



THE TUA ECOTOURISM

"Revitalizing the Nature of Uganda"



Current status and trends

With the development of activities like Gorilla tracking, Chimpanzee tracking, Birding, Forest / Nature Walks, cultural trails etc; Uganda has taken significant steps in what scholars may regard as a shift from the traditional tourism to responsible travel to ecologically sensitive areas.

Following this example TUA has designed ecotourism practices such as Community tracking, Coffee Tourism, Indigenous Tree Planting and Traditional Music Dance and Drama. This was initiated with the main theme of protecting Queen Elizabeth National Park and Bwindi Impenetrable Forest National Park, and to advance health, education and economic growth in the wider local community. 100% of TUA employees are from the community and the participatory planning of the organization includes members and representatives of homesteads neighbouring the National Parks.

Through Music, Dance and Drama, we disseminate conservation and advocacy information on nature protection, rehabilitation of biodiversity and ending Human-Wildlife Conflict with introduction of preventive alternative sources of income such as Coffee, Tea and Chilli (Habanero, Scotch Bonnet & Birdseye) Farming where youth, women and men are involved.

Tree Uganda Academy (TUA) defines Ecotourism as "that form of travel that involves travelling to natural areas with the objectives of learning, studying or participating in activities that seek to minimize negative impacts to the environment; at the same time protecting and empowering the host communities socially and economically".

According to IUCN 1996, ecotourism is defined as environmentally responsible travel and visitation to relatively undisturbed areas, in order to enjoy and appreciate nature (and any accompanying cultural features both past and present) that promotes conservation, has low negative visitor impact, and provides for beneficially active socioeconomic involvement of local population. Therefore TUA integrates Ecotourism in her activities to maximise the conservation impact as well as provide new insights to the tourists, with high level of hospitality.

.....*"Plant a Tree, Save the Planet"*.....

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This project initiative has contributed towards the conservation and improvement of the forests, wetlands, elephants, and the parks at large whilst raising the socioeconomic standards of the people through skills development, selling of the Coffee and Habanero products, forest walks, advancing conservation practices in the area's primary and secondary schools including training local guides, formation and supporting women groups like the Ibambiro Rural Women Entrepreneurship Group, Ngoma Drama actors etc. All this has improved on the image of the area and created conservation awareness amongst the local people.

Ecotourism benefits associated with this innovation.

TUA has divided the benefits of advancing ecotourism into three categories; i.e. environmental, economic and socio-cultural benefits. The following represent the general benefits of ecotourism to the communities and the government at large.

1. Preserves the natural resource by undertaking environmentally friendly activities.
2. Employment opportunities for the local people working as guides, staff in parks and other establishments adjacent to the resources.



3. Increased household income from the sale of handcrafts and other food items.

4. Enhances awareness and improvement of the social infrastructure like schools, libraries, health care Institutions through involving the local people in participatory planning programs and channelling tourism income to community projects.






5. Improvement in local community access hence reducing the feeling of solitude among the local people.

6. There will be development of pride, appreciation, understanding, respect for each others' culture as well as increasing self esteem of hosts and Visitors.

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