

REMODEL SCHOOL GARDENS TO SAVE EASTERN CHIMPANZEE:

GENERAL INFORMATION:

About Gishwati-Mukura National Park

Gishwati Mukura National Park, is the 4th national park in Rwanda established in 2015 by the law No 45/2015 enacted on 15th October 2015.

Gishwati-Mukura National Park is situated in Rutsiro and Ngororero Districts, in the Western Province of Rwanda. It consists of a 3,558 Ha natural forest in two physically separate forest units namely: Gishwati Forest with an area of 1,570 Ha, and Mukura Forest with an area of 1,988 Ha. The gazettement of the park also includes an additional buffer zone area of 962 Ha which brings the area of the park to a total of 4,520 Ha. **(GMNP 10 Years Management Plan)**

It is a mountain rainforest, located on the south of Volcanoes National Park in western Rwanda at altitudes of 2000 to 3000 meters above sea level. The Park comprises of two remaining areas of forest located in Rutsiro and Ngororero districts. The area has been for long the Rwanda's largest indigenous forests that covered approximately 253,000 ha which has now been reduced to 3,558 ha due to anthropogenic activities including Human-wildlife conflicts (crop raiding), high poverty levels and population density, illegal mining in the park, low level of awareness of local population on the importance of the park, very high degradation and loss of habitat, firewood extraction and illegal tree cutting for timber and charcoal making, park encroachment due to agriculture and livestock farming, poaching and bush fire due to honey extraction.

The forests sit on the ridge, which divides the Congo and Nile water catchment areas, along the incredibly biodiverse Albertine Rift in the west of the country. It is made up of 60 species of tree, including indigenous hardwoods and bamboo.

Gishwati-Mukura is home to a group of 20 types of chimpanzees (the most one is the Eastern Chimpanzee) which live alongside golden monkeys, L'Hoest's and Blue Monkeys. Birds are well represented too, 232 species have been seen at Gishwati and 163 at Mukura, among them Albertine Rift Endemic species and forest specialists.

The park is currently part of an ambitious landscape restoration program by the government of Rwanda.

About conservation issues:

Gishwati-Mukura National Park has a unique history of degradation and deforestation during the different periods of Rwanda's recent history. However, the park has managed to keep its biodiversity value very high and it continues to host some of the most endangered bird and mammal species such as Grauer's Swamp-warbler, golden monkeys and the charismatic chimpanzees. On top of this impressive biodiversity, the park also provides a host of many environmental services which are vital to local livelihoods and national economy. **(GMNP Ten Years Management Plan)**

In recent years, Gishwati and Mukura Forest Reserves have faced numerous threats associated to human activities including but not limited to illegal mining, forest clearing for agricultural land, settlements, and animal grazing. Over the last few decades, these threats combined effects have continually degraded and reduced this park size, fauna and flora (MINIRENA, 2010). According to Humphrey (2015), the fauna alone has declined by 99% whereas the flora that plays an important role in the lives of the local people such as medicinal plants has also declined (ARCOS, 2012).

The area was nearly depleted largely due to resettlement, illegal mining in the mineral-rich forest and livestock farming. (<https://www.visitrwanda.com/destinations/gishwati-mukura-national-park/>)

According to the 2012 Rwanda Population and Housing Census, the population density in Rutsiro and Ngororero districts is respectively 491 and 281 inhabitants/Km². This high density and unsustainable agricultural practices have led to reduced crop yields which compelled adjacent communities to run for alternative livelihoods in and around the forests to survive, which keeps the park under recurrent threats from anthropogenic activities. Despite its small size and above-mentioned threats GMNP remains home to a significant, rich biodiversity and various ecosystem services of the national and global importance.

For this, significant protection and conservation efforts have been carried. These include gazetting in 2015 of the Gishwati-Mukura as the 4th park by the Government of Rwanda and very recently UNESCO added the forests to the Man and Biosphere Reserves. These efforts are believed to drive comprehensive and inclusive approaches to ensure people are aware of park-people conflicts and are contributing to their mitigation and adaptation.

About the project

After decades of poorly managed land use, the country has carried out a significant restoration effort, moving towards a socio-economic development based primarily on eco-tourism. This yielded into gazetting GMNP, now a young national park that is a biodiversity hotspot, including endemic and endangered species. As a newly designated Biosphere Reserve, a key to successful management lies in raising awareness focusing on youth.

Through conservation education and reforestation process, the project will make GS Kibara a “role-model” school of Ecosystems-Based Adaptation by providing students with adequate knowledge and skills to lead environmental actions for sustainability.

The Project will intervene in all the three zones of the Reserve by (1) raising awareness and availing information on the biodiversity richness and importance of the core zone; (2) raising awareness on practices that are efficient to manage the buffer zone, including the management of natural vegetation, agricultural land, and forests to enhance the quality of production (3) tree planting in the peripheral area (manipulation zone) of a biosphere reserve where human activities like cropping, forestry, and settlements are taking place. This will include supporting the establishment of tree nurseries and tree planting with the community and selected schools.

Project's main overall objective

This Project aims to advance youth education towards their effective involvement in biodiversity conservation that benefits both humans and nature through actions that support school tree nurseries role in the restoration of the critical of newly MAB-designated landscape of Mukura-Gishwati.

Project's specific objectives and planned activities to achieve expected results

This Project proposes to use the school land (4 ha) to establish GS Kibara as a “role-model” school of Ecosystems-Based Adaptation. This will involve (1) providing students with access to information for adequate knowledge and skills to lead environmental actions for sustainability, (2) acquiring basic facilities to mastermind conservation actions that enables local green growth through: (3) acquiring facilities for food resilience

Activity 1: Environmental Education

The Project proposes to follow Pan African Conservation Education modules to train students with improved knowledge in conservation and its benefit. The Project will ensure students are able to use the school land to practice acquired skills by developing a school tree nursery for the park restoration and school garden to grow food for the school.

a) Training of students.

Gishwati-Mukura National Park management plan calls for Community-Park partnership and Education intending to engage local communities in its sustainable management for improved livelihoods and integrity of the park. It is anticipated that this will ensure that the communities fully understand the values and functions of the park, that adjacent communities are engaged in the park management activities to develop a strong sense of support from the communities and provide an essential mechanism through which communities can raise issues of concern, and provide feedback on management initiatives and other relevant matters.

For this, the project proposes to provide youths from GS Kibara with the opportunity to learn about conservation, and acquire necessary knowledge and skills in the management of conservation-based activities. Students will be introduced to biodiversity conservation, national expectations towards youth involvement in sustainable conservation, and the role of Gishwati Mukura National Park in Rwanda's path towards a green and resilient economy.

Activity 2: Reforestation

a) Establishing school tree nursery

In order to enhance the Ecological integrity and connectivity of GMNP, the park management plan calls for the establishment of tree nurseries for indigenous trees, intending to restore degraded areas of the park.

This project is proposing the establishment of one tree nursery with a carrying capacity of 200,000 indigenous trees. Besides being an educational tool for communities to gain knowledge and skills in tree nurseries development and management, it is an opportunity for students to be involved in the restoration process of degraded areas and the park's ecosystems by providing enough trees for the park. The project will stick on local communities knowledge to identify indigenous trees that need reintroduction.

b) Activity 5: Tree planting

The project will work with local authorities and park management to organise tree planting events. The project plans to restore the park area next to the school.

Activity 3: Food resilience

The park calls for integrated approaches to ensure a conservation that benefits to both the park and communities (GMNP Management Plan). The project plans to use the school garden as an incentive with the aim of providing schools with resources to grow enough food to sustain the school feeding programme. This program will involve introducing the school to organic farming (at least 5 ha) and small livestock (pigs/rabbits). Besides initiating the school to environmentally friendly agriculture, this activity will help the school grow enough foods to ensure kids are well fed to learn better.

PROJECT BUDGET BREAKDOWN

N	Item	Unit	Total unit	Unit cost	Total cost	Observation
A	Enviironmental Education					
1	Projector	Projector	2	500	1,000	
2	Flip-charts	flpchart	10	10	100	
3	Markers	Box	3	10	30	
4	Notebooks	Box	100	5	500	
5	Pinpapers	box	10	5	50	
B	Reforestation					
6	Timber to fix tree nursery	Timber	10	3	30	
7	Nails	Kgs	10	2	20	
8	wheelburrows	Wheelburrows	4	45	180	
9	Watering cans	Waterringcans	10	15	150	
10	Alinus/Seed	Kgs	10	45	450	
11	Caliandra/seed	Kgs	15	60	900	
12	Grevelia/seeds	kgs	15	70	1,050	
13	Hypercum/Seeds	Kgs	20	100	2,000	
14	Hagenia/Seeds	kgs	20	100	2,000	
15	Labour	Labour	0	0	0	Students
C	Food Resilience					
16	Corns/Seeds	Kg	200	8	1,600	
17	Organic manures	Kg	2000	1	2,000	
18	Pesticides	Kgs	30	5	150	
19	Spraying machines	Machines	5	50	250	
20	Labour	Labour	0	0	0	Students
					12,460	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

This project is unique of this kind where a local NGO and a local school engage a joint venture to work together to protect a threaten species.

Project genesis:

In February 2022, Partners For Conservation applied to officially launch its activities in Rutsiro district. By then, PFC wanted schools to work with in the area of environmental education. During the beneficiaries mapping, GS Kibara was selected. Since then, both PFC and GS Kibara started working together to implement environmental education activities through the club environment club. So far, both partners have been involved to some activities such as (1) a one week academy has been organised whereby students were able to discuss environmental issues in and around the

school, as well as ways to mitigate them, (2) conducting an inventory of local and indigenous trees, (3) conducting a study tour to Uganda to Kisoro Primary school whereby they were able to learn how schools are using PACE to help communities mitigate and adapt to climate change issues.

About key partners:

About co-applicants:

Partners For Conservation:

Partners For Conservation is a Rwandan charity that was founded in 2014. It was registered by the Rwanda Governance Board as a local non-governmental organization under n°343/RGB/NGO/LP/07/2018 (official gazette n°38 of 30/09/2010)

Its overall mission is to save a biodiversity legacy through the promotion, protection and conservation. Partners For Conservation serves as a platform that provides equal opportunities to everyone from farmers to businessmen; from children to adults; from illiterates to academics; from low-income people to donors; from volunteers to professionals, to appreciate and celebrate their contributions towards the conservation of a biodiversity legacy.

Groupe Scolaire Kibara:

GS Kibara is a public school located in Mukura sector of Rutsiro district. It is a new school established after 1994. The school occupies one of the park land given to communities for the settlement of Rwandans returning from exile. It is compelling to take advantage from this special and crucial connection between the park and the school to strengthen local resilience to ensure the school is capable to mastermind preservation and conservation activities. Currently, the school provides a twelve years basic education to 556 students including 325 girls and 231 boys.

Other Partners:

Rutsiro District
Rwanda Development Board
Mukura Gishwati National Park

Place of implementation:

- GS KIBARA located in Mukura sector of Rutsiro district

Expected duration:

12 months



Emmanuel BUGINGO
Executive Director



