



# BCFS *Venus*

March-September, 2017 | BLENDING RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION FOR SUSTAINABLE NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

## FROM THE EDITOR

Education is power. This may sound cliché but the role of conservation education in conserving Budongo Forest Reserve whilst improving community livelihoods around Budongo cannot be undermined. So then, what is conservation education? Pupils from Nyabyeya Church of Uganda Primary School help us understand conservation education and a number of other related topics as you read on. Following through with this, we believe this young generation's positive attitude towards conservation of natural resources will go a long way in protecting our forests and other vulnerable natural resources for the years to come. BCFS acknowledges this fact and therefore continues to educate not only the young people in schools but also engages community members in villages neighbouring the forest reserve. Infact, there are other stories in this edition that will grab your interest and get you learning more about BCFS, Budongo the forest and Budongo and its people. Enjoy your read.

Until next time,

*Sacantha N. Lwebya*

**BCFS Communications Coordinator**

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# Effects of Tenure Arrangements on Forest Conservation and Rural Livelihoods in Mid-Western Uganda

*By Christopher Mawa*



This PhD study is funded by the NORHED-supported project on Building capacity for REDD+ in East Africa for Improved Ecosystem Health and for Sustainable Livelihoods in Eastern Africa (REDD-EA) jointly implemented by Makerere University, University of Dar es Salam and Norwegian University of Life Sciences. The study is conducted in Budongo Central Forest Reserve and two adjacent community forests. The data for the study is two-fold: a biophysical inventory and a cross-sectional survey. I have completed the biophysical data collection and have pre-tested the survey questionnaire.

My research was inspired by questioning whether the forest governance arrangements that Ugan-

da government is promoting are yielding the desired results and the attendant conditions that help attain the desired results. In the past, forests were exclusively managed by state agencies manned by “experts” trained in formal institutions of learning, without meaningful involvement of local community members. However, recently, Uganda, just like other developing countries has been promoting forest governance strategies that seek to actively involve local community members in making decisions regarding forest resources. The ultimate aim of this new way of managing forests is to conserve the country’s forest resources while improving the livelihoods of the local communities who depend on the forest resources for a

large part of their livelihoods. Two major forest tenure arrangements stand out in Uganda’s efforts to achieve this twin win-win objective: the promotion of Collaborative Forest Management (CFM) and Community Forestry (CF). Under the CFM arrangement, the mandated state agency enters into an agreement with a group of local communities organised under a registered group – mostly Community-Based Organisation (CBO) to manage an area of a forest reserve. Such CFM groups are granted formal access, withdrawal and management rights to specified forestry resources in the forest area under the CFM arrangement. Community forestry on the other hand has been promoted in forests on customary land, most of which

were managed as open-access resources and were rapidly getting depleted and converted to other land uses. Community members registered under an association or group apply for the registration and declaration of their forest as a community forest. The members are expected to monitor activities related to the use and extraction of resources from their community forest and share revenue and other benefits accruing from the forest.

In the mid 2000's, the CFM arrangement was piloted in most of the compartments bordering communities on the southern and north eastern parts of Budongo Forest. Meanwhile, community forestry has also been piloted in four forests surrounding the reserve. However, there is dearth of information on whether the country is on course to achieve the win-win objective in the areas where these initiatives have been piloted. My study therefore seeks to assess whether forest compartments that are managed by the National Forestry Authority (NFA) alone and those under CFM are any different in terms of the levels of human activity therein and whether CFM members compared to non-members have superior livelihood portfolios. Data from the two community forests will help to assess whether the ten years of community forestry have yielded positive results for the forests and livelihoods of those that use the forests.

Preliminary results from the biophysical data reveal a higher incidence of recent human activity in compartments managed by the state agency - the National Forestry Authority (NFA) alone. The major extractive human activities recorded were charcoal and timber extraction. We also surprisingly recorded a high number of recent pit sawing sites in one of the compart-

ments where extractive activities are prohibited in principle. In the community forests, we recorded very few charcoal burning points and pit-sawing sites but a high number of small-diameter stumps from extraction of poles for construction. Although the CFM and community forest areas had fewer incidences of recent human disturbance, which would point to better rule enforcement and vigilance by the community members, these compartments also had lower numbers of preferred timber and charcoal trees. Thus, it is possible that there could be "leakage" where the organised community groups that formally share forest management responsibilities with the state agency protect their resources but continue to extract forest resources from the neighbouring compartments or forests that are not under their control. Although the CFM arrangement was piloted in most of the compartments bordering the local communities, only two groups have remained functional to-date. The success of the two groups is largely attributed to the favourable group homogeneity, small size, charismatic leadership and their involvement in several alternative livelihood activities promoted by Non-Governmental Organisations in the area.

In the community forests, the Communal Land Association (CLA) members have protected the community forests against encroachment for agriculture and settlement but not unauthorized extraction by community members. During the key informant interviews, members attributed the failure to completely control unauthorized access to the weak rule enforcement environment where wealthy rule-breakers can easily buy their way out of prison cells. The cost of managing the pro-

cess is too prohibitive for the CLA, moreover, the forests that they are managing have not been formally declared as community forests by the line minister – a basis that some rule-breakers have used to question the legitimacy of the actions of the CLA members.

For the success of these more-inclusive forest governance arrangements, state agencies need to strategically re-think the group dynamics in the areas where local community members are expected to work for a common cause. Forming amorphous groups that do not have a common cohesive ground in terms of culture, beliefs and livelihood activities could work to complete the paper work but ultimately fail on ground as we have observed in the compartments where the CFM arrangement did not succeed. More detailed synthesis of the study findings that are still in their draft forms will be published in peer-reviewed journal articles.

The data collection process could not have been any better given the warm reception, company, technical assistance and in-kind support offered by BCFS. I remain highly indebted to Dr. Babweteera Fred, Dr. Tumusiime David, Mr. Muhanguzi Geoffrey and Mr. Kiwedde T. Zephyr for their immense support during the fieldwork. I still have fresh memories of the endless jungle jokes my field team especially Mr. Okimat John Paul and Mr. Kennedy Andama kept making to keep the team strong even when the body threatened to collapse. The unpredictable rain, those 'tiny insects', as we would call them, that would bite when least expected, the rough transects and the numerous times we slid and fell down simply served to add flavour to the fun.

# Taking science to the public:

## The early days of conservation education

*By Fred Babweteera*

In the early years of its work, BCFS focussed on research and studies on chimpanzee behaviour and ecology dominated the research agenda. Many studies often revealed threats to Budongo's biodiversity. Notably, indiscriminate hunting methods that cause lethal injuries to chimpanzees and increased interaction between humans and wildlife that enhances the risk of disease transmission consequently threatening wildlife populations. In addition to these, logging that targeted high value timber tree species (such as mahoganies) potentially affected the regeneration of these trees given that loggers frequently cut small sized trees yet tree seeding is highly correlated with tree size/age. These and many other discoveries compelled BCFS to engage the local community adjacent to the forest and/or utilising Budongo Forest in a long term community conservation education programme. However, some were against the new direction BCFS was taking to engage with the public. For such individuals, it was deemed more practical for BCFS (then Budongo Forest Project) to focus on its strength, that is, to generate the knowledge through research and let other stakeholders engage the public. Just as the old proverb says, BCFS had taken the horse to the river, but could not force the horse to drink the water. BCFS redefined the proverb to say; You can take the horse to the river but cannot force it to drink the water. However, if the horse does not drink the water, then drink it yourself. It was time to take the science to the public!

The aim of the Community Conservation Education Programme was to create awareness of the threats to biodiversity and develop collaborative mitigation measures. The programme also targeted creating a forum in which the staff of BCFS and the communities engaged in interactive learning. This followed the belief that local communities play an important role in conservation. Consequently, interactive learning would create a stronger connection between Budongo Forest and its people prompting the local communities to contemplate how their actions threaten biodiversity and how they can be part of the solution.

The underlying principle of the community conservation education programme was that rather than reprimand local communities for their actions that threaten biodiversity, we should focus on understanding why they are acting in certain ways and seek to engage in innovative solutions that meet the local communities' needs while ensuring sus-



tainable use of the forest resources. The preliminary education sessions focussed on adults through communal village meetings. The meetings were strategically held on Sunday afternoon at local churches to capture church goers before they dispersed to their homes. The initial encounters were characterised by mistrust mainly due to the bad blood between the Forest Department (now National Forestry Authority) and the local communities. Common scenarios included flopped meetings due to low or no turn up of community members; denial of involvement in illegal activities; complaints of crop raiding by wildlife yet conservation agencies focus on the welfare of wildlife; and many others. This did not deter our drive push ahead. The key ingredient to the growth of the education programme has been patience and persistence. This has now become a key principle in the conservation programmes that BCFS delivers.

Fast forward to the present, the conservation education programme has evolved to encompass local schools in which conservation seminars and debates are hosted by school wildlife clubs. Investing in the next generation is now the primary focus of the programme. A variety of conservation issues are presented and discussed at the various platforms. Notable topics include eco-health, sustainable agriculture, alternative livelihoods and climate change. Others include primate behaviour, human-wildlife conflicts and wildlife laws and acts.

The success of this programme is largely credited to the field team initially led by Zed Tumwine and Steven Oliko. Currently the team is led by Dr Carol Asiimwe, Conservation Coordinator at BCFS. We are greatly indebted to Oakland Zoo and Royal Zoological Society of Scotland who have patiently and persistently funded the conservation education programme. BCFS will continue to use its research findings to inform the development of the community conservation education programme.

# Budongo Conservation Field Station (then Budongo Forest Project)

## THE EARLY DAYS. PART TWO

*By Vernon Reynolds*

I left readers of the last issue at the point where Chris Bakuneeta was in charge of the project, based in a building in Nyabyeya Forestry College. I had to go back to my job in the UK where I was a lecturer in anthropology. Next spring I returned to Budongo (I used to go twice a year in those days, for 3 or 4 weeks at a time). Chris met me at Entebbe Airport and he had an enigmatic smile on his face. Oh dear, I thought, something's gone wrong and he wants to tell me without worrying me too much. "How's the project going?" I asked. "Very well" he said. The smile was still there. "There's something you aren't telling me" I said, fearing the worst. "You'll be surprised" he replied, "we've moved." "Moved?" "Yes" said Chris, "we are no longer at the college". My fears deepened. Had we been thrown out? Had rebels arrived and destroyed everything? In those days there were rebels around. "Go on then" I said, "tell me what's happened".

Without informing me, Chris had moved the project from the college, where we had been based, to a house belonging to the Budongo Sawmill. He explained his reasons: from the college we had to travel to the forest, look for chimps, and then travel back. The sawmill was in a clearing right in the middle of the forest and the house was right by the forest edge. It took less than a minute to get into the forest. There were several large houses in the clearing, he said, together with a set of smaller ones for our staff. "Staff?" I asked. I didn't know about the staff either. "Yes" he said. "We now have



*House 1 before renovations*

six Field Assistants and six Trail Cutters". "That's great", I said. The project had really taken off, big time. Our own house, and staff! Could we sustain this level of activity? I started planning how to raise money to keep things going. Otherwise our project was going to collapse very soon indeed.

So as we bumped and slid along the muddy roads to western Uganda, I had plenty to think about. In my mind's eye was this nice house Chris was talking about. He told me it used to be part of the accommodation for the administrative and clerical staff of the sawmill. It was big, he said, with many rooms. And the smaller houses were just what we needed for the staff. I could not wait to arrive at our new camp. Chris drove us on. It was still a day's drive to camp. We were covered in dust, in need of a shower or a dip in a hot tub, and very hungry. "Don't worry

about food" said Chris, "we have a cook called Robina, and a nice kitchen". It all sounded like a holiday resort. I couldn't wait.

We arrived towards evening, the light was failing and I was exhausted. The house rose out of the semi-darkness in front of us. The door was off, the windows were broken, it was a ruin. I went inside, using my torch for light. The walls were all eaten by termites, the ceiling was down. No table and no chairs. No mattress on my bed. There was some food in the cupboard so I grabbed an avocado. A large number of cockroaches sped away. Bats were flying around the room. Chris had disappeared. I stood in the darkness and wondered whether to open my suitcase or just sit on it and go home the next day. The main thing that I needed was a wash. But there was nowhere to wash. Oh dear. I looked for the choo in the pitch darkness. "Be careful" Chris said, "you may fall down".

Someone appeared and offered me a plastic bowl, a kettle of hot water, and a piece of soap. Fantastic! At least I could now get the dust out of my hair and my beard and start to feel a bit better. "Where's the bathroom?" I asked Chris. "There isn't one" he said, "we use the back room". He showed me to a room at the back. It had a nice cement floor but nothing else. The door didn't lock. And I didn't care. I stripped off, poured the hot water into the bowl, stepped into it and had a lovely wash, using my hands to get the water up. The soap was a mixed blessing. It kept escaping and in the pitch darkness I couldn't find it. I was worried I might pick up a cockroach by mistake.

There were banging noises outside and soon food appeared. A kerosene lamp was lit, revealing chicken and rice, my favourite dish! Life was looking up. We had a good supper with the best avocados I've ever eaten. It was time for bed. There was now a mattress on my bed and

I slumped into a deep sleep. I didn't notice the bats whose lives I had disturbed, and even the hyraxes failed to keep me awake.

Next morning Chris produced a nice breakfast—a cup of tea followed by a big bowl of posho on which he heaped several spoonfuls of sugar. Nice. There was a table after all, and chairs. We were quite civilised really. And now the field assistants made their appearance: Zephyr, Geresomu, Dissan, Tinka and Nabert. Then the cutters arrived: Ascencio, Orach, Okellowanje, Ocokuru, Wele, and Sebbi. What friendly people they all were. Chris gave them some instructions for the day's work and off they went into the forest with their pangas. And then we heard chimps, quite close. I wanted to go in too but I hadn't yet unpacked or anything so I resisted the temptation. Chimps would have to wait until the following day.

I took a walk around our camp. Our house was truly in a terrible condi-

tion (see photo). The kitchen was a broken shack. The staff houses were even worse and we soon started to renovate them (see photo). Everything needed doing. Pound signs and dollar signs were appearing in my mind. Where on earth was the money going to come from to get this place into really nice shape? Chris seemed to have confidence in my ability to raise the necessary money and we made lists of everything that needed doing and what it would probably cost. And we also talked about chimps. Several had been identified from their facial appearance, their body shapes and cuts or other particular marks on their heads and bodies. They had already been given names. "Magosi" was the alpha male (later I learned what that word means). Some chimps had snare injuries, such as Kalema and Kewaya. There was an old chimp, Tinka, who kept scratching himself, he had some kind of skin disease. I would meet them all later.



*The old staff houses at the start of renovations*

# The role Budongo Conservation Field Station plays in Conservation Education around Budongo Forest Reserve

**B**udongo Conservation Field Station conducts sessions with pupils on how to conserve the environment such as lessons on tree planting, protecting the forest by avoiding tree cutting among others. Since the pupils are sensitised on how to conserve the environment, it's the same information the pupils pass on to their parents. BCFS has proactively encouraged tree planting by providing tree seedlings to schools and communities which are planted for shed and also help protect our water catchment areas. To further disseminate information on conservation, BCFS severally invites pupils and their teachers to the forest to see and appreciate more, the beautiful environment and the animals therein. Through workshops organised by BCFS in different schools in the sub-county, pupils share information and are guided on question approach in addition to which they are fed.

For our school in particular (Nyabyeya Church of Uganda Primary School), BCFS coordinated funds with which we were able to set up a school library and employ Mr. Aggrey who is the school's librarian and also serves as a teacher. BCFS also installed a water tank at the school premises which serves as a source of clean water for drinking, washing hands and utensils and for cleaning our toilet facilities. We have also on several occasions been honoured to receive visitors from the United Kingdom and other European countries with whom we have



been delighted to share our experiences and views on various subjects.

On behalf of Nyabyeya C.O.U Primary School I would like to thank BCFS for all the initiative they have taken to conserve our environment and urge you (BCFS) to keep up the good spirit. My special thanks go out to Dr. Carol Asiimwe and Mr. Geoffrey Muhanguzi.

**Mr Musinguzi Edward,**  
Head Teacher,

Nyabyeya C.O.U. Primary School

**BCFS** conducts community meetings where people are taught about the importance of forests, discouraged from engaging in poaching and sensitised on the importance of wild animals such as chimpanzees among others. BCFS also encourages and educates people on commercial agriculture to reduce their dependence on the forest for income and their daily livelihood. On a number of occasions, BCFS has provided crop seed to communities around the forest to encourage them to get involved in agriculture. In addition to this, BCFS organises seminars in schools where students are given a platform to discuss issues pertaining to forests.

**Mr Edward Katusabe,**

Sanitation Teacher, P.7 Class,

Nyabyeya C.O.U. Primary School



## The role conservation education plays in protecting Budongo Forest Reserve

Children are engaged in debates, sports and other fun activities that are themed on conservation which many children find fun. In this way, conservation education has helped reduce the number of school dropouts which in turn reduces the chances of early marriages. In this case, population growth is controlled as children of child bearing age stay in school longer. Through conservation education, children do learn and develop a conservation culture in addition to which this has helped increase the level of literacy in the communities.



Mr Aggrey Menya,

Librarian,

Nyabyeya C.O.U. Primary School

# CONSERVATION EDUCATION IN THE EYES OF THE YOUNG GENERATION

BCFS conducted a group discussion with a number of Primary five, six and seven pupils from Nyabyeya COU Primary School. In this discussion we focussed on conservation education and other related topics. The pupils were encouraged to share their knowledge on the subjects given what they had learnt over a series of encounters with the Conservation Education team from BCFS led by Dr Carol Asiimwe. Mr Edward Katusabe(teacher) and Mr Aggrey Menya(librarian) mobilised and organised the pupils for this meeting. We are happy to share some of the results of the discussion and our hearts are filled with hope knowing that our efforts for conservation education are making a positive impact.

## WHAT IS CONSERVATION?

Conservation is the keeping and maintaining something for future use.

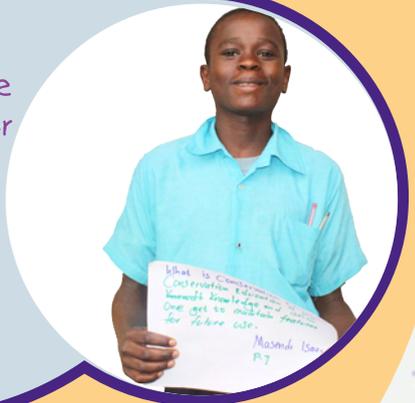
Businge Victor P.6



## WHAT IS CONSERVATION EDUCATION?

Conservation education is the knowledge and skills one gets to maintain features for future use.

Masendi Isaac P.7



Conservation Education is the study of about how to care for our environment and forest.

Wabyoona Chrescent,  
Namanya Agnes,  
Ovaya Alex, Aseera Lonna  
P.5/P.7



# ARE FORESTS IMPORTANT? YES

THESE ARE SOME OF THE REASONS THAT WERE OBTAINED FROM A NUMBER OF PUPILS FROM THE DISCUSSION SESSION WE HAD

## WHY ARE FORESTS IMPORTANT?

To farmers- They help in the process of rainfall formation

To people and the communities around them- forests are a source of firewood, herbal medicine, hardwood for furniture

To animals- forests are a home of aquatic animals (such as amphibians, reptiles and fish) and terrestrial animals such as chimpanzees, monkeys (such as baboons, black and white colobus monkeys, red tailed monkeys, blue monkeys, vervet monkeys) antelopes, squirrels and the Bunyoro rabbit.

To birds- birds get their food from forests and use forests as their habitat too

To insects- forests provide food, shelter and breeding place for insects

## WHAT IS SANITATION?

Sanitation is the general cleanliness of our surroundings.

## WHAT ARE THE SANITATION FACILITIES A CLEAN HOME SHOULD HAVE?

1. Pit latrine
2. Bathroom
3. Utensil drying rack
4. Rubbish pit

## NAME THE GOOD SANITATION PRACTICES YOU KNOW.



Avoiding environmental pollution by not disposing industrial wastes in water sources

Asianju Rachel P.5



Removing stagnant water after it rains

Rwothomiyo Didector Opio P.7

Proper disposal of human wastes

Ahaisibwe Anatole P.7



Recycling polythene bags to avoid polluting our environment

Chandia Samson P.7



Cleaning around water sources to avoid water pollution

Apio Precious P.7



Burning rubbish at the rubbish pit when it is full

Katusabe Sandra P.7



Smoking pit latrines to avoid badsmell

Aseera Lonna Consolate P.7



# In the Eyes Of The Young Generation

*During one of our conservation education sessions with pupils from Budongo Sawmill Primary School and Nyantonzi Primary School, the pupils were tasked with drawing pictures to tell the story of what they had learnt.*



Many animals live together in the forest which is also their home.



The forest also provides them with food on which they survive.

However sometimes as a result of food shortage in the forest which is often a result of people cutting down trees that provide food for the animals, animals such as chimpanzees and baboons move from the forest to the communities in search for food.



When the chimpanzees stray to the communities searching for food, it is not good to attack the chimpanzees with stones or even sticks as the animals may become very angry and fight back yet they are very strong and this could result in severe injuries. We therefore need to protect the forest so that the animals too have food and a home to stay.



# Ficus mucoso

A chimpanzee food tree in Budongo Forest

By Moses Businge



*The leaves of Ficus Mucoso. This picture is also representative of the leaf arrangement of Ficus mucoso*

Ficus mucoso belongs to the family of Moraceae, has an open crown with wide spreading branches, a smooth bark that is brown in colour with a relatively straight trunk with protruding buttress roots. When mature, it is one of the largest trees in Budongo forest.

Ficus mucoso fruits about four times a year which makes it a very dependable tree as far as chimpanzee feeding is concerned. It is a delicacy among the Sonso chimpanzee community that we can term it as the "rice, matooke and beef meal" for many of the Sonso individuals that they would prefer to feed on its fruits before considering fruits from any other species. In addition to mucoso being such a delicacy, this Ficus species produces many a number of fruits on each of its

branches which can sustain the chimpanzees for at least 3 to 4 days something that many other chimpanzee food tree species cannot provide. Fruits of one individual tree species of the other chimpanzee food trees can be consumed in a day if many chimpanzees came to feed on it. Not all is rosy for these chimpanzees that love to feed on the fruits of Ficus mucoso. The mature trees have such big trunks with diameters bigger than many other tree species which makes them hard to climb for many individuals. The chimpanzees often resort to using "short cuts" to reach the top of the tree. They climb smaller nearby trees to cover a reasonable distance of the fig's trunk after which they can move to its canopy to feed on the fruits.

Therefore conservation of this species means a lot to chimpanzees since it is one of the most dependable chimpanzee food tree species in the forest.



*The prominent buttress roots of a mature Ficus mucoso tree*



*The canopy of Ficus mucoso*

# BUDONGO AND ITS PEOPLE

## Meet Monday Mbotella Gideon

*Monday first worked with Budongo Conservation Field Station in 1998 as a part time birder and later worked with a number of researchers before he became a full-time member of staff in 2002 to date. Monday is currently a Senior Field Assistant mainly working with the Sonso Chimpanzee Community. Many that have interfaced with him at work can attest to his fondness of the chimpanzees. In an exclusive interview with Jacintha N. Lwebuga, Monday narrates some of the highlights of his experience working with BCFS. many researchers and interns.*

### **First experience working at BCFS**

I first worked with BCFS in 1998 as a part time birder working with Dr. Eric Sunday on his PhD research for a few months after which I left and later returned to assist Jeremy Lindsey with his research for a few weeks. I was jobless again! However I had applied to become permanent staff at BCFS and I was awaiting feedback.

### **My road to becoming a full time member of staff**

In 2000 around June, Dr Fred Babweteera called me and told me there was a Ugandan student Mnason Tweheyo I could assist with his research but I needed to undertake training for six months before I could be ready for the job. I surprised him when I did just one month of training and I was good to go! I worked with Mnason for one year after which I was offered an opportunity to join BCFS as permanent staff which I turned down. I still had hopes of returning to school. However the tuition was high that I could not afford it. I later on took on the job in 2002. I remember Sean O'hara the Assistant Co-Director then was the first white student with whom I worked for close to two years. He was tough and we worked Monday to Monday nesting the chimpanzees daily. He was tasked with fully habituating the Sonso chimpanzee community. It was hard work! But because of that hard work, today we can follow the chimpanzees without them going into "flight mode". I gained a lot of experience and courage to do this kind of work from Sean and I have since worked with many researchers and interns.



### **Challenges working in the forest**

Currently working as a Research Assistant, I often tell my students that it is not an easy task. It involves use of almost all of one's senses and requires a lot of patience. For example even when one sits the morning away in the forest, they are working as their ears and eyes must remain alert least one could miss an important hint. I also have to work with different personalities that I sometimes know nothing about so humbling oneself is necessary.

Working with chimpanzees is challenging sometimes as their animal instincts can kick in anytime. There are incidences when chimpanzees have charged at me out of the blue that I start to wonder what could have gone wrong. "I think there are times when the chimpanzees also get tired of our presence in their space but since they cannot talk, they instead just charge at us".

I remember one cloudy and rather dull morning while I worked with Mnason Tweheyo, we were following a group of about five adult male chimpanzees that were walking in a straight line along a trail. Mnason got a hold of his camera and started to take pictures but

sadly his camera flash was on. As soon as he snapped, the chimpanzee that was last on line barked and the whole group started to display, tease and charge at us. This went on for about 2-3 minutes but trust me they seemed much longer than they were. We were literally trembling. Mnason wanted to run for his life but I had to hold tight on to him and kept telling him to stay put. I am glad he listened! Otherwise the story would be different. We would be no more; us running off would be interpreted as though we are their enemies. There have also been times we (Research assistants and Researchers) have had to follow chimpanzees as they fight one another. One needs to be brave and strong hearted to follow through such an incidence. On some occasions, we have been victims of bush pig attacks. This is often after the bush pigs have been provoked by the chimpanzees we follow. In such scenarios we have had to run for our lives and climb up trees or fall-logs that are at least 2 meters high to survive the wrath of the agitated bush pigs.

### **What I love about Budongo Conservation Field Station**

I like the exposure, I have made many friends. And because of some of these friendships I got the opportunity to travel to Kibale, Entebbe, Kampala and many other places.

### **My visit to the U.K**

I did not know I would ever travel abroad, it was not in my wildest dreams but through my hard work it came to pass. I vividly remember the day when Geoffrey Muhanguzi (BCFS Field Station Manager) broke the news. "I cannot believe you until I board my flight" was my reply. He then told me that he was serious and that some of the students I had assisted with their research had contributed for my ticket and I would travel later that year (2014) with my colleague Geresomu Muhumuza. The day finally came!

In Scotland we visited the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland where we toured zoo and finally set foot at the famous Budongo Trail. There were so many tourists and journalists at the time and we were honoured to give a talk about the Sonso chimpanzee community and Budongo Forest at large. We also visited many places in the city including the Scottish Parliament, the Castles and St. Andrew's University were many of the student researchers at BCFS come from. Some of the students that we had assisted with their research

hosted us and took us around. I was such a wonderful experience. From some of our tours for example when I saw the "Great Walls" around cities I was reminded and started to visualise what I had studied as an A-level European History student. I also got an opportunity to visit Cambridge University where I was honoured give a talk about chimpanzee conservation in the wild. "Who am I to get a group of intellectuals from Cambridge listening?" It was such a beautiful experience. To add icing to the cake, some of my former student researchers organised and gave me a lifetime opportunity to tour Old Trafford the home of the Red Devils (Manchester United Football Club) a football team I am so passionate about.

I will forever be grateful to all those that made this whole life changing experience possible. Thank you and May God bless you. I hope to live to share this story with my great grandchildren.

### **What is your motivation?**

#### ***At work***

I would not say it is the money. The job is much bigger and challenging so one must love what they do. I love my job! And because of that nothing is too big a challenge for me to overcome. It has been my only job since I completed my A-level.

I remember my first day as full time staff at BCFS, Fred Babweteera told me two things that continue to ring in my head.

1. "Work hard even when you are not supervised" he said. There is nothing you can do that has no payment; good deeds will attract good payment and the reverse is true.

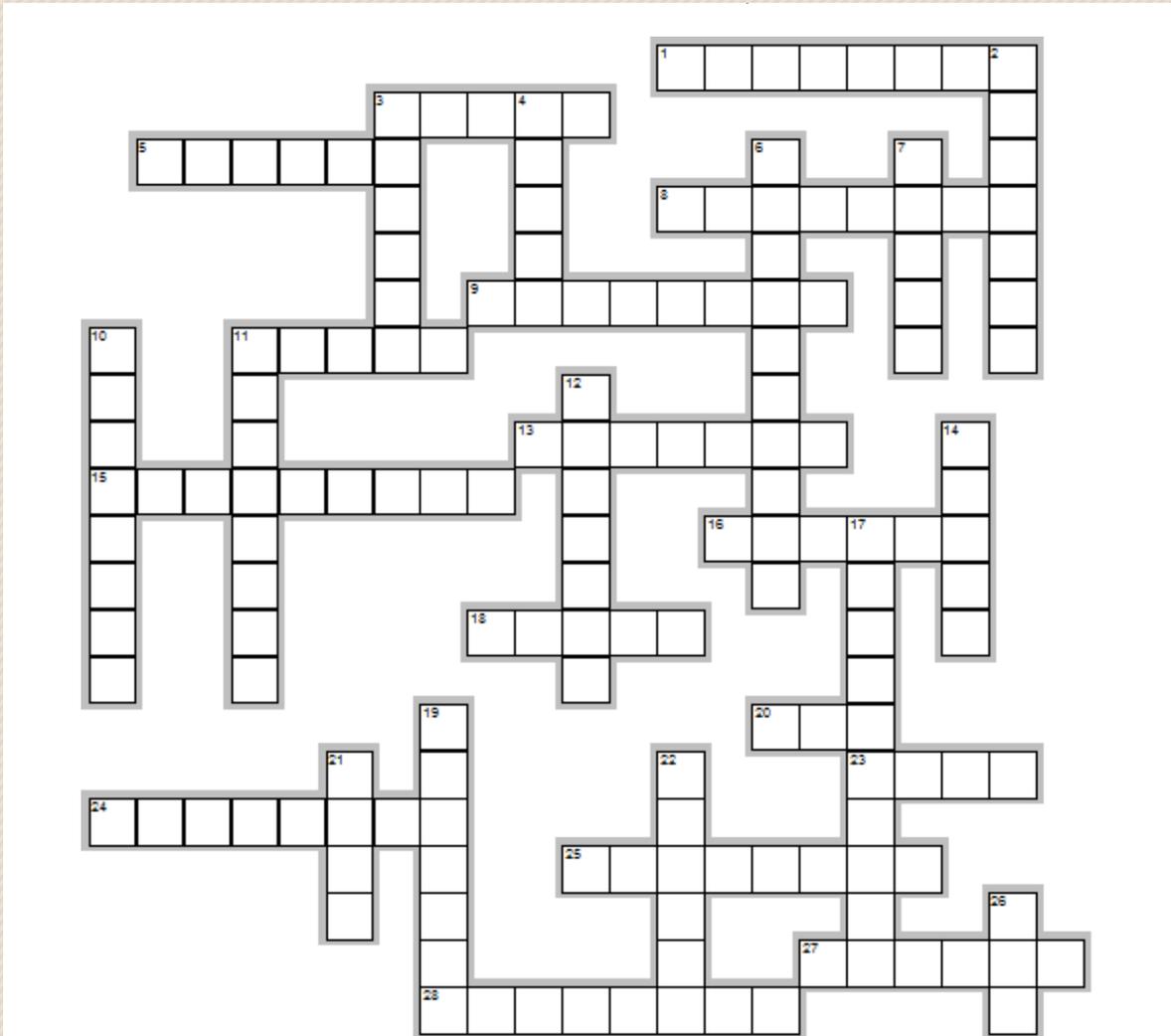
2. There are so many ways to life; some people have a more direct path while others may meander. Life is not about what you who have "failed" to achieve or where you are at a given point in time. You may begin from nowhere but you can make it through struggle and hard work.

#### ***In life***

You have to be patient. This is something I even tell my children. Do not do one thing and quickly give it up to take on another! If I had done that I would not have gotten all these opportunities.

# FUN CORNER

Crossword Puzzle By Eric Okwir



## ACROSS

1. Walk around in the night, and you will see these animals grazing on the camp lawns
3. Famous Ugandan Snack commonly eaten by researchers as field lunch, and also bears the name of a famous watch
5. An old land cruiser vehicle named after a prolific and reliable Ivory Coast footballer
8. The timber from this tree species makes extremely valuable furniture
9. Longest serving Field Assistant at Sonso
11. Small but very loud animal that makes noise throughout the night, and could form a good rock music band! Put a smiley face here

13. These notorious animals sometimes raid the camp kitchens for food, and often "poo" on the vehicles parked at camp perhaps in revenge?
15. Seasonal changes in tree flowering, fruiting and leafing
16. Founded BCFS, and is 'saluted' by the Sonso chimpanzee community whenever he comes to Budongo for his annual visit
18. Chimpanzees swallow herbal medicines to remove these small parasites from their gut.
20. Beverage that is traditionally taken at any time at Sonso
23. Important food source whose fruits normally leave chimpanzees screaming in joy
24. Forest plants commonly harvested by local communities and used as ropes
25. When an individual, or many chimpanzees sit and remove parasites from their bodies
27. Tree species illegally harvested for making boats, and is now at risk of extinction
28. The tree that produces the strongest/toughest timber in Budongo

## DOWN

2. Sugar factory whose cane plantations stretch to the forest-edge
3. A palm tree that grows in forest swamps and is a major source of minerals to chimpanzees
4. A big bird of prey, which hunts monkeys in Budongo forest
6. This animal is the BCFS flagship species and is man's closest relative
7. The small round hut at the Sonso camp
10. This member of the Big Five family once roamed the Budongo Forest, but is now locally extinct
11. Loud, black and white coloured bird
12. Is the newly habituated chimpanzee community
14. River running through the forest after which a chimpanzee community is named
17. Nearest village to the BCFS gate and home to many staff members
19. The district in which the BCFS camp is located
21. The male Sonso chimpanzee best known for his long consortship trips
22. One of the best drivers you will ever find, who is also a genius at fixing everything from electricity, broken window panes and rain gauges, to the water system on camp
26. The one-eyed, lame chimpanzee of the Sonso community