

Impact Spotlight

Mai Ndombe REDD+ Project
Q3 2021



**EVER
LAND**

**WILDLIFE
WORKS**





Community led governance at the Mai Ndombe REDD+ Project



The Mai Ndombe REDD+ Project serves the communities located within the project area and protects the forest from deforestation through a variety of activities focused on four main themes:

1. Stopping planned and legal logging and reducing unplanned illegal logging
2. Agricultural improvement activities
3. Village-centered capacity building through Local Development Committees
4. Provision of basic social services, infrastructure, and socio-economic development activities

When the project began, Wildlife Works signed a “Cahier de Charge” - an agreement with the community represented by three Chiefs of Groupements, the Territory Commissioner, the District Commissioner and the Provincial Coordinator for the Ministry of the Environment, approved by the Minister of Environment and the Cabinet. This document describes the project’s theory of change and the social activities to be undertaken on behalf of the community.

Local Development Committees have been established as key structures for local governance within the project area. Project activities are selected in consultation with the local communities as well as other key stakeholders and officials from different levels of government. The committees enable communities to determine project activities, increase the ability to respond to community issues at the local level, and provide an institutional framework for local governance, administration and problem solving at the project. They have been created in each village and now, elected committees exist for each Groupement (a group of villages): Ntomb’eNzale, Ngongo and Lokanga.





Local Development Committees

Local Development Committees have been key in the planning and implementation of project activities across the REDD+ project, including the building of schools, agriculture intensification, patrolling for biodiversity protection, the building of health clinics, and providing freshwater infrastructure at the project.

They have also played an important role in communicating project activities on the ground, engaging directly with the community, and delivering on local development plans.





Key activities

This spotlight report focuses on three important areas that Local Development Committees have prioritized throughout the villages of the project area: access to education, food security and clean water in the project area.

Education

Key activities: Building schools in 28 villages of the project area.

Importance: Having more educated people in villages in the project area will help decrease the number of deforestation agents i.e., those with unsustainable use of the forest. This activity is a high priority for the community.

Benefits: School construction activities are important for all community members across the project area. Most determinants of forest conservation are highly linked to families with some degrees of education, especially when there are more educated women in a community. Women with access to education are more likely to adopt forest conservation behavior and sustainable agriculture production methods.





Key activities

Food security

Key activities: Building fishponds for fish production and for restocking the Lake Mai-Ndombe.

Importance: Fish production is important for both nutrition and for the local economy. The Lake has been emptied due to unsustainable fishing methods and as a result, malnutrition has become an important issue for communities in the Lake Mai-Ndombe area to address.

Benefits: This activity impacts community members throughout the project area. Enhancing fish production is important for their health, the economy and improving their livelihoods. Shifting the community's activities towards fisheries and sustainable fish farming will help alleviate the pressure on the forest through a change of activities for unsustainable agriculture farmers.

Clean water

Key activities: Providing clean water to local communities in the project area.

Importance: Waterborne disease is one of the leading causes of death among children and older people in the project area. People use water from open water bodies (Lake and Rivers) which are often contaminated by humans and wildlife, or they dig shallow wells which are also contaminated. Women usually walk for many kilometers in search of clean and safe drinking water.

Benefits: This activity benefits community members throughout the project area especially for young people, women, and the elderly.





Milestones

Education

- ✓ Thousands of students have decent facilities to attend school
- ✓ Increased quality of education in the project area
- ✓ High marks in national school exams
- ✓ Support from the National government has increased the number of schools with paid teachers



Food security

- ✓ Seven fishponds have been constructed along the Loombe River in Bosongo area
- ✓ Fish have been introduced including Clarias and Tilapia. (Harvesting is expected in December)
- ✓ High impact for communities living in the area by building fish stock for the lake with indigenous species that are being grown in a number of ponds

Clean water

- ✓ Clean water has been provided to community members in the following villages: Mbale, Ikita, Lokanga, Ibali, Nselenge and Loombe
- ✓ Helps women who could no longer march for kilometers in search for clean water in swamp forest areas
- ✓ Helps stop the spread of waterborne diseases



Current news

Q3 2021 has seen the election of all the Groupements Local Development Committees in Mbale (Lokanga Groupement), Kesenge (Ntomb'e Nzale) and Bosando (Ngongo). Completing the election of all the Groupement committees has been an important achievement in the context of the pandemic. The main challenge for that activity and moving forward is to organize meetings for members originating from different villages.

Education

- ✓ Q3 2021 has seen an acceleration of building education infrastructure post pandemic with construction finalized for 3 schools in the project area and the start of three more construction in Nselenge and Bosongo.
- ✓ More than 5 villages have already stocked construction materials (stones and sand) and will be starting construction in their villages.
- ✓ Community members are enthusiastic about the construction of school buildings in their villages. Local materials have been collected and transported from Kinshasa. The main challenges are related to managing expectations from every village, as it will take time to deliver schools and materials to every village in the project area.

Food security

- ✓ Fish are growing in the fishponds and harvesting is expected in December
- ✓ Low water is an important challenge for fish - last summer, hundreds of fish were lost due to lack of water. Luckily, the project's water drilling team was able to create a water pump and supply water to the ponds during that period.

Clean water

- ✓ 6 water wells have been dug in the project area during Q3 providing clean water to more than 30,000 people.
- ✓ Water wells are solar powered and provide easy access for community members.
- ✓ Important challenges for the development of this activity are related to securing materials and supply such as tubes and submersible pumps.





The future



The project is planning to facilitate the creation of a Grand Local Development Committee that will represent the entire project area. This governing body will continue to help local communities decide for themselves on the key activities to be undertaken at the project, in line with the theory of change and the Cahier de Charge.

Education

The project is accelerating the building of school infrastructure in the coming months. They are hiring a construction manager and three more engineers to be able to deliver more schools in more villages. They are also discussing increasing the number of schools in each village due to the high number of students who need access to quality education in each community. The long-term goal is to build quality schools in every village with a goal to have 70% of children having the opportunity to graduate from high school.

Food security

The project will be building fishponds near every small river and every open swamp area in the project area. This will boost fish production and contribute to livelihood improvement among communities. This initiative has become of high importance to the community, with the goal to achieve high production in the farms as well as successfully restocking the Lake.

Clean water

The project's goal is to provide clean water to every village in the project area. The long-term ambition is that in addition to access to clean water present in every village, there will also be a running water network and connection in public buildings such as schools.