

Praise for *We are Inseparable*

I recommend *We Are Inseparable* for anyone committed to the future of mountain gorillas and wishing to engage in long term efforts to ensure they live in harmony with human beings in protected areas, supported by local communities. This book will become a valued resource for anyone interested in these issues, whether field staff working for national parks, conservation non-profit organisations, local community organisations, school children, staff at lodges, tour operators, and committed guests visiting the area who wish to be engaged in safeguarding the future of gorillas. The book is written as a field guide to easily find answers to questions about the gorillas and the forest habitats, the vital connection to communities, about conservation jobs and projects being done in the area. Its wide-ranging coverage will be of enormous benefit as an education resource, especially in local communities. The simplicity, graphics, and clear organization make it easy to use.

I have known Laura since 2001 when Volcanoes Safaris' first driver guide in Rwanda looked after Laura on her visits to Volcanoes and Bwindi National Parks and local schools. He got to use the prototype version of these cards.

***Praveen Moman, Founder of Volcanoes Safaris**

Through these cards [now a book] children know why they should conserve, which will influence the future. Great appreciation as cards have planted a positive attitude to the young generation to conserve wildlife in BINP.

***David Matsiko, founder and director of Rugando Parents School, Uganda. Bwindi Youth Guardian leader and mentor**

We worked closely with Laura to make sure the book includes accurate stories about the ancient Indigenous Batwa and our relationship with the forest, gorillas, chimpanzees, and other wildlife. We are the Keepers of Forest even though we are no longer able to live in our forest home. As the oldest Bantu tribes of the Great lakes region, we were happily living in harmony in the Bwindi Forest for 70,000 years. We hope the book will bring accurate information about the Batwa and about the forest to the minds and thoughts of readers.

***Ezera MUGENYI, Batwa, founder of Bwindi Batwa Culture Rocks & Cave Association, Bwindi Youth Guardian mentor**

(Translated into Rukiga) Turikukora na Laura Arndt owizire ahabwa CTPH/ NGS turikugyezeho okuhandika ekitabo kugira Ngu abantu abarikunkunda Kushoma, bamanye-ngu emigane ne nitekateko bya batwa ababeire barikutura omwihamba kubabire barikutura gye nengagi emyaka myingy emwireho 70,000 tukaturagye nengagi. Konka ahabwe abantu bingyi ahabwo kukunda ebyobuhangwa nengagi , hariho emiringo etaryemwe nemwe okubabasize kutuyamba nabantu boona abarikutura ehihi nehamba rya Bwindi.

***Ezera MUGYENYI, Batwa**

Over the past 8 years working with Gorilla Habitat I have learned so much from the villagers, the international NGOs and the gorillas. For travelers trekking the mountain gorillas the book will provide you with an excellent overview of what you will experience and educate you on the complexity of the community.

***Stan Miller, founder of Gorilla Habitat organization**

The book is truly marvelous. It MUST be published. The photographs are unique. They reveal the country, the people, gorillas, and forests as nothing else has done in the 53 years I have lived here! [About first card version, 2002]

***Rosamond (Roz) Halsey Carr, friend of mountain gorilla researcher Dian Fossey, author of Land of a Thousand Hills**

I've spent years taking people on gorillas tracking tours, and learned a lot from these cards (first version in 2002). It is a must for whoever wishes to know all about the gorillas. It will help them understand that the gorillas are in the same business as us: raising, protecting, and feeding their families with care and love without any intent to interfere or harm the people.

***Itangayenda (Itanga) Viateur, Tour Guide for Volcano Safaris**

The cards [first version, 2002] are viewed with pure excitement and anticipation as the children learn about the mountain gorillas, the forests of the national parks, the benefits and concerns about living together and the solutions to live in harmony. The children are [now] aware of the conservation concerns of this endangered species and the importance of finding solutions to help the animals and people surrounding the park.

***Zachary Dusingizimana and Chrissie Abel, teachers at Rosamond Carr's Imabazi Orphanage in Rwanda**

Foreword

**by Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka,
Wildlife Veterinarian, Conservationist and Author**

At Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH), we believe that the well-being of both wildlife and people are deeply intertwined, and nowhere is this connection more evident than at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. Mountain gorillas are threatened by disease from closely genetically related humans, loss of habitat and injuries from snares and spears through poaching for other wild animals including duikers and bush pigs as well as climate change. The Bwindi Cards are a crucial tool in advancing our shared mission of protecting the mountain gorillas and the forest ecosystem while uplifting the communities living around the park. These cards represent not only knowledge about protecting gorillas and other wildlife, but also the bond we share with the natural world—a bond that is, as the Batwa elder Geoffrey so eloquently put it, inseparable.

The Bwindi Cards are more than educational materials; they are a bridge between generations, places, and species. Through them, the youth of Bwindi, especially the Bwindi Youth Guardians (BYG) can learn about the delicate balance of the forest ecosystem, conservation careers, and great examples of innovative STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) projects that are vital for preserving our heritage. Each card highlights important information about the gorillas and other wildlife, the local communities, and their stories, as well as the incredible natural wonders of Bwindi. From the rangers who safeguard the park to the community members who contribute to gorilla conservation and tourism, the cards reflect the unity of purpose that drives us all.

When I was first introduced to these cards, I immediately appreciated how much they can educate the rangers when guiding visitors to the gorillas to broaden their knowledge of this

incredible national park, the wildlife it protects, and the roles they play within it. By providing a digital version, we hope to equip rangers with an invaluable resource that not only enhances their expertise but also allows them to share their passion and knowledge with tourists. Imagine the profound impact of turning a gorilla trek or a forest walk into an interpretive experience, where visitors leave not just with memories but with a deeper understanding of the forest and its inhabitants.

Over the past three decades I have been inspired by the increasing desire of local communities to want to protect the Gorillas and other wildlife as they come to the realization that our health and wellbeing is interdependent. We are inseparable—from each other, from the wildlife, and from the land. This is the heart of CTPH's mission, and it is the hope we carry forward with every set of Bwindi Cards. Together, we can ensure that future generations inherit not only the knowledge of conservation, but also the commitment to living in harmony with the forest and its remarkable species.

I would like to congratulate Laura Arndt and Global Green STEM, for this wonderful initiative. And hope that it will contribute significantly to the goals of Uganda Wildlife Authority and stakeholders - conserving for current and future generations.

— Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka
Founder and CEO, Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH)

Honoring Collaborators

Webare Munonga

I am humbly grateful to the countless colleagues and friends from around the world who have, over decades, contributed your knowledge, photographs, time, and compassion to the different versions of the cards and now book. The content of the book began as interactive educational cards in 2001 with essential edits by Ugandan teachers, international scientists, and UWA park rangers. This most recent version, in both book and card format, has been a combined effort of the people I highlight here!

Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka, CEO of Conservation through Public Health (CTPH), and author of *Walking with Gorillas: Tales of an African Wildlife Vet*. Her integrated community-environment systems approach is a perfect match for my Global GreenSTEM solutions-based STEAM conservation projects. Together we established Bwindi Youth Guardian groups who are learning with these Bwindi Cards.

Staff of CTPH: Stephen Rubanga, Lawrence Zikusoka, Ebenezer Paul, Richard Bagyenyei, Kaamu Bukenya, Kanie Kaniwabo Elizabeth, Lilian Nandudu, Mary Leahey, Ssali Ogwals.

Gracious Twebaze, the CTPH: community coordinator who masterfully guides the Bwindi Youth Guardian (BYG) leaders and youth.

Mentors for the BYG groups: Ezera Mugyenyei, Sam Rugaba, David Matsiko, Safari Joseph, Patience Tushabomwe.

Batwa of Bwindi (Indigenous Knowledge Keepers of the Forest): Ezera Mugyenyei, with 85-year-old Batwa elder Geoffrey Buchebe, and Marthias Ngabirano.

Our first **Bwindi Youth Guardians and leaders** in Mukono and Bujengwe Parishes. Your STEAM conservation projects are showing your villages and the world how young people can design and do projects with sustainable solutions to systemic conservation problems.

Erik Nshuti Arndt, my thought partner and editor, and the designer and builder of these beautiful cards.