



Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust

Annual Report 2013/14

Foreword

It is with great pleasure that I present the BMCT July 2013 - June 2014 annual report. In this period BMCT has reviewed and renewed its commitment with regard to integrating conservation and development in Bwindi Mgahinga conservation area. BMCT has reviewed its strategic plan to guide operations of the Trust. The strategic plan provides a roadmap for our operations in the next five years and highlights the collaborative engagement with partners to achieve biodiversity and ecosystem conservation in harmony with the development needs of the communities surrounding Bwindi Impenetrable and Mgahinga National Parks.

The Trust has successfully completed the implementation of the Water School Project in Kanungu District geared towards Sustainable Water use and Management for People and Nature around BINP (SWAMP) (2009 to 2014). The project was funded by D. Swarovski KG. In addition, the Trust with funding from CARE implemented the Health Education Agriculture Livelihood and land rights (HEAL II) project. The project supported Village Savings and Loan Associations to inculcate the income generation, savings culture and investment in communities. The project also supported improvement of accommodation to communities in particular the Batwa people as well as improving farming methods to increase food security and income generation in the community. Over the years, BMCT has increased capacity in supporting income generation and continues to seek partnerships with other development partners to extend this service to all communities surrounding the two parks. In this respect, we are

collaborating with Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) to provide this support to Batwa communities in Kisoro District.

In addition, the Trust continued to support community tourism development initiatives around Mgahinga National Park through the Rwerere Enterprise Community Training Centre (RECTC). The development of the centre is funded by Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration (GVTC) and pays particular attention to women, and youth entrepreneurs to benefit from Tourism activities. Similarly the Trust has remained at the forefront of community livelihood projects in Kabale and Kisoro Districts through advancing small grants to support small and medium enterprises for communities. BMCT will continue to look for practical partnerships with like-minded institutions to enhance its conservation and development objectives in BMCA.

Despite slow growth in the world economy our endowment fund posted a 5.35% growth in 2013-2014. The three-year average return on investments from July 2012 to June 2014 grew by 10.13%. This achievement was managed by the TMB prudence in avoiding risks through diversification of offshore investments as well as increasing on the real estate investment locally. The fund grew to USD 7,008,309 at the end of June 2014 from USD 6,497,800 in 2013 even after subtracting funds to support our annual operational plan. Nevertheless BMCT continued to proactively look for partners to support the institution to reduce dependency on the endowment fund.

In summary, BMCT contributed to the following community development interventions:

- Water Sanitation and Hygiene activities in Kanungu District. Provision of clean and safe water to schools and communities for improved health and natural resource protection
- Mobilizing communities through Village savings and loans schemes for income generation and livelihood improvement
- Climate change adaptation and mitigation through improving resilience of communities. During this period we targeted energy saving technologies, improving tree coverage in the landscapes and increased awareness on adaptation and mitigation to climate change,
- Sustainable livelihoods activities in Kisoro, Kabale and Kanungu districts and social empowerment to marginalized groups, and gender mainstreaming in all our interventions

It would not have been possible to accomplish such great achievements above without support from development partners and Donors. In this respect, we appreciate the support from D. Swarovski KG, CARE Uganda, Greater Virunga Transboundary Collaboration and ADRA. We acknowledge the support from our partners from Local Governments in Kabale, Kisoro, and Kanungu and local community beneficiaries for the tremendous support and collaboration. Special thanks go to staff of BMCT for the successful implementation of the planned programme activities and John Adams who we have worked

with to manage the Endowment Fund. The professional advice he provides in astute investment opportunities has made the fund to grow sustainably.

On behalf of the Trust Management Board, I pledge our commitment to strengthen the long-term sustainability of the Trust through increased financial resources, improvement of community livelihoods and ecosystem health of the two national Parks. We hope that this contributes to the national economic development and social transformation of the people in Kabale, Kisoro and Kanungu.

Conserving for Development

Mr. Achilles Byaruhanga
Chairman Trust Management Board

Bwindi Mghahinga Conservation Trust

Conserving for Development action for people and nature

The Bwindi Mghahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) provides long-term support for initiatives promoting research or conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of natural resources in the Mghahinga Gorilla National Park and the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park while at the same time promoting development and welfare of neighbouring communities.

BMCT engages in community development for sustainable conservation which will benefit people and nature immediately and in the future. BMCT works with health activities, especially relating to water and sanitation issues, infrastructure development to enhance community quality of life and livelihoods and conservation activities that impact on the protected areas and global issues like climate change. All activities apply participatory methods to ensure ownership and continuity.

Vision

The biodiversity and ecosystem health of Mghahinga Gorilla and Bwindi Impenetrable National Parks conserved in harmony with the development needs of the surrounding communities.

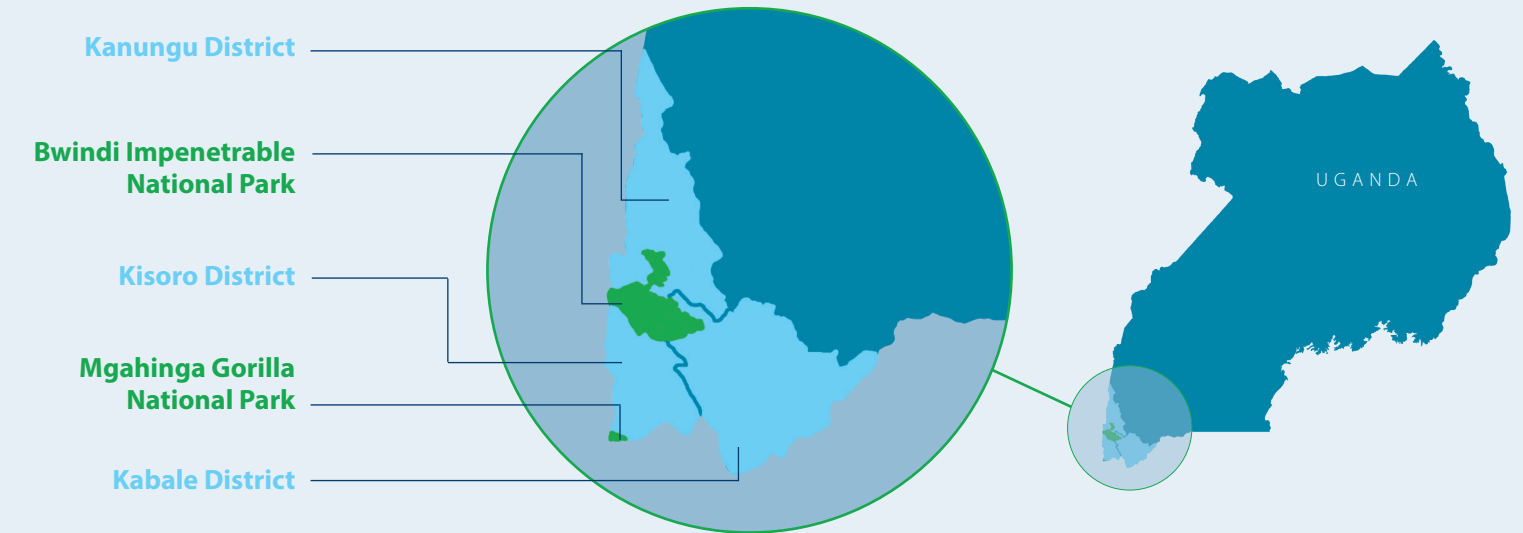
Mission

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

Core Values

- **Integrity** • striving to operate to the highest standards of professionalism, honesty and transparency.
- **Innovation** • striving to maintain an innovative approach to achieving our mission, overcoming new challenges and finding ways to improve.
- **Team work** • working together as a team to take advantage of our strengths, skills and knowledge.
- **Collaboration** • developing partnerships and strategic alliances with other institutions and organizations in support of the mission.
- **Excellence** • pursuing and achieving excellence in all endeavours.
- **Communication** • promoting and encouraging effective internal and external communications.
- **Effectiveness** • ensuring value for money in all BMCT programmes.

Area of Operation



Administration

The Trust Management Board

The Board held four ordinary meetings and one extraordinary meeting in the reporting period (2013-2014). The key decision issues included the approval of audit reports for the FY 2012-2013, the budgets for FY 2012-2013 and acquisition of another local asset in form of building or land. All Board sub-committees were functional and met as and whenever they were called upon as provided in their respective terms. The following were Board members during the reporting period:

1. Mr. Achilles Byaruhanga Chairman Trustee/Nature Uganda (Incoming) (was elected in March 2014 as representative for Kisoro District)
2. Mr. Frank .S. Karake Chairman TMB/ Trustee/Private Sector (Outgoing)
3. Mr. Andrew Seguya Trustee, Uganda Wildlife Authority
4. Mr. Caleb K. Tumwesimire Trustee/Local Community representative
5. Mr. Richard Sebagenzi Trustee/Local Community representative (was replaced in March 2014)
6. Mr. Wilberforce Mucunguzi Trustee/ Local Community representative
7. Ms. Mary Tushemereirwe Trustee/Local Community representative
8. Dr. Robert Bitariho Trustee/ITFC, Mbarara University
9. Ms Edith Kabesiime Trustee/CARE International in Uganda
10. Mr. Akankwasah Barirega Trustee/Ministry of Tourism
11. Ms. Habu Patricia Ex-officio Min. of Justice & Constitutional Affairs
12. Mr. George Serunjogi Ex officio Min. of Finance, Planning & Economic Development (Outgoing)

Administration (Continued)

Local Community Steering Committee

A new committee was elected in the reporting period. The old committee sat once in the year and deliberated on issues affecting the livelihoods of the people in BMCT's working area. Because of the election process we were not able to meet two times as provided. The first sitting of the new committee reviewed the constitution.

Trust Administration Unit

The unit functioned normally and implemented all Board decisions, reported to the Board as expected and participated in meeting organised by partners.

The Trust Administration staff remained the same from the past reporting period. To enhance BMCT effectiveness in financial management an Accounts Assistant was recruited.

External audits were commissioned as planned and all statutory obligations met. Uganda Revenue Authority extended the selective tax free status on the Fund for the reporting period.

Visitors

We were graced with the following visitors 2013/14

1. Achilles Byaruhanga – TMB Chairman
 2. Bernard Amwine – UN Human Rights
 3. Kandole Simon Peter – Deputy CAO Kanungu
 4. Mutabazi Hillary – BPM – Water Sanitation Development Facility South Western Uganda
 5. Doreen Wandera – Executive Director UWASNET
 6. Esther Mpamudhoka – CARE Grants Coordinator
 7. William Keyh – Gorta Regional Office (Nairobi)
 8. David Sancho – Excel Hot Consult –Mbarara
 9. Owior Stephen Fred- Ministry of Tourism
 10. Candia Leone – Ministry of Tourism
 11. David Meyers – Paris
 12. Kyomuhendo Grace - Kigali
 13. Beatrice Kabihongo – URP
 14. Caleb Kipande Tumwesimire – LCSC Chairman
 15. Alex Tumwesigye – Engineer Kabale Municipal Council
 16. Thijs Valuenburg – Portugal
 17. Fatia Azeredo - Portugal
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Cross-cutting approaches

The VSLA methodology

BMCT uses Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) as an entry point for addressing community members and strengthening the impact of our programmes. VSLA members meet once a week to save, which makes them easily accessible for community change agents (described below) and BMCT staff. A VSLA is a micro-credit model under which 25-30 members meet in a self-managed group once a week to save and borrow money. Members can take out loans to invest in income generating activities such as commercialised farming, goat rearing and small businesses, or they

can use the loans to meet expenses like school fees and medical bills. All members pay 10% interest and have three months to repay the loans, resulting in a steady growing pool of money, which is shared among the members once a year. VSLA members are provided with security against unforeseen emergencies and they have access to means to invest in the future. As a result, VSLA members experience pronounced economic and social progress leading to an overall increased well-being and enhanced quality of life.

Using community agents for lasting results

Community change agents are locally based men and women who are trained by BMCT or one of our partners in community mobilising and programme implementation. The agents are selected by community members and they are trusted and respected within the implementation areas. Using community agents makes it easier and more effective to mobilise people for participation in meetings, workshops and other programme implementation activities.

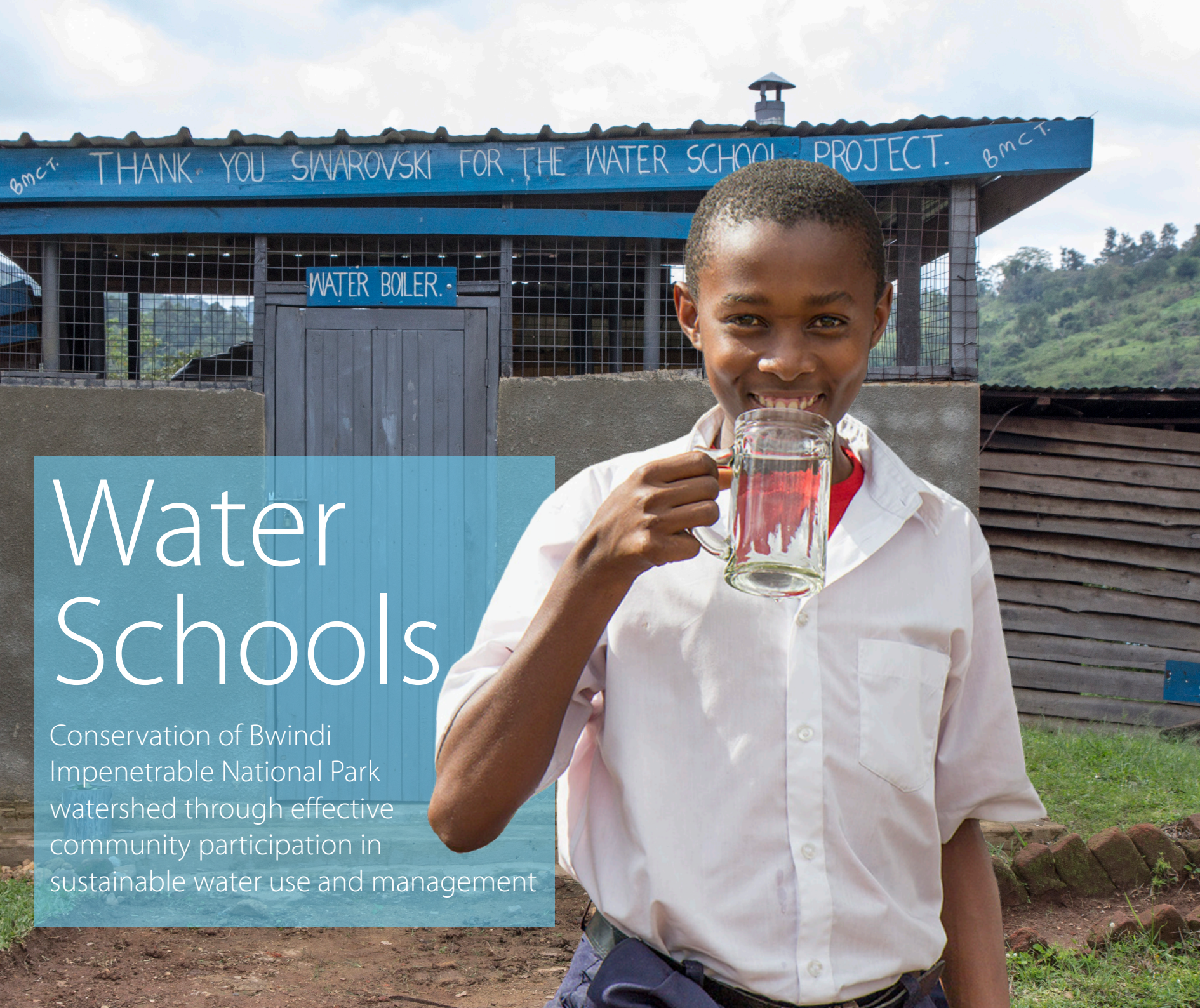
Because the community change agents are locally based, the training they have received benefits the whole community and contributes to build up local capacity, which in turn increases ownership and deepens the understanding of BMCT's programmes as well as the approach helps consolidate results and achievements in a long-term perspective.

Mitigating the negative effects of climate change

In Uganda, as elsewhere, climate change is severely affecting rural populations whose primary livelihood depends on land cultivation or on other natural resources. Changed rainfall patterns and prolonged droughts make it difficult to predict when to prepare the land for sowing, resulting in crop loss and increased food insecurity.

To mitigate the negative effects of climate change, BMCT is implementing an agroforestry component within its major programmes. This is done to

protect the environment and to ensure that communities have permanent access to firewood for cooking without harming the environment. BMCT also promotes energy saving stoves in households to reduce the amount of trees that are currently being cut for firewood and to reduce health implications of smoke filled cooking environments. To protect the nature and to promote alternative conservation-friendly livelihoods in the area, BMCT distributes tree seedlings to be planted at schools and private woodlots in the target areas.



Water Schools

Conservation of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park watershed through effective community participation in sustainable water use and management

Safe water for improved health and welfare in schools and communities

With funding from D. Swarovski KG's Water School Project, BMCT provides clean water and improved sanitation to poor rural communities in Kanungu district.

Access to safe water is a step towards an improved living standard and a better life. Communities with insufficient water supply, are often economically poorer compared to those with reliable access to clean water. Each day, economic and social development opportunities are lost to the negative effects of water borne illnesses and to the time consuming process of collecting water where it is not readily available. Particularly children and women bear the brunt of these burdens as they are responsible for providing water in most households. They spend numerous hours fetching water from sources often situated far from their homes. Time that could have been far better spent on productive activities and education.

The Banyara Gravity Flow Scheme

To address these issues, the Water School Project constructed the Banyara Gravity Flow Scheme. Designed and constructed by Ugandan engineers, the water scheme provides safe and clean water for almost 20,000 people in Kanungu District. The source is located in the mountains allowing gravity to create sufficient pressure to transmit water through the 42.8 kilometre pipeline system, which includes four reservoir tanks (of capacities; 150m³, 100m³, 50m³ and 30m³), five break pressure tanks, 62 tapstands and one protected spring. At schools located where the Banyara Gravity Flow Scheme has not been able to reach, 30m³ or 20m³ rain water harvesting tanks have been constructed to provide water for learners and teachers.

Water User Committees

To ensure proper operation and maintenance of the water sources, 410 water user committees have been formed and trained in daily scheme management, a scheme operator has been hired and a sub-county water board has been formed to oversee and guide the management.

"The water user committee oversee the day-to-day operation and maintenance of the water point. We are also responsible for collecting water user fees; each household pays Ush 1,200 (USD 0.5) per month. Four times a year, we organise meetings for the water users to discuss the use of the collected money and to deliver a financial report for the past quarter. It is important for them to know that their money is put into good use and the financial reporting promotes transparency and accountability. We have lived so many years without water so even though some families struggle to make the payment, they understand that they have to pay for the service."

Jane, Water User Committee member



Improved hygiene and sanitation

Safe water, access to sanitation facilities and good hygiene is vital for health, for social and economic development and for conservation of natural resources. Because healthy children attend school more and get more out of it, the Water School Project has installed sanitation facilities and promoted good hygiene practices to attract and retain students and to improve the learning environment at all water schools.

WASH Clubs

Hygiene and sanitation remains a critical issue at most schools in Uganda where many sanitation facilities basically are unfit for use. Lack of doors and private spaces and ramshackle constructions in danger of collapse are among the contributing factors to discomfort and poor learning environments. Throughout the project, all water schools have carried out conservation, water and health educational programmes. By forming school Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Clubs, learners and teachers have been exposed to the importance of good hygiene and safe sanitation. Members of the WASH Clubs are role models for the other learners and responsible for maintaining the water and sanitation facilities as well as keeping the school compounds neat. Through the WASH Clubs, knowledge on sustainable water management and improved sanitation and hygiene practices in school and at home is spread from within the school by the members who raise awareness among the other learners and their parents.

"The children really understand the messages; their parents inform us how they have changed their behaviour at home and how they have taught the rest of the household to boil water and improve hygiene and sanitation. This has really been an eye opener for many families that never knew the importance of hygiene before."

Florence Kesiime, WASH Club matron

Community- and school-led total sanitation

BMCT knows that merely providing water and constructing latrine facilities do not result in improved sanitation and hygiene. Therefore, as a complement to the WASH Clubs, BMCT has introduced Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS)/School Led Total Sanitation (SLTS), which is a sustainable low-cost high-impact intervention targeting multiple sanitation behaviours at once through community/school level change.

"CLTS and SLTS are widely used approaches for eradication of open defecation and improve communities' and schools' health and wellbeing. Open defecation possess an enormous threat to health and it is the root cause of faecal-oral transmission of disease. Through CLTS and SLTS, pupils and community members map their schools' and villages' contamination routes, and they analyse their hygiene behaviours and plan how to block the contamination. We have experienced very positive results using this method. 20 schools and neighbouring villages are now declared Open Defecation Free (ODF)."

Charity, Programme Manager, BMCT



"The school looks much better now compared to before; there are no trash lying around. Sanitation is a big issue around here. The latrines did not work; they were old and many of the doors were missing so we often had to queue in front of the few stances that could still be used. The boys had to bathe with the girls. Also the teachers used only one stance and had limited privacy. Before, there was no water supply at the school so we did not have water available for drinking, cooking and cleaning. Now, we have water and bathing shelters. We have enough water to drink; we bathe every day; we clean our teeth; cut our fingernails, and comb and trim our hair."

We have all told our parents about the new practices. Most families around the school have tippy-taps, compost pits, drying racks, and latrines. People clean their houses and compounds, they boil the water before drinking it and they use clean closed containers for storage."

Brenda and Eunice,

WASH Club members at Rubimbwa Primary School



A model household

To encourage implementation and to create awareness, local competitions in model housekeeping were carried out.

"I am proud of my home. I have made the improvements to upgrade our sanitation and hygiene standards. I wanted to have an ideal home so I have made the house nice to live in; it is tidy and well-aired, we have mosquito nets, an energy saving stove, a pit-latrine, a bathing shelter, a drying rack, and a tippy-tap.

Because I have access to water, I have been able to smear the house inside and outside as well as plant flowers in the compound. I used to fetch water from a stream quite a distance from here. I was often stressed by the time taken especially if I was working in the garden until late, then I had to walk directly to the stream. Now, I have more time to grow my vegetables and perform domestic chores. From my two youngest boys who attend on of the water schools, I have learned to wash my hands after visiting the latrine and I have gained knowledge from community meetings and drama performances on how to boil and store water for drinking. The change in our lives is almost unbelievable and I advise everybody to copy the improvements for better health, hygiene and sanitation.

Peace, Model household competition winner



Enhanced conservation and local development

The way water is used and managed positively or negatively influence the state of natural resources and large ecosystems such as the Bwindi Impenetrable National Park. By creating awareness on the importance of conservation, by providing safe water, and by promoting good sanitation and hygiene practices among the park adjacent communities, the Water School Project has contributed to minimise the pressure on the parks resources.

"The Water School Project has changed a lot around here. Most importantly, people no longer fetch water from the forest and the communities have learned to appreciate and protect the water catchment area within the park. The support we (UWA) have received from the Water School Project, have enabled us to better protect the natural resources and to improve our relationship with the neighbouring communities."

*Raymond Kato
Ecological Monitoring Warden, UWA*

The provision of accessible clean and safe water has reduced the distance to water points from two to four kilometres to less than 500 metres, resulting in a great reduction in time and energy consumption. The extra time is spent on extended agricultural production which has increased food security and stimulated local development. People living in the area have taken up new water dependent livelihoods like vegetable growing and brick-making and local enterprises such as the tea factories have been able to produce more since sufficient water supply is no longer a challenge.

Building community resilience

Climate change severely affects rural families whose livelihood depends on land cultivation or on other natural resources. Extreme weather conditions, changed rainfall patterns and prolonged droughts make it difficult to predict the seasons, resulting in failed harvests and increased food insecurity.

To build community resilience to overcome the negative impacts of climate change, to increase the tree-cover, to promote conservation friendly livelihoods and to ensure that the Water Schools have permanent access to firewood for their water boiling facilities, the project has distributed more than 400,000 tree seedlings to local schools, churches, enterprises and private households.

Increasing food security

"The school kitchen garden has made our school much more attractive. Both teachers and pupils have been trained in preparing land for sowing and growing vegetables. So far, we have planted beans, cabbage, and green pepper. We are very excited about the project because we get more food and we learn how to care for the garden. Participating in making the garden grow has inspired us to share it with our parents. We have taught them how to prepare liquid manure and the importance of weeding. Now, many of our families have kitchen gardens at home."

Precious and Derek, Buhoma Community Primary School



BATWA

Livelihood improvements for poor and marginalised Batwa people through socio economic empowerment, shelter improvement and better agricultural production practices to enhance food security.

BATWA

Livelihoods Improvements and social empowerment

Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) in partnership with CARE International in Uganda implemented a Health, Education, Agricultural Livelihood and Land Rights (HEAL II) project.

With a project goal to empower Batwa women and men to participate equitably in decision making at household and community levels, and to have improved sustainable livelihood securities, the HEAL II project

works through socio economic empowerment, shelter improvements and better agricultural production practices that enhance food security.

A sub-grant was signed in June 2013 for initially a period of one year, June 2013 to December 2013, but it was later extended until May 2014 to allow BMCT to continue supporting implementation of activities.

HEAL II interventions supported the integration of Batwa and non-Batwa through:

- 1 IMPROVING HOUSING AND BETTER HYGIENE & SANITATION
- 2 IMPROVING FARMING
- 3 IMPROVING INCOME

"After our eviction from the forests, we lived at the non-Batwa's land as squatters. We worked for the non-Batwa for meagre incomes that would not sustain a family's daily survival. Our huts were made of grass all over which made us live in misery whenever it rained because our belongings would get soaked. When it rained at night we would sit until it ceases as our children cried. However, the story has changed after getting better housing structures. We no longer get congested sleeping around the fire place. We sleep in the main house where children and parents sleep in separate rooms. Our belongings no longer get soaked, we wash and dry our clothes thus become smart like the non-Batwa."

Prosper - Nyabaremura (not pictured)



Improving housing and better hygiene & sanitation

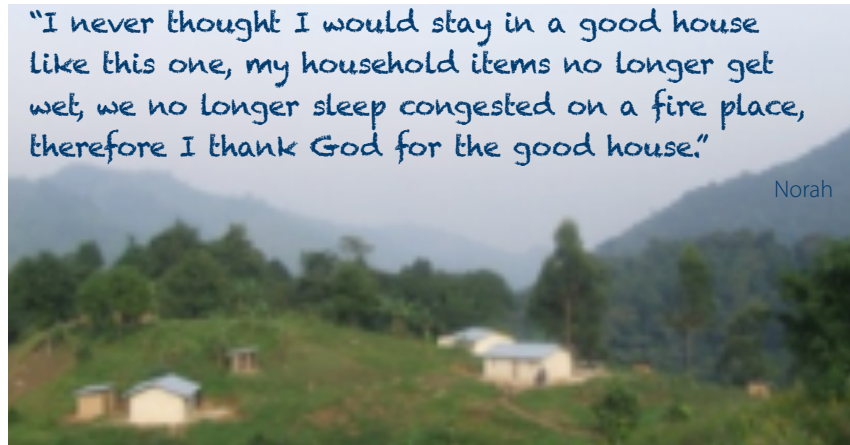
Six houses were constructed for six families (32 people in total) in Nyabaremura village, Rubuguri parish, Kirundo Sub-county. All families have adopted Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) practices by constructing facilities such as tippy taps, drying racks and compost pits. Gravity water was extended to three households near the park, whereas other three households were given 220 litre containers for rain water harvesting from the roofs of their houses.

Outcomes

- 1 Improved food security. Settled Batwa grow food crops like potatoes, vegetables and are no longer migrating from place to place in search of food.
- 2 Sanitation and hygiene has greatly improved due to the provision of pit latrines, water and tippy taps.
- 3 Batwa's self esteem within the community has improved. Batwa interact with the non-Batwa freely without inferiority complex. This is because they have homes like other non-Batwa and thus are more respected. Unlike in the past, where hygiene was poor and Batwa often appeared unclean with dirty clothing and unpleasant body odour.
- 4 Reduced outbreaks of malaria among the resettled Batwa families. Improved housing have enabled Batwa to use mosquito nets, which were supplied via a government programme.

"Malaria outbreak among the resettled Batwa are no longer common because we now sleep in good houses where we hang mosquito nets we were given by the government. Unlike in the past, when we slept around the fire place and would not hang the mosquito nets"

Prosy – Nyabaremura



Improving farming

Lack of land and very limited livelihood opportunities are among the most critical challenges facing the Batwa. BMCT works to accommodate this by procuring and renting land for Batwa families. In an effort to improve food security at household level, 65 families living on land formerly bought by BMCT, were given beans and sweet potato seed. 54 families received 270 kgs of beans seed and 11 families were given sweet potato vines as seed for planting.

To ensure sustained food security, resettled households are trained in advanced agriculture in environmentally and economically sustainable use of their new land. Soil and water conservation has always been a major challenge in the Kigezi region especially in Kisoro. To address this, 10 groups with a total of 260 members were trained in hands on practical training in soil conservation skills and improved agricultural technologies. Demonstrations were done on contour farming, strip farming, mulching, cover crop planting and manure application. Rotational planting, fallowing and agroforestry were also encouraged. Furthermore trainings sessions were conducted with an emphasis on timing the season to meet the market, seed selection during sorting and grading, land selection and preparation, planting, pests and disease management, weeding and earthing up, dehaulming, harvesting and storage.

Six Farmer Field Schools (FFS) were established with a total of 77 members - both Batwa and non-Batwa - and trained in improved farming technologies. The Batwa and their neighbours replicated the improved technologies on their farms as proven technologies for better crop production. Trainings were conducted on proper farming methods like soil and water conservation, crop rotation, pests and disease management, and on farm seed selection. Practical demonstrations were done with the group members, which made it simple for members to grasp the technologies and replicate them at home.

Outcomes

- 1 Improved Food security. Because of the continuous training in improved agricultural technologies, food security has been achieved especially among the participating resettled Batwa and non-Batwa families.
- 2 Gained skills and knowledge which were practiced to improve yields
- 3 Improved income at household level.
- 4 Improved nutritional balance and better health. Farmers have learned and planted a wider variety of crops including vegetables which they consume at household level.
- 5 Promotion of social integration: Through FFS farmers are able to come together as a class, learn, share and practice different agricultural methods.
- 6 Farmers learnt and replicated skills and knowledge on their farm land.

As a result, more Batwa relies on generating food and income from their own land instead of selling their labour to their neighbours at a low wage. The improved farming techniques have further strengthened the relationship between the Batwa and the surrounding local community members as the Batwa have been able to share their new knowledge with the non-Batwa for the benefit of the whole community.

Improving income

VSLA

40 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) groups were mobilised, trained and started saving with the aim of imparting a savings culture among the Batwa and non-Batwa in the target area. VSLA is a technology to facilitate members to pool their own funds as savings and to access loans for investing in micro projects for generating sustainable incomes at household level.

Out of the 40 groups 38 groups with a total membership of 989 (355M, 634 F and Batwa 334 (137M, 197F) shared out Ush 63,053,300. The amount includes savings, interest, welfare contributions and fines.

By commingling Batwa and non-Batwa in VSLA groups, the Batwa have been socially empowered and less marginalised in the local communities. Batwa VSLA member's self-esteem have significantly raised as they have been accepted as equals by the non-Batwa. Furthermore, personal hygiene has visibly improved as the Batwa bathe and dress in clean clothes when they go for VSLA meetings. Batwa became well integrated in VSLA groups and 26 out of 40 groups elected Batwa on executive positions.

"We have for a long time been poor due to lack of a savings culture. We used to work for some little funds to buy food but the surplus would be spent on alcohol. We are now proud and empowered to save on a weekly basis. We are happy that our VSLA group is led by a Mutwa. This is a sign of respect from the non-Batwa. I borrowed Ush 20,000 and bought a chicken which hatched nine chicks, of which six are ready to lay eggs. I'm going to generate money from sale of eggs and chicken and thus improve my household income."

Kayadi from Nyabaramura

Outcomes

- 1 Establishment of Income Generating Activities (IGAs) at household level:** Most VSLA members started IGAs from their VSLA savings & loans e.g. goats, sheep, chicken rearing, potato, cabbage and carrot growing as well as a large proportion of the members bought scholastic materials for their children. A vast majority of the VSLA members fully grasp and appreciate the benefits of the VSLAs. This has led to increased income household level.
- 2 Social integration:** Discrimination among the Batwa and non-Batwa has reduced. At VSLA meetings Batwa and non-Batwa sit together and interact on equal terms. Batwa also attend meetings in clean clothes which has greatly reduced the prevailing discrimination due to poor hygiene.
- 3 Batwa empowerment in decision making:** Batwa are empowered to make decisions during VSLA meetings. The inclusion of Batwa on VSLA executive committees has empowered them to raise their self-esteem thus enabling them to contribute actively in decision making processes.
- 4 Improved savings:** Both Batwa and non-Batwa have developed a savings culture. All group members strive to meet the weekly savings requirements which is a stark contrast to before where almost nobody was accustomed to savings.



Improving income

IGA • Income generating activities

To improve income levels and promote sustainable conservation-friendly livelihoods, BMCT has trained 40 VSLA groups - with Batwa and non-Batwa members - in IGAs with a particular emphasis on selection, planning and management. 619 (222 males/397 females) out of 1037 members attended the trainings.

IGAs selection was done based on the following parameters:

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Market availability | 5 Profitability |
| 2 Capital | 6 Risks involved |
| 3 Skills and knowledge | 7 Ecological conditions |
| 4 Family expenses | |

Two to three enterprises were chosen by each participant using the above parameters. The prioritised IGAs were sheep, piggery, potato and climbing beans growing.

The training in IGAs enabled the group members to acquire skills and knowledge to initiate and manage IGAs. This will in the long run enable them to get incomes that will help them to regularly save and pay back the loans.

Outcomes

The training equipped the learners with skills and knowledge on how to initiate and manage IGAs such as potato growing, piggery and sheep raising. For instance in Kanyakwezi Kwifatanya VSLA group members are proud to have embraced potato growing as an IGA after the training. They are now able to generate on average Ush 300,000 per household per season.

Producer and marketing groups

The purpose of training Batwa and non-Batwa in forming producer and marketing groups was to acquaint the farming groups with the knowledge and skills for better production and service delivery. So far three groups have been formed: Sanuriro Tukorerehamwe in Nteko Parish Nyabwishenya Sub-county, Kabale kwifatanya in Rukongi Parish, Nyarusiza Sub-county and Gatera Duterimbere group in Gitovu parish, Busanza Sub-county. The training was conducted by the District Commercial Officer who explained the advantages of working together as a producer and marketing group as follows:

- 1 Working together in groups improve the members' skills and knowledge because they learn from each which in turn creates better production
- 2 Bulk production is more profitable
- 3 Collective marketing is more profitable
- 4 Technical training is easier accessed in groups

Outcomes

- 1 Group cohesion is significantly improved. After the training, the groups have realised the importance of working together. The groups are registered at the sub-county and district as producer and marketing groups. This is advantageous since they are now recognised as service providers and can access funding from government and NGO's.
- 2 Farmers are able to produce together and market their products as a group thus enabling them to get high prices for their produce.



RECTC • Rwerere Enterprise Community Training Centre

Promotion of local livelihood options, tourism, development and conservation

RECTC • Rwerere Enterprise Community Training Centre

The RECTC concept is based on a principle of working with the local communities, private sector, government institutions and NGOs in a Public Private Partnership to make conservation benefit all stakeholders sustainably. In its implementation, livelihood options for communities will be promoted to address employment challenges in the area, improving skills, poverty reduction, promoting culture and diversifying tourism products and services for income generation.

RECTC is a result of transformational tourism that engages multi-stakeholders to achieve sustainable development and conservation.

There are three categories of stakeholders who are the sponsors of the project. The Greater Virunga Trans-boundary Collaboration (GVTC) as the major donor of the funds setting up the structures for its operational both systemic and physical infrastructure, Kisoro District Local Government and Uganda Wildlife Authority as the beneficiaries of the grant to set up the infrastructure and also the vision holders and the community who are the final beneficiaries of the activities and profits of RECTC. Finally there is need for private sector practitioner to make the superstructure operational in a business model.

RECTC is a unique product that aims at working with all stakeholders to enhance livelihood, tourism and general development in Kisoro District and Uganda generally as a model for unifying private sector and public interests for sustainable development. It will use the expertise of the private sector in business and the community in providing the critical mass to make Mgahinga an eco-friendly habitat with benefits flowing to all biodiversity in the area while at the same time contributing to meaningful socio-economic development.



Above photos are from the skills identification in crafts training November 2014, at Mgahinga community education centre. Community members are dyeing with natural colour.

Major outputs

The Management Structure

RECTC is now run by a steering committee composed of three district Officials, three Uganda Wildlife Wardens from Mgahinga Gorilla National park, four sub-county officials from the sub-counties of Muramba and Nyarusiza and two community members. This structure is now processing the registration of a community Trust that will have the following as trustees:

- 1 Two district officials
- 2 Two UWA officials
- 3 Two sub-county representatives
- 4 Two community elected representatives

The trust Deed has been drafted, a name has been registered *“The Mgahinga Community Initiative Trust”*, and the Trustees will be confirmed by their respective organisations as the main stakeholders. It is this Trust that will engage in a contract with the Private sector when it becomes a legal entity.

The way forward

- 1 Registration of the Trust and appointment of Trustees
- 2 Fundraising for ecotourism activities
- 3 Community capacity building to develop potential for ecotourism site management and products

Business Products

A baseline study was carried out to assess what opportunities are available and from the study the following business potential was identified and a programme is in progress for the development of these activities:

- 1 Ecotourism activities for the community: Here a lot was identified with regard to community linkages for tourists in the form of community walk to see socio economic activities , sightseeing, cultural dances, and home stays.
- 2 Development of standalone enterprise in handicrafts especially baskets, sculpture, born and horn ornaments and paper beads. Some of these are already in production.
- 3 Renovating the enterprise structure to have a curio shop, accommodation facilities for tourists and debriefing of tourists at the centre.



Finance

FY 2013/2014

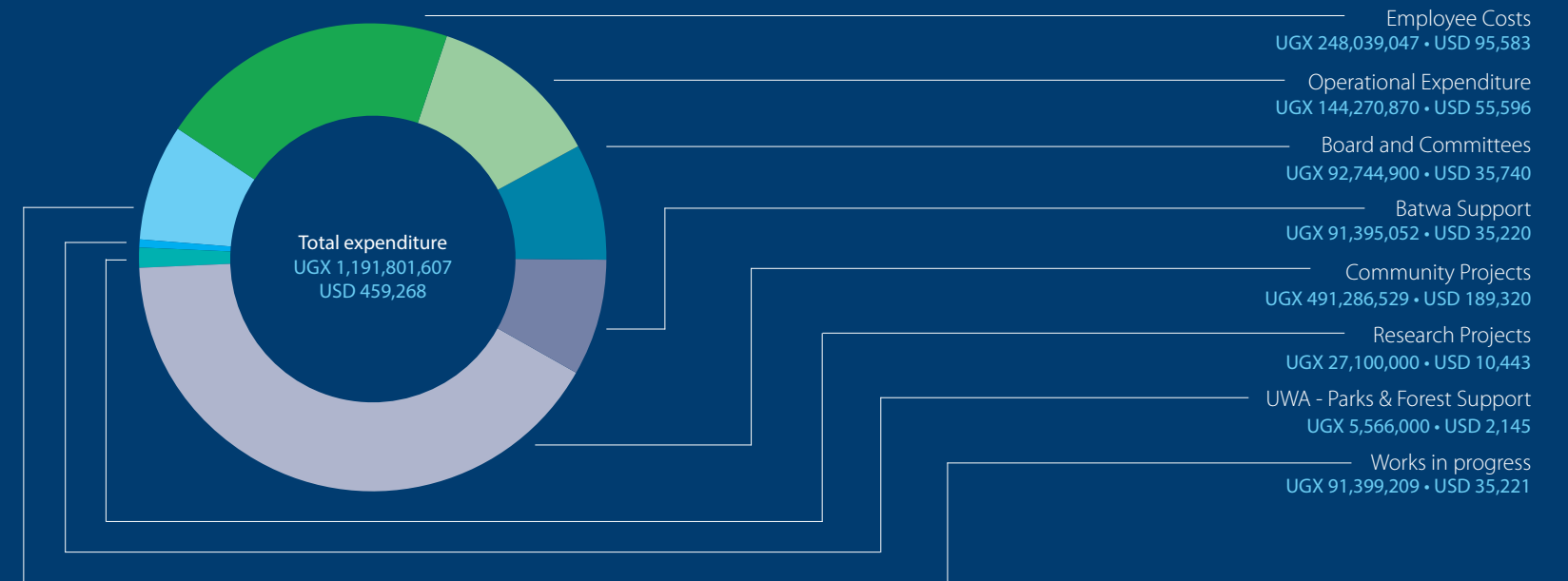
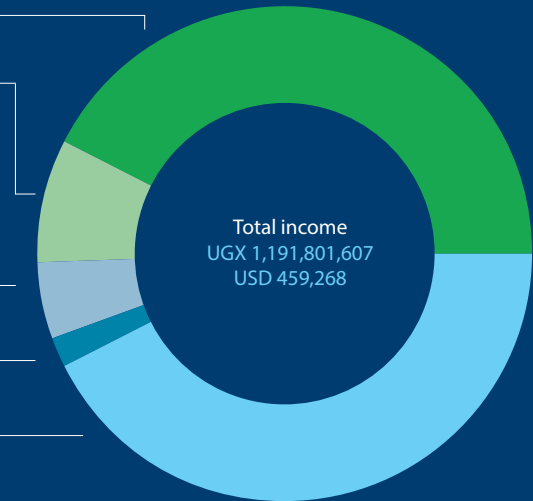
BMCT Fund Contribution
UGX 510,445,754 • USD 196,704

D. Swarovski KG
UGX 20,553,728 • USD 7,921

CARE International
UGX 54,381,975 • USD 20,956

CV-TES
UGX 93,528,000 • USD 36,042

Other Income
UGX 512,892,150 • USD 197,646





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