



the Jane Goodall Institute

FOR WILDLIFE RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND CONSERVATION



THE JANE GOODALL INSTITUTE IN UGANDA

ECOTOURISM



INTRODUCTION

Ecotourism can be an effective tool for leveraging resources for Protected Area management, and for fostering environmental stewardship from, and delivering tangible social and economic benefits, to communities. The discussion highlights the Jane Goodall Institute's experience in developing ecotourism programs in Uganda.



DEFINITION

- The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) defines ecotourism as: “purposeful travel to natural areas to understand the culture and natural history of the environment, taking care not to alter the integrity of the ecosystem, producing economic opportunities that make the conservation of natural resources beneficial to local people” (TIES, 1991).
- The World Conservation Union (IUCN) which describes ecotourism as: Environmentally responsible travel and visitation to natural areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features, both past and present) that promote conservation, have a low visitor impact and provide for beneficially active socio-economic involvement of local peoples.



GLOBAL & REGIONAL TRENDS

- In 2014, Travel & Tourism's total contribution to the global economy rose from 9.5% to **9.8% of global GDP (US \$7.6 trillion)**, not only outpacing the wider economy, but also growing faster than other significant sectors such as financial services, transport and manufacturing.
- In total, nearly **277 million jobs** were supported by Travel & Tourism in 2014 - **1 in 11 of all jobs in the world**.
- According to the UNEP (2013) Green Economies and *Trade Report (2013)* **Africa is the market leader in wildlife-base ecotourism** and accounts for about half of all wildlife tourism trips worldwide with Botswana, Kenya, South Africa and Tanzania receiving the most visitors in the continent.



POTENTIAL IN CENTRAL AFRICA

- **Central Africa has a wide range of tourism assets with significant potential to contribute greatly** to growth, employment and poverty reduction in the region. This richness includes a high concentration of primates in the, an ever-growing list of bird species, a special combination of nature based and cultural assets, and an extraordinary variety of landscapes from arid savannas to swamps, lakes, tropical forests and high mountains.
 - ❖ *However, its growth and development has been stalled by several factors most of which are country and/or context specific.*



Ecotourism Development

- **The Jane Goodall Institute (JGI) Uganda's programs focus in three areas, (1) habitat protection, (2) chimpanzee welfare; (3) Environmental Education the protection of Great Apes.**
- **JGI's conservation efforts in Uganda are focused in five (4) major forest blocks located along the western border with DRC Congo.** These forests are home to the last viable populations of the endangered chimpanzees in Uganda.
- **Ecotourism is one of the key sustainable options that JGI employs for conservation of these critical ecosystems.**



Ecotourism Development

- **Developing key tourist attractions** focused on chimpanzee viewing complimented by bird watching and nature hikes;
- **Developing tourist infrastructure** including accommodation, trails, communication systems;
- **Reinforcing partnership** between government, community and private sector for ecotourism development and management;
- Recruiting and **training community members (youth) to manage new products** such as the hiking, biking trail, and the crafts;
- **Supporting youth and women's groups to provide goods and services** to existing lodge operators within and around the CFR;



Ecotourism Development

- Setting-up an **environmental impact, monitoring system for tourism activities**;
- Using revenues from the ecotourism program to support **conservation awareness programs** in the area;
- Using revenues from the ecotourism program to **support other socio-economic development needs such as health, water and sanitation and education in the surrounding community**.



BENEFITS & SUSTAINABILITY

- Revenues from the four **ecotourism sites developed by JGI directly bring in over US\$1,500,000 per annum and employ over 200 people.** More employment industries have developed around these sites employing more people and bringing in even more revenues that are not captured in the figures above.
- This revenue has allowed profit base large enough for NFA and other partners to carry out conservation activities such as conservation education, effective monitoring and law enforcement in the forest reserve. Community-focused activities have enhanced relations between the communities neighboring the forest reserve and management.



GOVERNMENT CHALLENGES

- Coordination gaps between relevant government departments;
- Policy conflict – conservation vs. development;
- Limited framework for participation of stakeholders in ecotourism;
- Tenure and/or devolution of controls over natural resources management;
- No formal accountability requirements between the government and the stakeholders;
- Lack of data to facilitate management action and planning:
 - economic, environmental and social indicators
 - tourism indicators e.g. trends, demographics, purchasing patterns etc.



GOVERNMENT CHALLENGES

- Limitation in capacity across departments and agencies
 - Limited tourism capacity at subnational levels
 - Monitoring and enforcement of laws and policies– staff and equipment
- Poor infrastructure - ICT and Transport (road and air);
- Lack of support mechanisms to build up local supply chains for tourism;
- Limited community empowerment to provide goods and services;
- Limited investment in the tourism sector e.g. marketing, research etc. ;
- Benefits from ecotourism to communities are often insufficient;



DONORS AND NGO CHALLENGES

- Donor timelines for funding of ecotourism development projects are often too short;
- Donor/NGO coordination is required to avoid duplication of efforts/support;
- Conservation NGOs have limited capacity for business management.



Private Sector Challenges

- Limitations in awareness and understanding of the ecotourism industry often resulting in low Private Sector interest in ecotourism ventures;
- Competition between the ecotourism objectives (sustainability, minimal footprint etc.) and profit making objectives; profit motive may supersede the conservation agenda.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- If ecotourism is to contribute to sustainable development and the conservation of natural resources, **it should be immersed into the broader environmental management and development framework of the destination.** Accordingly, ecotourism should be viewed as a component of several tools that can work in complementarity to achieve the goals of sustainable development.
- The tourism sector is a broad and complex network of stakeholders from the public and private sectors, civil society, and donor community. Development of ecotourism ventures therefore requires **identification and involvement of key stakeholders based on effective communication, transparency, coordination, and assignment of clear roles and responsibilities.**