



NRT NEWSLETTER

JAN/FEB 2024





NRT Newsletter

Jan/Feb 2024 Issue

Dear NRT Partners,

For thousands of children across Kenya, the beginning of 2024 was synonymous with a fresh school year. This was an exciting time for many as they showed up in brand new uniform to a new class, and stuffed their lockers with new textbooks, fancy stationery and neatly covered exercise books. The world was their oyster.

In remote northern and coastal Kenya, a starkly different scenario played out for a significant number of young girls denied the chance to set foot in a classroom by early, and in some cases, forced marriage.

To address children's learning needs and fulfil the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4, which underscores quality education, in 2024, working with partners, we continue to support schools in our member community conservancies in various ways including infrastructure development and provision of school supplies, bursaries, teacher training and conservation education.

We are ramping up efforts to improve teacher-to-student contact hours, class enrolment and attendance, and graduation into the next grade. Welcome to our first newsletter of the year, where we share the latest updates from across the NRT landscape and actions we are taking to ensure no girl is left behind in education.

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.

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.

2,220

girls mentored since the inception of the Girls’ Mentorship Programme in 2022



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.



Ujuzi Manyattani: The Vocational Training Programme that Changed a Moran's Life

The 6th of April 2022 found John Galwersi, a moran from Karare in Songa Community Conservancy, Marsabit County, brimming with excitement.

It was finally graduation day for him and 336 other youth and women from six NRT member community conservancies after three months of intensive vocational training by MashinaniWORKS (NRT Trading) through its Ujuzi Manyattani Programme. Their joy was palpable. Ujuzi Manyattani had propelled them into a future filled with endless possibilities.

Waves of gratitude flowed through John as he reflected on the journey that had brought him to this moment. Before taking up Ujuzi Manyattani's vocational training, he worked as a boda boda (motorcycle taxi) rider. The nature of the job coupled with the long working hours it demanded took a toll on his health.

Quitting, however, was not an option. John had no other way to make ends meet. So he continued with his boda boda business while enduring recurrent health challenges as he sought an alternative source of income. As destiny would have it, John came to learn about the Ujuzi Manyattani Programme through conservancy leaders.

The Programme, he discovered, equipped community members with in-demand skills through vocational training, diversify their livelihoods and fostering

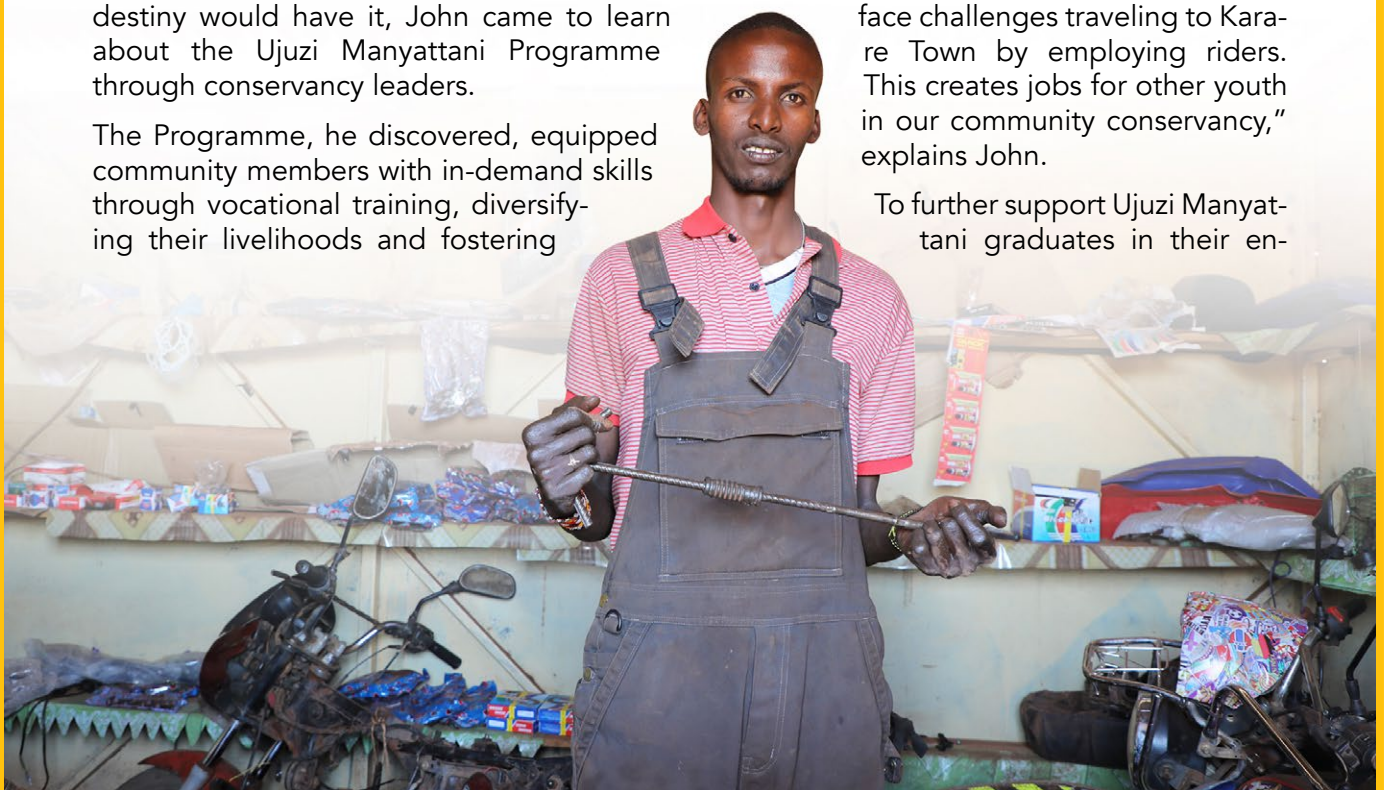
entrepreneurship. Ujuzi Manyattani was the lifeline John needed. He promptly enrolled in the motorcycle repair and maintenance course.

After completing his training and graduating, John struggled to secure a formal job. Rather than throw in the towel, John changed his approach for finding meaningful employment. Using a toolkit that Ujuzi Manyattani had issued to him upon graduating, John built on his expertise in motorcycle repair by working as an apprentice for skilled mechanics for a while.

During this time, John saved up Ksh 5,000 which he used to set up his own motorcycle spare parts and repair shop. Gradually, he stocked the shop with essential items, including engine oil, side mirrors, and brake pads. Today, John's small business is not only addressing a crucial need in the community for motorcycle repair services, but also creating employment opportunities for other youth in the Conservancy.

"My daily income from the repair shop ranges from Ksh 1,000 to 5,000. I also offer mobile services to customers who face challenges traveling to Karare Town by employing riders. This creates jobs for other youth in our community conservancy," explains John.

To further support Ujuzi Manyattani graduates in their en-





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John Galwersi,
Songa Community Conservancy

entrepreneurship journey, through its Biashara Mashinani Programme, MashinaniWORKS provided them with entrepreneurship and financial literacy training, which enabled John to successfully expand his business.

Since its inception in 2019, Ujuzi Manyattani has trained 962 young men and women in vocational skills, who contribute Ksh 97 million to the local economy each year. 96% of the Programme’s graduates are self-employed and own businesses, while the rest are apprentices or formally employed.

Ujuzi Manyattani is supported by USAID through both the Local Works and the Scaling Sustainability and Resilience for Community Conservancies Programmes, 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 and The Nature Conservancy.

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 needs like clean water, healthcare and education.

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

In 2023, the Conservancy launched the Women and Youth Empowerment Programme (WYEP), after allocating Ksh 1.7 million of its funds from the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project (NKRCP) to the Programme’s implementation. WYEP was established



289

women and youth in

11

self-help groups in Nasuulu Community Conservancy directly benefitted from the Women and Youth Empowerment Programme

to empower women and youth by offering microfinance support. The Programme has directly benefitted 289 women and youth in 11 self-help groups within Nasuulu.

Mariam Abdulahi, the Chairlady of 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.”

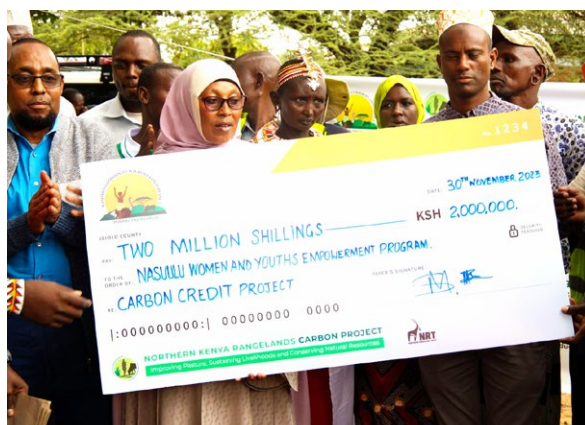
For women and youth in Nasuulu, WYEP has become a beacon of hope. Nancy Bouka from Bule Women Welfare Group was delighted that her group had received financial support from the Programme.

“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 a total of Ksh 322,979,438 across all participating conservancies for community development, improving the lives of 205,000 community members.



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.

NRT and Community Conservancies Host AFD Team

We were honoured to host Agence Française de Développement's (AFD) Task Team Leader-Agriculture, Rural Development and Biodiversity, Frederique Willard, and Programme Officer-Energy and Environment, Nyokabi Gitahi, when they conducted a three-day visit of our headquarters and member community conservancies.

The AFD officials met with the Isiolo County Secretary, Dadhe Boru, and Isiolo Deputy County Commissioner, Patrick Musango, and discussed future collaboration.

Afterward, they visited Kinna and Nasulu Community Conservancies in Isiolo County, where they engaged with community members and gained an understanding of their development priorities and the impact of AFD's support on livelihood improvement, peacebuilding and biodiversity conservation.

Finally, the officials had discussions with the MashinaniWORKS team on AFD-supported programmes and their contribution to economic empowerment in conservancy communities.



Joy as 140 Youth Graduate from Ujuzi Manyattani Vocational Training in Isiolo County

The 13th of February was a day of unbridled joy and celebration for 140 youth from Leparua, Cherab and Garbatulla Community Conservancies, as they graduated from MashinaniWORKS' Ujuzi Manyattani Programme after three months of vocational training in various courses including motorcycle repair, tailoring and dressmaking, electrical and solar installation, hairdressing and beauty therapy, catering, and mobile phone repair and maintenance.



The spectacular graduation ceremony held at Leparua Community Conservancy was presided over by the Principal Secretary of the State Department for Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in the Ministry of Education, Dr. Esther Thaara Muoria.

Isiolo County Government officials as well as representatives of our development partners, including the United States Agency for International Development, Danish International Development Agency, and ICEP, were present at the event, where the NKRCPC gave a voluntary levy of Ksh 10,162,910 to the County.

The levy, which is equivalent to 5% of the revenue obtained in Isiolo County in 2023 from the NKRCPC, will accelerate the development of essential bills in the county, including the Tourism Bill, Wildlife Conservation and Management Bill, and the Isiolo Community Conservancy Bill.



The Family is Growing! **Geoffrey Kaituko** and **Ali Daud Mohammed** Join NRT's Board

We are thrilled to announce Hon. Geoffrey Kaituko and Ali Daud Mohammed, as the newest members of NRT's Board of Directors.

With over 20 years of experience spearheading organisations in the public sector and implementing effective public policies at national and county levels, Kaituko is well-versed in overseeing government entities. An exceptional, results-oriented leader with a proven track record in project implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, Kaituko has a history of moving the needle for the benefit of all.

Ali Daud Mohamed has worked for more than 30 years in Kenya's public service, gaining a wealth of experience in natural resources management, and environmental and climate change policy development. He is an environment, climate change, and development maestro with notable achievements and contributions in impactful environmental diplomacy and intergovernmental arrangements. Mohamed's multifaceted knowledge and leadership acumen position him to successfully steer organisations through complex multilateral operations.





Newsbytes from Across the NRT Landscape

REGIONAL UPDATES

NRT Centre

NRT Centre and Communities Health Africa Trust are working closely to address health disparities in Ngilai, Westgate and Kalama Community Conservancies by introducing the Population, Health and Environment (PHE) approach. The PHE framework is an integrated, multi-pronged, community-based approach that enhances the complex relationships between people's health and the natural resources on which they depend. The project, which is designed to run for five years in the three conservancies, includes an 18-month pilot phase.

NRT East

The Region convened its first staff meeting of the year to discuss the regional master work plan for the first quarter of the year, monthly budgets, programme reporting protocols, weekly movement plans, staff's key performance indicators, and donor grants, among other topics. The NRT Board Vice Chair, Jarso Mokku, also attended the meeting and provided guidance in laying out a plan for the Region to achieve NRT's 2050 Vision.

NRT West

West Pokot's County Government's Department of Health and Sanitation recently declared ten villages in the region as open defecation-free areas, following months of community sensitisation on good water, sanitation, and hygiene practices. The sensitisation sessions were conducted by the European Union-funded Ustahimilivu Programme, led by Amref Health Africa. 480 households were targeted during the campaign which drove behaviour change, leading to the construction of pit latrines, improving sanitation and reducing cases of waterborne diseases.

NRT Mountain

- NRT and the regional team held a one-day training session to facilitate the development of a curriculum for the Rangelands Management Programme (RAMP). Modelled after NRT's Leadership and Management Programme (LAMP), RAMP seeks to improve rangeland health by providing conservancy board and grazing committee members, youth, women and herders, with practical insights for effective rangeland management and carbon sequestration.
- The regional team, in collaboration with representatives from the Wyss Academy for Nature Hub East Africa, the Centre for Training and Integrated Research in ASAL Development, Save the Elephants and the National Land Commission, assessed the critical wildlife corridors in the Laikipia and Samburu County ecosystems, to understand their ecological impact and devise strategies for enhancing conservancy-based protection, and monitoring of endangered species.

NRT Coast

- The regional team organised a series of meetings and workshops for executive committee members of five Beach Management Units (BMUs) in Kiunga and Pate Community Conservancies. During the meetings, participants reviewed the BMUs' 2023 operations and financial reports, and discussed 2024 work plans and budgets, while the workshops were aimed at enhancing the governance and management of marine resources, ultimately safeguarding and improving the livelihoods of coastal communities.

- NRT Coast, alongside multiple partners and stakeholders, commemorated World Wetlands Day on the 2nd of February at a ceremony held in Faza Village in Pate Community Conservancy. During the event, awareness was raised about the importance of wetlands conservation, and a beach and village clean-up exercise was conducted.

CONSERVANCY UPDATES



Westgate and Kalama

The two Community Conservancies hosted NRT Centre’s rangelands team and representatives from Justdiggit, when they visited restoration sites in the two conservancies to review the progress of semi-circular earth bunds established by the communities towards the end of 2023. Notable improvements in soil conservation, water retention, and vegetation regeneration were observed.



Kalama

The Conservancy leadership, the NRT Centre team and the Grevy’s Zebra Trust’s rangelands team, met and discussed Kalama’s upcoming cattle bunching exercise, and the ongoing implementation of semi-circular earth bunds through the Towards Ending Drought Emergencies Project.



Ngilai

During the first annual general meeting of the year, 2023 status and financial reports were presented, and the community endorsed Ngilai’s 2024 Conservancy Development and Management Plan, and grazing and operational plans. The Samburu East Member of Parliament, Hon. Jackson Lekumontare, was present at the meeting.



Kalepo

The Conservancy’s Board convened to deliberate on the challenges faced in 2023 and their potential solutions and develop plans and programmes for 2024.



Meibae

Elders from the Conservancy’s Nkisiau Zone visited rangeland rehabilitation sites, to evaluate the state of the community-led clearing of *Acacia reficiens*, as well as the proposed cattle bunching area.



Nannapa, Nanapisho, Naapu, and Narupa

A joint meeting involving the four community conservancies and attended by regional teams, Isiolo County Government officials and local national government administrative officers, was held at Nannapa’s headquarters, to discuss various matters including enhancing governance and fostering inclusion.



Nakuprat-Gotu

The first annual general meeting of the year was held, with discussions centering on conservancy governance and leadership, free, prior and informed consent processes and the NKRCF.



Melako

The Conservancy conducted a standard operating procedures training for all its community scouts, to enhance their wildlife protection skills.



Jaldesa

The Grazing Committee met and discussed grazing plans for the wet season, rangeland rehabilitation interventions and measures to address charcoal burning.



Naibunga Upper, Central and Lower

NRT's rangelands and infrastructure teams visited the three community conservancies to evaluate the state of their cochineal-breeding greenhouses and their efficacy in preventing the spread of the invasive *Opuntia stricta* cactus.



Naibunga Upper, Shulmai, Maiyanat, Kirimon, Il Ngwesi, Lekurruki, and Sera

MashinaniWORKS' Ujuzi Manyattani Programme conducted sensitisation and engagement meetings in seven community conservancies: Naibunga Upper, Shulmai, Maiyanat, Kirimon, Il Ngwesi, Lekurruki, and Sera, to facilitate the identification of new vocational training sites.



Kiunga and Pate

Eight reef community scouts from the two community conservancies completed training in open-water scuba diving, safety at sea, and coral reef restoration and were certified by the Professional Association of Diving Instructors.



Ruko and Kaptuya

Newly elected board members of the two community conservancies underwent a four-day induction and Leadership and Management Programme training, enhancing their management and governance skills.



Morung'ole

Eight newly recruited community conservancy scouts visited Kenya on a one-month exposure tour to Sera, Westgate, Kalepo and Nasuulu Community Conservancies, where they interacted with their counterparts and gained insights on using Wildlife-CoMMS for rhino monitoring and data collection.



Video of the Month

BeadWORKS, a handicraft enterprise run by MashinaniWORKS harnesses northern Kenya's rich beading tradition to create opportunities for pastoralist women to translate their traditional skills into much-needed income.

Revenue from BeadWORKS not only enables the women to meet their families' basic needs, but also finances crucial conservation initiatives that preserve natural resources, benefitting entire communities.



Go behind the scenes with us as we show you what it takes to create each BeadWORKS product. Watch the video [here](#).

Surprise Your Loved One with a Timeless Gift!

Take a moment to browse through the BeadWORKS' website for a classy, meaningful gift. Each item on the site is exquisitely made with love from northern Kenya. For every purchase you make, you not only support BeadWORKS' incredibly talented bead makers, but also bolster wildlife protection efforts and community-led conservation. To shop, please click [here](#).



In the Media



DW

[Kenyan women foster sustainable fishing with octopus farm](#)



Citizen TV

[Jamii yahasishwa mbinu za kusitisha wizi wa mifugo Samburu](#)

[Samburu community adopts hay growing to minimise conflict over grazing land](#)

[Faida za tabianchi Samburu](#)

[The County Government of Isiolo receives Ksh 10 million from the sale of carbon credits](#)

[Kaunti ya Isiolo yapata shilingi milioni kumi kufaidi miradi ya hewa kaa](#)



Inooro TV

[Atumia kwirutira kũhanda nyeki mĩcĩ-inĩ arĩ njĩra ya kũnina mbaara cia arĩithia, Samburu](#)



KTN News

[Wakaazi wa Lamu wamehimizwa kutotupa taka za plastiki na nepi baharini](#)

[Pastoralists embrace carbon projects: initiative aimed at protecting local resources](#)

[Mradi wa malipo ya hewa ukaa wapiga hatua katika kupambana na mabadiliko ya tabianchi](#)

[Mikakati yawekwa kuhakikisha kuwa mazingira yanatunzwa kaunti ya Samburu](#)



KBC Digital

[Isiolo County Government has received Ksh 10 million from 5 community conservancies as 5% annual levy](#)



The Standard

[Conservation: women fighting to change everyday life](#)



The Star

[Marsabit carbon credit projects lauded for changing lives, boosting conservation](#)

[140 Isiolo youth benefit from Ujuzi Manyattani Program](#)



Kenya News Agency

[Youth graduate from Ujuzi Manyattani Program](#)



Kenya Digital News

[Northern Rangelands Trust embarks on rebuilding trust in the carbon space](#)



Nature World News

[Kenya relocates 21 rhinos to revive population in former habitat](#)

Tukio News

[Ujuzi Manyattani saved us from banditry business, youth say](#)



Waso TV

[Vijana wa Isiolo wafuzu na vyeti vya kiufundi](#)



Biftu FM

[Mapato yanayotokana na mradi wa carbon credit, yaani hewa ukaa, kupitia shirika la kuhifadhia mazingira la Northern Rangeland Trust \(NRT\) yametumika kuboresha maisha ya wenyeji wa maeneo ambayo shirika hilo linafanya kazi](#)

Kamachu TV

[Smiles all over as 140 youth in Isiolo graduate under Ujuzi Manyattani Program](#)

[Governor Abdi Guyo receives Ksh 10 million from conservancies courtesy of NRT](#)



BNN Breaking

[Northern Rangelands Trust: harnessing technology for transparent carbon credit projects](#)



TV47

[Afueni ya Mafunzo ya Kiufundi](#)

Culex Media



[Isiolo to use Ksh 10 million carbon credit levy to fast-track wildlife, tourism, conservancy bills](#)

2024 is filled with endless possibilities and opportunities. As it unfolds, working closely with our partners, we will continue to support our member conservancies in northern and coastal Kenya and Uganda in building their resilience against climate change.

We are delighted and honoured to have you join us in our journey as we strive to achieve this mission and transform lives through community-led conservation.



ASANTENI SANA

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

County Governments



Donors



Partners

