

Q4 2020

Mai Ndombe REDD+ Project Impact Report



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Mai Ndombe: Advancing towards durable conservation success

Located in a remote 300,000 hectare rainforest area in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Mai Ndombe REDD+ Project provides essential basic social services for over 50,000 people in 28 villages. Already challenged by the remoteness of the project, poor infrastructure, and other day to day implementation issues, in 2020 the project had additionally to overcome the new challenges brought by the COVID pandemic. Yet the project successfully faced down these daunting challenges and made breakthrough accomplishments that advance the project toward durable conservation success.

Key achievements for 2020 include:

- 1. Sustainable intensification of agriculture.** Unsustainable extensive slash and burn agriculture is the main driver of deforestation in the project area today. In 2020 the project made significant strides in helping the community to sustainably intensify food production. The project established four 1-hectare cassava farms with a new varietal that achieved yields of 3,700kg per hectare, 10 times higher than the yield of conventional varieties. Additionally, the project established 10 demonstration gardens and built 5 fish ponds: People in the project area have historically relied on fish production from Lake Mai Ndombe, but with the lake substantially depleted from overfishing, sustainable fish farming combined with high-yielding cassava will help improve community health and nutrition while alleviating the pressure on the forest and the lake.
- 2. Bringing schools to every village.** The project made incredible strides in 2020 toward its commitment to build schools in every village. In 2020 the project built 4 new schools serving approximately 5,000 students, bringing the total constructed to date to 10. With the foundations for four new schools completed by year's end, the project is on track to continue the progress made in 2020.
- 3. Establishing health care infrastructure.** Access to health care in this remote area is essentially nonexistent. In 2020, the project successfully completed the construction of the Iballi Clinic, which will deliver access to high quality health care in the project area, providing better testing, diagnostic capacity, and will play a vital role in improving the health of the community.
- 4. Sustained employment.** In the face of the COVID epidemic, the project was nonetheless able to sustain full employment of 300 local project staff in the DRC, as well as an additional 80 people employed on the project's construction sites, agriculture projects, and fish ponds.
- 5. Wildlife returning.** Until the project began, leopards, elephants, and buffalos had not been seen in the project area since the 1970s. 2020 appears to have been a turning point for wildlife in the project area: While elephants have been documented since the start of the project, 2020 marked the first known return of the buffalo and the leopard, while the elephant population in the project area has split into 3 different groups, a result of a growing population and the emergence on more dominant male animals in the group.

These incredible results were made possible only through the tireless efforts of the community and Wildlife Works staff on the ground, who carry the work forward in tremendously challenging conditions that are difficult to imagine from the homes and offices from which this report has been prepared and is being read. Mai Ndombe's achievements demonstrate clearly the role that REDD+ plays in transforming the lives of the world's most vulnerable populations, while protecting the climate for the benefit of all.

About the Mai Ndombe REDD+ Project

The Mai Ndombe REDD+ Project protects 300,000 hectares (740,000 acres) of critical bonobo and forest elephant habitat within the world's second-largest intact rainforest and some of the most important wetlands on the planet, the Congo Basin. This project reduces the principal drivers of forest and biodiversity loss and is charting a new pathway for community prosperity through comprehensive investments into the surrounding local communities, which are among the most impoverished in the world. Such investments include building and renovating schools, providing healthcare services (such as access to immunizations), supporting food security and nutrition (such as through agricultural diversification), and providing capacity building activities that empower local communities.

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2020 Impacts



✓ Agriculture

- 5 fishponds built
- 4 cassava farms (1 hectare)
- 37 bags of 100kg yield of casava per hectare, 10x higher than past yields
- 10 demonstration gardens



✓ Education

- 10 schools built in total, 4 in 2020
- 5,000 students served
- 2 more schools under construction



✓ Employment

- 300 local people on Wildlife Works payroll
- 80 people employed on construction sites, agriculture and fish workers



✓ Healthcare

- Every community member at CLD's request receiving health care services
- 1 clinic built to completion

Q4 2020 Summary

Progress and perseverance toward delivering sustainable livelihoods and social services

This past quarter, the Mai Ndombe REDD+ project has continued to make steady progress towards delivering key infrastructure projects for community members. This has included the completion of several new fishponds in the Loombe Agriculture village, final touches to the Ibali healthcare clinic, and the completion of 4 school building structures in the villages of Ilee and Makaba and 4 new building foundations in the village of Nselenge.

In addition, the project has embarked on an exciting new initiative to analyse the biological diversity inside of Lake Mai-Ndombe as it works to replenish the lake.

✓ Continued progress of the Agriculture Development test site in Loombe

✓ eDNA campaign to reveal the biological diversity inside of Lake Mai-Ndombe

✓ Ibali Clinic: access to high quality healthcare

✓ Educating the next generation





Continued progress of the Agriculture Development test site in Loombe

Agriculture intensification activities have expanded in the village of Loombe during this past quarter. Goats and sheep have been successfully introduced into the enclosure, soybean and cassava have been harvested, and two new fishponds have been completed, with one more pond scheduled to be built during the first quarter of 2021.

There was an exceptional yield of cassava this past quarter and soybean production was also abundant, producing 1,000 Kg of soybean in 3 sites for a total of 1.4 hectares. The soybean seeds will be used to help expand agricultural activities in other sites across the project area.

Agriculture development activities such as these are important in alleviating pressure on the forest by targeting efficient use of areas under fallow for high yield cassava and soybean cultivation. The dedication of local communities alongside Wildlife Works staff continues to deliver high quality results in this initiative.



Highlights



eDNA campaign to reveal the biological diversity inside of Lake Mai-Ndombe

This past quarter the project has launched a new initiative to analyse the biological diversity inside of Lake Mai-Ndombe.

The eDNA campaign has been designed to reveal the remaining biodiversity that exists in the lake by studying the residual DNA in the Lake. The project has partnered with a London based company, Nature Metrics, which has developed this pioneering approach to assessing biodiversity. Another team will be collecting fish samples in the local market and from fisherman in the area to help match the unknown DNA from the water sample to the DNA of the fish in order to determine the diversity of the lake.

This activity is of paramount importance as it will allow the project to evaluate the remaining biological diversity in the lake. This will serve to target local species in Lake Mai-Ndombe as the project starts to replenish the lake — a critical task as Lake Mai-Ndombe is being emptied due to the misuse of mosquito nets and unsustainable fishing.





Ibali clinic: access to high quality healthcare

The construction of the Ibali Clinic, which has been tracked throughout 2020 in these Impact Reports, has now been completed during Q4 with the finishing of plastering. The new clinic will deliver access to high quality health care in the project area, providing better testing, diagnostic capacity, and will play a vital role in improving the health of the community. The project is now waiting for doors and windows to be shipped and for medical equipment to be delivered, and is working to appoint a doctor.

Educating the next generation

Four school buildings have been completed in the village of Ilee and Mankaba at the south westernmost part of the project area this past quarter. This brings the total number of schools built in the project area to date to 10. In addition, the foundation of four new schools in the village of Nselenge has been completed and the construction of these schools will begin next quarter.

In addition to providing access to education to the youth, the building of schools in the project area has also provided important employment opportunities to the local community — both through construction jobs and teaching.

Building these schools will continue to improve quality education in villages across the project area, helping to educate a new generation and providing opportunities for prosperity and growth.





Project activities slowed down due to the COVID-19 pandemic

With schools closed due to government restrictions and employees unable to leave Kinshasa, executing project activities has been a challenge this past quarter.



Challenges

✔ Project activities impacted by COVID-19 restrictions

✔ Transportation challenges to and from Kinshasa



Project activities impacted by COVID-19 restrictions

Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, most of the project activities have taken an important hit this past year. Employees were encouraged to follow guidelines from healthcare officials both in Kinshasa and in the project area, which slowed down the ability to implement project activities. However, the project's office in Kinshasa was open and in full operation this past quarter and project activities have been able to return to near-normal. While the pandemic has been highly challenging to navigate, the project has continued to persevere and stay dedicated.



Transportation challenges to and from Kinshasa

Transportation to and from Kinshasa has remained a significant challenge during this past quarter. The road system has further deteriorated due to a lack of maintenance and high rain, which has affected the project's ability to deliver manufactured goods to the project area. Despite these ongoing challenges, the project has been able to deliver goods to the project area during these difficult times, through finding alternative means of transportation. The system that was put in place during the third quarter is still in operation, with two 4x4 vehicles now available to support. Management has agreed to buy a second vehicle to help facilitate transportation to and from the project in order to address this ongoing challenge.





Forest Impacts



300,000 hectares

hectares of Congo Basin rainforest protected

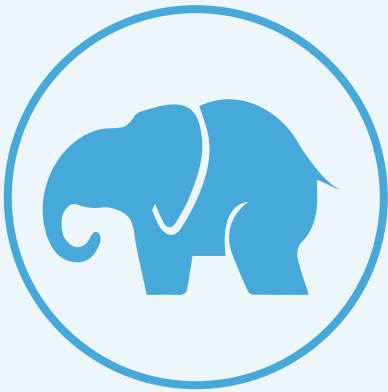
13,322,276

tonnes of emissions avoided to date



Impact Over Time

Wildlife Impacts



Two endangered species protected: the Bonobo and Forest Elephant.

The current population of the endangered Bonobo (only found in the Congo Basin) is estimated between 30,000 - 50,000. About **20** Bonobos live in the protection area. The current population of the Forest Elephant (only found in the Congo Basin) is estimated at 100,000. About **30** Forest Elephants live in the project area.



Impact Over Time

Community Impacts



10 schools built

3,000 people
receiving health services

300 local people
on Wildlife Works payroll



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