



**BMCT**

# **Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust**

ANNUAL REPORT **2019 -2020**  
FINANCIAL YEAR



*Conserving for Development*



# ANNUAL REPORT FINANCIAL YEAR

# 2019 -2020

Published by BMCT

Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust.  
Plot 4 Coryndon Road, Makanga  
P.O. Box 1064, Kabale, Uganda  
Tel: Office: +256-414-534406 or +256-486-435626  
E-mail: [bmct@bwinditrust.org](mailto:bmct@bwinditrust.org)  
Website: [www.bwinditrust.org](http://www.bwinditrust.org)

## Citation:

BMCT (2020). Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust. Annual Report 2019-2020.

## Acknowledgement:

Prepared by Kakuru Phares Kosia. Review and design layout done by Gaster Kiyingi (Tree Talk Plus).

© Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT).

This Annual Report is published under an open copyright policy. Any part of this report can be reproduced and adapted with no fees or royalties for charitable and academic purposes only.

**Cover Photo:** *Women group involve in art and crafts enterprises*



SWAROVSKI  
WATERSCHOOL



# Table of Contents

List of acronyms	iii
Greetings from Chairperson, Board of Trustees	iv
Executive summary	v
About BMCT	vi
The BMCT Board of Trustees	vii
The Batwa Land and Resettlement Program	1
The Batwa Education Program	3
The Batwa Careers Day Celebrations	4
Humanitarian Relief for the Batwa	5
Visibility and Participation in National Events	6
Climate Change	7
Alternative Livelihoods Program	8
Embracing Local Tourism	9
Financial Report	12
The Year 2019/2020 in Pictures	13
Key Impacts	15

# List of Acronyms

BINP	:	Bwindi Impenetrable National Park
BMCA	:	Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Area
BMCT	:	Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust
CDO	:	Community Development Officer
GEF	:	Global Environment Facility
GVTC	:	Greater Virunga Trans-boundary Collaboration
IIED	:	International Institute for Environment and Development
ITFC	:	Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation
LC II and LC III	:	Local Council Two and Local Council Three
LCSC	:	Local Community Steering Committee
MGNP	:	Mgahinga Gorilla National Park
TAU	:	Trust Administration Unit
TMB	:	Trust Management Board
UGX	:	Uganda Shillings
UWA	:	Uganda Wildlife Authority

# Greetings from the Chairperson, Board of Trustees



## **I**t is a pleasure that I present the 2019/2020 Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) Report and Financial Statement.

As BMCT, we have reviewed and renewed our commitment towards conservation in Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Area (BMCA), and as such, we have provided community development grants, contributed to local conservation awareness and park protection. It is this awareness that will ensure long term survival of habitats for various flora and fauna, particularly the endangered mountain Gorillas.

We are therefore grateful to all stakeholders, funders, partners, and staff of our Trust Administrative Unit (TAU) who have contributed to this successful year. It is gratifying and rewarding to see that our investments result into improved conservation efforts, better livelihoods and greater resilience to cope with the ravages of climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic challenges that continue to rock communities.

This reporting period of 2019/2020, we realized income of UGX 1,027,759,197 (approximately USD 282,000) that supported our work in the Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Area (BMCA). This was in addition to funding support from United Nations Development Programme (\$80,000, Matching grant) and Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (\$25,000). We appreciate this support and collaboration in addition to the support from government (including the district local governments) and the communities in Rubanda, Kisoro and Kanungu districts.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the associated challenges have affected our performance and delivery of development this year (2019/2020). The pandemic threatened past development gains among the Batwa and this necessitated targeted

investments to prevent health, food and poverty crisis. Together with other partners, we supported the underprivileged Batwa communities with humanitarian relief (both food and non-food items) aimed at building their resilience to climate change and COVID-19 pandemic. We have taken steps to drive recovery efforts whilst addressing both the short-term long term impacts of the crisis.

Our climate response initiatives have remained focused on adaptation and mitigation actions as well as building resilience at community level. Specifically, BMCT invested in energy saving technologies (at household and institutional level), supported tree planting to improve tree cover in the landscape, raised awareness about climate change and the associated impacts and supported biodiversity conservation and community development in the areas surrounding the protected areas.

In a bid to reduce dependence on resources in the protected areas, BMCT supported communities to invest in agribusiness, art and craft value chains, as well as enhancing opportunities to benefit from community tourism. As such, the Trust promoted local tourism through establishment of tourism trails, training women and youth in handicraft as well as positioning them to be able to sell their products to local and international visitors.

We have continued to build the capacity and ability of the Batwa to harness natural resources, improve their livelihoods and shelter, develop knowledge and skills through vocational studies as well as social empowerment, including gender mainstreaming.

Our sincere thanks go to the staff of BMCT for relentlessly implementing projects and activities for this reporting year and to John Adams for professionally managing the endowment fund.

As Board of Trustees, we commit to strengthening the Trust through increased financial resource mobilisation and improvement of community livelihoods and ecosystem health in the conservation area. Once achieved, BMCT will have played its part; contributing to national economic development and social transformation of the people in Rubanda, Kisoro and Kanungu districts.

  
Mr. Sam Mwandha  
**Chairman Trust Management Board**

# Executive Summary

**For the year 2019/2020, BMCT has provided support to projects aimed at promoting sustainable use of natural resources around MGNP and BINP.**

This has been through collaborative community development projects, grants for biodiversity conservation, promotion of tourism, and building ecosystem and community resilience towards climate change. These projects have improved community livelihoods, income generation and enhanced biodiversity conservation, research and ecological monitoring for improved park management.

BMCT has continued investing resources to improve the plight of the less privileged Batwa and surrounding communities in Kisoro, Rubanda and Kanungu districts with emphasis on:

- (i) increasing awareness for biodiversity conservation whilst improving livelihoods among farmers,
- (ii) integrating conservation into community development projects and activities.
- (iii) mitigating climate impacts whilst exploring livelihoods opportunities through agricultural enterprises, construction of houses and support towards education.

For climate change, the focus has been on adaptation and mitigation actions tenable at community level as well as exploring opportunities for building ecosystem and community resilience to climate impacts. BMCT invested in energy saving technologies (at household and institutional level), improving tree coverage in the landscape and increasing awareness about adaptation and mitigation actions relevant to biodiversity conservation and community development. In fact, BMCT distributed a total of 36,918 assorted tree seedlings to various groups including Kasenene Bakyara Tukore Group (4,000 assorted seedlings), Kinyogo Ngozi Group (4,418 assorted seedlings), Tahondi Micheal (11,000 eucalyptus seedlings), James Gilukwayo (1,000 seedlings) and Kyumbugushu Bataka Group (5,500 assorted tree seedlings). These have been planted at households, at schools and some are commercial private woodlots in the target areas.

In order to reduce dependence on resources in the protected areas, BMCT supported communities to

invest in alternative sources of incomes (medium and small agribusiness enterprises) as well as art and craft value chains aligned along community tourism opportunities. As such, skills for business development and marketing were enhanced among beneficiary communities.

A participatory approach was adopted for all project activities, including selection of projects (where project ideas were solicited for at community level), with involvement of LCSC members, Sub-county representatives, BMCT staffs, Local leaders and community members. These ideas were then developed into proposals submitted to parish local councils (LC II) for vetting and alignment with government development planning process and later approval by sub-county local councils (LC III). The proposals were further verified by staff and LCSC together with Government representatives to ensure that they are in line with government development priorities.

Consequently, Bee keeping (7), Energy saving stoves (5), Fish farming (1), Heifer Project (17), Mushroom growing (1), Piggery (16), Potato growing Project (4), Water harvesting (4), Tree planting project (10) and vegetable growing (1) were approved. These are intended to provide alternative income generating opportunities and reduce pressure on park resources.

There is an increase in levels of awareness, with messages reaching out to a total of 859 people (451 Females & 408 Males), in the districts of Rubanda, Kanungu and Kisoro Districts. For these beneficiaries, agro inputs such as potato seed, animal breeds, tree seed, spawns, knives, rolls of threads have been procured and supplied to the beneficiaries to implement over 63 micro-projects.

For the education programs, 127 (57 males and 63 females) pupils in primary schools, 11(8 males & 3 females) students in a vocational institute, 3(2 males & 1 female) students in secondary school (Comboni College) and one female has completed University with Bachelor of Social Works and Social Administration (SWASA).

Details of projects and programs are detailed in the different sections of the report.



*Conservation awareness creation among Batwa communities around Mgahinga Gorilla National Park*

# About BMCT

## Vision

To conserve the biodiversity and ecosystem health of Mgahinga and Bwindi Protected Areas in harmony with the development needs of the surrounding communities.

## Focus

We focus on the environment, people and the economy with a view to conserve the biodiversity and ecosystem

## Mission

BMCT works to conserve biodiversity in BINP and MGNP through investment in community development projects, grants for research and ecological monitoring, funding park management and protection, and programmes that create greater conservation awareness.

BMCT facilitates change by:

1. Supporting vulnerable groups
2. Providing economic opportunities
3. Strengthening capacities (knowledge and skills) of community
4. Influencing policy decisions to trigger systemic change

## Core Values

<p><b>Integrity:</b> operating to the highest standards of professionalism, integrity and transparency</p>	<p><b>Team work:</b> taking advantage of BMCT strength, skills and knowledge</p>	<p><b>Collaboration:</b> partnerships and alliances in support of the BMCT mission</p>	<p><b>Excellence:</b> pursue excellence in all endeavours</p>
	<p><b>Communication:</b> effective internal and external communication.</p>	<p><b>Effectiveness:</b> Ensuring value for money in all BMCT programs</p>	<p><b>Innovation:</b> maintaining innovative approaches to achieving the mission</p>

# The BMCT Board

BMCT was established under the Uganda Trust Act in 1994, as a registered Conservation Trust Fund mandated to support conservation of Mgahinga Gorilla National Park (MGNP) and Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) and contribute to uplifting the livelihoods of the people in communities adjacent to these national parks. It was the first Conservation Trust Fund in Africa established by Global Environment Facility (GEF).



Mr. Sam Mwandha, Chairman  
From Uganda Wildlife Authority.  
Joined the TMB in 2018



Dr. Gladys Kalema, Trustee  
From Local NGO.  
Joined the TMB in 2019



Dr. Ian Clarke, Trustee  
Opinion Leader  
Joined the TMB in 2014



Ms. Nakyeeyune Cotilda, Trustee  
CARE International  
Joined the TMB in 2020



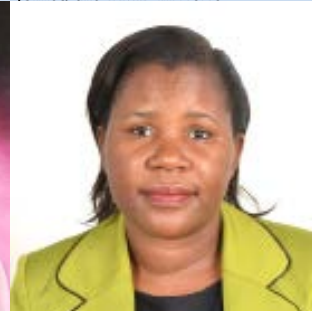
Ms. Annet Ireeba Kobusinge, Trustee,  
from MFPED, Joined in 2019



Mr. Bazamanza Nelson  
Trustee, LCSC Kisoro  
Joined the TMB in 2019



Ms. Charlotte Kamugisha  
Trustee, Private Sector.  
Joined the TMB in 2019



Ms. Harriet Tukamushaba  
Trustee, MJCA.  
Joined the TMB in 2016



Mr. Kanyeihamba Johnes,  
Trustee, LCSC Kanungu  
Joined TMB in since 2019



Dr. Robert Bitariho  
Trustee, From ITFC  
Joined the TMB in 2018



Mr. Stephen Fred Okiror  
Trustee, from MTWA  
Joined the TMB in 2019



Ms. Kiconco Annah  
Trustee, LCSC, Rubanda  
Joined the TMB in 2019



Mr. Mark Mwine  
Trust Administrator  
Joined the TMB in 2020





**1** *Improved Batwa wellbeing through houses construction in Kihembe Settlement, Kanungu District*

# The Batwa - Land and resettlement

*...the Batwa are poor, vulnerable and at risk*

**W**hereas BMCT is a strong defender of equality in its programing, it remains focused on support the vulnerable Batwa as an 'impact group'.

Originally a forest dwelling community, the Batwa became homeless when a decision was taken to declare their original homes as protected areas. As such, they were driven out of the forests, that were their homes for centuries.

Since they were not consulted nor compensated during the eviction, they have remained susceptible, vulnerable, poor and at risk, as they have no livelihood assets to reckon with. They lost land, shelter and with no skills to survive in the new life style, the Batwa remained marginalized, exploited, abused and in work situations serve as slaves.

Out of the registered 6,700 Batwa, 3,500 of them live in the Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Area. Poverty, shortage of food, lack of employment, and illitracy characterize typical Batwa households. Access to food, water, fuel wood, work, and services such as education and health care are limited because of poverty, discrimination, and/or remoteness. And, Batwa women are forced to become sex workers in towns and trading centres in order to supplement their very low income.

Since 1994, BMCT has been working with the Batwa communities, based on priorities identified by themselves. Interventions have

included support for animal husbandry, food security, as well as undertaking advocacy campaigns intended to trigger change that would bring improved service delivery, access to land and education, informal micro finance (Village Loans and Savings Associations), and small-scale enterprises among others.

BMCT has prioritised land ownership for the Batwa in a bid to find a lasting solution. The experience of BMCT on resettling the Batwa is bearing fruits. For example, BMCT procured 406 acres of land (Kanungu (173.28 acres), Kabale/Rubanda (93.85 acres), and Kisoro (138.87 acres), resettled 303 Batwa households and provided them with start-up kits (seeds, household items, and other inputs) in Rubanda, Kisoro and Kanungu Districts.

Providing land and assets to the displaced Batwa restored self-esteem and pride, as they now own productive assets (land, a house, and livestock) and are valued in the eyes of the local communities.

BMCT encouraged the Batwa to identify and negotiate for the land, making sure that they are compatible with the neighbouring communities. Because they negotiate for the land by themselves, the land becomes cheaper compared to when BMCT does the negotiation. For one to qualify for land, BMCT has set a criteria that includes one being a squatter, having a family with children and expressed willingness to participate in building a house

on the acquired land. Community acceptance was also assessed; based on participation in monthly stretcher group meetings (engozi), willingness to participate, but also, from the neighbouring communities, their willingness to sell land to the Mutwa concerned.

The land to be procured had to be close to social services such as health facilities, a church (to foster moral values) and a school where the beneficiary family will be encouraged and supported to educate their children.

BMCT is interested in building bridges and establish inter-ethnic linkage (between Batwa and other communities), mutual recognition, and incentives to embrace development. As such, BMCT encourages the local community to embrace the Batwa in their midst, to sell land to them, welcome them in churches, schools and health facilities, and meaningfully employ them when an opportunity arises.

Consequently BMCT has given land agreements to 105 Batwa household heads in Kisoro district, 79 in Kanungu, and currently, 77 household heads in Rubanda/Kabale district will benefit from the ongoing program.

BMCT processes the land agreements in the names of the Mutwa for whom land has been purchased. This grants tenure rights and security to utilize the land productively. BMCT signs the purchase agreement as a witness together with the local council leaders. The leaders' involvement provides support in the event of a dispute between the purchaser's family and the seller.



The beneficiary then participates in the construction of his/her home by either providing labor or financial contribution for the purchase of construction materials. BMCT supports the construction of the main house (3 bedrooms), a kitchen, a latrine and provides a water tank.

One of this year's beneficiaries, 59 years old George Kakongozo is exceptionally thankful and excited by BMCT's intervention, after years of living in a small hut with a leaking roof which he says he constructed when he still had energy. Together with his wife Jane, the couple was stranded when their longtime home collapsed last year due to the heavy rains forcing them to move into a very tiny makeshift hut that only had space for a single bed spread on the floor. The couple has no children since they lost all of them during their childhood most probably due to such terrible housing conditions. The couple now hopes for improved health in their new homestead.

Another beneficiary, Jane Kinyangamba, says, *"I had to look for old mats to cover myself in case it rained at night. I am now living in this beautiful house which I constructed with BMCT's help. We have planned to maintain it and keep it in good condition because it is our house. It is an overwhelming idea and experience to own a house for the entire family"*.

The approach is, however, not without trials: some Batwa do not cultivate their land (but rent it out), they sell donated agro-inputs to buy alcohol and some have attempted to sell the land. Because of the fear to resell the land, BMCT is in the process of developing land administration guidelines aimed at limiting the reselling of such land.

**Overall, it gives us pride to improve their lives, and the impactful stories from the beneficiaries are the motivation for BMCT to continue supporting the poor and vulnerable Batwa.**



*Skilling Batwa youth through education*

## 2 The Batwa Education Program

*creating knowledge base, improving skills and employability*

**B**MCT is currently sponsoring 127 (57 males and 63 females) pupils in primary schools, 11 (8 males & 3 females) in vocational institutes, 3 (2 males & 1 female) in secondary school (Comboni College), and one female has completed University. This part of the initiative to create a knowledge base, improve skills and employability among the Batwa.

Unfortunately, Batwa communities don't take education seriously. A sizeable number of pupils and students drop out of schools for various reasons, preferring to becoming casual labourers and others getting married, or girls get pregnant (outside marriage) before completing school. A shift in mind-set, a re-orientation of culture and attitude change is needed, if Batwa children are to stay in schools. This year, BMCT embarked on engaging stakeholders on this front.

As such, BMCT is now focusing on supporting vocational studies for the Batwa. In this approach, Batwa youth (who have left school after attain basic study) are encouraged to enroll for various practical disciplines including brick laying, concrete practice, electrical installation, hair dressing and saloon management, general tailoring, and fashioning, depending on their preferred choices.

Students going through this approach, acquire

skills that they apply immediately, generate income and can easily better their lives. They receive more hands-on, career-minded education compared to traditional studies. Once Batwa see their own graduates from the vocational institutes start living better lives, they will encourage their children to stay in schools a little longer.

What BMCT is doing is to encourage Batwa students to explore and identify potential career goals. Based on that, BMCT provides the resources needed to achieve the goals. They are then provided hands-on training for specific jobs. They go on to become more practical, confident and perform better at jobs than students with general academic background. One beneficiary student said, *"I will go home and help fellow Batwa in the construction of their houses"*.

There is a growing need for skilled labor at community level and this training fills the gap. Local communities appreciate that vocational education has helped Batwa youth become relevant by equipping them with diverse vocations. Vocational education is preparing them to take up rewarding jobs and become independent at a young age.

**Vocational training is great for Batwa, arms Batwa school leavers with real life skills, interpersonal skills, become agile and more employable.**



*Graduation ceremony for Batwa youth at Bwindi Trust House, Kabale*

# 3 The Batwa Careers Day Celebration

*...improving retention of pupils at school*

**In 2016, BMCT conducted an assessment of the Batwa scholarship scheme. The assessment revealed that the scheme faces a high number of dropouts due to lack of food while at school (23%), having long hours of study (21%), marginalization of Batwa pupils/students (21%), Batwa life style and attitude (18%), early marriages/unwanted pregnancies (6%) and lack of role models in homes and community (11%).**

To avert the above, BMCT rolled out a scheme that pays 100% tuition, provides uniform, scholastic materials (exercise books, mathematical sets, rulers), sanitary materials for girls, and provide lunch for day scholars.

In 2019/20, BMCT conducted a careers day for all sponsored students (at university, vocational institutions, secondary and upper primary). Parents of the sponsored students were also invited to attend. This half-day event provided Batwa students with an opportunity to listen to over 10 experts with different career background. These included District Education Officers, Community Representatives, District Local Government staffs from the BMCA districts. The experts presented different career/ curriculum opportunities, entrepreneurial and life knowledge and skills as well as intriguing success stories to trigger interest among the adolescents.

Based on the speeches, the students (in consultation with their parents, were able to revisit their interests, values, strengths, and weaknesses. The event influenced the young boys and girls, it created impact and we believe they will be able to make informed choices for their education, training, and future employment. We also believe they were influenced towards better choices for social lives, finances, and health outcomes as they transit towards a fruitful future career path.

One of the guest speakers, Mr. Bedda Turinomuhangi, encouraged them to, *'develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes and make educational, training, and occupational choices that will help them manage their careers and future life.'*

BMCT now believes in supporting students in making well-informed choices that can lead to a more optimistic outlook on life, sense of purpose, and a greater level of contribution that they make to their families and society.

**What is gratifying is that students exhibited high motivation about their future, as they now understand themselves better, how they prefer to live and work when they leave school. BMCT is now motivated to regularly arrange for this event, resources allowing.**



*Support to Batwa community around BMCA with food relief*

# 4 Humanitarian Relief for the Batwa

*....realities of the COVID-19 pandemic*

**The outbreak of the Corona virus (COVID 19) pandemic affected the socio-economic status of most communities and worst of all the vulnerable Batwa community. Traditionally, Batwa depend on handouts from well-wishers who were greatly affected because of the lockdown, and this further constricted their way of life.**

With COVID-19 affecting humanity world wide, the Batwa faced double vulnerability emanating from historical landlessness as well as their psychological, economic and social status as human beings. Whereas there were humanitarian aid (food and non-food items) provided by government to most affected social groupings, the Batwa were not supported, considering that the COVID-19 Taskforce did not have an indigenous peoples' representative.

The key impacts of COVID-19 to the Batwa included impacts on livelihoods (because of restricted movement to look for food, sell products and work), impacts on health (because of limited access to medical services) and impacts on human rights (domestic violence due to stay-home rules).

As such, BMCT was concerned and set out to support the Batwa with 10 Kgs of

maize flour (posho) and 1bar of soap per household. In all, 413 households in Kisoro District, 180 households in Kanungu district, and 188 households in Rubanda district received the support, totalling a net of 8 tones of maize flour and 781 bars of soap. This activity was done in collaboration with the District COVID-19 task force alongside other partners that distributed different relief and humanitarian items. At the hand over ceremony, the Resident District Commissioner, Kisoro District, and his counterpart from Rubanda district, applauded BMCT and other NGOs for the support.

This support lessened their susceptibility to extremes of the virus as the Batwa were able to sustain themselves during the difficult times. This is in addition to coping with hand washing and personal hygiene that was a key requirement to combat against COVID-19 at household level. With food available, there were fewer inter-community movements in search of food, hence a reduction in susceptibility to the virus.

**BMCT knows it will take a while to stabilise and for the Batwa to live a free life, look for work, transact their businesses. Keeping an eye on the long term impact is out longterm strategy.**



*BMCT participation during World Wildlife Day*

# 5

## Visibility and Participation

*...projecting a positive image for BMCT*

**B**MCT believes that despite the rise of new technologies and the virtual environment, face-to-face interaction remains one of the most effective ways to reach out to the public, get partners and clients and be part of a wider conservation network. This is the reason for participating in the World Wildlife Day that was held in Kasese and Kisoro districts and the World Tourism Day celebrations that was celebrated in Gulu District. These events attract large numbers of participants.

Part of our mandate is to undertake community engagement; intended to share information, acquire community ownership, acquire ideas and feedback, and leverage the support of decision makers. BMCT has used these events for advertising our work, our products and our services, reaching out to potential partners in the sector, and to launch internal/external information campaigns.

During these events, we shared spot messages, joint radio talk shows, community awareness creation, public talk shows; emphasizing the need for biodiversity conservation amidst an era of climate change, governance challenges, COVID-19 pandemic and requirements for gender responsiveness.

The World Wildlife Day raised awareness

about the multitude of threats, impacts and benefits of wildlife to people, particularly to those communities who live in close proximity to it. A call was raised for the urgent need for governments, civil society, private sector actors, and individuals to add their voices and take actions to help conserve wildlife and ensure its continuity and sustainability. BMCT is proud to be part of this call.

The World Tourism Day emphasised the importance of tourism worldwide whilst highlighting how tourism affects, not only the economic values of a country or region, but also how it affects the social, political, and cultural values of the country or region.

BMCT joined other actors in the sector in events such as town clean-ups, exhibitions, Tourism Sector Review, and Tourism Thematic Conferences, during which a positive image of the work of BMCT was projected.

**Our participation increased our visibility, presented new opportunities for joint planning meetings, reached out new audiences and received feedback based on which to make improvements in our work. We hope to continue being present in events of this nature.**



*Skilling communities around BMCA in briquette making for climate change mitigation*

# 6

## Climate change

*...mitigating impacts and supporting livelihoods*

**C**limate change is severely affecting rural populations around BMCA whose primary livelihood depends on the cultivation of land or exploitation of natural resources. The changing rainfall patterns and prolonged droughts make it difficult to predict when to prepare the land for sowing, resulting in ruined harvests and increased food insecurity.

Uganda as a country, endorsed the Paris Agreement with requisite climate actions. As a follow up, Uganda is pursuing its Nationally Determined Contribution that focuses on a low carbon development pathway, reducing vulnerability of the population, environment, and economy by implementing measures that build resilience.

BMCT is contributing to that through implementation of an agroforestry project, that aims to protect the environment while ensuring that communities have permanent access to fuel wood, today and in the future. In addition, BMCT is promoting energy saving cook-stoves at household level; intended to reduce the volume of wood used for domestic cooking. In fact, 155 household members were trained and

supported with energy saving stoves. These include; Kyabuyorwa Upper, Northern Ward, Butogota T/C (62 households), Abakyara Bengozi Katoma A, Katoma Village, Kitojo Parish, Ruhija Sub-county (63 households) and Katoma Women's group, Katoma Village, Kitojo Parish, Ruhija S/c (30 households).

To protect the nature and to promote alternative conservation-friendly livelihoods in the area, BMCT distributed 36918 assorted tree seedlings to Kasenene Bakyara Tukore (4000 assorted seedlings) and Kinyogo Ngozi Group (4418 assorted seedlings), Tahondi Micheal (11,000 eucalyptus seedlings), James Gilukwayo (1000 seedlings) and Kyumbugushu Bataka Group (5500 assorted tree seedlings) be planted at schools and private woodlots in the target areas.

**At BMCT we believe that to fight climate change, we must plant trees and that the use of energy-saving cook stoves leads to less fuel-wood usage, less trees cut down, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.**



*Support to communities around BMCA with alternative means of livelihood for reduced pressure on park resources.*

# 7

## Alternative Livelihoods

*...for communities around BMCA*

**B**MCT strives to improve the wellbeing of people adjacent to BMCA by diversification of products for income generation to improve livelihoods.

During the FY2019/20 BMCT verified and funded 63 community projects to support 859 (451 Females & 408 Males) beneficiaries in Rubanda, Kanungu, and Kisoro Districts. Agro inputs such as potato seed/potato tubers,



animal breeds, tree seed, spawns, knives, rolls of thread were procured and supplied to the beneficiaries for implementing the 63 projects.

These projects include: Bee keeping (7), Energy-saving stoves (5), Fish farming (1), Heifer Project (17), Mushroom growing (1), Piggery (16), Potato growing Project (4),



Water harvesting (4), Tree planting project (10) and vegetable growing (1). The evolution of the types of projects funded in each of the cycles indicates some level of maturity and appreciation of the need to fund alternative livelihood projects and address problems that reduce pressure and threats on the protected areas.

Community livelihood improvement linked to forest protection and development is a wise choice to achieve a “balance” between “people’s lives” and “forests survival and development”. This improves and enhances the quality of life for the people, as well as protect and develop forests and effectively respond to natural disasters and risks.

**BMCT Community grants have created a positive relationship between people and the protected area management.**





*Skilling Batwa youth in making souvenirs from bones, hones and lava stones*

# 8

## Embracing Local Tourism ... a potential for BMCA

**Community tourism is gaining so much popularity as a way of earning income for the local people of Mgahinga.**

As such, BMCT is supporting this form of tourism, packaged around the way of life of the local communities, their daily activities and routines, as well as demonstration of traditional skills such as basket weaving, black smiths, traditional dances and attending to domestic animals. These supplement the known tourism package centred around wildlife. The activities and services presented to the tourists who in turn pay the local communities a fee. The community earns income that they invest in different ways within their villages and households. This gives them an income-generating opportunity from what would otherwise not be paid for when they do them during their daily life. Both, the daily way of life and the activities designed for tourism are what is referred to as community tourism.

BMCT has supported communities to establish community trails that include Mgahinga Community Tourism Trail and Mpungu Community Tourism Trail. These trails aim at the development of a high-quality community-based tourism products for those visiting BINP and MGNP, thereby increasing the variety of tourism activities offered in the area, while also providing members of the local community with an alternative source of income directly linked to conservation.

The established community tourism trails have led to the development of a community-based tourism approach that fosters more equitable and just (tourism) development, specifically in favour of the youth a disadvantaged group in society. The Mgahinga Community Tourism Trail sites are elaborated below.

### **a. Mgahinga Cultural and Craft Center:**

The center was built through a partnership between GVTC, UWA, and Kisoro District Local Government. Through public-private partnership arrangement, a local entrepreneur who is passionate about conservation and tourism, one Herbert Mugisha heads the center as the Chief Executive Officer. The center is a developed facility with an ample space for parking, a good environment, guests and meeting facilities, and a craft collection center. The center spearhead programs aimed at environmental conservation most especially through encouraging locals to grow Bamboo instead of collecting it from the park. It also promotes and preserves culture through music dance and drama, and preserving traditional equipment.

### **b. Blacksmiths:**

This reveals the African technology of using different tools and how skills were passed on from generation to generation. Mzee David Birikani

is a popular blacksmith in the community; he produces knives, axes, wood carving tools, spears, dog bells, hoes, machetes, and many others provide he gets either a description or a design. He uses metal scraps as raw materials. Some local people do barter metal scraps for tools. The old man acquired the skills from his parents; both his father and grandfather were blacksmiths. He has already trained his boys, who made a demonstration during our visit because David was sick. David informed us that one of his challenges is that products meet stiff competition with Chinese products because they are produced cheaply and in big quantities. He however warns locals that he produces more durable materials and spends money locally. There are some products such as a special hoe for weeding, spears and a few others that large factories haven't replicated yet. He notes that as a result of the competition, the number of blacksmiths in the area has reduced and the art is getting endangered. David has already benefited from tourism; he gets tourists once in a while and sells small items such as knives.

### c. Caldera:

The term 'caldera' comes from the Latin language and means 'cooking pot.' It is formed by the collapse of part of the volcano into the empty magma chamber created during a large volcanic eruption. If enough magma erupts, the emptied chamber will not be able to support the weight of the volcanic mountain created, fractures will form around the edge of the chamber, usually in a roughly circular shape. As the magma chamber empties, the center of the volcano within the ring fractures begins to collapse within, forming a caldera.

The walk to the caldera is a mild hill climb. The views on top are breathtaking. There are gardens inside the caldera and local people have even started planting trees. The locals also believe that the caldera was formed as a result of volcanicity, there are no myths around the formation although they do not explain it in good detail. That the hill used to be covered by forest and

inhabited by antelope species but the forest was cut down to pave way for crop farming.

### d. Water Collection Point:

This is the main and more reliable water collection point for two parishes with a population of over 10,000 coming from a radius of 5-8Kms. The area is water-stressed with no rivers, lakes, or swamps. This water point was discovered by a wood carver called Nyamajinya; he was making a pounding mortar in the forest on the caldera. The mortar slipped out of his hands and rolled down the hill up to the base. Nyamajinya tracked the mortar, which lead him to this water source. Before the discovery of the water source, people used to collect water from Cyuho, which is around 15 kilometers. The place is until now named after him, Jinya. The water source has attracted the political leadership and is now protected with a fence to avoid being damaged by people and animals (both domestic and wild). Water is fetched in a more organized way, on taps.

### e. Model traditional home & making handicrafts:

Young boys were learning to weave baskets and lump shades; they are being taught by their dad who makes them for sale to tourists and local farmers. They used to get bamboo from the Mgahinga National Park but today they use domesticated bamboo. The old man says he gets money to pay for school fees for his two grandchildren. This home is also a good example of a typical Bafumbira homestead; with a granary at the main entrance to the homestead, this makes it easy to monitor. The granary was also intended to be away from the kitchen to avoid fire outbreaks and multiplication of pests due to warm temperatures. Then the main house faces the entrance to the homestead. The son's houses would surround the main house. Traditionally, a married son must have his own toilet; the daughter-in-law can in no circumstance share a toilet with the boy's father; it is a taboo.

#### f. **Traditional healer:**

A fairly old lady, Katalina who serves as a traditional healer in the community is proud of her skills which were passed on from her late father. She said she is 110 years; however, she looks to be in her late 80s. She stressed that she uses herbs and is not a spiritual healer although she agreed that she treats people who are possessed by evil spirits. She looks at the signs and symptoms to do a diagnosis as to whether someone is suffering from natural illness, is bewitched or it is as a result of evil spirits.

#### g. **Ruganzu's site:**

The feature might have been created as a result of hot smooth unbroken and viscous magma flowing on hard structures such as tree roots hence the formation of the “dugout canoe” features. Local people believe that this was a home for the ancient king Ruganzu the 2nd of the traditional kingdom of Rwanda, which stretched up to Kisoro (Mgahinga is in Kisoro) in the early sixteenth century. He was a great warrior and performed miracles. He had various points where he used to rest. Site owners narrated that the formation has portions said to have been designated as water drinking points for his animals; one for cows, another for bulls, the third for calves, and the last for dogs. The site has been used as a shrine but has no resident priest or priestess but the land is privately owned; the old man inherited it from the father. Other sites related to this are on another property but within reach; Ruganzu's foot print and Ruganzu's chair. Ruganzu's chair and foot print might have been formed as a result of hot magma flowing on uneven surfaces hence resulting into the shapes.

#### h. **Ruhengo cave:**

Lava caves usually form in smooth lava flows. As the lava is emitted from the vent area, it spreads in the path of least resistance. The outer layers of the lava hardened, while the interior forms horizontal conduits that channel the advance of the flow. These conduits are the beginning stages

of lava caves that serve to insulate the heat from the lava which then provides a way for the lava flow to advance longer distances. The cave types/shapes formed depend on the slope, terrain, and lava viscosity. Ruhengo cave is very long and has partitions as one goes deep inside; no one has ever walked up to its end point! It is inhabited by bats and birds. Local people collect water from the cave during the dry seasons. Caves are believed to be hiding places for Batwa during wars; a place where they would go to remobilize themselves.

#### i. **Batwa Settlement:**

The Batwa are native to the African Great Lakes region on the border of the Central and East Africa. They are generally assumed to be the oldest surviving population of the Great Lakes region. Current populations are found in Rwanda, Burundi, Uganda, and the eastern portion of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Traditionally, they have been semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers of the mountain forests living in association with agricultural villages. Due to the clearing of the forests for agriculture, logging, development projects, and the creation of conservation areas, the Batwa have been forced to leave the mountain forests and establish new homes. However, many have not found it easy to adapt to a new life. This Batwa settlement was built by Volcanoes Safaris, one of the popular tour companies in the region. They also have a social center on-site which isn't often used. The group is organized with Safari as their chairperson; they also have a lady in charge of all females (deputy chairperson).

#### j. **The Buffalo wall:**

BMCT and UWA in their efforts to resolve human – wildlife conflicts around Mgahinga National Park built a wall out of the abundant stone resources in the area to protect farmers from buffalos. The wall has proved very efficient and is a great architectural impression in the area.

**To support and sustain the trails, BMCT trained 40 (30 males & 10 females) youth as community tourism guides.**

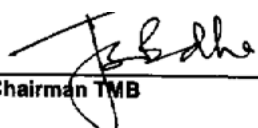
# 9 Financial Report

## Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) Trustees Report and Financial Statements For the Year ended 30th June 2020

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	Notes	As at 30th June 2020 UGX	As at 30-Jun-19 UGX
<b>Assets</b>			
<b>Non-current assets</b>			
Prosperity, plant and equipment	12.1	259,876,756	301,580,479
Trust fund	12.2	22,198,725,177	22,729,748,631
Investment property	12.3	521,636,160	1,427,839,742
		<u>22,980,238,093</u>	<u>24,459,148,852</u>
<b>Current assets</b>			
Receivables and pre-payments	12.4	62,515,225	34,682,463
Short term investment	12.5	-	700,000,000
Cash and bank	12.6	1,290,142,846	672,282,017
		<u>1,352,658,071</u>	<u>1,406,964,480</u>
<b>Total assets</b>		<u>24,332,896,164</u>	<u>25,866,113,332</u>
<b>Reserves and liabilities</b>			
<b>Accumulated fund</b>			
Capital fund	12.1	259,876,756	301,580,479
Trust fund	12.2	22,198,725,177	22,729,748,631
Investment fund	12.3	521,836,160	1,427,839,742
General fund		1,041,091,929	1,088,023,516
		<u>24,021,330,021</u>	<u>25,547,172,368</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>			
<b>Non-Current Liabilities</b>			
Gratuity payable	12.7	31,517,479	50,310,185
		<u>31,517,479</u>	<u>50,310,185</u>
<b>Current liabilities</b>			
Tenants security deposits	12.8	13,668,160	13,539,597
Payables and provisions	12.9	14,547,504	32,216,292
Commitments	12.10	251,833,000	222,874,890
		<u>280,048,664</u>	<u>268,630,779</u>
<b>Total reserves and liabilities</b>		<u>24,332,896,164</u>	<u>25,866,113,332</u>

The Financial Statements were approved for issue by Management on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020

  
Chairman TMB

  
Secretary TMB

# 10 The Year 2019/2020

*....in pictures*

## Skills development for communities around BMCA



## Support to education



**Alternative livelihood for communities around BMCA for reduced pressure on park resources**



**Conservation awareness creation**



# 11 Key Impacts

## Batwa schools program



Batwa enrolled in vocation institutions complete their course and get employed

## Livelihoods support



**451** Female



**408** Male

benefit from livelihoods & programs

## Tourism trails

**2**

ecotourism trails established to promote local community tourism packages with a view of improving tourism benefits to the communities.

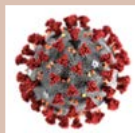
## Batwa houses



**60%**

of the Batwa acquiring land construct houses

## COVID-19 support



**600**

households receive 10 kilos of maize flour and 2 bar of soap helping them avoid the pandemic

**36,918**

Tree seedlings distributed and planted



**155**

household members were trained and supported with energy saving stoves.

## Batwa Population Characteristics

- There are 3,730 (1787 males & 1,943 females) Batwa in the Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Area
- Their growth rate is 5.1% for the last five years
- 4.2 is the average household size.
- 68.3% of the Batwa are below 25 years
- There are 92 males out of 100 females
- 68.2 % Batwa are below 25 years

## Decision making

- 25.5% of respondents think Batwa women never involve in decision making.

## Batwa education

- 49.8% have never attained any formal education and 0.3% had tertiary/ university
- 41.8% of Batwa learners do not attend school; Kisoro district is greatly affected with 49.2%.

## Land and Housing

- 56.4% of Batwa do not have access to land with 71.9 % in Kisoro staying as squatters on other people's land.
- 37.7% of Batwa live in temporary/grass thatched houses



## About Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust

Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) was established in 1994 under the Uganda Trustees Laws. Its mission is to foster conservation of biodiversity of Mgahinga Gorilla National Park (MGNP) and Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) through investments in community development projects, grants for research and ecological monitoring, funding park management, protection and programmes that create greater conservation awareness. It is mandated to work with communities surrounding Mgahinga Gorilla National Park (MGNP) and Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP). This area is also known as Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Area (BMCA). The area of operation is located in South Western Uganda, bordering DRC and Rwanda with operational headquarters in Kabale at Bwindi Trust House and a sub office in Kampala.

Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust.  
Plot 4 Coryndon Road Makanga  
P.O. Box 1064, Kabale, Uganda

Tel: Office: +256-414-534406 or +256-486-435626

E-mail: [bmct@bwinditrust.org](mailto:bmct@bwinditrust.org), Website: [www.bwinditrust.org](http://www.bwinditrust.org)