

Mai Ndombe REDD+ Project
Impact Report

**Q1-Q2
2022**



**EVER
LAND**

**WILDLIFE
WORKS**



Mai Ndombe

REDD+ Project

 DRC

EVER
LAND

Developer: Wildlife Works **Standards:** VCS, CCB

Agricultural intensification and diversification continue to expand across the project area, with new high yield cassava being introduced into community gardens. The women-led Community Based Organizations (OBs) have shown incredible progress, with 80% of women in the villages currently participating. The main building of the Ibali healthcare clinic has finished construction and has been equipped with new diagnostics equipment; further state-funded expansions are being planned. Poaching and logging continue to be challenging. However, a new radio-communications project is underway to improve the efficiency of incident reporting.



The Wildlife Works Mai Ndombe REDD+ Project protects 300,000 hectares 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, in partnership with local community members, is charting a new pathway for prosperity through comprehensive investments into the surrounding local communities, which are among the most disenfranchised 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.



35.9

MILLION
tCO₂e emissions
avoided to date

*through the protection
of 200,000 ha of dryland
forest and savanna*

4

IUCN REDLIST
species under active
protection measures

*including Forest Elephant^{CR},
Bonobo^{EN}, Giant Ground
Pangolin^{EN}*

>4600

students supported
in 11 schools built within
local communities

*with a further 21 schools
planned in the lifetime of
the project*

Highlight 1

Agricultural intensification activities continue to expand

Agriculture intensification activities have expanded in the village of Nkondi and new animal enclosures have been built in three villages. Cattle - including sheep and goats - are commonly left to roam the villages, which can be problematic for nearby agricultural fields as the animals feed on the growing plants. These new enclosures will continue to be built in other villages to mitigate this issue.

High yield soybean and cassava plantations have become permanent activities across the project zone as they have been very well received by the community members. After the success of the high yield cassava, the communities were keen to test other high yielding varieties, including soybean. Soybeans are important as a basis for the community diets and also can be utilized as feed for the nearby fish farms. The ultimate goal of the diversification of agricultural activities is to co-develop self-sustaining agronomy for the communities, ensuring they can produce adequate food for local consumption as well as selling in regional markets. The project team has established significant agricultural training and technical assistance for the communities by hiring well-educated agronomists to train each village individually.

Beyond agriculture, an additional fishpond was built in Nkondi and harvested for clarias and tilapia in Q1 2022. Expanding the new fishponds across the project area is very important to alleviate the pressure on the forest by targeting villages with limited agricultural potential. Further food security activities in these areas will include the construction of chicken and pig farms in the near future.



Highlight 2

Women-led Community Based Organizations (OBs) spread to more villages across the project area



The Gender Empowerment Team initialized the women-led Community Based Organizations (OBs) in one local village (Ibali) at the start of the project, with 12 women participating. As word spread of the exciting activities undertaken by the OBs (particularly the agricultural intensification of cassava), women from other villages were encouraged to get involved. By the end of 2021, additional OBs have been established in Kesenge, Nselenge, Ntono Nkomele, Ibali, Mpili, Mbwe Nzey and Nkundo. This was further expanded to Lobalu, Bakele, Bokebene, Ntandenyanga, Ilee, Mankaba, Ngeleku and Bosongo during the first half of 2022. Currently, 80% of women in the project area villages are participating.

After harvesting of cassava and other crop varieties, women distribute the materials to other village OBs as a means of spreading the food security program; which has catalyzed the expansion of women-led individual community farms. When each harvest is ready, the OBs provide the crops to the Wildlife Works team, who pay the OBs upfront and then sell the produce at local markets. Given how difficult transportation is across the region, Wildlife Works connects women to markets that would otherwise be inaccessible. The profits from the agriculture are used by the OBs for a variety of purposes - including expansion of agricultural fields and funding for education (school fees, uniforms and supplies).



Highlight 3

Ibali clinic finished construction

In Mai Ndombe, healthcare is limited and episodic epidemics are common among children in the villages. The Ibali clinic has completed construction in the first half of 2022, offering important high quality, accessible healthcare for the project zone villages and beyond. Due to the distances between villages and previously existing healthcare facilities, it was often difficult for the community members to arrive at clinics in time to receive treatment.

This new Ibali Clinic cuts the travel distance by at least $\frac{1}{3}$ for many villages, improving access to thousands of community members. Laboratory equipment (\$10,000 USD) has been purchased to improve diagnostics and clinic staff (technicians and doctors) are currently undergoing training. The Minister of Health recently visited the clinic and was impressed by the facilities; as a result, the government will be funding an additional building and new staff (state paid doctors and nurses).



Highlight 4

Improved water and education access

The construction of four new schools has been started in Bosongo, Nkondi, Mpata Mbalu and Lokanga. Foundations have been completed in these villages and masonry work is underway. Furthermore, four other school construction buildings have been initiated in Loombe, Mpili and Ngando Manga. Bricks are being built in preparation for these buildings in Bosongo, Nkondi and Mpata Mbalu.

Water drilling machines have delivered clean water in Iballi, Nselenge, Loombe, Lokanga, Mbale, Bosongo, Kesenge, Mpata Mbalu, Bokebene, Ikita, Lobeke and in Inongo. The work has been frequently interrupted due to shortage of materials (tubes and other), which have been outsourced from Kinshasa. Unfortunately, the supplies from Kinshasa are very expensive (10-fold the price of similar supplies from the US), so the team is currently looking to source materials from Texas to reduce costs.



Challenge

New telecommunications project initiated to alleviate poaching threats

Habitat protection in Mai Ndombe is essential for the safeguarding of biodiversity. Unfortunately, illegal logging and poaching is on the rise in the project area, mainly around the villages of Inunu and Bopambo near the project area boundary. The poaching is mainly for elephant ivory from African Forest Elephants (IUCN Red List Status: critically endangered) and bonobo bushmeat and bones (IUCN Red List Status: endangered); undertaken by outsiders rather than the local community members.



One poacher was recently apprehended in Ngeleku and was offered anti-poaching lessons and counseling rather than deferring him to authorities. The team believes in education and rehabilitation as a means of transforming illegal activities in the area.

When incidents occur near the villages, the community members report the details to the project team via a telephone network. However, communication between the project team and the communities is not always readily available due to the remoteness and limited telecommunications infrastructure. To improve this, the project has initiated a radio communications project (budget: \$166,000 USD) to install new cell phone towers in remote villages in collaboration with a local communications company. Furthermore, a team of villagers have been hired as eco-guards for the project, who will be using GPS units and the new communications system to respond to poaching and logging incidents.