This is Keppi the Okapi. Locals call okapi the “Unicorn of Congo” because it is so very rare. She lives in one of the most beautiful and precious biotopes of this planet with a vast biodiversity.

Unfortunately for her, there are also lots of metal ores and rare minerals in the area. Her home is vulnerable and threatened. Our “take-make-use-discard” economic system with its greed for resources like metal ores drives people to destroy this paradise. We need iron, aluminum, gold, copper, tin and other rare minerals for producing electronic devices, and this is destroying the habitats for fauna, flora, and the livelihoods of the local communities where these ores are found.

Mining produces enormous volumes of solid and liquid waste that are stored in structures, that reach several kilometres in area. Spills of this toxic waste lead to catastrophic devastation of entire landscapes and rivers, killing people and life on land and in water. This happened 40 times in the last decade. Mining also causes deforestation and contamination of drinking water. Extraction of rare minerals involves acid and produces vast amounts of very toxic sludge.

Mobile Phones are part of the problem – actually, they are a very big part of it. Nearly five billion people worldwide use a smartphone. But they only use one smart phone for a very short time, before replacing it with a new one with the latest gadgets, producing a mountain of smartphone waste.

Smartphones contribute to 10% of global electronic waste (50 million tonnes per year) an equivalent to 300,000 double decker buses of highly pollutant waste streams. Mobile phones are not yet designed to be easily recycled. It requires great effort to collect the waste, extract the parts and resources and to put them to new use or to recycle them.

Most mobile phones are not designed to be used for a long time or to be repaired. The good news is – some of them already are! Keeping phones in use for longer or passing them on, to be used by someone else would minimize the number which actually need to be recycled. This keeps materials in use for longer, reduces waste, and means less energy and resources are required for recycling processes or new phones.

That leads us to less mining activities!

Therefore, you and everyone can be part of the solution!

Use your smartphone as long as possible! If you absolutely must get a new smartphone, give your old smartphone to someone else to keep using it.

Try to find repair shops in your neighbourhood if it’s damaged!

If you cannot save your smartphone, find one that is used or repair friendly and robust!

Be part of the Game Changer community and save the habitat of Keppi and her companions!

We have to take action and spare these last intact ecosystems – we need them not to “save the planet” but to preserve the livelyhood of our children and grandchildren.