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L'ENVIRONNEMENT MONDIAL



WWF WORKS WITH COMMUNITIES TO CONSERVE THE RWENZORIS

WWF Uganda Country Office with funding from European Union (EU) and French Facility for Global environment (FFEM) is implementing a project titled **"Sustainable Financing of the Rwenzori Mountains National Park"** whose aim is to achieve effective conservation of the Rwenzori mountains through two key approaches: firstly through developing a sustainable financing mechanism that realizes the potential value of the natural resources and engage the private sector to maintain the natural resources on which they depend, and secondly to contribute to improved incomes and poverty reduction for the poor populations in the foothills of the Rwenzori through their engagement in management of the natural resources and in receiving benefits from their effective management.

The Rwenzori Mountains (Mountains of the Moon) are a global biodiversity hotspot and a water tower covering an area of 995 Km² in the Albertine rift landscape. The Mountains provide key ecosystem services – carbon storage, forest resources and water catchments for over 805,000 people living in areas adjacent to the park. The importance of this resource as a "water tower" is demonstrated by the presence of agricultural/irrigation schemes, existing and potential hydro power output in the catchments from four mini-hydro power stations, support to some of the industrial bases in the country, water from the catchments also feeds into **Lakes George, Edward, and Albert** which then forms part the River Nile.

Working with partners; Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA) and the District Local Governments, WWF is engaging communities adjacent to the National Park through the local Community

Based Organizations to protect the integrity of the of Rwenzori land scape and conserve the wildlife. Some of the activities include promoting Climate Smart Agricultural Practices, value addition, responsible community based tourism and providing alternative livelihood options.

Piloting a Payment for Watershed Services (PWS) Scheme

Payment for Watershed Services means that downstream water users reward upstream farmers for adopting sustainable land uses for flood prevention, control and mitigation; improving the quality of surface waters and ground waters, reducing erosion, stabilizing river banks and lowering the potential of landslides. In this case the downstream users that are targeted are the businesses that draw water from the catchment for industrial use. These businesses are encouraged to make a contribution to facilitate farmers to buy tools and conservation materials such as tree seedlings



A visitor grinding coffee as part of the coffee experience

and grass for use in soil and water conservation practices. Adoption of these practices by the upstream farmers will improve water quality and water quantity which will benefit the businesses as it reduces the cost of de-silting and improves dry season water flows in the rivers. Hima Cement, Bugoye Hydro Power and Tibet-Hima have already been involved in catchment management in the same landscape and other companies that depend on the water resources from the Mountains in the **Mubuku** and **Nyamwanba** water catchments are also being rallied to contribute.

Supporting coffee farmers to adopt climate smart agriculture and add value to their coffee produce

A coffee farming group of 516 members (387 women and 129 men) under the name of "Busongora Joint Farmers Association" is a community Based Organisation in Kasese that was formed with the main of joint coffee marketing. With support from WWF, the group was taken on learning visit on the slopes of Mountain Elgon which has a similar terrain as Rwenzori to learn lessons on climate smart agriculture and diversify into tourism. Mr Matthias Kasigalire the Association's Marketing Manager says "since the training which happened in July 2015, the Association members have adopted good agricultural practices such as mulching, digging trenches and planting cover crops which have reduced runoff that used to happen every rainy season" He added that "farmers have noticed an increase in their yield and are hoping for even better in the coming years". A demonstration garden has been set up to as a training centre for the rest of the community in order to make a bigger impact in water and soil conservation.

The Association is also currently providing **"The Rwenzori Coffee Experience"** a tourism product



Members from KICHIDA during a training in garlic growing

where the visitors are taken through the coffee production process from the garden to the cup. The visitors have an opportunity to take part in the planting of the coffee with seedlings from their nursery, picking and grinding; all done manually with the local tools. This is aimed at value addition and alternative revenue source which will increase household incomes.

Chimpanzee Conservation

Chimpanzees man's closest cousins are one of the threatened wild animals in Uganda due to poaching and habitat encroachment in some parts of the country. Among some communities near these habitats, Chimpanzees can create human wildlife conflicts by raiding gardens and destroying crops which strains their relationship with the local population. In Kabarole District, a community group called **Kinyampanika Chimapanzee Conservation and Development Association (KICHIDA)** who have the chimpanzee as their totem according to their culture (Abatangi) committed themselves to protecting the chimpanzees in the Rwenzori Mountains. Working with WWF and UWA, the

group has undertaken a thorough chimp tracking and monitoring survey, to document the findings which can be considered for future habitation, to promote tourism and enhance culture, environmental conservation awareness among the community. To reduce the on the human wildlife conflict, the community group has been trained in garlic growing, a crop which is not palatable to these primates. The benefits of garlic which is being planted on the park boundaries are two fold; it will act as a deterring factor for the chimps to cross into the community land and provide another source of income.

The project manager Richard Mwesigwa says " we are raising awareness among the communities about the value of the Rwenzori mountains resources and how they can utilize them sustainably, as well provide alternative sources of income to reduce the dependence on these resources". The Sustainable Financing of the Rwenzori Mountains National Park Project is a pilot which will provide lessons for similar projects and landscapes.