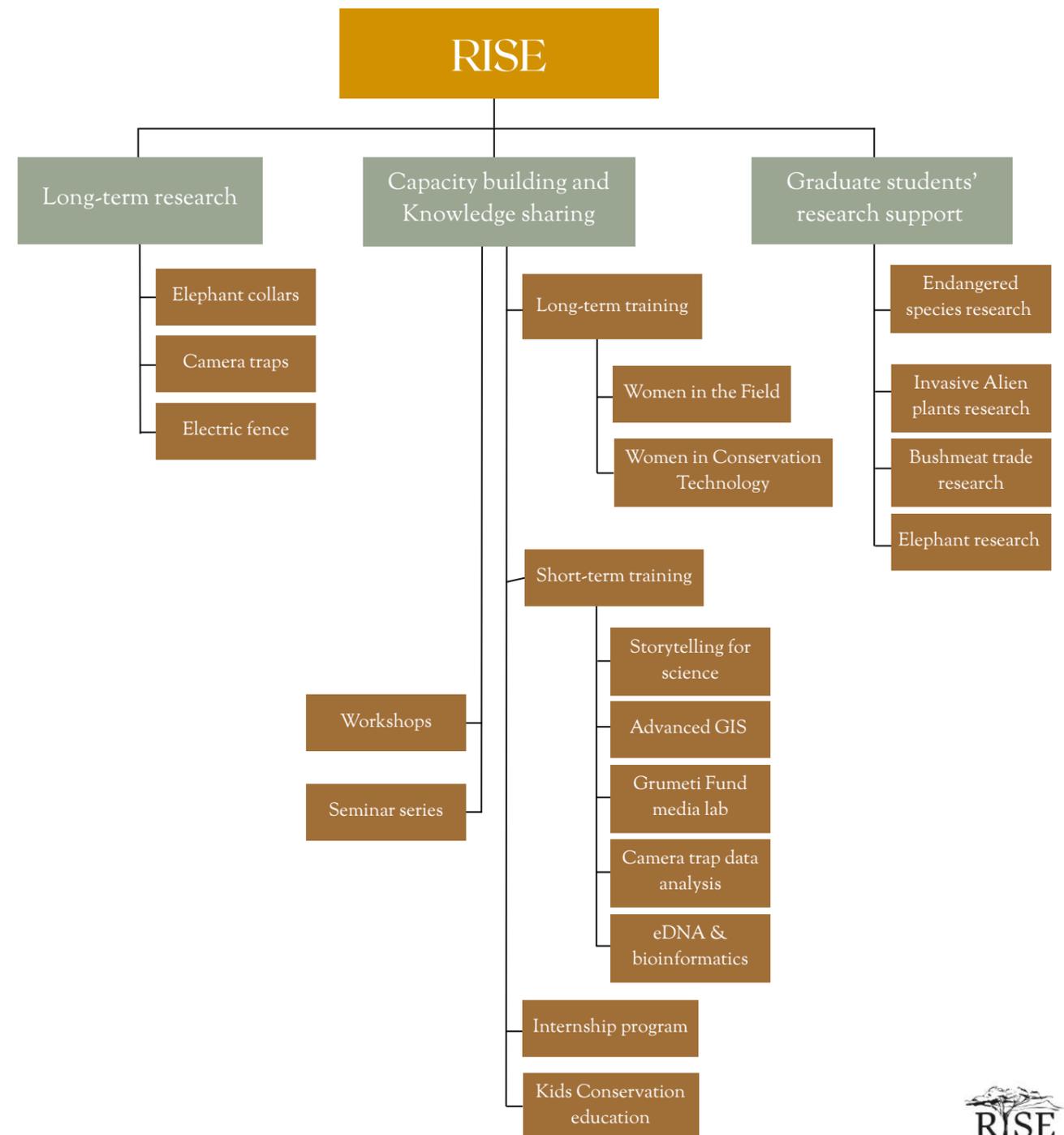# RISE

Updates 2025

GRUMETI FUND

Contents

Research and Innovation for the Serengeti Ecosystem (RISE)

Research and Innovation for the Serengeti Ecosystem (RISE) is an applied research facility and program established by the Grumeti Fund in 2019.

RISE is dedicated to fostering practical, solution-oriented research that benefits both the people and wildlife of the Serengeti ecosystem - and contributes to conservation efforts across Tanzania and beyond.

The program brings together leading minds from Tanzania and around the world - ranging from graduate students to senior scientists - to collaboratively address urgent questions in conservation science. The goal is to generate innovative, actionable solutions that address real-world conservation challenges.

RISE is equally committed to building local capacity by investing in passionate, talented individuals who are dedicated to the sustainable management of Tanzania's globally significant natural heritage.

OUR MISSION

To develop tools, knowledge, solutions, and human capacity to address the most pressing conservation issues of our time, and to support evidence-based decision-making that benefits both people and wildlife - through collaborative partnerships within Tanzania and internationally.
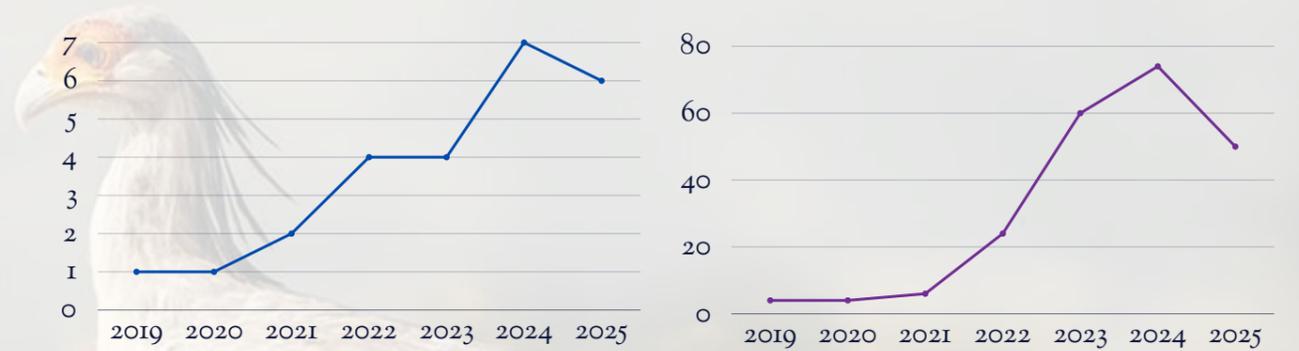
OBJECTIVES

- Maintain and grow our portfolio of research and generate high-quality scientific outputs
- Aid supervisory and logistical support to Grumeti Fund-sponsored graduate fellows
- Expand initiatives that support the professional development of early-career researchers, with special emphasis on programs that empower women in conservation

Collaboration — Education — Sustainability

RISE

- Long-term research
  - Elephant collars
  - Camera traps
  - Electric fence
- Capacity building and Knowledge sharing
  - Long-term training
    - Women in the Field
    - Women in Conservation Technology
  - Short-term training
    - Storytelling for science
    - Advanced GIS
    - Grumeti Fund media lab
    - Camera trap data analysis
    - eDNA & bioinformatics
  - Workshops
  - Seminar series
  - Internship program
  - Kids Conservation education
- Graduate students' research support
  - Endangered species research
  - Invasive Alien plants research
  - Bushmeat trade research
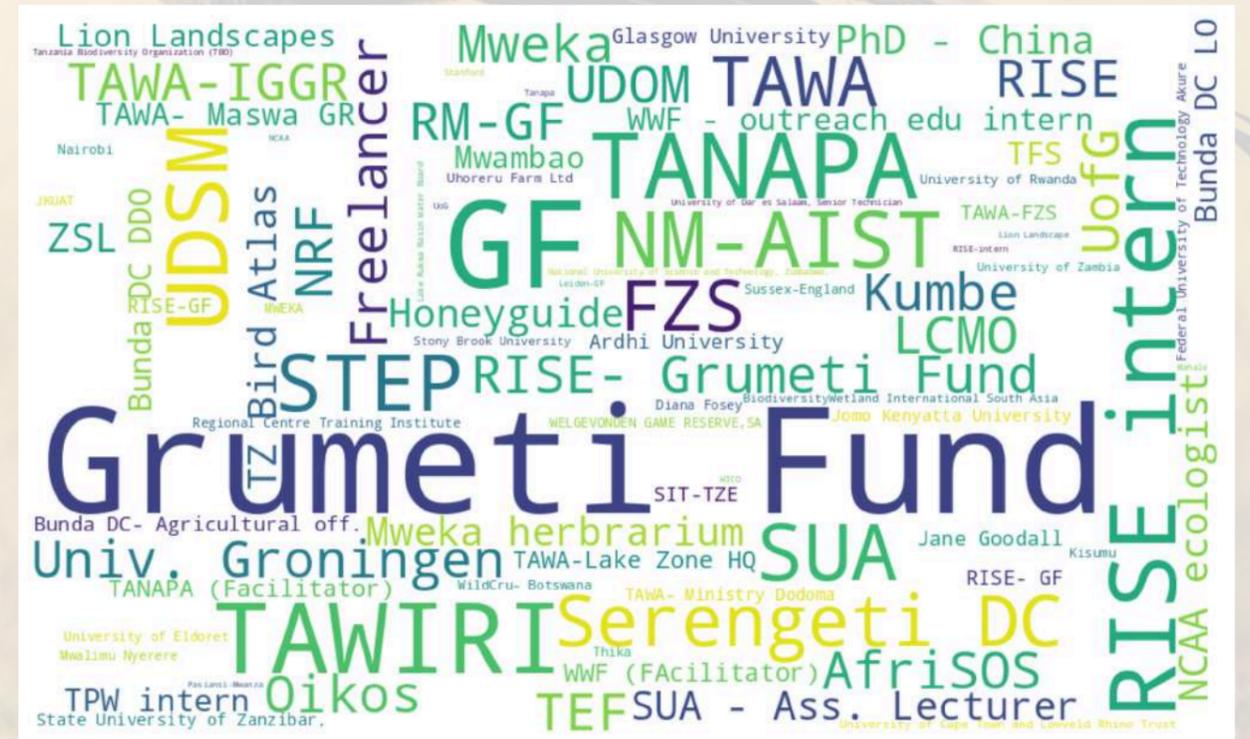 - Elephant research

RISE

MAKING PROGRESS

Since its inception in 2019 with the Women in the Field (WIF) program as its sole offering, the RISE program has grown tremendously in scope and impact. Over the past five years, RISE has expanded from a single training initiative into a comprehensive platform for applied conservation science and capacity building. From 2023 onward, several new programs were introduced to address emerging conservation needs and broaden skill development. These include Women in Conservation Tech (WiCT), Science Communication & Storytelling, Media Lab, Environmental DNA (eDNA), Freshwater Macroinvertebrate Bioindicators, Biodiversity Monitoring, Ecological Restoration, and the RISE Internship Program.

By 2025, RISE offered over ten specialized trainings, equipping Tanzanian students and early-career professionals with cutting-edge tools, hands-on experience, and a collaborative learning environment, firmly establishing RISE as a key player in conservation education and applied research.

Number of hosted programs over the years

Number of participants each year

89 unique organizations have been represented in the RISE training programs

Grumeti Fund + UDSM: A Bold Step for Science and Nature

The Grumeti Fund has officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM), marking the beginning of a dynamic partnership rooted in research, innovation, and shared passion for conservation. This MoU represents more than just a formal agreement — it is a bold commitment to harness the power of science and collaboration to protect Tanzania's rich biodiversity while investing in the next generation of conservation leaders. Through this partnership, the Grumeti Fund and UDSM will jointly pursue applied research, support student training, and develop technological solutions that address real-world conservation challenges.

RISE will serve as a key platform for this work, providing facilities and mentorship to UDSM students and faculty. And with the support of UDSM's Department of Zoology and Wildlife Conservation and the Institute of Resource Assessment, this partnership has a strong academic backbone to ensure long-term impact.

What does this partnership mean in practice?

- Graduate students will gain access to field attachments and research opportunities across the Serengeti ecosystem and beyond.

- Researchers and staff will benefit from joint training programs, lab collaborations, and shared expertise.

- Together, we will strive to co-develop and implement research projects that inform wildlife management and strengthen community engagement and wellbeing.

At the heart of this collaboration is a shared vision: a Tanzania where scientific knowledge and conservation practice go hand in hand, not only to preserve the wild but to uplift communities socio-economically and shape resilient, sustainable landscapes.

This partnership marks an exciting beginning. Our goal is to broaden and deepen collaborations with universities across Tanzania, building a strong national network dedicated to applied conservation research, innovation, and capacity building. We have therefore also started engagement for a similar MOU with Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST).

Together, we are working toward a future where science, education, and conservation join forces to safeguard Tanzania's natural heritage for generations to come. We are proud to take this step forward together for wildlife, for science, and for Tanzania's future.

We begun promising discussions with the Dar es Salaam Police Academy's (DPA) Research Center. This emerging collaboration with the Police Academy will significantly enhance our efforts to combat illegal wildlife trade through the integration of forensic science in conservation work.

Representatives from the the Police Research Centre and one from Forensic Biology and DNA services, Forensic Police headquarters vising RISE early April, 2025. From Left: Dr.Stanslaus Mwampeta (GF), ASP Grace Makazi (DPA), Lutengano Mwanginde (Head DNA section), SACP Ralph Meela (DPA), Dr. George Lohay (GF), SP Frank Lotti (DPA) and Exavery Kigosi (GF).

RISE

FRESHWATER ECOSYSTEMS TRAINING AT RISE: A STEP TOWARD SMARTER RIVER MONITORING

From February 24 to March 2, 2025, the Grumeti Fund, in collaboration with the University of Florida, hosted an intensive freshwater ecosystems training at the RISE facility in Western Serengeti. The workshop equipped Tanzanian researchers and graduate students with skills in macroinvertebrate biomonitoring using the Tanzania River Scoring System (TARISS) and the South African Scoring System version 5 (SASS 5) methods.

During fieldwork on a section of the Grumeti River, participants identified 15–18 macroinvertebrate taxa per site, highlighting the river's rich biodiversity. We sampled from four selected sites along Grumeti River (GR). Preliminarily, biondicator analysis suggested that site GR2 (Nyamamba) had the best ecological health, while the other two sampled sites reflected moderate conditions. Further (systematic and multiseasonal) assessments will be required to more reliably determine the river health using this survey method. Water quality assessments revealed overall healthy conditions, though GR3 had slightly lower oxygen levels and GR1 showed higher turbidity.

The training brought together a diverse group of participants from leading academic, research, and conservation institutions, including Mweka, UDOM, SUA, TAWIRI, NM-AIST, Lake Rukwa Basin Water Board, TANAPA, Tanzania Biodiversity Organization (TBO), and the University of Dar es Salaam. Several staff and interns from the Grumeti Fund also took part, strengthening internal capacity and fostering collaboration across sectors.

This training strengthened participants' capacity in freshwater monitoring and emphasized the importance of macroinvertebrates as tools for conservation. Participants left empowered with practical tools, data analysis skills, and a deeper understanding of riverine health.

RISE

More than meets the eye: The role of eDNA in environmental monitoring

In March 2025, the Grumeti Fund hosted its first Environmental DNA (eDNA) training at the RISE facility in the Serengeti, in partnership with Kumbe Biodiversity and experts from the University of Dar es Salaam, NM-AIST, and the University of Verona. The program engaged 12 participants, including interns, in hands-on learning with the latest portable and cost-effective eDNA technologies—covering the full workflow from sample collection to DNA analysis. This initiative strengthens RISE's capacity to support biodiversity monitoring, conservation research, and wildlife forensics using advanced tools like nanopore sequencing.

The Experts

Prof. Massimo Delledonne is a renowned Italian geneticist and full professor at the University of Verona's Department of Biotechnology. With a Ph.D. in Molecular Biotechnologies, his research focuses on clinical genomics, metagenomics, and next-generation sequencing technologies. He co-founded Personal Genomics in 2012 and serves as a scientific advisor for Genartis, a genomic technology startup. With over 28,000 citations, his work significantly impacts genetics and genomics, shaping advancements in DNA sequencing and personalized genomics. Prof. Massimo will be the main instructor.
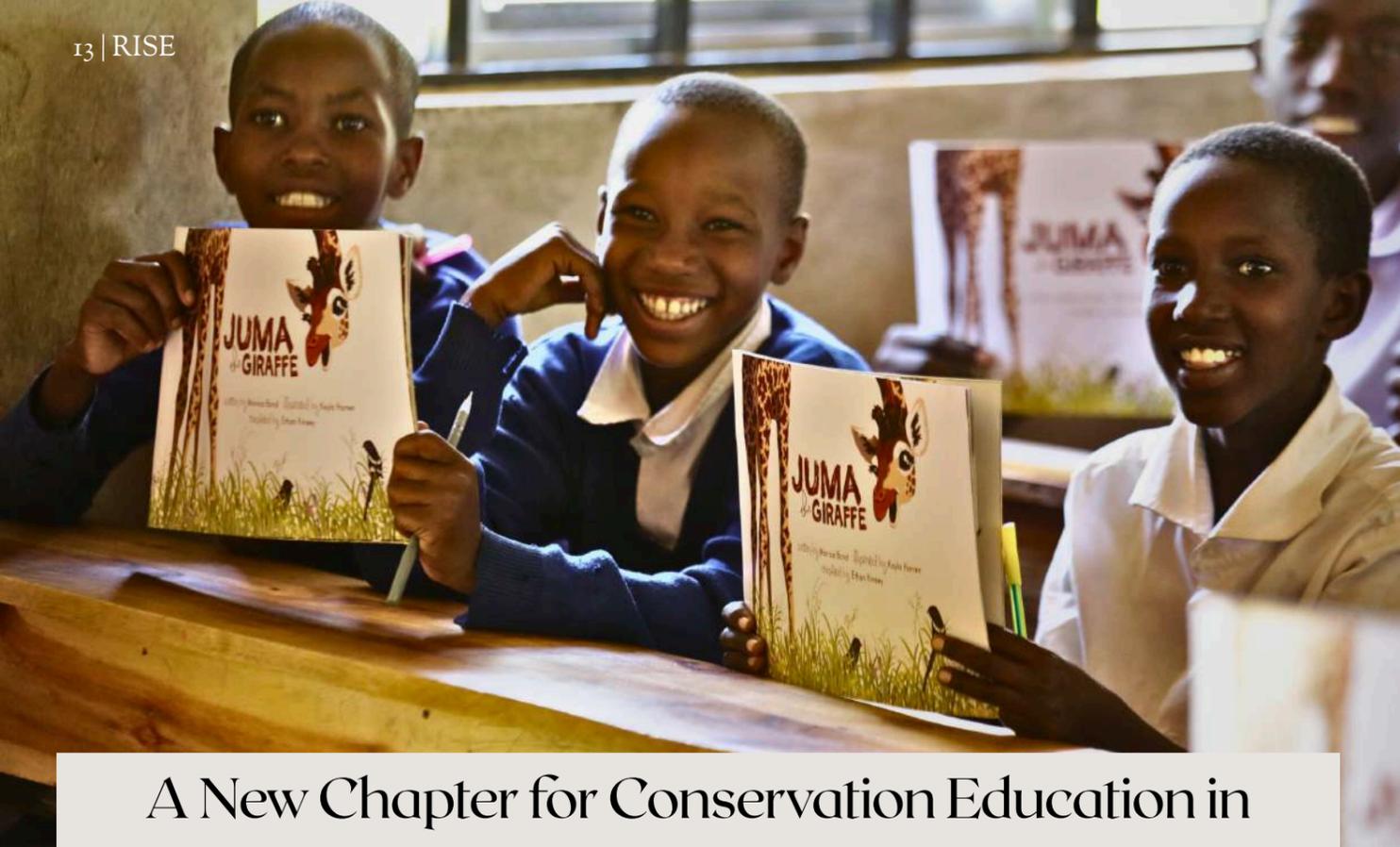

Dr. Beatus Lyimo holds a Ph.D. in Life Sciences with a background in Molecular Biology. Currently, he is working as a Lecturer at the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology (NM-AIST) in Arusha, Tanzania, where he teaches genomics and bioinformatics. From December 2020 to February 2023, Beatus worked as a Postdoctoral Fellow in Bioinformatics at the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR) on a project titled "Molecular Surveillance of Malaria in Tanzania," where he worked to understand the population structure and drug resistance of the P. falciparum parasite circulating in Tanzania. Before his current post, he had been a Senior Scientist at NM-AIST since 2011. His research interest is to contribute to human capacity and the health system through Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) and Bioinformatics approaches.

As a trained molecular biologist from Penn State University, Dr. George Lohay is proud to bring his expertise back home to Tanzania. In 2024, the Grumeti Fund invested in a thermal cycler (PCR machine) to support DNA amplification for research and training, an important step in advancing the Fund's mission to build scientific capacity in Tanzania. Through RISE, the Grumeti Fund has established research collaborations with the Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology and the University of Dar es Salaam. These partnerships are enabling Tanzanian researchers to conduct molecular analyses locally, capabilities that previously required outsourcing abroad. This progress would not be possible without the continued support of the Grumeti Fund.

Three students won art competition on World Giraffe Day June 21, 2025

A New Chapter for Conservation Education in Western Serengeti

In December 2024, RISE launched an exciting new initiative aimed at inspiring the next generation of conservation champions in Western Serengeti. In collaboration with Wild Nature Institute and Tanzania Education Initiatives (TanEDU), RISE introduced a Conservation Education Program for primary school students in the Bunda and Serengeti districts.

This was the first time the program, which has been successfully running in Monduli District for over seven years, was introduced to the Western Serengeti region. The initiative uses creative, science-based learning materials to teach environmental topics through the lens of Africa's Giants: giraffes, elephants, and rhinoceroses. These iconic species

become entry points for engaging lessons in biology, geography, math, language, and art, all rooted in real-world conservation challenges.

At the heart of the program is a set of bilingual supplementary books, written in both Kiswahili and English, and designed for students from Grades 1 to 5. Authored by wildlife researchers and education experts, these books help children better understand and connect with Tanzania's natural heritage. More than 400 students in Serengeti and Bunda Districts have benefited from the program.

"This is more than a classroom project—it's a grand vision: building a future where Tanzanian children grow up understanding and protecting the wildlife and ecosystems that make their country unique", Veila Makundi, workshop facilitator
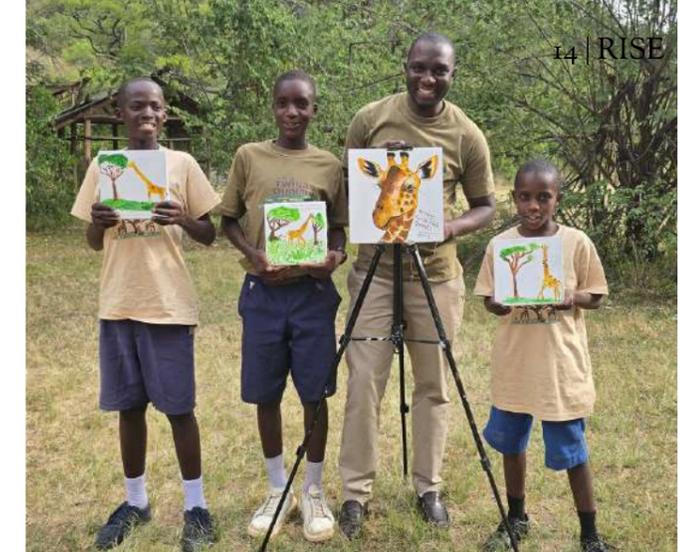
The launch included teacher training workshops held in selected schools, made possible through the support of the Grumeti Fund. RISE collaborates closely with the Fund's Relationship Department to implement this program as part of their broader environmental awareness campaign, which seeks to strengthen conservation values within local communities through education, storytelling, and science-based engagement.

District Education Officers, teachers, and local leaders embraced the program with enthusiasm, recognizing its potential to instill a lifelong respect for nature in young learners.

By equipping educators with the tools and knowledge to integrate conservation into everyday lessons, the program lays a strong foundation for sustainable environmental stewardship.

- On June 21st, 2025, Grumeti Fund celebrated World Giraffe Day at Environmental Education Center -EEC,

- 70 participants, including 38 students from seven primary schools and 32 adults.

- Activities included educational sessions on giraffe ecology, threats, and conservation strategies, as well as an art workshop, wildlife movie screening, and fun games.

- Students received certificates to recognize their creativity and participation, boosting their confidence and connection to nature.

- A highlight of the day was a guided game drive, giving students a chance to see giraffes in their natural environment.

Conservation Education Workshop participants from eight schools in Bunda and Serengeti DC

WOMEN IN THE FIELD

Women in the Field (WIF) is a flagship training initiative hosted by the Research and Innovation for the Serengeti Ecosystem (RISE) under the Grumeti Fund. Launched in 2019, the program is dedicated to empowering early-career Tanzanian women in conservation by building their technical capacity and professional networks in ecological and social science research.

Program Overview

WIF is a three-week intensive training that provides participants with practical and analytical skills in:

- Wildlife monitoring (e.g., experimental/practice camera trapping, telemetry, GPS use, etc.)
- Social research (e.g., surveys, research ethics)
- Spatial and statistical analysis (GIS and R)
- Field safety, communication, and career development

Sessions are co-led by conservation professionals, university lecturers, and WIF alumnae, fostering a collaborative and supportive learning environment.

Growth & Regional Interest

Since inception, WIF has trained 46 women, many of whom have advanced to graduate studies, research roles, and conservation jobs. The program has gained popularity across Tanzania and the broader East African region, prompting current efforts to expand participation beyond Tanzania in future cohorts. For most WIF alumnae, the program has been a critical and timely springboard that has almost literally sprung their careers and professional skills to greater heights.

2024 Highlights

After a pause in 2023, WIF returned in 2024 with two cohorts totaling 14 participants. Two graduates secured internships through networks built during the program—demonstrating its role as a valuable springboard into conservation careers.

Expanding Instructor Partnerships

To enhance the learning experience and increase post-program impact, RISE is actively exploring ways to diversify and expand the pool of WIF instructors. This includes building partnerships with academic institutions, NGOs, and research organizations to:

- Foster greater collaboration and knowledge exchange
- Offer mentorship and guest instruction from leading practitioners
- Open up internship and job placement opportunities for WIF alumnae

Why WIF Matters

WIF addresses critical gender gaps in conservation by:

- Building a skilled pipeline of female researchers and field scientists
- Creating a community of peer support and mentorship
- Linking participants to tangible opportunities through a growing network of partners.

WIF ALUMNI TESTIMONIES

Eva Johnson Ayaro

Participating in the Women in the Field (WIF) program in 2022 was a life-changing moment in my journey as a young Tanzanian conservationist. Selected as one of just six women, I joined an intensive, field-based training program at the Ikorongo–Grumeti Game Reserve that equipped me with hands-on skills in ecological monitoring, research design, wildlife observation, and community-based conservation. It was my first formal exposure to the practical side of field research and it gave me not only tools, but confidence.

I clearly remember my first project proposal. I had written it with great effort but little belief in its potential. With encouragement and detailed feedback from the WIF team, including Dr. Kristen and Prof. Sarah Cleaveland from the University of Glasgow. I gained the confidence to refine and submit it. That proposal became the foundation for my successful EDGE Fellowship application. Receiving the EDGE grant marked the beginning of my conservation career and opened the door to more opportunities and collaborations.

Since then, I have received additional support from the Rufford Foundation, Conservation Leadership Programme, Fonseca Species Conservation Fund, and Mohammed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, all of which have supported my ongoing work on the conservation of threatened herpetofauna, including chameleons, lizards and frogs in the Eastern Arc Mountains.

WIF did not just build my technical capacity, it opened my eyes to the scale of opportunity available to African women in conservation both locally and internationally. I have since earned international scholarships and am currently pursuing postgraduate studies at the University of Oxford, through the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU). I am also a Tasso Leventis African Biodiversity Fellow and continue to serve as an EDGE Fellow with the Zoological Society of London.

In addition, I had the privilege of working for a short time with the Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI) under the Wildlife Information, Education and Public Awareness (WIEP) department. Though brief, this experience gave me a deeper understanding of national conservation priorities and policy-level engagement.

I haven't stopped at growing my own career. I have also committed to giving back. Through the Women in Conservation Organization (WICO), which I co-founded, I now mentor young people passionate about conservation and research. I train early-career conservationists in project design, ecological monitoring, and grant writing, hoping to pass on the same support I received through WIF. Alongside this, I actively engage local communities and schools, raising awareness about Tanzania's overlooked but ecologically vital reptile and amphibian species that are too often ignored in mainstream conservation conversations.

WIF was the beginning of everything. It gave me the foundation, the push, and the belief that I had a voice in this field. Today, that voice is not only active in the field but echoing through the lives of young people and local communities I now help, guide, and inspire.

Plakizia Msalilwa, MSc

My name is Plakizia Msalilwa. I first joined RISE in 2020 when I was selected to attend the second cohort of the Women in the Field (WIF) program. At that time, the program was still small and could only host four girls per year. I had just started my first job in conservation, and to be honest, WIF became one of the most empowering experiences of my early career.

The program included a mix of classroom sessions, fieldwork, and opportunities to interact with Grumeti staff from different departments — something Kristen made sure we experienced. It was incredibly inspiring to learn from people who were far ahead in their careers, especially at a time when I was still finding my voice as a young African woman working in biodiversity and human–wildlife coexistence. The WIF program gave me exactly what I needed: confidence, community, and a clearer sense of direction.
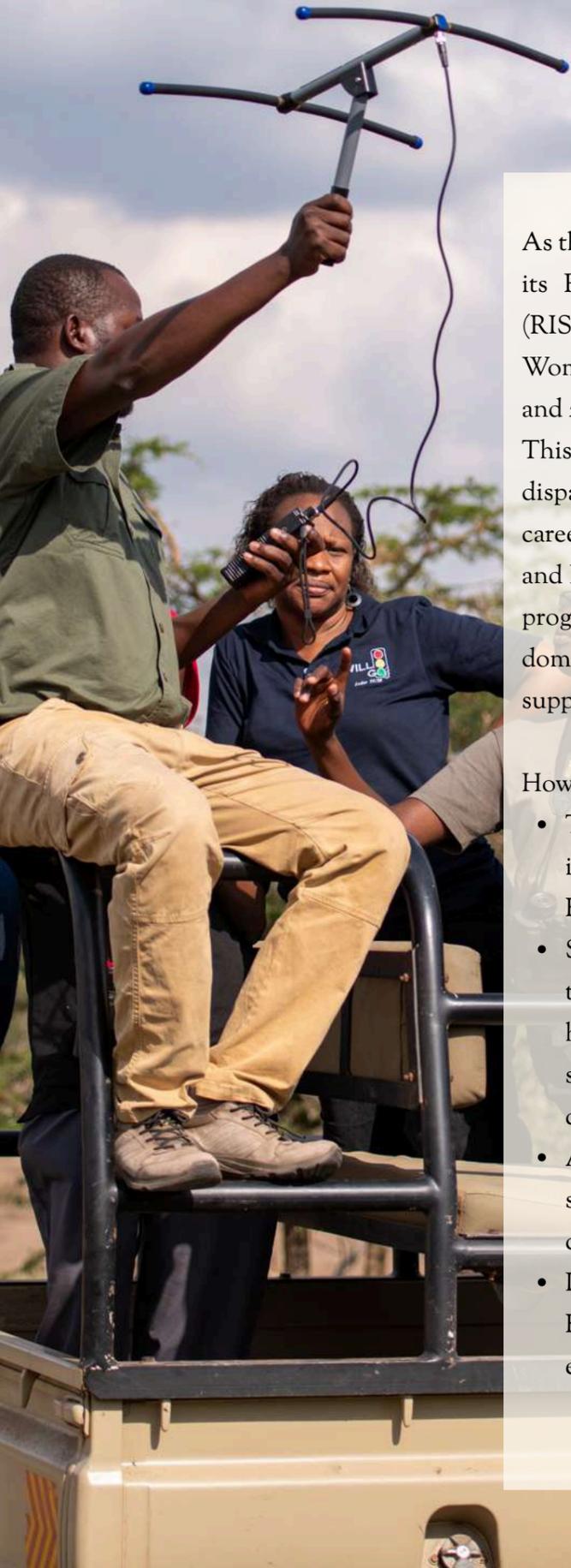
It wasn't just about developing technical or professional skills — it was about unlearning self-doubt and learning how to stand tall in spaces where women, particularly African women, are often underrepresented. Beyond my time as a trainee, I've also had the chance to return to the program as a trainer, an experience that has been equally rewarding. It's been amazing to meet brilliant, hardworking young women who are just starting out. The WIF alumnae network remains a source of strength and inspiration. Connecting with other women who've faced similar challenges and sharing stories, advice, and even small wins has been incredibly encouraging. It's rare to find that kind of honest, grounded support system.

In 2022, I applied for the Karimjee Jivanjee Scholarship, and I'm especially grateful for the support I received through my RISE connection — particularly Kristen. She encouraged me when I doubted myself, cheered me on when I got the scholarship, helped me prepare for the IELTS, reviewed my essays, and even practiced speaking with me. Thanks to that, I completed my Master's degree in Conservation Management of African Ecosystems at the University of Glasgow.

Currently, I'm interning with the North Carolina Zoo, focusing on vulture conservation. My work involves field monitoring, analysing GPS tracking data, and contributing to strategies aimed at reducing vulture poisoning in East Africa. I'm also working on publishing my MSc summer research, which focused on mapping roadkill hotspots along the Arusha–Namanga road, as well as a long-term study analysing how African White-backed Vultures have shifted their habitat use over the past decade in the Serengeti–Mara ecosystem. These are all critical steps toward my long-term goal of pursuing a PhD and advancing evidence-based conservation in East Africa.

I can confidently say that WIF helped shape the person I am today. Whether it's contributing in meetings, applying for new opportunities, or mentoring others who are just starting out, I carry the lessons from WIF with me every day. I'm deeply grateful for the space that WIF created, one that honoured our experiences, challenged us to grow, and empowered us to lead boldly in our careers and communities. I truly hope this program continues to thrive and uplift many more young women like me.

RISE

WOMEN IN CONSERVATION TECHNOLOGY

As the Tanzanian host institution, the Grumeti Fund - through its Research and Innovation for the Serengeti Ecosystem (RISE) program - has played a pivotal role in delivering the Women in Conservation Technology (WiCT) program in 2023 and 2024.

This regional initiative addresses the gender and geographic disparities in conservation technology by equipping early-career Tanzanian women with the technical tools, mentorship, and leadership skills needed to drive conservation impact. The program's mission is to elevate women in traditionally male-dominated conservation and technology spaces, while supporting locally led solutions to conservation challenges.

How is WiCT different from the Women in the field program?
- This program is primarily led by Fauna & Flora international and WildLabs, with support from Grumeti Fund and ARM Tech Company.
- Six months of virtual learning, community building, and tailored mentorship. It includes two in-person workshops hosted at RISE, including hands-on training on both software and hardware technology tools used in conservation.
- At the end of the training, participants are provided with seed grants ($500 USD) to implement individual conservation tech projects pitched by participants'.
- Internship opportunities, including placements at Grumeti Fund itself, enabling women to deepen their field experience.

Impact Highlights
- RISE Grumeti has hosted the program for two consecutive years, supporting a total of 19 Tanzanian women to date.
- Several participants have gone on to secure international scholarships, internships at Grumeti, and fellowships, with one alumna soon completing a master's program at the University of Glasgow, crediting her WiCT experience and Grumeti internship as key to her success.

Why Grumeti Fund is an Ideal Host
- The RISE facility at Grumeti offers an inclusive and field-based learning environment, with a strong track record of training Tanzanian conservationists, especially women.
- The program co-led by women and supported by committed male allies, the facility provides the practical tools and mentorship participants need to grow into leadership roles.
- Grumeti's fit-for-purpose infrastructure and long-running (well-established) conservation programs allow participants to engage with real-world, tech-enabled conservation initiatives, including anti-poaching, wildlife tracking and monitoring, and community-based conservation.

Looking Ahead

Grumeti Fund is committed to continuing and growing this impactful partnership, providing not just a venue, but also co-financing, mentorship, and in-kind contributions such as accommodation, logistics, and access to ongoing conservation programs. As a result, the WiCT program at RISE is not only empowering Tanzanian women - it is also helping shape the future of inclusive, technology-driven conservation in East Africa.

A CONVERSATION WITH SARAH MSHANGA

Sarah currently works as a Research Assistant and Conservation Biologist with the Women in Conservation Organization (WICO) where she leads a community-based green turtle conservation initiative on Mafia Island.

She previously served as a Governance, Communication, Community Outreach, and Awareness Intern at the Honeyguide Foundation, where she assisted in developing a communication strategy and enhancing equitable governance and equity in Wildlife Management Areas. She has also interned at the Greater Mahale Ecosystem Research and Conservation Project and Lion Landscapes Tanzania.

Sarah is deeply committed to advancing biodiversity conservation through community-driven and inclusive approaches, bridging science, outreach, and action to protect Tanzania's endangered wildlife and habitats.

George: As a participant in the Women in Conservation Technology (WiCT) program, what part of the experience did you enjoy the most?

Sarah: The part I enjoyed most was learning about integrating advanced and innovative technologies in conservation. I found the hands-on sessions particularly inspiring, as they allowed me to apply these tools to practical scenarios and witness their real-world impact on wildlife monitoring (tracking), human-elephant conflict mitigation, and habitat assessment.

I truly enjoyed the leadership component, which included a talk on the principles of leadership, one of which was confidence-building.

Additionally, the workshop on effective communication and pitching my work to different audiences enhanced my communication and professional skills.

George: What aspect of the program did you find the most difficult or demanding?

Sarah: The most difficult aspect of the program was building self-confidence, especially when speaking in front of others. While I'm passionate about conservation, expressing my ideas clearly in group settings was initially challenging, but the supportive environment helped me grow.

George: Which skills gained through WiCT have been the most useful in your current professional work?

Sarah: WiCT equipped me with practical skills, including data collection, proposal writing, conservation technology, and effectively communicating my work to various audiences, including funders. I apply all these skills, which now help me create a lasting impact in the field of conservation through the strong support I continue to receive from them. Additionally, this training has instilled a spirit of creativity and innovation in me.

George: Congratulations on receiving research grants! Could you share more about the grants and what you plan to pursue next?

Sarah: I'm honored to have received funding from the PADI FOUNDATION to support a project on the conservation of green turtles and their nesting sites in Mafia Island Marine Park. This grant marks a significant milestone in my conservation journey, offering me the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to marine conservation and raise awareness about the importance of protecting vulnerable species and their habitats. I am deeply grateful to the PADI FOUNDATION for their generous support.

Looking ahead, I plan to pursue additional grants and collaborative opportunities that will enable me to expand the impact of my work. I aim to stay actively engaged in research and conservation efforts that address real-world ecological challenges, with a strong focus on community-driven and nature-based solutions. To deepen my expertise, I intend to pursue a master's degree in wildlife conservation and will be seeking future support through scholarships and academic fellowships. I also look forward to participating in specialized training to enhance my technical capacity.

George: What advice would you give to young aspiring conservationists looking to build a career in this field?

Sarah: As an alumna of the WiCT training program, I urge all young women who are passionate about conservation to apply for participation in this program. It paves the way for them to receive support and build essential networking opportunities for their career development.

In the early stages of your career, support and connections are vital to guide and enhance your professional journey. For me, this training is more than just a program; it fuels my passion and reinforces the belief that the seed planted within me through this training must grow and bear fruit.

SCIENCE COMMUNICATION WORKSHOP: STORYTELLING FOR SCIENCE IN EAST AFRICA

Why Science Communication through storytelling?

Storytelling is one of the most powerful tools to make science meaningful, accessible, and actionable - particularly in conservation, where the issues are complex and deeply tied to local realities. In Tanzania, where wildlife conservation intersects with colonial histories, land rights, and community livelihoods, effective science communication is not just helpful - it is essential.

The workshop was designed to bring together ecologists, anthropologists, and Tanzanian conservationists to explore new, more grounded ways of sharing conservation knowledge that honor these complexities. It challenges participants to move beyond technical reporting and develop creative, culturally relevant, and empowering narratives.

Origin & Founding Idea
The initiative began in 2022 after Leiden University's teaching prize was awarded to co-founder Dr. Emily Strange, an Assistant Professor. She chose to use the grant to create a collaborative workshop in East Africa that combined ecology and anthropology to:
- Encourage interdisciplinary collaboration on conservation communication.
- Offer a space for mutual learning and experimentation.
- Support locally grounded narratives and critical reflection in storytelling.

🎯 Core Objectives
- Reclaim the narrative: Shift storytelling power toward African scientists, communities, and practitioners.
- Center local voices: Challenge the dominance of foreign-led, romanticized narratives by promoting stories told by those living and working within the conservation landscape.
- Co-create public-facing media: Develop accessible content (films, storymaps) that reflects both the scientific realities and the social contexts of conservation in Tanzania.
- Transform education: Feed workshop outputs into teaching materials for institutions like Leiden University to decolonize science education and diversify the voices presented in global classrooms.

🛠️ Tools & Skills Developed
Participants of the workshop are trained in practical science communication tools such as:
- Visual storytelling & filmmaking
- Audio recording & podcasting
- ArcGIS StoryMaps
- Narrative framing for advocacy and public engagement

These skills empower conservationists to communicate their work more effectively to communities, policymakers, donors, and global audiences.

🍀 Long-Term Vision
While the initial partnership with Afrisos is no longer ongoing, the workshop retains its foundational goals:
- Build a network of African conservation storytellers.
- Support cross-disciplinary collaboration between science and the arts.
- Produce high-quality, locally led content that can be used in classrooms, policy forums, community outreach, and international platforms.

The initiative also aims to influence global discourse on conservation by integrating East African perspectives into education and media, ultimately fostering a more just, authentic, inclusive, and hopeful conservation narrative.

RISE

Credit: Daniel Samwel

Credit: Daniel Samwel

EYES IN THE WILD: RISE CAMERA TRAP TRAINING EMPOWERS CONSERVATION PROFESSIONALS

Starting off 2025, the RISE program hosted a focused Camera Trap Data Analysis Training in the Serengeti, bringing together 23 emerging conservationists from across Tanzania. Participants came from conservation organizations and higher learning institutions, gaining critical hands-on skills in wildlife monitoring.

What They Learned
- Field deployment of camera traps
- Data cleaning, sorting, and analysis using R
- Image annotation using AI tools like TrapTagger
- Designing and managing camera trap-based wildlife monitoring systems

Why It Mattered
- Strengthened technical skills and boosted career confidence
- Inspired new graduate research and conservation proposals
- Led to scholarships, job offers, and expanded professional networks

Acknowledgments
Instructors: Michael Kimaro (University of Groningen), Exavery Kigosi (Leiden University & Grumeti Fund), Nyasatu Mkaka (RISE)
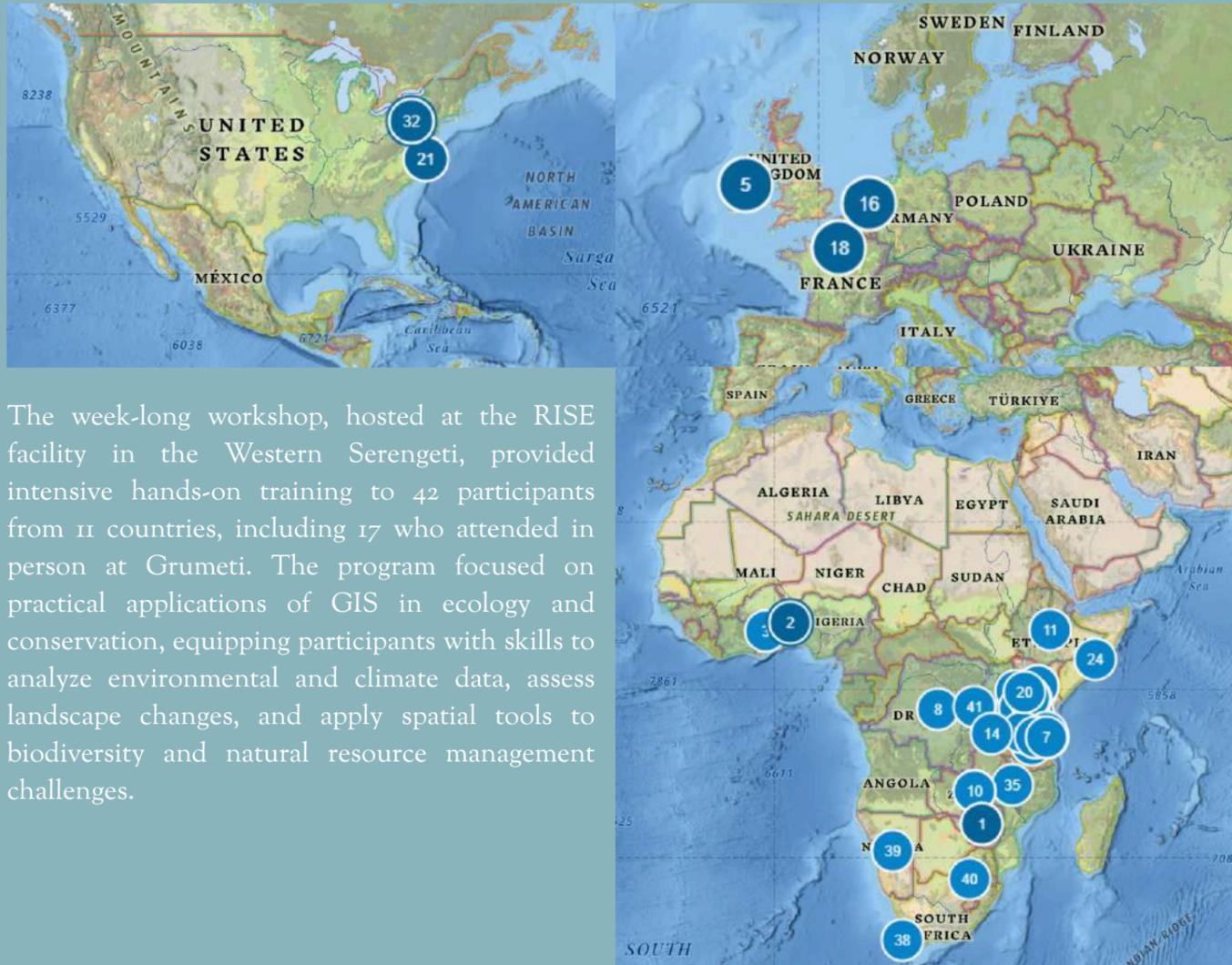
- Grumeti Fund embraces cutting-edge technology and innovation to address urgent conservation challenges.

- Through the RISE program, we have created a hub where experts, practitioners, early career professionals, and partners meet to share and test new technologies.

- Advanced and specially built cameras have the potential to support conservation in other ways, such as in combating poaching or illegal wildlife trade.

- We have recently initiated conversations with Microsoft AI about the SPARROW system (Solar-Powered Acoustic and Remote Recording Observation Watch).

- SPARROW is an open-source, solar-powered camera and acoustic monitoring device that uses on-device AI to detect and transmit key wildlife activity via satellite in near real-time.

- Its smart edge-processing and rugged design make it ideal for remote deployments in protected areas, with promising applications for future conservation surveillance.

ADVANCED GIS

Credit| Lollian Kosyando

In July 2024, the Grumeti Fund, through its RISE (Research and Innovation for the Serengeti Ecosystem) program, launched an Advanced GIS Training Program aimed at building geospatial capacity among early-career scientists and professionals across Africa. The training brought together expertise from Montana State University Billings (MSUB), Penn State University, University of Connecticut, and University of Dar es Salaam.

The week-long workshop, hosted at the RISE facility in the Western Serengeti, provided intensive hands-on training to 42 participants from 11 countries, including 17 who attended in person at Grumeti. The program focused on practical applications of GIS in ecology and conservation, equipping participants with skills to analyze environmental and climate data, assess landscape changes, and apply spatial tools to biodiversity and natural resource management challenges.

Credit| Akshita Rabdiya

Grumeti Fund's RISE Program Featured in MSU Billings News for Advanced GIS Training Collaboration

We were thrilled to see the training featured in an article published by MSU Billings, which highlighted the contributions of Dr. Donald Akanga, a faculty member in the GIS track of the Environmental Studies Program at MSUB. Dr. Akanga joined virtually to co-lead sessions and emphasized the global impact of empowering local practitioners with geospatial tools. Reflecting his commitment to education, he generously requested that his honorarium be redirected to support the Environmental Studies Project Fund at MSUB.

This training demonstrates the power of international academic collaboration to address pressing environmental challenges while building capacity among the next generation of conservation leaders.

This year we selected 50 participants from 21 countries, but the majority are Tanzanians

Internships

Jacquiline Respicious
Intern

Since May 2024, Jacquiline has been interning with the Grumeti Fund, gaining hands-on experience across three core departments: Research and Monitoring, Conservation Management, and Relationships. This multidisciplinary exposure has strengthened her skills in wildlife monitoring, ecological assessments, data collection, and community engagement.

Jacquiline has made valuable contributions during her time with the Grumeti Fund, actively participating in a range of conservation activities. Her work has included lion call-in surveys, vegetation composition assessments, biomass monitoring, and camera trap checks. She also took part in elephant collaring efforts and supported conservation awareness campaigns that reached over 3,500 community members across nine villages in Bunda District, promoting environmental education and stewardship. As part of her continued professional development, Jacquiline was selected to participate in the Women in the Field (WIF) program—a capacity-building initiative that connects early-career women with a national network of conservation practitioners across Tanzania.

Reflecting on her experience, Jacquiline shared:

"Both the internship and RISE programs built upon my academic foundation and provided clarity on the conservation path I wish to pursue. The multidisciplinary exposure has significantly sharpened my skills in wildlife monitoring, ecological assessments, data collection, and community engagement. Through practical fieldwork, mentorship, and collaborative learning, I've gained the confidence and competence to contribute meaningfully to the conservation of ecosystems and wildlife in Tanzania and beyond."

Angela Massay
Intern

Angela began her internship with RISE in 2024, where she has been actively involved in data analysis tools that help to address real-world conservation challenges. Angela has played a vital role in the Conservation education program for kids, visiting schools across the Serengeti region to promote environmental awareness and inspire the next generation of conservationists. The collaborative environment at RISE, supported by peers and mentors, has provided her with opportunities for shared learning and professional growth.

Reflecting on her journey, Angela notes that the internship has:

Strengthened her technical expertise in GIS, camera trapping, and genetic analysis, Deepened her passion for conservation genetics, Improved her communication and leadership through outreach, Provided a clear foundation for her future as a researcher and conservation geneticist. Most importantly, her time with Grumeti Fund and RISE has reaffirmed her dedication to wildlife conservation and inspired her to mentor and uplift others —especially young girls—who aspire to follow a similar path.

In her words:
"To aspiring conservationists: don't give up. Take chances, seize every opportunity, and trust that every small step brings you closer to creating meaningful change. With passion, persistence, and support, you can become a powerful voice for nature."

Nora Noel Lowassari
Intern

Nora interned with the Research and Innovation for the Serengeti Ecosystem (RISE) from February to May 2025. Nora worked closely with the Conservation and Population Genetics Project, where she was trained in environmental DNA (eDNA) techniques, including sample collection, DNA extraction, and sequencing, gaining valuable exposure to molecular ecology. She contributed to camera checks and assisting with image analysis.

Nora was instrumental in overseeing RISE's conservation education program, actively participating in outreach and educational initiatives across the Serengeti region. During the "Celebrating Africa's Giants" workshop, she used children's storybooks to teach primary school students about wildlife and ecological concepts - an experience that strengthened her communication and leadership skills. Some of her other fieldwork experiences included elephant collaring, de-snaring operations, and participation in a Science Communication and Storytelling Workshop, helping her translate scientific research into public-friendly messages - particularly for communities living near conservation areas.

Following her internship, Nora was offered a position as a Beekeeping Officer with Tanzania Forest Services (TFS). She credits her RISE experience as instrumental in building the confidence, technical expertise, and professional readiness that helped her succeed in the application process.

Reflecting on her journey, Nora shared:

"While passion may spark the path, it is resilience, hard work, and continuous learning that shape the future."
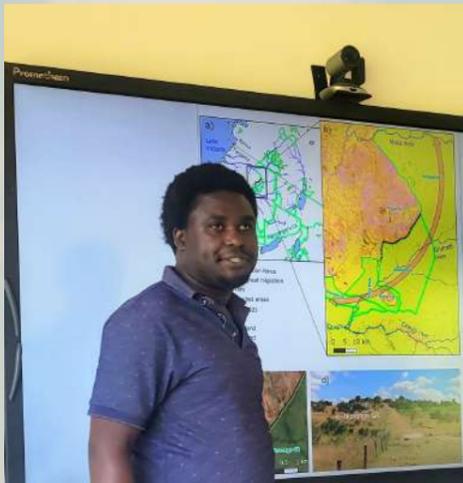
Franciska Mgina
MSc. Student- Wageningen University

Franciska is a dedicated and passionate early-career conservationist with a background in International Hospitality Management and a Pre-Master in Nature and Forest Conservation from Wageningen University. Originally from Njombe, Tanzania, and currently holding Dutch nationality, Franciska brings a unique blend of global experience and cultural insight to her conservation work. She has gained practical exposure to wildlife management in South Africa and is driven by a desire to inspire others and contribute meaningfully to wildlife conservation.

Franciska began her internship with RISE – Grumeti Fund in May 2025, where she continues to build on her skills and passion for conservation science. She is particularly interested in understanding human-wildlife coexistence in the western Serengeti and is eager to contribute to innovative solutions that support both ecological integrity and community well-being.

RISE

GF-SUPPORTED GRADUATE STUDENT PROGRESS

Michael Kimaro
University of Groningen, PhD
"Evaluating the efficacy, impacts, and perceptions of using electric fencing as a Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation Tool in western Serengeti"

Michael is working on assessing the efficacy of electric fencing in the western Serengeti. In the past 6 months, he has been able to submit one paper to a journal, and completed the analysis of other two papers that are under review by my supervisors. He has also been able to disseminate results of his research to local stakeholders. He plans to continue research in conservation fencing and seeks post-doctoral support.

Michael will be co-advising two master's students from the University of Dar es salaam and Sokoine University on research related to the fence. Michael was the main instructor for camera trap data analysis workshop held at RISE in January this year

Vainess Laizer
Nelson Mandela Insititute of Science and Technology, PhD
"Vulture breeding dynamics in the Serengeti Ecosystem"

Vainess is ccurrently doing her PhD program afetr completeing her masters degree in 2024. Her research is centered on the critically endangered white-backed vulture in the Western Serengeti, Northern Tanzania. This includes studying aspects such as breeding success, population status, and habitat preferences. Having completed her PhD coursework and data collection. She plans to submit her proposal soon and expects to finish by December 2027, with ongoing manuscript review.

Vainness receives funding from the Grumeti Fund and the Peregrine Fund for the coming 3 years.

Vainess supports RISE training programs. She has been an instructor for the WIF and WiCT

Lollian Kosyando,
University of Glasgow
"Elephant behavior"

Lollian investigates how elephants utilise the communal grazing area in the western Serengeti to understand how the structure and location of these areas may contribute to human-elephant conflict in nearby communities.

She has completed her data collection, conducting 60 focal elephant observations: 30 in the Makundusi grazing area and 30 in the Ikorongo-Grumeti Game Reserves. Each elephant was observed for 15 minutes, with behaviors recorded every 30 seconds using a pre-defined ethogram. This enabled the development of daytime activity budgets and comparison of behavior across land-use types. Lollian has completed the analysis of activity budgets and is currently working on statistical comparisons of foraging time between the two sites.

This fall, Lollian will start her Ph.D at the University of Glasgow. as a recepient of Leverhulme scholarship.

Exavery Kigosi,
Leiden University, PhD
"Impacts of Invasive Alien Plants in the Western Serengeti"

Exavery Kigosi, Grumeti Fund's GIS & Data Analyst, and a PhD Candidate at Leiden University, has completed data collection for his research on invasive alien plants in the Western Serengeti and is currently analyzing data. He has applied models to assess plant infestation across land uses and is evaluating wildlife space use and behavior in infested areas using camera trap data.

He has digitized remaining datasets, updated manuscript sections, and supervised an MSc student from Mweka during analysis.

Exavery has been instrumental in some of our training programs including camera trap data analysis and advanced GIS

RISE

Lollian Kosyando
WIF, Graduate student

My career in conservation truly began in November 2021 when I joined the Women in the Field training programme. Before that, I found myself stuck, unable to access internships and job opportunities because I lacked experience. Like many young women trying to break into the conservation field, I knew I had the passion, but without a starting point, that passion had nowhere to go.

The Women in the Field programme was a turning point. It didn't just train us on technical skills in ecological monitoring, camera trapping and animal tracking, it gave us our first real chance to be in the field, to collect, process, analyze, and present ecological data. More than the technical skills, this programme enabled us to build the confidence to carry out research independently and allowed us to network with inspiring women leaders in conservation who have been mentoring us to date. For the first time, I felt I had a chance in this field.

After the programme, I had an internship opportunity with the Southern Tanzania Elephant Program (STEP) as a Human-Elephant Coexistence Intern in Mang'ula, Morogoro. In this role, I supported the Human Elephant Co-existence Coordinator to work with communities to promote awareness and implement mitigation strategies for human-elephant conflicts. It was a great experience, one that deepened my understanding of the complexities of conservation in human-dominated landscapes. Shortly after, I received a scholarship to pursue a master's degree in Conservation Management of African Ecosystems (CMAE) at the University of Glasgow, working on a thesis that focused on understanding elephants resource use in the human-dominated landscape within the Greater Serengeti Ecosystem, utilising tracking data to assess their movement patterns and habitat selection.

After completing my studies, I joined the RISE team in Grumeti Fund, where I have been working on a project investigating how elephants utilize communal grazing areas here in the western Serengeti with the goal of understanding how the location and structure of grazing areas may facilitate human-elephant conflict in adjacent communities.

Looking back, I can say with absolute confidence, that the Women in the Field programme changed the trajectory of my career. It opened doors that had previously felt closed. It gave me and so many other women a real shot at our dream. In 2024, I had the honour of returning to the programme ,this time, as a facilitator. Standing in front of a new group of young women just beginning their journeys, I saw my own story reflected back at me, the same curiosity and eagerness to learn. I hope that when they saw me there, they saw a glimpse of what is possible for them too.

Credit: Tara Shupe

RISE

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Nyasatu Mkaka, A prospective MSc.
African College of Wildlife Management-MWEKA

Nyasatu grew up in Bunda District, adjacent to the Serengeti Ecosystem. She holds a bachelor's degree in Zoology from the University of Dar es Salaam and is dedicated to empowering women and youth in conservation. As an alumna of the Women in the Field program (2020 cohort), she previously worked with Lion Landscapes organization to promote human-wildlife coexistence near Ruaha National Park. In 2022, she earned a scholarship to study International Wildlife Conservation Practice at Oxford University's WildCRU.

Since 2024, Nyasatu has been working as an intern at RISE, with a primary focus on camera trap research. Nyasatu has been an invaluable member of the team, bringing her a strong background in wildlife data analysis from her academic background and work experience. She has played a key role in streamlining and analysing camera trao data using TrapTagger, an AI-powered platform designed to annotate and classify wildlife images. Her analysis focused on spatial and temporal overlaps between lions and leopards in relation to human activity - offering valuable insights into large carnivore site use under anthropogenic pressure.

Beyond her technical contributions, Nyasatu has co-instructed in training programs such as the *Women in the Field* program and the *Camera Trap Data Analysis Workshop*. She has also actively enhanced her own skill set by participating in training opportunities including *Advanced GIS* and *Freshwater Ecology workshops*.

Later this year, she will begin her master's studies at the College of African Wildlife Management, Mweka, where she plans to focus on the analysis of over five years of camera trap data. Nyasatu has also been offered a job position at WCS as a Carnivore Research Officer in Southern Tanzania for six months.

Sarah Maagi
MSc. Ecology, University of Dar es Salaam

Sarah is an alumna of the Women in Conservation Technology (WiCT) program and began her journey with RISE (Research and Innovation for the Serengeti Ecosystem) as an intern. During her six-month interim period, she focused on refining her GIS skills, gaining hands-on experience in spatial data analysis and conservation mapping.

Following her internship, Sarah joined the Research and Monitoring team at the Grumeti Fund, where she made valuable contributions to data curation, analysis, and the interpretation of GIS layers. Her adaptability and strong coordination skills allowed her to manage multiple projects and meet objectives with efficiency and precision.

Now pursuing an MSc at the University of Dar es Salaam, Sarah's research focuses on evaluating the effectiveness of aerial surveys and camera traps in monitoring population trends of selected wildlife species. She is also exploring how land cover changes affect the detection probability of small to medium-sized animals during aerial surveys.

Through her academic and professional journey, Sarah continues to build on the foundation she developed through the WiCT and RISE programs. Through her work, Sarah aims to generate practical insights to improve wildlife population monitoring and support adaptive conservation strategies in Tanzania and beyond.

Edward Swai, MSc
Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology.

Edward Swai is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Biodiversity and Ecosystem at the NM-AIST. His research focuses on the impacts of vertebrate scavenging on blowfly (Diptera: Calliphoridae) communities associated with vertebrate carrion in the Serengeti ecosystem.

Within the first six months of his program, Edward successfully conducted preliminary data collection to support the development of his research. He participated in a one-month outreach and internship program at RISE, a research initiative under the Grumeti Fund. During this period, he also completed all first-semester coursework at NM-AIST. Additionally, Edward developed and presented his concept note and is currently working on finalizing his full research proposal.

Mariam Michael Richard, MSc.
Nelson Mandela African Institute of Science and Technology

Mariam Richard has completed her coursework and began collecting data on January 21, 2025. As of June 19, she had completed data collection in eleven villages, reaching a total of 474 individuals, including 330 household survey respondents, 88 focus group participants, 22 key informants, and 34 former hunters.

She is now finalizing data collection in the remaining four villages and has submitted the first draft of her manuscript to her supervisors for review. Mariam anticipates to Graduate by May 2026.

Meshack Madata, MSc
University of Dar es salaam.

Meshack Madata is a Master's student in the Department of Zoology and Wildlife Conservation at the University of Dar es Salaam, co-advised by Dr. George Lohay. His research focuses on assessing the connectivity of Masai giraffe populations between the Tarangire ecosystem and the Enduimet–Arusha ecosystem, with the goal of informing conservation strategies for this endangered species.

Meshack was selected to participate in an environmental DNA (eDNA) training held at the RISE program to strengthen his capacity in independent research—from field data collection to molecular analysis. He is partially funded by the University of Dar es Salaam and receives fieldwork support from the Wild Nature Institute. In addition to his studies, Meshack serves as a Tutorial Assistant at Mkwawa University College of Education in Iringa. By supporting Meshack's academic journey, we are also contributing to the advancement of wildlife science and education in Tanzania.

RISE

RISE Seminar Series and Research Dissemination

Through its seminar series and guest speaker invitations, RISE provides a dynamic platform for conservation practitioners from diverse backgrounds to share their expertise and research with the broader conservation community. These seminars aim to offer valuable insights into current conservation efforts in Tanzania and beyond. Over the past two years, the series has attracted international attention, establishing RISE as a forum for dialogue on pressing conservation issues both locally and globally.

Seminar Series

25+ Presentations since 2024

500+ participants (including online)

New published research

Dr. George Lohay co-authored two scientific articles published on giraffes

- **Demographic drivers of population dynamics reveal subpopulation-specific conservation needs for giraffes in the Serengeti Ecosystem |**
This paper was published in the Journal of Wildlife Management in March. Highlighting the stable population in the central Serengeti and the declining population at the periphery (western Serengeti and Northern Serengeti)

- **Sexual dimorphisms in body proportions of Masai giraffe and the evolution of the giraffe's neck |**
Dr. George Lohay and his team questioned the idea that male giraffes evolved longer necks than females due to reproductive competition. Their research revealed that females have relatively longer necks—an outcome likely influenced by nutrition not sex

Dr. Kristen Snyder published two articles on elephants and EarthRanger

- **Crop use structures resource selection strategies for African elephants in a human-dominated landscape |**
In this research, Dr. Snyder and her team found out that elephants travel further outside protected areas in areas with fragmented agriculture and forests compared to those with intense agriculture- they travel shorter distances more frequently

- **EarthRanger: An open-source platform for ecosystem monitoring, research and management |**
Since 2017, the Grumeti Fund has used Ai2's EarthRanger software to gather and integrate data for informed conservation planning. Dr. Kristen's study offers a scientific evaluation of the tool, highlighting its contributions to conservation efforts.

Instructor *Portfolio*

Grace Malley, PhD
Lecturer
University of Dar es salaam

Dan Wanyama, PhD
Assistant Professor
University of Connecticut

Susan Kotikot, PhD
Postdoctoral Fellow
Pennsylvania State University

Donald Akanga, PhD
Assistant Professor
Montana State University Billings

Olipa Simon, PhD
Leading Scientist
University of Dar es salaam

Elisabeth Wiegele, MSc
UNESCO Chair for Sustainable
Management of Protected Areas
Carinthia University, Austria

Vanessa Berger, MSc
UNESCO Chair for Sustainable
Management of Protected Areas
Carinthia University, Austria

Joshua Benjamin
PhD Candidate
University of Florida

Loyce Majige, MSc
Research Scientist
University of Glasgow, Alumni

Meredith Palmer, PhD
Conservation Scientist
Yale University

Esther Githinji
Conservation Scientist
Yale University

Stephanie O'Donnell
Former WILDLABS Executive
Manager
Fauna & Flora UK

Henry Rees
WILDLABS Programme
Developemnet
Fauna & Flora

Libe Massawe, PhD
Lecturer
University of Dar es salaam

Rosalie Tribe
Senior Sustainability Coordinator
ARM

Alina Peter, MBA
Founder, ConTech Africa
African Leadership University,
Alumni

Rachael Horsman
Education Solutions Manager
ARM

Prowess Chukkas, MSc
Social Impact Technical Consultant
ARM

Charlotte Searle, PhD
Large Carnivore researcher
University of Oxford's
WildCRU

Janemary Ntalwila
Chief research officer, Head of
Wildlife information
TAWIRI

Emma Impink
Community
Development Manager
African Parks Network

Emily Strange, PhD
Assistant Professor
Leiden University

Cristiana Strava, PhD
Anthropologist
Leiden University

Ariel Gakunga
Field Communications,
Production and Storytelling
African Wildlife Foundation

Ghaamid Abdulbasat
Impact Communications
IUCN Great Blue Wall
Initiative

Victoria Mkessa, MSc
RISE Programs Coordinator
University of Glasgow, Alumni

Nyasatu Mkaka
WIF Alumni & RISE Intern
University of Oxford's Wildcru,
Alumni

Kristen Snyder, PhD
Scientific Advisor
RISE, Grumeti Fund

Catherine Getige
Researcher Epidemiologist
Ministry of Health, Tanzania

Claire Bracebridge, PhD
Program Manager, African
Vulture Conservation
The Peregrine Fund

Sarah Cleaveland, PhD
Professor, Comparative
Epidemiology
University of Glasgow

Josephine Smit, PhD
Conservation Scientist
Southern Tanzania Elephant
Program

Anna Estes, PhD
Assistant Professor
Carlton University

Evaline Munisi
Research Assistant
TAWIRI

Ana Grau, MSc
Biologist
Lion Landscapes

Skyler Nuelle, MSc
Head of Partnerships & Impact
Analysis , Grumeti Fund
University of Virginia

Credit: Daniel Samwel

THE RISE TEAM

Lameck Jacob, BSc.
Research Assistant

With the growth of our activities, the RISE team has expanded significantly over the past two years. In 2024, we welcomed Lameck Jacob as a Research Assistant to support our graduate students, as well as our research and training programs. Lameck brings over five years of experience working in the Serengeti Ecosystem and holds a background in Wildlife Management from the College of African Wildlife Management, Mweka.

Before joining RISE, he served as a Research Assistant for the Serengeti Biodiversity Program under the University of Glasgow. Lameck has quickly become an invaluable member of our team, contributing both expertise and dedication to our mission.

George Lohay, Ph.D.
Head Scientist

Kristen Snyder, Ph.D.
Scientific Advisor

Anna Tseama
Lab Technician

Anna Tseama is a Laboratory Technician at the RISE program, where she supports students and researchers engaged in molecular laboratory work. She holds a Diploma in Laboratory Technology from Sokoine University of Agriculture and is a licensed veterinary laboratory technician under the Veterinary Council of Tanzania. Anna brings over four years of experience in laboratory diagnostics and research, including previous roles with the AESA-RISE Project and Mininga Lab.

Her expertise spans clinical chemistry, parasitology, toxicology testing, and biosafety procedures. At RISE, Anna will provide support to our training programs, especially for Women in the Field.

Victoria Mkessa, MSc.
Programs Coordinator

Emmy John
House keeper

Theresia John
Chef

Credit: Daniel Samwel

RISE

LOOKING AHEAD: THE FUTURE OF RISE

As Head Scientist of the Research and Innovation for the Serengeti Ecosystem (RISE), I've had the privilege of witnessing the transformative power of investing in Tanzanian talent and applied conservation research.

Since launching in 2019, RISE has trained over 250 emerging conservationists, from GIS analysts to field ecologists, storytellers, and molecular biologists. Our programs are helping to shape the next generation of Tanzanian leaders who will carry forward the work of protecting our landscapes and wildlife.

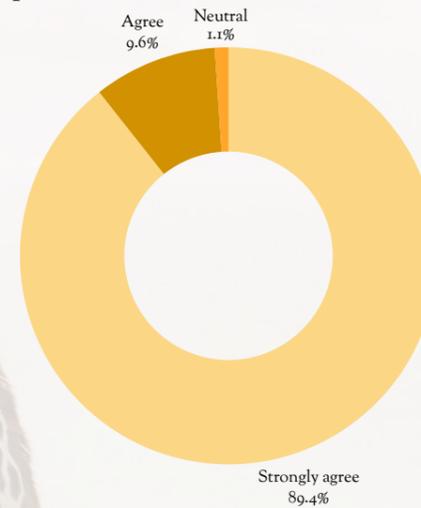We're expanding our focus in several key areas:

- Support for graduate students through long-term fellowships and supervision partnerships with Tanzanian and international universities.

- Innovation in conservation technology, including AI-powered camera traps, climate sensors, and GPS tracking systems.

- Establishment of a wildlife mini-lab in the Western Serengeti to support anti-poaching efforts and genetic monitoring in collaboration with Nelson Mandela African Institution of Science and Technology and Dar es Salaam Police Academy- Research Center.

Stronger local and global collaboration through research forums, summer programs, and joint projects.
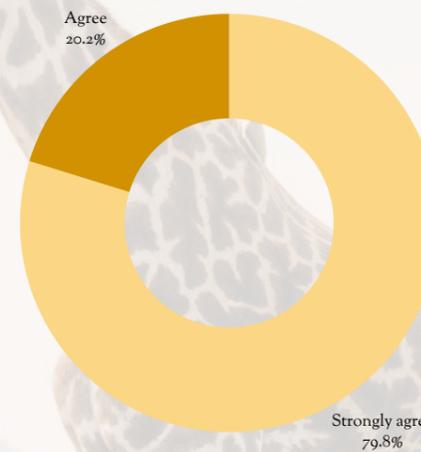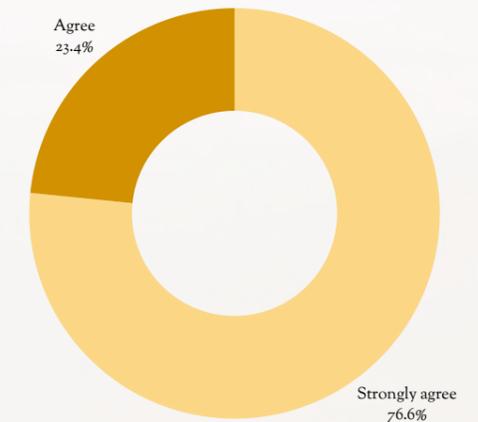
Credit: Daniel Samwel

We asked our participants:

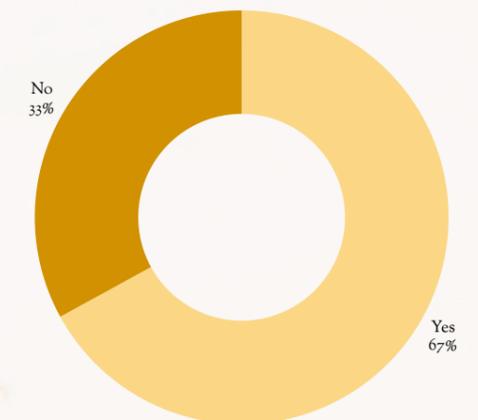**Was the training relevant to your career path?**

Agree 9.6%
Neutral 1.1%
Strongly agree 89.4%

Have you used the skills in your current job/studies?

Agree 23.4%
Strongly agree 76.6%

Did the program help you advance your career?

Agree 20.2%
Strongly agree 79.8%

Did you get an opportunity as a result of the training or connections you made at RISE?

No 33%
Yes 67%

"The program gave me practical skills that I now use to lead biodiversity surveys. I also train others." - Marylove

"Because of RISE, I secured a research position in carnivore conservation. It was a turning point in my career." - Bruce

"RISE gave me confidence. I now lead a conservation club at my university and applied for my first research grant." - Huruma

These stories remind us why we do this work. RISE is more than a training program. It's a platform for Tanzanians to lead the future of conservation - with the tools, knowledge, and networks they need to make a lasting impact. We look forward to what's ahead.

Dr. George Lohay
Head Scientist
RISE – Grumeti Fund

RISE

RISE Wishlist

To meet growing demand for training, student support, and applied research, RISE requires key investments to expand impact and improve efficiency

Field Vehicle – $83,000

RISE currently has only one vehicle shared by six staff and five+ graduate students, limiting fieldwork supervision and outreach. A second vehicle will improve mobility, logistics, and safety across remote sites.

Nanopore Sequencer – $3,500

A portable DNA sequencer (Oxford MinION) will enable real-time genetic analysis, reduce dependence on foreign labs, and provide hands-on molecular training for Tanzanian students.

Permanent Accommodation Facility – $350,000

Current lodging consists of three deteriorating tents with safety risks and limited capacity. A 6–8 room permanent structure will house 12+ students or staff, reduce reliance on external facilities, and match the design of the main RISE building.

Our Key Collaborations

We continue to work closely with our government partners to ensure the success of our programs and we are grateful for their continued support and collaboration.

Credit: Daniel Samwel

RISE

Website
grumetifund.org

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Instagram
@grumetifund

Youtube
Grumeti Fund - Non Profit Organization

Contact us through
RISE@grumetifund.org, www.grumetifund.org

Credit: Daniel Samwel