



NEWSLETTER January 2025

Greetings...

...and welcome to our monthly update from Kidepo and Lantoto, our project areas in South Sudan. Here's a quick overview of what we've been up to.

In Lantoto National Park.

- **An Exciting Discovery:** Sightings of nests confirm the presence of chimpanzees in LNP!
- **Building Momentum:** We are making major progress on our basecamp at Rasolo with a road, accommodation and other essential infrastructure all taking shape.
- **Strengthening Governance:** A dedicated governance team is now in place, with key meetings advancing coordination and policy efforts.
- **Safe Water Access:** Ongoing construction of two new wells will soon provide clean water to Rasolo village and its clinic.
- **Park Patrols:** Rangers have initiated patrols around the basecamp, marking an important step toward future park protection efforts.

In the Kidepo Game Reserve.

- **Conservation Underway!** We were excited to launch our conservation project in the Kidepo Valley to run in tandem with our ongoing peace project.

For more details, please scroll down to the monthly report below.

Best regards

Kris Debref, *Executive Director, Enjojo Foundation*

Kidepo Game Reserve is located in Eastern Equatoria State and adjoins the Kidepo Valley National Park in neighbouring Uganda. In partnership with the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism, Enjojo Foundation has assumed responsibility for the management of the reserve. Due to long-standing insecurity in the Kidepo Valley, conservation activities have been preceded by a peace project involving local communities.

Lantoto National Park is located in Central Equatoria State and adjoins Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Enjojo Foundation manages Lantoto NP, in partnership with the Ministry of Wildlife Conservation and Tourism and with support from African Parks through their incubation programme, with the immediate priority being the establishment of a park headquarters at Rasolo.

Peace & Governance

The following is an overview to date of the Peace Project implemented in the Kidepo Valley by the Enjojo Foundation (EF) from its inception in May 2024.

Project launch: A component of the EU-funded 'Fostering Peace and Natural Resources Governance (FOPNAG) programme, the EF Peace Project was launched in Ikwoto and Budi in May and June of 2024. Each event involved a 5-day peace training of boma chiefs using a syllabus contained in the draft EF Peace Manual. The launches were also attended by representatives of local authorities and national and state governments, including the Minister of Local Government for Eastern Equatoria State, members of parliament, payam administrators and paramount chiefs.

Enjojo publications: Following the two launch events, two books were published in to accompany the extension of the peace training initiative to the grassroots (boma) level in the project area. 450no. copies of the A4 EF Peace Manual – titled *Training Manual for Local Leaders: Human Rights, Peaceful Co-existence, Conflict Sensitivity and the role of Women & Local Leaders in Peace-Building* - were printed. These books are now being used by local trainers, among them the boma chiefs and payam administrators.

In recognition of the low level of literacy within project communities, the peace manual was supported by a full-colour graphic publication - the 24-page, A5-sized *Paths Towards Peace* – which uses drawings in place of text to spread peace messages. These include the role of women in promoting peace; complications caused by high dowry payments and the benefits of development over conflict. 1000 copies of *Paths Towards Peace* were printed for distribution to Peace Committee members and throughout project-area communities to spread the message of peace.



Above: Illustrations from Paths to Peace encouraging women not to celebrate returning cattle raiders.

Grassroot developments: Following the two launch events, the EF team took the Peace Project to bomas in the project area. The purpose was twofold: to train influential community members to spread peace messages within their home communities; and to organize them into peace committees (*see below*).

To date, 55 trained local leaders have carried out peace training for 380 village leaders from Bira, Losite, Chorokol and Chahari Payam in Ikwoto County and Homiri, Kimatong, Ngarich and Lotuke Payam in Budi County and peace committees have been established in 38 bomas and 8 payams bordering the Kidepo Game Reserve.

The success of this phase of operations was furthered by using a peace trophy and medals to stimulate community involvement in the peace process.



Above: Kimatong Peace Committee.



Above: Village characters in a boma peace committee in Paths to Peace.

At each payam visited and trained by the EF team, a peace trophy was presented to the payam administrator to symbolise that payam's acceptance of peace. The trophy remains with him until training moves to another location. The custodian of the trophy is invited to take part in the next payam training and presents it to his counterpart there. In this way, the peace project spreads the peace message and creates linkages between payams. Furthermore, medals are presented to members of the Peace Committees who proudly wear them to demonstrate their status as peace champions within their community.



Above: Peace trophy presentation in Lotome Payam.

Stakeholder Meeting: In November 2024, meetings were held with key stakeholders in Ikwoto and Budi counties to discuss the progress of the project to date and consider proposed developments. Participants were unanimously supportive of Enjojo's peace initiative in the Kidepo Valley and the imminent conservation project.

Challenges: Operations within the Kidepo Valley are compromised by some challenges, most notably poor roads and insecurity.

As this picture of the road to Losite shows (*right*), travel by vehicle is slow and difficult, especially during the wet season when already poor routes are further degraded by heavy trucks.

Whilst assuming that the peace project will result in an improvement, insecurity remains an issue within the project area. Sadly, staff of our partner VSF/ G staff were robbed during a road ambush in Kimotong Payam.



Above: The road to Losite.

Conservation

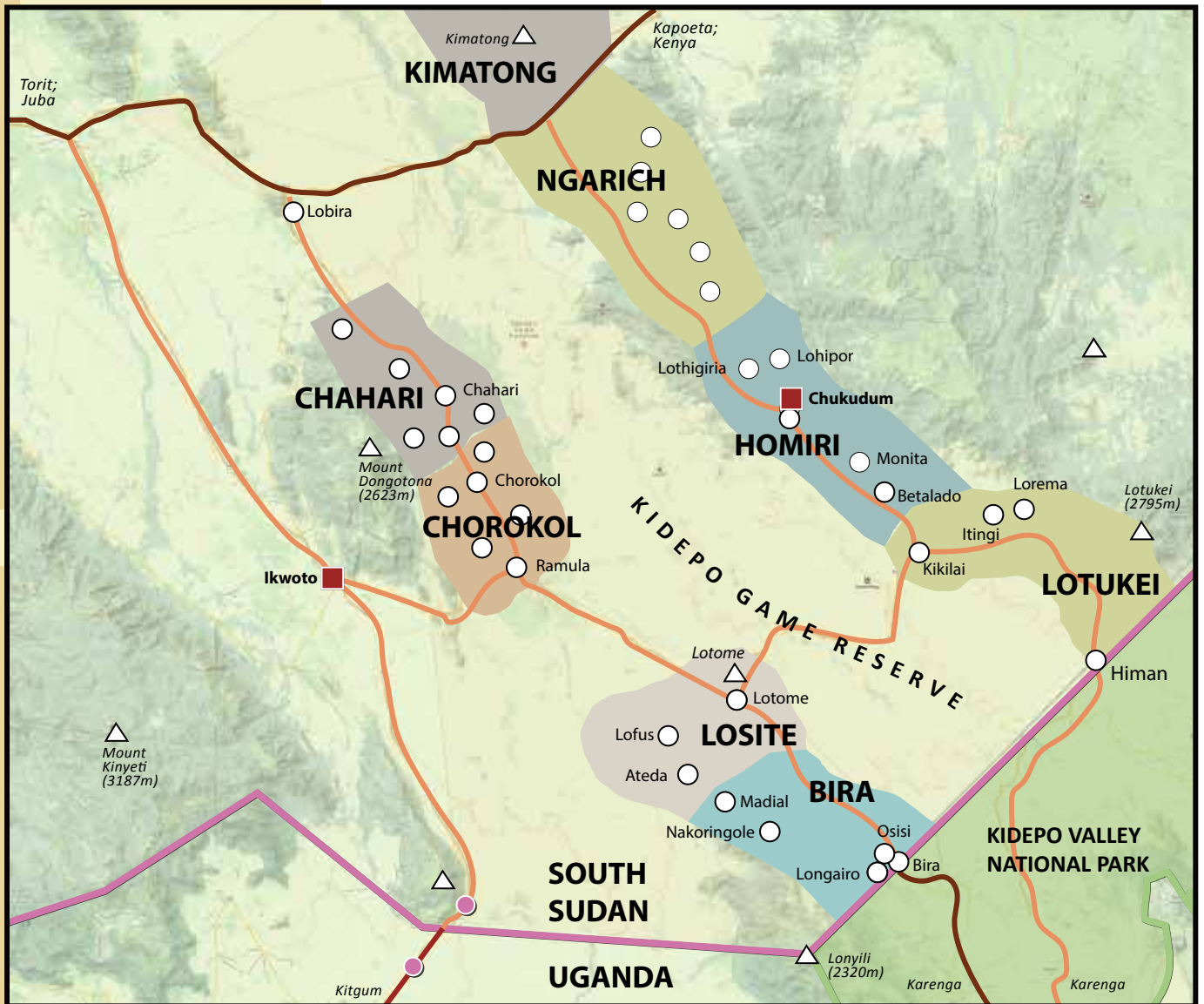
Following the start of the ongoing Kidepo Peace Project in May 2024, Enjojo Foundation launched the **conservation component** of our programme in January 2025.

Community Development*

During the payam peace training sessions, the Enjojo Foundation mapped the areas visited and carried out a preliminary **survey** of conditions within the boma. This information is being collated into booklets that will guide a future Community Development Plan.

* includes livelihood & green enterprises

Enjojo Foundation has begun the development of a **Community Conservation Manual** to guide impending conservation education activities in the Kidepo Game Reserve and Lantoto National Park.



Mapmaking underway for the EF payam survey booklets.

Peace & Governance

New Recruits: A Governance Manager and a Governance & Safeguards Officer have joined the team and begun their duties.

Key Meetings were held with a number of partners, namely:

- The Commissioner of Yei River County to discuss EF's program implementation.
- The Bishop of ECSS Diocese of Yei on the Church's role in peaceful park management.
- Landili Payam Director to clarify EF's role and community involvement in conservation.
- Yei River County Security Agencies to advocate for the relocation of Mbororo cattle keepers.
- Landili Payam youth to address employment concerns and green economy opportunities.

Community Development*

Construction of two **wells** is ongoing in Rasolo village and at the local clinic, to improve access to clean water.

Enjojo Foundation has begun the development of a **Community Conservation Manual** to guide impending conservation education activities in Lantoto National Park and Kidepo Game Reserve.



Right: Work underway on a borehole.

* Includes livelihood & green enterprises

Park Protection

A **physical training routine** have been implemented for the rangers.

Patrols were conducted at Buruduwa (4km from basecamp) and the old border crossing into DRC/Garamba.



Right: Rangers in LNP.

Wildlife & Habitat Management

While our efforts under this pillar will officially begin in 2026, our team conducted a 25km reconnaissance walk inside the park and found exciting evidence of the presence of **chimpanzees** in the form of three nests.



Above: Chimpanzee habitat in Lantoto

Infrastructure & Logistics

In November 2024, our advance team reached our **headquarters** site at Rasolo and starting building from scratch.

Thanks to the acquisition of a **car** and **lorry** (*right*) in December, construction works have now accelerated.

Key developments so far include:

- Full opening of a road from Rasolo village to the camp.
- Basic tented accommodation for staff put in place.
- Completion of the workshop.
- Near completion of two staff cottages.
- Ablution block for rangers.
- Ongoing drilling of a water well.
- Solar power installation.
- Internet installed.
- Ongoing construction of the restaurant and ranger accommodation.



*Above (from top)
Laden with building materials, the
Rasolo truck leaves Juba.*

*Staff cottage under construction at
Rasolo.*

Kidepo Game Reserve

Kidepo Game Reserve features a breathtaking landscape of sand-bed rivers, inselbergs, mountains, bamboo thickets, and open savannas. It is the only semi-arid ecosystem protected in South Sudan. Despite poaching pressures and security challenges, KGR's intact habitats and the presence of wildlife both north of the reserve and in neighbouring Kidepo Valley National Park (Uganda), including elephants and giraffes, hold promises for future recovery. With proper protection and management, the reserve would play a critical role in both stability and the restoration of biodiversity across the Kidepo Valley Transboundary Ecosystem.



Aerial view of Kidepo Game Reserve

Lantoto National Park

Lantoto National Park forms a contiguous protected area with Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), sharing a 98 km porous border along the Congo-Nile watershed. Situated at the transition between the Sudan-Guinean savanna and the Congolese rainforest, LNP boasts a spectacular mosaic of wooded savannas, forests, and striking inselbergs. Its central hills and streams sustain key rivers, swamps, and lowlands that support local livelihoods. Given its exceptional, near-pristine scenery, LNP holds potential to restore and protect its unique assemblage of species, including chimpanzees, elephants and lions. A well-managed, secure park will strengthen both regional security and ecosystem integrity across the Lantoto-Garamba landscape.



Aerial view of Lantoto National Park

thank you



The Enjojo team thanks our colleagues at the South Sudan Wildlife Service and our many friends, supporters and funding agencies who make our work possible:



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