

SUCCESS STORY



Léonidas receiving the National Geographic / Buffett Award 2018 "Leadership for the protection of the environment".

BIOPAMA

From Knowledge to Action for a Protected Planet in Western and Central Africa

BIOPAMA aims to improve the long-term conservation and sustainable use of natural resources in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, in protected areas and surrounding communities. It is an initiative of the ACP Group of States financed by the European Union's 11th European Development Fund (EDF), jointly implemented by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC).

Léonidas, a conservation hero committed to sustainable local development

Léonidas Nzigiyimpa, 56 years old, a forester with training on sustainable development, has been working for 20 years at the Burundian Office for Environmental Protection with nature conservation and management of protected areas.

For the last 10 years, Léonidas has been working on a complex of 5 protected areas in the southern region of Burundi. In daily life, with his collaborators and eco-guards, he organizes patrols, development and demarcation activities of protected areas, as well as environmental education sessions. "I spend a lot of time in the field meeting with the community to raise awareness of the importance of conservation and the opportunity to do income-generating activities for the community, such as livestock and ecotourism based on protection of species like Chimpanzees, or agrotourism as result of the promotion of local products, such as coffee".

According to him, it is a challenging work, specifically in the context of Burundi, characterized by demographic explosion and poverty that leads more than 90% of Burundians to depend on natural resources to live, causing conflicts between conservation services and the population.

Driven by a genuine desire for change, he piloted an initiative to support the empowerment of Batwa communities who live near the Bururi Forest Reserve.

For this determinant action he has just won the National Geographic / Buffett Award 2018 "Leadership for the protection of the environment".

Léonidas tells us that he involved the Batwa community in the development of this small 3300 ha reserve during one year (from March 2017 to February 2018). The group was engaged in various activities for materializing boundaries, protection of the reserve and opening of a tourist trail. A total of 53 adults was committed to these activities and each one of them received a salary. The money was divided in two shares: one half was used for community subsistence needs and the other was put in a savings account in a local bank. "The initiative has benefited 28 households and 150 people and with the savings of one year a total of 12.000 dollars has been used to buy 3 hectares of land. In less than 2 years we can say their living conditions have changed, families have managed to build a nearly decent house with bricks and steel sheet, and some have goats, oxen and cows, to have more manure and improve the agricultural productivity of their ground".



At present, the Batwa live from their land and their house is similar to those belonging to other Burundi groups. Suddenly, they started benefiting from other activities that generate income, such as goat livestock.

Léonidas is also recognized as a leader among his conservation colleagues and the governmental authorities of his country. After having participated in a training process promoted by the BIOPAMA programme, when he had the opportunity to explore the Integrated Management Effectiveness Tool (IMET) for the first time, he facilitated the application of the tool to all protected areas in his country, the first initiative on this scale throughout the African continent.

As a coach, Léonidas has traveled around the country, passing through 14 protected areas, to collect data using the IMET tool. He says that "the coach is not supposed to give lessons, but rather to show the manager of each protected area how to use the IMET tool in order to get on the right track, collect the data without bias and see clearly the pathways that lead to good decisions." He considers that this experience is really important because on the one hand it is possible to evaluate the situation of protected areas and on the other hand it is a managers' capacity building process.

According to Léonidas, previously most protected area managers did not know the protected area management cycle and so they used, for the first time, a computer tool (offline/online) which makes possible to evaluate the effectiveness of protected areas management.

Improving Protected Areas Management Effectiveness in Burundi

Legend : Steps - **ACTION** - Intervention Level - Results

2013 - BIOPAMA launch workshop (phase 1)
PARTICIPATION
 Interest
 Networking

2015 - Integrated Management Effectiveness training in Tapoa National Park, Niger
IMET TOOL
 Focus on protected area management cycle
 Management Effectiveness
 Context of intervention

2016 - IMET campaign in Burundi
LEARNING BY DOING
 IMET application in 14 Protected Areas
 14 PAs with IMET analysis and reports

Since 2016 - Taking Action
ADVOCACY
 Towards Government
 Technical and Financial Partners
 Official University of Burundi

2016 - IMET campaign in Bururi Reserve
DIAGNOSTIC
 Inexistence of Protected Area Management Plan
 Objectives not clear
 Insufficient budget
 No inputs
 Reduced activities except surveillance
 Recommendations to support decision making
 Improved Planning

national level
 site level



Léonidas at BIOPAMA's second phase inception workshop in Central Africa, 2018.



From the analysis carried out, they will now be able to build a management plan based on real facts.

After the data collection phase, the most important task is to carry out the analysis. According to Léonidas, this is the most difficult step for managers, but it adds more value to their work. "In my experience, not only in Burundi but also in other countries where I had the opportunity to participate in IMET exercises with the senior coach, I found that the analysis is still a challenge for managers. But when you know how to analyze the information, the exercise becomes really interesting and useful, since it is the moment when we can interpret the different data and formulate objectives in order to improve the situation".

2017 - National Restitution Workshop
COMMUNICATING
 Media coverage
 Elaboration of National Report
 Report: Evaluation of Burundi Protected Area Management effectiveness using the IMET tool

2016 - Bururi Restitution Workshop
COMMUNICATING
 Protected Area Restitution Dialogue
 Community Engagement
 First Bururi Protected Area Management Plan

2018 - Scaling Up
CROSS ANALYSIS OF 14 AP'S
 Grouping of protected areas
 Ranking, IMET Index, Average protected area system, Indicators of non-response, Visualization
 Burundi protected area network: analysis report based on the IMET assessments

2018 - Taking Action
ADVOCACY
 Elaboration and Approval of intervention projects through Technical and Financial Partnership with FAO
 Project: Strengthening Burundi's protected areas integrity and improving the living conditions of local population (FAO: 300.000 USD)

2018 - Improved Management
PRIORITY DEFINITION AT NATIONAL LEVEL

Definition of operational priorities
 Management improvement
 Capacity building priorities
 Target threats
 Enhance strengths and opportunities
 Community Engagement
 Comprehension of the Status of PAs at National Level
 Budget assignment to two of the most vulnerable PAs

2019 - Taking Action
PARTNERSHIPS
 Elaboration and Approval of intervention projects through Technical and Financial Partnerships with World Bank
 Sustainable Management of Protected Areas
 (a sub-component of the Landscape Restoration and Resilience Project)
 (The World Bank: 3 million USD)

NEXT STEPS
POLICY DESIGN
 Expected results: Burundi Protected Areas Strategy

ON-GOING
PROMOTING CHANGE
 Advocacy for additional funds for the most vulnerable APs
 Work on materializing boundaries
 Setting up management committees
 3 other PAs management plans under development

national level
 site level

The results of the use of the IMET tool in Burundi

The IMET has enabled the country's various conservation managers to ask questions about the necessary and priority actions for the efficient management of protected areas. They now have data and information to develop their management plan and an annual work plan based on evidence.

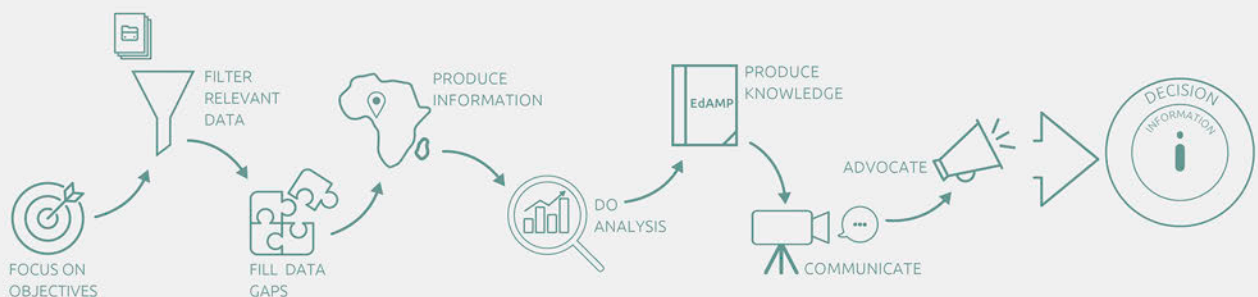
At local level, Léonidas with his team was able to analyze the information offered by the IMET forms and elaborate the Bururi protected area management plan. In addition, he used information on Bururi's management effectiveness to develop, in partnership with a university professor, a project submitted to FAO to strengthen the physical integrity of small protected areas in this region. Together, they were able to mobilize funds (USD 300,000) to initiate community sensitization activities for the protection of biodiversity in Monge, Nkayamba, Rumonge and Vyanda.

At national level, data from the 14 protected areas visited resulted in the production of a national report on the effectiveness of protected area management in Burundi, which presents recommendations to the Burundian Office for Environmental Protection, including the implementation of a national conservation strategy, capacity building for managers and resource mobilization.

The integrated data analysis of all 14 IMET assessments done in Burundi made visible the general situation of the PAs at national level and facilitated the establishment of intervention priorities. The visualization of the results supported by advocacy activities towards the Government allowed the negotiation of resources to save two of the most vulnerable PAs identified through this assessment process.

Léonidas dreams of changes in all the protected areas of Burundi equivalent to those he has seen materialized in the Bururi Reserve. Thus, the next step is to promote the use of IMET data and results to mobilize funds for the other protected areas in the country.

Evidence based decision making in support to protected area management effectiveness



Contacts

Tanya Merceron

BIOPAMA regional coordinator
West and Central Africa
International Union for Nature Conservation
e-mail: tanya.merceron@iucn.org

Léonidas Nzigiympa

Représentant Légal de l'Association Conservation et Communauté de Changement (3C)
e-mail: nzigiympal@yahoo.fr
WhatsApp: +257 69738431

Production: LinkRural.net

Donors & Implementing Partners



This publication has been produced with support of the 11th EDF. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union nor of the ACP Group of States.

www.biopama.org