

RETO OLKESEN WOMEN INAUGRAL REPORT



ANNUAL REPORT

MARCH 2022 - MARCH 2023



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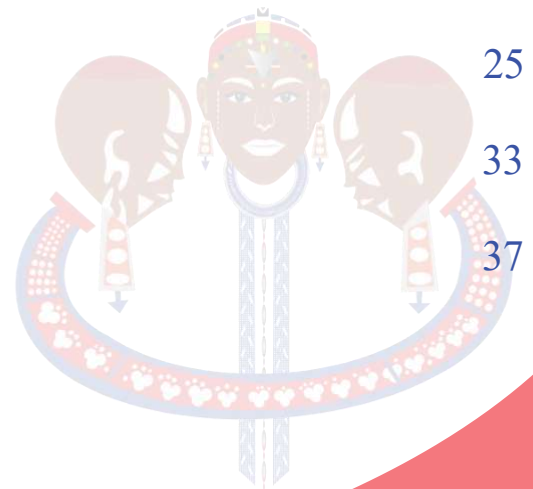
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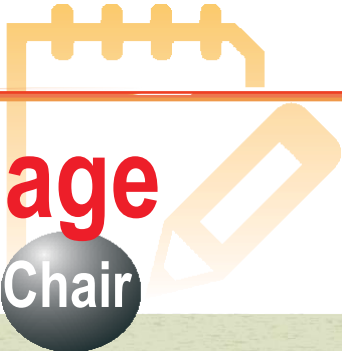
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ANNUAL REPORT

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Message from the Chair

"Reto o Reto olashe lenkiteng ai", our slogan, embodies a spirit of mutual help, 'lending a helping hand' through self sacrifice, friendship, sharing of experiences and building of partnerships. I am greatly humbled to be chairing RETO since 2018.

RETO/RWA has been in existence for over three decades and has accomplished a great deal in the field of women and girls' empowerment accomplished a great deal in the field of women and girls' empowerment with its greatest achievement being the fostering of unity among the Maa speaking people of Kenya and Tanzania through Cultural Festivals, a forum for appreciating and embracing the community's distinct cultural endowment. It is intended to develop this function further in the future, within the confines of our mandate, by undertaking activities to preserve and revitalise the Maa language through development of literary materials. RETO is in the process of rebranding (itself) to be known as Reto Olkesen Women Association (2024) for purposes of renewal and repositioning.

Tasks ahead of us include more involvement in the health sector, following on the heels of a successful cancer awareness, and non-communicable disease screening exercise supported by Stanbic Bank in partnership with Kajiado County Government. Other key partners were African Cancer Foundation, Women4Cancer, Beyond Zero, Aga Khan University Hospital populations through awareness creation campaigns in partnership with well-wishers and persons of goodwill.

The rebranded RWA will be professionally structured and rest on the tenets of transparency, accountability, continuity and friendships. The combined energy, professional skills and wealth of experience of each of the members, those still employed and those retired makes Reto a dynamic and formidable force and resource that will act as a vehicle bearing the potential to touch lives of the Maa people everywhere. May God help and guide us in all our endeavours for his honour and glory

BACKGROUND

Reto Women Association has been in existence since 1986 and was very active until the early 2010 when it experienced a period of dormancy after the demise of their chairlady, Rachel Seleiyen Ntoyai. (May she Rest in peace). However during her tenure Reto managed to register a radio station in Samburu present day Serian FM. The association remained dormant until November 2017 when the government shooting of 300 head of cattle in Laikipia made it imperative to resurrect the association to protest against this injustice to Maa herders in Laikipia. The members in partnership with like-minded people demonstrated on 22nd November 2017. Reto also send a memorandum to the Minister for Internal Security about the injustices being meted out to the herders of Laikipia. This memorandum is attached as an appendix at the end of the document. After reviving the association we decided to call ourselves NEW RETO distinct from the old one whose energy had dissipated, from then on a few members continued to hold ad hoc meetings to plan strategies to revive the association. By 2018, New Reto had taken shape and was ready to embark on the work ahead some of the issues which the association was concerned about were:-

- Environmental degradation by charcoal burning and sand harvesting,
- Selling of land
- Health and education of the community
- Empowerment of youth and women

Our Vision: A Socio-economically empowered Maa Community

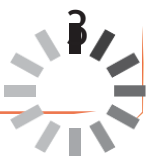
Our Mission: To elevate the community through advocacy, mentorship, awareness creation, partnerships, and enhance social accountability

Core Values	• Friendship • Accountability • Inclusivity • Integrity • Respect	Reto Activities	❖ Health Activities ❖ Social Welfare ❖ Education & Culture ❖ Land and Environment ❖ Resource Mobilization
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ACTIVITIES FROM 2018 TO MARCH 2023

In 2018, members of the association met the Kajiado Governor, HE Ole Lenku and discussed their concerns on the issues affecting land in Kajiado County. In this meeting, the governor assured the group that the county had come up with a land use plan for the county which would zone the land to avoid sub division of land in rural areas into small plots.

On 26/5/2018, Reto in its efforts to address environment issues, conducted a tree planting activity at Nkoile Primary School. The exercise involved both secondary and primary school students. Kefri supported the effort by providing 200 tree seedlings which were planted. In November of 2019, Reto planned and conducted a cultural activity named Enkipaata. The ceremony is one of the 3 ceremonies recognized by UNESCO. The others are Eunoto and Olngesher.. Enkipaata is a ceremony for boys before initiation. The theme was “Safeguarding Maa unity and continuity”.



In 2021, Reto held four meetings to discuss various issues such as yearly subscriptions and strategies to raise funds for its activities. Because of Covid 19 pandemic we could not plan other activities.



Reto team with community leaders plan for Enkipaata Ceremony

Some of the boys from keekonyokie location who took part in Enkipaata ceremony



A group from Namanga with their signature white ornaments

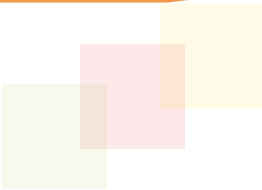
REPORT

FROM MARCH 2023 MARCH 2024

Meetings:

The association held 3 meetings in February, March, July, October and December, 2023 in which we discussed plans for the following activities:-

- 1). Cancer awareness meeting to be held at PCEA Kimuka Church on 14/5/2023.
- 2). A Non-Communicable Disease (NCD) screening activity scheduled for August and September in Loitoktok Isinya and Imbirikani. This activity was sponsored by Stanbic Bank (courtesy of Joan Ntoyai), In the 14th September meeting. The outcome of the visit to Meto was discussed in 2023, where the association had gone for a mentorship activity at Oldonyio Sampu Primary School.
- 3). The visit to Sajiloni and Loitoktok were scheduled for 10th November 2023 and 22nd March 2024, respectively.
- 4). New Registration for the association. After several discussions, members agreed to register Reto as Reto Olkesen Women Association and the application process was started on 19th October 2023. The application was successful and Reto Olkesen Women Association was officially registered on 7th August 2024.



HEALTH ACTIVITIES HELD IN THE YEAR **(March 2023-March 2024)**

The year from March 2023- March 2024, Reto held several activities related to health and social welfare as indicated below.

1.0 HEALTH ACTIVITIES

1) CANCER AWARENESS ACTIVITY AT KIMUKA PCEA CHURCH HELD ON 14TH MAY 2023.

1.1 Background.

Prof Violet Kimani and Dr Jane Wakahe met Rose Legis in Loitoktok and expressed a wish to sensitize Maa women on breast and cervical cancer. This was discussed by Reto at several meetings and in liaison with the doctors, it was agreed that 14th May be set as a date for the awareness to take place. The venue was PCEA Kimuka church. A member of Reto, Mary Lemanken mobilized the women to attend. A total of 41 Maa women attended the activity. Dr Wakahe, an Ob/Gyn Specialist gave a talk on breast and cervical cancer especially on prevention and early diagnosis and the importance of early care seeking. Translation was ably done by Jedidah Ntoyai. Reto is looking for funding to conduct a screening activity in this location in the future. It is estimated that this will cost at a minimum 100,000/=



Reto Team at Kimuka PCEA Church. In centre are Prof Violet Kimani (in blue) and DR Jane Wakahe in (red/white)



Women listen to Dr Wakahe and Jedidah Ntoyai

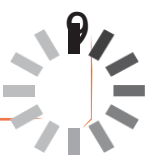


Dr Jane explains the anatomy of the reproductive system to the women

NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE (NCD) SCREENING AT KAJIADO COUNTY.

2.1. Background.

Stanbic Bank with partners as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) conducts NCD screening in counties. Joan Ntoyai requested the bank to consider doing this in Kajiado County. Reto, Stanbic, Kajiado County held discussions on the best areas to conduct this activity in order to reach as many Maa people as possible. It was decided this should be done at Loitokitok Sub county Hospital and Imbirikani Health Centre on 22nd and 23rd August 2023. Mobilization was done by Kajiado County through CHVs and also on radio and local FMs by Reto. In September this was done at Isinya Health Centre. Kudos to Kajiado Health team (Dr Jane Saoli, Sarah Naneu, health staff at the county, Loitokitok and Isinya). At Imbirikani, 359 clients were screened, 102 women for cervical and breast cancer, 47 men for prostate cancer, 121 people registered for NHIF. In Loitokitok, 246 people were screened, 175 women were screened for breast and cervical cancer, 3 women with breast lumps were referred for ultrasound. 1 woman was found to have a suspicious signs of cervical cancer and another treated at the clinic. 76 men screened for prostate with PSA and none was found to be suspicious. Reto would like to thank the following for the success of this exercise; Kajiado County Health Department, African Cancer Foundation. Women 4 Cancer. Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH), Beyond Zero,, National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) and the members of the public who turned up for the screening



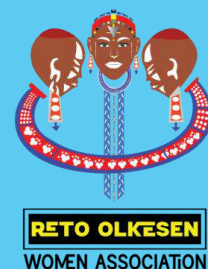
IMBIRIKANI SUB-COUNTY HOSPITAL



People waiting at Imbirikani Sub-County hospital



Screening team
with Grace
Tanyassis of
Reto (in red) at
Loitokitok SC
Hospital



Clients register at Isinya Health Center



ISINYA HEALTH CENTER



2

SOCIAL WELFARE ACTIVITIES

2.0 Background

As one of our core values of friendship, cultural care and assistance, we undertook to support members socially and financially. This is done through visiting families of members especially if they are unwell or elderly. In this regard, Reto made the following visits;-Priscilla Tiren who has been unwell. She was visited on 11/3/2023. The members took gifts both in cash and kind to support the family. Visit to Naomi Kipuri and her husband who has not been well. She was visited on 28th September. Members gave the family support in cash and kind. On 10th November, Reto visited the elderly mother of Santau, Eunice, Alice and Ruth at Sajiloni in Kajiado central. This family also received gifts in cash and kind. From March 22nd to March 25th, Reto visited the mothers of Rose Legis and Grace Tanyassis and also the family of Jedidah Ntoyai. These families are in Loitokitok. Reto members were hosted by the families and also they presented gifts to these families.

Reto members
visiting
Priscilla Tiren
(seated in a
red Dera dress)





Reto team at the home of Esther Lakati (mother of Santau, Eunice, Ruth and Alice)



Reto members with the mother of Grace Tanyassis (seated in pink scarf)



Reto members with the family of Paul and Jedidah Ntoyai (Paul seated with Jedidah in black)



Reto Members with the mother of Rose Legis (seated with a hat)



Mama Rose
still knits
these woollen
blankets at
93 years!



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EDUCATION AND CULTURE

3.0. Background

One of Reto's objectives is to support education in Maasailand. In this regard, we visited Oldonyo Sambu School in Meto, Kajiado county. Reto members supported this effort through contributions. Their contributions supported lunch, sports equipment for the school, stationery (exercise books, pencils, erasers and sharpeners for the pupils. The family of Priscilla Tiren supported the buying of sanitary pads for the girls through the alumni of Alliance Girls High School. The members also held a session to encourage girls and boys in education. After lunch, Reto held 2 meetings;- one for the girls and their mothers and another with boys and fathers and other men in the community. The purpose of the separate meetings was to address issues which affect the boys and girls and their education at this stage of their development. We learnt that girls are especially vulnerable to early marriages as soon as they hit puberty. The men in the community start targeting them and if they get pregnant, their fathers are only too willing to marry them off to older men who are able to take care of them financially. We therefore feel that we need to visit schools in Masailand to talk to pupils about the importance of education and be role models who they can look up to. In addition we'll seek partnership with the Department of Children's Service to put in place lawful mechanism to protect children and to disseminate information to the community on the rights of children.



Community leaders at Oldoinyo Sambu School. The Headmaster is 3rd from left in black and white.





The Headmaster of Oldonyo Sambu School (left) with Joyce Naisho, Jeddy Ntoyai and Grace Tanyassis of Reto



Reto Chair Julie with the Pashile Girls



Some of Reto members at Oldoinyo Sambu School



Reto members join community and school children in a dance



Josephine Saidimu a member who is also a headmistress gives advice to girls and women of Oldoinyo Sambu School



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Julie (Chair of Reto) with a pack containing sanitary pads for girls at Oldonyo Sambu School



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Support

for Pashile Girls;

The plight of the Pashile Girls was brought to the attention of Reto by one of the members Joyce Nampaso. The family were visited on 16th November 2023. There are 3 girls (Namelok (13), Tumpesia (10), Mampai (7)) staying with their father. Their mother left them three years ago.

The father has no means of livelihood as all his animals died in the prolonged drought. He relies on manual work at Magadi Soda Company whenever he gets a chance.

Due to the father lacking steady employment the children depend on the immediate community for food handouts and other needs.

The father had not been able to pay fees (in arrears of 5,000) at Ilparakuo Primary School and so the children were not able to attend classes consistently. The Reto team who visited (Julie Njeru: Chair, Grace Tanyassis: Treasurer, Joyce Naisho: member) took food items for the family. Subsequently, Reto members raised funds to clear school fees arrears and raise funds to enrol them at AIC Girls Boarding School. The fees for the 3 girls was 115,000/-. An anonymous donor (through Naomi Kipuri) contributed 110,000/- towards this effort. Reto will be forever grateful to this donor for coming to the aid of these children. Unfortunately, the oldest girl was found to be pregnant and expected to deliver in early 2024. She has since delivered a baby boy and Reto picked her up from Magadi in February 2025. She and her baby are at Miale ya Tumaini Centre and Namelok is enrolled at Nakeel Primary School Grade seven



Reto team visiting the Pashile girls. Joyce Naisho at the left, the children (Mampai, Namelok, Tumpesia), their father, Pashile, Julie Njeru (Chair), Grace Tanyassis (Treasurer)



The pathetic shelter where the Pashile girls live



Two of the Pashile Girls on admission at AIC Girls Boarding School in Kajiado with their uncle



Tumpesia and Mampai at the uniform shop in Kajiado



School items for the Pashile girls purchased through members contribution

Joyce Naisho (in white cap) with the Pashile Girls sorting items at AIC Girls





TRANSLATION TO MAA OF CBC MATERIALS.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the period of 2022-2032 as the International Decade of Indigenous Languages (IDIL2022-2032). International Decade of Indigenous Languages is an initiative launched by the United Nations with a mission to raise awareness on Indigenous language preservation, revitalization and promotion. One of the issues which concerned members of the group is the disappearing of the Maasai language. This is because of urbanization, use of Kiswahili and English as languages of instruction in schools and parents also prefer their children to be proficient in the above languages. Kenya's Ministry of Education recommends children to be taught in their mother tongue in pre primary up to grade 3. The group could not find any material in the Maasai language to be used for teaching although there were materials in other vernacular languages. In this regard, the group started an effort to translate pre primary book to Maasai language. This effort however is being hindered by the lack of funds to pay for the artwork and printing.



CONCLUSION

This is the first report of Reto in many years. Reto Women Association has been in existence since 1986 with a mission of supporting mainly education of the girl child in Maasailand. Already, the Maasai were marginalized and lagged behind in areas of education therefore the Maasai girls were even more marginalized.

Specific efforts will be made the Association in the coming year to partner with government institutions that deal with child protection and rights to sensitize the communities. Efforts will also be made to recruit partners and the support of development organizations in this area.

The County of Kajiado is large and the rural communities are hard to reach due to poor infrastructure. Access to basic health facilities is often difficult and more often than not, people continue with traditional methods of treating various ailments. In serious cases, people lose their lives due to the extremely long distances to government facilities. Reto intends to work with the local County to undertake medical camps in remote areas to carry out basic screening and preventive activities. More partners will be sought in the coming year to cover the far flung areas of Kajiado.

“Mairoro enkutuk ang” phrase was coined by the Education and Culture Committee to emphasize the need to speak the Maa language. The production of learning materials is still in the offing and more consultation will be made with relevant bodies to assist us in the development and printing. Discussion will also be made with the county to integrate the phrase in the day to day programme and activities in the County and other offices.

Lastly, Reto is about mutual help and consolidation of friendships. All members help each other in every way possible. In Reto you are never alone. All members give of their time and resources and their little pensions and whatever else God has blessed them with, to further the initiatives of the association. It is hoped that more like minded members will join the Association so that together, we can make a positive difference in the Maa communities everywhere.

RETO OFFICE BEARERS AND MEMBERS



JULIE TOPIRIAN KIPURI NJERU

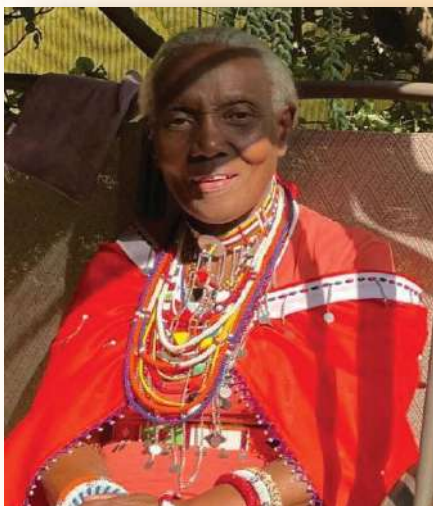
Julie Topirian Kipuri Njeru, Chairlady of Reto Women Association, was born in Kajiado County. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master of Business Administration. A seasoned administrator, Julie has worked in Provincial Administration, Central Government, and state corporations in the wildlife and tourism sectors. She brings extensive experience in organizational development, driving significant progress at Reto over the past six years. Julie is passionate about issues affecting the Maa community, including education, culture, health, and land. A great storyteller and avid reader, she leads Reto with enthusiasm and confidence, aspiring to make it a premier association for positive impact in the Maa society.



DR. PRISCILLA SANTAU MIGIRO

Dr. Priscilla Santau Migiro is the Secretary of Reto and Chair of the Health Committee. A paediatrician trained at the University of Nairobi, she has extensive experience in Kenya's private and public health sectors.

At the Ministry of Health, she contributed to policy and guideline development. As one of the first Maasai women medical doctors, Dr. Migiro is passionate about child survival and healthcare access for indigenous peoples. She authored a chapter on healthcare access in Africa for the 2015 publication "The State of the World's Indigenous Peoples."



JOYCE NAIPANOI NAISHO

Joyce N. Naisho, a founding member of Reto since 1987, served two terms as chair and is currently an active Health Committee member and advisor. She holds a Master of Health Planning and Administration from the University of Michigan, USA, and a Nursing degree from the University of Nairobi, Kenya. Joyce's career includes roles such as Health Specialist at AMREF (1978-1997), Health Program Director at the International Eye Foundation, Malawi (1997-1999), and Senior Nurse at Virginia Hospital, USA (2005-2015). She specializes in training health workers, community health management, and advocacy for women's and children's health and education.



GRACE NANINAAI SAITA

Grace, the current deputy chair of Reto, is a Kenya-registered community health nurse with extensive experience in sexual and reproductive health and community health care. She has international experience in humanitarian crises in Somalia, South Sudan, and Darfur. Skilled in managing health and nutrition programs, Grace excels in fundraising, ensuring donor compliance, and capacity building. She has influenced health strategies, led inter-agency forums, and documented best practices, transforming communities through quality program implementation and staff training.



DR. NAOMI KIPURY

Naomi Kipury, born in Ilbissil, Kajiado County, Kenya, graduated from the University of Nairobi in 1975 with a degree in Education, majoring in Literature and Linguistics. She was the first Maasai woman to earn a PhD in Anthropology from Temple University, USA, in 1989. Naomi's work experience includes teaching at Narok High School, working at the Kenya National Archives, and the University of Nairobi's Institute of African Studies. She later became the Kenyan director of the Arid Lands Institute and Arid Lands Resource Management. Currently, she consults for various regional and international organizations and serves on multiple boards.



DR. EUNICE TETELYIAN OBIERO

Eunice Teteyian Obiero is a driving force within Reto, leveraging her extensive experience and expertise to provide positive change on the Social Welfare Committee. As a Medical Doctor with a Master of Medicine degree, she leads by example as a specialist physician at Kericho County Hospital, pioneering HIV/AIDS care in the South Rift of Kenya. With over two decades of leadership in women's ministry and a fervent dedication to the development of the Maasai community, Eunice embodies compassion, leadership, and unwavering commitment to societal advancement remains there, focusing on the education and welfare of girls.

A portrait of Rose Nairesiae Legis, a woman with short, reddish-brown hair, wearing a white patterned top. She is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression.

ROSE NAIRISIAE LEGIS

Rose Nairesiae Legis hails from Loitokitok, Kajiado County. She holds a Master's degree in Human Resource Management from the University of Manchester, UK. Rose has extensive administrative experience, having served as an Administrative Officer at the Public Service Commission of Kenya from 1979 to 1991, overseeing recruitment and selection functions.

Her teaching experience includes lecturing on behavioural courses at university and teaching English and Kiswahili at a college in Switzerland from 2002 to 2020. Rose is passionate about environmental conservation and the advancement of the Maa community.

A portrait of Jedidah Pilale Ntoyai, a woman with short, dark hair and glasses, wearing a teal top. She is smiling slightly at the camera.

JEDIDAH PILALE NTOYAI

Jedidah Pilale Ntoyai, from Loitokitok, Kajiado County, is an HR practitioner with an M.A. and B.A. in Counseling Psychology and a Diploma in Management. With 29 years of experience at KPTC and KCCT, she advanced to Head of Human Resources and Administration. She has also worked as a counsellor at Kenyatta National Hospital. Jedidah was vice-chair of the Independent interim Boundaries Commission and the Independent Policing Oversight Authority Board. Currently, she serves on the Environment Committee at Reto. She is passionate about accurately documenting the Maasai language and culture.

A portrait of Grace Kakenia Tanyassis, a woman with dark, curly hair, wearing an orange turtleneck. She is smiling at the camera.

GRACE KAKENIA TANYASSIS

Grace K. Tanyassis, born in Loitokitok, Kajiado County, is an HR Practitioner with a BA in Human Resources from Kenya Methodist University. She has extensive training in conflict resolution, peacebuilding, and women advocacy. Married with four children, Grace enjoys reading, watching movies, travelling, singing, and dancing. Passionate about helping the less fortunate and promoting girls' education in Maasailand, she also engages in farming.



GRACE MESOPIRR SICARD

Grace Mesopirr Sicard was born in Lepolosi, Kilgoris, Narok County. With 25 years at the Kenyan Embassy in France, she excels in public relations and administration. An author of an autobiography and a translated Maa dictionary (PARLON), she enjoys writing, singing, and storytelling. Grace is passionate about cultural events, aiding the less fortunate, and promoting girl child education in Maasailand.



GRACE NEMAYIAN KONCHELLA

Nemayian Konchella is a dynamic entrepreneur and chair of the Reto environment committee. She began her career as a stenographer, bookkeeper, and designer. With extensive experience in various business ventures, Nema has consistently advocated for government support and opportunities for women.



RHODA KELAI RAE

Rhoda Kelai Rae, a member of the health committee in Reto, is a Kenya Registered Nurse with extensive experience in Kenya's public and private health sectors. She has led numerous consultancies and currently directs a private hospital in Western Kenya. Rhoda is passionate about community health, women's health, and youth and adolescent health. Her work reflects a strong commitment to the development and well-being of the Maasai people.



RUTH SIALALA

Ruth Sialala is a dedicated public health practitioner with 32 years of experience, focusing on schools and underserved communities in Baringo County. She has coordinated National AIDS Control Council programs and served as an official of the Afya Sacco for 17 years, leveraging her reliability and interpersonal skills. In Reto, Ruth is committed to ensuring every Maasai girl lives with dignity and has access to clean water.



DR. JANE RERIANI MIANO

Dr. Jane Reriani Miano was among the first 16 graduates of the University of Nairobi's new medical school in 1972. She later specialised in Obstetrics and Gynecology and served as the Director of Maternal and Child Health at the Ministry of Health before moving to private practice. Her interests include the education of girls, reducing teenage pregnancies, eradicating FGM, improving maternal health, and reducing infant mortality. Dr. Miano has served on several boards, including the Practitioners and Dentists Board, Kenya Obstetric Society, Medical Women's Society, Pumwani Maternity Hospital, and Lions Eye Hospital. She has travelled globally to learn advanced treatment methods and has been a dedicated Reto member since its inception.



DR. ALICE SIPIYIAN LAKATI

Alice Sipiyan Lakati is an energetic member of the Education and Health Committee in Reto, with over 20 years of experience as an epidemiologist and public health expert. She has excelled in academic research and program implementation globally, enhancing her skills in partnerships and fundraising. Alice held vital roles, such as acting as vice chancellor and founding dean of public health. She has a PhD and Master's in Epidemiology from Curtin University, Australia, and is the pioneering Director of Research and Community Extension at Amref International University. She is passionate about education and climate change's impact on the Maa community.



JOYCE NAMPASO LAIRUMPE

Joyce Nampaso Lairumpe was born in Loitokitok. With a college education, Joyce is a businesswoman and farmer. She served as deputy chair-person of Thirdway Alliance Kenya (2018-2020) and has been a board member of Satellite Primary School, Naivasha, and the Naivasha Water and Sanitation board. Her business skills benefit Reto, where she serves on the environment committee.



PRISCILLA IPASO TIREN

Priscilla has had a long and rich career in the public sector, spanning from the late 70s until her retirement in 2013. After graduating from Kianda Secretarial College, she worked at Kenya Seed Company, Wareng County Council, and the Central Bank of Kenya. Priscilla brings a wealth of knowledge and a passion for assisting the disadvantaged to Reto. Despite being away from Maasailand, her heart remains there, focusing on the education and welfare of girls. As a valued Education Committee member, she mobilized her children and their respective alumni to support Oldoinyio Sambu Primary School, providing sanitary pads, sports equipment, and other materials.



IRENE KATETE

Irene is a seasoned Maasai professional with 28 years of experience in community development. She holds a degree in Community Development and a diploma in Public Relations. Currently the Director of Social Services in Kajiado County, she is skilled in project management, team leadership, and achieving high-quality outcomes. Known for building meaningful relationships, Irene excels in meeting targets and deadlines while motivating teams to deliver first-class results.



MARY LOLCHOKI

Mary, born in Kajiado County, is a member of Reto Women and a mother of three. She has experience as a container terminal manager at Bolloré Africa Logistics. In her free time, she enjoys farming, listening to music, reading, swimming, watching movies, and going on road trips.





JOSEPHINE NAIRUKO NAIKUNI

Josephine Nairuko Naikuni, a Member of Reto Women Association. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Theological Studies and a Master of Theological Studies. A retired Teacher. Currently carrying out farming activities in Kajiado County, growing a variety of fruit trees and other Indigenous Species.



MUKAMI KIPURI

Mukami Kipuri a Reto women Association Member. A bachelors degree holder. A diploma holder (KTTC). Worked in the following institutions. Lecturer Government Secretarial College, NCKK in SME department, Daima Bank investments department and lastly in KPLC in Credit Control department. Mukami has a wealth of experience in business related issues, loves farming, reading and passionate in giving back to the community always.



SILOLE MPOKE

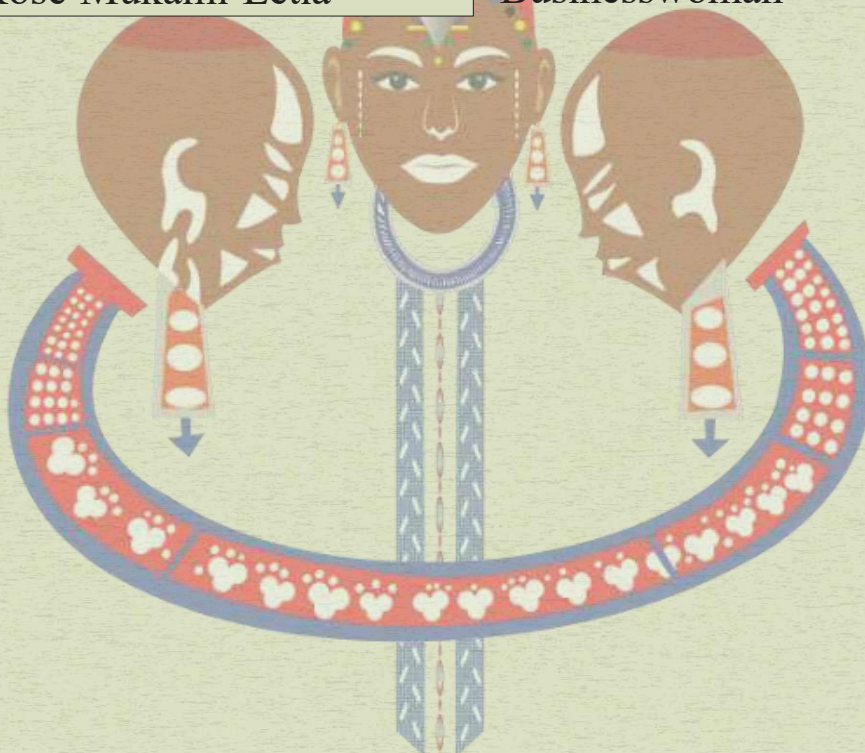
A registered nurse by profession, Silole has had a long career in the health sector with special emphasis in community health. While at AMREF she worked in the programme targeting nomadic health Programme. This has continued to be her focus after retirement when she started Nenkashe Education Centre. This centre addresses the plight of destitute girls, their health, Education and life skills. This aligns with the vision and mission of Reto, to serve our community in every way possible.



RETO OLKESEN
WOMEN ASSOCIATION

RETO MEMBERS - Cont..

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------|---------------|
| 23. | Josephine Saidimu | Teacher |
| 24. | Rose Mukami Letia | Businesswoman |



RETO OLKESEN
WOMEN ASSOCIATION

APPENDIX 1

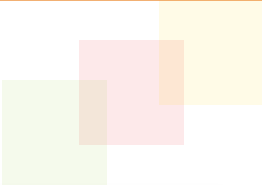
STATEMENT BY RETO WOMEN ASSOCIATION ON CRITICAL ISSUES AFFECTING THE MAA COMMUNITY. PRESENTED TO HON. DR FRED MATIANG'I A.G. CABINET SECRETARY FOR INTERNAL SECURITY AND COORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT ON 14TH NOV 2017

Reto Women Association is an association of Maa women from five counties of Kajiado, Narok, Laikipia, Samburu and Baringo. It serves as a forum for the exchange of ideas, skills and experiences for the promotion and improvement of livelihoods of the Maa-speaking people.

The main activities of the association have centered on the improvement of the welfare of the Maa girl child; socio-economic empowerment of women; promotion of, sensitization and celebration of shared values and culture among the various sub-community members. The association would like to bring to the attention of the Cabinet Secretary the following issues which affect and continue to affect the community negatively. These are the painful issues which need to be addressed; -

1. The Maasai, probably more than any other community in Kenya, have suffered untold historical injustices right from the advent of colonialism to the present day.
2. They have been exploited and oppressed by the colonial administration through expropriation of their best grazing lands for European settlers. The combination with the cool and productive lands in Kiambu, Muranga, Nandi and Kericho, the so-called white highlands were established. At independence, in spite of written formal agreements, Maasai lands were annexed by the new Kenya government and given to other communities for settlement.

The 1904 and 1911 agreements that were signed with British colonial masters, by the erstwhile illiterate and completely ignorant Lenana, were completely disregarded. The independence government and subsequent governments perpetuated the alienation of the remaining Maasai land as the people were systematically marginalized and excluded as they remained with high levels of illiteracy. This process is still going on today. Yet the Maasai are bona fide citizens of Kenya and have equal rights as all Kenyans under the constitution.

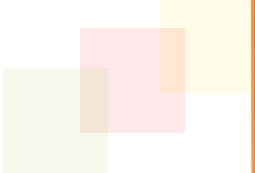


2. The land policies of the Kenya government from the 1970's onwards encouraged the creation and demarcation of group ranches in Kajiado and Narok Counties, with the sole purpose of making them available for sale to the so called 'willing buyers'. "Willing buyer, willing seller" is a FALLACY. Two unequal parties cannot enter into fair contractual arrangements. Some of the so-called 'willing sellers' were driven by poverty, illiteracy and shortsightedness and others were manipulated through state sponsored schemes such as the Agricultural Finance Corporation, and ILLEGAL called "Special Land Control Boards" as was happening in Kajiado County as recently as early 2017 by the County Commissioner. The outcome of these actions resulted in:-

- Drastic reduction of land for ordinary residents;
- Systematic impoverishment of the Maa community. The sold land provided short term relief, if any, to their families. Most households lost the land and now remain landless with few herds that cannot sustain pastoralist livelihoods;
- The willing buyers came into the lands, erected fences and kept the herders out. Some herders were forced to move and squat in lands belonging to their relatives or move to urban centers without any marketable skills. This is not right nor acceptable.

• Pastoralism is the only economic activity most Maasai people know. Their attachment to their cattle is legendary and the symbiosis has produced one of the most efficient and specialized livestock management skills in the world. Now that the land has shrunk through invasion by well to do migrant communities, they cannot sustain the keeping of adequate herds that are economically viable. Most of them do not know of any other way of life, and at any rate much of the land can only support the keeping of livestock. Serious poverty has set in and, instead of the government taking Affirmative Action to address this problem, as it should (it is the responsibility of governments to protect the livelihoods of all their citizens) instead what is witnessed is even more massive influx of migrants to impoverish, disenfranchise and push the Maa community into near total annihilation in a few short years. All successive government regimes have aided and abetted this trend since their officials have become beneficiaries of the looted lands and resources.

**WE NOW WISH TO STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT
THERE WILL BE NO MORE BUYING OF LAND
IN KAJIADO AND NAROK COUNTIES..**



The Governments of the two counties will support this as it is in their interest and the interest of their constituents to do so.

Owing to official and historical lack of support to pastoralism as a livelihood system, the Maa have continued to suffer wherever they live as they search for pasture, water and salts for livestock. A few examples are hereby cited: We recall the skirmishes between the Maasai and another community in Longonot over their traditional watering points, during the tenure of Hon Michuki as Minister for Internal Security and Jane Kihara, the MP at that time.

The skirmishes were resolved by the shooting of Maasai herders by use of a helicopter. The nation was treated to that painful, gruesome and inhumane spectacle on national television. Not even wild elephants and rhinos are treated that way unless they turn rogue . This action will never be obliterated from our minds.

Confrontation between herders and settlers in Laikipia is close to our hearts and is the subject of our peaceful demonstration today. The poor people of Laikipia and Samburu are hoodwinked into ceding their lands to the settlers to be turned into so called Nature Conservancies.

Agreements are drawn which illiterate people sign, (yet again!) thereby ceding their pasture lands for over 25 years and more, without realizing the implication of their actions. When there is serious drought as has been the case in the past few months, the herders, who owned the land in the first place, find themselves having to go back to the so called conservancy for pasture and water.

This is because the drawing of the agreements never took into consideration the needs for wet and dry season grazing of the herders or emergency grazing needs occasioned by drought. The settlers cry foul, the government, acting with total impunity, shoots over 300 cattle belonging to poor people without following due process of law. In mid 2017, they killed a young boy by the name Daniel Lkipuri Leyiago who was 12 years old and injured others for no reason at all.

This action is equivalent to setting fire to an entire coffee or tea plantation, or the demolition of several buildings belonging to an investor. Destroying people's livelihoods is not only illegal under the law; it is cruelty of the highest order and no words by the government can justify it.

• On whose orders did the security agents act? One might ask. Have the culprits been brought to book, if so who has been charged? Whatever the case, an arm of the state is clearly responsible for the heinous acts and the government must take responsibility.

“MAA LIVELIHOODS MATTER AND APPROPRIATE
COMPENSATION MUST BE GRANTED
TO THE HERDERS WHOSE CATTLE WERE SHOT,
PUBLIC APOLOGY BE GIVEN TO THE COMMUNITY AND
THE SO-CALLED NATURE CONSERVANCIES AGREEMENTS
BE ANNULLED.”

**“There is continuous arming of other communities
while disarming the Samburu’s and Pokots thus
making them vulnerable.”**

*THE MAA COMMUNITY HAS NEVER HAD ISSUES WITH SHARING
THEIR RESOURCES OF GRAZING LANDS OR WATER.THEREFORE,
IT IS A FALLACY TO TRY AND CREATE DIVISIONS BETWEEN
THE MAA SUBTRIBES.*

MEMORANDUM TO H.E JOSEPH OLE LENKU, GOVERNOR OF KAJIADO COUNTY, BY RETO WOMEN ASSOCIATION IN 2017

Reto Women Association is a group of Maa Women from Maa speaking counties of Kajiado, Narok, Samburu, Laikipia and Baringo. We have chapters representing each of the Maa speaking counties. The purpose of the Association is to raise and promote Maasai consciousness on matters pertaining to the community. The Association has supported education especially of girls through identification of bursaries, buying school necessities (mabati boxes) for very needy girls, providing sanitary towels and promoting Maa culture.

1. ENVIRONMENTAL QUESTIONS

i) Sand harvesting

Sand harvesting has already been banned in counties like Machakos because it leads to drying of rivers. This practice is going on in Kajiado County and there seems to be no control. At the end of the day there will be no rivers to sustain the community. The county should therefore abide by the rules and regulations on sand harvesting such as

- Designating sand harvesting sites, construction of gabions on said sites, rehabilitation of sites, restricting sand harvesting to acceptable depths and riverbeds.
- Sand harvesting sites to be documented and demarcated and included within the county environment management plan.
- Lorries to use designated roads only. The county should also consider banning sand harvesting like other counties

ii) Charcoal burning

Though there is a policy against burning of charcoal and cutting of trees, this has been going unabated leading to desertification in an already unstable environment. The cutting of trees and burning of charcoal has reached serious levels leading to environmental degradation, soil erosion, desertification and climate change. Therefore, the county should consider banning these activities as has been done in other arid and semi-arid counties.

It appears that despite the available laws, regulations and guidelines, government departments which are supposed to safeguard the environment have turned a blind eye as this state of affairs continues unabated.

Solutions

- Licensing of charcoal burning to stop forthwith and initiatives for reforestation to be started all over the county.
- The county government to put in place alternative economic activities to benefit the community as well as restore the environment. These are tree nurseries and reforestation where community groups will be paid for taking care of tree seedlings. The county environment committee to identify hilly areas and hill tops and protect these areas from tree felling for example at Namanga hill

NB: The Constitution in Article 69 states: The State shall; eliminate processes and activities that are likely to endanger the environment.

REVISIT THE 1904 AND 1911 AGREEMENT

The Maa through these two agreements between UNEQUAL PARTIES lost large tracts of their land and those lands are well known. According to these agreements, the land would revert back to the community after 100 years and, "As long as the Maasai as a community continues to exist." Well, the Maasai community in Laikipia and Naivasha still exists and want their land back. The British colonialists did not wait for the ink to dry on the 1911 Agreement before they broke it. The Kenya government perpetuated the dishonorable action of the British and denied the Maasai of Laikipia their land.

WE WISH TO REVISIT THESE TWO AGREEMENTS IN THE INTERNATIONAL COURTS AND GET THE LAND BACK. THE SETTLERS WHO WERE ALLOCATED THE LAND SHOULD MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO SURRENDER THEM, SINCE THEY DID NOT BUY THEM IN THE FIRST PLACE. THEREFORE THESE AGREEMENTS SHOULD BE REVISITED AS 100 YEARS ELAPSED IN 2004 AND 2011

RECOMMENDATIONS (For Laikipia case only)

- Public apology be pronounced to the affected Samburu and Pokot families.
- The Gazette Notice of November 2016 must be quashed immediately
- All families (Samburu's and Pokots) who have lost livestock and lives since the gazettelement should be fully compensated
- The government should desist arming other communities while disarming the Samburu and Pokot
- We call upon the HE the President to respect the court order
- We call the government to urgently provide food support, medical and education to the families of the deceased both Samburu's and pokots
- We call upon the National Land Commission and the Ministry of Lands to revisit the issue of The 2.5 million acres owned by 36 settlers.
- Laikipia belongs to the Maa community.
- Revisit the issue of ADC Mutara
- Due process of law must be followed in this and every case and culprits be brought to book so that Justice must not only be done, but it must also be seen to be done.
- Re-visit the 1904 and 1911 agreements with the purpose of reverting the land back to its original owners.
- Wherever necessary, Affirmative Action should be applied to protect citizens from human rights violations.

S) LAND SALE

The continued and uncontrolled sale of land in Kajiado has made the Maasai poor and will continue to increase the poverty levels in the community. Families are forced by need such as food and school fees to sell their ancestral lands leaving future generations landless. This is a source of great concern and a threat to the very survival of the community. This has led to the breakdown of families and women and children are the most affected. The selling of land on “willing seller, willing buyer” basis is not completely right, as the parties in the contract are unequal. The seller is illiterate and poor and the buyer is at an advantage of education and wealth.

The other issue as far as land is concerned, is that sale is controlled by national government and the county can only appoint members to the land boards. The boards are chaired by county commissioners who may not be sensitive to the repercussions of loss of land by the community.

Results of continued sale of land

The continued loss of land will result in the following:-

- *The community will not be able to have a sustainable livelihood of pastoralism, as this is the economic activity which the land is suited for*
- *There will be breakdown of families and suffering of women and children due to loss of their homes*
- *Political disenfranchisement. The community will over time not be represented as they will have no say in the politics of the county.*
- *Widespread poverty.*

This situation is currently so serious that communities buying land are boasting that they will finally push the Maasai from Maasailand leading to extinction of one of the most recognizable cultures in the world. Maasai as a people will disappear if nothing is done.

Solutions

i) Leasing of land instead of outright sale.

The selling of land must be stopped immediately. Instead of selling, families should be encouraged to lease land for specified periods. In this way, families will retain land and continue benefitting from it. This will sustain families and curb landlessness and displacement of future generations.

ii) Buying back the sold land:

The county government as a holder of land in trust for its people must put strategies and resources in place to progressively buy back the land which has been sold. The resources can be obtained from revenue paid by mining companies and national parks, land rates and any other revenue sources.

Any public land which has been irregularly allocated should revert back to the community forthwith.

/) WATERS

Because of the foregoing environmental challenges, and Kajiado being semi-arid, availability of water is a major problem. All efforts should be geared to protecting the water sources such as Oldoinyo Orok, the foothills of Kilimanjaro, Chyulu Hills, Ngong Hills and others.

4) EDUCATION

The community has continued to lag behind in education. The fact that the population is dispersed in a wide area means that schools are few and far apart. Even the available schools are not at par with the rest of the country in terms of facilities and adequacy of teachers. While it is appreciated that education has not been devolved, is there something the county can do to raise the standard of education?.

Solutions

Affirmative Action

The standard of education in Kajiado is low compared to other areas. This means that the students cannot compete for the available places in the national institution of higher learning. Therefore, there should be affirmative action for Maa students to get places in these institutions.

This is provided in the Constitution Article 27 (6) which states in part; the state shall take legislative and other measures, including affirmative action programmes and policies designed to redress any disadvantage suffered by individuals or groups because of past discrimination

5) EMPOWESMENT OF THE COMMUNITY

Article 56 of the Constitution states: The state shall put in place affirmative action programmes designed to ensure that minorities and marginalized groups;- b) are provided special opportunities in education and economic fields

Youth

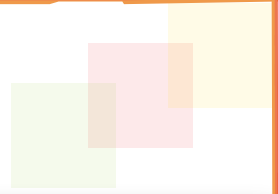
The county government should put in place programs to empower the youth through, adult education, village polytechnics and technical colleges. Village polytechnics should be in every sub county and technical institute in every constituency. They should be encouraged to form groups to access the Youth Fund.

Women

County should strengthen existing women's groups so that they can access Women Funds. Also strengthen adult literacy programs for women. The county should consider setting up, promoting and protecting of a Maasai medicinal plant centre o provide access to these medicines and also as a source of income for the community.

Cash Transfer Programs for the disabled and elderly.

Through purposeful civic education, the county government can work with chiefs to register such persons for them to access these funds. This empowerment will bring dignity to families without the need to sell land, burn charcoal, or sell sand.



Civic Education

The importance of continuing civic education at all levels cannot be over emphasized. This should target schools, colleges, men, women groups and youth. All stakeholders need to work together to empower the community by civic education so that they can understand the consequences of land sale and environmental education. Reto Women Association is ready and willing to work with the county government in civic education programs for all and continuously promoting Maa consciousness in the community.