

Activity & Impact Report 2024



Founded: 14 March 2018



Mission

Friends of the Maasai enables community-led ecosystem and livelihood restoration in Maasailand. We do this by supporting organizations and projects via fundraising, communication and creating a network of experts that can contribute to a sustainable future for the Maasai and the savanna ecosystem they are part of.

Activities

This report summarizes the projects organized by Maasai communities and funded by the Friends of the Maasai Foundation in 2024.

Friends of the Maasai works closely together with two Maasai community based organizations (CBOs) in Kajiado (Kenya): Beyond Cultural Limits (BeCuL) in Tikoishi and Olmeguarra in Orpirikata. The collaboration is confirmed in a memorandum of understanding for a period of 10 years. The aim of this cooperation is to make the local Maasai communities self-sufficient and future proof in 2033.

Based on the ambitions and priorities formulated by the local communities, agriculture/food security, water and education are the focus points in this long term cooperation.

In 2024 8 community projects were supported by Friends of the Maasai with a total amount of nearly €17,000.



Maasai habitat in Kenya and Tanzania; location Tikoishi and Orpirikata

January: repairment water pump Orpirikata

Donation: €350

The water pump in the community of Orpirikata needed maintenance and repair.

January/February: training permaculture in Orpirikata and Tikoishi

Donation: €2,650

The CBOs of Orpirikata and Tikoishi requested support to increase skills and knowledge about permaculture (including beehives) to improve the results of their community and kitchen gardens. These gardens are a great success and an increasing number of people are interested in growing their own food.

The participants were taught about the prevention of diseases, how to prevent insects and other little animals eating or destroying the crop and how to fertilise on a natural basis.

In total approx. 80 people (40 in each village) participated in this training.





February: new water tank Tikoishi

Donation: €950

To improve and increase the water storage capacity in Tikoishi, in particular to irrigate the community garden, an additional water tank was acquired.

March: empowerment event SMALA

Donation: €750

The Strong Maasai Ladies Association (SMALA) is a community based organization dedicated to support and empower girls through mentorship and empowerment programs. Friends of the Maasai co-sponsored an event benefitting approx. 100 Maasai girls.

June: planting trees at schools in Tikoishi and Orpirikata

Donation: €3,300

The boards of the CBOs in Tikoishi and Orpirikata started a program to make the youth more aware of the environment, the role of trees and the benefits of growing trees. This is all part of the community plan to teach people to grow their own food, learn how to work in community and kitchen gardens and to improve food security and take care of the environment at the same time.

July: fencing community gardens Orpirikata and Tikoishi

Donation: €6,175

From the start of these gardens in 2022 problems with wild and domestic animals eating the crop were growing. The CBOs requested support to fence these gardens and to cover the crop with nets to keep the animals and birds away.



August: fieldtrip Friends of the Maasai in Kenya

Stefan Schuwer, board member of Friends of the Maasai accompanied by a new friend of the Maasai (Reinier Gerrits¹), visited Kenya in August 2024. Nelson Kirokkor of Nkoilale, an elder and local ambassador of Friends of the Maasai, accompanied them as driver/guide/advisor. During this trip they visited the communities of Orpirikata and Tikoishi, had a meeting with The Nomad Child Foundation, had a long meeting in Laikipia about starting new permaculture centres, visited Lekiji and Emarti test farm and visited Nkoilale Community Development Foundation.

Visiting the communities in Orpirikata and Tikoishia

The Friends of the Maasai Foundation and the CBOs Olmeguarra and BeCuL signed a memorandum of understanding to confirm Friends of the Maasai's commitment to support both communities for a period of 10 years focussing on 3 topics: agriculture/food security, water and education/empowerment.

In a meeting with the boards of the CBOs the following topics were discussed:

- improvement of the watersystem (solar panels for the waterpumps instead of fuel, water-ATM's, improved quality of the water);
- the mentorship program;
- making a 5- and 10-years plan for the communities.



¹Reinier Gerrits was appointed a member of the board of the Friends of the Maasai Foundation in April 2025.



The Nomad Child Foundation

On previous occasions Naserian Kirrokor, founder and director of The Nomad Child Foundation, was introduced to Friends of the Maasai. Her foundation provides training to Maasai communities in Narok to increase awareness of the challenges for Maasai girls and to develop the talents of young Maasai. During a meeting in Nairobi opportunities for collaboration were explored.

Visit Lekiji (county Laikipia) community

The representatives of Friends of the Maasai participated in a workshop where Maasai women learned how to make soap. This was combined with a visit to the Lekiji community with a good working community garden, set up with the help of Joseph Lentunyoi a few years ago. This community is a “melting pot” of many different indigenous people living peacefully together.



Meeting at Laikipia Permaculture Centre

At the Laikipia Permaculture Centre an extensive meeting was held with the leaders of the CBOs BeCuL and Olmeguarra (Faith and Purity), Nelson Kirrokor (director of Nkoilale Community Development Foundation) and Joseph Lentunyoi (director of the Laikipia Permaculture Centre). The objective of the meeting was to prepare the start of two new permaculture centres in the counties Kajiado (near Tikoishi and Orpirikata) and Narok (near Nkoilale), and a sub-centre near Laikipia. Friends of the Maasai is committed to help them develop these permaculture centres based on the experience of the already existing permaculture centre in Laikipia, founded by Joseph Lentunyoi.

Mara Elephant Project in Emarti (county Narok)

After a one-day drive through a beautiful but rough landscape the Emarti community was reached. A test-farm for growing plants and herbs, not eaten by animals such as elephants, was visited. This is an innovative way of growing and selling plants while at the same time avoiding problems with wild animals.

Nkoilale (county Narok)

At the end of the trip the Nkoilale Community Development Foundation was visited. Our ambassador Nelson Kirrokor is director of this CBO. He demonstrated the water system with the water ATM that was built 10 years ago. This is a good example for the water system that the communities in Tikoishi and Orpirikata are aiming for.

We also visited the Women Craft Centre, where women of Nkoilale sell jewellery and accessories they make from beads, wood, etc.



August: mentorship program in Orpirikata and Tikoishi

Donation: €2,800

As next step in the ongoing mentorship program a 2-days training for young girls and boys and their parents in both Orpirikata and Tikoishi was organised.

Mentorship programs will help young Maasai people while they go through life transitions, dealing with stressful changes in individual life, home situation, adolescence and peer pressure.

The main purpose of this program was to help the young Maasai explore ideas about their career and to shape their future. Additionally the mentorship program will help the youth to recognize certain negative practices of the Maasai culture and its impacts on their lives (e.g. FGM, early child marriages and drug and substance abuse).

In total about 250 Maasai girls and boys with their parents joined this training.

October: field trip boards BeCuL/Olmeguarra to Nkoilale

Donation: €1,500

The boards of the CBOs BeCuL and Olmeguarra visited the NCDF (Nkoilale Community Development Foundation) to see how the water system is built and how it is managed so they can use this experience for their own water project. Subjects that have been discussed are financial, technical and managerial aspects, the community's role in sustaining and maintaining the water project, collaboration with local authorities and other stakeholders and the impact of the water project in terms of access to clean water, health improvements and agricultural productivity.





Finance

In 2024 nearly €17,000 was granted to in total 8 projects of the local Maasai communities. From donors we received nearly €14,000. The remaining €3,000 was funded from the reserves of the foundation. At the end of 2024 the equity of the foundation was nearly €2,500 which is in line with our policy to maintain some reserves for running costs and unforeseen issues.

Main donors

Our projects could not have taken place without the following donors. We like to thank them for their generous support:

- Stichting Familiefonds Wierda-Baas;
- Stichting Ontwikkelingshulp D.A.S.;
- Takutan Management;
- Louis Bolk Instituut.

and all board and family members, friends and other supporters that contributed to our activities.

Impact

Measuring the impact of our activities is not very easy. Many projects are in their early stage and we are very much aware that many other factors have an influence on the results in the long run as well.

Nevertheless, we hear and see that the local communities are very satisfied with the results and improvements so far. It stimulates them to take new initiatives. And we see certain changes in food production and consumption which was originally nearly 100% based on meat and dairy. The gardens are doing well and people eat much more plant based food than they did before. This makes them less dependent on their livestock that is subject to growing threats created by climate change and severe droughts.

So our cooperation with the local communities leads to:

- Improved food security for 1,000+ local Maasai;
- Improved water security in two Maasai communities;
- Capacity building on many issues in two Maasai communities;
- New income from local sales;
- Empowerment of 1,000+ local Maasai.

In the long run this will make these communities much more self-sufficient and future proof.



Board

Willem Lageweg	Chairman
Stefan Schuwer	Secretary
Etienne Spierts	Treasurer
Reinier Gerrits	Member (since 22 April 2025)

Volunteers

Anoek Schuwer	Communication
Renske v. Santvoort	Communication
Willem Branten	Fundraising & stakeholder management
Jos Reinhoudt	Overall advise

Advisory board

Faith Supeet	Chairwoman of CBO BeCuL (Beyond Cultural Limits)
Purity Ntanin Meikan	Chairwoman of CBO Olmeguarra

Ambassadors

Karin Boomsma	Director Inclusive and Sustainable Business Kenya
Frans Makken	Former Ambassador of the Netherlands in Kenya
Nelson Ole Kirroko Foundation)	Director of NCDF (Nkoilale Community Development

Partners

