

Project Update: February 2021

Project Background

Chimpanzees are threatened across their distribution with habitat loss, poaching, and disease. The Masito-Ugalla ecosystem (MUE), a vast area outside national park boundaries in western Tanzania, is a habitat for the endangered eastern chimpanzee (*Pan troglodytes schweinfurthii*) and countless species of flora and fauna. MUE is under increasing anthropogenic pressure due to over-dependence on nature. Over-dependence on nature by the MUE adjacent communities has negatively affected chimpanzee populations due to habitat loss and fragmentation. This project aims at promoting sustainable livelihoods that are expected to reduce community dependence on nature and contribute to the restoration of the threatened chimpanzee habitat.

Update on the Project Activities

Activity 1: To conduct a survey in the villages bordering to Tongwe Forest Reserves in Mishamo to: assess the local community willingness to take on beekeeping and tree planting as sustainable livelihood options. We conducted a survey in 10 villages (Fig. 1) that are directly bordering to Tongwe Forest Reserves in Mishamo (formerly known as Mishamo refugee settlement).

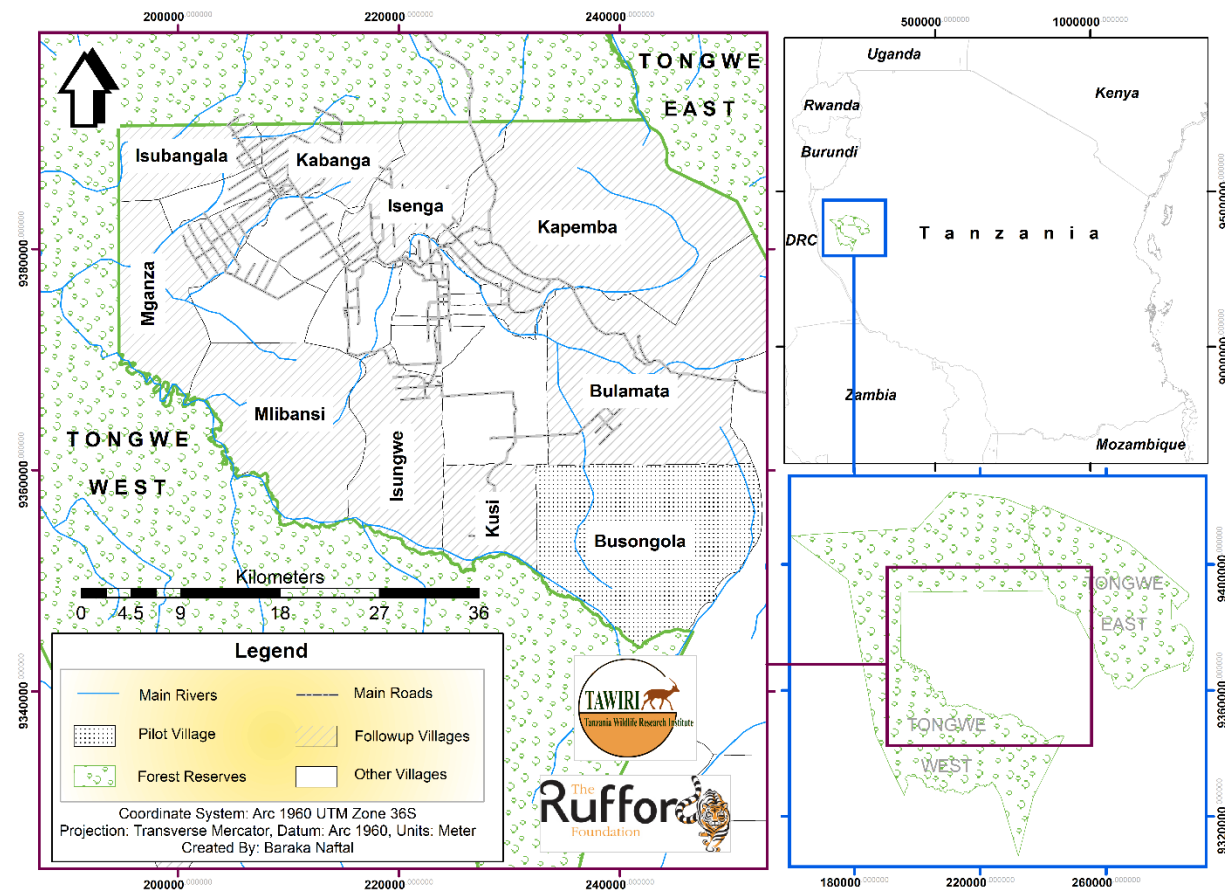


Figure 1: Surveyed villages within Mishamo area (formerly Mishamo Refugee Settlement)

The survey revealed that people in the villages prefer engaging in beekeeping to tree planting. The reason for their preference is based on what activities bring instant benefit. Additionally, beekeeping is an activity already practised in their area however in a very traditional way that is destructive to the forest resources. Beekeeping activities across the surveyed 10 villages are conducted in Tongwe West Forest Reserve (TWFR) and Tongwe East Forest Reserve (TEFR) which are part of the Masito-Ugalla ecosystem (Fig. 1). Considering the local community preference and for the purpose of project sustainability, the project team decided to focus on sustainable beekeeping first. Tree planting activities will be promoted in the near future.

Activity 2: To identify potential beekeepers in Busongola Village and facilitate the formation of farmer beekeeping group

People in all the surveyed villages were in need of undertaking sustainable beekeeping. However, funds to accommodate all the 10 villages at once were lacking. To really make a difference in one place before moving to another, we decided to concentrate in one village. We agreed to start with Busongola village (Fig. 1). In collaboration with the village and community leaders, we identified people engaging in traditional beekeeping activities. We identified a total of 56 potential beekeepers. We then selected only 25 committed potential beekeepers (males and females). The selected people were educated on the benefit of working in groups and supported to form their own. The group members were then supported with the group registration process. Henceforth, a community beekeeping group of 25 members (Fig. 2) was formed at Busongola village and registered at district level under the community development department.



Figure 2: Members of a community beekeeping group (Okoa Mazingira Beekeeping Group) that was formed at Busongola village with village leaders and project facilitators. Behind are the modern beehives that was given to the group.

Activity 3: Perception and willingness of the beekeeping group members to sustainable beekeeping and forest conservation

We conducted a simple questionnaire to the selected 25 potential beekeepers in Busongola village to assess their perceptions and attitudes towards forest conservation and willingness to engage in sustainable beekeeping. Through questionnaire we also assessed their beekeeping knowledge and the performance of traditional beehives (lifespan, production volume and quality of bee products) that will be used to compare its efficiency with the recommended beehives. The beekeepers seemed to lack appropriate knowledge to a successful beekeeping project. The only knowledge they had included making of the traditional beehives from tree barks and logs, selection of apiary site, and traditional way of honey harvesting.



Figure 3: The project leader (right) performing a questionnaire to a member of a community beekeeping group at Busongola village. On the back of the t-shirts, there is a conservation message that reads, "Conservation of chimpanzee habitat through beekeeping and tree planting".

Activity 4: To conduct workshops and meetings with the selected potential beekeepers

We conducted workshops and meetings to share key findings of the previous field-based study and solicited community participation as a strategy to instill project acceptance and ownership at early stages within the community. We explained the effect of anthropogenic disturbance on chimpanzees in the Masito-Ugalla ecosystem and the efficiency of the recommended actions to improve human livelihoods and conservation of chimpanzee habitat within the ecosystem.

The workshops involved training on how to construct beehives. Potential beekeepers were invited and trained on how to construct modern beehives. Importantly, one group member with a little experience in carpentry received intensive training on how to make modern beehives. The training involved hands-on activities.



Figure 4: A meeting with the 25 selected potential beekeepers, village leaders and the project facilitators



Figure 5: Images of a community beekeeping group (Okoa Mazingira Beekeeping Group) at Busongola village when they attended a workshop on how to construct modern beehives. During the workshop, beekeeping expert explained in detail on why there is a need to use modern beehives. The expert also explained the effect of traditional beehives on the total well-being of bees.

Activity 5: Provide beekeeping training and support to the community beekeeping group

We collaborated with beekeeping experts to design and train on key aspects of beekeeping. Training covered management of beehives (protection of bee apiary, capturing of bee swarm, queen development, pest and disease control), beekeeping

calendar, apiary site selection, positioning of hives in forests, hive inspection, colony multiplication, extracting honey, and training on bee products. Also, we trained the group members on the efficiency of harvesting, packaging and branding of bee products to attract market values. After training was done, the beekeeping group was supported with 50 Tanzanian Top Bar Beehives.



Figure 6: Fifty (50) Tanzanian Top Bar Beehives that was supported to a community beekeeping group at Busongola village



Figure 7: Representatives of **Okoa Mazingira Beekeeping Group** at Busongola village, village leaders and project facilitators

Supporting the beekeeping group members in selecting apiary site, baiting and hanging of beehives in the forest



Figure 8: Images indicating the support and facilitation that was provided to Okoa Mazingira Beekeeping Group at Busongola village. The images show the means of transporting beehives to field and baiting of the beehives using beeswax.



Figure 9: Images showing beehives and how they were hanging in the forest. The other image shows some of the project members, beekeeping expert that facilitated the activities and the project team members after hanging beehives in the forest.

Other Activities Performed at Busongola Village

While on project activities dealing with villagers at Busongola, we received an invitation to visit Busongola Primary School for the purpose of meeting The School Environmental Club. We managed to visit Busongola Primary School and discussed conservation matters with the club and conducted conservation talks to raise conservation awareness of the club members.

The pupils were happy to have had discussions with us. However, they requested more assistance including several visits to nurture their conservation attitude and skills while they are still young. Since the school has more than 10 acres of the school forest, the headteacher and the environmental club matron asked for the possibility of being supported with at least 10 modern beehives to facilitate the pupils in learning sustainable beekeeping practically. Further, the headteacher pointed that, the beehives will not only act as teaching material, but also, they will produce income through selling bee products. Income generated from the school beehives under the environmental club can support buying essential materials for the school like chalks, books or creating desks.

Based on the request from Busongola Primary School, we promised them whenever fund will be available, we can provide them with 10 modern beehives.



Figure 10: Images showing the project team when they visited Busongola Primary school to meet the school environmental club

Update on the 50 beehives that are in the Forest at Busongola

On 22nd January 2021, we facilitated the Okoa Mazingira Beekeeping Group members in hanging up 50 Tanzanian top bar beehives in the forest. Up to date 35 beehives are already stocked by bees.

Next Project Activities

The main next activity under the project is to perform monitoring and evaluation. This will be taken as part of strategy to measure performance at both activities, inputs/output and outcome of the project. We will assess challenges and opportunity for progress performance. Also, we will assess the outcome of the project (contribution of beekeeping to the livelihood of the people and restoration of chimpanzee habitat).

