



FONDATION KIBIRA

Fondation Kibira

Newsletter

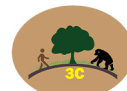
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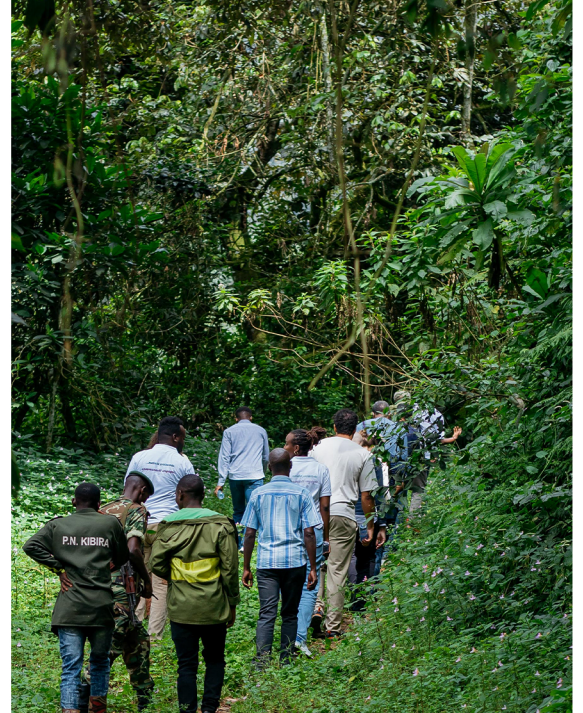
Nature
Investment
Facility

Cartier for Nature



In This Issue

Welcome to this edition of the *Fondation Kibira* Newsletter! In this issue, we begin with a message from our Chairperson, reflecting on our mission and future goals. We then take a look back at our key achievements in 2024, highlighting milestones such as eco-guards' recruitment, restoration projects, and community initiatives. You will also find an inspiring impact story showcasing how our work has transformed lives. In addition, we bring you exciting updates on recent visits and engagements, including high-profile visits that support conservation efforts. Finally, we share our vision for 2025, focusing on ecosystem restoration, sustainable tourism, and community empowerment.



About *Fondation Kibira*

Fondation Kibira is an organization committed to the conservation and restoration of the Kibira Forest and its surrounding areas. Established to continue the impactful work of the "Kibira, Sanctuaire de Paix" project, *Fondation Kibira* serves as a strategic entity ensuring the sustainability of conservation efforts and community development initiatives initiated by the project. By maintaining and expanding its activities, the foundation plays a crucial role in preserving the ecological integrity of the Kibira National Park and enhancing the livelihoods of surrounding communities.



Our Mission

Fondation Kibira's mission is to preserve the ecological integrity of Kibira National Park while fostering sustainable livelihoods for the surrounding communities. By integrating conservation, socio-economic empowerment, and cultural heritage preservation, the foundation aims to create a resilient environment that benefits both nature and people.



Board of Directors

The Board of Directors provides strategic leadership, guidance on long-term goals, and ensures good governance at *Fondation Kibira*. Comprising diverse professionals committed to conservation and sustainable development, the board plays a vital role in shaping the organization's vision and impact.

- Chairperson – **Hon. Imelde Sabushimike**
- Vice Chairperson – **Barthelemy Ntakarutimana**
- Member of the board & Secretary – **Delphin Kaze**
- Member of the board – **Jadot Nkurunziza**
- Member of the board – **Benitha Mireille Mugisha**
- Member of the Board – **Abraham Niyongabo**
- Member of the Board – **Asterie Bimenyimana**
- Member of the Board – **Jacqueline Habonimana**
- Member of the Board – **Aloys Ngendakumana**

Management and Staff

Our management and staff work tirelessly to implement programs, engage communities, and drive our conservation efforts forward.

- General Administrator – **Delphin Kaze**
- Resources mobilization specialist – **Christophe Ndayizeye**
- Technical Advisor – **Jerome Ahishakiye**
- Community Engagement Officer – **Elysé Ntakarutimana**
- Environment Conservation Officer – **Etienne Nduwayo**
- Communication Officer – **Lys Esther Karikumutima**
- Accountant – **Nelly Ishimwe**



**Mr. Delphin
Kaze**

Words from the
General Administrator



**Dear Friends, Partners, and
Conservation Advocates,**

Kibira National Park is a vital cornerstone of Burundi's ecological integrity and biodiversity. Unfortunately, it faces ongoing challenges such as deforestation, unsustainable land use, and environmental degradation.

At *Fondation Kibira*, we are resolutely committed to confronting these issues through an integrated conservation model that prioritizes ecosystem restoration, sustainable livelihoods, and robust institutional support.

Our mission is to protect Kibira National Park's unique ecological functions while simultaneously enhancing community livelihoods and nurturing a culture of stewardship. Through strategic partnerships and innovative funding mechanisms, we drive tangible results on the ground.

Our co-management agreement with the Office Burundais de Protection de l'Environnement (OBPE) has significantly strengthened forest monitoring and improved operational efficiency through the rehabilitation of critical infrastructure.

By directing resources toward reforestation, community-led conservation initiatives, and capacity-building programs, we are laying the groundwork for the long-term sustainability of the Kibira National Park.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to conservation-driven development.

Fondation Kibira is not just an advocate for nature; we are a catalyst for positive change in the communities surrounding the park.

Together, we believe our collaborative efforts will continue to yield precise, impactful results, ensuring that Kibira thrives as a vibrant and resilient ecosystem for generations to come.

***Thank you for being an
essential part of our
journey.***

Warm regards,

Reflecting on 2024 Achievements

The past year has been marked by significant progress and impactful initiatives that highlight our commitment to enhancing the well-being of the communities we serve. Thanks to your continued support, we reached several key milestones in 2024.

The restoration of OBPE facilities at the Mwokora site in Kibira National Park was completed, now providing a canteen, kitchen, and accommodations for eco-guardians and park management staff. Additionally, we recruited twelve new trackers who have been trained in chimpanzee habituation and tourism guiding, strengthening the park's conservation efforts.

A major highlight was the successful establishment of the Kibira Cultural and Artistic Center in Rwegura, a space designed to promote local heritage and encourage community engagement.

Alongside this, we advanced environmental rehabilitation initiatives to restore damaged ecosystems and ensure long-term ecological resilience.

Recognizing the importance of inclusive participation, we appointed representatives from diverse sectors within the community to foster better decision-making and local ownership.

Furthermore, our formalized partnership with Hydroneo will facilitate ecosystem services, allowing for an expanded collaborative approach to conservation and sustainable development.

These achievements underscore the transformative potential of collective action and serve as evidence of what we can accomplish when we work together.



Impact Story

Ubu nanje notuganya umugambi



Asterie's Journey with *Fondation Kibira*

In the communities surrounding Kibira National Park, many residents once relied on the forest for survival, cutting wood or cultivating land without considering its long-term conservation. Among them was Asterie Bimenyimana, a mother of five, who saw Kibira as a means of sustenance rather than a protected natural treasure.

Following the launch of the Kibira, "Sanctuary of Peace" project by Communities of Hope, local communities participated awareness sessions aimed to promote sustainable income-generating activities, moving away from reliance on Kibira natural resources. Asterie, like many others, was introduced to innovative farming techniques, including fruit tree nurseries and mushroom cultivation.

Inspired by this initiative, she took a bold step and founded "Abagenzi b'Ibidukikije" (Friends of the Environment), an association bringing together 44 women and one man, all committed to preserving Kibira.

Reflecting on her transformation, Asterie shared, "Ubu nanje notuganya umugambi"— "Now, I can plan and execute a project too."

Through her newfound skills and determination, Asterie turned her knowledge into prosperity. The sale of mushrooms enabled her to buy a pig, which later gave birth to 13 piglets. Selling them brought in BIF 910,000—nearly a million Burundian francs. Yet, for Asterie, the true reward was not just financial. Her family's lifestyle and health improved, she could invest in her children's education, and the women in her association also saw a positive change.

Most significantly, she no longer needed to return to the Kibira forest for survival.

Recognizing her dedication and leadership, in June 2024, Asterie was elected as the Women's Representative on the *Fondation Kibira's* Board.

Her journey is a testament to the transformative power of community-driven conservation. From struggling to make ends meet to leading an organization that empowers others, Asterie is more than a success story—she is a symbol of resilience, progress, and hope for her entire community. Imagine the ripple effect her story is creating for others like her.

In the News

At the start of 2025, Kibira National Park had the distinct honor of welcoming Her Excellency, the Minister of Commerce, Transport, Industry, and Tourism, who visited the park during her personal holiday. Intrigued by the park's natural beauty and the innovative conservation efforts underway, she took the opportunity to explore Kibira at her own initiative. Her visit not only underscores the growing national interest in sustainable development but also serves as an inspiring example of how leaders can personally connect with and support our environmental initiatives.



This high-profile engagement highlights the vital role of public-private partnerships in conservation and reinforces our collective commitment to protecting Burundi's natural heritage.



In another exciting development, on February 17th, 2025, *Fondation Kibira* welcomed a delegation of UNCDF's financial partners to assess our progress and engage in discussions about our long-term vision. During their visit, we showcased our achievements and outlined ambitious plans for the future, including the development of eco-friendly lodges and sustainable tourism initiatives aimed at attracting visitors from Burundi and the region.

Looking Ahead to 2025



With 2025 already underway, we remain dedicated to expanding our initiatives and reinforcing our commitment to preserving the Kibira National Park. In the coming year, our focus will include strengthening stakeholder collaboration by deepening partnerships with government entities, local communities, and conservation groups to ensure integrated and effective park management. Additionally, we are consolidating restoration efforts through the development of a comprehensive plan for the Mabayi and Rwegura sectors, aiming to rehabilitate critical habitats and safeguard biodiversity.



We are also committed to elevating chimpanzee conservation by raising awareness about the importance of protecting their populations. At the same time, we will continue promoting cultural and ecotourism activities that create sustainable income-generating opportunities for local communities while enhancing advocacy and appreciation for Kibira's natural and cultural heritage. Finally, we remain dedicated to **serving people** and improving lives through initiatives that directly enhance local livelihoods, focusing on sustainable economic opportunities and skills training.



Join Us

Greater impact depends on collective action. Whether you are a conservation enthusiast, a business leader, a donor or a volunteer, there are many ways you can contribute to safeguarding this natural treasure.

- **Partner with Us** – We welcome collaborations with organizations, businesses, and institutions that share our vision for conservation and sustainable development.
- **Support Our Initiatives** – Your donations and financial support enable us to expand our programs, restore degraded ecosystems, and improve the livelihoods of local communities.
- **Visit Kibira** – Experience the beauty of Kibira National Park firsthand by engaging in ecotourism activities, cultural experiences, and guided nature walks. Your visit supports conservation efforts and helps sustain local economies.
- **Spread the Word** – Follow us on social media, share our stories, and raise awareness about the importance of protecting Kibira's biodiversity.

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