



SGP The GEF
Small Grants
Programme



Tapping into school children's curiosity to promote conservation of sacred kaya forests

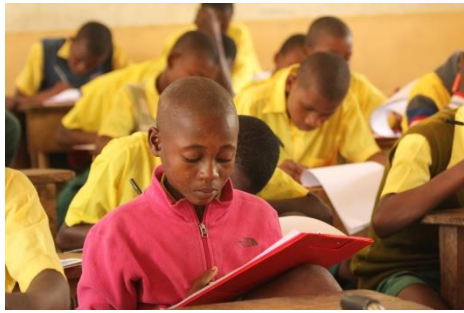


The forest ecosystem of the coastal areas of Kenya is listed as one of the top global biodiversity hotspots by Conservation International, with high levels of endemism. The once extensive coastal forests (*see figure on left*) have been reduced to a fragmented patchwork along a narrow coastal strip. This fragile resource is made up of gazetted forest reserves and conservation areas; community managed forests and woodlands, including culturally important sacred “kaya” forests; and privately-owned forest and woodland patches.

Despite the fragmented nature of the remaining forests, they have high conservation, cultural and livelihood values for local communities. Several biological surveys undertaken over the past two decades have highlighted the importance of conserving the forest remnants for their local, national and global biodiversity and cultural values. In fact, a number of these forests are enlisted as World Heritage Sites (WHS) under UNESCO for their biodiversity and cultural values.

Education and Conservation Project

Colobus Conservation received a grant from GEF SGP to implement a project titled, ***‘Conservation of Kaya Mstwakara and Gandini through Knowledge Transfer and Conservation Education’***. The project seeks to tap into school children's curiosity in order to conserve the remaining patches of Kaya Mstwakara and Gandini through knowledge transfer, creation of awareness and forest excursions. To achieve the project goal, a comic book was developed and 1000 copies produced for distribution to reteach culture and conservation history. Education workshops were organized for the school children aged between 8-17 years from schools within the buffer zones of kaya Mstwakara and Gandini. In addition to these, a fully equipped classroom was set-up in Miyani primary school to create a miniature depiction of the kaya forest set up.



Pupils of Miyani Primary school doing a quiz

The education workshops focused on the culture, history, biodiversity, conservation challenges and future of kayas. Learners gained interest in learning more about their heritage from elders who took them on learning tours in kaya forests. A total of 150 learners have so far visited their respective kayas where they enjoyed songs and dances, storytelling and excursions through the kaya forests. They eagerly engaged elders in numerous questions on the kaya heritage, conflict of religion and culture. The target is an additional five schools with a total of 250 children.

Beyond schools and awareness creation

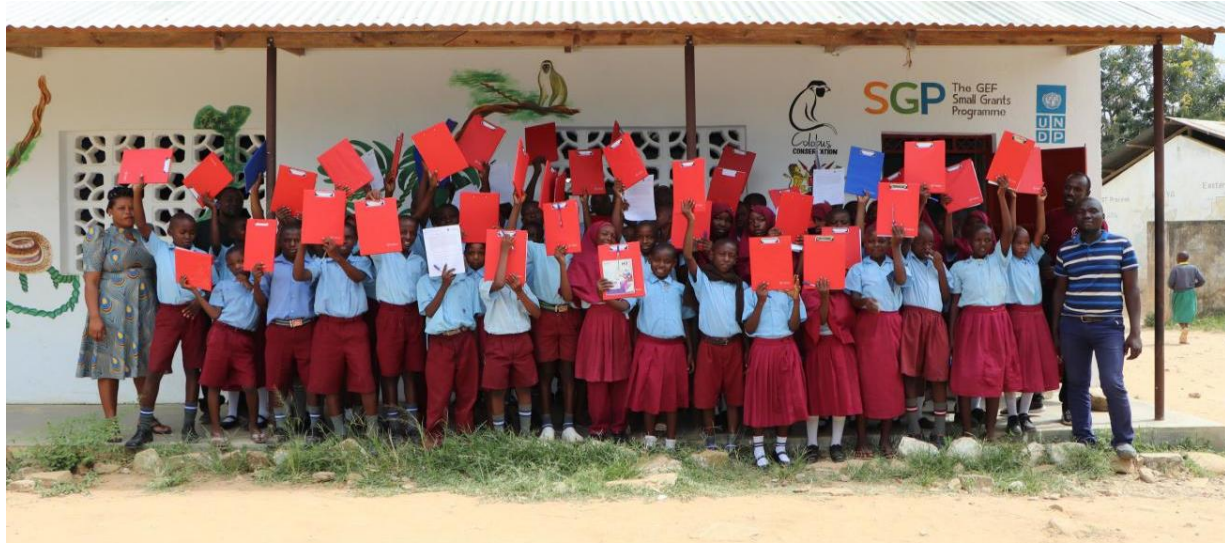
Colobus Conservation, a non-profit making organization established in 1997, not only works with school children, but encourages local residents, businesses and various institutions to conserve and protect primates and their habitat through planting a variety of indigenous trees on private and public land. In addition, the organization protects primates by curbing illegal pet trade and poaching, installing aerial canopy bridges known as colobridges across Diani Beach to facilitate crossing by primates and other wildlife. The organization also operates a 24-hour emergence response center and a monkey clinic with a resident vet who treats wounded monkeys and other wildlife rescued.

Project Key Partners

Colobus implements this project in partnership with Kenya Wildlife Services, National Museums of Kenya, Kenya Forest Services, Kwale County Government, Teachers Service Commission, Kwale County Schools, Wildlife Clubs of Kenya patrons, World wide Fund for nature (WWF) and Kaya elders.



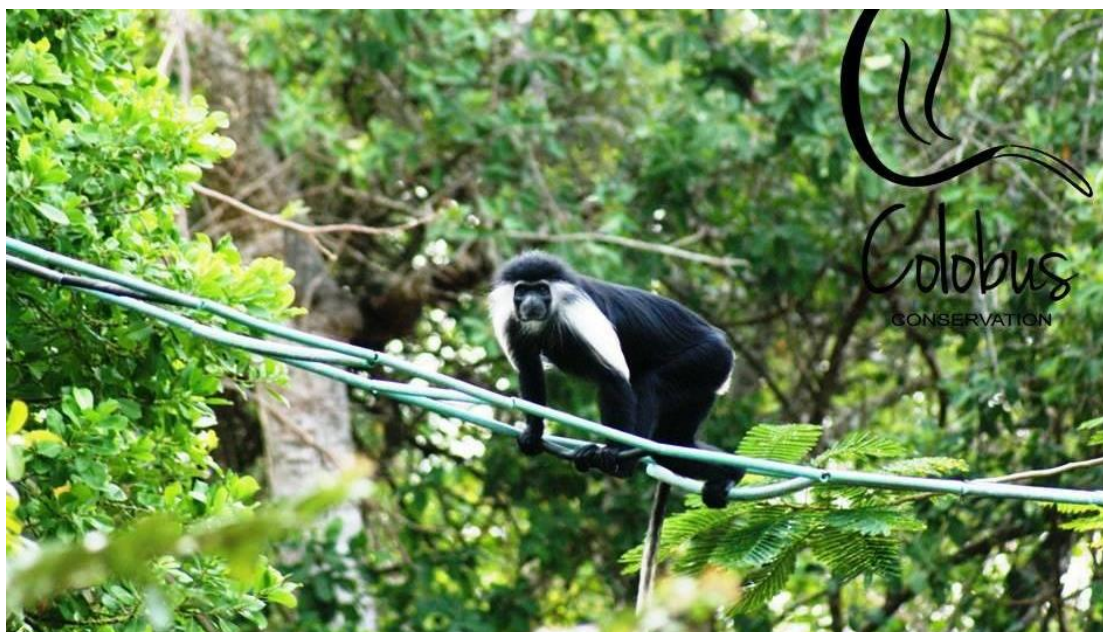
Miyani primary school children attending sessions with kaya elders



Gandini Central school children posing for a photo after attending an education workshop



Pupils of Dzivani primary school during Kaya Gandini forest excursion with elders



A photo of a colobus monkey crossing Diani Beach Road using a colobridge.



For more information contact Colobus Conservation on. P.O. Box 5380-80401 Diani Beach, Kenya Tel/Fax: + 254 (0) 711 479 453 Web: www.colobusconservation.org/ Email: enquiries@colobusconservation.org