

CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT: BWINDI IMPENETRABLE NATIONAL  
PARK.

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## **DEDICATION.**

This thesis is dedicated to my father the Late Mr. C.B.Kahororo who sacrificed a lot for me to be who I am today and to my mother Tumuhirwe B and my grandmother Kabwimukana S.

## ABSTRACT

*'In the past they have been seen as islands of protection in an ocean of destruction. We need to learn to look at them as the building blocks of biodiversity in an ocean of sustainable human development , with their benefits extending far beyond their physical boundaries'* Achim Steiner, IUCN director 2003 in (Adams 2004) referring to the management of national parks. Community conservation as an approach to conservation of wildlife was adopted by many African countries as a means of involving local communities participate in decision making and management of protected areas. This was thought be beneficial for both the development of local communities and general development of rural areas while protecting wildlife after the failure of the exclusionist policy. This thesis explores the concept of community conservation focusing on participation and involvement in conservation and tourism by the local communities in and around Bwindi impenetrable national park in south western Uganda. It assesses whether the principles that guide the application of community conservation to wildlife management have been followed and the forms of participation that the communities are involved in. It further explores the different ways through which communities living in and around the national park have benefited from participating in both tourism and conservation. Lastly the study examines whether there exists conflicts, the causes of those conflicts and how these conflicts affect the relationship between the local communities and the national park authorities.

The theory that informs this study follows alternative development theory and the concept of community conservation. Alternative development focuses on empowering people to take charge of their own development both in decision making and implementation focusing on the role non governmental organizations play. Community conservation emphasises the involvement of communities living around protected areas to participate in both decision making and management of protected areas. Participation in decision making is aimed at empowering people take charge in the management of resources where benefits (economic) are shared amongst the different stakeholders in both conservation and tourism.

A qualitative mode of inquiry is used to collect data that informs this research. Data was collected using formal interviews, informal interviews, observation, questionnaire, life stories and document review. Findings reveal that, communities living in the villages around the national park have been involved in different projects and programmes aimed at conservation and development. It further reveals that there have been benefits accruing from participation delivered through the work of conservation organizations. Despite the benefits, people still feel they deserve more than they are at present getting from the national park. Conflicts between the national park authorities and the local communities exist but these are not at a scale big enough to affect their relationship. Generally this research found out that when community conservation is well implemented with the involvement of local communities, it provides benefits to those communities through tourism, minimises conflict and ends up making the people own the projects targeting wildlife conservation.

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## **List of Abbreviations**

ADMANDE:	Administrative Management Design for Game Management.
AWF:	African Wildlife Fund
BDCA:	Buhoma Community Development Association.
CAMPFIRE:	Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources.
CARE:	Carry American Relief Everywhere.
CBC:	Community Based Conservation.
CCAC:	Community Conservation Area Committees.
DANIDA:	Danish International Development Agency
DTC:	Co-operation for Assistance and Relief Everywhere. Development Through Conservation (project).
FAO:	Food and Agricultural Organisation.
GEF:	Global Environmental Facility
HUGO	Human Gorilla Conflict Resolution Organisation.
IGCP:	International Gorilla conservation Project.
ITFC:	Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation
IUCN:	International Union for the conservation of Nature.
MBCT:	Mgahinga and Bwindi conservation trust.
MGVP:	Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project.
NEMA	National Environment Management Authority.
PAs:	Protected Areas.
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme.
UNEP:	United Nations Environment Programme.
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
USAID:	United States Agency for International development.
UWA:	Uganda Wildlife Authority.
WCS:	World Conservation Society.
WWF:	World Wildlife Fund.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### *1.1 Background to the study*

Conservation is as old as the establishment of the first world known national park in the United States<sup>1</sup>. This was aimed at mainly preserving wildlife for leisure and nature's beauty (Adams 2004). In Africa, Protected Areas (PAs) form the basis for conservation and their establishment dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Mugisha, 2002). PAs in Africa were established originally for serving the colonial interest of hunting and preserving what was seen as pristine lands. These areas were not productive in terms of human habitation, and the Africans were excluded from decision making when laws establishing PAs were enacted (ibid). In 1980, there were around 29 conservation biomes that had a total of 324 protected areas covering 1,046,291.71 km<sup>2</sup> which is around 3.5% of Africa's total land mass (ibid). By 2000, the total number of protected areas in the world had reached 30,000 covering an area of 13, 250, 000 km<sup>2</sup> an area equivalent to the size of china (IUCN, 2006).

Conservation with development has been used as a model for rural transformation in most African countries for the transformation of rural economies where the resources for conservation exist. But the results for these efforts have been mixed over the years both showing success in some areas while in others a complete failure. This need has necessitated people to be part of the conservation drive since they have the local knowledge with regard to the resources that are found within their locality. It helps to develop the local people and their areas when they participate. Conservation emerged as a contested terrain where, not just nature as wildlife but nature as the innate character of social being is staked and defended; (Saberwal et al 2003:267). The linkage between communities and protected areas are often very complex and difficult to distinguish but occur along temporal and social organizational levels (individual, household and community) and differ in terms of usage and importance like economic, social and spiritual. (Paul et al 2003). As Duffy (2006) puts it, ecotourism is promoted with the idea of fostering economic growth and environmental conservation which has a link with

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<sup>1</sup> Yellowstone National park was established in 1872(Adam 2004)

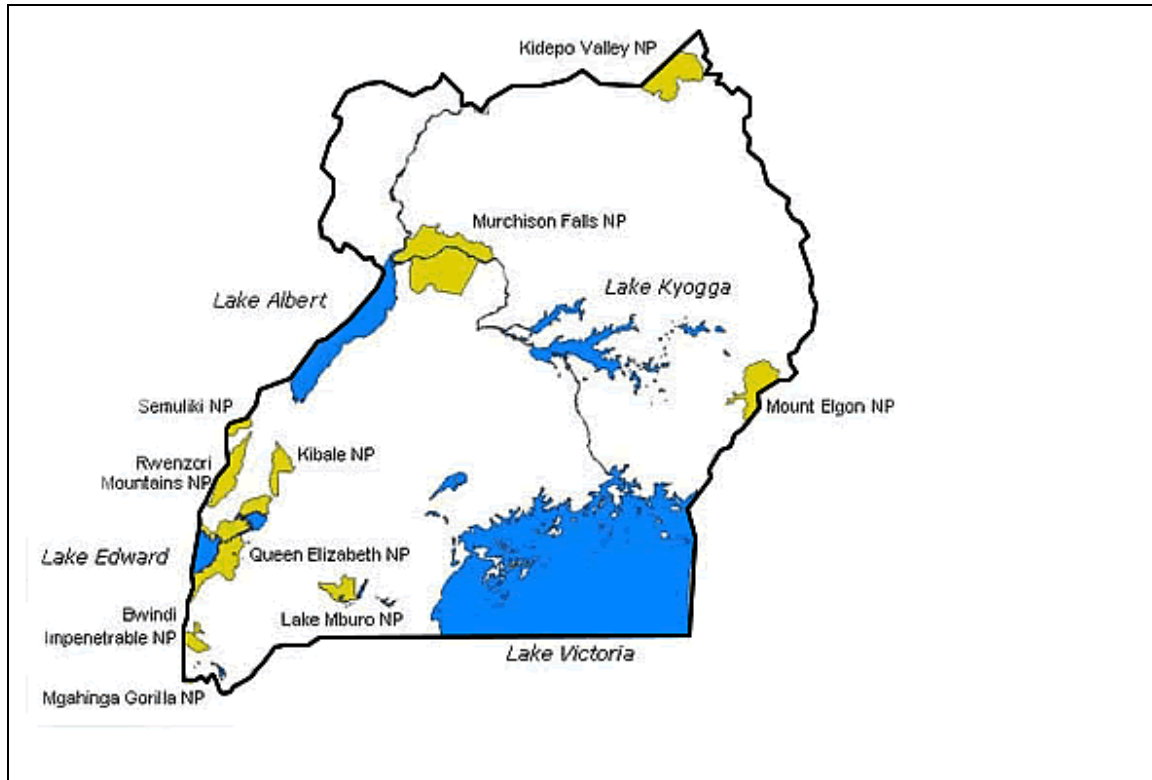
community based natural resource management where communities can be organized in order to benefit.

Tourist expenditures within the conservation area and the surrounding communities provide the necessary economic gains and opportunities for advancement while striving to reduce poverty within these areas (Paul et al 2003). It is therefore the objective of this research to find out whether in the first place, there has been a contribution to people's wellbeing since the establishment of Bwindi impenetrable national park. This study will also find out how true this has been done in order to shed light on the contested argument that conservation can benefit the locals as will be discussed in later chapters.

## ***1.2 History of conservation in Uganda***

In Uganda, indigenous forms of conservation drives date back to kingships when the different kingdoms set aside chunks of land for their kings' recreation and sport hunting. In 1891, the king of Toro signed an agreement with Lugard (colonial head) where all forests and wildlife were put in the hands of the British Queen (Naughton (1999)). During the colonial rule in the 1930's and 50's the first conservation areas were created mainly for hunting purposes to serve the hobbies of the British colonialists. Conservation is at present legally recognized under the Uganda Wildlife Statute (UWS 1996) which allows for the combination of biodiversity and wildlife management in collaborative management. The 1995 Uganda constitution provides for protection of natural resources together with other statutes that were passed to protect the essential natural resources in the country. According to UWA (2006), there are 10 national parks, 8 game reserves and many other small protected areas that are used for purposes of protecting wildlife. Conserving wildlife in Uganda has always been in conflict with the local people who see the conservation as a deprivation of a resource that has long been part of their survival (NEMA2004). In 1992, IUCN realized that for protected areas to survive they needed the support of the local people and 'protected areas should be seen as islands of biodiversity in an ocean of sustainable human development' (Adams et al 2004:146). This marked the beginning of an era of conservation with local communities aimed at helping the people around the resources to develop while protecting the resource that sustains their livelihoods.

In Uganda, the conservation of wildlife is centered around the need to foster growth through tourism that is beneficial to the nation as a whole and the local communities.



**Figure 1. Map of Uganda Showing the major protected Areas**

Source: Uganda Wildlife Authority.2007

Uganda as a country is fortunate to have the major four ecosystems ranging from desert, grassland, wetlands and forested areas. These form national parks, Game reserves, or wildlife sanctuaries plant and animal species are protected. In Uganda, four of the major national parks are grassland parks like Kidepo Valley National Park, Murchison Falls National park, Lake Mburo National Park and Queen Elizabeth National Park. There are also four forested national parks like Mt Elgon National Park, Bwindi Impenetrable National Park and Mgahinga Gorilla National Park, Kibale National Park and Semuliki National Park which also has a semblance of wetlands. There are also two mountain national parks like Mt Rwenzori National Park and Mt Elgon National Park which all have elements of afro-montane forests.

### ***1.3 Background information on Uganda***

In this section, an overview Uganda is presented. It gives general background information about Uganda looking at geography, population, economy, climate, relief and natural resources. This is followed by a brief description of Bwindi as the study area, focusing on population, main activities, and general demographic characteristics based on households in Mukono Parish, Kanungu District.

#### **1.3.1 Geographic location and size.**

Uganda is a land locked country found in the Eastern African region. It is bordered by Sudan in the north, Republic of Kenya in the East, Rwanda and Tanzania in the south and Democratic Republic of Congo in the West. It lies between latitude 1° 30' South and 4° North and longitude 29° 30' East and 35° astride the equator (NEMA 2002). The total size of the country is about 241,500 km<sup>2</sup> with a perimeter of about 16,630 km. Of the total area, 15.3% is open water, and 3.0% are permanent wetlands and 9.4% seasonal wetlands (ibid).

#### **1.3.2 Population characteristics.**

According to the 1995 constitution, Uganda has around 46 categories of indigenous tribes. These tribes have varying consumption patterns and traditional settings (NEMA 2002). There are also a number of foreigners living in the country of which the majority of them are refugees from neighbouring countries like Rwanda, Kenya and Democratic Republic of Congo. Most of the people derive their livelihoods from agriculture (85%) with mixed livelihood strategies like cultivation, pastoralism and mixed agriculture.

According to the Population and Housing Census of Uganda 2002, the population of Uganda was 24.7 million and is projected to reach 40 million by the year 2030. Uganda's population has grown from 10 million people from independence in 1962 to 24.7 million in 2002 which indicate a growth rate of over 140% over a period of 40 years (UBOS 2002). Most of the people live in rural areas with 12.3 % living in urban areas by 2002. This has a bearing on how population impacts the environment because most people

depend on the environment for their livelihoods through agriculture, and fuel wood among others.

### **1.3.3 Natural resources.**

Uganda is a country well endowed with natural resources and as indicated in section 1.3.4, these natural resources have been shaped by the country's history in relation to forces of nature. Of these there is a wide variety of rivers, lakes, mountains, forests, and beautiful scenery not forgetting the rich deposits of minerals like sand, copper, gold, oil, phosphates and many others. All these support varied activities for which the people and the country derive the sustainability of the economy. Among these, most of them like forests, rivers and lakes support a vibrant tourism industry that is one of the major foreign income earners of the country. This is supported by a high number of biodiversity which according to NEMA 2002 is estimated to contribute over US \$1,000 million per year to the national economy through livestock, forests, wildlife and inland water resources.

Tourism is said to be the second largest earner of foreign exchange in Uganda following coffee. There have been steps to ensure that the resource that provides the above is protected. The wildlife statute mandates Uganda Wildlife Authority to protect wildlife and its habitat (NEMA 2002) and ways have been created to find means of minimizing conflict between the wildlife managers and the local communities. According to NEMA 2002, this has been through the creation of wildlife protected area institutions to ensure that communities are empowered in wildlife management and benefit from it as will be explained in chapter 4. To effectively do achieve this objective, UWA has involved local governments, private sector and Non-governmental organizations to implement community conservation programmes.

### **1.3.4 Climate, relief and Drainage.**

According to NEMA 2002, Uganda has five climatic regions, showing a diverse climatic distribution by region which includes the Lake Victoria zone, the Karamoja zone, the

Acholi- Kyoga region, western Uganda zone and the Ankole southern zone. The climate in Uganda is influenced by the inter tropical convergence zone and the monsoon winds. Most parts of the country have fairly marked climatic seasons as rainy and dry seasons (NEMA 2002). The mean temperatures over the country shows great variations depending on location and elevation where areas near water bodies, their temperatures tend to be modified by the maritime conditions. According to United nations 2002 in Mutegeki 2006; 8, the precipitation in Uganda averages 750mm-2000mm per year. Rainfall is lowest in the dry pastoral areas in the north east of the country and it is highest in the area around Lake Victoria, Mt Elgon area in the east Rwenzori Mountains in the west and Gulu in the north. Annual rainfall in the central region around Lake Victoria ranges from 1750-2000and falls throughout the year with January and February having mild dry seasons (Mutegeki 2006).

Uganda's morphology is largely shaped by its history with Earth movements. According to NEMA (2002), most of Uganda forms part of the interior plateau of the African continent. Relief of Uganda is characterised by flat topped hills in the central region, Western and Eastern parts of the country which is represented by a mountainous scenery along the borders like the Rwenzori Mountains and Mufumbiro Volcanoes in the west ,Mt Elgon, Mt Moroto, Mt Murungole and Mt Timu in the East( NEMA 2002). Most features in Uganda were acted on by forces like volcanicity, faulting down and up warping. These forces resulted in the formation of spectacular land forms of which the western arm of the East African rift valley is among. There are a large number of water bodies which include the second longest river in the world (river Nile) that has its source in Uganda and the Largest Lake in Africa which is also the second largest in the world (Lake Victoria). The country's drainage is dominated by the River Nile basin with other rivers like Kafu, Mpanga that flow in Lake Victoria (Mc Coy 2003 in Mutegeki 2006).

#### ***1.4 Brief description of study area.***

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park is located in south-western Uganda, at the junction of the plain and mountain forests, at the edge of the great western arm of the East African

rift valley. The National Park covers 32,000 ha and is known for its exceptional biodiversity, with more than 160 species of trees and over 100 species of ferns. Many types of birds and butterflies can also be found there, as well as many endangered species, including the mountain gorilla. (UNESCO 1995). The national park has 95 species of mammals recorded, and these include buffaloes, elephants, duikers (black fronted duikers), giant forest hog, different types of monkeys and half of the total mountain gorillas in the world are found in this national park. Some of the animals are only endemic to the national park.

The national park is mainly hilly due to forces of nature that acted on it most especially due to up and down warping that formed the rugged hills on the western side of the rift valley. It is exceptional for its forests from the lowland areas at 1160metres above sea level to the montane forest where the highest peak is highly dissected south of the national park at 2607 metres above sea level (Infield 1997, UWA 2001).

Bwindi impenetrable national park straddles through three districts of Kanungu, Kabale and Kisoro as shown in figure 2 and covers an area of about 321 km<sup>2</sup>. It is located between latitude 0° 53' to 1°8' and longitude 29°35' to 29°50' East. It was first established as a forest reserve in 1932, but later changed its status and was declared a gorilla sanctuary in 1961. In 1991 through an act of parliament it was declared a national park because of its importance as a water catchment area for the south western part of Uganda. It has a high species diversity of both animals and plants of which some are endemic to the area and also because of tourism of whereby it contributes 40% of the revenue from wildlife tourism in Uganda (UWA 2001).

Annual precipitation in Bwindi impenetrable national park ranges from 1,130mm to 2390mm. The heaviest rains are experienced in March –April and December –November while December-January and June-August are the dry season. The coldest period according to UWA 2001, are in June-July with an overall temperature of about 7 °c to20 °c.



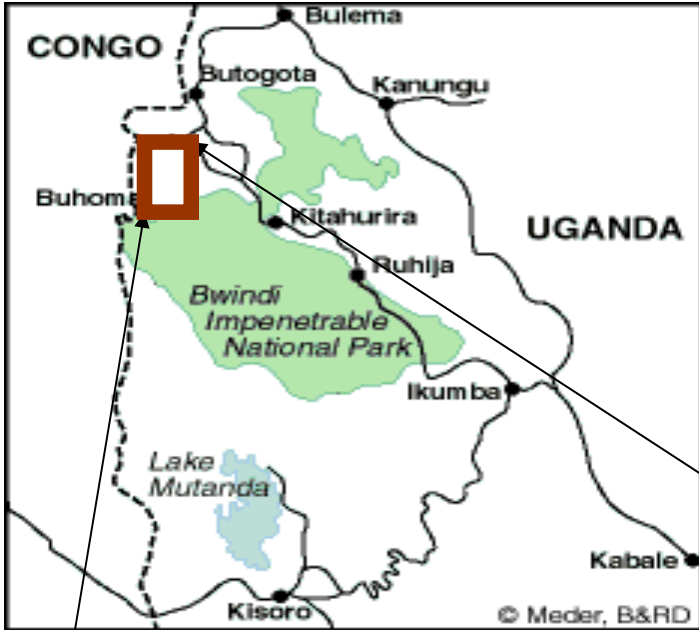


Figure 2 Bwindi Impenetrable National Park showing (inset study area in brown)

Source: <http://www.berggorilla.org/english/gjournal/Bwindi.html>

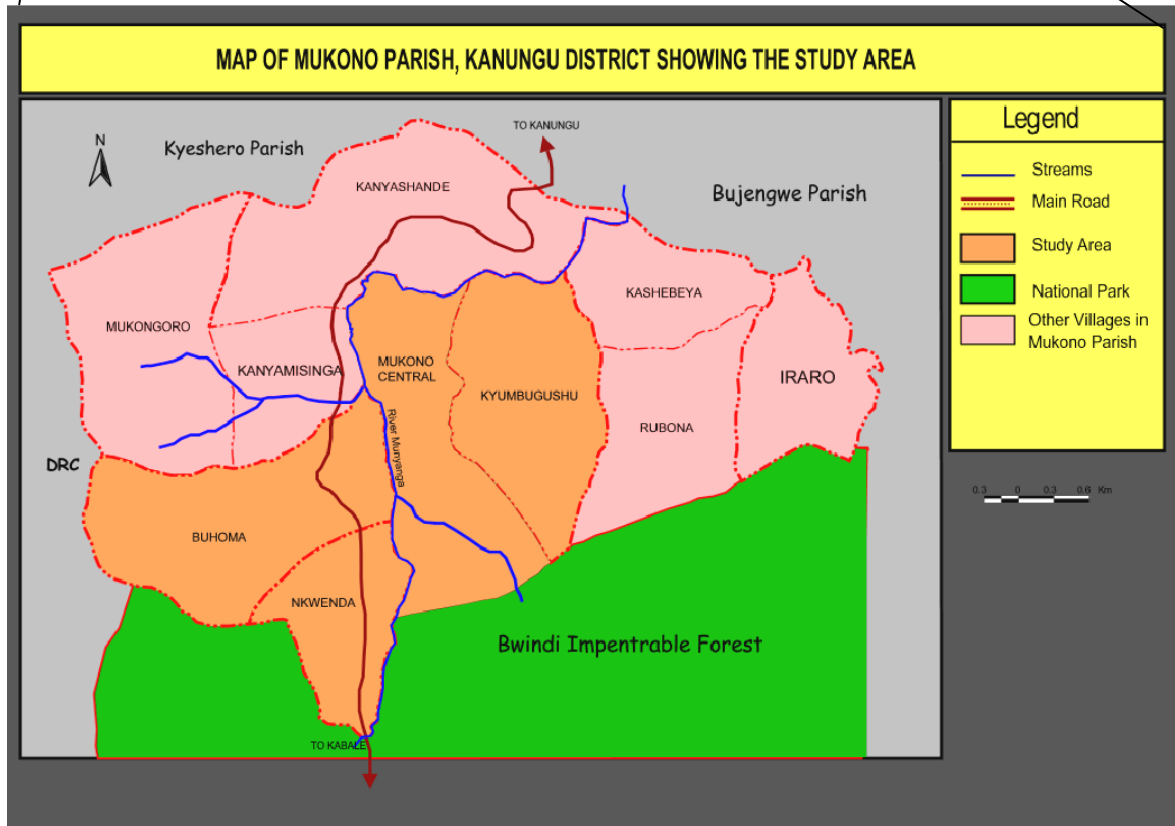


Figure 3 Mukono Parish showing the villages that formed the study area shaded brown.

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park was established in 1991 as a gorilla national park to conserve endangered species as well as being a biosphere reserve that was declared a UNESCO heritage site in 1994 due to its richness in biodiversity (Scott 1992). Due to the conflicts that arose between local resource users and the conservationists over resource use and conservation, the authorities decided to use a development approach to conservation. This was adopted from the 1980 world conservation strategy (IUCN) which defined conservation in relation to development as the management of human use of the biosphere so that it may yield the greatest sustainable benefit to present generations while maintaining its potential to meet the needs and aspirations of the future generations. Thus conservation should be positive, embracing preservation, maintenance, sustainable utilization, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment (Scott 1992). Through the use of community wildlife conservation this is slowly being implemented with some benefits and winning the support of the local population who see the benefits trickling in (ibid). This is guided by government policy that mandates Uganda wildlife authority to involve the local communities in the management of wildlife resources and help enhance the benefits to the people.

Bwindi impenetrable national park is divided into zones each serving a specific use. These zones were demarcated depending on the availability of resources and how these resources can easily be accessed by the local people to be able to get out the best possible results protecting the environment and resources therein. At the same time zoning was aimed at benefiting the people that live close to the national park and who are affected by it in certain ways. There are four types of zones, the tourism zone, administrative zone, wilderness zone and the multiple use zone. The tourism zone is restricted to only tourism activities since this is where the habituated gorillas are and the multiple use zone (integrated resource use zone) are mainly those that the locals have access to and can harvest a few resources like bee keeping, firewood, medicine and providing poles for construction, all this is under the supervision of the national park authorities. The multiple use zones are areas that are away from the busy tourism areas and since the people cannot benefit from tourism, they are able to use some of the resources from the national park in a controlled way to compensate for the failure to access tourism benefits.

The wilderness zone is a conservation zone where there is less human impact for purposes of maintenance and protection of physical and ecological processes (UWA 2001). The administrative zone is for development of national park operational infrastructure and visitor accommodation.

#### **1.4.1 Mukono parish.**

Mukono parish is one of the 27 parishes that surround Bwindi Impenetrable National park in Kanungu District in south Western Uganda. The parish according to Uganda national population and housing census 2002(UBOS 2002) has a total of 11 villages. There are four villages that mainly border the national park; Nkwenda, Kyumbugushu, Buhoma, and Mukono which formed the basis of this study. The four villages have a combined household total of around 552(UBOS 2002). The majority of these households share a boarder with Bwindi Impenetrable national park and are affected by the national park in terms of how they use their land and also how they access certain resources that are within the national park. Most of the tourism activities in Bwindi impenetrable national park take place in Mukono parish especially in the four villages which are under the tourism zone of the national park. Of the four gorilla groups habituated for visitors, three of them are found in the parish of Mukono which shows how important it is for tourism in the area. The parish is mainly inhabited by the Bakiga people who form around 90% of the population with the rest shared by other tribes like the Batwa, the Bahororo, and Bahunde. The predominant type of activity in the area is agriculture as in other parishes around the national park (UWA 2001).

#### ***1.5 Statement of the problem.***

Many writers and researchers (Adams 2004, Mugisha 2002 and Zimba 2006) have tried to put into perspective the role of conservation in trying to eliminate poverty by using wildlife conservation as a tool for rural transformation. The findings have been with mixed results. The world wide trend has been using the catch phrase of community based conservation/community based wildlife management to foster sustainable development on a broader perspective. The government of Uganda is using the integrated tourism master plan to achieve development in rural wildlife resource areas. This research is

intended to look at whether there has been a contribution to development in Bwindi Area through conservation and tourism. The focus for this research is on the role of community conservation programs; how these programs have helped the people that live around Bwindi conservation area in western Uganda. The whole research will revolve on whether or not wildlife conservation leads to development and if not look at the reasons why it's not the case yet in other areas it is said to be working.

### ***1.6 Study objectives.***

The major objective is:-

1. To establish whether people in communities around the park are benefiting from their participation in conservation and tourism.
  - How are the communities surrounding the national park being involved and benefiting from wildlife conservation?
  - What are the areas of conflict that have arisen from conservation?

The other objective is:-

To identify the different types of developments that have taken place as a result of the establishment of the conservation area.

- What are the strategies/programs that have been put in place to ensure that conservation benefits the communities and foster their involvement?
- What views do people have about wildlife conservation?
- What are the disadvantages that have arisen from establishing the park?

### ***1.7 Structure of the thesis.***

Chapter one introduces the study giving background information about conservation and country profile on Uganda, a brief description of the study area , research problem, study objectives and research questions. Chapter two presents the theory mainly emphasizing community conservation approach where the focus is on how the different actors around the national park are involved in conservation and the likely benefits that arise from the participation. Chapter three presents the different methodological tools that were used to

both collect and analyze data. I also present the selection of the study sample, issues of validity and reliability and limitations of the study are also discussed.

Chapter four, five and six presents the findings from the field first looking at the different forms through which local people participate in conservation followed by a discussion on how local communities have benefited and then the conflicts. All these are discussed in line with the objectives of the study and also taking into account the theory.

Chapter seven give a review of the objectives, theory, findings and conclusions. I also present some recommendations for future management effectiveness of the conservancy and a future research area.

#### Summary.

In this chapter, the aim was to present background to the study, the study problem and objectives and the research questions. I also presented a discussion on the structure of the thesis.

## **2.0 Theoretical framework**

### ***2.1 Introduction***

Preston 1997 in Masauso (2003) highlights the importance of theoretical frameworks to tell us the world we have and what kind of explanations to provide to which problems in order to make informed decisions based on recommendations there from.

In this chapter, I present the concepts and theory that have been used for the research. Alternative development theory will be presented along side the concepts of community conservation, participation approach and sustainable wildlife conservation (development) approach.

It is from the basis of the above that this dissertation will try to use alternative development theory to try to unravel the contribution made by wildlife conservation to the development of the people around Bwindi national park. The main emphasis will be put on community conservation approach in order to assess its importance to communities that live near conservation areas to achieve development.

### ***2.2 Alternative development theory.***

Development has no clear definition but what is apparent is that the meaning of the word development has been changing over time due to the deferent problems that have been encountered in the world. Despite the different approaches that have been taken to reduce poverty in the third world, there has not been much to show but rather poverty has continued to take root in third world countries (Friedmann 1992). The per capita incomes of those countries have continued to grow and this is because it is always the top down approach to decision making and planning that has been used. After this, the Cocoyoc declaration in Mexico in 1974 realized that priority should be placed on satisfying the basic needs of the people using the available resources but in a sustainable way(ibid). This gave birth to the alternative thinking to development that looked at satisfying human basic needs, promoting a people centered approach and achieving development of human kind in harmony with the environment that promotes sustainability.

With alternative development, the focus is “helping people to help themselves” (Willis, 2005) in order to achieve development. This is reflected in the role played by non-governmental organizations in the South to development as they are seen to be more efficient and appropriate service providers to the communities (ibid). Alternative development theory promotes empowerment among the marginal communities and groups while engaging in the needs and opinions of the poor. The alternative theoretical approach is founded on its humanistic approach to all human beings, and based on endogenous values, self reliance, ecological soundness and structural transformation for advancement of all in harmony with the environment, (Masauso 2003, Pieterse 2002). This will be the basis to inform this research on whether using the approach of participation and sustainable development alongside community based conservation, contributes to development in Bwindi and if not what would best explain it.

### **2.2.1 Participation**

In 1976, the Dag Hammarskjöld foundation advocated for a more humanistic type of development called the Third System that advocated for people having legitimate power that is theirs for decision making to pressure the state and economic power by organizing to expand the autonomous power of the people (Friedmann 1992). Participation takes many forms for which democratic representation has been the most dominant. The most recent of all is direct citizen participation which has a bottom up approach to decision making rather than the top bottom approach. Participation has a longer and more varied genealogy in development thinking and practice than is usually acknowledged and has been periodically regenerated around the new schools of thought, institutional agendas and changing political circumstances (Hickey and Mohan 2004).

There are different degrees of participation. Mikkelsen (1994) discusses four approaches to encourage participation. Passive participation is training and information with one way communication, while active participation involves two-ways communication with the local people interacting with the training staff. Further, there is participation by subscription, which means that local people through groups or committees are given the opportunity to take responsibility for parts of the projects. Lastly there is participation on local request, where local people express their needs, find the solution and take actions

based on their own knowledge and qualifications. The argument therefore is should all levels be followed to ensure participation or finding the most appropriate that suits a certain project or program. But the argument seems to be that one should follow all the levels up to four in order for it to be effective.

Participatory approach's main objective is to ensure the transformation of the existing development practice and more radically, the social relations, institutional practices and capacity gaps which cause social exclusion (ibid). In doing so, it ensures social responsibility of the projects outcomes by the communities that are part of it leading to lasting impacts both for the people and the project.

Participation according to Mikkelsen (2005) is the involvement in people's development of themselves, their lives and their environment. Its aimed at empowering people to enable them do their own analysis, take command and gain confidence in making their own decisions. This is argued that it brings about lasting development and sustainability while leading to equity in resource use and general well being and owning the development (ibid). The concept of participation arose out of the increasing need to make development projects work due to the realization that the people with whom the projects were meant for rarely participated in the design of those projects which meant their failure (Rugumayo 1999). Participation should be looked at as a right rather than simply an invitation offered to beneficiaries of development. The right to participate in decision making in social, economic, cultural and political life should be included in the nexus of the basic human rights (Gaventa 2004), but there is a need to assess the extent to which new spaces for participatory governance can be used for transformative engagement or whether they are more likely to be instruments for reinforcing domination and control. There fore participation will be used to justify rural development in Bwindi to try and link the role of a people's oriented approach to conservation as (Lusigi1984) concludes:

*“Amid economic and political turbulence, realistic conservation can only be achieved by local and indeed mainly by rural population. Therefore, it is only the people themselves who can defend the protected areas against any pressures. Future conservation efforts*



*should take as their starting point, the restoration of the balance between nature and people” (Scott 1992:15).*

Participation is not only desirable but essential to the success of rural development and natural resource management projects. It is therefore worth noting that participation is one of the essential and key principles for the success of community based conservation in the study area and the wider protected areas management. Throughout this research I tried to find out how the local people in the study area are engaged in conservation and the different forms or levels of participation that exist. I will further try find out whether this participation has been translated into benefits or not and try to show who has benefited and who has not.

### **2.2.2 Sustainable Development.**

In the 1980s the concept of sustainable development constituted the debate on development and the environment. In retrospect, it can be said that the concept not only helped to forge a compromise between growth and environmental protection but also stimulated the exchange of views on development in general. The 1987 world conference on environment and development defined sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future generations to meet their own needs” (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987). Sustainability is an attempt to provide the best outcomes for the human and natural environments both now and into the indefinite future. It relates to the continuity of economic, social, institutional and environmental aspects of human society, as well as the non-human environment. It is intended to be a means of configuring civilization and human activity so that society, its members and its economies are able to meet their needs and express their greatest potential in the present, while preserving biodiversity and natural ecosystems, and planning and acting for the ability to maintain these ideals in a very long term. Sustainability affects every level of organization, from the local neighborhood to the entire planet.

In case of the study area, the opportunity to benefit from tourism should be the same for all stakeholders irrespective of their inclinations, background, gender, age and economic status and this is supposed to be done in an ecologically sound manner. Sustainability in the context of this research will be looked at from the continuity in producing of benefits for the local communities around Bwindi impenetrable national Park. This research looks at the benefits people are able to reap from conservation and how these benefits and the resources that provide them can be continually produced and protected not only for the people presently, but for the future. The question that will be reflected on to be able to unravel the truth is that of whether there has been capacity building in order to maintain and increase the benefits people get from conservation.

### **2.2.3 Community based conservation (CBC).**

In more recent years, the strategies of protected areas have shifted from strict preservation of wild game to conservation of biodiversity and from closed access for the few to open access for all especially for tourism purposes. The increased poaching of game, famine, human tragedies and the resulting environmental degradation of the 1970s led to the questioning of the traditional ideologies and conservation approaches of setting aside protected areas for preservation of wildlife. The protectionist policy to PAs where areas of land were set aside disregarding the interests of the people had failed both economically (fines and fences). Politically it was seen unfair to exclude people was unfair, unreasonable and or illegal (Adams and Hulme 2001). In the 1980s, conservationists, international conservation organizations and African wildlife departments conceded that the exclusion approach to managing PAs was increasingly becoming unpopular and ineffective for a number of reasons (Jones 2001). First, the approach was believed too expensive to be sustained over a long period as it required a lot of work force like rangers to patrol PAs.

Second, it was realized that local people are the main offenders of wildlife laws, so if they become the guardians of wildlife, then African wildlife would have a secure future.

Thirdly, it was pointed out that local people bear the biggest costs from the damaged property such as crops, loss of human lives and lost opportunities to use protected areas' land yet they benefited least from wildlife conservation programs (Gibson 1999). This

revelation coincided more with the general global trend in development thinking and led to initiatives to include local communities in wildlife management in Africa's protected Areas (Gibson and Mark 1995). In essence community conservation aspires to turn the would be conservation offenders (enemies) into wildlife protectors /guardians.

There are many words used to describe the term Community based conservation like integrated conservation and development, community conservation, collaborative management or co-management. For purposes of this study community based conservation will represent programs or projects conducted in areas surrounding PAs with the purpose of looking for support of neighboring communities for PAs, through such activities that raise awareness and benefit in these communities. I will also use the word community as a group of individuals sharing the same social-cultural and economic characteristics with common interests living in a common location.

Hackel(1999) defines community conservation refers to wildlife conservation efforts that involve rural people as an integral part of wildlife conservation policy. It became important in the 1980s when there was a shift in dominant discourses of development with a rejection of top down technocratic planning in favour of development from below at times referred as 'participatory development'. This enabled conservationists (NGOs) to orient their activities with development (Adams 2005). CBC is a response to both alienating the protectionist policies of the past and to the economic concerns that many rural people face (Hackel 1999). The key element of the program is that local communities participate in resource planning and management and that they gain economically from wildlife utilization. It represents a shift away from state centric thinking to community level focus that conceptualizes conservation based on the ideas of sustainable development, utilization and ecological dynamics and incorporation of neoliberal ideas and market forces to 'make conservation pay' (Brown 2003).

Adams (2005) identifies two distinct elements of community conservation;

- To allow people living in and around the protected areas or those with property rights in the national parks and or with claims on the land to use protected living

resources (people and park projects) where people are engaged in national park related tourism, management and operations in the provision of services to communities like education and health through the national park outreach programs.

- Secondly it links conservation objectives to local development needs through 'conservation with development projects or integrated conservation and development projects. This is geared towards poverty reduction and the aspirations of the people around the national parks hence the moral argument that conservation goals should contribute to and not conflict with the basic human needs.

In CBC, communities are not merely perceived as beneficiaries but more as active participants capable of carrying out wildlife management activities. The proponents of CBC stress that it is a bottom-up approach rather than top-down giving people a strong voice in land use decisions rather than having them imposed from above thus changing the usual way of doing things (Zimba 2006). The rationale is that CBC and community-based tourism are generally considered to improve livelihoods sustainability derived both through engagement in consumptive and non consumptive uses to wildlife which diversifies peoples' incomes (Sullivan 2002). The government of Uganda through the Uganda wildlife statute (1996) and the wildlife policy (1999 draft) provides for the use of wildlife resources to benefit the local communities in which these resources are found (UWA 2002). The main aims of this are to be able to make people accept the style of wildlife management and also to conserve areas with great biological diversity.

There have been arguments against CBC approach that it does not necessarily lead to improvements in people's lives nor does it create a good relationship between the resource managers and the local communities. Adams (2004) argues that the concept of community conservation carries with it a considerable amount of romantic baggage. It draws on a long history of idealistic and simplistic western ideas about the nature of communities in the colonial world and political ideas in Europe about the essential nobility of the peasant life. According to Mugisha (2002), complications arise from the definition of a community and the goals of conservation. By advocating for PAs designed

in such a way that it benefits the local communities living around them implies that communities should be defined by the proximity to the PAs.

Hackel 1999 in Mugisha 2002, raises concerns about the ability of CBC to change people's behaviour through economic incentives, he argues that CBC cannot generate enough benefits to offset costs communities bear from wildlife. He also argues that CBC doesn't engender the communities to comply with conservation laws and by itself, CBC doesn't address the development needs of the people, hence it is most likely that local people will support it. Zimba (2006) points out that the local people in South Luangwa Game Reserve in Zambia feel that they have not benefited from community conservation but rather foreigners have most especially foreign tour operators. This is further supported by Lewis and Phiri (in Mugisha 2002) who found out in Lupande, Zambia, (Luangwa Integrated Resources Development) had failed to reduce the incidences of killing animals using wire snares. Adams (2004) supports this by saying that community benefits by ADMADE (Administrative Management Design) programme in Zambia have failed to compensate for the economic, social, and political returns from hunting, hunting tactics have changed but people still flout the law to hunt. Songarwa 1999 (in Mugisha 2002) further argues that the interests of the communities are largely for survival rather than conservation and it is therefore difficult to meaningfully engage them in conservation. It is also argued that community institutions have been eroded and compromised, to the extent that they cannot manage to take responsibilities. The other weakness of involving local communities includes the failure of national governments to give the communities full responsibility to manage and lack capacity to boost management by the communities (Mugisha 2002).

Despite the above, there have been some success stories in as far as community involvement and benefits are concerned in Africa. The CAMPFIRE programme in Zimbabwe as cited by Sibanda (2004) introduced some elements of local management, the use of indigenous knowledge and traditional practices and the policy of allowing local communities to benefit directly from wildlife. However, the major limitation is its inability to create a more equitable distribution of benefits from wildlife. Fabricius (2002) argues that the success of community conservation depends on the willingness and ability

of communities to regulate their own activities mostly when they are founded on traditional structures like in the Kunene region in Namibia with the community game guard system. Adams (2004) further argues that the idea of community conservation is still evolving. Therefore with time it will be able to offset the challenges that it has so far faced.

Uganda has recorded some success in community conservation. In the Mgahinga and Bwindi conservation area, community conservation area committees (CCAC) have been the key to communities participating in decision making. According to Mapesa and Makombo (2003) CCACs are an essential and initial step towards distributing benefits and an effective communication channel through which the national park management and its neighbours, identify and discuss issues in order to work towards solutions. Adams and Infield (1998) attributes the effectiveness of community conservation to bring benefits in Mgahinga Gorrilla national park in Kisoro District to the work of non-governmental organizations that worked towards ensuring communities benefit from conservation. They further point out that the role of community conservation rangers who identify themselves with the communities has helped reduce on illegal entry into the national park. Also people have been able to understand benefits from the national park through the community conservation rangers. NEMA 2002 attributes the success of community conservation to a number of laws enacted to give powers to the people for wildlife management where wildlife use rights are enshrined in the constitution supported by statutes like Uganda wildlife statute which recognize the role of communities in wildlife management.

Mugabe and Clark 1998 (in Mugisha 2002) identify that the Pallisa Community Development Trust has been able to record success because they have a clear mission statement, sense of control and responsibility, a participatory approach to problem identification and a sense of ownership and control by community leaders. These indicators help in understanding the conditions under which community based conservation is effective. In Kibale and Semuliki national parks, local communities were involved in development of management plans. The benefit of this was the formation of collaborative resource management mechanisms that allow communities to use and

manage selected resources from the national parks (Muhwezi 2003). An extension programme of consultation between the national parks and the local communities led to the identification of required resources and the signing of memorandums of understanding to allow regulated harvesting from the parks.

This research will use CBC approach to find out whether people are involved in community based wildlife conservation through participation in conservation decisions and establish whether they have benefited from this participation. Since CBC approach strives to (a) change the roles of local communities into partners in the PAs management and (b) demonstrating that PAs are beneficial to the local communities, it is imperative that this research will find out whether people and their communities have developed. I will try to see whether the principles of community conservation have been followed in Bwindi Impenetrable National park and whether these have been able to effectively help achieve both development for the people and protection for the national park.

#### Summary.

Alternative development theory was preferred in this study to identify the way people are helped to participate and how they do participate in developing themselves and thereby foster conservation. Using the concepts of community conservation, participation and sustainable development, revealed that there are varied ways through which communities participate in both tourism and conservation. The thinking behind community conservation is to put people in charge of decisions over resources that are within the conservation area such that they can utilize them effectively while protecting the resources to sustain their livelihoods.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

#### ***3.1 Introduction***

In this chapter I describe the methodology, methods and tools that were used to collect and generate information. I start by explaining the type of methodology leaning that I chose to use (qualitative) and why I chose it. Secondly I present the choice of respondents and the methods of data collection and analysis and why they were used over other methods. Here I describe how I used the methods to collect the data necessary for the study. I will also be able to point out the limitation of using the different methodological tools I chose and how they affected the research process. The methodology of choice is qualitative to try and explain reality from the point of view of the people or communities from their point of view. However, quantitative data has been used on a small extent to look at relationships between certain variables like household age, education level, income and resource availability and use to be able to gauge the extent to which there has been growth or not in the general wellbeing of the communities around the national park. Lastly, I will also describe my research experience while giving an impression of how the field work was conducted. Issues to do with reliability and validity of the data will also be discussed.

#### ***3.2 Qualitative research Design***

Qualitative methods tend to be associated with the interpretive view as opposed to the realist view that quantitative methods tend to follow (Daymon & Holloway: 2002). It is concerned with the way people make sense of their social worlds and how they express their understanding through language, sound and imagery (ibid, Kvale: 1996). Therefore, you try to understand social reality from the point of view of those living in it. Qualitative research tries to understand processes starting at the individual level rather than the aggregate level to get behind the stories of particular individuals or groups



(Bamberger.2000). During the study the main focus was the people who live adjacent and around Bwindi Impenetrable National park. This was because they are the ones who understand what and how they have been affected by and have affected the national Park. The peoples' stories were central to this study as I tried to listen as much as possible to what they were telling me in order to ensure, answers to the research needed were found. The research was designed in a way that the questions to the respondents allowed them to tell me about the situation in detail about their relationship with the National park and their livelihoods conditions. Here interviewing and observation were essential to be able to get a story from what the respondents were telling me.

I tried to obtain an in-depth understanding and definitions of the situation presented by informants, rather than the production of qualitative measurements of their characteristics and behavior though this also formed part of the investigation. Aggregating variables without getting stories behind them would have given me information that lacks content as it would be up to me to interpret the data to make meaning of the situation than the stories giving me the basis of interpretation. This is why method triangulation was very important to capture both sides of the story. The intent was to discover why things have developed the way they have and the reason for this development.

Before field work, I had a view of why there had been some development through reading material about Bwindi impenetrable national park and contacts I had. But conducting field work helped me look at the beliefs, dealings and behavior of the people and put them in context. This prompted me to do a detailed observation and interaction with the people I was studying to be able to see the world through their eyes rather than subjecting my self to what I thought was right. In line with the above, I tried as much as possible to use the appropriate methods as will be explained later in this chapter to be with a lot of care and pay attention to details which when overlooked could have threatened the outcome of this research. I first tried to get to know the people by mixing with them and participating in some of the things they were doing like joining social gatherings at bars and eating places to make them get to know me and I to know them better and gain their confidence.

### ***3.3 Justification of the methodology.***

Qualitative research is opted in many studies and particularly in this in that the researcher has the freedom to change and formulate questions as they come in mind around the issue being investigated. This allows the researcher flexibility in what he or she asks the interviewee thus bringing in rich information. It was also the most appropriate method for my study because the intention was to get to know people's lived experience with regard to wildlife conservation and tourism in their areas and how they think about it in terms of how it has affected their wellbeing. It gave me the freedom to interact with the people at will and not follow the written interviews all the time but also used informal methods like discussions to get as much information as possible. Since it involved my interaction with the people being studied it was less likely that the subject or respondent can misunderstand the questions (Kvale 1996) since I was there to repeat a question or put it in a different form that the respondent can easily grasp and understand. Not only did I use qualitative methodology but quantitative methods also were employed to be able to get certain issues that the people would not tell me if I only used qualitative methods. For example quantitative methods were employed in order to calculate variables like family size in a household, education level and land size a particular household owns. This information supplemented the views of people which helped me make an enriched judgement of how things are using both types of methodologies.

### ***3.4 Study population and sampling method.***

This study covered a total of 42 respondents who were purposively chosen. Purposive sampling is based on assumption that a researcher has prior knowledge of particular group with regard to its importance to the study (Alston & Bowles 2003). Of the 42 respondents, 14 were households who answered questionnaires, 21 were individuals who participated in interviews and discussions and 7 were key informants who included LC 1 chairmen of Nkwenda, Mukono, Kyumbugushu, and Buhoma, two wardens from Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park and LC2 chairman of Mukono parish. Households

adjacent to the national park boundary were given priority. I believe that the categories chosen possess special knowledge of the events that have taken place since the establishment of the national park a view shared by (Cournoyer 2000) and have lived in the place for a long time. The aim was to solicit information from the people living around the national park in the villages of Buhoma, Kyumbugushu, Mukono and Nkwenda in Mukono parish. These are the villages that share the boundary with the National park in Mukono parish and directly also affect the National park. The four villages were important to this study because they house the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park headquarters in Buhoma, all the major activities of the national park (tourism and community conservation) take place in these villages. The four villages also form the main entry point to the national park and the facilities it has to offer on top of having a fairly high population that lives near the conservation area. Both women and men were given equal chances to get a balanced view from both genders since they are all affected by the conservation area rather than concentrating on one category(males). This was done to enable me find out whether both men and women are affected in the same way.

I also interviewed National Park officials and the political leadership who influence how resources are distributed and used in the area and directly influence the people within the area. These two categories formed the key informants. Both national park officials and the local leadership's views and how they look at the co-existence of the National park and the local people were critical to the study. The local council leaders serve both the interest of the people who elected them and also the side of the National park that they work with. All the four local council one chairmen of the selected villages were interviewed together with the Local council two chairman of Mukono parish. The information they gave was important as it was used to relate to what the people had told me to be able to find truth in the whole study. All the above are stake holders both in wildlife conservation and tourism activities that take place in and around the national park. The selection of the study groups was based on the perceived influence that they have on wildlife conservation and how they impact on the way the conservation area is managed and used to achieve the goals of conservation and also the expectations of the

communities around the National park. I believed that the national park officials although they serve the interest of the national park, are interested in the relationship of the local communities have with the national park because it is so essential for conservation to be successful.

### ***3.5 Research Methods***

In this section, I describe the tools used in data collection and how each tool that I selected was used each with strength and constraints that it provided. These are the tools or the techniques that were used to collect different types of data whether secondary or primary and how the data collected was transformed into useful information that informs this research as its findings.

#### **3.5.1 Interviews**

This is one of the most common methods used in collecting qualitative data. It is the basic mode of inquiry where two people talk and ask questions. The main function is to provide a framework in which respondents can express their own thoughts in their own words (Brewer 2003)

*“The use of language itself contains within it the paradigm of cooperative inquiry ; and since language is the primary tool whose use enables human construing and intending to occur, it is difficult to see how there can be any more fundamental mode of inquiry for human beings into the human condition”*(Seidman 1998:2).

Interviews come in different forms and can be used depending on the orientation of the researcher, the time available and the type of data that one is interested in to collect. They can be structured interview, interviews with a guide or informal conversational interview. It allows the researcher to collect rich and varied data in less formal settings (Kitchen & Tate 2000) and it's a means of hearing other people's stories for which we are interested in understanding the experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience(Siedman 1998). It can be used to collect data on personal feelings, experiences and opinions about a certain occurrence which other methods are not able to

collect. While it's a good method, the researcher should be able to develop strategies, understand the dynamics of interviewing and be aware of the weaknesses and strength of interviewing as a method (Kitchen and Tate 2000). It helps you establish a rapport with the respondent and develop an understanding of the situation, erase the stereotypes that the interviewer had prior to the interview and maintain a neutral position with regard to the topic in discussion. In most cases it is limited in that the time element is not always available and may lead to collection of less or inadequate information.

21 structured interviews were conducted during the course of the study (field work) period that took around 45 days. Apart from these, more informal interviews as will be explained later in this chapter were also carried out to be able to gain an understanding of how the dynamics of operation of the National park and how the people look at it were. This helped augment the information that was got from the formal interviews but most of all it acted as a way of providing proof of what information was given during the formal interviews.

### **3.5.2 Key Informant Interviews**

This method was mainly used to get information from local leaders and national park officials possess knowledge about the national park and its activities mainly using an open ended semi-structured interview guide. A total of 7 key informant interviews were conducted covering four local council chairmen and 2 senior national park officials(wardens) and the local council 2 chairman of Mukono parish. The local leaders mainly LC1 and 2 chairmen had a view that represented that of the local people and also represented the interests of the national park since they were thought to have a balanced view that represented both sides. Based on the objectives of the study and the research questions, an interview guide was used mainly with open ended questions to allow for more elaborate answers. The questions were focused on obtaining information that relates to how the National park relates with the communities, the forms of benefits that the people have got from the National park and to find out whether there are conflicts existing between the National park and the people and the attitudes/opinions of the local people on the benefits that have come with the establishment of the National park.

It was also used with key national park officials like the two wardens (conservation and tourism) to provide more detailed information about the national park, how it relates to the people. The extent of the problems that are being faced by both the National park and the local people in and around the National park mainly the warden in charge of community conservation and the warden in charge of tourism whose information was so valuable. These were selected because they were thought to have an informed understanding of the problem because they relate with the community quite often. I thought they represented a view that reflects the feelings of the people since they daily relates with them and also the national park and some of its partners.

### **3.5.3 Informal interviews.**

Interviews are at times used to reveal the hidden social-economic situation of a particular community which can either be formal or informal in nature. Informal interviews are usually conversational and are conducted in familiar settings involving open questions (Makumbi 2007). This helps one to gradually advance, take time in a conversation using the best possible means to capture the attention of a respondent on a specific topic. Informal interviews increase the salience and relevance of the questions since interviews are built on and emerge from observations where the interview can be matched to individuals and circumstances (Mikkelsen 2005). This helped me to get information from mainly local people on things to do with livelihood improvement, benefits and their opinion on the contribution of the whole conservation project since the national park was established. Of particular interest this method was used to solicit information from the catholic and protestant groups which revealed how religion is a determinant on how benefits are distributed among the local communities but there were other informal talks with other local people on individual level. Unstructured questions were used in order to explore the life worlds of the respondents and be able to allow them to exhaustively provide elaborate answers. Krueger 1994 in (Pole and Lampard 2003; 133) says that the main strength of this method lies in its ability to relax participants and allow them to loose inhibitions which allows them to express their opinions, feelings and emotions. During the informal interviews, I tried to give the respondents ample time to internalize

questions which relaxed them and were able to discuss amongst themselves to give appropriate answers. It also helped me as a researcher to be able to record the conversations. This helped supplement the information derived from the structured interviews.

#### **3.5.4 Questionnaire (open ended)**

The questionnaire method is like an interview but the interviewer in the questionnaire method is not present in administering the tool or has limited influence to administer the questions to the respondent. This gives the respondent time to read and interpret the questions and provide an appropriate answer that best suits the question in his or her opinion. Since I was dealing with people who are less educated however, I had to be present to be able to read the questions to them and fill in the answers provided with the exception of a few respondents. Here the respondent answers the questions at his own will which helps him to give objective answers because there is no interruption from the interviewer or researcher. 'The kind of data here is distinct from that which could be obtained from interviews, observation or documents' (Denscombe2003). To be effective, the researcher needs to cover a number of respondents in order to guard against the problem of non respondents. This technique is easy to administer and in situations of less resources it is the most appropriate (ibid). This method was used only to solicit information from the local people to get their own views about the national park and how it has affected them. I used this method to mainly get local people's views on the levels of access to the national park, their stories about how they were before the national park and how they are now with the national park fully functional. Fourteen questionnaires were administered to 14 households with a total number of 114 members. The information collected was mainly related to family size, health, education, land size and utilization, comparing both now and before 1991. These parameters were aimed at establishing the extent to which the national park has affected the local communities and the people.

#### **3.5.5 Observation.**

Observation is a method where you watch events unfold (Kitchen 2000). Foster (1996) in (Pole & Lampard 2002, 71) defines observation as '*a matter of collecting information*

*about the nature of the physical and social worlds as it unfolds before us directly via the senses rather than indirectly through the account of others*'. To do this, we must make sense of the data through ordering it, interpreting and giving meaning to information. Unlike interview and questionnaire that try to get information from other people, the researcher gets the information himself by mere watching events without an intermediary (respondent) and goes hand in hand with writing in order to keep record of the things you watch. Also photographs may be used to visually represent the observed. It helps supplement interviews in giving information that can't be provided by the respondents (Kuløy 2002). The researcher tries to observe directly the interactions that take place between people and tries to participate as much as possible in those interactions. For the whole period of data collection, I tried as much to be part of the society by engaging in their everyday lives and participating in some of the activities and engaging in casual conversations in order to be able to be part of the experience. This helped me observe the critical things that the people themselves are not able to reveal or tell me and yet are important for this investigation. Critical on this was the way people unknowingly revealed certain things like the way a health centre was established, how the Batwas have acquired some land and others as will be discussed in the following chapters which helped me further probe to get more information through visiting these areas to see what the people were talking about.. To further enrich the information got using this method, I tried as much as possible to take photos where necessary to be able to show evidence of the observed.

### **3.5.6 Life Stories.**

These are gathered to describe the environmental, socio-cultural and economic situations within a certain setting due to changes that take place in society. Life stories are about how the person copes with society rather than how society copes with individuals (Lie 2000). Life stories add depth, focus and reliability to the research and to questions that the interviews and reports failed to answer. This method was used to supplement the information that the other methods generated and also act a check to gauge whether the information was varied or reliable. The intention was to use it for soliciting information related to the people's experiences both before and after the introduction of the national



park and establish whether there has been a change in their lives since the national park opened. This method helped in providing some information that will help answer some of the critical questions in this research. I followed a case of a young man called Joseph (not his real names) whom I met as the motor cycle I had hired had a puncture and as I walked I met him and he helped show me 'panyas' short cuts on the road which gave me an opportunity to build confidence between us and engaged in a conversation that revealed the whole relationship between his family and the conservation area. For two weeks I talked to him and he revealed the different ways he benefits from the national park and the coping strategies that he has adopted to be able to survive and plan for his family's future.

### **3.5.7 Document review.**

This method mainly looked at secondary information reviewing the written literature about the study area in relation to the topic of study. Documents are records relating to individuals or groups of individuals that have been generated in the course of their daily lives (Clarkson 2003) or a situation, project or an event and can supply empirical evidence that can support sociological theories. But J Scott in Bryman (2004) says that in order for the documents to be used, four criterion have to be looked at; *authenticity* which relates to genuine evidence and of credible origin, *credibility* that relates to whether information is free from error, *representativeness* is the evidence typical of its kind and also *Meaning* in whether the evidence is clear and comprehensive. To supplement the data collected I had to visit the ministry of tourism library, Uganda wildlife Authority and related websites on work about Bwindi conservation area. Reports on the performance of the national park, government documents and research information available on the national park, the conservation area master plan, performance reports from Uganda wildlife authority, policy documents from the ministry of tourism trade and industry were reviewed. I also reviewed the reports from Bwindi Impenetrable National park with regard to how they relate to the communities surrounding it, the methods they use to stem off conflict with the communities and also the extent of the effect of the policies towards helping the people around the national park. Information from such secondary sources

was of importance in that it helped to justify some of the information that I collected from the field.

### **3.5.8 Data Analysis.**

According to Erlandson et al in Zimba (2006; pp31), what distinguishes scientific approach from superficial conjecture is a thoroughly prepared, rigorously researched and documented analysis. Bryman (2004) stresses that maintaining a close connection between data and conceptualization such that the correspondence between concepts and categories with their indicators is not lost should be the key. Here it is evident most especially when using grounded theory that the main aim of any research is to make sure data collected is linked with the theory. Since this research is aimed at establishing the relationship between conservation and the living standards of the people who before and after the establishment of the national park were and see it as a source of livelihood, a theoretical framework was developed that has been used to try and link the data with theory to be able to make meaning of the outcome of the study. Therefore data analysis in this study follows a grounded theory approach to be able to answer the questions that guided the inquiry in order to establish whether or not there has been an improvement or not.

In line with this I tried to code the data that I collected in order to come up with a pattern of topics that are able to answer the research questions and show whether the theory holds or not. From the field, to ensure that data collected daily is not lost, I had to transcribe all the days information arranged according to the different themes based on the research questions and objectives which helped not loose valuable information. When field work was over, I had to group the data collected into different categories mostly in accordance with the questions that were being answered. This helped me derive the different topics and subtopics in the thesis. After this I tried to regroup the data grouped into topics to find areas where the information given had similarities. This gave a clear picture of how the different topics within the chapters were going to be. I did it through tracing the data to the method that generated it which ensured that there is no mixture or

confusion of information. This continually led to the evolving and emergency of information through constant comparison both data from all sources; secondary and primary. The objectives of the study influenced and guided how data was grouped to ensure that I come up with the answers to the questions the study wanted to answer. They acted as a safety net that was used to make sure that no information is lost in the process of writing the final chapters in the thesis.

### **3.5.9 The use of research assistants.**

My contact with research assistants begun before I traveled to Uganda. I contacted a friend who connected me to a research assistant who lives and derives his livelihood from Bwindi as a bird guide. This meant that he knew the area best and understood the dynamics that exist in the area. When I reached Uganda I contacted him and briefed him on the whole research, the areas of interest and the intention of the whole research. To be able to establish a link between the local communities, we had to move around the villages for three days mapping out strategies on how we were to cover the area and also to get to know the local communities and them to get to know and accept me in their community. This helped me get an overview of how certain things relating to the social organization of the area are and also to be able to introduce my self to the local leaders. It provided me with an entry point to the study area and also helped me gain access to respondents quickly than I would have had I been alone. He was able to arrange meetings with respondents and also organizing the Batwa for an interview and making appointments with would be respondents.

I was aware of the problems related with using a local person in that he can have bias on the selection of people that you are to interview. Since I was aware of this, I tried to make sure that I limit this problem. For example in choosing households I decided that we will move along the path and choose every fourth home on the route that we followed to avoid the research assistant choosing the people he is already familiar with.

The other problem was that he would always try to chip in to try and help people answer certain questions which I would interrupt to let the respondents answer the questions at their own will and with their own knowledge.

### ***3.6 Positionality in the research***

During the fieldwork I tried as much as possible to position myself to the researched in a way that could not affect the results of the study. Gender of the researcher, education level, age, and class among others affect the field of research (Limb and Dwyer, 2001). All these influence the way we perceive and are perceived in the field thereby having an effect on the results of the study. My positionality in the research especially with the local people was important. I showed as much as possible not to associate myself with the authorities in the national park as the people would have a second thought as to whether I was working for the national park authorities to spy on them. The position of the researcher and relationships in the field surround elements of power (Ibid). This would have made the local people fear to give me genuine information which would have affected the study. I tried as much as possible to be neutral though at times you cannot control certain aspects to 100% but tried to minimize the influence my association to the authorities and the power it possesses on the way it would have influenced respondent reaction.

### ***3.7 Limitations of the study.***

To carry out a successful, reliable and relevant study, certain necessary activities have to be carried out as part of the methodology to make sure that the findings are able to tell or answer the research question that guide the inquiry. But as it turns out there are certain forces/things that are beyond the control of both the researcher and the contingency measures that were meant to minimize this from happening that at times changes the whole course of the study. During the period when fieldwork started certain events happened that were not expected; there was a problem of reward for information given with some respondents when they requested for money in exchange for information especially the local people. However I tried to explain to them the purpose of the research

and was able to bring out what they will benefit from when the research is published or disseminated, which helped calm them down to accept interviews.

Limited time period for the research was a key limitation which led to the narrowing of the study area to a parish rather than working with two and considering more respondents. This is likely to affect the outcome of the whole document but I will strive to make sure that I do much in so short time provided.

There was a big problem of accessibility to the research area which further led to wastage of valuable time as traveling to and from there proved to be more of a headache than a smooth ride. There is only one bus a day that plies the route which means that in case you miss it, you have to wait until the following day. This meant that I had to do only one thing at a time but due to the appointments that I had made with the other respondents I had to keep on traveling to and from there which led to loss of valuable time.

Despite the limitations I had a good discussion with the respondents and largely I was able to collect data and information that is sufficient for the research to be able to draw a line between the theoretical basis of the study and the reality on the ground. There is of course no study that will ever be enough to find answers to a given problem given both time difference and skill of the person carrying out the study and the methods used to carry out the study. But for this particular study am convinced that the information collected was able to provide answers to the research questions.

### ***3.8 Reliability and Validity***

Pole and Lampard (2002), define reliability as the extent to which repetition of the study will yield the same results while validity as the degree to which the study has successfully measured social phenomena upon which it has been focused. To better answer the above, I used a multi method approach to be able to generate information that would be reliable to answer the specific questions that guided the study. Information collected using the different methods acted as checks to be able to find truth and balance in the data collected from the respondents. In qualitative research there is no guarantee that accuracy of results can be achieved but some degree of consistency in the means through which the data was generated can help to bring about accuracy. Constant reference to the theory and relating it to the situation while in the field helped guide in

conducting the study such that focus is not lost. The manner in which the questions were asked and the assurance of confidentiality determined how truthful the respondents were because they were not intimidated since they knew their names were not to be used. This made them give information as they know it rather how I needed it. My ability to communicate with the respondents in their own language ensured that no information is lost through translation to English which helped me capture and understand the information the way it was being given. Given that the study was not a political issue as far as the politics of Uganda are concerned, I believe the people had nothing to fear by giving me genuine information since I had introduced myself to them as a student and clearly outlined to them the intention of the research. All this helped achieve reliability and validity of the findings.

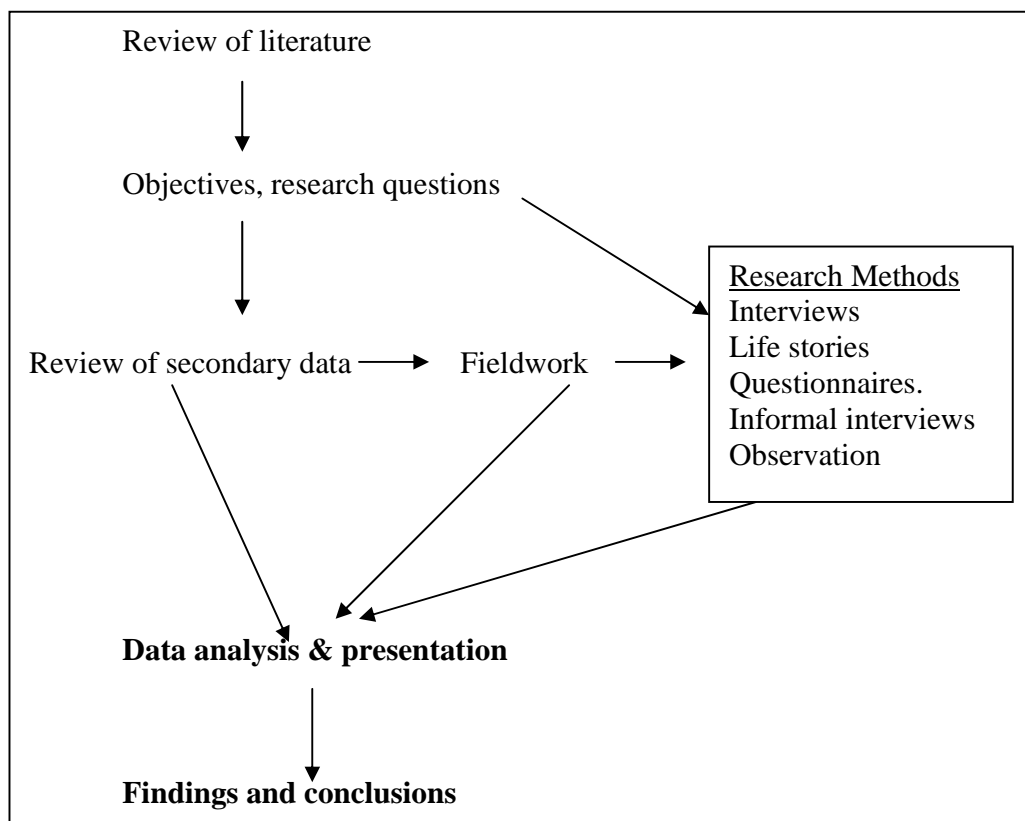


Figure 4 Link between methods objectives and finding.

## **Summary**

The above methods were chosen and found appropriate to answer the questions that this study sought to provide answers to. A method triangulation was able to limit deviation while providing truth and limiting respondent bias. I was able to collect data that is reliable to be able to explain why the situation was the way it was and where possible if not why its not. The next chapter looks at the benefits the local communities have been able to enjoy due to the establishment of the national park.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN CONSERVATION AND TOURISM.

#### **Introduction.**

This chapter presents the findings from the field. I will present peoples' own feelings about participation to show the real world in which things happen and work in relation to community conservation. I will try to reflect on the main tenets of community conservation in order to clearly bring out the real as opposed to the assumed outcome of community participation. The discussion will be based on the objectives focusing on community participation and community benefits from their participation in conservation. I will focus on people's own views on how they are being helped to participate which represents their own lived experiences mainly using quotations from some of the respondents. To better demonstrate the level of local involvement, I will present a key interview with the minority Batwa group and also present an informal discussion with one youth (Joseph) not real name to show the level of involvement and also be able to reveal the complexities of the local community-national park relationship.

#### ***4.1 Forms of participation.***

According to the warden in charge of community conservation, there was a problem of collaboration with the communities around the national park when it was established in 1991. The local people saw the gazatement and eventual restriction from access to the national park as a threat to their livelihoods. The National park Authorities and its partners (Non-governmental organizations) and the government thought of how to involve people in being partners rather than enemies of the conservation and be able to share the benefits from conservation. As discussed in chapter 3, Mikkelsen (1994) asserts there are four types of participation; active participation, passive participation, participation on local request and lastly participation by local subscription. ***Passive participation*** entails one being part of a project but is not mainly involved but acknowledges his support. Here people are only told what is being done for them. ***Active***



*participation* on the other hand involves both beneficiaries of the project taking part side by side where they interact mainly through communication and sharing ideas. *Participation by local subscription* mainly involves local communities taking responsibility for parts of the project while *participation on local request* is more than owning a project where local people express their needs, find solutions and take action based on their abilities in the context of knowledge, skills and qualifications. Most of the people interviewed expressed most the view that nearly all the types of participation exist in the conservation area. Out of 21 people interviewed 14 indicated an active role, one does not take part but understands conservation and six showed elements of participation which is passive and at the same time participation by subscription. This is an indication that there are different ways to make sure that different and varying interests of the different groups are taken care of to maximize benefits and engage them in developing themselves. Active participation was mainly evident in working with the national park and its partner non-governmental organizations in areas like tree planting, handcraft making, problem animal control (HUGO-Human Gorilla Conflict resolution). The other area where active participation was evident was where the local people were working with the national park as labourers or permanent staff where they participated in many activities that are conservation and community development related. Those in passive were mainly members of different organizations like the Buhoma Community Development Association but played no major role other than paying their subscription fee. This does not mean that they were all happy with the way they are involved in the whole project. While some expressed satisfaction with their level of participation some were not. Most of the discontent is in line with the benefits they would wish to reap from being part of the conservation drive and doing away with the resources and other uses they used to derive from the national park before it was gazetted. Where I found people taking charge of their own projects using their own knowledge on the subject was through the work of Bwindi Community Development Association where a committee elected by the people initiates projects and takes charge of implementing those projects for the benefit of the whole community. For example the association initiated the village trail project and received help from donors.

From the observations, I was able to establish both a direct and indirect role that people are playing as participants in the whole conservation project (see table 1). Women groups mainly involved in craft making and youth participating in small scale business ventures like wood curving for sculptures and other items that they sell to tourists. But when asked whether they were participants they dismissed it but it is evident that they are. From the conversations people themselves are not sure whether they are playing a part in their own development. What I found out is that what they think is participation is supposed to be direct involvement in conservation and tourism but ignore the indirect role they do play. In the course of the investigation I discovered that though some people were claiming of being involved, they were in fact to a large extent involved but at different levels and with different means. The participation ranged from being part of organizations, mainly NGOs that are working in the Bwindi area. Rather than NGOs directly doing things themselves, they engage local people to implement the different project while they act as overseers. Of the 21 people interviewed all disclosed that they were working with different NGOs both international and local that work with communities. NGO work include community conservation education, providing infrastructure for social services like education and health, do business and provide people with alternative ways of living without relying mainly on the national park. Notable of the NGOs that operate in the area are CARE (Carry American Relief Everywhere), BMCT (Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust,), International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) and the local peoples own initiated project NGO Buhoma Community Camp Ground which operates under BDCA (Buhoma Community Development Association. All these organizations are involved in work related to community building through provision of materials for use, compensation and provision of income generating activities and also community education on the importance of conservation for both people and the wildlife. The benefits from working with these non-governmental organizations will be discussed in the next chapter (5).

I also found out that people are involved in decision making on issues regarding the national park. Decisions are not directly made by the people but there are representatives elected by the community who push and attend on behalf of the people to air their views.

I established from the local council chairmen of the four villages that they attend meetings between the national park and the community where they are involved in laying out strategic plans with regard to peoples needs. However, they do not decide how those needs are to be taken care of as this is at the discretion of the national park and its partners. After decisions are taken it's the work of the community representative to go back to the communities who, as I was told by all the four local council chairmen, hold quarterly village meetings. In these meetings, the community representative relays the message to the people. In most cases these meetings are attended by all members of the community. They react to the message from the community representative and their views are again taken back to the national park authorities by the chairmen until when a solution is found that fits all parties. All the parishes around the national park have a community representative. They acts as a bridge to the national park and the people as confirmed by the four chairpersons of the four villages that the research covered a view also echoed by the warden and at least 17 of the people interviewed. However, the problem with it was that some people feel that they (representatives) are compromised by the national park and do not push for their views. The four Local council Chairmen for the villages studied disclosed that they are consulted about policies that matter to the people. And at least once in a while they are called for meetings. When asked about the extent of their participation the people preferred that the national park makes all decisions advancing that they have the technical ability that the people do not have. However, they feel they should be informed of the decisions taken on a regular basis as a way of accountability. In line with government policy the national park should consult and make decisions that are pro-people.

There are also situations where I found out that the people have a say in certain areas most especially the projects that are being run around the National park. An example is the Buhoma camp ground project which is run entirely by the local community. The camp ground project which I will discuss later in the chapter 5 has a membership of nearly all the households in the whole of Mukono parish and the decisions are taken collectively. It has a representative on the national park board and decisions have to be discussed first before meeting where he represents them to the national park board.

The other area I found community participation was in the problem animal control. Members of the local community have been so instrumental in this area. They have an umbrella organization called HUGO<sup>2</sup> (Human Gorilla Conflict Resolution Program) where they help in protecting gorillas from getting into peoples farms to raid crops. This is done on a voluntary basis as one member said *“I do this because I see the benefits when my son and I earn some income because of these gorillas through tourism, when we work as porters for tourists and my children are able to go to school because of them”*. This clearly shows the commitment that people have to protecting the gorillas. They are only facilitated in terms of food, foot wear and rain gear, the rest they do on a voluntary basis. At the end of the day they know they will get benefits because of gorillas which are the main resource in the area that attracts tourist. They also take part with the other members of the community to plant a thorny hedge (Mauritius thorn) around the national park. This is meant to stop problem animals like the baboons and the gorillas from coming to people’s gardens to raid crops. The seeds and the equipments like pangas are provided, what the people have to offer is their labor as one said *“after all we are trying to protect our own crops what do we lose”*. Most of the respondents indicated their desire to be more involved in the national park activities as this would strengthen the relationship between the two stakeholders. But when I asked the warden about the sustainability of this arrangement, he expressed some fear that this might not be sustained in the future. This because it is built on mutual understanding with less tangible benefit for the people. An example he gave was the case of Hugo members who work without pay from the national park which might end up leading to conflicts in the future. His argument was that at the moment the money economy is not that very important but in future they (HUGO members) might end up requiring some pay from the national park for their services. This situation is likely to cause tension given the national park’s small budget.

Because of their knowledge about gorillas and having lived with them for some time, the locals are used to help in habituating gorillas for visitor viewing. This helps them use

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<sup>2</sup> These are people who help in guarding against animals raiding peoples’ gardens and attacking peoples’ lives.

local knowledge in tracking the gorillas. The assistant manager of Buhoma Community Rest Camp told me that when the national park was started, locals were at the forefront of habituating the gorillas which led to some of them getting employed as rangers for guiding and tracking them with the visitors. This has helped people be part of the conservation process. When I talked to the people from the two main church groups, I found out that the Catholics feel they are not fully integrated in the process while the Protestants however were okay with the level of participation. Through discussion with a catholic group of two men and five women, a lady and husband reiterated that *'we have educated children who have qualifications but cannot get jobs as the other peoples children who are from other areas (meaning the protestant areas).'* They added that maybe it's because they are migrants from the neighboring district of Kabale. With this though they acknowledged that on the whole people have jobs as compared to when the national park was still a forest. As with the protestant group that had 7 women and two men indicated that they are members of different groups that work in partnership with the national park through women groups. They also expressed satisfaction with the way the national park relates with the communities around which was different from the catholic group.

**Table 1**Forms of participation in Mukono Parish

<b>Type of participation</b>	<b>Local Involvement</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Passive participation	Membership of organstaions like BDCA	Meetings. Following set rules and agreeing to them.
Participation on local request	Through organizations like BDCA, Buhoma womens group	-tourism initiatives. Accommodation establishment -establishment of educational projects.
Active participation	Through HUGO, business ventures and local associations.	Planting thorny hedge around the national park boundary -guarding gorillas from destroying peoples' crops. -tree planting.
Participation by subscription	Through organizations like BDCA, Buhoma womens group	-tourism initiatives. Accommodation establishment -establishment of educational projects.

#### **4.1.1 Batwa Community.**

These are people who are commonly referred to as the pygmies. They used to live in the forest and were typically hunter-gatherers with no other main activity to do. When the national park was established in 1994, these people were relocated from inside the forest to outside the forest. This meant that they had to give up their way of living and adopt a new one mainly by integrating with other people. According to [www.pygmies.net](http://www.pygmies.net) , they are people proud of their heritage and culture that have formed the foundation of their involvement in the whole conservation drive. Due to their local knowledge about the

tropical rain forests, they used to harvest fruits, medicine, honey and used the forest to offer sacrifices to their gods in the forest. Different approaches have been used to and according to the Batwa<sup>3</sup>, they do not regret having left jungle life to live alongside the Bakiga people. They told me that when they left, they were given a piece of land with which they live on and cultivate crops for food. The land was given to them by the Bwindi trust in conjunction with the Church of Uganda. According to [www.pygmies.net](http://www.pygmies.net) they were fully involved in the purchase of the land though the Bakiga elders had cautioned of the Batwa being primitive and would eventually sell the land. However this has so far not happened. According to the head of the group, they have so far lived in this place for around 7 years now and are fully involved with the national park in promoting conservation through folk songs and dances to the visitors in the national park.

The Batwa people are part of (Buhoma community village trail) managed by Buhoma Community Development Association which manages the funds generated from the trail. They everyday assemble at specific places where tourists find them. They perform for the visitors and also display their handcrafts which are bought by the visitors. When I tried to ask them whether they understand why the national park was established I found out that they are well versed with the importance of the national park and the benefits they get from the forest as one 'Mutwa' went ahead and elaborated on the importance of the national park and forest as providing rain, protect wildlife, get jobs and help to capture toxic gases. This is an indication that there has been a lot of education and awareness for the people about the national park. There is an NGO that put a lot of emphasis to resettling the pygmies called MBIFCT and when moving along the access roads to the national park, one is able to notice that there are different resettlement areas that this organization has given to the Batwa people like one in the plate 4.1 below under the motto "conservation for development". When asked whether they are consulted about certain decisions taken, they were told me that they have a representative who is one of the elders chosen through consensus by the whole group. He attends meetings and conveys their ideas to the responsible authorities. But when further asked they indicated

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<sup>3</sup> The Batwa are part of pygmy people who are hunter- gatherers and live mainly in the tropical forests of Africa with no modern means of life. The ones in Bwindi have been integrated into the life of other people outside the national park especially after the forest was gazetted into a national national park.

that the most of the decisions are made for them because people think they are primitive a thought which bothers them. They contended that they should be left to decide on certain things on their own as this would strengthen their confidence.



**Plate 1** Sign post to some land given to the Batwa.

Source: Field research July 2007.

One of their main concerns is on how the money generated from their activities in tourism should be used. To them this money should be used to buy assets like goats and cows to strengthen their asset base. However, the money decisions are taken by trustees for the Batwa who make decisions that are not in line with their aspirations. They told me that the money they generate is put on an account and spends a lot of time there without



being used and is given to them at the end of the year to share. Instead, they would have invested the money in income generating projects that would bring more money.

However, when I had a group discussion with some of the Batwa people, there were some voices that were convinced that they were not yet ready to be fully in control of certain resources and assets. When asked about who makes the decision on the allocation of benefits, they indicated that they are taken by the national park authorities together with the district authorities. When I asked the warden in charge of community conservation, he was quick to tell me that for example the money (20 percent share to communities from gate collections) is channeled to the district authorities who plan how to use it. This seems to create some problems because the local people other than the Batwa indicated that the district authorities do not consult on what the money should do and worst still they rarely see what that money does. One local leader told me that since the national park opened they have only seen the construction of a bridge and refurbishment of the local access road which to him is not enough given the years the money has been generated. He was skeptical that the money is embezzled by the district officials and since the locals do not know how much they are given, they have no way of questioning its use. When I asked him why they do not know, he didn't give a definitive answer but he said they are invited to meetings which they attend and are only told about what they are to do for the community. He said their job is to go back and only relay the information to the people they lead without having a hand in implementation or planning of the projects. However when I put the question to the warden he told me that at times it is the responsibility of the local government through which the money is channeled to explain to the local leaders who in turn should inform the community not the national park. What I observed is that when there is something to do with self help projects, the planning and implementation of the projects are done with the local communities but when it is related with development work, this is only done by local government in conjunction with the national park. The local people are only informed of what is being done. There is a great suspicion on the side of the people as to how this money is used. One local councilor expressed the fear that most of the money is channeled to do other things and moreover in other places other than those that the money is intended to help on

top of some being embezzled through corruption. This has necessitated the need for greater involvement by the people because when asked whether they are satisfied with their involvement, the majority were not satisfied but indicated that it is process that should be given time.

#### **4.1.2. Joseph's Case.**

As stated in the introduction I had discussions with Joseph whom I met when the motor cycle I had hired broke down and he had to help me find short cuts to where I was going. Joseph is from Mukono parish which is found in the tourism zones of the national park. He is 29 years old, married with a 2 year old girl. He comes from a family of five (two boys and girls plus the mother). When I asked him what he does for a living, he told me that he works as a porter in the national park and does some casual work for the establishments in the national park like camping sites near the national park and also has a garden that he and his wife tends to get food. Over the period that I was with him, I came to learn about the family and the strategies that they have used to get a living and be able to improve on their life. His life revolves around conservation and the national park (mainly tourism) as his main sources of income. He told me that because of lack of funds, he was only able to study up to senior four and dropped out in favor of his younger brother who by the time of the discussion was in senior six waiting for exams to join university or college. He dropped out to make money to be able to pay school fees to take his brother to school on agreement that he will take his share of the family land in return which his brother accepted. When I asked him how much he earns, he told me that officially they are supposed to get 15 dollars a day from carrying tourist luggage, at times he gets 100 dollars on a good day which includes pay and a tip from the tourist he has worked for. But the major limitation is the number of times he has to do this in a month. Because of the high demand for the work, the national park authorities makes a time table to be followed for which each individual participates around four times a month giving them an official income that they use to satisfy their needs. He also earns money from selling the produce that he and the wife produce from the family garden which supplements his other income.

Joseph is all praises to the national park for having been established and told me that before they only used to go to the national park for pit sawing, firewood, bush meat and at times medicine which was done by mainly his father when it was still a forest reserve. He told me that he has been able to pay school fees for his brother. He is able to give basic support to his family which he wouldn't with his level of education and being in a village where there are hardly jobs than tending to the family garden. When I asked him whether he was involved in conservation other than being a porter and a member of HUGO, he told me that he is involved in planting a thorn hedge around the national park boundary and he is a member of Buhoma Community development Association (BCDA) which has a membership of nearly all community members in the area. It deals in supporting private initiated business, owns a campsite and operates the Buhoma Community Trail and owns a campsite near the national park (more about BCDA) will be discussed in chapter 5. During the time that I met Joseph, I was able to notice that he was always moving from one place to another either doing things that have a bearing on the national park or talking about the national park and its related benefits they get or how to curve out a better livelihood from the resource that it provides.

#### Summary.

From the study I found out that the level and method of participation varies. However, the people have a wide range of areas through which they are involved ranging from active, passive and other forms that neither were active nor passive but which have made everybody in the community feel that they are part of the conservation drive. This has created a sense of ownership taking the national park as a community resource that people guard against any threat simply because the whole society derives or has its livelihood determined by the sheer presence of the national park. To the people it looked as tough being part of the whole project is not just a call to get involved but a responsibility that they have to shoulder in order to guard against the destruction of a resource that is so dear to them. In the next chapter, I present the different benefits that the people have got from conservation. I will further present the different actors who have made these benefits possible and how they work to achieve it.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the role played by non-governmental organisations. There are many non-governmental organisations both local and international working for conservation and improving the conditions of local people. I will concentrate on the work of mainly two NGOs, one international initiated with a local bearing (BMCT) and the other, a local initiative (BDCA) started by the local community itself. I will show what exactly they have contributed to both the development of the area, the people and their role in conservation and tourism. In discussing their work I will also have to bring in other NGOs mainly working as partners with the two main NGOs. I will first discuss the work of BMCT showing the different projects it is involved in and also show the view the local people had on their activities.

After I will discuss the work of BDCA which is a community owned organisation that works to promote the development of its members in Mukono parish. I will show the works that it has been able to do and how this work has impacted on the people. Lastly I will also highlight generally the benefits that the local people have been able to reap from tourism both direct and indirect. All the above will be discussed bearing in mind the main objectives of the study to be able to answer the research questions as stated in chapter two of this thesis. I will explain some of the work of the NGOs while bringing to light some of the expressions of the local community that was got from the interviews and the household survey.

### ***5.1 The work of non-governmental organizations and community benefits.***

Non-governmental organizations have been instrumental in making it possible for the community to accept the conservation drive in Bwindi and later enjoy the benefits that come with it.

Non-governmental organizations that work in the Bwindi area are mainly conservation organizations that were formed or attracted to the area to stem off resistance to the formation of the national park. From figure 5, it shows that all the NGOs work together in

various forms of partnerships. According to the warden in charge of the community conservation which department is responsible for liaising with the communities, the major NGOs operating in the area are CARE(Carry American Relief Everywhere), MBCT(Mgahinga and Bwindi Conservation Trust), IGCP(International Gorilla Conservation Programme), MGVP(Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Programme), UCOTA (Uganda Community Tourism Association), CTPH (Conservation Through Public Health), and MGCF (Mountain Gorilla Conservation Fund) and also the local NGO Buhoma Community Development Association. (BCDA)

In 1991 when the National Park was established, the communities around the forest were using it as a source of livelihood both for food and income that sustained them for along time. I took a house hold survey of fourteen household mainly those who live on the edges of the national park. Fifty eight percent of the households were using the forest before it was a park, while 42 percent did not directly use it but bought things from the forest. Things they used to harvest ranged from timber for both sale and own building, bush meat, firewood, sand and honey. Some said they used to go in for gold mining. Because of the above benefits people thought they were going to loose out in favour of foreigners and the government. According to the warden in charge of conservation, this created a lot of tension between the National Park authorities and the local communities who continued to use the park mainly through poaching and illegal logging.

**Table 2 Key actors supporting conservation and development in and around Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park**

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Primary focus</b>	<b>Funding</b>
MBCT (Mgahinga and Bwindi Conservation Trust)	Provides funding for community development projects (income generating projects and rural infrastructure), Park management, research, the Batwa programme and the ecological monitoring project	Netherlands government, GEF/World Bank, previously USAID.
BDCA (Buhoma Community Development Association).	Community tourism, accommodation, education and conservation education	Membership fees, MBCT, Tourist revenue and accommodation
Institute of tropical forest conservation	Applied ecological and socio-economic research, ecological monitoring, resource use monitoring, biodiversity assessment and inventories, training of students	Netherlands government/MBCT, WCS, WWF, Fees from researchers
International gorilla conservation project (IGCP)	Support to protected area authorities in the range states of mountain gorilla and certain communities around Pas. Revenue sharing and development of regional collaboration on conservation of the mountain gorilla.	AWF, WWF, FFI
DTC	Community conservation, park planning and management, institutional development, sustainable agricultural intensification, income generating projects	DANIDA, (Previously USAID), European development fund
Mt. Gorilla veterinary project (MGVP)	Focus on gorilla health	MAF and others.

Source: UWA 2001.

The establishment of the national park attracted the attention of government and also the international non-governmental organizations. The main aim was to create a friendly atmosphere in which people and animals plus the national park co-exist and be able to share benefits. These organisations had to work with the people through training in improved skills and educating people about conservation while highlighting the benefits that were to come from conservation. The household survey shows that 90% of the households were directly benefiting from the same conservation that they resisted at the beginning and only 10 % were indirectly benefiting. Also from the set of interviews 19 out of 21 people interviewed confirmed to me that not only have they benefited from the national park but the majority of the population in the parish has benefited and their lives have improved from pre-establishment of the national park. As in the house hold survey, they indicated things like jobs, market for their products, having schools, improvement in education and health as some of the major benefits they have got. These benefits have come because of some dedication to work for and with the people by an array of NGOs in the area which will be discussed below focusing on MBCT and BDCA which are the main organisations in the area.

### **5.1.1 Mgahinga & Bwindi Conservation Trust (BMCT).**

An umbrella organization was formed called MBCT (Mgahinga and Bwindi Conseration Trust) after the establishment of the national park. The main purpose was to resettle displaced people and also carry out education among the communities on the benefits of conservation. According to the MBCT representative in the area, it has since included doing other things like supporting agriculture and micro-finance schemes. From the field observations, there is a high presence of the organization in the area mainly in areas to do with assistance to health units, supporting schools, resettlement and purchase of land for the Batwa people, and helping in agriculture improvement.

The main beneficiaries of the organization are the Batwa people who as explained in chapter four, used to live a hunter gatherer life inside the forest and communities along the borders of the national park. MBCT was formed in 1994 with capitation from the global environmental facility of the World Bank to the tune of around US\$4.3 million but

has since received support from USAID and the Royal Netherlands Government (Dukti 2003, Mountain forum 2002). The main activities of MBCT at present centre on community development which includes education and training communities in conservation, provision of grants, and technical assistance to a whole community ,group or individuals for social development activities or business activities. According to Dukti 2003), 60% of the net revenue of the trust is spent on these activities.

#### **5.1.1.1 Enterprise and business development.**

The Warden Community Conservation was quick to point out that MBCT has been of great help to both the people and as a partner to the national park. The organisation has helped people with business ventures through giving technical assistance and training especially for women. For example the Buhoma women group is one of the beneficiaries and its members told me that they receive advice and help from MBCT. This group makes hand crafts like baskets, masks, mats, wooden carvings and other varieties of crafts. MBCT helps them on how to market and sell their products as well as skills improvement which they appreciate a lot. The money generated from the sale of the crafts is invested back in the business and some shared amongst the members. I was told that each member makes her own product(s) and brings it to the association which buys it and after sale pays the purchase price to the owner and retains the profit. The profit is invested back in the association's money lending scheme that operates as a microfinance scheme which they started with the help of MBCT. When I asked the group how much money they received from MBCT, they were unable to disclose the information. But they have been able to lend money to members at relatively lower interest rates. One of the respondents, a lady who owns a shop in Buhoma trading centre told me that she borrowed 200, 000. Ug shillings (around US\$ 120). She invested the money in a small shop that sells clothes in Buhoma trading centre and has been able to pay back the money and its interest.

MBCT has a local steering committee that screens local proposals for funding and provides the capital to the beneficiaries. Most of the people on the committee have



received training in proposal writing and are able to help people in writing proposals that can easily be funded. The grants to communities are used to invest in small scale business ventures that benefit local communities or individuals. This and many are some of the success stories that MBCT has been able to record that seems to stem off resistance to conservation and has been able to contribute to improvement of peoples' livelihoods. This has reduced greatly the dependency of the people on the national park for resources thus reducing conflict. Women who used not to have a say in society have been lifted from that situation to a point where they do not depend on their husbands for basic subsistence and their status both in family and public has improved. From my observation, the majority of shop owners, handcraft sellers, food vendors in the area were women though I was not able to establish exactly the proportion to men as no record is kept by the area local council. This makes them independent and are not harassed by their husbands as they know they can now be on their own. There is also a linkage to the handcraft makers with UCOTA (Uganda Community Tourism Association) that helps to market people's products especially buying it and helping to sell them in Kampala the capital city and also exporting it to other countries as shown in table 3 below. On top of this, UCOTA in collaboration with MBCT through a project that was initiated by FAO (Food and Agricultural Organisation) helped in development of new tourism products that would be able to increase the number of activities the people are engaged in.

#### **5.1.1.2 Aiding the Batwa people.**

The other critical area where MBCT has done a lot is in resettling the Batwa whom I talked about in chapter four. According to the co-ordinator, the organisation has been able to purchase 400 acres of land for which each family was given 2 acres each (Kisibo 2006). The work of resettlement covers most of the parishes around the park but in Mukono there is particularly one group of the pygmies who have benefited in Mukono Village. When discussing with this group of Batwa people, they were able to tell me that they have received much more than land. Their leader told me that they have been able to achieve what their ancestors would not have dreamed of happening. To them being able

to live freely with other tribes without being harassed is much more than they had hoped for.

**Table 3 Improvements in products available for people.**

<b>Product</b>	<b>Improvements and strategies</b>
Handicrafts	Introduction of new skills and appropriate technologies for production and for value addition (improving local designs, natural dying techniques and improved packaging).
Community Based Tourism	Adding new products with new attractions (village walk and birding circuit) to existing tourism market  Collaboration with Uganda Wildlife Authority to mainstream quality with park standards.  Collaboration with private sector tour operators and managers of lodges for promotion
Community Campground	Improvement in management skills, Business plan development and sourcing of funding

Source: FAO 2006.

They are able to mix freely with the Bakiga community who previously used to hunt them as animals. They say that despite not having the same opportunities as the other people in terms of jobs and business, they feel it is only a matter of time before they are able to achieve it. However, they are given high priority by non-governmental organizations mainly in areas to do with health and education, which they believe is the only way to self belief and development. I was told that their children study free of charge in the schools like Mukono primary school and community primary schools and receive free medical care from the health centre while other people pay a small fee. This is mainly aimed at lifting them from an inferior status to equal terms with other people in

the area. According to (Kisibo 2006) MBCT supports over 700 Batwa school children in the parishes around the national park and around 20 of these are from the pygmy group in Mukono village. Asked whether they have benefited from the establishment of the park, one pygmy family had this to say *“we were nowhere, owned no land than working on other people’s land but now we have our own, our children are going to school, and we now take medicine which we used not to do. So if I say we have not benefited I would be lying”*. This is an indication that the people appreciate the establishment of the national park because with it came a lot of benefits which they would not imagine would have been there. They also told me that their lives have changed drastically in that they now live in proper houses yet before they used to live in trees and makeshift huts. The work done by MBCT to be able to make the Batwa pygmies fit in the mainstream society is slowly but surely paying some dividends. Even the Bakiga people who are indigenous to the area have come to accept the Batwa living side by side with them though of course they still enjoy different opportunities.

### **5.1.1.3 Agricultural support and improvement.**

Agricultural support is so critical to the economy of the people around the national park for subsistence and commercial purposes. All the 14 households that I sent questionnaires to were involved in peasant farming with land ranging from 1 acre to 20 acres the later being for those who are well off. Also 21 people interviewed showed agriculture was supplementing their other income generating activities with earnings. Since people mainly farm for subsistence purposes, most people were dealing in the same type of crops. The most common were banana plantations where at least each family had some, beans, maize, cassava, millet and potatoes. Tea is also one of the most widely cultivated crops and has an advantage of not being eaten by the wild animals from the national park. It is therefore grown near the national park boundaries for specifically this purpose and being a commercial crop, it helps supplement family incomes. All the tea out growers are guaranteed sales because the tea leaves are bought by a tea company Kayonza Tea Growers Association which is owned by the farmers. MBCT helps in providing improved seed varieties to the farmers like beans and maize. These I was told are high yielding

crops that are resistant to diseases and draught. This helps in increasing family produce per acre enabling even the small land owners to be self sufficient in food production. In the end, they are able to sell the surplus and acquire other necessities of life.

MBCT works as an implementing organ for other organizations like Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and CARE in establishing and supporting development projects for people. Table 4 shows the different small scale Agricultural projects that were studied, implemented and supported by MBCT in partnership with FAO to help local people in Bwindi be able to engage in productive activities and generate income. Most of these projects are agricultural activities which shows how important it is to the people in the area.

**Table 4 Areas with projects that FAO supports in collaboration with MBCT**

Products	Enterprise strategies
Honey and beeswax	Introduction of new skills and appropriate improved technologies for production and for value addition (improved traditional beehives, wax extraction and processing, collection centre for packaging).
	Potential new products (sieved honey and wax)
	Potential new markets (Kampala)
	Market linkages with suppliers and buyers
Cultivated Oyster Mushrooms (fresh and dried)	Introduction of new high value/low volume product for existing local and national markets
	Introduction of skills and appropriate technologies for production and for value addition through processing and packaging
	Formation of growing groups to initially share high capital investments
	Market linkages with suppliers and buyers

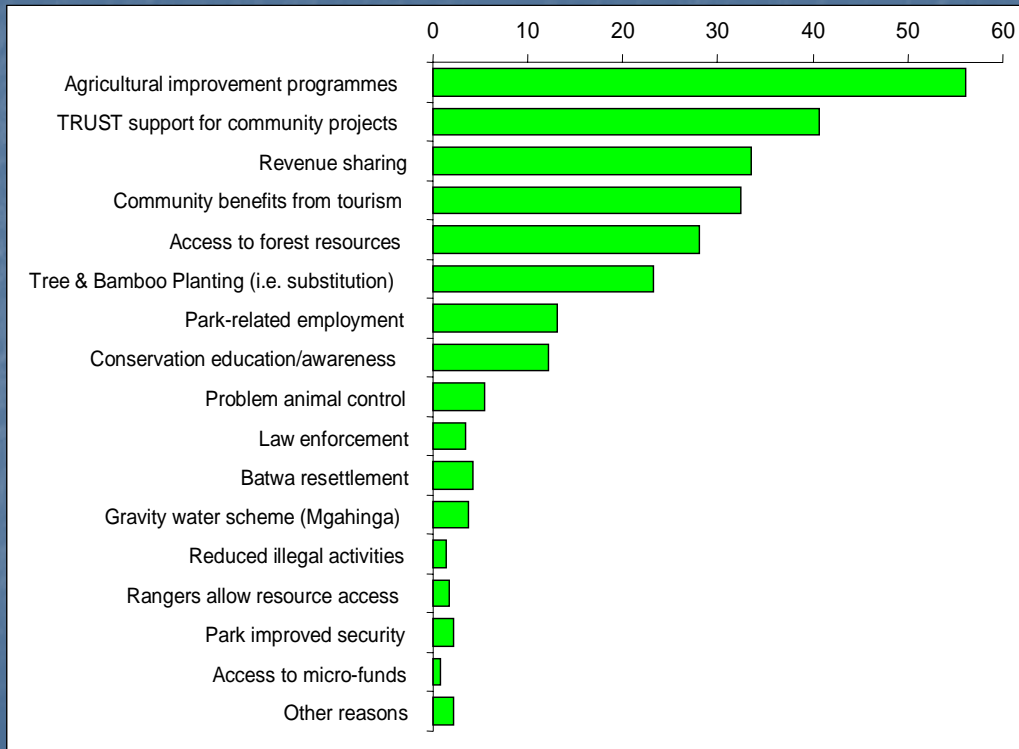
Passion Fruits	Improved production and post harvest management  Linkages with transport companies for access to major buyers in urban centres
Irish Potatoes	Improved production and post harvest management with guidance from National Agricultural Research Organization (NARO), National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), and district extension agents

Adapted from Mujuni et al 2003.

From table 4, there are clear steps followed to be able to realize the main objective and the work is done with the input of the local people through consultations and training. First a project is identified that needs to be funded and implemented. Then strategies are put in place on how the project is going to be planned and implemented and also to ensure cost effective production. For example ensuring that people produce in groups rather than individuals. And lastly they identify the potential market and help the people sell the produce. For example in Nkwenda, honey production is in progress and there is direct marketing and sale to tourists and also to other districts. A small store showcasing the products was opened in a trading centre by the entrance of the national park in Buhoma to be able to show local products to the outside world. Among the products are dried banana, honey, processed ground nut paste, dried pineapple and dried mushrooms which all have a longer life in the shelves.

According to (FAO 2006) the success of the projects lie in community involvement in planning and design of enterprises and its inclusion of social and environmental concerns alongside technological and financial aspects of a potential product. For example the methods of preservation of the products helps in reducing food wastage. I was told by the shop attendant that the dried products have an expiry date of more than a year. Considering that previously these food products used to rot either in the stores or in the gardens, people now have a way of reducing on the wastage thanks to MBCT and FAO. They helped in both training and ensuring that people continue with the project and the benefits are there to see.

## Percentage of people citing each factors causing improved attitudes



**Figure 5. Some of the benefits to people in Bwindi.**

Source: [www.povertyandconservation.info/docs/20060321-Equity\\_and\\_Incentives](http://www.povertyandconservation.info/docs/20060321-Equity_and_Incentives)

One of the most prominent agricultural projects that the people were involved in was the goat project that is being funded by CARE –Uganda in collaboration with MBCT as the implementer through a project called Development Through Conservation. It is also supported by the government of Uganda’s agricultural programme NAADS (National Agricultural Advisory Services). All the households that were covered had knowledge about the project but only 3 out of the 14 households covered had so far benefited. In the programme, goats are given to people who have the capacity to look after them. Before you are given a goat, you have to demonstrate that you will afford to look after it. The way it works is that when you are given a goat and it produces a female, you give the newborn to another person. It is like a revolving fund where you cannot have permanent

ownership of the goat before you give its first offspring to another person. One of the beneficiaries in Nkwenda village told me that he has so far got three goats after giving away one and he is so happy. He hopes to sell some of them when they become many and buy a cow which offers him much more financial security. This shows strategies that people are trying to come up with to be able to maximise the benefit and enrich themselves. However, the Catholic group that I met in an informal group interview claimed that the way they select the first beneficiaries is not right and they thought there was corruption in the way the distribution is done. When I pressed on to give examples of how this corruption is evident they were unable to single out one. The other problem was the rate at which the goats are being given out which to them seems to be taking ages to distribute them. They told me that some people are not considered. These negative attitudes and feeling depict how some of the projects might fail because without the support and ownership of the local people they are doomed to fail. However the voices of decent are so isolated to influence the feelings of the majority of the residents in Mukono parish towards the contribution of conservation to the economic and social development. Even those who were sceptical acknowledge the importance of the national park to the social economic development of the area and attribute it to the presence of the national park. The reason behind the project is to be able to provide poor families with assets that they can easily convert into cash for financial security purposes and as with the resident I talked to it seems to be working.

## ***5.2 Buhoma Community Development Association (BCDA).***

### **Background Information.**

In 1991 when the forest was declared a national park, there was a ban on exploitation of forest products. That ended the local dependency on the forest for livelihood which seemed to have doomed peoples economic situation. But Mukono parish according to (Mapesa and Makombo 2003) has witnessed an economic boom for which the people have exploited the opportunity to generate revenue from the tourism business.

Buhoma community development association was started in 1993 by the local communities within Buhoma which is located at the main entrance of the national park with the help of Peace Corps Volunteers. The assistant manager of Buhoma Community Rest Camp which is one of the main business ventures of the association, told me that all members of the community are free and encouraged to be members of the association which operates with the following objectives.

- To create a sustainable resource base and development in Buhoma
- To promote activities that will empower women to be financially productive and independent
- To promote quality health and education for the children in the community that will teach them to value their environment
- To promote conservation of natural resources through economic activities that are safe to the environment and in particular, BINP (Bwindi impenetrable national park).

The association owns a campsite that is situated right next to the national park offices. It was opened in 1993 as the need was to provide accommodation for the increasing number of tourists and in fact it was the first establishment in the area to cater for tourists when the national park opened. Instead of providing accommodation themselves, the National park authorities decided that the community should rather take up the opportunity to reap the benefits of the tourism business. The National park authorities according to the warden in charge of community conservation, provided assistance in form of land and non- governmental organizations provided money and technical assistance and at present the campsite generates income for community use. The assistant manager of the campsite revealed that from the money they generate, they have been able to purchase a pick up truck that acts as an ambulance as long as people can afford fuel for the vehicle which helps the sick to be taken to the hospital or health centre.

The association has opened up two schools, a primary school and a secondary school in the same compound using the money generated from the businesses that they undertake. The association also receives donations from the tourists who visit the national park and



other non-governmental organizations in the area that work to be able to show the people that conservation can benefit all. The assistant manager at Buhoma campsite told me that of the pupils in the schools around 200 are sponsored by the tourists who visited the national park and decided to pick one or two students to sponsor. This has relieved the parents of the burden of school fees. It has improved the quality of life of the students and the people employed because some kids had no hope of attaining education as their parents were either so poor to afford or are orphans. And despite Uganda having a program of free primary and secondary schools, the schools in the area are either far away from the village or are poorly facilitated which makes the community initiative a very welcome innovation for the whole area. For example the assistant manager was told me that the schools employ over 20 teachers and over 10 support staff. On top of the schools the association employs 11 guides who take tourists for the village walk and around 10 people who directly work at the campsite. All the workers I was told are sourced from the communities neighbouring the national park.

### **5.2.1 Initiation of community projects.**

BDCA has been able to lobby and write proposals to funding agencies for funds to implement some of the work that is critical to the community. In this section I will discuss the different projects that BDCA has been able to work on. It should be noted that as with MBCT, BDCA also works in partnership with other organisations to be able to achieve its objectives. Notable of these projects are the hydro power plant scheme, the Buhoma community village trails and the water project.

#### **5.2.1.1 Hydro power project**

From working with some partners in both conservation and development, there has been initiation of projects that have been able to help the people get the services that were previously not available in the area. There are plans underway to provide the area with hydro electric power from one of the falls in the national park. The project is to be funded by the German Development Agency (GTZ). This came about because of a proposal written by the community development association which attracted the interest of the donors to it. The Assistant manager of Buhoma community campsite was excited by the

project, he told me that it will help in reducing the demand of fuel wood mainly for the campsite and other accommodation establishments around the national park. When completed, it will help the conservation drive while enhancing starting of small scale businesses by the locals. The association is planning to set up a grinding machine in the area and thereby reducing on the distance people have to travel to the nearest town to grind their grain. It will also be a welcome relief for the health centre and the schools in the area which use wood fuel for cooking and generators for other purposes like the theatre for operation at the health centre and night reading for pupils at the school. The above shows that rather than being a community acting as passive recipients of development, they themselves are fully involved as active participants in their own development. They have clear set rules of engagement and have structures in their organization to counter any negative forces that might threaten to derail their determination to get the best out of conservation.

#### **5.2.1.2 Water project.**

BCDA in partnership with the GEF (Global Environmental Facility) small grants programme of the World Bank and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have helped in providing gravity water in Mukono parish especially in Buhoma and Nkwenda villages. The National park authorities provided the site for the source of water. I was told by the Warden for tourism that the national park has many water sources that provide clean water and the forest is an important water catchment area not only for the area but for the surrounding districts of Kabale, Kisoro and Kanungu. So far the villages of Buhoma, Nkwenda and a small part of Mukono villages had received clean water that is got from the falls inside the national park. It is believed other neighbouring communities will soon receive clean water. This will help in reducing many water borne diseases that are common in the area like worms, some skin diseases and also be able to reduce the time travelled to go to the traditional wells and concentrate on other important things. Had it not been the tourism resource that attracted the conservation drive this project would have not been possible, these places are not on the priority list for the

government because of have limited resource. Tourism is used as a bargaining tool to be able to get the much needed development assistance in the area.



**Plate 2 Showing the location of the water project and the water head office in Buhoma.**

Source: Field (Byaruhanga Michael)

### **5.2.1.3 The community village trail.**

The Buhoma Community Village Walk was started with the help of Uganda wildlife authority and Mgahinga and Bwindi conservation trust in collaboration with the local people. The major aim was to provide tourists with alternative attractions while enabling the people to have an alternative source of income. It is managed by the BCDA and includes all sections of the community including the Batwa families that live in Mukono parish. The trail involves show casing to the visitors the way of life of the people around Bwindi National park in the parish of Mukono. It covers all three of the four villages that are part of this study. Tourists are taken to a typical Kikiga homestead (Bakiga are the local people), a banana juice brewing site for traditional beer called (Tonto), a traditional healers shrine, Batwa dancing and music group and a visit to a local women handcraft shop and if time allows the agricultural gardens. The money generated from the walk is shared amongst the members of the trail, the guides take 15%, 15% goes to the village

walk committee, 20% to the rest camp association for community development projects and 15% to the Batwa families and the rest which is 35 goes to other participants like the traditional healer and the local beer brewer. When I asked the Batwa what they do with the money, they told me that they use it to buy meat which substitutes bush meat that they used to get from the national park but the largest percentage is kept in the bank to earn some interest. This has introduced the Batwa people to the cash economy though as mentioned in the previous chapter 4, the money is managed by someone else other than their own. On top of this the local people are able to sell their handcrafts to the tourists on the village trail which is used to supplement their incomes. The Batwa told me that when they perform for the visitors, they are able also to display their traditionally made crafts which are bought and most times they get tips from the tourists.

Generally the area has been able to get much needed infrastructure to boast their development through the tourism businesses that are taking place. On top of the work done by the association, there is a 20% share of the gate collection that the national park authorities give to communities for development purposes like building of class blocks in the schools around the national park. It is also used in helping upgrading the roads and health centres as the warden told me which was confirmed by the local leaders mainly the local council chiefs of the four villages that formed the study area. This is supplemented by the help got from individual tourists who fund certain projects. During the study, a block of 5 class rooms was being built at Mukono primary school with the help of an American tourist who visited the area see plate 3. This shows that the tourism adventure has opened up the area to the outside world which has been of help in uplifting the standard of living of the people. During the interviews when I asked the respondents during interviews how they are now as compared to before the national park was opened, I was told that they are much more better than how they were before the national park was established.



**Plate 3** A new five classroom block under construction at Mukono primary school that was funded by an American tourist.

Source: Field(Byaruhanga Michael).

### ***5.3 Improvement in education and transport.***

Education is said to be the stimulus to development since it exposes one to better technology and earn skills to be able to improve his or her living standards while contributing to the betterment of a wider society. From the household survey, I wanted to find out what has improved in people's homes since the establishment of the national park. All the 14 households were able to say that their conditions have generally improved from the pre-establishment of the national park times. But specifically I was able to establish that there has been an improvement in the level of education not only in terms of enrolment but also in terms of attainment of qualifications. The young generation as compared to the old generation had nearly 90 percent enrolment level which was way higher than the old generation. Of the 114 people covered in the survey, only 25 people had never gone to school and the reasons were that they were either too

young for school going age or are the parents who did not have access to education. A small number were those who just opted not to go to school. Of the people aged 35 and below the education level was high because the majority have benefited from the improvements in the economic situation brought by tourism in the area. Most of them started school when the national park was gazetted or were in the early stages of their education which enabled them to continue with schooling as opposed to the age group 35 and above.

**Table 5 Education level by age.**

Age group (in years)	Number of people in age group	Number of literate people in age group	% of total in age group	% of total number of people covered
0-10 Years	36	21	58	18.4
11-20	37	35	94.6	30.7
21-35	22	22	100	19.3
36-50	12	7	58.3	6.1
51 +	7	4	57.1	3.5

NB : Of the people in age group 0-10, 30.5 of them are not yet school going children which shows that only 11.5 of them don' t go to school.

From table 5, it is clear that there is an improvement in the enrolment and attainment of education in the age group of 35 years and below with a combined total attainment of education averaging to 84 % as compared to the age group above 35 year whose average is just above 50% with 57.7%. The rate of the under 35 years would be nearly 100 % but because 36.1 % of the age group 0-10 are not yet of school going age. This shows that

there are some factors that have led to an improvement as compared to the age above 35 years. The reasons from my observation are mainly an improvement in the availability of schools and the affordability of school fees. In 1991 when the National park was established, the parish had no secondary school with one main primary school and two others that did not have classes beyond primary five. Two new schools have been started by the BCDA because of donations from the tourists and well wishers. Mukono primary school (plate 3) is one school that used to operate up to primary five but has since upgraded to primary seven. This means that children don't have to travel for long distances to schools far away from home. There has also been increased demand for education. For example during the interviews and the household survey the concern of people was mainly education for their children. The high demand coupled with the increased incomes to families, most kids have been going to school. Another factor may be related to the government policy to give free primary education since 1996 to all children, but without schools this would not have happened.

#### ***5.4 Improvement in health services.***

Provision of health services is one of the main targets of people working with conservation in the Bwindi area. Before the establishment of the national park there was hardly any health unit in the area and the nearest hospital was around 40 kilometres from Mukono parish. This means that sick people had to walk for kilometres before they had to get decent medical attention and given that the road situation and there used to be no transportation, it used to be a hard task.

The establishment of Bwindi Community Health Centre has changed the lives of people and has been able to provide much needed health services. Priority treatment is given to the Batwa people who are given free medical services with the other people paying a small fee for their treatment. The health centre provides services like primary health care, maternity, dental services and general diagnostic services to the people. All the 14 households that I talked to sited improvement in health as one of the major benefits that they regard to have come to Bwindi followed by education. This is an indication that people regard the health centre high and from the informal conversations with the people, the

founder (Dr Scott) of the health centre is known all over the area and treated as a hero. The health centre was started in 2003 by a missionary couple from the USA who had come to the area mainly to help the Batwa. The Batwa had then been evicted from the forest that forms the current national park and Dr Scott and his wife decided to start a health centre for the people to benefit and now it is owned by the Church of Uganda. Driven by the need to help the Batwa people the health centre now serves a whole community. From the health centre's website they say that over 20,000 patients visit the health centre every year. I was told by the director of the health centre that they work in collaboration with the local traditional healers. The traditional healers still use their traditional medicine but have been taught safe ways of practicing their trade. Considering that there is a shortage of medical personnel in the area as I was told, traditional healers have helped supplement western medicine most especially in the field of pregnancy and delivery where they assist pregnant mothers. They are more helpful especially where the health centre workers and outreach programmes do not have access and the people don't visit the clinic quite often. From the Buhoma Community Health Centre's website ([www.bchc.ug](http://www.bchc.ug)), they indicate that when the centre started the mortality rate in the under five Batwa children was 50%. However, during the period they have been operating it has been reduced to 18% which is at the same level as the Ugandan average. It shows that there has been progress and to be progressive you need a health body for productivity to increase. When asked about the good things that have come in the area since the national park was opened the most common answers the people I interviewed gave were schools and the hospital (meaning-health centre)..





**Plate 4 The administrative block and the main ward of BCHC**  
Source: Field(Byaruhanga Michael)

Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH) is a small local Non-governmental organisation that has dedicated its services to the people as well as the gorillas in the area. Instead of only looking at the health of the Gorillas, they deal in both human and animal health mainly through research in human animal transmissible diseases and blood testing. The main aim is to be able to stop animals from transmitting diseases to people and vice versa. The operations officer/accountant told me that they do more than that, they also pioneered in the introduction of internet communication and computer teaching. This is so rare in most areas both rural and urban in Uganda.

Gorillas and humans can transmit diseases among each other like tuberculosis, flu and scabies. When humans with these diseases get in contact with the gorillas they easily transmit the disease. To stop this, the operations officer/accountant told me that they help diagnose people and provide the necessary help for treatment. Had it not been the gorillas, these services would not have been provided to the people. Though they do not

operate on a big scale they have been able to provide the necessary help to stop the spread of contagious diseases both among the people and also to the animals through research and testing. In line with communication, they have been able to construct a centre for communication that provides computer communication related services like email and calling centre. Given that most rural areas only dream of such services even by urban areas they have standard equipment and fast internet in fact it was my main way of communication during the period of the study. Because of high tech equipment they have been able to extend services like computer literacy to rural children in the Bwindi area at a low fee. Whenever I would be at the centre, I noticed young children learning how to use the computer with a lot of enthusiasm. This not only helps the people acquire the skills, but allows them to be exposed to the outside world via internet and this exposes them to better ways of living which in the end inspires hard work for personal growth. The other mode of communication that the centre has established is cable television where children and adults alike are shown mainly conservation related channels like Animal Planet and National Geographical Channel that are mainly geared towards conservation and the administrator of the place told me that the centre is visited by close to 100 people every day.

### ***5.5 Tourism and its related linkages.***

Tourism forms the bulk of the activities in the Bwindi area as the most dominant activity. When engaging in a conversation it hardly passes without anyone mentioning anything to do with tourism. The main tourism activity in the area is Gorilla tracking that attracts the majority of the visitors to the National Park as the warden in charge of Tourism explained. Apart from gorilla tracking there are other activities like bird watching, forest walks, research, and community tourism which local communities have greatly benefited from. The national park only has the monopoly over Gorilla tracking and forest walks where they issue exclusive permits to visitors. Community tourism, bird watching and craft businesses are done by the community through BDCA and others privately. This shows that the national park is trying to work in partnership with communities so that the

benefits from tourism are shared fully between the two stakeholders. The national park gives 20% of the total gate collections to local communities around the national park to help fund community initiated projects like road maintenance and construction, improving health, and supporting schools in the area. As I was told by the warden, the largest share of the income the national park generates is mainly from gorilla permits which form around 90% of the total.

**Table 6 Tourist figures from July 2003 to December 2006 for Bwindi NP**

Year	Foreign non residents	Foreign residents	Local Residents	Citizens	Students	Vips	Total
2003/04	4474	109	0	95	906	21	5605
2004/05	6047	115	11	83	237	71	6564
2005/06	8250	120	32	134	1675	97	10308
2006/07	5128	44	6	75	379	0	5632

Source: Uganda Wildlife Authority

**Note.** From table 6, the total figure for the 2006/2007 is lower than the previous year because it only covers the period from July to December 2006

Table 6 shows the tourist figures to the national park which shows there has been a growth in the number of visitors every year. The figures are not much simply because there is no mass tourism. The number of visitors allowed to view the gorillas used to be 6 persons per group but by the time of this study it had been increased to 8 people each paying 500 dollars for a day. Most of the people who visit the national park form the bulk of those who participate in the nature walks and village tourism as different packages. Through this there are many benefits that the local communities are able to reap from the whole business not only as business establishments but also individuals.

### **5.5.1 Employment.**

Because of the rather exclusive and costly form of tourism in the Bwindi area, there are visitors who are attracted by the demand for quality facilities. There has been growth in

the number of high class accommodation facilities. Notable of them from my observation are Gorilla forest camp, Buhoma homestead camp, Mantana Safari camp, Volcanoes, Bwindi Safari camp, Lake kitandara camp and Buhoma community forest camp. Most of these camps charge around 150 to 500 \$USD for accommodation and meals a night for one visitor. Of these its only Buhoma campsite that is owned by locals collectively, the rest are owned by either tour companies or foreign investors. There are other numerous budget tourist establishments that are mainly owned by the locals or local groups like gorilla friends lodge and a host of others. All these establishments employ a lot of people from the local community most especially in the non managerial jobs. The employment is both direct and indirect, some people are directly working with the camps but there are people who supply materials to these camps. The most important things they supply are food (bananas, chicken, beans and a variety of fruits), wood for heating and other essentials including building materials (hard core stones, logs, bricks, labour and sand). This has boosted people's incomes and encouraged self sustainability rather than dependency where people employ themselves and at time create jobs for others to increase their productivity. In Bwindi impenetrable national park as in all national parks in Uganda according to (Mapesa and Makombo 2003), employment is guided by the policy that stipulates that when recruiting, locals should be given first priority in certain job capacities. For example the majority of the wildlife rangers and the guides are from the surrounding communities as the warden told me. However, the top management comes from other parts of the country presumably because the locals do not have the skills needed to fill these positions. By 2003, 90 % of the total permanent work force of the national park was from the surrounding parishes of the national park (Mapesa and Makombo 2003). They earn a combined sum of around \$9000 every month that is mainly spent within the communities, this further creates more multiple jobs thus improving the conditions of the people in the communities. The money economy as I observed is becoming more relevant by the day which encourages hard work and progress which is an added advantage for the area. There are also people who are employed as porters for the tourist who have luggage and cannot afford to carry them. They can hire porters to help in carrying their property as plate 4 shows porters waiting for tourist to clear and begin their work.





**Plate 5 Porters waiting to carry tourist bags to an expedition**

Source field (Byaruhanga Michael)



**Plate 6 Tourist waiting for briefing at the headquarters of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park**

Source. Field (Byaruhanga Michael)

With such employment, the rate of unemployment among the youth has been reduced because they are able to work and earn income. Most of them use the money to pay for their school fees. Schooling stops them from being social disruptors and avoid crime. Others use the money to support their families. From the 14 questionnaires I sent to households, all the respondents indicated that one of the major benefits from the establishment of the national park has been job creation. With job creation there are many things as I observed that have improved, for example there has been a growth in the small towns settlements within Mukono parish especially in Buhoma. Notable of these are Buhoma trading centre, Mukono trading centre which all attract more people to do business leading to more expenditure and certainly growth of the area. Small scale lodges are being opened to cater for the lower market tourists who operate on a small budget. People's homes have improved a case in point is where you find semi permanent houses with permanent houses by the side which indicates that most families have tried to improve on the housing structures like in the picture below.



**Plate 7** New structures like this have sprung up around the area indicating a high income that drives improved living conditions.

Source. Field(Byaruhanga Michael)

Most of the people I talked to expressed joy in that they no longer have to travel to Butogota town 32km away to be able to buy essential commodities and also sell their produce. Many told me that agricultural products are sold from homes as the demand is now high as compared to when there was no national park.

### **5.5.2 Improved market for locally produced products.**

Another important thing that I was able to learn from the study was that there are a lot of activities taking place to be able to provide the needed resources to sustain the demand for many items like food, building materials, firewood and stone quarrying which have also improved peoples lives. The most positive of this that I observed was the planting of eucalyptus trees that help in providing people with fuel wood for both sale and using in homes and also the numerous quarrying centres for stones in the area.

The planted plots are mainly near the forest edges which shield encroachment. People no longer go to the forest to extract firewood. Instead most families have planted their own trees for harvesting. The main market for fuel wood is provided by brick makers and the lodges which use the wood for heating and cooking since electricity is not available and solar energy that they use is not very strong due to limited sunlight. Though eucalyptus tree species are said to deplete the soils of their nutrients, they have been planted on a big scale around the national park. In the future a solution has to be found since eucalyptus trees might end up spreading to the national park and replace the local species leading to their extinction. One of the solutions to this as the warden told me were the constant patrols that the national park authorities make. The national park also relies on locals to report such incidences plus those related to encroachment and poaching which have worked.





**Plate 8** Showing a eucalyptus tree plantation by the edge of the national park in Nkwenda Village.  
Source: Field(Byaruhanga Michael)

Though planting of eucalyptus is said to be bad for the soils as mentioned above, at present it is the best and most productive way of utilizing the land since agriculture cannot take place due to crop raids by the animals on top of stopping forest encroachment.

Most of the stone quarries target the growing construction industry in the area mainly those involved in building lodges. Also due to increased incomes there is a sizeable number of local people who are improving on their housing structures from semi-permanent to permanent structure. The picture below shows one of the quarrying centres with stone ready for sale.



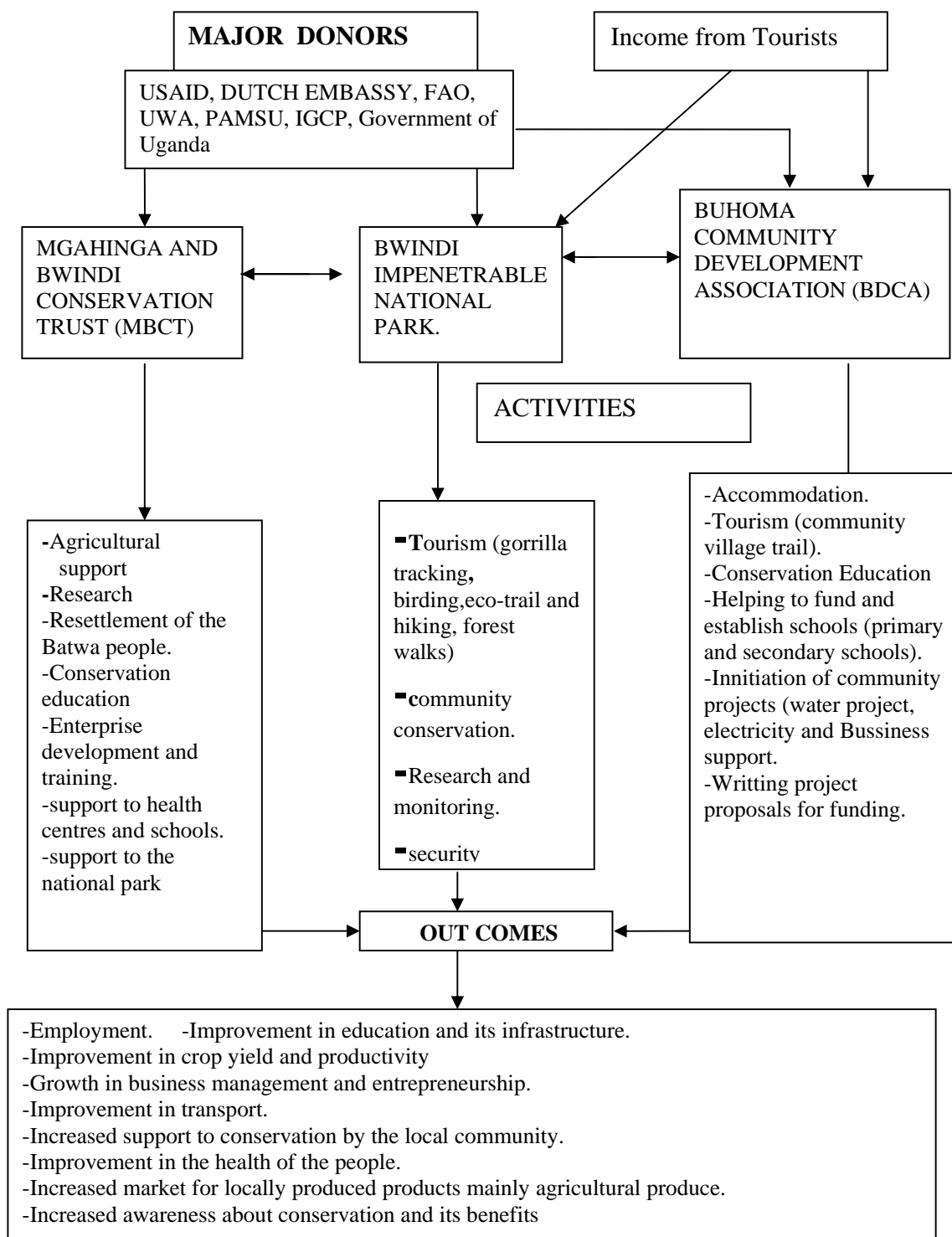
**Plate 9** Stones ready for sale at a quarry near the protestant church in Mukono Village.  
Source: Field(Byaruhanga Michael)



### **5.5.3 Transport**

There has also been an improvement in the transport sector of the area. There used to be no easy transport from Bwindi to other neighbouring towns. When one wanted to go shopping he/she had to wait for a Thursday or Friday to go to Kabale or Rukungiri which are the nearest big towns to Bwindi. And to go to the capital city of Uganda in Kampala, it had to be a highly planned journey that you took two days. But the local people were quite relieved that the need for tourism has created the need for bus companies to operate in the area. For example, the need to take tourists to the national park attracted Gateway Bus Company to operate a bus everyday to and from the national park headquarters. Actually this is the same bus that I used during my travel to and from the area. It has reduced the time of travel and convenience to most people. The journey to Kampala used to take two days but now the same journey takes a maximum of 8 hours for express and 10 hours for one that stops on the way. There is also another bus operator that reaches the nearby town of Butogota where one can jump on a motor cycle that takes him or her to Bwindi. There is also a slightly good network of roads that have been constructed to enable the movement of people and tourists to and from the area. The main problem though is that the roads are poorly maintained with many potholes which makes the journey uncomfortable. Within the area (Mukono) there is a good network of murrum (gravel) roads to help in the movement of both people and goods. Some of the roads I was told by the warden were constructed using the 20% share that the national park gives to communities. There are some new roads in the area that are used for transport to the gorilla tracking areas. Roads have been constructed to ease tourist movement like the road from Mukono village through Kyumbugushu to the gorilla group called Mubare. This has not only enabled the easy movement of tourists but also the sale of produce that the people have to avail to markets which helps stimulate production. On the whole from my observation, compared to other rural areas even in near by villages, the Bwindi area is well catered for by a good road network. There is however, a big problem of maintenance especially the main road from Kanungu town. It's not only potholed but there is a lot of gravel in the road that destroys vehicles and also some patches of the road are on the verge of being washed away by erosion. All these threaten the smooth movement of

tourists who form the back bone of Bwindi's economy. When I inquired who is responsible, the people and especially the leaders told me it's the central government's responsibility. With further inquiries from authorities I found out that it's the central government policy to take care of main roads especially those with highway status like the Kanungu-Bwindi road.



**Figure 6 Shows the flow of fund, the relationship between different non-governmental organisations and the national park, their work and outcomes.**

## Summary.

From the study, it seems clear that when community conservation is well planned, it can have tremendous impact on the lives of the target local community. The local Community in Bwindi has benefited from working in partnership with both the national park and its partner organisations mainly non-governmental organisations while reaping the benefits from tourism that comes with conservation. Community tourism through an organized association that is led by mainly the local people has helped to improve peoples lives by not giving them handouts but enabling them to start their own income generating activities. Here decisions over what is to be done are made by the people themselves with the help of development partners as enhancers but not implementers. This has led to people owning their own projects while respecting the principles of conservation. Local and international non-governmental organisations like care and MBCT have helped build trust between the local people and the national park. But the question still remains whether this relationship can be sustained for a long time given the challenges that the national park faces. However, the local people say they have benefited from tourism since most of them are employed, have businesses that are sustained by tourism and there is market for locally produced products all which provide the needed income to the people to improve their lives. There has also been an improvement in infrastructure that is needed for the areas' development like schools, roads, water and a health unit. It can therefore be said that the drive to conserve the forest national park while involving the local people has helped create an improvement in the general living standards of the community. In the next chapter I will be able to highlight on some of the challenges that are probable drawing from what the people and the national park officials were able to discuss with me during the study.

## **CHAPTER SIX.**

### **6.0 National Park-community conflicts.**

#### ***6.1 Introduction.***

From the previous chapter, it is clear that there is a good working relationship between the local people and the National Park authorities in Bwindi Impenetrable national park. There has also been an improvement in the provision of benefits to the communities for which the national park has benefited from. There is now relative peace from encroachers and illegal use of the resources without the consent of the national park authorities. All these have helped in maintaining a low budget for the national park on law enforcement. But this doesn't mean that there has not been problems that threaten to cripple the relationship that has taken along time to build. In this section, I will highlight some of the problem related conflicts between the local people and the national park authorities as told from interviews and household survey. Most of the problems relate to resource use and sharing where each side feels that there is need to do much more than has already been done. I will discuss this section by representing what the respondents themselves felt insecure with and what their fears are for the future and also point out some of the fears that were expressed by the national park authorities.

#### ***6.2 Problem Animals.***

Problem animals are mainly vervet monkeys, baboons, gorillas and some times elephants and buffaloes though the last two are not so much of a problem and rarely come out of the forest. However, gorillas, vervet monkeys and baboons attack peoples crops most especially banana plants, millet and maize crops. This is one of the main problems that the national park in Bwindi poses to the people. As stated in chapter four most of the people derive part of their livelihoods from peasant agriculture. During the interviews, out of 21 respondents 19 were directly involved in peasant farming. The other two, were a chef in one of the accommodation establishments and a lady working as a support staff in the national park who also owns a craft shop in Buhoma trading centre. Most of them claimed that time and again they do cultivate only for wild animals to eat most of their

crops but they cannot abandon cultivating since it's their main source of work and food. One farmer in Kyumbugushu told me that in 2006, Gorillas entered his banana plantation and destroyed nearly half of the crop. When he reported this to the authorities, they came and measured and have since never had a response from them. When I put the question to the warden in charge of community conservation why this is so, he told me that it's true that people are not compensated for crop damage. The reason he gave was that it's too expensive if they were to compensate all the people whose crops have been raided by the animals and also there is no proper method of quantifying in monetary terms the value of the damage. The failure to compensate the people for their loss has left them wondering whether they will continue supporting the conservation drive. Some people have taken matters in their hands and kill the animals through poisoning. The warden community conservation told me that it is allowed to kill the baboons and vervet monkeys since they are categorized as vermin but only outside the national park. But gorillas and elephants are highly endangered species that are critical to conservation. The other reason for not giving compensation was that since there are alternative sources of income that the people can engage in, it gives them options in case they are to abandon cultivating. Being a densely populated area with a population density of 300 people per km<sup>2</sup>(Mapesa and Makombo 2003), this means there is less land to shift to and given the poor infrastructure in the area it makes it difficult for people to engage in other activities. This at times has strained relations between the national park authorities and the local communities and threatens the sustainability of good co-operation and relationship they have had for years. Some of the people I talked to have found a solution by shifting from growing crops that attract animals to those that deter them. For example tea growing is one of the highly cultivated crops at the edges of the national park boundaries. Tea cannot be eaten by the animals and provides steady income because it is harvested all year round. There is ready market provided by Kayonza Tea Growers Co-operative which itself is owned by the farmers in the area.

Life is also at stake from the problem animals that attack people's crops. Some of the people are injured by the animals in the process of chasing them from the crops. They are attacked and at times seriously injured and the national park authorities rarely come to their rescue. One man told me that he was attacked by baboons while looking after his

millet garden and they injured his leg which had a big scar. Such incidences leave people traumatized by the experience and in some instances shattering their lives but the man told me that this is the price he has paid because of conservation. He lamented that animals have become more important than people to an extent that some people have been ignored and died but I had no way of verifying the statement

Of the households covered, four households indicated that they no longer use their land because of problem animals. During the interviews people expressed that they are not happy because their stock of land available for use has reduced. This affects their productivity and consequently the level of food production given that most of the residents are small holder peasant farmers.

There has been a direct approach to some of the problems involving the people, the national park and the non-governmental organizations that work in the area. The planting of a thorn hedge is done by the people, the national park authorities only provide facilitation like hoes, pangas and supervision. The seeds are provided by IGCP (International Gorilla Conservation Programme) in collaboration with CARE UGANDA and MBCT to make sure that the animals are deterred from crop raiding and injuring people. It remains to be seen whether this will work because by the time of this study, the plants were still young. It is hoped that when they grow, gorillas and elephants will not be able to cross the boundary. The other related short term solution has been a voluntary vigilant group called Hugo (see chapter 4) that helps in detecting and chasing the animals before they reach the private areas. But this is a much more time consuming process that needs a lot of labour and money. The fact that the people who do this do it voluntarily without pay is a great risk. This is because apparently, the money economy is taking shape in the area and growing in relevance to people's lives and livelihoods. In future the national park authorities might find themselves at cross roads when these people demand pay for their work. This is possible because they know how much the national park makes in terms of permits and entrance fees which will make it hard for them to be told that they cannot be paid yet there is a windfall of dollars in millions.

## ***6.2 Loss of land.***

During the interviews there were people who expressed the view that they were evicted from their land when the national park was started to establish a clear boundary but have never been compensated. Three households claimed they had land that adjoined the national park in Nkwenda village and Kyumbugushu. They said they were told that they will be compensated for the land but up to now for over 15 years have not received any settlement for the loss. Some of them were very bitter in reaction to this saying that the national park authorities don't consider their plight "*where do they think we live or get food from yet they know we were evicted from our rightful land*". Another section of the local people though received compensation was not happy with the way the whole process was done. They contend that they were paid little money and in some instances not paid proportionately with the land one lost. The Catholic group during an informal interview said that some people were paid way much higher than what they lost because they knew those who were handling the process. When I tried to inquire from them to sight examples that support their allegation, they all withheld for fear of exposure even when I promised confidentiality. But they insisted that such cases were many. Most of the people who lost land were those who were thought to have illegally taken advantage of the lack of a clear boundary and took land that belonged to the then forestry department before the national park was established. This view was supported by the local council chairmen and also the warden community conservation said that in some instances it was clear that there was illegal use and that people had entered the forest illegally before the national park was gazetted. The warden community conservation revealed that they are still acquiring land though this time people are being paid quickly than when the national park had started. Related to this is the planting of the thorn hedge along the national park boundary. During interviews, respondents told me that they are not allowed to plant the hedges on national park land but on their land which raises suspicion why this is so. A group of ladies and one man who I talked to in Mukono village raised the issue and went on to say that they think it is a deliberate attempt by the national park authority to take over a chunk of peoples' land in the long run. This has put some question marks on the intentions and in some cases creating bad blood as some people appear hesitant to plant



the hedge. As explained above land in this part of the world is held so dear and given that it is the only physical asset that people possess, the national park needs to treat the matter so carefully otherwise peoples' sentiments might end up creating a turn round in relations which might put more than ten years work in jeopardy. One thing I noticed though was that despite these problems, people still feel they have to move with conservation given the importance it holds on their lives through the benefits and developments as discussed in the previous chapter 5.

### ***6.3 Revenue sharing.***

Revenue sharing is one way that the national park and indeed in the whole of Uganda's national parks gives back to local communities. Twenty percent of all national park entrance fees is given back to local communities that live around the national parks. The warden community conservation told me that this money is channeled through local government authorities to help build schools, health centers and also for maintaining roads. But as I found out the mood within the local community is not one of joy though they somehow appreciate the contribution. They feel they have received a raw deal because the national park receives far much more money than they give communities. For example during the interviews, people were knowledgeable of how much is supposed to be given, but the problem was that they rarely get to know whether the national park authorities have reimbursed the money or not. Secondly the concern is that it takes so long for the money to be released, during the study I was told that since the national park began, they have released money once to communities. When I asked the warden community conservation, he agreed with this but clearly said the reason was to wait for the money to accumulate to be able to do something useful. He also told me that Bwindi impenetrable national park is the largest earner within the national parks in Uganda that breaks even, and this means it has to contribute to the funding of other non profit making national parks in the country. But the people argue that why not each conservation area catering for itself and benefiting its own locality.

The other concern related to revenue sharing was that too little is allotted to the scheme. For example the national park charges US \$ 10 per person for entrance fees of which

20% is given to the local communities which is the official share for the scheme. Holders of gorilla permits are charged US \$500 for gorilla tracking with entrance fees inclusive. Putting this in context, it means that the national park gives only 2 dollars per visitor to the community but keeps 498 dollars for itself. The people I interviewed when asked what they would wish the national park to improve on or do for them, around 40 % of the people suggested that the share should be increased to be able to increase on benefits to the community. They argue that only then will the money be meaningful and do something that stands out.

The other significant complaint came from the tour operators who bring tourists to the area. Through discussions with them (most of them stayed in the same lodge as I was staying in) they were concerned about the condition of the main road that leads to the national park. As indicated earlier in the chapter 5 some roads have been upgraded but the main road is far from impressive. The tour operators told me that their clients always complain about the state of the road and this is threatening their business. Some of them said that they are considering taking clients to Rwanda where roads are in good shape and at least where their complaints are heard. When I asked the warden tourism why the road is not well catered for, he said told me it was the responsibility of the central government not the national park authorities to work on the roads. Besides the money required cannot be raised by the national park even the district cannot raise the required money. Standing to loose are hundreds of people who depend on the flow of tourists to the area. Asked how they feel during many of my informal discussions, most people were concerned about the road and were squarely blaming the national park for not doing lobbying from the government to work on the road. If tourists are taken to Rwanda, it is not only the national park that stands to loose but the people and the whole nation. This means that some of the lodges will close due to lack of clients.

#### ***6.4 Harvesting resources from the forest.***

I also established that there is a high need for people to go in the forest to harvest some of the resources like medicine and honey. The study area lies in the tourism zone of the national park where people benefit from tourist expenditures. In other parishes where there is no tourism, people are allowed to do harvesting and use the forest for things like materials for making handicrafts, bee keeping and collecting herbs. The people argue that it is not fair for them not to harvest the products when at times they are left to rot in the forest. I was told by the warden community conservation that people are not aware that the other parishes don't benefit through tourism and for purposes of equalization, that's why they are given controlled harvesting of products in the national park. Fifteen of the 21 people interviewed said they see no harm if they harvested something from the national park. The national park authorities argue that if this is permitted in the tourism zones, it might end up creating a problem where the animals (gorillas) can be scared away leading to relocation and hence loss of tourism revenue.

#### ***6.5 Illegal use of the national park.***

The warden told me that there are instances of illegal entry into the national park that threatens the life of some animals. There are people who enter the national park to hunt for bush meat though this is not common. In the last two years there have been only two instances and this has been possible because of the vigilance of the people who report such cases as and when they happen. Because of local awareness most people report cases that relate to unfair use of the national park resources. They know any repercussion is detrimental to their livelihoods that have been built around the area of tourism and conservation. Related to illegal use is also the problem of people who own goats and cows having to go and graze their animals within the national park boundary. I was told this may lead to disease transfer from the animals to the people and likewise especially the gorillas since they are near to man in terms of genetic make up.

There is a fear by the warden community conservation that one day some of the resources will be more exploited and lead to demand for alternatives which will put pressure on the national park authorities to allow for the use of the resources within the national park itself. For example as I noticed through observations, there is a lot of open ground quarrying that is leaving the soil bare. This will end up creating soil erosion that might end up silting the rivers and causing floods. The quarries are also a threat to eco-friendly tourism that attracts some of the tourists to the area. This might in the long run end up becoming a public relations nightmare for the national park authorities that might scare away potential tourists.

## **Summary**

There are a number of challenges that the national park authorities face that threaten the relationship between the local people and the national park authorities. Most of these challenges arise from some conflicts that exist between the local people and the national park authorities. The conflicts range from problem animals, loss of land, revenue sharing, resource use and illegal entry into the national park. From chapter five, it's clear that there are a lot of benefits that the people are enjoying. But despite the benefits, there is need to lay strategies to reduce on conflicts if conservation efforts are to be sustained for a long time. If this is not done, the people will lose faith in the whole programme and threaten to put more than ten years work at risk. There is also need to increase on the benefit basket to the communities around the national park such that they outweigh the problems. Despite the conflicts and their related problems, between the local communities and the national park authorities, they do not pose a high risk as far as the relationship of both the national park and the local people at present. But they need to be reduced and also try to improve on the benefits that the communities are getting because in future this might end up creating a much bigger problem for the national park if not solved despite not affecting all the people.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### 7.0 Conclusion and recommendations

#### *7.1 Introduction.*

Throughout the course of this thesis I have shown how local communities are participating in conservation projects in the areas around Bwindi impenetrable national park and how it has led to certain benefits. The main purpose of the study was to establish whether people are involved in the conservation drive along side the national park and to establish whether they have been able to reap benefits from this participation. This chapter therefore gives an overview of the objectives relating them with the findings and establishing whether the findings have been able to answer the main questions this research aimed to answer. It will also look at whether the theory used to help provide a platform on which future conservation drives in other areas can be undertaken without hurting both the resources for their foundation and also the people within the communities where the projects are implemented.

When going to the field, I assumed that in Bwindi impenetrable national park, the people around the national park are active participants in the conservation drives in the area. I also assumed that since the people do participate, they have been able to benefit from the conservation drive while enhancing their personal development and the development of the area.

#### **7.1.1 Participation**

The findings from this study indicate that there are different forms through which the local communities have been engaged in the conservation drives. There are sections of the population that are actively involved together with the national park and the non-governmental organizations in promoting conservation and using it as a livelihood enhancing strategy. BDCA is a good example of this active participation where they have managed to work alongside other organizations to better the conditions of its members

and the development of the area through schools, health and water & sanitation improvement. I found out that different people made their own choices on how to be part rather than being forced into participating. This helps in the continuity of the project because the local communities in the study area have a great attachment to Bwindi impenetrable national park. The most important finding was that unlike in other failed community projects in other areas, the Bwindi conservation area attracted a lot of attention from the outside world that came and teamed with the national park authorities and the local people. In the process there was a lot of capital injection in the area that resulted in trickledown effects in all the communities around the national park. These non-governmental organizations like CARE, IGCP, MBCT and CTPH helped in drafting plans that would help integrate the local people into the conservation project. This has brought a positive attitude towards the conservancy by the people because they do not look at the national park as a threat but rather a platform for livelihood improvement and development.

Although the non-governmental organizations have been able to help, when they leave the area, there is a likelihood that the national park authorities will be stretched to sustain what has so far been achieved. The national park does not have enough resources finance all the projects that non-governmental organizations have been involved in. They will also miss the grants that these organizations like MBCT and CARE have been contributing to the general running of the conservancy.

### **7.1.2 Benefits.**

Finding from the study show that the establishment of Bwindi impenetrable national park has brought with it a great number of improvements in the living conditions of the people. There has been general development of the area in terms of infrastructures like accessible roads, schools, health units and sanitation. Many respondents indicated that they are in one way or the other benefiting either directly or indirectly from tourism and other activities that have been initiated since the national park started in the early 1990s. People indicated that they are much better off today than when the national park was still a forest reserve. Among the benefits were employment opportunities to the people both in

the national park or through businesses initiated targeting the development of tourism. Through community conservation, the local people have also been able to learn how to use sustainably their environment to not only be able to protect it but also to make sure that they economically use it to enhance their livelihoods.

One other objective was mainly aimed at establishing the strategies in place to ensure that conservation benefits the communities. I have been able to show in chapter 4 and 5 that one of the main successes of the project was the involvement of the donors and local non-governmental organizations in the area to provide benefits to the people(see figure 6). The study shows that due to the uniqueness of the conservation area in terms of its main attraction-the gorrillas, it was able to attract a lot of non-governmental organizations like CARE, BMCT, FAO and BDCA as a local organization. These as shown in the findings have been able to engage the people to be the implementers of the projects they have initiated. In doing so, they have been able to win the support of the local communities and limit conflict though it has to be argued that conflicts still exist in as far as resource use and sharing is concerned.

The policy of revenue sharing is also another strategy in place that has been devised to be able to encourage local participation and support of the conservation area. Giving back to communities is seen as a responsibility of the national park to strengthen the economic, social and development situation of the people who see the resource that forms the base of the entire conservation area to be theirs. Thus giving 20% back is a way of showing the communities that they are part and parcel of the conservation area and the need to conserve it doesn't only benefit the conservation drive but also them.

### **7.1.3 Conflicts.**

Despite the benefits that the people enjoy, the study found out that there are some conflicts which are long running and the intervention mechanisms have all failed to solve them. The study shows that local peoples' main concern is the problem animals that raid their crops as the majority of the people are peasant farmers. The findings show that the national park authorities do not compensate the people for crop damage by the wildlife.

This problem together with the feeling of loss of land and failure to realize the impact of 20% share to the local communities from gate collections are challenges that the national park authorities need to work on in future to retain the trust and confidence of the people. Despite the conflicts it seems at the moment, people are happy with the way they relate to the national park mainly because of the benefits that they derive from the presence of the national park.

Involving people to be part of solving the evolving problems is one strategy that has limited conflict to spill over. People feel they are and should be part and are enthusiastic about the measures being taken to reduce the level of conflicts between them and the national park authorities. The issue of planting the hedge to reduce on the effect of problem animals, the goat project to supplement loss of jobs or crops due to animal raids have all helped to cement the relationship between the national park authorities and the local communities around the national park which is good for the conservation drive.

#### **7.1.4 Relevance of the theory used to research area.**

I used community conservation relating it to the concept of participation as my theory because I believe that through community conservation the involvement of the people in the conservation drives is paramount for any conservancy to be able to succeed. Also community conservation provided a platform on which to assess the involvement of different players and how these players affect the outcome of conservation by looking at their activities. By using the main objectives of community conservation, I have been able to show how the local people are active participants in their development rather than passive victims of a project initiated to be able to benefit both the locals and biodiversity protection.

From findings, I have shown that when communities are allowed to participate without suppressing their voices and availing to them every opportunity where decision are not only made but implemented by them, there is bound to be success in conservation where benefits are shared rather than selectively given. The involvement of all the major players



(government, non-governmental organizations, national park and the local people) is the major reason why conservation for development has been a success in Bwindi Impenetrable National park. Unlike in other failed projects where it is said that they cannot make enough money to breakeven. I was able to find out that the national park is one of the national parks in Uganda that breaks even mainly through revenue collected from sales of gorilla permits and special permits for forest walks and hiking through the forest. However, it should be noted that the success of the project and mainly the benefits to the local people have been due to involvement of other stakeholders. Without them the national park authorities would have faced an uphill task of bringing on board the local people.

Therefore, when well applied allowing for all stakeholders to have a say in both decisions and implementation of projects while embracing local values, community conservation can help not only preservation and conservation of the resources in the conservancy but also bring about changes in the livelihoods of the people through development projects and tourism. However, as Adams and Hulme (2001) community conservation is a concept that has a wide diversity of meanings that have different applications. The success of the approach depends on how you implement it and the level at which local people do participate without coercion and intimidation. Without carefully planning the implementation, the projects and benefits to involve people in and respecting peoples culture and beliefs then CBC is bound to fail.

## ***7.2 Recommendations.***

From the study, there are certain policies that need to be considered for community conservation to be sustainable into the future and also be able to reduce on the conflicts that exist as the findings revealed. Also for communities to be able to have a greater share of the benefits there is need to have some policies in place to be able to bring in the much needed development while winning over the support of the people.

This study recommends that there is need to increase on the percentage share that the community receives from the national park gate collections. During the study, communities as discussed in chapter 7 were receiving 20% of the gate collections. This money is far too little to accumulate to a figure that can be used to provide benefits to the people. The percentage share to communities should cover not only gate collections (entry fees) but also the permits for gorilla viewing. This figure has been in force for so long without revision but needs to be revised regularly since the user fees for the national park have increased over the years. Secondly the money should not be channeled through local government authorities as it is subject to corruption and at times failure to reach the target group. In this way there would be enough money to do tangible and long lasting projects. The money should be channeled through a trusted NGO that has been working with communities and already knows the needs of the people like Buhoma community development Association or MBCT. This way the money can be put to better use while benefiting the majority of the beneficiaries because people already trust these organizations. There is need for

This study also recommends the change of policy on compensation for loss of crops and injuries due to problem animals. Currently the policy in place recommends no compensation citing verification methods and quantifying loss as major problems. The national park authorities should make sure that they establish scales of values for certain crops per square acre to reduce on false claims and also make the process transparent and easy for the victims to understand how it works.

Government of Uganda should make sure that the main road to the national park especially from Kanungu Town to the national park headquarters is well graded and if necessary bituminised. This will reduce on the time of travel to and from the national park and also increase on the comfort of the travelers especially the tourists to the national park.

There should be a framework through which local communities harvest products from the national park in a sustainable way. From the findings, communities in the tourism zones

are not allowed to harvest products from the national park which makes them bitter since they understand that the other communities in other zones harvest medicine, craft making materials, and bee keeping. The national park should devise ways and means of allowing minimal harvesting of resources especially medicine (nyakibazi) to be able to reduce on complaints and illegal entries in the national park.

### **7.2.1 Future research area.**

The main concern for this study was whether community conservation programme in Bwindi impenetrable forest national park has been able to involve the people and whether the local communities have been able to benefit from their participation through community projects and conservation itself.

The research revealed that there are many ways through which people are being involved in conservation and that this is producing benefits. But the sustainability of the benefits and the continued support by the local people to conservation efforts should also be given priority by future researchers. This should be aimed at establishing changes in people's perceptions about the national park before, now and in the future. I believe this should be able to reveal whether perceptions have changed for the worst or best to determine the sustainability of the programme into the future.

### **Summary.**

Based on community based conservation and its principles, this study is able to conclude that the local communities have been able to benefit from conservation. There has been a lot of work done by conservation organizations and non-governmental organizations in partnership with Bwindi impenetrable forest national park to see to it that conservation efforts succeed while providing the local people with livelihood enhancing benefits. The local people have been involved both in decision making, planning and implementation of the conservation and development projects. Through participation by the local people,

there has been acceptance and owning of community related conservation and development projects that have produced trickle down effects to communities. However, a lot still needs to be done both by the national park authorities and non-governmental organization to make sure that there is sustainability of the benefits and conservation efforts while ensuring that peoples trust is not lost.

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## 9.0 APPENDICES

### ***A) INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LOCAL PEOPLE (RESIDENTS) AND LOCAL LEADERS.***

**NORWEGIAN UNIVERESITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (NTNU)**

**Byaruhanga Michael B**

NAME OF INFORMANT.....DATE.....  
SEX.....AGE.....EDUCATION.....  
OCCUPATION.....VILLAGE.....

- 1 Do you permanently live in this area and for how long?
- 2 Do you own land around this village?
- 3 How do you make a living/what type of work do you do?
- 4 For how long do you work in a day or what is your day like?
- 5 How much do you earn a month or do you earn enough for a living?
- 6 Are you involved in some conservation related work within the conservation area?
- 7 Is there any project that you are involved in within or around the conservation area?
- 8 At what level in the project are you involved (planning, implementation or Management)?
- 9 In your opinion do people around here understand the reason why the national park exists?
- 10 Do you think people or you in particular, have benefited because of the existence of the conservation area/ National Park?
- 11 In what ways do you think people or you have benefited from the establishment of the national Park?
- 12 What do you think about the National Park in general and do you think you ought to have benefited more from the National Park?
- 13 Compared with the period before 1994 and after the National Park was introduced, are you or other people any better than then or worse off now and in what ways?
- 14 what are the areas that you don't agree with the national park or the authorities in the way they manage the conservation area?

15 In your opinion how do you relate or how does the public and the National Park relate with each other?

16 Are there areas of conflict and if so what are they and how do they affect the co-existence of the National Park and the people?

17 in your opinion how do you think the park should be managed taking into consideration the principles of conservation?

18 what would you wish for in relation to the National Park if told to do so?

***B) INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARK OFFICIALS AND UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY.***

**NORWEGIAN UNIVERESITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (NTNU)  
Byaruhanga Michael B**

Name .....

Sex .....

Occupation.....

1 How did this project begin?

2 What was the rationale behind the establishment of the project?

3 How was the environment situation then and now?

4 Generally how has been this area before and after the establishment of the park?

5 What are the major areas of concern and operation of the park?

6 Who are the major stake holders in the whole project?

7 Do the local people get involved in the management of the park?

8 How do you involve them?

9 What benefits do you think have accrued to the communities in relation to the establishment of the park?

10 Did the locals welcome the establishment of the park or there was some resistance.

11 If there was some resistance how did you win over them or the park was forcefully established

12 There must be some conflicts that are there between the park and the local communities, what are they and how or what strategies are in place to reduce these conflicts.

13 What is the park doing to increase the way people benefit from participating or being part of the conservation drive.

14 What do you think should be the areas of concern for this area in the future?

15 Do you think the project is sustainable in relation to conservation and the interests of the people and how?

### ***C) QUESTIONNAIRE FOR HOUSEHOLDS.***

#### **C) NORWEGIAN UNIVERESITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (NTNU)**

Household.....Date.....

Village.....

The information that you are to provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for purposes of this research so please feel free to provide the information as you have it.

1. For how long have you been living in this Area/ village?

- A) 0-15 years
- B) 15-50.years
- C) 50-100 years
- D) Generations

How many members in h/h	Names	Position in house/h	Age	Education	Occupation
-------------------------	-------	---------------------	-----	-----------	------------

**2. What is the composition of the household?**

A) Sex      Number of Males       Females

B) Age      0-10       11-20       21-35       36-50       51+

C) Education. No education       primary       Secondary       College  &University

**3. What are the occupations of the members?**

- A) Self employed.....
- B) Civil servant.....
- C) Park employee.....
- D) Peasant farmer..... And if so how much land
- C) Not employed.....

4) Were you before the park establishment using the park resources for your livelihoods?

Yes

No

If yes, how were you doing it and what resources were you utilizing.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

5 How do you perceive the park in terms of its importance to you?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

6. Are any of you benefiting form the park both directly and indirectly?

Yes

No

If yes how(please specify)

.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

7. Is there anything you lost because of the park establishment?

Yes

No

If yes what and how

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Were you compensated for the loss and how

.....  
.....  
.....

8. How do you rate your situation now from when the park was established?

a) Better off

b) Same as before

c) Worse off

9. Are there situations where you find your selves unable to do certain things because of the park?

Yes

No

9. If yes how and how do you think it can be solved.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

10. Do you receive interventions from the park to mitigate the situation and how?

.....  
.....  
.....



11. Does the park help in providing some societal infrastructure?

Yes

No

and if yes what are they

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

12. Are there community projects that have been initiated by the park to help the community?

Yes

No

If yes do you benefit from the project and how? .....

.....  
.....

13. What role do you play in the project?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

14. In your opinion how do you think the park should work and how should people benefit from it.


(Elaborate).....

.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you for reserving time to participate in the survey.



**E) PERMISSION LETTER FROM UWA.**

**UGANDA WILDLIFE AUTHORITY**  
HEADQUARTERS, PLOT 7 KIRA ROAD KAMWOKYA  
P O Box 3530, Kampala Uganda

Your Ref:  
Our Ref: UWA/TBDP/RES/50 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2007

Mr. Byaruhanga Michael B.  
Faculty of Social Science and T  
Technology Management  
Department of Geography  
Norwegian University  
Norway

**RE: RESEARCH APPLICATION APPROVAL**

I am in receipt of your application dated 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2007, seeking to carry out a Research in Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, addressing "**Wildlife conservation and rural development around Bwindi Impenetrable national Park**"


I am glad to inform you that your research application has been approved for you to carry out research from 20<sup>th</sup> June to 27<sup>th</sup> July 2007. You will be expected to submit a progress report by 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007, and a final report of your findings by 26<sup>th</sup> July 2007 to the Monitoring and Research Unit of the Uganda Wildlife Authority. Please note that, any researcher failing to submit reports at the appropriate time will either not be allowed to continue with the research or in the case of the final report, will not be allowed to come back to do further research.

You will pay an application fee of UG. Sh 10,000/= to Uganda Wildlife Authority

You are required by law to seek clearance from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST). By copy of this letter, UNCST is duly informed that your research has been approved by UWA.

Please report to the Chief Warden, Bwindi/Mgahinga Conservation area upon arrival in the park for registration, and further guidance.

Yours sincerely,  
**Conserving for Generations**

  
Aggrey Rwetsiba  
For: **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

c.c: Executive Secretary, UNCST  
