

# Chyulu Hills REDD+ Project **Impact Report**

**Q3-Q4  
2021**



**EVER  
LAND**

CONSERVATION  
INTERNATIONAL



# Chyulu Hills REDD+ Project

📍 Kenya

EVER  
LAND

**Developer:** Conservation International

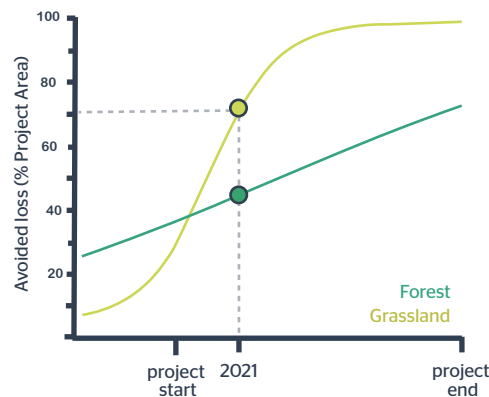
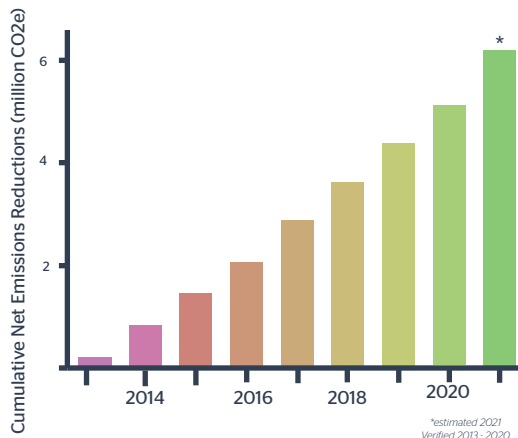
**Key Partners:** Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust, Big Life Foundation, David Sheldrick Trust, Kenya Forest Services, Kenya Wildlife Services, Indigenous Maasai

**Community Groups:** Mbirkani, Kuku A, Kuku, Rombo

**Standards:** VCS, CCB

## Half year summary

The Chyulu Hills REDD+ benefits have been shared across the community, allowing for the expansion of a beekeeping enterprise, the construction of a new ranger station, the distribution of hundreds of new bursaries and the establishment of a girl's healthcare education program. Whilst the project zone has been challenged by an increasing threat of forest fires, new partnerships with adjacent NGOs has resulted in an integrated fire management and response plan. The pandemic continues to limit community engagement and has resulted in an uptick in human-wildlife conflicts.



### IUCN Red List species protected



## About the Chyulu Hills REDD+ Project

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 utilised 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.

**5,108,924** tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions avoided to date





# Impact Highlights

## Fire management protocols expanded across Chyulu Hills

The Chyulu Hills REDD+ project and partner organisations (including Kenya Wildlife Service and Big Life Foundation) have joined forces to manage wildfires across the landscape by developing a cooperative fire management plan. The group works together to jointly monitor fires during the dry season using NASA's satellite fire alerts combined with regular ranger vehicle patrols. Significant investment has been allocated towards the training of over 300 fire rangers and purchase of fire equipment such as sand buckets, rakes, forked jembes, 2 new vehicles, Jerry cans for carrying water and fire flaps for beating the fires. More than 240km of fire breaks have been constructed along roads to mitigate against the spread of wildfires.

Incidents of fires are shared through a joint WhatsApp group, allowing rapid communication and firefighting support across the project area. Aerial observation and fire fighting capacity has also been organised, permitting the deployment of helicopter support in emergency situations.

Most of the fires occurring in the project zone are set by local community members for agricultural purposes or by illegal intruders (poachers, loggers) - thus, the Chyulu Team has run multiple outreach workshops focussed on fire training, environmental awareness, post-fire strategies and grazing management plans. Whilst most fires are human-induced, the increased prevalence of heat waves and drought has created the ideal conditions for fires to spark and spread widely at a rapid rate; underpinning the importance of the newly established landscape-wide fire management plan.



New vehicle armed with water tank and hose



Chyulu REDD+ project supported rangers undergoing fire preparedness training





## Hundreds of bursaries distributed to students during outreach meetings



During Q3-Q4 of 2021, a series of 16 community outreach meetings were held to discuss the progress of the REDD+ project and the importance of conserving forests in the region. The zones that the meetings were held in include: Emukutan, Inkoisuk, Mbirikani, Olingosua, Kalesirua, Inkoroshoni, Oltiasika, Olbili, Mbirikani, Ilchalai, Enkaji Naiborr and Osupuko. During these meetings key issues were discussed, including project employment opportunities, ensuring balance in regional participation and discussing ideas for benefit sharing activities. The meetings ensure transparency and provide an opportunity for community members to ask questions. The developers used this opportunity to distribute 329 bursaries, worth over 2 million KSH (\$17,500 USD), benefiting secondary and university students living in the project zone.

During these outreach discussions, it has become clear that the community members have a good understanding that conserving the forests and managing fires lead s to the success of the carbon project and ultimately the benefit of the community through initiatives like the bursary program.







## Beekeeping enterprise continues to grow



Beekeeping is a very important activity at the project as it offers a diversified livelihood opportunity in honey production, while also providing pollinators to enhance the yield of adjacent crop fields. Community members have noticed a strong correlation between the health of the ecosystem locally and the quality of harvest, providing more incentive to protect the surrounding forest.

Beekeeping can be undertaken by anyone in the community as it requires very little land, time and equipment; in the Chyulu Hills REDD+ project most of the beekeepers are women. The enterprise is very profitable for the local community; one single harvest from a hive having the potential to pay 1-year of tuition fees for a child.

The beekeeping enterprise has continued to develop across the project zone over the last two quarters, with 15 new beekeeping kits being delivered to 15 groups in Rombo last September. The project team organised a 2-day training session with all groups on the maintenance of the hives, and then spent a week at each group providing training on how to undertake their first honey harvest. Following this training, 100 new hives were also delivered to the Rombo ranch for the next harvest cycle.

The development of a solar-powered processing plant has proceeded slower than expected over the last year as a result of the pandemic. However, it is expected that the quality of honey will be exceptional once the plant has been completed. When the supply has consistent quality and volume, there will be an opportunity to expand the beekeeping enterprise to the national market by entering a supply chain covering some of the major supermarkets in Nairobi.







## Sustainable female healthcare kits distributed during educational workshop

65% of school age girls in Kenya cannot afford sanitary pads and therefore must use homemade alternatives such as rags, tissue paper and other unsanitary means. Limited access to menstrual information and sanitary products has resulted in many girls having to miss school, negatively impacting their performance and lowering their self-esteem. The Rombo group proposed that some of the project funds be channelled towards girls' healthcare by providing educational seminars and sustainable sanitary towels.

In partnership with the Mabel Foundation, the project has provided training on menstruation management, feminine hygiene and teenage pregnancies to 300 girls across 5 schools. The participating girls were also provided with a Mabel healthcare kit which included locally-sourced, sustainable menstrual supplies lasting them for 2-3 years. The Mabel Kit supplies were chosen following a pilot test phase; those items selected were cost effective and well received by the test group of women, allowing the activity to target more girls in the community without sacrificing the sustainability or effectiveness and quality of the products. The partnership is continuing, with the target of reaching a further 200 girls in 3 more schools in Rombo in 2022.







# Challenges & Opportunities

## Community engagement challenges and human-wildlife conflicts continue as a result of the pandemic

The outbreak of the pandemic has continued to be a challenge in implementing some of the project activities, especially those that involve large gatherings or outreaches. To mitigate this challenge, project partners have been consistently communicating with the community the importance of ecosystem protection and the benefits that the community receives through conservation-driven programs. Everyone has transitioned to their “new normal” with teams finding ways to meet virtually, use social distancing and limit numbers for gatherings to ensure all initiatives continue to run smoothly despite the ever-changing pandemic control measures.

Community members continue to suffer from economic losses as a result of pandemic mitigation measures such as travel restrictions and closure of markets. This has increased the incentive for bushmeat poaching.

At the same time the project has had to reduce the activities of rangers. This has resulted in some losses of wildlife due to poaching and an increase in crop raiding by elephants. The capacity of the programme for compensating for livestock losses due to wildlife predators has also been reduced due to restrictions related to COVID guidelines. The project team is doing what they can through their ranger forces and teams on the ground to work with the communities to mitigate conflict impacts, however it will continue to be a challenge until the COVID restrictions are lifted.

