

Gorilla Conservation and Poverty

Experiences from Bwindi and Mgahinga Conservation area (BMCA), Uganda.

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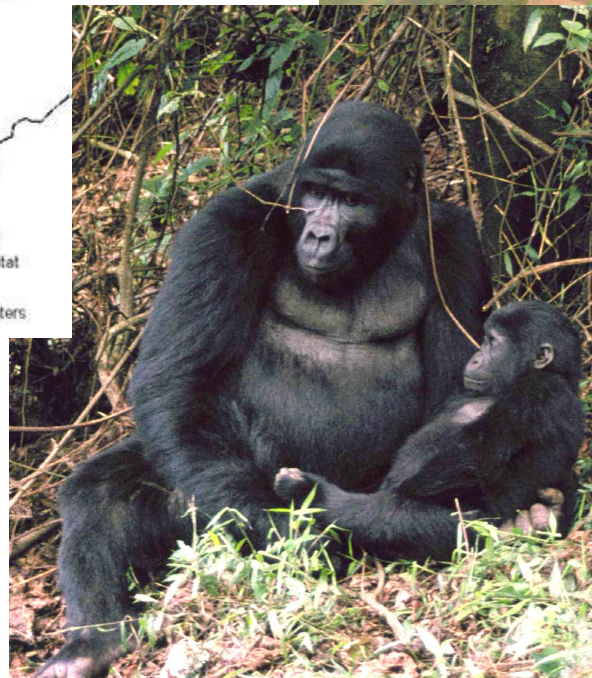
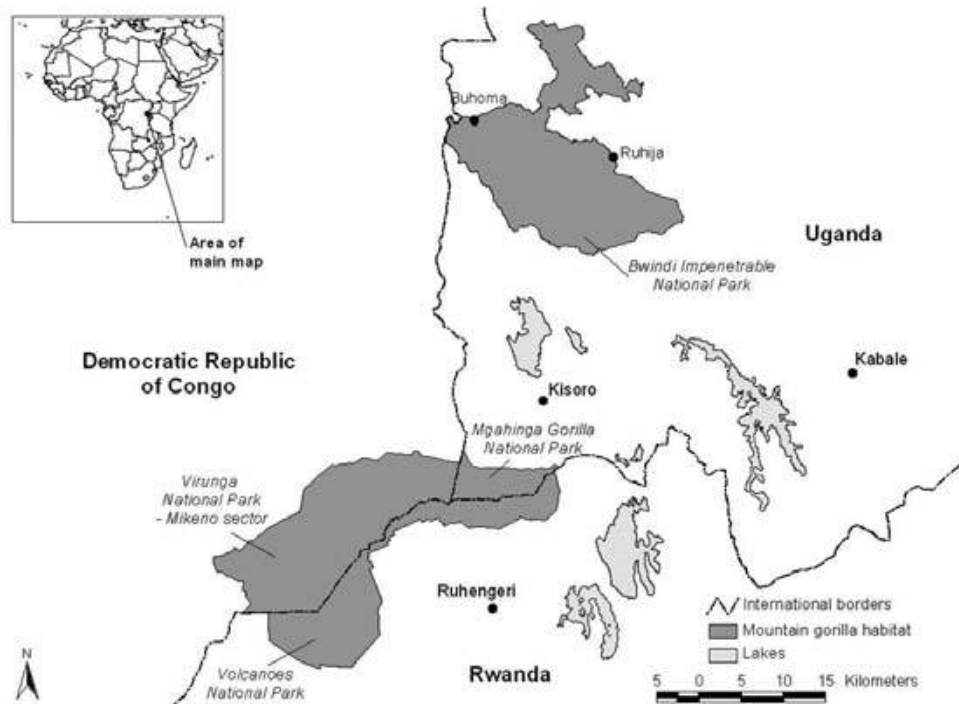


Wildlife Conservation Society



**Mgahinga and Bwindi
Impenetrable Forest
Conservation Trust**

Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks



Context and rationale

- Gazetted as NPs in 1991
 - BINP (330.8 sq. km), MGNP (33 sq. km)
- Conflict and resistance from local population arose after gazettelement
- Key threats included:
 - Illegal exploitation of forest resources
 - Fire: initially deliberate, later mainly from human activity (farming, honey gathering)
 - Pressures of demand for land (initially politically supported when the PAs were relatively new)
 - General negative attitudes towards the PAs and staff, (including violent attacks) threatening management effectiveness

The study

- 2001-2003
- Aim: **Test effectiveness of Integrated Conservation and Development (ICD)** interventions in reconciling biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development interests
 - Assessed whether interventions aimed at improving local livelihoods can also promote NR conservation
 - Identified mechanisms through which development interventions have conservation effect
- Did not seek to assess overall devt impact of interventions, but did assess how interventions were perceived by and impacted different wealth categories

ICD interventions around BMCA

- By 2001, 13 strategies had been implemented since 1980s
- 6 strategies were selected, criteria being:
 - Implemented to reconcile conservation and devt interests in NRM
 - Must have been implemented for at least 5yr

Impact of ICD on the poor around BMCA

The MBIFCT Community Infrastructure Projects



Conservation Trust & Revenue sharing

- Initial focus on social infrastructure projects
- Benefit from projects was not determined by wealth status (public good investment)
- Recent focus on household and group income generating projects and the “Gorilla Levy” will increase local share of benefits
 - Attention must be on deliberately targeting the poor

Controlled Access to Park Resources (Multiple Use)



PA resource access (Multiple Use)

- Focus: weaving materials, medicinal plants, beekeeping
- Primary beneficiaries (registered harvesters) few, not all the parishes around the PAs involved
- But wider secondary beneficiaries' group, through purchase of products
- Benefit from MU seemed to be dependent on wealth, with poor people benefiting less
 - the commercialization of MU products
 - Social marginalization of the poor and Batwa from RU groups
 - Exclusion of resources of interest to Batwa

- The program has recently been expanded to more parishes, RU (esp. bee keepers) have increased in #, including women
- Batwa interests being addressed too (except honey harvesting).
- Support to honey marketing in recent years by NGOs is increasing economic benefits to RU around the CA

The Tourism Program

**(CAMPGROUNDS, EMPLOYMENT, MULTIPLIER EFFECTS
OF TOURISM)**



Tourism

- The most effective ICD in generating economic benefits at local level
- Until recently was localized in few areas
- But showed the most marked failure to impact the poor
- Likelihood of benefits being reaped by the wealthier and well connected very high, unless deliberate efforts to extend benefits to the poor are made
 - Community walk, support to tourism-related IGAs like crafts, deliberate inclusion of Batwa activities and products have been devised to address this

Improved Agriculture



Improved agriculture

- Implemented all around the PAs, longest duration
- Agric improved food security and income security
- However benefits from agric were dependent on wealth, despite deliberate effort by CARE to avoid this
- Pro-poor targeting has proven difficult, even in other sites in Africa

Why difficult to reach the poor?

- Social marginalization of the poor within the community (for group-based agric extension)
 - fear to attend fora where information is given, to seek advice from extension workers
 - often live on parish margins (near PA boundaries) & do not get information
- Lack of basic implements e. (e.g. hoes)
- Acute land shortage- some people (including Batwa) were near-landlessness
- Land shortage, fragmentation and hilly terrain made it hard to adopt soil conservation technology
- The poor occupy marginal land, nearest to PA boundaries: disproportionately affected by wildlife damage; some PA-adjacent land parcels rendered useless
- High demand for agricultural labor by the wealthier HHs lures the poor off their farms

Substitution (Tree & Bamboo planting)

- Results show the benefit was not depended on wealth, against what commonly happens elsewhere
- Result could be due to flawed research methods- no attempt was made to establish the level of participation per household (e. g a few trees vs. a whole woodlot)

PA-related costs for the poor still high

- The poor are disproportionately affected by park restrictions on resource access coz they have limited livelihood options, more reliant on PA resources
- Improved protection of wildlife has increased their populations and scale of damage
- Crop damage continues to be a serious challenge for poor park adjacent households: level of investment in PAM still insufficient

- Social costs of wildlife damage for poor people are immense
 - Unproductive use of time spent guarding crops
 - Limits people's mobility, access to information, involvement in other community activities
 - Children's education compromised in some HHs
 - Abandonment of land near the PA boundary
 - Concentration of land into the hands of the wealthy who have various options (through give-away sales)
 - Out migration and dispossession
- Majority around BMCA still perceived conservation costs to outweigh benefits, thus better to live away from the PAs than adjacent