

THE ROMBO PROJECT

AMAZON

DONOR REPORT

REPORTING PERIOD:
FEBRUARY 2023 - JULY 2023

JUSTDIGGIT

INTRO

Dear Miriam Ben Jedida,

We are happy to share the next progress report of the Rombo Project for the period January – July 2023 with you. Here, you will find the latest updates from the field, our future plans for this restoration project, and of course the dedicated impact we've realised in this area thanks to the support of Amazon!

Our Treecovery program in Central Tanzania keeps on growing. We're currently rolling out the program to another 15 villages. Together with LEAD Foundation, our Tanzanian partner, we have trained over 200,000 farming households to bring back trees to their farm, which resulted in over 14 million trees being regenerated!

Our programs in other areas are growing as well. The water bunds in Arusha are showing a good response. The little rainwater they received was successfully retained and is now promoting the growth of grass! Similar interventions are being implemented in southern Kenya, in the South Rift and around Amboseli National Park. Both areas are heavily degraded but form a vital habitat for wildlife, whilst being of great importance to the communities that use these areas to graze their livestock. Together with our implementing partners, we have drafted a long-term vision for these areas, which will help to transform them into healthy ecosystems again.

We are thankful for the support of our partners, who enable us to do what we love: working together with local communities to give nature the boost it needs to restore itself and make the future look green again!



**This photo was taken in the Arusha area, not in the Rombo area

IMPACT OF THE ROMBO PROJECT

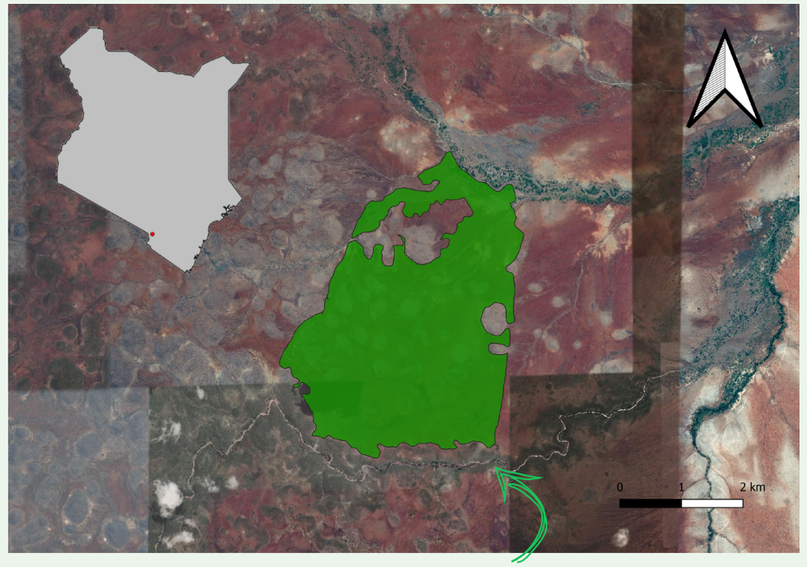


FIGURE 1: MAP OF ROMBO LOCATION IN SOUTHERN KENYA

The restoration project in Rombo Group Ranch in southern Kenya – where your donation has been used – has really started to pick up pace in the last six months. Together with our amazing partner, Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust (MWCT), and a dream team of diggers, rangers, fundis (artisans), and other members of the community we've managed to hit our target for the amount of land that is being regreened. We now have **972** hectares under restoration in Rombo. Within this project area, we've dug a total of **48,100** water bunds, out of which **14,400** bunds were constructed in January 2023!

There are already many people benefiting from this project, either directly or indirectly. A total of **116** people are directly benefiting from the project through temporary employment as diggers, artisans (fundis), or technical team members, of which **53** people are young people and **43** (37%) are women. The number of people that are indirectly benefitting from the project in the wider is four times higher, **464!**

Dedicated impact of Amazon
Of course, these great results so far wouldn't have been possible without the help of Amazon. Thanks to your support, we've been able to make a real positive impact on the living environment of many people and animals. We can't thank you enough for helping to regreen and cool down our planet!

This is the impact we've realised so far with your donation:

138 hectares under regreening
6,834 bunds dug
66 people positively impacted
7,333,086 litres of water retained

RECAP

Land degradation in the Chyulu Landscape occurs in a vicious cycle, as is often the case. Natural vegetation is gradually disappearing and is unable to regenerate due to overgrazing, unsustainable grazing management, and prolonged drought. High-quality perennial vegetation disappears, leaving only low-quality annual vegetation. During the dry season, these die off, leaving the landscape bare until the first rains arrive. Because of the lack of vegetation cover, the soil hardens and becomes less permeable, significantly reducing infiltration during the next rainy season. More runoff occurs, frequently resulting in massive erosion and further land degradation, leaving less rainwater in the soil and allowing for even less vegetation growth during the following growing season.

Together with our partner Maasai Wilderness Conservation Trust (MWCT) and local communities, we restore these degraded areas by implementing simple and easy-to-apply nature-based solutions, raising awareness, and promoting more sustainable land management practices. Water bunds are being dug in these degraded areas for soil and water conservation, which reduces surface runoff by holding the water during the rains. The planted grass seeds help bring back vegetation, making more natural pastures available for the livestock. Restoration projects such as this one in Rombo have brought hope to the people affected by the devastating drought.

The project started in the second half of 2022. Since the digging started, over 48,000 water bunds have been dug in an area covering about 972 hectares of bare rangeland. The water bunds help in promoting soil and water conservation, which helps bring back vegetation, making more natural pastures available to the community, and creating a microclimate that in the long-term will alleviate the prolonged droughts faced by the communities. One rain shower was received during this reporting period and follow-up rains were needed but did not occur. We are hoping for better rains towards the end of the year when the next rainy season is expected!





Figure 2 & 3: Rombo bunds and stone lines during bund digging in Jan 2023

PROJECT PROGRESS UPDATE

1. COMPLETION OF REMAINING BUNDS

The digging of bunds was successfully concluded in January 2023, resulting in the construction of a total of 14,400 bunds. This achievement not only met the project's initial target of 48,000 bunds but also exceeded it by an additional 100 bunds. Simultaneously, the process of seeding the bunds was carried out. Drone photos showed germination and growth of vegetation after one rain rainfall event. Throughout the rainy season from March to April 2023, the region only experienced one rainfall episode. Drought conditions have continued to be a significant challenge and a threat to the local communities situated within the project site. As a result, this situation has increased grazing pressure in the bund sites.



Figure 4: Grass sprouted and grew inside the bunds after April 2023 rains

2. RANGER PROTECTION

The Rombo bund site continues to generate direct income by providing employment to eight community members. These individuals have taken on the role of rangers, working closely with both the community and the grazing committee to ensure the safeguarding of the rehabilitated areas. A grazing committee is a committee consisting of 130 respected community members who are trained to teach their fellow pastoralists more about the importance of grazing management.

A single instance of rain shower was received at the bund sites, resulting in an increase in vegetation cover. However, this also led to heightened grazing pressure in the area. To address this, a well-coordinated effort has been underway, involving informal meetings between the herders and the rangers. To enhance protection and awareness, a ranger's post has been established within the bund site. As a result, the rangers conduct daily foot patrols, actively safeguarding and educating the herders and communities. This protective and informative presence will persist throughout the entirety of the project's duration.

PROJECT PROGRESS UPDATE



FIGURE 5: ROMBO RANGERS POST INSIDE THE BUND SITE

3. MONITORING

In the regions characterised by arid and semi-arid conditions, the extended rainy season spans from March to May. Yet, the degree and overall amount of rainfall can significantly vary across our diverse landscapes. Given this variability in precipitation during the months of March, April, and May in these regions, it is crucial to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the rainfall's impact within our designated project sites.

Our interventions, when combined with the distinct rainfall patterns, hold the potential to positively influence vegetation attributes such as cover and height, as well as facilitate the introduction of diverse grass and shrub species. However, external dynamics, such as the grazing pressure exerted by livestock, can influence the overall vegetation cover. For this reason, it's important that we gain a clear comprehension of grazing pressure levels across the landscape, particularly within our project sites.

By leveraging the data on vegetation cover gathered during on-site assessments and with the help of a consultant, we have formulated an effective grazing management tool. This tool will serve to clarify and regulate grazing pressure, involving sample testing within the laboratory to facilitate in-depth analysis and the subsequent development of a user-friendly grazing management tool.

PROJECT STATUS, SUSTAINABILITY AND BENEFITS

Following a single rain shower in April this year, the grasses that were planted within the bunds sprouted. Currently, the project has entered its maintenance phase, with rangers actively present on-site to oversee monitoring and protection of the area. To ensure effective management and utilization of grazing resources, a comprehensive grazing tool will be used. This tool will play a pivotal role in promoting sustainable grazing practices. In the upcoming weeks, we will organise training sessions for the grazing committee members to familarise them with the utilisation of the grazing tool.

The photographs below are taken on the Rombo bund site. The first one is captured in January prior to the rains, and the others in May after the rainfall. These images visually highlight the transformation and impact of the project's efforts!

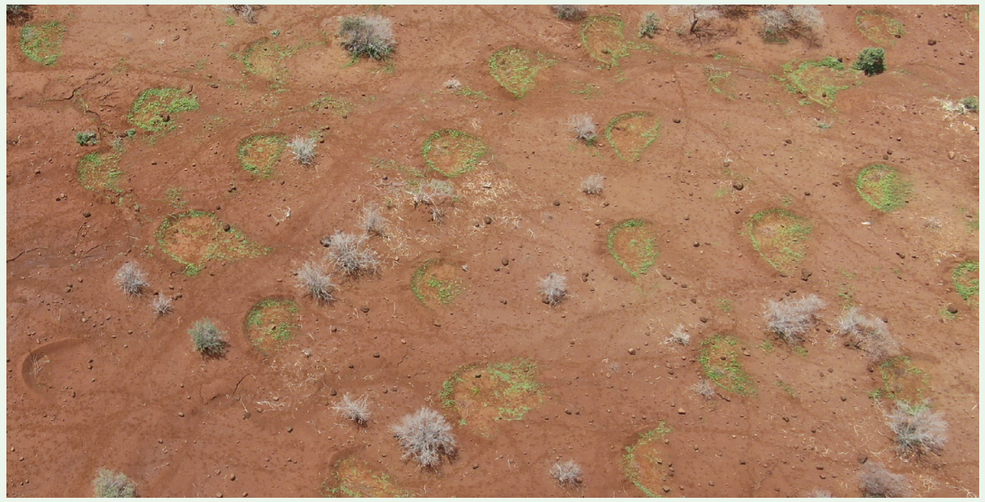


FIGURE 6: A BUND IN THE ROMBO BUND SITE IS VERY BARE BEFORE THE RAINS IN JANUARY DURING THE DRY SEASON



FIGURE 7: ROMBO BUNDS AFTER RAIN SHOWERS IN JUNE 2023

PROJECT STATUS, SUSTAINABILITY AND BENEFITS





FIGURES 8 & 9: ROMBO BUNDS DRONE PICTURES IN MAY 2023 AFTER JUST ONE RAIN SHOWER

DIGGER TESTIMONIAL

Neema Nekanisa, a 34-year-old woman, took part in Rombo bunds project phases 1&2.

"I saw the benefits of the bunds project because it came at a difficult time during the long drought and allowed me to buy food for my family." In addition, I have seen the benefits of conservation, particularly through restoration and conservancies."

NEXT STEPS

The following activities will take place in the next phase of the project:

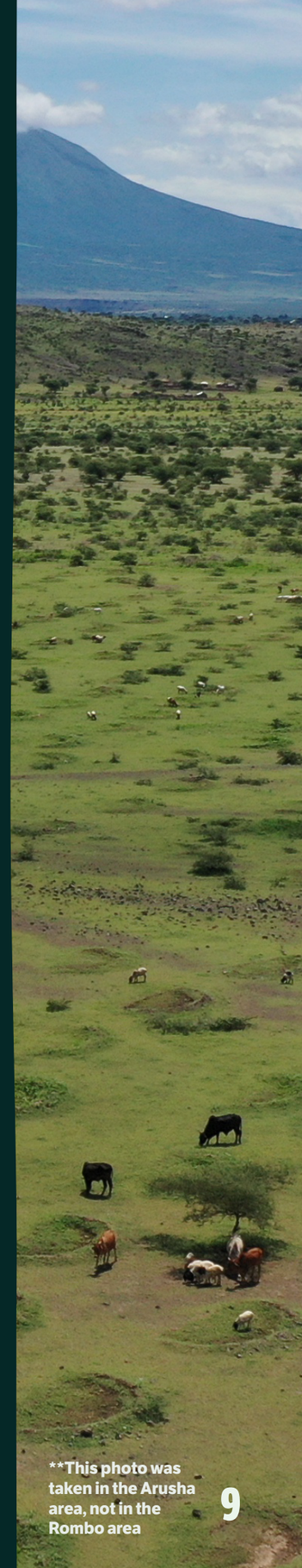
1. Grazing committee meetings
Meetings and capacity building for grazing committees are planned for the following quarter. These aim to increase the support from herders and ensure sustainable utilisation of the restored resources.

2. Community meetings (informal meetings between rangers & herders)
There will be a quarterly community gathering to raise awareness of restoration and inform the community of the project's progress.

3. Site visits
There will be scheduled site visits to evaluate the project's progress and meet with the site rangers to discuss issues, spot gaps and potential areas for improvement, and gather feedback from the community.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation
Monitoring and evaluation will be conducted by our Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) team and the MWCT team.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUOUS SUPPORT!



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