

# Jane Goodall's Biography

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## Biographical Highlights

Jane Goodall was the first of several people recruited by Louis Leakey to do extensive studies of primate behavior. Goodall went to Gombe, Tanzania to study the chimpanzees who lived there. She is credited with many original observations, including tool making and use by the chimpanzees, meat eating, and warfare between chimpanzee groups. Goodall is currently a leader in the effort to save habitats and preserve the chimpanzees in their wild state. She established the Jane Goodall Institute for Research, Education and Conservation, and its global youth network program “Roots and Shoots.”

## Historic Roots

Primatologist and ethnologist Jane Goodall was born in London, England in 1934. Her father was an engineer, and her mother was an author. As she grew up, Goodall exhibited a love for the outdoors and a curiosity about the animals she found around her home. At about the age of eleven she began to be interested in Africa and expressed an interest in living there. Goodall was a good student, but did not attend college. She learned secretarial skills instead, believing that such skills could be put to use anywhere in the world.

Goodall went to Africa in the early 1950's, finding work as a secretary in Nairobi, Kenya. While she was there she went to visit Louis and Mary Leakey, who were working nearby. Leakey, a leading paleontologist, believed that understanding primate behavior would provide important clues to the behaviors of the early humans he was studying through the fossil remains his team found in the Olduvai Gorge in Kenya. The Leakeys were evidently impressed with Goodall and hired her as their secretary. She helped the Leakeys organize their research notes into presentations. Eventually, Leakey developed his primate research project and thought Goodall would be a good researcher. He wanted someone without a lot of training in anthropology or ethnology because he wanted a new, unbiased, perspective on the subject. Leakey sent Goodall to the Gombe National Reserve in Tanzania to study the chimpanzees living there. Her mother, Vanne, went with her since the government would not allow her into the region without a chaperone. Goodall began to observe the chimpanzees almost immediately, but found that establishing the necessary level of trust with them was a slow, difficult process. After weeks of passively observing from a distance, Goodall was able to move closer and, eventually, the chimpanzees accepted her presence among them.

Once she was able to observe chimpanzee behavior first hand, Dr. Goodall made several remarkable observations. Her first surprise was the discovery that the chimpanzees ate meat as well as plants and berries. No one had seen meat eating before. Another important observation came soon afterward. Goodall watched one of the chimpanzees shape a piece of grass into a tool, and then use it to get food. Over the next several years, tool use was seen numerous times. These observations forced important changes in the way chimpanzees were perceived. They were obviously much more like humans than had been previously thought.

The emotional and social characteristics of the chimpanzees were also revealed as a result of Goodall's work. She noted that they exhibited many of the same emotions that humans experience, like sadness, grief, happiness, and loneliness. She even saw a young chimpanzee “adopted” by an older female after his mother died. Goodall's work showed that chimpanzees live in social groups with a defined status structure. The groups were sometimes in conflict with each other, and in one case a group eliminated its rival group completely. Her work proved to be centrally important in the field of primate studies. When Dian Fossey came to Africa to study the mountain gorillas, she went to Gombe first. Goodall taught her how to observe primates in the wild.



After several years in Gombe Goodall returned to England to pursue a doctoral degree at Cambridge University. In 1965 she completed the degree program, becoming the first person to be awarded a doctoral degree from Cambridge without completing an undergraduate program first.

By 1967 Goodall was acting as the program director at Gombe, with much of the observation being done by students and assistants. She began to concentrate more on her role as an advocate for the program, and for chimpanzees in general. She has published several books about her work, appeared in films and television documentaries, and made many personal appearances to promote the work at Gombe. Her interests have broadened to include efforts to preserve habitat and protect chimpanzees living in the wild. Goodall is also concerned with the need for a place to provide shelter for chimpanzees who are sick, injured, or in need of a home. These efforts are supported through the Jane Goodall International Foundation (JGI). JGI has established a sanctuary called Chimpanzee Eden in South Africa to shelter chimpanzees in need.

### **Importance**

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of Jane Goodall to primate research, or to the cause of animal welfare. As Louis Leakey's first recruit for his primatology research project, she truly led the way. She developed techniques and made discoveries that informed the work of other primate researchers such as Dian Fossey, Birute Galdikas, and everyone who followed their lead in the field of primate studies. The results of her work changed the perceptions of everyone about these creatures. Goodall has also served as an effective advocate for the cause of animal welfare. She has put forth great effort to publicize the need for action on behalf of animals world-wide. Her foundation has provided resources to support that work, and she attracts support because she is so well known to the public.

### **Ties to the Philanthropic Sector**

Goodall's work has been a product of the philanthropic sector since the beginning. The Leakey Foundation provided the initial support for her work, and continued to support her, and the Gombe Center, and its programs. Goodall's own organization, the Jane Goodall International Foundation, currently solicits support for several on-going programs, including research and the Chimpanzee Eden sanctuary. Without philanthropic support, none of this work could have been done.

### **Key Related Ideas**

**Animal Welfare:** the compassion and respect due animals as living, responsive beings. Animals are entitled to kind and respectful treatment at the hands of humans, and this is not to be left to the compassionate impulses of humans, but is an entitlement that must be protected under the law.

**Observation:** Observing of developments in something: the careful watching and recording of something.

([http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary\\_1861684331/observation.html](http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_1861684331/observation.html))

**Sanctuary:** Refuge, a safe place: a place where wildlife is protected.

([http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary\\_1861701083/sanctuary.html](http://encarta.msn.com/dictionary_1861701083/sanctuary.html))

### **Important People Related to the Topic**

- Dian Fossey: Another researcher in the primate study project. Fossey studied the mountain gorillas and is known for her book, *Gorillas in the Mist*.
- Birute Galdikas; Galdikas spent many years studying the orangutans of Indonesia as part of the primate research project.
- Louis Leakey: Leakey was a well known paleontologist who organized and funded the primate research project. He recruited Goodall, Fossey, and Galdikas as his first three researchers.

### **Related Nonprofit Organizations**



- The Jane Goodall International Foundation, Center for Primate Studies site (<http://discoverchimpanzees.org>) is a good place to start for information about the chimpanzee study project and any of Goodall's other activities.
- The Jane Goodall International Foundation, Chimpanzee Eden organization is working to provide sanctuary to Chimpanzees who are rescued in the field or from research facilities. <http://janegoodall.org>.

### Related Web Sites

Jane Goodall Institute for Wildlife Research, Education and Conservation at (<http://janegoodall.org>).

The Dian Fossey Foundation at (<http://gorillafund.org>).

The International Primate Protection League at (<http://ippl.org>).

The Leakey Foundation at (<http://leakeyfoundation.org>).

The Primate Info Net at offers a good selection of websites on the subject of chimpanzees and primate research. <http://pin.primate.wisc.edu/fastsheets/entry/chimpanzees/cons>

Roots and Shoots, A Global Youth Network program of the Jane Goodall Institute (<http://www.rootsandshoots.org/>)

### Bibliography and Internet Sources

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- Goodall, Jane. *Reason for Hope: A Spiritual Journey*. New York: Warner Books. 1999.
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