



NRT NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2023





NRT Newsletter

October 2023 Issue

Dear NRT Partners,

A recent survey NRT Trading conducted in 25 member community conservancies found that only 1% of the respondents had a university education.

Since its inception in 2012, NRT's Education Program has sought to promote learning by complementing governmental efforts and spearheading school infrastructure development.

The Program has additionally been providing supplies, teacher training and accommodation, mentorship for learners, their parents as well as teachers, tuition bursaries, school meals, and conservation education.

In the first half of the year, 7,225 students in 10 community conservancies benefitted from Ksh 51.7 million education bursaries supported by the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project (NKRCPP) and the NRT's Conservancy Livelihood Fund (CLF).

While a lot has been accomplished as we strive to bridge the existing inequality gap, much more remains to be done. Follow along as we share additional steps we are taking to secure a brighter future for communities in northern and coastal Kenya and Uganda through education and conservation.

Learning for All: Bringing Education Dreams to Life in NRT Member Community Conservancies, One Child at a Time

Across the vast northern Kenya pasturelands, an eight-year-old boy from a maa-speaking pastoralist community herded his father's livestock, as was his norm, every school holiday.

On this day, physically, he was present, watching large cumulus clouds floating across a blue sky while keeping an eye on the cows and goats as they grazed so he would not lose any to a lion. Mentally, his mind had turned back the hands of time to the day he was born. He did not know the precise day, month, or year, as his parents never attended school.

His mother said his birth took place during a solar eclipse. While most youngsters in his class knew their precise date of birth, his remained a mystery. Like any other little boy his age would have, he decided to designate his favourite date, month, and year as his birthday!



With that very important matter out of the way, his thoughts drifted to the places he would explore while searching for pasture.

The older he grew, the more his understanding of the ecosystem increased. Everything was interlinked, he realized. His father's livestock entirely depended on the health of the surrounding rangelands, forests, and rivers.

His family could only afford to pay school fees when the natural environment was healthy, and their livestock could access high quality pasture, increasing their yield and market value when sold, generating sufficient income for his parents.

The tide turned when the family lost most of the herd to a catastrophic drought, which also brought the livestock economy on which his pastoralist community relied to its knees.

Instead of dreaming about his next adventure, he was now witnessing increased human-wildlife conflict as elephants competed for water with humans, and his beloved community grappled with limited livelihood options.

Raising his school fees under these circumstances was an uphill if not impossible task for his family. The future ostensibly looked bleak, and dropping out of school was the only option left, dashing his hopes.

Unbeknownst to the little boy and his parents at the time, there was a bigger world than the one before their eyes waiting for him, one that would lead him down a less trodden path.

Thanks to the community's rallying together to sponsor his education, not only would he be the first in his family to undergo formal learning, but he would also be the first from Westgate Community Conservancy to graduate from a Kenyan university. He would go on



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to etch his name in history books by becoming Westgate's first Conservancy Manager, the inaugural winner of the prestigious Tusk Award for Conservation, a recipient of Stanford Law School's Environmental Sustainability Award, and the current CEO of the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), Tom Lalampaa.

For decades in the semi-arid landscape that is northern Kenya, many children, like eight-year-old Tom, have had their access to learning hindered by a confluence of geographic, socioeconomic, cultural, and political factors.

It is not unusual to see children seated under a tree or on an earthen floor during class. In some areas, the situation is worsened by teachers withdrawing from schools due to insecurity, housing shortages, and long commutes to work.

Predominantly home to nomadic pastoral communities, northern Kenya is also affected by climate change, prompting parents to relocate with their children in search of pasture.

According to data from a 2019 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics report on education and training, 70.3% of the nation's population aged three and above had completed primary or higher-level education. Nine counties, namely, Garissa, Marsabit, Isiolo, Tana-River, Samburu, West-Pokot, Turkana, Mandera, and Wajir less than 50% of the population with a primary education or higher education.

NRT, its member community conservancies, and partners, are supporting select schools in assessing and prioritizing their educational needs to increase enrolment and retention rates, and improve learning outcomes for girls and boys in northern and coastal Kenya.

"Community conservancies are working to improve ecosystem health and livelihoods by increasing children's access to education, which is fundamental in the achievement of this goal," notes Moses Lenaipa, NRT's Senior Education Officer.

This October, NRT East, West, and Mountain regions awarded education bursaries worth Ksh 27.5 million from the CLF and the NKRCF to 2,324 students in Kinna, Sericho, Garbatulla, Cherab, Masol, Pellow, and Naibunga Upper Community Conservancies, with support from the Europe-



an Union, United States Agency for International Development, and Agence Française de Développement.

The bursaries are a respite for struggling pastoralist families, who have been under immense financial strain after losing livestock, their main source of livelihood, to drought.

Rahma Hussein, 14, a student from St. Mary's Girls' High School in Isiolo, is one of Kinna Community Conservancy's bursary beneficiaries. Despite her challenging educational journey, she is grateful for the opportunity to learn and fulfill her dream of being an accountant.

"My father, a mason, recently lost his livestock to drought. He has always believed that with an education, I will go further, and break free from the poverty cycle we are in," Rahma explains.

As a result of NRT's Education Program's activities, student performance in schools within member community conservancies has improved, enrollment and retention rates have increased, as well as the student transition rates from primary to secondary school level.

The Education Program is supported by ICEP, Conservation International, The Nature Conservancy, Tusk Trust, and Lewa Wildlife Conservancy's Education Program.

Active in 42 schools spread across 27 community conservancies, NRT's Education Program continues to play an instrumental role in raising the next generation of African conservation leaders.

October 2023 Education Bursaries Disbursement

- » Kinna Community Conservancy: **Ksh 3.8 million**
- » Garbatulla Community Conservancy: **Ksh 4.6 million**
- » Sericho Community Conservancy: **Ksh 2.5 million**
- » Cherab Community Conservancy: **Ksh 6.6 million**
- » Naibunga Upper Community Conservancy: **Ksh 4 million**
- » Pellow and Masol Community Conservancies: **Ksh 6 million**



Ufugaji Bora Mashinani: Transforming Lives, Improving Pastoralist Livelihoods through Training

46-year-old Grace Metiaki from Naibunga Lower Community Conservancy spent most of her life herding using traditional livestock-keeping techniques. Often, she experienced cataclysmic failures, and her livestock would bear the brunt of the ineffective practices she employed.

In 2021, an opportunity emerged for her to undergo animal husbandry training through NRT Trading's Ufugaji Bora Mashinani Program, which is supported by the United States Agency for International Development's Local Works Program, and aims at increasing the livestock production capacity of 300 herders from 10 NRT member community conservancies.

This year, as part of her training, Grace went on an educational exposure tour at the Kenya Agricultural Livestock Research Organisation with 30 other livestock market agents. The experience broadened her horizons and elevated her to new heights of pasture production and management.

"The learning tour provided a platform to engage with experts, pose questions, and observe real-world application of the concepts taught in class," she explains.

Fuelled by a determination to succeed and apply her newfound expertise, Grace invested in pasture development and put an isolated piece of land she owned to good use, transforming grass into her most valuable asset.

"I was eager to practice pasture production and management as I had been losing hundreds of livestock to drought," she adds.

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Ufugaji Bora Mashinani has made me a better herder. I am imparting the knowledge I have gained to other group members in the livestock value chain so they can safeguard their livestock during drought.

Grace Metiaki,
Ufugaji Bora Mashinani beneficiary from
Naibunga Lower Community Conservancy

Grace began to manufacture her own animal feed blocks, ensuring they were well-balanced by adding vital nutrients such as animal salts, feeds, and molasses.

As her training progressed, Grace learnt about conservation and the benefits of acacia pods. Harvesting and conserving acacia pods, she discovered, opened a world of endless possibilities and kept her herd fed throughout harsh drought seasons.

Deeply encouraged by the success of her initial efforts, Grace is preparing another piece of property to increase her pasture output.



Towards a Greener Future: NRT Coast Co-develops Forest Management Plans and Agreements in Tana River County

NRT Coast engages in forestry activities aimed at terrestrial forests, which are vital water catchment areas with high biodiversity.

These activities include registering Community Forestry Associations (CFAs) and aligning them with conservancy governance structures, mapping and monitoring forest conditions, protecting and managing forests, establishing tree nurseries, undertaking tree planting exercises, and developing Participatory Forest Management Plans (PFMPs).

The formulation of PFMPs is mandated by law to ensure sustainable conservation, management, and restoration of public forests, mitigate the effects of climate change, and improve forest cover and livelihoods of communities living near forests through sustainable utilization of forest-based products.

In October, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and Chara, Mpozi, Kipini, and Kilelengwani CFAs signed PFMPs and Forest Management Agreements (FMAs), achieving a monumental milestone in forest conservation that granted the members of these CFAs rights to use Chara, Mpozi, Kipini, and Kilelengwani Forests for socioeconomic purposes, such as beekeeping, manufacturing herbal medicine, and crab farming, while still preserving them.

CFA members converged at Chamwanamu Village to witness the signing of the PFMPs and FMAs.

The PFMPs were drafted by the KFS in collaboration with the Tana River County Government, Lower Tana Delta Community Conservancy, NRT Coast, The Nature Conservancy, the Kenya Forestry Research Institute, and Nature Kenya. To ensure successful PFMP development and implementation, numerous village barazas (community meetings) were also held to obtain views from community members.

“We are eager for the PFMPs to be implemented and for the community to be involved in the protection, sustainable management, and restoration of the natural ecosystem in order to enhance livelihoods and conserve biodiversity,” said Kuso Ahmed, NRT Coast’s Deputy Regional Director, when he spoke at the event.

The Deputy Chief Conservator of Forest, Beatrice Mbula, presided over the signing of the documents. She encouraged the community to carry on planting trees in line with the national goal of growing 15 billion trees by 2032, and urged the KFS to continue partnering with CFAs in forest conservation and protection.



Joyous Celebration as **150 Youth Graduate** from NRT Trading's **Ujuzi Manyattani**

150 youth from Shurr, Songa, Naibunga Central, and Kaptuya Community Conservancies graduated from NRT Trading's Ujuzi Manyattani Program in October, bringing the total number of beneficiaries since the Program's launch in 2019 to 932.

The graduates (39 men and 111 women) underwent three months of rigorous vocational training through Ujuzi Manyattani, gaining skills in motorcycle repair, tailoring, hairdressing, catering, and electrical installation.

In January, NRT Trading conducted a survey that revealed Ujuzi Manyattani graduates contribute over Ksh 60 million to the local economy through their income-generating activities, and at least 88% of the Program's graduates were self-employed and had started their own businesses.

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The vocational skills training NRT Trading provides has not only promoted peaceful coexistence among the communities but also created an alternative source of income. This is very important as drought has adversely affected 70% of the livestock in northern Kenya.

H.E. Solomon Riwe,
Marsabit Deputy Governor



The Program is widely accepted, and its reach has grown over the years. Speaking at the first-ever conservancy-based graduation ceremony held in Marsabit County, the Marsabit Deputy Governor, H.E. Solomon Riwe, underscored the vital role technical and vocational skills training plays in the County's socioeconomic growth.

Ujuzi Manyattani equips pastoralists and community members who have not had a formal education with valuable and marketable skills without disrupting their way of life.

The Program is implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Education's Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority, the National Industrial Training Authority, Kiirua Technical Training Institute, and Laikipia North Technical and Vocational College.

Program operations are supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Local Works and the Scaling Sustainability Resilience for Community Conservancies (SSRCC) Programs, as well as the French Development Agency, French Facility for Global Environment, and Rainforest Trust.



AKO Foundation Team Visits Melako Community Conservancy and NRT

It was a great honour to host a team from AKO Foundation at our headquarters and Melako Community Conservancy in Marsabit County.

AKO Foundation, based in the United Kingdom, supports charitable causes that improve education, promote the arts, or mitigate climate issues. The Foundation funds our Girls' Mentorship Program—which operates in 23 schools in 14 community conservancies—and the Women's Fellowship Program, through Conservation International (CI).

The AKO team visited Nairibu and Laisamis Primary Schools, where two female intern teachers are stationed, and learnt about the effects of the Mentorship Program on girls' enrolment in school, their retention, transition rates, and academic performance.

The team also engaged with CI fellows from NRT, who apprised them of how their work has promoted women's empowerment, leadership, and inclusion in rangelands and conservation initiatives.

Road to Sustainability: NRT Grants Team Undergoes Conservation Fundraising Training

Recently, our Grants and Partnerships team joined fundraising groups from government sectors, parastatals, and non-governmental organisations in a training sponsored by the National Environmental Trust Fund, which aimed at increasing participants' capacity and efficiency in fundraising.

The training provided an excellent opportunity for attendants to share their experiences, network, and exchange ideas.

Our partners, who were also present, lauded the conservation milestones NRT has achieved through the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project.



Newsbytes from Across the NRT Landscape

REGIONAL UPDATES

NRT East

- Kinna, Garbatulla, Sericho, and Cherab Community Conservancies collaboratively disbursed education bursaries worth Ksh 17.5 million to a total of 800 students, at an event presided over by H.E. Dr. James Lowasa, the Isiolo County Deputy Governor.

The bursaries were disbursed through the Conservancy Livelihoods Fund, with support from Agence Française de Développement, Rainforest Trust, and Fonds Français pour l'Environnement Mondial. Kinna Community Conservancy also officially opened its headquarters during the event.

- The Region held a two-day training for rangeland coordinators and managers, which aimed at analyzing data from Veg-CoMMS (a vegetation monitoring system), providing feedback on livestock census data, and exploring ways conservancies can make data-driven grazing planning and rangeland management decisions.

NRT Coast

- 42 youth conservation champions from Pate, Kiunga, and Lower Tana Delta Community Conservancies graduated after completing a three-month Leadership and Management Program (LAMP) training, bringing the total number of NRT Coast beneficiaries to 293, since the Program’s inception in 2016.

This LAMP training was uniquely designed for youth, who are involved in various activities in their respective conservancies, including sea turtle monitoring and conservation, peacebuilding, collection of fisheries data, and mangrove restoration. The Lamu County Government backed the initiative and committed to fund the champions’ conservation and livelihood development activities.

NRT Centre

- The Region participated in the 31st edition of the Maralal International Camel Derby, held in Maralal, in Samburu County. During the event, Governors H.E. Lati Lelelit (Samburu County), H.E. Patrick Ole Ntutu (Narok County), H.E. Joseph Ole Lenku (Kajiado County), and other legislators, visited the NRT booth and expressed an interest in learning more about our conservation work and ways member conservancies are increasing communities’ climate resilience.

The highlight of the Derby, which was attended by the Prime Cabinet Secretary and Cabinet Secretary for Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, H.E. Musalia Mudavadi, was the 21-kilometer professional camel race, in which NRT’s very own, Gedhia Mamo, emerged as the winner.



- The Region’s rangelands coordinators met at Kalepo Community Conservancy and discussed the respective conservancies’ achievements, solutions for the challenges faced in rangelands management, and plans for 2024. They also deliberated on the strategies to take to enhance rangeland coordinators’ performance and improve information dissemination.

NRT Mountain

- The Region and NRT’s Peace team jointly organized a peace meeting for the Maa community, in Nanyuki Town, that was attended by officials from the Laikipia, Samburu, and Isiolo County Governments.

The two-day forum was supported by the European Union-funded Kenya Rangelands Ecosystem Services Productivity (RangER) Program and The Nature Conservancy’s Wyss Foundation, and chaired by H.E. Patrick Ole Ntutu, the Narok Governor.



Also in attendance were Governors H.E. Joseph Ole Lenku (Kajiado County), H.E. Lati Lelelit (Samburu County), H.E. Joshua Irungu (Laikipia County), Francis Ole Kaparo (former Speaker of the National Assembly), legislators from the four counties, and community members and leaders from the Region.

After careful deliberation, all present unanimously agreed on an extensive list of actions to take to end the long-standing conflict in the landscape, paving the way for lasting peace.

- 35 women leaders from seven community conservancies in NRT Mountain graduated after undergoing LAMP training, bringing the total number of graduates to 70. The women will join the Region’s Women Caucus, which strives to minimize gender gaps and empower local women, increasing their involvement in governance, conservation, and community development.

NRT West

- The regional team participated in the launch of West Pokot’s County Integrated Development Plan and highlighted the community impact Masol and Pellow Conservancies had achieved through the Ustahimilivu Project.

This four-year European Union-funded Project aims at increasing community resilience to drought and other effects of climate change.

After meeting project beneficiaries at the event, West Pokot County Governor, H.E. Simon Kachapin, said the Conservancies had given county leaders new insight into ways to transform community members’ lives.

CONSERVANCY UPDATES



Melako, Jaldesa, Songa, and Shurr: The four community conservancies conducted a participatory grazing and rangeland review, identified rangeland requirements and areas for collaboration, and forged partnerships to support grazing plan development and rangeland management.



Ishaqbini: The Conservancy participated in the inaugural International Wildlife Scientific Conference hosted by the Wildlife Research and Training Institute in Naivasha. At the Conference, whose theme was ‘Use of Wildlife Science for Enhanced Biodiversity Conservation and Improved Livelihoods,’ the Ishaqbini team presented the Conservancy’s community conservation work, focussing on the Hirola Sanctuary.



Garbatulla: Following the establishment of a new Ujuzi Manyattani training site in Kombola Village, 40 trainees enrolled for vocational training in various courses including catering, motorcycle repair and maintenance, tailoring, and electrical and solar power installation.



Il Ngwesi: In order to obtain the community’s free prior and informed consent, the NRT Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) team convened a meeting at which the development of a water pan in the Conservancy was discussed. In attendance were community members from all the Conservancy’s villages, who unanimously agreed to the water pan’s construction. The project is supported by the Darwin Initiative and will address the community’s dire need for clean water.



Ngilai: The Conservancy established a livestock compensation fund to encourage peaceful coexistence with wildlife in the Ngilai and Kalepo areas, and prevent retaliatory acts in response to livestock losses caused by wildlife.



Westgate: The Conservancy’s technical team underwent a semi-circular bunds training conducted in collaboration with the Towards Ending Drought Emergencies (TWEENDE) Project and JustdiggIt. The training will facilitate the implementation of a large-scale program that will involve approximately 80,000 bunds in Kalama and Westgate Community Conservancies, and increase both conservancies’ grass cover and soil carbon sink capacity.



Naapu, Nanapisho, Westgate, and Nasuulu: NRT’s Rangelands team gathered the conservancies’ grazing committees and leaders in a joint meeting to improve grazing planning and coordination across the four community conservancies.



Pellow and Masol: 810 students benefitted from Ksh 6 million in education bursaries, issued collaboratively by the two community conservancies through the Conservancy Livelihoods Fund, with support from the European Union and USAID.



Kaptuya and Ruko: Annual general meetings were held separately in the two community conservancies at which conservancy achievements, annual financial reports, and challenges were shared with community members, increasing their understanding of and participation in conservancy operations.



Leparua: NRT's Rangelands team organized a two-day capacity-building training for 60 youth from Elsa, Kilimani, and Leparua clusters, raising their awareness of the Conservancy's rangelands management activities, educating them on the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project and increasing their involvement in the Conservancy's activities.



Video of the Month

Women, children, and youth are the most affected by conflict, which leaves them vulnerable in every respect. In northern Kenya, many women have weathered losses due to conflict and are leading the way in peacebuilding in the region.

[Watch this video](#) to learn how women in NRT member community conservancies are creating pathways for peace.





In the Media



NTV: [West Pokot: 800 learners and orphans benefit from bursaries worth Sh6 million](#)



KTN News: [Wanawake Marsabit waingilia juakali](#)

K24: [Pastoral communities in Laikipia reap big from sale of carbon credits in Naibunga Conservancy](#)



Daily Nation: [Celebration in Laikipia as morans who dropped out of school graduate](#)

The Star: [Ujuzi Manyattani program set to boost pastoralists' livelihoods in Marsabit](#)



Look Up TV: [Shirika La North Rangerland \(Nrt\) Limetoa Mafunzo Na Hamasisho Kwa Wanawake Eneo Bunge La Laikipia](#)



Look Up TV: [Kwa Hatua Inayotarajiwa Kuleta Matumaini Na Fursa Za Elimu Kutoka Kwenye Familia Isiyojiweza](#)



Kameme TV: [Atumia a ariithia a mahiu kuhurwo njeki Laikipia](#)

Kameme TV: [Aikari a Naibuga, Laikipia kurihwo ni guthaitira maria maturigiciiri](#)



Muthingi TV: [Githomo Kuri Ariithi a Laikipia](#)



Kenya News Agency: [Trained Youth Equipped To Generate Income](#)

Kenya News Agency: [700 Laikipia Students Get Bursaries From Carbon Credits](#)



Angaaf Radio: [Northern Rangelands Trust \(NRT\) 17.5M bursary disbursement in Garbatulla, Isiolo](#)



Education News: [Relief as 800 learners in West Pokot receive bursaries worth Ksh 6M](#)

Culex Media: [Isiolo, Laikipia, Samburu And Marsabit Communities Outline Gains From Nrt Carbon Credit Project](#)

As we serve our member conservancies and provide the guidance needed to ensure they remain hallmarks of excellence in community conservation, our efforts are bolstered by dependable partners and donors.

Their unflinching support is the tailwind that propels us forward, ensuring we continue to preserve nature, build resilience, and transform community members' lives and livelihoods.

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.

