

Chyulu Hills REDD+ Project
Impact Report

**Q1-Q2
2022**



**EVER
LAND**

CONSERVATION
INTERNATIONAL



Chyulu Hills

REDD+ Project

 Kenya

Developer: Conservation International
Standards: VCS, CCB

Key Partners: Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust, Big Life Foundation, David Sheldrick Trust, Kenya Forest Services, Kenya Wildlife Services, Indigenous Maasai

The Sustainable Menstrual Solutions pilot project is gaining steam as it expands across the Rombo Group ranch, creating interest from other communities across the project zone. Education continues to be supported through the awarding of hundreds of bursaries, distribution of school supplies and hiring of new teachers. As wildfires continue to risk the forest, community and wildlife in the project area, the partners continue to implement proactive mitigation approaches. The project is in the final step of the verification process; new VCUs will be ready for purchase soon.

The Chyulu Hills are a volcanic mountain range in south-eastern Kenya and are part of the greater Tsavo Conservation area (TCA) and form a critical wildlife corridor between Tsavo and Amboseli National Parks. The area is home both to Maasai pastoralists and Kamba agriculturalists who have utilized the land for decades. The cloud forest on top of the hills is a unique feature and the landscape provides important ecosystem services to the communities including water provision, carbon sequestration and storage, medicinal plants, cultural heritage, and biodiversity.



5.1

MILLION
tCO₂e emissions
avoided to date

*through the protection
of 410,000 ha of
diverse forest landscapes*

17

IUCN REDLIST SPECIES
under protection measures

*including Black rhinos, African
savanna elephants, African wild
dogs and Leopards*

70,000

local Maasai
community members

*receive a share of revenues; from
pastoralist tribes with various
groups or clans*

Highlight 1

Sustainable Menstrual Solutions expand across Rombo Group Ranch

Like many areas around the world, menstruation remains a taboo subject in the Maasai community. Access to sanitary products is limited and for most, unaffordable. Often, when girls have their period, they end up missing school, leaving them behind in their studies. A lack of sustainable and hygienic solutions can often lead to increased health issues.

In partnership with The Mabel Foundation, the CHRP has distributed sustainable sanitation kits ("Mabel kits") and provided training on topics including: menstrual management & hygiene, how to use the Mabel kit and teenage pregnancies to girls living in the project area. Last year, Mabel kits were distributed to 300 girls. Within the first 6 months of 2022, the CHRP has already distributed kits to more than 200 girls in 5 schools. Officials have selected an additional 10 schools to reach by the end of the year, with an aim of reaching a further 600-700 girls.



Sustainable Menstrual Solutions expand across Rombo Group Ranch



This pilot program has only been established in the Rombo area thus far; an area that is male-dominated with limited historic representation of women, where inequalities are pronounced as women are culturally and educationally marginalized. The fact that revenue has been distributed to support this growing program demonstrates an important evolution in the mindset of group ranch leaders, who are now prioritizing the well-being of women and girls within their communities.

The impacts of this outreach pilot project are currently being analyzed. Early results indicate that there has been a significant decrease in the number of days of school girls miss per month compared to baseline results (average 4 days / month). Based on this success, other areas within the project zone have already expressed interest in funding such programs in their local schools. The team plans to expand the program to the whole project area within the coming years.



Highlight 2

Bursary program expands in eastern communities



Access to education continues to be an important priority for the Group Ranches in 2022. Through the bursary and educational support program, CHRP has distributed nearly 900 bursaries in 2021, provided revision textbooks, distributed desks, improved infrastructure and employed new teachers. While the government covers educational fees for primary school children, this funding is limited for those who wish to attend secondary school (ages 12 -16) as this level of education is considered to be beyond the minimum requirements. As a result, transition rates from primary into secondary school are extremely low. From the age of 12 onward, many pastoral families prefer to take their children out of school to assist with livelihood income opportunities - e.g. herding - rather than pay for the additional school fees.

As part of the bursary selection process, the Project Office team and the Big Life Foundation (BLF) visit homesteads of the potential beneficiaries to verify economic status and check the performance progress of the students.

As students from less advantaged back-grounds (in terms of economics and education) are prioritized, these home visits are vital to ensure the bursaries are going to those in greatest need. A total of 10 homesteads were visited in the following villages this past quarter: Emukutan, Mbirikani centre, Nkoroshoni, OIngosua, Nasipa, Lemasusu, and Ilchalai. As a result, over 300 students were awarded bursaries from Mbirikani Group Ranch in Q1-Q2 2022.

Highlight 3

Fire risk, management and community outreach

The CHRP has prioritized proactive wildfire management for many years now to deal with the ever increasing threat of climate-induced fires in the project area and surrounding regions and enhance adaptation and resilience to climate change across the project area. While the semi-arid region has often experienced drought, anecdotal evidence suggests that drought has been increasing in frequency, duration and severity over the last decade - particularly since the 2008-2009 drought year which led to the loss of 90% of the pastoralist community's livestock - producing the ideal enabling conditions for sparking wildfires. While savanna burning occurs naturally within the ecosystem to enable increased carbon storage and nutrient cycling, the uncontrolled spread must be mitigated.



The project area consists of a small moist cloud forest surrounded by savanna grasslands and woodlands. Historically, fires have been contained within surrounding savannas, without enough ignition and intensity to expand into woodlands and moist forests. However, as fire risk continues to rise in the project zone, efforts are being focused on educating the community through outreach training and improving firefighting capability on-the-ground.

Fire risk, management and community outreach

The project team have engaged in discussions with the communities about a variety of topics, including:

- The impact of purposeful burning,
- The basic elements of fires (oxygen, fuel, heat) and different options of removing one element to extinguish a blaze,
- How uncontrolled fires can damage the environment, impacting the ecosystem during the rainy season,
- Laws and penalties associated with starting fires in national parks and protected areas.

Furthermore, the team has been visiting schools to teach children about fire risk and prevention measures, ensuring that the next generation is fire aware. By educating kids about these threats, these training sessions help develop critical thinking skills that enable them to understand the complexities of the region's ecological problems.

Rangers are continuing to receive training on basic fire response techniques and have been provided with new equipment for firefighting, including: water bowsers, portable water packs, fire beaters, vehicles and other field equipment. A member of the Nature Conservancy's Fire Ecology Program is currently visiting the project area to assess the current fire protocols and run a training session with the rangers.



Challenge

Verification delays continue

The CHRP has been in the process of verification since November 2020 when the monitoring report covering 2017 - 2020 was submitted to Verra for review. Unfortunately, Covid disrupted the process throughout 2021 as the verification bodies were unable to visit the project area until 2022, delaying the issuing of new credits. Despite these obstacles, the verification has been completed and is currently being reviewed by Verra. A response is expected within a few weeks, after which new Verified Carbon Units (VCUs) will be available for purchase. The results from the monitoring report indicate that a further 3 million VCUs will be allocated.



Lion (*Panthera leo*)

