



2020 Annual Report

Friends of Bonobos

and on behalf of Les Amis des Bonobos du Congo

www.friendsofbonobos.org



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We are grateful to Arcus Foundation, Leon Haberkorn, Alex Miles, Lisa Murray, Sebastien Birr, and many others for the photos used in this report.

A bonobo is sitting on a large, weathered log that extends from the left side of the frame towards the center. The bonobo is facing the camera, holding a piece of yellow fruit in its right hand and eating it. Its left hand is resting on the log, and its right leg is extended towards the right, with its foot touching the water. The background is a lush green forest with large, heart-shaped leaves. The water in the pond is calm, reflecting the surrounding greenery.

Lola ya Bonobo

Your gifts provided more than 75 endangered bonobos living at Lola ya Bonobo with a safe home and all the love, care, and support they needed to survive and thrive.

You provided sustenance, support and safety for the bonobos at Lola ya Bonobo, the only bonobo sanctuary in the world, so they can live happy, healthy lives.

- Food and nourishment
- Medical treatment, including emergency care
- Surrogate mothers (for orphaned babies)
- Bonobo wellness checkups for all
- Regular upkeep and repairs of enclosures and buildings, like the infirmary, bonobo sleeping quarters, nutrition center, and nursery
- And much, much more

You also helped keep the sanctuary running efficiently and effectively to properly support all the bonobos and the bonobo education and awareness programs.

- Personal Protective Equipment and disinfectant to keep the staff and bonobos healthy
- Utilities, communications, and equipment
- Hygiene, grounds and site maintenance
- Travel and vehicle expenditures
- Security
- Educational materials and activities (pre-COVID)
- Educators and tour leaders (pre-COVID)

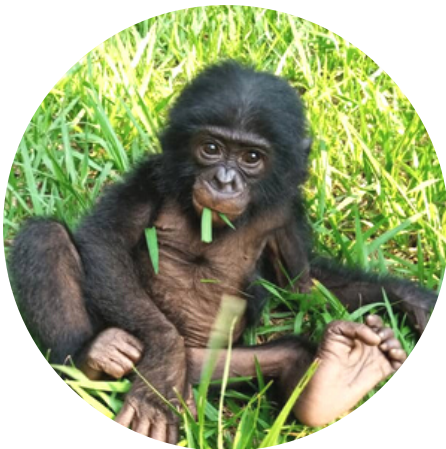


The Nursery

at Lola ya Bonobo Sanctuary

Last year, you helped rescue 11 baby bonobos.

That's more rescued bonobos than in the past 6 years combined.

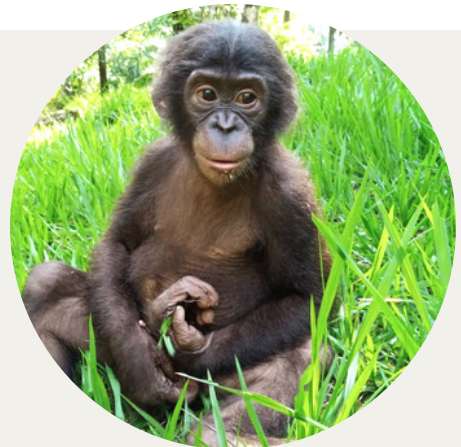


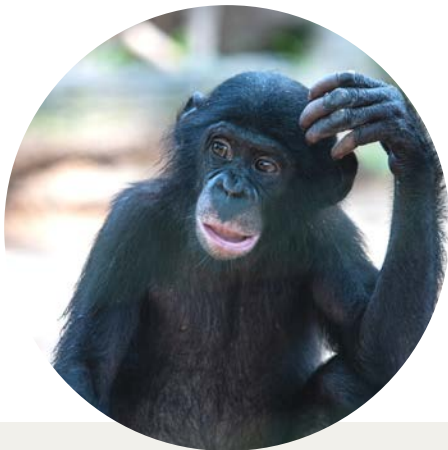
Ikela

Ikela was rescued from a wildlife trafficker. She was cared for by Judicaël Ekenda, founder of UALCN (Union of Indigenous People for Nature Conservation), while awaiting transport to Lola. When they found her she was weak and malnourished, but her health has steadily improved. She is very social, loves playing games and exploring the forest, and isn't intimidated by some of her rougher male bonobo playmates!

Omandja

When Omandja arrived, he was in poor shape with swollen eyes and cheeks and sores on his body. He has come a long way and is now social and friendly, but still very attached to his substitute mom Micheline. He loves games, especially jumping on the trampoline, and charms all the other moms with his easygoing nature.



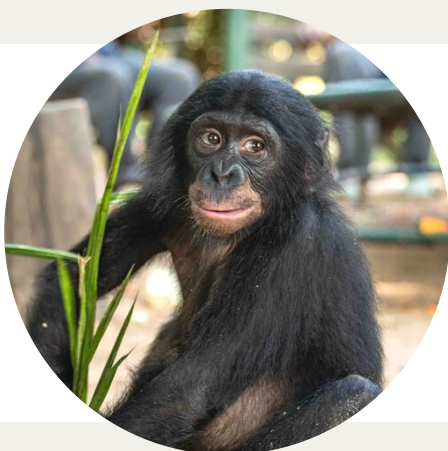
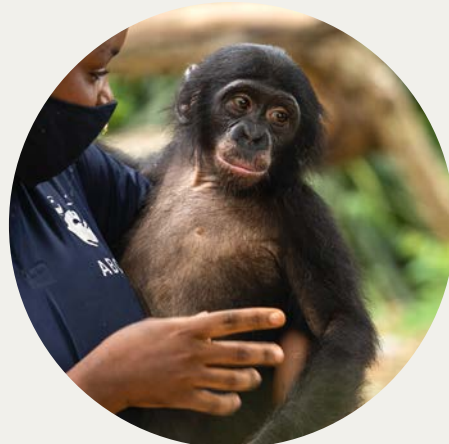


Mpongo

One of our partners in the field, NGO Conserv Congo, found Mpongo with a man who said he had saved Mpongo from his dogs. We don't know what happened to her family, but the area where she was rescued is known for poaching. After the sorrow and loss Mpongo experienced, Mama Yvonne slowly gained her trust and now she's doing well!

Monkoto

Monkoto was rescued by our field staff Héritier and Mama Elando. Héritier has rescued countless bonobos and Elando is our trained surrogate mom who cares for bonobos as they wait for transport to Lola. Monkoto arrived at Lola skinny and in poor shape. He was cared for by our veterinarian Dr. Jonas until he was healthy enough to join the nursery. With Mama Meritha's love and care, he is doing great!

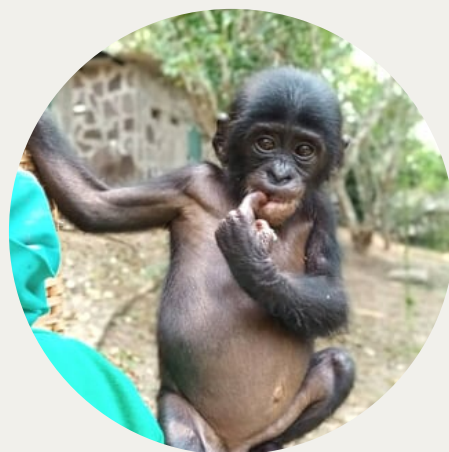


Mondombe

NGO Conserv Congo found Mondombe in an area where there has been a huge spike in poaching. When she arrived at Lola, she was suffering from bloating and intestinal parasites that our veterinarians worked quickly to address. Now, she spends her days relaxing with her surrogate mom Peguy and enjoying handfuls of tasty treats!

Yuli

When Yuli was rescued she was in pretty bad shape. Not only was she weak and malnourished, but she was also suffering from a broken arm. There was no one in the field who could treat it! Once at Lola, our vets quickly went to work and we are happy to report that she can now use her arm normally. With plenty of food, care, and love from her surrogate mom, she is a healthy and playful bonobo!





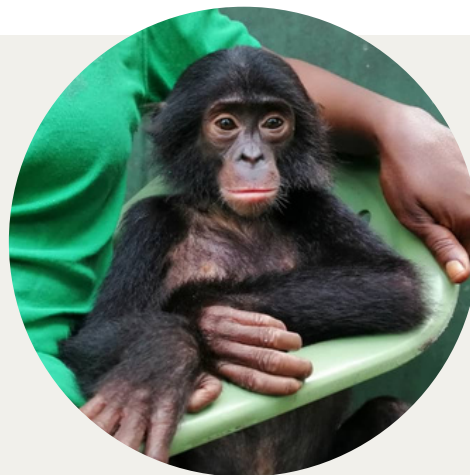
Welenge

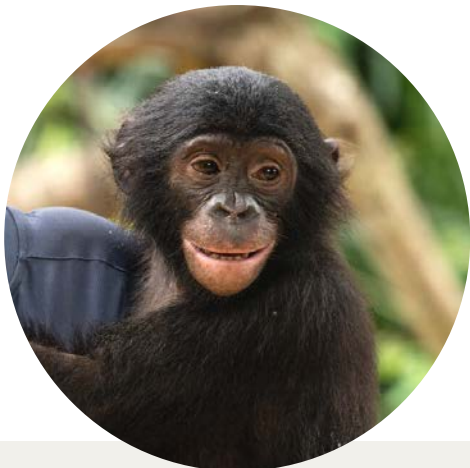
Welenge was the first baby rescued last year. Villagers spotted her with a soldier and reported it to the authorities. She was found with a bullet in her jaw and an injured eye resulting from an attack by poachers. Once at Lola, she was recovering but then died unexpectedly of EMCV, or encephalomyocarditis virus. This unpredictable, fast-moving virus has claimed the lives of precious bonobos at Lola in the past.

Diyoko

Diyoko was being kept as a pet and was rescued by Héritier, our field staff rescue hero. When transport to the sanctuary was stalled for weeks for reasons outside our control, we sent Mama Yvonne to Diyoko. Initially aggressive and fearful, he has been completely transformed.

Read Diyoko's full story on page 12.



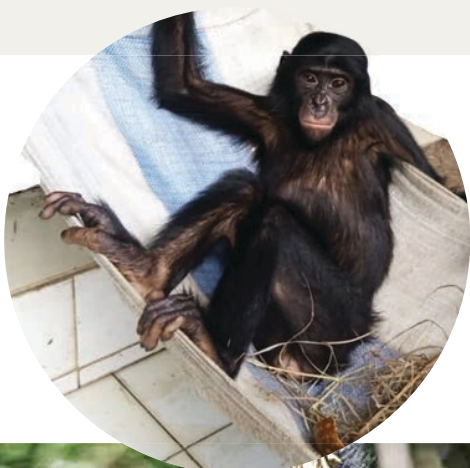


Loto

Héritier rescued Loto. She stayed with Mama Elando until she got on a plane to the sanctuary. At Lola, she has formed a close bond with her substitute mom Micheline and is adapting well to change. She is curious and loves games but is wary of approaching men. She often rolls up her blanket as if it were a nest. She isn't too fond of baths, but has a great appetite and loves bananas and other fruits!

Njale

Njale was rescued around the same time as Loto, and the two spent several months together in Lodja awaiting transport to Lola ya Bonobo. Njale progressively became weaker despite our best efforts to try and get him to the sanctuary as soon as possible. His condition worsened and he began showing signs of a respiratory infection. He passed away soon after.



Booke

Local villagers discovered Booke caught in a trap and alerted us to her plight. Héritier jumped into action and rescued her, getting her swiftly to the sanctuary. She was older than most of the orphans rescued from the field and was slowly beginning to adjust to life at Lola before unexpectedly passing away.



You provided four new surrogate moms for orphaned bonobos.

As the number of baby bonobos in the nursery grew, so did our need for surrogate mothers.

Thanks to your support, we welcomed Meritha Membo, Gladys Mavunza, Ruth Muanda, & Huguette Lawu to the team (pictured clockwise from top left).

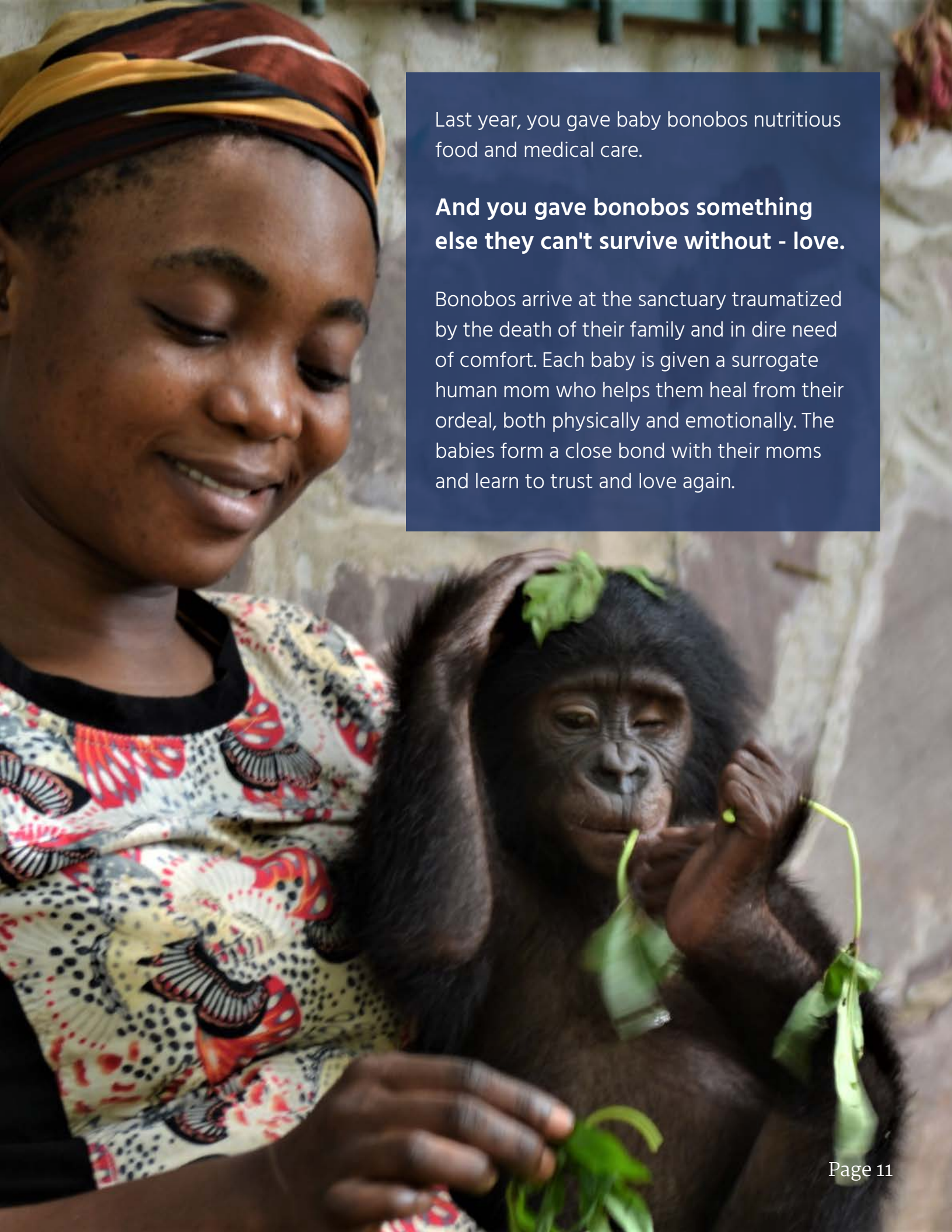


We also said farewell to surrogate mom Niclette Bonyoka (left) who moved away with her family. We are so thankful for the years of love and dedication she gave to each baby bonobo in her care.

There are now eight surrogate moms in the nursery, led by nursery director Yvonne Vela.

Not pictured: Peguy Kiadi, see next page





Last year, you gave baby bonobos nutritious food and medical care.

And you gave bonobos something else they can't survive without - love.

Bonobos arrive at the sanctuary traumatized by the death of their family and in dire need of comfort. Each baby is given a surrogate human mom who helps them heal from their ordeal, both physically and emotionally. The babies form a close bond with their moms and learn to trust and love again.



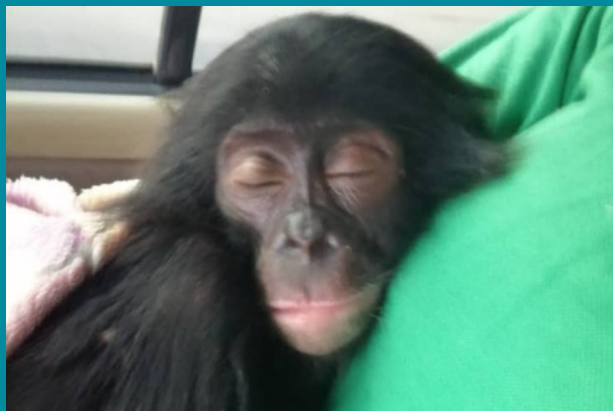
Meet Diyoko

Diyoko was being kept as a pet when concerned community members alerted us to his plight. He was rescued by our bonobo hero and field staff member, Héritier Mpo. Héritier convinced Diyoko's owner to surrender him.

Traumatized by his ordeal, Diyoko was becoming increasingly stressed and was in danger of dying of emotional neglect.

Despite some comfort from his new bonobo companion Welenge, Diyoko remained in extreme distress and was attempting to injure himself and others. Concerned that he would not survive the wait for transport to Lola, the team came up with a unique and creative solution to save his life - if he couldn't make it to the mamas, we would send a mama to him!





With time of the essence, lead surrogate mom Yvonne headed quickly to Diyoko. Mama Yvonne spent the week getting to know him, gently and slowly building an emotional bond. Before long, Diyoko's behavior was transformed thanks to her love and affection. Soon after, Diyoko made it to the sanctuary.

Your support saved Diyoko's life.

He is now thriving in the nursery with the other baby bonobos. He is playful and loving, and enjoys eating matembeles and pondolos!



Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve

At Ekolo ya Bonobo, you provide a safe haven for bonobos.

Here, bonobos who have been nursed back to health at Lola ya Bonobo sanctuary are released back into their natural habitat, the Congo rainforest.

In 2019, with your support, we grew Ekolo ya Bonobo from 20,000 to 120,000 acres and secured province-level protection (similar to a state park). The next phase, which we began in 2020, was to create the management plan for the reserve in collaboration with local communities and government authorities.



Meanwhile, with poaching rates on the rise in the height of the pandemic, wildlife reserves like Ekolo ya Bonobo were more vulnerable than ever. However, COVID restrictions prevented us from recruiting and training our own eco-guards from local communities and our current team was not large enough to patrol the newly expanded reserve on their own. So the Congolese government implemented interim protective measures and deployed six eco-guards to assist us.

You provided a camp for the eco-guards to use while patrolling the significantly expanded Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve.

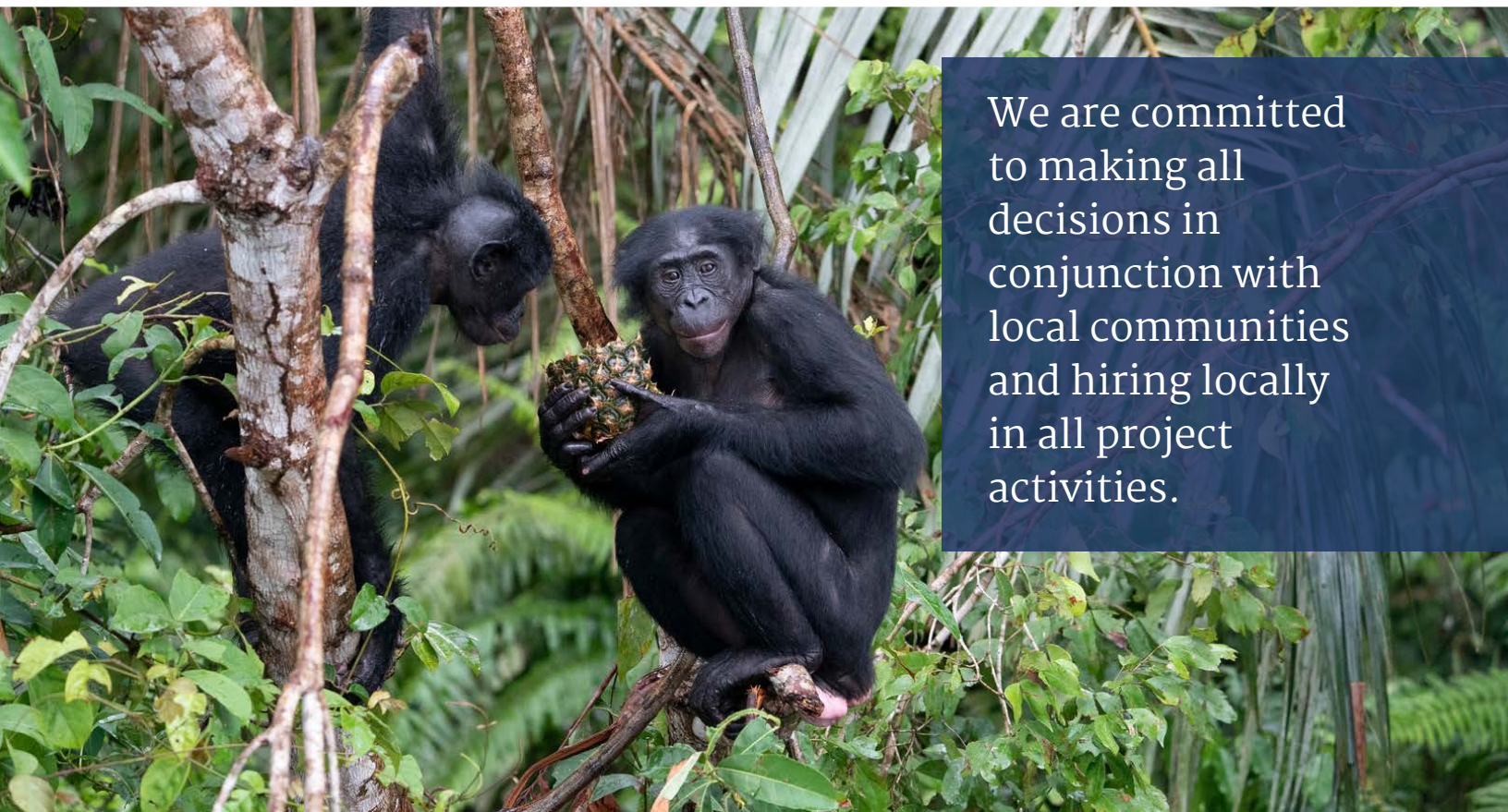


Eco-guards apprehending a poacher



New eco-guard camp

The teams have been highly effective at detecting and stopping illegal activity in the reserve. But we promised the local communities that we would hire locally, and they were understandably upset and concerned. In June, we discovered several of the reserve boundary signs had been removed by locals. We learned it was done in response to the temporary deployment of the government eco-guards, which was taken as a sign that we were not honoring our agreement to recruit, train and employ eco-guards from their communities.



We are committed to making all decisions in conjunction with local communities and hiring locally in all project activities.

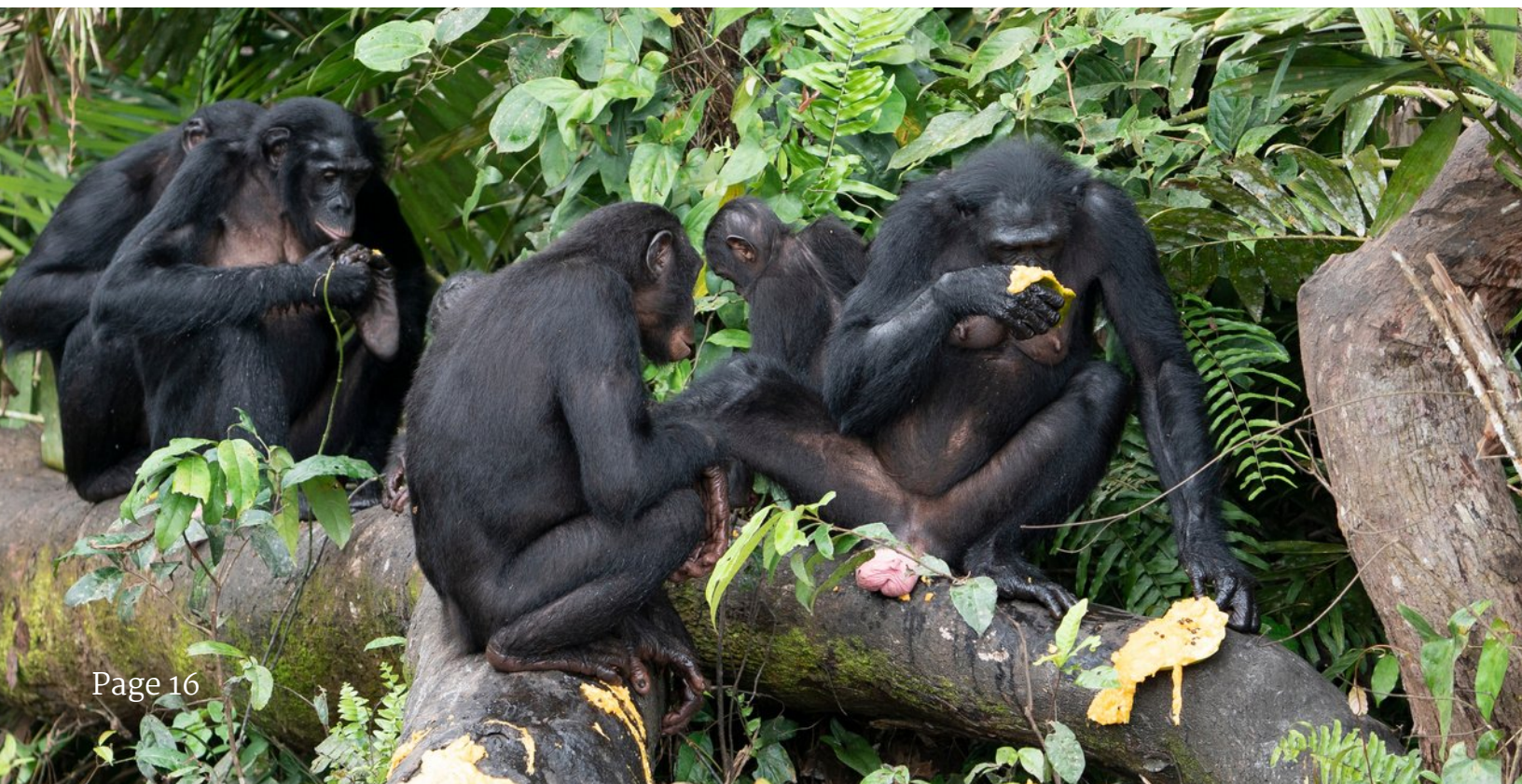
Additionally, they were dissatisfied that we had not held meetings to discuss the protected area management plan. Our reduced time with the communities was a direct result of pandemic restrictions and was out of our control. Regardless, we knew we needed to take quick action to reestablish good working relationships with the communities around the reserve.

Thanks to your support, we hosted workshops, meetings and radio broadcasts.

The workshops with local villages led to renewed trust and understanding of the protected area. We reinstalled boundary marking signs together with community representatives.



We also met with community leaders and organized radio broadcasts (the primary form of mass communication in this part of the world) to explain to the communities that the government eco-guards were a temporary measure due to the constraints of COVID. We reaffirmed our commitment to recruit and train eco-guard teams made up of members from surrounding communities.



Research

Because of the remote locale, research and monitoring activities at Ekolo ya Bonobo were less disrupted by COVID-19.

Thanks to your support, progress continued towards our multi-year phenology study - a look at the seasonal variations in plants growing in different habitats. The research team examined both firm land and swampy forest. The swampy areas are especially valuable in terms of biodiversity, bonobo carrying capacity, and carbon storage. Among the 43 tree species identified so far, 31 (72%) are food sources for bonobos! This bodes well for future bonobo rewilding.

You also supported the set up of an acoustic recorder for bioacoustic monitoring. This allows us to explore the biodiversity of Ekolo ya Bonobo by learning more about the animals that are living in the reserve. It is especially helpful in identifying other endangered animals living there, besides the bonobos. We need to learn more about the forest and the animals living there in order to grow the protected area and conserve more rainforest.

You are helping us conserve more bonobo habitat!



You Support Bonobo Rewilding

Due to the risk of COVID, we had to postpone the release of the bonobos quarantined on Totaka Island. Thanks to you, they continue to receive the care and monitoring they need from our staff until release is possible. Then they will move across the river to their forever home - Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve.

The bonobos of Totaka Island:

- Maya (female, 27 years old) + children: Bisengo (daughter, 14), Mayele (son, 9), Ndona (daughter, 4½)
- Lisala (female, 19)
- Mwanda (female, 17) + children: Mvula ya Lola (daughter, 7) + Totaka ya Totaka (son, age 2, born at Totaka)
- Masisi (female, 13) + daughter, Boyokani (2½)
- Api (male, 20)
- Mbandaka (male, 18)
- Yolo (male, 17)
- Kole (male, 12)
- Sadly, we lost Elaka, Lisala's daughter. She died of a snake bite.



COVID-19 Challenges

Quarantine

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Lola ya Bonobo decided to cease all visitor activities on March 13, 2020. A few days later, the sanctuary entered full quarantine.

For five months, nearly two dozen staff members lived on site full time to care for the bonobos. When orphaned bonobos were found, only our lead veterinarian, Dr. Jonas, left the sanctuary to help with their rescue and transport to Lola.

The shutdown, quarantine, and extra sanitation measures were essential to prevent transmission of the virus to bonobos, which could have had devastating effects.

**You kept our staff employed and you provided
consistent care for the bonobos.**



Added Sanitation

Thanks to your support at this critical time, we put new sanitation protocols in place to reduce the potential for disease transmission.

Masks and regular disinfection were required at all times. All food deliveries were exchanged at the sanctuary perimeter and immediately sanitized before being distributed to the kitchen and bonobo nutrition center.

During quarantine, you provided safety and security for the staff and bonobos in their care.

Meanwhile, our US staff worked remotely.



Pandemic Obstacles

COVID-19 not only posed an immediate threat to the health of the staff and bonobos, but it also led to several temporary setbacks.

The bonobo release planned for 2020 - after being previously delayed, once for bureaucratic reasons and once due to an Ebola outbreak - had to again be postponed, and the bonobos had to remain in quarantine at Totaka Island.

This meant that at Totaka, your support provided additional pay for staff and other costs associated with keeping the bonobos in quarantine longer than anticipated.

Meanwhile, closing the sanctuary meant that we were unable to generate revenue from day tours, overnight visits, and on-site media opportunities. Add in the record number of orphaned bonobo rescues, and it is clear why expenses were high while revenue was down. But because of your support, we made it through.

You kept the bonobos safe and healthy while you helped us rescue more baby bonobos than ever.



Education and Awareness

Social distancing and restricted travel forced us to suspend our education and awareness programs both at Lola and in the provinces.

We took this opportunity to conduct trainings with conservation partners, Hérítier Mpo and Judicaël Ekenda, on how to effectively educate children and raise awareness about bonobos and the need for biodiversity conservation.

And thanks to your support, Hérítier and Judicaël are leading new education programs targeting areas where we have seen an increase of orphaned bonobos and where there are frequent reports of poaching.



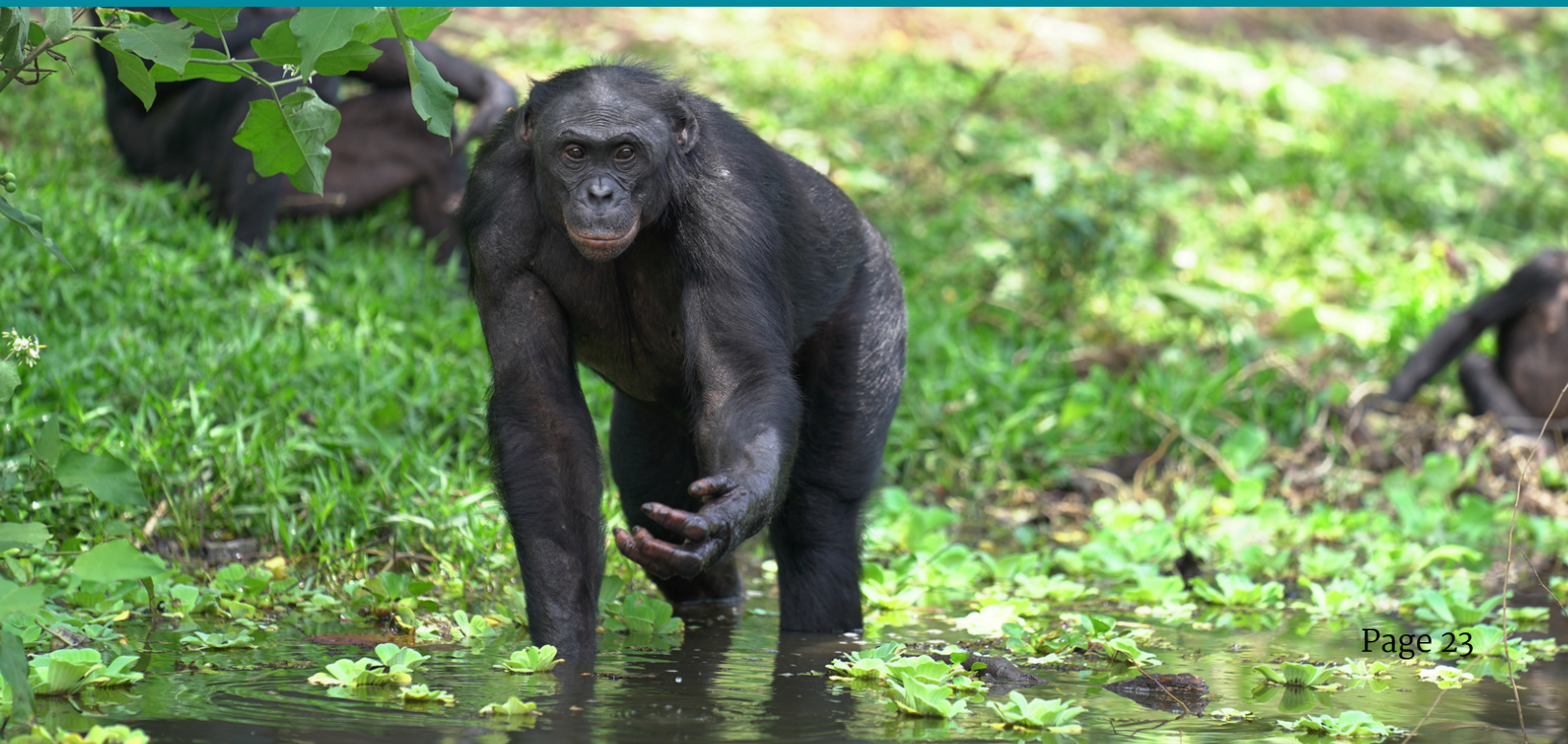
Hérítier (right) with Yvonne



Judicaël (right) with Blaise,
our Director of Education

Community Development

Due to the pandemic, we were forced to postpone health visits and all other community development initiatives around Ekolo ya Bonobo reserve.



COVID and Bonobos FAQs

Can bonobos contract COVID-19?

Yes. They are susceptible to the same respiratory illnesses as humans.

How severely would a bonobo be affected by COVID-19?

We don't know for sure, but experience with other respiratory illnesses in apes, such as the flu virus, suggests effects could range from mild to severe, including death. Gorillas at the San Diego Zoo Safari Park who caught the virus fully recovered.

Can bonobos (and great apes in general) receive vaccines?

A number of U.S. zoos have given an experimental COVID-19 vaccine to apes, including bonobos, with no serious effects.

Have poaching rates risen during the pandemic?

Lola ya Bonobo rescued more baby bonobos in 2020 than in the previous 6 years combined. We believe this increase was partly due to the pandemic (less patrolling meant more poaching) and partly because our education programs are working: more people are reporting captive bonobos to the authorities.

Have there been any confirmed cases of bonobos contracting COVID-19?

No.

What steps did Lola ya Bonobo take to keep the bonobos safe from COVID-19?

Lola closed its doors to visitors, essential staff quarantined at the sanctuary for 5 months, and sanitation protocols were increased. See page 20 for details!

Have many Congolese people been vaccinated?

According to government data, the vaccination rate in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is approximately .1% or one-tenth of 1 percent.



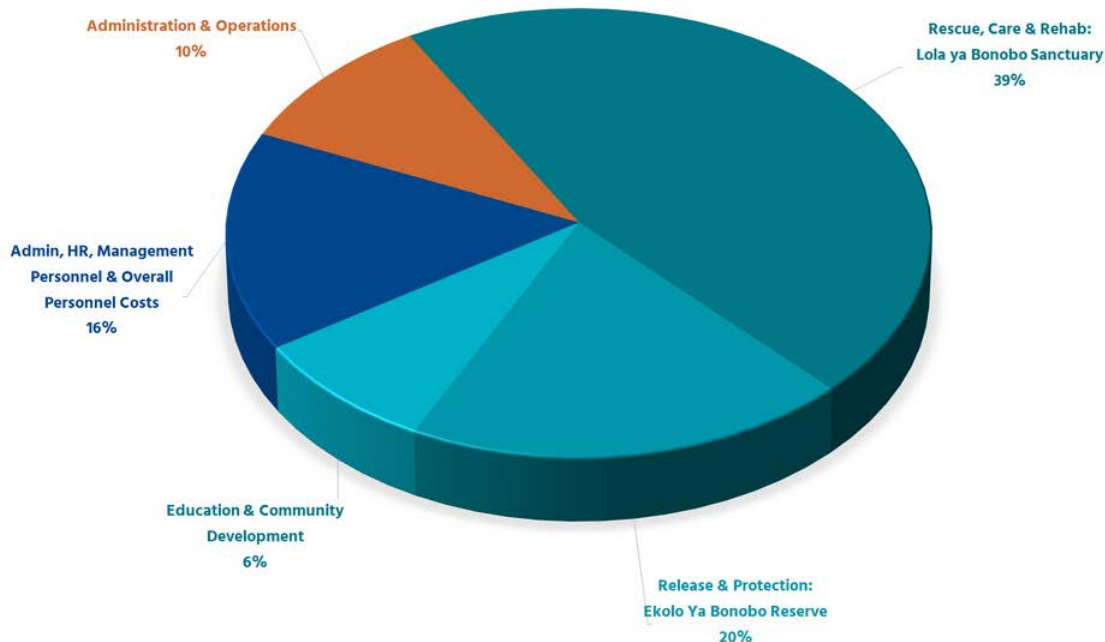
ABC Financials (DR Congo)

2020 Revenue

Income and Local Contributions	\$60,725
Grants and Sister Associations Contributions	\$1,051,073
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Total:	\$1,111,798

2020 Expenses

Rescue, Care & Rehab: Lola ya Bonobo Sanctuary	\$496,715
Release & Protection: Ekolo ya Bonobo Reserve	\$211,650
Education & Community Development	\$90,703
HR, Management Personnel & Overall Personnel Costs	\$169,975
Administration & Operations	\$108,564
<hr/>	
Total:	\$1,077,607





Friends of Bonobos

Friends of Bonobos was founded by Claudine André, the founder of Les Amis des Bonobos du Congo (ABC). We support the work of ABC, which includes Lola ya Bonobo sanctuary, Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve, and all the work you have read about in this report! In addition, we raise awareness in the United States and internationally about bonobos and their plight and ABC's critical work to save and protect them.

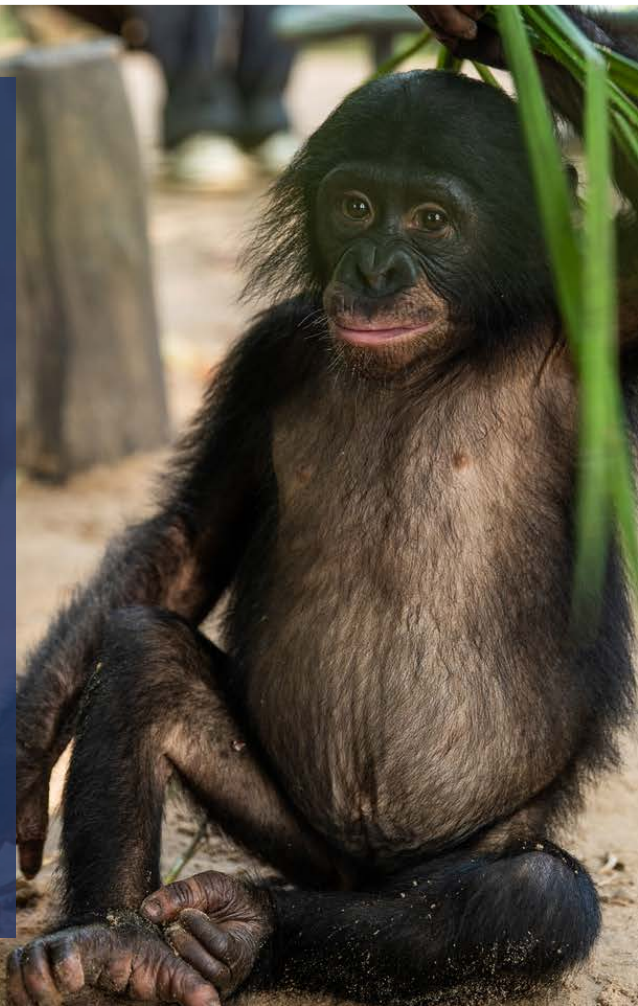
By supporting Friends of Bonobos, you not only supported the critical work of ABC, you also helped more people around the world learn about these amazing great apes and the threats to their survival. And you helped us increase our capacity to grow revenue for years to come, which is critical to bonobo conservation for the long haul.

Your support last year helped to build long-term advancement of bonobo conservation.

What's the problem?

Bonobos were finally recognized as a separate species in the 1930s, more than 150 years after people had already come to know chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans. Today, the knowledge gap remains: bonobos are the least known of the great apes.

Since the beginning, ABC has worked to change that. Already, more than half a million people in the Congo have participated in ABC's education and awareness programs. Now, Friends of Bonobos is working with ABC to harness the power of digital and social media to raise awareness of bonobos and their plight globally.



Rising Global Awareness

With greater reliance on digital communications during COVID, we invested in strengthening our online presence, including a new and improved website. We continued to raise awareness about bonobos and grow the number of people who know about bonobos.

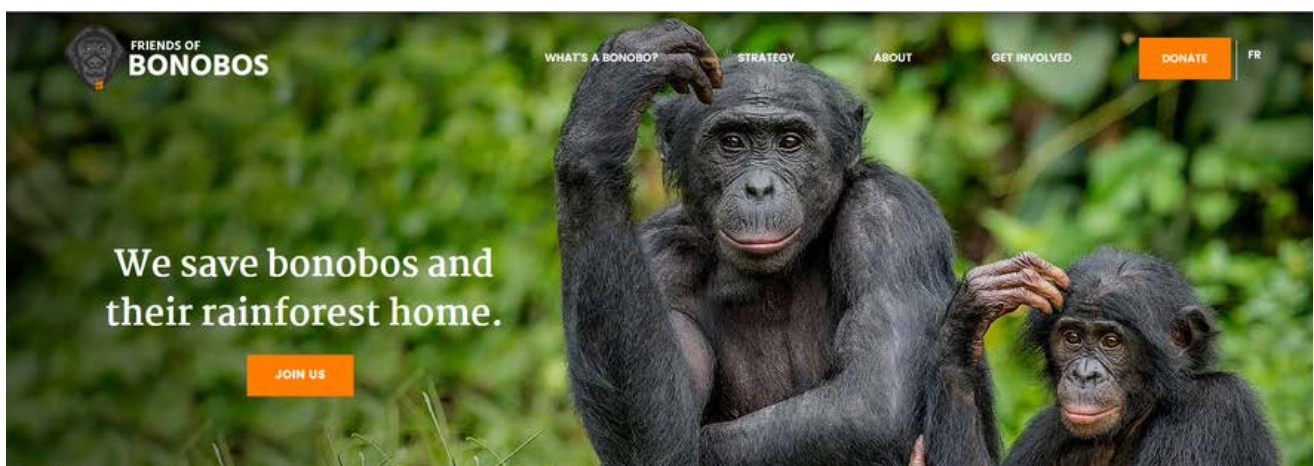
In 2018, we reached about 540,000 people via our online awareness initiatives. In 2019, that grew to over 11 million. In 2020, more people than ever tuned in to learn about bonobos.

Thanks to your support, our bonobo messages last year reached approximately

... 50 million people

What we know for sure: people love to hear about bonobos and all they stand for - kindness, cooperation and peace.

Introducing www.friendsofbonobos.org - our new online home! Our new website provides a concise yet comprehensive overview of all the things we love about bonobos. It presents the work we are doing to protect them and conserve their rainforest habitat, as well as ways for people to get involved.



Capacity Building in the US

Friends of Bonobos is on the move! In 2020, you helped us expand our team to include three full-time staff working alongside Executive Director Ariel Rogers, so we can do more for bonobos for the long haul. This is an essential part of our long-term strategy to grow the bonobo conservation programs in the DRC.

Karen Kemp, Communications Director



Karen is a communications strategist who elevates the impact of environmentally responsible organizations. She manages FoB's media relations, marketing, and communications. She also is active in donor relations and fundraising. Previously, she was a journalist and held leadership roles at Duke University and the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences. She is passionate about animal welfare and the environment.

Kaitlin Saxton, Program Coordinator



Kaitlin supports all of FoB's work, including fundraising, donor relations and data management, communications, digital marketing, and social media. She earned her Master's in Environmental Management from Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment in 2020. She is interested in field work, wildlife population monitoring and human-wildlife conflict.



Friends of Bonobos Financials (US)

Friends of Bonobos has been investing in staff, digital and social media, and infrastructure so that we can raise more funds for the programs in the DRC while simultaneously raising public awareness about bonobos and their plight.

As a result of our investments, we saw a 7% increase in revenue, despite the pandemic leading to a significant reduction in overall wildlife and conservation donations in 2020.

<u>Revenue</u>	2019	2020
Grants	\$206,000	\$231,000
Individuals & Foundations	\$767,000	\$812,000
Total Income	\$973,000	\$1,043,000

2020 Expenses

Operational & Fundraising Expenses (US)	\$ 98,760
Awareness Program Expenses (US)	\$ 97,640
DRC Program Expenses (Grants to ABC)	\$717,800
Total	\$914,200



2020 Expense Ratio

Percent of expenses spent on operations & fundraising	11%
Percent of expenses spent on programs	89%



Looking Ahead – Next 5 Years

Goals for Bonobo Rescue, Care & Rewilding

- Transform Lola ya Bonobo sanctuary into the ultimate destination for eco-tourists and wildlife enthusiasts.
- Rescue, care for, and rehabilitate orphaned bonobos at the world's only bonobo rehabilitation center and sanctuary, Lola ya Bonobo.
- Release another group of able bonobos to the wild (and continue to do so every 3-5 years) at Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve and bonobo reintroduction site.

Education and Awareness Goals

- Increase understanding of bonobos throughout the DRC, prioritizing areas where the bushmeat and wildlife pet trade begin (poaching in the forest) and end (trade in the villages).
- Grow partnerships with major media outlets to increase awareness of bonobos and their plight worldwide.
- Partner with large institutions to further amplify our global awareness program, and to make bonobos a household name.
- Increase global understanding and awareness of bonobos through digital and social media.
- Facilitate ethical research studies and disseminate findings to international audiences.


Rainforest & Bonobo Habitat Protection

- Double the size of Ekolo ya Bonobo Forest Preserve from 120,000 to 240,000 acres.
- Obtain national park status for Ekolo ya Bonobo
- Develop sustainable and ethical ecotourism of Ekolo in partnership with local communities and other stakeholders.

Community Development

- Build a school near the reserve.
- Expand current participatory socio-economic development projects in support of communities surrounding Ekolo.
- Build capacity with local communities to oversee management of Ekolo.
- Expand reach and frequency of medical and dental visits .





In 2020, you rescued, protected and provided save
haven to our peaceful cousins through the
pandemic and for the long haul.

Thank you for your enduring commitment to bonobos!

Thank You!



2020 Annual Report

Friends of Bonobos

and on behalf of Les Amis des Bonobos du Congo

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