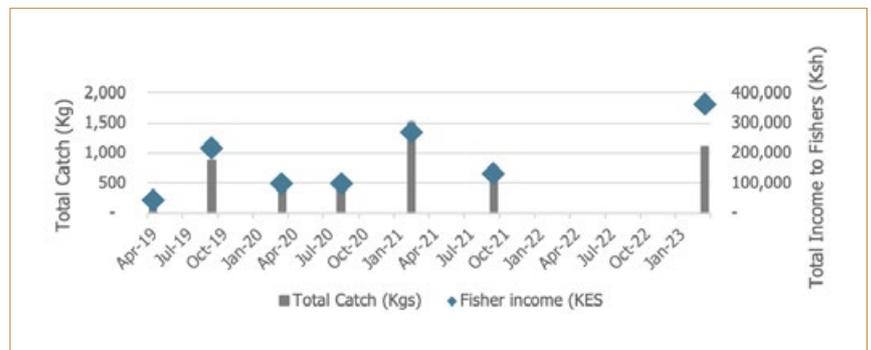
**In 2023:**

- » Pate and Kiunga Community Conservancies opened the seasonal octopus closures twice (in March and September), for octopus fishing. The fishers, who are mostly women, caught 3,715 kilogrammes of octopuses. A notable increase in octopus catch and size was observed, with the largest individual weighing 4.8 kilogrammes.
- » Octopus fishers earned Ksh 1,016,986 (USD 7,533) as the market price for octopus doubled, significantly boosting their income.
- » 14.6 tonnes of fish were sold under the Fish-to-Market Programme in Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies, generating Ksh 3.2 million (USD 23,703) for fishers.

**Summary of the Opening of Octopus Closures (2019-2023)**



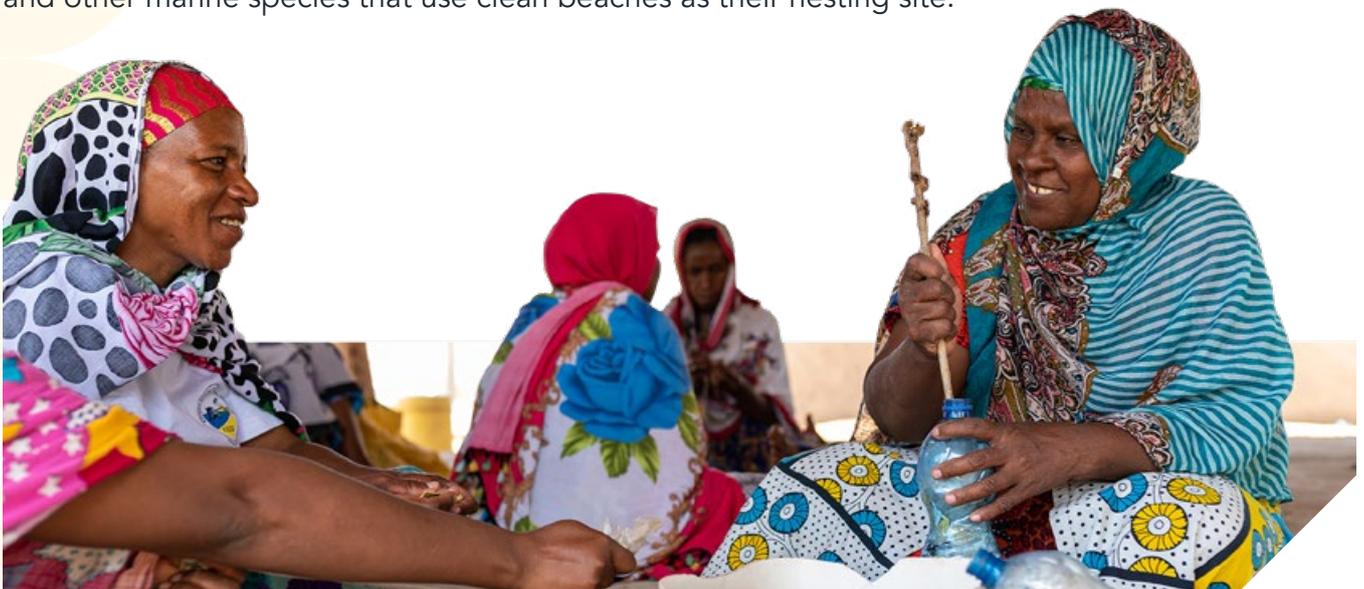
**Data on Octopus Fishers' Catch and Income (2019-2023)**



**Ocean Plastic Collection and Recycling**

According to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), nearly 23 million tonnes of plastic waste finds its way into aquatic ecosystems each year, polluting lakes, rivers, and oceans. Unchecked plastic pollution, reduces ecosystems' resilience to climate change and directly affects the environment and community livelihoods.

To address this, NRT Coast works with the community conservancies in the Region to collect and recycle plastic through an initiative dubbed the 'Bahari Moja Project,' which organises beach cleanup exercises. This prevents marine plastic pollution and helps to conserve the endangered sea turtle and other marine species that use clean beaches as their nesting site.



Women in Kiunga Community Conservancy creating eco-bricks under the Bahari Moja Plastic Recycling Project.

**In 2023:**



- » 8,789 tonnes of ocean plastic waste were collected from the sea turtle nesting beaches in Kiunga Community Conservancy and sorted for recycling. This brought the total plastic collected since 2019 to 91.989 tonnes.
- » Kiunga Community Conservancy received Ksh 2,295,000 (USD 17,000) from the Lamu Environment Foundation to support ocean plastic recycling initiatives.
- » A solar-powered plastic shredder was installed at the Bahari Moja Centre in Mkokoni, enhancing its plastic collection and recycling capability.

Plastic Collected and Sorted at the Kiunga Bahari Moja Project Centre (2023)					
	Type of Plastics	Jan-Mar (Kg)	Apr-Jun (Kg)	Jul-Sep (Kg)	Oct-Dec (Kg)
1.	Plastics bottles	123	266	499	170
2.	Glass bottles	8	80	147	15
3.	Flipflops	400	380	800	1,000
4.	Polythene bags/papers	21	31	44	3
5.	Unused fishing gears	12	13	46	16
6.	Ropes	500	521	575	34
7.	Buoys	200	100	135	21
8.	Hard plastics	661	474	983	228
9.	Bottle tops	4	3	136	10
10.	Sacks	15	5	16	8
11.	Other tiny plastics	30	7	24	24
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,974</b>	<b>1,880</b>	<b>3,405</b>	<b>1,529</b>



A section of the plastic waste collected during the beach clean up exercise in Kiunga Community Conservancy.



Transforming plastic waste into wall deco.

## Mangrove Forest Management

The Lamu Archipelago mangroves account for more than 60% of Kenya's mangrove forests and are among the largest in East Africa. These mangroves are critical to maintaining a highly productive environment, as they contain dense populations of finfish and crustaceans along Kenya's coastline. Regrettably, decades of intensive logging, overharvesting of fuel wood and timber production have left most of the shoreline damaged and unstable.

Since 2018, NRT Coast, in collaboration with partners, government agencies, and the communities in Pate Marine, Kiunga and Lower Tana Delta Conservancies, has adopted a community-led approach to mangrove restoration that includes conducting mangrove awareness campaigns, establishing nurseries for growing mangrove seedlings and identifying community members to train in mangrove restoration, transforming them into experts capable of independently monitoring planted sites.

### In 2023:



- » 90 new mangrove restoration experts were selected from the local communities and partners in the Lamu-Tana seascape and successfully trained.
- » 50,790 mangrove seedlings were planted and nurseries holding 18,593 propagules were established in Lower Tana and Pate Community Conservancies. This raises the total number of mangroves planted since 2018 to 146,284. NRT Coast aims at planting 245,494 mangroves by 2028.



Women from Pate Community Conservancy planting mangrove seedlings.

## Navigating a Course to Sustainable Fishing in Kiunga Community Conservancy

For decades, fishers in Kiunga Community Conservancy in Lamu County used beach seine nets, locally known as *juya* to catch fish. The knowledge of how to operate these nets was passed down through generations of fishers, but each was unaware of the destruction the seines were causing.

Shaibu Omari, a fisher for the past three decades, eventually noticed that the size of fish caught was declining and that juveniles formed the bulk of each day's catch. These small fish fetched low market prices, and generated little income, limiting his ability to provide for his family.

"In the past, fishing was profitable. There were plenty of high-quality fish, and I generated enough income to educate my children. These days deadly puffer fish make up most of my catch, so I release them back to the ocean," bemoaned Shaibu Omari, who until recently was unaware that the seine nets were the cause of his problems.

Every day, Omari and his fellow fishers would lower their seine nets into the sea and drag them through the waters in the hope of catching large fish for sale. This would destroy sea grasses and coral reefs, which provide food, shelter, and a safe space to reproduce or raise baby fish to nearly 25% of the ocean's fish and other organisms.

Additionally, up to 75% of young fish and other non-targeted marine organisms would be caught when the fishers used seines, upsetting the marine ecosystem's natural equilibrium.

To prevent this, in June 2023, NRT, in collaboration with partners including The Nature Conservancy, the Kenya Wildlife Service, Lamu County Government, Basecamp Explorer Foundation, Fauna & Flora, and the Kenya Marine and



# 176

beach seine fishers voluntarily exchanged their beach seine nets for new sustainable fishing gear issued by Kiunga Community Conservancy



Fisheries Research Institute, launched the Gear Exchange Programme, in which fishers from Kiunga Community Conservancy voluntarily exchange their seine nets for sustainable fishing gear.

During the Programme's launch, 176 beach seine fishers voluntarily exchanged their beach seine nets for new sustainable fishing gear issued by the Conservancy. The seines, which are currently in the custody of the Kenya Wildlife Service, will be recycled.

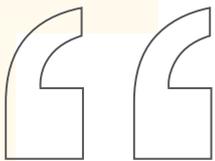
Speaking during the event, The Nature Conservancy Africa's Fisheries Strategy Manager, George Maina, said, "With Kenya focused on the blue economy, we must play our role in protecting the oceans. The Gear Exchange Programme is a key component of our broader efforts to achieve our goal of protecting at least 30% of land, fresh water, and ocean by 2030."

The exchange was preceded by a training of the fishers on how to use the new gear and marked a significant milestone achieved in the protection of marine life in Kiunga Marine National Reserve. In addition to the new fishing equipment, the fishers will also benefit from NRT Coast's Fish-to-Market Programme, which links them with a buyer, Kumbatia Seafoods. This prevents exploitation by middlemen, increasing the fishers' income.



**WATCH NOW**

[Kiunga Fishers Embrace Sustainable Fishing](#)



The Gear Exchange Programme is a step towards modernising Lamu's cottage fishing sector as it faces the realities of overfishing and the effects of climate change. The Lamu County Government has set aside Ksh 40 million to go towards fisheries and the blue economy development budget, as part of our commitment to improve the blue economy sector.

**Hon. Issa Timamy,**  
Governor of Lamu County



## Chapter 7

## Fostering Human-wildlife Coexistence

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NRT employs a community-led approach to conflict resolution and wildlife conservation, which focuses on endangered species such as black rhinos and elephants. This has proven effective in not only protecting these species from poaching brought on by bushmeat trade, but also fostering peacebuilding, creating a conducive environment for tourism, livelihood development and business investment.

Kenya's wildlife are constantly under threat. The dangers they encounter daily include wildlife crime, habitat degradation, intense competition for limited resources, the encroachment of human settlements onto wildlife corridors, and the proliferation of illegal weapons in some pastoralist communities, which leads to violent clashes during raids, with wildlife unwittingly caught in the crossfire.

To secure wildlife and livestock corridors and uphold community safety, NRT collaborates with multiple conservation partners, including member community conservancies and government agencies such as the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS).





## Community and Wildlife Safety

Conservancies are investing in community policing to complement government agencies and ensure a human-centred approach to enhancing wildlife protection and safety in northern Kenya.

### In 2023:



- » 26 instances of bushmeat poaching were recorded in the coastal region and parts of Isiolo and Marsabit Counties. 1,096 kilogrammes of bushmeat and 158 kilogrammes of sea turtle meat were recovered at the coast.
- » 17 snares set by poachers on animal paths were successfully recovered and destroyed through a joint effort involving community conservancy scouts, the KWS and wildlife response units.
- » Road banditry incidences surged, with 26 cases being recorded along the border between West Pokot and Turkana Counties and in Isiolo, Samburu and Marsabit Counties.

### Safety Incident Reports of NRT Member Community Conservancies (2023)

Year	Road Banditry	Stock Theft Incidents	Bushmeat Cases	Weapons Recovered	Snares Recovered	Tourist Attacks
2023	26	175	26	6	17	2

## Community Conservancy Scouts and Wildlife Response Units

The community scouts in our member conservancies play a vital role in monitoring endangered wildlife species, conducting anti-poaching patrols, raising conservation awareness and promoting peace.

The scouts are employed from indigenous communities and undergo intensive training in standard operating procedures and human rights. Currently, there are 1,092 scouts across the NRT landscape. 994 (902 male, 92 female) of the scouts are based in the conservancies while 96 (94 male, 2 female) serve in the wildlife response unit.





## Scouts in NRT Member Community Conservancies (2023)

ID	NRT Region	Conservancy	County	Male	Female	Total
1	NRT Coast	Awer	Lamu	15	0	15
2	NRT Coast	Kiunga	Lamu	18	2	20
3	NRT Coast	Hanshak	Lamu	13	0	13
4	NRT Coast	Pate	Lamu	15	2	17
5	NRT Coast	Lower Tana Delta	Tana River	13	0	13
6	NRT Coast	Ndera	Tana River	10	3	13
7	NRT Coast	Ishaqbini	Garissa	21	2	23
8	NRT Centre	Sera	Samburu	87	18	105
9	NRT Centre	Kalama	Samburu	38	7	45
10	NRT Centre	West Gate	Samburu	38	2	40
11	NRT Centre	Meibae	Samburu	37	3	40
12	NRT Centre	Nkoteyia	Samburu	19	1	20
13	NRT Centre	Ltungai	Samburu	21	2	23
14	NRT Centre	Ngilai	Samburu	20	3	23
15	NRT Centre	Kalepo	Samburu	29	3	32
16	NRT East	Naapu	Isiolo	11	2	13
17	NRT East	Nannapa	Isiolo	11	2	13
18	NRT East	Narupa	Isiolo	13	0	13
19	NRT East	Nannapisho	Isiolo	11	2	13
20	NRT East	Nasuulu	Isiolo	22	1	23
21	NRT East	Biliqo Bulesa	Isiolo	30	2	32
22	NRT East	Nakuprat-Gotu	Isiolo	27	2	29
23	NRT East	Leparua	Isiolo	22	1	23
24	NRT East	Songa	Marsabit	12	0	12
25	NRT East	Jaldesa	Marsabit	12	1	13
26	NRT East	Shurr	Marsabit	13	1	14
27	NRT East	Melako	Marsabit	32	2	34
28	NRT East	Cherab	Isiolo	19	2	21
29	NRT East	Sericho	Isiolo	18	2	20
30	NRT East	Garbatulla	Isiolo	19	2	21
31	NRT East	Kinna	Isiolo	18	2	20
32	NRT West	Pellow	West Pokot	26	2	28
33	NRT West	Masol	West Pokot	25	3	28
34	NRT West	Kaptuya	Baringo	14	1	15
35	NRT West	Ruko	Baringo	21	4	25
36	NRT Mountain	Il Ngwesi	Laikipia	20	0	20
37	NRT Mountain	Lekurruki	Laikipia	25	3	28

38	NRT Mountain	Kirimon	Laikipia	15	2	17
39	NRT Mountain	Ngare Ndare	Meru	24	4	28
40	NRT Mountain	Naibunga Lower	Laikipia	14	1	15
41	NRT Mountain	Naibunga Central	Laikipia	13	0	13
42	NRT Mountain	Naibunga Upper	Laikipia	13	0	13
43	NRT Mountain	Mayianat	Laikipia	0	0	0
44	NRT Mountain	Shulmai	Laikipia	0	0	0
45	NRT Uganda	Morong'ole	Kabong District in Uganda	8	0	8
	<b>Total</b>			<b>902</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>994</b>

### In 2023:



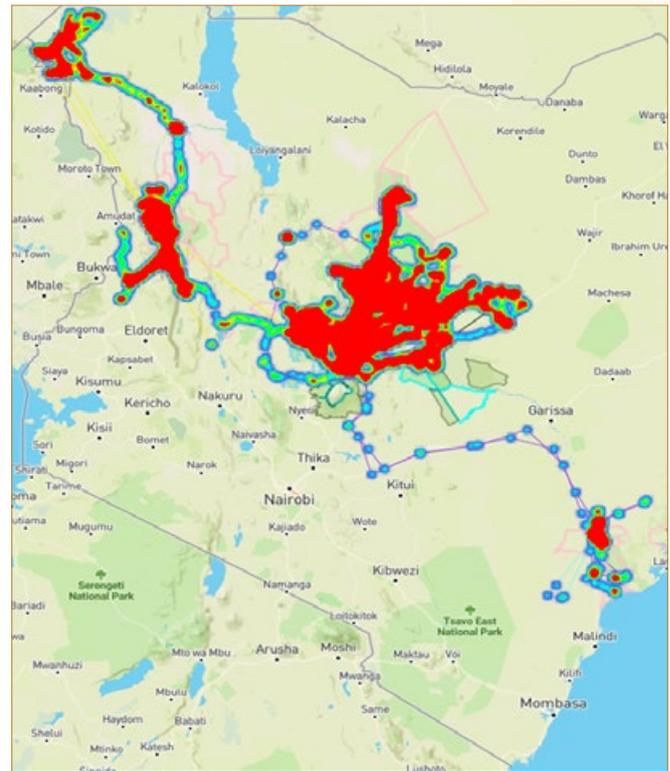
- » 10 scouts in NRT Coast were named the best-performing scouts in their respective community conservancies during an event organised to commemorate World Ranger Day. Four others received special recognition and awards for their outstanding wildlife protection efforts in the conservation of the endangered sea turtle and hirola.
- » 8 scouts from NRT's mobile wildlife response unit and Ngare Ndare Community Conservancy joined more than 100 teams of rangers across Africa in competing in Tusk Trust's 2023 Wildlife Ranger Challenge, held to fundraise for wildlife rangers' frontline work.



### Community Conservancy Scout Trainings Held in 2023

Training	Number of Scouts Trained	Community Conservancies Trained/ Mobile Teams
Conservancy Standard Operating Procedures	159	Biliqo, Kalepo, Lekurruki, West Gate, Il Ngwesi, Awer, Pate and Kiunga Community Conservancies
Refresher and Skills Upgrading Courses	77	Wildlife response unit
Rhino Tracking	18	Sera Community Conservancy's scouts
Junior Leadership Course	10	Wildlife response unit
<b>Total Trained</b>	<b>264</b>	

### NRT Wildlife Response Units' Patrol Heatmap (2023)



### Addressing Human-wildlife Conflict

Northern Kenya's elephant population traverses Laikipia, Samburu, Marsabit, and now Meru County, and is the country's second biggest after Tsavo's. This population is the most distinctive on the continent due to the substantial overlap that exists between the elephants' territory and migratory routes and human settlements.

In NRT member community conservancies, scouts track Human-wildlife Conflict (HWC) using Wildlife-CoMMS, a simple system used to monitor wildlife. The HWC data collected through Wildlife-CoMMS not only provides insights into the primary causes of HWC, but also



**WATCH NOW**

[Safe at Last: How the Naibunga Community Triumphed over Tragedy and Human-elephant Conflict](#)



highlights hotspot areas, guides the planning of community engagements and the development of plans to mitigate HWC, reducing its impact on people's lives and livelihoods.

Data on elephant's movements obtained using EarthRanger, a software solution that collects information on wildlife in real-time, reveals an expansion in elephant range and increased connectivity between Mount Kenya and Marsabit County. This is attributed to the heightened safety NRT member community conservancies provide along the elephants' migratory routes.

**In 2023, the following additional actions were taken to reduce HWC across the NRT landscape:**



- » A 1.6-kilometre perimeter fence was erected at Naiperere Primary School in Naibunga Lower to prevent elephants from accessing the school compound. A gate was constructed to further enhance safety within the school.
- » At Tamiyoi Rangers Camp in Samburu, an electric fence was installed with support from the Samburu County Government, safeguarding community members in the area from encounters with wildlife.
- » Fence attendants in Naibunga Central and Lower Community Conservancies underwent a training that enhanced their capacity in evaluating the effectiveness of electric fences in mitigating HWC.

### **Naibunga Community Conservancy Elephant Exclusion Zones**

Naibunga Central and Lower Community Conservancies function as a crucial elephant corridor that links the Laikipia-Isiolo-Samburu-Marsabit wildlife circuit. In 2022, Naibunga Community Conservancy, in collaboration with partners who included the KWS, erected a 40-kilometre electric fence in Naibunga Central and parts of Naibunga Lower to mitigate the impact of HWC in the area and avert further loss of human life.

## **The Elephant in the Classroom: Naibunga Community Conservancy Addresses Human-wildlife Conflict in Schools**

For the longest time in Naibunga Community Conservancy, human-wildlife conflict stirred fear among residents. Tales of lives lost after encounters with wildlife were all too familiar.

In Naibunga Lower, elephants posed a continuous threat to the students attending Naiperere Primary School.

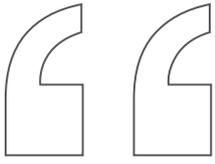
Since wildlife roamed freely in the area, elephant herds would frequently find their way into the school compound and disrupt classes or cause damage to school property.

While no elephant-related injuries or fatalities among students or staff had occurred, the School's head teacher, Adoyo Anunda, observed that an increasing number of pupils were late or absent, and those who were present studied with some trepidation.

To address the issue, the Conservancy's Board, in collaboration with NRT and other partners, erected a 1.6-kilometre perimeter fence around the School and installed a gate, enhancing safety within the school compound. A storage facility was also constructed for the School.

"Since the fence's installation, we have witnessed significant improvement in performance. Pupils arrive early and can concentrate better." Noted Anunda.

NRT and member conservancies continue to prioritise the safety and well-being of the communities living adjacent to wildlife corridors, such as those at Naibunga Community Conservancy.



The greatest thing that has ever happened to Naibunga was the erection and maintenance of the elephant protection fence. Cases of human-wildlife conflict have dramatically decreased.

**Hon. Francis Ole Kaparo,**

former Speaker of the National Assembly of Kenya and a member of Naibunga Community Conservancy.

## Technology and Digital Radio Upgrade

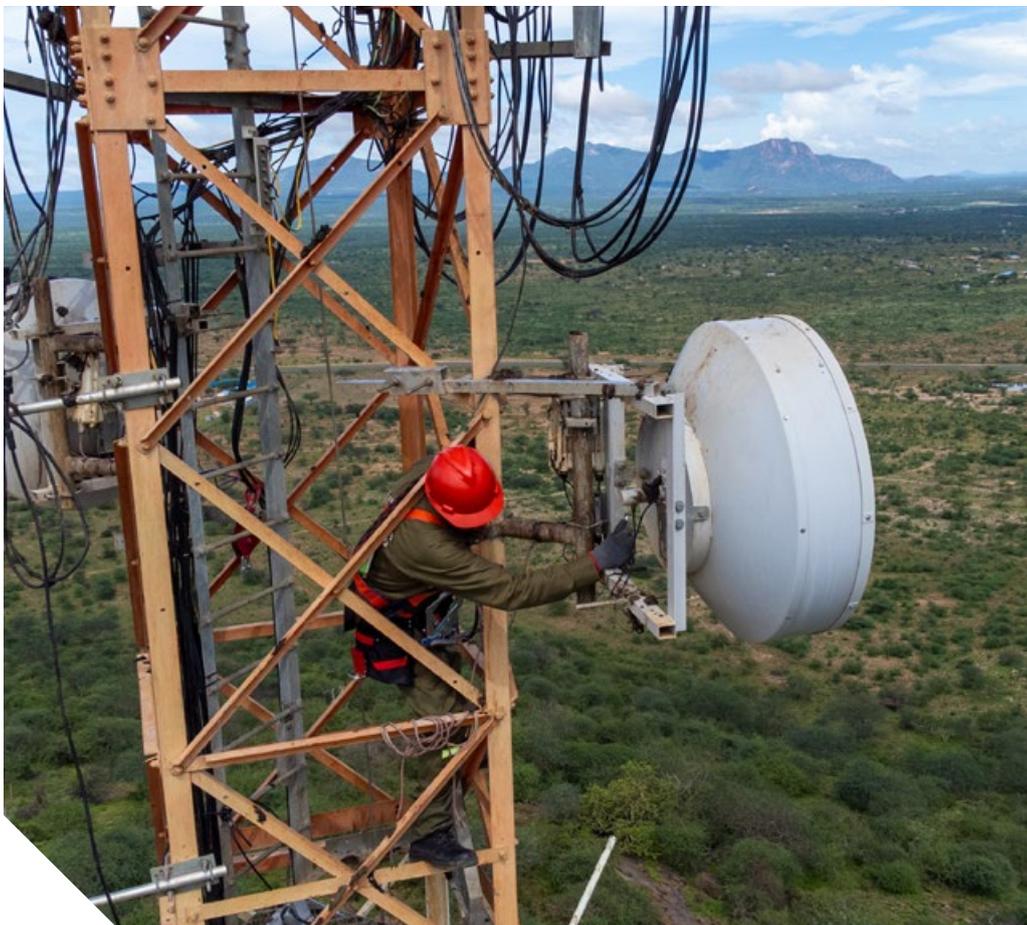
Over the last three years, NRT, working with partners, has been upgrading its communication infrastructure in an ambitious project that has seen its radio network upgraded and an Internet of Things (IoT) network deployed and expanded.

The project was launched in 2019 and was conducted in phases that included installing power monitors, upgrading the power supply, establishing a data backhaul network, and ensuring that radios and accessories were seamlessly integrated into the system.

The project was completed in 2023 with valuable support from Dimension Data, Cisco, Connected Conservation Foundation, 51 Degrees, EarthRanger, and the European Union's Community Policing Initiative Biolive Project.

The radios, which are fitted with a Global Positioning System have enhanced radio communication and the coordination of safety efforts and wildlife protection across 22 NRT member community conservancies.

In 2023, the digitisation of the data collection process was successfully implemented in four more community conservancies: Naibunga Lower, Kalama, Sera and West Gate Community Conservancies.



Security network installation in Kalama Community Conservancy.

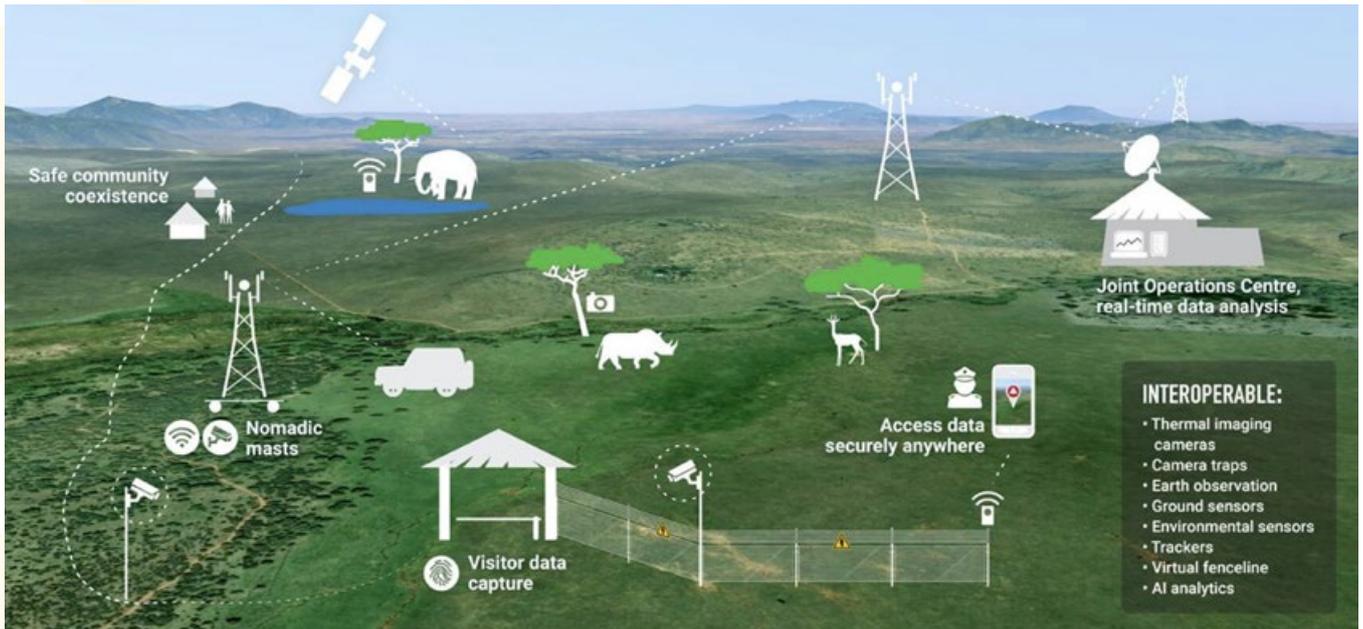


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[Revolutionising Wildlife Conservation Through Technology](#)



## NRT's IoT Network, Powered by Connected Conservation



## The Conservancy Infrastructure Development Unit

The Conservancy Infrastructure Development Unit (CIDU) improves vehicle and aerial patrol access to facilitate rapid response to safety incidents. The team seeks to reduce contingencies through increased patrol coverage.

In 2023, the CIDU maintained 68.8 kilometres of roads and 7 kilometres of airstrip in six NRT community member conservancies: Sera, Ngilai, West Gate, Ngare Ndare, Kalama and Naibunga Lower.



## Scaling New Heights of Wildlife Conservation: Africa's Largest IoT Network Deployed in NRT Member Community Conservancies

We see it in our homes and our places of work. Situations can go terribly wrong really fast when there is a breakdown in communication.

For community conservancy scouts working in the field, the effects of miscommunication are exponentially worse, and information, if it is inaccurate or arrives a fraction of a second too late, can cause injury and loss of life for human beings and wildlife.

Until recently, scouts in NRT member community conservancies relied on an analog communication system, which posed significant challenges during rescue operations and hampered wildlife monitoring.

Since 2019, NRT has been implementing an ambitious project that has seen its radio network upgraded and an Internet of Things (IoT) network established and expanded, creating a vast communication web that connects 22 NRT member community conservancies, with plans underway to bring more on board.

Deployed in collaboration with Connected Conservation Foundation, Cisco, 51 Degrees, Earth-Ranger, and the European Union's Community Policing Initiative Biolive Project, NRT's is Africa's largest landscape-wide, IoT conservation network.

The first of its kind in Kenya, it is enhancing the protection of endangered species and the conservation of natural resources by leveraging cloud-based sensors and networks to collect, monitor, and analyse environmental data in real time.

NRT upgraded the radio network in three phases. In the first, power monitors were installed and a substantial upgrade of power supplies was undertaken, while in the second, Low-Power, Long-Range (LoRa) technology was introduced, connecting all conservancies to a wide area network.



Finally, EarthRanger systems were installed in NRT member community conservancies, enabling them to track and monitor wildlife and scouts in the field.

Using EarthRanger software, NRT is also able to monitor water stations and levels digitally and collect vital information for managing water resources. This cutting-edge technology has enabled NRT member community conservancies to track wildlife, including endangered species such as black rhinos and elephants, and detect poaching activities—all in real time.

Sera Rhino Sanctuary, for example, now provides live footage to NRT's Joint Operations Communication Centre (JOCC) for real-time rhino tracking, elevating wildlife protection to new heights.

For Samuel Lekimaroro, NRT's Wildlife Protection Manager, the radio technology upgrade and the establishment of the IoT network are welcome developments as they have made it easier to conduct conservancy patrols.

He vividly recalls an incident in which a scout sustained an injury while on patrol in Mukogodo Forest, and contact with him was lost, necessitating a rescue operation in the dead of night. "All field patrol teams can now be monitored and coordinated by the team in headquarters, which is the central location," he says.

The upgraded radio network and the newly established IoT network have massively improved communication within and across NRT member community conservancies, enhancing and boosting scout patrols, wildlife protection, and conservation of endangered species.

## NRT's IoT Network



Is Africa's largest landscape-wide network



Features Long-Range (LoRa) and EarthRanger technology



Wildlife in 22 conservancies monitored in real-time, across 6.4 million acres of rangelands



## Chapter 8

## MashinaniWORKS: Building Climate-resilient Economies

MashinaniWORKS (NRT Trading) empowers historically marginalised youth and women in Kenya's Arid and Semi-arid Lands (ASALs) through trade, vocational skills training, entrepreneurship and commerce, to diversify their livelihoods, increase their income and build their climate resilience.

Through its vocational trainings, business incubation programmes and provision of access to financial services, MashinaniWORKS is transforming the lives of thousands of people in NRT member community conservancies.

Northern Kenya and some parts of coastal Kenya continue to be economically disadvantaged due to multiple factors, including a rapidly changing climate, inadequate infrastructure, conflict over resources, persistent insecurity, and prolonged drought, which affects livestock, their primary source of livelihood.

This challenging business environment notwithstanding, MashinaniWORKS' livelihood and business investments continue to improve lives across the NRT landscape, while promoting self-governance and nurturing positive attitudes toward conflict resolution, conservation, land use and natural resource management.



### NRT Trading is Transforming and Rebranding to MashinaniWORKS

To better position NRT Trading to accomplish its mission, the Boards of Directors of the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) and Northern Rangelands Trading Limited (NRT Trading), approved the formation of MashinaniWORKS as a non-profit company limited by guarantee. The new company and branding will drive clarity of focus and clearer communications to communities, the Government and partners. NRT Trading will maintain its close working relationship with NRT and continue to serve the community conservancies, and counties of the arid and semi-arid lands of Kenya.





## BeadWORKS

BeadWORKS is a handicraft business that harnesses the rich beading tradition of northern Kenya to improve livelihoods and empower women.

The business currently empowers 1,200 women in nine community conservancies, including 108 Star Beaders, who make beaded jewellery and accessories and sell them in domestic and international markets.

### In 2023:



- » BeadWORKS generated Ksh 35.5 million (USD 262,962) in product sales.
- » The women beaders earned Ksh 12.8 million (USD 94,814) in income from the production of 89,013 items.
- » BeadWORKS contributed Ksh 1.7 million (USD 12,592) in conservation fees to community conservancies.
- » Star beaders' rewards amounted to Ksh 611,669 (USD 4,530).
- » BeadWORKS' B2C e-commerce website generated Ksh 805,545 (USD 5,967) in sales.
- » BeadWORKS organised the Women in Business and Conservation Conference, bringing together 150 women leaders and entrepreneurs from Isiolo, Samburu, Laikipia, and Marsabit Counties to discuss the opportunities and challenges of establishing resilient, sustainable businesses that advance climate action and gender equality.
- » The World Fair Trade Organisation (WFTO) certified BeadWORKS as a fair-trade enterprise. WFTO is the global community and verifier of social enterprises that fully practice fair trade.
- » The Kenya eCommerce Awards added another feather to BeadWORKS' cap by announcing the Programme as the winner of the prestigious Best International/Export E-commerce Website Gold Award.



WATCH NOW

[From Our Artisans' Hands to Yours: The BeadWORKS Global Journey](#)





## Ufugaji Bora Mashinani

Livestock is the backbone of northern Kenya's economy, yet pastoralists are frequently confronted with new challenges.

Ufugaji Bora Mashinani seeks to bring about transformation in community conservancies by using modern information to complement traditional approaches while embracing the best aspects of both and taking into account the communities' ecological and socioeconomic realities.

Through practical skill training, the Programme empowers herders to increase the productivity of their herds and the rangelands, improving their livelihoods.

### In 2023:



- » Ufugaji Mashinani evaluated the effectiveness of the Programme's module 1 and 2 training through a midterm assessment which revealed:
  - 80% of the beneficiaries reported improved access to quality production inputs, suppliers, and livestock feed supplements.
  - 60% of trained herders focused their efforts on pasture productivity and conservation.
- » 300 herders from 10 community conservancies underwent training covering rangeland health and climate change in module 3 and leadership, governance, and gender inclusion in module 4.
- » Pastoralist groups in Songa Community Conservancy collaborated with the Conservancy's Grazing Management Committee to establish a 12-acre fodder farm. USAID's Nari Programme and Pastoralist Community Initiative and Development Assistance Programme supported the herders by issuing them with balers and harvesting equipment.
- » West Gate Community Conservancy's pastoralist groups benefitted from a partnership with Coopers Kenya Limited's DigiCow Programme, which trained them on and provided them with animal health products, including dewormers.
- » Engagement with the Livestock Departments of Laikipia, Samburu, and Marsabit Counties increased, resulting in Marsabit and Samburu Counties' Departments of Veterinary Services partnering with Ufugaji Bora Mashinani in implementing a rabies control programme in Loiyangalani and West Gate.
- » Sera and Kalama Community Conservancies' livestock groups were supported by Samburu County's Emergency Locust Programme, which provided them with animal health inputs.



## Tourism

Conservation-based tourism is an acceptable form of land use that complements pastoralists' way of life and provides youth and women with an alternative source of income, in addition to pastoralism, while funding community development priorities such as education, health and water.

### In 2023:



- » Tourism earnings for 12 NRT member community conservancies increased by 22% to Ksh 139.9 million (USD 1,036,296), compared to Ksh 115.1 million (USD 852,592) in 2022.
- » Bandas (self-catering accommodation facilities) generated Ksh 16.4 million (USD 121,481).
- » Ksh 23 million of NKRCF funds were allocated towards the construction of a banda in Nasuulu Community Conservancy, launched by then Cabinet Secretary for Tourism, Wildlife, and Heritage, Hon. Peninah Malonza. The banda construction is complete, and its opening is scheduled for 2024.
- » Nkoteiya Eco-lodge's income hit the Ksh 10 million (USD 74,074) mark, predominantly through investment and leasehold.
- » Lekurruki Community Conservancy awarded bursaries worth Ksh 1 million (USD 7,407) to 111 students enrolled in secondary and tertiary institutions. The funds were generated from tourism.
- » 108 youth and conservancy board staff underwent training in tourism management, enhancing their hospitality management skills and facilitating the profitable operation of community bandas.
- » 47 community members from Lekurruki, Nkoteiya, Naibunga Lower, Sera, West Gate, Nasuulu, Il Ngwesi, and Meibae Community Conservancies, were successfully trained in providing wilderness first aid.
- » Olgaboli Banda and MashinaniWORKS drafted a memorandum of understanding that will see the Banda autonomously manage its lodge operations with technological support and guidance from MashinaniWORKS to ensure seamless operations.
- » Community-owned lodges were showcased at the 3<sup>rd</sup> East African Regional Tourism Expo and the 2023 Magical Kenya Travel Expo held at the Kenyatta International Convention Centre.



Tassia Lodge in Lekurruki Community Conservancy.

## Tourism Income from NRT Member Community Conservancies (2023)

Conservancy	Amount (Ksh)
Ngilai	1,600,000
Kalepo	3,000,000
Kalama	35,252,704
Ngare Ndare	9,892,228
West Gate	30,632,327
Lekurruki	7,379,195
Il Ngwesi	32,759,870
Nakuprat-Gotu	82,000
Sera	3,873,000
Nkoteiya	10,608,975
Naibunga Upper	80,000
Naibunga Lower	4,395,355
Nannapa	358,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>139,913,654</b>



# 584

conservancy entrepreneurs from 11 community conservancies underwent training in business plan development and improvement, gaining practical business management skills

## Biashara Mashinani Programme

The Biashara Mashinani (business at the grassroots) Programme develops the capacity of individuals and groups in community conservancies to start and manage enterprises. It seeks to bring women and youth into the economic mainstream by supporting livelihood diversification and the creation of an asset base that is not solely reliant on livestock.

The Programme is distinguished by a structured graduation-based approach that encompasses training, business development, business mentorship, the provision of financial literacy tools, such as savings and loan facilities and mobile banking, and access to a savings and credit cooperative organisation (Rangelands Sacco).

### In 2023, through the Biashara Mashinani Programme:



- » 132 women from Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies in NRT Coast received Ksh 10 million (USD 74,074) to facilitate the growth of their enterprises.
- » 584 conservancy entrepreneurs from 11 community conservancies (Naibunga Lower, Biliqo Bulesa, Meibae, Ruko, Masol, Ishaqbini, Shurr, Jaldesa, Songa, Pate and Oldonyiro) underwent training in business plan development and improvement, gaining practical business management skills.
- » 1,514 youth and women in NRT member community conservancies received training in life skills, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, and business management.

## The Rangelands Sacco

The Northern Rangelands Savings and Credit Cooperative (now known as Rangelands Sacco) was founded in 2016, when it became apparent that a financial intermediary was essential for youth and women from communities in NRT member conservancies to have access to micro-loans and other financial services.

The Sacco is an independent, community-owned, membership-driven organisation, which receives critical oversight, technical support and training from MashinaniWORKS. The Sacco works closely with community conservancies to administer savings and microcredit loans.

MashinaniWORKS has provided approximately Ksh 195.7 million (USD 1.4 million) in funding for community enterprises through the Rangelands Sacco, since its inception.

### In 2023:



- » Rangelands Sacco members received Ksh 1.65 million (USD 11,851) in dividends for the 2022 financial year. The dividends were issued at the Sacco's annual delegates' meeting, attended by 50 delegates from nine conservancies.
- » 365 new members joined the Sacco, bringing the total to 6,007 active members, with 70% being women.
- » Ksh 13.6 million (USD 100,740) was used to finance 334 new youth and women-run businesses.
- » Ksh 44.3 million (USD 328,148) was accrued by members in savings and shares.
- » Borrowers' loan repayment stood at Ksh 17.2 million (USD 127,407).

## Ujuzi Manyattani Programme

Ujuzi Manyattani, a vocational training programme established in 2019, now operates in eight counties in Kenya: Marsabit, Samburu, Isiolo, Laikipia, Baringo, West Pokot, Garissa and Lamu.

The Programme was instituted as part of a wider effort by community conservancies to diversify indigenous peoples' livelihoods and encourage entrepreneurship among women and young morans. It provides mobile, village-based vocational training to community conservancy members by collaborating with polytechnics.

To date, Ujuzi Manyattani has trained 962 young men and women in vocational skills, who contribute Ksh 97 million (USD 718,518) to the local economy each year.

### In 2023:



- » The Programme expanded its footprint into Kiunga Community Conservancy in Lamu County, where a vessel repair and maintenance course was developed, with 13 young men enrolling and acquiring skills that will help them address the needs of the marine transport sector. A tailoring and dressmaking course was also launched, which drew 17 young women.
- » Apart from Kiunga Community Conservancy, the Ujuzi Manyattani Programme was launched in five other community conservancies: Naibunga Central, Kaptuya, Leparua, Garbatulla and Cherab, with 320 community members enrolling in the Programme.
- » A 2023 survey revealed that 96% of Ujuzi Manyattani graduates are self-employed and own businesses, while the rest are apprentices or formally employed.
- » In 2023, for the first time since Ujuzi Manyattani's inception, the number of young women graduating from the Programme surpassed that of young men. Of the 210 graduates, 67% were young women, a noteworthy accomplishment in our efforts to address the economic marginalisation of women in pastoralist communities.

## Rising Above Terrorism Scars: Mumina's Extraordinary Journey from Tragedy to Triumph

Kenya's northern and coastal regions have long been plagued with insecurity, upending the lives of community members, such as Mumina Omar.

In 2017, en route to Kiunga Primary School in Lamu County from Marani Village, Mumina, then in seventh grade, and other pupils with her experienced a tragedy that no child should ever have to suffer.

While travelling along the Mararani-Kiunga Road which passes through the dense and extensive Boni Forest, the vehicle transporting them drove over an improvised explosive device that had been planted by terrorists. A deafening explosion and a fiery inferno ensued, engulfing the vehicle.

The remote location of the incident hampered rescue efforts, and regrettably four of Mumina's schoolmates succumbed to their injuries during the lengthy wait for help that continued late into the night. The impact of the explosion had flung Mumina far from her peers, making it hard to trace her. She spent the harrowing night alone in the forest, writhing in pain and consumed by fear, before eventually drifting into a state of unconsciousness.

It was not until 11 a.m. the following day that Mumina was found during a renewed search mission prompted by her distraught family's reporting of her disappearance. She was rushed to Aga Khan Hospital in Mombasa for treatment but showed no signs of improvement. After a fortnight, she was transferred to Kijabe Mission Hospital in Kijabe.

Her extensive injuries necessitated the amputation of one of her legs three months later to save her life. This profound loss not only impacted her education, dreams and self-esteem but also strained her family's resources.



Despite the prevailing circumstances, Mumina's indomitable spirit shone through the darkness. With the help of a prosthetic leg that was purchased by a good samaritan, she resumed formal learning in 2019, persevering through bouts of excruciating pain to complete her primary and secondary school education.



# 96%

of Ujuzi Manyattani graduates are self-employed and own businesses, while the rest are apprentices or formally employed



Mumina aspired to attain higher levels of education, but the pain searing through her body confined her to the walls of their family home, where she dutifully assisted her parents with light tasks. As destiny would have it, in 2023, Mumina heard about MashinaniWORKS' Ujuzi Manyattani Programme, which provides vocational training in high-demand skills to young men and women in marginalised communities.

The Regional MashinaniWORKS-Coast Ujuzi Manyattani Coordinator encouraged Mumina to enroll in the Programme, where she underwent three months of training in tailoring and dressmaking.

Despite her fears and doubts, through sheer determination and the unwavering support of her parents, trainer, and fellow trainees, Mumina learned to sew a wide array of garments and mastered the art of operating a sewing machine with one leg.

During her graduation from Ujuzi Manyattani, Mumina's face lit up with a radiant smile. "Terrorists may have robbed me of one leg, but not my destiny," she said defiantly. Upon graduating, Mumina and 30 other graduates from Kiunga Community Conservancy were issued with startup toolkits, enabling them to launch their businesses.

Ujuzi Manyattani remains a beacon of hope for communities in NRT member conservancies and is supported by USAID through Local Works, the Scaling Sustainability and Resilience for Community Conservancies Programme, the Royal Danish Embassy through the Danish International Development Agency, the French Development Agency, ICEP, the Embassy of Sweden through the Integrated Management of Natural Resources for Resilience in Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Programme, The Nature Conservancy, and IUCN Save our Species through the European Union-funded Beisa Oryx Protection Project.

In January 2023, MashinaniWORKS conducted a survey that revealed Ujuzi Manyattani graduates earn an average of Ksh 8,840 (USD 65) monthly from their businesses and contribute Ksh 97 million (USD 718,518) to the local economy, every year, through their income generating activities. Survey findings also showed that 96% of the Programme's graduates were self-employed and had started their own businesses, while the rest were apprentices or formally employed.

To date, 962 young women and men have graduated from the Programme with training in vocational skills and startup toolkits, securing their livelihoods and expanding their horizons.



## Chapter 9

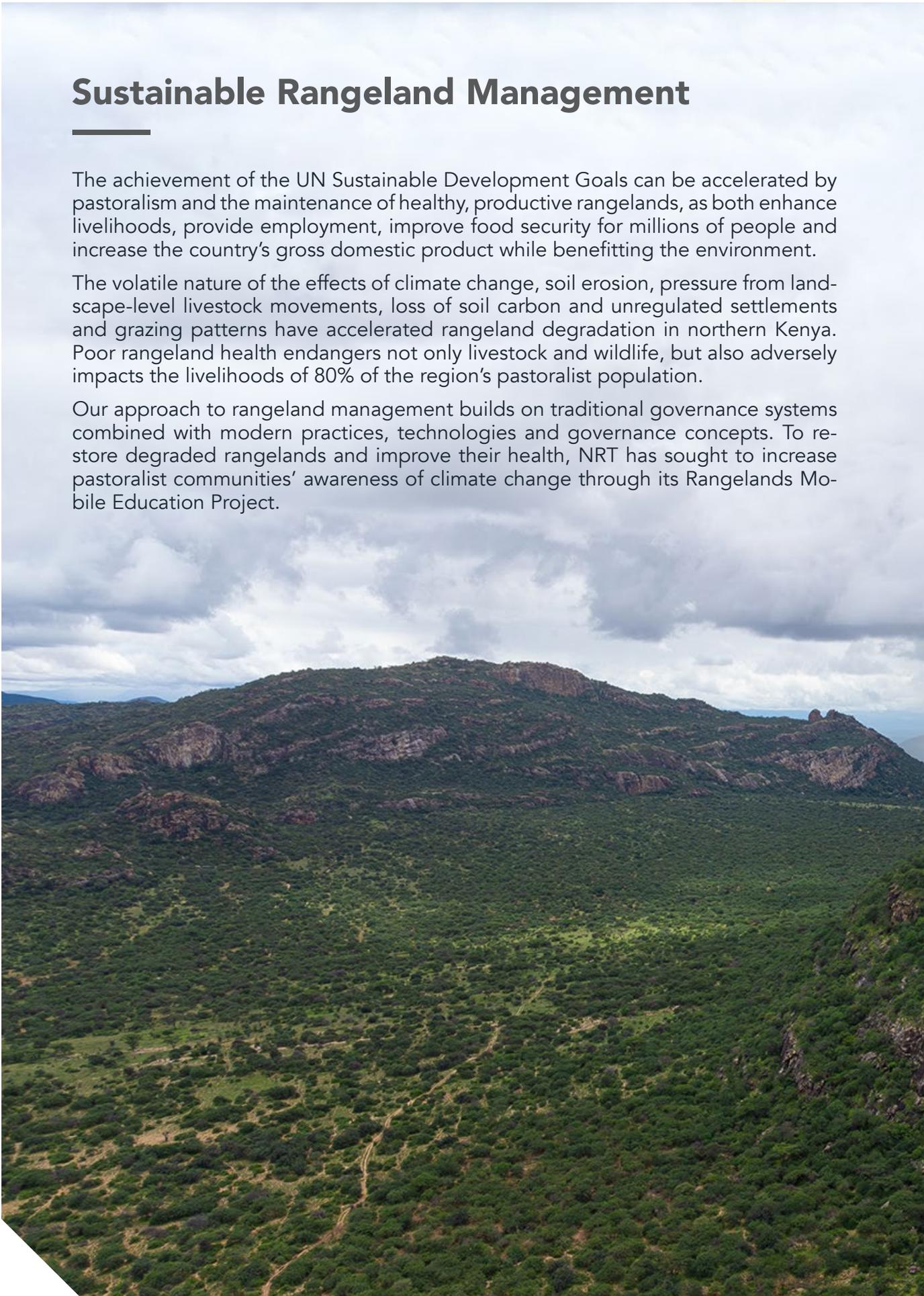
## Sustainable Rangeland Management

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The achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals can be accelerated by pastoralism and the maintenance of healthy, productive rangelands, as both enhance livelihoods, provide employment, improve food security for millions of people and increase the country's gross domestic product while benefitting the environment.

The volatile nature of the effects of climate change, soil erosion, pressure from landscape-level livestock movements, loss of soil carbon and unregulated settlements and grazing patterns have accelerated rangeland degradation in northern Kenya. Poor rangeland health endangers not only livestock and wildlife, but also adversely impacts the livelihoods of 80% of the region's pastoralist population.

Our approach to rangeland management builds on traditional governance systems combined with modern practices, technologies and governance concepts. To restore degraded rangelands and improve their health, NRT has sought to increase pastoralist communities' awareness of climate change through its Rangelands Mobile Education Project.



As a result, NRT is collaborating with 32 community conservancies to implement its Rangelands Programme, which focusses on sustainable rangeland management and rehabilitation and governance. Other activities performed through the Programme include the development of grazing and livestock movement agreements, and policy advocacy for livestock movements and invasive species management.

The Programme also conducts rangeland vegetation monitoring in the conservancies, using Veg-CoMMS, a system NRT adapted from the United States Department of Agriculture's Monitoring Rangeland Health Guide.



## Vegetation Cover Inside and Outside Conservancies

NRT member community conservancies are employing adaptive grazing management techniques to drive the growth and improve the health of vegetation.

To support these efforts, in 2023, NRT's rangelands team monitored vegetation in 28 community conservancies using Veg-CoMMS. The team also visited 265 field transects in Isiolo, Samburu, Laikipia, Marsabit, West Pokot and Baringo Counties to assess rangeland health.

Despite six consecutive years of poor rainfall, which hindered the growth of vegetation, NRT member community conservancies have maintained vegetation cover on their vast rangelands, with a significant number of conservancies registering continuous improvement in grass recovery.



### Veg-CoMMS

A vegetation monitoring system NRT adapted from the United States Department of Agriculture's Monitoring Rangeland Health Guide

## Rangelands Health Indicators

In community conservancies that are part of the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project (NKRCP), the average percentage of forage abundance doubled to 58.9% in the second half of 2023.



# 2x

Forage abundance doubled to nearly 59% in 2023

## Remedies for Natural Resource Degradation

To improve rangeland health and accelerate natural grass regeneration, community conservancies, with NRT's support, are implementing short-term and long-term rangeland restoration strategies, including reseeding, invasive species management, planned grazing management and herd bunching.

## Rangelands Mobile Education Programme

To initiate a dialogue about rangelands management among herders, women, elders, and children, NRT's Rangelands Programme runs a Rangelands Mobile Education Programme in which a three-part cartoon series narrated in English, Swahili and Maa is used to analyse how the northern Kenya landscape has deteriorated in recent years.

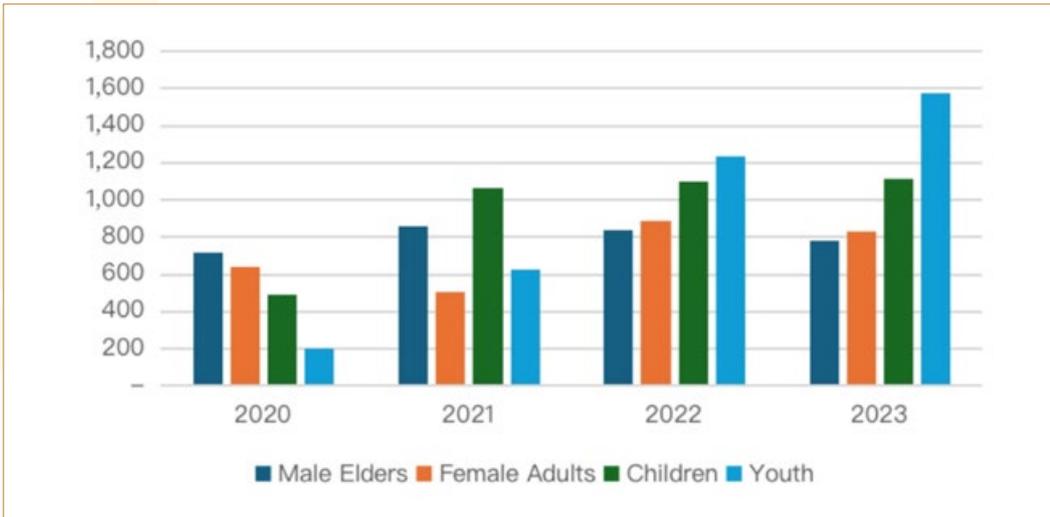
The series highlights the reasons for the change and offers potential solutions.

### In 2023:



- » 4,000 herders were reached by the Rangelands Mobile Education Programme, raising their awareness of planned grazing, climate change, rangeland rehabilitation and livestock management and movement plans. This is the highest number of herders that the Programme has ever reached since it was established in 2020.
- » Repeated cartoon screenings in communities resulted in significant positive changes in behaviour in several community conservancies running the cartoon series.

### Trends in Cartoon Screening Attendance (2020-2023)



### Grazing Plan Implementation

Community conservancies developed conservancy-level grazing plans and identified priority areas for rangeland management using a landscape-level approach.

To further promote the implementation of grazing plans and rangeland restoration, in 2023:



- » 24,609 herders practised planned grazing with the support of conservancy grazing committees, which encouraged adherence to the grazing plans.
- » 7,628 women herders and 320 grazing committees were trained in rangeland management.
- » Bespoke rangeland management programmes were developed with a focus on women, herders and youth in rangelands, to promote inclusivity. The Women in Rangelands Programme, which has been in existence for a year, has doubled the number of women from pastoralist communities involved in rangeland management.



## Invasive Species Management

In 2023, community conservancies intensified their efforts to control the spread of invasive species through the following community-led activities:

### Invasive Cactus Control

Naibunga Community Conservancy has been investing in the biological control of the invasive *Opuntia stricta* cactus for several years. The cactus prevents grass growth, causes injury to livestock and wildlife who attempt to eat the fruit beneath its spines, and sometimes leads to increased human-wildlife conflict when its fruit attracts elephants to settlement areas.

The Conservancy opted to use cochineal insects, which feed exclusively on *Opuntia stricta* to curb the spread of the cactus. This is an economical, eco-friendly method of control.

The breeding of cochineal insects is taking place in 18 greenhouses. Each produces 100 buckets of infested *Opuntia cladodes* for spreading in the field. The spreading is done by community women groups and ensures the cochineal insects reach more areas and plants.

The efficacy of the spread is monitored through annual transect surveys, which have revealed a significant reduction in *Opuntia* cacti numbers and their stems, fruits and flowers.

### *Acacia reficiens*

*Acacia reficiens*, a tree that spreads rapidly on degraded land, is becoming more prolific. It serves no purpose for either livestock or wildlife and displaces other more valuable forage species. With the support of donors and partners, the conservancies that are severely impacted by the species have engaged the community to clear the trees.

When the *Acacia reficiens* trees are chopped down as part of rehabilitation efforts, their branches are spread over the earth, preventing soil erosion when rain falls, and herbivores from consuming grass seeds sown among the branches.

In 2023, NRT member community conservancies restored 3,000 hectares of degraded rangelands, transforming them into productive, reseeded grasslands for livestock and wildlife use.

### The Prosopis Project

In 2023, the conservancy scouts in Ruto Community Conservancy removed 300 *Prosopis juliflora* seedlings that had developed along Lake Baringo's shores where floodwater had receded, to prevent the propagation of *Prosopis* trees. An absence of funding makes it challenging to regulate the spread of *Prosopis*.

## Rangelands Rehabilitation

NRT and member community conservancies strive to stabilise and rehabilitate degraded rangelands and grasslands through effective rangeland management. This improves forage for livestock and wildlife, reduces competition and conflict over pasture, and safeguards the livestock economy on which pastoralists rely for their livelihoods.

### Earth Bunds

Community conservancies are using earth bunds, semi-circular holes dug in the ground, to collect runoff water and restore degraded rangelands.

In 2023, over 50,000 semi-circular bunds, with the potential to hold roughly 400 litres of surface water, were constructed in West Gate, Kalama and Naibunga Upper Community Conservancies. The bunds were used to reseed grass, protecting the rangelands from severe erosion.

## Grass Reseeding

### In 2023:



- » Community grass banks were established in Ngilai Central, West Gate, Lekurruki, Kalama, Nannapa, and Narupa Community Conservancies and used to reseed other areas.
- » 718 acres in West Gate and Kalama Community Conservancies were reseeded with grass.
- » Ishaqbini Community Conservancy, with Mercy Corps' support, cleared 650 square metres of invasive species and reseeded the degraded area, as part of a pilot project that seeks to restore a large area for the endangered hirola and other wildlife.

## Cattle Bunching

This is a herding system in which cattle from various areas or community conservancies herd together, moving from one pasture block to the next. During droughts, this approach loosens and fertilises hardpan soil.

In 2023, more than 5,000 cattle were herded together in West Gate and Kalama Community Conservancies for three months, helping regenerate the grasslands.



## Building Greener Futures: NRT Member Community Conservancies Lead in Rangeland Rehabilitation

Across northern Kenya, the health of the rangelands determines the wellbeing of the pastoralist communities who reside there.

In the NRT member conservancies in this region, indigenous communities are combatting climate change by rehabilitating degraded rangelands, charting a brighter future for all.

January 2023 saw Ruth Rana, Chairlady of Enduata Women's Group in Naibunga Upper Community Conservancy lead women in her group in clearing parcels of land that had been overrun by *Opuntia stricta*, an invasive plant species commonly known as the prickly pear. The shrub had dominated vast stretches of grasslands, hampering the growth of native flora.

The women then diligently sowed grass seeds and ingeniously repurposed the prickly pear's matter as a natural mulch that protected the seeds, preventing them from being blown away by gusts of wind or eaten by birds and rodents.

To support the women's efforts in improving the health of the rangelands, the Conservancy organised tours for them to various NRT member community conservancies and other parts of Kenya where grass reseeded had been successfully performed, and trained them on various rehabilitation techniques including the use of semi-circular earth bunds.



In October 2023, 32,000 semi-circular earth bunds were created by over 300 women in the community, supported by Fauna and Flora and the Darwin Initiative. Ruth is optimistic that this will accelerate the growth of indigenous grasses, providing pasture for livestock and securing the communities' livelihoods, which are dependent on a livestock economy.

Similar community-led land rangeland rehabilitation drives have taken place in West Gate Community Conservancy in Samburu County, where like in Naibunga Upper, rangeland degradation was prevalent.

James Lenantoiye, from West Gate's Lempaute Village, recalls how the landscape gradually deteriorated, leaving community members puzzled. "Despite the area receiving rainfall in the rainy seasons, the ground hardly improved. The once-rich vegetation slowly dwindled, and most of our livestock and wildlife as well, succumbed to hunger."

He adds that to protect their surviving herds, some community members encroached on inhabited territories in search of pasture and water, sparking inter-ethnic conflict. In 2022, West Gate, keen on solving the underlying issue, conducted a learning tour of the Kuku Group Ranch in the Amboseli ecosystem in Kajiado County for its grazing committee members, who gained valuable insights on effective rangeland management practices.

Upon their return, they disseminated the knowledge they had acquired.

West Gate's initial rangeland rehabilitation efforts were mainly carried out by groups of women and youth who aimed at planting *Cenchrus ciliaris* grass species on 250 hectares of land at different sites in the Conservancy, supported by the Conservancy's Carbon Community Fund. Further, 1,200 semi-circular earth bunds were established in the Conservancy.

Between October and mid-November 2023, with technical support from Justdiggitt under the Towards Ending Drought Emergencies (TWEENDE) Project, 13,844 semi-circular earth bunds were established in West Gate after potential sites were identified, community sensitisation was conducted, and community members were trained on bund usage.

The TWEENDE Project is also supporting similar land restoration efforts in Kalama Community Conservancy and overseeing the development of 5,770 semi-circular bunds.

As Kenya continues to experience above-average rainfall due to El Nino, it is expected that the rangeland rehabilitation efforts of the communities in both Naibunga Upper and West Gate Conservancies will be rewarded by rich grass harvests, securing the livelihoods of indigenous pastoralist communities and ensuring abundant pasture is available for livestock and wildlife.



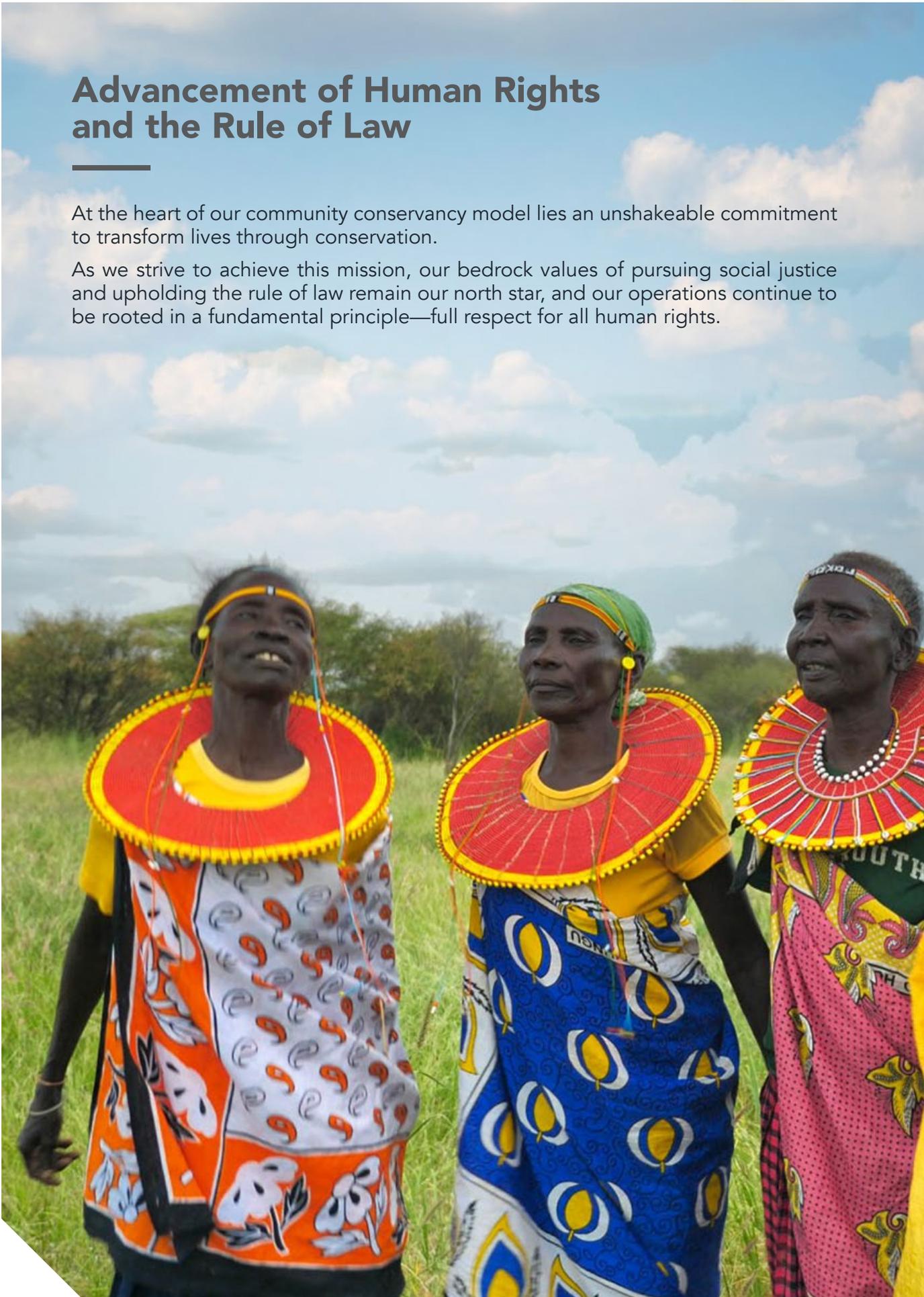
## Chapter 10

## Advancement of Human Rights and the Rule of Law

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At the heart of our community conservancy model lies an unshakeable commitment to transform lives through conservation.

As we strive to achieve this mission, our bedrock values of pursuing social justice and upholding the rule of law remain our north star, and our operations continue to be rooted in a fundamental principle—full respect for all human rights.





## Protecting Human Rights in Conservation Projects

To ensure that no people's rights are infringed on and all stages of development of conservation projects deliver enhanced outcomes and a positive impact on communities and nature, NRT continues to conduct human rights and Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) trainings, as well as widespread community meetings for all project activities.

NRT accomplishes this while respecting human rights, managing project risks, adhering to its social safeguard policies and procedures, and following global best practices.

### To further promote and protect human rights, in 2023:



» 4 policies and Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) guidelines were developed to strengthen NRT's human rights-based approach to conservation:

- \* **Human Rights Policy:** provides an overview of what is expected of employees, member community conservancies and partners.
- \* **Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy:** sets out NRT's vision for preventing and responding to instances of sexual exploitation and abuse. It also outlines concrete strategies for creating and maintaining a safe and respectful environment for the communities NRT serves as well as NRT and conservancy staff.

Additional policies that govern the conduct of NRT staff include the Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy, the Sexual Harassment Policy, and the NRT Code of Conduct.

- \* **Whistleblower Policy:** detects and pre-empts malpractice and infractions as well as provides a mechanism for stakeholders to responsibly and effectively voice their concerns.
- \* **FPIC Guidelines:** serve as a checklist for determining whether the organisation has effectively obtained Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) from a community before commencing a project or activity.

Our human rights-based approach to programmes ensures that FPIC is obtained before project commencement so that the impact the intended project will have on community members and their rights is ascertained.

These rights include the right of indigenous communities to access, use and manage land and resources, and their right to consume and sell products from the land.



Training on human rights at Pate Marine Community Conservancy.



- » NRT and NRT member community conservancies' staff underwent training on the practical application and implementation of human rights policies and principles, increasing their understanding and awareness of human rights and their safeguarding.

6 trainings in total were conducted, bringing together 452 participants from NRT's five regions.

Additionally, 15 staff completed a human rights training of trainers course and will be responsible for conducting annual refresher trainings for NRT and conservancy staff.

- » Workshops were held to validate the grievance mechanism, a component of NRT's Human Rights Policy, that provides a channel through which grievances can be voiced by individuals or communities having concerns of, or suffering actual or potential harm, from NRT's or its member community conservancies' activities.

120 community members participated in the validation process.

- » FPIC records were digitised, simplifying and enhancing data processing, analysis, storage and security.

[We remain committed to protecting the human rights of the indigenous communities we serve and all beneficiaries of our development programmes. To view our human rights policies, please click here.](#)



# 452

NRT participants from NRT's five regions



# 15

staff completed a human rights training of trainers course



Community members at Pate Marine Community Conservancy undergoing a training on human rights.

# Chapter 11

## Transparent Internal and External Communications

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In a world that is increasingly interconnected, we recognise the importance of enhancing our member community conservancies' communications and press interaction capabilities. This will enable them to raise and amplify their (collective) voice in modern-day media debates, increase transparency, and communicate independently about conservancy progress.

NRT's communications team, therefore, collaborates with member conservancies to harness the power of media to promote community conservation and livelihood development projects while combatting misinformation.





## Communications Newsbytes

In 2023, the following communications milestones were achieved:



### Communications Strategy

A five-year internal communications strategy was developed to increase awareness of NRT's work and objectives and ensure that NRT is widely recognised, acknowledged and respected as an expert in community conservation in Kenya. The strategy is currently under review.

### Press

Local and international media outlets featured NRT and the community conservancies approximately 175 times in print, radio and television media, and highlighted the successes, innovations and challenges of community-led conservation. NRT, the community conservancies and our donors were prominently recognised or appeared in 90 Kenyan TV slots and 70 print newspapers and digital platforms. The coverage by international press included at least two-page spreads in mainstream media outlets such as the British Broadcasting Corporation, Deutsche Welle, Guardian, Radio France, American Broadcasting Company, and Newsweek. 98 percent of the press was positive.

### Media Engagement

NRT's communications department, with support from The Nature Conservancy, organised two media coverage trips to NRT Coast and NRT Mountain ahead of COP28 and as part of the department's end-of-year media engagement. The trips, which centred on NRT's climate efforts, are part of the department's wider effort to increase awareness and understanding of NRT and its member community conservancies through media communication. After an introductory training to the community conservation model, the teams from both international and local media outlets were divided into two groups, one of 12 journalists covering NRT Coast and the other of 10 covering NRT Mountain. Following the trips, 31 positive stories were published and aired, garnering tens of thousands of views. In addition, the community conservancies' conservation work received prime-time coverage on Citizen TV.





## Africa Climate Summit Support

Representatives from NRT and our member community conservancies were among the 30,000 delegates who attended the inaugural Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi. Summit discussions focussed on climate finance, Africa's green growth agenda, climate action and economic development. The Summit offered opportunities to present on NRT and our member community conservancies' climate change mitigation and adaptation programmes to world leaders and a global audience.

## Online Fundraising

NRT's communications department collaborated with Tusk Trust in running a digital campaign to raise much-needed funds for community conservancy scouts' front-line conservation work, during the 2023 Wildlife Ranger Challenge. The campaign raised Ksh 52 million (USD 385,185) through GlobalGiving.

## Community Voices

A series of videos showcasing the conservation work of our member conservancies, and the impact we and our partners have had on the NRT landscape, were produced and disseminated on our digital platforms.

## Kenya EU RangER Communications Partner Engagement

The NRT communications team convened a meeting of all consortium partners' communications officers for the Kenya Rangelands Ecosystem Services Productivity (RangER) Program, which is funded by the European Union.

Meeting discussions centred on RangER Program's communications and work plan, to improve the Program's reporting and visibility.

## Publications

To increase the general public's understanding of the community conservancy model, and provide regular updates on our member conservancies, NRT and MashinaniWORKS, the NRT communications team produced 12 monthly newsletters and five major publications.

## Social and Online Media

Throughout the year, NRT developed engaging content for its social and digital platforms, and produced high-quality media including articles, videos, stories, event posts and statements to highlight impact, provide news updates and quell misinformation. These consistent efforts have increased awareness and understanding of community-led conservation, and overall engagement is high. The following is a breakdown of current followers across the major social media platforms:



@NorthernRangelandsTrust: **75,104** Followers



nrt\_kenya: **58,905** Followers



@NRT\_Kenya: **4,453** Followers



Northern Rangelands Trust: **2,937** Followers



Northern Rangelands Trust: **1,003** Subscribers



[www.nrt-kenya.org](http://www.nrt-kenya.org)

# Chapter 12

## Building Strong Partnerships

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NRT has been working to forge partnerships built on trust with the relevant county governments and other players operating in the landscape to maximise the impact of the community conservancy model.

To deliver lasting positive change, community conservancies require supportive legislation, strong financial, political, and technical support, and effective partnerships and investor relations.

NRT, in line with its 2050 Vision, strives to:

- Strengthen its advocacy capacity.
- Encourage the sharing of best practices across regions.
- Maintain ongoing participation and support from counties and wards.





## Engaging County Governments, Assemblies and MPs and Lobbying for Supportive Legislation

NRT and its member community conservancies have been working to create synergies between county government operations and indigenous communities’ efforts to improve their lives and livelihoods.

Community conservancies have proven to be effective institutions for delivering county services and investments when conservancy plans are synchronized with County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs).

Over the years, county government engagement with conservancies has increased, with some counties now providing policy, legal and financial support. Across the NRT landscape, 10 county governments are actively supporting community conservancies, and six are providing financial support or in the process of establishing their own-funded conservancies.

By investing in community conservancies, many county governments are fulfilling their mandate of providing public services while addressing community development priorities.

### County Government Engagements (2023)

<p><b>NRT Coast</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NRT Coast team attended a multi-stakeholder workshop hosted by the Tana River County Government to validate the County’s draft Climate Change Action Plan and Participatory Climate Risk Assessment (PCRA). Both documents were revised to incorporate stakeholder feedback.</li> <li>• NRT Coast’s marine conservancies in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Heritage, KWS, and the Wildlife Research and Training Institute (WRTI ) commemorated World Sea Turtle Day in Mombasa County.</li> <li>• The NRT Coast team attended a public participation workshop held as part of the development process for the National Maritime Transport Policy and Maritime Education and Training Policy. The two policies were created to drive the sustainable growth of the maritime sector and create a conducive environment for maritime transport operations.</li> <li>• NRT Coast developed Participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMPs) and Forest Management Agreements (FMAs) in collaboration with the Tana River County Government, Lower Tana Delta Community Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, the Kenya Forestry Research Institute, and Nature Kenya. The formulation of PFMPs is mandated by law to ensure the sustainable conservation, management and restoration of public forests, the mitigation of the effects of climate change, and the improvement of forest cover and livelihoods of communities living near forests.</li> </ul>
<p><b>NRT West</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NRT West team collaborated with county and multisectoral technical groups in West Pokot to align the Ustahimilivu Project, funded by the European Union, with the 2023-2027 County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP). The team also sought technical support from the County during project implementation.</li> <li>• NRT West participated in the CIDP launches of West Pokot and Baringo Counties.</li> </ul>
<p><b>NRT Centre</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NRT, the Samburu County Government and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) jointly launched the 2022-2032 Samburu Tourism Strategic plan.</li> </ul>

<p><b>NRT Mountain</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The regional team met with Laikipia County Government officials to lobby for the Conservancies Bill.</li> <li>• In collaboration with the national and county governments, Loisaba Conservancy and The Nature Conservancy, NRT Mountain constructed a school to address the educational needs of community members from Laikipia, Baringo and Samburu Counties. The school serves as a unifying factor for communities across the three counties, promoting peace in the region.</li> </ul>
<p><b>NRT East</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Region supported community participation in the development of 3 CIDPs that will address the needs of 10 wards.</li> <li>• The NRT East team met with Isiolo County’s House Committee on Environment, Wildlife and Tourism to revive discussions on Isiolo County’s Community Conservancy Bill, Tourism Bill and Wildlife Management Bill.</li> <li>• NRT East supported the formation of the Isiolo County Conservation Association.</li> <li>• Sessions were conducted to raise awareness of the Community Land Act and transition processes.</li> <li>• NRT and member conservancies consistently participated in monthly USAID Partners for Resilience and Economic Growth (PREG), County Steering Group (CSG), and Technical Sector Working Group meetings to coordinate and synchronise partner activities.</li> </ul>

### Lobbying for Government Funding

Government policy, legal and financial security is needed to sustain the proven impacts of community conservation across northern and coastal Kenya.

**In 2023:**



- » County Government support to community conservancies amounted to Ksh 192.7 million (USD 1.4 million).
- » Pate and Kiunga Community Conservancies in NRT Coast received Ksh 8.1 million (USD 60,000) from the Lamu County Government to support the Sustainable Management and Access to Water and Sanitation in Arid and Semi-Arid Areas (SWASAP) Project.
- » Since 2014, the County Government has provided Ksh 489 million (USD 3.6 million) in funding, to support NRT member community conservancies.
- » Pate Community Conservancy, along with women’s fisher organisations, received Ksh 20.5 million (USD 151,851) from Kenya Marine Fisheries and Socio-Economic Development (KEMFSED) for conservation and livelihood projects.



## County Government Funding (2023)

County	Conservancy	County Government - Operations	County Government - Capex	Notes
Lamu	Kiunga	Ksh 3,934,862	Ksh 0	The Lamu County Government's co-financing contribution given to Kiunga Community Conservancy for the Sustainable Management and Access to Water and Sanitation in Arid and Semi-Arid Areas (SWASAP) Project.
Lamu	Pate	Ksh 4,252,308	Ksh 0	The Lamu County Government's co-financing contribution given to Pate Marine Community Conservancy for the Sustainable Management and Access to Water and Sanitation in Arid and Semi-Arid Areas (SWASAP) Project.
Samburu	Kalama	Ksh 7,500,000	Ksh 0	Given by the Samburu National Reserve to support the operational activities of the Conservancy.
Samburu	Ltungai	Ksh 5,500,000	Ksh 9,381,000	Ksh 5.5 million was apportioned to cover operational expenses including salaries, equipment, fuel and administrative tasks, while Ksh 9.3 million was allocated for the construction of Murpusi Eco-lodge.
Samburu	Meibae	Ksh 645,000	Ksh 0	Ksh 645,000 was designated for conservancy operations.
Samburu	Nkoteiya	Ksh 5,336,000	Ksh 0	Ksh 5.3 million was allocated for community conservancy scouts' operations.
Samburu	Sera	Ksh 2,500,000	Ksh 6,054,000	Ksh 2.5 million was designated for operations and Ksh 6 million for the construction of senior staff housing.
Samburu	West Gate	Ksh 7,600,000	Ksh 0	Ksh 7.6 million given by the Samburu National Reserve to support the operational activities of the Conservancy.
<b>Total</b>		<b>Ksh 37,296,170</b>	<b>Ksh 15,435,000</b>	

Baragoi Conservation Area		Ksh 46,666,667		Operational support covering salaries, equipment, fuel and administrative tasks.
Ndoto Conservation Area		Ksh 46,666,667		Operational support covering salaries, equipment, fuel and administrative tasks.
Nyiro Conservation Area		Ksh 46,666,667		Operational support covering salaries, equipment, fuel and administrative tasks.
	Total amount given to support conservancies outside NRT	Ksh 140,000,000	Ksh 0	
		Samburu County Conservancies	Ksh 140,000,000	
		County Government Support: Operations	Ksh 155,435,000	
		County Government: Capex	Ksh 37,268,170	
		<b>Cumulative Government Support</b>	<b>Ksh 192,703,170</b>	

## National Government Agencies

For decades, NRT has maintained positive working relationships with government agencies, including the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Kenya Forest Service (KFS), Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute (KMFRI), Kenya Fisheries Service (KeFs) and Wildlife Research and Training Institute.

NRT's wildlife and forest protection efforts are focused on places outside the country's protected areas that are critical migratory and dispersal zones. In the coastal ecosystem, NRT collaborated with KMFRI, KeFs, and KFS to support the management of fisheries and recovery of degraded marine habitats.

Since the passing of the Wildlife Act in 2013, NRT has partnered with the KWS on four projects centred on wildlife conservation, community conservancy scout training, infrastructure and technology development, and community enterprise development and tourism.

## Donor Partners

NRT member conservancies drive community development through conservation, economic empowerment, peacebuilding and wildlife protection, with the generous support of our donors, who fund our programmes and our member conservancies.

Our primary donors, the United States Agency for International Development, The Nature Conservancy, The Danish International Development Agency, Agence Française de Développement and the European Union, continue to invest in our core programmes in northern and coastal Kenya, enabling the development of independent and sustainable conservancies.

## Working Partners

NRT collaborates with its conservation partners—who include the Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association, Lewa Wildlife Conservancy, Save the Elephants and Grevy's Zebra Trust, to support the development of resilient communities and ecosystems, advocate for policies, monitor wildlife, increase biodiversity through the translocation of endangered species and facilitate communication and knowledge sharing.



Lamu and Pate-Ndau-Awer (PANDAWE) Community Forest Associations unveil their Participatory Forest Management Plans.

Samburu County Governor, H.E. Lati Lelelit (second from right), and other key partners, at the launch of the 2022-2023 Samburu Tourism Strategic Plan.



## Chapter 13

## The Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project

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The Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project (NKRCP) is the world's largest soil carbon removal project and proof of concept for rangelands restoration and community-based development through the carbon market. It is anticipated to remove 50 million tonnes of carbon dioxide over 30 years—the equivalent of the annual emissions from over 10,000,000 cars—and generate millions of dollars for local communities.

In the NKRCP, cattle herders combine traditional and modern ways of grazing livestock to restore savannah grasslands, so they capture more atmospheric carbon, which is sold as offsets on the global carbon market, earning local communities' sustainable income.

In addition to catalysing the conservation of vulnerable landscapes and addressing climate change, more than 205,000 people are benefitting from the NKRCP, as well as livestock and wildlife, with four endangered species living in the project area.





## The Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project

14 NRT member community conservancies (21 conservancy units), namely, Il Ngwesi, Meibae, Namunyak, Lekurruki, West Gate, Kalama, Sera, Ol Donyiro, Nasuluu, Nakuprat-Gotu, Naibunga, Leparua, Biliquo Bulesa and Melako are involved in the NKRCF. In 2017, each of these conservancies authorised NRT to sell carbon credits resulting from the NKRCF's activities on its behalf.

NRT currently administers the NKRCF, supporting its activities on the ground and the reporting needed for ongoing verification for credits to continue to be issued.

Soils for the Future, a soil science consultancy, developed the project methodology from inception to verification by Verified Carbon Standard, and continues to support the NKRCF in monitoring, reporting and technical advice.

Native, a Public Benefit Corporation, takes the lead in the validation and verification of the carbon and supports NRT in optimising the NKRCF's success over its operational lifetime. Native also takes issued credits to market, engaging corporate and other supporters to ensure maximum value and revenue to the Project.

Developing a carbon project is a lengthy process requiring high levels of upfront investment, very specific technical expertise, and proper structures to credibly verify the project's soil carbon sequestration and ensure its long-term success.

Working with Soils for the Future and Native, NRT has facilitated this over the past ten years so the sale of the sequestered carbon on global markets generates sustainable income for member conservancies to use for community-led development projects.

NRT receives no profit from the sale of the NKRCF's carbon credits.

## Rangelands Management

To promote the responsible use of community conservancy rangelands and improve their health, several actions were taken in 2023, including implementing planned grazing strategies, organising meetings with grazing committees at both local and regional levels, conducting rangelands management awareness programmes for herders and communities, and coordinating regional planned grazing efforts.



## The Carbon Community Fund

The Carbon Community Fund (CCF) is a community-owned and run fund that facilitates community access to carbon funding in a transparent and accountable way.

Each conservancy democratically decides which development projects to fund and which efforts to prioritise. This includes any decision to provide bursaries for students and the financial level of those bursaries.

Throughout 2023, the CCF played a crucial role in addressing pressing community needs, including emergency drought responses.

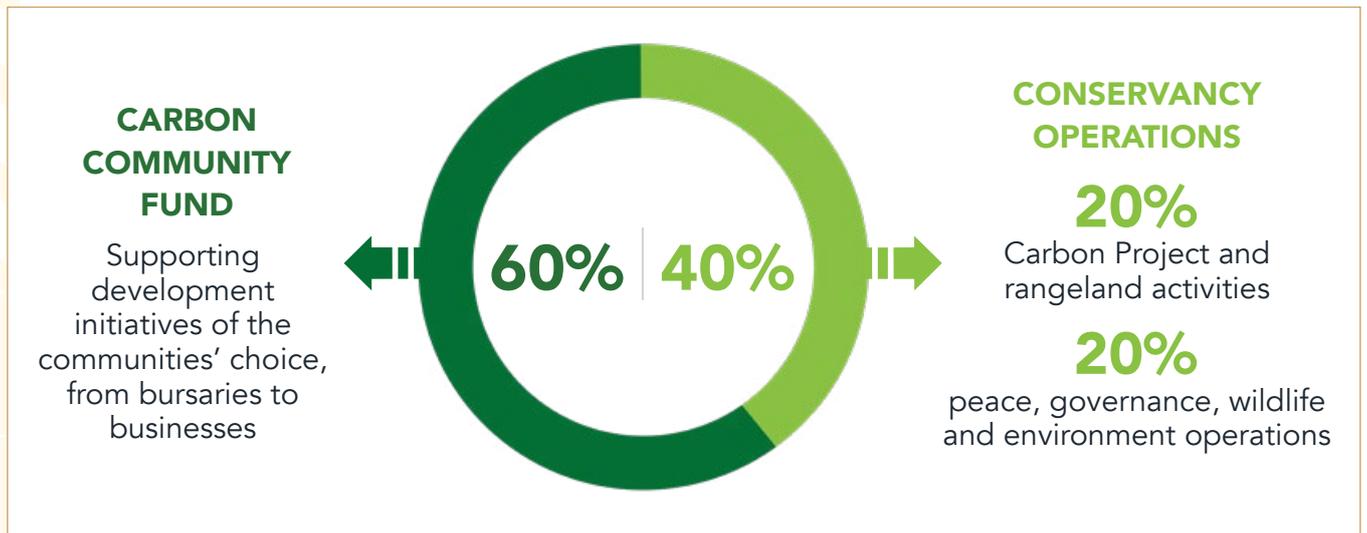
Furthermore, the CCF facilitated investments in infrastructure and water development, education, healthcare, tourism, and youth and women empowerment, among other projects. These undertakings made life better for the community and improved livelihoods.

### In 2023:



- » The CCF disbursed Ksh 90,011,244 (USD 666,749) to the 14 community conservancies involved in the NKRCF, for bursary issuance.
- » 13,122 students, including those enrolled in secondary school or pursuing higher education in colleges and universities within the project area, benefitted from NKRCF-funded bursaries.
- » A total of Ksh 322,979,438 (USD 2,392,440) was disbursed to all community conservancies participating in the NKRCF.

### Carbon Revenue Split



### Carbon Community Fund Distribution (2023)

Conservancy	Amount (Ksh)
Lekurruki	23,171,000
Kalama	21,500,000
Nasuulu	23,224,442
West Gate	26,415,952
Nakuprat-Gotu	20,000,000
Leparua	23,224,442
Sera	22,457,719
Melako	23,224,442
Meibae	20,700,000
Il Ngwesi	19,800,000
Biliqo Bulesa	21,820,000
Narupa	3,000,000
Naapu	5,792,859
Nannapa	5,792,863
Nannapisho	5,200,000
Naibunga Central	6,900,000
Naibunga Lower	6,900,000
Naibunga Upper	7,720,000
Kalepo	6,900,000
Ngilai Central	7,300,000
Ngilai West	7,311,906
Nalowuon	14,623,813
<b>Total</b>	<b>322,979,438</b>

### Carbon Community Fund Bursary Distribution (2023)

Conservancy	Amount (Ksh)	No. of Beneficiaries
Biliqo Bulesa	3,200,000	713
Naapu	2,700,000	412
Nannapa	2,500,000	460
Nanapisho	2,100,000	253
Narupa	3,000,000	713
Nasuulu	5,420,000	1,058
Lekurukki	2,500,000	124
Naibunga Lower	1,000,000	258
Naibunga Upper	1,730,744	545
Naibunga Central	2,600,000	621
Melako	10,000,000	2,000
Sera	12,000,000	689
Nalowuon	10,000,000	921
Ngilai West	3,450,000	585
Ngilai Central	1,710,500	268
West Gate	8,000,000	340
Kalama	4,000,000	1,356
Kalepo	3,000,000	252
Meibae	6,000,000	660
Leparua	5,100,000	894
<b>Total</b>	<b>90,011,244</b>	<b>13,122</b>



## Community Development Projects Funded by the Carbon Project (2023)

Community Conservancy	Project	Project Purpose	Amount Allocated (Ksh)
Nasuulu	Launched the 2023 Women and Youth Empowerment Programme	Economically empower women and youth by fostering entrepreneurship and self-reliance	1,750,000
	Issued education bursaries to support students in secondary schools and tertiary institutions	Promote access to education	5,420,000
	Constructed an additional banda (self-catering accommodation facility)	Increase tourism revenue and drive economic growth in the Conservancy	3,000,090
	Conservancy website, signs and signage development	Increase the Conservancy's visibility. Establish an online presence to showcase conservation efforts within the Conservancy and engage the local community	200,000
Leparua	Performed water pipe extension at Loruko	Provide reliable water supply to Loruko residents	3,500,000
	Constructed a pressure box and extended the water pipe at Olchurai	Improve access to safe, clean water in Olchurai	1,500,000
	Extended a water pipe at Kakili	Provide access to safe, clean water	Ksh 500,000
	Extended the water pipe at Ngare Sergkon	Provide a reliable source of water in Ngare Sergkon	1,000,000
	Drilled a borehole at Elsa Village	Ensure consistent water supply and address water scarcity issues	2,400,000
	Fenced Kakili Primary School	Enhance the safety and security of Kakili Primary School students; provide a conducive learning environment for students	500,000
	Provided goats to community members in Kilimani	Economically empower community members so they could restock their herds after losing their livestock—their main source of livelihood, to the prolonged drought	2,000,000
	Construction of a meeting shade (ongoing)	Provide a communal space for gatherings and events	1,600,000
	Construction of a social meetings facility (ongoing)	Provide a central hub for community gatherings	2,000,000
	Distributed funds from the Village Savings and Loans Association to Leparua, Kilimani and Kambi Turkana Villages	Financially empower communities	2,200,000

Community Conservancy	Project	Project Purpose	Amount Allocated (Ksh)
<b>Kalama</b>	Constructed a library at Kalama Primary School	Foster a conducive learning environment and enhance access to educational resources	2,000,000
	Constructed a kitchen at the Girgir Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) Centre	Support the well-being and development of early childhood learners and safeguard their health	1,000,000
	Purchased sports kits for youth	Promote community engagement and well-being through organised sports activities	1,000,000
	Issued education bursaries to students in secondary school and tertiary institutions	Increase access to education	4,000,000
<b>Sera</b>	Disbursed education bursaries, supporting students in secondary school and tertiary institutions	Provide access to education	12,000,000
	Transferred cash to vulnerable communities in Losesia and Sereolipi	Provide financial support to communities following the drought, which adversely affected their livestock herds, their main source of livelihood	5,400,000
	Drilled a borehole in Sereolipi Town	Increase the community's access to water	6,000,000
<b>Naibunga Lower</b>	Purchased 60 school desks for an ECDE class in Il Motiok Primary School	Facilitate learning and access to education	300,000
	Constructed Oloshaki ECDE Centre	Enhance access to education	1,667,000
	Constructed an additional banda at Tiamamut Lodge	Boost tourism, drive economic development and increase tourism revenue	1,967,000
	Constructed an additional banda at Koija Starbeds	To enhance accommodation facilities at Koija Starbeds for tourists and contribute to the growth of local tourism	1,450,000
	Purchased 20 camping tents for Koija Starbeds	Provide additional lodging options for tourists	550,000
	Bursary disbursement	Increase access to education	1,000,000
<b>Ngilai Central (2022 Funds)</b>	Installed a solar power system at Ngilai Dispensary	Improve access to healthcare and ensure uninterrupted power supply at the Dispensary	200,000
	Renovated 2 camping sites near Ngilai Community Conservancy's headquarters	Improve accommodation facilities for guests and promote tourism	300,000

	Cleared Lkaria Road	Improve connectivity and facilitate community development	150,000
	Renovated the Conservancy's headquarters and the conservancy manager's house	Improve functionality and facilitate effective service delivery	200,000
	Cleared hospital bills for 10 community members who were unable to pay for their hospital expenses	Promote access to quality healthcare	460,000
	Issued education bursaries to students in secondary school and tertiary institutions	Enhance access to quality education	1,617,500

## Nasuulu Community Conservancy: Empowering Women and Youth through Carbon Community Funds

Across the northern Kenya landscape, community conservancies grapple with myriad challenges including limited access to economic opportunities and basic necessities like clean water, healthcare and education.

Nasuulu Community Conservancy, in Isiolo County, made it a priority to support women and youth as a means of bringing about community transformation.

In 2023, the Conservancy launched the Women and Youth Empowerment Programme (WYEP), after allocating Kshs 1.7 million (USD 12,592) from its NKRCF funds to the Programme's implementation. WYEP was established to empower women and youth by offering microfinance support. WYEP has directly benefitted 289 women and youth in 11 self-help groups within Nasuulu.

Mariam Abdulahi, the Chairlady of the Dei Women's Group in Nasuulu, speaking about the Programme shared, "The support it has given us has opened new doors for us. With the funds we have received from WYEP, we can expand our businesses, take our children to school, and build a brighter future."

For women and youth in Nasuulu, WYEP has become a beacon of hope. Nancy Bouka from Bule Women Welfare Group was delighted that her group had received financial support from WYEP.

"As a women's group, we plan to use the money to buy tents and chairs for hiring out during events like funerals and weddings. We thank NRT for their generous contribution because it will go a long way in boosting our group's income," she said.

By investing in women and youth using its NKRCF funds, Nasuulu has not only accelerated the economic development of the community as a whole but also demonstrated the transformative power of the community conservancy model.

To date, the NKRCF has disbursed Ksh 322,979,438 (USD 2,392,440) across all participating conservancies for community development, improving the lives of 205,000 community members.

## Carbon Community Fund Projects



« Constructed tourism banda in Nasuulu Community Conservancy, Isiolo County.



« Furnished the dormitory of Samburu Community School in Nasuulu.



« Constructed a new classroom in Kiltamany, in West Gate Community Conservancy, Samburu County.



“

The support given to us has opened new doors. With the funds we have received from the Women and Youth Empowerment Programme, we can expand our businesses, take our children to school, and build a brighter future.

**Mariam Abdulahi,**  
Chairlady, Dei Women's Group,  
Nasuulu Community Conservancy



Melako Community Conservancy and NRT issue a dummy cheque of the voluntary county levy from the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project to Marsabit County Governor, H.E. Mohamud Ali, to support the County's drought relief efforts.



# Chapter 14

## Safeguarding Forests

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The forests in NRT member community conservancies play a critical role in water catchment, climate regulation, and carbon sequestration and provide invaluable ecosystem services to communities in surrounding areas.

To protect forests and in line with the Kenya Government's goal of planting 15 billion trees by 2032, NRT actively engages indigenous communities and supports them in their efforts.

The activities that make up NRT's approach to forest conservation include tree planting, tree nursery establishment, as well as the formation and registration of Community Forestry Associations (CFAs) and their alignment with conservancy governance structures.

Additionally, NRT supports the development of Participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMPs), a vital step that improves the livelihoods of communities residing near forests while contributing to the effective management of public forests.







# Forest Conservation and Protection

In 2023, NRT and member community conservancies made significant strides in forest conservation, achieving the following milestones:

## Ngare Ndare Forest Trust

- » The tree nursery capacity was increased to 25,000 seedlings. Five germination beds were also constructed at the tree nursery, and two 10,000-litre aerial tanks were installed to collect water for the nursery.
- » 30,000 polythene tubes were distributed to facilitate the operation of 10 community tree nurseries.
- » 22,654 seedlings were nurtured by six active nurseries.
- » 8,040 trees were planted across two forest sites in collaboration with community members, schools and water resource users associations, and 5,740 seedlings were planted to replace those that died off.
- » The fencing of rehabilitated sites at Karimba and Echo 4 was completed, and a 10,000-litre aerial tank was installed to provide water to Echo 4.
- » The 1-for-1 Agroforestry Programme was launched, enabling community members to plant 12,600 fast-growing trees on their farms.

## Kirisia Community Forest Association

- » 120,000 tree seedlings were distributed to community members for planting in homes and schools bordering Kirisia Forest.
- » 90,000 trees were planted in Kirisia Forest.
- » Ksh 240,000 (USD 1,777) was generated by 7 women's groups after they established tree nurseries within Kirisia Forest and produced 8,000 seedlings, which were sold for Ksh 30 (USD 0.20) each.
- » Ksh 320,000 (USD 2,370) was generated from the sale of 400 kilogrammes of honey collected from the Beekeeping Project.
- » 3,000 seedlings and 2,000 fruit trees were planted to address food insecurity in the area.
- » Joint patrols of Kirisia Forest conducted by Kenya Forest Service rangers and Kirisia Community Forest Association scouts have significantly reduced illegal activities.

## Il Mamusi Mukogodo Forest Association

- » The 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the Mukogodo 10-kilometre Wild Walk, themed, 'To restore, protect, and ensure a sustainable future for the Mukogodo Forest and its communities,' was held.

## Lower Tana Delta Community Forest Association

- » 6 CFAs in Lamu and Lower Tana Delta launched PFMPs and signed forest management agreements with the Kenya Forest Service.
- » 1,200 tree seedlings were planted in Ndera Community Conservancy in collaboration with local schools as part of the 'Adopt a Tree Campaign.' Nurseries holding 5,000 indigenous trees and fruits seedlings were also established.

# Chapter 15

## Sustainable Finance and Operations

Community conservancies require major investment in institutional establishment, infrastructure, and operational costs to effectively conduct their activities and support community development.



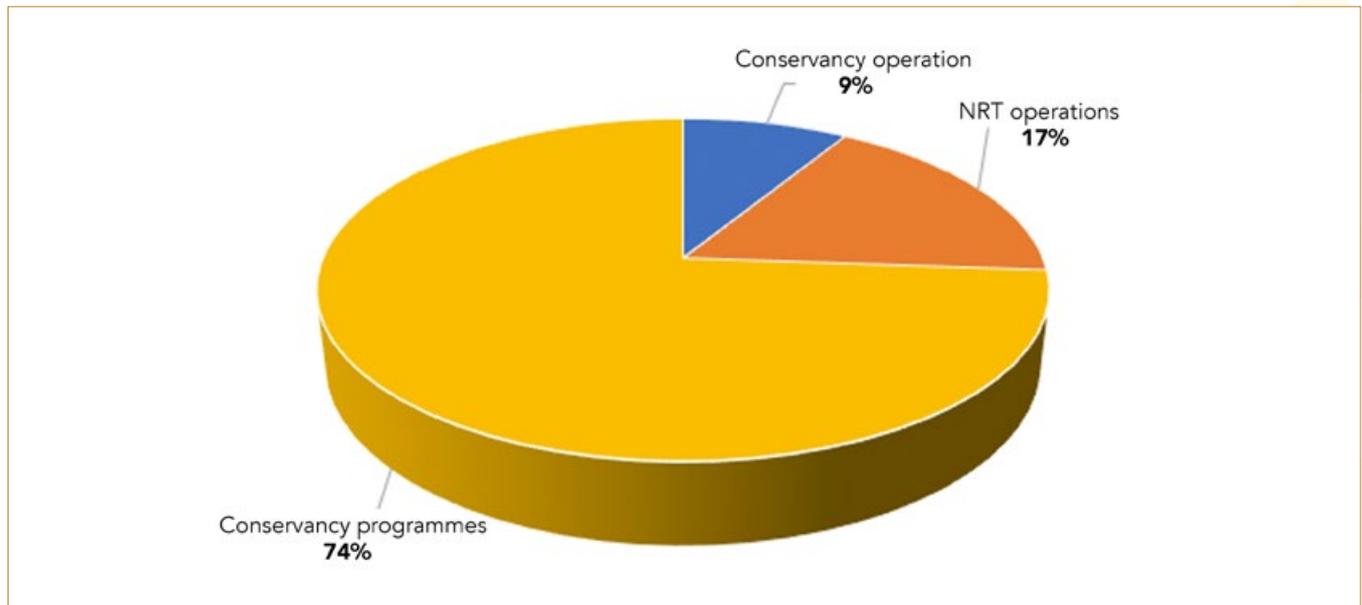


# Finance

To fulfil NRT's strategic goals and sustain the significant momentum that is currently driving community conservation, a combination of long-term financial sustainability, expertise, lasting partnerships, and supporting policies, regulations, and government funding is required.

Currently, NRT and member community conservancies are mostly funded by international donors—who continue to show strong support—commercial earnings from tourism, the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project, and the County Government.

## Finance Overview – NRT's Expenditure 2023



NRT's long-term financial sustainability plan is centred on:

- » Diversifying its revenue base, with funding from donors accounting for only 25% of overall revenue.
- » The Conservation Trust Fund, which can provide an additional 25% of NRT's budget when invested responsibly.
- » Commercial revenue streams, including MashinaniWORKS' (NRT Trading's) businesses, the NK-RCP and tourism, which can add another 25%.
- » National and county governments contributing a minimum of 25% support (facilitated by NRT's sustainability strategy). Some donor, commercial, and county government support will go directly to community conservancies, reducing the amount NRT needs to fundraise for conservancy operations.



On its path to achieving long-term sustainability, NRT accomplished the following milestones in 2023:

## Fundraising

For many years, NRT has been relying primarily on bilateral and multilateral funding generated through grant submissions to agencies, public government institutions, foundations, and philanthropists with conservation or development interests. Our growth depends on strengthening existing partnerships and increasing private philanthropic income from major donors, corporate partnerships and the general public or online giving.

NRT's fundraising team drafted a five-year fundraising strategy that is in the advanced stages of development and will guide the organisation's fundraising efforts. The team also created and executed an online fundraising campaign, diversifying NRT's funding sources. Plans to expand into corporate fundraising in 2025 are underway.

## Conservation Trust Fund

NRT is establishing an endowment fund—the Conservation Trust Fund—to support vital conservation efforts and NRT's operations whenever a donor funding shortfall occurs. Ksh 405 million (USD 3 million) was secured for this Fund through a partnership with The Nature Conservancy. A concerted effort is underway to grow the Fund to Ksh 1.3 billion (USD 10 million) by 2028.

## The Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project

By the end of 2023, the NKRCP had released Ksh 529.8 million (USD 3.9 million) to all 14 community conservancies participating in the Project, with additional disbursements expected each year.

The conservancies have received revenue from the sale of carbon credits twice (in 2022 and 2023), directly supporting their operational costs and funding development needs of the community's choice.

In collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, NRT is exploring the possibility of blue carbon as a revenue source for marine conservancies.



**Ksh 529.8  
million**

(USD 3.9 million) released to all  
14 community conservancies  
participating in the Northern Kenya  
Rangelands Carbon Project

## Government Funding

NRT received Ksh 192 million (USD 1.4 million) in county government financial support in 2023.

For 12 months during the Covid-19 pandemic, community conservancies and the national government partnered in enhancing conservancy scout wildlife protection operations.

NRT has been advocating for government support for conservancies to be addressed through legislation.

# Operations

NRT aspires to the highest standard of performance in all aspects of its operations and is constantly working to transform itself into an efficient and effective organisation.

## Job Creation

In a region where formal employment is scarce, NRT and its member community conservancies combined rank among the biggest employers, producing thousands of temporary jobs each year.

### In 2023:



- » NRT and member community conservancies employed 1,366 staff permanently.
- » 49 community members were hired permanently by conservancy-owned tourist camps and hotels.
- » Over 100 community members were recruited by privately-run lodges in conservancies.
- » Development projects, including water and infrastructure, created 1,130 temporary jobs in member community conservancies.

## Organisation Development

### In 2023:



- » NRT conducted an organisational review and adopted a new structure, enhancing its overall effectiveness.
- » Financial audits for 2022 were conducted for NRT, member community conservancies and the NKRCPC.
- » NRT's Strategic Plan for 2024-2028 and Vision 2050 were created.
- » Guided by the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, the 2024 Operational Plan was developed, outlining NRT's objectives and targets for the year. The implementation of a robust monitoring system is ongoing to ensure timely reporting and accountability.

## Capacity Building

### In 2023:



- » NRT implemented 10 external and internal training and development programmes to raise staff performance and skill levels.
- » To better serve our stakeholders, NRT's five regional offices, which serve as the first points of contact for our member community conservancies and county governments, were fully decentralised.

## Infrastructure Development

NRT member community conservancies periodically request NRT's support in establishing infrastructure, such as headquarters, lodges, ablution blocks, classrooms and tourism facilities, for effective conservancy management and operations.

### In 2023:



- » 45 infrastructural projects were implemented in 25 community conservancies, with 31 projects being completed or nearing completion.

- » Ksh 146.3 million (USD 1 million) was invested in conservancy infrastructure, facilitating the construction (or improvements) of three headquarters, 13 scout outposts, 4 schools, 1 General Service Unit, Kenya Wildlife Service camps, 4 sanctuaries, 1 hay store and 3 tourism facilities.

### Infrastructure Projects Rolled Out in 2023 in NRT Member Community Conservancies

	County	Conservancy	Infrastructure	Status
<b>NRT Coast</b>	Lamu	Kiunga	2 <sup>nd</sup> phase construction of the Mongo Sharif KWS Camp, including the access jet; renovation and improvement of staff accommodation and <i>djabia</i> construction (underground water tank)	Complete
		Pate	Renovation of the office block at the headquarters	Complete
			Construction of a new two-room outpost with kitchen and ablution block on Ndau Island to facilitate monitoring by conservancy scouts	Complete
			Outpost renovation and improvement	Complete
	Garissa	Ishaqbini	Sanctuary fence repair and maintenance; replacement of the old triple-twisted net with tight lock, cantilever and poles	99% complete

<b>NRT East</b>	Isiolo	Cherab	Construction of an office block with a meeting area, 2 offices, a radio room a strong room, and container storage, and a community conservancy scout section comprising 2 rooms, a kitchen and an ablution block; Gutter installation along with electricity and water connection	40% complete
		Garbatulla	Construction of an outpost comprising 6 conservancy scout accommodation areas, a kitchen with a mess section, a store and ablution facilities; Gutter installation along with solar power and water connection	Complete
		Kinna	Construction of the headquarters comprising one office block with a meeting area, 2 offices, a radio room, a strong room and container storage, and conservancy scout section with 2 rooms, a kitchen and ablution facilities; Gutter installation along with power and water connection	Complete
	Biliqo Bulesa		Construction of a hay shed, erection of a 1-kilometre fence at Bulesa Insiny farmlands and hand over to the community	Complete
			Erection of a 1-kilometre solar-powered short fence spanning 10 acres to protect farms from wildlife at Biliqo farmlands	Complete
			Construction of a classroom at Awarsitu Primary School	Complete
			Construction of an administration block at Godha Primary School	Complete
			Entire renovation of the Babala Outpost, including roofs; construction of a masonry water tank and beds, paintwork, and power and gutter installation	Complete
		Construction of ablution facilities at the General Service Unit Camp in Kom area	Complete	

	Nasuulu	1 <sup>st</sup> phase construction of 3 bandas, a mess, kitchen, pathways and ablution facilities	Complete
		Initiated the tendering process for a project to install power and pump equipment at Nasuulu Lodge	Ongoing
		2 <sup>nd</sup> Phase construction of a swimming pool to facilitate tourism	95% complete
	Nannapa	Erection of a fence at Laberishereki Primary School	Complete

<b>NRT West</b>	Baringo	Ruko	Continuous maintenance of a 7-kilometre fence at the Sanctuary. Purchasing of maintenance materials, tools and clearing of the fence line	Complete
		Kaptuya	Design, bill of quantities preparation, tendering, and launching of construction of Kaptuya's headquarters comprising 4 rooms, a kitchen and ablution facilities; installation of solar power	50% complete

<b>NRT Mountain</b>	Laikipia	Naibunga Central & Lower	Erection of a 40-kilometre fence to prevent human-wildlife conflict and hand over to the community	Complete
			Renovation and upgrading of Naibunga Conservancy's headquarters and conservancy scout outposts	Complete
		Lekurruki	At Tassia Lodge, construction of staff accommodation, 3 rooms, kitchen and ablution facilities	Complete
		Naibunga Lower	Store construction and installation of a 1.6-kilometre perimeter fence and a gate around Naiperere Primary School, to prevent disturbance by elephants	Complete

<b>NRT Centre</b>	Samburu	West Gate	Outpost 1: construction of the new core area comprising 3 rooms, kitchen and ablution facilities, and power installation	Complete
			Outpost 2: a proposal submitted to the county government for the construction of a second outpost was approved, and the funds for the outpost's construction were disbursed to West Gate	Complete
		Meibae	Construction of 3 community conservancy scout outposts at Lengei, Lpus and Lussein, as well as a kitchen, ablution facilities and beds. Solar power and gutter installation	95% complete
		Sera	Construction of a fourth banda at Lchoro Lodge to facilitate tourism	Complete
			Construction of a road packing unit and a storage container	Complete
			Construction of a kitchen for community conservancy scouts at the anti-poaching camp	90% complete
			Twin house for senior management at Sera Rhino Sanctuary	Ongoing
		Construction of new toilets blocks in outposts at Motto and Kauro headquarters	50% complete	



# Chapter 16

## Special Projects

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NRT is implementing three special projects overseen by consortiums consisting of different partners sharing the common goal of improving the livelihoods of vulnerable communities and increasing their resilience to drought and other effects of climate change.

The three projects: Ustahimilivu, the Kenya Rangelands Ecosystem Services Productivity Programme and the Integrated Management of Natural Resources for Resilience in ASALs Programme, support communities in ASALs in generating sustainable livelihoods and improving natural resource management.

Indigenous communities have benefitted greatly from these special projects, which have enhanced peace, increased safety for people, livestock, and wildlife, restored ecosystems, and strengthened community resilience to climate shocks.





## Ustahimilivu Project

Ustahimilivu is a four-year project operating in West Pokot County whose goal is to increase community resilience to drought and other effects of climate change in Kenya's Arid and Semi-arid Lands (ASALs).

Launched in April 2020, this European Union-funded Programme collaborates with West Pokot County Government to improve the lives of residents in 11 wards in Masol and Pellow Community Conservancies.

The Project is implemented by a consortium consisting of the Northern Rangelands Trust (lead), the European Committee for Training and Agriculture (CEFA), E4Impact Foundation, SOMIRENEC (Social Ministry Research Network), and Amref Health Africa, working together to improve the food and nutrition security of vulnerable households—especially women and children—generate sustainable livelihoods and protect productive assets in West Pokot County.

### In 2023:



- » A Ksh 6 million (USD 44,444) education bursary fund was launched, benefitting 810 primary and secondary school students in Pellow and Masol Community Conservancies. The European Union contributed Ksh 5 million (USD 37,037) and USAID Ksh 1 million (USD 7,407) toward the establishment of the fund.
- » A Ksh 22 million (USD 162,962) water project was launched, providing Pellow Community Conservancy's upper catchment with access to clean water for domestic use.
- » Training sessions on modern beekeeping practices were conducted in Kasei, in Pokot North, enhancing beekeepers' knowledge and understanding of modern beekeeping, bee morphology, and pest and predator control.
- » Muino Valley Farm Input Cooperative was launched in Masol and Pellow Community Conservancies, to provide horticultural farmers with seeds at a subsidised cost and markets for their produce.
- » A one-kilometre chain link fence was erected at Simbol Fodder farm to protect it from livestock invasion. Additionally, farmers were supported in soil preparation and cultivation, seed production and propagation, and market linkages.
- » Cheror Honey Processing Unit earned Ksh 1,020,000 (USD 7,555), after selling 1,700 kilogrammes of honey to Roshni Distributors Limited, a chain of honey traders. The honey was sold at Ksh 600 (USD 4) per kilo, generating a 20% profit margin for the Unit.
- » Six water structures: the Orwa Primary School borehole, the Riting and Anniken water pipeline, the Kour water point and the Kachanguya and Sarmach boreholes were rehabilitated, improving access to clean water for domestic use.
- » Established peace committees were engaged to mediate between warring communities and foster peace using traditional and modern conflict resolution mechanisms.

## Kenya RangER Program

The European Union-funded Kenya Rangelands Ecosystem Services Productivity (RangER) Program seeks to improve the livelihoods of communities and landscapes in Amaya Triangle Counties (Laikipia, Samburu, Isiolo and Baringo), by increasing the productivity of the ecosystem services provided by the rangelands and supporting climate-smart natural resource management, effective governance, as well as peace and security for wildlife and people.

The Program, which is ongoing in these four counties located in ASAL areas, has resulted in numerous benefits including improved human and livestock well-being, enhanced ecological connectivity and biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and increased resilience of indigenous communities, biodiversity, and ecosystems to climatic shocks.

The three-year RangER Program, launched in September 2021, is being implemented by a consortium of partners comprising NRT (lead), the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, World Agroforestry, Community Safety Initiative, E4Impact Foundation and the Baringo, Laikipia, Isiolo and Samburu County Governments.

### In 2023:



- » The impact of the RangER Program was increased by enhancing partner collaboration, leveraging the technical expertise of consortium partners and applying a landscape approach.
- » A strategic peace plan was developed to guide peacebuilding and conflict mitigation across the four Amaya Counties (Laikipia, Samburu, Isiolo and Baringo).
- » An ecological and environmental impact assessment centred on wildlife was conducted in targeted project sites in eight community conservancies, in addition to baseline reporting, mapping of land use and invasive species, and soil survey and characterization.
- » Two tree nurseries were established in Ltungai Community Conservancy in Samburu County to support the production of quality multipurpose tree seedlings, for use in restoring and rehabilitating degraded landscapes, as well as planting trees for food, medicine, and timber, among other uses.
- » Ecological and social surveys were conducted in Kaptuya, Ltungai, Lekurruki and Biliqo Bulesa to determine the status of wildlife and the environment in these Community Conservancies, as well as their governance index rating. The community conservancies were assessed and rated against five key factors: accountability, direction, legitimacy and voice, performance and fairness, and rights.
- » Amaya Counties (Baringo, Samburu, Laikipia and Isiolo) were engaged at different levels, to facilitate the creation of local natural resource management policies and conservation bills that align with each county's integrated development plan.

This led to the review and formulation of the counties' natural resource management policies, legislation and strategies.

### SIDA IMARA Programme

The Integrated Management of Natural Resources for Resilience in ASALs (IMARA) Programme is a seven-year partnership (2018-2025) that aims at increasing the resilience to climate shocks of vulnerable households in the ASAL counties of Isiolo, Elgeyo Marakwet, Laikipia, Marsabit, Narok, Samburu, Turkana and West Pokot, by diversifying livelihoods and improving natural resource management and use.

The Programme is in its second phase and is being implemented by a consortium of five partners: World Vision Kenya (Lead), NRT, Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association, Saferworld and the Stockholm Environment Institute.

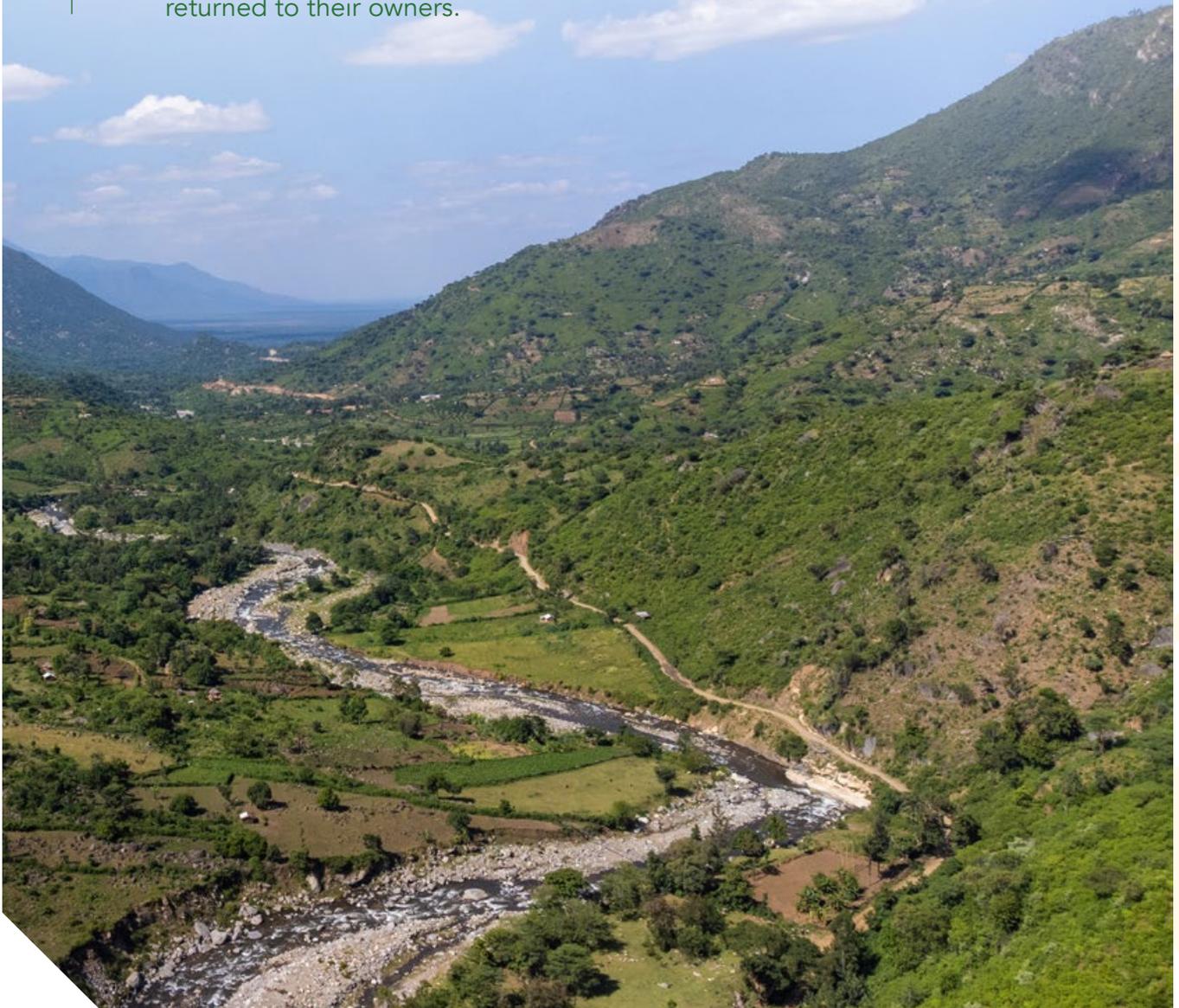
### In 2023:



- » The IMARA Programme supported the organisation of BeadWORKS' Business and Conservation Conference that brought together 120 women leaders and entrepreneurs from four counties: Isiolo, Samburu, Laikipia and Marsabit, to deliberate on their experiences, best practices, and innovative approaches to building resilient businesses and communities in the face of climate change.



- » Three social media marketing campaigns were conducted to boost BeadWORKS sales in the three Naibunga Community Conservancies, generating Ksh 577,935 (USD 4,281).
- » Three dams were constructed and two sand dams were rehabilitated in Tuale in Oldonyiro Community Conservancy, increasing access to safe clean water. The construction of a new dam in Ormodei in Kalepo Community Conservancy is ongoing.
- » 60 biogas digestors were procured and installed in community conservancies in Isiolo and Samburu Counties, mitigating the unsustainable use of wood fuel.
- » Supported by the IMARA Programme, 60 board members and local leaders from Ngilai and Kalepo Community Conservancies went on an exposure tour to Save the Elephants' headquarters and West Gate Community Conservancy to learn about natural resources management, good governance and accountability.
- » Peace meetings were held in Isiolo and Samburu Counties to reduce natural resource-based conflicts inside and outside project areas and prevent retaliatory attacks. 1,010 people, including youth, women, elders, religious groups and government representatives attended the meetings. As a result of the peace meetings, 11 planned attacks were averted, and 400 stolen livestock were returned to their owners.



## Saving Lives of Mothers and Newborns in West Pokot County

Motherhood is the greatest yet one of the hardest journeys a woman can undertake. For first-time mothers, parenting is an incredible adventure in which they discover the depths of love they have for their precious little one.

In Masol and Pellow Community Conservancies in West Pokot County, expectant mothers' hope of holding their little bundle of joy in their arms was often clouded by the fear and anxiety of losing their life or their child during delivery or shortly after.

Maternal and child mortality rates in this predominantly semi-arid area were high and sanitation was poor. Limited access to professional medical assistance compounded the issue, and inexperienced young new mothers lacked the guidance and support needed to effectively care for themselves and their newborn babies.

To make the transition into motherhood easier for mothers, Amref Health Africa, an implementing partner of the Ustahimilivu Project, which aims at addressing maternal mortality, malnutrition, and sanitation issues in ASALs, introduced the Mother-to-mother Programme, whose goal is to link older, more experienced mothers with younger ones.

"Through the Mother-to-mother Programme, we have received practical training on breastfeeding and good hygiene for us mothers and also our infants. Amref has also implemented several water projects in the villages, reducing the burden of women as it is their responsibility to avail water in their homes," explained Hellen Todoreng, a member of Kachanguya Mother-to-mother Support Group.

Additionally, the Mother-to-mother Programme implemented multiple interventions in the community to improve the well-being of new mothers in the community, which is largely made up of pastoralists.

"The existence of mother-to-mother support groups has driven an increase in hospital deliveries and uptake of both antenatal and postnatal services. Good sanitation practices and behaviours such as regular handwashing and the use of clean water for drinking are now widely practised in the community," said Mable Serem, Amref's Technical Officer for nutrition-sensitive interventions.

Thanks to the interventions by the Mother-to-mother Programme, supported by the Ustahimilivu Project, maternal mortality in Masol and Pellow has been on a downward trend, and child survival rates have continued to improve.

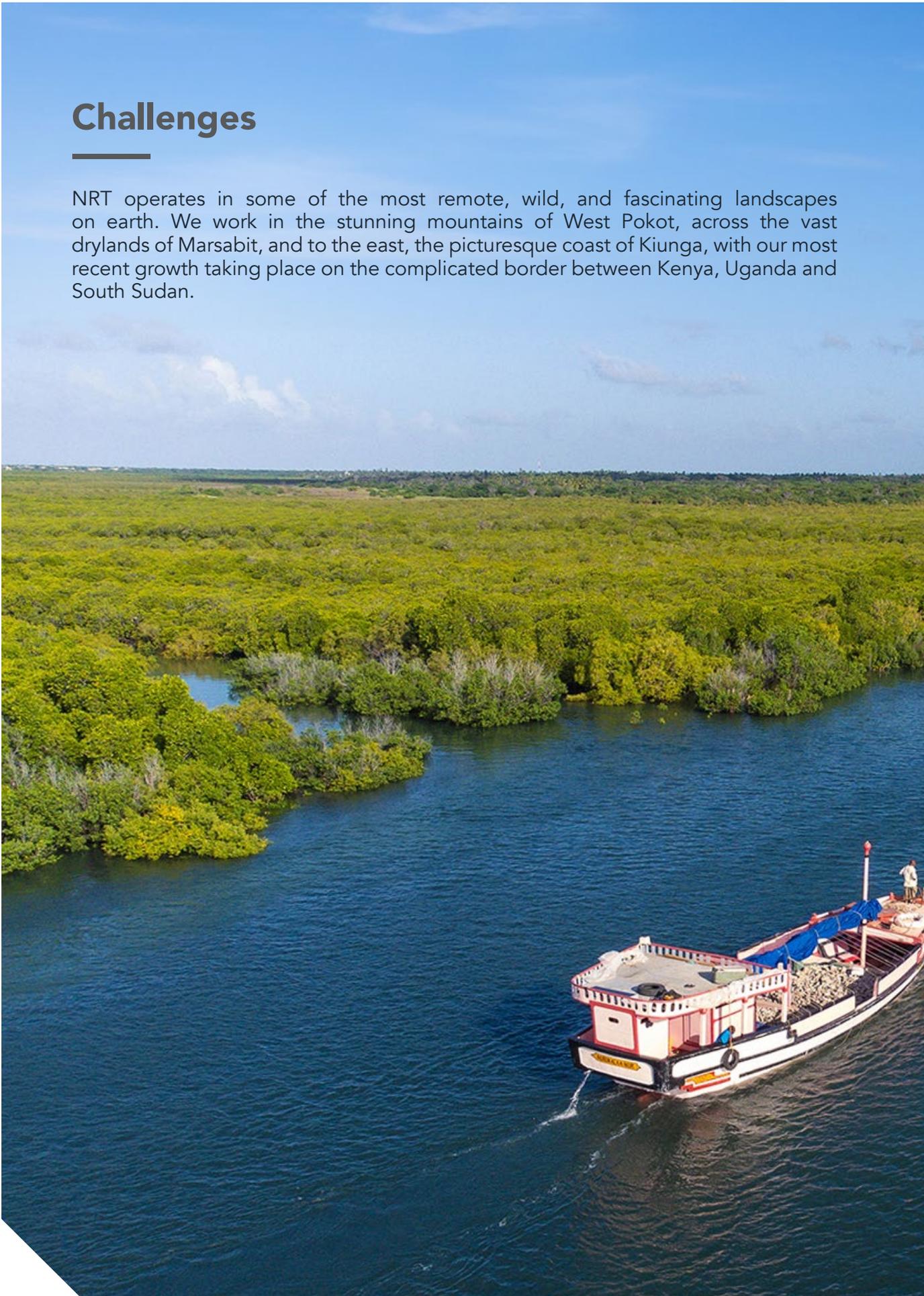


# Chapter 17

## Challenges

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NRT operates in some of the most remote, wild, and fascinating landscapes on earth. We work in the stunning mountains of West Pokot, across the vast drylands of Marsabit, and to the east, the picturesque coast of Kiunga, with our most recent growth taking place on the complicated border between Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan.





## Navigating the Complexities of Conservation

These breathtaking landscapes are home to some of the most captivating communities on Earth. Wearing local BeadWORKS products with traditional patterns and adorned with scarification marks, feathers, and red ochre, our communities possess some of the most vibrant and historic cultures in all of mankind.

These communities and landscapes are exquisite, but they come with significant challenges. For decades, the 19 ethnic communities that make up our landscape have been at odds with one another. Political influences and changes in land laws have further exacerbated longstanding animosities.

Livestock theft has been a persistent problem in the region, as pastoralism is the primary source of livelihood for many community members. Stock theft, which was formerly a practice used by teenage warriors to show off their skills and win over potential partners, has evolved into a widespread, usually violent, fatal criminal activity that adversely impacts thousands of families and their livelihoods.

In times of extended drought, as was the case at the beginning of the year, northern Kenya communities experienced an uptick in livestock theft, as many pastoralists lost their entire herd to the severe drought.

Further, the climate change-induced drought triggered conflict in the region as herders clashed over diminishing pasture and water resources in grazing fields. Whenever these conflicts arose, injuries, fatalities, and livestock losses were frequently the end results. This is a price far too high for any community to pay.

Estimates have put illegal weapons in the region at over a million. This proliferation of illegal firearms contributes to the insecurity in the area. Visitors to the community conservancies have not been spared either as incidents of tourist attacks were recorded in the last year. Regrettably, road banditry and arson attempts also spiked in 2023.

In a striking contrast, the catastrophic drought was followed by widespread flooding as the El Nino phenomenon hit the country. Many roads in northern Kenya were rendered impassable by the heavy rains, often leaving community members stranded.

At a time when climate change and its debilitating effects continue to wreak havoc across the globe, NRT, working with partners, is developing the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project (NKRCPP), to generate sustainable revenue to address community needs including health, education and water, and increase the resilience of indigenous communities.

The NKRCPP has not only promoted livelihood diversification and peacebuilding, but has also served as a litmus test for the world's first and largest soil carbon capture programme.

Being the pioneer in a new market and technique and its implementation, we have encountered numerous hurdles that we are working diligently to surmount. Nonetheless, the NKRCPP, an innovative natural climate solution, has continued to transform lives and represents our greatest endeavour yet for mitigating the damage caused by climate change.

Across the NRT landscape, internet and cell phone coverage is limited and sporadic, inhibiting communication. Moreover, the high illiteracy rate in our area of operation hinders progress in sharing our model and approach.

To address this, we are making concerted efforts to transmit information in indigenous languages through traditional media, including radio, and debunk fundamental misconceptions about NRT and member community conservancies.

As we pause to consider some of the obstacles we encounter daily, we remain deeply encouraged by the positive impact we see taking place at the grassroots levels of the communities we serve.

The growth we have experienced over the years may have brought with it its own set of challenges, but it has also built our resilience and provided opportunities to make a real difference. Despite the prevailing headwinds, we remain steadfast in our mission to conserve nature, transform lives and build peace through community-led conservation.



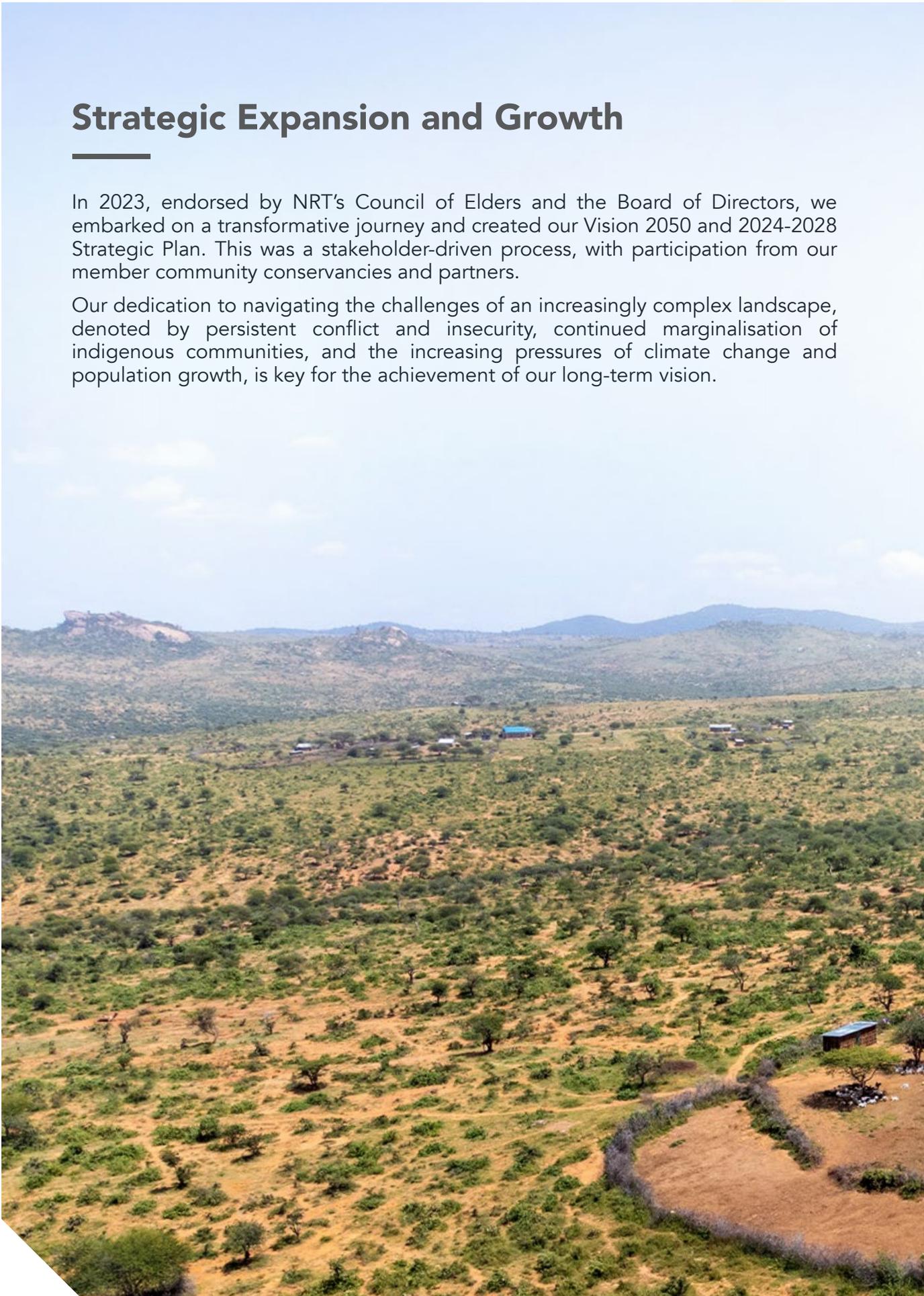
## Chapter 18

## Strategic Expansion and Growth

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In 2023, endorsed by NRT's Council of Elders and the Board of Directors, we embarked on a transformative journey and created our Vision 2050 and 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. This was a stakeholder-driven process, with participation from our member community conservancies and partners.

Our dedication to navigating the challenges of an increasingly complex landscape, denoted by persistent conflict and insecurity, continued marginalisation of indigenous communities, and the increasing pressures of climate change and population growth, is key for the achievement of our long-term vision.



In this landscape, we perform three distinct roles:

- » Centre of Expertise: excelling in our core priorities, such as the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project, peace building initiatives and good governance.
- » Trusted Coalition for our member conservancies: empowering communities to lead in their specific area of focus, including rangeland management, wildlife protection and livelihood development. We seek to foster self-reliance and sustainability within these communities.
- » Convening Platform: effectively bridging the gap between indigenous communities, remote areas, and international development partners. This role emphasises our dedication to facilitating connections and collaborations that transcend geographical boundaries.

Our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan builds on our long-term vision, and fulfilling these three obligations for our various outputs is a top priority. By adopting this approach, NRT is not only positioned to adapt to changing conditions but also actively shape a more resilient and sustainable future for the communities we serve in northern and coastal Kenya and Uganda.



## New Membership Applications

Interest in joining NRT's membership is growing, as evidenced by over a dozen pending applications from prospective conservancies.

In 2023 alone, 18 communities requested support in joining NRT, and three counties sought NRT's assistance in establishing the community conservancy model. The Turkana County Government, for instance, requested NRT to examine conservancy opportunities across Turkana County, in collaboration with a wide group of Turkana community elders.

Growth, however, while welcome, is not easy. NRT has learnt many lessons and experienced numerous growing pains throughout its quick expansion from a few community conservancies in 2004 to the current 45. Due to funding limitations, more than 20 membership applications are pending approval. This formally expressed interest in NRT membership is a testament to the positive impact the NRT community conservation model has had over the last two decades.

Stretching the limited available funding to support new conservancies has been an ongoing challenge that is yet to be sustainably addressed.

The Boston Consulting Group conducted an organisational review of NRT in 2023, which provided the chance to reflect on our growth in a structured manner, as well as designate a senior role to oversee future expansion, in line with our strategic goal of supporting community conservation and the growth of the NRT model in Kenya and beyond.

## Scaling Conservation Reach

Two new community conservancies, Maiyanat and Shulmai from Laikipia County, joined NRT in 2023, bringing our total membership to 45. Our reach and impact expanded by 701,000 people and the area covered by our conservancies by 6.37 million hectares, after the two joined NRT.

The two community conservancies voluntarily became NRT members, through a process in which all FPIC procedures were duly followed.



## Our Impact

Implemented across 45 community conservancies spanning 6.37 million hectares, the NRT community conservancy model has positively impacted over a million people, resulting in considerable gains in community development and wildlife protection, which include the following:

- » The development of the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project, a game-changer among natural climate solutions.
- » NRT member conservancies' current protection of 15 endangered species.
- » MashinaniWORKS (NRT Trading) generates millions of shillings annually for grassroots economies while building communities' climate resilience.
- » Our Livelihoods Programme provides marginalised communities with access to vital basic amenities including water, health, education and reliable energy.
- » Robust marine and forest programmes that promote healthy marine and forest ecosystems.

## International Interest

NRT continues to garner attention from around the world, in its model and preceding successes. Several nations have sent delegations on fact-finding missions to NRT. In November 2023, Namibian conservation teams conducted a week-long visit to NRT.

## NRT in Uganda

The first significant development under our newly-established growth and expansion department was NRT's expansion into north-eastern Uganda, where NRT partnered with the Uganda Conservation Foundation (UCF) in establishing Morung'ole Community Conservancy in collaboration with the community and upon their request.

Morung'ole is located high in the mountains on the Kenya-Uganda border. Its people live an agricultural-based life on the mountain ranges. They are a small community that has historically experienced marginalisation and exclusion from mainstream development. The Conservancy borders a National Park, where numerous wildlife species roam freely between conservancy lands and the national protected areas.

NRT seeks to enhance the Conservancy by providing support in the recruitment of conservancy scouts, vehicle acquisition, training of the elected conservancy board, and raising awareness about conservation and the impact of the NRT community conservancy model.

As a full member of NRT, Morung'ole Community Conservancy benefits from the wide-ranging experience and opportunities provided by the Council of Elders and NRT's seasoned staff. The Conservancy's Chairperson holds full membership status in the Council.

# Asanteni Sana

The Northern Rangelands Trust would like to thank the following principal donors and partners, and many other partners, donors and investors (listed on the website), for their invaluable support.

## County Governments



## Donors



## Partners



## Get Involved

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### 20 Years of Community Conservation and Wildlife Protection

With steadfast supporters like you by our side throughout 2023, we addressed the most urgent needs of our member conservancies, enhanced their climate resilience and accomplished incredible conservation milestones.

Our community conservancy model continues to make a real difference for nature and indigenous communities living in the remotest parts of northern and coastal Kenya and Uganda. The task is not finished yet. In a world that is increasingly susceptible to the effects of climate change, much more remains to be done.

Your kind support ensures we can keep showing up for nature and the most vulnerable communities in our member conservancies. Will you join us in this mission? Your gift will be used to support our community conservation and wildlife protection work wherever the need is greatest. To donate, please visit [nrt-kenya.org/give](http://nrt-kenya.org/give)

For inquiries on ways to give, please call (+254) 113 912 371 or email us: [donate@nrt-kenya.org](mailto:donate@nrt-kenya.org)

### Looking for a unique present for a loved one?

Take a moment to browse through BeadWORKS' website for the newest products. Each item on the site is exquisitely made with love from northern Kenya. With every purchase you make, you not only support BeadWORKS' incredibly talented beaders and their families, but also bolster wildlife protection efforts and community-led conservation.

To view the BeadWORKS catalogue, [please visit](#)

### Experience the Vacation of a Lifetime!

Ready for your next adventure? Strap on your boots and explore the Big North! From rhino tracking safaris, game drives, private pools, rock climbing, nature walks, to stunning views, the Big North has it all!

For more information, visit [www.thebignorth.travel](http://www.thebignorth.travel)

### Join our Thriving Community!

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To subscribe to our emails and newsletters visit:  
[www.nrt-kenya.org/bloom-signup](http://www.nrt-kenya.org/bloom-signup)

### Learn more about NRT

Please visit [nrt-kenya.org](http://nrt-kenya.org) for the latest updates on NRT, our member community conservancies, exciting new projects, and more!

For inquiries, write to: [info@nrt-kenya.org](mailto:info@nrt-kenya.org)

## Looking Ahead

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2023 was an incredible year for us at NRT and our member community conservancies. Day after day, we embraced the power of incremental progress and worked diligently to create an enabling environment for communities and nature to coexist and thrive.

In the future, we anticipate that extreme weather events caused by climate change will continue to occur. All community members are impacted by the climate crisis, but the most vulnerable and impoverished are disproportionately affected. It is only prudent that we remain prepared.

Steered by our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan and 2050 vision, we will prioritise increasing the climate resilience of the indigenous communities we serve.

We will also continue to support our members in becoming financially sustainable and self-sufficient, and build on existing partnerships to multiply the positive impact of the community conservancy model.

We look forward to executing this mission with the same passion and enthusiasm as we did in the last year.







[www.nrt-kenya.org](http://www.nrt-kenya.org)