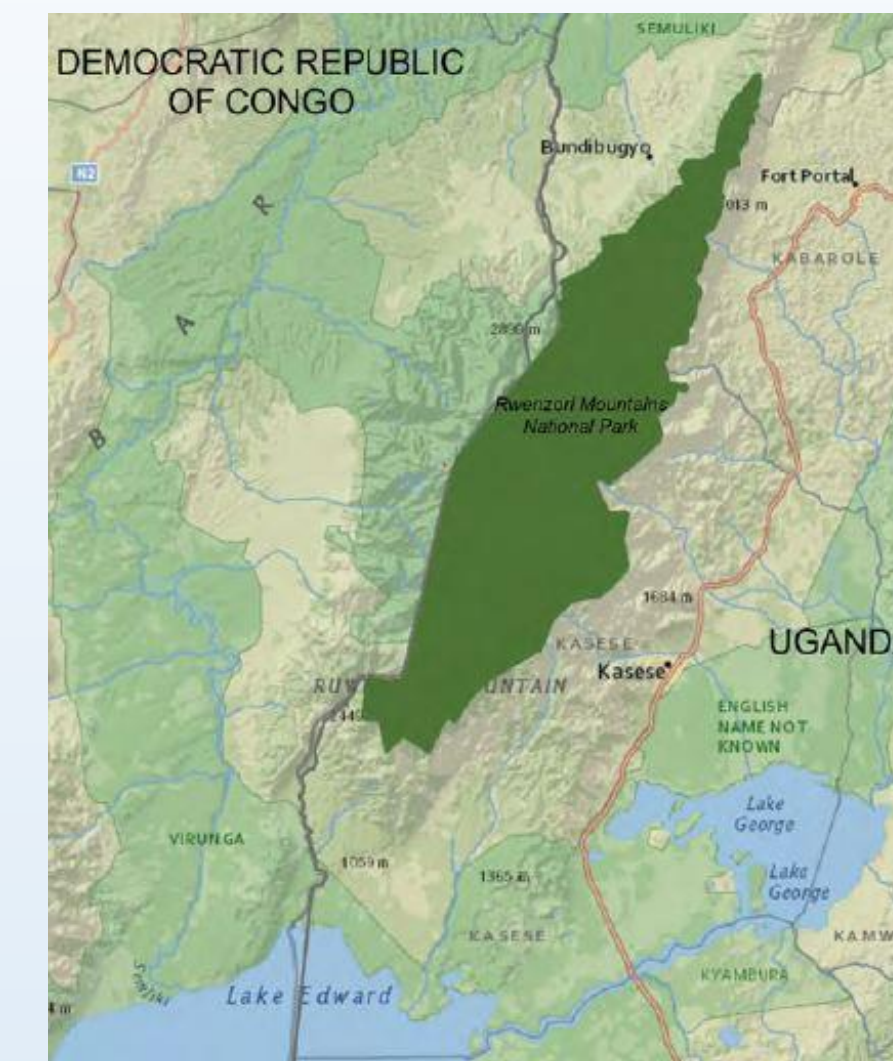


Social Assessment of Protected Areas (SAPA) at Ruwenzori Mountains National Park, Uganda



The Ruwenzori Mountains Protected Area (RMNP) was first established as a Forest Reserve in 1941, and then gazetted as a national park in 1992 covering an area of 995 km². RMNP is state owned and managed by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA).

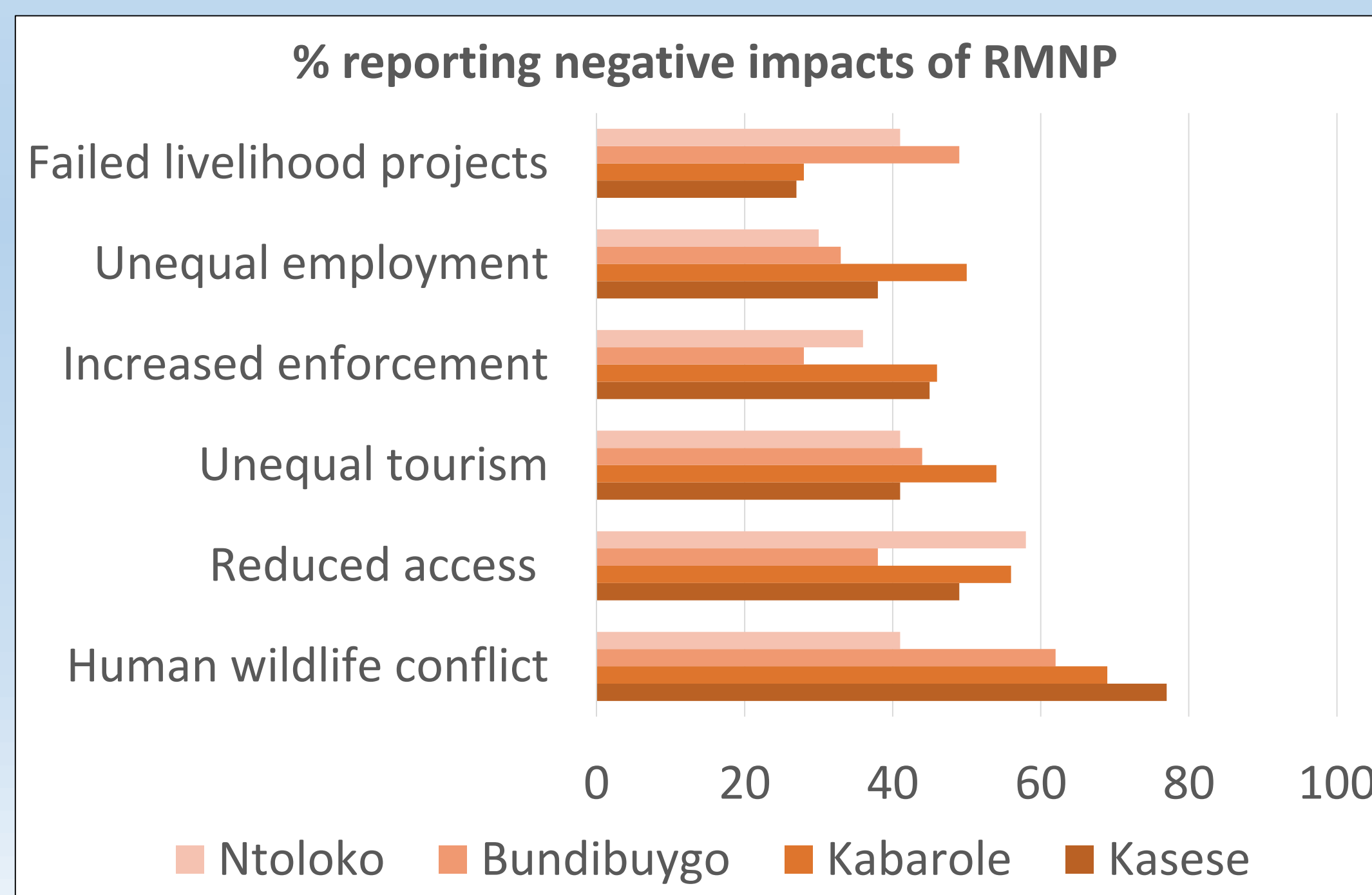
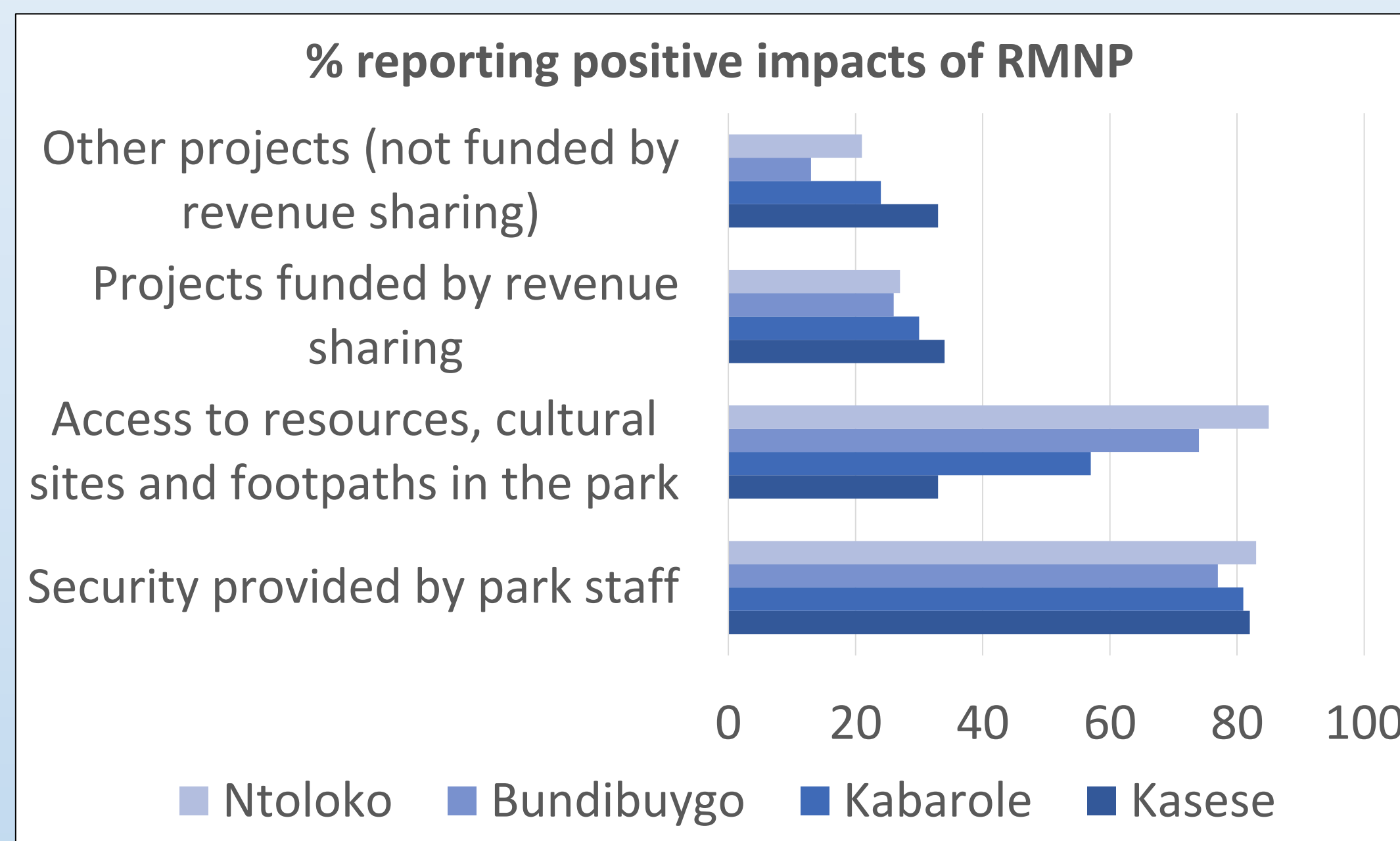
In nine of the 58 parishes UWA allows local people to harvest some non-timber products, to access cultural sites and/or use footpaths, and involves them in boundary management. RMNP generates significant tourism revenue from visitors to the mountains, and 20 % of the park entry fees are used to support livelihood projects in border parishes.

SAPA is a multi-stakeholder methodology that assesses the positive and negative impacts of a protected area and related conservation and development activities on the wellbeing of communities living within and around the PA.

The SAPA assessment at RMNP included community and stakeholder workshops and a household survey of 109 women and 132 men from 241 households in four districts – Ntoloko, Bundibuygo, Kabarole and Kasese. The assessment was facilitated by a team comprising staff of UWA, Kasese District Government and Fauna and Flora International (FFI).

The results suggest that **security** is the most significant positive impact of the RNMP – referring to the contribution that the UWA rangers make to general security in this relatively insecure region close to DRC border. Second in significance is access to resources, cultural sites and footpaths in the park, and it is notable that both security and access are felt to be more significant benefits than livelihood projects funded by revenue sharing and NGOs.

The most significant negative impact is **human wildlife conflict** - mainly damage to crops by caused by monkeys, followed by baboons and chimpanzees.



In terms of **governance**, the SAPA assessment reveals that there is low awareness of key information about the RMNP (particularly amongst women), but people reported that they have a good or very good relationship with park staff. In terms of responsiveness of park staff to community concerns 35 % stated that they have raised a concern with RMNP staff regarding law enforcement, and 50 % regarding community conservation, and most of these people (77 % and 82 % respectively) noted that some action was taken in response.

A key final stage of SAPA is to move **from assessment to action** through a multi-stakeholder process of sharing the results, jointly identifying recommendations and assigning responsibilities for activities. At RMNP, stakeholders have proposed the following next steps:

- Extend tourism to other park-adjacent communities where there is potential.
- Extend the resource use and access program.
- Ensure more equitable allocation of tourism revenue sharing funds.
- More frequent park-community meetings.
- Provide training on control of problem animals that raid crops.