

Lessons learnt from supporting a community scout programme in Uganda

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1. Introduction

1.1 Resolving human-wildlife conflict to tackle wildlife crime

Conflict between people and animals is a major threat to conserving protected areas. It is also a significant threat to local people, especially poor rural communities who can lose their crops, livestock and property from raids by wild animals. The animals, many of which are threatened or endangered, are often killed in retaliation or to prevent future conflicts. Consequently, addressing this human-wildlife conflict (HWC) is a priority for many protected areas across Africa.

In Uganda, a range of community scout programmes have been established by different organisations (NGOs as well as the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA)) around protected areas in order to help tackle HWC. A recent review conducted as part of the IIED-led “Pro-poor responses to wildlife crime” project found that:

- Many of the programmes are not institutionalised with scouts continuing to work on a voluntary basis even after donor funding or support finishes
- Providing scouts with incentives is critical for the programmes to succeed
- The most important incentives are income-generating activities, savings schemes, training in HWC mitigation techniques and provision of HWC equipment including coats, boots, whistles and phones ([Mwedde et al, 2017](#)).

1.2 Gathering lessons learnt

The ‘[Countering Wildlife Crime: Livelihoods, Intelligence & Prosecution Capacity Building in Uganda](#)’ was a two-year project funded by the UK Government’s Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge Fund that ran from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2018. It was led by Tusk Trust in partnership with the Uganda Conservation Foundation (UCF), Soft Power Education, UWA, the Natural Resource Conservation Network and the International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED).

The project built on several activities to tackle wildlife crime in Uganda. These included the IIED-led project ‘[Building capacity for pro-poor responses to wildlife crime in Uganda](#)’, which involved research to better understand why people undertake wildlife crime in two of Uganda’s oldest and largest national parks: Queen Elizabeth and Murchison Falls. The research showed that local people were angry about the lack of support they received from conservation authorities when wildlife raided their crops and livestock, and that this resentment was a significant driver of wildlife crime. Based on this finding, recommendations to reduce wildlife crime included strengthening existing, or establishing new, wildlife scout programmes to address HWC ([Travers et al. 2016](#)).

Acting on this recommendation, the Countering Wildlife Crime project involved recruiting local community members as scouts to implement and monitor HWC interventions. UCF led this programme and recruited 50 scouts at Nwoya, Murchison Falls Conservation Area (MFCA) and 25 at Rubirizi, Queen Elizabeth Conservation Area (QECA). UCF trained the scouts in various skills including group dynamics, leadership, conflict resolution, group savings, environmental stewardship, alternative livelihoods (e.g. beekeeping), and HWC mitigation measures. [Early experiences](#) from the scout programmes and other aspects of the Countering Wildlife Crime project were shared by UCF at a workshop hosted by IIED in Kampala, 2017.

Tusk Trust commissioned IIED to support a ‘lessons learnt’ review of its community scout programme. The review was to compare experiences by UCF project staff in executing the scout programme with the scouts’ experience in receiving it. The aim was to generate lessons in terms of what worked and what could be improved, in order to inform scout programmes elsewhere in Uganda.

2. Methods

Dilys Roe (IIED) and Julia Baker (consultant to IIED) designed surveys to gather lessons learnt from the UCF project staff (Appendix A) and from the scouts (Appendix B). The surveys included questions on five key aspects of the scout programme, which were:

- The process to select the scouts
- The scout training programme
- Incentives given to the scouts
- Implementation of the scout programme
- Sustainability of the scout programme after the Countering Wildlife Crime project finishes.

The scout survey was implemented by UCF project staff during February and March 2018. Out of 25 scouts at each Park, 10 surveys were completed by scouts at QECA (although many questions on one survey were left blank) and 11 surveys by scouts at MFCA (a few surveys contained no responses to some questions).

In addition, six surveys were completed by UCF project staff.

Survey responses were first reviewed to identify common themes. The number of responses for each theme was then recorded, from which trends in the data were determined. It was not possible to analyse the survey responses statistically, given the small number of survey responses.



Photograph 1: Community scout group in Rugarama, QECA, receiving equipment (UCF)

3. Results

3.1 Scout selection process

Key summary

UCF staff responses

- UCF staff were able to describe a clear strategy for selecting scouts which was open and transparent and based on nominations of individuals by community members and existing scout groups.
- Many thought that this worked well because the communities and scout groups knew the individuals who would commit to the programme, and because these individuals would be likely to continue working as scouts after the programme finishes.
- Recommendations to improve the scout selection process included spending time at the start to clearly explain the whole programme and expected roles of everyone involved.

Scouts responses

- Most scouts described how their community or existing scout group selected scouts. Scouts at QECA described a voting process, whereas scouts at MFCA described how the existing scout group selected scouts based on “certain criteria”.
- Most scouts at QECA and at MFCA explained that they were selected because they were trustworthy or hard-working. Only a few said they were selected because they lived near the Park, meaning that most scouts described specific characteristics as the reasons why they were selected rather than simply living near to the Park.
- All scouts knew people who were not selected. At QECA, scouts explained that only a small number of scouts were needed, whereas at MFCA, scouts explained that people were not selected because they were not active community members or only sought material gains.
- All scouts interviewed thought that the selection process was fair.

3.1.1 Survey questions and responses by UCF staff

What was the selection process?

At QECA, UCF staff explained that UWA’s Community Conservation Warden identified five villages that were ‘HWC hotspots’ and gave contact details of local leaders to the UCF staff. At each village, they met the local leaders and wider community to explain the project and request five individuals be nominated for participating in the scout programme. The UCF staff also explained that the communities selected scouts based on their ability to work as scouts, their willingness to participate, and their location (those living near the Park were prioritised). This process with all five villages took between four to six weeks.

At MFCA, UCF staff met existing groups of community scouts who had received support from UWA (through the African Wildlife Foundation). They explained this programme to the group; i.e. to work with 25 scouts who were living and/or operating within a close geographic area in order to establish a 'model' scout programme that others could replicate. They asked the group to identify 25 members to participate in the UCF programme. The whole scout selection process took approximately two weeks.

A few UCF staff explained that they emphasised the need for hardworking individuals who will cooperate with the team and who are from villages adjacent to the Park that are affected by HWC.

All UCF staff emphasised that, at both locations, the community or existing scout groups selected the scouts while they emphasised the importance of selecting individuals who are hard-working and committed for the programme to be successful (note: this was reflected in the scouts' comments, see below, as they believed that they were selected because of personal qualities rather than simply because they live near the Park).

What went well?

At QECA, UCF staff highlighted the quick response of the community that enabled the programme to be start promptly, and the priority given to selecting scouts who live near the Park.

At MFCA, all UCF staff thought that asking an existing scout group to select individuals to participate in this programme worked well. Some explained that this worked well because the group knew individuals who are reliable and would be committed to work with UCF. One explained that this approach helped to ensure the scouts continue working as scouts after the UCF programme finishes.

What could be improved?

A few UCF staff described how this programme could be expanded to other villages affected by HWC, especially because the small number of scouts meant that their overall 'UCF' impact with regards to the whole Park is limited. One described how expanding the programme would "increase vigilance" of all community members to mitigate HWC and another said that this "would look more satisfactorily in the eyes of the local community".

One UCF staff described a specific area of improvement: to better explain the approach during the initial community meetings so both the communities and scouts understood that the scouts themselves design their own interventions, rather than following a set of already prescribed interventions.

Recommendations on the process of selecting scouts

Recommendations by UCF staff were to:

- Clearly and thoroughly explain the programme and expected roles of all involved (not just the scouts) during the initial community meetings, before scout selection.
- Ask the community to identify individuals to participate in the scout programme.
- Involve UWA, while carefully manage sensitivities of Park – community relations (possibly by involving UWA after the scouts have been selected).

3.1.2 Survey questions and responses by the scouts

What was the scout selection process?

At QECA, most scouts described how their community selected scouts by voting. A few said that scouts selected were those with gardens near the Park or those already active in chasing animals away. However, the majority described the voting process.

Responses from scouts at MFCA were similar, as most scouts described that the selection process was undertaken by the existing scout group. However, the scouts did not mention voting specifically, rather they said that the group selected scouts based on "certain criteria".

A few said that scouts selected were those who live near the Park or those already active in chasing animals away. But the majority thought they were selected because they were trustworthy and/or hardworking.

Do you know why you were selected to be a scout?

All scouts interviewed at QECA and MFCA knew why they had been selected.

At QECA, most scouts said that they had been selected because they were trustworthy (trust was frequently mentioned). A few said they were selected because they lived near the Park or because wild animals were raiding their crops. However, the majority explained that they were selected because they were trustworthy, rather than the physical aspect of living near the Park.

Responses from scouts at MFCA were similar. A few said they were selected because they were already chasing wild animals away from community land, but most described specific characteristics as reasons why. These included being a hard worker, a team member, trustworthy and an active member of the community. This reflected comments by UCF staff regarding their priorities for individuals who would be hard working and committed to join the programme.

Do you know anyone who wanted to be selected as a scout but was not, and do you know why they were not selected?

All scouts interviewed at QECA and MFCA knew people who wanted to be scouts but were not selected.

At QECA, they explained that only a small number of scouts were needed but many people applied. At MFCA however, they said that people were not selected because they were not active community members or cooperative team workers. A few scouts at both QECA and MFCA said that people were not selected because they did not live near the Park.

Was the process of selecting scouts fair? Please explain your reasons why.

All scouts interviewed at QECA and MFCA thought that the selection process was fair.

At QECA, most scouts said the process was fair because the group selected scouts based on a voting process. Only a few said it was fair because people living near the Park were targeted.

In contrast at MFCA, scouts gave various reasons for why they thought that the selection process was fair. The most common were firstly that the group selected the scouts, and secondly that people selected were hard-working, cooperative and always available to work as scouts. Only a few mentioned that people selected were those living near the Park, or that the selection process avoided people who were only interested in material gains and not willing to work as a scout.



Photograph 2: QECA's community scouts in Buhingo, chain-linking their beehives

3.2 Scout training

Key summary

UCF staff responses

- UCF staff described various training modules that were given including group dynamics, conflict resolution, HWC mitigation, enterprises and Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLAs). None described training in tackling the illegal wildlife trade (IWT).
- Many thought the training went well because all modules were complementary and of great interest to the scouts, especially training in wider skills such as leadership, rather than just technical aspects of HWC mitigation or the enterprises.
- When asked how the training could have been improved, some said the training should have been longer and included more on wildlife behaviour to support the scouts' work to mitigate HWC. One described how scouts were split into groups for training on different modules, but this created a division between the scouts and scouts should have been kept as one group.
- Recommendations on scout training for other programmes included giving refresher training on specific modules, and training a few individuals to be able to train other scouts.

Scout responses

- All scouts believed that the training they received in HWC mitigation and in tackling IWT helped their work.
- When asked how the HWC mitigation training could be improved, most scouts suggested that follow-up training for scouts should be given. Other recommendations included training more scouts and training other community members in order to raise awareness about the scouts' role.
- Most scouts confirmed that they had received other training. Scouts at QENP described training in VSLAs and scouts at MFNP described training in beekeeping.
- When asked if they would like any other training, scouts at QENP asked for more training in HWC mitigation techniques. In contrast, most scouts at MFNP asked for training in enterprise development, business skills and leadership skills.

3.2.1 Survey questions and responses by UCF staff

What training was provided to the scouts?

All UCF staff described various modules of the training, which included group dynamics and conflict resolution, HWC mitigation and data collection, enterprises such as beekeeping, and VSLAs. One UCF staff described that there was one trainer per group of 25 scouts, and that there were two training sessions per week. None specifically mentioned training the scouts to support UWA to tackle IWT.

What worked well and why?

Many UCF staff explained the training went well because all modules were complementary and of great interest to the scouts, especially the beekeeping and VSLAs. One UCF staff mentioned that the trainer in QECA was extremely good, whereas another explained that the participatory approach to the training went well, especially sessions when scouts discussed and shared experiences.

One UCF staff said that providing training on group dynamics gave the scouts a future direction, especially in terms of the scouts formally registering their group at the district and sub-county levels to be able to benefit from (or lobby local government for) financial support.

What could be improved?

Some UCF staff said that the training programme should have been longer and include more on wildlife behaviour to support the scouts' work in HWC mitigation. One UCF staff described how, for practical reasons, they asked scouts to choose certain training modules based on their specific responsibilities (for example collecting data, maintaining the wildlife trenches etc). However splitting the scouts into groups created a division between the scouts, and all scouts should have been given the chance to be trained in all modules.

Recommendations on scout training

Recommendations by UCF staff were to:

- Increase training for scouts in the wider skills that they value the most (e.g. group dynamics, leadership, etc), as this is valued by the scouts and complementary to their technical training in HWC mitigation and in enterprises.
- Design and budget to train all scouts in all modules, but be flexible to discuss the training needs and programme with the scouts and adapt as appropriate.
- Give refresher training for certain modules (actual modules were not specified), which are also opportunities for scouts to share their learning and experiences throughout the two years of the programme.
- Consider training a few scouts as trainers for scouts in other areas.

3.2.2 Survey questions and responses by the scouts

Did you receive training in mitigating HWC? Did the training help you in your work?

All scouts interviewed at QECA and at MFCA confirmed they had received training. They all believed that the training had helped their work.

Could the HWC training be improved? If so, in what way?

All scouts interviewed at QECA and at MFCA thought that the HWC training could be improved.

When asked how, most scouts recommended giving follow-up training for scouts. Others recommended improving the HWC training by:

- Giving training to other community members to raise awareness of the scouts' role.
- Extending the training to scouts in other frontline communities.
- Training scouts in use of rubber bullets (QECA only).

Did you receive training in how to tackle IWT? Did this help with your work?

All scouts interviewed at QECA and at MFCA confirmed they had received training in IWT, and all believed that it helped their work. This is an interesting finding given that UCF staff did not mention training in tackling IWT. Scouts at QECA also described how the IWT training had helped them to understand their role as scouts.

Note from UCF: training was general awareness raising; we did not include anything specific on reporting IWT to UWA, which in hindsight we could have experimented with. In QE, UWA took on this role during the week-long residential training workshop that the scouts attended at Mweya, facilitated by trainers from Katwe Wildlife Institute and UWA's team. In MF, our project officer took on this role himself

as our scout location was seen as “very hostile” by UWA. Being from the community himself, the project officer designed his own approach that suited the cultural context.

Could the IWT training be improved?

All scouts interviewed at QECA and at MFCA thought that the IWT training could be improved. Their suggestions to improve the IWT training were: extending the duration of the training, covering more topics, and training more people.

Did you receive any other training?

Scouts at both QECA and MFCA confirmed that they had received other training. Scouts at QECA described receiving training in establishing and running VSLAs and scouts at MFCA described receiving training in beekeeping as an income generating activity and to mitigate HWC.

Is there other training that you would like to receive?

Scouts at QECA called for more training in HWC mitigation techniques. This included training in use of rubber bullets, on tackling crop raiding by elephants, and on safety.

Note from UCF: MF scouts asked for and received a three day training course on first aid and were donated first aid kits; QE scouts didn't think they needed this until the end!

In contrast, most scouts at MFCA asked for training in enterprise development, business skills and leadership skills. One scout asked for training in farming and one for training in community development and mobilisation.



Photograph 3: QECA's community scouts lining beehives along the Park boundary

3.3 Incentives

Key summary

UCF staff responses

- UCF staff described a range of incentives provided to scouts including HWC mitigation equipment, livelihood 'wildlife friendly' enterprises and VSLAs.
- When asked what well went, some UCF staff described how the VSLAs improved the scouts' social and economic status, and how the bicycles provided the scouts and their families with transport. Others described the approach whereby scouts identified their own incentive schemes and where equipment was issued after an activity (i.e. as a reward, not a handout)
- Regarding improvements, UCF staff explained that giving phones to some but not all scouts caused some tension. They also noted that some scouts struggled to understand and successfully use the Open Data Kit (ODK) software, despite training.
- Recommendations for other scout programmes included checking the suitability of phones or ODK at the start, and giving sufficient focus to livelihood activities. However recommendations on issuing HWC equipment were mixed: some staff recommended giving the minimum while others recommended giving enough to last after donor funds are finished.

Scout responses

- All scouts mentioned the provision of equipment as one reward for being in the scout programme (both equipment to help them undertake their scouting role and equipment for income generating activities).
- When asked which reward was most important to them personally, most scouts at QECA said beehives, explaining that beehives provide income. In contrast at MFCA most listed HWC equipment as most important because it provided protection against wild animals and enabled communication between scouts to undertake their work.
- Most scouts at QECA and at MFCA described enterprises as the most important reward for their **family** (as opposed to them individually), explaining that these provide income. Several scouts at QECA also highlighted bicycles, as these provide their families with transport.
- All scouts at QECA and at MFCA said that the rewards were not enough for them to continue working as scouts (although refer to the Sustainability section for additional questions on this topic).
- When asked if there were other rewards they would like, scouts at QECA requested more HWC equipment to replace worn out supplies. Similarly, most scouts at MFCA requested phones so all scouts can communicate, while a few asked for uniforms and identity cards so they are prominent within their communities (uniforms in the form of t-shirts were provided at the end of the project as rewards). Two scouts at QECA requested payment for working as scouts.

3.3.1 Survey questions and responses by UCF staff

What incentives were provided to the scouts?

All UCF staff described a range of incentives that were provided to scouts. These were either equipment for mitigating HWC (e.g. boots, coats, torches), livelihood 'wildlife friendly' enterprises that also mitigated HWC (e.g. beekeeping, non-palatable crops) or activities for VSLAs. One UCF staff explained that they adopted a livelihood approach to incentives - they support income-generating activities but did not provide any salary or stipend - and that they clearly explained this approach to the communities and scouts at the start.

What worked well and why?

Some UCF staff described specific activities of HWC mitigation that successfully deterred wild animals from crop raiding. These included organic repellents, which deterred animals from crop raiding, and sunflowers, which are a cash crop that wild animals do not eat. Others pointed to the VSLAs because these improved both the scouts' social and economic status, while other UCF staff described how the bicycles enabled scouts to undertake HWC mitigation activities and provided them and their families with transport.

One UCF staff described that asking scouts to decide their incentives (with guidance from the UCF team) worked well because the scouts themselves directed how the programme supported them. They also described how giving equipment after an activity or training worked well because then the scouts had a sense of having worked for a reward, rather than simply receiving a handout. It was noted that this worked well at MFNP, although "management challenges" at QECA meant that there was less visibility about this.

What could be improved?

When asked how the scouts' incentives could be improved, UCF staff identified the following:

- While the livelihoods approach worked at MFCA, it was less successful at QECA. This was thought to stem from a lack of effort by the original UCF staff member working at QECA, with the implication that this should have been identified and addressed sooner.
- Each incentive should have been linked to the completion of a specific activity, and this should have been detailed in a work plan to give clarity to the scouts and to ensure that all incentives were rewards for work (i.e. not donations or handouts).
- At MFCA, incentives were issued with conditions. For example, if scouts were caught with bushmeat then their bicycle would be confiscated. This approach should have been considered for all scouts.
- Issuing phones to only 10 scouts (out of 25) caused issues with the group dynamics, especially at MFCA but less so at QECA.
- Not all scouts were sufficiently literate to use the ODK tool.
- Ensuring the HWC mitigation equipment was sufficient (e.g. scouts at QECA requested rubber bullets).
- Bicycles were well received by the scouts although they needed money to repair them. Some suggested scouts could use the income gained from their new livelihood enterprises, whereas others suggested that the project should give on-going support.

A few UCF staff said that scouts should be given a "small monthly stipend" or allowance, explaining that this would motivate them further.

Recommendations on scout incentives

Recommendations by UCF staff were to:

- Check whether scouts are able to use phones and/or the ODK tool before investing in the equipment; and/or amend the ODK tool to suit the scouts (for example, being more picture or symbol based).
- Not raise expectations by giving incentives simply to attend meetings; rather ensure that any incentives are issued after training or an event (so that they are not handouts or donations).
- Ask scouts to identify the income-generating schemes they would like support with, while providing guidance to ensure that the schemes are viable and, where possible, have the dual outcomes of generating income and deterring wild animals from crop raiding.
- Recognise the importance of supporting voluntary scouts with income-generating schemes for the long-term sustainability of the scout group, and give this sufficient focus throughout the programme.
- Consider holding HWC equipment centrally with an appointed member of the scout group, so these are used appropriately (e.g. there were concerns that torches could be used for night-time poaching).
- Consider rewards for mini-competitions between the groups to further encourage their work.

Recommendations about issuing HWC mitigation equipment were mixed. Some staff recommended giving only the minimum amount of equipment and focusing on building livelihood capabilities, so that the scouts could use this income to purchase their own HWC mitigation equipment when donor funds are finished. Whereas other staff said that the HWC equipment is essential and sufficient supplies must be given so that scouts have equipment (that is not worn out) when donor funds are finished.

A few UCF staff again mentioned giving scouts a small monthly stipend, with one staff specifying that a yearly allowance of one hundred and fifty thousand Ugandan shillings would be appropriate.

3.3.2 Survey questions and responses by the scouts

What rewards were offered to you as scouts?

All scouts listed various items that they had received. These items were either HWC equipment (for example, gum boots, raincoats, phones, torches) or equipment for enterprises that also mitigate HWC (for example beehives and non-palatable crops).

Which rewards are most important to you personally and why?

Beehives were the most important reward for scouts at QECA. When asked why, scouts explained that beehives provide income. A few also mentioned that beehives help to prevent animals from raiding their crops and one scout said that beehives provide honey, which is a medicine.

In contrast at MFCA, only a few scouts described enterprises and VSLAs as their most important rewards. They explained that these provide an income source for their family and enabled them to save money. But most scouts at MFCA described HWC equipment as their most important reward, explaining that the equipment protected them when chasing wild animals and enabled communication when there was an emergency.

Which rewards are most important to your family and why?

Most scouts at QECA listed beehives as the most important reward for their family, explaining that beehives were a source of income. Several listed bicycles as most important for their family, describing how the bicycles provided their families with transport.

At MFCA, all scouts described wildlife friendly enterprises as the most important reward for their family because they were sources of income. One scout also mentioned HWC equipment, saying that it provided protection during night patrols.

Are the rewards enough for you to continue working as a scout?

All scouts interviewed at QECA and at MFCA said the rewards were not enough to continue working as scouts. *Note: refer to the Sustainability section for more detailed responses on this topic.*

Are there rewards that you do not currently receive but you would like to?

Scouts at QECA said they would like more HWC equipment, explaining that these are used every day. The HWC equipment most frequently mentioned were raincoats, gum boots and first aid kits. Two scouts said that they should be paid for working as scouts.

At MFCA, most scouts said that they would like phones so that all scouts can communicate. Several mentioned uniforms and identify cards so that their work as scouts is prominent within their communities (note from UCF staff: uniforms in the form of t-shirts were provided at the end of the project as rewards).

3.4 Implementation

Key summary

Note: UCF staff were asked for their lessons learnt about the scouts' monitoring activities and general implementation of the scout programme. The scouts were asked for their views on the implementation of the programme including the effectiveness of their work.

UCF staff responses on scout monitoring activities

- UCF staff described that the scouts monitored both HWC incidents and HWC mitigation activities. None mentioned monitoring IWT incidents.
- Some UCF staff described that having scouts monitor in groups worked well, as the broader community felt that "someone cared about their challenges with crop raiding". Others said that paper forms worked better than the smart phones.
- UCF staff described various ways that the monitoring could have been improved, with many pointing out difficulties scouts had with using smart phones. Also mentioned were unsuccessful attempts to hand-over coordination to UWA.
- Recommendations for other scout programmes regarding monitoring included ensuring sufficient training and follow-up support with both collecting monitoring data and using recording equipment, and planning early for any hand-over to conservation authorities.

UCF staff responses on implementation of the scout programme

- When asked what went well, some UCF staff emphasised the importance of selecting hard-working, committed individuals to participate in the programme. Others described how working with existing scout groups meant that this project could build on their work.
- UCF staff identified a number of improvements. This included the realisation of the time and resources needed to fulfil the original aim of developing a 'model' scout group that could then train other scouts, and better planning for UWA's involvement.
- Recommendations for other scout programmes included ensuring a full-time field officer for overall coordination, ensuring the field team have worked together (or have been fully trained in the specifics of this programme) before the scout programme starts, and arranging for the scouts to visit other scout groups around the Park or elsewhere to share experiences.

Scout responses on their effectiveness of their work

- All scouts believed that they helped to reduce HWC and IWT.
- Some scouts at QECA thought that the training and on-going supervision that they had received by the UCF staff has been a key factor in making their work effective.
- Some scouts at MFCA thought that UCF could help further improve their effectiveness by providing more equipment and more training.

3.4.1 Survey questions and responses by UCF staff

SCOUT MONITORING

What monitoring were the scouts tasked with?

UCF staff described various activities that scouts monitored including:

- Crop raiding incidents
- Incidents where scouts chased animals back to the Park
- Buffer zone management
- Installing and ongoing maintenance of beehives along buffer zones
- Management of wildlife trenches
- Responses by wild animals to organic repellent (at MFCA)
- Sensitisation of community members on protected area conservation, especially poaching (this was the only IWT-related activity mentioned)

Some UCF staff described how scouts first recorded their monitoring using paper forms and, later in the programme, were trained to record data using ODK on smart phones.

What worked well?

Some UCF staff explained that having groups of scouts monitor HWC incidents (rather than individuals) worked extremely well because their communities felt “someone cared about their challenges with crop raiding”.

One staff said that paper forms worked better than phones because many scouts found the phones hard to use. Another said that monitoring the wildlife trenches went well although scouts at QECA frequently asked to be paid for maintaining the trenches.

What could be improved?

UCF staff described various ways that scout monitoring could have been improved, which were:

- Training on ODK and using smart phones was too short for the scouts to be familiar with the equipment.
 - One UCF staff said that UWA Community Conservation Rangers at MFCA described how scouts did not visit farms of HWC incidents because they did not know how to use the phones.
 - Another described that the quality of monitoring recorded on paper was limited but worse using ODK.
- Scouts should have received on-going support in both data collection and in using the equipment (or a few individual scouts should have received in-depth training so that they can provide this on-going support).
- Monitoring forms should have been translated into the local language with greater use of pictures and symbols, although with the recognition to check whether English literacy is more common than local languages, as is sometimes the case.
- UCF undertook a coordination role of retrieving and sharing the HWC incident data. The aim was for UWA Community Conservation Rangers to take on this role so that UWA would continue working with the scouts and be able to monitor HWC incidents, especially to assess the effectiveness of mitigation interventions. But UCF’s efforts to handover coordination to UWA were unsuccessful; some staff explained that this was because they did not provide transport or internet data, while other said that doing so would not be sustainable in the long-term.

Consequently, issues regarding who holds the HWC incident data remained when the project finished.

- Continued support should have been given for monitoring the bee-keeping and the VSLA activities.

Recommendations on scout monitoring activities

Recommendations by UCF staff were to:

- Provide sufficient training for scouts on data collection and on using the recording tool (be this paper or digital), then provide on-going support and/or train a few scouts to be able to provide this on-going support to other scouts.
- Translate monitoring forms into local languages and/or use pictures or symbols.
- Plan early for any hand-over to the conservation authority, involving the authority with the monitoring as far as possible; noting the challenges of this for such large protected areas where UWA's community conservation staff are very few (or consider the option to involve the law enforcement staff)
- Consider providing a small stipend for a few scouts to be 'data collectors' to visit all scouts and collect their HWC monitoring data, or incentives so that they continue this role after the project finishes.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SCOUT PROGRAMME

How were scout programmes rolled out, for example what were their roles and responsibilities?

UCF staff explained that UCF were project implementers with full-time UCF staff in the field. They collaborated with UWA for Community Conservation staff to give technical guidance. Scouts' responsibilities included collecting data on HWC incidents and mitigation activities, and designing and implementing HWC mitigation interventions. Some UCF staff described specific HWC mitigation activities that scouts undertook including maintaining wildlife trenches and guarding farms from elephants, but no one mentioned IWT. Scouts signed MoUs detailing their responsibilities and overall these were adhered to. One UCF staff said that the project was also designed to re-establish park-community committees, but this was vetoed by UWA.

What worked well?

Some UCF staff emphasised the importance of selecting hard-working, committed individuals who are willing to help "vulnerable members of the community by herding animals away from their crops". Others explained that working with existing scout groups meant that they could achieve greater results (rather than starting afresh), and that the number of scouts selected was appropriate given the funding.

One UCF staff described how the scouts actively began their work in HWC mitigation following the training, and reiterated the point that asking scouts to identify and develop their own interventions worked extremely well because then the scouts took ownership of the interventions.

What could be improved?

UCF identified a number of improvements, including:

- Capacity-building to improve the scouts' group dynamics and coordination, which in turn would increase efficiencies in their work.
- Data collection (for reasons mentioned above).
- The original aim was to develop 'model' scout groups who would train other scouts, but it became apparent that this required considerably more time (and budget) for the UCF field team to work with the scouts.

- Increased staff and budget to work with more scouts in order to achieve a more substantial impact given the sizes of the Parks.
- Planning for greater involvement by UWA to improve community-UWA relations, with UCF as “the bridge”.

UCF staff noted that, at QECA, Community Conservation Rangers actively participated in UCF’s work as the CC Warden had been hoping to establish scout programmes for some time. However at MFCA, attaining UWA’s input was difficult, as one of the two local CC rangers had no transport and the other was on study leave for most of the project.

Recommendations on implementation

Recommendations by UCF staff were:

- Plan and budget for the project field team to receive a comprehensive training programme specifically about the project (including donor requirements) before the scout programme starts (also ensure the field team have been working together for three to six months before hand)
- Plan and budget for a full-time field officer for overall coordination and communication, including with UWA (noting for this project, there was a full-time field officer at MF but not at QE where 2x project officers shared the tasks between them)
- Arrange for the scouts to visit and share experiences with other scout groups. These could be in other areas around the Park or in other Parks.
- Ensure the scouts receive sufficient HWC mitigation equipment because equipment wears out quickly.
- Provide refresher training and on-going support to the scouts throughout, with sessions where scouts can share lessons learnt.
- Engage the wider community and other relevant stakeholders throughout.
- Engage the wider community when scouts design their own interventions, as some scouts had little or no knowledge about the range of possible options.

3.4.2 Survey questions and responses by the scouts

Did your work help to reduce HWC? How?

All scouts interviewed at QECA and at MFCA believed that they had helped to reduce HWC.

Many scouts at QECA described how the UCF training had made their work more effective. A few explained that they had reduced HWC by protecting gardens from wild animals.

Scouts at MFCA did not mention the UCF training. Instead most described their patrols to protect farmland from wild animals, and a few described how they helped communities to apply repellents to reduce elephant raids. Some said that they helped to reduce HWC by explaining the importance of protected area conservation and the dangers of poaching to other community members, possibly indicating that they helped to reduce conflict between local communities and conservation authorities.

Did your work help to reduce IWT? How?

All scouts interviewed at QECA and at MFCA believed that they had helped to reduce IWT.

Many scouts at QECA explained that local communities are now harvesting their crops and gaining an income (implying that there was no need to go to Park), and one said that the scouts had improved the sales of food. Some described that they used their HWC equipment “in a good way” and one scout said he helped to reduce IWT by protecting crops from wild animals.

Most scouts at MFCA explained that they had reduced IWT by teaching communities about the importance of protected area conservation. Two scouts said that they reported incidences of IWT to the authorities. Another two described reporting incidences but did not specify whether these were IWT or HWC incidences. A few scouts explained that they had reduced IWT by reporting HWC incidences to the authorities, or recording HWC on their Open Data Kits (possibly indicating that they helped to reduce conflict between the Park and local communities).

Could the UCF project help to make your work more effective?

Scouts at QECA seem to understand this question to be how the UCF project had helped them, rather than what UCF could do to help make their work more effective. In terms of how UCF had helped, most scouts described the training they had received while some described UCF's on-going supervision. A few mentioned that UCF had given them HWC equipment.

Scouts at MFCA described activities that UCF could take to help make their work more effective. Providing more equipment "so there is no hindrance to our work" was most frequently mentioned, although only equipment was mentioned and it was not clear whether this was HWC equipment or enterprises. Many scouts also said described how additional capacity building would help make their work more effective.

3.5 Sustainability

Key summary

UCF responses

- UCF staff described various aspects of the project's exit strategy: UWA adopting the coordinator role; training scouts so they can support themselves through wildlife friendly enterprises; and, dissemination meetings with sub-county and district governments.
- UCF staff said the enterprises were working well, as income generation would continue after the project (as opposed to giving salaries to scouts for only the project's duration). But they described the need for other stakeholders to formally commit to supporting the scouts in the long-term.
- Recommendations for other scout programmes focused on involving UWA and local governments throughout the project so that they are more likely to adopt a supporting role after the project finishes.

Scout responses

- All scouts said they would continue working as scouts after the UCF project finishes – while this is despite their previous comments (page 11), they explained that they were already volunteering as scouts before the UCF project and so there was no reason not to continue.
- A few scouts said they would continue because of the UCF training and the equipment they had received
- When asked what rewards they need to continue working as scouts, all highlighted the need for financial rewards – not necessarily salaries but some mechanism for generating income.

3.5.1 Survey questions and responses by UCF staff

What is the exit strategy?

UCF staff described various aspects of the project's exit strategy: UWA taking-on the coordinator role (UWA agreed although had not made a formal commitment); training the scouts especially in wildlife friendly enterprises so they can "stand on their own"; community sensitisation meetings on the scouts' achievements; and wider dissemination meetings with organisations who could support the scouts, which included representatives from sub-county and district governments especially regarding decisions on allocating UWA's Revenue Sharing funds. One UCF staff described their efforts to obtain additional funds to continue working with scouts.

Is this working well or likely to work well?

Many UCF staff explained that, as communities and UWA will "always be neighbours", their aim for UWA to adopt the coordinator role is essential despite the challenges they faced when trying to secure this (see above).

Some UCF staff thought the enterprises were working well because they generate incomes for scouts after the project (as opposed to scouts receiving a salary for only the duration of the project).

One UCF staff described positive feedback from sub-county representatives around MFCA, especially that UCF's work had generated useful lessons that will inform their approaches in the future. Sub-county representatives around QECA were less involved (beyond handling the Mauritius thorn hedge

re-establishment), but UCF staff were hopeful that UWA CC Rangers would continue working with the scouts.

Do other provisions need to be put in place?

UCF staff all made one point: other stakeholders must formally commit to supporting the scouts. One UCF staff said that scouts should have a specific contact within sub-county governments, while others said that supporting stakeholders could undertake spot checks which would motivate the scouts to continue.

Recommendations on exit strategies

Recommendations by UCF staff were:

- Ensure the scouts and their communities do not consider livelihood activities to be hand-outs.
- Provide refresher training for the scouts throughout the project to build on and extend their initial training at project start-up.
- Involve UWA and local governments throughout, while refraining from paying expenses so that these stakeholders are more likely to adopt a supporting role after the project finishes. They particularly should be involved in project start-up and closure meetings.
- Engage wider community members throughout the project, especially at the start and when the project closes, to secure their support for the scouts.
- Host a final project meeting with the scouts, their community, UWA and local government representatives for all to share lessons learnt and commit to on-going support for the scouts.

3.5.2 Survey questions and responses by scouts

When the UCF project finishes, will you continue to be a scout? Why?

Scouts at both Parks said they will continue to work as scouts after the UCF project finishes. When asked why, most scouts at QECA explained that they were already volunteering as scouts before the UCF project and so will continue (some explained that the crops are theirs, not for UCF).

Note by UCF staff: these scouts were protecting their crops, and those of their neighbours, by camping at the edge of their gardens.

Two said they will continue as scouts because of the training they had received, and one said he will continue as he now has HWC equipment.

Similarly at MFCA, most scouts said they will continue because they were already volunteering as scouts before the UCF project. Some said they will continue because they want to continue helping their community to reduce crop raiding, while a small number said they will continue because of everything they have learnt from the UCF project.

What rewards do you need to continue?

At QECA, all scouts said that they need a salary to continue. One scout also said he needs a phone to communicate with other scouts, and one said he needs a bicycle (noting that all scouts were given bicycles for the project).

Note by UCF staff: evaluation interviews conducted during mid-late April showed that QECA scouts were very happy with the beehives as a source of income and explicitly stated that beehives were preferred over receiving an allowance, as they are sustainable and can have a multiplier effect in the community.

Responses from scouts at MFCA were similar in that they said they need financial rewards to continue as scouts. However no scout specifically mentioned a salary. Instead half of the scouts interviewed referred to the wildlife friendly enterprises to generate income and the other half simply referred to needing money or anything that brings income.

Note by UCF staff: during the project scouts were given a 20,000 Uganda shillings allowance by the sub-county, which set a precedent.

4. Lessons for other community scouts programmes in Uganda

From UCF staff and the scouts' experiences, notable lessons for other scout community programmes in Uganda are:

- **Ensure a fair and transparent selection process**

A fair and transparent selection process is important to both scouts and their community. It is also important that scouts and their community understand, and agree with, the selection process.

- **Provide training by external experts and in wider skills**

Scouts appreciate, and benefit from, training provided by external experts and training in wider skills such as group dynamics, conflict resolution and leadership. This boosts their technical skills and their self-esteem, making them feel valued and important, which in turn motivates them in their work.

- **Understand and act on scouts' motivations**

Individuals are motivated to participate in scout programmes for different reasons. Projects must understand these motivations in the first instance, and then structure their reward schemes to respond to what scouts want. In some cases simply providing coats and boots is sufficient, in other cases scouts want more sophisticated equipment including phones, bikes and rubber bullets or identity cards so they are prominent within their community; in yet other cases income-generating activities will be the most highly desired reward.

- **Clearly explain incentive structures, especially when these are not financial**

Projects providing livelihood interventions, not salaries, as incentives to scouts must clearly communicate this at the start to all stakeholders.

Asking scouts to select their livelihood interventions, and ensuring that they see these as rewards and not hand-outs, can engender their ownership of the interventions. This is especially important for scouts to continue with the intervention (and their scouting activities) after the project finishes.

Similarly if incentives include the provision of HWC mitigation equipment, ensure scouts understand whether they are expected to repair or replace their equipment themselves, or whether the project will replace worn-out equipment during its duration.

Projects should consider engaging the wider community and stakeholders such as UWA and local government in the selection of livelihood interventions, and if so, what engagement would be most beneficial. For example, communicating progress updates or a more active involvement.

- **Provide sufficient training and on-going support for livelihood interventions**

If livelihood support projects are being utilised as an incentive for scouting, then ensure appropriate training is provided to enable the scouts to fully benefit from these interventions (e.g. how to establish and run VSLAs; small enterprises, book keeping etc). Projects should not offer these rewards without supporting scouts sufficiently in terms of initial training and on-going support. On-going support can be opportunities for scouts to share their experiences, which can be valuable to other scouts within their group and to members of their communities.

- **Ensure equipment provided to scouts is appropriate and easy to use**

Not all scouts will be able to use sophisticated monitoring equipment such as smart phones and data collection software such as ODK, or be able to replace them if worn out or broken. Before making an investment, discussing options with scouts, their community and stakeholders such as UWA can be invaluable. This can help ensure that the equipment is appropriate, for example using pictures or symbols for scouts to record HWC monitoring data, and that training and on-going support for scouts is sufficient.

- **Clearly communicate to manage expectations**

As mentioned above, clear communication is essential to manage expectations of the scouts and stakeholders. This regards all aspects of the project, such as scouts' responsibilities to support UWA in tackling IWT and when project support finishes. Visual aids can be useful, for example work plans or programmes in the local language, or more formal arrangements such as MoUs.

- **Gather feedback throughout**

Community scouts can perceive themselves to be effective in reducing HWC and tackling IWT. Project based monitoring and feedback could strengthen this perception (and thereby increasing the scouts' sense of value). It could also help highlight to scouts exactly *how* they have been effective, what has worked well and they could do more of, and what they can do differently in order to enhance their effectiveness.

- **Plan an appropriate exit strategy**

Community scouts do not necessarily need the presence of external "projects" in order to carry out their roles – many have worked as scouts for a long time to support their communities. However projects can help generate and/or sustain the necessary financial rewards that keep scouts motivated.

Projects must have a comprehensive exit strategy on sustaining financial rewards long after it finishes. This can include supporting scout groups to formally register at the district and sub-county levels, linking scouts with organisations who might be interested in supporting them, or conducting a formal hand-over to another organisation who then continues to support the scouts. Such hand-overs must be carefully planned from the start, such as involving the organisation throughout the project and hosting a final project close-out meeting with a hand-over ceremony.

Appendix A: Lessons learnt survey for UCF staff

The survey can be completed individually by UCF staff involved in designing/supporting/implementing the community scouts programme, or through a workshop process which brings together UCF staff to discuss the individual experience and agree a common answer. Please record who participated in the survey and their role at UCF/in the scouts programme and make as many copies of the form as you need. Please also record if any key UCF staff were unable to participate in this survey.

Overall we are interested to understand what worked well and why, what could be improved and why, and what recommendations should be passed on for future initiatives. Understanding the reasons why is really important, so please make sure these are fully discussed and recorded.

NAME AND ROLE OF RESPONDENT(S):

Element of scouts process	UCF Staff Reflections (please expand the table as much as you need)
<i>Selection process</i>	
What was the selection process/criteria and over what timescales was it undertaken?	
What worked well? Why?	
What could be improved? Why (how would this make a difference)?	
Recommendations for future scouts programmes on selection process	
<i>Provision of training to scouts (in HWC mitigation methods etc)</i>	
What training was provided and in what form (how delivered, over what timescales, how many scouts trained per trainer etc)?	
What worked well? Why?	
What could be improved? Why (how would this make a difference)?	
Recommendations for future scouts programmes on training	
<i>Provision of incentives to scouts</i>	
What incentives were provided (livelihood schemes, uniforms, equipment, status etc)?	
What worked well?	

Why?	
What could be improved? Why (how would this make a difference)?	
Recommendations for future scouts programmes on incentive schemes	
<i>Scout monitoring of HWC incidents and interventions</i>	
What monitoring were the scouts tasked to undertake?	
What worked well? Why?	
What could be improved? Why (how would this make a difference)?	
Recommendations for future scouts programmes on incentive schemes	
<i>Implementation (effectiveness in tackling HWC and IWT)</i>	
How was the scouts programme rolled out – ie what were the expected roles, responsibilities and impacts?	
What worked well? Why?	
What could be improved? Why (how would this make a difference)?	
Recommendations for future programmes on implementation	
<i>Sustainability beyond project timeframe</i>	
What is the sustainability plan/exit strategy?	
Is this working well or likely to work well (and why)?	
Do other provisions need to be put in place?	
Recommendations for future programmes on sustainability	

Appendix B: Lessons learnt survey for community scouts

Note for UCF staff: ideally this information should be collected on an individual basis from each scout. If this is not possible please include a sample from each scout group. Please make as many copies of the form as you need.

NAME/LOCATION:

Element of scouts process	Scout Reflections (please expand the table as much as you need)
Selection process	
How were you selected to be a scout?	(note for interviewer – we are interested in their understanding of the process/criteria)
Do you know why you were selected?	
Is there anyone you know who wanted to be selected and wasn't? Do you know why he/she wasn't selected?	
Was the process for choosing scouts fair? Can you give reasons for your answers	
Provision of training to scouts (in HWC mitigation methods etc)	
Did you receive training in HWC mitigation?	Note for interviewer - elaborate on what HWC mitigation means if necessary
Did the training help you in your work?	
Could the training be improved? In what way?	
Did you receive training about IWT?	Note for interviewer – explain IWT and what sorts of things the scout might do for example, how to work with UWA, how to report illegal activities, etc
Did the training help you in your work?	
Could the training be improved? In what way?	
Did you receive any other kind of training?	
Is there any other kind of training you would have liked to have received but	

didn't?	
Provision of incentives to scouts	
What rewards were you offered to be a scout? Uniform? Equipment? Involvement in an enterprise scheme? Status? Anything else?	Interviewer please note all different types of incentives received and ask if any others
Which of the rewards are most important to you personally? Why?	Interviewer – this question is about how the INDIVIDUAL feels about the rewards
Which of the rewards do your family think are more important? Why?	Interviewer – this question is about how the scout's FAMILY feels about the rewards
Are the rewards enough for you to continue as a scout?	
Are there any rewards that you don't currently get that you would like to get? Why?	
Implementation (effectiveness in tackling HWC and IWT)	
Do you think that you helped reduce HWC? How?	Interviewer – try and probe what evidence the scout has that he/she has been effective
Do you think you helped prevent any IWT? How?	Interviewer – try and probe what evidence the scout has that he/she has been effective
How could the UCF project have helped your work be more effective?	
Sustainability beyond project timeframe	
When the UCF project finishes will you continue to be a scout? Why?	
What type of rewards would you need to continue? Why?	

