

CONSERVATION WITHOUT BORDERS: MOUNTAIN GORILLAS AND LIVELIHOODS

INTERNATIONAL GORILLA CONSERVATION PROGRAMME

Introduction

International Gorilla conservation Programme (IGCP) was formed in 1991 by 3 coalition partners (AWF, FFI, WWF) to conserve mountain gorillas and their habitat through partnering with key stakeholders while significantly contributing to sustainable livelihood development, thus linking conservation with poverty is part of its design

Interventions for Poverty reduction

1. Support and organise communities to benefit from ecotourism enterprises
 - Facilitating formation Community institutions (NCDF and SACOLA)
 - Promoting and supporting community - private sector partners to enhance community benefits from ecotourism enterprises
 - Supporting the improvement of quality and quantity of Handcrafts production and linkages with Markets
2. Support projects that increase productive time within communities members
 - Water projects (gravity and rain water harvesting)
 - Human wildlife conflict management eg Gorilla monitoring response teams (volunteers)
3. Support projects that minimize crop raiding

Impacts

- Mountain gorilla growth rates turned positive
- Community investment in conservation enterprises increased
- Benefits (monetary and non monetary) accruing to communities from ecotourism enterprises increased
- Community participation and involvement in conservation projects increased

Lessons learnt

- Community benefits can not compensate individual Household conservation costs and therefore household livelihood based projects need to be promoted as well
- Projects based on volunteerism are not sustainable in the long run and therefore innovative approaches to keep volunteerism candle burning needed
- Building enterprenuershipness and good governance structures in community institutions takes a long time and therefore it requires patience and tolerance to establish profitable community ecotourism enterprise projects
- Time saved as a result of conservation projects eg rain water harvesting ,is hardly converted into productive time and appreciated. Therefore more sensitization of productive use of such time required
- Monitoring and evaluation of the linkage between ecotourism benefits by communities and conservation very difficult and therefore this approach doesn't easily translate into commiserate behavior change within communities to support conservation

