

Darwin Initiative: Half Year Report

(Due 31 October 2014)

Project Ref No	19-019
Project Title	Integration of the Batwa cultural values in the management of the protected areas of Bwindi, Semliki and Mgahinga.
Country	Uganda
Lead Organisation	Fauna & Flora International (FFI)
Collaborator(s)	Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) Institute of Tropical Forest Conservation (ITFC) United Organization for Batwa Development in Uganda (UOBDU)
Project Leader	Dr. Arthur Mugisha
Report date and number (e.g. HYR2)	28th October, 2014; HYR3
Project website	www.fauna-flora.org

1. Outline progress over the last 6 months (April – Sept) against the agreed baseline timetable for the project (if your project has started less than 6 months ago, please report on the period since start up).

Output 1. Batwa values and institutions are integrated into park governance structures, policies, plans, processes and day-to-day management actions.

The project has continued to support Batwa communities living around the Southern Sector of Bwindi Impenetrable National Park to pursue the development of the Batwa Forest Experience (BFE). Following the successful development of agreement in principle with the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and other local interested parties in the basic concept of the BFE, a consultant was hired to design the enterprise in detail, providing advice on different elements of the BFE, infrastructure requirements and other aspects of creating a feasible and sustainable enterprise. The main elements of the plan have been implemented by the partners; the trail has been developed for a 5 hour trek through the park (a shorter 2 hour option is also available); a team of 11 Batwa Guide/Forest Interpreters has been trained; partner staff have been trained as translators (two Batwa with sufficient command of English were also trained as translators). The BFE will be marketed via the UWA website. A memorandum of understanding between the Batwa community, UWA and the Nkuringo Cultural Centre, a local CBO, is under final negotiation and will specify the roles of the three partners in the BFE enterprise.

A central component of the BFE initiative is the Batwa Community Fund. Funds generated by the BFE in excess of operating costs will be channelled to the Fund, which will be managed by the Batwa Community with guidance and oversight from UWA and Local Government. The MOU also establishes a Trail Maintenance and Development Fund.

The MOU between the Batwa community of Semliki National Park and UWA has been signed and operations initiated.

Output 2. Batwa, park staff and park governance institutions represent and communicate their interests, perspectives and values effectively to each other

Functional literacy and English language training for Batwa communities continues to be highly valued by members of the Batwa community, CBOs and project partners. That two members of the Batwa community received training as translators testifies to the value of the training as does the fact that Batwa communities are confidently discussing opening bank accounts and managing community funds. Batwa are being supported to make and sell handicrafts, they have also benefited from this training, and are managing the proceeds of their sales effectively.

Despite intentions to implement activities to support Batwa languages, the day-to-day use of Batwa language has fallen to such low levels that it is beyond the capacity of the project to encourage its use. A significant level of intervention is required to recover the language before it disappears. Such work is beyond the capacity and remit of the project and its implementers.

The project has supported Batwa to represent themselves and communicate their interests and concerns to Park officials and local government officials at a range of project and local administration meetings.

Output 3. Batwa are actively engaged in park, tourism and community enterprises and initiatives drawing on their forest-related knowledge and values.

The 8 Joint Batwa/Ranger Monitoring Units provide employment for 24 Batwa and demonstrate the capacity of Batwa to contribute skills and knowledge to Park management, improving conservation outcomes.

As part of the development of the Batwa Forest Experience for Bwindi NP, 11 Batwa Guides/Interpreters have been trained. Further training will be provided in the next reporting period. The Guide/Interpreters will monitor the state of the trail infrastructure and report to UWA management as well as guide visitors. Batwa were employed during the trail development.

In Semliki NP, the Batwa are guiding visitors along the Batwa Forest Trail. Batwa groups have been supported to collect medicinal herbs in the park as well as collect materials for using in the production of handicrafts.

In addition to engagement in enterprises directly related to tourism, the project has continued to support several Batwa groups to produce and sell handicrafts to tourists. This has provided income sufficient, as reported by some Batwa to buy household utensils and food. Some Batwa have earned sufficient income to buy sheep and goats. This has been complemented by the support provided for food production including animal husbandry.

Output 4. Cultural values approach practitioners working in Uganda network to share experiences, help evolve good practice and contribute towards project evolution and implementation.

FFI have continued to engage with UWA officials at all levels to promote cultural values approaches and support their integration at an institutional level. As a result of these approaches the new General Operational Plans of both Mgahinga and Bwindi National Parks, currently in their final stages of development, include specific provisions for cultural values approaches to protected area management.

The proposed email network for exchanging best practice and lessons learned has not come about due to the practical difficulties still encountered by many UWA staff in

accessing the internet. Long periods without email access have discouraged the development of the proposed email group discussions. However, Park staff working in the three target Parks for this project and in two other Parks where cultural values approaches have been implemented have engaged directly through project activities and exchanged their experiences face to face. Their discussion and exchanges will provide the basis for best practice guidelines for UWA to integrate cultural values approaches at other protected areas. A workshop will be held during the next reporting period at which staffs that have participated in delivering cultural values approaches will draft the guidelines.

Output 5. Impacts of cultural values approaches to Batwa/park relations are monitored, evaluated and findings shared locally, nationally and internationally

Impacts of project activities on Batwa livelihoods are reported above. This section focuses on Batwa/Park relations. It is evident that these are linked as contributions to household revenues supported by project activities, by Park authorities and by the forest all influenced relations between Batwa and the Park.

Relations are measured by assessing attitudes using a five-point Likert scale and by investigating whether Batwa communities had or were prepared to support law enforcement in the Parks. Information was also collected on levels of participation of Batwa in meetings called by Park authorities.

Relations range from uniformly positive to generally negative. Detailed analysis of the data collected will be required to identify correlations between Batwa/Park relations and project interventions. Preliminary analysis and anecdotal evidence suggest, however, that Batwa value the Park for the natural resources they are allowed to access. Despite this, where access to cultural resources such as sacred sites or locations for dances and ceremonies has not been provided, attitudes remained generally negative. Where Batwa communities felt that the Park was actively supporting access to their cultural resources and sites, relations tended to be better.

Participation in meetings by Batwa varied greatly and seemed to influence relations. In one community over 80% of respondents had attended meetings while in another, no respondents had attended meetings. Where Batwa attended meetings, they found the meetings valuable. Respondents indicated they felt empowered and had been able to raise issues important to them. Where Batwa had not attended meetings, relations were poor as Batwa felt Park authorities were failing to engage them (Park authorities suggested that Batwa were failing to attend meetings). It is of concern that participation by Batwa in meetings remains so patchy at this stage in the project.

In Semliki NP positive attitudes were the norm and respondents were appreciative that UWA recognized Batwa culture and allowed them to retain and recover elements of their history and life in the forest. The opening of the Batwa Forest Trail where Batwa act as guides was mentioned as important in helping to retain cultural values in and connections to the forest as well as generating income. A similar result was found for Mgahinga NP - respondents indicated between 4 and 50 visits to cultural sites thanks to the operation of the Trail. Being able to visit dancing sites was of particular importance.

Many respondents around Bwindi reported that the park had done nothing to respect their cultural values and that no Batwa had accessed cultural sites inside the park. The project must deepen activities beyond sites being developed for tourism activities so that other communities can access cultural resources for purely cultural reasons.

2a. Give details of any notable problems or unexpected developments that the project has encountered over the last 6 months. Explain what impact these could have on the project and whether the changes will affect the budget and timetable of project activities.

The Project Leader left FFI at the end of July 2014. The loss of Dr Mugisha, who led the development of the project proposal and who had led the development of the cultural values approach to conservation being implemented by UWA, has inevitably had some impacts on delivery during the reporting period. Field staffs have had less than the usual level of technical support and project partners have had less than the usual engagement and supervision. As a result there have been some gaps in reporting and some delays in the implementation of activities. Most significantly, on-going processes and negotiations requiring engagement with UWA at Park and HQ levels have been set back. The immediate result has been that some activities that were expected to have been completed during this reporting period will be carried over to the next reporting period. These are not significant enough to materially affect the budget however. Dr Mugisha has been replaced as Project Leader by his successor (as FFI Programme Manager, Uganda) – Edison Nuwamanya.

2b. Have any of these issues been discussed with LTS International and if so, have changes been made to the original agreement?

Discussed with LTS: yes

Formal change request submitted: yes

Received confirmation of change acceptance: no

3a. Do you expect to have any significant (e.g. more than £5,000) underspend in your budget for this year?

Yes No

3b. If yes, and you wish to request a carry forward of funds, this should be done as soon as possible through the formal Change Request process. However, it would help Defra manage Darwin funds more efficiently if you could give an indication now of how much you expect this request might be for.

The estimated carry forward request will be **£4800**; this is mainly from the budget lines of International travel, vehicle operations and field subsistence and accommodation.

A formal C/F request shall be submitted before 31st Jan 2015 which may be equal or less than the estimate above.

4. Are there any other issues you wish to raise relating to the project or to Darwin's management, monitoring, or financial procedures?

If you were asked to provide a response to this year's annual report review with your next half year report, please attach your response to this document.

Please note: Any planned modifications to your project schedule/workplan or budget should not be discussed in this report but raised with LTS International through a Change Request.

Please send your **completed report by email** to Eilidh Young at Darwin-Projects@ltsi.co.uk . The report should be between 1-2 pages maximum. **Please state your project reference number in the header of your email message eg Subject: 17-075 Darwin Half Year Report**