



**Scaling up conservation of eastern chimpanzee (*P.t schweinfurthii*) and its habitats in  
Tongwe Forest Reserves, western Tanzania**



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## **1.0 Project Background**

This project is a continuation of the previous Rufford funded works that aimed at balancing conservation goals and human livelihood needs in the local communities around Tongwe Forest Reserves (TFRs). The projects came into actions after realizing that, the TFRs adjacent communities, were unsustainably clearing the forests (i.e., chimpanzee habitats) for agriculture, timber and debarking certain tree species to make traditional bark beehives, actions that eventually killed trees. The cleared, logged and debarked trees are the important food and nesting resources for chimpanzees. Hence, engagement of the local communities in conservation of chimpanzee habitats through education outreach program and implementation of a sustainable livelihood options. Sustainable beekeeping projects was among of the intervention put in place to address the challenges with the aim to conserve chimpanzees and their habitats. Sustainable beekeeping is considered one of the strategies that can improve local communities' livelihoods while conserving natural resources. Following the success of the initial beekeeping project in three (3) villages in Mishamo area, it was ideal to scale up the project into the remaining villages to broaden the conservation impact of the TFRs.

### **1.1 Aim of the Project**

The project aimed to enhance the conservation of Tongwe Forest Reserves (i.e., chimpanzee habitats) in Mishamo area while contributing positively to the surrounding local communities' livelihoods through promoting sustainable beekeeping activities. That is, the project focused to discourage and control human activities that drive forest loss and fragmentation in the TFRs by promoting human activities that foster nature conservation and enhance human livelihoods.

### **1.2 Objectives/Activities**

The project had three main objectives for which different activities were carried out to achieve the targeted project goals. The objectives included:

- (i) To raise local community understanding and awareness on the importance of protecting biodiversity and sustainable utilization of natural resources
- (ii) To reduce the conversion of forests and woodlands to agricultural lands, halt logging and debarking of trees to make traditional beehives in TFRs
- (iii) To promote sustainable beekeeping to improve local community livelihoods and contribute to the management of chimpanzee habitats in TFRs

## **2.0 Methods**

### **2.1 Project site**

Initially, this project was proposed to be scaled-up in three villages (i.e., Kapemba, Isenga and Kabanga) around Tongwe Forest Reserves (TFRs) in the Mishamo area. However, with the additional funding from the National Geographic Society, further two villages of Isungwe and Mlibansi were included in the project making a total of 5 villages under the project.

## 2.2 Implementation of the project objectives/activities

### 2.2.1 To raise local community understanding and awareness on the importance of protecting biodiversity and sustainable utilization of natural resources

In the first step, the project team gauged the local communities' initial understanding, awareness, perceptions and attitudes towards biodiversity conservation and sustainable utilization of natural resources. Then, based on the responses from the local communities, the team designed an awareness campaign and provided conservation education to the local communities. The team conducted workshops and meetings with the local communities to provide conservation education and raise their awareness.



**Plate 1:** A meeting with the village authority to introduce the project



**Plate 2:** A workshop with the local community members to raise their understanding and awareness on the importance of protecting biodiversity and sustainable utilization of natural resources

### **2.2.2 To reduce the conversion of forests and woodlands to agricultural lands, halt logging and debarking of trees to make traditional beehives in Tongwe Forest Reserves**

This was achieved through promoting diversification of improved eco-friendly and sustainable income generating activities. The local communities were encouraged to engage in the alternative livelihood options that are environmentally friend and that does not deplete the forests.



**Plate 3:** A debarked tree for the purpose of making a traditional bark beehive: This act was highly discouraged and instead sustainable beekeeping practices were promoted



**Plate 4:** Tree barks in the process of making traditional bark beehives: This act was highly discouraged and instead sustainable beekeeping activities were promoted

### **2.2.3 To promote sustainable beekeeping to improve local community livelihoods and contribute to the management of chimpanzee habitats in Tongwe Forest Reserves**

Activities performed to achieve this objective include:

#### **2.2.3.1 To identify potential beekeepers focusing on people driving forest degradation in Tongwe Forest Reserves**

People engaging in forest damaging traditional beekeeping activities and those driving forest degradation through other unsustainable human activities were identified and converted to be proponent of sustainable beekeeping practices. Village Chairmen and Village Executive Officers highly assisted in identifying these potential beekeepers.



**Plate 5:** Some of the identified potential beekeepers in a training on various aspects of sustainable livelihood activities with focus to beekeeping.



**Plate 6:** Some of the identified potential beekeepers in a training on various aspects of sustainable livelihood activities with focus to beekeeping.

2.2.3.2 To train the identified potential beekeepers on the basics of sustainable beekeeping and facilitate the formation farmer beekeeping groups

The identified potential beekeepers were first assessed for their willingness to engage in sustainable beekeeping activities. Then, beekeeping experts trained them on the basics of beekeeping, the benefit of working in groups and facilitate formation of one farmer beekeeping group in each village under the project.



**Plate 7:** A workshop with the identified potential beekeepers on the importance of working in groups



**Plate 8:** A group picture of the workshop facilitator with the attendee of the workshop in Mishamo area

2.2.3.3 To support the farmer beekeeping groups with basic beekeeping gears and facilitate them with the installation of beehives in the forest and train them on the process

Each farmer beekeeping group were supported with modern beehives and all the necessary beekeeping gears ideal for the start-up beekeeping group. All of the beekeeping groups were supervised to install the beehives in the forest and trained to master the process.



**Plate 9:** One of the formed beekeeping group with a sample of beehives (Commercial beehives) that were given to them



**Plate 10:** Handing over of the Tanzanian Top Bar Beehives to a Primary School Environmental Club for further hand-on training of the young generation



**Plate 11:** A beekeeping group with the sample of Commercial beehives and Tanzanian Top Bar Beehives that were given to them after the demonstration of processing honey and packing it in marketable containers

2.2.3.4 To facilitate and train the farmer beekeeping groups on how best to harvest, extract honey from honeycombs, pack bee products and label them for marketing

Bee products like honey requires proper handling, packaging, labelling, and storage. Through workshops, the beekeepers in their groups were trained on bee product harvesting, processing, packaging, labelling and storage.



**Plate 12:** Processing of honey and packaging it into marketable containers as demonstrated in one of the trained beekeeping groups under the project





**Plate 13:** Processing of honey and packaging it into marketable containers as demonstrated in one of the trained beekeeping groups under the project.



**Plate 14:** Hand-on activities on how to process honey for packaging.



**Plate 15:** Hand-on activities by the members of one of the beekeeping group on how to process honey and packaging for marketing



**Plate 17:** Hand-on activities by the members of one of the beekeeping group on how to process honey and packaging for marketing

### 3.0 Overall Project Implementation Status

All of the project activities were full implemented as planned. With the addition funding from the National Geographic society, the project team were able to scale-up the project in almost all villages bordering to Tongwe Forest Reserves in the Mishamo area. However, a gap still exists on promotion of beekeeping value chain in all the formed beekeeping groups in the Mishamo area. However, it has recently been discovered that the wild edible orchids are highly threaten across the area (i.e., in the Tongwe Forest Reserves), a situation calling for an intervention to address the challenges/threats.



**Plate 18:** Members of the beekeeping group showing their ready packed honey in the Mishamo area.

#### **4.0 Project Achievements and Impacts**

Generally, the project instilled beekeeping knowledge to the TFRs adjacent communities in the Mishamo area. Sustainable beekeeping positively contributed to household income a situation that discourages clearing of the forests for farming and establishment of new settlements, logging and de-barking of trees for traditional beehives.

Specifically, the project achieved the followings;

- (i) Improved local community livelihood through selling bee products for income generation
- (ii) Reduced forest degradation by abandoning the harmful and unsustainable anthropogenic activities that are driving forest degradation in the vicinity of the Tongwe forests
- (iii) Increased quality of bee and chimpanzee habitats in terms of food and nesting resources availability through the ecological role played by bees (i.e., pollination of flowering plants)
- (iv) Enhanced understanding of sustainable beekeeping by the local community as a livelihood option that plays a significant role in the management of forest resources and biodiversity
- (v) Raised local community awareness of forest resources, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable utilization of natural resources

#### **5.0 Monitoring and Evaluation of the Project**

Monitoring and evaluation of the project activities was performed throughout the project. This will continue beyond the project time frame. Monitoring and evaluation of the project was performed to measure the progress performance and success of the project. The success of this project was primarily measured based on people's willingness to participate in sustainable beekeeping, improvement of local communities' livelihood and the conservation of the forest resources, bees and chimpanzees in the TFRs.

## **6.0 Way forward/Next plans**

The project team is looking forward to apply for the completion grants. For the completion project we anticipate to work on, “Promoting beekeeping value chain and conservation of the threatened wild edible orchids among the local communities around Tongwe Forest Reserves, Tanzania”. By promoting beekeeping value chain among the beekeeping groups established under the previous projects, we will be completing the only remaining aspects under the project to ensure a bigger conservation impact and improved local communities’ livelihoods.