



**Environment: journeys through a changing world.**

*Gorilla Tourism*

**Alastair McNeilage, Wildlife Conservation Society**

At the same time, another organisation was starting up a gorilla tourism programme, trying to find ways the forest could generate income sustainably without being harvested, without being cut down, without killing the animals. So that that provided income for the management of the park itself, paid for all the salaries of the rangers and the guides and the park staff and the maintenance of the forest. But also to generate income for the local communities.

**Female tourist**

It's amazing; I've never seen anything like this.

**Voice over**

Now Gorilla tourism is seen as the answer to conservation. It's based on the simple economic principle that there is more money to be made from tourist dollars than from selling off natural resources.

**Moses Mapesa, Executive Director, Uganda Wildlife Authority**

We stopped timber companies and timber harvesting in Bwindi and we earn a lot more money from the great apes tourism, from the gorilla tourism, than we'd ever earn from timber production.

**Tugumisirize Yese, Local Entrepreneur**

We respect the gorilla because of tourism. It's a bigger income to our country.

**Dr Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka, CEO Conservation Through Public Health**

What's also very wonderful about gorilla tourism beginning is that the local communities' perceptions of conservation have changed significantly. Because they now see the gorillas as a sustainable source of income for them.

**Voice over**

Revenue from tourism trickles down to communities via job creation and extra trade, but there's also a scheme that puts a percentage of Park entrance fees directly into the hands of local people.

**Enock Turyagyenda Local Resident**

There's a little money that comes into the parishes every year. We call it revenue sharing. That money comes from UWA. It is the money which the whites contribute to visit this park and thus to help the citizens that live around the Park.

**Ghad Kanyangyeyo, Local Resident**

In the beginning everything like wildlife to me was useless, because there was nothing I was benefiting from them. Many local people were taking anything as if it were nothing and they'd chop the trees down and kill the animals but now things have changed. Everybody now puts pressure on conservation because we are benefiting from wildlife. Everyone's benefiting from tourism.

**Voice over**

Any long term plan needed to be profitable and offer sustainable livelihoods to local communities. Gorilla tourism has done this with some surprising results.

In 2006 a census found a total of 340 gorillas in the Park, an astonishing 12% increase in the population over the preceding decade.

**Moses Mapesa Exec. Dir. Uganda Wildlife Authority**

We can begin to talk about a very positive trend, in the conservation of Bwindi and the gorillas specifically. We have seen a steady rise in the gorilla population and the habitat is still large enough to accommodate a few more gorilla families.

**Voice over**

But is the Integrated Conservation and Development approach, supported by the money from tourism, really sustainable? Is it the answer to saving the gorillas?

**Alastair McNeilage, Wildlife Conservation Society**

What doesn't always work as well and is perhaps a bit unrealistic is to think that through these ICD projects you're going to improve people's livelihoods so much. You're talking about maybe helping people to move from being very poor to poor but they're still poor. And so just because they may be able to cultivate more crops and raise some goats doesn't mean to say that they still don't have great needs which could still be met by getting resources from the Park.

**James Byamukama, International Gorilla Conservation Programme**

You cannot be in charge of the minds of the people; the needs of the people keep changing day by day. There are many people around here for example, who still feel even if you gave them alternatives or substitutes for bushmeat, who still feel that bushmeat is what they need. What would you do with them? They will still have to get back into the forest to trap. So I think Fortress Conservation and Integrated Conservation and Development approaches have to be combined and the kind of management that brings about that is what we call Adaptive Management. You adapt the management according to the situation.