

# Conservation Through Community Development

Wildlife Conservation and Anti-Poaching in Western Uganda

A Project of Good Sun Solar, a California-based 501(C)(3) NGO

## Monthly Report

Produced by

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# 1. Project Background

Conservation Through Community Development (CTCD) is a project of Good Sun, a nonprofit organization registered in the U.S. as a 501(C)(3) public charity and in California as a domestic nonprofit<sup>1</sup>. The CTCD project was initiated when it came to light that Uganda's unique tree-climbing lions were being poached for \$12 USD per lion. It is relevant here to note that the tree-climbing lions of Uganda are estimated to generate around \$13,500 USD per specimen in annual tourism revenue<sup>2</sup>.

In the spring of 2021, the poaching of six lions from Uganda's Queen Elizabeth National Park (QENP) made international news. According to Amoniz Muhumuza, headmaster at the Queen Elizabeth Nursery and Primary school in Kihikihi, a community bordering QENP, the lions were poached by men from his village in order, "to sell the lion heads to local witch doctors."

Poaching of sensitive wildlife within and nearby to the QENP was identified to be increasing as a result of the restrictive socio-economic policies implemented under governmental Covid management strategies. Essentially, individuals and families were and are being forced to seek alternative sources of income and some have turned to poaching. Having already been involved in several community development projects in Uganda, Good Sun, deciding that \$12 per lion was a manageable expense, began sending monthly donations to the Kihikihi community, in care of Mr. Muhumuza, with the express goal of replacing any potential income from selling lion heads. From this initial, modest goal, CTCD was formed.

## 2. Wildlife Assessment

Elephants and the unique tree-climbing lions in the Ishasha sector of Queen Elizabeth National Park (QENP) face threats from growing and expanding human populations around the park. As a result, wildlife populations have suffered. The number of Ishasha lions has declined from six to four lions per 100 km<sup>2</sup> over the past ten years (need reference). The African savanna elephant population has decreased by around 60% over the last 50 years, according to (?) assessments. Both species have suffered sharp declines since 2008 due to a significant increase in poaching, which peaked in 2011 but continues to threaten populations (reference?).

Primary threats to lions in QENP involve poaching from desperate individuals seeking income and angry farmers seeking retribution for livestock predation or injury to fellow villagers. Elephants face retaliation from farmers who experience mass crop destruction. According to Mr. Muhumuza, the majority of farmers do not attend to their livestock and crops at night, which leaves their property susceptible. The most common forms of poaching around Ishasha include snaring, poisoning, and stabbing with spears.

In January 2016, six elephants were killed in Queen Elizabeth National Park<sup>3</sup>. In April 2018, eleven dead lions were found in Ishasha with insecticide in their carcasses. Most recently, six tree-climbing lions were poached in March, 2021<sup>4</sup> eliminating over \$80,000 USD of tourism revenue along with the lions from QENP.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.GoodSun.life](http://www.GoodSun.life)

<sup>2</sup> Wildlife Conservation Society: <https://uganda.wcs.org/Wildlife/Lions.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/tanzania/news/africa/poachers-kill-six-elephants-in-uganda-queen-elizabeth-park-2543542>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ugandawildlife.org/news-events/news/six-lions-die-in-queen-elizabeth-national-park>

To ensure a future for tree-climbing lions and elephants in QENP, and mitigate the impacts of the current ecological crisis<sup>5</sup>, specifically poaching, Mr. Muhumuza from Kihiki and Eric Stikes from Good Sun, have endeavored a long-term project of Conservation Through Community Development (CTCD). This report covers the activities and milestones of CTCD in 2021.

### 3. Project Information

| Program Title     | Conservation Through Community Development |                  |  |
|-------------------|--|------------------|--|
| Fieldwork Contact | Amoniz Muhumuza                            | 256.788.850.796  | <a href="mailto:Amonizmuhumuza229@gmail.com">Amonizmuhumuza229@gmail.com</a> |
| Program Contact   | Eric Stikes                                | 001.302.466.3786 | <a href="mailto:eric@goodsun.life">eric@goodsun.life</a>                     |
| Reporting Period  | July 1, 2021                               | Jan. 31, 2022    |  |

### 4. Project Activities

| Date       | Activity  | Results  |
|------------|---|--|
| April 2021 | Poaching activity reported to Good Sun                  | Eric Stikes at Good Sun begins communicating with Amoniz Muhumuza of Kihiki about increasing poaching of lions, elephants, giraffe, and other animals.   |
| May        | Conservation work begins                                | Members of communities in and around Ishasha begin to hold meetings to discuss the importance of wildlife and environmental stewardship. Reformed poachers begin to hand over poaching tools, traps, and weapons.  |
| June       | Conservation work continues. Threatened species rescued | Good Sun begins providing financial support to Mr. Muhumuza's anti-poaching activities. Money goes toward hunger relief and community education. More poaching tools are surrendered.<br><br>A Pangolin is rescued and handed over to Uganda Wildlife Authority by reformed poachers.              |
| July       | Conservation organization is taking shape               | Community of conservationists and reformed poachers come together to dig large trenches to prevent elephant passage from QENP into borderline communities. More poaching tools handed in. More sensitization meetings held.  |
| 7/14-8/20  | Official formation of reformed poacher groups           | 3 conservation groups made up of reformed poachers are formed in Nyarurambi, Cumbugu and Kazinga communities. Average of 20 reformed poachers in each group. Clear management is in place.<br><br>46 spears, 8 pangas, 4 poaching nets, 3 poisons, and 12 snares handed over by reformed poachers. |
| 8/10/21    | Youth conservation group formed                         | A council of youth has been formed to help the anti-poaching/ wildlife conservation effort. Youth members receive funds from Good Sun, maize seeds to sow in fields, and instruction from community leaders.   |
| 8/22-11/9  | Sensitivity training & awareness campaign               | 20 conservation sensitivity trainings conducted.<br><br>Over 300 people reached during trainings and awareness campaign  |

<sup>5</sup> A.k.a. The Sixth Mass Extinction

|             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| 8/23-8/27   | Hunger relief & community support during Covid lockdown | 100kg & 50kg bags of posho distributed to 20 most vulnerable households<br><br>Poaching cases reduced from 90% in the first lockdown to 50% in the second lockdown amongst beneficial members<br><br>40 bars of soap distributed to 20 households, 2 bars/household   |
| 9/13/21     | Retaliation   | Mr. Muhumuza is physically assaulted by poachers trying to intimidate him to abandon his conservation work  |
| 9/15-11/19  | Setting up projects for alternative income              | 42 bee hives in place with 25 hives with bees.<br><br>Wooden pig Sty in place with a total of 16 pigs, 15 Sows and 1 Boar.<br><br>1 Fish pond (120m X 85m) under construction.  |
| 10/14/21    | Threatened species rescued                              | 1 Pangolin, 1 Francolin, and 1 owl rescued and handed over to Uganda Wildlife Authority by reformed poachers  |
| 10/15-12/15 | Conservation group meetings                             | Five meetings are held during this time period to check in on reformed poachers and poaching activity, family health and well-being, sharing of ideas and experience, plans for alternative income projects, etc.   |
| 10/26-10/28 | Trench work   | The conservation team reworks the elephant trenches (2m deep x 2m wide, 20km long), crop invasion reduced by 50%  |
| 11/17-11/20 | Financial Support                                       | 24 “most vulnerable” families in Kihikihi community provided with 30,000 UGX each for food and other needs  |
| 11/23/21    | Organization named. First formal report produced.       | Mr. Muhumuza completed the first official report of the activities of the Queen Elizabeth Conservation Foundation, eventually renamed Conservation Through Community Development (CTCD), a nod to the pre-existing Conservation Through Public Health NGO in nearby Buhoma which focuses on gorilla conservation through family planning. |

## 5. Project Evolution

The following lists important development milestones in the CTCD project.

| Date      | Milestone  | Output  |
|-----------|--|---|
| Perpetual | Involvement of UWA Conservation Rangers to support CTCD efforts        | Poaching law-enforcement  |
| Perpetual | Involvement of local leaders especially local Council One Chairpersons | Messaging about conservation and environmental stewardship conveyed to wider community audience |
| 10/15/21  | Financial grant awarded from WWF via UWA                               | Establishment of piggery project for reformed poachers  |
| 10/29/21  | Community financial support  | Contributions to partially-finished projects by beneficiary members                             |
| 12/12/21  | Contribution from Uganda Tree Academy                                  | One knapsack sprayer for piggery  |
| 12/15/21  | Commencement of reformed poacher group Village Savings and Loan        | Three groups meet once per week to invest savings of 1,000 UGX per member                       |
| 12/21/21  | Representation on Wildlife Scouts Committee                            | One CTCD member appointed to Wildlife Scouts Committee  |



## 6. Project Budget

| Date      | Source           | Amount (USD) | Activities Funded                            |
|-----------|------------------|--------------|--|
| 6/9/21    | Good Sun         | \$12         | NA – Trial payment to test Sendwave App      |
| June 2021 | Good Sun         | \$75         | Food relief to families of detained poachers |
| July      | Good Sun         | \$200        | General Project Funds                        |
| August    | Good Sun         | \$100        | General Project Funds                        |
| September | Good Sun         | \$200        | General Project Funds                        |
| October   | Good Sun         | \$100        | General Project Funds                        |
|           | WWF/UWA          | \$2,640      | Establishment of piggery project             |
|           | Kihihi Community | \$2,550      | Support for piggery project                  |
| November  | Good Sun         | \$100        | General Project Funds                        |
| December  | Good Sun         | \$200        | General Project Funds                        |
| Jan 2022  | Good Sun         | \$150        | General Project Funds                        |

## 7. Next Steps and Future Opportunities

The following are planned activities for the coming months and potential opportunities given increased project funding:

- Expanding the piggery, apiary and fish projects to benefit more community members.
- Leveraging the Village Savings and Loan Scheme by establishing a revolving fund to enhance members' savings and linking the groups to financial institutions to improve members' access to finances.
- Training reformed poachers on the Wildlife Use rights and conservation challenges as well as recommending them to UWA to join the conservation team to fully participate in the collective management of the Protected Areas.
- Setting up CTCD office to have a clear address and improved identity.
- Strengthening awareness creation campaigns, recruiting more poachers for the reformed poacher groups with the VSLA perspective.
- Setting up a community library with internet, training members on ICT skills to increase access to information by community members.
- Setting up tree nursery beds and engaging community members in planting trees to conserve the environment.
- Partnerships with other conservation Organizations both local and international in order to increase the conservation impact.

## 8. Appendix I: Testimonials

### Why I stopped poaching by Felix Rutaro

“My Name is Rutaro Felix. I am a resident of Cumbugu Village, Rusoroza Parish in Kihhihi Sub County in the Kanungu District of Uganda. I’m married with two children. I first turned to poaching due to lack of basic needs like food meat and money. I needed a way to support my family. I used to like poaching small animals like bush pigs and Cobs. The CTCD helped me move away from poaching and incentivized me to conserve and protect wildlife. They educated me on dangers of poaching like imprisonment and risks of death due gun shots by game rangers and attacks by harsh animals like Lions. They continued to call me and others for meetings and trainings and we were always given lunch facilitation and Transport refund. The project continues to support us and improve our livelihoods so we no longer turn to poaching. I also encourage you to do the same like I did and handover your poaching tools. I have now resorted to making through other projects like crop growing, bee keeping, and rearing pigs. I have also pledged to support the educational campaigns against poaching.”



“I request those who are still poaching to completely stop, reform from poaching and join our group. By conserving wildlife, we can have tourists and improve our wellbeing.”

## 9. Appendix II: Photo Gallery



Figure 1: CTCD awareness campaigns and sensitivity training





*Figure 2: Meeting with reformed poachers during food distribution event.*



*Figure 3: Distribution of posho, beans, and soap during Covid lockdown.*





**Figure 4: Reformed poachers of Cumbugu making bee hives.**



**Figure 5: Reformed poachers of Kazinga setting up piggery.**



**Figure 6: Reformed poachers of Nyarurambi digging a fishery pond.**





**Figure 7: Reformed poachers digging elephant trench at border between Queen Elizabeth National Park and frontline communities.**



**Figure 8: Reformed poachers handing over poaching tools: spears, pangas, snares, poisons, and nets.**