



Mt. Elgon Traditional Ecological Knowledge Center

Ginnary Road, Nambwa Parish, Lukhonge Sub-county, Mbale District, Uganda

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Mt. Elgon Traditional Ecological Knowledge Center is dedicated to preserving the rich cultural heritage and natural resources of the Bamasaaba/Bagisu community in the Elgon Zone. The center's work is centered around four key task areas that aim to promote sustainable environmental management, community development, and cultural preservation.

1. Research and Documentation

One of the center's flagship research projects was a study on traditional ecological knowledge and practices among the Bamasaaba/Bagisu community in the context of environmental risk management. The study included mapping and characterization of traditionally conserved water springs and catchment areas, providing valuable insights into the community's indigenous knowledge and practices. This research aims to inform policy and practice in environmental management and conservation.



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Map below shows; Traditionally conserved water springs and catchment areas in the District of Bududa, Mbale, Manafwa and Namisindwa in Uganda.





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The table below shows characterization of traditionally conserved Water springs and catchment area in Bududa, Mbale, Manafwa and Namisindwa Districts in Uganda.

Name of Cultural Site and characterization	Location	Recommendation
Namatokholo <ul style="list-style-type: none">- ownership, owned by the community.- GPS Not available (See Map)- Size: Approximately one quarter of an acre- Landscape: water springs that feeds river Manafwa and valley- Purpose: Provides fresh water for domestic and agricultural purposes such as growing rice.- Year of Establishment: 1887- Cultural Significance: Sacred site for Bamasari clan- ownership. By community	Village: Bumasari Parish: Mulukhu Sub-county: Sibanga District, Manafwa	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Document and preserve traditional ecological knowledge- Support community-led conservation initiatives- Integrate traditional knowledge with modern practices for sustainable development
Nakuriti. <ul style="list-style-type: none">- ownership, owned by the community.- GPS : Not available (See Map)- Size: Approximately Half an Acre- Landscape: Rolling hills with scattered trees and eucalyptus- Purpose: Supports agricultural activities and source of fresh water for domestic use.- Year of Establishment: not clear- Cultural Significance: Important for local community's spiritual practices for Bakibiti, Bawanyoni, Bamuliika clans- ownership. By community	Village: Nakuriti Parish: Busanza ward, Sub-county: Magale District : Namisindwa	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Compensate encroachers.- expand on the land.- seek support from Inzu Ya Masaaba- increase indigenous conservation- Gazette the site- Fence the cultural site.



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Namashowu. GPS Not available (See Map) - Size: Approximately half an acre - Landscape: Hilly terrain with Namashowu stream. - Purpose: Provides fresh water for domestic and agricultural and making bricks - Year of Establishment: 17th century - Cultural Significance: Sacred site for local Bamusomi, Bakiabi, Bakibiti, Bakhiyaki. - ownership. By community	Village: Namashowu Parish: Kaboyi, Sub-county: Bumoni, District ; Namisindwa,	Document and preserve traditional ecological knowledge, need more land for expansion. - Support community-led conservation initiatives in the area - Integrate traditional knowledge with modern practices for sustainable development.
Wabusayi. GPS Not available (See Map) ownership, owned by the community. - Size: Approximately half an acre. - Landscape: Gentle valley and water stream that feeds in river Manafwa. - Purpose: Provides fresh water for domestic and agricultural it feeds river Manafwa - Year of Establishment: 1932 - Cultural Significance: Sacred site for - ownership. By community	Village ;Bunamubi. Ward; BuwanganiTown Council.Buwangani District; Manafwa	- gazette the cultural site - Support indigenous conservation - Integrate traditional knowledge with modern knowledge
Nashinde. GPS No results (See Map) - Size: Approximately one and half acre - Landscape: Hilly terrain, the stream feeds river Manafwa. - Purpose: Provides fresh water for domestic and agricultural use - ownership, owned by the community.	Village ; Buwanambisi. Parish; Bufukhula. Sub-county; Bushilibo. District ; Bududa	- Document and preserve traditional knowledge sites by fencing. - sign post required - Pay off encroachers - survey the land - Support community-led conservation initiatives - Integrate traditional knowledge with modern practices for sustainable development



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<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Year of Establishment: 17th century- Cultural Significance: Sacred site for Bafukhula clan.- tourist site.- visitors over one thousand- ownership. By community		
Shiyayi GPS Not available (See Map) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- ownership, owned by the community.- Size: Approximately one quarter of an acre- Landscape: Hilly with infertile soil- Purpose: Provides fresh water for domestic and agricultural use- Year of Establishment: 1918- Cultural Significance: Sacred site for Banabulayi, Banangaka, Bamwambu, Barnabala- ownership. By community- Number of Visitors. Over one thousand	Village ;Mukari. Parish; Burukuru. Sub county; Bushiende. District: Mbale.	compensate encroachers to recover the original size -Gazette the cultural site - Fence the cultural site
Namabe GPS Not available (See Map) <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Size: Half an Acre- Landscape: Hilly terrain with water springs and valleys.- Purpose: Provides fresh water for domestic and agricultural they grow maize- Year of Establishment: 16th century- Cultural Significance: Sacred place for Batsongola, Bawanyanga, Nabiini, Banandutu.- ownership. By community- Number of Visitors. Over one thousand	Village:Buwanyama/ Bunandutu Parish ; Buyaka, Sub county ;Busano. District: Mbale.	-Gazzette the cultural site - fence the site - Provide a sign post



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Kibukwa. GPS not available (See Map) - Size: Approximately 2 acres - Landscape: sloppy gentle Land scape - Purpose: Provides fresh water for domestic and agricultural use growing upland Rice - Year of Establishment:1891 - Cultural Significance: Sacred site for Banomone clan - ownership. By community - Number of Visitors. Over one thousand	Village: Bunamone, Parish; Fuluma Toma Fuluma, Sub county ; Butta. District ; Manafwa.	- require fencing - Gazette the site as tourist site - structure a calendar for cultural events - compensate some encroachers to recover the original size. - Develop it into a tourist spot
Malabasi GPS Not available.(See Map) - Size: Approximately Twelve hectares - Landscape: Hilly terrain with stream feeding in river Manafwa river valleys - Purpose: Provides fresh water for domestic and agricultural use - Year of Establishment:17th century - Cultural Significance: Sacred site for local community - ownership. By community	Village; Malabasi. Parish ;Bunamubi. Sub county ; Bukigai. District; Bududa.	- Document and preserve traditional ecological knowledge - Support community-led conservation initiatives - Integrate traditional knowledge with modern practices for sustainable development - develop the Site into a tourist place.
Namasho. GPS: not available (See Map) ownership, owned by the community. - Size: Approximately 2 acres - Landscape: Hilly terrain with river Manafwa passing down steam - Purpose: Provides fresh water for domestic and agricultural use	Village ;Namasho. Parish;Bumwalye. sub county; Bulucheke, District ; Bududa.	gazette the cultural site - Support indigenous conservation - Integrate traditional knowledge - improve Site leadership. - develop bylaws for the Site leadership.



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<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Year of Establishment: 17th century- Cultural Significance: Sacred site for Banakhayoti clan.- ownership. By community		
<p>Namatsokho. (See Map)</p> <p>GPS: not available</p> <p>ownership, owned by the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Size: Approximately one acre- Landscape: Hilly terrain with Namatsokho water springs- Purpose: Provides fresh water for domestic and agricultural use- Year of Establishment: 1928 century- Cultural Significance: Sacred site for Namwando, Basulwa, Banabitu, Banambobi, Bafuma, Banasambu, Basaula.- ownership. By community	Village ; Namatsokho. Parish; Namatsokho. sub county; Tsekhlulu. DistrictN;amisindwa.	<p>gazette the cultural site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Support indigenous conservation- Integrate traditional knowledge- survey the cultural Site- Plan a natural fence.
<p>Napoli.</p> <p>GPS: not available (See Map)</p> <p>ownership, owned by the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Size: Approximately 2 acres- Landscape: Hilly terrain with Napoli source of water.- Purpose: Provides fresh water for domestic and agricultural use- Year of Establishment: 17th century- Cultural Significance: Sacred site for Bamutoto only- ownership. By community- Number of Visitors. Over one hundred thousand	Village ;Mutoto lower. Parish; Bumutoto. Sub county ; industrial division. District: Mbale City.	<p>gazette the cultural site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Support indigenous conservation- Integrate traditional knowledge in conservation.- Reclaim the original size of the Site.



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2. Advocacy and Policy Engagement



The center has worked tirelessly to engage policymakers and stakeholders in discussions on the importance of traditional ecological knowledge in conservation. Through research, documentation, and community outreach programs, the center has demonstrated the effectiveness of indigenous knowledge in managing natural resources sustainably.

Key Achievements

- **Development of Policy Briefs:** The center has developed policy briefs in the local language on the importance of traditional ecological knowledge in conservation, which have been presented to policymakers and stakeholders.
- **Community-Led Conservation:** The center has supported community-led conservation initiatives, empowering local communities to take ownership of their natural resources and manage them sustainably.
- **Capacity Building:** The center has provided training and capacity-building programs for community members, enabling them to effectively participate in conservation efforts and advocate for their rights.

Impact

The center's efforts have led to significant policy changes and community-led conservation initiatives. The local government has recognized the importance of traditional ecological knowledge and has incorporated it into their conservation policies. Community members are now actively involved in conservation efforts, and the region's biodiversity has benefited as a result.



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3. Community Training and Sensitization



The center has launched a comprehensive community training and sensitization program aimed at educating local communities about the importance of conserving the Colobus monkey and its habitat. The program focuses on raising awareness about the threats facing the species, promoting sustainable livelihoods, and developing alternative practices that reduce the demand for Colobus monkey skins.

Key Components

- The center is working with local communities to document and promote traditional ecological knowledge related to the Colobus monkey and its habitat.
- Community Engagement: The center is engaging with local communities, cultural leaders, and traditional circumcisers to promote alternative practices and reduce the demand for Colobus monkey skins.

Impact



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The community training and sensitization program has shown promising results, with many community members expressing a willingness to adopt alternative practices and protect the Colobus monkey. The center's efforts have also led to increased collaboration between local communities, conservation organizations, and government agencies, ensuring a coordinated approach to conserving the species.

4. Ecosystem Restoration



The Center is working to restore degraded ecosystems in the Mt. Elgon region through a comprehensive approach that combines traditional knowledge with modern conservation practices. One of the key initiatives is the conservation of riverbanks using indigenous trees known as *Nandela*.



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Riverbank Conservation with *Nandela* Trees

The *Nandela* tree, (locally it means a tree with many umbilical cords or roots) native to the region, has proven to be an effective species for stabilizing riverbanks and preventing erosion. *Nandela* tree can grow both in water and on land. The center is working with local communities to plant *Nandela* trees along Manafwa riverbanks, it is estimated that one kilometers stretch of trees have been planted, which not only helps to conserve the soil but also provides habitat for various aquatic species.

Conservation of Water Springs and Catchment Areas

In addition to riverbank conservation, the center is also working to protect traditional water springs and catchment areas. Twelve water springs are so far under going conservation. There is need to conserve the over four hundred springs remaining. These areas are crucial for maintaining the region's water supply, and the center is using traditional knowledge to restore and conserve them. By doing so, the center aims to increase the production of fresh water, which will benefit local communities and support sustainable development.

Community-Led Conservation

The center's ecosystem restoration efforts are community-led, ensuring that local people are actively involved in the conservation process. This approach not only empowers communities to take ownership of their natural resources but also ensures that conservation practices are tailored to the local context.

Impact

The center's ecosystem restoration efforts have shown promising results, with improved water quality, increased biodiversity, and enhanced livelihoods for local communities. The initiative has also helped to promote sustainable land use practices, reducing the risk of landslides and erosion.

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If you need to get in touch with the center or plan a visit, these details should be helpful.