

2021 **ANNUAL REPORT**

FRIENDS OF BONOBOS

On behalf of Les Amis des Bonobos du Congo

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A man is sitting in a small, dark wooden boat on a calm river. The boat has a small outboard motor at the stern. The man is looking towards the left. The background is a dense, lush green rainforest with many trees and foliage. The water is still, reflecting the surrounding greenery.

OUR MISSION

We're on a mission to save and protect bonobos and their rainforest home - forever.

We provide rescue, sanctuary, and rewilding to endangered bonobos. We save the rainforest where bonobos live. We work with communities and government to tackle root causes of bonobo endangerment. We educate and raise awareness for bonobos and their plight locally and globally.

Thanks to the Arcus Foundation, Cintia Garaj, Leon Haberkorn, Justin Makangara, Lisa Murray, Ley Uwera, and many others for the photos used in this report.

LOLA YA BONOBO



The Nursery

In 2021, you helped rescue nine bonobo orphans, including four that arrived within weeks of each other, filling all quarantine huts. Six survived -- Lowale, Lokenye, Andji, Bokona, Lofuté, and Loolo.



Bokona

Bokona, named after a village near where she was found, was spotted by a researcher with the African Wildlife Foundation. Her mother had died after being caught in a snare. Louise Asinoko, an ABC staffer in Basankusu, served as Bokona's surrogate mother until paperwork and travel plans could be finalized. In Kinshasa, Dr. Jonas met the plane at the airport and carried Bokona to Lola ya Bonobo. Huguette is her surrogate mama.



Lowale

Lowale was rescued from a wildlife trafficker by local authorities. The trafficker had hidden baby Lowale in a basket made of liana and left her in severe conditions. Knowing he was wanted, the trafficker fled to another village; despite this, he was found, and the bonobo was seized. Lowale was entrusted to Héritier Mpo for first aid before her transfer to Lola ya Bonobo. She arrived safely at Lola ya Bonobo, paired with Mama Ruth, and is doing well!



Closeup of a baby bonobo getting medicine.

Sadly and despite our greatest efforts, we lost three who never made it to Lola ya Bonobo.



Loolo

Loolo arrived at Lola ya Bonobo on Christmas day. Previously tied up and abused, Loolo had painful wounds on both hands and swollen fingers. She was visibly distraught and fearful, hiding her face when approached. Luckily, thanks to continued treatment and the love of her surrogate mother, C'Arrive, she has recovered well and has become less afraid of human contact.



Andji

Andji is one of the youngest bonobos ever rescued – barely a year old. He's a little male. He was transported by plane from Boende, in the province of Tshuapa, sending Dr. Jonas back to the Kinshasa airport to pick him up. Andji's surrogate mama is Peguy. We look forward to seeing him blossom.



Lofuté

When hunters illegally killed his family, one-year-old Lofuté was orphaned, caught in a trap, and injured. The frightened baby was then held in a cage. With authorities on the way to Kole to confiscate him, the trafficker beat Lofuté and tried to kill him, injuring his eye. His crying led authorities to the place where he was being held. At Lola, he began to recover in the loving care of Mama Meritha.



Lokenye

With assistance from the nonprofit Conserv Congo, Congolese law enforcement agencies located Lokenye and confiscated him from a trafficker in Kindu who was trying to sell him on the internet. The trafficker also had okapi skins in his possession when he was arrested. The first step of Lokenye's journey to safety was a motorbike ride to Lodja. In Lodja, trained surrogate Mama Elando cared for Lokenye while he waited for a flight to the sanctuary. Lokenye was paired with Mama Gladys.

Your Gifts Support All the Bonobos of Lola

You provided sustenance, care, and safety for all the bonobos at Lola ya Bonobo, the only bonobo sanctuary in the world, so they can live happy, healthy lives and, when possible, return to the wild. Your gifts provided:

- 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
- Enrichment activities for bonobos
- 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
- Educators and tour leaders



FANNY MINESI





Suzy accepting the Femme de Valeur (Woman of Honor) award on behalf of Fanny.

Awards for ABC Director

McKenna-Travers Award

Fanny Minesi, General Director of Les Amis des Bonobos du Congo (ABC), received two awards in 2021 in recognition of her leadership and untiring conservation work in Congo.

The prestigious McKenna-Travers Award (MTA) for Compassionate Conservation, given by the Born Free Foundation, recognizes outstanding conservationists who prioritize animal welfare in their work. The award is named in honor of Virginia McKenna OBE, her late husband Bill Travers MBE, and their eldest son, Will Travers OBE, who co-founded the UK-based charity that became Born Free in 1984.

The award included a prize of £10,000 which Minesi will use to help acquire an island near Ekolo ya Bonobo Reserve. This will be a refuge for bonobos who cannot return to the wild completely, because of injury or behavior, but who would do well in a wilder setting than can be offered at Lola ya Bonobo sanctuary.

Nyota Africa Award

Fanny was also recognized in 2021 as a Femme de Valeur (Woman of Honor) by Nyota Africa (African Star), along with three other top women leaders who are making a difference for DR Congo. Suzy Kwetuenda accepted the award on Fanny's behalf at a ceremony on International African Women's Day.

The Legacy Continues

Minesi took over management of all of ABC's projects and programs from her mother, Claudine Andre, in 2014. She oversees a staff of more than 80 people in two locations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Previously, Fanny held management roles in a multinational logistics company, eventually managing nine locations in DR Congo and 157 employees. She earned a law degree at the University of Nice Sophia Antipolis School of Law, Political and Economic Science.

PROFILE



Suzy checking on the bonobos during release.



Suzy Kwetuenda

A Bonobo Whisperer

When it was time to prepare the bonobos of Totaka Island for their move to Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve, there was one person ideally suited for the job: Suzy Kwetuenda.

Suzy has worked with the bonobos at Lola ya Bonobo for more than 10 years. While Lola's veterinarians tend to the bonobos' physical health, Suzy monitors their social and psychological wellbeing. She knows all their names and personalities, and she helps manage their social groups. She can tell you which bonobos are easygoing and which are mischievous and might throw a wrench in the works.

So, about two months before moving day at Ekolo, Suzy traveled from Lola ya Bonobo to the reserve in remote Equateur Province. Her task was to help the bonobos get used to the cages they'd have to enter for their short, historic boat journey to Ekolo. Bonobos are extremely intelligent and very sensitive to change, so the process took time and patience. After weeks of rehearsals, the group of 14 bonobos was ready.

Fascinated with Bonobos

Suzy started at Lola as a volunteer intern. She had just graduated from Kinshasa University, where she studied biology and ecology. Then in 2006, she met Vanessa Woods and Dr. Brian Hare, who had come to Lola to work on behavioral studies bonobos. They hired her as a research assistant and are "so glad we did."

The studies they conducted over the next three years led to important scientific findings. Suzy became the first, and perhaps the only, Congolese national to co-author a peer-reviewed scientific paper on bonobos.

After the research projects ended, Suzy joined the staff of Lola as a caretaker. Over time, her role grew. Now, in addition to bonobo wellness, she teaches the surrogate mothers about healthy bonobo social and emotional development. She also welcomes natural history filmmakers, international visitors, and scientists to Lola. And she was a key member of the team that returned bonobos to the wild the first time – in 2009.

"I was so pleased to see that the bonobos quickly learned to take care of themselves in the wild. They made nests, foraged for food, and kept the same social groups they had at the sanctuary," explains Suzy and adds, "The bonobos are happy to be back in the wild!"



Claudine and Suzy talking on the veranda.

Divided by Civil War

Suzy was born in eastern Congo, and her father was a university professor whose research focused on fish of the Congo. When she was 17, while she and her two brothers were on vacation at Lake Tanganyika, armed conflicts escalated into civil war. They could not travel back to their parents. In their hometown, rebel soldiers were going from home to home, killing, raping, and pillaging.

Three months passed. Suzy and her brothers were sure their parents were dead. Finally, a letter arrived. Her parents were safe, but they had lost almost everything, including their home. They managed to get Suzy and her brothers plane tickets to Kinshasa, and they've been there ever since.

Suzy doesn't talk much about that time. In a recent TV interview, she said, "Sometimes we go too far because we tear each other apart, we divide ourselves. War is a human thing. It's hatred, it's selfishness. It's terrible [and] there's no progress when there's war."

"She was tireless, super bright, and wonderful to be around. Her smile is brighter than a camera flash, and she was always cracking jokes."

A Passion for Conservation

Growing up, Suzy had dreamed of becoming a doctor. But when she went to Lola ya Bonobo, her plans changed. She fell in love with bonobos. "Bonobos are fantastic," she says, "they are amazing! They are really close to us, and they are very smart."

Suzy believes bonobos are the pride of DR Congo, along with her country's other endemic wildlife and natural beauty. She inspires others to value these gifts as much as she does. While Suzy's early ambition was to be a human doctor, she found a rewarding career working with bonobos.

"I'm working with our closest cousin, so I'm not so far from my childhood dream after all.

I love it, and I feel like I'm working with my family. Every day is a new challenge. There's no way to stop."

— SUZY KWETUENDA

MANAGER, BONOBO WELL-BEING
& VISITOR/RESEARCH COORDINATOR



EKOLO YA BONOBO





You Rewild Bonobos & Support Local Communities

At Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve, ABC releases bonobos that have been nursed back to health at Lola ya Bonobo back into their natural habitat, the Congo rainforest. This process is also called reintroduction or rewilding.

The rewilding process involves years of selection and preparation at Lola ya Bonobo, then two release phases. In the first phase, bonobos are released to Totaka Island, where they live in quarantine until they are deemed healthy and ready. In the second phase, the bonobos are moved from Totaka to Ekolo ya Bonobo, the 120,000-acre reserve in Équateur Province.

ABC continues to monitor the health, well-being, and safety of the bonobos at Ekolo ya Bonobo through eco-guards, bonobo trackers, and our private-public partnership and management of the protected area – all thanks to your support!



Mothers and children at nutrition education session.

You also supported partnerships with the local communities around Ekolo ya Bonobo to manage the reserve and provide:

- Jobs and economic security
- Nutrition education
- Agricultural development
- Supplies for schools
- Maternity services
- Dental clinics
- And much more

Rewilding: A Story With a Twist

After delays due to Covid-19 and other challenges, the whole ABC team was eager to complete the final stage of release for bonobo group two in the spring of 2021. The 14 bonobos on Totaka Island would move to their forever home in Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve!

Unfortunately, new challenges would arise. Despite careful planning and hard work by the dedicated, tireless ABC staff, the move could not go forward as planned. The bonobos in Maya's group had to live on Totaka a bit longer. What happened?

The Plan

The rewilding plan involved multiple steps:

- Completing paperwork with provincial authorities
- Repairing the isolation enclosure on Totaka and transport cages
- Building a “tunnel” with multiple chambers inside the enclosure for the bonobos to move through to the transport cages
- Habituating the bonobos to the tunnel
- Coaxing the bonobos into the tunnel on moving day, sedating them, then moving them into the crates
- Ferrying the bonobos across the river and releasing them

Habituating the Bonobos

Suzy Kwetuenda worked to re-habituate members of the first release group (Etumbe's group, rewilded in 2009–2011) to come to a staging area so they could be fitted with radio collars. The collars allow ABC to track their movements within the reserve.

Meanwhile, more staff members and a local welder completed the masonry, electrical, and metal work required to install the tunnel.

When the tunnel was ready, Suzy worked with the bonobos on Totaka (Maya's group) to get them comfortable with entering the isolation enclosure and the tunnel.



By mid-May, the bonobos were entering the enclosure and the tunnel easily.

With moving day approaching, the rest of the team including veterinarians Jonas Mukamba and Raphael Belais – soon arrived and began working on placing radio collars on a few bonobos from Etumbe's group.

This was no small feat! After two weeks, two males were successfully fitted with collars, while the dominant females remained unapproachable.

Moving Day

Initially, all went fine: All the bonobos were in the tunnel and the doors were about to be shut to separate them for safe sedation and transport. Then a young male bonobo began violently shaking one of the doors. He broke the iron bar that attached the door to the tunnel.

Bonobos are very strong and independent-minded! Sometimes they decide they don't want to go along.

The team immediately saw a major risk: The reaction of this young male started to excite the other bonobos. Other doors could also break, endangering the staff. Realizing they could not safely keep the bonobos enclosed without taking significant risks, the team decided to open the tunnel doors. The bonobos darted back into the forest.

In the end, although everything else went well, one piece of infrastructure let us down. With the rainy season approaching in the swampy forest of Ekolo ya Bonobo, we had to abandon the operation for 2021.



What's Next?

Despite this big disappointment, the team planned to regroup early in 2022. Suzy would need to rehabilitate the bonobos, but thanks to your support, the infrastructure is in place.

Working in the remote rainforest in the DRC is always a challenge. There is no electricity. Equipment and materials degrade in constant humidity. All supplies and skilled staff must be brought in, and even with detailed planning, results are not guaranteed. When one challenge is met, new ones pop up! But the ABC team sees difficult times as opportunities to learn and progress.



In the spring of 2022, with your continued support, ABC pressed on with the historic rewilding of Maya's group.

We're happy to report it was a success! [View our website blog for the full story.](#)



The Importance of Rewilding

Returning bonobos to the wild takes a tremendous amount of time, energy, and resources. Beyond our love for these magnificent, intelligent beings who deserve to live the life they were born to, why is it important?

Bonobos are Key

The bonobos of Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve have a lot of company. The Congo basin rainforest has 10,000 native plant and animal species that can't be found anywhere else. One example is the sitatunga. This species of antelope has been "spotted" in Ekolo by a remote camera. They are not endangered yet, but they are hunted for food – just like bonobos.

Although bonobos are not the only rare species in the Congo rainforest, they are a keystone species. They eat a lot of fruit, and because of this, they play a huge role in forest health by dispersing seeds. In fact, some types of trees can't reproduce without bonobos' help.

Clean Air, Biodiversity

The Congo Basin's old-growth rainforest is one of the most biologically important ecosystems on the planet. Rainforests like those in the Congo cover just 6% of the Earth's surface but are home to 80% of all terrestrial species. They also clean the air, absorb greenhouse gas emissions, and stabilize the earth's climate.

Yet, we are destroying rainforests at an alarming rate. By one UN estimate, primary Congo rainforest will be completely gone in 75 years. Saving forested lands like Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve is critical to all life on earth.

People Matter

Investing in our planet also means investing in people. You support our efforts to collaborate with local communities to improve their access to education, medical care, and sustainable sources of food. Together we can protect their ancestral lands and the bonobos living there.



Envisioning the Future of Ekolo

In 2021, Les Amis des Bonobos du Congo (ABC) received support to grow Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve (EBCR) to twice its current size over the next four years. To begin planning for the future ABC completed its first management effectiveness evaluation. The evaluation identifies key areas of focus for improving and advancing biodiversity protection in EBCR.

Because ABC collaborates with the local communities and with the Congolese Nature Conservation Institute (ICCN) to operate Ekolo, representatives from all stakeholders took part in a six-day planning workshop.

Two ICCN coaches led the workshop at the base camp in Elonda, near the reserve. ABC's department chiefs and two representatives from each of the three partner communities participated as well. This evaluation provides a road map for activities in the reserve and serves as a baseline for gauging future progress.



Collaborators work together to evaluate and plan for Ekolo ya Bonobo.



EDUCATION & AWARENESS





Children from Boenga education program holding up books.

You Provided Bonobo Education

Targeting Areas Where Rescues are on the Rise

Reports of rampant poaching are coming from areas in Tshuapa Province around Salonga National Park – critical bonobo habitat. We’ve also seen an influx of orphan rescues from this province. In 2020, we rescued four orphans from Tshuapa (Mondombe, Monkoto, Ikela, and Yuli), while in 2019, no rescues came from this area.

In response, ABC’s lead educator Blaise Mbuaki traveled to Tshuapa with a key partner in the field, Judicaël Ekenda, to help people learn about DR Congo’s unique national treasure – bonobos! It was the first time ABC conducted outreach in this area. Judicaël, founder of the nonprofit Union of Indigenous People for Nature Conservation, has been instrumental in helping rescue bonobos from this area.

Thanks to your support, Amis des Bonobos (ABC) was able to reach nearly 20,000 people during an educational mission to a new area!

1500 Students & Teachers!

Your gifts made it possible for Blaise and Judicaël to visit seven primary and secondary schools and a university. A total of 1,441 students and 62 teachers learned about bonobos, other great apes in the DRC, the risks of eating bushmeat, and the overall benefits of nature conservation.

(Continued on next page)

"When you enter one fight, you enter all the others."

— **CLAUDINE ANDRÉ**
CONSERVATIONIST & FOUNDER



Blaise teaching children during Boenga education program.

Law Enforcement

Congolese authorities play a central role in rescuing orphaned bonobos from the illegal trade in endangered wildlife, so Blaise and Judicaël also met with officials and local leaders to work towards better application of laws that protect bonobos and other wildlife. They discussed the law and the harms and risks of the bushmeat trade. They described the trauma a bonobo orphan experiences during capture and the consequences for the orphan's health and behavior.

The officials represented all the areas involved in conservation, anti-poaching, and rescue of endangered species:

- Local police
- Political and administrative authorities
- Local NGOs
- National Intelligence Agency
- Congolese Armed Forces
- General Directorate of Migration
- Air Transport Authority

Expanding Our Reach

Our team also reached about 18,000 more people using radio and movies. In remote parts of DR Congo, radio is still the best, and often the only, way to reach large audiences. In Boende, the capital of Tshuapa Province, our educators took part in three radio broadcasts and were on air for over 3 hours.

They set up a screen in the night market in the Bosongo district of Boende and projected short educational films from a laptop computer. One movie showed the care rescued bonobos receive at Lola ya Bonobo sanctuary.

Educational outreach to areas where wild bonobos are under increasing pressure is possible because of your support! Thank you. Together, we can build a better world for bonobos and humans alike.

"It was a very good mission, very convincing. The public and the authorities understood our work and assured us they would help us."

— **BLAISE MBUAKI**
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION



Agriculture project at Lola ya Bonobo.

Community & Organizational Development

Farm Partners Visit Lola

Thanks to your support, farmers from Kimbala and Mafunfu, two villages located close to Lola ya Bonobo, visited Lola in the summer to celebrate not only the harvest but also the longstanding partnership between them and ABC. Some of the growers have been collaborating with us for 15 years.

The farmers toured the sanctuary to see where their produce goes and gain a firsthand understanding of their significant role in bonobo conservation.

Lola staff also organized a friendly competition between the villages, gave awards, and distributed agricultural supplies.

Through the partnership between the growers, Lola, and the Seed Production Center (CEPROSEM), the growers receive improved seeds and technical support in return for guaranteeing Lola a regular supply of quality vegetables and fruits at preferential prices.

This arrangement is beneficial for everyone. The bonobos receive a fresh supply of diverse foods including cucumbers, sweet potatoes, and papayas, and the farmers avoid having to transport their produce a long way to sell in the capital city.



You Provided Medical & Dental Care

In May 2021, we held our annual campaign for dental care at Ekolo led by Dr. Giuseppina (Pina) Ponziani (above), who was assisted by local nurses. Your gifts provided dental check-ups and care as well as hundreds of 100% biodegradable bamboo toothbrushes to local children.

Thanks to your support, we've made progress in our five-year plan to build a school near the reserve and increase the understanding of bonobos throughout the DRC. In 2021, we were able to start the planning phase with the goal of breaking ground in 2022.

New Staff

Thanks to you, we expanded our team to continue providing the bonobos with the best care possible and supported professional development for core staff members.

This year, Amis des Bonobos (ABC) welcomed new assistant veterinarian Dalton Akamba (right) to the team at Lola ya Bonobo. He replaced Cedric Kambere who left for another position.

In addition, Angelique Baillet was hired to enhance administrative activities at Lola and Cintia Garai was promoted to Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve Site Director.

Thanks to these new additions, communication, and daily operations are more streamlined and General Director Fanny Minesi can focus more attention on strategic planning, an often overlooked but critical element of successful long-term conservation.



PROFILE



Cintia Garai in Kahuzi-Biega National Park.



Cintia Garai

Ekolo Site Director

Dr. Cintia Garai's journey from Budapest to the forests of the DR Congo began with a movie. At the age of 13, she was deeply inspired by “Gorillas in the Mist,” about the life of Dian Fossey. At that moment, “I decided I wanted to work with great apes in the Congo Basin,” Cintia says. Now, the Hungarian primatologist and wildlife filmmaker is Ekolo ya Bonobo Community Reserve’s first full-time site director. Cintia has about a decade of field experience in DR Congo and the Amazon and a long relationship with ABC. Her responsibilities as director of the expanding 120,000-acre reserve include everything from scientific research to personnel management.

“My job is to coordinate activities and, together with my colleagues, protect the area from illegal activities, monitor biodiversity and get a better picture of the natural assets, and assess the effectiveness of our work,” Cintia says. “We also build good relations with local communities and involve them in management.”

She also oversees the scientific and technical staff, manages relationships with funders, and recruits and trains forest guards in collaboration with the Congolese environmental agency.

From Budapest to the Forest

As a child, Cintia lived in an apartment in the city, but her family enjoyed hiking in the mountains and exploring the outdoors. When she chose to pursue zoology, a career that “economically, was not a wise choice,” they were supportive.

She earned her master’s degree at Szent Istvan University in Budapest, then landed a stint as a research assistant at Lui Kotal Bonobo Research Field Station. She arrived in the DRC in 2007 having researched captive gorillas and orangutans but lacking any experience with wild bonobos. And she had never set foot in a tropical wilderness. She would live in a tent for five months, observe and track bonobos through the forest, and collect urine and feces samples.

“My biggest fear was now that my dream came true, I wouldn’t enjoy the forest. And then what do I do in my life?”

Luckily, Cintia didn’t have to reconsider her passion. She adapted well to the physical nature of the work and the heat, and she deeply loved being in the forest.

“It was just lovely. That first experience changed my life.” In the middle of the forest, 15 miles from the closest village, she discovered she had everything she needed.

Behind the Lens

At Lui Kotal, Cintia also realized being a scientist was not her path. “It's not the scientist who decides who, when, and if anybody will use their results. I wanted to show the world what I've seen and to make everyone feel the same way I feel about the forest and bonobos. And maybe that will help protect them.”

Cintia returned to Hungary to pursue a new career: wildlife filmmaker. Since then, she has traveled widely to make dozens of films -- about macaws and millipedes in the Peruvian Amazon, palm cockatoos in Australia, rhinos in Kenya, elephant poachers in Congo, a series for Kahuzi-Biega National Park in eastern Congo, and about ABC and Lola ya Bonobo.

She co-founded Wildlife Messengers, a nonprofit that creates nature films to educate and trigger conservation action. She loved making films but became restless, eager to be even more effective. She was also missing bonobos and the Congo.



Scientific Research

Cintia decided to pursue a Ph.D. in primatology with leading bonobo scientist Takeshi Furuichi of Kyoto University. At the Wamba Research Station, she studied bonobo personality traits, comparing them to those of humans, chimps, and other great apes. She published her findings, but life in academia was never her goal.



Cintia Garai filming capibaras in the Peru Tambopata Research Center.

Instead, she wanted to combine science, filmmaking, and practical conservation work to save bonobos. In 2016, with her Ph.D. in hand, Cintia went to work with Terese Hart at Tshuapa-Lomami-Lualaba (later Lomami National Park), a research site and refuge for bonobos, okapi, and other endemic species. Cintia's duties were diverse, from filmmaking to community building and law enforcement partnerships. “I learned a lot from Terese,” Cintia says.

Before long, Claudine André lured Cintia to work with ABC. Before she became Ekolo site director in 2021, Cintia had served as grant manager, director of scientific research and fundraising, and scientific advisor.

Dedicated and Optimistic

Cintia is matter-of-fact about the threats to bonobos from habitat loss and, especially, poaching. Scientists have estimated that 15,000 bonobos are left in the wild, but that number is uncertain because bonobos' range is so large and inaccessible, she says. “Poaching is so difficult to stop with our infrastructure. [DRC] is such a huge place.”

“The difficult thing in conservation is that when we lose a battle, that's forever – you lose a species or a habitat. But if we win a battle, that's temporary. So it's really frustrating work, and nothing is enough.” Despite the challenges, Cintia is committed to conservation.



"It's my personality - I'm optimistic. I cannot sit back.

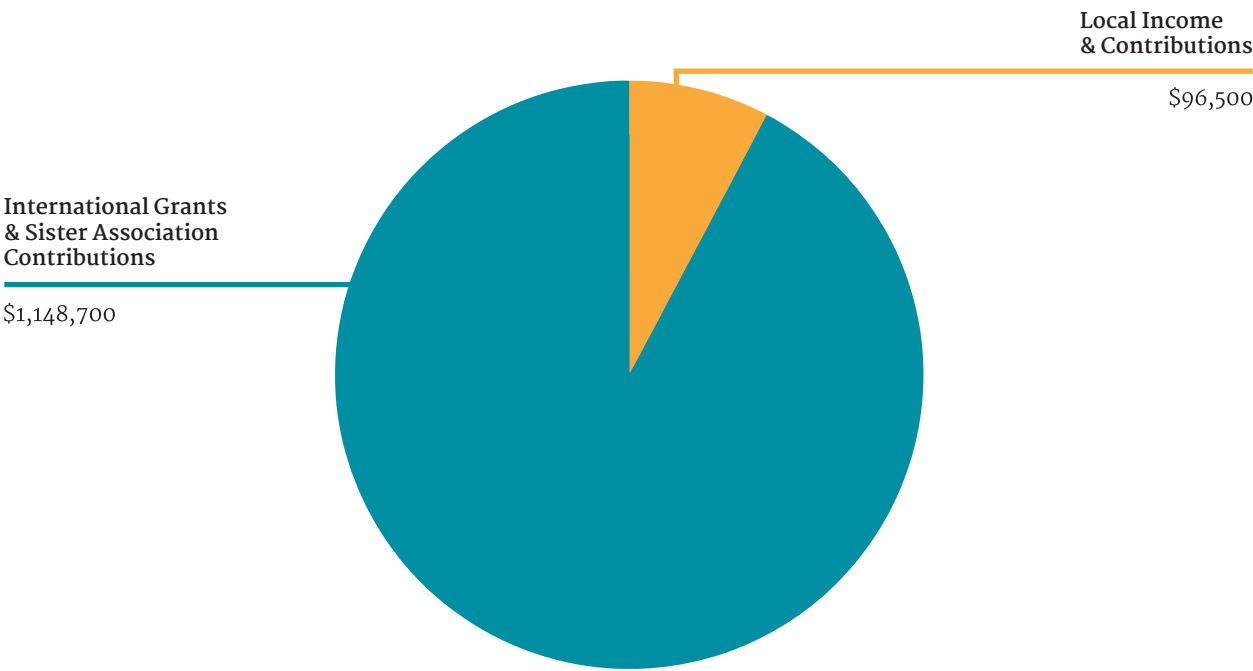
**In our lifetime we might not be able to do as much
as we hope, but we can reduce the suffering of
individuals, including bonobos."**

— CINTIA GARAI
SITE DIRECTOR, EKOLO YA BONOBO

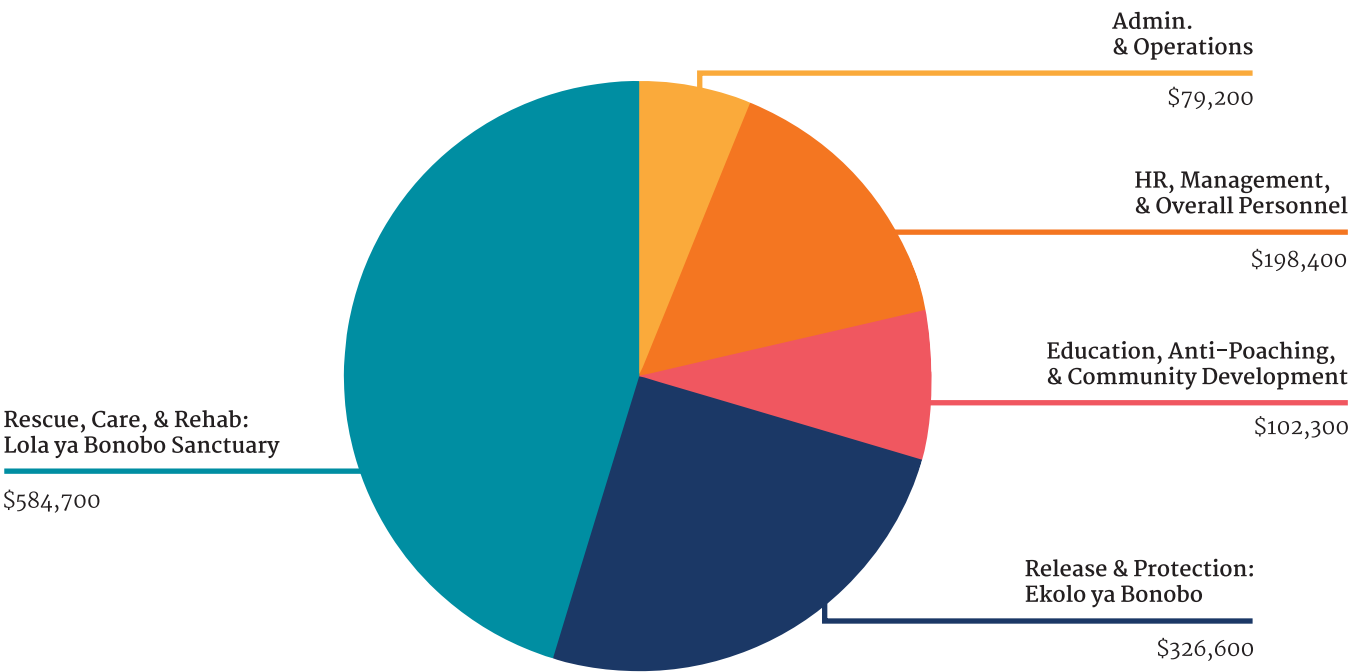


Amis des Bonobos Financials (DRC)

2021 REVENUE (\$1,245,200)



2021 EXPENSES (\$1,291,200)



FRIENDS OF BONOBO





Our Purpose & Impact

Friends of Bonobos supports all the work of Les Amis des Bonobos du Congo (ABC) through fundraising, awareness-building and public relations in the United States and internationally. Like ABC, Friends of Bonobos was founded by Claudine André.

By supporting Friends of Bonobos, you not only supported the urgent work of ABC in the Congo, you also helped more people learn about the intensifying threats to these amazing great apes – our closest non-human relatives – and ABC's valiant efforts to save them. Your support helped us increase our capacity to grow both revenue and support around the world, which are both urgently needed to ensure the future of bonobos.

In 2021, Friends of Bonobos grew and diversified our revenue streams to increase sustainability through stock, IRA, legacy and estate giving, as well as crypto-philanthropy.

We also continued to expand our digital audiences. Through social media, online marketing, and traditional media we increased awareness about bonobos and the work of ABC, while also bringing more donors into our giving community.

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.



Surrogate mother Yvonne and baby bonobo. Photo by Ley Uwera for NPR.

Our Activities

You supported education and awareness-raising!

- Our social media followers grew by 34%
- And our social media content reached approximately 48 million people!
- Can you believe people spent 90,000 hours viewing our Facebook videos?
- The Bonobo Project, a nonprofit founded by the Co-President of our board and Director of Bonobo Partnerships, Ashley Stone, merged with Friends of Bonobos to generate a greater impact for bonobos.
- More than 6,600 visitors went to our new website bonobos.org and we successfully launched the French version.

Thanks to your continued support and the hard work of our team and, our digital communications continues to raise awareness of bonobos globally.



The Bonobo Project merger into Friends of Bonobos brought hundreds of new supporters to FOB.



To raise awareness on World Bonobo Day, we ran our first online giveaway with products donated by supporters.

In the Media

Media projects previously postponed due to the pandemic began to pick up again and new projects got underway.

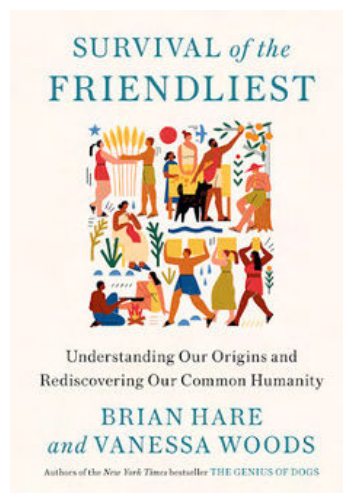
Our self-produced short video documentary, "The Story of Lola ya Bonobo," (by Leon Haberkorn) won Best Short Documentary from Paris Cinema Awards and the Boden International Film Festival.

"In Survival of the Friendliest", the new book by FOB board members Brian Hare and Vanessa Woods, bonobos are key to the evolutionary history of friendliness. The book generated significant media attention in publications such as The Washington Post, The New York Times, Slate, and Scientific American.

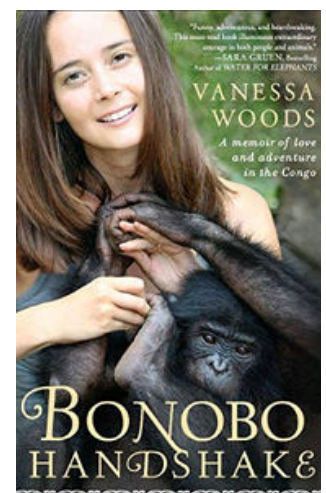
FOB also hosted two online book talk events for donors marking the 10th anniversary of Woods' book, "Bonobo Handshake."



Scene from Leon Haberkorn's
"The Story of Lola ya Bonobo."



New



10th Anniversary


Top Stories in 2021

Four stories aired on National Public Radio (NPR), the #1 news radio station in the U.S.

- Goats and Soda Podcast: "Some Generous Apes May Help Explain The Evolution Of Human Kindness," March 20, 2021
- Shots Health News: "Saving Endangered Bonobos Teaches A Lesson In Empathy," March 20, 2021
- All Things Considered: "Bonobos Offer Clues To Why Humans Evolved To Value Niceness," March 31, 2021
- Morning Edition: "Inside Lola ya Bonobo Sanctuary's Efforts To Save One Of The World's Greatest Apes," April 2, 2021

- Mongabay: "For Africa's great apes, a post-pandemic future looks beyond tourism," June 9, 2021
- Yahoo News: "'True survivor': How investigators saved a baby ape trafficked on the Dark Web," July 14, 2021



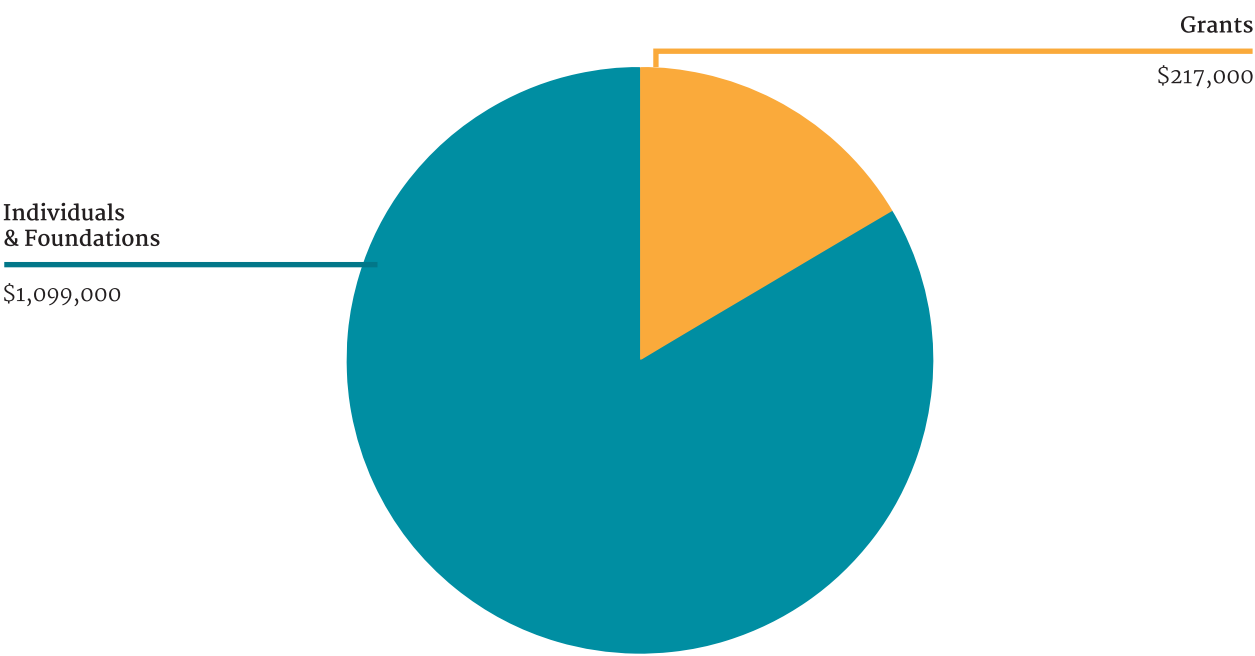
A bonobo is sitting in a light-colored hammock that is suspended within a wire cage. The bonobo is looking directly at the camera with a calm expression. The cage is made of metal bars, and the background shows some greenery outside. The lighting is natural, coming from the side.

Friends of Bonobos continues to invest 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.

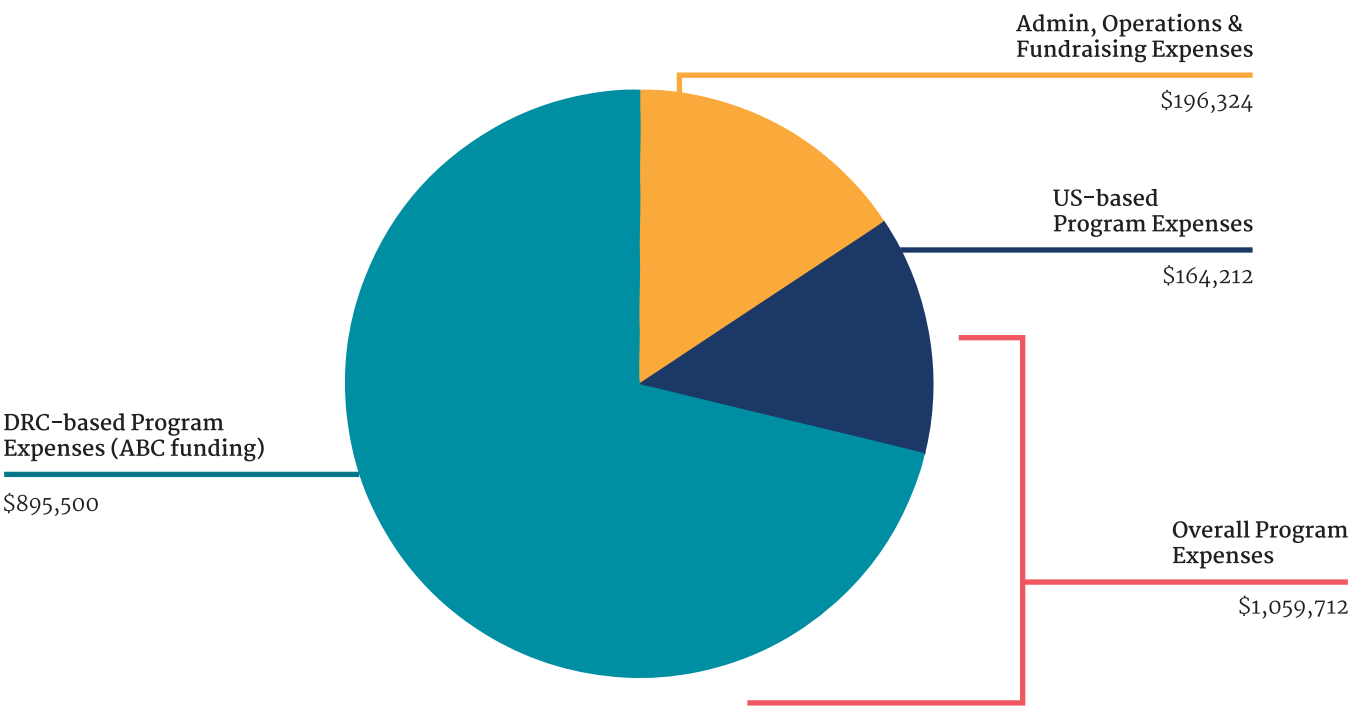
As a result of our investments, we saw a 26% increase in revenue in 2021.

Friends of Bonobos Financials (US)

2021 REVENUE (\$1,316,000)



2021 EXPENSES (\$1,256,036)



Looking Ahead, The Next 5 Years

Bonobo Rescue, Care & Rewilding

- Expand and 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 & Awareness

- 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

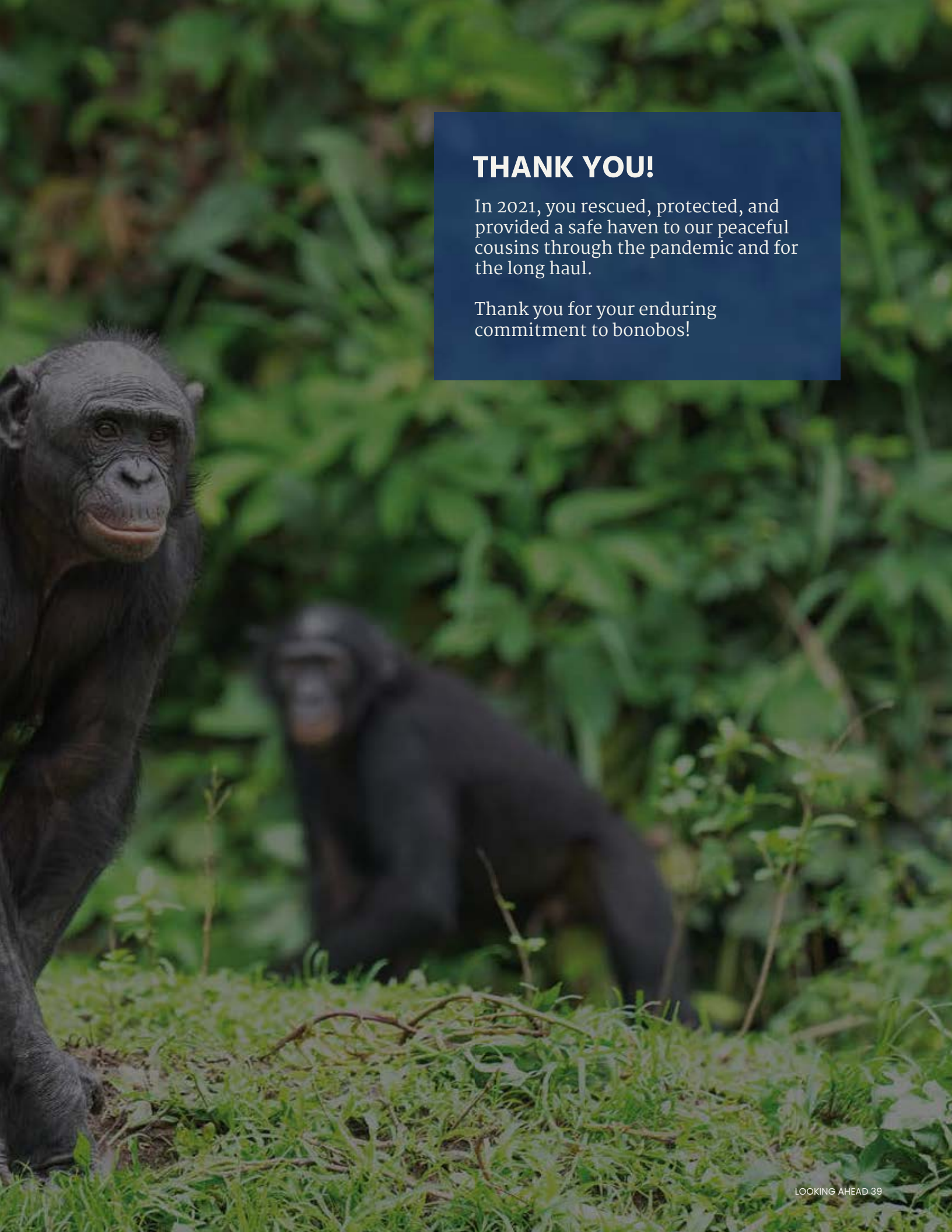
Rainforest & Bonobo Habitat Protection

- 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 the management of Ekolo
- Expand reach and frequency of medical and dental visits





THANK YOU!

In 2021, you rescued, protected, and provided a safe haven to our peaceful cousins through the pandemic and for the long haul.

Thank you for your enduring commitment to bonobos!



FRIENDS OF **BONOBOS**



When you give to Friends of Bonobos, you can be confident that your donation is making a difference. Friends of Bonobos is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of U.S. law.

This report is printed on recycled (mix), FSC certified and Rainforest Alliance certified paper.



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