

Linking Ape Conservation and Poverty Alleviation

Experiences from Africa

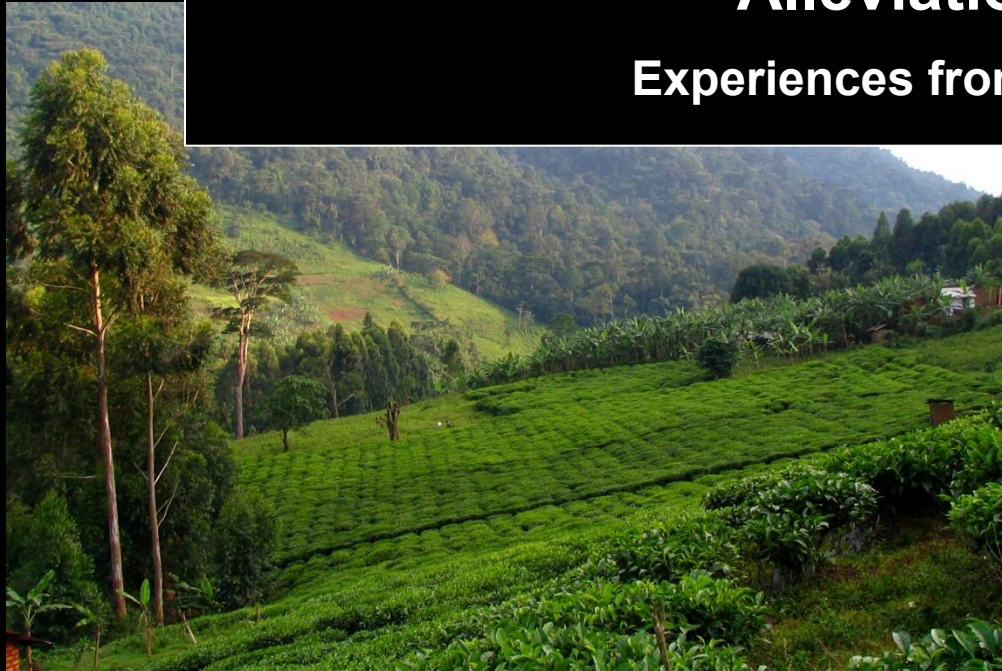
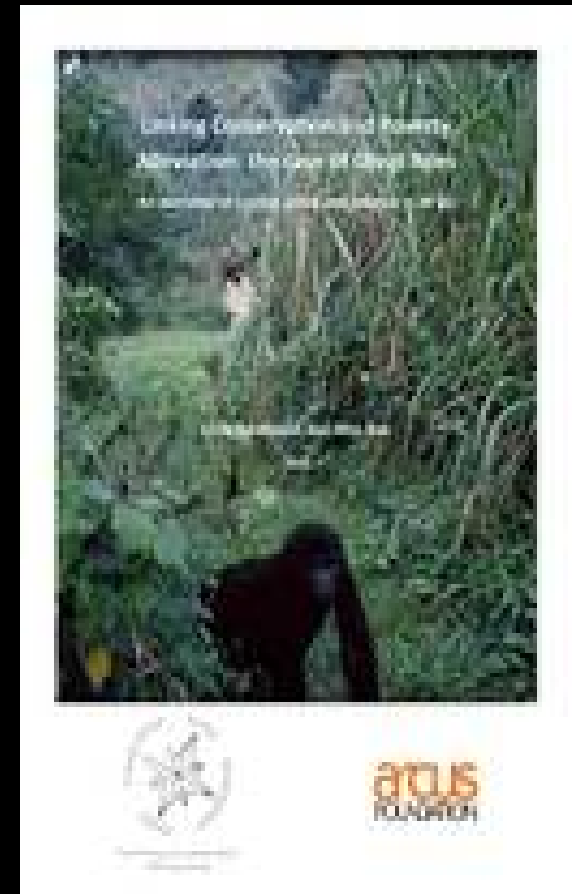


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African great apes and poverty alleviation

- Based on a recent review for IIED of linkages between great ape conservation and poverty reduction in Africa undertaken by Chris Sandbrook



Why link ape conservation and poverty alleviation?

- Great ape range states coincide with some of the poorest countries in the world - partic in Africa
- Apes attract a lot of international attention – a valuable resource
- But benefits often not shared at a level sufficient to generate conservation incentive
- Conservation often through strictly enforced protected areas – (potential) *cost* to local communities
- Missed opportunity for poverty reduction *and* risk of threat to conservation



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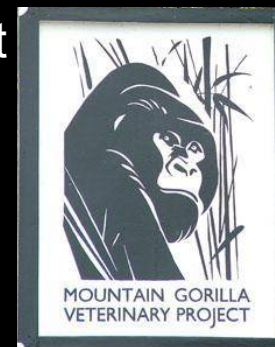
Apes and Poverty in National Policy

- Although role of *environment* well recognised in most PRSPs, limited attention paid to biodiversity and to the role of the conservation sector.
- In most cases biodiversity loss/environmental degradation seen as contributing to poverty
- A few exceptions where biodiversity seen as a potential opportunity to address poverty - countries where nature based tourism is important – eg Uganda, Rwanda
- Far better attention to poverty within NBSAPs – but again focus tends to be on threats rather than opportunities.
- Mixed provisions for community involvement in biodiversity management but in most cases some degree of recognition of local resource rights and moves towards decentralisation



The poverty focus of ape conservation organisations

- Large number of organisations addressing ape conservation in Africa:
 - 8 multi-country organisations/initiatives that are ape specific
 - 15 multi-country organisations/initiatives that include apes amongst other conservation concerns
 - Anything between 2 and 20 organisations/initiatives in each ape range state
- Focus varies but in general (and unsurprisingly!):
 - **The** underlying rationale of ape conservation is **not** poverty reduction
 - Where poverty is an obvious threat, ape conservation organisations try to address it
 - Where it isn't, they don't
 - Poverty seen as a conservation constraint



Approaches to linking conservation and poverty at ape sites

- Many different approaches taken by different organisations at different sites
- From changing the behaviour/attitudes of communities towards conservation (education, outreach) to changing the practice of conservation (CBNRM, community conserved areas)
- From finding alternatives to resources of conservation concern (alternative protein/energy sources) to generating benefits from resources of concern (tourism, PES)
- From enforcing conservation priorities to paying for them



Approaches to linking conservation and poverty at ape sites

- Examples include:
- Tourism jobs and SMEs
- CBNRM, community conservation
- ICDPs
- Human health and family planning
- Bushmeat alternatives
- Firewood alternatives/fuel efficient stoves
- Protected area outreach/revenue sharing
- Addressing human wildlife conflict
- PES
- Zoning
- Skills/capacity development
- Value chains/market access



Different approaches in different contexts

Two main types of ape habitat in Africa:

1) relatively intact forests, with very low human population density eg DRC, Gabon

- Main threats to apes not poverty driven: commercial bushmeat hunting, commercial forestry, epidemic diseases
- Vast areas of ape habitat outside protected areas
- Common interventions: alternative protein projects; efforts to encourage forestry companies to improve their practices, community conserved areas.

1) forest fragments, with high human population densities between the fragments eg Uganda, Rwanda, Cross River - Nigeria.

- main threats are poverty driven: slash and burn, subsistence hunting, human wildlife conflict and disease transmission stemming from apes crossing into agricultural land.
- Main populations of apes in state run protected areas – fewer CCAs
- Common interventions : public service provision eg schools and hospitals, public health, family planning, problem animal control and enterprise development.

Context Specific but Common Themes

Increase in number of initiatives that seek to hand over some form of control over natural resource management to local people

Continued large number of ICDP type projects that seek to substitute another activity for natural resource use

Ape tourism by far the most popular way of converting the presence of great apes into money for local development activities

Initiatives that seek to deliver general development benefits to local people, such as schools and hospitals, far more common in areas with very high human population densities



Does great ape conservation reduce poverty?

- Some of the activities associated with ape conservation programmes can reduce poverty for some people
 - Employment & revenue (particularly in tourism areas)
 - Infrastructure & healthcare
 - Empowerment
 - Long term resource protection
- But they can also have negative poverty impacts
 - Increased law enforcement restricting livelihoods in short term
- Lack of data to draw overall conclusions



Factors influencing outcomes

1) The scale of poverty - partic in forest fragment areas

- Very difficult to have a poverty impact in areas with huge poor populations
- Eg SACOLA in Rwanda \$100,000 in one year but only \$10 per person
- Valuable benefits often end up in the hands of a small local elite



2) The availability of economic alternatives

- Where tourism is possible it can generate meaningful benefits
- In remote areas with no tourism or market access, very difficult to achieve reduction in *income* poverty – potential in REDD?



Factors influencing outcomes

3) Local capacity

- Community based governance better for poverty than strict PAs
- But often lack of capacity at local level to address power imbalances, claim rights



4) Conservation organisation capacity

- Conservation projects tend to be very focused on sites, less engagement with national policy, forest governance etc
- Lack of development skills amongst conservation professionals



Overall conclusions

- Ape conservation is most likely to contribute to poverty *reduction* when:

- 1) Poverty is an obvious driver of threat
- 2) Poverty is on a manageable scale
- 3) There are opportunities to generate benefits from conservation
- 4) The governance regime gives space for local interests. Not a strict PA
- 5) There is local capacity to fight for, manage, and fairly distribute benefits
- 6) Programmes are at an appropriate scale
- 7) Appropriate development skills are available
- 8) Good information on poverty / biodiversity linkages is available
- 9) There is good stakeholder cooperation
- 10) Benefits are accessible to the poor

However, these things rarely come together.

When they don't trade-offs rather than win-wins are the norm

Acknowledgements

- Thank you to:
 - Dilys Roe & IIED
 - The other symposium organisers
 - All the people who responded to the survey or met me in person
 - Arcus foundation for funding the research



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