

# THE GOLA RAINFOREST, SIERRA LEONE



**PROTECTING CRITICALLY  
ENDANGERED WESTERN  
CHIMPANZEE & PYGMY HIPPO**

**REINTRODUCING LOST SKILLS  
IN SUSTAINABLE COCOA  
PRODUCTION**

**REBUILDING COMMUNITIES  
AFTER CIVIL WAR & THE  
EBOLA OUTBREAK**

## PROTECTING SOME OF THE WORLD'S MOST THREATENED FOREST

The Upper Guinean Forest of West Africa is one of only three forested biodiversity hotspots in Africa. Until the end of the 19th Century it covered most of Sierra Leone, Liberia, South-East Guinea, Southern Ivory Coast and South-West Ghana. Less than a fifth of this rainforest remains today.

The Greater Gola Landscape, straddling the Sierra Leone-Liberia border comprises the largest remnant of this critical ecosystem – over 350,000 hectares in a mosaic of protected areas, community forests and smallholders' agricultural lands.

In 2011 the project established the Gola Rainforest National Park, working with communities and other key stakeholders to ensure that the 70,000-hectare Park and its 70,000-hectare buffer zone are better protected, and threats of encroachment are minimised. The long-term plan is enabling stakeholders (government, communities and national NGOs) to manage this entire landscape sustainably, not only to benefit local

communities directly, but also wildlife such as the critically endangered Western Chimpanzee.

All efforts contribute to the rebuilding of lives after over a decade of civil war and more recently the worst ever recorded Ebola outbreak. At the same time, the project ensures millions of tonnes of carbon that are locked within Gola's trees and in the earth below it are safeguarded through sustainable management - delivering benefits for the entire planet.

ClimateCare works with Gola Rainforest Conservation, a partnership between the government of Sierra Leone, the Conservation Society of Sierra Leone, local communities and the UK's Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, to bring you an exclusive opportunity to help keep Gola's trees standing – for its wildlife and the people that depend on it.

This project reduces global carbon emissions by half a million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e annually.



## DELIVERING THE GLOBAL GOALS (SDGS)

1 NO POVERTY



Reducing poverty through support of farming, community saving schemes and education across 122 communities involving over 24,000 people.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Carbon funds are financing access to basic healthcare, including a district clinic and medical support services for communities around the National Park.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



Supporting rural education in the Forest's impoverished communities through investment in schools and 700 annual secondary school scholarships, equally distributed to boys and girls.

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



168 local staff employed, the vast majority coming from forest edge communities. 122 communities supported through sustainable agriculture programmes (particularly cocoa production).

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



Making communities more resilient through education (thousands attending roadshows and listening to the Gola radio show) and support initiatives, generating and diversifying income and developing key infrastructure.

13 CLIMATE ACTION



Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards Gold for Climate Change Adaptation, reducing global carbon emissions by half a million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>e annually.

14 LIFE BELOW WATER



Climate, Community and Biodiversity Standards Gold for Biodiversity, protecting 31 fish species, 35% of which are endemic to the region.

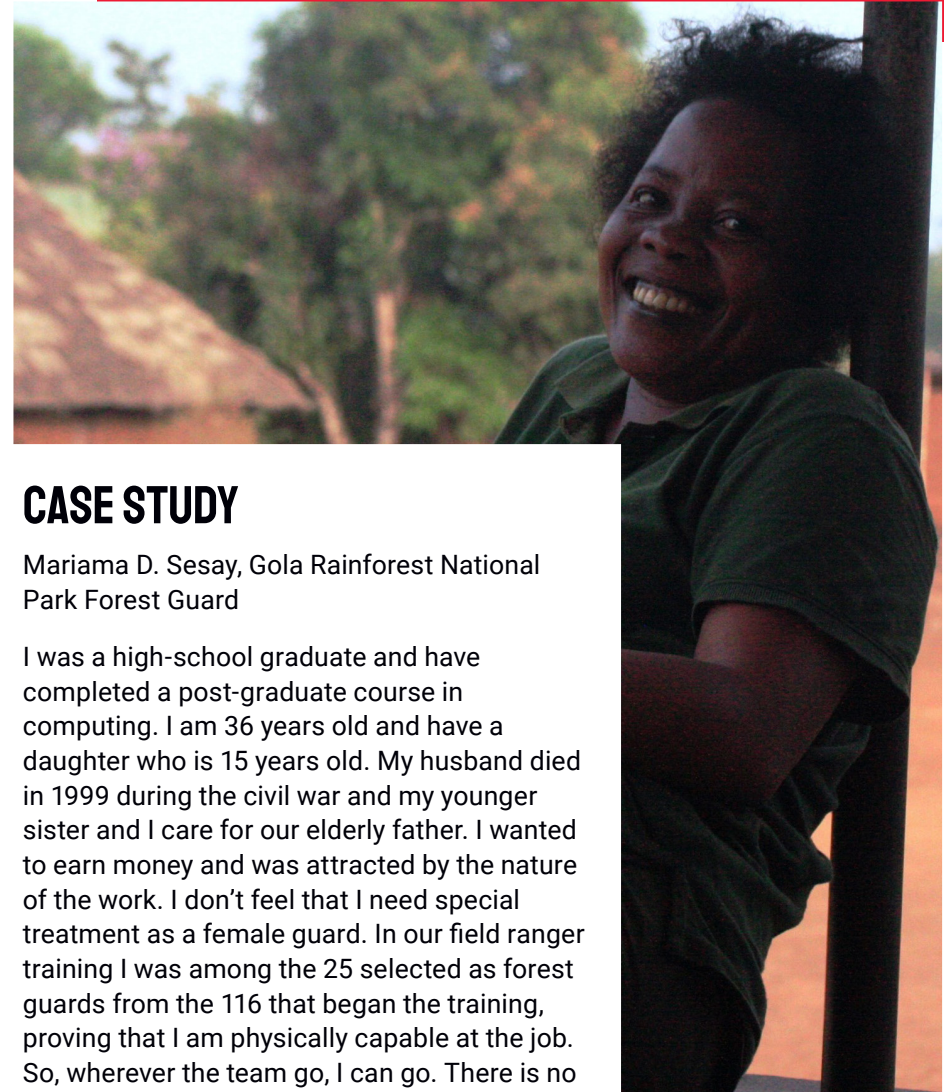
15 LIFE ON LAND



Protecting habitat for 327 bird species, 650 endemic plant species, and 49 species of larger mammals, including the elusive Pygmy Hippo and the Western Chimpanzee.

**“MY YOUNGER SISTER AND I CARE FOR OUR ELDERLY FATHER. I WANTED TO EARN MONEY AND WAS ATTRACTED BY THE NATURE OF THE WORK.”**

**MARIAMA D. SESAY, GOLA RAINFOREST NATIONAL PARK FOREST GUARD**



### CASE STUDY

Mariama D. Sesay, Gola Rainforest National Park Forest Guard

I was a high-school graduate and have completed a post-graduate course in computing. I am 36 years old and have a daughter who is 15 years old. My husband died in 1999 during the civil war and my younger sister and I care for our elderly father. I wanted to earn money and was attracted by the nature of the work. I don't feel that I need special treatment as a female guard. In our field ranger training I was among the 25 selected as forest guards from the 116 that began the training, proving that I am physically capable at the job. So, wherever the team go, I can go. There is no success without struggle.



## WHAT THE CARBON FINANCE DELIVERS


Carbon finance, through direct loyalty payments, incentivises local communities to conserve the forest's natural resources and allows them to develop skills and generate income, protecting this unique environment and helping lift families out of poverty.

Gola's previous Forest Reserve status did not prohibit small-scale logging operations, industrial and artisanal mining, and agricultural activities, and the forest area was under threat of rapid deforestation and degradation. The carbon finance helped enable the designation of the area as a national park in 2011, protecting it for generations to come. The project works to ensure effective management of the National Park through transparency and local involvement in conservation activities. It aims to foster a sense of stewardship for the forest in the surrounding local communities.

### GET IN TOUCH:

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Menuata Korome, member of the  
cocoa farmers' co-operative



"We are establishing a gender-inclusive cocoa producer organisation (with 1,500 members) that is receiving training on cocoa rehabilitation, rainforest-friendly cocoa farming as well as processing, and marketing of cocoa beans. These skills empower local people helping preserve natural resources and generating income for poor families in the community.

We've even developed a supply chain for the Western market (and an RSPB chocolate bar!), which is bringing much-needed hard currency to these impoverished communities."

Aminata Berewa, Gender Specialist