

SOLUTIONS IN FOCUS:

Sustainable Tourism in Protected and Conserved Areas



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Green List
Protected | Conserved Areas

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PANORAMA - Solutions for a Healthy Planet

PANORAMA – *Solutions for a Healthy Planet* is a global partnership initiative to facilitate learning from success in conservation. It promotes examples of inspiring solutions that showcase how nature conservation can benefit society. Through a modular case study format, solutions are being dissected into their replicable “*building blocks*” and their broader application is supported through cross-sectoral learning and exchange, relying on online as well as offline mechanisms.

PANORAMA allows practitioners to share and reflect on their experiences, increase recognition for successful work, and to learn with their peers how similar challenges have been addressed around the globe.

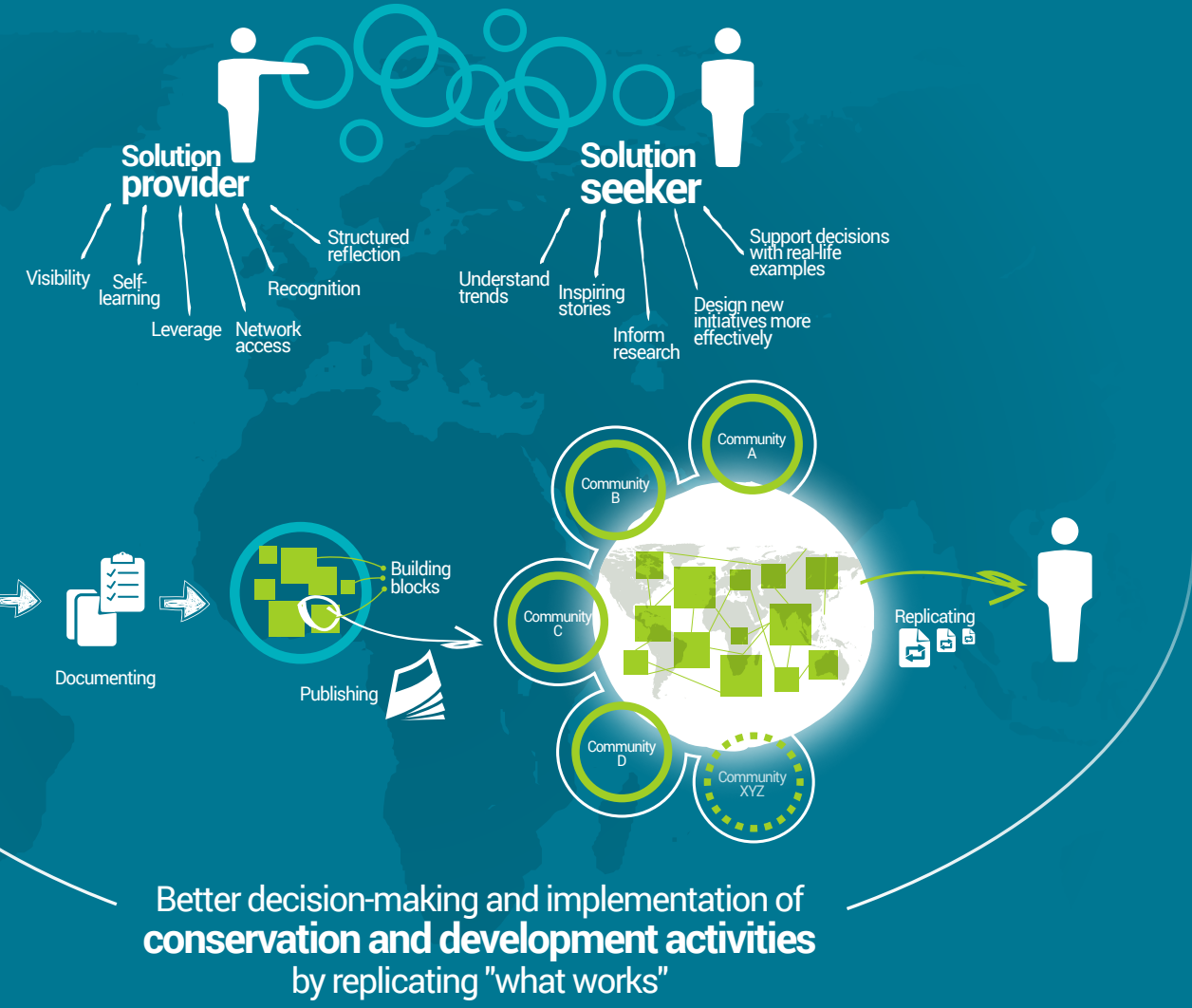
IUCN co-leads PANORAMA together with a growing number of partner organizations including GIZ, GRID-Arendal, EcoHealth Alliance, UNDP, ICCROM, ICOMOS, IFOAM - Organics International, OCTO, Rare, UNEP and World Bank.

Explore over 1,200 solutions from around the world, including the ones being introduced in this brochure, through the PANORAMA web platform, and submit your own example!

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from each other's
success?

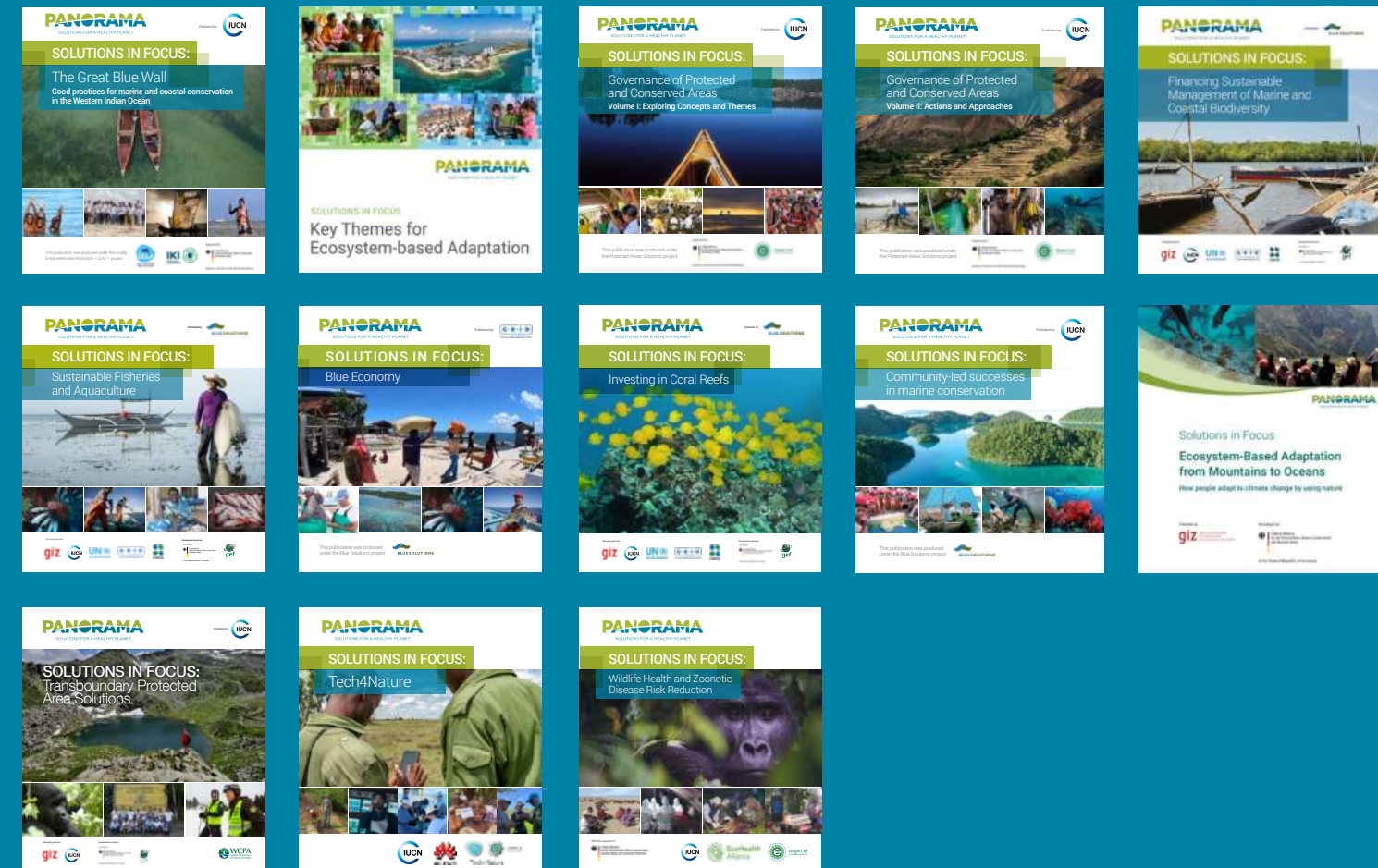
Cross-sectoral, global
learning and exchange



The Solutions in Focus series

This booklet is part of a series of compilations assembling PANORAMA solution case studies on a defined topic. *Solutions in Focus* zooms in on a topic of interest covered by PANORAMA, allowing to explore common elements and shared learnings across success stories. It is a snapshot of the PANORAMA portfolio at a given time, rather than a representative assembly of selected "best practices" on the issue at hand.

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PANORAMA Solutions in focus

Sustainable Tourism in Protected and Conserved Areas

What should sustainable tourism in Protected and Conserved Areas look like in a Post-COVID world? Existing good practices in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

What is Sustainable Tourism?

Sustainable tourism is presented as a valid alternative to mass tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities¹. To ensure that tourism is truly sustainable, a balance between these three principles must be achieved.

Demand for sustainable tourism is growing, especially after the significant increase in outdoor activities motivated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and more visitors than ever are now interested in experiencing nature and culture in a low-impact manner. So much so that 81% of global travellers affirm that sustainability is important to them, and

71% want to make more effort in the next year to travel more sustainably². This shows that there is a real opportunity for positive change, shifting tourism towards a greater sustainability.

Tourism tends to focus on landscapes where nature and wildlife are healthy, which are often protected territories. In **protected and conserved areas**, sustainable tourism must contribute to the long-term conservation objectives of the socio-ecological systems on which it depends. Sustainable tourism within protected areas should:

- Preserve the natural and cultural assets that attract tourists

- Respect the rights of local communities and their idiosyncrasy
- Ensure the viability of economic operations with a fair distribution of socioeconomic benefits
- Foster meaningful and high-quality visitor experiences

One of the greatest challenges is to balance conservation needs with the viability of recreational and tourism initiatives. Destination stewardship and collective governance play a critical role in

overcoming these conflicting interests, helping to address the needs of all stakeholders. To this end, planning and management become essential, as well as a clear communication strategy that ensures that visitor impacts are within acceptable limits and consistent with conservation goals.

Protected and conserved areas can and must offer a new model of tourism that provides an alternative to traditional tourism, maximising its benefits for all rightsholders.

Nature-based Tourism

The term nature-based tourism refers to any tourism activity that takes place in the natural environment. Therefore, all sustainable tourism activities that are connected to nature fall into this category as well.

Often, nature-oriented tourists are attracted to natural landscapes with high levels of biodiversity, which underscores the importance of nature-based tourism experiences also tackling sustainability issues.

Ecotourism

Ecotourism is a niche nature-based tourism segment where the environment serves as both the setting for the experience and the primary driver of travel. Healthy and relatively untouched ecosystems are necessary to provide a satisfactory ecotourism experience.

Ecotourism is widely regarded as a form of low-impact tourism that adheres to the economic, social and environmental sustainability principles. Minimising the disruptive effects of mainstream tourism, while respecting nature and culture, involving local stakeholders in its planning and bringing economic benefits to local communities, are among its main objectives.

¹ UNWTO definition. <https://www.unwto.org/sustainable-development>

² Booking.com 2022 Sustainable Travel Report <https://globalnews.booking.com/download/1161485/booking.comsustainabletravelreport2022final.pdf>

Foreword

With the evolution of society in recent times, tourism has been enshrined as a human right that responds to an acknowledged need for travel. It is the taste of experiencing new ways of living and being, expanding our view of the world through direct experience, awakening our senses.

When we think about an idyllic location, we frequently picture a beach with crystal-clear waters, breath taking mountains or plentiful wildlife. The reason for this is that the imagery of tourism often resonates with natural beauty and relies on natural assets. Protected and conserved areas with recognised natural, ecological and cultural values, are natural treasures full of history and traditions that attract visitors coming from all parts of the world. Nowadays, parks are more and more transitioning from being just a background landscape to becoming the very reason why tourists travel, in seek of the outdoors and the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas.

Tourism in protected and conserved areas was rather a niche interest for a long time. However, the COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in the demand towards nature destinations, reaching record-breaking numbers, especially in the case of domestic tourism. This sudden surge in visitors searching for outdoor experiences and being in nature, exacerbated the already existing pressures on their vulnerable ecosystems and limited resources, and highlighted the need for more responsible tourism planning and management.

Nonetheless, this hunger to get outdoors and to reconnect with nature does not necessarily have to be a burden for protected and conserved areas and the people living within and around them. On the contrary, tourism can be an opportunity when managed following a sustainable model, as well as an important income generator for rural or more remote areas. Tourism, as a cross-cutting sector, can actually play an essential role in the transition towards a greener and more equitable society that considers sustainability in a holistic way, balancing the trade-offs between economic, environmental and social aspects.

This balance is not an easy task, and protected and conserved area managers and conservation stakeholders need support in order to reach a sweet spot between environmental needs and nature-based tourism demand. If successful, tourism can be a fundamental source of income to finance protected and conserved areas and contribute to the achievement of their conservation objectives.

IUCN, in its mission towards influencing and assisting societies to preserve the integrity and diversity of nature, is always working to identify and tackle threats to conservation, and thus focusing on how to make tourism in protected areas more responsible is a high priority. With this project, IUCN continues its journey towards the sustainable tourism development goal without forgetting about community livelihoods and protected areas conservation, while building the capacity of tourism and conservation stakeholders to recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

This publication was developed within the framework of the *Sustainable Tourism and Protected Areas in a Post-COVID World* project implemented by IUCN in partnership with Planeterra Foundation, with support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). It displays successful examples of tourism-related actions that have been implemented in protected areas of Latin America, Asia and Africa amid the COVID-19 pandemic to contribute to nature conservation and sustainable development. We hope these solutions can inspire tourism and environmental stakeholders, leading the way towards a more resilient future.

Carla Danelutti
Ecosystem Resilience and Spatial Planning Manager
IUCN Centre for Mediterranean Cooperation

Background

Tourism is often a wonderful opportunity, but sometimes can be a terrible nuisance for hosting populations and nature depending on the way the sector of activities is managed and developed. Mass tourism comes to mind as we think of large concrete hotel infrastructures towering next to beaches, or oversized cruise ships moored in harbours all over the world, pouring out passengers.

As tourism development shifts to focus on quality rather than quantity, alternative forms of tourism are emerging. Since the 1970s and 80s, tourism has been promoting more respect towards host communities and the environment.

Tourism has been instrumental to financing protected and conserved areas – home of emblematic species, pristine ecosystems, and cultural heritage worldwide. Funds have been provided for the management operations of the parks, jobs for the local people to be involved directly in the tourism activities, and wider economic benefit for local and international businesses.

Suddenly, in March of 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic broke out and put the entire world on hold. Tourism has been one of the most affected sectors, with the abrupt suppression of international and domestic

travel. After an initial period of stupefaction and disbelief, the actors of this industry deployed diverse strategies to stay afloat and approach matters differently, often marketing for more domestic tourism (Planeterra summary findings of interviews with 10 community-based tourism enterprises globally, 2022).

However, the crisis has greatly distressed millions of people, as those earning a stable income in tourism descended into poverty. For example, Planeterra’s survey has reported a decrease of yearly income from 3,000 – 400,000\$ before the pandemic to 0 – 80,000\$ in 2021.

“They [the community-based enterprises] noted that income from international travellers made up the majority of their revenue pre-pandemic” (Planeterra 2022).

In most protected areas, incidences of poaching, illegal trade of fauna and flora, as well as deforestation increased dramatically. People were focused on trying to survive the impacts of the pandemic, and operations of surveillance could not be sustained and often funding was re-allocated from conservation activities.

“Communities also noted that there was visibly more poverty in their communities as there was no longer any money circulating.” (Planeterra, 2022).

The pandemic has been an eye opener as site managers, NGOs, and tourism experts have learnt the difficult lesson that tourism cannot be the only income generating activity to rely on. Putting all one’s eggs in one basket leads them to more loss in situations like these. For the defenders of local cultures and nature, the pandemic opened new avenues to advocate for ‘building back better’, and for making sustainable, nature, and community-based ecotourism^[1] the norm for the future in protected and conserved areas.

This publication falls within this vision that values tourism that helps preserve the natural environment and brings benefits for the local people living in the visited areas. The “*Sustainable Tourism and Protected Areas in a Post-COVID World*” project, led by IUCN on behalf of GIZ and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and implemented with the Planeterra Foundation, aims at delivering sustainable community-based tourism development in several protected and conserved areas in Peru and Vietnam. It also brings in a global

perspective on existing beneficial practices around the world, that can inspire further development of sustainable and fair tourism.

This publication is taking the reader on a trip to amazing destinations, where local actors have implemented truly inspiring solutions that can demonstrate the development of resilient forms of tourism.

“Tourism will only thrive if it is adaptable and functions as an essential environmental and social service. This will be possible if it fully integrates the principles of sustainable development, and focuses on equity, inclusiveness and integration better than it has done in the past”. (Spenceley et al. 2021)

As such, protected area tourism can participate in deploying activities in line with the emerging One Health concept, that emphasizes the intertwined characteristic feature of the relationship between humans, animals, and ecosystems. It raises awareness on the necessity to prevent other zoonoses to affect our societies the way COVID-19 has. In this regard, protected and conserved areas are essential to the preservation of harmonious balance that we need in our lives.

“Healthy nature, stewarded in protected and conserved areas, is the backbone of a recovering planet, with diversified funding sources, including but not limited to sustainable tourism” (M. Hockings, Parks, vol. 26, May 2020).

Methodology

For this publication, we selected and sourced 22 tourism related case studies from Latin America, Asia and Africa. They consist of concrete examples of actions that have been successfully implemented which resonate well with the recommendations outlined in the paper “Tourism in Protected and Conserved Areas amid the COVID-19 Pandemic” (Spenceley et al. PARKS Vol 27 (Special Issue) March 2021).

We highlighted three main groups of solutions: **rapid responses to the loss of tourism revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic**, **sustainable tourism models**, and **tourism as a component of a wider holistic approach**. All the solutions illustrate ways tourism contributes to nature conservation and sustainable development.

DISCLAIMER: all of these solutions were taken from the PANORAMA – Solutions for a Healthy Planet platform. Wording was very minimally corrected to preserve the integrity of how they were submitted by the original solution providers. Many have been written and contributed by non-native English speakers.

^[1] Definitions found in: [Definitions of Ecotourism, Nature Tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Responsible Tourism – Gaia Discovery](#)

Nature tourism: Responsible travel to natural areas, which conserves the environment and improves the welfare of local people. (Source: [Texas Parks & Wildlife](#))

Ecotourism: Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education. (Source: [The International Ecotourism Society](#))








Solutions in Focus:

Rapid responses to the loss of tourism revenue due to the COVID-19 pandemic

As countries closed their borders, imposed movement restrictions to their population, economies slowed down and some sectors of activity stopped. In areas where nature tourism provided steady revenues for local people, organisations mobilised their resources and network to implement coping strategies to rapidly reduce the negative impacts of the pandemic. Many grant opportunities were made available for communities to apply and strengthen their resilience during this period (Planeterra, 2022). The following PANORAMA solutions provide different examples of such mechanisms.

Providing relief and resilience for Community Bird Guides in South Africa faced with national lockdowns and tourism declines

	Solution provider:	Birdlife South Africa
	Location:	South Africa
	Summary:	<p>BirdLife South Africa's Community Bird Guide Project has trained 200 individuals from underprivileged backgrounds to become professional bird guides. Over 50 guides remain active, while others have transitioned into other careers such as education, conservation, and hospitality. Graduates are not employed by BLSA, but rather empowered to become freelance operators. However, a strong relationship is maintained through multiple forms of support, including marketing on the BLSA website, provision of uniforms and business cards, and loan pairs of Swarovski Optik binoculars.</p> <p>During the COVID-19 travel bans in South Africa, the guides had no prospect of income. BLSA started the Community Bird Guide Relief Fund, appealing to the public. They raised R800 000 which was paid in monthly contributions over 8 months until travel reopened. The contributions did not replace all income but provided enough for food, electricity, medical bills, and other essential costs.</p>

Impacts: 200 individuals from rural and underprivileged backgrounds have been trained in becoming bird and nature guides over the last 20 years
 150 of the guides found new job opportunities in the tourism sector
 50 specialist bird guides remain active and provide a localized service to birders
 During the pandemic, over 40 BirdLife South Africa Community Bird Guides were saved from a desperate situation and were able to weather the travel bans during the national lockdowns. This ensured that they were able to resume guiding once these lifted as they had not needed to pivot to other livelihoods.



Success factors

The BirdLife South Africa Community Bird Guides are well regarded and respected members of the South African birding community

BirdLife South Africa has an extensive network of members, supporters, and birders locally and abroad





Habitat restoration and support of livelihoods impacted by COVID-19, through removal of IAS (Invasive Alien Species) in the Lunugamvehera National Park



Solution provider: Federation of Environmental Organisations



Other organisations: Department of Wildlife Conservation, Sri Lanka ; Sabaragamuwa University, Sri Lanka



Location: Hambantota, Sri Lanka



Summary: FEO partnered with the Department of Wildlife Conservation (DWC) for a habitat restoration project by clearing around 500 ha of the Invasive Alien Species (IAS), Agada (*Xanthium indicum*) in Minneriya and Kaudulla National Parks in 2020. Based on the success of this project, DWC has authorized FEO to undertake a similar project at Lunugamvehera and Uda Walawe National Parks, where a large percentage of the parks are currently impacted by the uncontrolled spread of the IAS, Lantana camara (*S. Gandapana*) and Eupatorium odoratum (*S. Podi singho maran*). This project involves clearing over 900ha of these invasives in the Park which is surrounded by communities who have been engaged in tourism involving the national park for a long time & whose livelihoods have been affected by the Covid19- pandemic. The invasives are cleared using manual labour, allowing native vegetation to be protected and restore grazing grounds for herbivores like Elephants which could de-escalate conflicts between humans and wildlife.

Impacts: Habitat management and invasive removal has positive impacts on both the wildlife and the surrounding community. Rapid response in preventing seed dispersal is critical in controlling the spread of any invasive alien plant species and reduces long-term costs for controlling the spread in national parks in Sri Lanka. Removal of invasive plants allows the regrowth of native plant species and thereby restoring the habitat and grazing grounds for herbivores in the Lunugamvehera National Park. These areas are the primary feeding grounds for herbivore populations (including elephants - an endangered species) that are resident or visit the Park, and thus impact their interconnected ecological food webs. This Project intends to make a positive impact by employing local communities engaged in tourism, agriculture, and others who are daily wage earners who have lost income due to the pandemic. Hence this project would provide them with a steady source of income by employing villagers for the manual removal of the invasive plants. The creation of an alternative livelihood for the local community who became unemployed due to the pandemic through protecting the Park fosters an attitudinal shift from one of conflict to benefiting financially from and being involved in the protection of the Park.






Success factors

Partnerships with Department of Wildlife Conservation and Partnerships with the local community

Manual removal of invasive plants instead of using heavy machinery



Barcoding Galapagos: Recording and mitigating COVID-19 impacts using key workers in eco-tourism

	Solution provider:	Barcode Galapagos
	Location:	Galapagos Islands, Ecuador
	Summary:	<p>The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted the tourism industry in the Galapagos, putting thousands out of a job and threatening conservation efforts based on tourism income. In particular, naturalists guides, fishermen, and farmers were hit the hardest affecting the core of the island economy. This lack of income could also be detrimental to sensitive ecosystems by lifting adequate control and increasing fishing quotas as measures to mitigate this economic collapse. The Galapagos Barcode project's main goal is to directly employ naturalist guides (women and men equally) currently without income, to catalog the biodiversity of the Galapagos using DNA sequencing technology. By providing infrastructure and scientific training (cash for training), it will build local capacity and resilience, with implications for wildlife and ecosystem conservation, and socio-economic growth.</p>

Impacts: This non-invasive technology is used to catalog the islands' genetic diversity at the ecosystem level; to identify illegal capture and trafficking of endangered species, and to identify and interfere with invasive species that arrive on ships or by air. The employment of naturalist guides who have lost their livelihoods due to the pandemic are now knowledgeable on barcode techniques, generating new job opportunities in research and technology, thus creating resilience for future uncertain times.







Success factors

Transfer of technology

Clear measurable outcomes



Empowering communities for sustainable alternative livelihoods to cope with COVID-19 crisis

	Solution provider:	Environment Governance Institute
	Other organizations:	SOS IUCN; European Union
	Location:	Murchison Falls National Park, Uganda
	Summary:	Before the Covid-19 pandemic, over 90 % of the community members, living around the Murchison Falls Protected Areas, made an income from tourism related activities. Even the Uganda State as a whole was relying very much on tourism contributing to 7.9 percent to the GDP in 2019. As a direct consequence of the tourism shutdown, local villagers went in the Protected Area to hunt for bush meat, find food, cut down tree cover for charcoal and find other resources for income. The Environment Governance Institute (EGI) team has been working towards sustainably diversifying livelihoods to build resilience among local communities and awareness raising activities, that got eventually a large attention in the media. Thanks to a well-articulated combination of actions and supportive partnerships, local communities were able to overcome the challenges brought by the pandemic and improve their livelihoods, with a highly positive consequence on the Protected Area's integrity.

Impacts: The level of encroachment dropped dramatically from 32 to 6 cases in 12 months. Diversified livelihoods successfully implemented to support an increased number of community members, e.g. 366 households trained in bee keeping (200 bee hives were provided), 612 community members have adopted improved agricultural land use practices resistant to climate change. The general income of community households have increased and their businesses became also more resilient.

The training and involvement of young people in art performances, to raise awareness on the link between the biodiversity conservation and human livelihoods got the attention from the media. The drama groups are now often hired to perform, as they deliver strong messages on biodiversity benefits and how to live in harmony with wildlife. The relationship between the local communities and the Uganda Wildlife Authority has improved; the authority uses less the force to reinforce the Protected Areas law.

A set of by-laws to regulate the activities in the Protected Areas were drafted and agreed upon by the local communities and endorsed by the District leaders.



Success factors

Development of diversified livelihoods

Powerful awareness raising approach

Multiple supportive actors



ENVIRONMENT
GOVERNANCE
INSTITUTE (EGI)



Story

Mr. Kwikiriza Tickey is the lead singer and a chairperson of the Friends of Chimpanzee drama group. It is located within the chimpanzee corridor connecting Bugoma and Budongo forest reserves within Murchison falls National Park. The group arose out of the need to reverse community revenge on chimpanzees who started invading their settlements destroying crops and homesteads. The communities did not know that their actions of encroaching on the chimpanzees habitat for firewood and building materials were responsible for the negative impact.

The group comprises 25 members (16 males and 11 females) and use primary local tools to generate music, dance and drama to sensitize communities on how to live in harmony with nature. Today, the group's impact has been powerful in changing the community mindset and enhanced chimpanzee conservation. Please look at the music clip of their song "Let's preserve nature" in the video link in the resources below. The lyrics of the song in English are the following:

- Let us protect nature and not destroy the environment, it provides for our livelihoods and supports us in different ways.
- The forest, lakes, and swamps work together to give us fresh air, the food we eat, and also provide shelter to our ancestors the chimpanzees.
- The scholars and researchers said we evolved from chimpanzees that's why they eat, move, dance, and play like us.
- You see how we dance, that's how they also dance in the forest when they are happy. Don't destroy their home and make them unhappy. We should protect them as they form our history. We are friends of chimpanzees, forest and other animals.
- We should not destroy the forest by cutting down trees because they are also our spiritual home, our parents used to pray in these forests and they got blessings, why should we destroy the things our parents used to treasure.
- Even today the trees you are seeing provide us with nice shades, the trees do support us with rainfall formation that we depend on for planting our crops such as Matooke (bananas), sweet potatoes, sorghum.
- I have heard people complain that the animals come and destroy our crops and our homes, but it's because we have destroyed their homes, let's ensure they have a home and they will not come to our homes.
- Nature is so expensive, see if we destroy it but very beautiful if we conserve it.

We have advised you to protect nature, do not destroy the wildlife. I have advised you all, you also go and tell others. Nature is our livelihood, let's protect it!









Solutions in Focus:

Sustainable tourism models

As tourism activities have resumed in most parts of the world, it is worth promoting good models that have proven benefiting both people and nature. The following PANORAMA solutions focus on ways tourism was developed and contributed to strengthening conservation work. They all involved local communities, as actors and beneficiaries of these activities. They have integrated species and ecosystems conservation and local socio-economic development at various degrees. Some models focus on creating jobs for the local people to mitigate unsustainable use of natural resources and raise awareness on the natural area, while others have made tourism an incentive for conservation activities.

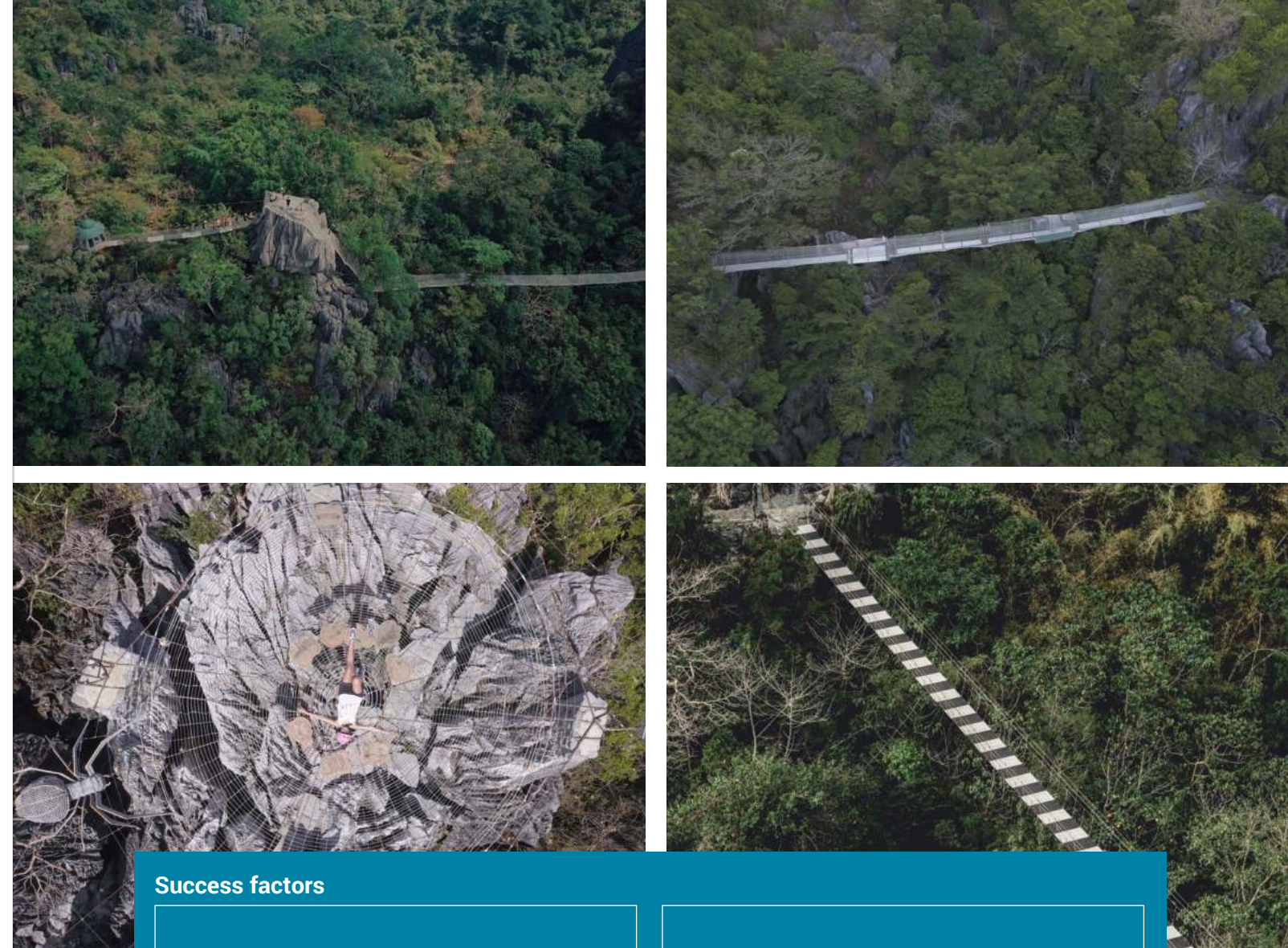
The Georeserve Model: Mindful engineering as a means to build sustainable tourism value and income in conservation areas

	Solution provider:	Masungi Georeserve Foundation
	Other organizations:	Department of Environment and Natural Resources; Masungi Georeserve
	Location:	Masungi Georeserve, Province of Rizal, Philippines
	Summary:	<p>The georeserve model is a trademarked innovation demonstrated at the Masungi Georeserve conservation area in Baras, Rizal, Philippines. It has been proven to provide sustainable income for the management of the 430-hectare local conservation area through innovative tourism and engineering.</p> <p>Inspired by the UNESCO Geopark Model, the georeserve is a smaller-scale initiative in the Philippines encompassing the three pillars of conservation, education/research and sustainable development, plus design and engineering that enhances the touristic value of an area in a low-cost and low-impact way.</p> <p>The Masungi Georeserve hosts more than ten of these engineering marvels that enhance the natural character of the area: these include the Sapot (a web-style viewing platform that uses biomimicry), the Duyan (dubbed as the longest hammock in the world) and the Sawa (a rope bridge that serves as a rapid exit for visitors).</p>

Impacts: Environmental Impact: After 20 of restoration from illegal logging, quarrying & land speculation, the georeserve now hosts more than 400 species of wildlife, many of which are rare & endemic to the Philippines. This includes the Giant Cloud Rat and Civet Cat, the Jade Vine and Hoyas, and numerous endemic birds, insects and amphibians. The 10-kilometer limestone formation of Masungi has been protected from constant quarrying and mining threats. In 2017, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources expanded the conservation area from 430 ha to more than 2,700 ha surrounding the georeserve.

Social Impact: The georeserve now employs over 100 people, many of whom are local and several are part of the indigenous community. Previously illegal loggers and charcoal makers themselves, these park rangers are now the ones taking care of the forest and guiding people through the trails. Park rangers who join the georeserve double their income from the average income in their villages and receive social, health and housing benefits.

Economic Impact: Thousands of visitors have already visited the georeserve since its opening on December 2015. This gave rise to the opening of food and drink establishments, lodging, as well as other community-managed nature hikes within the area. The total economic impact for the local economy can be estimated at more than \$1 million dollars per year.



Success factors

Mindful engineering

Tourism policy enforcement

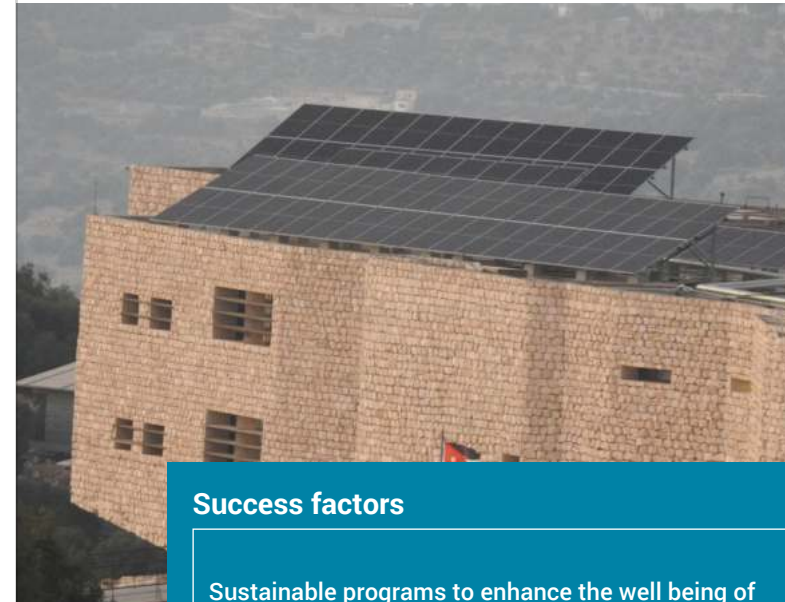


MASUNGI
GEORESERVE

Ajloun Forest Reserve is a leading model for conservation of nature and developing the local community

- Solution provider:** The Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN)
- Location:** Ajloun Forest Reserve, Jordan
- Summary:** Ajloun Reserve which is a RSCN (the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature) managed protected area covers 12 km2 from the remaining fragile and fragmented forest patches in northern Jordan. The RSCN's main approach to ensure the integration of the local communities into the conservation programs is by establishing nature-based low-impact eco-tourism initiatives. The area of the reserve barely received any visitors before we developed the eco-tourism infrastructure and facilities that serve both the day visitors such as various hiking trails, restaurants, or accommodation cabins that attract nature lovers who desire to stay overnights in the area. We made sure that our ecotourism products depended on natural and cultural resources, low level of technology with a low negative impact on nature respecting the carrying capacity of the site.

Impacts: Ajloun Reserve became an "Economic Driver " in the low-income governorate as it contributed in creating number of job opportunities (65 full-time staff, all locals). The yearly "Protected Area Benefits" report shows that in 2019, the reserve expenses were 832000 JDs, mostly spent as salaries, goods, and services procured from local communities. The Eco-tourism and Socio-economic projects created income-generating nature-inspired jobs that contribute to the sustainable development of the reserve and its conservation programs, and at the same time provide economic benefits to the locals and help developing this rural area and its inhabitants by enhancing the infrastructure and the needed services like electricity, roads, and water. These projects changed the locals' attitude towards nature conservation and helped them to understand and value their natural heritage. We have provided educational programs to local children and students living around the reserve to teach them about nature conservation hoping that one day they'll become local community leaders and change the perception/views of the local community around the reserves and become more committed towards the protection of nature.



Success factors

Sustainable programs to enhance the well being of the locals

The Role of Ecotourism in supporting socio-economic development in Ajloun Forest Reserve



Story

37 years old Laith Smadi was an employee at a small dessert shop in a town of Ajloun governorate. Through the project (PLEDJ) in Ajloun which is funded by the EU Delegation to Jordan, he received a small grant for his eco-friendly business idea. With the grant, he managed to open an Ajloun Reserve Restaurant.

A Leap of Determination

“I used to make 200 JDs as an employee, I’m now the chef and manager of two major restaurants in my home town of Ajloun thanks to the grant from the EU” says Laith who has experienced a great change in his income and saw that change reflected on his family as it helped him by saying that “it feels great to be able to provide a better life for my wife and kids”. With determination, years of experience in food production and a newly acquired knowledge in project management, finance and latest tips and tricks in the kitchen thanks to a series of training workshops preluding the implementation of his business project; Laith’s kitchen now contains cooking equipment worth tens of thousands of Jordanian dinars. Though he has a vast experience participating in events held by major hotels in Amman and the Dead Sea, he admits that he “knew nothing about management or finance before.” What he learned was very useful in managing his restaurant.

Thriving hand in hand

Laith has recently set up a new beautiful restaurant at the Royal Academy for Nature Conservation in Ajloun growing his staff members from the local community to twenty men and women, many of them couldn’t find a job before either due to lack of job opportunities or because of the conservative nature of the society which limits women’s choices when trying to find a job. He has “trained some of the staff for a while and now they are very good at what they do”. He is very proud of his women colleagues who challenged social norms and proved themselves equal to men at work. One of those strong women started as a steward and became the assistant chef, supervising all staff members who are majorly men. When it comes to food, Laith has several agreements with providers from the local community. The two restaurants are “fully dependent on the local produce”. “I hand-pick the items myself most of the time to ensure high quality” he adds. The two restaurants follow Ajloun’s Natural Reserve environmental and eco-tourism standards and regulations and are model sustainable environment-friendly businesses that can be replicated by other entrepreneurs in the region.

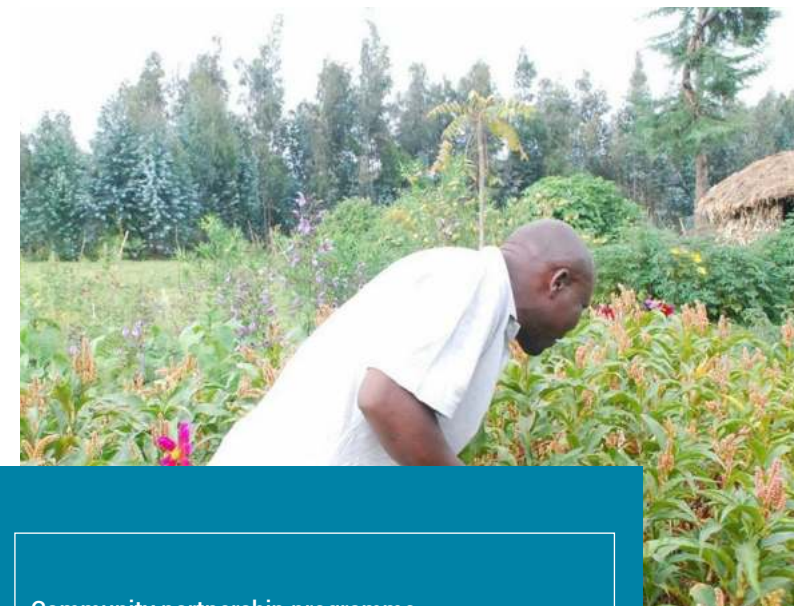


Community-based tourism's contribution towards conservation in Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park

- Solution provider:** Red Rocks Initiatives for Sustainable Development
- Other organizations:** Rwanda Development Board; Rwanda Cultural Heritage Academy
- Location:** Volcanoes National Park, Northern Province, Rwanda
- Summary:** Rwanda's Volcanoes National Park (VNP) is sited in the Virunga Mountains, one of the most important regions for biodiversity conservation in Africa. We introduced community-based tourism entrepreneurship working with communities around the village of Nyakinama. We work closely with women and youth cooperatives, integrating their views and wishes through participatory planning meetings. We facilitate the access to market, enabling cooperatives to reach international tourists with their handcraft products and cultural activities. Environmental programmes, linked to tourism products have positive impacts on biodiversity. Our community-based tourism activities support conservation in VNP. Our model helped in diversifying livelihoods and reduced forest resources dependency. Our community-based tourism programme has a high pro-poor impact, enabling the local community to be included in the tourism value chain, increase their economic status, thus allowing them to spearhead conservation in the Volcanoes National Park.

Impacts: We promote environmental sustainability and inclusively through projects that are culturally appropriate.

- More than 100 women participate in our tree planting activities
- Created jobs and opportunities for 120 artisans and craftspeople, performers and entertainers, lodgings, dining establishments, crafts supply stores; trained more than 35 youth to work in our campsite as local guides; and supported 25 local artists to engage in producing artistic materials speaking about the urge to conserve the environment.
- Established local traditional dancing troop composed of 25 women and 5 men who do the drumming for the tourists.
- We involved more than 200 women to work in making eco-friendly banana seed bags, to replace plastic bags, which also contribute to soil conservation.
- The Establishment of Red Rocks botanical garden prevented the locals from entering the park in search of medicinal plants
- Beekeeping activity which is promoted outside the park provides income to the locals by selling natural honey to the tourists and nearby lodges/hotels thus gaining some income



Success factors




Rwanda Tourism Revenue Sharing (TRS) program

Community partnership programme





From threatened to thriving: How ecotourism saved Jabal Moussa mountain

	Solution provider:	Association for the Conservation of Jabal Moussa
	Location:	Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve, Mount Lebanon Governorate, Lebanon
	Summary:	In 2007, following an attempt to blast a road in the heart of the mountain known as Jabal Moussa, the Association for the Protection of Jabal Moussa (APJM) NGO was established to protect the mountain from increasing pressures, within challenging socio-economic and political contexts. APJM negotiated and funded a lease contract with religious endowments to rent large swaths of the mountain, and Jabal Moussa was designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2009. Inspired by the Man and Biosphere Programme, APJM launched a community-based ecotourism program the same year, engaging several local community members. From a previously neglected and threatened area, Jabal Mousa became a well conserved touristic destination, welcoming 20,000 visitors in 2017, and increasingly contributing to the wellbeing of its local communities. Despite the very fragile law enforcement framework, Jabal Moussa is today thriving due to the engagement of the local community and the support of the general public.

Impacts: 10 years into the establishment of APJM, Jabal Moussa became a renowned ecotourism destination, offering diverse hiking and accommodation packages, and receiving wide media coverage. Local agro-food and handicraft products are manufactured in a centralized workshop by local women, and marketed under the brand name “Jabal Moussa” at an increasing pace. APJM today hires 10 local staff members, 6 guards, and collaborates with 3 nursery owners, 20 guides, 6 guesthouses, 20 women products manufacturers, 50 beekeepers, 20 farmers, and tens of local service providers.

From a conservation perspective, a significant part of the core area received legal protection, from the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture and Culture. An increase in dense forest areas was observed along the years since the establishment of APJM, according to a study done by MÁN Poyatos et al, in 2015. Three nurseries maintained in local villages contribute to the propagation of thousands of native forest species every year. Wildlife and archaeological surveys were conducted, and as a result: Jabal Moussa was designated a Global IBA; the endemic *Salvia peyronii*, claimed to have been extinct, was rediscovered thriving in Jabal Moussa; an uninterrupted series of human occupation was recorded since the Stone Age; several cultural sites were rehabilitated and/or surveyed.



Success factors

Designing projects for sustainability through integration into the organization's strategy and analysis of local context

Striving to be locally rooted, participative and adaptive, while globally connected

Creating a relatable “brand image” for the Reserve through effective targeted communication



Story

In 2007, APJM was established to protect Jabal Moussa from increasing pressures. The mountain presented a unique natural and cultural heritage of regional importance, and was owned in large part by the Maronite Patriarchate and church endowments. However, Lebanese legislation did not recognize Nature Reserves on private lands. APJM negotiated and funded lease contracts to rent large swaths of the mountain, and sought ways of their protection. Following two years of surveys and conservation work, Jabal Moussa was designated a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2009.

The UNESCO Man and Biosphere Programme constituted an inspiring concept, that encompasses the human dimension, in contrast with the classical restrictive conservation concept. APJM sought a diverse range of funding sources, to overcome the lack of governmental funding and achieve its dual mission of conservation and development: project funding, income generating activities, and engagement of the private sector.

Ecotourism started with the funding of a project by the Italian Cooperation, which led to a program sustained over the years by the revenues it generated. Other funded projects fed into the program, supporting the expansion and diversification of the tourism packages. From a nearly unknown and threatened site, Jabal Moussa became a thriving site, receiving more than 20,000 visitors per year. Several locals benefit directly or indirectly from the Reserve, including local guards, guides, guesthouse owners, local workers and others.

Complementary programs also started with funded projects, such as the production of agro-food and handicraft products, and the growing of native tree seedlings. These programs contribute increasingly to the sustainability of the conservation stance, and to the development of the local communities. Jabal Moussa Reserve gradually received recognition nationally through the legal protection of several plots by the Ministries of Environment, Agriculture, and Culture. APJM also achieved a breakthrough in the mobilization of the private sector. A gala dinner is organized yearly, to invite the private sector to contribute to APJM's mission. APJM is thus able to cover its core costs from corporate donors.

The work of APJM is today well received among local communities and mostly recognized as one of development, contrary to the beginning, when certain locals went as far as assaulting the reserve premises, to cover their illegal quarrying activities.





Advocating eco-tourism through art photography



Solution provider: Tengeneza Generation



Location: Uluguru Nature Forest Reserve and Mkingu Nature Reserve, Morogoro region, Tanzania



Summary: TEG is a youth organization, which focuses on empowering young people living by Nature Reserves through improved livelihood opportunities: eco-tourism and agribusiness. We have worked with communities in the Uluguru Nature forest Reserve in developing ecotourism, using attractions that are naturally found in their culture and tradition. The project has connected beneficiaries with market opportunities, provided capacity building in alternative livelihoods. It has contributed to address challenges, such as the lack of employment and the degradation of the natural environment caused by human activities. We engage professional photographers, who teach photography to young people in the communities, accompany ecotourism expeditions, document the natural environment, as well as the cultural and historical assets of the area. Photographs are curated and form part of regular online exhibitions. They serve to promote eco-tourism activities and valuable tools for raising awareness about conservation.

Impacts: Through Continuous determination of TEG staff and partners we have increased the socio-economic status of adjacent communities through ecotourism initiatives. We provided them with the necessary support such as conservation education, materials like sign boards and skills exchange about promoting tourism. This has, increased online engagement and discussion about the future of ecotourism by securing partnerships with 2 reserves namely Uluguru nature forest reserve and Mkingu nature reserves and Eastern Arc Mountains Conservation Endowment fund (EAMCEF)

More specifically, we have measured the following impacts:

- Secured partnerships with the Eastern Arc Mountains, which support \$10,000 in community-based eco-tourism activities.
- Government officials changed their mindset when they saw how photographs can be important for promoting tourism.
- Since the beginning of our activities, more than 273 people visited the Nature Reserves, mostly from Tanzania but also from abroad. The eco-tourism activities have generated more than \$ 10,000, through the different activities and services provided by the communities.
- In the Choma community, 35 people are members of the eco-tourism services group and 273 people from the wider community have benefited through farm product selling and transportation providers, out of 400 households and have generated more than \$ 10,000.



Success factors

Team determination





Strong partnership

Art photography

TEG. TENGENEZA
GENERATION



Reserva Bosque La Tigra: A replicable model for sustainable and community-based ecotourism

	Solution provider:	GIZ
	Other organization:	Travel to Nature
	Location:	La Tigra de San Carlos, Alajuela Province, Costa Rica
	Summary:	<p><i>Reserva Bosque La Tigra:</i> Biodiversity in action Costa Rica aims to develop a replicable model for sustainable and community based ecotourism, which includes the creation of the Bosque La Tigra Biological Station-Reserve for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity, as well as reforestation efforts, carbon fixation, protection of drinking water sources, environmental education, biodiversity monitoring, and development of ecotourism services. Bosque La Tigra also focuses on community outreach, by facilitating capacity building and development of skills in the tourism field for local communities.</p> <p>The project is an initiative of the Travel to Nature company and the develoPPP program, implemented by the German Cooperation for Development, GIZ, on behalf of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ).</p>

Impacts: This comprehensive initiative achieved successful interventions in multiple areas such as tropical forest restoration, enhancing the ecological connectivity, environmental education, capacity building for local communities, and the revitalization and recovery of the touristic sector locally. Bosque La Tigra accomplished to develop an attractive touristic product for international and national visitors, communities, and students that aspire to connect with nature and learn from local biodiversity. This touristic product serves as an example, inspiration, showcase and replicable model for international and national organizations. The project was able to implement a business model that operates within the limits of nature and that is designed to work with nature and support it. During the implementation of the project, more than 4000 native trees were planted in the reserve. A total of 46 hectares of secondary and primary rainforest can now thrive and grow under Bosque La Tigra's stewardship. Water sources that provide drinking water for over 1000 people in La Tigra are now protected. The project generated impacts far beyond the limits of Bosque La Tigra, currently a group of business owners, entrepreneurs and different stakeholders from La Tigra district and other surrounding districts have engaged in a strategic process to create a new touristic destinations in the region.



Success factors

Forest Restoration and Ecological Connectivity

Environmental education: Bosque La Tigra Rainforest School

Biodiversity responsible touristic offer

Community outreach and capacity development for tourism

Story

The districts of San Lorenzo, La Tigra, and Peñas Blancas are crossed by national Route 702, a route highly frequented for its final destination: the Arenal Volcano and La Fortuna, one of the most developed tourist centers in Costa Rica. However, the districts on Route 702, harbor immense tourist potential, great biodiversity, and tourist attractions of great interest. Likewise, there is a group of businesspeople and tourism entrepreneurs who develop their activities along this national route in search of better family income and personal development.

Bosque La Tigra has identified the tourism potential of this area and has promoted the development of skills in the tourism sector. First, with the support of GIZ, 14 people from the communities have been trained as local tour guides and 15 people have improved their management skills to apply them in their businesses.

In the second stage, Bosque La Tigra has fostered the local organization for better management of the tourist destination. Currently, a group of 30 business people and tourism entrepreneurs are organized to make decisions at the level of a new tourist destination: Destino Ecoturístico Ruta 702, making strategic decisions to develop the destination under a common vision. They have also formed a community for the exchange of experiences of good tourism practices and advice and recommendations from their peers to apply in their businesses. The organization also encourages productive linkages between businesses.

According to José Miguel Herrera, president of the Route 702 Ecotourism Association, entrepreneur and beekeeper “We organized ourselves to move forward as tourism entrepreneurs, developing the potential of our beautiful districts and supporting each other. We are aware of the precious biodiversity of our tourist destination and we want to make the best use of it while using it sustainably and guaranteeing its conservation”.



Assessing economic impacts of visitor spending in Protected Areas of Brazil

- Solution provider:** Instituto Chico Mendes de Conservação da Biodiversidade
- Other organizations:** GEF; US Army Corps of Engineers; University of Florida; Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel
- Location:** Brazil
- Summary:**

Assessing economic impacts of tourism in protected areas (PA) provides a way for park managers of developing countries to inform stakeholders of the value of PAs in serving not just for conservation purposes, but as engines for relatively low-impact, high added-value economic growth.

An analysis of the economic impact of tourism was developed to measure visitor spending around PAs in Brazil. The study revealed the economic magnitude of an important ecosystem service provided by PAs – tourism and outdoor recreation. Visitation at PAs demonstrated to be an impactful mechanism to develop local economies and the tourism industry in Brazil as each dollar invested in management generates \$7 for the economy. The initiative reinforced that economic impacts of tourism influence directly the PAs, as well as indirectly other businesses and the local communities, generating greater economic benefits for local communities that have a higher household dependency on the surrounding natural resources.

Impacts: Economic Impacts of Tourism assist managers to inform policy-makers, stakeholders, local communities, and the public at large, of the PAs values for conservation as well as for benefit-sharing. Results in Brazil, for example, identified that each dollar the country invested in the PA system produced \$7 in economic benefits. In 2017, the 10,7 million visitors spent about US\$ 530 million on local communities around PAs. The total contribution of these expenditures to the national economy was around 80 thousand jobs, US\$ 583 million in income, US\$ 822 million in aggregated value to GDP and US\$ 2,2 billion in sales. In regards to taxes, a total of US\$ 38 million was generated at the municipal level; in state, US\$ 130 million and in federal, US\$ 71 million; totalizing US\$ 240 million in taxes.

Results are assisting policy-makers, conservation and commercial stakeholders, local communities, and the public at large of the value that PAs serve for conservation as well as engines for benefit-sharing. The results were used, for example, to pass the Law No. 13.668 / 2018, which improved the legislation for the concession of recreation services in federal protected areas in Brazil..



Success factors



Identifying the problem:
Conducting economic instead of
financial analysis

Tourism Economic Model
in Protected Areas (TEMPA)
assessment tool

Using tourism economic data
for analysis, reporting and
influencing decision-making



Making protected area concessions work for communities

	Solution provider:	Wilderness Safaris
	Location:	Torra, Namibia
	Summary:	The long-term partnership at Damaraland Camp between Wilderness Safaris (private sector; WS) and the Torra Conservancy (community) in Namibia illustrates that tangible benefits from such joint venture partnerships play an important role in development and poverty reduction, with intangible benefits improving social welfare, biodiversity conservation and local economic development.

Impacts: A total, for community levies only, of over NAD 3.3 million (approx. USD 235 000) has been paid by Damaraland Camp to the Torra Conservancy between 1st March 2011 and 29th February 2016. In terms of employment, Damaraland Camp employs 30 individuals, 77% from the Torra Conservancy. The building of the Camp required 20–30 unskilled, casual labourers, some of which went on to find permanent employment in the Camp and in other WS camps in Namibia. Damaraland Camp guests visit nearby villages and the Camp makes use of laundry services, wood purchases, and road maintenance from local community members, further injecting an amount of NAD 123 816 (approx. USD 9524) into the local economy from 2011 to 2015. Staff costs, in terms of wages, meals, housing, uniform and training totalled more than NAD 8.89 million (USD 635 000) over the six year period (March 2011-Feb 2016). Extensive positive biodiversity impacts have also resulted from the partnership, including the recovery of a number of species, including Hartman’s mountain zebra, elephants and black rhino.



Success factors

Establishing community-private sector partnerships

Creating employment and skills training and development

Preferred use of local suppliers of goods and services

Managing expectations and benefit-sharing

Development of various community and social welfare projects







Story

From year ten to fifteen of the partnership, the Torra Conservancy was given, per annum, 20% equity in Damaraland Camp until they owned 100% and chose to sell a portion back to Wilderness Safaris to form a joint venture equity partnership. Wilderness Safaris was then offered and purchased 60% of the Camp back from the Torra Conservancy and they are now operating as equity partners with the JV leasing the land from the conservancy for a fee. Bennie Roman, Torra Conservancy Chairman and Damaraland Camp Board of Director until 2014, says: "From the start we kept our relationship as good as possible. We have quarterly Joint Management committee meetings where we discuss matters on the ground and, present the conservancy and Camps reports and plan for the future. Conservation is our joint interest and tourism their (Wilderness) culture. We have learnt from each other over the years and we can now apply our knowledge." The lodge has also been upgraded, with both WS and the conservancy investing capital for the upgrade. These upgrades were initially fully funded by WS but the conservancy used cash earned from the sale of a portion of the Camp back to WS to settle their portion of the shareholders contribution in terms of the upgrade. The reinvestment of 'community capital' into the project is one of the first instances in Namibia that did not involve donor funding or loans. In 2009, Wilderness Safaris and the Torra Conservancy entered into a formal equity JV and registered the company Damaraland Camp (Pty) Ltd. Roman: "The business became sustainable over the years and we decided to enter as a business partner. We now have 40% share in the business and still receive our monthly 10% turnover as bed levies. We feel we have ownership and can make decisions at director level." In 2010, WS assisted the Conservancy to raise a bank loan of NAD 500 000. This money was used to build the Damaraland Adventurer Camp and is the first instance of a community raising their own funds for building purposes and helped to empower the community and provide experience in financial management and business skills. "Where there are issues or areas of concern in the partnership we discuss the topics and set joint tasks to solve any problems. Wilderness concerns are mostly over predator killings, especially Lions because it affects their market negatively but they also understand that we must keep a balance to sustain communal farming in the area.", says Roman.





Digital series Voces del Bosque was developed, a series that shows the main wild species of Alto Mayo and northern Peru

	Solution provider:	Ikam Expeditions
	Other organizations:	Conservation International; National Service of Natural Areas Protected by the State (SERNANP); Videá
	Location:	Moyobamba e Rioja, Departamento de San Martin, Perú
	Summary:	<p>Voces del Bosque, is a serie that promotes wildlife observation and the stories of those who strive to conserve it</p> <p>With funding from the Turismo Emprende program of the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism, the ecotourism company Ikam Expeditions presented this audiovisual series "Voces del Bosque", that shows incredible expeditions searching for unique wild species in northern Peru.</p> <p>The first season of the digital series has 5 chapters:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hummingbird Route - Representative birds of Alto Mayo - Nightlife in Tingana - Wildlife in Tingana - Bird watching in Moyobamba

Impacts: The impact is mainly communicational, our idea as an ecotourism company was to show our expeditions that are based on wild species and conservation spaces, among which Protected Natural Areas, Private Conservation Areas, Regional Conservation Areas and other modalities stand out.

To date, the audio-visual material has been exhibited on social media(Instagram, Facebook and YouTube) of the company and allied organizations (Conservation International and Alto Mayo Protection Forest).

It is also important to specify that this type of material is unprecedented at a local an national level.




Success factors





Biodiversity knowledge

Biodiversity communication





Cash-for-Work (CFW) mechanism to promote community tourism and ensure direct economic income to the local population

- 
Solution provider:
- Planeterra International Foundation
- 
Other organizations:
- National Service for State Natural Protected Areas (SERNANP): Headquarters of the PNRA and the RCA. RCA Administration Contract Executor (ECA Amarakakaeri)
- 
Location:
- Amarakaeri Comunal Reserve and Rio Abiseo NAtional Park, Perú
- 
Summary:
- One of the main weaknesses in community tourism services is the lack of quality infrastructure for community and tourism use and also a high financial and employment vulnerability. To solve this problem, the Sustainable Tourism and Protected Areas in a Post-COVID World project in the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve and the Río Abiseo National Park (Perú), developed the Cash-for-Work (CFW) mechanism, also known as the Employment Fund. Through this mechanism, these weaknesses are transformed into an opportunity to create greater local impact, offering temporary employment to the residents of the 10 communities of both protected areas, in projects that were prioritized by the inhabitants themselves, in their Community Action Plan. The projects were executed and financed completely during the months of August and October 2022. The Fund for Employment mechanism has strengthened the local economy and, at the same time, has generated a greater sense of belonging and community empowerment.

Impacts:
 Communities of the Abiseo River National Park
 San Juan del Abiseo: A visitor reception house. 17 people benefited directly (14 men and 3 women) and 180 community beneficiaries as users.
 Pizarro: A tourist viewpoint with improved accessibility. 28 people benefited directly (24 men and 4 women) and 600 community beneficiaries as users.
 Pucallpillo: Renovation of three community bridges. 30 people benefited directly (26 men and 4 women) and 150 community beneficiaries as users.
 Santa Rosa: Improved access to the community Botanical Garden, an artisanal oven. 22 people benefited directly (17 men and 5 women) and 50 community beneficiaries as users.
 Dos de Mayo: A new community bridge. 20 people benefited directly (18 men and 2 women) and 2000 community beneficiaries as users.
 Communities of the Amarakaeri Communal Reserve
 Queros: 6 new house rooftops, and new base structure for the tourist bridge “Aguajal”. 26 people benefited directly (10 men and 16 women) and 30 community beneficiaries as users
 Shintuya: 1 sanitary pit and 6 waste reception huts. 36 people benefited directly (12 men and 24 women) and 300 community beneficiaries as users
 Puerto Azul Mberowe: 1 communal dining room. 15 people benefited directly (10 men and 5 women) and 60 community beneficiaries as users
 Boca Isiriwe: 1 visitor reception centre. 26 people benefited directly (12 men and 14 women) and 45 community beneficiaries as users
 Barranco Chico: Planted 200 ornamental and production plants (chestnut trees, palm trees, coconut trees, etc.). 25 people benefited directly (9 men and 16 women) and 45 community beneficiaries as users.



Success factors

Community Action Plan

Alignment of Action Plan with Employment Fund projects



Story

Clara del Águila is a farmer and artisan baker from the community of Santa Rosa (Río Abiseo NP). She supports her family partly through the sale of artisan breads, but since she does not have her own oven or equipment in good condition, she rented a space from a local family for her daily production. This causes her a lot of uncertainty, since she did not know how long she could continue carrying out her activity and contribute financially to her home.

In 2021, her husband, Wilfredo Caballero, passed away from COVID-19. He was the one who, through agriculture, provided the main income for the home. With his departure, Clara was left alone, with her son José, a patient with meningitis and with an increasingly bleak future. In fact, José's illness requires constant medical attention, incurring higher expenses that, with Wilfredo's departure, were more difficult to cover.

One of the strategies of the Project "Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas in a Post-COVID World", led by Planeterra and IUCN, was to develop a Community Action Plan, in which each community and its managers identify in consensus infrastructure needs and those that could allow the generation of temporary employment.

Thus, in Santa Rosa, the decision was made to dedicate part of the funds from this mechanism to the construction of a new oven for Clara and the conditioning of an artisan bakery space near her home.

In this way, Clara could not only convert the sale of artisan breads into a safer source of income and offer better quality products to the community, but also, her knowledge and skills would allow her to integrate into the tourist circuit of Santa Rosa, enabling visitors not only to taste, but also to participate in an artisan bakery experience in the middle of the Amazon; a value that gives Clara and her community a competitive advantage within the Río Abiseo National Park.

During this process, she and her son also generated economic income, by being part of the construction of its infrastructure. Thanks to this, Clara can face the future with greater security, José can have better medical care opportunities, and in turn, continue with an activity that they are passionate about and empowers day by day.



Heroes Wanted: Tourism, Partnerships and Communication for Financing in Marine Protected Areas

- Solution provider:** Paralelo 28
- Other organizations:** Pro Natura Noroeste; Niparajá Natural History Society; Network of Citizen Observers; Eco-Alliance of Loreto; United Bay; National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP)
- Location:** Islas Marietas, State of Nayarit, Mexico
- Summary:** Four civil society organizations (CSOs) created Paralelo 28 in order to raise resources to contribute to the management and surveillance of natural protected areas (ANP) in the Gulf of California. In 2016, they launched the campaign Heroes Wanted in Islas Marietas National Park, in collaboration with the National Commission of Natural Protected Areas (CONANP) and the Riviera Nayarit Convention and Visitors Bureau. Agreements were established between Tourism Service Providers (TSP), CSOs and the government to build a financial mechanism that would contribute to the proper management of the ANP. PST form the Bahía Unida association and contribute \$40 pesos per tourist to the Marietas Fund. Paralelo 28 executes the communication campaign recognizing the participating companies (+95%). CSOs and the government execute management actions with the funds generated, offering transparency and clarity in financial management and initiate replications in other PNAs. This has increased the annual budget by 5,500%.

Impacts: On-site:

Revenues of \$550,000 dollars in 18 months equivalent to an annual increase of 5780% compared to the fiscal 2018 budget.

Investment of \$450,000 dollars in the ANP to: a) increase the presence of security guards (personnel, equipment, and supplies); (b) increased environmental awareness (environmental educators); (c) strengthen reef monitoring and restoration; d) train PST in good practices, and e) strengthen CONANP's management capacity.

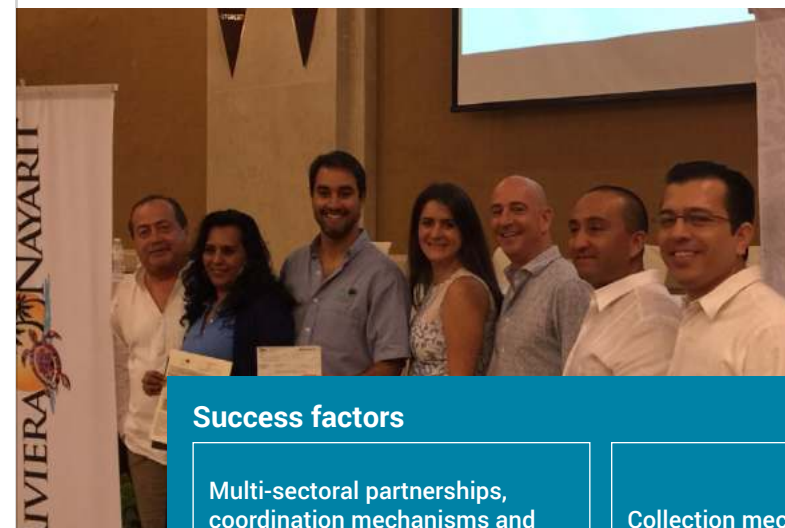
More than 800 tours and 25,000 vessels verified and an increase from 88 to 99% in compliance with the regulation by PST.

Management of tourist activity (installation of mooring buoys, established carrying capacity, rules to avoid impact on corals), reef recovery and increase in the quality of visitation.

At the regional level:

Positioning a solid and successful communication campaign, with replicable products for multiple scenarios.

Working model for other marine and terrestrial areas, with a successful reproduction (whale shark sighting in La Paz Bay, Baja California Sur) and others that are beginning (Espiritu Santo NP, Cabo Pulmo and Loreto Bay).



Success factors

Multi-sectoral partnerships, coordination mechanisms and accountability

Collection mechanisms

Marketing for social change

Tourism management

Effective inspection and surveillance



Wildlife conservation ecotourism in Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park, Lao PDR

- Solution provider:** Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)
- Other organization:** Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park
- Location:** Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park, Houaphanh Province, Lao PDR
- Summary:**

The Nam Et-Phou Louey National Park (NEPL NP) is one of the largest and most biodiverse protected areas in Laos. At the same time, more than 30,000 people from 91 village, representing multiple ethnic groups located within some of the poorest districts of the country, are living inside or immediately adjacent to the NEPL NP.

To provide livelihood opportunities for local people and to safeguard the national park's wildlife biodiversity and ecosystems on which communities rely on, the NEPL NP begun wildlife ecotourism program in 2010.

The NEPL NP ecotours have been designed in a way to create a direct link between conservation and tourism so that the money generated by visitors acts as an incentive for the local communities working in tourism and living around the ecotourism area to protect wildlife. This is achieved through both direct employment in the ecotourism service provider groups, and through a wider financial incentive system to the surrounding communities based on their conservation efforts.

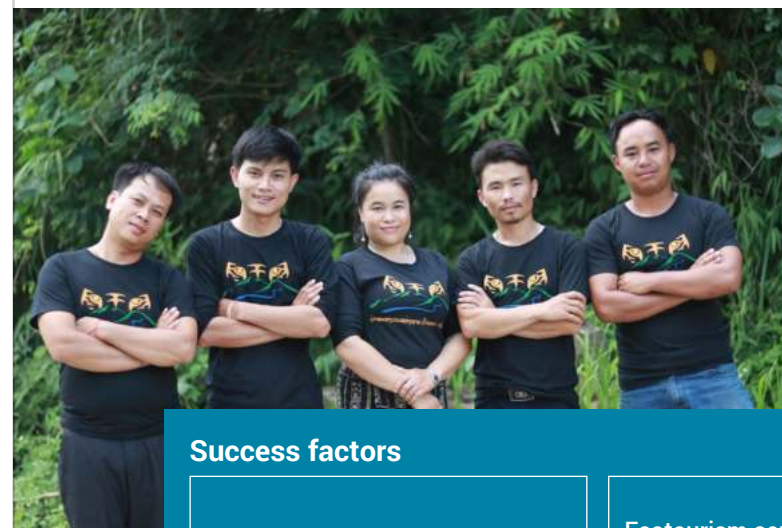
Impacts: Wildlife Conservation: Significant conservation benefits through a decrease in threats and a measurable increase in wildlife sightings. The average wildlife sightings on the Nam Nern Night Safari wildlife spotting tour have increased from 4 animals only in 2010 to 11 animals in average per tour in 2021.

Livelihoods: Additional livelihood opportunities for more than 150 households in 4 villages. 40% of the ecotourism service providers are women and 30% are younger than 30 years old.

Wide benefit sharing. 26 villages representing more than 2'000 households receive financial incentives based on the seen wildlife by visitors on the NEPL NP ecotours, - representing almost 30% of all NEPL NP villages, and mostly Khmu and Hmong ethnic minority groups. In addition, the NEPL NP ecotourism program generates financial benefits for the National Park, tourism entrepreneurs and government.

Education: Continuous educational and skill development opportunities to multiple stakeholder groups (communities, visitors, government) as well as a positive education environment for NEPL NP ecotourism staff.

Positive International Exposure: Through various awards and visibility in the leading media, the NEPL NP ecotourism program creates positive international exposure to the country.



Success factors

Ecotourism Benefit Fund

Ecotourism service provider contracts

Capacity Building and Awareness Raising

Law Enforcement

Marketing and Collaboration with tourism private sector

Monitoring and Adaptive Management



Story

Traditionally wildlife is valuable to the NEPL NP communities, but only once the animal is captured or killed as then the animal can be sold to earn additional income for the household or can be consumed to feed the family. With the increasing domestic and regional demand for bush meat and rare animal parts and growing human population, this is no longer a sustainable practice.

To overcome this challenge, the NEPL NP introduced ecotourism as an alternative source of revenue to hunting. However, tourism, particularly in remote-low tourism areas, has its limitations as not all community members can be employed in tourism or in the related sectors.

To create a wide community support to conservation and to share the tourism revenue, the Ecotourism Benefit Fund (EBF) was introduced by NEPL NP. Though the EBF, the NEPL NP not only delivers to the villages surrounding the ecotourism area a fixed amount of money for every tourist going on the tour, but an additional amount is provided depending on the numbers and type of wildlife encountered by the visitors on the tour. To encourage conservation efforts, greater incentives are provided for sightings of species with higher conservation importance.

In the beginning, when NEPL NP began the ecotourism program in 2010, many ecotourism service providers attempted to enjoy both revenue opportunities: ecotourism and hunting. Consequently, the respective individuals received a warning or their contract was terminated, and their village's annual EBF was reduced. This was a valuable lesson learned to others.

With increasing visitor arrivals, grew also the community revenue from ecotourism services and EBF. Consequently, more households became interested in ecotourism and were willing to comply with the national park regulations. The former household members who violated the regulations could re-apply for the ecotourism positions if their record was clean for more than 2 years. Now, 10 years later, more than 150 households in 4 villages work as ecotourism service providers (wildlife spotters, boatmen, cooks, souvenir producers, etc) and 26 surrounding villages receive financial benefits through the EBF, - this represents almost 30% of all NEPL NP villages.








Solutions in Focus:

Tourism, a component of a wider holistic approach

In this section, tourism is not the main focus of the solutions, but appears as a component of a wider holistic approach. Yet, as in the solutions in the previous groupings, local communities occupy a central part of the different approaches. In the following solutions, tourism plays an important role in implementing a One Health approach and species conservation, in community-based areas management and community empowerment mechanisms, such as the development of alternative livelihoods opportunities.



Mitigating zoonotic disease transmission with a One Health approach to gorilla conservation and gorilla tourism

	Solution provider:	Conservation Through Public Health
	Location:	Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, Western Region, Uganda
	Summary:	Uganda's Gorilla tourism started in 1993. Concerns about disease transmission from humans to the great apes were quickly raised. In Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, the first scabies outbreak in 1996 resulted in the death of an infant gorilla. The disease was traced back to people, in this case to the local communities living around the National Park. Mountain gorillas are endangered, with only 1,063 individuals remaining in the wild. Conservation Through Public Health (CTPH) was founded by Dr. Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka, with the mission to promote biodiversity conservation by enabling people, gorillas and other wildlife to coexist through improving their health and livelihoods in and around Africa's protected areas. CTPH has extensive experience implementing One Health approach in protected area management, and we are committed to sharing our lessons learned and recommendations with other countries facing similar issues.

Impacts: The impacts of implementing a One Health approach are the following:

- Significant improvement in the general health of local communities living in and around Bwindi Impenetrable National Park;
- Significant improvement of the general health of the mountain gorilla population living in Bwindi, and no death from COVID -19;
- Significant increase in voluntary family planning uptake amongst local communities living in and around Bwindi Impenetrable National Park, reducing pressure on both natural and household resources

The CTPH model of One Health was evaluated by international research institutions, as having truly contributed to conservation and sustainable development outcomes in Bwindi

A policy brief, including clear recommendations for safe great ape viewing, based on research proven outcomes, was compiled by CTPH and the International Gorilla Conservation Programme. It was endorsed by the Government of Uganda, partner NGOs in conservation and public health, and shared with the 13 other countries in Africa which have great ape tourism;

Improved awareness of, and adherence to, safer great ape tourism guidelines.



Success factors

Research conducted in a timely manner


Village Health and Conservation Teams (VHCTs)

Alternative livelihoods


Long-term partnerships with the government and NGOs




Applying a multi-faceted approach to achieve long-term sustainable conservation goals in a programme for the reintroduction of Critically Endangered Western lowland gorillas to a Protected Area within the Republic of Congo


Solution provider:


The Aspinall Foundation


Other organizations:

Ministry of Forest Economy; Congolese Agency for Wildlife and Protected Areas


Location:

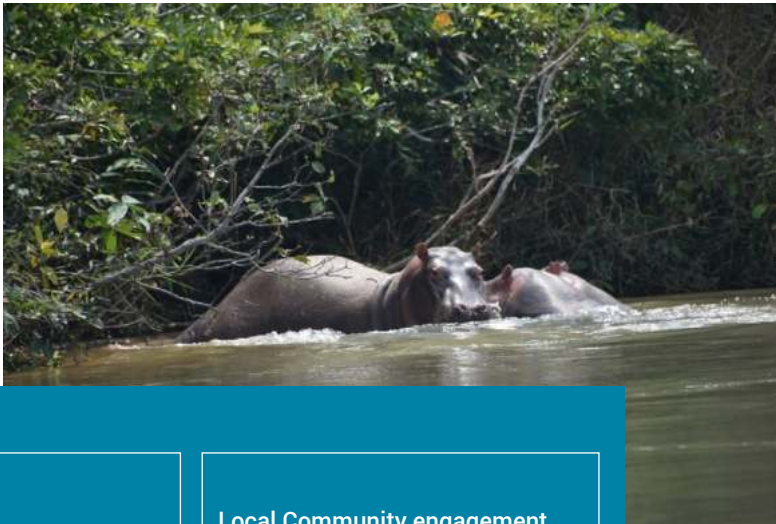
Lésio-Louna Reserve, Batéke Plateau, Republic of Congo


Summary:

The Gorilla Protection Project began in 1987 with the aim of reintroducing Critically Endangered western lowland gorillas to an area they had been hunted to extinction. Young gorillas, orphaned by the illegal bush meat trade, receive care and rehabilitation at the project before release back to the wild. Also captive-bred gorillas are repatriated to Congo where, after a period of adjustment, they too are released into the reserve. The protection afforded to the area also allows a wider range of flora and fauna to benefit, improving the biodiversity and health of the eco-system. Yet the anthropogenic pressures remain. To achieve sustainable conservation results the project seeks to achieve a holistic solution by adopting a multi-faceted approach to a complex problem. This involves conservation initiatives that include local community development in the villages surrounding the reserve alongside enforcement and protection against unauthorised activities for the wildlife and habitat of the protected area.

Impacts: The project’s approach has led to a natural expansion of its scope. At its core there remains the initial focus of the reintroduction and protection of the western lowland gorilla population, but its impact has expanded beyond a single species. The health of the eco-system as a whole is integral to the project, and the complex inter-relationships between humans, wildlife and habitat are key elements. As with many of the remaining wilderness areas, the villages surrounding Lésio-Louna Reserve are some of the poorest in the country and they are highly dependent on the natural resources around them. Environmental and social resilience is achieved by empowering the local communities to transition from subsistence to sustainable lifestyles.

Since the inception of the project there is now a self-supporting population of wild gorillas in the reserve and other species, including hippos and forest buffalo, have increased in number. Through training, raising awareness, and building new income streams that encourage a desire to protect wildlife and habitats, local communities have gained new skills and a better understanding of the importance of sustainability. In addition to contributing to a number of SDGs this continued development will ultimately enable local people to become the custodians of their environment.



Success factors

Collaboration of appropriate authorities and creating a team

Effective planning

Local Community engagement




Access to technology

Project oversight, evaluation and future planning





Community stewardship for conservation in Western Arunachal Landscape, India

	Solution provider:	World Wide Fund for Nature, India
	Location:	Western Arunachal Landscape, Arunachal Pradesh State, India
	Summary:	Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) formed with the help of WWF India in Arunachal Pradesh have helped local communities to better manage forests. Factors such as excessive use of forest resources and setting up of large infrastructure projects have led to forest loss across the region. CCA have helped reverse this trend with local communities setting aside large portions of the forest as conserved area and managing these areas for conservation and sustainable livelihood purposes.

Impacts: 1. The CCA maintain ecosystem services while securing key wildlife habitats (the CCA covers significant habitat of red panda, Himalayan goral, serow, mishmi takin, marbled cat and contains high altitude lakes). Since 2007, community members have voluntarily declared four CCAs, which together cover an area of roughly 1,000 km2 of forests. 2. The CCA model and approach has been successfully endorsed by the government of Arunachal Pradesh. Collaboration with developmental agencies including line departments at district, state and national levels have been integral part of this effort. Apart from substantial support that this project received from the state, one of the CCA management committees now receives an independent three-year long grant (\$ 40,000) from the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India to strengthen its work. 3. The Community-based Tourism (CBT) initiative in Thembang, one of the CCAs, is now in its seventh year with revenues increasing four-fold since inception, amounting to \$ 23,000 as of March 31, 2015.



Success factors

Collective decision through participatory process

Institution Building by setting up CCA Management Committees

Participatory mapping and demarcation of conserved area

Community-based tourism: economic incentive for conservation

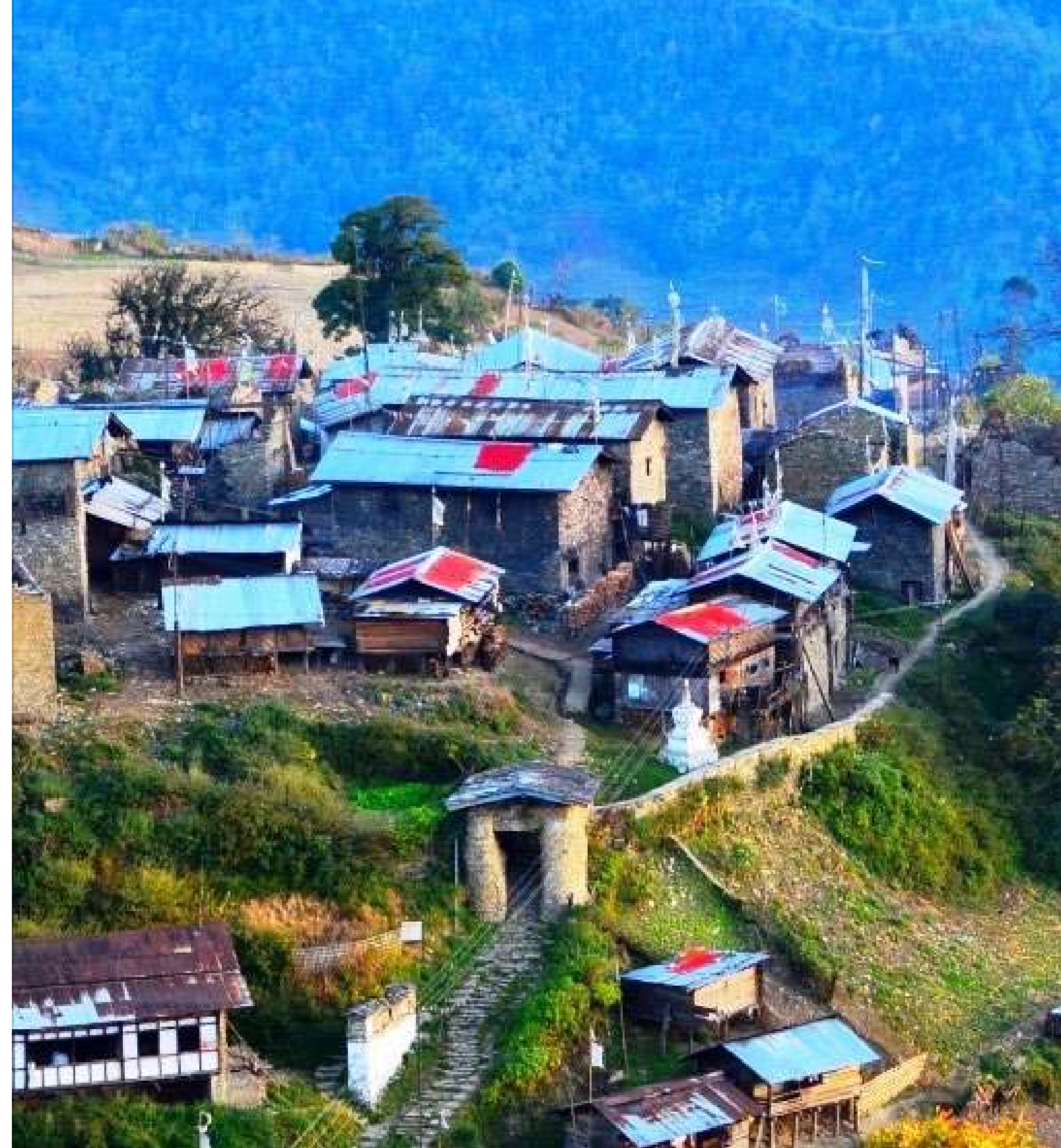
Participatory CCA monitoring

Participatory management planning and capacity building







Story

Changing attitude towards conservation: The community-based conservation model has had an organic growth over last one decade. Today, there are roughly 1,000 sq km of pristine forests fall under this management regime where community decides management rules and implements protocols on sustainable resource harvesting practices. These changes have come throughout the years of rigorous and regular engagement with the local community. “We have been working very hard to conserve the red panda, the black-necked crane and to preserve forests for our future generation” said Rinchin Wangdi, one of the executive members of Pangchen Lakhar CCA management committee while attending an award function held recently. “The award is a prize but we will also take this as a responsibility to perform better” he added. This positive attitude of the community has come over the period of time with successful implementation of CCA processes and with due recognition and appreciation. This positive vibes reflect in other villages too. Recently, the Socktsen village, one of the villages of the valley, came forward to declare some of their pristine forest as CCA. The villagers decided to undertake this conservation initiative after experiencing the model of their neighbouring villages. Ironically, this is the same village that has refused to take part of the conservation initiative way back 2011 with a suspicion notion that this will lead to alienation of their rights over natural resources and forests. Of late, this has been clarified, understood and finally, the villagers decided to declare their own conserved area and set up a management committee. This is the tip of the iceberg and there are many instances of how the people have shown their positive attitude towards conservation in the landscape. “We have been sighting red panda since our childhood but barely had any special feeling about it. If someone would have hunted a red panda before, it would least bother me. But, today, my perspective on red panda is changed, I feel pride and concern about them and of course, I will not let anyone hunt or let hurt them” Lham Tsering expressed his feeling about the red panda in one of our field conversations. Lham Tsering is one of the local community members undertaking red panda survey in Zemithang valley in a couple of years now. This model has already touched few hearts however there is a long way to go to make really a difference.



An example of governance and participation of indigenous people and nations in the management of the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve, Ecuador

	Solution provider:	Ministerio del Ambiente
	Other organizations:	Ministerio de Turismo; Ministerio de Agricultura, Ganadería, Acuacultura y Pesca; WWF; Rainforest Alliance; Cofa Survival Fund; National Environmental Fund; German Cooperation (GIZ); European Union
	Location:	Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve, Sucumbios and Orellana Provinces, Ecuador
	Summary:	Several factors contributed to the consolidation of the Cuyabeno Wildlife Reserve in Ecuador. One of them was the empowerment of indigenous organizations to establish "Use and Management Agreements" with the State. Besides that, the government defined policies for the conservation of protected areas, such as the Socio Bosque Program, the National Environment Fund, and investments in sustainable tourism. Finally, the availability of funds and technical assistance from international cooperation was key to support an initiative integration across borders (Colombia–Ecuador–Peru).

Impacts: The Natural Resources Use and Management Agreements allowed to trace boundaries for the indigenous population territory, establish the limits of the protected area, and promote the legitimization of the indigenous population rights to live in the Reserve and use their natural resources under special conditions. Government policies at a national level, along with technical and financial support from the Tri-National Program helped strengthen operations and management of the area, with improvements in infrastructure, increased effectiveness of the control and surveillance program, strengthening of sustainable tourism, and of the productive chains in the buffer zone.

The increase in local participation through the Use and Management Agreements celebrated between the communities and the authorities, the inclusion of indigenous communities in the Socio Bosque Program for conservation incentives (promoted by the Government of Ecuador,) and the involvement of indigenous communities in tourism activities have allowed for a sustained co-management within the protected área, in accordance with the use regulations for natural resources within communal spaces of the Reserve.

The involvement of the local population in several initiatives has contributed to an improvement of the living conditions of their members.



Success factors

Co-Management Between Indigenous Communities and the Government

Governance Beyond Borders

The Protected Areas Fund as a financial sustainability strategy

The Socio Bosque Program a successful incentive and conservation strategy

Sustainable tourism management




Cofan
Survival
Fund




Ministerio
del Ambiente




Strengthening community conservation in a biodiversity hotspot


Solution provider:

The Energy and Resources Institute


Location:

Sukhai, Kivikhu and Ghukhuyi, Nagaland State, India


Summary:

A pilot scale project was initiated in the 3 villages of Sukhai, Kivikhu & Ghukhuyi in Nagaland, which aimed at creating & linking Community Conserved Areas (CCAs) across the landscape & supporting conservation through livelihood creation. The model adopted aimed at strengthening the resilience of the communities by rejuvenating traditional conservation practices & providing supplementary livelihoods. Activities included compiling Indigenous Knowledge, sensitization on landscape conservation & capacity building of the communities in biodiversity documentation & monitoring, as well as promoting ecotourism as a livelihood option. Today, the project has yielded +ve results in terms of sustainable use of biological resources by adopting longterm sustainability, enhanced governance & effective conservation of landscape. This model is being mainstreamed within the governance mechanism & upscaled through a multipronged approach including financial support & legal recognition.

Impacts: Around 222 species of birds, 200 species of butterflies have been documented and protected by declaring 939 hectares as community conservation reserve and banning hunting and destructive fishing across the remaining landscape of forests and rivers (total area being 3751 hectares). The direct beneficiaries so far have been 1200 individuals from 3 villages while number of indirect beneficiaries that have been sensitized through various tools is approximately 10000 individuals. The communities reported increases in the protection of natural resources after the formation of jointly managed CCAs, and improvement in management of common resources. The elders were satisfied with the documentation of their traditional and cultural indigenous knowledge in the People's Biodiversity Register while the women, youth & hunter groups reported increases in their household income due to ecotourism by \$260 per household per year. Neighboring 7 villages that share their forests & natural resources with the current three pilot villages have approached TERI to be a part of the CCA network and replicate the conservation related activities in their respective CCAs as well.







Success factors

Local Champions

Alternative conservation-linked livelihoods

Indigenous Ecological Knowledge

Innovative participation in conservation and poverty alleviation (IPaCoPA)

	Solution provider:	Tree Uganda Academy
	Other organizations:	GirlPower Foundation Uganda, Solving African Youth Issues Totally; The Youth Innovation Hub Kayonza
	Location:	Kanungu and Kigezi District, Uganda
	Summary:	<p>IPaCoPA is an inclusive regeneration entrepreneurial design sparked in 2016 to aid and philanthropy community led conservation and poverty alleviation. In 2018 it was recognised as one of the best Panorama Solutions for a Healthy Planet.</p> <p>Over time, this solution has been improved by consolidating best practices in Agriculture, Conservation and Ecotourism to address the increasing need for nature conservation and livelihood development.</p> <p>IPaCoPA solution is being applied through formation of grassroots community led conservation groups and clubs and capacity building members to implement the strategic directions of the organisation approved by the Board. We integrate the Village Savings and Loan Scheme and invite external partners to enable community's easy access to finance and resources to invest in conservation and livelihood initiatives embedded in the IPaCoPA solution whilst sparingly utilising the natural resources which allows space for threatened species to thrive.</p>

Impacts: 71 conservation Groups and 25 Clubs formed with 2,227 members including 3 groups of reformed poachers championing conservation and climate justice.

2,227 members trained on basic wildlife use rights and conservation challenges with 65% able to describe the characteristics of the parks and promote general awareness creation.

2,227 people educated on sustainable management practices, renewable energy and their benefits, with 75% applying them.

2,227 members trained on how to write a formal letter to the local authority and at least 70% can ably report on the status of the park through writing.

Integration of the Village Savings and Loan Scheme with 995 people in 71 conservation Groups benefiting, enhanced with linkages to local financial institutions.

A total of 230,000 indigenous trees Planted.

Human-Wildlife Conflict reduced with introduction of Commercial farming of Chilli, with 500 households involved.

Introduced Debates on relevant Environment and Climate Change topics in Schools where 1,023 youth students have participated.

Promotion of Eco-tourism and Agro tourism enhanced with on-farm biodiversity conservation.

Organised and Implemented 5 Local Community Nature Walks.

Music, Dance and Drama competitions organised, where 11 groups and 5 Clubs excelled, awarded and recognised for exhibiting creative art relevant to nature conservation.



Success factors

Tree Uganda Academy (TUA) Board and Staff

Tree Academy Groups and Clubs (TAGs & TACs)

Village Saving and Loan Scheme and External Partnerships



Story

You've likely heard about the growing list of wildlife species that are vulnerable, threatened, or critically endangered in Queen Elizabeth National Park (QENP). Some species have even been defined as critically endangered in the past few decades, often due to overhunting, habitat loss, wild fires and Human-Wildlife conflicts.

But while it's true that we're losing biodiversity, among wildlife the Tree Climbing Lions, their prey and Habitats faster than we can categorize them, there's a parallel story unfolding among the plant and animal diversity in the Ishasha Sector of Queen Elizabeth National Park, with increasing innovation by Tree Uganda Academy to engage local communities in the protection and restoration of important grassland and open woodland habitat that the Tree Climbing Lions and other animal species rely upon.

More than two decades ago, 90% of locals who entered the park entered with the intention of either poaching or encroaching on the resource. Conversely, the spark of the IPaCoPA solution in 2016 has seen us take huge strides to reverse the phenomena with increased numbers of informed conservationists including three (3) groups of reformed poachers empowered with alternative source of income through Commercial farming of Chilli, Ecotourism and the introduction of the Village savings and Loan Scheme.

Our approach has acknowledged local communities and actually made them central to conservation, where today 2,227 people are directly engaged in conservation activities and in the collective management of the park. Rather than protecting people from nature, we look for practical solutions that allow humans and other species to thrive together.

Through the IPaCoPA innovation, more than 2,227 have been empowered and over 230,000 trees planted (**including Fig Trees in Queen Elizabeth National Park**) and we are working on a common goal to ensure the Climbing Lions of Ishasha Sector and other threatened species are moved from the critically endangered species list to the threatened list by 2025.







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