

Saving Gorillas by Saving People: How Gladys Kalema Transformed Her Teenage Passion for Animals into a Radical Social Innovation

Diana Fernholz 18 July 2017

As a new graduate from veterinary school, Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka invented her first job. She wrote to the Ugandan Wildlife Authority, laying out her research explaining just how critical it was to create a role for a veterinarian within the organization. Prior to her letter, the general practice was that wildlife should be left to the circle of life, without any intervention. At the same time, public health programs were managed separately from conservation programs in wildlife-protected areas, using a parallel set of institutions. This traditional approach overlooked their interconnection, specifically the problem of zoonotic transmission of diseases between human beings and wildlife that threatens the success of conservation programs. Gladys' letter made an impact. As the home to 400 of the world's 900 Mountain Gorillas, it was clear that animal welfare needed to be made a priority. As the Wildlife Authority's first vet, she was given a desk and told to get to work.

[Continue reading at Ashoka...](#)