

## Kipsaina Education and Environment Partnership (KEEP)

Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

For the year ending 30 November 2024

Charity number: 1175806

[www.keepkenya.org](http://www.keepkenya.org)

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### Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts

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## Reference and Administrative Information

- Charity Name: Kipsaina Education and Environment Partnership (KEEP)
- Legal Status: Charitable Incorporated Organisation
- Charity Number: 1175806 (Registered 20 November 2017)
- Principal Address:  
4 The Square  
Greta Bridge  
Barnard Castle  
County Durham DL12 9SD
- Trustees:
  - Sam Forsyth (SSF)
  - Rubel Quader (RKQ)
  - Mary Charrington (MC)
- Bank:  
HSBC  
1 Prospect Place  
Darlington, County Durham DL3 7LQ

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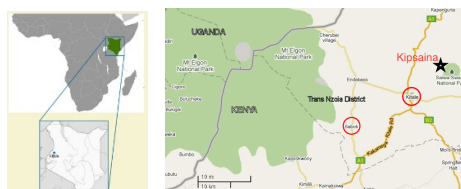
## Overview

KEEP exists to support long-term conservation and community development in and around Kipsaina, a small village at the headwaters of the Saiwa Swamp ecosystem in Western Kenya.

We continue to operate on a lean budget and aim to punch well above our weight, brokering international partnerships, supporting frontline delivery of education and environmental restoration, and using funds as effectively as possible.

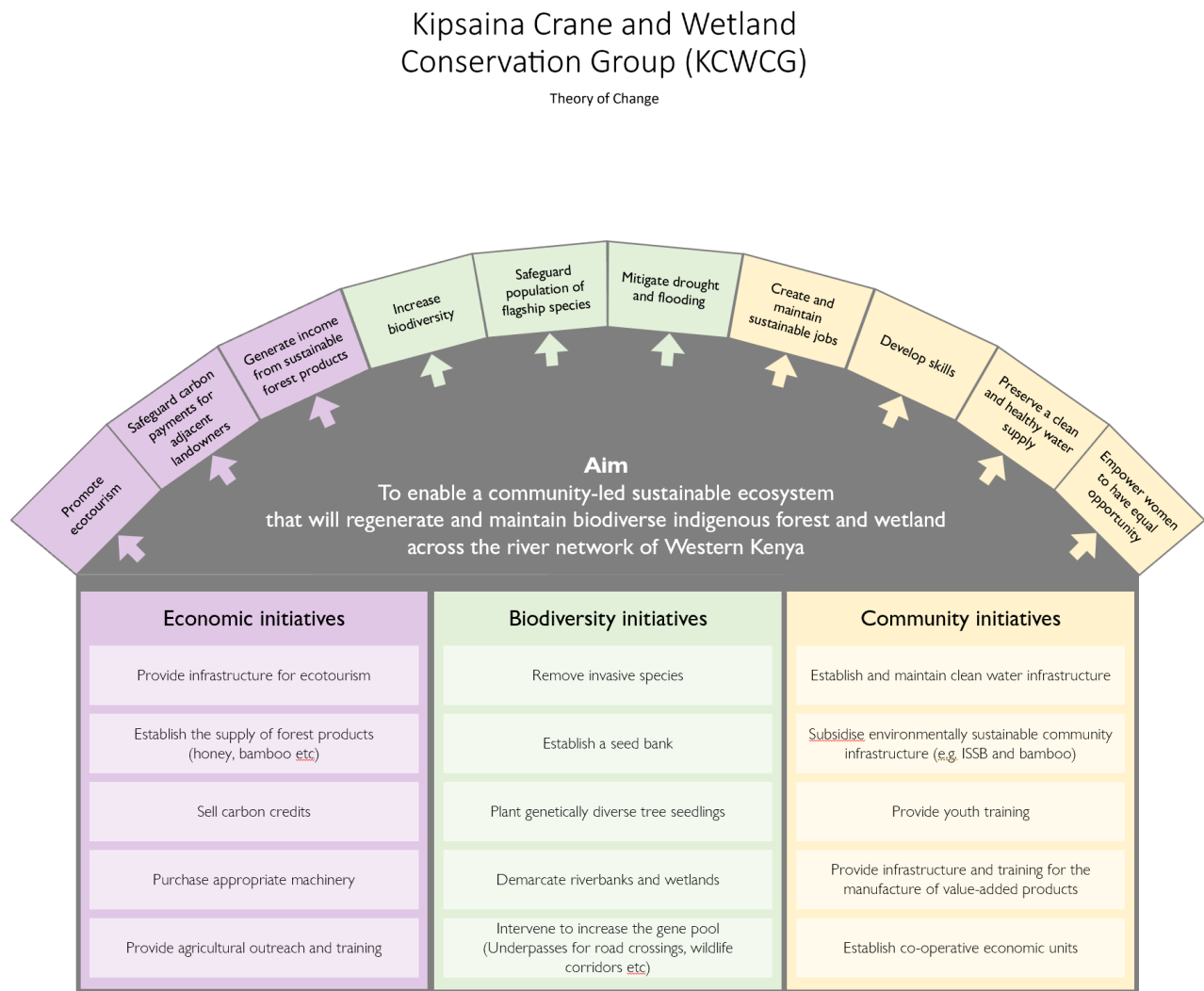
The 2023–2024 cycle was a pivotal year for KEEP's long-standing partnership with the Kipsaina Crane and Wetland Conservation Group (KCWCG) led by Maurice Wanjala Sitoko (MWS) in Western Kenya. This year saw the consolidation of our efforts to transition from traditional donor-based conservation to a long-term model focused on sustainable livelihoods, ecological restoration, and regenerative income generation. Our core work continued to focus on supporting environmental education, wetland and forest protection, and sustainable development in and around Kipsaina village, upstream of the Saiwa Swamp National Park. However, in response to both community needs and the climate crisis, a major priority throughout the year was the development of a community-led social enterprise model to embed environmental protection within community prosperity.

Our close collaboration with KCWCG allows us to maximise impact through decades of community trust and local knowledge. We are proud of our growing role as a connector between UK-based expertise, global fundraising, and Kenyan fieldwork.



## Framework for understanding KEEP and KCWCG's activities

In the last cycle, MC and SSF worked with MSW and UK collaborators to produce the following schematic explaining the drivers and outputs for KCWCG. As KEEP works to facilitate the work of KCWCG, this “Theory of Change” diagram gives a clear directive to understanding our shared aims.



Where we are	Our purpose	Where we want to be
An experienced community conservation CBO (est 1991) recognized internationally (Disney Conservation Hero 2021)	To equip and enable community-led regeneration and maintenance of a healthy, diverse ecosystem	A sustainable, biodiverse indigenous forest and wetland that spans the river network of Western Kenya to the benefit of its communities

### Drivers

1 Local economy	2 Biodiversity	3 Community development
Generate income from sustainable forest products	Mitigate drought and flooding	Preserve a clean and healthy water supply
Safeguard carbon payments for adjacent landowners	Safeguard population of flagship species	Develop skills
Promote ecotourism	Increase biodiversity	Create and maintain sustainable jobs, with women empowered by equal opportunity

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## **Trustees' Annual Report**

This report covers the 12-month period ending 30 November 2024 and highlights KEEP's growth in advocacy, education, infrastructure delivery, and support for the development of a community-led social enterprise.

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### **Governance**

The trustees meet regularly (twice in this cycle) to oversee strategic planning and fundraising priorities. Decision-making is informed by ongoing dialogue with our Kenyan partners and a growing network of international collaborators.

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## Fundraising and Donations

This year KEEP was proud to manage several successful donations and legacy gifts:



- £500 raised in memory of Nicholas Perkins. This was donated for the completion of two interlocking stabilised soil block (ISSB) guesthouses at the KCWCG Tree Nursery, providing accommodation for visiting students and eco-volunteers.
- £2035 raised by Barnard Castle School from leaving party for out-going headmaster Tony Jackson plus a non-uniform day. This was donated for ISSB rain-water harvesting tanks, specifically at St Christopher's Girls School.
- Ongoing donations through CAF Donate and from Barnard Castle School camping fees for Duke of Edinburgh expeditions at Greta Bridge (£250) have enabled further investment in tree nursery expansion, agroforestry outreach, and school clean water initiatives.

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## Achievements and Performance

### A. Education and Exchange

Barnard Castle School Industry Day 2024 – Partnership Impact Summary

In October 2024, Barnard Castle School hosted its 14th annual Industry Day, the second themed around sustainability and inspired by the school's 25-year partnership with KEEP.

Sixth-form students were challenged to develop sustainable product ideas and marketing strategies that would benefit water, wealth, and wildlife—aligning with KEEP's mission of wetland conservation and community development in Western Kenya.

The day opened with a video message from Maurice Wanjala, Director of KCWCG, and his daughter Sharon Neron who praised the school's role in supporting reforestation, school rebuilding, and agroforestry work in the Saiwa River catchment. He challenged the students to think big and design products that made a difference.

Y12 Students worked in teams, mentored by local business professionals, to pitch ideas ranging from mango butter cosmetics, tropical fruit juice healthy drinks, and sustainable haircare. The winning entry, "Maca Hair", proposed a shampoo made using locally sourced macadamia nuts—highlighting both environmental benefit and commercial viability.

This event strengthened the international educational partnership and gave UK students a chance to contribute entrepreneurial ideas to real-world conservation and development

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## B. Environmental and Infrastructure Projects



KCWCG Tree Nursery team with KEEP ISSB Water tank with logos of major donors Barnard Castle School and Teesdale Rotary Eco

### B. 1 Rain-water harvesting tanks

In February 2024, Barnard Castle School demonstrated its long-standing commitment to KEEP's community work through two significant fundraising events. A non-uniform day held by students and a collection made at the retirement celebration of former Deputy Head, Mr Tony Jackson, together raised £2,035, which was allocated directly to the construction of two ISSB rainwater harvesting tanks (to be completed in the next cycle). The first 20,000 litre tank will serve St Christopher's Girls Secondary School just outside Kipsaina, and a larger tank (80,000 litres) will serve a newly planted high-value avocado seedling nursery, providing clean water for irrigation and community use.



KCWCG Trainee Builder Team: Stephen, Fred, Dan, Francis and Lewis with tank foundation

### B. 2 Guest House Completion

The two ISSB guesthouses initiated in the previous cycle were completed at the KCWCG Tree Nursery, allowing the site to host eco-tourists, researchers, and school delegations. This was made possible through the generosity of the £500 collection made at former Mt Elgon resident, Nicholas Perkin's, funeral.



Guest Houses before Nicholas Perkins Donation



Finishing the gables



Guest Houses in relation to KEEP supported KCWCG HQ Community Building

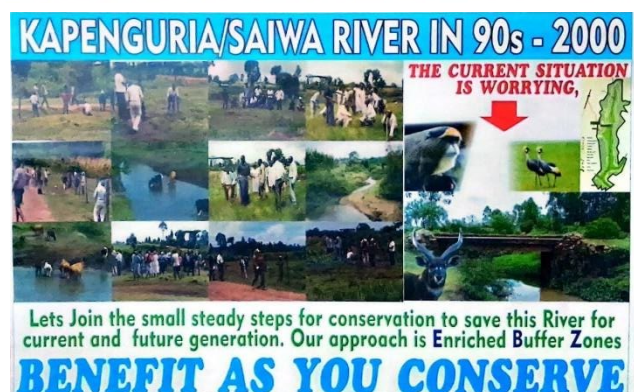
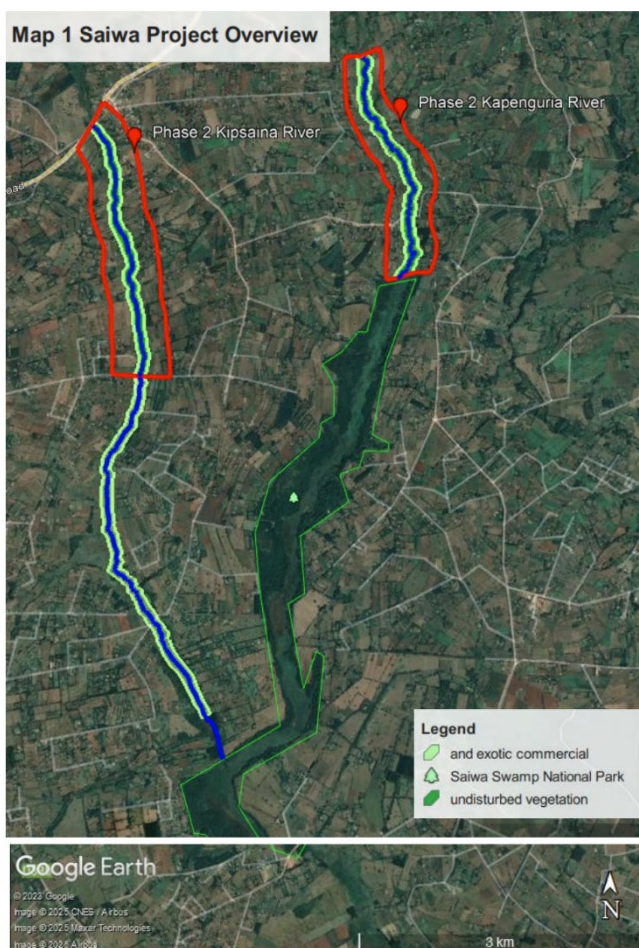


Completed Guest Houses



- Supported by KEEP, annual seedling production in the KCWCG nursery reached 1 million, including for agroforestry, fruit, and indigenous trees.
- Continued support was provided for the multi-purpose community vehicle (funded by KEEP in 2020), used for tree deliveries, eco-tours, and health support.

## C. Support for Sitatunga Riparian Corridor Restoration



KCWCG Flyer

- A major milestone in 2024 was the support KEEP provided to KCWCG in preparation for the Sitatunga Corridor Restoration Project, focused on reforesting 17 km of riparian buffer zones on the Kapenguria and Kipsaina Rivers.
- The initial aim focuses on a pilot totalling 5km on the two rivers upstream of Saiwa Swamp National Park.
- KEEP supported KCWCG to clarify landowner engagement approaches and align project methodology with Kenya's national 30-metre riparian buffer policy under National Environment Management Agency (NEMA) and Water Resources Authority (WRA).
- KEEP supported KCWCG to conduct initial stakeholder work with key local farmers and landowners along both the rivers. These key farmers were introduced to the concept of participation in the scheme in return for access to training, inputs (such as avocado trees, beehives, fruit trees, and goats), and participation in long-term conservation incentives.
- Farmers would be organised into around twenty co-operatives, each of twelve farmers,, with purchase of raw agricultural products and value addition to be carried out centrally by KipAgro (see below).
- This restoration is designed to protect biodiversity and flood control while enabling alternative livelihoods.



## D. Support for Social Enterprise Development

During 2023–24, KEEP continued to provide technical and partnership support to the emerging Kipsaina Agroforest (KipAgro) community social enterprise, developed in close collaboration with KCWCG.

KipAgro aims to unite smallholder farmers in organic agroforestry cooperatives and research and develop local value addition for sustainable products, including:

- Avocado and associated value added products
- Honey and wax-based goods
- Other plant oils such as croton seed oil
- Fruit products including custard apple, mango and tamarillo
- Dried flowers and decorative seed pods
- Medicinal barks and teas
- Bamboo packaging
- Biochar and compost-based fertiliser

In 2025, the enterprise will incorporate the product line of “Nzoia Forest Farms”, building on groundwork laid this year.

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## Institutional Partnerships & Research Engagement



*Heidi Varley of Pink's Flower Farm demonstrating potential decorative crops*

- KEEP facilitated new research connections, including conversations with Oxford University, Swansea University, Coventry University, and other academic partners around potential studies in invasive species, mycorrhizal fungi, and sustainable dried flower production.
- Following discussions with UK flower grower Heidi Varley (Pink's Flower Farm), we developed initial links with flower sustainability expert Prof David Bek (Coventry University) to explore dried flower and ornamental grass markets. Prof Bek's research and his Sustainable Flowers Project are helping frame this product line in ways that make it attractive to environmentally conscious buyers. KEEP anticipates that a carefully curated product list (seed pods, ornamental grasses, dried flowers) combined with a strong story of **community conservation, women's empowerment, and rewilding of wetlands and riverbanks** could make this a flagship export stream for the KipAgro value chain.

This partnership represents a key knowledge and market development link for KEEP's long-term aims of creating **climate-resilient livelihoods** for Western Kenya's riverine communities.





## Forward Look

KEEP's priorities for 2024–2025 include:

- Supporting the successful pilot phase of the Sitatunga Wildlife Corridor with financial support from Ecosia (securing a second, larger, contract after the successful completion of "Forest Block 3").
- Backing the full-scale launch of KipAgro with the product line "Nzoia Forest Farms", a values-led social enterprise driving reforestation and sustainable product development.
- Continuing collaboration with UK and Kenyan schools (revitalising the Rotary Digital Bridges project), universities and donors to support training, infrastructure and livelihoods.
- Exploring new markets for dried flowers and ornamental grasses, with expert input from floriculture specialists in the UK.
- Facilitating student research projects into biodiversity, agroecology, and carbon draw-down through new university partnerships.



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## Financial Review

KEEP continued to operate with no debts, fully documented fund transfers, and excellent value for donor funds. All projects delivered were within budget and aligned to our charitable objectives.

## Risk Management

Our risk register was reviewed and updated. All partners signed the safeguarding code of conduct. All data is managed in compliance with GDPR.

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## Declaration

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' Report above.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

Sam Forsyth  
Trustee

Dated: 18 November 2025

Mary Charrington  
Trustee

Dated: 18 November 2024

**KEEP**

**RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS**

**YEAR ENDED 30 NOVEMBER 2023**

		<b>2024</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>Unrestricted Funds</b>	<b>Restricted Funds</b>	<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>Total Funds</b>
			<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
<b>Receipts (Donations)</b>				
Barnard Castle School	2275		2275	<b>0</b>
Barnard Castle Rotary Club	0		0	<b>0</b>
Private Donations	654		654	<b>1,930</b>
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>2,929</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,929</b>	<b>1,930</b>
<b>Payments</b>				
Charitable activities - general	0		0	<b>350</b>
Charitable activities – ISSB	2514		2514	<b>1,500</b>
Bank charges	165		165	<b>34</b>
Administration	178		178	<b>254</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>2857</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2857</b>	<b>2,138</b>
<b>Net receipts / (payments)</b>			<b>72</b>	<b>-208</b>
Cash funds b/f			604	813
<b>Cash funds c/f</b>			<b>677</b>	<b>604</b>

Period from 01 December 2023 to 30 November 2024