



# NRT NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2023





# NRT Newsletter

## September 2023 Issue

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Dear NRT Partners,

Climate change is impeding Africa's development.

Its catastrophic effects are not only leaving behind a trail of loss and destruction in their wake, but also holding African leaders to ransom, compelling them to weigh using funds for economic development against allocating them to tackling climate-related humanitarian crises.

To ensure this status quo does not prevail, a paradigm shift is urgently required. No nation or community should ever have to choose between its people's survival and progress.

The recently concluded Africa Climate Summit, themed "Driving Green Growth and Climate Finance Solutions for Africa and the World," presented an opportunity to bring the topic of climate justice back to the table and reimagine a better future for all.

Over 30,000 delegates from 120 countries attended this inaugural Summit, and we were honoured to join them in charting a carbon-negative course for the world, one in which the continent contributing the least to global climate change does not continue to suffer the worst consequences.

Follow along to learn additional steps we and our member community conservancies are taking to supercharge climate action across the NRT landscape and beyond.

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### **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, its consequences are the harsh reality as they bear the brunt of extreme climate events.

The UN reported that over 9 million heads of livestock were lost in the Horn of Africa last year alone, due to unprecedented drought. For northern Kenya's pastoralists, struggling to recover from the drought, and the over 4 million Kenyans, including lactating mothers, who grappled with food insecurity while dry conditions persisted, these were not just figures on a dashboard. They represented one of the darkest times of their lives.





Africa's low rate of greenhouse gas emissions must not relegate us to the margins and footnotes of the global climate agenda. Climate action is not a Global North issue or a Global South issue. It is our collective challenge, and it affects all of us. We need to come together to find common, global solutions.

H.E. Dr. William Ruto,  
President of the Republic of Kenya

Through our community conservancy model, we are working hand in hand with indigenous communities and our partners, to mitigate the devastating effects of climate change. Among our natural climate solutions is the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project (NKRCP), the world's largest soil carbon removal project.

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. Through a popular three-part cartoon series, our rangeland team is empowering the communities in this arid area to understand rangeland rehabilitation and act on mitigation strategies.

Competition for water is rife in many parts of Kenya 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 Program team is traversing the NRT landscape, surmounting terrain challenges to lay down infrastructure that grants tens of thousands of households access to safe, clean water.



**70%**

of rangelands degraded in northern Kenya due to overgrazing, unplanned settlement, and climate change.



**4.7 million acres**

anticipated to be restored through the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project.

A decline in water and pasture for livestock, thanks to climate change, triggers natural resource-based conflict among pastoralists in northern Kenya. Our peace team undertakes peacebuilding and conflict-resolution missions to avert violent clashes, and conducted over 70 peace interventions across five counties in the first half of this year.

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, we are reversing this trend by installing biogas digesters in NRT member conservancy homesteads, making cooking easier, improving community health, and boosting the conservation of forests, which reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The ocean is the largest carbon sink in the world. The more fish and marine life there are in the sea, the more carbon is sequestered, locking it away. At the Coast, our Marine Program is focused on preserving marine life, increasing the ocean's efficacy as a carbon sink and improving the lives of communities whose livelihoods depend on the marine ecosystem and fisheries. The Program's efforts concentrate on mangrove and coral reef restoration, collection of ocean plastic, 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 have voluntarily exchanged their nets for legal sustainable fishing gear through NRT Coast's Gear Exchange Program, preventing habitat damage, overexploitation of nearshore reefs, and the decline of fish populations, increasing carbon sequestration.

Our Livelihoods Program builds resilience by promoting livelihood diversification. The Program has seen 782 youth and women gain vocational skills and self-employment through NRT Trading's Ujuzi Manyattani Program, 300 pastoralist herders undergo Ufugaji Bora Mashinani Program training, increasing their livestock production capacity, 1,200 women earn an income through BeadWORKS, a handicraft business, and 2,767 youth and women engaged in entrepreneurship through our Biashara Mashinani Program.

To improve lives and drive nature-positive development across the NRT landscape, we have disbursed over Ksh 520 million to NRT member conservancies for community development through our Conservancy Livelihoods Fund, implemented over 180 projects since 2015, financed nearly 4,000 enterprises to empower youth and women, and provided bursaries to 19,748 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 endangered species, including the hirola, the world's rarest antelope. This facilitates low-impact tourism, a vital conservancy income stream that facilitates the communities' adaptation to climate change.

While we are doing all we can, with our partners' support, to address the climate crisis, much more is left to be done. As we fix our gaze on COP 28, the collective hope is that the global discourse that took place at the Africa Climate Summit will translate into meaningful change. Meanwhile, we will continue to harness our ingenuity to unlock the full range of solutions that enable our member community conservancies to grow and thrive despite climate change.

## Armed Conflict in Communities: How Women in Northern Kenya are Creating Pathways for Peace

Peace is a simple five-letter word. For Jenerika Aule from Nasuulu Community Conservancy in Isiolo County, peace means so much more.

The absence of peace is the reason her three children no longer have the hope of seeing their father walk in through the door after a long workday. They would do anything to have just one more conversation with him. Now, all that is left are fond memories of their father and closely held photographs.

On one fateful day, without an ounce of fear or hesitation, Jenerika's husband had selflessly volunteered to join a rescue mission after a cattle raid. In a tragic turn of events, he and a friend sustained gunshot wounds during the operation. Regrettably, Jenerika's husband succumbed to his injuries.

But there was no time to mourn. Grieving was a luxury Jenerika could not afford. She urgently needed to figure out how to single-handedly fend for her three young children without the help of her beloved husband and family breadwinner. Where would she begin?

Women, children, and youth are the most affected by conflict, which leaves them vulnerable in every respect. In northern Kenya, many women have weathered the same loss as Jenerika,

due to conflict, and are leading the way in peacebuilding in the region. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of September, more than 500 women from NRT member community conservancies, including Nakuprat-Gotu, Leparua, Nasuulu, Westgate, Ngilai, and Meibae, gathered at Nanapisho Community Conservancy in Isiolo County for NRT's annual Inter-conservancy Women for Peace Forum.



“The devastating experiences that some of these women have had drive 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 the morans,” Qureshi Bille, Chairperson of NRT East’s regional Women Peace Council, explained.

The Assistant County Commissioner for Isiolo County, James Macharia, attended the Forum and assured the women of continued collaboration, urging them to engage morans—their sons—as they are more inclined to listen to their mothers.

Speaking at the Forum, which was supported by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (IADC), Josephine Ekiru, our Peace Coordinator, reported 725 women have been engaged in peacebuilding this year. Conflict incidents have declined, thanks to their efforts and those of peace ambassadors, and 17 planned attacks have been averted.

Peacebuilding is a journey of a thousand miles and every milestone achieved in any part of the NRT landscape is a cause for celebration.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of September, NRT and partners congregated in Baragoi Town in Samburu County, to commemorate International Peace Day and a year of peaceful coexistence between Baragoi’s Turkana and Samburu communities.

At NRT Coast, Lower Tana Delta Community Conservancy marked Peace Day with a colourful ceremony at Chamanamuma Village and celebrated a decade of peaceful coexistence among the Conservancy’s communities. Regional partners attended the event which was presided over by the area’s Member of Parliament, Hon. Ali Hashako, who lauded NRT for fostering peace and transforming the lives of communities in the region.

Supported by partners including USAID’s People to People Reconciliation Program, the European Union-funded Kenya Rangelands Ecosystem Services Productivity (RangER) Program, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency’s SIDA-IMARA Project, and the French Development Agency (AFD), we continue to make every effort to contribute to national peacebuilding efforts.

**725**

women engaged in peacebuilding this year.

**17**

planned attacks averted thanks to their actions.



## Biashara Mashinani: One Teacher's Journey from the Classroom to Successful Entrepreneur

When curtains closed on 2019 on New Year's Eve, and spectacular fireworks filled the skies with bursts of colour, few on the planet realized they had just bid business as usual goodbye. Fewer still knew that as the clock struck midnight, the world would be ushering in a character-defining year, and a terrifying virus that would upend life as the human species had come to know it.

Farhiya Choya, 42, from Karare in Songa Community Conservancy in Marsabit County, found herself in a predicament many across the globe faced in 2020. Being a widow with two children, monthly salary delays had left her in a bind. As her unpaid bills mounted, depending solely on income from her job became untenable.

She was employed as an Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) teacher at Karare Primary School, but pandemic-related school closures had disrupted learning.

Confined to her home, like many across the world, she experienced varying degrees of cabin fever. What she found more distressing, however, was the uncertainty of not knowing when her next paycheck would arrive.

Necessity became the mother of invention for Farhiya, and the daily struggle to survive fathered her evolution. She elected to convert the one resource she had in abundance—free time—into income.

With the Ksh 15,000 she had in savings, Farhiya rented a retail shop at Karare Market Center, and stocked it with fast-moving groceries, to generate additional income to support herself and her two children.



In 2021, she discovered NRT Trading's Biashara Mashinani Program through the Conservancy's management, and attended the Program's intensive three-day training, gaining skills in entrepreneurship, finance management, and business planning. These she applied while running her retail shop, whose profits grew gradually, enabling her to save a little each month.

Farhiya became inspired to open a savings account with the Northern Rangelands Savings and Credit Cooperative (NR Sacco), an independent, community-owned, and membership-driven organisation, which receives oversight, technical support, and training from NRT Trading. The Sacco partners with NRT member community conservancies to provide access to bespoke financial services, including savings facilities, affordable loans, business coaching, and investment opportunities.

After consistently saving with NR Sacco, Farhiya became eligible for her first loan of Ksh 25,000, whose issuance was approved at a critical time when a biting drought had decimated the livestock herds of northern Kenya's communities, adversely impacting their main source of livelihood.

"Using the loan, I stocked my shop with various foods and cereals," Farhiya explains as she cheerfully attends to a customer at her shop, whose revenue sustains her family. Income from her business ranges between Ksh 500 on bad days and Ksh 3,000 on good days.

Farhiya plans to use future NR Sacco loans to expand her business. She is one of 3,594 women who have benefited from the Sacco, which has disbursed over Ksh 186 million in loans to its members over the last six years.

Farhiya has retained her teaching job. When school is on, her cousin manages the shop. After classes end, Farhiya takes over.

Purposely designed to operate at the grassroots level and uplift the indigenous communities we serve, Biashara Mashinani and NR Sacco continue to empower thousands like Farhiya, enabling them to diversify their sources of income and increase their resilience.



**3,594**

number of women who have benefitted from the NR Sacco.

**Ksh 186 million**

disbursed in loans to NR Sacco members over the last six years.



## High-Level **Royal Danish Embassy** Delegation Visits NRT

It was an honour to host the Danish Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy, Dan Jørgensen, when he visited Nasuulu and Ngare Ndare Community Conservancies in Isiolo and Meru Counties respectively, to learn more about the projects funded by the Danish Government and how they are increasing communities' resilience to climate change.

The Minister, who was accompanied by Denmark's Ambassador to Kenya, Amb. Stephan Schönemann, his immediate predecessor Ole Thonke, and other officials from the Royal Danish Embassy sought to gain a deeper understanding of our community conservancy model, and the impact of the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project.

In Nasuulu, the Minister also launched a water supply project that is supported by the Danish Government. The project provides water to Nasuulu's tourism banda (a self-catering accommodation facility) and the Conservancy's headquarters.



## **Supporting Africa's Rangers:** NRT Undertakes the 2023 Wildlife Ranger Challenge

Rangers in our member community conservancies selflessly safeguard the endangered species that roam the vast NRT landscape from the numerous threats they face, particularly poaching. Beyond their 24-7 role as wildlife protectors, they wear many different hats.

These valiant men and women are teachers, peace builders, researchers, conservationists, leaders and so much more! No matter what role they play, they are dedicated to making the world a better place for wildlife and indigenous communities, and this commitment drives every action they take.



On the 16<sup>th</sup> of September, four of our rangers joined more than 100 teams of rangers across Africa in gearing up for the fourth Wildlife Ranger Challenge half-marathon, an annual initiative coordinated by Tusk and the Game Rangers Association of Africa to raise much-needed funds for rangers' front-line conservation work.

During the race, our rangers ran a 21-kilometer circuit in Lewa Community Conservancy while carrying a 22-kilogram weight each, clocking a time of 02:48:53. They did us proud by not only taking part in the 2023 Wildlife Ranger Challenge, but also pushing past their limits throughout this endurance test that only the brave dare to attempt.

## Promoting Good Governance across the NRT Landscape: NRT Board Members and the Council of Elders Convene

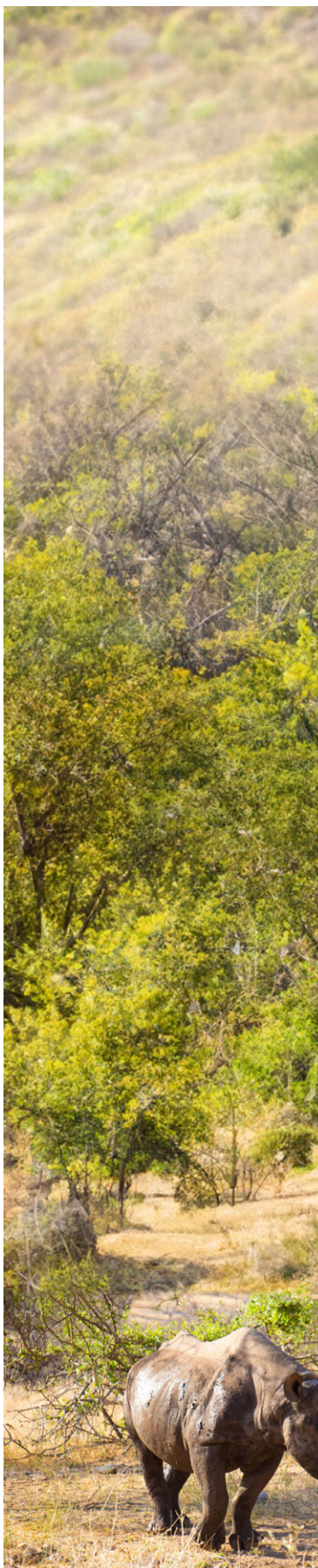
NRT's Board members visited Lekurruki, Westgate, and Kalama Community Conservancies, where they engaged with the community, received project status updates, and launched several development projects focussing on water, education, and livelihood improvement.

In line with our mission to improve conservancy-level governance, the chairpersons of all 43 NRT member community conservancies in Kenya and Uganda also convened for the second bi-annual Council of Elders (CoEs) forum of the year, shared conservancy updates, and progress made since the last meeting, earlier this year.

Our esteemed partners USAID Kenya, the European Union in Kenya, the Kenya Wildlife Service and Kenya Forest Service, county commissioners, members of county assemblies, and other government officials from the ten counties we operate in also attended the CoEs forum.

The Council of Elders is NRT's highest decision-making body.





## NRT Celebrates **World Rhino Day**



Being a black rhino in the wild today is dangerous business. It means constantly having a target on your back. One wrong move could make you another statistic.

This notwithstanding, there is a glimmer of hope for this majestic species as conservationists across the globe have ramped up efforts to protect them.

Among those giving black rhinos a fighting chance in this battle for survival is Sera Community Conservancy. Its members run Sera Rhino Sanctuary, the first community-owned black rhino sanctuary in East Africa.

Supported in its conservation efforts by partners including Fauna & Flora, St. Louis Zoo, Save the Rhino, San Diego Wildlife Alliance, and Tusk Trust, the Sanctuary is home to 22 black rhinos.

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September, Sera Community Conservancy, in collaboration with NRT, the KWS, the Samburu County Government of Samburu, and other partners, joined the world in commemorating World Rhino Day and celebrating the milestones achieved in conserving rhinos.

In July, Sera made history again by becoming the first community conservancy in Kenya to conduct a black rhino ear notching and transmitter fitting exercise, further enhancing the protection and conservation of rhinos.

There have been zero poaching incidences at Sera Rhino Sanctuary since its establishment in 2015.

## Engaging Community Voices: The NKRCPC Holds Awareness-raising Session for Four Counties

The conservancy managers and chairpersons of all 14 community conservancies involved in the Northern Kenya Rangelands Carbon Project (NKRCPC) convened in Isiolo Town in September for a pre-briefing session ahead of the upcoming Joint Conservancy Board Meeting.

The session increased community members' and key stakeholders' understanding and awareness of the NKRCPC in Marsabit, Isiolo, Laikipia, and Samburu Counties.



### Newsbytes from Across the NRT Landscape

#### REGIONAL UPDATES

##### **NRT Coast**

The Region launched a training and online mentoring program aimed at teaching community members of Kiunga and Pate Conservancies best practices for restoring coral reefs and increasing their resilience, in collaboration with partners including The Nature Conservancy, Fauna & Flora, the Darwin Initiative, REEFolution, the Kenya Marine and Fisheries Research Institute, Kenya Wildlife Service, Wildlife Research and Training Institute, Coast Development Authority, and the Lamu County Government.

##### **NRT Mountain**

Staff from all NRT member community conservancies in the region participated in a joint team-building event that strengthened their working relationships and enhanced their communication and problem-solving skills.

##### **NRT Centre**

The NRT Centre team and other peace actors in the region attended a training on the application of the 'Do No Harm' approach in conflict management in Baragoi, Samburu County. The approach, which is currently

integrated into Samburu County's peace-building efforts, enabled participants to understand and minimize unintended negative consequences of peace interventions on ongoing conflict.

##### **NRT East**

Jaldesa, Shurr, Melako, and Songa Community Conservancies participated in the 2023 Marsabit County Trade Fair, whose theme was 'Unlocking Investment Opportunities in Marsabit County through Value Addition for Food and Nutrition Security.'

At this inaugural Fair organized by the County Government, the Marsabit County Deputy Governor, H.E. Solomon Gubo, visited NRT's booth and learnt about NRT's programs and how they are building economic resilience.

##### **NRT West**

All the community conservancies in the region held second-quarter financial and board meetings ahead of the annual general meetings and conservancy board elections scheduled for October and November this year.

CONSERVANCY UPDATES



**Kiunga:** A beach cleanup was conducted on the 16<sup>th</sup> of September under the Bahari Moja Project to commemorate International Coastal Cleanup Day. Participants in the exercise—which raised community awareness of the dangers of marine litter—included local schools’ environmental clubs, youth, women, fishery representatives, and beach management unit officials.



**Westgate:** The Conservancy hosted a delegation of 11 Turkana County Government officials who were in Samburu County on a learning trip. The officials gained valuable insights on the NRT community conservancy model during the visit.



**Kalepo:** NRT’s Education team conducted a mentorship session for pupils in Oromodei Primary School, one of the 23 schools involved in a mentorship program implemented in partnership with Conservation International. Thanks to the program, the School has had zero drop-outs due to teenage pregnancies over the last two years.



**Ngilai:** The Conservancy, in collaboration with NRT and Legado, convened a priority-setting meeting to facilitate the development of Ngilai’s Conservancy Management and Development Plan. During the meeting, the community unanimously agreed to make rangeland rehabilitation, water infrastructure improvement, and education the Conservancy’s top development priorities for the next five years.



**Nkoteiya:** 30 women successfully underwent a two-day training on rangelands management and leadership. The area Member for County Assembly, David Lekushula, and local national government administrative officers were also present.



**Melako:** The newly established grazing committee held its inaugural meeting, where members outlined their roles and responsibilities and discussed rangeland management programs.



**Jaldesa:** The Conservancy’s Board members met and extensively discussed conservancy operations, ongoing challenges, program plans, partnerships, and community engagement. Key stakeholders, including the County Ward Administration, local chiefs, and representatives from the KWS attended the meeting.



**Oldonyiro:** 60 grazing committee members from each of the four units that make up Oldonyiro Conservancy (Naapu, Nanapisho, Nanapa, and Narupa) underwent a three-day training aimed at increasing grazing plan compliance and coordination among the four units.



**Narupa:** A peace meeting was held at Longopito to address the long-standing conflict and insecurity experienced in the region. Morans, elders, peace committees, and national government administrative officers from Oldonyiro, Westgate, Meibae, Nkoteiya, and Naibunga Lower Community Conservancies attended the meeting, which was supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).



## Video of the Month

Rangers are Africa's unsung heroes. Every day, as they protect wildlife against unrelenting poachers, they put their lives on the line, and plenty of resources are required to keep them safe.

The just concluded 2023 Wildlife Ranger Challenge, organized by Tusk, was a race with one goal: generate funds for the critical front-line work these guardians of wildlife perform. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who took the time to support our rangers during the Challenge.

To learn how our rangers are working with indigenous communities in our member conservancies to safeguard endangered species, watch [this video](#).





## In the Media



### NTV Kenya

[Kenya ilijumuika na dunia kuadhimisha Siku ya Kifaruru Duniani](#)

[No rhino poaching reported in 2023](#)



### Citizen TV

[Jamii zilizokuwa zikizozana Isiolo na Samburu zashirikiana kwa mavuno ya amani](#)



### KTN News

[Wanawake wafugaji waendeleza wito wa amani](#)

[Mikakati ya sera na ufadhili](#)



### KBC TV

[Jamii ya wafugaji katika hifadhi ya wanyama pori ya Nasuulu katika kaunti ya Isiolo kupata maji](#)

[Isiolo Women Peace Council engages in peace building in areas prone to attacks](#)

[Boosting Livestock Value Chain: NRT Livestock working with local communities](#)



### Look Up TV

[Wanawake Watajwa Kama Waathiriwa Wakuu Wa Vita Vya Kijamii](#)

[Isiolo Community Benefits From Water Supply Project](#)



### Nomad Times

[NRT conducts Consultative Meeting for CLMCs, Conservancy board, Chairperson & the Community Leaders](#)



### IBSE Radio

[NRT Conducts consultative meeting for CLMCs, Conservancy board, chairpersons and the Community representatives in Isiolo](#)

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As we strive to catalyse progress in climate action, our efforts are bolstered by unwavering partners and donors who enable us to make quantum leaps in conservation. We owe them a debt of gratitude for unfailingly supporting us as we continue to increase the resilience of our member community conservancies.

# 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.

