

COMMUNITY-PARK RELATIONS: HOW TO ACHIEVE AND MEASURE SUCCESS.

A CASE STUDY OF KIBALE NATIONAL PARK.

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Abstract

Although conservationists are interested in the long-term use of resources, the communities neighbouring Protected Areas are interested in the short-term benefits. This creates problems and costs of conservation proportional to the extent of conflict between these two sets of interest. The situation in Uganda has not been different. In the case of Kibale National Park, conservation has faced the same obstacles till a pro-people approach to conservation was adopted. In order to know the effectiveness of the programme, this study was carried out in the communities neighbouring the Park with the overall objective of assessing the community-Park relations.

The attitude towards the park is good although people felt that they are not yet benefiting from the Park-Community programmes. Most people are aware about the importance of conserving the park but they are blindfolded by the problems that arise from the park like crop raiding. The awareness about the wildlife policy of involving communities in park management and benefit sharing is very low despite people's willingness to collaborate in managing the park.

In spite of peoples' knowing the law governing the management of Protected Areas, conservation still remains a challenge due to the prevailing poverty in these communities. This implies that whether legal or not, dependence on park resources by these communities will continue.