



The influence of Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust programmes on local communities around Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Area, SW Uganda



Robert Bitariho, Medard Twinamatsiko and Dennis Babaasa.

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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,
Website: www.bwinditrust.org

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Cover Photo: *Women group undertaking project activities related to production of art and craft materials*

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List of Acronyms

BINP	Bwindi Impenetrable National Park
BMCA	Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Area
BMCT	Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust
COU	Church of Uganda
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FAO	Food Agricultural Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GPS	Geographical Positioning System
ICD	Integrated Conservation and Development
ITFC	Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation
LC	Local Council
MGNP	Mgahinga Gorilla National Park
MUST	Mbarara University of Science and Technology
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
PA	Protected Areas
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
URU	Unauthorized Resource Use
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority
VHT	Village Health Team
VSLA	Village Savings and Loans Associations

Executive Summary

Introduction and problem context

This assessment was done to establish the influence of Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) on the communities living adjacent to Bwindi Mgahinga biodiversity hot-spot. The study aimed at assisting BMCT to further impact positively on protected area conservation and community livelihood wellbeing. Local people around Protected Areas (PAs), continue to agitate for conservation benefits since they are the ones that bear the costs of conservation. In spite of Integrated Conservation and Development (ICD) interventions for the last 20 years, high levels of illegal activities, high poverty rates in a rapidly growing population and limited livelihood opportunities, continue to hinder the achievement of conservation objectives around BMCA as these challenges pose serious threats to the BMCA ecosystem. With this background information on the status of human development around BMCA and rising pressure and threats on park resources, the study team identified critical gaps in BMCT project design and delivery needs to address. This would help improve the way conservation and the park are perceived by the local communities through BMCT development and conservation interventions.

Methods

Data was collected using questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions and through observations. Field data was entered into Microsoft Excel spreadsheet and analyzed using SPSS. Documentary review was also conducted to draw comparisons with past studies. A survey was taken at a household level involving both BMCT project support beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries. A total of 576 respondents were randomly selected composed of 288 beneficiaries and 288 non-beneficiaries. In addition, key informant interviews were conducted with community leaders and stretcher groups. Cost and benefit ranking and stakeholder analyses were also done.

Results

Results show that BMCT has contributed positively towards addressing livelihood insecurity around BMCA. This has led to increased support for conservation. Eighty eight percent (88%) of the BMCT project beneficiaries reported positive attitude towards Bwindi. The process of project support by BMCT was regarded as fair to the beneficiaries but considered unfair to those who have not benefited. Eighty four percent (84%) of the beneficiaries reported that their proposed projects were funded, indicating that BMCT is receptive to community needs and values. BMCT has improved community livelihoods through the provision of agricultural inputs leading to improved food security. The existence of the park has had little contribution in terms of formal employment as less than 25 individuals from the local communities are employed by Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA). The key finding for this study is the need for clear and transparent communication with the local communities. This ranges from providing clear eligibility and application guidelines to providing a framework for sensitization, training, selection, implementation and monitoring.

Results further indicate that the inclusion of all community members in project implementation and an emphasis on communities making their own decisions are critical to project success, as each community development needs are unique even though the conservation pressures, they face may be similar. Those whose positively view the park are the ones who benefit from BMCT projects because they recognize, own, and have control over projects and therefore refrain from illegal park access. The nature of project disbursement is currently exclusionary, fostering resentment and perpetuating social inequalities, a short-coming in this delivery method that needs to be addressed. Revising the mechanism of delivery by reducing on the bureaucracy in project decision-making and disbursement of funds is critical, as is, creating tangible frameworks and guidelines for consultation, implementation, and follow up. Therefore, the mechanism of implementation is critical in promoting positive views of conservation.

Not only is the mechanism of implementation key but also the inclusion of stakeholders in the governance and implementation process. Communities emphasized the need for including local government, community stretcher

groups, religious leaders, and BMCT in a collaborative relationship to the benefit of the community. The roles of the various stakeholders, especially those at the higher hierarchical levels, should be clearly indicated as advocates and mobilizers rather than managers of project funds. Stakeholders should also be incorporated into the sensitization and outreach framework of BMCT without undermining the autonomy of local communities in decision-making and ownership of projects.

Conclusions and Recommendations

While the mechanisms of implementation are paramount to sustaining positive attitudes towards the parks, so are the quality and type of inputs. Livelihood inputs such as Irish potato seeds, livestock (goats and pigs), are beneficial if well managed by the beneficiaries. Lack of sustained inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, or agricultural extension makes the community members feel their projects are destined to fail. Furthermore, many community members reported receiving poor quality inputs, which either fail to flourish, or die soon after receiving them. The exclusive nature of group projects, calls for the need of projects that can benefit a greater number of recipients through long-term, sustainable means. Common good projects such as roads, water access, and schools are important here, not only because providing a visible project highlights the well-meaning philosophy of BMCT, but also because it provides a critical platform for capacity building, community access, and future educational opportunities. Projects that combine conservation objectives and meet community needs are optimal, and projects such as tree planting were highly praised among communities for such reasons.

There is also a need to differentiate between projects that compensate for conservation costs, and projects designed for community development. There is a current duality in BMCT project implementation and philosophy, which appears to confuse the recipients and obfuscate the intentions of BMCT.

Overall, BMCT implementation philosophy and methods needs to be revised in order to improve transparency, promote capacity building and community ownership, and improve the linkage to sustainable livelihoods and conservation efforts. BMCT's projects do not markedly differ from those of other conservation and development organizations operating in the BMCA area, therefore, highlighting the need to emphasize 1) common good development projects and 2) conservation cost compensation efforts. The design and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation mechanism, with an emphasis on capacity building for community self-monitoring, is critical for tracking project reception, community impact, and improving community perception of BMCT as a resource as well as a benefactor.

There is a need to improve governance, transparency and implementation mechanisms for BMCT projects. Areas of improvement include: information flow, funding proposed projects, sensitization, consultation and training, monitoring, capacity building and continued conservation education. To achieve it all, BMCT must work with various stakeholders, ITFC, local government, civil society and religious leaders. BMCT mode of operation should shift from less office time to engaging communities in identifying viable projects and implementing best practices. The study recommends that a framework should be established to assess the eligibility of applicants benefiting from BMCT; a mechanism of outreach and information sharing, consulting and interacting with communities to develop a framework is one key component of improving BMCT's operations around the two parks. It also recommends that a system of monitoring and evaluation should be in place, conservation related projects like tree planting, live fences prevention of bush burning will improve on the conservation of Bwindi and Mgahinga.

1. Introduction

Globally, the phenomenon of community and individual wellbeing and conservation of biodiversity is attracting international and local debates as to what policy interventions best address both people's livelihood needs and at the same time protect biodiversity (Wells et al., 1998; Hughes & Flintan, 2001; Salafsky, 2011:975; Twinamatsiko et al., 2014). There is often a contest between local communities and protected area management premised on inadequate benefits from Protected Areas (PAs) to address community livelihood needs yet it is the communities that bear the bulk of the conservation costs. The Bali Congress specifically recognized that people living in or near protected areas can support protected area management "if they feel they share appropriately in the benefits flowing from Protected Areas, are compensated appropriately for any lost rights and are taken into account in planning and operations" (World Parks Congress, 1982 as quoted by McNeely & Miller, 1984). However, since the Bali Congress, there has been a continued biodiversity loss as well as deterioration of human welfare in developing countries (Mugisha, 2002). This is especially true for people inhabiting areas around PAs. Gazettement of protected areas has often brought hardships to the poor, rural communities living around them (Wild and Mutebi 1996; Infield and Namara 2001; Hamilton et al. 2000). This is mainly as a consequence of lost economic opportunities and prevention from access to protected area resources and from the loss of crops and livestock due to raiding wildlife species. However, conservation agencies in third world countries are chronically faced with lack of funds, equipment, and trained personnel making them unstable. This means that they are unable to fully protect conservation areas without a reasonable level of cooperation with the local communities (Hamilton et al. 2000)

In response, new strategies have evolved over the last three decades to integrate the rural poor communities in protected area management and conservation (Infield and Namara 2001; Hamilton et al. 2000; Blomley et al. 2010). These are meant to address local community concerns like loss of access to resources only found in protected areas and issues to do with loss of their only livelihood through crop and livestock losses caused by wild animals from the park. Currently, these community conservation programmes are being critically examined to see if they meet the conservation and development objectives for which they were intended to achieve (Blomley et al. 2010)

In the case of BMCA, when in 1991 the Government of Uganda changed the status of Mgahinga and Bwindi from central forest reserves to national parks, giving them greater protection status it was done with insufficient consultation with the local communities (Hamilton et al. 2000). This drastic action led to loss of local resource access, anger and resentment; all of which turned into opposition to the national park and its managers. Local people suddenly suffered a change in status from legal resource users to illegal poachers and responded with disregard for newly established rules (Wild and Mutebi 1996). National and international concern over encroachment, degradation and threats to mountain gorilla habitat led to development of strategies that included greater park protection, ecotourism based on gorilla visitation and support for more sustainable economic development in local communities.

1.1 The Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust

Interest to support sustainable economic development in local communities by the international donor community, fostered exploration of sustainable financing options to address long-term conservation and development challenges. The World Bank and GEF prescription was the creation of an endowed conservation trust fund that would invest in conservation-related projects in and around the two national parks. Thus was born the Mgahinga and Bwindi Impenetrable Forest Conservation Trust (MBIFCT), now Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT), the first GEF supported trust fund in Africa. BMCT was established and registered under the Uganda's Trustee's Incorporation Act (CAP. 147) in 1994 as a conservation trust fund mandated to work in a two-parish-wide band around Mgahinga Gorilla National Park (MGNP) and Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) i.e., communities bordering the parks and communities bordering the communities that border the park). This means that the scheme covers many inhabitants that have no direct contact with the parks and was an attempt to increase social and economic impact of Trust's investments beyond the immediate surroundings of the parks (Victurine and Oryema-Lalobo 2001).

The major aim of BMCT is to provide long-term reliable support for projects promoting research, conservation of biological diversity and sustainable use of natural resources in the BMCA whilst promoting the well-being of neighboring communities. The underlying principle is that the conservation of the national parks should benefit local communities nearby who often excluded from accessing protected area resources and suffer crop damage by wild animals. Communities bearing the costs for the protection of the ecosystem should, therefore, be rewarded. The Government of Uganda and GEF agreed that the Trust Fund should be established in perpetuity to support conservation in the region, rather than a project, with a limited life. Therefore, the Trust provides 60% of its financing to community projects that promote the conservation of biological diversity and sustainable development and resource use. Community involvement was considered key in setting up the trust and not only did the Trust Deed allocate the majority of funds for community development activities, but it also strongly involved the community in its management by establishing community representation within both the governance structure and the organisation's programme management regime. This was done through the establishment of a local community steering committee (LCSC). The Trust design provided the LCSC with responsibility for the review and approval of community-level projects.

The LCSC is comprised of local villagers, NGO representatives and the community conservation officers of the two national parks, represents the primary institution involved in decisions regarding the approval of community projects. Elected by villagers, the community members of the LCSC serve terms of three years and review and approve all community projects and can approve projects of less than \$1,000 without sanction by the Board (as long as the project meets technical requirements). The LCSC operates as an extension of the Trust with roots deep in the communities and in effect balances the priorities of the communities with the stated goals of the Trust. This strategy ensured support for both biodiversity conservation and community conservation and social welfare initiatives. The criteria for BMCT project support eligibility set forth by the Trust (World Bank 1995) are:

- (i) that projects are proposed by established local community groups;
- (ii) they have a demonstrable positive impact on the conservation of the parks and their biodiversity;
- (iii) projects are consistent with the policies and park management plans of Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA);
- (iv) projects meet social and environmental soundness, equity, and transparency criteria;
- (v) projects include a matching contribution in cash or kind by the proponent; and
- (vi) projects include arrangements for accountability and long-term sustainability.

However, Victurine and Oryema-Lalobo (2001) report that during the first round of project proposals received by the Trust, more than 90% were requests for funding local infrastructure programs like construction of schools, clinics and road. These did not mesh with the conservation priorities of most Board members who wanted to fund projects with more direct links to resource conservation and economic development. But community board members argued that the people know where the funds come from, understand that the funds are linked to conservation of the parks, but have their urgent community priorities. The Board debated the issue and finally acceded to community explanation and justification for funding village-identified priority projects as a means to build strong relations with the communities and create an entrée for conservation messages in the future. This was a direct result of community participation on the Board that created a bridge between community and national-level (and some extent international) discourse about what actions truly contribute to conservation. This informal reporting mechanism helped communities better grasp the Board's concern about the lack of conservation-related community projects in the portfolio. It also led to strong community advocacy, through the community Board members, for funding community priorities. This communication led to stronger relations between the Trust and the communities and to a clearer program definition.

The initial focus of grant making embraced three areas: a) social welfare, infrastructure, education and training; b) productive enterprise; and c) programs explicitly addressed to the needs of the minority Batwa community. Funding for these grants came through USAID, DGIS, the UN Foundation FAO program, and later from Trust Fund income.

In the first cycle of community projects between 1997 to 2002, some 50 projects were funded, most of which answered basic community welfare and infrastructure needs - school classrooms, health units, and a women's training center. A second round of funding, also under the DGIS grant, supported a variety of projects aimed at productive alternative livelihood activities such as beekeeping, passion fruit cultivation, coffee growing and tree nurseries, as well as community infrastructure involving the construction of classrooms, water tanks and latrines, two high-school level science laboratories, a girls' dormitory, a vocational training centre for women, eight health units, and solar power for a remote health unit which required refrigerated storage for vaccines. A total of 90 projects were funded in both cycles.

The third cycle of grant making between 2002 and 2005, heavily focused on training and technical assistance for improving livelihoods through small-scale agricultural activity. Assistance was also provided for planning woodlots, Irish potatoes, rice and passion fruit, and for the purchase and consolidation of land. In addition, grants were given for dramatic events and radio spots to raise consciousness about the importance of conserving biodiversity in the parks.

Since 2005, the Trust has focused more on livelihood projects that are perceived to make a substantial contribution to local awareness and commitment to park protection. These include: cross cutting approaches, water schools, Batwa development, provision of reproductive health environment and provision of community projects.

1.2 Cross-cutting approaches

i. Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA)

A VSLA is a microcredit model under which 25-30 members meet in a self-managed group once a week to deposit and borrow money. Members can take out loans to invest in IGA such as commercialized farming and small businesses, or meet such expenses such as school fees and medical bills. The loan carry a 10% interest rate and have to be repaid in three months resulting in a steady pool of money which is shared at the end of the 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. BMCT uses the VSLA as an entry point for contacting community members and strengthening the impact of the Trust's programmes. VSLA meet weekly to save, which makes them easily accessible for community change agents and BMCT staff.

ii. Using community change agents

Community change agents are locally based men and women who are trained by BMCT or any of their partners in community mobilizing and programme implementation 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 the building up of local capacity, which in turn increases ownership and deepens the understanding of BMCT's programmes and the approach helps consolidate results and achievements in a long-term perspective.

iii. Mitigating the negative effects of climate change

Climate change is severely affecting rural populations whose primary livelihood depends on cultivation of land or other natural resources. Changed 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. To mitigate the negative effects of climate change, BMCT is implementing an agroforestry project. This is done to protect the environment and to ensure that communities have permanent access to fuelwood 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 the 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.

1.3 Water Schools

Water Schools project is designed to conserve BINP watershed through effective community in sustainable water use and management.

i. Clean water for improved health and welfare in schools and communities

BMCT provides clean water and improved sanitation to poor rural communities in Kanungu District. Water is the most important natural resource for human health and welfare and the way it is managed is decisive for social and economic development. In Kanungu District, access to clean water is very limited and many people have no choice but to rely on unprotected water sources or over-exploit the safe water points for their daily consumption. Consequently, water borne diseases like diarrhea, dysentery and typhoid are common among children and adults as lack of water restricts development of new livelihood opportunities. The Water School project teaches young pupils and students about the importance of conserving watersheds and other natural resources, and about safe water, sanitation and hygiene practices in schools and at home. Through knowledge building and active participation, the children learn to appreciate the value of water and they are trained to share their newly-gained knowledge with their parents and other community members to encourage self-replication of the conservation and health promoting practices at home. By creating awareness, providing safe water and promoting good sanitation and hygiene practices among the BINP adjacent communities, BMCT seeks minimize the pressure on the park's resources, while at the same time stimulating improved health conditions, well-being and local growth.

ii. Improved hygiene and sanitation

BMCT is implementing conservation, water and health educational programmes in 14 primary and six secondary schools in Kanungu District through Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) Clubs. The club members raise awareness among other learners and their parents about sustainable water management and basic sanitation and hygiene practices in school and at home. Through the WASH Clubs, teachers and learners acquire new knowledge and club members show how to put actions behind words by transforming the schools into ideal models of good water and hygiene conduct.

To consolidate the results of the WASH Clubs and to further improve the pupils and students learning environments, BMCT has installed solar power panels at rural secondary schools. The electricity is used for illumination of reading rooms and dormitories. Nyamiyaga Secondary School also received three computers for A-level computer lessons. Another activity has been the educative school drama club performances to cause awareness among learners and community members. Drama, music, dance and poems have been performed by WASH Clubs at Water Schools. Two teachers from each participating school were trained by BMCT on how to use drama to effectively engage pupils in conveying information about sustainable water use and safe hygiene. To encourage pupils and students, drama competitions were held between schools on sustainable water management, sanitation and hygiene issues.

iii. Clean water supply

Banyara Gravity Flow Scheme was designed and constructed by Ugandan engineers to provide safe and clean water to 20 schools and 2,000 households. The source of water is located in the mountains allowing gravity to create sufficient pressure to transmit water through the 42.8km pipeline system that includes four reservoir tanks of capacities 150m³, 100m³, 50m³ and 30m³. five break pressure tanks, 58 tapstands and one protected spring. Each water point is managed by a local water user committee and the members have been trained

in operation and maintenance. At schools located where the water scheme could not be constructed, water harvesting tanks of 30m³ or 20m³ have been constructed. To improve pupils and students health and learning capacity, drinking water boiling systems have been provided to Water Schools. The system has insulated boilers which due to the heat isolation, use a minimum amount of firewood. The 1,000 litre tanks are filled with clean water from the gravity water scheme or the water harvesting tanks and produce freshly boiled once a day serving both learners and teachers. The boiler and water storage facilities are managed by assigned teachers and learners from the schools WASH Clubs.

1.4 Batwa development

Through the Securing Batwa Health, Education, Agriculture and land rights (HEAL) project BMCT has been empowering the Batwa around BMCA to achieve sustainable livelihoods through increased access to land, food security, diversified income sources, improved health and higher levels of education.

i. Education

BMCT has supported Batwa education at primary level since 1996. More than 800 Batwa school going children have been supplied with uniforms and scholastic materials to enable them enroll in local primary schools under the governments free Universal Primary Education programme. In spite of an increased enrolment rate, Batwa pupils still experience poor academic performance and a high dropout rate due to frequent school changes and lack of parental support, among others.

ii. Improved livelihood

Lack of land and very limited livelihood opportunities are among the most critical challenges facing the Batwa. BMCT works to accommodate this by procuring land and constructing permanent houses for Batwa families. To ensure sustained food security and higher income levels, resettled households are trained in environmentally and economically sustainable use of their new land. Through the Farmer Field School approach, Batwa have been trained in crop selection of ecologically viable crop types, planting, cultivation, post-harvest handling and seed production. Other initiatives include livestock rearing and establishment of kitchen gardens to cultivate fast growing vegetables like cabbage, spinach and eggplants.

iii. Improved health and hygiene

BMCT works to improve Batwa's health seeking behavioral change and increased access to health services in the area by carrying out awareness campaigns on good hygiene and sanitation, offering health outreach services; advocacy with local health providers and capacity building of Village Health Team (VHT) members. Batwa have received health related services in areas covering immunization, treatment, reproductive health, HIV testing, growth monitoring, de-worming, etc.

iv. Social empowerment

Extreme poverty, poor hygiene, violence, excessive use of alcohol, etc have led to a social exclusion and discrimination of Batwa. To support social empowerment, welfare and equal participation by Batwa and non-Batwa in community management, BMCT has held thematic workshops for 17 resettled households covering areas such as rights, gender issues and conflict resolution, sanitation and hygiene, and creation of income generating activities.

v. Social and economic integration

The many years of destitution and social isolation of the Batwa have led to a cultural erosion, self-discrimination and despair often reflected in alcohol and drug abuse, petty crime such as theft and very poor personal hygiene

and self-preservation. All these have led to discrimination and hostility towards Batwa from other population groups who often perceive them as dishonest and uncivilized. BMCT seeks to address this by using the VSLA methodology as a tool for economic empowerment and integration of resettled Batwa households into their new communities. BMCT formed VSLA groups consisting of Batwa and non-Batwa. This was to reduce on the social differences and prejudices that previously created mistrust and hindered integration among the two population groups.

vi. Local leaders involvement

Improving the lives of the Batwa is a long-term perspective that involves forming relationships between Batwa, the surrounding communities and local service providers such as health centres and local governments. BMCT invites local government officials to visit resettled Batwa households to show them how the Batwa are determined to be self-reliant.

1.5 Provision of reproductive health environment

BMCT implements integrated community conservation and development for a healthy population around BMCA.

i. Reproductive health and conservation

Population density and growth have significant impact on conservation and community welfare. In partnership with the Path Foundation Philippines Inc., BMCT works through Population, Health and Environment (PHE) project to raise awareness and increase access to family planning and reproductive health services for the rural population in Kanungu District. Building on existing structures formed under other initiatives, the PHE project supports community change agents, adult peer educators and health workers to improve service delivery and it raises awareness of reproductive health issues, effective conservation and sustainable livelihoods among women, men and youth for improved family health and environmental-friendly social and economic long-term development. To increase impact, BMCT has developed a PHE role-model family. These families are selected to promote and enhance impact of the project activities in the communities.

ii. Fuel saving stove

A majority of the population in Kasese District depend on fuelwood as their main source of energy. Most households still use the traditional three-stone cooking fireplace which consumes large quantities of fuelwood. Fuelwood saving stoves reduce consumption of fuelwood by up to 60% by maximizing the heat transfer to the cooking pot and thereby shortening the cooking time significantly. Not only do the stoves contribute to a sustainable energy use, they also save the owners time used to collect fuelwood. The stoves also reduce the negative health effects caused by smoke from traditional indoor fireplaces.

1.6 Community projects provision

BMCT strives to improve the wellbeing of people adjacent BMCA by diversification of products for income generation to improve livelihoods. BMCT has funded 26 community projects to support 501 beneficiaries in Kabale and Kisoro Districts. Agro inputs such as potato seed, animal breeds, tree seed, spawns, chemicals, animal drugs, pumps, drums, watering cans, jerry cans, hoes, pangas, rakes, polythene bags, knives, rolls of thread were procured and supplied to the beneficiaries for implementing the 26 projects. The projects include: goat and sheep rearing, piggery, potato and mushroom growing, and tree and live hedge planting.

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. However, the link between these initiatives of improving community livelihoods thereby contributing to poverty reduction and improving local peoples' attitudes and behavior towards conservation and reducing threats to mountain gorillas is still little known.

2.0 Problem statement and Context of the study

The BMCT's initial project activities are believed to have had a marked impact on people's attitudes towards conservation of BMCA. The Trust funded numerous infrastructure projects like schools and health clinics that benefited virtually all members of the communities through donor funding (World Bank 2007; Blomley et al. 2010). However, funding of community infrastructure projects ceased in 2004, when those 'common good' projects became the responsibility of local governments. In 2005, with support from other agencies such as CARE international, the Trust began to support income generation initiatives. These alternative revenue-generation activities have benefited some community members and hold promise for the future, but the focus on such initiatives needed be strengthened. A key challenge was to target these activities to the poorest in the communities, who are most prone to resort to illegal activities for their sustenance (Blomley et al. 2010). Such initiatives needed to be supplemented by adequate capacity building for individuals and groups of enterprises with regard to management, accounting, use of credit, and marketing of products.

Assessing the effectiveness of such community projects in supporting biodiversity conservation is necessary if such programmes are to find support among the local communities and other key stakeholders and replicated and rolled out in other areas where they have not yet been implemented. However, no systematic assessment has been done to evaluate whether a shift in strategy from 'common goods' projects to IGA has had the desired impact of uplifting the community livelihoods and improvement of their perceptions to conservation, particularly the most vulnerable.

2.1 Conceptual framework

The major drivers of biodiversity degradation and loss in southwest Uganda are poverty coupled with a high human population density that lives a subsistence lifestyle (Butynski and Kalina 1993). Therefore, the overall vision of BMCT is to foster the conservation of BMCA through investment in community development projects, mitigating human-wildlife conflicts and other programmes that create greater conservation awareness. Improving community livelihoods through the initiation of community friendly livelihood projects is assumed to bring about positive attitude to conservation by the project recipients. Also, provision of substitutes and alternatives to resources extracted from the parks would reduce on the demand for natural resources from the protected areas. Another assumption for the BMCT model is that there is a positive correlation between community livelihood benefits and biodiversity conservation. It is envisaged that linking the project benefits accrued and the existence of BMCA would reduce on the threats to the parks by increasing on the knowledge of park values and benefits.

However, there are some limitations to the BMCT conceptual model. Attitudes and improvement in local livelihoods of individuals are not always closely linked to behavior (Infield and Namara 2001). Much as community conservation programmes attempt to influence thinking and attitudes in the belief that this will lead to changes in behavior, this might not be the case in poaching and other illegal activities. Assessing behavior itself is difficult; therefore community conservation programs use attitudes and livelihood improvement as a means of assessing their impact.

Also, it should be noted that there are a large number of parallel and overlapping initiatives by other organizations making it difficult to ascribe impacts on local beneficiaries to any particular BMCT project with confidence since BMCT is only one of several important actors around the parks. As such, it difficult to directly attribute changes in the conservation of the parks and livelihoods of the local communities to only BMCT. UWA now has capacity to

manage and police the parks and the Uganda's economy has grown, and conflict has diminished bringing more tourists to the area and more interest in its protection. Therefore, the Trust's community development activities are not solely responsible for changes observed in the parks and local communities. Nonetheless, there is still need to determine the extent of BMCT contribution towards improving local community livelihoods and protected area conservation and generation of indicators that can be used to measure the changes.

3.0 Goal and Objectives of Assessment

3.1. Over-arching Goal

The main goal of this study was to generate information needed to enhance the conservation of BMCA through investment in community development projects, and programs that create greater conservation awareness. This information is to be used to measure the degree and quality of change during project implementation.

3.2 Specific objectives

- Examine BMCT contribution towards conservation and community livelihoods and document lessons learnt.
- Establish best practices in program implementation for reference, replication and improvement.
- Establish the area for BMCT operations that will lead to substantial impact on conservation
- Establish the stakeholders that BMCT should work with to achieve its goals and objectives
- Using GPS establish the key parishes proposed for operations of BMCT and provide a map
- Make recommendations on the basis of the above to guide project operations that will have positive impact.

4.0 Methods

4.1 Study Area Description

The assessment was carried out in the two-parish-wide radius around Mgahinga Gorilla National Park and Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, an area where BMCT is mandated to work (Figure 1). The two National Parks form Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Area (BMCA) and this assessment adopted BMCA to refer to both National Parks. Bwindi Impenetrable National Park covers three districts of Kabale (now Rubanda), Kanungu and Kisoro while is located in Kisoro District, Uganda and borders Rwanda and DRC (Figure 1). The two Parks are a home to some of the world's endangered species including the mountain gorillas. Bwindi is a world heritage site for one of the two remaining small populations of the critically endangered mountain gorillas (McNeilage et al., 2006; Bitariho, 2013). The two parks are bordered with one of the densely human populatins in Uganda (about 300 people/Km²) (UWA, 2012b).

Bwindi Impenetrable National Park has been variously described as an Afromontane forest. It is located in the region that is rich in biodiversity as well as a large number of endemic species (McNeilage et al., 2006). Butynski (1984) and Howard (1991) consider Bwindi as one of the richest ecosystems globally and consequently Uganda's most important forested area for the conservation of biological diversity. The United Nations agency, UNESCO, also looks at Bwindi Impenetrable National Park as a world heritage site as a result of endangered gorilla species (UNESCO, 2005; IUCN, 2010). Land holdings around Bwindi are small and fragmented (Ellis and Bahigwa, 2003), but subsistence agriculture remains the main occupation of almost all the inhabitants, the majority of whom are reported to live in abject poverty (Lanjouw et al., 2001). Before the designation of the national park, the use of forest resources was important for local livelihoods. Local people were much involved in pit sawing and gold mining. MGNP is a natural high altitude forest covering 33.7 km². It MGNP forest facilitates the collection, infiltration, and storage of large amounts of water. However, communities surrounding these forests find it hard to access water. The problem stems from the spatial distribution of groundwater discharge points relative to the population that surround the two forests.

Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust Research Locations

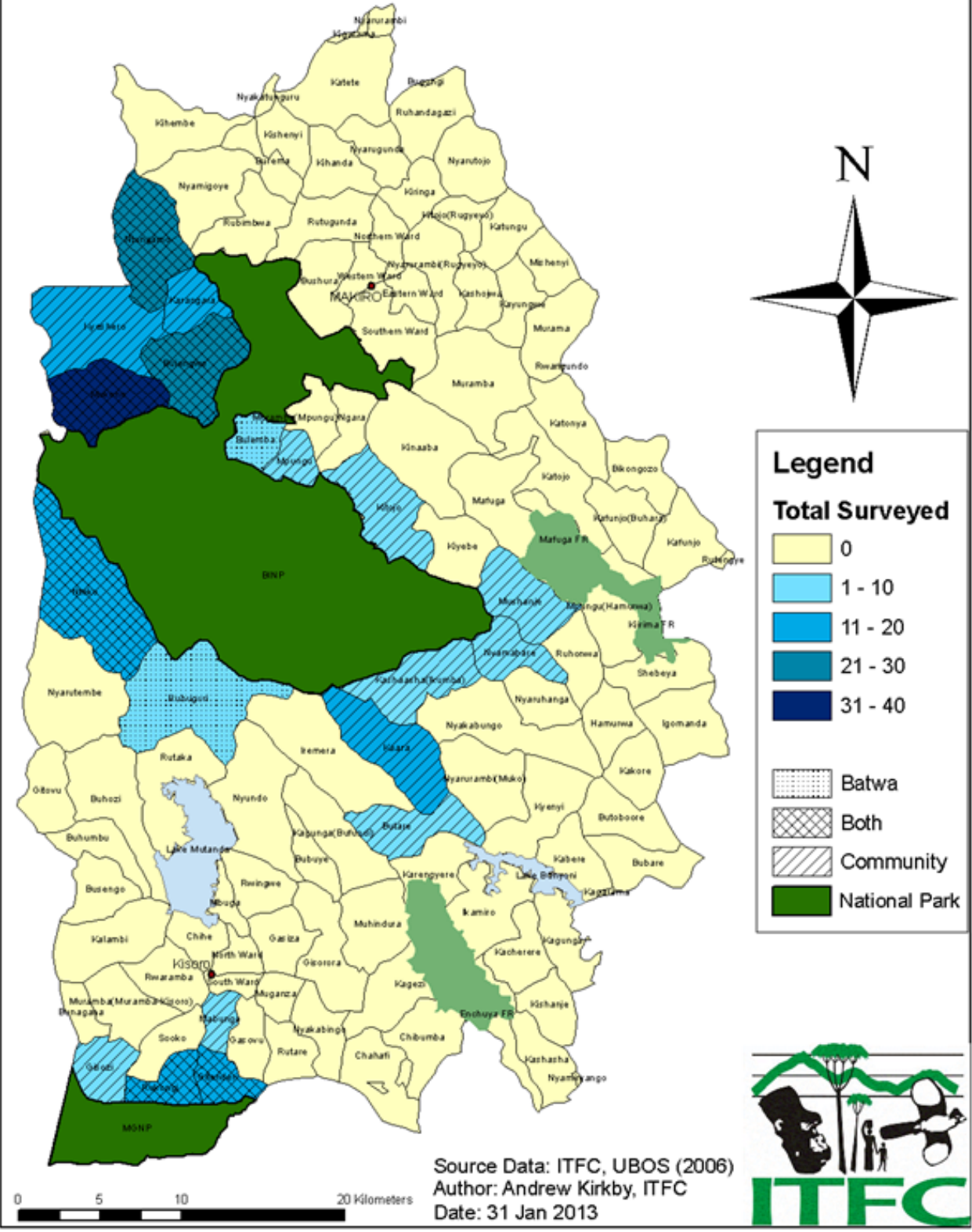


Figure 1 Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust working Area around BMCA

4.2 Study Design and Methods

4.2.1 Sampling Design

We stratified the area of operation of BMCT based on first parishes directly adjacent the park and non-adjacent parishes – the second parish bordering the first parish. We randomly selected 4 parishes around Mgahinga (2 adjacent and 2 non-adjacent parishes) and 19 parishes around Bwindi (11 adjacent and 8 non adjacent) for household surveys. In total, 23 parishes were included in the sample.

To select household to be interviewed, lists of all household names were acquired from LC1 chairpersons. Also, list of project beneficiaries were also got from BMCT for Beneficiary Assessment at household level. From the lists, a total of 288 beneficiaries and a similar number of non-beneficiaries were randomly selected with the latter acting as controls to collate findings on BMCT contributions to community welfare and conservation of BMCA (Figure 2).

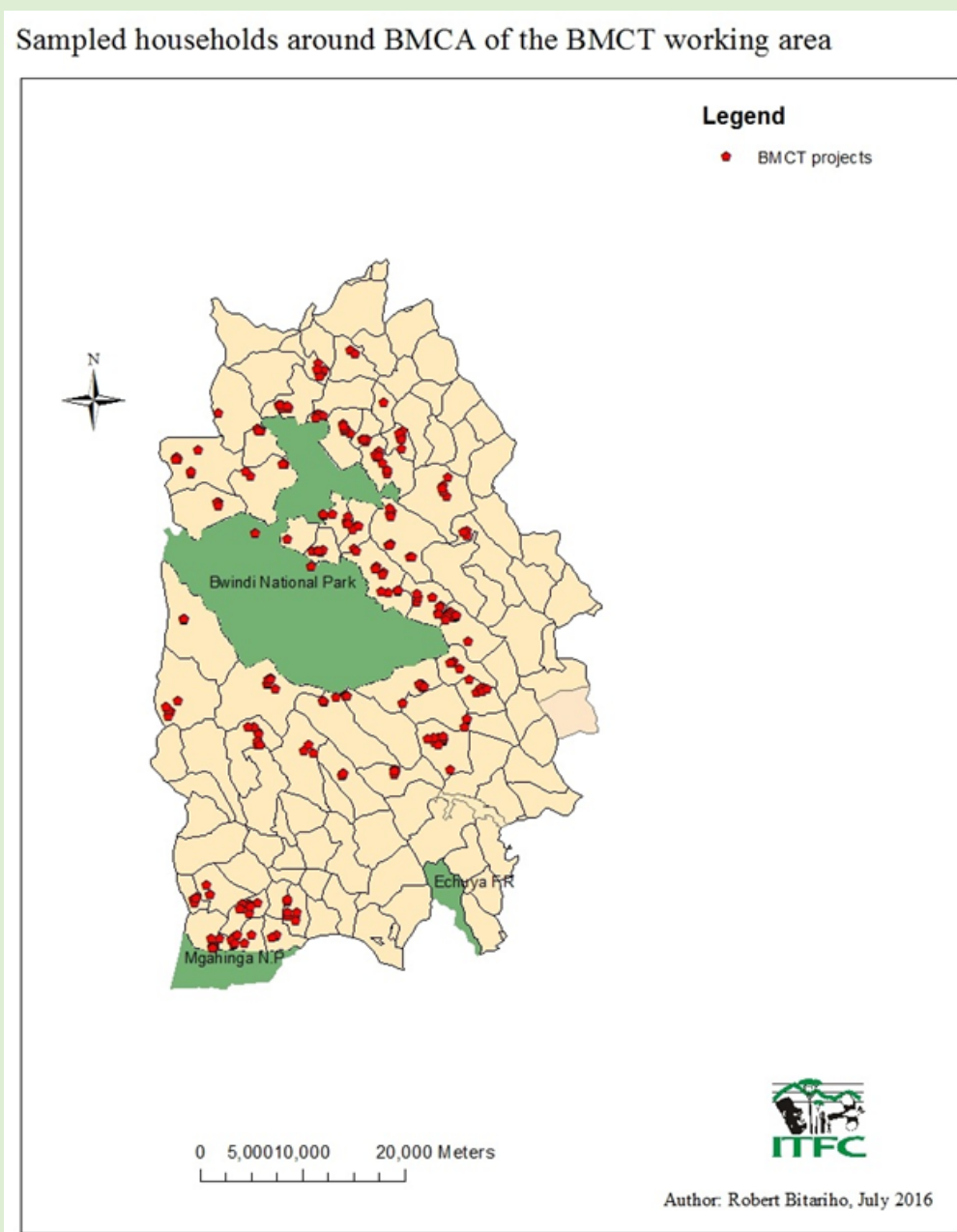


Figure 2 Sampled and interviewed BMCT projects' Households (beneficiaries and non beneficiaries) around BMCA

4.2.2 Methods description

We used a mixed methods approach in order to generate the required data. This included both quantitative and qualitative approaches for data collection. Mixed tools measure magnitude of changes and provide a better explanation about issues being investigated (Mallick, 2002). Social impact assessment techniques were employed to understand the BMCT project activities and how they impact on people neighboring the two BMCA while socio-ecological assessment procedures were used to understand how BMCA is impacted by the communities neighboring it. Social impact assessment helped us understand the consequences of BMCT presence and activities on the local communities neighboring BMCA. This brought to light any public or private actions that determine the ways in which people live to meet their needs and relate with BMCA. This assessment was undertaken in terms of community livelihoods, wellbeing and governance aspects. We used structured and semi-structured household interviews as well review of annual and past evaluation reports of BMCT for this aspect. For socio-ecological impact assessment, we depended solely on documentary review, mainly of UWA reports based on Ranger Based Data Collection (RBDC) and Community Conservation work.

4.2.4 Data Analysis

Interview and questionnaires data was analyzed using SPSS to understand the relationships between impacts from the park and community impacts to BMCA while the GPS data was analysed using ArcGIS 10.0. SPSS also helped to generate frequencies and descriptive statistics for clear presentation of results. We conducted 23 FGDs (230 participants) in both the adjacent and non adjacent parishes. Mgahinga and Bwindi are surrounded by 30 adjacent parishes (n=3 in Mgahinga and n=27 in Bwindi). Other 24 parishes are non adjacent. In each parish, we conducted an FGD with local stakeholders and did a stakeholder analysis. During FGDs, problems, costs and benefits ranking were conducted. A preference ranking matrix was done to generate local intervention strategies. In each parish, we conducted semi-structured interviews and beneficiary assessment survey. During household interviews, homestead analysis in terms of homestead information and livelihood assets and wealth ranking were done.

5.0 Results

5.1 Social demographic profile of the respondents

Various demographic characteristics were established and used to understand the extent of how BMCT influence community livelihood. The identified characteristics were gender, ethnicity, age and length of community members stay in areas where they currently live. Table 1 below reveal the proportion distribution of respondents per category as expressed in percentages.

The gender divide among respondents was nearly equal; the respondent population was ethnically inclusive (Table 1). Respondents were household heads with the majority being between the ages of 21-60 and married.

Respondents were relatively homogenous in social markers of highest education attained and mobility. Nearly 20% of respondents had no formal education, with 61% having attained primary education, 12% had reached secondary level, with only 5% having achieved tertiary education. The majority of respondents therefore had a limited education, which has implications for community capabilities and development potential that will be discussed later. The respondents were also relatively immobile, with 89% having lived in the same village for ten years or more. This indicates that perhaps the communities may not have the means to pick up or move elsewhere if heavily impacted by poverty and lack of development. Lack of mobility also implies that the majority of respondents were most likely to be familiar with the area and the history of the conservation.

Table 1 Demographic characteristic of respondents

Variable	Categories	Percentage distribution
Gender of respondents	Males	49
	Females	51
Ethnicity of respondents	Bakiga	74
	Bafumbira	22
	Batwa	4
Age of respondents	Above 60	15
	41-60	43
	21-40	41
	Below 20	1
Marital Status	Married	84
	Widowed	12
	Single	4
Length of Stay	Less 5 years	4
	5-10 years	7
	Above 10 years	89

5.2 BMCT contribution towards conservation and community livelihoods

5.2.1 Current livelihood and poverty status

We found pervasive poverty and persistent livelihood insecurity among community members neighboring BMCA. Poverty levels and high dependence on subsistence agriculture indicate a highly insecure population, forcing them to illegally access resources within the park. As indicated in Figure 3, the livelihood security in communities was perceived to be markedly tenuous, with nearly all non-beneficiaries and BMCT beneficiaries reporting that their main income-generating activity as insufficient in meeting household needs. In addition to household income poverty, a poverty index calculated on a food security variable indicates that a considerable proportion of beneficiaries and of non-beneficiaries were food insecure and relatively less wealthy. These factors explain why a majority of the beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries perceive illegal resource access in the park as being caused by poverty or the pursuit of alternative income sources (Figure 3). Therefore in order to securely protect the parks community livelihood needs to be addressed. As indicated in Figure 2, there were insignificant differences in the proportions of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries in all the considered socioeconomic livelihood indicators. . This could imply that the contribution of BMCT to the livelihoods of beneficiaries is not substantially impacting differently from what other interventions have had on the lives of those that have not benefited from BMCT

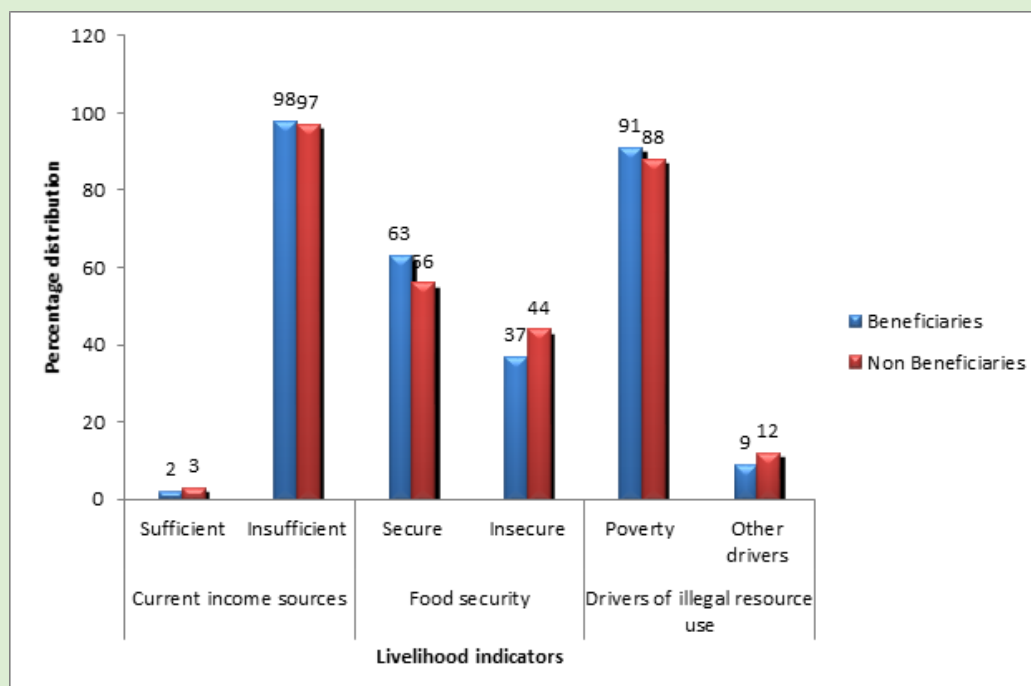


Figure 3 Current livelihoods indicators among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries

5.2.2 Contribution of BMCT towards community livelihood

The contribution of BMCT in addressing the identified condition of community livelihood security was perceived positively by most of the respondents that had received assistance from BMCT. BMCT livelihood and common good projects positively influenced attitudes towards park conservation by bolstering insecure households and providing alternatives to park resources. However, only 10% of beneficiaries had likelihood of abstaining from illegal activities in the park or reporting those conducting illegal activities. This may reflect unwillingness to admit conducting illegal activities in the park on part of BMCT beneficiaries. From the analysis, a less accusatory indicator of the livelihood improvement /park conservation link is reflected by the 33% of beneficiaries who reported a heightened appreciation of the park as a result of BMCT project benefits.

These beneficiaries view the park as the benefactor behind their benefits, and arguably abstain from behavior that could jeopardize their access, or abstain because their livelihood needs are met by BMCT inputs. Similarly, many beneficiaries view BMCT benefits as compensation for losing access to the park in the first place, so there is clearly a duality of viewpoints on benefits and conservation, though both are positive mainly due to the benefits shared rather than the intrinsic value of the park itself.

As reflected in Figure 4, BMCT projects positively impacted beneficiary attitudes towards the park. Majority of the beneficiaries reported positive attitudes towards Bwindi as a result of benefitting from BMCT projects. However, the proportion of beneficiaries who report positive attitudes towards the park differs only by nine percentage points to proportion of non-beneficiaries who reported similarly. This indicates either that attitudes towards the park as a natural entity are perhaps generally positive across the region or cannot necessarily be attributed to BMCT activities only. What is known is that BMCT is concentrating on uplifting those communities that are more heavily impacted by the park. One of the ways BMCT lifts up those heavily impacted by the park is alleviate the conservation burden through projects such as live fences to mitigate wildlife crop-raiding, giving out land to landless Batwa, and providing alternative sources of meat such as livestock which compensate for lack of access to wild animal meat. In general, beneficiaries reported receiving at least some benefit or great benefit from BMCT projects as they 1) alleviate or compensate for park costs and 2) promote general community development through common good projects.

Respondents' recommendations for promoting community livelihoods include requests for better quality or increased livelihood inputs (45%) – ranging from goats, sheep, and Irish potatoes to the various inputs needed to sustain such projects such as drugs for livestock and training in better/modern agricultural methods. The request for improved livelihood support was closely followed by 25% of respondents requesting common good projects and improved capacity building in the form of VSLA projects such as schools, roads, and particularly clean water projects. Twelve percent of beneficiaries also recommended inclusive and consultative implementation of projects, meaning that BMCT can better support livelihoods when it includes community members on selection and implementation of desired projects, versus the current top-down approach. However, 84% of beneficiaries' proposed projects were supported, indicating that BMCT is indeed responding positively to most of the beneficiary requests for project support. This is a good lesson that needs to be scaled up in order to make BMCT projects sustainable through community ownership.

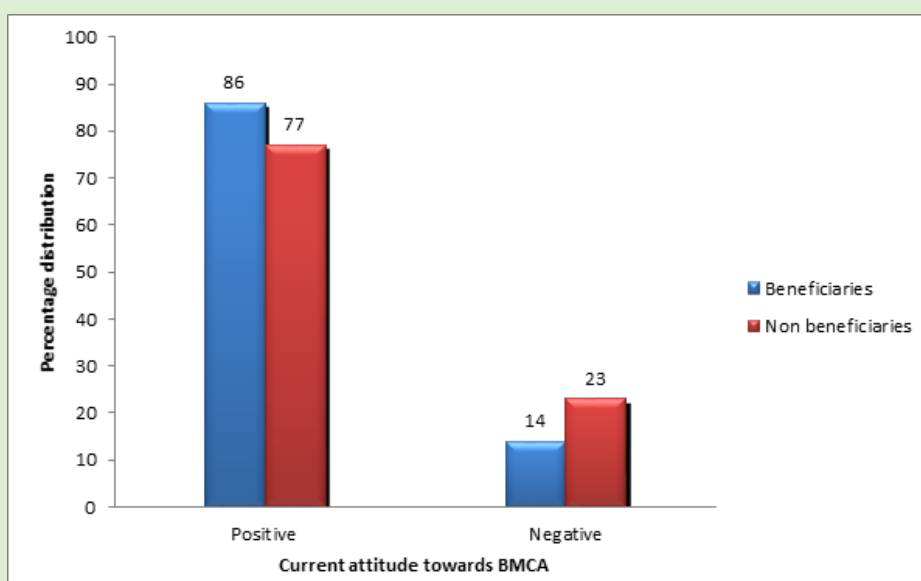


Figure 4 General perceptions of BMCT beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries

5.2.3 Perception of BMCT projects in impacting local livelihoods

BMCT's impact on local livelihoods and community development was reported to be positive overall, but there are glaring gaps in evidence of tangible outcomes of these interventions. This calls for close monitoring and evaluation. In the eyes of beneficiaries, BMCT projects are perceived to improve food security (22%) and provide critical livelihood inputs and support (28%). In fact, a total of 46% of beneficiaries report that livelihoods and household income have fairly improved or been provided for through BMCT's operations. Yet these are self-reported figures, and have little or no documentary support meaning that respondents could contrive answers in order to continue benefitting from BMCT projects. This indicates a critical need for monitoring and evaluation to assess project impacts. Furthermore, 57% of beneficiaries requested monitoring and advisory services as components of their community projects.

The existence of the park itself has little influence over community livelihoods in regards to formal employment and livelihood generating opportunities. Only 0.35% of overall respondents were employed directly by UWA, 0.52% reported bee-keeping as a primary source of income and 1.2% reporting handcrafts as their main source of revenue. Many respondents cited frustration with UWA over bypassing locals for employment and employing Ugandans from elsewhere, though there are subliminal reasons behind this trend. Considering the limited education of the local population, as shown by this survey, local community members may not have the training and professional qualities sought for by UWA indicating need for capacity building and a heightened emphasis on education and training for the locals. Capacity building would improve community perceptions towards UWA as a non-discriminatory, local-development oriented entity, rather than an outside establishment plagued by nepotism and discrimination.

There is an urgent need to improve the governance, transparency, and implementation mechanisms for BMCT projects. Resentment seems to be brewing among a considerable number of non-beneficiaries (33%), who correlate their lack of BMCT project support with poor leadership and corruption [ON PART OF???]. and a general lack of information and transparency.. Additionally, 41% of non-beneficiaries recommended inclusive implementation as a better method of supporting community livelihoods, implying that widening the net of beneficiaries and promoting community consultation and involvement are key to positive impact projects. Amongst beneficiaries, they cite a need for sensitization and information [BY WHO?] (37%), which is closely followed by a recommendation of community decision-making and consultation (33%) as a mode of best practice in BMCT projects. The pattern emerging here, both among beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries, is a desire to be thoroughly informed, sensitized, included/consulted [BY WHO?], and supported throughout the implementation processes. Since these are suggestions for improvement, this indicates that current projects lack these best practices. Implementing a transparent mechanism of project implementation would be a fruitful response to the community recommendations, where such a mechanism would outline the process of identifying, informing, and training, disbursing, and supporting projects throughout the implementation process.

Promoting conservation through development efforts is an under-emphasized aspect of BMCT projects. A little less than a third of beneficiaries had an understanding of BMCT as both a conservation and community support entity, with 52% perceiving its efforts as primarily common good or livelihood project support. This highlights a need to entrench the conservation messages further in its operations, namely through sensitization and projects emphasizing conservation. The majority of beneficiaries cited tree-planting as more beneficial project that both promoted conservation and mitigated a conservation cost in the form of reduced access to park trees. Additional community needs such as access to water and environmentally friendly agricultural methods provide additional opportunities for BMCT to link community development with a message of conservation and environmental preservation. Linking the community development objectives with a tangible conservation message is critical, as this makes BMCT projects unique. Furthermore, improving access to conservation messages through key stakeholders and community platforms, such as radio, schools, and performances, allows for a wider dissemination of messages as well.

5.3 Best practices in program implementation for reference, replication and improvement

The study documented various practices that program design and implementation must refer to, replicate and improve on. From the study, respondents revealed that without good communication and transparency, among others, the implementation of BMCT is going to prove difficult. There are evident areas where BMCT has done well during its project implementation and other areas where it needs to improve. This section presents and discusses people's perception of BMCT best practices and areas for improvement.

5.3.1 Improved Information Flow

Information flow regarding BMCT operations and clearly defined functions is critical to continue building an understanding of the organization's mandate with the local community. Only a third of beneficiaries reported that they are aware of BMCT as a supporter of both conservation and livelihoods, which emphasized that BMCT was more known as a development organization rather than a conservation entity as well. Defined outreach mechanisms, such as different media for relaying messages over the radio or through drama, seem pertinent here. Where BMCT has adopted this strategy of using various media houses, there have been registered success stories of perceived information flow and knowledge of the implemented activities. This flow of information facilitates perceived involvement and ownership of projects. Furthermore, collaborating with stakeholders such as local governments, and community organizations such as VSLA groups as platforms for information flow has been a useful outlet as well. Figure 5 reveal people's perception of BMCT information sharing and flow system of both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

As shown in Figure 5, most people (63.9%) believe that the current BMCT information flow and sharing with the communities before and during the implementation projects is good. There are, however, some people in communities where BMCT implements its project activities that believe that information is not well shared due to inability to reach out to remote areas. It is reported that BMCT ought to reach out to communities that are remotely located especially those near the park boundaries. Such communities are likely to be excluded from BMCT interventions since they are far from roads, village centres yet they are the ones that incur the greatest conservation

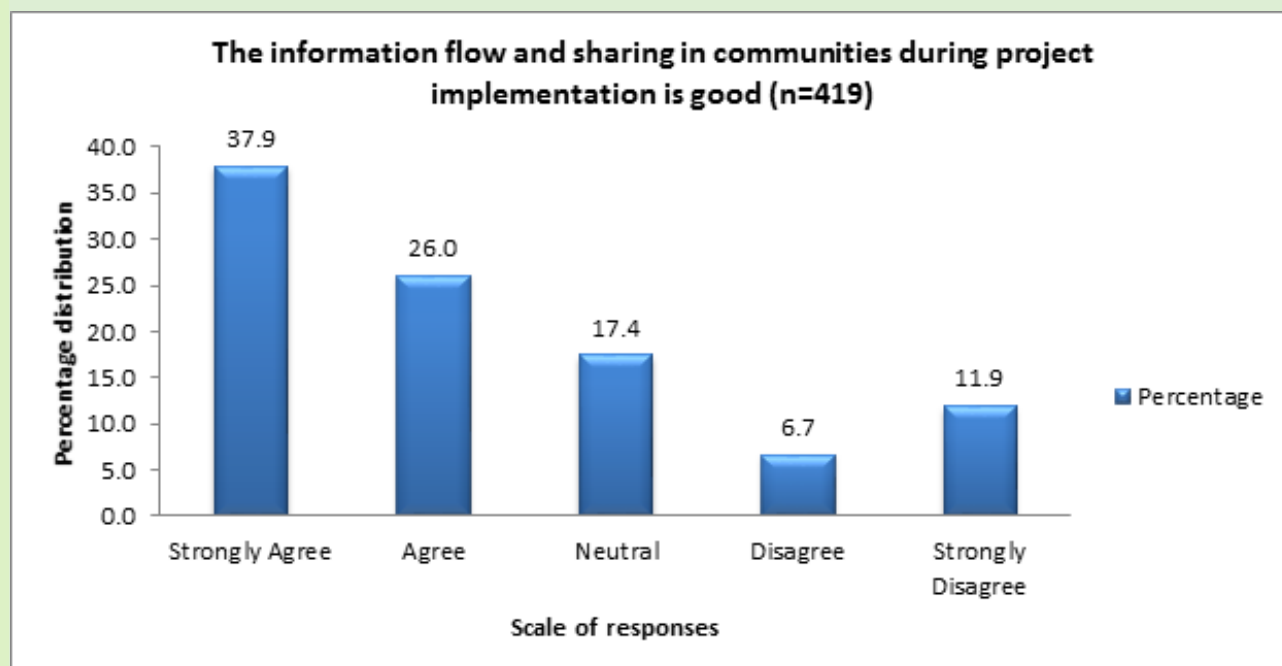


Figure 5 Perceptions of information flow and sharing of BMCT by respondents

5.3.2 Transparency in Eligibility and Application Process

Most non-beneficiaries reported a lack of awareness of BMCT operations and benefits, with many sharing a resentment that they are excluded from project support for reasons that are far from clear. For beneficiaries themselves, there was little consensus on what exactly rendered their applications successful. Clearly defined eligibility guidelines such as relevance to conservation, geographic area, level of need, group size, or method of application need to be communicated to mitigate all possible resentment from those who feel excluded from the process based on structural barriers. Furthermore, unsuccessful applications should have feedback explaining why the selection committee rejected them. Having a framework for application process and making it readily available reduces the likelihood of the most wealthy or well-connected from monopolizing project benefits while the neediest remain without a voice and without access.

As Figure 6 shows, less than 50% of the respondents (both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries) believe that there is accountability and transparency in the distribution of BMCT projects while the rest do not agree or are not sure. The distribution of projects refers to who is likely to be selected, projects selected and the entire process. This area of openness and accountability is vital for BMCT operation and needs immediate redress. Most respondents who think the process of project distribution is not fair are mostly the non-beneficiaries (85%).

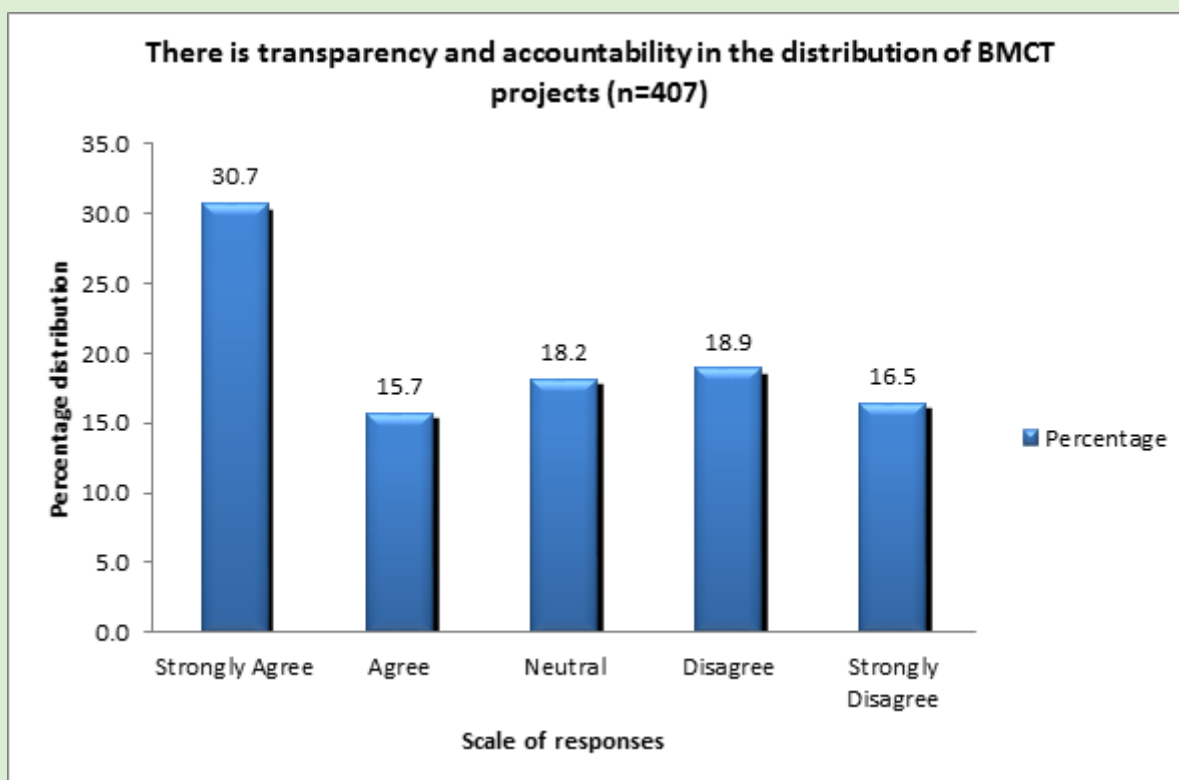


Figure 6 Perceptions of transparency and accountability of BMCT projects and distributions by respondents

5.3.3 Projects Implemented according to Community Requests

Majority of beneficiaries seemed appreciative of their projects, but not necessarily because some projects were more successful or more livelihoods-focused than others. Respondents appear content with the projects supported by BMCT because they feel they have been adequately consulted and involved in the selection and implementation process, resulting in the desired benefits. Nearly half of all beneficiaries recommended that BMCT should consult with the community and allow for community ownership and decision-making of projects in order to improve project designs. This indicates that perceptions of success for BMCT projects is more aligned with community involvement and consultation than the specific nature of the benefit itself; as long as community members are receiving their

requested benefit, their perceptions of BMCT seem mostly positive. This is important for future replication. **Most beneficiaries (84.5%)** as indicated in Figure 7 revealed that the process through which they benefited from BMCT projects was fair enough.

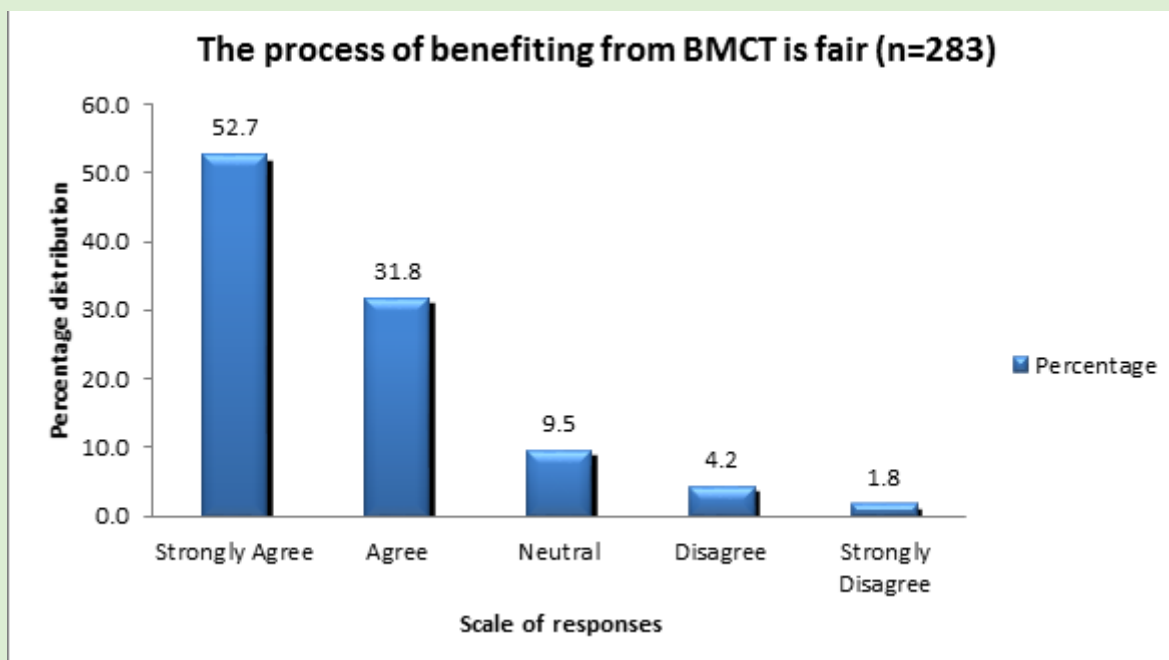


Figure 7 Perceptions of processes of BMCT projects benefits receptions by the respondents

5.3.4 Conscientious Sensitization, Consultation and Training

Constant consultation with communities regarding desired projects, carefully outlining the feasibility of the said projects, and creating a work plan for implementation is important in the effort to provide inclusive development. However, there is a tangible need for support beyond the implementation phase, especially for livelihood inputs. Sensitization and training on farming methods and agricultural upkeep are not only highly desired but critical to the success of livelihood projects. Offering trainings such as these can have a lasting impact, as it enables community members to improve output and sustain agricultural gains in particular. Lastly, there is also a need for delivery of necessary inputs to maintain said projects, such as medicine for animals or fertilizer for crops. Without these, any livelihood input is useless.

Most beneficiaries (74.3%) agreed that BMCT procurement process is fair (Figure 8). This was attributed to the involvement of LSCs and local community project committees. What is however important is to realize that there are some beneficiaries that do not perceive fairness in the procurement processes. This is premised on distribution of projects when the beneficiaries were not involved in identifying suppliers and also making some contributions to the procurement process that was not clearly explained. The fact that most people believe in the procurement process is an important strategy that BMCT should take forward but also addressing the shortfalls that arise from the negative perceptions.

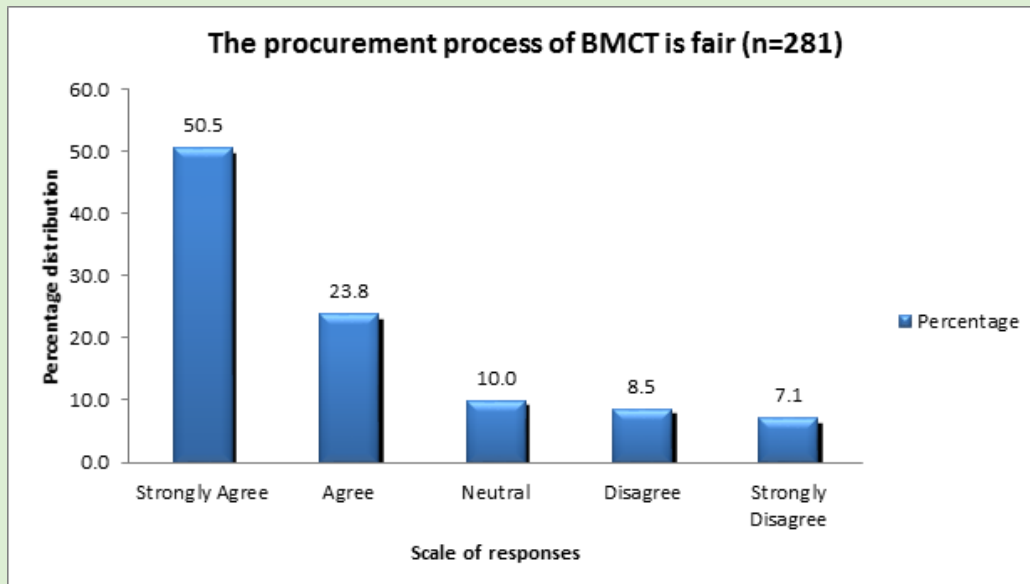


Figure 8 Perceptions on the procurement processes of BMCT projects by respondents

5.3.5 Sustainability and Durability of Projects

Many respondents shared a desire for sustainable and long-term projects that continue to produce or give back in some way. Projects such as trees, land, VSLA, water, live fences, schools, and bee-keeping were especially appreciated for their longevity and contribution to development. Livelihood inputs such as Irish potatoes and goats are tenuous, as all benefit relies on the sustained life and well-being of that vulnerable input. This is not to say that livelihood projects are inferior, but considering the uncertain livelihood situation of most respondents, projects that offer more consistency and future benefits seem to be greatly valued.

5.3.6 Consistent monitoring and advisory services

The BMCT monitoring framework has shortfalls that ought to be addressed for improved project implementation practice. Results show that right from project identification and registration of beneficiaries to the implementation stage, there is limited monitoring by BMCT staff. This leads to ghost members and manipulation of the implementation process. Nearly 60% of beneficiaries recommended implementing monitoring and advisory mechanisms to sustain the implemented projects. Furthermore, project advisors should be available as a resource for communities to consult throughout the duration of their project in order to sustain said project. The monitoring mechanism should be seen as a resource rather than a punitive measure, as it is simply there to insure that community members are receiving the benefit they were promised. Consistent monitoring also gives the community the reassurance their well-being and development is valued by BMCT and thus worthy of long-term monitoring to insure optimal benefits. There was also a tangible desire for the community to gain the skills to self-monitor projects as well, allowing independence in future projects.

5.3.7 Inclusive implementation and capacity building

The impact of BMCT has been mostly been corroborated with the implementation of common good projects. It should consider emphasizing those common good projects that collectively improve well-being of the majority, such as clean water, proper school structures, and roads, as these foundational services were usually requested by respondents and open up the door to greater community development. Without these basic inputs, providing livelihood support in the manner of agricultural inputs is an unevenly applied and largely ineffective way of spurring

greater area development. Furthermore, common good projects arguably reduce resentment and dependability on the park as a source of income, and provide ownership over community projects that uplift the collective rather than a select few. The group benefit model currently applied by BMCT is still exclusive, rendering benefits to a few while excluding many.

Results show that many recipients proposed projects that are visible and permanent rather than transient and individualized, though some respondents also argued for the opposite. There is still limited capacity among local beneficiaries to influence the BMCT decisions (Figure 9).

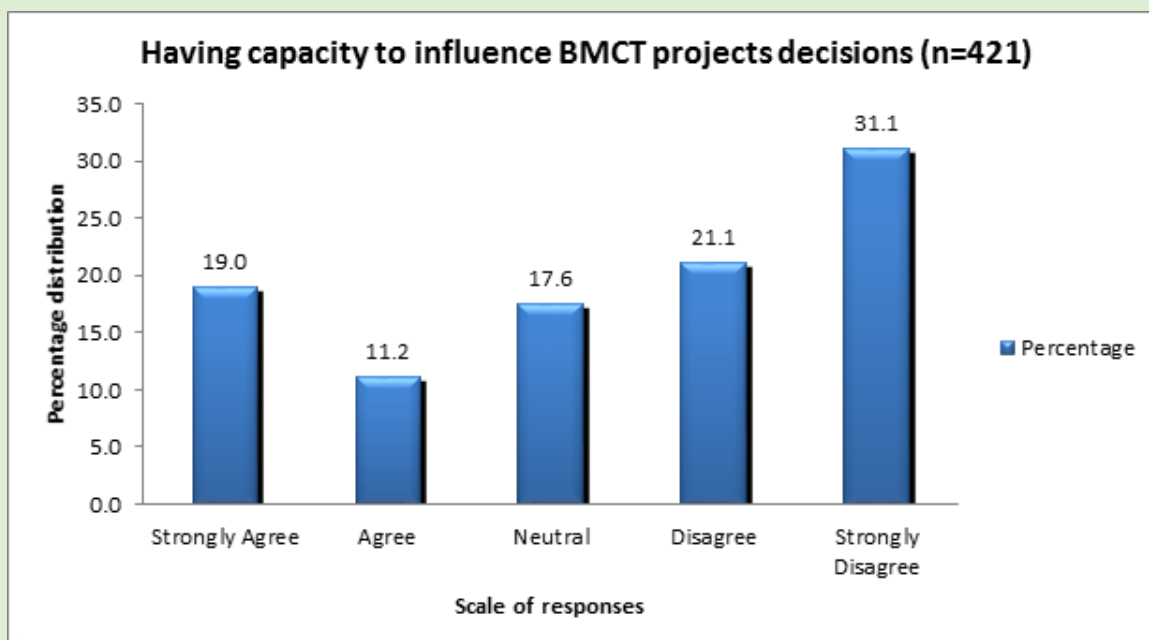


Figure 9 Perceptions of local communities to influence BMCT decisions by respondents

5.3.8 Continued conservation education and projects

Currently, perceptions of people towards the park are largely positive. This is attributed to the natural benefits that the national parks provide. Continued sensitization efforts through radio, drama, and other means are important for equating the value of the park with its intangible benefits rather than capital gains. Certain conservation trends are catching on as well due to the mutually constitutive benefit they garner for community members. Tree planting is a case in point here – not only is tree planting beneficial for the environment, but it also provides a primary source of lumber, firewood, and income for community members, making them less dependent on park resources. Many community members praised tree planting for its dual purpose as a developmental input and a conservation effort. Equating BMCT efforts with a philosophy of conservation as a result of development is also important, as there are many NGO’s providing development benefits and BMCT’s unique approach may get lost.

5.4 BMCT operation area that will lead to substantial impact on conservation

We found that the community members had different views about the existence of Bwindi and Mgahinga as national parks - nearly 80% of the respondents were positive about the their existence (Figure 10). Most of the community members who had negative perceptions over the existence of these conservation areas were non-beneficiaries since they were not directly benefiting from the supported projects.

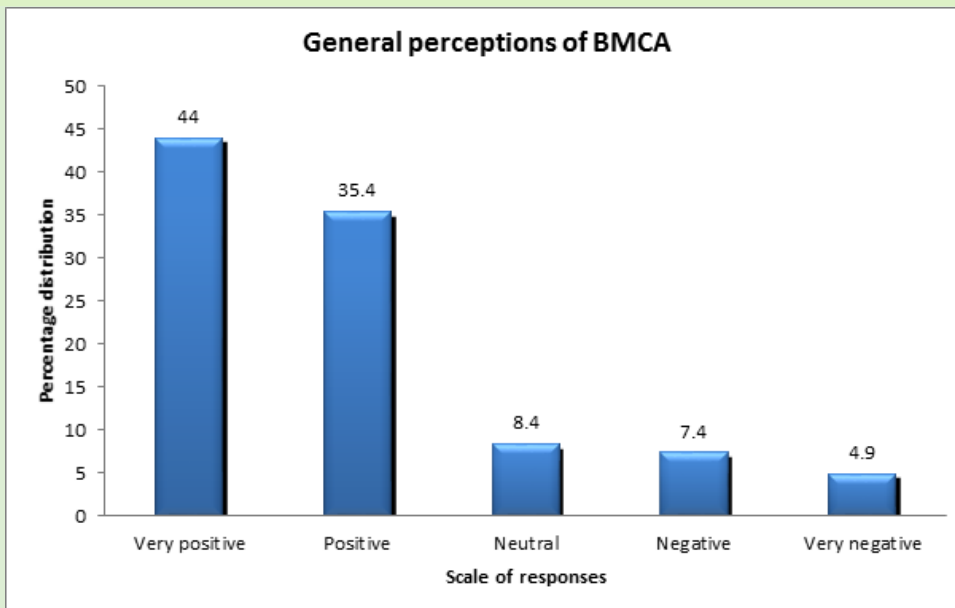


Figure 10 Perceptions and attitudes on the impacts of BMCA by respondents

Respondents equated the benefits of BMCT and before its implementation and reported that the benefits of BMCT were substantial. However, it is worth noting that BMCT has areas of weakness despite the tremendous achievements in improving the lives of people living in and around Bwindi and Mgahinga. For BMCT to do better the following areas must be tackled with emphasis and ensuring that majority of the community members have some benefit. The study found out that 28.7% suggested improved leadership in community/park institutions with less corruption, 26.8% suggested including areas far away from the park, 12.2% improving on access to information to local communities and transparency, 10.1% improving leadership and communication in the community, 9.2% ensuring proper consultation, sensitization and good local community mobilizations by BMCT, 7.8% better local representation and 5.2% monitoring of the BMCT operations. Figure 11 below summarizes these findings.

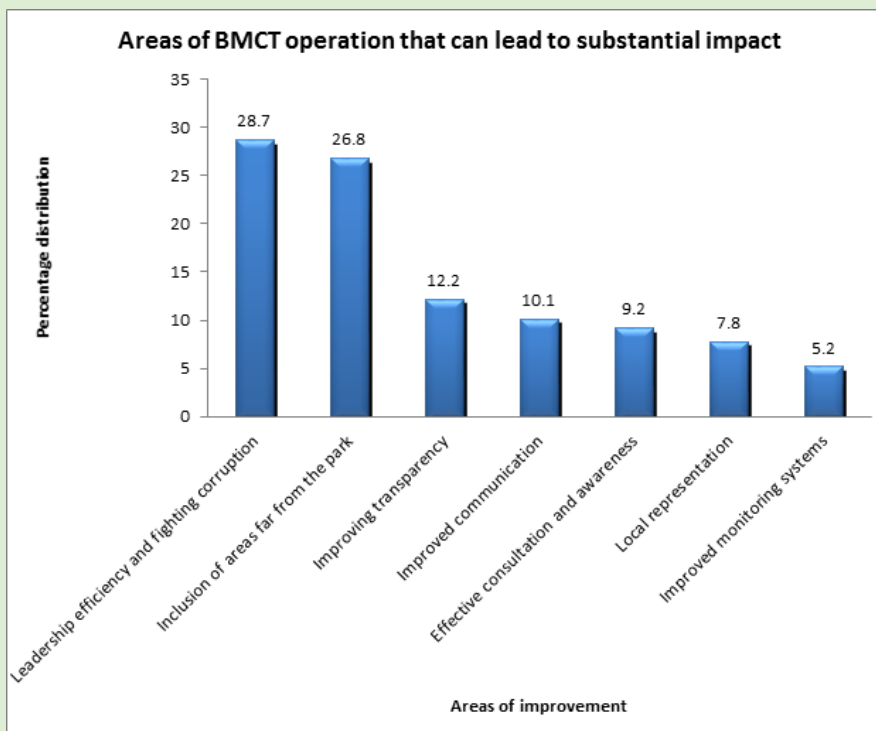


Figure 11 BMCT areas of improvement that will lead to substantial impact on conservation as suggested by respondents

5.4.1 Poor leadership and corruption

28.7% of the responses revealed that they have experienced and heard about cases of weak leadership and corruption related scandals in park/community institutions. Understanding why most efforts fail resulting in failure to achieve their goals is poor leadership among park/community institutions.. BMCT cannot achieve sustainable conservation if this leadership is not streamlined. Such leaderships include the LCSCs, local council institutions and other park/community institutions. Corruption cases were reportedly responsible for the exclusion of some households from benefiting from the community projects funded by BMCT. This explains why some of the community members have not benefited from BMCT projects.

5.4.2 Far away places far from the park

26.8% of the findings indicate that the places very far from the park (after the second parish) were not included in BMCT implementation and they were left out as non-beneficiaries. From the key informant interviews, places far from the park have a contribution to sustainable conservation. Whereas they are living far from the parks, the forest and grass cover around them is protected and therefore they should benefit from BMCT because of their contribution. It may be looked at to be small, but this cannot stop them from encroaching the park and the forest to hunt, cut timber, charcoal because they do not cause a negative impact. From Focus group discussions, it was revealed that animals from the park destroy the crops of people including those who are far from the parks. Excluding them from benefiting from BMCT is not the best way, since they are not always compensated. It was also revealed that at times there is no physical compensation, BMCT simply uses projects of giving one goat yet animals destroy a lot of crops which would help a farmer to buy more livelihood assets than just one goat.

5.4.3 Lack of information and transparency

Figure 11 show that about 12.2% of the responses revealed BMCT as lacking transparency, and also having information gap. In some cases, some members were left out to benefit from BMCT because they lacked information and the communication was not clear, it lacked transparency and passing out of information was not authoritative. “Information is power” if one has no access to information, he/she feels less empowered, may become less concerned and this affects sustained conservation of BMCA.

5.4.4 Poor information and bad leadership

As illustrated in Figure 11, ten percent (10.1%) of the study findings relate achieving substantial impact on conservation to good information, good leadership and good character. This is a component that BMCT has not yet achieved. More effort should be put to address information gap in terms of when it is passed on, by whom and if it targets the relevant people it's meant to reach. One respondent was quoted:

“Park is not becoming friendly to us and the park partners are there especially ITFC and BMCT which have always come here and we told them our problems but they have failed to advise the park to consider our problems” (Key informant in Rubuguri-Kirundo Subcounty, Kisoro District)

The respondents revealed that their views are not addressed and have a feeling that communicating their problems to BMCT would ease their tension and make the park a place to live near. Understanding how conservation is a multi-stakeholder involvement and listening to each other is important in addressing information and leaderships gaps that exist.

For BMCT to operate consultation, sensitization and mobilization are important. The findings in Figure 11 indicate that 9.2% of consultations are done, proper policies that may not be resented can be passed and people will abide by them with less difficulty. Policies are core for effective implementation of any given project. They become more

relevant and adaptable when people who will be guided by these policies are involved in the passing them, it is an indicator that the policies come from them and are documented to keep them reminded.

Representation is another key aspect for every project’s success; the locals should have a genuine representation since they are the ones to ensure implementation of the programs. Allowing them to choose among themselves who should be the leader is vital and giving this leader autonomy to deliberate on the key issues gives them a sense of project ownership.

5.4.5 Monitoring of BMCT projects

Results indicate that the monitoring and evaluation system of BMCT is weak and prone to manipulations. During this study interviews, some registered beneficiaries in BMCT database were found nonexistent. A few names appeared on the verified lists of beneficiaries yet are not known as beneficiaries by the organization. It was established that such perceived beneficiaries were not consulted in project identification, meetings and eventual project funding. This is dangerous for its operation and its reputation in the communities. BMCT will increase its substantial impact on conservation if proper monitoring is ensured. It should be noted that monitoring helps in identifying the gaps and weaknesses and appreciating the effort. Monitoring of BMCT projects helps to identify projects that are liable to succeed and measures that should be put in place to regulate failure of projects.

5.5 Important BMCT Stakeholders

We conducted a stakeholder analysis based on extensive literature review of old and new management plans of BMCA, BMCT inception, annual and evaluation reports and documents and publications on human-park interactions, using the following question as a basis:

Who are the key people, groups, organizations, institutions etc., involved in, concerned with, or affected by the conservation of BMCA?

The identified stakeholders were then clustered under a series of headings categorizing their relationship with conservation of BMCA. The outcome is shown in Table 2. At this stage, we were generally considering conservation of BMCA not stakeholders/participants in BMCT itself. This was considered important so that the full potential scope for BMCT future strategy could be analyzed. We then made a selection of six stakeholders that we thought were more relevant to BMCT operations for detailed analysis. We examined their roles and functions, interests, expectations and their contribution in relation to the mandate of the Trust. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 3.

Beneficiaries	Affected positively	Implementers	Collaborators	Supporters (incl. donors-customers)	Policy/ decision makers	Affected negatively/ opponents/ obstacles/ competitors
International community	National and international forest re-search groups	UWA field level	National and internal forest research groups	Dutch Govt	UWA	Bioprospectors

Local communities	Tourism industry	ITFC/MUST	Researchers and students	World Bank	Min of Tourism, Wildlife & Antiquities	Timber industry
General public with linkage to pride/heritage	Tour operators in and outside Uganda	IGCP	MUST	USAID	NEMA	Local communities adjacent BMCA
Batwa	Community lodge operator	Wildlife Clubs of Uganda	International universities	GEF	GoU	Poachers
	Tourist agencies	Nature Uganda	Makerere University	UNESCO	Local Govts – Kisoro, Kanungu, and Rubanda	Local farmers
	National and international tourists	BMCT	Conservation organisations interested in SW Uganda	WWF		Illegal forest users of all types
	Bioprospectors	Local communities	Local govts (LCI – V)	CARE		Pharmaceutical industry
	Timber industry	Traditional forest resource specialists	NGO Forum – Kabale, Kanungu and Kisoro Districts	PHE		
	Legal forest resource users	Local farmers		D. Swarovski KG		
	Local schools around the park	CTPH		European Union		
		Service providers				
		GVTC				
		Gorilla Organisation				
		MGVP				
		AICM				
		URP				
		UCOTA				
		BMCT				

Table 3 Key stakeholders for BMCT

	Local communities	Batwa	Traditional forest resource specialists
Roles & functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Custodians of natural resources on their land ▪ Support UWA to conserve BMCA ▪ Negotiate and enforce in-PA resource use agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support UWA to conserve BMCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support UWA to conserve BMCA ▪ Negotiate and enforce in-PA resource use agreements
Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use in-PA resources ▪ Benefit from conservation ▪ Recognition of their role and involved in management of PAs ▪ Promoting and preserving indigenous traditions and skills ▪ Access to other opportunities and alternative income generation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use in-PA resources ▪ Recognition of their role and involved in management of PAs ▪ Promoting and preserving indigenous traditions and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use in-PA resources ▪ Recognition of their role and involved in management of PAs ▪ Promoting and preserving indigenous traditions and skills
Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have direct benefits and revenue/income ▪ Mitigation of human-wildlife conflicts ▪ Be provided with better social and infrastructure services ▪ Employment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have direct benefits and revenue/income ▪ Access to natural resources and cultural sites in-PAs ▪ Own land and shelter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Access to natural resources in-PAs
Contribution/output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key partners to UWA ▪ Prime implementer of conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indigenous knowledge for management of PAs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indigenous knowledge for management of PAs

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Indigenous knowledge for management of PAs 		
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	Uganda Wildlife Authority	Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation	Donors
Roles & functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Implement conservation policy ▪ Custodians of BMCA ▪ Coordinate and lead conservation action and players ▪ Identify research and monitoring needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contribute to the development of management plans ▪ Training of scientists ▪ Supporting research projects ▪ Carrying out research that enables effective conservation and management ▪ Networking – responding to research needs of UWA and other conservation partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide funding ▪ Work within national policy guidelines ▪ Fulfill home country govt and public goal ▪ Facilitate access to technical support ▪ International conservation advocacy ▪ Monitoring and evaluation of funding
Interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain biodiversity and integrity of PAs ▪ Income generation mainly from tourism ▪ Increased role of local communities in PA management ▪ Sustainable natural resource use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ generate new knowledge and ideas as well as better ways of undertaking conservation practice ▪ deliver highest quality results and training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sustainable development ▪ International and national recognition ▪ Disburse funding according to political priorities ▪ Conservation and wise use of natural resources ▪ Influence economic and environmental policy
Expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be self-sustaining ▪ Sustainable management of PAs ▪ Support from local, national and international communities ▪ Donor support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cooperation ▪ Support ▪ New discoveries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Build sustainable institutional and human resource capacity ▪ Transparent and accountable programmes ▪ Work according to donor national plans
Contribution/output	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The leader and key player in conservation ▪ Key implementer of conservation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advice to park management ▪ Solutions to natural resource management challenges ▪ Impacts of conservation initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funds ▪ Access to international conservation and environmental networks ▪ Programme continuity ▪ Technical assistance

5.6 Key parishes proposed for operations of BMCT

When establishing the specific geographic boundaries for the Trust's funding program it was agreed to focus the funding in communities bordering the parks and those communities bordering the communities that border the park, (two parish-wide band) in an attempt to increase social and economic impact of Trust's investments (Victuarine and Oryema-Lalobo 2001). However, Harrison et al. (2015) and Twinamatsiko et al. (2014) report that the majority of the people who enter and use the parks illegally are those from poor households, who live closest to the parks and farthest from roads and trading centers. They add that other motivations for illegally resource of park resources include crop raiding by wild animals, inequity in revenue sharing, lack of employment and lack of employment. In some communities, benefits from projects have reduced illegal use of park resources, though the greatest deterrent is law enforcement (Blomley et al. 2010; Harrison et al. 2015). To reduce illegal activities in the parks, it was suggested the Trust benefit the poorest people living in remote areas and near the park boundary by providing affordable alternative sources of forest products, mainly bush meat and fuelwood, and addressing crop raiding (Harrison et al. 2015).

The key parishes that were proposed for operation were those immediately adjacent to the parks. Residents in these parishes incur the greatest conservation costs compared to those beyond. Stretching projects may be crucial for community wellbeing but impact less on conservation. The second parishes from the park could be included for common good projects such as roads, water, schools and health infrastructure and services. Results show that currently, some BMCT projects are stretched to third parishes. This is a misplaced investment in situations when the scope of operation is around BMCA. Most respondents in the parishes beyond the second parish radius knew very little about Bwindi and Mgahinga and were less bothered about their conservation. Most key informants interviewed asserted that the investment of BMCT activities in communities far from the park was less connected to conservation outcomes since most people who interact with BMCA are mostly from the frontline parishes. The most notable illegal activities were poaching of wild animals and harvesting of minor forest products such as firewood, bean stakes, poles, bamboo and medicinal plants. According to UWA law enforcement reports, most of the unauthorized resource users who were arrested were residents of the frontline parishes.

Focusing BMCT in the immediate adjacent parishes is likely to lead to improved conservation since it could motivate poachers to reform after realizing the direct benefits of conservation. It was reported in Mpungu, Mushanje, Rubuguri and Nteko parishes that the implementation of ICD projects has led to the formation of reformed poacher groups. Some of the members of reformed poachers were found to have benefited from ICD projects.

5.7 Impact of people on the park

We examined law enforcement reports to gauge the impact of local communities on the park. Analysis of Bwindi RBDC from 2011 to 2014 indicate that the most common illegal activity incidences were of poaching of wild animals (56%), followed by fuelwood collection (12%) (Arinaitwe 2015). This tallies well with results of other studies in the communities around Bwindi (Harrison et al. 2015). This is a pointer to the Trust that it should support projects that provide alternatives to game meat and fuel wood.

5.8 Lessons Learnt for Future Project Sustainability

From the study, it was learnt that BMCT was found to be trusted, transparent compared to local government and other Non-Governmental Organizations. Given the autonomy to implement key projects there no doubt that such projects would be successful.

BMCT staff should be more field based than working in office. Physical presence within the communities is key in

achieving project's success. In most cases it's the community members to say what they want, and they can only tell this when BMCT staff are in contact with the communities than waiting to be approached in office.

This study also noted that it is very important to engage communities at project initiation stage. Consulting community members in identifying projects for support makes them own the projects. In one of the communities in Kanungu, one of the officials who is supposed to train local people [IN?] and give feedback to BMCT rarely engages them in the training but this official makes reports to BMCT. The local communities have never understood where he gets the information he reports to BMCT since they have never seen him for that activity apart from the day of issuing out projects. Relatedly, during the process of project designing, the local communities are availed a list of projects to choose from. The community members criticized this as an anomaly as they think they should be the ones to come up with such a list not BMCT. It looks like it they are forced to adopt projects that BMCT has already designed. This is not a good practice for project sustainability.

Learning from successful projects like those of CARE, Church of Uganda Village Savings and Loans Associations (COU-VSLA), and NAADS among other projects in implementing their projects is helpful in understanding how BMCT can improve its operations and future project sustainability. Some of the key components for such projects' success is sensitization of the community on what projects are supported and engaging them in projects identification and design. Such projects offer basic services that are vital for development for example USAID extends nutritional services and advocates for children's rights. The VSLA scheme it be utilised further to improve conservation. The Trust could provide more money to these groups to increase their capital for lending to members but at reduced interest rates than current ones they use. But the money should returned to BMCT after the VSLA have accumulated enough capital through interest paid on borrowed money so that the money given to other groups. But the money borrowed should be for livelihood and environmental conservation related projects. Study visits by BMCT staff and some LCSC members to VSLA schemes run by IUCN along River Rwizi in Mbarara, Bushenyi districts and around Mt Elgon can be made to learn more how this model is run.

It should also be noted that project implementation and success is determined by the good practices. Practices like sensitization, dissemination of information for example running radio announcements and advert on televisions, training the beneficiaries before recruited to benefit from the project and ensuring transparency in the project is key to success. Disassociating projects from bad practices makes the implementers or funders trusted by the beneficiaries. Bad practices like corruption, not giving incentives like lunch to builders, not allowing many groups to apply for projects, and not being transparent costs the projects bad reputation in public thus making it lose trust.

Engaging both men and women in projects make them more sustainable. In some cases, projects are designed to favour either gender. Though such projects should not dominate since they become boring and most likely fail when it is not implemented by both gender. At the same time, trusting the local leaders so much can frustrate the project because sometimes they can mismanage the projects. There situations in which projects meant to benefit a given village are instead taken to other villages through the selection of applications. Some technical committees should be put in place to sit with the local leaders to determine eligibility of applicants who are finally selected for project benefit. Use of Farmer Field Schools, now used in Batwa projects, should be extended to other community projects. Local community are more likely learn to learn better from each other than from service providers, though the latter are required for guidance.

In working with other stakeholders, BMCT has been able to achieve more. In some instance, programs that include those that directly or indirectly increase household income have caused an impact on conservation of protected areas. Such agencies have contributed but not limited to the following: Food Agricultural organization (FAO) promoted the growing of crops like Irish potatoes, beans, honey refinery and training of bee keepers, CARE - tree planting, Irish potatoes and beans, NAADs - Irish potatoes, goat and sheep rearing, AMREF- Soil erosion control, provision of home furniture and mattresses, Village savings and credits associations (VSLA) and Heifer projects,

Compassion international - education support to some students, and USAID - Health support through training on nutrition and family planning, VHT- supports in health related issues like medical.

It was also learnt that projects that directly link to conservation like tree planting are vital for BMCT in conserving the environment. Continuous tree planting reduces impact of drought, and provide man with resources like fire wood, habitat for animals. In most cases, where trees are not planted, erosion is high, water can easily destroy the livelihood of the community. BMCT operation should also focus on integrating projects like tree planting in areas where land degradation is apparent.

Community members can be supported to own livestock. This can be a source of income through direct selling of the animals and/or animal products. There is a need to help the communities manage the livestock well to keep them focused on what they own, rather than going to hunt in the park. This will make them forget about going back to the park to poach wildlife leading to conservation of the hunted species.

Decision-making is vital for project's success. The decision making process should include community members so that their initiatives are prioritized. Beneficiaries give crucial information when consulted, they can duly select a viable project and this gives a sense of ownership of the project. It should be by consensus, mutual benefit without some people taking advantage of others. At every stage of decision-making, the community members are key stakeholders in deciding what to do and how to do it.

In relation to the above, project diversification is vital for conservation to yield more conservation benefits in Bwindi and Mgahinga. This will increase the number of people benefiting from BMCT projects. It should be noted that as many people benefit, their destructive activities on nature and the environment will reduce leading to sustainable conservation. This will in addition increase community livelihoods alternative and reduce incidences of poverty, illiteracy, and increases community ownership of development projects. The study found out that giving the same projects to beneficiaries bored them. They revealed that some of the projects are unevenly distributed, and good projects got to targeted areas. Again, the communities are limited by the number of applications they can make and this has created a negative image between the leaders of the projects.

It should be also noted that communities are interested in seeing permanent projects being put in place for their benefit. Projects that last longer make communities to believe and value more the initiative of conservation. Projects like road network (construction, repairing and upgrading) can encourage conservation. Other projects include support to schools, and extending water to rural areas where community members fear moving for long distances looking for water and education services. This is an initiative to reduce illiteracy in rural areas and encouraging young children to study harder and live a better life in future.

6.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

In conclusion, BMCT has contributed positively in addressing livelihood insecurity around BMCA that has a potential to improve general community welfare. This however differs little from non-BMCT Beneficiaries who may have benefited from other interventions. Most activities implemented are however not strongly connected to conservation and specifically Uganda Wildlife Authority yet it primarily has a conservation mandate. BMCT is vital in building community trust in conservation through implementing projects that fall in the expectations of the local people around BMCA. Being trusted by the local community is paramount in wooing them to conservation. In this case, the contribution should be visual, felt and the community members should be able to reflect what would happen if BMCT stopped operating. Showing the extent to which the program has influenced the development and improvement in the standards of living of people in BMCA measures the extent to which the program can be credited or discredited.

Generally, the operation of BMCT is overstretched to areas that do not necessarily impact to the conservation of BMCA. Some projects are implemented beyond second parishes yet such people do not know about Bwindi and Mgahinga. As part of the contribution, BMCT will only gain popular support and become successful when the projects help the communities to attain needs especially those that they cannot achieve by themselves. This is more relevant to communities that bear most conservation costs. Doing needs analysis to know what the communities generally find difficult in fulfilling by themselves can be BMCT's focus to create a difference from other organizations implementing related projects. The needs should be sustained and focus has been put on literacy programs through education. Such programs are crucial for remote and adjacent communities to the park where education seems to be limited as a result of crop raiding.

BMCT should focus its implementation on the households which do not benefit from other ICDs. This can facilitate the effort of conservation by reducing the negative impacts of conservation and visualize conservation benefits. The existing shortfalls that relate to governance challenges of exclusion, corruption and lack of transparency should also be tackled. The inclusion and exclusion criteria is not clear, there are no clear reasons advanced according to the data to exclude someone from benefiting from BMCT projects. All people around BMCA would wish to benefit should have equal chances. This can be achieved if bad practices such corruption are handled and dealt with to reduce the negative image of BMCT.

6.2 Recommendations to Guide Project Operations for a Positive Impact

1. Refocusing BMCT operations are vital for its success. This should be in terms of its established mandate, the geographical scope and the projects that are implemented. The primary mandate of BMCT should be conservation. Community livelihood improvement is a pathway of achieving this mandate. All BMCT activities should be aligned to conservation outcomes and linked to the operation of UWA but not seen in isolation. In terms of geography, BMCT should focus on the immediate adjacent parishes that bear most conservation costs. Common good projects can stretch to the second parishes but should not stretch beyond second parishes since linkages to conservation are likely to be ignored.
2. Create a mechanism of outreach and information sharing regarding BMCT functions and conservation philosophy through stretcher groups, religious leaders, and local governance. Information sharing allows projects to be gauged and see whether they will be successful or not. In addition, it reduces bias on whether the project was studied before implementation or not. Through information sharing, key stakeholders in this case the community and its members are given an opportunity to share their experience on whether they will

own, guard, keep in support of the project.

3. Create a standard framework of eligibility and application guidelines for BMCT projects for transparency purposes. In most cases, projects have failed due to lack of a systematic framework of operation. It is always important to create an environment where work will move with ease. The framework can be created based on other related successful projects which are related or implement related work for example natural conservation of conserved areas. In addition the need to create a data base to manage projects implemented by BMCT will add value and ease accountability. However, this system should be online, integrated with codes that may not be easy to tamper with apart from the administrator.
4. Consult and interact with communities within a framework of implementation – for example, mandate a 1) sensitization meeting followed by a 2) application and selection meeting followed by a 3) training and implementation, with specific guidelines for who is in charge of each stage. Rendering such meetings accessible and available is critical. Such a consistent framework enables consistency in program applications and outreach. Some of the projects which have succeeded under BMCT have attributed it to a series of sensitization, application of meeting outcomes and training and implementation. This extends the responsibility of community members from a watching role to a participation role. The study recommends a continuous series of such meetings and trainings and impact of implementation of projects under BMCT.
5. Continue providing projects consistent with community needs and requests with an emphasis on sustainability and longevity. In most cases, projects are successful because the community members like them based on their sustainability, long term plans and favoring community development interventions. The local leaders at such a stage must be involved to spear head the longevity of the projects and making them relevant to community expands their life span. The study also recommends facilitating of the leaders and project team members in order to keep them moving on the right direction.
6. Provide consultation and advisory services for specific projects to insure optimal implementation and success. The need for consultancy firm to provide services in generating technical report and make the process of project formulation formal and easy for the locals to understand through the consultant. Service providers should also be contracted to offer quality services for example educational services and attract the conservation agenda in Bwindi and Mgahinga. These will at the end create employment opportunities in such areas and this will increase income of the adjacent communities.
7. Install a strong monitoring and evaluation system – ideally through a community based-monitoring system - to track projects and their impact on the community. BMCT should embark on community evaluation and assessing the profitability of the projects being implemented. This can be done by community stretchers and extension workers. The monitoring and evaluation department is fundamental for project sustainability. More investment should be put at strengthening the monitoring department to build strong databases that can easily track progress. Communities can monitor and evaluate the project than the seasonal technical persons who have the experience. Their experience is hands on and their expectations are high and can only be met by having them as part of the monitoring unit. There should be a way of involving local leaders in the process of project selection especially politicians because they are people who live with their people and some of them are beneficiaries so they can decide on the best project to be implemented in the community, especially LC1-3.
8. Continue providing conservation-minded projects such as tree-planting and live fences that simultaneously benefit the community and promote conservation. Such projects reduce zeal of the encroachers from degrading the environment. Other projects include avoiding bush burning among others.

9. Continue providing conservation education through various media, such as drama and the radio, to emphasize the value of the park in and of itself. The role of media should not be underrated at all and BMCT should use the same platform. Without information, all the projects can be baseless and will gradually depreciate. In Uganda, the companies that advertise have been more successfully and have many sales. The result is complete cycle of harvesting and ensuring that the project will start getting stability. Through advertising, funders can identify themselves and as potential investors who have changed a lot apart those investing to degrade the environment.

10. BMCT should improve on the information dissemination and sharing strategies because the current emphasis on radio as a channel of communication is inadequate especially for the remote residents. Other channels such as churches, public gatherings should be explored to supplement the current channels. Most people go to church and those who don't go there can get information from the attendants. There is also a need to use other public places like in the trading Centres and public notice boards. Having information related issues addressed will improve the benefits and better operation of BMCT.

7.0 References

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8.0 Appendices

A: BMCT Beneficiary Assessment Survey



BMCT Beneficiary Assessment Survey



Date: _____ Interview Ref # _____	GPS Northing _____ Easting _____
Interviewer names: _____ _____	
Beneficiary type: (circle)	
Water project VSLA HEAL PHE Community projects GVTC Agro-forestry Others _____	
Describe household location: LC1: _____ Parish: _____	

1. Interviewee

1.1 **Name** (optional) _____ **Interviewed** **previously**
 Yes/No

1.2 **Sex** (circle) **Male** **Female**

1.3 **Age:** (circle) **+60** **41-60** **21-40** **Below 20**

1.4 **Ethnicity:** (circle) **Bakiga** **Bafumbira** **Batwa** **other** _____

1.5 **What is your position in the community?** _____

1.6 How long have you lived in this village? (circle) **<5 years** **5-10 years** **>10 years**

2. Homestead information

2.1 What is your marital status? (tick)

- Married** →
- Single (never married)**
- Co-habiting**
- Widow/er**
- Divorced and separated**

If married,
Number of wives _____

2.2 How many people currently live in your household (including person being interviewed)?

Age (years)	Number of males in this household	Number of females in this household
+60		
41-60		
21-40		
Below 20		
	Total number: Of these n. your own children:	Total number: Of these n. of your own children:

2.3 What is your level of education? (tick)

- No formal education
- Primary school _____
- Secondary school _____
- Tertiary _____
- Other (please detail) _____

2.4 Do you have (and look around for evidence): (tick)

- Hand-washing water facilities at toilets (Done by) _____
- Drying rack (Done by) _____
- Kitchen with a smoke escape out-let (Done by) _____
- Toilet (Done by) _____
- Toilet cover (Done by) _____

2.5 Where do you obtain water? (tick all that apply; if more than one circle main source)

Protected source:	Unprotected source:
<input type="checkbox"/> Protected spring	<input type="checkbox"/> Lakes
<input type="checkbox"/> Bore hole	<input type="checkbox"/> Ponds
<input type="checkbox"/> gravity flow scheme	<input type="checkbox"/> Rivers
<input type="checkbox"/> roof catchments	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring

2.6 How many of these diseases have you and others in your household had in the last 6 months:

Total number (not occurrence): _____

Tuberculosis, Measles, Polio, AIDS, Malaria, Scabies, Cough, Diarrhoea
--

3. Current livelihood status and community interaction with the park

3.1 List the 3 most important income-generating activities to your household (**most important first**) - such as farming, livestock, tourism-related activities, forest resource utilization, village market sales etc

Income-generating activity	Who in household does this?
1.	
2.	
3.	

3.2 Are these activities enough to address your household needs? (circle) **Y / N**

3.3 If no, what do you suggest as measures to meet your livelihood needs? (Probe efforts.....

3.4 On average how many meals do you and your family have a day? (circle) **1 2 3+ A DAY**

3.5 How often do you / your family go hungry per week: (tick box below)

Never
 Once or twice a week
 Three or four times a week
 Above five times a week

3.5 What is your current thinking about Bwindi or Mgahinga National Park?

- Very positive**
- Positive**
- Neutral**
- Negative**
- Very negative**

Give reasons for your score.....

3.6 What was your thinking about Bwindi or Mgahinga National Park before BMCT (BMCT)?

- Very positive**
- Positive**
- Neutral**
- Negative**
- Very negative**

Give reasons for your score.....

.....
.....

3.7 What conservation costs do you bear as a result of the National Park (Bwindi or Mgahinga)?

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

3.8 What current conservation benefits do you get from Bwindi or Mgahinga National Parks (Probe economic and ecological benefits?)

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

3.9 If 1 is the worst and 5 the best, what number best represents your life at the moment? (circle) **1 = worst; 2 = somewhat bad; 3 = average; 4 = fine; 5 = best**

3.10 **Discuss reasons for score** with links to natural resources/park existence if appropriate (for example, they need household building materials or fuel wood, bear costs of conservation , get benefits etc).....

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

3.11 In your community what are the current motivations for resource use in the forests?(Probe details of the answer) **Poverty Income (To sell forest items or labour) Cultural/tradition Societal norm / peer Resentment Others**

Notes:.....
.....
.....

4. BMCT contribution towards conservation and Community livelihood and lessons learnt

4.1 Tell me what you know about BMCT (Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation BMCT)?.....

.....
.....

4.2 Identify BMCT (BMCT) projects you know and have benefited from; Rank the level of benefit impact (no prompting; if not applicable write N/A)?

BMCT project	Know about (tick)	Specifics	What impact did the project have on your household? (tick)				
			0= No benefits	1 = Bad	2 = No change	3=Some benefits	4 = A lot benefits
Water project							
Village Savings and Loans Association							
Batwa support							
Reproductive health							
Trees/Agro forestry							
Arable farming							
Livestock rearing							
Heifer project							
Poultry farming							
Fish farming							
Conservation education/drama							
Health centres							
School support							
Road construction							
Bio-gas							
Energy saving stoves							
Bee keeping							
Live fence/crop raiding control							
Ecotourism							
ITFC research							
Other projects							

Give reasons for any answers given in the table above (Probe ranking).....

.....

4.3 In your own opinion, what made you get selected as a beneficiary for BMCT (BMCT) projects?

.....

4.4 Did you get the project you immediately wanted? (Probe whether it was a priority and why e.g Batwa houses, land, cropping, livestock etc?).....

.....
.....

4.5 What challenges did you or do you meet with the project you received? (Probe issues of ownership rights, benefit distribution, natural disasters etc).....

.....
.....

4.6 What other projects have you benefited from apart from BMCT projects?.....

.....
.....

4.7 How do you differentiate BMCT (BMCT) projects from other Organisations?.....

.....
.....

4.8 What changes in livelihood and community welfare have you seen in your household/community because of BMCT project/s? (Probe socioeconomic, the past and current state)

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

4.9 From the projects benefited, how has this addressed your support for conservation (Probe changes before BMCT and now?).....

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

4.10 If not, why do you think the projects have not addressed your livelihood insecurity and support for conservation?.....

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

4.11 How is your current attitude/feeling towards Bwindi or Mgahinga National Park connected to BMCT (BMCT) benefits?

.....
.....

5. BMCT Projects and best practices for replication, reference and improvement

5.1 Which BMCT (BMCT) project(s) do you know about? Rank your level of involvement (no prompting; if not applicable write N/A)?

BMCT project	Know about (tick)	Specifics	Were you involved in designing & implementing the project? (tick)				What level of ownership of the project did you feel? (tick)			
			A lot	Some	A little	None	A lot	Some	A little	None
Water project										
Village Savings and Loans Association										
Batwa support										
Reproductive health										
Trees/Agro forestry										
Arable farming										
Livestock rearing										
Heifer project										
Poultry farming										
Conservation education/drama										
Health centres										
School support										
Road construction										
Bio-gas										
Energy saving stoves										
Fish farming										
Bee keeping										
Live fence/crop raiding control										
ITFC research										
Other projects										

Here note any discussion points:

.....

5.2 Did you attend any BMCT (BMCT) meetings before you benefited? (circle) **Y** / **N** If yes:

5.3 Rank meetings in terms of conduct and outcome?

No.	Kind of BMCT meetings	How the meeting was conducted? (tick)			How was the meeting outcome? (tick)				
		Excluded	Somewhat involved	Fully involved	Very poor	Poor	Ok	Good	Very good

Discuss with guiding questions:

Were there opportunities to ask questions and express their views? Did they feel listened to? Were the meetings too short / long? Cover everything they wanted? Was the purpose of the meeting clear and was this achieved?

.....

.....

.....

.....

5.5 Describe the process you followed to get a project? (Probe sensitisation; application; how beneficiaries were selected, selection criteria of projects, procurement, implementation up to receiving a project etc in the context of gender).....

.....

.....

.....

.....

5.6 The process of benefit I went through to get BMCT (BMCT) livelihood project was fair?

- Strongly agree**
- Agree**
- Neutral**
- Disagree**
- Strongly disagree**

5.7 The procurement processes of BMCT are consultative?

- Strongly agree**
- Agree**
- Neutral**

- Disagree**
- Strongly disagree**

5.8 There is a good Information flow and sharing before benefiting from BMCT projects

- Strongly agree**
- Agree**
- Neutral**
- Disagree**
- Strongly disagree**

5.9 There is accountability and transparency in distributing BMCT projects

- Strongly agree**
- Agree**
- Neutral**
- Disagree**
- Strongly disagree**

5.10 As a community member, I have the capacity to influence BMCT project implementation

- Strongly agree**
- Agree**
- Neutral**
- Disagree**
- Strongly disagree**

Comments:.....

5.11 In your opinion, what would you call good practices in BMCT (BMCT) project implementation?
 (Probe practices and projects succeeded; approaches used etc)

.....

5.12 In your opinion, what would you call bad practices in BMCT (BMCT) project implementation?
 (Probe practices and projects succeeded, approaches used)

.....

5.13 In BMCT (BMCT) project implementation how are gender issues considered or
 addressed.....

.....

5.14 What lessons have you learnt in BMCT project implementation and governance?.....

.....
.....

6. Area of BMCT operation and Stakeholder involvement

6.1 What makes your community special for the BMCT (BMCT) operation?.....
.....
.....

6.2 In getting the projects, who were the BMCT stakeholders involved?
.....

6.3 What was the role of those stakeholders involved?
.....
.....
.....

6.4 Do you know BMCT committees (LCSCs)? What has been the role of LCSCs in your community?.....
.....
.....

6.5 Who are other stakeholders you would recommend to work with BMCT (BMCT) in their project operations?.....
.....

7. Recommendations

7.1 How would you want BMCT (BMCT) to improve in its project design and implementation? (Probe how they would want to be involved etc)
.....
.....
.....

7.2 What would you recommend to BMCT (BMCT) to do better to improve your community livelihoods?
.....
.....

7.3 As a community member, what do you want BMCT (BMCT) to do better to promote sustainable conservation?.....
.....
.....

7.4 Over all, what would be your recommendation to BMCT (BMCT) in sustaining its projects?.....

.....
.....

7.5 If Bwindi or Mgahinga forests was/were to disappear today, what would you lose?

.....
.....

8. Interview close

8.1 Any comments or questions on anything that we have discussed?

B: BMCT Non-Beneficiary Assessment Survey



BMCT Non-Beneficiary Assessment Survey



Date: _____ Interview Ref # _____

Interviewer names: _____

GPS Northing _____

Easting _____

Describe household location: **LC1:** _____ **Parish:** _____

Density of neighbours nearby: (circle) **none** **few/some** **many**
Main type of surrounding land: (circle) **farmland** **forest** **village/centre** **other:** _____
Nearest **village/trading centre** (circle) **under** or **over** 1 hour walk
Nearest **road for vehicle use** (circle) **under** or **over** 1 hour walk

1. Interviewee

1.7 Name (optional) _____ Interviewed previously
Yes/No

1.8 Sex (circle) **Male** **Female**

1.9 Age: (circle) **+60** **41-60** **21-40** **Below 20**

1.10 Ethnicity: (circle) **Bakiga** **Bafumbira** **Batwa**
other _____

1.11 What is your position in the community? _____

1.12 How long have you lived in this village? (circle) **<5 years** **5-10 years** **>10 years**

2. Homestead information

2.1 What is your marital status? (tick)

- Married**
- Single (never married)**
- Co-habiting**
- Widow/er**
- Divorced and separated**

If married,
Number of wives _____
Number of households _____

2.2 How many people currently live in your household (including person being interviewed)?

Age (years)	Number of males in this household	Number of females in this household
+60		
41-60		
21-40		
Below 20		
	Total number: Of these n. your own children:	Total number: Of these n. of your own children:

2.3 What is your level of education? (tick)

- No formal education**
- Primary school** _____
- Secondary school** _____
- Tertiary** _____
- Other (please detail)** _____

2.4 Do you have (and look around for evidence): (tick)

- Hand-washing water facilities at toilets (who provided)** _____
- Drying rack (who provided)** _____
- Kitchen with a smoke escape out-let(who provided)** _____
- Toilet(who provided)** _____
- Toilet cover**

2.5 Where do you obtain water? (tick all that apply; if more than one circle main source)

Protected source:	Unprotected source:
<input type="checkbox"/> Protected spring	<input type="checkbox"/> Lakes
<input type="checkbox"/> Bore hole	<input type="checkbox"/> Ponds
<input type="checkbox"/> piped water	<input type="checkbox"/> Rivers
<input type="checkbox"/> gravity flow scheme	<input type="checkbox"/> Spring
<input type="checkbox"/> roof catchments	

2.6 How many of these diseases have you and others in your household had in the last 6 months:

Total number (not occurrence): _____

Tuberculosis, Measles, Polio, AIDS, Malaria, Scabies, Cough, Diarrhoea

3. Current livelihood status and community interaction with the park

3.1 List the 3 most important income-generating activities to your household (**most important first**) - such as farming, livestock, tourism-related activities, forest resource utilization, village market sales etc

Income-generating activity	Who in household does this?
1.	
2.	
3.	

3.2 Are these activities enough to sustain your household needs? (circle) **Y / N**

3.3 If no, what do you suggest as measures to meet your livelihood needs? (Probe efforts?).....

3.4 On average how many meals do you and your family have a day? (circle) **1 2 3+ A DAY**

3.4 How often do you / your family go hungry per week: (tick box below)

Never **Once or twice a week** **Three or four times a week** **Above five times a week**

3.5 What is your current thinking about Bwindi or Mgahinga National Park?

- Very positive**
- Positive**
- Neutral**

3.6 How do you think about Bwindi or Mgahinga National Park 20 years ago (in the past)?

- Very negative**
- Positive**
- Neutral**
- Negative**
- Very negative**

Give reasons for your score.....

3.7 What conservation costs do you bear as a result of the National Park (Bwindi or Mgahinga)?

3.8 What current conservation benefits do you get from the National Parks (Probe economic and ecological benefits?)

3.9 If 1 is the worst and 5 the best, what number best represents your life at the moment? (circle) **1 = worst; 2 = somewhat bad; 3 = average; 4 = fine; 5 = best**

3.10 **Discuss reasons for score** with links to natural resources/park existence if appropriate (for example, they need household building materials or fuel wood, bear costs of conservation, get benefits etc)

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

3.11 In your community what are the current **motivations for resource use?**

**Poverty Income (To sell forest items or labour) Cultural tradition Societal norm / peer
Resentment Others**

Notes:.....
.....
.....

4. BMCT contribution towards conservation and Community livelihood and lessons learnt

4.1 Have you benefited from any projects that are connected to the parks (Probe all Integrated Conservation and Development projects benefited from).....

4.2 If yes, mention the projects benefited from?

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

4.3 If not, why do you think you have not benefited from those projects?.....

.....
.....

4.4 Do you know BMCT? (circle) **Y / N**

4.5 If yes tell me what you know about BMCT (BMCT) and its activities?.....

.....
.....

4.6 If no, why don't you know BMCT (BMCT)?.....

.....
.....

4.7 Are there common good projects or livelihood beneficiaries in your community?

4.8 If yes, mention them?.....

4.9 If no, why not?.....

4.10 In your own opinion, why do you think you have not directly benefited from BMCT (BMCT) projects?.....

4.11 In areas where BMCT (BMCT) operates, what is its contribution?.....

4.12 Why would you want BMCT (BMCT) to support your household or your area? (Probe justification issues relating to conservation costs and opportunities for project success and conservation as a whole)

4.13 How has lack of benefits from BMCT (BMCT) projects affected your household livelihood?

4.14 How has lack of benefits from BMCT (BMCT) projects affected your attitude towards Bwindi or Mgahinga?.....

5. BMCT Projects and best practices for replication, reference and improvement

5.1 Which BMCT (BMCT) project(s) do you know about? Rank your level of involvement (*no prompting; if not applicable write N/A*)?

BMCT project	Know about (tick)	Specifics	Were you involved in designing & implementing the project? (tick)				What level of ownership of the project did you feel? (tick)				
			A lot	Some	A little	None	A lot	Some	A little	None	
Water project											

Village Savings and Loans Association										
Batwa support										
Reproductive health										
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Arable farming										
Livestock rearing										
Heifer project										
Poultry farming										
Conservation education/drama										
Health centres										
School support										
Road construction										
Bio-gas										
Energy saving stoves										
Fish farming										
Bee keeping										
Live fence/crop raiding control										
ITFC research										
Other projects										

Here note any discussion points:

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

5.2 Have any of your family members benefited from BMCT (BMCT) projects? **YES/NO. If yes:**

Project benefited: _____

Location: _____

How have you/did you indirectly benefit from the project?

.....
.....

5.3 Have you ever attended any BMCT (BMCT) meetings? (circle) **Y** / **N** If yes:

No.	Kind of BMCT meetings	How the meeting was conducted ? (tick)			How was the meeting outcome? (tick)				
		Excluded	Somewhat involved	Fully involved	Very poor	Poor	Ok	Good	Very good

Discuss with guiding questions:

Were there opportunities to ask questions and express their views? Did they feel listened to? Were the meetings too short / long? Cover everything they wanted? Was the purpose of the meeting clear and was this achieved?

5.4 Do you think your failure to benefit from BMCT is connected to the way meetings were conducted and level of involvement?.....

5.5 If yes, how?.....

5.6 If not, what could be the reasons?

5.7 The process of people through which people get BMCT (BMCT) projects/ICD projects is fair?(Circle either BMCT or ICD)

- Strongly agree**
- Agree**
- Neutral**
- Disagree**
- Strongly disagree**

5.8 The procurement processes of BMCT (BMCT)/ other ICD projects are consultative? (Circle either BMCT or ICD)

- Strongly agree**

- Agree**
- Neutral**
- Disagree**
- Strongly disagree**

5.9 There is a good Information flow and sharing of BMCT (**BMCT**) /**ICD projects** (Circle either BMCT or ICD)

- Strongly agree**
- Agree**
- Neutral**
- Disagree**
- Strongly disagree**

5.10 There is accountability and transparency in distributing BMCT (**BMCT**) /**ICD projects** (Circle specifics)

- Strongly agree**
- Agree**
- Neutral**
- Disagree**
- Strongly disagree**

5.11 As a community member, I have the capacity to influence BMCT (**BMCT**)/**ICD project** implementation (Circle specifics)

- Strongly agree**
- Agree**
- Neutral**
- Disagree**
- Strongly disagree**

Comment (Probe for other ICDs eg Revenue sharing, CARE, MUPs):.....

.....

5.12 In your opinion, what would you call good practices in BMCT (**BMCT**) project implementation? (Probe practices and projects succeeded).....

.....

5.13 In your opinion, what would you call bad practices in BMCT (BMCT) project implementation? (Probe practices and projects succeeded).....

.....

5.14 What are the current limitations in accessing BMCT (BMCT) projects?.....

.....

6. Area of BMCT operation and Stakeholder involvement

6.1 In your own opinion, why do you think BMCT is not operating in your area?.....

.....6.2

In your own opinion, what do you think should bring BMCT to operate in your area?.....

.....

.....

6.3 Who are stakeholders you would recommend to work with BMCT(BMCT) in their project operations?.....

.....

7. Recommendations

7.1 What would you want BMCT (BMCT) to improve in its project design and implementation? (Probe how they would want to be involved etc).....

.....

.....

.....

7.2 What would you recommend to BMCT (BMCT) to do better to improve community livelihoods?

.....

.....

.....

7.3 As a community member, what do you want BMCT (BMCT) to do better to promote sustainable conservation?.....

.....

.....

7.4 Over all, what would be your recommendation to BMCT (BMCT) in sustaining its projects?.....

.....
.....

7.5 If Bwindi or Mgahinga forests was/were to disappear today, what would you lose?

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8. Interview close

8.1 Any comments or questions on anything that we have discussed?

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Discussion notes:



They year 2019 will be the year when we commemorate the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of BMCT. It gives us great pleasure to make this announcement now and to extend our advance gratitude to our friends and to those that have supported us through the times. We still have the goals of the Organization at heart and will continue to take pride in their achievement. We will be informing you of the date and venue for the commemorative event.

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 and 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, Website: www.bwinditrust.org