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Project Update April 2025

Monitoring and Preparations for Upcoming Restoration Activities

During the December-February period, we conducted a monitoring survey of the areas restored during our previous planting phase. The results were incredibly encouraging — after just one year, the growth of the trees has been remarkable. Many of the planted species have already attained impressive heights, a testament to the effectiveness of our site selection, species choice, and community involvement in nurturing the seedlings.

In preparation for our upcoming May–June 2025 planting season, we also carried out seedling potting activities at our nursery. This phase not only ensures we have sufficient planting material but also continues to strengthen our community-based approach to restoration.

A highlight of this period was the informal engagement with a group of local women who visited our site. These women, who are keen to be more involved in the project, had already begun experimenting with potting techniques on their own initiative, as seen in the figure 6. Recognizing their potential and enthusiasm, we pledged to work with them more closely and support their capacity building through structured training in nursery management and restoration practices. They are expected to play a critical role in the next phase of planting and monitoring.

In institutional developments, Ngong Hills has recently welcomed a new Forester. We have established a collaborative relationship with him, and he has been highly supportive of our work. He particularly praised the health and maturity of trees at our adopted site, which he has now begun using as a model site to demonstrate best practices in ecological restoration and community-based forest management. This recognition strengthens our role as a leading example of effective restoration within the region.

However, some challenges have emerged. The protective fence around our adopted site is beginning to deteriorate, even though it was intended to last for three years, we are currently in year two. We plan to carry out repairs to ensure continued protection of the site from grazing and other forms of disturbance.

Another notable development has been the theft of a few seedlings from our nursery. While this is a concern, it also signals growing interest from the community in tree planting, a clear indicator of positive behavioral change and ownership of restoration activities. We view this as a win-win

situation: the demand for seedlings shows that people are increasingly motivated to plant trees on their own land, thereby expanding the reach and impact of our work beyond the project sites.

1.0 Monitoring Progress at the Adopted Forest Restoration Site



Figure 1 A view of our restoration site showing tree seedlings planted in 2023. Most of the trees are thriving, demonstrating healthy growth and establishment. In the bottom-left photo, a seedling that self-rooted from a potting bag near the nursery is also showing vigorous growth, a positive indicator of species resilience and suitable site conditions.



Figure 2 Tree seedlings currently in our nursery, potted in preparation for the upcoming May–June restoration activities. The photos highlight both newly potted seedlings and the impressive growth of previously planted trees. In one image, Dr. Teresiah Mungai (5'3") stands beside trees planted in 2023 — now significantly taller than her — demonstrating the excellent growth rates and vitality of the restoration site within just one year.



Figure 3 This figure shows the healthy growth of most trees planted in 2023. While some seedlings experienced suppression by the invasive African bush daisy (*Tithonia diversifolia*), we carried out targeted interventions, including on-site slashing, weeding, and mulching to support their recovery and growth. Our goal is to ensure the trees establish strong root systems and gain enough height to eventually outcompete the invasive species by creating a canopy that limits its spread through shading.



Figure 4 An Acacia seedling, one of the native species planted during the 2023 restoration phase, seen here surrounded by the invasive African bush daisy (*Tithonia diversifolia*). Despite the competition, the Acacia is establishing well, and ongoing site management efforts — including weeding and mulching — are helping to ensure it continues to thrive and eventually outcompete the invasive vegetation.

2.0 Monitoring the Green School Model: Restoration Activities at the Upper Nalepo School (2023 Planting)





Figure 5 Monitoring at one of the school-based restoration sites in Uppah Nalepo, focused on an area just outside the school gate where planting was done. The school has since installed a protective barrier made from locally available materials to safeguard the planted area and clearly demarcate it. This site stands out for its exceptional care, thanks to the dedication of the students and the headmistress, who has shown a strong commitment to tree planting. In one of the photos, Mwangi Koitee, a community member who helps manage and maintain our nursery, stands next to a thriving seedling that now surpasses his height, located just outside the school's restoration zone.

3.0 Additional Activities



Figure 6 *Potted seedlings prepared by a group of local Maasai women at a site managed by a nearby church, located adjacent to our adopted forest restoration site. Their self-initiated efforts reflect a growing community interest in ecological restoration. We plan to support and strengthen their capacity through targeted training in nursery management and restoration techniques, integrating them into our upcoming*