

Inspiring Conservation and Creativity at Borana Conservancy

From immersive field trips to innovative upcycling projects, Mazingira Yetu (MY) – Swahili for ‘Our Environment’ – is nurturing the next generation of conservation leaders in Kenya. Established in 2022 within Borana Conservancy, MY uses creativity, education and collaboration to empower local communities as they embrace sustainable practices and connection to the natural environment.

Connecting Communities

Like many school visits around the world, trips to MY are often the first time children experience places beyond their own local areas. These captivating moments offer a unique chance for students to connect with nature and develop a practical understanding of the relationship between human activity and the environment.

Mazingira Yetu goes beyond school children, engaging adult groups through visits to Borana, promoting conservation principles and sustainable practices to all community members. Since it began, MY has reached 1,520 students and 265 adults from neighbouring areas. Both adults and children carry conservation messages back to their homes, and through these initiatives, MY aims to empower children and community members to become stewards of their surroundings.

As MY's outreach has expanded, so too have its facilities, enabling the programme to support an even broader range of community conservation activities.

Reimagined sustainability

Below: One of the classes at Mazingira Yetu, where a school group transformed plastic lids into unique pieces of art.

Starting as a small education centre with space for groups to learn, MY has grown significantly in the last year. Today, it has a six-room accommodation wing, ready to be a base for up to 12 volunteers, trainers, and field researchers supporting Borana's ongoing aims for community-focused conservation.

The centre itself is a testament to sustainability, designed and created using local, upcycled materials. Many local students participated in painting and planting workshops, revitalising discarded items into practical, eye-catching objects.

Sessions with tins, bottle tops and scrap materials offered children the chance to reimagine the value of waste, sparking their creativity whilst



encouraging a sense of environmental responsibility.

The programme's focus on upcycling gave pre-loved items a new purpose. From chandeliers reimagined from scrap metal to cosy denim furniture crafted from over 200 pairs of jeans, the MY Education Centre is a vibrant display of how sustainability can transform everyday objects into functional art.

Ultimately, engagement with MY helps secure the sustainable health of the Borana ecosystem for rhinos and other wildlife as well as local communities by fostering conservation understanding. MY promotes sustainable farming practises, water and soil improvement as well as human wildlife mitigation efforts. In just two years, Mazingira Yetu has evolved into a cornerstone of Borana's efforts. With more than 1,750 visitors to date, the programme is bringing more people closer to conservation. Looking ahead, MY plans to host short, intensive environmental management courses, establishing a new generation of conservation leaders ready to address pressing environmental challenges. With more people acting as champions for nature, the future of the Borana ecosystem, and the incredible species within it, will be brighter than ever.

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