



Left to right: Congolese boy with puppet from the education suitcase Brevard Zoo provided / Congolese child playing a game / Club Ebobo kids with their artwork (photos courtesy of Thomas Breuer and Mark Gately)

CLUB EBOBO EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Report from the Field: Thomas Breuer Principal Researcher:
Mbeli Bai Gorilla Study Nouabalé Ndoki National Park, Republic of Congo

The Mbeli Bai Gorilla Study is an on-going research study at the Nouabalé Ndoki National Park. Recognizing the importance of education the Mbeli Bai Study established a children's conservation education program called Club Ebobo in 1998 conducted in the local village of Bomassa near the park headquarters. The major aim of Club Ebobo is to teach local children about gorillas and their behavior as well as explain why large mammals are protected and important for the African rain forest.



With support from Brevard Zoo, **including Safari Club donations**, we were able to expand Club Ebobo and the program is now also running in two schools in Ouessou, the capital of the Sangha province. Club sessions are usually held once a month, and are based on fun and interactive ways of learning, including colorful worksheets, interactive role play games and challenging puzzles. A qualified Congolese teacher is recruited and trained by our team to implement the interactive learning program. Through organized visits to Mbeli Bai the opportunity to actually see gorillas and other large mammals is provided to the children from the surrounding villages and particularly Ouessou where they are less likely to come into contact with these animals in the course of their daily lives. We are currently reaching a total of 150-200 children annually through Club Ebobo.

In 2005 we aim to expand Club Ebobo to the local town of Makao, the second base of the Nouabalé-Ndoki National Park situated 30km north-east of the Park boundary in the Likouala region. This region, once extremely remote and home to several different indigenous groups of hunter-gatherers, is now surrounded by logging concessions, and has undergone a complete demographic and economic transformation over the past three years as a direct result of logging activities in the region. It is important that the traditional values once attributed to wildlife are not totally lost in this area.

The Brevard Zoo has provided two environmental teaching suitcases as well as salaries for two Congolese educators. Thank you Brevard Zoo for remembering and supporting us here in the Republic of Congo!



Thomas Breuer at Mbeli Bai