

Promoting Gorilla Conservation through a One Health approach

Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka, Founder and CEO, Conservation Through Public Health

Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH) is an award-winning grassroots NGO and non-profit founded in 2003 that promotes biodiversity conservation by enabling people to co-exist with wildlife through improving animal health, community health and livelihoods in and around Africa's protected areas and wildlife-rich habitats. Following a fatal scabies disease outbreak in the then critically endangered mountain gorillas, traced to marginalized human communities living around the protected gorilla habitat, CTPH developed a One Health approach to conservation that addresses human, animal and environmental health together.

CTPH's programs began at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park in Uganda, home to 43% of the world's mountain gorillas. The One Health model improved community health and contributed to a reduction in human-related morbidity and mortality in gorillas. This model also improved community attitudes to conservation, and led to better protection for gorillas in community land. CTPH built upon this One Health model to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, working with Uganda Wildlife Authority, NGOs, tour operators and community groups, to prevent transmission of COVID-19 between people and from people to gorillas and improving community livelihoods in the absence of tourism through provision of fast growing food crops and supporting coffee farmers living next to gorillas through Gorilla Conservation Coffee, a social enterprise. Through organic expansion, training and advocacy this model is being expanded to biodiversity hotspots.

CTPH is also advocating for integrated approaches to achieve a planet in balance through a book – *Walking With Gorillas* – about Dr Kalema-Zikusoka's conservation journey shaped by One Health.