

Beyond gorillas

Local economic development
through tourism at Bwindi
Impenetrable National Park



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Introduction - project overview

Tourism in Uganda is critical for generating revenue for conservation of Mountain Gorillas and other species and habitats. At Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, tourist numbers have increased from 1,300 per annum in 1993 to around 20,000 today. International tourists pay US\$600 per head to track gorillas. Local people living around the forest receive a share of the revenue generated by tourism to the park including US\$10 per gorilla permit sold plus 20 per cent of the US\$40 park entry fees in recognition of the importance of their support for conservation. The total amount of money generated by this revenue sharing scheme is allocated to park-adjacent parishes according to a formula set out in Uganda Wildlife Authority guidelines and is used to fund community projects such as clinics and schools.

Recent research conducted by IIED and partners¹ has shown that local people have a negative attitude towards the park and towards conservation, despite the share of the revenue that they are allocated. This is driven by the fact that many people suffer significant costs from living next to the park, such as crop raiding by wild animals. The park revenue that is shared with local people is not specifically targeted at those who bear the most costs. Furthermore, there are few conservation or tourism-based jobs open to local people. Other direct benefits from tourism, such as cash from sales of locally-produced souvenirs or other local tourist attractions are also limited. This is partly due to poor quality of many of the local products and services and low levels of skills development to improve job prospects or enterprise opportunities. It is also due to the limited opportunities for direct interaction between tourists and local people. Tourists tend to arrive at Bwindi with a guide on the afternoon of one day, spend one night at a lodge, spend the next day gorilla tracking and the next night at the lodge, and then depart the following morning.

The result is that relationships between local people and the park authorities have been problematic, and poaching, snaring and other forms of illegal resource use continue. This represents a significant threat to the park and to the long-term conservation of the gorillas, and also a missed opportunity for harnessing tourism as an engine for local economic development.

The 'Local Economic Development Through Pro-Poor Gorilla Tourism' project, funded by the UK Darwin Initiative, was intended to start to address this problem. Running from 2016 to 2019, the project (involving IIED with partners the Institute for Tropical Forest Conservation (ITFC), the International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) and the Responsible Tourism Partnership (RTP)) aimed to develop and test new or improved local tourism products and services that responded to an expressed demand from tourists, tour operators and lodges, and have the potential to increase local revenue from tourism around Bwindi Forest thus contributing to poverty alleviation, improving local peoples' attitudes to conservation and reducing threats to gorillas. The focus of the project was on delivering training to micro-enterprises in order to increase the quality, transportability and utility of products for which there is proven demand (and hence their value and desirability and thus the number and value of sales). A key element of the project was to leverage contacts and relationships with both lodge owners/managers and tour operators and their driver/guides in order to direct their clients to the new and improved products and services and, ideally, include them in their itineraries. The project also set out to develop a Gorilla Friendly™ ecolabel, resting on three key pillars: 1) products/services must reach a high quality standard; 2) products/services must be produced by people living within 2 km radius of the park boundary and benefits from the products and services are shared transparently through good

¹ Twinamatsiko, M., J. Baker, M. Harrison, M. Shirchorshidi, R. Bitariho, M. Wieland, S. Asuma, E.J. Milner-Gulland, P. Franks, and D. Roe, (2014). Linking Conservation, Equity and Poverty Alleviation: Understanding profiles and motivations of resource users and local perceptions of governance at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda. IIED. The report is free to download from <http://pubs.iied.org/14630IIED.html>

governance best practice; 3) products and services must be produced in a way which does no harm to gorillas or to their habitat.

Overall, the project's implicit Theory of Change was that by explicitly linking the delivery of benefits from a vibrant tourism industry based on a healthy population of Mountain Gorillas to front-line, marginalized communities, local attitudes to conservation would be improved and threats to the park reduced. It was hoped that rural areas around Bwindi Forest will support sustainable local economic development which maximises the contribution from tourism as opposed to simply existing alongside it.

Overall, the project aimed to test the following hypothesis: Improving local capacity to produce quality tourism products and services that respond to expressed demand from tourists, tour operators and lodges will increase the number of sales resulting in increased income at the household level and, as a result, improved attitudes towards and support for conservation of Bwindi forest. To test this hypothesis, we sought to answer three key questions:

1. Do the local tourism capacity development interventions delivered by the project to poor people living close to Bwindi Forest result in increased uptake of local tourism products and services by tourists, tour operators and lodges?
2. Do increased sales of local tourism services and products affect household incomes and, if so, what difference does this make to local livelihoods?
3. Does increased household income from Park tourism enterprises change local attitudes towards national park conservation?

Figure 1 describes the key steps involved in the project.

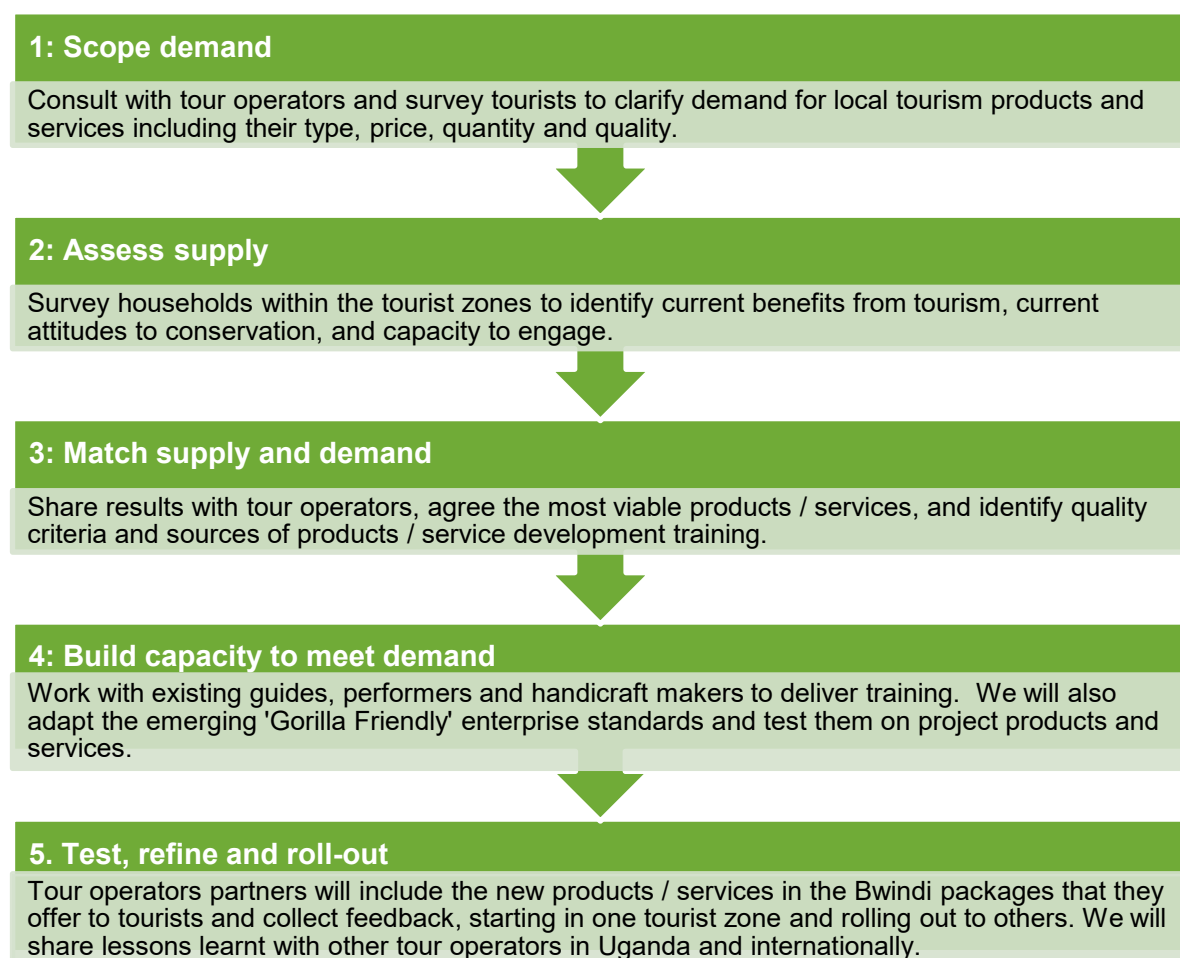
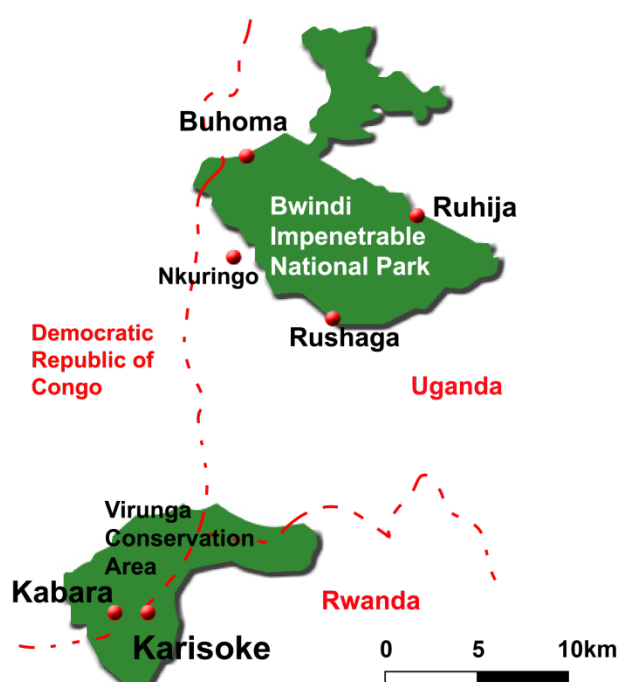


Figure 1: Overview of the pro-poor gorilla tourism project approach

Tourism at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) is located in south-western Uganda covers an area of 330.8 km². It is situated on the edge of the Western Rift Valley occupying the highest blocks of the Kigezi Highlands (Figure 2). The park lies along the border of the Democratic Republic of Congo, at about 29 km by road to the north west of Kabale town and 30 km north of Kisoro town. Bwindi is home to about 400 endangered mountain gorillas (*Gorilla beringei beringei*) – about half the world population. It has been managed as a protected area since 1932, first as a forest reserve, then as a game sanctuary and, from 1991, as a national park (with subsequent evictions of the resident, indigenous Batwa people). The park was declared a World Heritage Site in 1994.

Figure 2: Bwindi Impenetrable National Park



The loss of income and livelihoods resulting from the designation of the National Park led to violent conflict between local people and the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) responsible for managing the Park (Baker et al. 2011). In 1994, as a result of the tense relationship between the community and UWA, a collaborative forest management approach was set up. This allows limited forest resource access and use by the frontline communities that shoulder the opportunity cost of land not used for agriculture and that also suffer crop damage from gorillas and other wild animals. A revenue sharing programme was also introduced in the late 1990s whereby 12% of gorilla tracking fees were allocated to a fund for community development projects such as schools and clinics. In the early-mid 2000s, the scheme changed to an allocation of 20% of park entry fees to the community fund resulting in a significant lowering of the total funds disbursed to local development projects. After lobbying by local government, residents and international organisations working in the area, an additional allocation of 1% of the gorilla tracking fee (US\$ 500 per permit) was added to the fund from 2010 onwards in the form of a 'gorilla levy'. In 2015, based on research from the Research to Policy project, and subsequent

lobbying by the Uganda Poverty and Conservation Learning Group, this gorilla levy was increased to \$10 per permit sold.

In addition to the revenue sharing programme, a tourism programme was established as one component of a range of local development projects supported by the Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) – an endowment fund established by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in 1994. For example, in 2002, the ‘Buhoma Village Walk’, was established with support from BMCT in the community adjacent to Buhoma gate and park headquarters.

Since formal, state managed gorilla tourism started in 1993, tourist numbers have exponentially increased from 1,313 in 1993 to 18,000 in 2012 (BINP General Management Plan 2014-2014) and then 21,500 in 2014 (IGCP Pers comm) Like many other African countries, tourism to Uganda has suffered as a result of the Ebola outbreak in 2014 and security concerns with tourist numbers to Bwindi dropping to 16,500 in 2015 (IGCP Pers comm).

As tourist numbers have increased, so have the number of tourism facilities. In 1993 there was only one tourism centre – the village of Buhoma. Now there are five key tourism centres around the Park. Buhoma in the west, Ruhija in the east, and Nkuringo, Rubuguri and Rushaga in the south, with Rubuguri acting as a hub for the southern sector (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The main tourist centres in Bwindi Forest (map reproduced from Uganda Wildlife Authority 2018²)



There are 18 habituated gorilla groups in Bwindi forest. This spread of habituated gorilla groups has associated challenges, key among which is the increased human-wildlife conflict caused by gorillas ranging outside the park on community land. At least six of the habituated gorilla groups are known to

² <http://www.ugandawildlife.org/download/category/3-park-brochures>

range on private land. This contributes to the perception of costs associated with the park among local communities. While well-motivated, the revenue sharing scheme, gorilla levy and other tourism initiatives have not to date generated significant benefits for the majority of people living around the park. This is partly due to the system of disbursement of funds which has been corrupted leading to some funds failing to reach intended beneficiaries. It is also due to poor targeting of benefits at those households who actually bear the costs of conservation – eg the poorest households who live closest to the park. Furthermore, Bwindi is surrounded by one of the most densely populated areas of rural Africa, with up to 300 people/ km², (Plumptre et al. 2004). There are 101 villages in 27 parishes along Bwindi's boundary representing approximately 70,000 people, of whom approx. 1000 are from the indigenous – and politically marginalised – Batwa ethnic group. Under UWA's Revenue Sharing Guidelines, all should receive a share of the income that UWA raises from park entrance fees and gorilla tracking permits. The total amount of revenue is, however, limited. In 1996, UGX 76 million (approx. GBP 19,000) was disbursed, rising to UGX 662 million in 2012, and reducing to UGX 500 million in 2013 and 2014. In 2017 the total had increased again to UGX 576 million with a further UGX 4.5 billion due to be disbursed in 2019 (IGCP pers comm). In addition to this revenue, a survey of 23 tourism lodges around Bwindi conducted by IIED and IGCP in 2015 estimated that only 450 local people (and mostly male) are employed in tourism. Overall, therefore, benefits to poor people from tourism are limited (albeit recently increasing).

Research carried out under IIED's Research to Policy (R2P) project³ looked at motivations for unauthorised use of resources from Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda. Among other factors, employment of local people in park and tourism related activities were found to contribute to perception that the distribution of benefits from the park were not fair. Perceptions of unfairness contributed toward the unauthorised use of park resources by local people. Local people believe that they do not get a fair share of the available jobs, especially when considering the park-related costs they incur (Twinamatsiko et al., 2014)⁴.

³ 'Research to Policy: building capacity for conservation through poverty alleviation' is a 3-year project funded through the UK Government's Darwin Initiative

⁴ Twinamatsiko, M., J. Baker, M. Harrison, M. Shirchorshidi, R. Bitariho, M. Wieland, S. Asuma, E.J. Milner-Gulland, P. Franks, and D. Roe, (2014). Linking Conservation, Equity and Poverty Alleviation: Understanding profiles and motivations of resource users and local perceptions of governance at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Uganda. IIED. The report is free to download from <http://pubs.iied.org/14630IIED.html>

Supply of, and demand for, local products and services at the start of the project

Each of the tourism centres around Bwindi is filled with craft shops and rickety signs pointing to guiding and other services (Figure 4). A snapshot inventory gives the impression of a vibrant local tourism industry. However, many of the enterprises listed - particularly the guided walks and other guiding services - are occasional and opportunistic rather than viable businesses. Others are aspirational – for example the many honey producers have limited sales to lodges as do the market gardeners. Key challenges include inadequate capacity to produce quality products and services, inconsistent supplies and poor agricultural practices. In the case of the craft producers and outlets, there are numerous small craft shops and producer groups. However the majority sell the same products – gorilla carvings, baskets and fabric crafts – with quality standards in general being fairly low.

Figure 4: A craft shop in Buhoma, Bwindi (photo credit: Dilys Roe)



As a preliminary first step in the project we conducted a survey of tourists and tour operators to explore what they were looking for as part of their experience at Bwindi.

Tour operators reported that trips to Bwindi varied in length between 2 and 5 nights with the large majority being two or three nights. Guests may have some free time in the afternoon when they first arrive, and evenings, at their accommodation (although they are likely to have an early night before and after the trek). If trips are longer than 2 nights, then tourists tend also to have a day free after doing the gorilla trek on their first full day in Bwindi. Some will choose to repeat the gorilla trek on their second day. Sometimes the gorilla trek will finish early if the gorillas are sighted early in the day. That would leave the remainder of the day free but willingness to participate in any other activities would depend on the tourists' mood after the trek, how tired they were and so on. Any activities marketed to meet this

opportunity would therefore need to be able to be provided at short notice / on an ad hoc basis rather than being bookable in advance. For some groups, it is not possible for individual guests to undertake independent activities - the whole group has to do the same activity.

Few tour operators routinely include any product other than one, or exceptionally two, gorilla trekking experiences in their Bwindi itineraries. A small number sampled from a wide market spectrum showed that optional extras of Batwa trail and village visits along with guided birding walks are available. Most visitors are on pre-planned, and therefore time poor, itineraries. Little to no effort, at UTB or local tour operator level, has been made to define 'new' product and have this offered to international tour operators to include in the pre-planned itineraries.

The tourist survey – completed by 112 tourists - revealed that the most commonly available and purchased products were wood handicrafts (with baskets and fabric handicrafts also being popular). Locally cooked and served meals were also commonly purchased (although from the comments on the survey forms it appears that many respondents were including lodge-provided meals in this category rather than 'experiential' local meals), as were local trails and cultural visits. The survey found that there was good awareness of the availability of most products, with the exception of guided birdwatching walks and local artisan foods and products, although there was mixed feelings as to the quality and content of the products and services on offer. One lodge owner told a story of a wealthy client who really wanted to spend some money and buy a quality souvenir to take home but could not find anything available locally that was up to his standards and that he would be prepared to exhibit in his house. The experiences expressed at Bwindi resonate with those heard from tourists in many other tourism destinations, and there is clearly a gap in the market for high quality, authentic and unique souvenirs.

The tourist survey asked respondents to indicate which products and services they would purchase if available, and whether they would stay longer at Bwindi in order to do so. Most commonly, tourists wanted to buy quality handicrafts and to participate in cultural or nature-based guided walks and trails.

Feedback from the tour operators and tourists highlighted some key issues relevant to the improvement of existing, or development of new, products and services:

- For many people the gorilla trek can be quite strenuous so complementary walks and trails should be easily accessible
- Most tourists are in Bwindi for the walking and wildlife and so will appreciate additional nature-based trails. However, existing nature trails sometimes disappoint in comparison to the highlight of the gorilla trek. It is important to make additional walks more about the scenery, a good lunch, seeing a village etc and then any wildlife spotted is a plus.
- High quality, confident, well-trained local guides are key. It's important to revive storytelling, modernise and professionalise it.
- Cultural trails are attractive to tourists but have to be carefully managed and executed so as not to seem exploitative and uncomfortable. Tourists appreciate activities that feel authentic and that they can see benefit and involve the local community, but which are not 'charity'. They like to be able to observe and participate in daily life and in particular not to feel like poverty tourists. Village / farm / home walks / visits.
- Better quality and a wider variety of handicrafts would be well received. Tourists would like to watch and understand how things are made and even to try making them themselves. Tourists like to feel they are contributing to the community and local people's livelihoods. Products need to have a genuine story as to who benefits.
- Craft products need to be locally made, easily transportable and good quality. Items should be small enough to put in a suitcase and be of practical use or aesthetic quality over and above the 'sentimental' trip-associated reasons for purchase.

- It is also crucial to differentiate unique local products from those available on other parts of guests' longer itineraries such as carvings and beads.
- How and where the crafts are presented is also important: at the accommodation works well, alternatively in a relaxed atmosphere for example in a cafe/bar with a nice view on the evening of the trek, at the end of the trip. Avoiding hassle is essential.

Beyond tourists and tour operators, lodge owners and managers also directly influence the uptake of local tourism products and services. At the start of the project there was limited use of local products and services by the tourist lodges around Bwindi. In discussions about the constraints and opportunities, nearly all highlighted problems of quality, quantity and consistency of supply. Lodge managers reported that they would be willing to purchase a wide range of fresh fruit and vegetables, herbs and spices, honey, cut flowers, milk and (to a lesser extent) meat, if regular supply of good quality products could be assured. Beyond food products, a number of lodge owners noted problems in providing cultural services and other tourism products. For example, they noted a lack of coordination between suppliers of different services – for example dance groups – and lots of quarrelling about who will attend which lodge. Lodge managers also noted that many of their guests are very interested in experiencing Batwa culture but are equally concerned to ensure experiences are not exploitative and that the Batwa themselves are actually benefiting.

The Local Economic Development project – key activities and interventions

Based on the tourist/tour operator surveys and the inventory of existing local enterprises, as part of the scoping visit the project team conducted interviews and visits with a number of individuals and enterprises that appeared to meet our desired criteria of involving the poorest households but also having real potential to engage with, and benefit from, tourism (eg they were already showing some entrepreneurial spirit and had nascent enterprises or enterprises that could be further developed). We identified a range of initiatives that could benefit from training in product development and/or from technical support in order to improve the viability and quality of the products on offer. We particularly considered enterprises that were owned by, or working with, frontline communities within a 2km radius of the park boundary and that had an apparent interest and capacity to engage with tourism. Table 1 provides a summary of the initiatives identified.

Table 1: Tourism enterprises supported by the project

	Name of the initiative	Tourism Zone	Type of product/service	No of hh	No of women	No. of men
1.	Ride 4 A Woman	Buhoma	Weaving and jewellery	41	41	0
2.	Community Initiatives for Biodiversity Conservation	Buhoma	Horticulture-vegetables and fruits	98	40	58
3	Bwindi Community Nutrition Project	Buhoma	Horticulture-vegetables and fruits	25	5	20
4.	Ruhija Beekeepers Association	Ruhija	Apiculture	20	4	16
5.	Ruhija Women Community and Cultural Group (Clemencia)	Ruhija	Weaving and jewellery	35	35	0
6.	Change a Life Bwindi Men Beekeepers Association-Mpungu	Ruhija	Apiculture	17	2	15
7.	Change a Life Bwindi Women Weavers	Ruhija	Weaving and jewellery	21	21	0
8.	Rubuguri Poachers-Turned Market Gardeners	Southern sector	Horticulture-vegetables and fruits	43	0	43
9.	Rubuguri-Nteko Handcraft Cooperative Society Limited	Southern sector	Weaving and jewellery	53	53	0
10.	Nkuringo-Rubuguri Multipurpose Beekeepers Association	Southern sector	Apiculture	31	8	23

11.	Rubuguri Hope Women Weavers	Southern sector	Weaving and jewellery	6	6	0
12.	Youth Carvers	Southern sector	Carving and jewellery	6	0	6
13.	Rushaga Batwa Valley Cultural Dancers and gardeners	Southern sector	Cultural performance and horticulture	7	6	1
14.	Bwindi Specialist Guides Group	All	Bird and general guiding	6	1	5
TOTAL PROJECT BENEFICIARIES				409	222	187

Project partnerships

On the ground social science research (to conduct before and after household income assessments) and coordination was provided by the Institute for Tropical Forest Conservation (ITFC) – a partner with IIED on the earlier Darwin project. ITFC works in collaboration with its mother institution - Mbarara University of Science and Technology - to secure the services of renowned Ugandan social scientist Medard Twinamatsiko to lead the research component of the project, supporting Medard with research and logistical assistance

The International Gorilla Conservation Programme – also a partner on the earlier project – was responsible for developing the Gorilla Friendly standard, in collaboration with the Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network.

The Responsible Tourism Partnership (RTP) was responsible for coordinating delivery of tourism product and service training on the ground and for building linkages with the lodges in the tourism areas around Bwindi. RTP also brought to the team its extensive network of partners from the tourism industry. In particular, Lets Go Travel emerged as the most interested and active Ugandan partner. Alfred Kamya, Director of Lets Go has played a key role in terms of mobilising other tour operators in Uganda and encouraging their attendance at bi-annual tour operator catch up sessions. As the project developed, Matoke Tours became an enthusiastic participant in the meetings and expressed great interest in directing clients to the new walking trails once they are ready to be marketed. And in the UK, Exodus and Explore provided continuous feedback on the project and on the products and services developed.

Kwetu Africa is a private arts and handicrafts business owned by Sanaa Gateja. Sanaa led the delivery of training in improved handicraft production including weaving, carving and jewellery making.

Golden Bees is a commercial honey producing and exporting company. Brian Mugisha who owns the company provided training in improved bee-keeping and honey production, donated equipment to the bee-keeping groups, and opened a honey shop in Rubuguri – one of the small towns to the south of the park – to sell the local honey and handicrafts.

Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) – a trust fund established by the GEF to support conservation in Uganda's two gorilla parks - provided some seed funding for some initial handicraft training at the start of the project and subsequently joined the project as a full partner to manage the identification, contracting and payment of individuals identified to provide training services.

Training delivered by the project

Sanaa Gateja (Kwetu Africa) provided training in basket weaving - including improved weaving technique, improved designs and use of local, plant-based, dyes for baskets; jewellery production; and

carving (including recruiting a renowned Kenyan calabash carver to teach young men how to use calabashes as an alternative to only producing wooden carvings). A training of trainers approach was used, with a limited number of women spending a week each at Sanaa's compound near Kampala and then returning to Bwindi and subsequently rolling out training to many other women. The women were taught to make two different types of baskets - Rushashara and Raza baskets (Fig 5) but have also gone on to develop their own new designs.



Figure 5: Raza (left) and Rushashara (right) baskets made by Bwindi trainees

All products meeting the technical standards taught during training received a '100% Forest Friendly' label (Figure 6). This was not intended to be a quality standard mark but an indicator that the products have been hand crafted by local people who live close to the edge of Bwindi forest, who have received support from the project, and who have used raw materials from outside Bwindi Forest. Ultimately it was hoped that these products would also meet the standards required to be awarded a 'Gorilla Friendly' label developed by the International Gorilla Conservation Programme and Wildlife Enterprise Network (see page 17). Full details of the training provided are discussed in 'The Bwindi Collection' available at <http://pubs.iied.org/17635IIED/>



Figure 6: 'Forest Friendly' labels signifying products that were developed as part of the project

Brian Mugisha (Golden Bees Ltd) provided training in bee keeping and honey production to two producer groups – one in the southern sector and one in Ruhija/Mpungu. Beekeeping around Bwindi is

largely a subsistence activity dominated by the use of traditional hives and rudimentary skills which have been passed down through the generations. Until now interventions with beekeeping in the region have been disjointed and had little impact. This training provided through the project was intended to invigorate local beekeeping through a private sector led approach, deemed suitable due to its scalability and sustainability. Training was delivered through a combination of classroom sessions and practicals which included opening hives, building hives and creating a mini bee herbarium. The initiative was intended not only to stimulate the production of quality honey and other bee products but also to lay the foundations for long-term business relationships with the smallholders to create a sustainable honey value chain (Figure 7). Further details on the bee-keeping training are provided in 'Beekeeping around Bwindi' available at <http://pubs.iied.org/14673IIED/>.

Figure 7: Brian Mugisha, the owner of Golden Bees Ltd proudly presents the first jar of Bwindi branded honey as a major and unique outcome of the training.



Training in guiding was provided by Peter Nizette (RTP) and Johnnie Kamugisha, chair of the Uganda Safari Guides Association (USAGA). Preliminary training was provided to over 50 aspiring guides from all areas around the park and then of these the six most promising and most committed guides went on for a further week of intense training and earned the title of 'Bwindi Specialist Guides.' The guide training not only helped to instil technical and practical skills but the trainers also worked with the guides to identify and develop itineraries for potential new trails that provide a new activity that could be included in tour operator itineraries. Three new trails were identified – one at Buhoma and two in Rubuguri (Fig 8). The 'Rubuguri Origins and Honey Trail' flyer is available at: <http://pubs.iied.org/G04323/>; the 'Reformed Poachers Trails' is available at <http://pubs.iied.org/G04322/>; and the 'Traditional Rural Life and Batwa Culture' trail is available at <http://pubs.iied.org/G04324/>

Figure 8: New guided trails at Bwindi





Training in horticultural production was provided by Honest Tumuheirwe an agricultural extension worker who had been identified by BMCT. Honest taught the market gardener groups (Rubuguri poachers turned market gardeners, Community Initiative for Biodiversity Conservation (CIBC), Bwindi community nutrition project and Rushaga Batwa Cultural Dancers and Gardeners) how to terrace their land, to use mulches, and provided seeds for them to grow the types of vegetables that are demanded by lodges.



Figure 9: A bumper crop of cabbages at the Bwindi Community Nutrition Project ready to be cut and sold to tourist lodges

The Certified Gorilla Friendly™ Standard

Certified Gorilla Friendly™ is an ecolabel that has been trademarked by Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network. Through this project a set of standards and associated documents (Policy & Guidelines, Definitions, Certification Manual, and Audit Form) specific to 'Park Edge Community Products' were developed and piloted among the participating enterprises. Product-specific standards were developed for: Honey & Beekeeping Products, Handicrafts & Jewellery, Cultural Performance & Experiences, Nature Experiences & Bird Watching, and Crops. The standards covered a range of issues including: Wildlife Conservation, Livestock, Resources & Waste, Local Economy & Working Conditions, and Cultural Protection.

Representatives from 12 enterprises were trained for two days - with the understanding that they would then train other members of the enterprises. The training was designed to meet the following objectives:

- To help participants understand the standards and integrate them in their business.
- To identify practical examples of how the standards could be applied.
- To highlight best practices for supporting gorilla conservation.
- To explore how use of the standards could provide the enterprises with a market advantage.

In addition to the training, awareness-raising meetings were held, also serving as an opportunity to seek free prior and informed consent for community enterprise members wishing to participate in the audit for certification. Through these meetings, a total of 308 members (93 Men; 215 Women) were sensitized about the Gorilla Friendly™ standards and 13 enterprises expressed willingness to participate in the audit and GF certification process. In addition the standards were translated into local languages and widely distributed (Figure 10).



Figure 10: Local language guidance on the gorilla friendly standard

Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network worked with IGCP to identify an independent entity to conduct the pilot audit which was conducted with all consenting groups in March 2019. The auditors used a participatory process to determine whether the enterprises could demonstrate meeting the requisite standards based on the products which were produced. At the time of writing the results of the audit were not known, but those enterprises recommended for certification will subsequently go through an approval process with the Certification Committee of Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network.

The Gorilla Friendly™ standards were officially submitted to the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) in 2018. UNBS recognised that Certified Gorilla Friendly™ are private standards meant to target and support the marketing of products and services offered by communities living near Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga Gorilla National Parks. They observed, however, UNBS have some existing standards that are applied to park edge products, particularly honey. They cautioned, therefore, that the Gorilla Friendly™ standards should complement rather than contradict the existing standards. Going forward, the Gorilla Friendly™ standards will need to be reviewed against the UNBS Honey standards, UNBS Food Safety standards and UNBS Hospitality standards. However, UNBS expressed interest in using the Gorilla Friendly™ as the basis for bigger/national standards for park edge products. This is work in progress and IGCP will continue engaging with UNBS over the next five years on this.

Uptake of the new products and services

In order to understand whether the training had resulted in increased uptake of the new products and services by tourists and tourism business we undertook surveys of the lodges around Bwindi and of the enterprise owners.

Changes in Numbers of Tourists Visiting the Enterprises

Our survey found that the number of tourists visiting the enterprises increased over the duration of the project and compared to before the project. Amongst the handicrafts enterprises, the enterprise leaders thought that the new basket designs introduced by the project, coupled with the Forest Friendly label – indicating participation in the project – had increased both the numbers of tourists visiting (Table 2) and the amount of money they were spending.

“From the time, the project trained us in making new products; we have seen a wave of tourists coming to visit us. First of all, women are lucky to see many whites coming here. The quality standard mark has become our attraction point. When a tourist comes, he/she will prefer the one with a new mark and those are the new products”. (One of the enterprise leaders in Buhoma).

“Before the project, we would get two or four tourists per month, but now we get about 30 tourists coming to visit our enterprise every month. Each time they come, at least 20 will buy” (One of the enterprise leaders).

Table 2: Number of tourists that visited four enterprises in Buhoma and Ruhija between July to November 2019

S/N	Name of enterprise	Estimated number of tourists before training (Monthly average)	Estimated number of tourists after training (Aug 2018)	Estimated number of tourists after training (Sept 2018)	Estimated number of tourists after training (Oct 2018)	Estimated number of tourists after training (Nov 2018)
1.	Ride 4 A Woman	5	45	35	43	40
2.	Change a Life Women Bwindi	3	38	25	31	38
3.	CIBIC	None	10	3	6	6
4.	Bwindi Specialist Guides	4	15	12	12	14

Uptake by lodges

To assess changes in uptake of the new/improved tourism products and services by local lodges, we conducted a baseline survey at the start of the project and then repeated this midway through the project and at the end. In the surveys, we presented lodge managers with a list of produce and asked how much was bought from local enterprises and how much was sourced from outside the area. The list included; basket handicrafts, wood handicrafts, beverages, eggs, flour, fruits, honey, Irish potatoes, local vegetables, meat, milk, mushrooms and spices. The uptake lodge survey was a follow-up of the baseline surveys that similar lodges had responded to.

Results show that, overall, by the end of the project more lodges were buying more local produce compared to before the project (Table 3). However, there were cases for some lodges where local buying declined – often related to local availability of produce. The three main reasons given by lodges for not buying local were limited availability, high prices and limited continuity of supply. This reflects the importance of ongoing engagement between lodges and local suppliers so that the suppliers can

ensure that they are adequately responding to demand from the lodges. This factor was recognised by the suppliers as well as lodges:

“This project brought some linkage between us and the lodge managers. They can now approach us whether we have local products to sell or not. They have been buying majorly the vegetables and honey. They normally give us orders in advance and we supply them. On some days however, you may find we do not have enough products to supply them. This is a challenge to the continued engagement because they sometimes think we are unreliable”

Lodges suggested that the key ways to increase local purchasing were to increase production and reduce prices. To do this they suggested further training would be useful, but also recognised that they needed to communicate their needs better and in a timely way.

“There is a new lodge in Ruhija called Agandi Uganda Eco- Lodges. They gave us an order to make laundry baskets, bin baskets and also serving baskets using the same design. It's an order of over 50 baskets. The ladies are very excited and they have already started weaving. I have already given them part of the payment so they are not out of pocket for the materials. They will be paid more than double for these baskets than the other, lower quality old design, ones. I think he would have paid more if the ones in my shop had the labels on them. I have sub-contracted the laundry baskets to Kyarisiima and her ladies on the Rushaga/Rubuguri side because I wanted to meet the October deadline for the orders.”

Table 3: Trends in purchasing of locally vs externally sourced products by lodges

Name of the Zone and Lodge	2016 (Baseline in %)		2018 (Mid-line in %)		2019 (End-line in %)	
	Local	Outside	Local	Outside	Local	Outside
Buhoma Zone						
Volcanoes Safaris Bwindi Lodge	33.3	66.7	71.4	28.6	100.0	0
Buhoma Community Rest Camp	85.7	14.3	62.5	37.5	85.7	14.3
Bwindi Community Hospital Monkey Lodge	63.6	36.4	70.0	30.0	69.2	30.8
Bwindi View	33.3	66.7	33.3	66.7	69.2	30.8
Engagi Lodge	71.4	28.6	100.0	0	50.0	50.0
Buhoma Lodge	66.7	33.3	60.0	40.0	46.2	53.8
Ruhija Zone						
Gorilla Conservation Camp	100.0	0	100.0	0	100.0	0
Gorilla Friends Lodge	85.7	14.3	100.0	0.0	100.0	0
Ruhija Gorilla Friends Resort Camp	80.0	20.0	75.0	25.0	72.7	27.3
Ruhija Community Rest Camp	87.5	12.5	71.4	28.6	66.7	33.3
Bakiga Lodge	71.4	28.6	75.0	25.0	46.2	53.8
Gorilla Mist Camp	66.7	33.3	33.3	66.7	35.7	64.3
Gift of Nature	20.0	80.0	28.6	71.4	25.0	75.0
Southern Sector Zone						
Gorilla Valley Lodge	75.0	25.0	75.0	25.0	100.0	0
Haven Lodge	83.3	16.7	100.0	0.0	81.8	18.2
Trekkers Safari	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	69.2	30.8
Trekkers Tavern Cottages	0	100.0	33.3	66.7	60.0	40.0
Nshongi Camp	100.0	0	100.0	0	50.0	50.0
Ruhija Gorilla Lodge	71.4	28.6	71.4	28.6	45.5	54.5
Rushaga Gorilla Camp	66.7	33.3	66.7	33.3	41.7	58.3
Gorilla Safari Lodge	83.3	16.7	83.3	16.7	30.0	70.0
Ichumbi Gorilla Lodge	75.0	25.0	75.0	25.0	20.0	80.0

Uptake by Tour Operators

The project had less success than we had hoped in directly influencing the Bwindi packages offered to tourists by Bwindi tour operators – perhaps due to unrealistic expectations on our part. Lets Go Travel in Uganda have been an exception to the rule and their website includes full details of the activities at Bwindi including the handicrafts available and the new walking trails (www.ugandaletsgotravel.com/responsible-tourism-activities-bwindi/). However even if there is limited documented evidence of uptake, we have had excellent feedback from a number of tour operators including:

- Audley Travel: *“We are currently looking at excursions in Uganda, and specifically cultural activities so would really like to include some of your new product. We have been speaking to Great Lakes about the basket weaving but would appreciate a bit more information about the experience and any others that you have been developing in the area.”*
- Explore: *“Myself and a couple of others in the group chose to spend an afternoon learning to weave with the lovely women at the Ride 4 A Woman charity in Bwindi. I would highly recommend this. It was a very relaxing afternoon spent chatting to and learning about the locals.”*
- Matoke Tours: *“I think the guided trails are fantastic and it seems that you managed to solve all challenges which we as tour operators face when introducing new products to our itineraries. We are in contact with Paul and have already made a few bookings with him for the coming months. Although the deadline for our programs for 2019 had actually already passed, I did manage to still include one of the walks in one of our group trip itineraries for next year (for one of our biggest partners in Germany). Hopefully, we will be able to send 6 or 7 groups to experience the guided walk in Rubuguri.”*

Impact of the project on local livelihoods

How we assessed impact

To assess the impact of the project on local livelihoods we undertook two key activities. We conducted a household survey at the beginning of the project and at the end of the project to explore local people's perception of how much income they earned from tourism, how this changed over the course of the project and what difference this made to their livelihoods. We also collected basic book-keeping information from each of the enterprises we worked with on a monthly basis in order to compare individuals' perceptions, with actual earnings. To provide more qualitative insights we also conducted interviews with some individual beneficiaries to better understand the changes the project had made for them personally.

There were 496 households in the 'before project' survey, compared with 455 households in the 'after project' household survey. Key characteristics of the respondents are described in Table 4.

Table 4: Characteristics of household (HH) survey participants

Key characteristics		Before project HH survey	After project HH survey
Total number of respondents		496	455
Type	Project beneficiaries	n/a	321
	Others within their community	n/a	134
Gender	Women	57%	58%
	Men	43%	42%
Ethnicity	Batwa	18%	10%
	Other ethnic groups	82%	90%
Location*	Rubuguri	29%	27%
	Mukono	24%	23%
	Nteko	22%	20%

**The household survey was undertaken in 12 parishes around Bwindi, but in different parishes from the 'before project' household survey. However, the distribution was similar. In both the before and after project surveys, most respondents were from Rubuguri, Mukono and Nteko which are major tourism zones around the national park.*

Stories of change: Agatha, Bwindi Specialist Guides Group

I was living in Rushaga when I got involved with this tourism project. There was a meeting for all the tour guides from Ruhija, Nkuringo and Rushaga, and I was among seven people who were chosen to participate in training. We gained a lot of skills and knowledge, and now I'm well-known to different companies and tour operators.

I do long guided walks with clients, for six or seven hours – including local experiences, like canoeing, hiking, seeing the volcanoes, and crossing the forest. Before the training, in a month, I may have had twenty clients, from different companies and to do different activities. Now I have completed the training, I hope to have closer to fifty in a month. I'm going to be a professional guide forever!



Recorded impacts

Perceived changes in most important income-generating activities

We found little evidence that the project had brought about any change in the types of income-generating activities that were important. Respondents described a wide variety of different income-generating activities, which illustrates that people around Bwindi undertake various activities to earn money. However, both before and after the project, subsistence farming was the most frequently mentioned activity, followed by handicraft production and weaving, and then casual work. Handicrafts and weaving were clearly more important income sources to women and the Batwa rather than men. For example, after the project 30% of female respondents listed handicrafts as their most important income source compared to 8% of male respondents (results were similar from before the project). And 36% of Batwa listed handicrafts and weaving as one of the most important activities compared to 23% of other ethnic groups.

Perceived importance of park tourism to household income

Income generated by tourism to Bwindi national park was not specifically mentioned as an income-generating activity by any respondents. However, many tourism-linked or park-linked activities were mentioned. In addition to the importance of handicrafts as discussed above, respondents mentioned selling honey, being a porter, providing dance and cultural displays, and employment. Although income from these activities is not all linked to tourism (for example, respondents described that they sell handicraft and weaving products at local markets as well as to tourists), most respondents be they women, men, the Batwa or other ethnic groups described park-linked income as 'important' to their households both before and after the project. For example, after the project 78% of female respondents, 72% of male respondents and 73% of Batwa respondents rated national park tourism as 'important' out of a five-point scale ranging from very important to least important (and the results from before the project were similar).

We didn't detect much difference between project beneficiaries and those respondents not involved in the project (Table 5). This is not surprising, however, as most respondents were involved with tourism in some way, independent of our project, so even if they are not earning as much tourism income as the project beneficiaries, what they do earn will still be important to them.

Table 5. Percentage of respondents from the household surveys describing the importance of tourism income to their households

What is the importance of tourism income to your household?	Project beneficiaries	Others within their community
Very important	14%	17%
Important	76%	72%
Average	6%	7%
Low importance	2%	1%
Least importance	2%	2%

While these insights highlight the importance of park tourism income to people's livelihoods, they tell us little about the impacts of the project itself on income. To assess this, we asked further questions as to how the project beneficiaries perceived their income had changed as a result of the project and then we compared this with the details of actual incomes earned, derived from the enterprise accounts. These are discussed below.

Stories of Change: Tina, Change a Life Bwindi

When this initiative started, the women already had some knowledge of weaving, but it helped them to be more creative and learn how to make the perfect baskets with perfect colours.

The women have achieved a lot. Each family was able to weave four sets of baskets, and those were able to buy a solar panel for six lights for each of the members. Just two sets of baskets, which take a week each, earns enough to afford school fees for one term. Now their homes are well-lit, they are happy, their families are benefitting, their kids are at school, and the women have increased production of baskets because they're able to weave at night with the solar lights.

This project gives us new skills every day. And it has connected us with other groups of basket weavers. We didn't know each other, now we know each other, we work together.



Perceptions of changes in income as a result of the project

The household survey revealed that most (64%) of the beneficiaries of the project believed that their income had increased over the course of the project. This was mainly attributed to the training and the increases in production of goods and services. For example, one respondent noted: “the income has increased than before because some years back we would weave one basket but now I weave many and they get market”.

However, 7% reported there had been no change in their income and 30% thought their income had actually reduced. The most common reasons given were the lack of a tourism market and high levels of competition between local enterprises. For example, responses we heard included: “The weavers are many so to sell is by luck” and “Sometimes tourists buy from the lodges and don’t buy ours” or “There is a lot of competition in basket weaving and selling”. Also amongst beekeepers, many reported that their hives were not being colonised by bees. Judging from these responses it seems that it wasn’t the project that caused a reduction in income, just that the prevailing market conditions or external factors meant that income had reduced.

We found that more women (67%) than men (58%) believed that the project had increased their income – probably reflecting the fact that more women had benefitted from the training provided, particularly in terms of basket weaving. We also found that the Batwa were slightly more likely to think that their income had reduced than increased (43% of Batwa compared to 29% of other ethnic groups thought it had reduced compared to 36% of Batwa and 65% of other ethnic groups who thought it had increased) but only 14 Batwa replied to this question, so it is not possible to know whether this finding holds true. For respondents who reported that the project had increased their income, many described what they could do with their new income. For example, “because I have managed to buy thing I never had like more utensils in the house and buying livestock”. This gave further insight into the significance of the income that they now gained because of the project.

Stories of Change: Ainkamiye Jackline-Kikomo Rubuguri Nteko Weavers Association

I was selected by the group secretary. The training was okay because I managed to learn new skills, new designs and styles for baskets. I was a weaver for about ten years and I learnt how to measure a basket. New designs of colour balance. Now after the training I am getting much money that sometime back because I currently get like 15000 out of 3 baskets per week.

I have been able to pay school fees in nursery schools. I weave above 10 baskets to pay school fees for my children I cemented my house. I also buy food for my family.

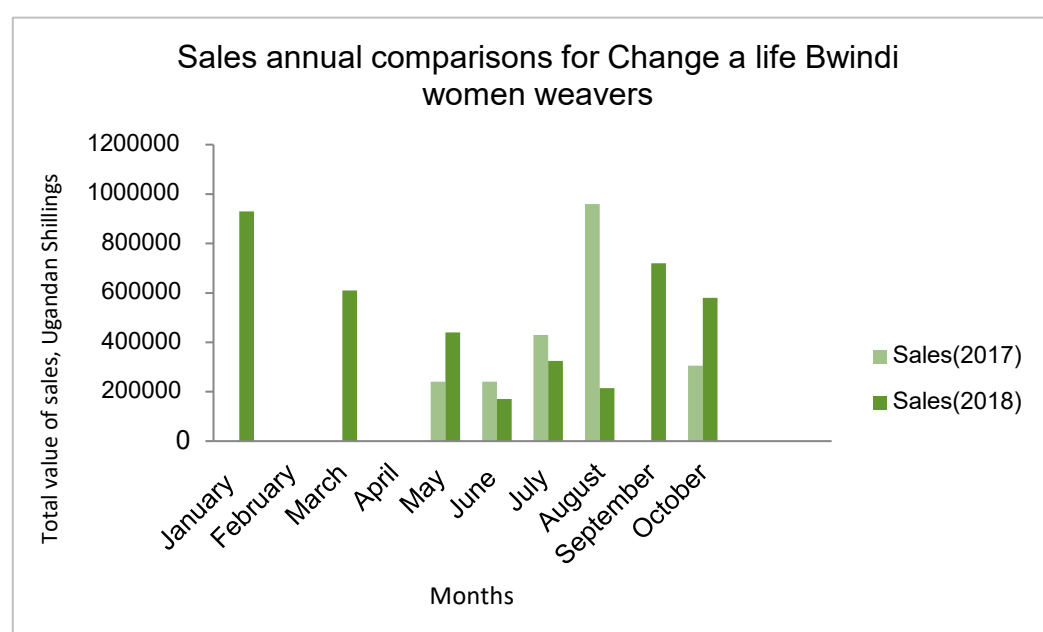
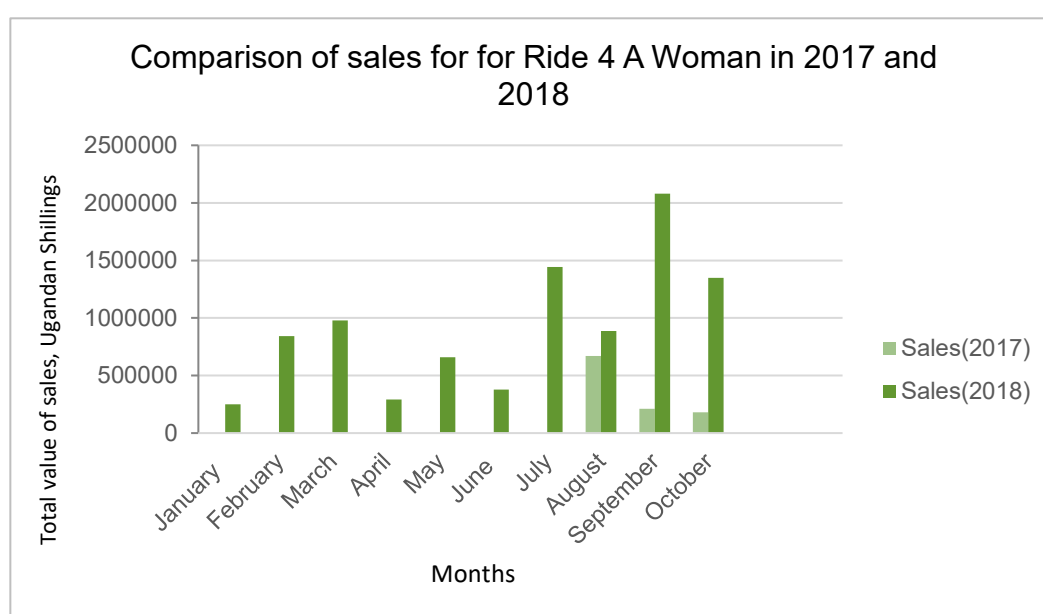
Because some years ago, I would want to have food like posho and I fail to get it but now if I want posho I must sell my baskets and buy posho which is a big change in my household. Yes we had a whiteman called Richard but we would weave the way you want not measuring. During that time, you would weave a basket and if they fail to buy it you can sell it to the handcraft owners.

When I hear that tourists are coming to Bwindi I feel good because I will be sure of the market of my baskets. Yes, because they are currently buying my baskets. These baskets which we learnt with Kyarisiima they are highly marketable than those we used to weave. I feel good because when tourists come to see Bwindi and gorillas they buy my baskets like recently they came, were walking on foot they bought some of my baskets. We people who are nearby Bwindi we get rainfall than those who are far and market for our products than those who are far.

Actual income changes recorded by enterprises

Our analysis of monthly accounts kept by the enterprises shows that overall incomes have increased on a monthly basis compared to the situation before the training. The enterprise data is incomplete – not all enterprises kept monthly records and not all kept accurate records. Furthermore, few enterprises get sufficient records for us to determine which households covered by the household survey were receiving what income. Nevertheless, the overall trend is positive, as illustrated by enterprise-level income figures for three handicraft enterprises: Ride 4 A Woman in Buhoma, Change a Life Bwindi in Ruhija, and Rubuguri-Nteko Womens Cooperative. Figure 11 shows how the total value of sales changed on a monthly basis at each enterprise, and Figure 12 shows how the average monthly income of individual members changed.

Figure 11: Monthly changes in sales figures for a) Ride 4 A Woman; b) Change a Life Bwindi and c) Rubuguri – Nteko Cooperative



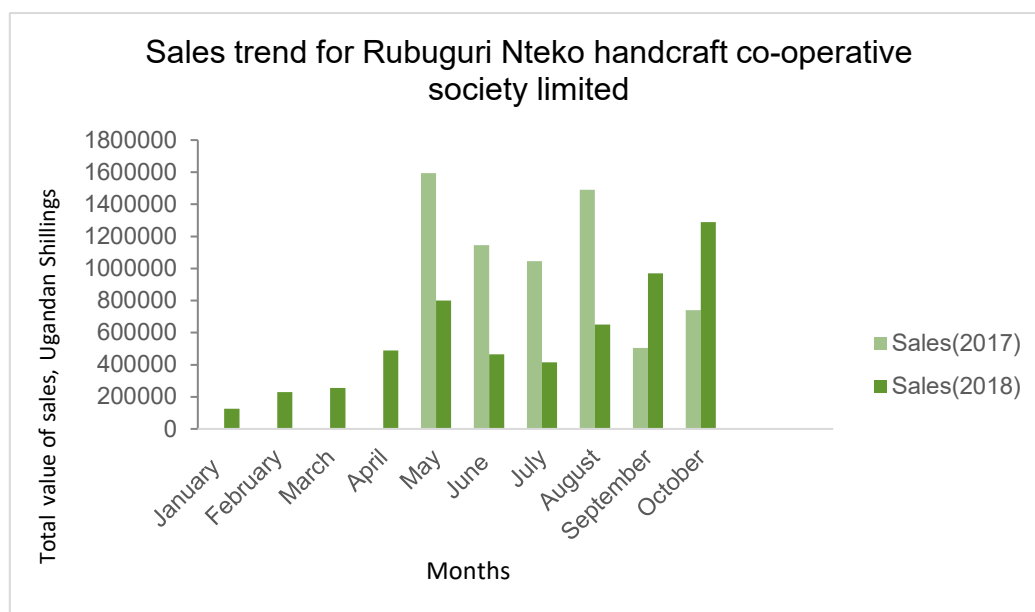
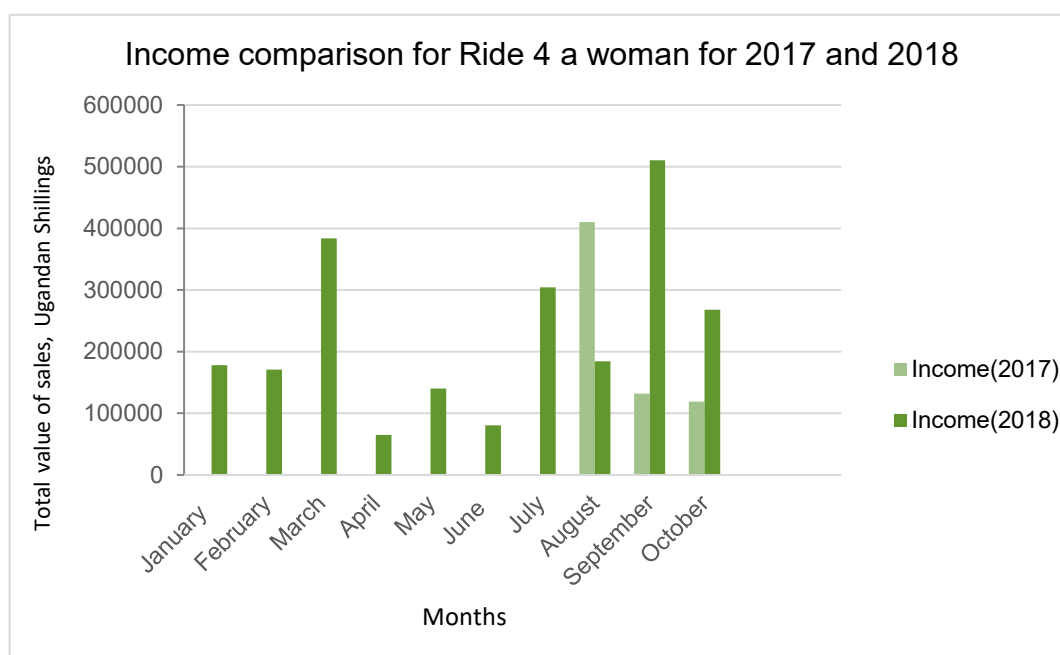
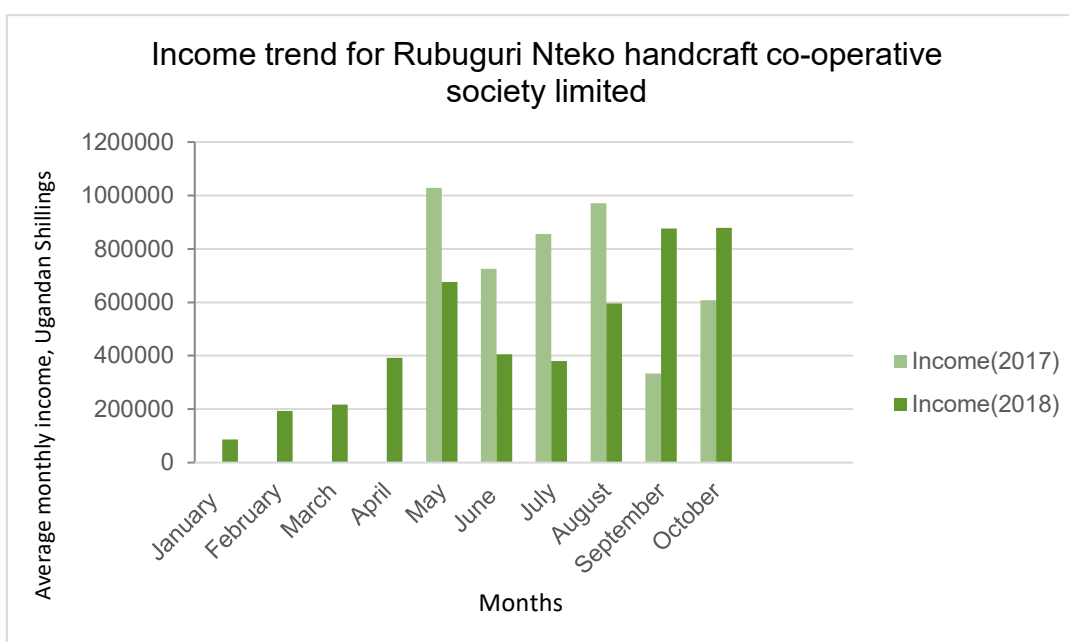
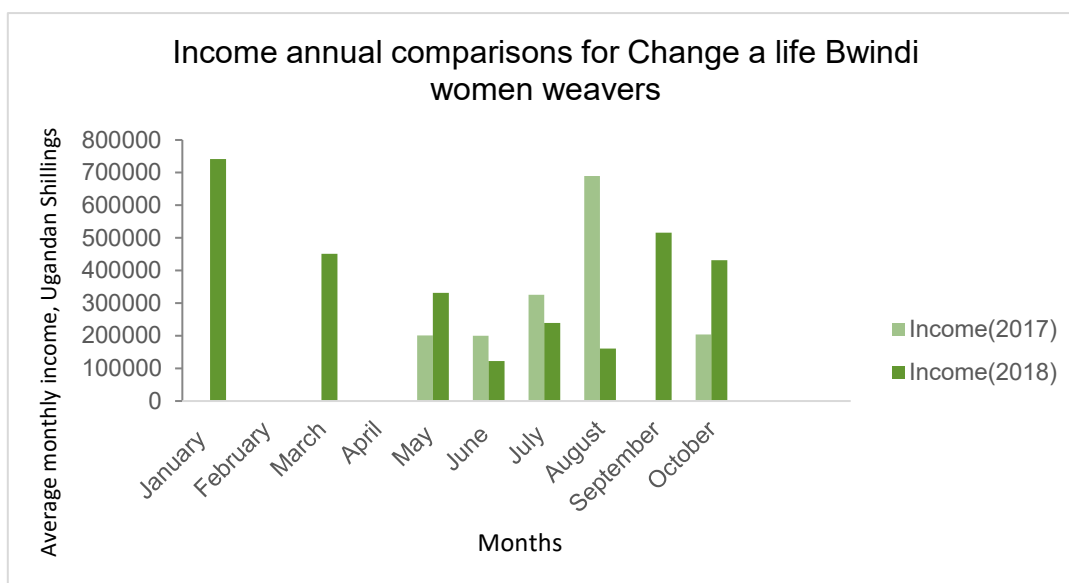


Figure 12: Monthly changes in individual incomes for members of a) Ride 4 A Woman; b) Change a Life Bwindi and c) Rubuguri – Nteko Cooperative





Comments from individual members of the enterprises highlight how they feel about the income:

“Our income has increased. We now have increased sales as a result of increased number of tourists visiting us. We become happy whenever we see many people coming to see our products. For us we know that by their coming, money has come to our pocket” (One woman at the Ride 4 A Woman commented).

“Some money can now get to our pockets. We enjoy what we are seeing. I am now able to meet my domestic chores because the sales have gone high. Now days whenever I see a white coming to our enterprise, I already see money coming to my pocket. I have been able to install solar to my house and children can now read at night” (One project beneficiary at Change a Life Bwindi)

“We are now rich because the lodges have started buying our products. Now days we have started getting profits. We as members, we are celebrating this project that aims at improving tourism in our area”. (Member of Poachers-turned-market gardeners, Rubuguril, Bwindi Southern Sector).

Impact of the project on attitudes to conservation

How we assessed impact

To assess the project's impact on local attitudes to conservation we included a number of key questions in the household survey that was conducted at the beginning and end of the project. The following questions were used to assess whether people's attitudes towards the national park changed after the project:

1. What is your current relationship with the national park? *Asking respondents to describe how they are currently feeling towards the national park.*
2. How does your relationship with the national park compare with last year? *Asking respondents whether they think their relationship with the national park is improving or getting worse.*
3. How has the national park affected your ability to lead a good life? *Asking respondents whether and how the national park affects their ability to lead a good life.*

Given limitations of the surveys, the findings are indicative trends only.

Stories of Change: Evelyn, Ride 4 A Woman

I'm the founder of Ride 4 A Woman. When the tourism project came here, they knew what we were doing to empower women. They gave us new designs for quality baskets, which are forest-friendly. The quality of our baskets has improved, and we have even tried to initiate new designs. Tourists want quality, and handmade, and to know that someone here made their basket.

The baskets have put our name out there and made a huge difference to people's income because now we need weavers every day. Every day the weavers are here is a day that they are paid. Right now, we have about 50 women that come every day, but we want to go up to 100, because that means more income for more women. We have the vision, and we hope that this market will increase, and then we can make as many baskets as possible.



Recorded Impacts

Changes in attitudes to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park

The results from the 'before and after project' household surveys indicate a clear positive trend: more individuals be they women, men or the Batwa, described their relationship with the national park as positive, and fewer individuals felt that their relationship with the national park was negative, after the project than before. Before the project, 43% of respondents described their relationship with the national park as positive. After the project, this increased to 64% of respondents (Figure 13). Furthermore, 65%

of respondents thought their relationship with the national park was better after the project compared to 56% before the project (Figure 14).

Figure 13: Before and after the project, how people described their relationship with the park

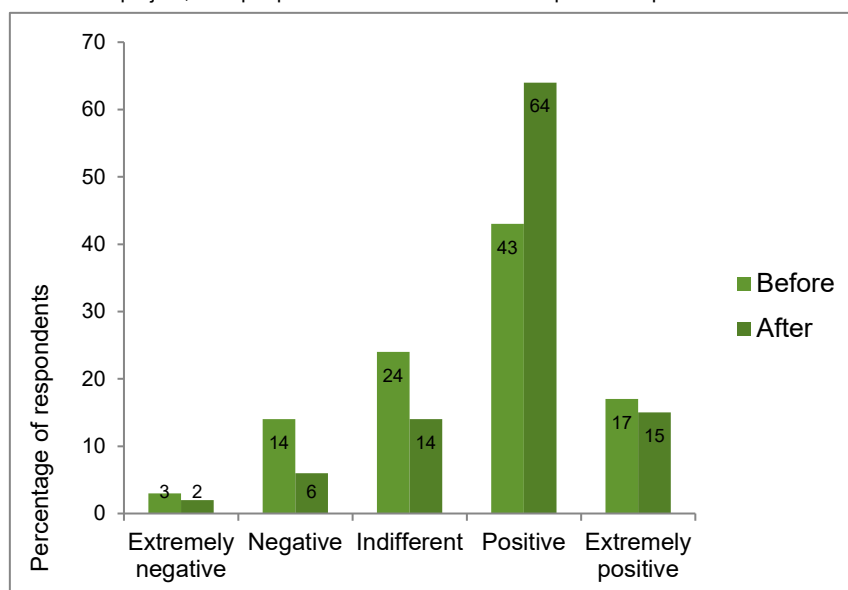
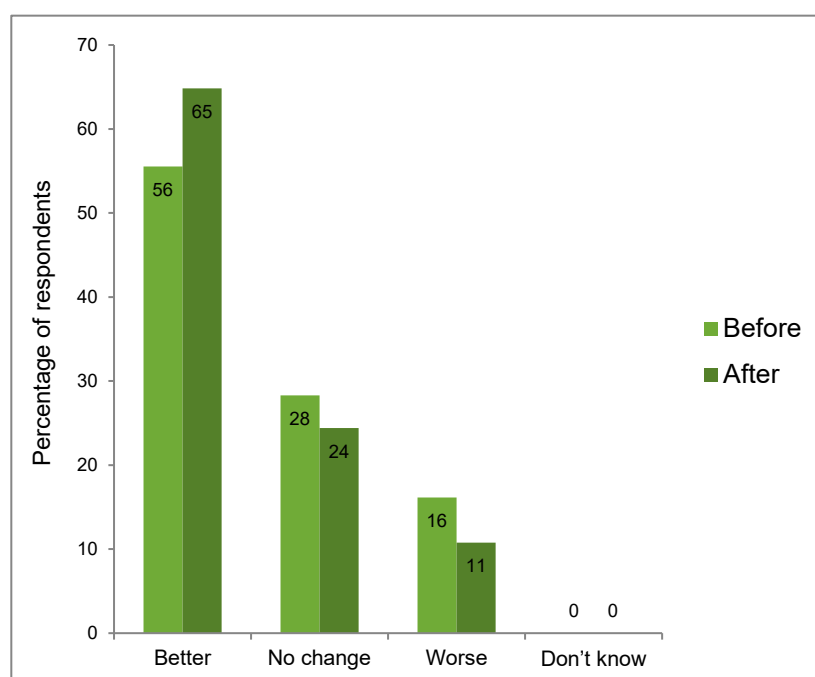
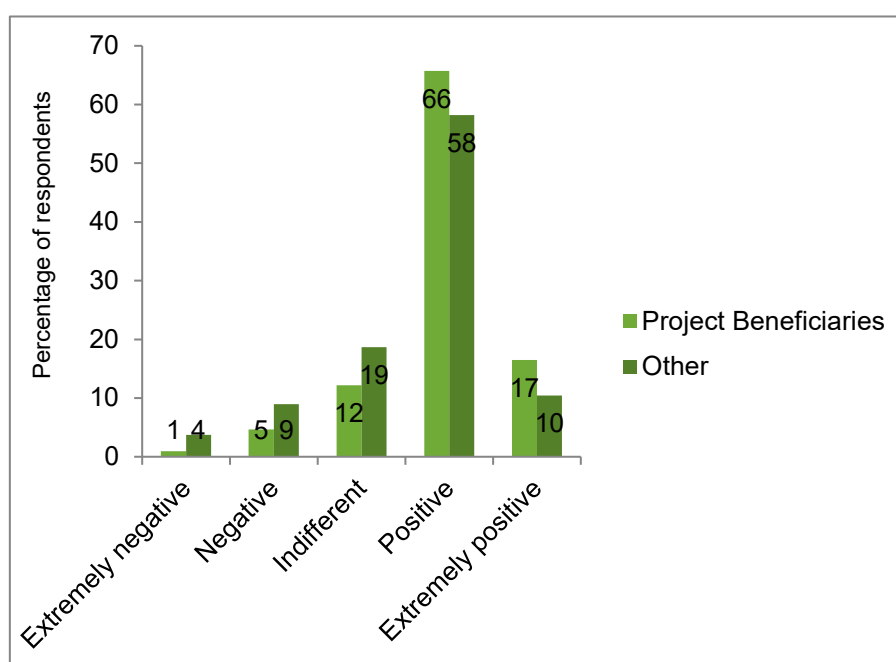


Figure 14: Before and after the project, how people described changes in their relationships with the park



Also, following the project, more individuals that had been directly involved in the project described their relationship with the national park as either positive or very positive *compared to others within their communities*. Similarly, fewer project beneficiaries described their relationship with the national park as negative compared to others within their communities (Figure 15). This is particularly interesting because many of the 'others' were involved with local tourism enterprises independent of our project.

Figure 15: Attitude of project beneficiaries to the park compared to others in the community after the project



Overall this positive trend was experienced more strongly by women than by men (Tables 6 and 7). There was an increase from 47% to 67% of female respondents describing their relationship with the national park as positive, from before to after the project. Also after the project, there were fewer women describing their relationship as negative (from 16% to 5%), although a minor decrease in women who described their relationship as extremely positive from 17% to 14%. For men there was an increase from 45% to 59% of respondents describing their relationship with the national park as positive, from before to after the project. Also, after the project, fewer men described their relationship as negative (from 11% to 7%), although those describing their relationship as extremely positive was similar.

Table 6. Percentage of female respondents from the household surveys describing changes in their relationship with the national park

How does your current relationship with the national park compare to last year?	Percentage of female respondents	
	Before the project	After the project
Better	54%	69%
No change	30%	20%
Worse	16%	11%

Table 7. Percentage of male respondents from the household surveys describing changes in their relationship with the national park

How does your current relationship with the national park compare to last year?	Percentage of male respondents	
	Before the project	After the project
Better	58%	59%
No change	26%	31%

Worse

16%

10%

The findings for the Batwa were mixed. We found an increase from 37% to 49% of Batwa respondents describing their relationship with the national park as positive, from before to after the project. We also found fewer Batwa respondents describing their relationship with the national park as negative after the project compared to before (from 15% to 7%). However, there were fewer Batwa respondents describing their relationship as *extremely* positive (13% before the project to 4% after).

Stories of Change: Margaret - member of Bwindi Nutrition Project

The chairman informed me about the training. I found out that the training was good because I learnt new methods of growing vegetables. Before the training I was just a mere peasant. Yes, I have learned new skills. I have learnt new methods of cultivation like making lines, using manure to fertilize our vegetables and application of herbicides. I have been able to spend the money on school fees for my children at school. I don't know how much vegetables I have to sell in order to get school fees because I don't sell them at once. Paying school fees for my children has made the biggest difference to my life because it is very high.

During the training, I learnt a lot of things which I have put into practice and have made me produce a lot of vegetables which I sell and get school fees and also buy other domestic items such as; clothes, soap, salt and paraffin. I had never been involved in other projects or trainings like this one before. This training had been better because we learnt how to cultivate nutritional foods which are good for our healthy.

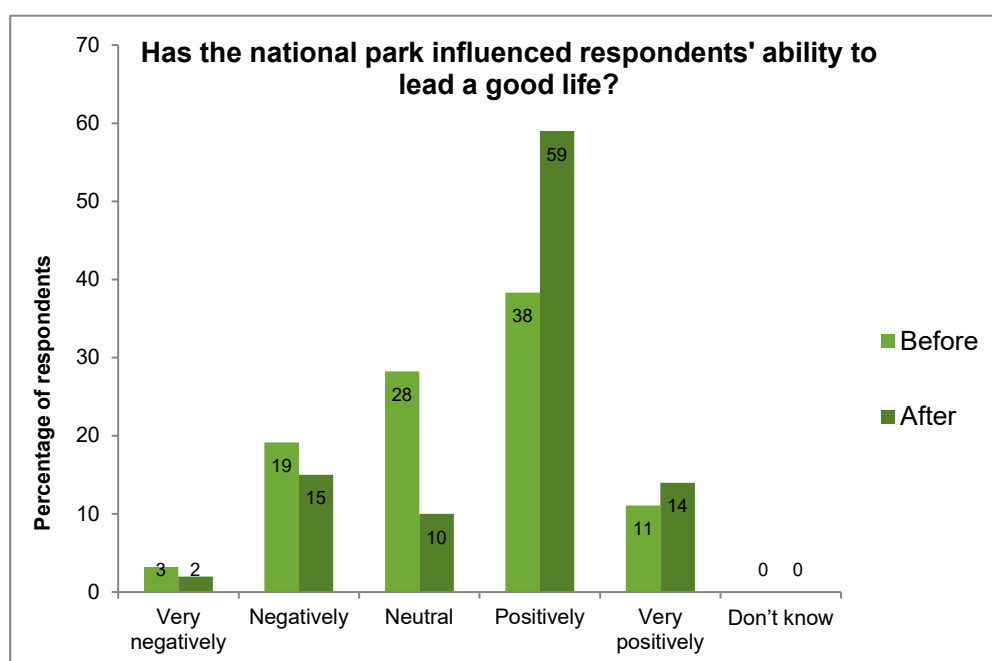
I feel very happy about tourists coming to Bwindi, we benefit from them by selling our vegetables to the hotels and lodges where they stay for accommodation. I am benefiting more since the project started because I sell and eat some of the produce from my garden.

I feel happy with the park and the gorillas because all the income is almost coming from the park. Visitors come and pay to park authorities who in turn come and buy my products. Am benefiting from living nearby the park because my children go there during the holidays and they are given casual work/take tourists to the forest to see gorillas and they are paid money which I add to what I have and I pay for their school fees. I lived the park and gorillas before the project started because it I where my children could go and get money.

Perceived impact of the park on peoples' ability to lead a good life

Before the project, 38% of respondents believed that the park positively influenced their ability to lead a good life. Whereas 19% believed that the national park had a negative influence and 3% believed that the national park had a very negative influence. After the project, this changed – more people believed that the national park either positively or very positively influenced their ability to lead a good life. Furthermore, fewer people felt that the national park negatively or very negatively influenced their ability to lead a good life.

Figure 16: Perceived impact of the park on people's ability to lead a good life, before and after the project



The respondents were asked why they thought Bwindi national park influenced their ability to lead a good life. The reasons given before and then after the project were similar. Those who felt that the national park had a negative or very negative influence gave two main reasons: lack of benefits and crop raiding. For example:

“I don't work in the park and I have not sold anything to the tourists or park staff”

“They don't give me anything but animals from the park destroy my crops”

Of those who felt that the national park had a positive or very positive influence, some mentioned benefits for their communities, notably revenue sharing. But many described direct benefits to their household, which included income from tourism. For example:

“My bees come from the park and I pay school fees because of honey which is sold because of the park”

“Because of the income I get from tourism, I have managed to buy a goat and land expansion”

“I have managed to sell my baskets and the park employs my son”

“The park brings tourists who buy my products and they give income which helps me to have a positive life I am living”

“After selling honey and vegetables to the park staff and lodges I managed to pay school fees in time”

As with the findings on local attitudes towards the park, we found that this positive perception was more strongly associated with women than men. More women felt that the national park had a positive or very positive influence on their ability to lead a good life after the project, than before. Also after the project, fewer women felt that the national park had a negative or very negative influence on their ability to lead a good life (Table 8). The results for men were similar to women - more men felt that the national park had a positive influence on their ability to lead a good life after the project than before, and fewer felt that the park had a negative influence on their ability to lead a good life. But the proportion of male

respondents describing the influence of the national park on their life as either *very negative* or *very positive* changed much less from before to after the project compared to the women (Table 9).

Table 8. Percentage of female respondents from the household surveys describing how the national park influences their ability to lead a good life

Does the national park influence your ability to lead a good life?	Percentage of female respondents	
	Before the project	After the project
Very negatively	4%	2%
Negatively	20%	14%
Neutral	29%	8%
Positively	38%	62%
Very positively	9%	14%

Table 9. Percentage of male respondents from the household surveys describing how the national park influences their ability to lead a good life

Does the national park influence your ability to lead a good life?	Percentage of male respondents	
	Before the project	After the project
Very negatively	2%	2%
Negatively	18%	16%
Neutral	27%	13%
Positively	38%	55%
Very positively	14%	13%

The findings were less pronounced for the Batwa. Before the project, a total 46% of Batwa respondents felt that the park had either a positive or very positive influence on their quality of life. After the project, 53% of Batwa respondents felt the park had a positive influence, but none felt it has a *very positive* influence. Meanwhile, before the project, 29% of Batwa respondents felt that the park had either a negative or very negative influence on their quality of life. This increased to 33% after the project, indicating that after the project slightly more Batwa felt that the national park had a negative influence on their life than before (Table 10).

Table 10. Percentage of Batwa respondents from the household surveys describing how the national park influences their ability to lead a good life

Does the national park influence your ability to lead a good life?	Percentage of Batwa respondents	
	Before the project	After the project
Very negatively	9%	2%
Negatively	20%	31%
Neutral	25%	13%
Positively	33%	53%
Very positively	13%	0%

Overall, however more project beneficiaries believed that the national park positively influenced their life compared with others within their communities. Also fewer project beneficiaries believed that the national park negatively influenced their life than others within their communities. As noted above, many of the 'others' were involved with local tourism enterprises independent of this project and so this is an important insight into the impact of the project (Table 11).

Table 11. Percentage of project beneficiaries describing how the national park influences their ability to lead a good life, after the project

Does the national park influence your ability to lead a good life?	Percentage of respondents	
	Propoor beneficiaries	Others within their communities
Very negatively	1%	4%
Negatively	12%	23%
Neutral	7%	16%
Positively	65%	46%
Very positively	15%	11%

Stories of Change: Reformed poacher, Mpungu Beekeeping Association

We used to poach a lot, but we saw our friends getting arrested and having their property sold... and we realised it was time to change. That's when we thought about beginning the beekeeping project. Through beekeeping we generate money and have enough to buy some goats. Each member of the beekeeping project is able to sustain his own household.

Through the tourism project we received beekeeping training. The training introduced us to a new type of beehive, which still uses local materials but it's more durable and long-lasting. Because of this we don't have to spend so much time re-making beehives. That means we can make more honey. I think beekeeping is more profitable than poaching. Now we earn money and we are not losing anything.



Impacts of the Certified Gorilla Friendly™ – does it help?

While it is too soon to assess whether the Certified Gorilla Friendly™ Park Edge Community Products standard can boost the incomes to the projects target communities, we found several indicators that the ecolabel may provide a way for continued support to the groups who participated in the project.

- 1) All groups freely consented to an independent audit based on the standards, inclusive of a review of their internal record and bookkeeping. This is evidence of trust, as well as an expectation that the label will help with one of the recognised challenges – access to new and better markets for products.
- 2) As the Forest Friendly label demonstrated, product labelling can serve to motivate both producers and consumers and serve as added value to intermediary entities or vendors.
- 3) There is willingness and interest expressed by the different groups to have closer connections and cooperation with each other. This was noted especially among the handicraft groups who have started to cooperate with each other based on larger orders, etc. This also could extend to supporting joint assessments against Gorilla Friendly™ standards, as expressed during the Gorilla Friendly™ training conducted.

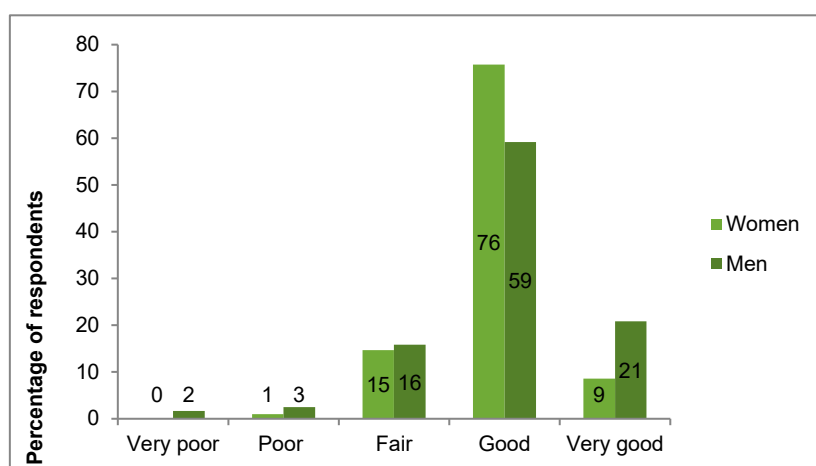
Through this project, weak internal governance of groups were observed during interaction with members. Such governance weaknesses are critically important and may become conflicts, or inhibit transparency, trust and inclusivity among members and the larger community. The Certified Gorilla Friendly™ standards and ecolabels will provide an opportunity for the entities themselves and project partners to continue to track the progress of these entities, and weaknesses identified in the audits can be used as a basis for internal improvements and potentially more targeted capacity building.

The International Gorilla Conservation Programme and Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network have committed to continuing to support the Certified Gorilla Friendly™ Park Edge Community Products standards and auditing and marketing through 2024. This project has enabled a pilot to be conducted alongside a concerted effort for product training, marketing and market linkages.

Project participants' reflections on the project

The project participants were asked to rate their experience of being involved with the project on a 5-point scale from 'very poor' to 'very good'. Three replied n/a. Out of the others, most (70%) said that they had a good experience of being involved with the project. There were similar numbers of respondents who said that their experience was very good (13%) or fair (15%). Only a few - seven respondents (2%) - described their experience as poor or very poor (Figure 17).

Figure 17: Project participants' reflections on the project



Why did 7 respondents have a poor or very poor experience of the project?

Four of the seven respondents explained that their poor experience of the project was because the training was only verbal rather than practical, for example "they never taught us well because they taught us in words and no practices". Reasons given by the other respondents included that their beehives failed to colonise, which is not a failure of the project to link respondents with tourism markets but perhaps reflects high expectations of the respondents and/or a lack of communication on the likelihood of new hives becoming colonised.

Why did respondents have a fair experience of the project?

Respondents who described their experience as fair highlighted a benefit of the project, such as the training or increased income, but also highlighted a problem. Problems included the limited tourism market, for example "because of the project I have acquired skills but the problem is low markets". The problems also included a lack of training eg "the training was not enough for us to get everything" and challenges such as "the project was okay because it led us to weave well but the problem is that we supply baskets in Kampala and the one who take the baskets fail to bring the required amount".

Why did respondents have a good or very good experience of the project?

Acquiring new skills and knowledge – that was the main reason why respondents had a good or very good experience of the project. For example, "the project helped to get more skills of weaving different styles of baskets" and "I learnt how to improve on the quality of products" and "the project was good because I have learnt many new things I never knew before like making designs and measuring the basket". Other people explained that their good or very good experience of the project was because their income increased. For example "before the project I knew nothing but I can now weave baskets and earn income" and "the project was good because for the income from the project I used it to buy a goat and food for the family".

What was the experience of men and women of being involved with the project?

Most men and women reported that they had a good experience from being involved with the project, although there was a higher percentage of women (76%) compared with men (59%). However more men rated their experience as very good (21%) compared with women (9%), while similar numbers rated their experience as fair.

What was the experience of Batwa respondents of being involved with the project?

Most Batwa (64%, n=9) described their experience as good. While none said that their experience with the project was very good, none said it was very poor. Of the remaining responses, 21% said their experience was fair and 14% said their experience was poor.

Responses by all other ethnic groups followed a similar pattern to the responses by all respondents (described above).

Conclusions and next steps

The Local Economic Development Through Pro-Poor Tourism project has demonstrated that it is possible to develop sustainable livelihood opportunities from tourism – even when they are not based on the main tourism attraction themselves. At Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, tourists visit to see gorillas. None of the enterprises supported by this project are offering gorilla viewing tours, yet they all have complementary products that can enhance the main tourism attraction.

When systematically planned and implemented, responsible tourism enterprise contributes not just substantially to GDP, but also to the informal economy. At least 70 to 80% of tourism economic activity is accounted for by small businesses. Developed responsibly, tourism can make better places for people to live as well as better places for people to visit – whether for business or pleasure or both and delivers independent supply of goods and services.

On many occasions, small-scale tourism initiatives have been developed by NGOs with no business or market experience. There has been an assumption that if a product is developed the tourists will come. The failure of this model has resulted in deep cynicism about the viability of small-scale tourism as a strategy for incentivising conservation (just as the failure of many other so-called ‘alternative livelihood’ projects has).

This project has demonstrated, however, that small scale tourism enterprises can be developed sustainably – as long as they are demand - not supply - driven and based on sound business principles. The experiences documented in this project demonstrates that the development of these small enterprises has induced a sense of worth, a sense of recognition and a degree of economic independence. This, in turn, contributes substantially to livelihood change and poverty reduction.

Our strategy has been not to develop primary tourism attractions such as community-based gorilla tracking but rather to focus on indirect tourism-related economic activities that are supplementary to day-to-day livelihood activities, can achieve substantive and substantial economic empowerment and provide added value by inducing forward linkages to downstream sectors. Diversifying the product base - underpinned by capacity development to deliver those products - reduces risk of market failure and, thus, underpins sustainability of development. The results documented here have been life-changing for some participants.

It is too early to reflect on the importance of certification as a mechanism to enhance both livelihoods and conservation – time will tell if the enterprises are able to meet the standards of the Gorilla Friendly™ certification and what difference this makes to them. But the experience with the Forest Friendly badge that was used to distinguish products that had resulted from the projects demonstrated power of labelling as a marketing tool – whether or not accompanied by a standard. The enterprises certified will be supported in advanced marketing of the products locally and through a dedicated website, while audits – for new and existing entities – will be conducted at least annually with the intent of developing a robust network of competent auditors. With the pilot in Bwindi, the audits will be expanded to around Mgahinga Gorilla National Park, Uganda, as well as Volcanoes National Park, Rwanda, and Virunga National Park, DRC, in subsequent years.

In terms of wider upscaling of the project, we hope that the example shown here can be replicated elsewhere both in Uganda and beyond. Within the project area further support is needed to take these enterprises to the next level of development – including business planning, marketing and financial management skills. Support is also needed to keep communications open between the lodges and producers, ensuring continuity of supply and maintenance of standards. Elsewhere in Bwindi, and around other national parks, emerging small enterprises would benefit from the same type of capacity

development in producing authentic, high quality, local products that meet a clear demand from tourists, tour operators and tourist lodges.

We hope this project has demonstrated how a relatively small injection of professional training and technical support can transform small enterprises. We look forward to engaging with others who see an opportunity in this approach.

Tourism in Uganda is critical for generating revenue for conservation of Mountain Gorillas and other species and habitats. At Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, tourist numbers have increased from 1,300 per annum in 1993 to around 20,000 today causing potentially problematic relations between local people and park authorities. As such the the “Local economic development through pro-poor gorilla tourism” project was set up to reduce the threat to the park and to the long-term conservation of the gorillas, as well as to harness tourism for local economic development. This report summarises the initiatives set up in the area surrounding the park, as well as highlighting the findings from the project.



Project Report

Theme

Keywords:

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