



BWINDI MGAHINGA CONSERVATION TRUST



Batwa Graduands at Bwindi Trust House - Kabale

BATWA CENSUS 2020 REPORT

Covering the Districts of Kanungu, Kisoro, Kabale and Rubanda.

Submitted to:

Trust Management Board (TMB)

Submitted by:

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Executive Summary

Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Trust (BMCT) has worked closely with and promoted the welfare of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park (BINP) and Mgahinga Gorilla National Park (MGNP) neighboring communities especially the Batwa. BMCT's Mission is to promote conservation of biodiversity in BINP and MGNP through investment in community development projects, research and ecological monitoring, park management and protection, and programmes that create greater conservation awareness."

To better understand the Batwa dynamics, BMCT commissioned a Batwa Census -2020 study to which this report is about. It was intended to:

1. To collect and analyse the relevant information of existing Batwa situation in the BMCA (including number of Batwa, sex disaggregation, education status, age, number of households, average household size etc)
2. To establish the relationship between Batwa owning land and the education status of their children, volume of harvest (food security), nutritional status, and housing conditions.
3. To identify challenges Batwa are facing and find appropriate solutions which in end will help BMCT in planning and decision making.

The study is based on primary data collected from 903 Batwa households, Secondary data sources included BMCT progress reports and other similar studies. Primary qualitative information was collected from key informants like partners and government representatives. The results have been summarised as follows:

Batwa Population Characteristics

1. There are 3,730 (1787 males & 1,943 females) Batwa in the Bwindi Mgahinga Conservation Area (BMCA)
2. Batwa Growth rate is 5.1% for the last five (5) years
3. 4.2 is the average household size among the Batwa.
4. 68.3% of the Batwa in the BMCA are below 25 years
5. Batwa Sex ratio is 0.92. This means there are 92 males out of 100 females
6. It was also realized that most Batwa are below 25 years (68.2%)

Batwa education

1. Most of the Batwa (49.8%), have never attained any formal education and smaller percentage (0.3%) that had tertiary/university.
2. 41.8% of school going Batwa learners do not attend school with Kisoro district 49.2% being the most affected.

Land ownership and Housing among the Batwa

1. 56.4% of Batwa in the BMCA do not have access to land and Kisoro district is the most affected with 71.9% of Batwa population staying as squatters on other people's land compared to other districts
2. 37.7% of Batwa within BMCA live in temporary/grass thatched houses with Kisoro district (49.2%) being the most affected.
3. Most of the Batwa farmers considered beans (32%) and maize (21%) as their primary sources of livelihood.

Decision making amongst the Batwa

1. 25.5% of respondents think that Batwa women/females are never involved in household decision making.

The study recommend that;

1. Establish a network of voluntary Batwa lead farmers, recruited from different sub counties, linked to Batwa settlements/groups. The lead Batwa farmers should be trained to cascade agricultural and business skills trainings to fellow Batwa farmers at various stages of crop growth, marketing and investment.
2. Conduct exposure visit to successful Batwa farmers and related enterprises in the region and beyond. Such visits should be attended by selected Batwa farmers.
3. Strengthen Batwa groups on common objectives through skills building in governance, group cohesion farming as business and benefit sharing at household level. Such trainings should tackle gender disparities and youth involvement in Agricultural production
4. Batwa Partners should beef up monitoring of beneficiaries, providing technical support if possible. Monitoring aspects should include, among others, location of Batwa farmers, area of land under production, adoption of agronomic practices, harvesting practices, and possible linkages. This will increase value chain integrity and actor royalty to the value chain.
5. Build capacity of Batwa lead farmers in saving and investment, customer relationship management and farmer mobilization skills. The Batwa need further capacity development in general business skills for sustainable businesses of grown crops.
6. Batwa partners in collaboration with Local governments should come up with byelaws and ordinances which obligate the caretakers and parents to ensure that all children of school going age stay at school.
7. Partners should sensitize Batwa parents and children about the importance of sending their children to school and participating in school activities.
8. There is need to strengthen the scholarship program for the Batwa children. The community fund could be used specifically to address the challenge
9. The office of Community Development should strengthen the enforcement of labour laws to reduce on child labour and abuse of children's rights at the same time following up acts of alcoholism and domestic violence
10. Revitalise Batwa stakeholder's coordination meetings to strengthen monitoring of children enrolment, dropout in schools and other school related issues
11. The project should institute a lesson learning mechanism that is documented and communicated in various platforms like workshops, websites, social media platforms and made available for future projects. These should become resources for development of new funding proposals in areas that have proved to work or improving on areas of great potential that unfortunately did not work that time.

Introduction

The Batwa people are traditional indigenous forest dwellers but were expelled from their habitat in 1991 when Bwindi Impenetrable Forest and Mgahinga Gorilla National Park were gazetted as national parks. Batwa were left outside the forest to fend for themselves with no recourse to any traditional way of life, no land for settlement or alternative means of livelihoods, with no income streams for survival and development. Batwa families survive by working for small amounts of food or cash or by begging. As a result, a large proportion of the Batwa suffer from marginalization, depression, poor health, alcoholism and lack of hope for a better future.

BMCT since inception in 1994 has supported the Batwa to achieve sustainable livelihoods by procuring land, establishing permanent houses, providing agricultural and small-scale business training, establishing village savings and loans associations (VSLA's) and disseminating hygiene and nutrition information. It is our aim to empower Batwa households to secure consistent income and to enable them to nourish their families and educate their children on their earnings.

BMCT through this evaluation will establish the following;

1. To establish the Batwa sociodemographic characteristics;
2. To examine how Batwa sociodemographic characteristics influence affect food security, nutritional status, and housing conditions; and
3. To identify challenges Batwa are facing and make recommendations for improving their livelihoods

Methodology

In an attempt to provide the most accurate and reliable evaluation findings, we employed mixed methods data collection, analysis and interpretation. The evaluation team employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis.

This involved a well guided desk review of project documents and primary data collection in the field. The main data collection methods used in the field was in-depth interviews and Focus group discussions using interview and FGD guides. During each interview and FGD, enumerators/research assistants took notes in English. Questionnaires were also administered to capture quantitative data. Data obtained from respondents was then coded and analyzed using SPSS to generate frequency distributions, and cross-tabulations.

Results

Sociodemographic characteristics

There are 3,730 Batwa in the BMCA with 1,787 males and 1,943 females distributed among 903 households. Majority of Batwa were in Kisoro District (Table 1). There are 92 males per 100 females. This compares favourably with the national sex ratio of 94.5 males per 100 females (UBOS, 2014).

Table 1: Distribution of Batwa by sex in the BMCA

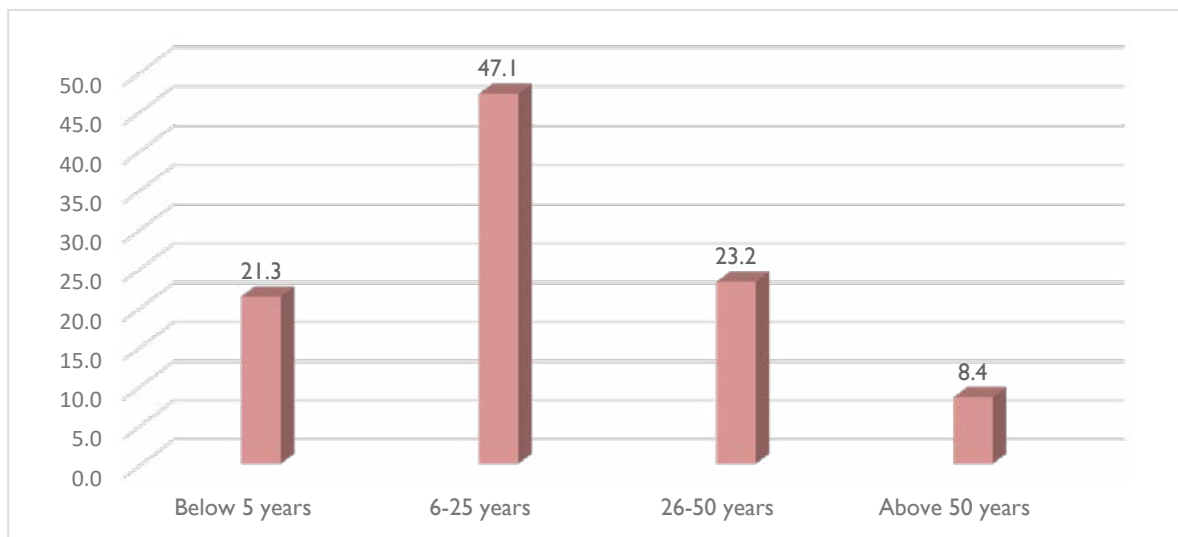
District	# of HHs	Males	Females	Total
Kanungu	178	395	426	821
Kisoro	516	1,009	1,090	2,099
Rubanda	173	308	346	654
Kabale	36	75	81	156
Total	903	1,787	1,943	3,730

The average Batwa household size was 4.13 members, which is slightly lower than the national average of 4.7 people per household (UBOS, 2016). Kanungu has highest (4.6), followed by Kabale (4.3), Kisoro (4.1), with Rubanda having the lowest (3.8). Household members range between 1-14.

Age distribution among the Batwa

Age distribution is one of the important aspects in a given population. It is indicated that most of the Batwa are below 25 years (68.4%) compared to other age groups. It also shows that there are a considerable number of young children below 5 years contributing 21.3% of the Batwa population.

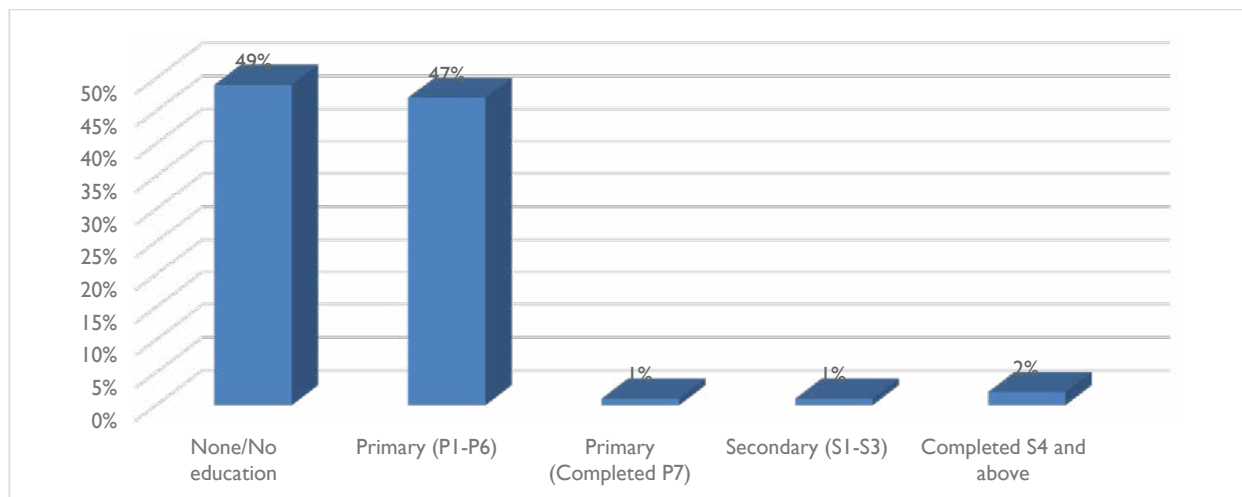
Figure 1: Percentage distribution of Batwa according to their age groups by district.



Level of Education

The most productive age group of Batwa (26-50 years) make 23% of the Batwa population, with majority of them having no formal education (65%). Illiteracy and inadequate basic education deprive people of the opportunity to realize the potential and effectively participate in decision making and other development activities. Education has been identified as a key component of human capital quality that is essential for higher incomes, sustainable economic development and poverty eradication. Majority of the Batwa are below 25 years (68%) and nearly half the population have no formal education. A very small proportion have attained tertiary/university education.

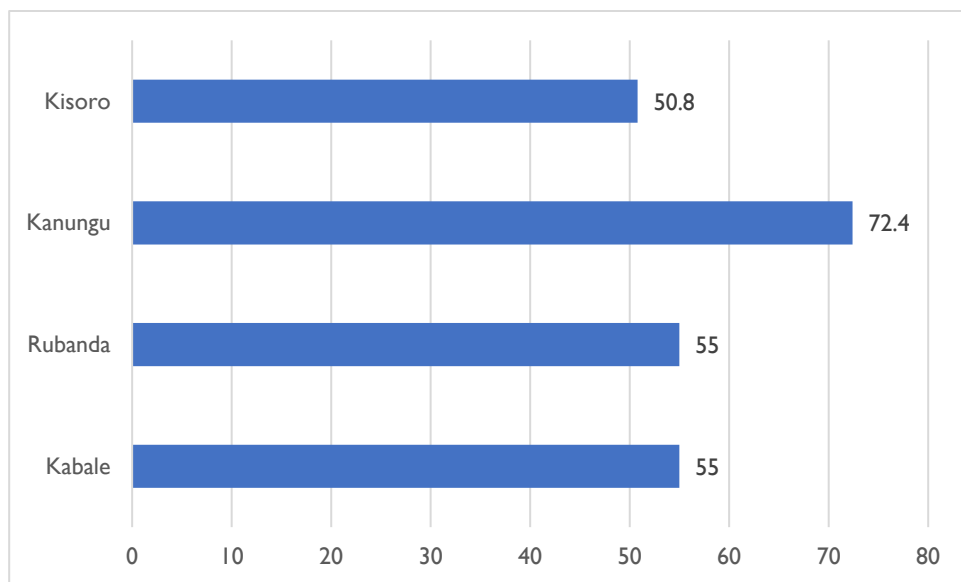
Figure 2: Levels of education attained by the Batwa population



Proportion of school going age Batwa learners

BMCT is implementing a Batwa scholarship scheme supporting where 127 (57 males and 63 females) pupils are in primary schools, 11 (8 males and 3 females) are in a vocational institute, 6 (3 males and 3 females) in secondary school and one female has completed University. However, majority of Batwa children do not take education seriously and some drop out of school along the way and a sizeable number of girls get pregnant before completing school. According to BMCT reports, 25% of supported pupils complete primary compared to 59% completion rate for primary education nationally (UBOS, 2018).

Figure 3: Proportion of the school going age Batwa children per district



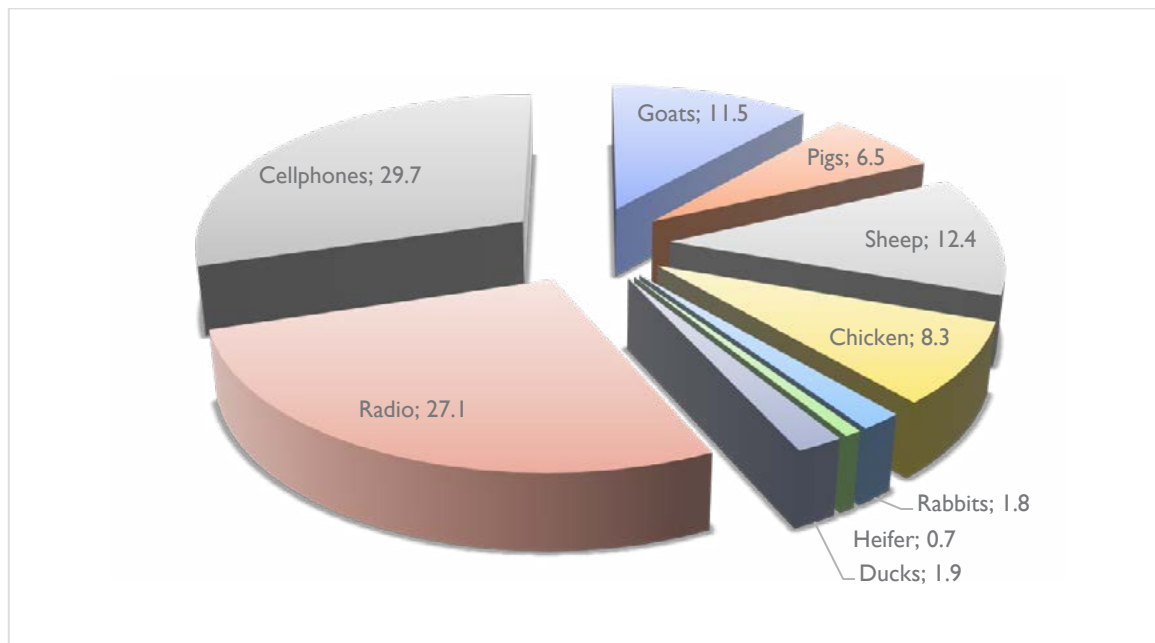
About 58% of school going age (6-35 years) attend school. Kisoro is the worst affected with nearly half school going age children not attending school. According to BMCT report 2016, Batwa pupils/students drop out of school due to the following;

- Poverty; Batwa children in schools still need some extra attention as they do not have access to basic school requirements like uniforms, shoes and other scholastics.
- Limited number of peer examples from educated Batwa who would serve as role models to encourage the young children on the importance of education.
- Batwa parents lack awareness of the importance of education and prefer using their children for domestic chores like selling labor for food, cooking, collecting water and firewood, taking care of the young ones, working in gardens and scaring away problem animals other than sending their children to school.
- Alcoholism and domestic violence in Batwa families hinders favorable conditions for their children.

Assets ownership among Batwa households

Batwa assets/property ownership was assessed to ascertain their economic status and details in the Figure 4.

Figure 4: Assets ownership among Batwa households

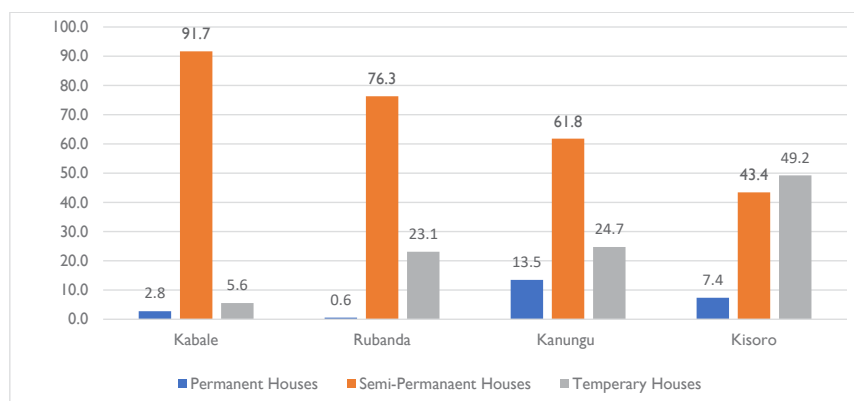


Over the years, Batwa in the BMCA, with the help of partners, have acquired assets as shown in Figure 3. More than a half of the Batwa households have a cellphone and radio from which information can be sought. This could mean that Batwa value phones and radios compared to other household assets. Ownership and control of assets among the Batwa influences their individual participation in development processes at all levels and lack of assets makes them vulnerable to various forms of violence and lessens their decision-making power in the whole community.

Batwa housing conditions

Batwa population being one of the people living in object poverty, their living conditions are also very poor. This is because according to the study, 38% of Batwa live in temporary houses and the worst affected district Kisoro with nearly half of the Batwa households in the district staying in temporary houses.

Figure 5: Batwa housing conditions per district



BMCT and other partners have constructed houses for the Batwa living in BMCA to improve their housing conditions. This is slowly helping them to adapt to a more settled life in small communities.

Batwa Access/Ownership of Land

Over half of Batwa in the BMCA do not own land and this has affected their productivity. Kabale District is the worst affected with 61.1% of Batwa population staying as squatters on other people’s land. Kanungu has the least landless Batwa. This land was bought and is being secured in trust by non-governmental organizations.

As farming is the key to the livelihood improvement for the Batwa population in the BMCA, therefore, access/ownership of farmland is essential. BMCT together with donors and government aims at increasing the number of Batwa accessing land. Batwa need to access and increase acreage on which crops are planted for their households.

Figure 6: Batwa access to land per district

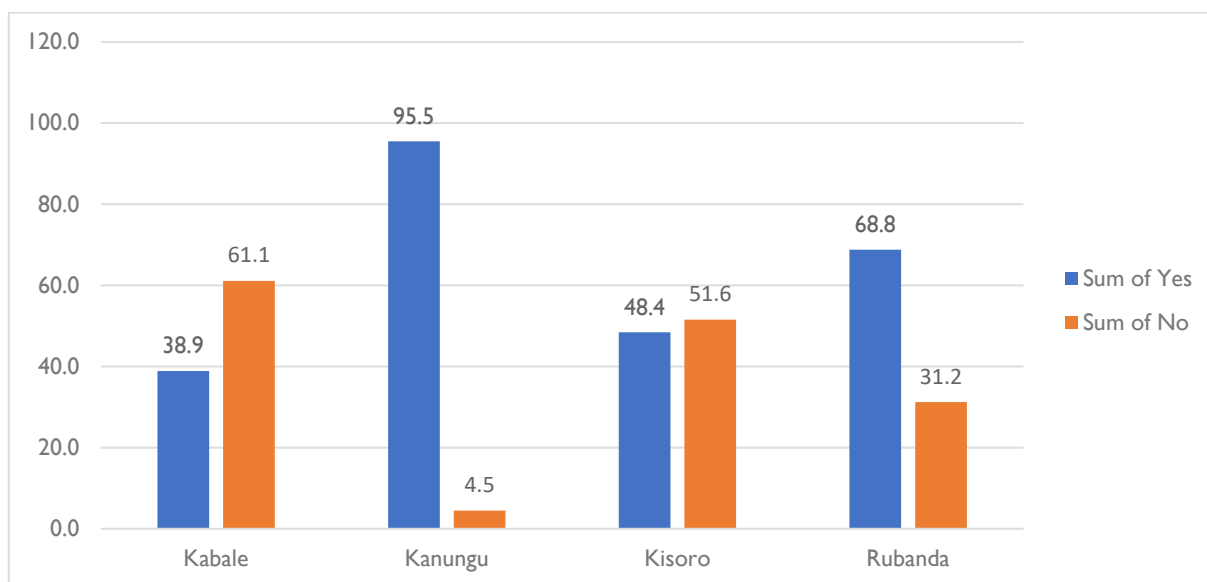


Figure 7: Contribution of partners towards procurement of Batwa land (in acres)

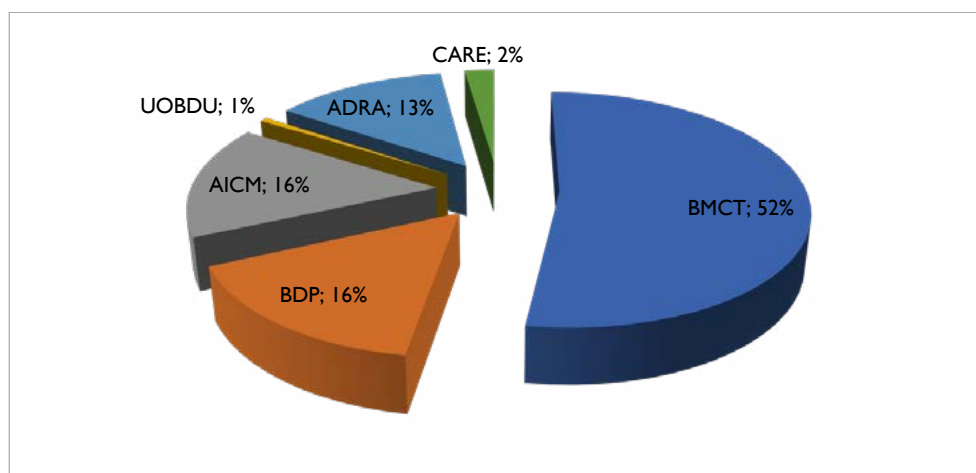


Figure 7 shows contribution of organization in the procurement and provision of land to Batwa. The procured land is being kept in trust by almost all organizations as a strategy to avoid conflicts with neighbors and loss to land grabbers. BMCT procured 406 acres of land (Kanungu (173.28 acres), Kabale/Rubanda (93.85 acres) and Kisoro (138.87 acres), resettled 303 Batwa households and provided them with start-up kits (seeds, household items and other inputs) in Rubanda, Kisoro and Kanungu Districts. The BMCT's strategy is based on the belief that providing displaced Batwa with assets is an important way to foster their sense of self-esteem, since it is by owning productive assets such as land, a house and livestock that the Batwa became valued in the eyes of the local communities.

Level of agricultural production, productivity and Income amongst the Batwa

Batwa farmers considered beans (32%) and maize (21%) as their primary sources of livelihood. Other crops grown for the season preceding the study included; Millet (5%), Ground Nuts (4%), Sweet potatoes (14%), Cassava (8%), and Irish potatoes (4%). The only cash crops grown by the Batwa are Coffee (9%) and Tea (1%) and are restricted to Kanungu District.

Table 2: Crops grown and income from sale by Batwa farmers last season

Crop grown by Batwa farmers	# of Batwa HHs involved	Average # of acres	Average Amount of money from sale (Ugx)
Maize	165	0.5	25,000
Beans	251	0.5	34,000
Millet	36	1.0	18,000
Ground Nuts	28	0.3	20,000
Sweet potatoes	111	0.6	30,000
Cassava	64	0.5	15,000
Irish potatoes	33	0.4	164,730
Onions	11	0.6	22,000
Coffee	71	0.5	85,770
Tea	6	0.7	164,160

The size of land under crop cultivation is a good indicator of efforts being made by Batwa to open up land for farming. On average, Batwa opened up 0.6 acres of land for production last season. A wide range of crops are grown by the Batwa and most crops are similar to those grown by their Bakiga/Bafumbira neighbor's within the region. These include beans, maize, cassava, irish potatoes, sweat potatoes, ground nuts, millet, sorghum, yams, peas and vegetables, However, most of them use intercropping of crops to overcome the problem of little land.

Savings and Credit amongst the Batwa

Batwa participate in credit market, with even increasing urge should the credit suppliers increase in the area. The study found 22% of the Batwa had received credit from at least one source in the previous two seasons preceding the survey. However, the credit amounts received was very low, ranging from Ugx 30,000 shillings to 300,000 UGX depending on which financial institution that farmers used, and where they held saving accounts. The low credit limits are mainly due lack of corresponding collateral or credit insurance scheme amongst the Batwa. Many commercial financial institutions do not service smallholder communities due to the high levels of risk involved or cost required.

The Batwa participated in credit market, despite most of them having not been exposed to training on savings and credit management. On average, only 14% of the Batwa had received this training. The training sensitized farmers on procedures for credit acquisition, how to form their own savings and credit associations, re-invest proceeds and acquisition of credit for productive use.

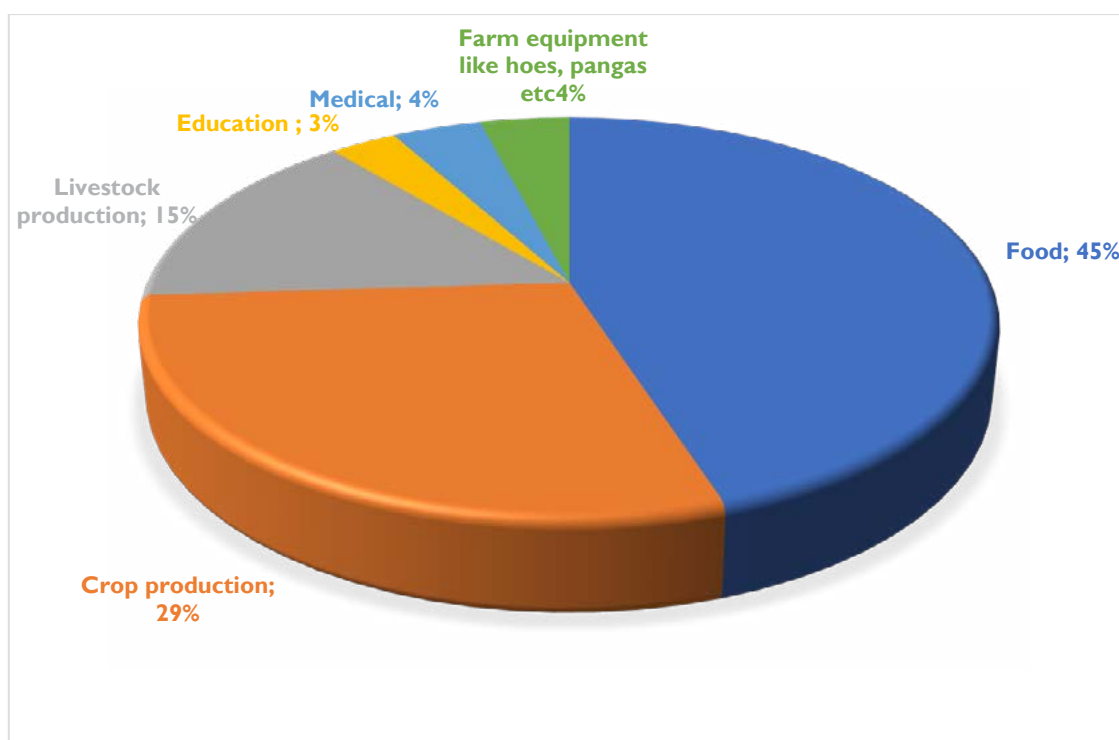
Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) was the most dominant source of credit as it is utilized by 95% of those accessing credit, while Micro Deposit taking institutions like Commercial Banks and SACCO and were the least popular.

The VSLAs are predominant due to their flexible loan terms as well as being within the community unlike other financial institutions. “We are encouraged to get loans from formal financial institutions, but its VSLAs that is available in our vicinity and we do not incur transportation cost”, One Mutwa- Mpungu sub county- Kanungu district. There is thus a financing gap, since VSLAs have little financial portfolio to all applicants. ‘Each member of VSLA contributes to an average of only 5,000 UGX a month. This is not enough to satisfy community borrowing needs, in the absence of alternative financial institutions.

Uses of credit amongst the Batwa

The Batwa that acquired credit used it majorly for buying food and crop production (Figure 8). Education expenses like tuition and other scholastic materials for their school going children were the least.

Figure 8: Use of credit borrowed



The relative uses of credit can also be discerned from the goals of farming community or social groups. For instance, a member of Kihembe Batwa VSLA group reiterated its purpose of raising school fees and meeting emergencies. “We formed this saving group to help us on school fees, meet medical expenses, home needs and acquire more livestock like goats, pigs and sheep”. VSLAs thus allow borrowing for medical expenses, home needs like home improvement and expenditure on food more so if the member has a ceremony or it is a festive season like Easter or Christmas.

Sources of Loan repayment among the Batwa

Loan repayment has not been good for the Batwa, as there are serious cases of default reported. The most predominant sources of loan service was business related and to a small extent sale of farm produce (Table 3).

Table 3: Sources of loan repayment

Loan repayment	Frequency	Percent
Business	71	60%
Sale of produce	33	28%
Salary	15	13%
Total	119	100%

Finance and Business skills for Batwa

Batwa have not embraced farming as a business. Their business acumen is still low, though they appreciate that if well managed agriculture, can be very profitable compared to other businesses. Few Batwa have basic business knowledge and skills to allow them plan, conduct business with sustainability lens, and are stuck to traditional methods of farming. Batwa are generally disconnected from the wider input market, for instance credit market and other agro input market. Batwa generally rely on agro inputs supplied from partners/well-wishers and do not put effort to acquire their own inputs apart from the seeds.

14% of Batwa had received training in group formation, group dynamics, governance and management. These trainings had been extended by NGOs (45%) like BMCT, AICM, UBODU, BDP and government extension programs (27%) and community trainers (27%). They provided general training on group formation, access and use of credit, business growth and investment.

Gender and Decision making amongst the Batwa

Decision making reality falls in a deep cultural setup where women, youth and men have varied roles, in the different production systems. 26% of respondents think that Batwa women/females are never involved in household decision making, while a few more (39%) think that they are sometimes involved. Slightly more than a third of respondents think that women are frequently involved in decision making at household level. Women provide most labour but have lower on-farm decision making power.

Men generally own and control land, a vital factor of production for agricultural production. Most households interviewed acknowledge that men own land, and most decisions thereon.

It was also interesting to note that both men and women have access to land, while decisions on for instance disposition or acquisition of land (control) is largely on the side of men. This has affected the sharing of benefits from agricultural production, as also reiterated by some farmers. "What constrains us is not only shortage of land, but even what is available is owned and controlled by our husbands as tradition dictates".

Table 4: Access to, ownership and control of land among the Batwa

Characteristic	Man/Husband (A)	Woman/Wife (B)	Both A & B	Others
Ownership of land	51.5%	18.9%	32.2%	0.5%
Access to land	16.5%	16.5%	64.5%	2.2%
Control of land	50.1%	15.5%	31.1%	2.4%

Women are more involved in food production decisions than selling and planting decisions. Men/husbands were reportedly dominating selling decisions (37%) as compared to the rest for instance joint decision making (32%), while women/wife involvement stands at 17%. Crop planting decisions are dominated by joint decisions between man and wife, at 49%. It was a common view point that women decision making in key enterprises tend to be wanting.

This is entrenched in the culture where women have long been considered as subordinates to their male superiors. "Women tend to be involved in agricultural production but with weak decision making".

The differential roles in agricultural production can also be attributed to low awareness on benefits of fairness resource sharing and taking up of positive cultural orientation for the betterment of the whole society. Women in particular lack access to training and tools even though they are heavily involved in on-farm labour. Yes, some farmers already had received such awareness, but their level of skills and practice was still low.

However, women still miss some of the small sensitisations that come to the communities, due to family chores, leaving such trainings to be dominated by men. “There is need for targeted sensitization that take into consideration the realities of female chores. Increasing attendance of women in trainings will empower them, and have longer time positive effects than what is currently occupying them in favour of trainings”- BMCT staff, Kanungu District.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The study reveals that farming is the most important economic activity for the Batwa in the BMCA and that crop production is typically conducted on small farms using traditional methods and rudimentary hand tools. The major findings and challenges identified are inadequate resources to facilitate opening of their land, the application of inefficient tools and lack of adequate seed. Majority of the Batwa access farmland of their own, while the minority depend on rented land. On average, a Mutwa household cultivates 0.6 acres of land. We observed that Batwa sometimes rent land to non-Batwa in exchange for either food or money and this is a hindrance to food security among the Batwa in the BMCA.

Most Batwa farmers have not embraced farming as a business, despite some trainings they have so far received. Farmers have basic business and financial skills, and they are disconnected from input and output markets. Batwa have organized themselves business and social groups like Ngozi/Bataka, Saving, Local Council and farmer groups. Majority of the Batwa are members of saving groups (95%), followed by farmer groups (47%), and VSLAs are the major sources of credit. However, some farmers borrow money claiming it is for food, crop production, medical, school fees and end up squandering it, and there are many cases of default reported.

There is need to bring such land into productive use by sensitizing Batwa on landuse, providing support with essential inputs such as seeds and tools so as to build their capacity for self-sufficiency. The program’s approach of providing seeds, training Batwa in backyard gardening, soil and water conservation is a move in the right direction, but this must be carefully focused.

The most widely cultivated crops were identified as beans, maize, cassava, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, ground nuts, millet, sorghum, yams, peas and vegetables. These are also the main staple foods in the region. The program should aim at increasing production and adoption of these crops such that more farmers are involved and supported to increase acreage under such crops.

Household food access is defined as the ability to acquire sufficient quality and quantity of food to meet all the household members’ nutritional requirements and live productive lives. The Household Dietary Diversity Score (HDDS) is used to determine whether this status has been attained. For a household to be considered as having achieved the standard HDDS, it must score at least 5 out of 12 food groups. Therefore, a household consuming an average of five food groups indicates their diet is diverse.

Recommendation for Promotion of Batwa education

Land use and Productivity

1. Establish a network of voluntary Batwa lead farmers, recruited from different sub counties, linked to Batwa settlements/groups. The lead Batwa farmers should be trained to cascade agricultural and business skills trainings to fellow Batwa farmers at various stages of crop growth, marketing and investment.
2. Conduct exposure visit to successful Batwa farmers and related enterprises in the region and beyond. Such visits should be attended by selected Batwa farmers. We recommend a visit to selected enterprises managed and operated by Batwa in Kanungu district.

3. Strengthen Batwa groups on common objectives through skills building in governance, group cohesion farming as business and benefit sharing at household level. Such trainings should tackle gender disparities and youth involvement in agricultural production.
4. Batwa partners should beef up monitoring of beneficiaries, providing technical support if possible. Monitoring aspects should include, among others, location of Batwa farmers, area of land under production, adoption of agronomic practices, harvesting practices, and possible linkages. This will increase value chain integrity and actor royalty to the value chain.

Savings and Investment

1. Build capacity of Batwa lead farmers in saving and investment, customer relationship management and farmer mobilization skills. The Batwa need further capacity development in general business skills for sustainable businesses of grown crops.

Partner collaboration

1. Batwa partners in collaboration with local governments should come up with byelaws and ordinances which obligate the caretakers and parents to ensure that all children of school going age stay at school.
2. Partners should sensitize Batwa parents and children about the importance of sending their children to school and participating in school activities.
3. There is need to strengthen the education scholarship program for the Batwa children. The community fund could be used specifically to address the challenge
4. The office of Community Development should strengthen the enforcement of labour laws to reduce on child labour and abuse of children's rights at the same time following up acts of alcoholism and domestic violence
5. Revitalise Batwa stakeholder's coordination meetings to strengthen monitoring of children enrolment, dropout in schools and other school related issues.

Project developments

1. The project should institute a lesson learning mechanism that is documented and communicated in various platforms like workshops, websites, social media platforms and made available for future projects. These should become resources for development of new funding proposals in areas that have proved to work or improving on areas of great potential that unfortunately did not work that time.